

CEDAR COUNTY: ENVISIONING A NEW HORIZON VISION PLAN

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In partnership with
East Central Intergovernmental Association



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CEDAR COUNTY

Envisioning a New Horizon

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Executive Summary

This plan, **Cedar County: Envisioning a New Horizon**, is meant to stimulate activities that preserve and enhance a high quality of life for current and future residents, while also maintaining the character that makes Cedar County unique in Iowa. The visioning plan supplements concurrent work to create a new Cedar County comprehensive plan, which primarily serves as a guiding document for land use decisions in the county. Both the Comprehensive Plan and Vision Plan were developed as part of a partnership between the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities (IISC), Cedar County Economic Development Commission (CCEDCO), The University of Iowa School of Urban & Regional Planning, East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA), and the Cedar County Board of Supervisors. A group of Urban & Regional Planning graduate students led the planning process and developed the final document.

The Vision Plan leverages assets that already exist within the county, promotes revitalization of great places within the county, and helps inspire the creation of new experiences and assets that reflect Cedar County's unique sense of place.

Although Cedar County has fewer than 20,000 residents, it shares borders with three of the four most populated counties in Iowa, which also include some of the fastest growing metro areas – Cedar Rapids (Linn County), Iowa City (Johnson County), and the Quad Cities (Scott County). Interstate 80, a major freight corridor stretching across the US, passes through Cedar County. Cedar County is one of only 45 counties in the country that can boast being a birthplace of a US president, and is home to one of only 14 presidential libraries in the United States.

A drive through Cedar County helps understand why the community has seen slow and steady population increases, while some neighboring counties have experience rapid growth- the county has some of the best farmland in the state. Agriculture is central to Cedar County's economy, and residents have a strong desire to preserve not only land, but also the area's rich agricultural heritage. The Vision Plan promotes development and objectives that build community and attract new residents and visitors without changing the fundamental character

that makes Cedar County a great place. The close proximity to large urban areas presents an opportunity to lure new residents looking for small town lifestyles and lower-cost high quality of life experiences.

The Vision Plan reflects input from the County gathered through an extensive public engagement process. Community leaders, recognizing the importance of intergovernmental collaboration, expressed a strong desire to establish a county-wide plan that unifies the eight incorporated cities (Bennett, Clarence, Durant, Lowden, Mechanicsville, Stanwood, Tipton, and West Branch) and the unincorporated area under one common vision. Community outreach and engagement was an important component of this plan. Eight community workshops were held across Cedar County in October and November of 2017, one in each of the incorporated cities. The Planning Team also attended "A Day on the Prairie" on September 16th, 2017 to survey residents and visitors about their hopes for the community. Input was also collected through an online survey and a survey of high school students in the county.

The process resulted in community goals, objectives, and strategies for implementation that will help achieve the community's vision. Throughout the planning process, Cedar County residents provided insight and expertise that helped shape a vision for the future, reflected in the vision and mission statements shown below.

Cedar County Vision Statement

Cedar County 2038 will enhance the quality of life of its residents and visitors with the County's unique assets and attributes. This will be accomplished by encouraging downtown revitalization, developing arts and cultural opportunities, and enhancing natural environment infrastructure.

Cedar County Mission Statement

Cedar County strives to preserve its unique rural identity while strengthening amenities for a strong, resilient, and attractive county; provide leadership to ensure quality services; and promote a healthy, safe, and prosperous county for its residents and visitors.

Cedar County's vision and mission statements build on the strengths of the community: quintessential rural community downtown spaces, agricultural heritage, cultural offerings, and high quality of life, while recognizing that more needs to be done to retain and attract residents and build more resilient communities.

The community's vision for a more sustainable future provided a foundation for a set of goals designed to guide future activity. The overarching goals established for Cedar County are to:

- Increase entertainment opportunities through art and culture.
- Enhance recreation and outdoor amenities to increase quality.
- Encourage downtown revitalization to strengthen community.

The need for collaboration in order for the plan to be successful was a consistent theme among residents and key stakeholders. The plan calls for a stakeholder committee to carry out the goals, objectives, and strategies. Leaders and residents from across the county make up the stakeholder committee, helping ensure that intergovernmental collaboration guides future action. The stakeholder committee will continually seek out opportunities to develop and implement strategies that promote Cedar County as a great place to live, work, and visit.

The planning team provided substantial data and project recommendations to help stimulate short and long term actions in the county, with specific actions steps for implementation. The team has worked with Cedar County communities and residents in order to begin identifying possible projects in each community that are consistent with a unified county identity. Additionally, the plan includes performance and evaluation measures that will allow decision-makers to assess progress on objectives and strategies, and prioritize them as needed.

The implementation of the Cedar County Vision Plan relies on the passion and energy of residents combined with city leadership, commitment, and collaboration. As a new approach to working toward a better shared future, this plan functions as a jump start into new ideas and new opportunities.



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Chapter 1
Introduction
Visioning Cedar County

Introduction

Visit any community in Cedar County and you will quickly find yourself immersed in the history of those communities; from historic structures that once served as a draw for the entire county, to events that celebrate the County's storied history, Cedar County possesses many unique historic properties and features that make the county special. Landmarks such as the Hardacre Theatre in Tipton and Cedar Valley Quarry contribute to the rural identity of Cedar County.

The list of Cedar County landmarks on the right were identified during community engagement and evaluation processes. These sites reflect the importance of historic preservation, small-town community character, and natural environments shared throughout the county. Though not comprehensive, the landmarks identified on the right were specifically highlighted in this planning process.

These sites not only serve economic, environmental, and social purposes, but are strong identifiers for Cedar County residents. Preserving and rehabilitating these sites will enhance community identity for future generations.

In August 2017, students at The University of Iowa, in partnership with Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities (IISC), Cedar County, East Central Intergovernmental

Association (ECIA), and the Cedar County Economic Development Commission (CCEDCO), began the process of updating the County's comprehensive plan. A Vision Plan was developed in-conjunction with the comprehensive plan to highlight existing great places in Cedar County. The plan provides goals, objectives, and implementation strategies that can be used to enhance the County's assets.

Project Scope

Cedar County has many assets across the county that are part of the economic, environmental, social, and cultural fabric of the community. The plan will help the county enhance historic preservation and recreation opportunities. Implementing the plan will strengthen the sense of place in Cedar County, while improving cohesion between communities.

Purpose of the Plan

The Vision Plan serves three primary purposes:

1. Engage the community and collect their input about Cedar County's future.
2. Support the Cedar County Comprehensive Plan.
3. Through creative placemaking strategies, create a roadmap to transform Cedar County's future.

Unique Landmarks in Cedar County

Hardacre Theater

Buchanan House Winery

Rochester Cemetery

Cedar Valley Park

Herbert Hoover Museum and Library

Downtown West Branch

Downtown Tipton

Downtown Mechanicville

Downtown Clarence

Clarence Community Park

St Paul's Episcopal Church

Lincoln Hotel



Landmarks in Cedar County

 Cedar County Landmark(s)

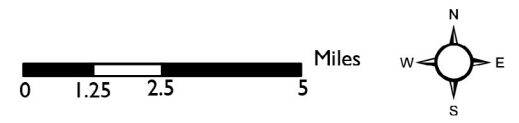


Figure 1: Existing Assets in Cedar County, 2018

Source: Ahnna Nanoski

Mission

Cedar County strives to preserve its unique rural identity while strengthening amenities for a strong, resilient, and attractive county; provide leadership to ensure quality services; and promote a healthy, safe, and prosperous county for its residents and visitors.

Vision

Cedar County 2038 will enhance the quality of life of its residents and visitors with the County's unique assets and attributes. This will be accomplished by encouraging downtown revitalization, developing arts and cultural opportunities, and enhancing natural environment infrastructure.

Goals

The goals below highlight recommendations (established through the public participation process described in Chapter 2). Action steps are organized by community in the next chapter to help implement goals.



Arts and Culture

Increase entertainment opportunities through art and culture programs in the County.

Rationale:

During community workshops, residents indicated that limited entertainment opportunities is a barrier to young families moving to the County. Improving arts and cultural opportunities can serve as a mechanism for attracting new residents to the County.

Objectives:

Develop family-friendly amenities throughout the County.

Prioritize grassroots efforts when developing arts and cultural opportunities.

Highlight each communities' unique identifiers through creative placemaking strategies.



Natural Environment

Enhance recreation and outdoor amenities to increase quality of life outcomes.

Rationale:

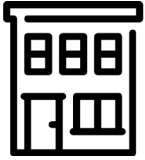
During the public participation process, all communities expressed their appreciation for Cedar County's natural features and want to see more recreation opportunities in the County.

Objectives:

Develop a county-wide trail system.

Improve accessibility to Cedar County landmarks.

Preserve and enhance Cedar County's parks.



Downtown Revitalization

Encourage downtown revitalization to strengthen community identity.

Rationale:

Residents want to preserve the rural character of their communities while preserving the historic character of the downtown. Downtown revitalization can accomplish this by fostering new revenue streams, strengthening existing businesses, and promoting regional identity.

Objectives:

Sponsor events and activities that promote heritage, educate residents, and increase tourism.

Encourage policies to enhance the appearance and functionality of downtowns.

Coordinate efforts between County, City, and advocacy group officials.





Need for the Plan

Cedar County is a rural county with a population of 18,340 residents. Social and geographic differences, across the county make it a challenge to create a voice with a concise vision for the future of the County.

Up-to-date planning is also important since the 1980 Comprehensive Plan and 2006 Land Use Plan are out of date. The Vision Plan will also support the 2018 Cedar County Comprehensive Plan to ensure that land use, economic, and environmental growth aligns with communities' identity and cultural goals.

Plan Outline

The Vision Plan outline is shown below. Each section is described in more detail to illustrate the contents of each chapter:

Community Engagement

This chapter details the methods used to gather community input, and the results of community engagement efforts.

Assets and Attributes

This chapter provides a highlight about the three prioritized landmarks in Cedar County.

Implementation Strategies

This chapter provides action steps for each community to enhance their existing assets.

Methodology

This chapter describes Advocacy Planning and Strategic Planning, and how these two planning theories are used to develop a vision plan for the County.

Performance and Evaluation

The chapter includes performance measures to establish an outline for implementing the plan. Evaluation provides the county and communities with metrics so they can evaluate how well the plan is being implemented, and guide changes to the document as needed.

Background

Cedar County, IA is a quaint community located near Iowa City, Cedar Rapids, and the Quad Cities. The county provides a small-town atmosphere with convenient access to metropolitan areas. Residents believe that it is an ideal place to start and raise a family.

Small-town living and distinctive attractions shape the county's charming character. The following key components contribute to Cedar County's unique identity:

Historic Preservation

Examples in Cedar County:

- Historic Downtowns
- Pioneer Cemeteries

Natural Environment

Examples in Cedar County:

- Cedar River
- Pocket Parks

Family Amenities

Examples in Cedar County:

- Local Farmers Markets
- Museums and Libraries

County Highlights



Rochester Cemetery, Tipton, IA



Pocket Park, Clarence, IA



St. Paul's Episcopal Church Durant, IA



Hardacre Theater, Tipton, IA

County Profile

The following highlights demographic data about Cedar County. Understanding the current conditions will help inform Cedar County's vision discussed in this plan. Statistics come from the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, unless otherwise noted.

- The County's population has remained relatively stable for the last two decades and has shown slight upward trends in the past few years.
- The median age in 2016 is 42.

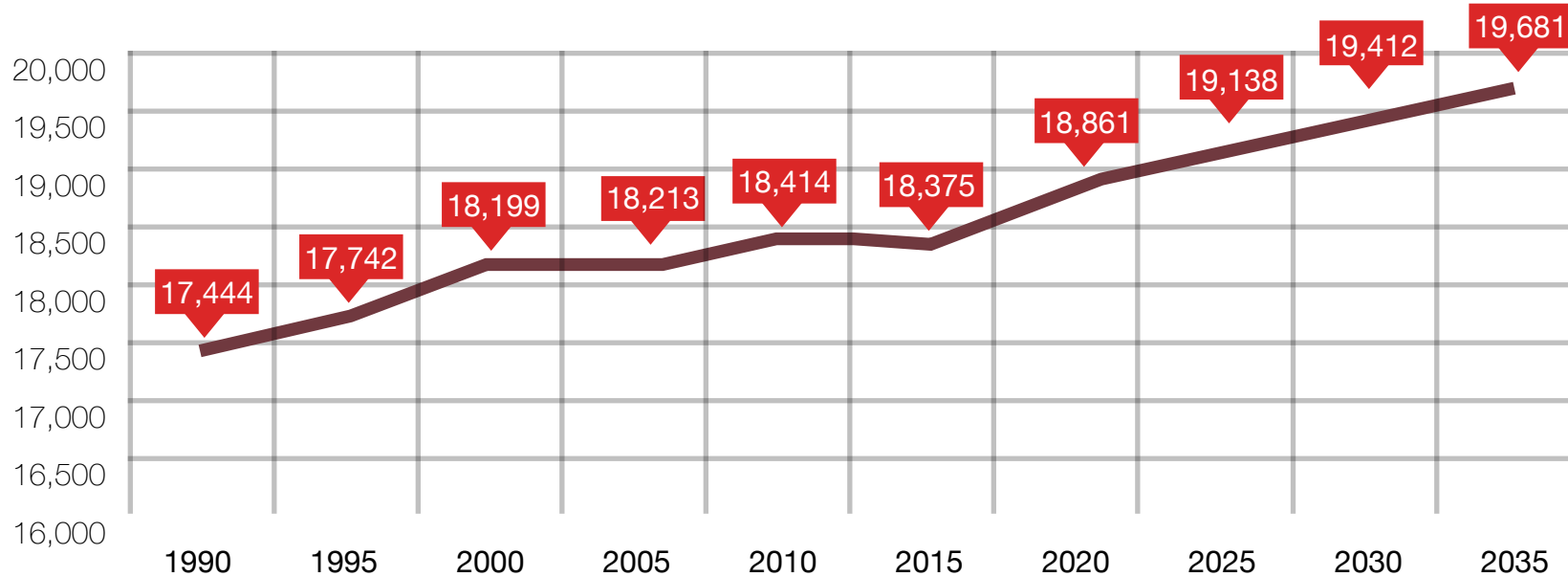
- The racial and ethnicity makeups of Cedar County are generally less diverse than that of the state and the nation. As of 2016, 1.8% of residents are Hispanic or Latino. 2.9% of residents are non-white, of which .6% are black or African American, .8% are Asian, and 1.5% are other races.

- Cedar County has a median household income of \$69,946.

- 6.4% of the population in Cedar County lives below the poverty level.

- 74% of residents leave the county for employment.¹

Figure 2: Cedar County Population (1990 – 2035)



Sources: Population estimates from 1990 -2005: Annual Population Estimates of the Total Population for Counties (number of persons as of July 1st in each year), U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis - April 2012 release, Population estimates from 2009-2016: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

A Brief History of Cedar County

Please also see the 2018 Cedar County Comprehensive Plan for a longer explanation of Cedar County's history.



1837

Cedar County was formed in 1837, named after the Cedar River running through the southwestern portion of the County.²

1859

Underground Railroad activity occurred around West Branch as the John Brown Freedom Trail made its way towards Chicago.³

1874

Herbert Hoover, US President from 1929 – 1933, was born in West Branch in Cedar County.⁵

1919

The Hardacre Theater was converted from an opera house to a movie theater in 1919.⁴

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Chapter 2

Community Engagement

Outreach Overview

Meaningful public engagement opportunities that involve community members and stakeholders supported the development of goals and objectives in this plan. Community engagement focused on discussing the unique identity of Cedar County and envisioning a future to enhance the quality of life for its residents and visitors.

Community engagement, listed in Figure 2, was combined to increase attendance for both the Cedar County Comprehensive and Vision Plans. The following summarizes public input tools used during this planning process:

Cedar County Visioning Steering Committee

A 25-member steering committee was formed, composed of ECIA staff, the Cedar County Economic Development Commission, and administrative staff from each incorporated community. Members of the steering committee facilitated community engagement workshops in Stanwood and Bennett. The Cedar County Visioning Steering Committee will continue the efforts described in this plan.

Figure 3: Public Engagement in 2017

Date	Workshop/Meeting/Interview	Attendees
09/17	Economic Development Interviews	3
10/03/17	West Branch Community Workshop	25
10/11/17	Mechanicsville Community Workshop	18
10/18/17	Clarence Community Workshop	9
10/23/17	Lowden Community Workshop	15
10/24/17	Stanwood Community Workshop	6
10/25/17	Durant Community Workshop	16
11/01/17	Bennett Community Workshop	9
11/02/17	Tipton Community Workshop	33
11/06/17	Cedar County Farm Bureau Meeting	7
12/18/17	Online Survey	138



Surveys

A Day on the Prairie, 2017

A Day on the Prairie is an event hosted by the Cedar County Historical Society showcasing Cedar County's local history. The event featured a bank heist reenactment, traditional music, family-friendly activities, and tours of historic structures.

The Planning Team took the opportunity to survey attendees and inform them about the comprehensive and vision plans. 32 responses provided an initial understanding of how the community perceived Cedar County.

Online Survey

An online survey was released to the public to gather additional information. 138 people completed the online survey. Approximately four respondents lived outside Cedar County. A majority of the feedback was consistent with the community workshops held in October. The Planning Team used their best judgment to incorporate additional items mentioned through the online survey.

High School Student Survey

A High School Survey was sent out to Cedar County school districts in December of 2017. 52 survey responses were received from Wilton High School. It is important to get input from young adults in the County, in order to provide amenities that may keep them from leaving the County. The following are key findings from the survey;

- 71% of respondents rated Cedar County as an okay or great place to live.
- 17 respondents want more recreation options.
- 33 respondents want more restaurant options.
- 11 want more community events.
- Students cited a lack of entertainment options as a reason they would leave the County.



Two members of the Planning Team surveying at A Day on the Prairie

Community Workshops

Each community workshop consisted of two main components:

Asset Mapping

During this public participation activity individuals were asked, “What do you love about your community?” A poster with eleven pre-selected unique sites in Cedar County encouraged workshop attendees to indicate their preferences with those sites. The poster motivated people to share why local landmarks are important to their community and what makes them special.

Additionally, interaction with county and city maps identified additional great places and development

ideas that could take place in the County. This allowed attendees to celebrate their community's unique physical and cultural attributes. Attendees also acknowledged what could be done to make those features stronger.

Small Group Discussions

Small group break-out sessions were used to discuss a wide range of planning topics in detail. A workshop survey was crafted to address these topics, spark conversation, and get people thinking about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of Cedar County.

Major Themes Discussed in the Community Workshops

The following were consistently discussed in community workshops. Order does not reflect priority or level of importance.

Infrastructure improvements throughout the County.

Increasing parks, recreation, and open space opportunities.

Encouraging community-based economic development.

Revitalization of downtown and main street districts.

Encourage historical preservation throughout the County.

Water quality.

Responsible development around HWY 30 and I-80.

Increased cooperation and communication between the County and towns in Cedar County.

Suitable land use regulation between agriculture and new development.

Barriers to population growth include access to amenities for families and children, entry level housing, variety of quality housing, and healthcare.

Overview

Community Workshop Survey



Community-based economic development and revitalization is encouraged by Cedar County

57% Agree
18% Disagree
25% Don't Know



Cedar County has a variety of rental, affordable, mobile, condominium, senior, and single-family housing

40% Agree
43% Disagree
17% Don't Know



Accessible parks, recreation facilities, and open space is an important aspect of rural lifestyles in Cedar County

87% Agree
9% Disagree
4% Don't Know



Increased highway safety and fast emergency responder time needs to be addressed in Cedar County

60% Agree
23% Disagree
17% Don't Know



Cedar County has regional transportation services connecting jobs and other services

20% Agree
50% Disagree
30% Don't Know



Discouraging development in hazardous areas is important for future growth in Cedar County

81% Agree
8% Disagree
11% Don't Know



Providing accessible, quality, and a variety of public services, facilities, and health care options is a priority of Cedar County

46% Agree
31% Disagree
23% Don't Know



Cedar County's regional transportation investments adequately support development

15% Agree
37% Disagree
48% Don't Know



Cedar County offers and provides access to healthy and locally grown food options

72% Agree
16% Disagree
12% Don't Know



New development in Cedar County should respect and encourage safe redevelopment of natural habitats

95% Agree
2% Disagree
3% Don't Know



Economic growth depends on Cedar County providing and maintaining infrastructure that accommodate growth and demand trends

91% Agree
6% Disagree
3% Don't Know



Cedar County encourages water conservation to protect streams, watersheds, and floodplains

61% Agree
17% Disagree
22% Don't Know



Cedar County has up-to-date infrastructure and facilities

26% Agree
49% Disagree
25% Don't Know

Figure 4: Community Workshop Results

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Chapter 3

Cedar County Assets and Attributes

Top Priorities

The Hardacre Theater, downtown West Branch, and downtown Tipton have been identified as top priorities through community engagement processes and professional evaluation. These sites are important for regional identity and provide positive benefits to the whole county.

Implementation strategies that can be applied to all communities in Cedar County, as well as strategies for specific sites are included to enhance quality of life throughout the County are in Chapter 4.

Downtown Tipton

Unique Attributes

Downtown revitalization is important to a lot of Cedar County residents and stakeholders. Downtown Tipton is particularly popular, with the County Courthouse, Carnegie Library, Hardacre Theater, unique shops and restaurants, and the RAGBRAI bike sculpture.

Strengthening the County's Quality of Life

Downtown Tipton has great potential for niche attractions. Encouraging creative business opportunities and mixed-use development will strengthen downtown Tipton's unique character. See Tipton's implementation strategies for information on how the city can strengthen their amenities.

Community Benefits

Residents enjoy the amenities and historic buildings in downtown Tipton. Strengthening residential and entertainment opportunities will increase social and economic activity in downtown Tipton. With downtown Tipton being a success story for small town downtown revitalization efforts, other downtowns throughout Cedar County can use similar strategies to strengthen their downtowns.



Pictured above: Sweet treats from Tiffany's Tipton Bakery.

Spreading joy with sweet and delectable donuts, pastry's, and muffins, Tiffany's Tipton Bakery is a landmark and source of pride for the community. Their goods have been sold across the nation and even internationally. Tiffany's Tipton Bakery is an example of Tipton, Iowa's unique small town community identity.

Hardacre Theater

Unique Attributes

During community engagement processes, the Hardacre Theater was identified as a regional asset. Long-time residents of Cedar County remember seeing movies at the Hardacre Theater as children. Some workshop attendees are excited about the “grass roots” efforts to revitalize the site. The Hardacre Theater’s gorgeous architecture and development potential resonates “specialness” with the community and tourists.

Strengthening the County's Quality of Life

The Hardacre Theater will need significant renovations to bring it to its fullest potential. The following lists some projects that will strengthen the sites aesthetics and economic sustainability:

- + Façade improvements
- + Marque revitalization
- + Art gallery space
- + Community room space
- + Fully-functioning theater
- + ADA compliance
- + Interior renovations

Community Benefits

Though immediate benefits will affect downtown Tipton first, long-term positive externalities will branch out across the whole County. County-wide benefits include;

- + Increased activity and spending in Cedar County.
- + Residents and visitors will have increased access to art and theater amenities.
- + Provides an attraction for all ages.
- + Enriches the lives of Cedar County residents and visitors.



Figure 5: Perspective of the Hardacre Theater
Source: Rohrbach Associates PC Architects



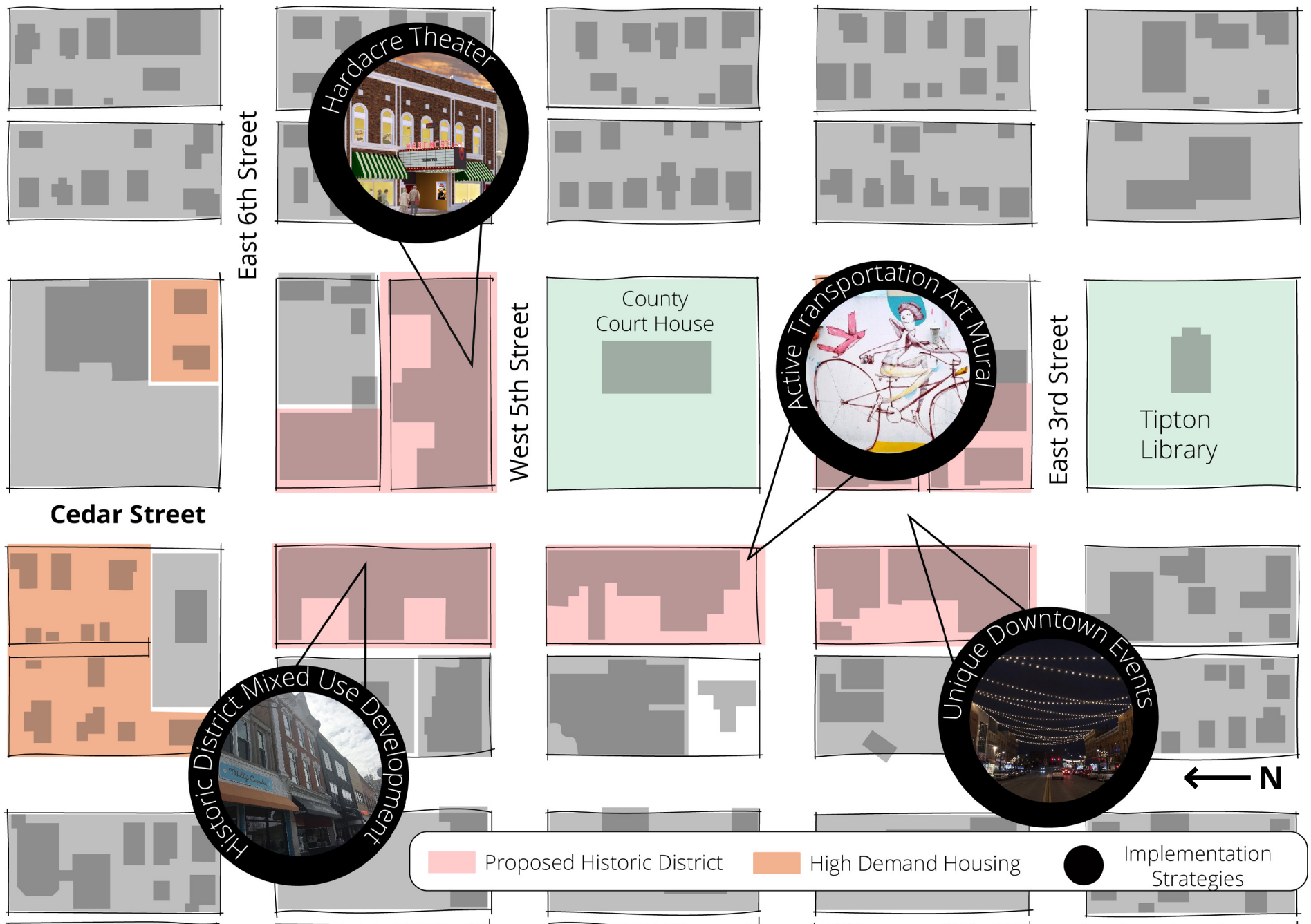


Figure 6: Proposed Priorities for Downtown Tipton
 Source: Ahna Nanoski

Downtown West Branch

Unique Attributes

West Branch, IA is the hometown of Herbert Hoover, the 31st president of the United States. The historic downtown of West Branch is located adjacent to the Herbert Hoover National Historic Site, run by the National Park Service. Downtown West Branch has many historic buildings, a pocket park, and is adjacent to greenspace that provides visitors with a wide range of amenities. The downtown area is compact, walkable, and provides visitors access to restaurants, museums, and a winery.

Strengthening the County's Quality of Life

As West Branch grows, the City is investing in multimodal transportation throughout the community. West Branch is in the process of adopting a complete streets policy; the town also adopted a bicycle master plan to create a bicycle network throughout the community. Currently, West Branch has good sidewalks and crosswalk systems, but some access points for pedestrians are not ADA accessible. Furthermore, the City currently has minimal bicycle infrastructure and bike racks for cyclists to safely store their bikes. Combining complete streets efforts with bicycle access increases pedestrian and cyclist safety, and serves as an additional

attraction for visitors. The Hoover Nature Trail is located three blocks from downtown; this trail provides ideal recreation access for visitors, and can be incorporated into the West Branch Community Trails Plan.

Community Benefits

Downtown West Branch is well-suited to accommodate visitors to the community. Having a national historic site brings in tourists that provide opportunities for the rest of the County. The downtown area offers restaurants, open space, and is easy to access for residents and visitors alike. Strengthening the downtown will encourage people to spend money in the area, generating sales tax revenue for the City. Increasing amenities will attract visitors and bring additional economic opportunities for the community.



Figure 7: Proposed Priorities for Downtown West Branch

Source: Ahnna Nanoski



County

Unique Attributes

Cedar County is a rural, agricultural-based county. The County's agricultural roots are seen in its communities, with an identity that reflects the rural character of the County. This identity can be seen through their downtowns, with many historic structures that once served as destination spots in their respective communities. Cedar County residents are proud of that heritage, and want to see it preserved. The Cedar River runs through the heart of the County, providing recreation access and opportunities unique to Cedar County.

Strengthening the County's Quality of Life

Recreation opportunities around the Cedar River are not fully realized, in part due to development and private ownership of land along the river and its floodplain. The County has made strides in acquiring properties located along the river to prevent future development in the 100-year floodplain. This provides an opportunity to expand recreation amenities for residents; increased recreation amenities and opportunities are strongly desired by residents. The County should investigate adding a recreation trail along the river; potential also exists for a mountain bike trail, and snowmobile trail.

The County should also work with communities in the county to develop a county-wide recreation trails plan. Due to the high costs associated with constructing on a separate right-of-way, the County should identify areas of their highway network suitable for bicycle use. As part of preserving and enhancing the identity of Cedar County communities, the County should establish trail names that identify with Cedar County communities (i.e. Lincoln Highway Trail connecting Mechanicsville, Stanwood, Clarence, and Lowden).

Cedar County should work with its communities to promote historic preservation throughout the County. Intergovernmental coordination in preserving the County's history will help preserve and strengthen the rural character of the County.

Community Benefits

Throughout the community workshop process, residents consistently identified expanding recreation amenities and opportunities, and preserving the rural character of their communities and county. Preserving historical buildings and sites strengthens the placemaking of those communities.

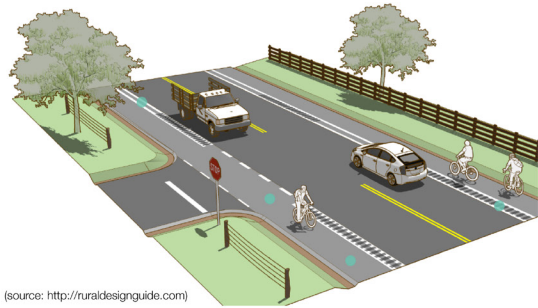
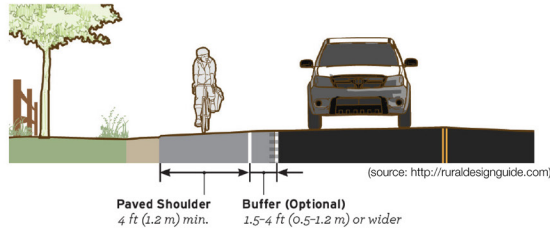
Increasing recreation opportunities throughout the County provides residents access to the outdoors, improving their quality of life.

Sites include:

- + Cedar Valley Park
- + Cedar Valley Quarry
- + Bennett Park
- + Rochester Cemetery

Paved Shoulders

This infographic provides some examples of how Cedar County can create a network of bike trails across the County. The examples provided here are not an exhaustive list of options for the County, and additional research should be done as the County develops their trails plan. Examples and graphics used here are from ruraldesignguide.com.



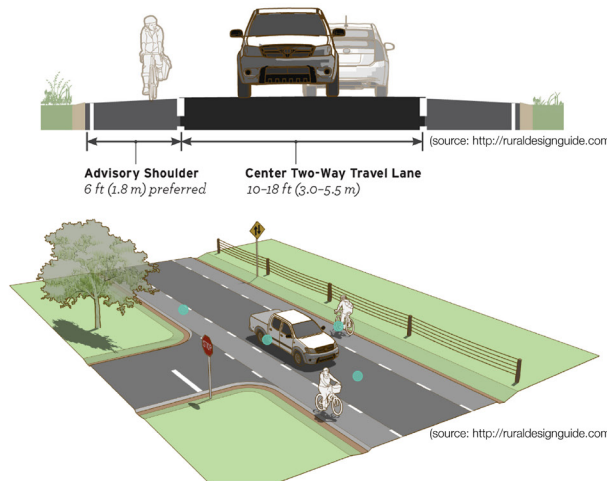
Paved shoulders improve roadways and can make travel safer for cyclists and pedestrians. Paved shoulders are ideal for providing a regional connection between Cedar County communities. Paved shoulders should be used on highways outside of incorporated areas. While still applicable in incorporated communities, communities may wish to pursue different solutions.

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION	VOLUME (AADT)	SPEED (MI/H)	RECOMMENDED MINIMUM PAVED SHOULDER WIDTH
Minor Collector	up to 1,100	35 (55 km/h)	5 ft (1.5 m)
Major Collector	up to 2,600	45 (70 km/h)	6.5 ft (2.0 m)
Minor Arterial	up to 6,000	55 (90 km/h)	7 ft (2.1 m)
Principal Arterial	up to 8,500	65 (100 km/h)	8 ft (2.4 m)

Table: Classification for Paved Shoulders (source: <http://ruraldesignguide.com>)

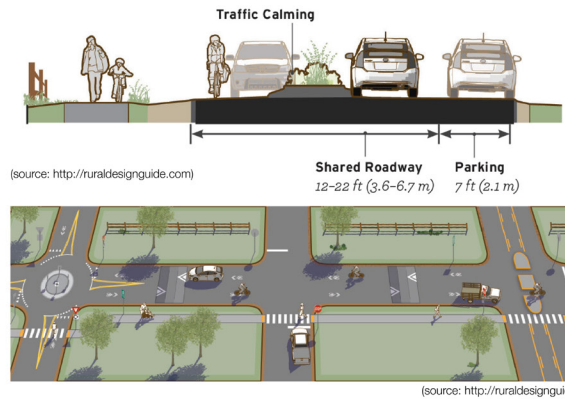
The table above shows the most effective application of paved shoulders based on the road classification, AAADT, and speed. All highways in Cedar County, with the exception of I-80, fall in the Minor Arterial category or lower. When establishing paved shoulders, Cedar County should consider installing rumble strips separating highway lanes from the paved shoulder.

Advisory Shoulder



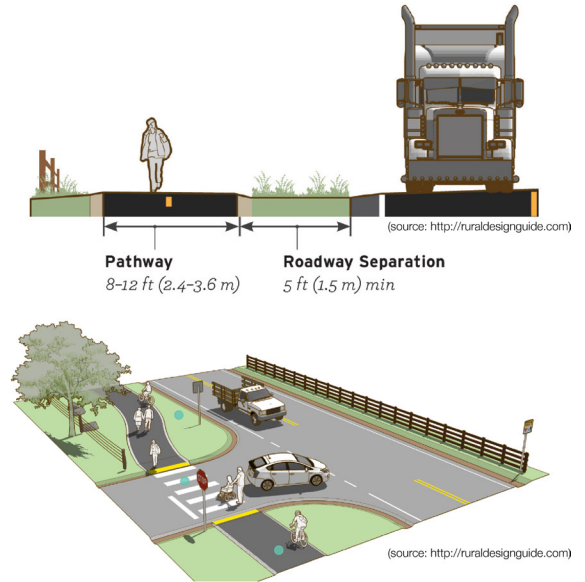
Advisory shoulders provided a fall back option for municipalities when conditions are too narrow for bike lanes to be added. Advisory shoulders are best applied to areas that are built up, or provide connections to built up areas where there is limited space to add a paved shoulder. They are intended to be used on roadways that have low speed limits, and where the number of pedestrians and cyclists are low.

Bicycle Boulevards



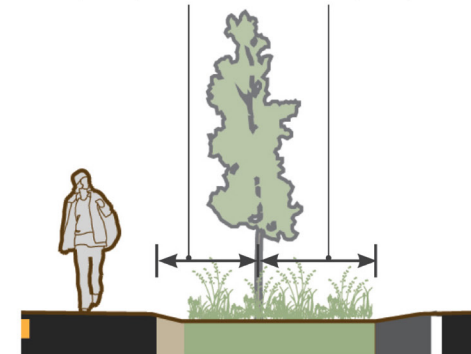
Bicycle boulevards incorporates bicycle infrastructure into existing roadways where motorists and cyclists share the lane. Bicycle facilities can include pavement markings, or traffic calming measures to improve the safety for cyclists. This solution is best applied to incorporated areas of Cedar County, and can be easily implemented in communities.

Sidepath



Horizontal Clearance From Path
3 ft (0.9 m) min

Lateral Offset From Roadway
4 ft (1.2 m) min



Sidepaths provide complete separation from the highway network, providing dedicated bicycle access for cyclists and pedestrians. These paths should be a minimum of 8 ft.; paths less than 8 ft. should be accompanied with barriers such as vegetation or rumble strips. The best application of sidepaths in Cedar County is in incorporated communities, in downtowns and other built up areas that accommodate cyclists and pedestrians.

Figure 8: Design Examples for Bike Networks
Source: Rural Design guidelines, emphasis Karl Mueller

Chapter 4

Implementation Strategies

Implementation Strategies

The implementation plan provides specific action steps for advancing the Cedar County Vision Plan. Executing the implementation plan requires the coordination of public and private stakeholders. This chapter is intended to be a living document, evaluated and edited as funding is secured and projects are completed.

Key

Each implementation initiative includes the following sections

Time Frame and Priority



Lower

Higher

Short- and long-term time frames will be associated with each outcome. The bar prioritizes which implementation strategy should be addressed first, in that time frame. Higher scores indicate top priorities, lower scores indicate secondary priorities.

Description

This section indicates relevant facts or details about the implementation strategy.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parties responsible for implementing action steps are listed in this section.

Assets and Attributes

This section identifies which Cedar County landmark the implementation strategy supports.

Action Steps

Methods to consider when addressing the strategy are listed in this section.

Costs

The cost icon indicates approximate costs of the implementation strategy. One dollar sign represents a low cost outcome. Two dollar signs represent a moderate cost project. Three dollar signs represent a costly project. If applicable, potential resources will also be listed.



Outcomes

This analysis will determine the effectiveness of a strategy as it relates to the strengths and weaknesses surrounding its implementation. Case studies or success stories can also be used to support the effectiveness of a strategy.

Vision Theme

This section identifies which goal and objective the implementation strategy aligns with.

County

Develop, adopt, and implement a county-wide trails plan.

Time Frame and Priority

Long-term



Lower

Higher

Description

Throughout the community outreach process, residents expressed interest in having access to recreation to trails.

Roles and Responsibilities

Cedar County Conservation Board

ECIA

Cedar County communities

Bicycle advocacy groups

Action Steps

1. Develop a trails master plan to guide development for 20 years.
2. Coordinate with Johnson County, IA to enhance and expand the Hoover Nature Trail.



Costs to Consider

\$60,000 or more for plan development
Staff time

Outcomes

- Establishes a basis for creating a county-wide recreation trail network.
- Prioritizes trail development areas.
- Identifies roles and responsibilities for carrying out the plan.
- Serves as a guide for trail development for the next 20 years.

Vision Theme

Natural Environment: Objective 1

Assets and Attributes

Cedar Valley Park

Clarence Community Park

Continue developing and funding Prairie Village as an interpretive center for the County.

Time Frame and Priority

Ongoing to Long-term



Lower

Higher

Description

This site provides a museum documenting history in Cedar County, and a collection of historic buildings from across the County. This site is the location of the annual "A Day on the Prairie" event.

Roles and Responsibilities

Cedar County Historical Society

ECIA

City of Tipton

Cedar County

Action Steps

1. Continue to coordinate with The University of Iowa for "A Day on the Prairie".
2. Develop signage for buildings in the village.
3. Work with the County to continue acquiring historic buildings and machinery to add to the village.
4. Include Prairie Village in county branding efforts.



Costs to Consider

Staff time

Building acquisition costs

Building restoration

Signage costs

Outcomes

- Strengthens historic preservation and community character.
- Expands educational opportunities.

Vision Theme

Arts and Culture: Objective 1

County

Make Cedar Valley Park a focal point of Cedar County's recreation network.

Time Frame and Priority

Ongoing to Long-term



Lower

Higher

Description

Cedar Valley Park is a special place for many Cedar County residents. Increasing visibility and park amenities can strengthen Cedar Valley Park as a local and regional attraction.

Roles and Responsibilities

Cedar County Conservation Board

Action Steps

1. Increase staffing hours for maintenance and supervision of site.
2. Establish safe activities for residents to interact with the quarry.
3. Install wayfinding signage, directing visitors to Cedar Valley Park.
4. Install additional campground amenities.



Costs to Consider

Facility Costs
Infrastructure Costs

Example

Terry Trueblood
Iowa City, IA

Outcomes

- Enhances Cedar County's identity.
- Establishes a new source of revenue for the County.
- Increases tourism.
- Improves recreational access for residents.

Vision Theme

Natural Environment: Objective 2 & 3

Assets and Attributes

Cedar Valley Park

Install wayfinding or informational signage for points of interest in Cedar County.

Time Frame and Priority

Short-term



Lower

Higher

Description

Wayfinding or informational signage can improve visibility for attractions.

Roles and Responsibilities

Cedar County
Limestone Bluff RCD

Action Steps

1. Use the Vision Plan to identify significant sites.
2. Apply for funding.



Costs to Consider

\$500 - \$2000
Staff time

Outcomes

- Promote existing attractions.
- Guide visitors to Cedar County landmarks.
- Helps County branding.

Vision Theme

Natural Environment: Objective 1

Assets and Attributes

Cedar Valley Park
Clarence Community Park
St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Rochester Cemetery
Lincoln Hotel

County

Support Cedar County's participation in RAGBRAI.

Time Frame and Priority

Short-term



Lower

Higher

Description

RAGBRAI is an excellent opportunity to bring visitors to the County and showcase trails and other bicycle infrastructure. This can also be used as an opportunity to generate interest for bicycle trails in the County.

Roles and Responsibilities

Cedar County	ECIA
Bicycle Advocacy Groups	Cedar County Communities

Action Steps

1. Continue to coordinate with RAGBRAI officials to support benefits for hosting communities.
2. Develop paved trail network for Cedar County.
3. Expand bicycle facilities in Cedar County Communities.



Costs to Consider

Application Fee	Resources
Staff time	Emergency Services

Outcomes

- Generates economic activity.
- Promotes a bicycle culture.
- Promotes sites and attractions in Cedar County.

Vision Theme

Natural Environment: Objective 1

Encourage Cedar County communities to invest in downtown revitalizations projects.

Time Frame and Priority

Short-term



Lower

Higher

Description

When distributing necessary grant money to Cedar County communities, strong partnerships between ECIA and Cedar County communities will make the fund distribution process easier.

Roles and Responsibilities

CCEDCO	ECIA
Cedar County Communities	

Action Steps

1. Incentivize business and façade improvements for downtown buildings.
2. Identify historic buildings and apply for designation on the National Historic Register.



Costs to Consider

Staff time

Outcomes

- Strengthened intergovernmental relationships.
- Improved business opportunities.
- Promote historic preservation.

Vision Theme

Downtown Revitalization: Objective 3

Assets and Attributes

Downtown Tipton	Downtown Mechanicsville
Downtown West Branch	Downtown Clarence

County

Create a Cedar County Office of Tourism.

Time Frame and Priority

Short-term



Lower

Higher

Description

A Cedar County Office of Tourism will help support branding, communication, and activity or event development.

Roles and Responsibilities

ECIA	IF/THEN
Limestone Bluff RCD	The University of Iowa - IISC
CCEDCO	

Action Steps

1. Develop an app that serves as a guide for Cedar County. A mobile app creates an “all in one” spot to find and learn about attractions in Cedar County. The app could contain maps, lists of events and activities, nearby restaurants, and contact information.
2. Create a brand and marketing materials for Cedar County and communities within the County. Creating a brand for Cedar County will unify residents and stakeholders across the County. Branding also confirms credibility when moving forward in pursuing multiple creative funding sources.
3. Develop a brochure/magazine highlighting points of interest across the County. The brochure/magazine will provide an easy to read, “one stop shop” to find information about attractions in Cedar County.
4. Coordinate with county and community entities, and ad-hoc groups to create a promotional video highlighting opportunities in Cedar County. Unique public outreach that advocates for Cedar County attractions will educate a wide range of viewers. Additionally, allowing community members to play an active role in the video’s creation will strengthen their sense of place.



Costs to Consider

Content management
Staff time
Fees to develop app

IF/THEN
IISC fee and staff time

Outcomes

- Increased awareness of Cedar County attractions.

Vision Theme

Downtown Revitalization: Objective 3

Great Place Support

Cedar Valley Park
Clarence Community Park
Lincoln Hotel
Rochester Cemetery
Hardacre Theater
Downtown Clarence
Downtown West Branch
Downtown Mechanicsville
Downtown Tipton
St. Paul’s Episcopal Church

County

Encourage public art opportunities across the county.

Time Frame and Priority

Ongoing to Long-term



Lower

Higher

Description

With either professional or volunteer work, the County can transform public spaces with public art installations such as murals and sculptures.

Roles and Responsibilities

ECIA

Cedar County Communities

Action Steps

1. Create wall mural program.
2. Secure funding for public art installations.
3. Cedar County Visioning Steering Committee approve installation requests.



Costs to Consider

\$15,000

Staff time

Outcomes

- Enhanced public spaces.
- Strengthened community character.

Vision Theme

Arts and Culture: Objective 3

Great Place Support

Downtown Clarence

Downtown Tipton

Downtown Mechanicsville

Prioritize County funding for reaching goals and objectives of the Vision Plan.

Time Frame and Priority

Short-term



Lower

Higher

Description

To fund community projects, securing matching funds might be required. This strategy could also increase the odds of securing funding.

Roles and Responsibilities

ECIA

Cedar County Board of Supervisors

Cedar County Communities

Action Steps

1. Apply for Iowa Great Places Program.
2. Reapply for designation every five years.



Costs to Consider

Staff time

Outcomes

- Financial incentives to strengthen Cedar County assets and attributes.

Vision Theme

Downtown Revitalization: Objective 3

County

Expand farmers market and community garden opportunities.

Time Frame and Priority

Intermediate



Lower

Higher

Description

During community outreach, residents expressed interest in expanding farmers market and community garden opportunities.

Roles and Responsibilities

Cedar County Communities

Cedar County Main Street Steering Committee, if applicable
CCEDCO

Action Steps

1. Coordinate with ad-hoc groups to establish local community garden programs.
2. Form a committee to increase vendors at local farmers markets.



Costs to Consider

Staff time

Materials and tools for volunteers

Outcomes

- Improves access to healthy foods for residents.
- Provides local economic benefits.

Vision Theme

Natural Environment: Objective 2

Assets and Attributes

Downtown Tipton

Downtown Clarence

Install workout stations along trails or in parks.

Time Frame and Priority

Intermediate



Lower

Higher

Description

Additional amenities such as workout stations will provide alternative methods for residents and visitors to stay healthy.

Roles and Responsibilities

Cedar County Communities

ECIA

Action Steps

1. Conduct a SWOC (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Challenges) of existing park amenities.
2. Prioritize park amenity improvements.
3. Conduct focus groups with public.
4. Apply for funding, such as REAP funding.
5. Update priorities annually.



Costs to Consider

\$7,700 - \$20,426 (excluding shipping costs)

Installation costs

Staff and maintenance costs

Outcomes

- Provide additional amenities to visitors.
- Increase park visitors.
- Lays groundwork for providing community programs in Cedar County parks.
- Increased health benefits for residents.

Vision Theme

Natural Environment: Objective 3

Assets and Attributes

Cedar Valley Park

Clarence Community Park

County

Support more communities in becoming an Iowa Main Street Community.

Time Frame and Priority

Ongoing to Long-term



Lower

Higher

Description

Being an Iowa Main Street Community can build upon existing momentum with the Cedar County Vision Plan and kick-start a lot of great projects in downtown districts.

Roles and Responsibilities

Cedar County Communities
ECIA

Action Steps

1. Cedar County Visioning Steering Committee helps Cedar County communities build capacity to apply for Iowa Main Street Community designation.

Examples

Clarence, IA
West Branch, IA

Outcomes

- Intergovernmental collaboration.
- Provide additional funding sources for Main Street communities.

Vision Theme

Downtown Revitalization: Objective 1

Install Little Free Libraries throughout Cedar County.

Time Frame and Priority

Short-term



Lower

Higher

Description

Provide an area for people to provide reading materials to children in their community.

Roles and Responsibilities

Cedar County communities

Action Steps

1. Identify suitable locations for Little Free Libraries.
2. Coordinate with public library.
3. Apply for funding.



Costs to Consider

Sign and Post: \$315-\$404
Maintenance costs
Labor costs
Staff time

Outcomes

- Promote youth book-reading.
- Enhance family-friendly amenities.

Vision Theme

Arts and Culture: Objective 1

County

Renovate the Hardacre Theater to become a functioning theater and community event space.

Time Frame and Priority

Ongoing to Long-term



Lower

Higher

Description

Hardacre Theatre is one of Cedar County's treasures. Currently, closed for operations, many residents see potential to re-open the theatre for commercial operations and social opportunities.

Roles and Responsibilities

Hardacre Theatre Preservation Association
City of Tipton

ECIA
Cedar County

Action Steps

1. Develop a project plan for site renovation.
2. Identify costs of renovation, funding sources, and how to acquire funding.
3. Prioritize renovations and process for renovation.
4. Conduct public fundraising efforts.
5. Apply for grant funding and other funding sources.



Costs to Consider

\$2.1 - \$3.8 Million

Funding Sources

Hardacre Theatre Preservation Association
City of Tipton
ECIA
Cedar County
Iowa Great Places Program
Historic Preservation Tax Credits

Outcomes

- Increase entertainment opportunities for the County and its residents.
- Improve arts and culture in Tipton.
- Attract artists to Tipton.
- Provide opportunities for community plays.
- Provide a venue to host art galleries and other events.
- Provide economic boost for the City, especially downtown Tipton.
- Increase number of visitors and tourists to the City and County.
- Promotes historical education.
- Preserves the historic integrity of the theatre.
- Strengthens historic and cultural identity for residents.

Vision Theme

Downtown Revitalization: Objective 2

Assets and Attributes

Hardacre Theater
Downtown Tipton

Clarence

Expand and complete sidewalks, increase vegetation, and prioritize façade improvements in downtown Clarence.

Time Frame and Priority

Ongoing - Long-term



Lower

Higher

Description

Pedestrian friendly environments will encourage people to visit and linger in downtown Clarence.

Roles and Responsibilities

Clarence Main Street Steering Committee
City of Clarence

Action Steps

1. Create a capital improvements plan.
2. Prioritize downtown revitalization projects in capital improvements plan.



Funding Sources

Clarence Main Street funds

Outcomes

- Increased safety for pedestrians.
- Improved aesthetics of downtown Clarence.

Vision Theme

Downtown Revitalization: Objective 2

Expand opportunities at the Clarence Public Library.

Time Frame and Priority

Short-term



Lower

Higher

Description

Clarence has a nice and well-loved public library. Increasing activities and events would strengthen family-friendly amenities in their downtown. Programs such as AmeriCorps can bring staffing assistance to community projects.

Roles and Responsibilities

Clarence Public Library
AmeriCorps VISTA, if applicable

Action Steps

1. Apply for a Clarence Public Library AmeriCorps VISTA, if applicable.
2. Survey residents to understand what family-friendly amenities the public library should host.
3. Start new programming.



Costs to Consider

Costs depend on desired programming
Staff time

Outcomes

- Strengthen an existing family-friendly amenity.

Vision Theme

Arts and Culture: Objective 1

Mechanicsville

Expand amenities in East End Park, such as a water fountain, playground equipment, picnic facilities, and recycling bins.

Time Frame and Priority

Intermediate



Lower

Higher

Description

East End Park has existing amenities, but these amenities are in disrepair and in need of replacement.

Roles and Responsibilities

City of Mechanicsville
ECIA

Action Steps

1. Prioritize amenity improvements.
2. Conduct focus groups with public.
3. Apply for funding, such as REAP funding.



Costs to Consider

Shelter \$1400
Picnic Tables: \$300-\$900/table
Bicycle Parking: \$195-\$400/rack
Grills: \$188-\$211/grill
Recycling bins: \$242-\$669
Water Fountain: \$381-\$911/
each
Playground equipment:
\$13,231-\$19,000

Outcomes

- Investment brings in new visitors.
- Invites broader range of the public to utilize park.
- Public health benefits for surrounding residences.

Vision Theme

Natural Environment: Objective 3

Revitalize the historic opera house downtown to serve as community space.

Time Frame and Priority

Ongoing to Long-term



Lower

Higher

Description

Revitalizing the Mechanicsville opera house would strengthen the aesthetics and provide a space to increase social activities in the downtown district. Strengthening this landmark will be an attraction for Mechanicsville and surrounding communities.

Roles and Responsibilities

City of Mechanicsville

Action Steps

1. Start a crowdsourcing campaign to fund project.
2. Post the project bid.
3. Hire a consulting firm.



Costs to Consider

Staff time
Construction costs
Consulting firm costs

Outcomes

- Historic preservation.
- Increase residents access to family-friendly amenities.
- Downtown façade improvements.

Vision Theme

Arts and Culture: Objective 1

Mechanicsville

Develop and install family-themed wall murals around town.

Time Frame and Priority

Short-term



Lower

Higher

Description

Wall murals are inexpensive art installations. With either professional or volunteer work, a city can transform a public space.

Roles and Responsibilities

City of Mechanicsville

Action Steps

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Identify a location for mural. OR | 1. Partner with school for students to make mural. |
| 2. Create a project bid. | 2. Plan and design mural. |
| 3. Hire an artist. | 3. Plan day for students to create mural. |



Costs to Consider

Staff time

Outcomes

- Improved appearance of downtown Mechanicsville.

Vision Theme

Arts and Culture: Objective 3

Durant

Support the Durant - Wilton trail as part of county-wide bicycle network; provide connections to points of interest in Durant.

Time Frame and Priority

Intermediate



Lower

Higher

Description

Durant does not have any recreation trail access for cyclists. Residents identified Durant - Wilton as a desirable trail. This trail sets the stage for trail connectivity with the County.

Roles and Responsibilities

Cedar County
ECIA
City of Durant

Durant Main Street Steering Committee, if formed
Bicycle Advocacy Groups

Action Steps

1. Conduct focus groups to identify cycling interest.
2. Identify sites and alternatives for bike path.
3. Apply for funding.
4. Create marketing program to promote the trail.



Costs to Consider

Costs of wayfinding signage, bicycle facilities, banners, etc.
Staff time

Outcomes

- Increase new economic opportunities in Durant.
- Expand opportunities for existing businesses.
- Provide cycling opportunities for Durant.
- Attract new residents to Durant.

Vision Theme

Natural Environment: Objective 1

Implement community-themed murals at Dutton Park in downtown Durant.

Time Frame and Priority

Short-term



Lower

Higher

Description

Wall murals are inexpensive art installations. With either professional or volunteer work, a city can transform a public space.

Roles and Responsibilities

City of Durant
Durant Boy Scout Troop, if applicable

Action Steps

1. Develop project proposal.
2. Partner with a local community organization, such as the boy scouts.



Costs to Consider

Staff time
Supplies

Outcomes

- Improved appearance of Dutton Park.
- Community investment into local parks.

Vision Theme

Arts and Culture: Objective 1

Durant

Improve signage to direct visitors towards St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

Time Frame and Priority

Short-term



Lower

Higher

Description

Adding signage will increase the visibility of historically significant sites such as St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

Roles and Responsibilities

City of Durant

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Action Steps

1. Apply for grant funding.
2. Develop a project plan.
3. Implement signage.



Costs to Consider

\$5,000

Staff time

Outcomes

- Increased awareness of St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

Vision Theme

Arts and Culture: Objective 3

Lowden

Install creative light features, such as bistro lights, along and across Lincoln Highway.

Time Frame and Priority

Short-term



Lower

Higher

Description

The Lincoln Hotel is a unique attraction in Cedar County. Extending its whimsical character down Lincoln HWY will strengthen Lowden's downtown.

Roles and Responsibilities

City of Lowden

Action Steps

1. Fundraise for project.
2. Obtain necessary permits and equipment to install lighting.



Costs to Consider

\$70,000

Staff time

Outcomes

- Increased pedestrian friendliness of Lincoln HWY.
- Increased aesthetics of downtown Lowden.

Vision Theme

Arts and Culture: Objective 3

Create a railroad-themed pocket park.

Time Frame and Priority

Ongoing to Long-term



Lower

Higher

Description

Pocket parks are easy ways to add green infrastructure to the built environment.

Roles and Responsibilities

City of Lowden

Action Steps

1. Create a project plan.
2. Apply for funding.



Costs to Consider

\$70,000

Staff time

Outcomes

- Increased family friendly amenities.

Example

New York City and Philadelphia

Vision Theme

Arts and Culture: Objective 1 & 3

Stanwood

Install signage at Bell Tower Park to highlight its significance.

Time Frame and Priority

Short-term



Lower

Higher

Description

Signage to a park increases the park's visibility, and can draw new visitors.

Roles and Responsibilities

City of Stanwood

Action Steps

1. Apply for funding.
2. Install signage.



Costs to Consider

\$500 - \$2,000
Staff time

Outcomes

- Historic preservation.

Vision Theme

Arts and Culture: Objective 3

Coordinate with school district to have "block party" style events on main street (E Broadway St).

Time Frame and Priority

Short-term



Lower

Higher

Description

Block party events bring out residents and provide an economic boost to visitors.

Roles and Responsibilities

City of Stanwood

Action Steps

1. Coordinate with school district to determine interest and feasibility.
2. Identify rules or regulations that may inhibit block party events from happening; revising the municipal code, if necessary.
3. Conduct focus groups to identify community interest and wishes for block party event.
4. Apply for funding.



Costs to Consider

Staff time

Outcomes

- Strengthen community identity by bringing residents together for social gatherings.
- Provide economic boost to local businesses, particularly restaurants.
- Provide new entertainment opportunities for residents.

Vision Theme

Arts and Culture: Objective 1

Tipton

Develop an Underground Railway Educational Outdoor Trail, a segment of the County wide trail system.

Time Frame and Priority



Lower

Higher

Description

Tipton and West Branch's growing bike communities would be connected with an unique themed trail.

Roles and Responsibilities

City of Tipton	Cedar County Conservation Board
City of West Branch	Cedar County Historical Society
	West Branch Historic Preservation

Action Steps

1. Coordinate with all stakeholders.
2. Determine feasible route, reach agreement on funding split, and apply for funding.
3. Develop a plan for expanding trail and facilities.
4. Include interpretive signs about underground railroad.



Costs to Consider

Staff time

Outcomes

- Promote tourism in Cedar County.
- Increase alternate transportation opportunities.
- Connect Cedar County's two largest cities by bike.
- Lay the groundwork for the county to host RAGBRAI.

Vision Theme

Natural Environment: Objective 1

Install an active transportation-themed mural near the RAGBRAI bike in downtown Tipton.

Time Frame and Priority

Short-term



Lower

Higher

Description

Tipton has an existing sculpture celebrating RAGBRAI. A mural can expand upon that features, and help strengthen Tipton as a bicycle-friendly city.

Roles and Responsibilities

City of Tipton
CCEDCO

Action Steps

1. Tipton and local artists coordinate to create mural designs.
2. Conduct public focus groups or a community competition to select mural design from alternatives.
3. Apply for funding.



Costs to Consider

\$15,000
Staff time

Outcomes

- Brand Tipton as a bicycle-friendly city.
- Improves downtown aesthetics.
- Promotes collaboration between city and the public.
- Attracts visitors to downtown.

Vision Theme

Arts and Culture: Objective 3

Tipton

Establish a Tipton “Restaurant Week” to celebrate local foods and community hangouts.

Time Frame and Priority

Intermediate



Lower

Higher

Description

Establishing a “restaurant week” promotes local restaurants, and encourages residents to spend their money inside of the County instead of outside. Money from the event would go to further downtown revitalization efforts.

Roles and Responsibilities

Tipton
CCEDCO

Action Steps

1. Work with the Mayor and City Council to establish annual “restaurant week”.
2. Develop marketing campaign and forms to generate restaurant participation.
3. Review process annually to identify areas for improvement.



Costs to Consider

Staff time

Example

Kansas City, MO
Restaurant Week

Outcomes

- Promotes “shop locally” ideals.
- Provides economic boost to city restaurants.
- Increases sales tax revenue to fund downtown revitalization efforts and CIPs.
- Shows Tipton’s commitment to entrepreneurial success.

Vision Theme

Arts and Culture: Objective 2

Create a historic preservation plan for Tipton.

Time Frame and Priority

Ongoing to long-term



Lower

Higher

Description

Tipton, like the rest of Cedar County, possesses many historic buildings and homes. Developing a historic preservation plan will help the community preserve their historic culture, and maintain community placemaking.

Roles and Responsibilities

City of Tipton	IF/THEN
Cedar County Historical Society	The University of Iowa: School of Urban and Regional Planning
ECIA	

Action Steps

1. Establish a community historic preservation committee to oversee the development of the plan.
2. Conduct outreach to West Branch, and other communities that have historic preservation plans.
3. Work with ECIA to carry out the development of a historic preservation plan.



Costs to Consider

Staff time

IF/THEN

The University of Iowa: School of Urban and Regional Planning

Outcomes

- Provides guidance for preserving Tipton’s historic buildings.
- Establishes a legal basis for creating historic districts.
- Maintains Tipton’s community identity and character.
- Preserves Cedar County’s rural character.

Vision Theme

Arts and Culture: Objective 2

Bennett

Expand the riparian buffer around Bennett Creek.

Time Frame and Priority

Long-term



Lower

Higher

Description

Riparian buffering can be installed along Bennett Creek to expand vegetation, improve water quality, and provide the setting for a recreation trail.

Roles and Responsibilities

Cedar County
City of Bennett
ECIA

Action Steps

1. Develop incentive program for riparian buffers.
2. Work with property-owners who own land around Bennett Creek.
3. Develop plan to expand riparian buffers and trail around the creek.



Funding Sources

Cedar Watershed Management Authority funds
Staff time

Outcomes

- Improve water quality.
- Increase vegetation in community.
- Basis for trail loop.

Vision Theme

Natural Environment: Objective 3

Create a trail loop along Bennett Creek.

Time Frame and Priority

Long-term



Lower

Higher

Description

Bennett lacks a recreation trail for its residents.

Roles and Responsibilities

Cedar County
City of Bennett
ECIA

Action Steps

1. Work with property-owners with land around Bennett Creek.
2. Establish trail location, width, and timeframe for completion.



Costs to Consider

Staff time

Outcomes

- Improve health and well-being through increase access to recreation amenities.

Vision Theme

Natural Environment: Objective 1

West Branch

Create and maintain a community garden in existing greenspace.

Time Frame and Priority

Intermediate



Lower

Higher

Description

Throughout the community outreach process, residents expressed interest in having increased access to healthy foods.

Roles and Responsibilities

City of West Branch

ECIA

Action Steps

1. Coordinate with all stakeholders, including gardening and composting partners, to identify community garden best practices.
2. Identify location.
3. Apply for funding.



Costs to Consider

Staff time

Garden worker = \$12 hr.

Tools

Seeds and transplants

Building materials

Soil

Outcomes

- Provides additional access to healthy, locally grown foods.
- Promotes social interaction and cohesion.
- Strengthens community character.

Vision Theme

Natural Environment: Objective 3

Install amenities in Wapsi Park to include a shelter, more picnic tables, bicycle parking, recycling bins, grills, and a water fountain.

Time Frame and Priority

Short-term



Lower

Higher

Description

These improvements would expand the available uses of Wapsi Park, and serve a broader range of the community.

Roles and Responsibilities

City of West Branch

Action Steps

1. Hold focus group to determine public opinion on improvements.
2. Prioritize amenity improvements.
3. Apply for funding.



Costs to Consider

Shelter \$1400

Picnic Tables: \$300-\$900/table

Bicycle Parking: \$195-\$400/rack

Recycling bins: \$242-\$669

Grills: \$188-\$211/grill

Water Fountain: \$381-\$911/
fountain

Outcomes

- Community engagement/involvement.
- Increased amenities expand visitor base.
- Promotes social interaction and cohesion.

Vision Theme

Natural Environment: Objective 3

West Branch

Coordinate with Tipton and the County to develop an underground railway-themed educational outdoor trail.

Time Frame and Priority



Lower Higher

Description

This trail would serve as part of Cedar County's trail network; development should occur on existing right-of-way.

Roles and Responsibilities

City of West Branch
ECIA

Action Steps

1. Coordinate between entities to identify improvement priorities.
2. Apply for funding.
3. Improve signage along trail, as well as throughout West Branch.



Costs to Consider
Maintenance costs

Funding Sources
Iowa Great Places
REAP

Outcomes

- Completion of a portion of Cedar County's trail network.
- Increased tourism opportunities.
- Improved public health.

Vision Theme

Natural Environment: Objective 1

Implement the goals and objectives in the West Branch Historic Preservation Plan.

Time Frame and Priority

Ongoing to Long-term



Lower Higher

Description

Historic preservation is a pivotal part of West Branch core values. The vision and historic preservation plan should evolve together.

Roles and Responsibilities

City of West Branch
Cedar County Visioning Steering Committee
West Branch Historic Preservation Commission

Action Steps

Every other month, review and assess how Cedar County communities can support or avoid conflict with West Branch achieving historical goals.



Costs to Consider
Staff time

Outcomes

- Achieving the goals of the West Branch Historic Preservation Plan.

Vision Theme

Downtown Revitalization: Objective 3

Chapter 5

Methodology

Planning Process

Project Timeline

In March of 2017, Cedar County and city leaders, along with economic development officials and ECIA staff determined that a Cedar County comprehensive and vision plan should be developed.

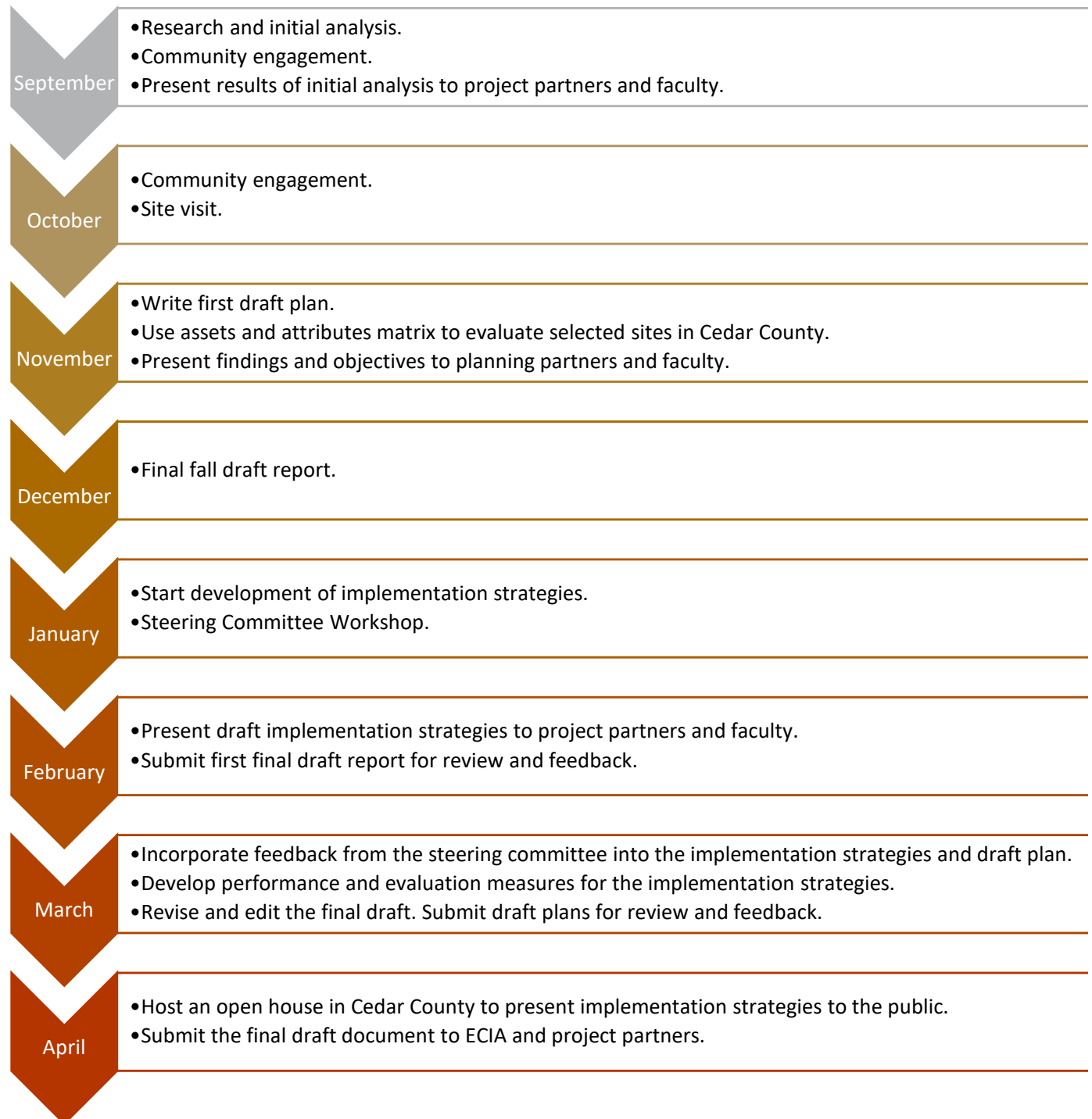
The timeline on the right highlights the Planning Team's process for the Vision Plan from September 2017 to April 2018.

Advocacy Planning

Advocacy Planning is the primary planning theory used for this plan. This planning theory emphasizes representing interests of individuals and groups in Cedar County.

The Cedar County Vision Plan is a collaborative project that involved representatives from Cedar County, ECIA, and CCEDCO, and Urban and Regional Planning graduate students at The University of Iowa. These groups and community workshops identified assets the County has and how assets can be improved to enhance the quality of life.

Strategic Planning was the planning theory used for designing and implementing the plan. This is described on page 60.





Community Engagement

Community engagement is an integral component of any planning process. It allows residents to voice their concerns about actions that affect their communities, ensures transparency, and provides residents with a sense of ownership over the plan.

Community outreach was sought and encouraged throughout all stages of the Vision Plan process. The process followed Best Practices for Authentic Participation in the American Planning Association (APA) Best Planning Practices. Those practices are to:

- Engage stakeholders at all stages of the planning process.
- Seek diverse participation in the planning process.
- Develop alternative scenarios for the future.
- Provide ongoing and understandable information for all participants.
- Use a variety of communication channels to inform and involve the community.

In the Fall 2017, eight community workshops were held in the County from October through the first week of November; each incorporated community hosted a workshop. Community outreach was also gathered through:

- Online surveys
- Interviews
- Comment cards

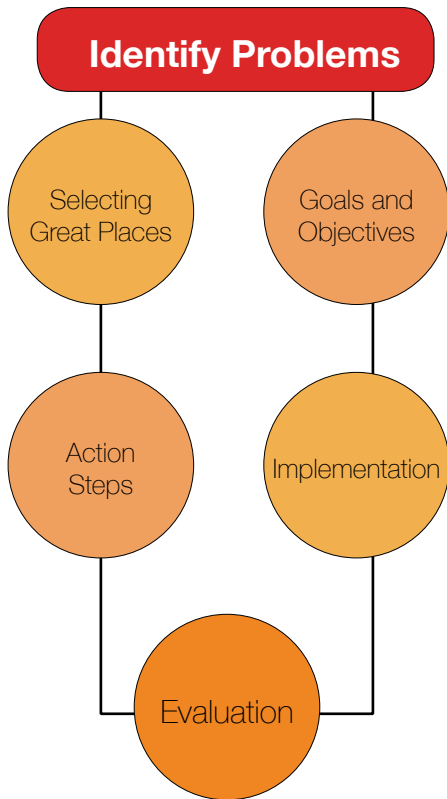
To inform the public of planning and the process, as well as to inform upcoming community workshops, the following media outlets were used:

- Facebook
- Newspapers
- Press Releases
- Flyers

An open house was held in April of 2018 to showcase the objectives and implementation strategies of the Cedar County Comprehensive and Vision Plans.

Survey

To ensure that residents unable to attend a workshop still had the opportunity to voice their vision for Cedar County's future, an online survey was available. The survey followed the format of the discussion guide given to community workshop attendees. This was to ensure that both workshop attendees and online survey users had the same access to questions and discussion material.



Strategic Planning Method

Strategic Planning is used to identify and assess existing Cedar County assets and attributes, through site visits, and community workshops. Once identified, a SWOC analysis is used to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges for each site. The Cedar County Asset and Attribute Matrix scores these sites based on APA guidelines. These tools serve as the basis for determining goals, objectives, and action steps, and provide the foundation for establishing implementation strategies and evaluation measures. The Strategic Planning Method is the foundation for developing the Vision Plan:

Goals

- Goals for the plan were identified through site visits, SWOC, the Cedar County Assets and Attributes Matrix, and community workshop.
- Action steps that can be used to achieve goals and objectives. Action steps were informed by the SWOC and Cedar County Assets and Attributes Matrix.
- Determines the best methods to carry out action steps.
- Performance measures establish a timeline for carrying out the implementation strategy and evaluating progress towards achieving goals and objectives.

Site Visits

Three site visits occurred in the Fall of 2017 and one in January of 2018. Site visits allowed the Planning Team to gather information about landmarks in the County, and brainstorm opportunities for those sites. Site visits were conducted on:

August 17th, 2017

September 16th, 2017

October 13th, 2017

January 25th, 2018

SWOC Analysis

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges (SWOC) analysis was conducted for each selected site in Cedar County. Sites were identified during site visits and through community engagement. The analysis was used to assess the attributes of sites in the county, and identify opportunities for those sites. A SWOC analysis was completed prior to the community workshops, and then revised to include comments from the community after the conclusion of fall workshops.

Cedar County Assets and Attributes

A matrix was used to evaluate existing sites in the County. The purpose was to identify the strengths of sites and identify potential for improvements. The matrix was created using guidelines provided by APA Great Places in America.

The matrix below, Figure 3, provides the scores of site's in the County. The scores reflect the sites ability to promote connectivity, foster social interaction, and strengthen economic vitality.

The top three sites are considered to be representative of Cedar County community character with further development having the most benefit for the whole County.

To quantify the “special” feeling of each site, the matrix was weighted. This was to incorporate a sense of place that each site contributes to the County and its residents. This measure is more subjective but an important part of the County's sense of place.

By weighting these criteria, the Planning Team were able to establish a quantifiable metric to evaluate the “specialness” of a place. Guidelines in the matrix that were weighted include: 1.4.A, 1.6, 2.3, 2.4, 3.2, and 3.7.

Scoring used the following format:

No = 0

Yes = 1

Potential = 2

Figure 9: Cedar County Asset and Attribute Scoring Spreadsheet

	Imageability and Function	Sociability	Unique Characteristics	Total	Ranking
Hardacre Theater	19.5	8	11.5	39	5
Downtown Tipton	23	6	9	38	5
Downtown West Branch	23	6	8	37	5
Downtown Clarence	19.5	6	9	34.5	4
Buchanan House Winery	20	6	8	34	4
Downtown Mechanicsville	19	6	6	31	4
Herbert Hoover Museum and Library	17	6	7.5	30.5	3
Lincoln Hotel	11	5	8	24	3
Cedar Valley Park	10	6	8	24	3
Rochester Cemetery	11	4	7	22	2
St. Paul's Episcopal Church	8.5	6	6	20.5	2
Clarence Community Park	9	6	4	19	1

Source: Planning Team - School of Urban and Regional Planning, The University of Iowa

Sites that were already meeting guidelines were scored with a 1; if a site did not currently meet the guideline, but potential existed, it received a 2. “Potential” was added both to increase scores for sites with greater potential, and to aid drafting action steps and implementation strategies.

Scores range from 0 to 50, with 50 being the highest score a site can receive. High scores indicate sites with multiple Great Place attributes or with the most potential of growth.

After scoring, sites were ranked on a 1-5 scale, with 5 being the highest. The ranking was based by percentile. Sites receiving a ranking of 5, for instance scored above the 80th percentile. Downtown West Branch, the Hardacre Theater, and Downtown Tipton has the highest scores, receiving scores of 39, 38, and 37 respectively.

Implementation

This section will highlight implementation strategies and identify the roles and responsibilities for carrying out each strategy. Draft implementation strategies were drafted for each of the three themes in January and early February. A workshop was held in Tipton with the Steering Committee in February of 2018 to present the draft strategies and receive feedback from the committee.

The implementation strategies combine overarching county-wide strategies, and strategies that pertain to individual communities. An overarching element of the implementation strategies was intergovernmental coordination; implementation strategies were designed to help foster intergovernmental coordination between county and municipal officials, and local non-profit and stakeholder groups.

Evaluation

This section discusses performance measures that will be used to set targets for achieving goals and objectives.



Chapter 6

Community Engagement

Results

Cedar County Comprehensive and Iowa Great Places Vision Plan

Please indicate whether or not you agree, disagree, or don't know with the following statements.
Be prepared to share your thoughts in small groups.

	Agree	Disagree	I don't know
1 Cedar County has regional transportation services connecting jobs and other services.			
2 Discouraging development in hazardous areas is important for future growth in Cedar County.			
3 New development in Cedar County should respect and encourage safe redevelopment of natural habitats.			
4 Cedar County encourages water conservation to protect streams, watersheds, and floodplains.			
5 Economic growth depends on Cedar County providing and maintaining infrastructure that can accommodate growth and demand trends.			
6 Community-based economic development and revitalization is encouraged by Cedar County.			
7 Cedar County has a variety of rental, affordable housing, mobile home, condominium, senior, and single-family housing. Please circle any option you feel there is not an adequate amount of.			
8 Providing accessible, quality, and a variety of public services, facilities, and health care options is a priority of Cedar County.			
9 Cedar County has up-to-date infrastructure and facilities.			
10 Cedar County offers and provides access to healthy and locally grown food options.			
11 Accessible parks, recreation facilities, and open space is an important aspect of rural lifestyles in Cedar County.			
12 Increased highway safety and fast emergency responder time needs to be addressed in Cedar County.			
13 Cedar County's regional transportation investments adequately support development.			

West Branch Community Workshop

Topics discussed

River Bend Transit services are limited for Cedar County residents.

Residents of Cedar County need more information about transportation services in Cedar County and in desirable destinations like Iowa City, Cedar Rapids, and the Quad Cities.

Coordination between flood plain management and zoning regulations needs to be encouraged in Cedar County.

Recreation opportunities should be encouraged in the floodplain highlighting natural flora and fauna.

Residents of Cedar County are curious about what can be done with old landfill sites, abandoned gas stations, and brownfield sites.

Cedar County residents are worried about sewer system and septic tank regulation.

Cedar County residents would like more education about how to protect streams, watersheds, and floodplains.

Roads and other infrastructure are aging in Cedar County.

Responsible development around I-80 and HWY 30 should be encouraged to avoid “pass by” communities.

Enhance “bedroom community” amenities.

Trails (walking, biking, and hiking) should be developed to connect towns within Cedar County and to nearby counties.

Encourage more towns to participate in Main Street Iowa program.

Historic, cultural, and art opportunities should be increased in the County.

Housing options need to be addressed in Cedar County. Residents are worried about the availability of affordable housing, “entry level” housing for starting families, rentals, and senior housing.

Residents are concerned about access to healthcare and mental health services.

Increase the variety of foods offered at Farmers Market.

Residents are concerned about how emergency response time will be effected by HWY 30 and I80 expansions, especially with declining emergency service volunteers.

Development Ideas

Oasis water restoration projects.

Home-work incentives.

RAGBRAI comes back to Cedar County.

Cedar River themed development in recreation and campground opportunities.

Cedar Valley quarry redevelopment.

Wayfinding to Great Places.

Hardacre Theater – opens as a movie theater/event space.

West Branch Community Workshop
Additional Great Places

Rochester Cemetery

Quilt museums

Maxson Farm

Clarence Community Workshop

Topics discussed

River Bend transit will provide services to elderly and disabled residents in Cedar County. Residents would like more information about how the transportation system could be utilized.

There is a correct time and place for development in hazardous areas. Clarence residents want to see abandoned gas station sites redeveloped.

In regards to water conservation, residents believe that farmers are doing their part.

Railroad crossings and incompatible land uses in close proximity to the railroad concern Clarence residents.

CAFOs need more regulation.

Residents are pleased that Cedar County has joined the Lower Cedar River Water Management Authority.

Residents believe that CCEDCO will improve economic development in the County.

Residents doing a majority of their shopping outside the County is an economic challenge for Cedar County.

Clarence residents want to see more job opportunities in their Cedar County.

Creating amenities for kids and families should be prioritized

Affordable housing options are a barrier for young or low-income families moving into the County.

Long distances to specialized health services, lack of volunteers for emergency services, and emergency response times is a barrier for county residents.

Gravel roads, sidewalks, and bridges need to be improved in Cedar County.

Clarence residents want more access to healthy and local foods. Residents are driving long distances to grocery stores.

Development Ideas

Investing into the Hardacre Theater will provide a regional attraction.

More entertainment opportunities inside the County.

Trail networks, especially near HWY 30.

More recreation and hunting opportunities.

Clarence Great Places

New Clarence Farmers Market

Clarence Public Library

Veterans Pocket Park

Clarence Community Park

Clarence murals (one near veteran's park in development)

Mechanicsville Community Workshop

Topics discussed

Residents believe that public transportation is difficult to provide in rural counties.

Residents are concerned about railroad safety and suitable land uses near train tracks.

Subdivision regulations and new development should be mindful of how to properly balance the preservation of agriculture and natural habitat while still encouraging new development.

Residents are encouraged that Cedar County is joining the Lower Cedar River Water Authority.

Downtown revitalization is very important in Mechanicsville.

Cedar County needs to take advantage development surrounding I-80 and HWY 30 corridors.

Residents want more child development and family services.

Recreation and campground opportunities should be improved in Cedar County.

Lack of affordable, quality, and rental housing will affect population retention in Cedar County.

Cooperation between communities and the County needs to be improved.

The relationship between Lisbon and Mechanicsville is important. Residents typically travel to or through Lisbon and Mount Vernon to purchase groceries/ household goods and for other services.

Development Ideas

Downtown Mechanicsville revitalization.

Improved recreation and campground opportunities.

Cedar Valley quarry redevelopment.

Mechanicsville Great Places

Doughboy statue in cemetery

Sports complex near Elementary School

Quality housing near Elementary School

Durant Community Workshop

Topics discussed

Transportation services for low-income residents of persons with disabilities is important.

Long distances to work, groceries, and other basic needs might discourage people to move to the county.

Residents are pleased with Durant's efforts to improve water quality.

Managing appropriate development in the floodplain or on brownfields is key to responsible development in hazardous areas.

There needs to be a better balance between residential, industrial, and agriculture development in the County

Cedar County needs to increase its labor force.

Cedar County needs more recreation opportunities including trails that can accommodate walking, hiking, biking, and ATVs.

Affordable housing, variety of housing, and quality housing is the biggest barrier for new residents moving into Cedar County.

Durant residents are pleased with road maintenance in Cedar County.

Amenities that appeal to young families need to be enhanced.

Development Ideas

Corridor development should occur along Yankee Ave/1st Ave that connects Durant to I-80.

"Main Street" Durant needs more signage and sidewalks.

County brochure/marketing magazine.

Tri-County marker in Durant where county lines meet.

Durant Great Places

Lincoln HWY markers (near Mechanicsville)

Pioneer Hi-Bred is a symbol of job/employment health

Bennett Community Workshop

Topics discussed

There needs to be greater awareness of River Bend Transit services.

Getting around the County is difficult unless you have private transportation.

Discourage development around hazardous areas. In cases of brownfields, residents would like greater resources on how to develop and fund the redevelopment of brownfield sites.

Infrastructure is good considering the county's limited resources. Narrow roads make biking unsafe.

Increase education efforts for citizens to understand water conservation.

Look for other low cost ways to improve waterways, Bennett Park should be improved.

Surrounding metro areas attract residents from Cedar County.

Difficulties in starting and maintaining a business in Cedar County.

Access to affordable quality housing (rental, condo) and recreational activities is a barrier for young adults in the County.

Cedar County should encourage Tiny house concepts/sub communities.

Limited elderly/senior housing options.

Barriers for low-income & people with disabilities barriers include limited local jobs, need for transportation, limited afford quality rental and housing, limited services.

Cedar County needs more quality rentals, affordable quality entry-level housing, and elderly housing options.

Residents appreciate farmers markets. The farmers markets should be encouraged to grow.

Development Ideas

Downtown revitalization.

Develop community nature trails.

More recreational activities like parks.

Bennett Great Places

Bennett Library

Bennett Grade School

Bennett Park

Stanwood Community Workshop

Topics discussed

Assets of the community; quiet community, low crime, neighbors watch over other neighbors, nice park, close to Cedar Rapids and Quad Cities.

Cost of living for housing is low compared to Cedar Rapids or Quad Cities.

Every other year have a street dance/festival.

Football games and track meets held by the high school are community events.

Railroad comes through town – could be better utilized for business.

Potential development of old gas station in Stanwood.

Biggest challenges for the County:

County roads and bridges need repair and funding.

Stagnant growth over the years.

Not prepared to upgrade infrastructure in the small towns.

County not prepared for a disaster such as a train derailment.

No hospital in the county.

Lack of awareness about regional public transportation in the County

Obstacles to growth include:

Limited employment options – jobs are in Cedar Rapids, Eldridge, Davenport – nothing in town only agriculture.

Cost of living is offset by the cost to drive to work.

No Chamber of Commerce.

Not a member of CCEDCO.

No nursing homes or senior housing in the City of Stanwood.

Development Ideas

County needs to have a casino between Tipton and I-80.

Need a trail head in Stanwood and a comprehensive trail to connect communities.

Grocery store, hardware store

Fully staffed fire department and ambulance service – all volunteer now.

No school here now – district office only.

Farmers Market

Need more housing rehabilitation programs.

Need better quality rental housing

Stanwood Great Places

Dittos of Stanwood

Lincoln Hotel (Lowden)

Tipton Community Workshop

Topics Discussed

River Bend Transit does not serve as a commuting service.

Environmental degradation of sensitive areas should be considered as hazardous.

Smart infill development recommended within the City rather than building outward.

Need to be more selective with development of CAFOs.

Not enough money to support economic development.

South of Tipton is “shovel-ready” but Iowa changed the rules and now it is not shovel ready. It would cost a lot to get it there. So it's just vacant land.

Entry level housing, housing costs, and long commutes are barriers for young adults.

Internet connection.

There is a need for senior housing and quality rentals.

Tipton struggles with funding to fix streets, sidewalks and bridge issues (embargoed bridge near Lime City over 80).

Residents love the Tipton Farmers market.

Lack of EMS volunteers.

There are no strategies to attract businesses and employers to Cedar County.

Are Tiny Homes a solution for entry level housing issues?

Development ideas

Downtown revitalization.

Trail and outdoor recreational opportunities.

Organic production.

Hardacre Theater redevelopment.

Bring together the arts community in the County.

Heartland Sports Complex should work together with Tipton on events.

More apartments downtown above businesses.

Connect Buchanan Winery and the Cedar County Historical Society with the Herbert Hoover Nature Trail.

Increase signage for underground railway sites.

Establish an underground railway trail system.

Increase boat access on Cedar River.

Development ideas (cont.)

Increase marketing efforts for great places.

Cedar County Bicycle Coalition.

Tipton Community Workshop

Tipton Great Places

Post Office

Carnegie Library

Old Tipton Union School

Hardacre Theater

Heartland Sports Complex

Bickett-Rate Memorial Preserve

Scattergood between West Branch and Springdale; underground railway stuff happened there

Cedar River

Tipton City Park

Rochester Cemetery

Old County Jail in Tipton

Freedom Rock

Lowden Community Workshop

Topics Discussed

Residents interested in new residential growth rather than preserving agriculture land around the city.

The residents appreciate the relationship with the railroad, but lots of trains essentially pass through town all day and night.

Water and sewer issues.

Replacing the water tower.

Lowden Great Places

Lincoln and Hoover Highway

Historic Downtown

Historic Society Museum

Lincoln hotel

City Hall

American Legion

Memorial Park with disk golf course

Historic Frontier Cemetery

330 Golf Course

Trains

Online Survey

Respondent Demographics

Gender

Male = 48

Female = 90

Age

24 years of age or less = 3

25 - 44 = 57

45 - 64 = 66

65 + = 12

County Resident

Yes = 134

No = 4

Housing Tenure

Rent = 16

Own = 121

Other = 1

Question 1 - What are some of your favorite places in Cedar County?

Key Points: Most sites are in West Branch or Tipton, indicating either the higher popularity of these places or relatively more public engagement from West Branch and Tipton.

Most popular choices

Historical destinations

Parks

Trails

Recreation Center

Vibrant downtowns

Question 2 - If the County had unlimited funds, what would you like to see invested in to improve arts, culture, or historic preservation? Be creative!

Key points: Historic preservation, downtown revitalization, and arts are the areas that most respondents want to invest in. The restoration of Hardacre Theater (Tipton) is the top priority (mentioned 25 times). It is considered the County's icon, a community symbol that needs extra funding to support local efforts in restoration. Downtown revitalization involves the improvement of street landscape with trees and sidewalk, as well as the restoration of old buildings with multiple uses, not just antique stores. Where arts is an option, funding art activities for school children and increased art display in public and at businesses were mentioned often in the community engagement processes.

Topic Distribution

Hardacre Theater - 25

Arts - 22

History/Historic Preservation - 21

Downtowns - 21

Trails - 7

Food/Restaurants - 5

Recreation - 4

Restoration - 4

Online Survey

Question 3 - Here is a brief list of Great Places the Planning Team has gathered so far:

Herbert Hoover Museum & Library, West Branch, IA
Downtown Tipton, IA
Downtown West Branch, IA
Tipton, IA Farmers Market
Buchanan House & Winery, Tipton, IA
Cedar County Historical Society & Museum
Red Oak Church & Cemetery, Tipton, IA
John Brown & Underground Railroad Sites, West Branch, IA
3/30 Club, Lowden, IA
Hoover Nature Trail, Oasis to West Branch, IA

Are there any Great Places in Cedar County that are not included in this list?

Hardacre Theater, Tipton, IA
Tipton City Park & Aquatic Center
Tri-County Museum, Durant
Lowden Historical Society, Lowden, IA
Tipton Golf and Country Club
Mechanicsville Sports Complex
Bennett Park
Cedar Valley Park
Rochester cemetery
Brick Arch Winery
Cedars Edge Golf Course
Clarence walking trail
Tipton Country Club,
Tipton Community Schools
Cedar County Fair Grounds,
Tipton Airport

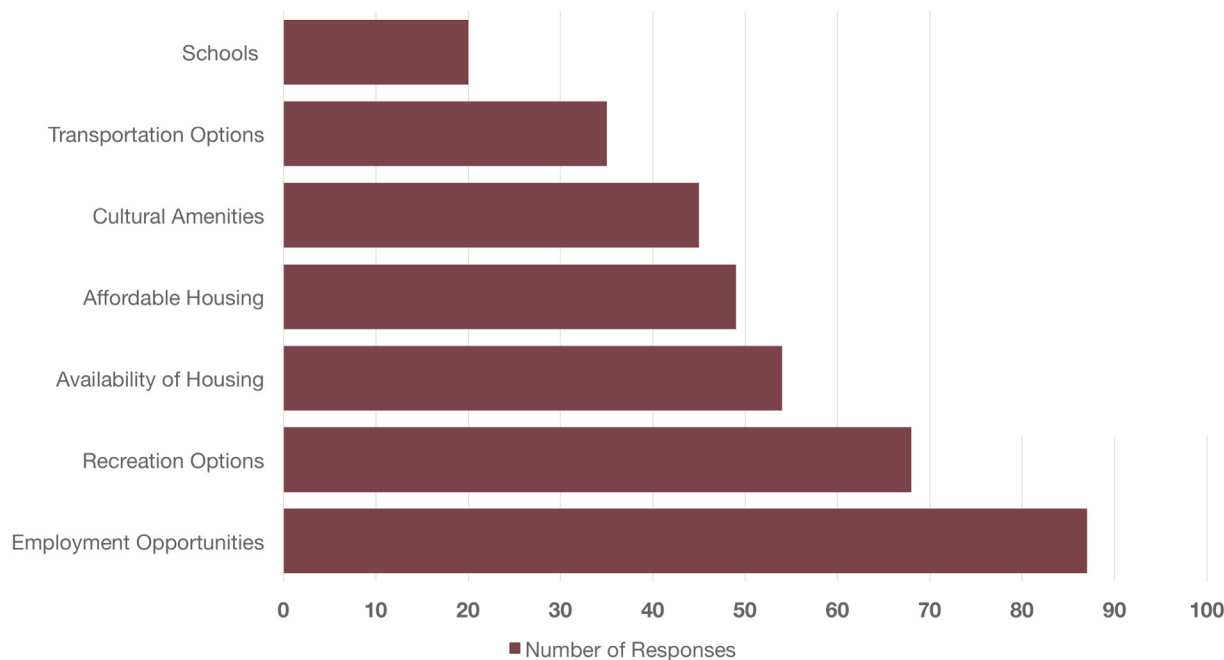
Grant Woods lithographs
Lincoln Hotel, Lowden, IA
Lowden Memorial Park, Lowden, IA
Mechanicsville City Park
Red Oak Park
Stanwood Cemetery
Cedar County Parks
Cedar Bluffs
Cedar Valley Quarries
West Branch Farmers Market
Secrest Octagonal Barn (in Johnson County, IA)
The Badlands Golf Course
Pioneer Cemeteries
Heartland Sports Complex
Tipton Library (Carnage Library)
Tipton Adaptive Daycare (special needs child care)
Old Cedar County Jail, Tipton, IA
Tipton Victorian homes
Tipton Post Office

Online Survey

Question 4 - What are some of the barriers preventing young adults from moving to or succeeding in Cedar County?

Key points: Most people agree that there are multiple barriers preventing young adults from moving to or succeeding in Cedar County. Employment opportunities are the biggest barrier, followed by recreation options, availability of housing, affordable housing, cultural amenities, transportation options, schools, others, and "all of the above" (21 people did not answer). Note: others include quality dining, greater variety of local retail shopping, xenophobia, lack of community policing crime, and high paying jobs, etc.

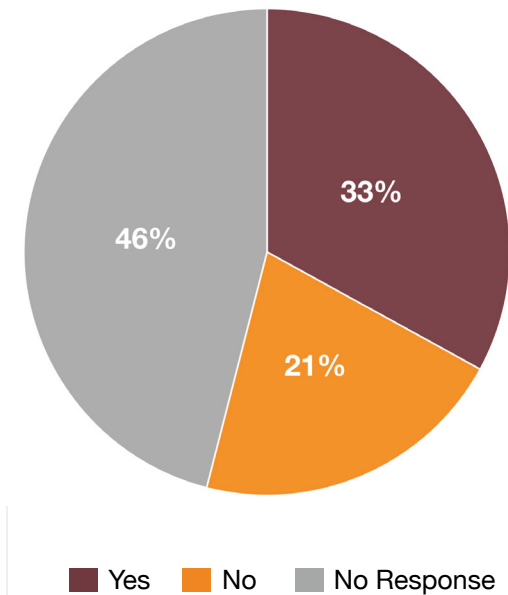
Figure A.1



Question 5 - Are there barriers for a person living with a disability in Cedar County? If so, what are some of these barriers? Please use the comment box under "Yes" to identify specific barriers or challenges.

Key points: The majority of respondents don't know if there are barriers for a person living with a disability in Cedar County. The county is generally lacking in ADA facilities, services (care and transportation), recreation opportunities, employment opportunities, and assisted living facilities. Accessibility via streets and sidewalk is considered very limited.

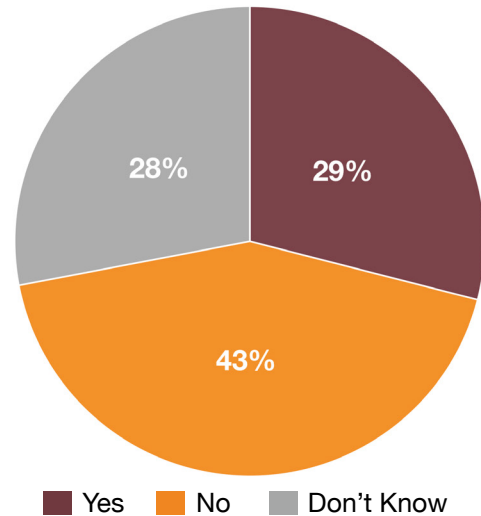
Figure A.2



Online Survey

Question 6 - Do the current trails and roads meet your recreational needs?

Figure A.3



Question 8 - What improvement(s) do you think could be made to increase use and quality?

Key points: Suggestions to increase use and quality of parks, trails, and open space: (1) upgrade facilities for recreational use in the winter; (2) increase the quantity of trails; (3) improve shade trees in parks; (4) update playgrounds; and (5) advertise and promote places (via signage, for example). Walking and biking trails are in high demand and considered seriously lacking or non-existent as of late.

Question 7 - How would you rate the following recreational options in regards to quality?

Figure A.4

	Good	Bad	Needs Improvement
County Trails	18%	23%	59%
City Trails	20%	33%	46%
County Open Spaces	30%	8%	62%
County Parks	34%	8%	58%
City Parks	47%	3%	50%

Online Survey

Question 9 - Does the county have any strengths or things it does well at that weren't discussed in this survey? If so, what are these strengths?

Key points: Some of Cedar County's strengths include: low crime rate/good law enforcement; low debt, good schools, affordable property taxes compared to neighboring counties, excellent community involvement, non-profit and volunteers, small town living, county conservation board, rural vibe, proximity to big cities, charity, downtowns in Tipton and West Branch, and historic heritages.

Question 10 - Does the county have any weaknesses or challenges that weren't discussed in this survey? If so, what are these weaknesses or challenges?

Key points: Some of the County's weaknesses include poor emergency services, lack of inter-governmental cooperation for economic development, funding to support infrastructure, facilities and development projects, lack of cultural and recreational opportunities, lack of demographic diversity (too white, too old), conservative community, lack of vision for future development, and small tax base.

Question 11 - What is one economic challenge you think the County faces?

Key Points:

Retaining small businesses in the County

Adequate workforce

Commuting - distance from major metropolitan areas

Internet connection limits work from home options

Lack of jobs that pay a living wage

Opportunities for startup businesses

Competition with other metropolitan areas

Affordable housing

Question 12 - What are some prominent issues regarding road safety in Cedar County? Select all that apply.

Road maintenance - 69

Width of roads - 32

Quality of structures (i.e. bridges, culverts) - 45

Road surface type - 42

Accessibility - 10

Railroad/railroad crossings - 5

Intersections - 26

Key Points: Respondents are also concerned about bridge condition, lack of bike lanes, availability of parking, and law enforcement.

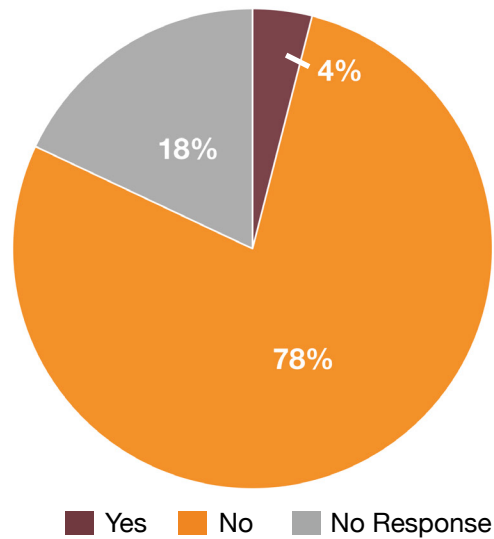
Online Survey

Question 13 - What types of business development should the County promote within unincorporated areas?

Agriculture Related Industries - 70
Shipping/Distribution Centers - 60
Traditional Manufacturing - 62
Agri-Tourism - 73
Retail Service - 55
Data Centers - 55
Professional Office - 49

Question 13 - Have you ever used or requested service from River Bend Transit?

Figure A.5



Question 14 - Have you been to any of the locally grown food events/operations in Cedar County?

Tiptons Farmers Market - 63
West Branch Farmers Market - 38
Clarence Farmers Market - 7
Mechanicsville CSA - 3
Echollective - 3
Hollow Maple Farms - 2
Bennett (CSA) - 2
Durant Farmers' Market - 2
Mechanicsville Farmers' Market - 2
Lipes Family Farm - 2
West Branch (CSA) - 2

Question 15 - What is one way the County could play a role in improving access to local food options?

Key Points: Respondents want to see farmers markets and CSA's better advertised. Farmers markets should also accept SNAP and provide a wider variety of healthy foods or goods. Local events or agritourism are creative ways to connect residents to local food. Respondents also want to see more small business incentives and community gardens in Cedar County.

Online Survey

Question 17 - What do you think is the one thing that could improve the County's ability to respond quickly and efficiently to emergencies?

Key Points: Respondents believe that the issue involves a dependency on volunteer services. Switching to paid staff would mitigate some of the issues respondents are experiencing. Additional volunteers or volunteer training could also help. GPS and 911 dispatch records would improve accuracy of emergency services.

Question 18 - What are some ways the regional transportation services could improve to meet your needs?

Key Points: Respondents want more information about River Bend Transit. They also need the service to increase their hours of operation and destination options to meet their needs.

Question 19 - What types of housing are most needed in Cedar County?

Figure A.6 - Rentals

A majority of the respondents (53%) indicated that more rentals are needed in Cedar County.



Figure A.7 - Affordable Housing

A majority of the respondents (44%) indicated that affordable housing is needed in Cedar County.



Figure A.8 - Mobile/Manufactured Homes

A majority of the respondents (49%) indicated that more mobile/manufactured housing is not needed in Cedar County. None of the respondents indicated interest in this housing type.



Figure A.9 - Single-Family Housing

A majority of the respondents (42%) indicated that single-family housing is needed in Cedar County.



Online Survey

Figure A.10 - Condominiums

A majority of the respondents (63%) indicated that condominiums are only moderately needed in Cedar County.

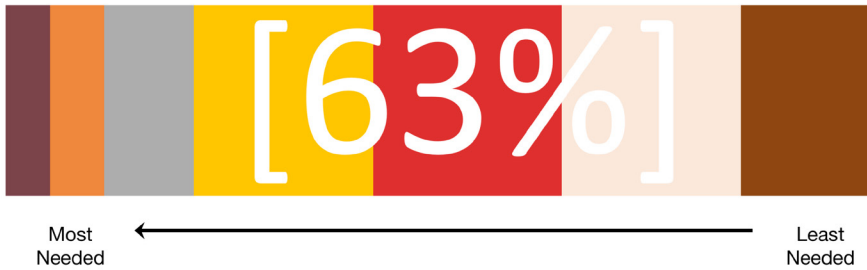


Figure A.11 - Senior Housing

A majority of the respondents (45%) indicated that senior housing is not needed in Cedar County.



Figure A.12 - Better Quality Housing

A majority of the respondents (38%) indicated that better quality housing isn't needed in Cedar County.



Online Survey

Question 20 - Please indicate whether or not you agree, disagree, or don't know with the following statements ...

Figure A.13 - Cedar County has regional transportation services connecting jobs and other services.

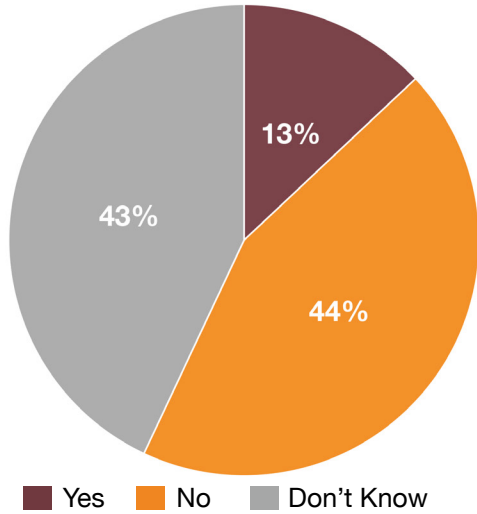


Figure A.15 - New development in Cedar County should respect and encourage safe redevelopment of natural habitats.

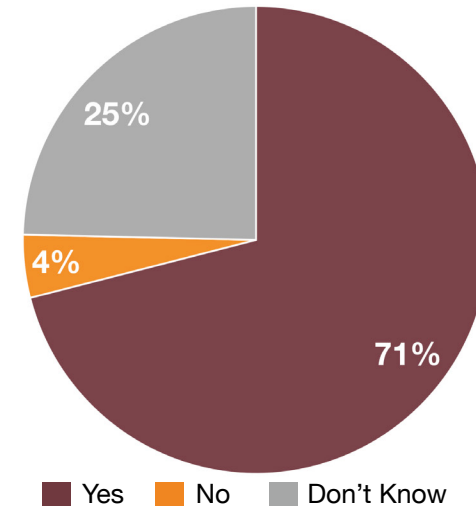


Figure A.14 - Discouraging development in hazardous areas is important for future growth in Cedar County.

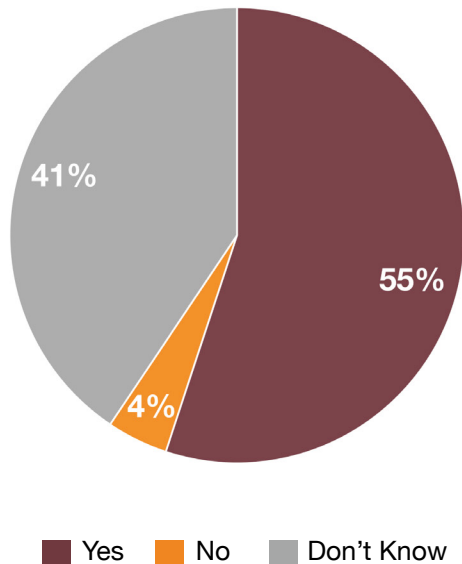
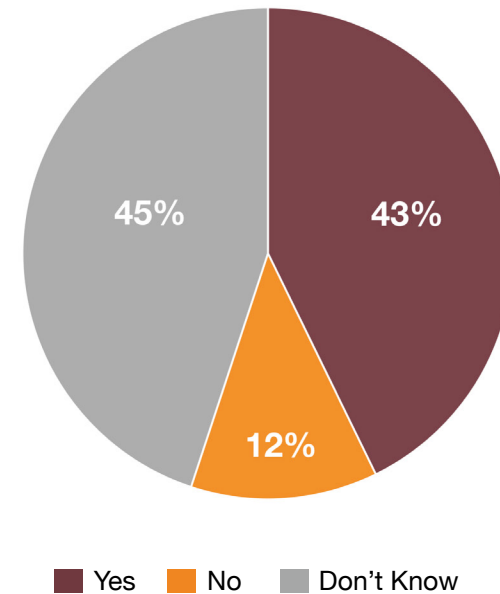


Figure A.16 - Cedar County encourages water conservation to protect streams, watersheds, and floodplains.



Online Survey

Please indicate whether or not you agree, disagree, or don't know with the following statements ...

Figure A.17 - Economic growth depends on Cedar County providing and maintaining infrastructure that can accommodate and demand trends

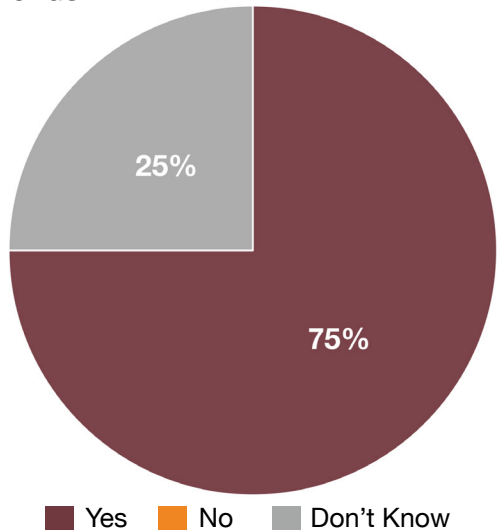


Figure A.18 - Community-based economic development and revitalization is encourage by Cedar County.

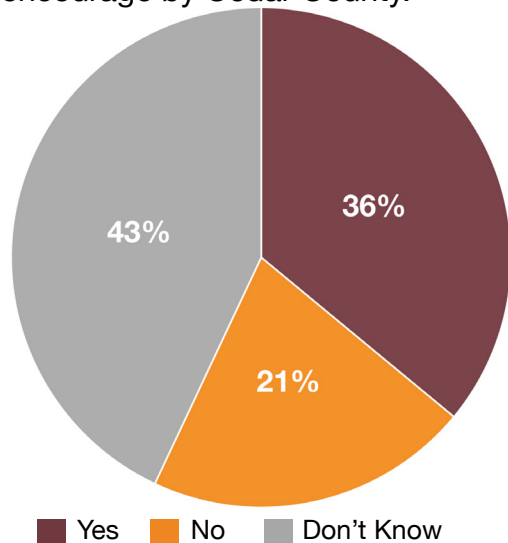


Figure A.19 - Cedar County has a variety of rental, affordable housing, mobile home, condominium, senior, and single-family housing.

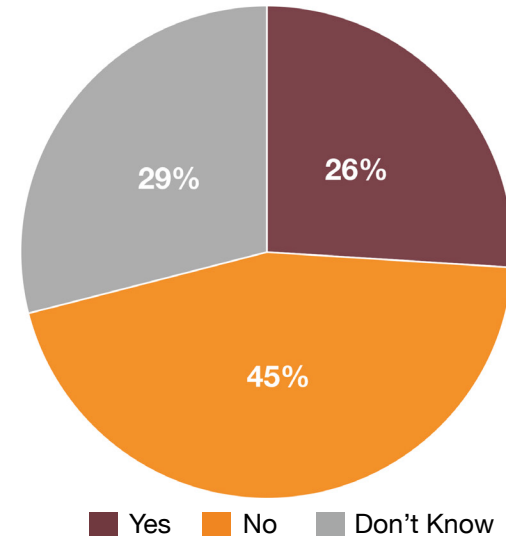
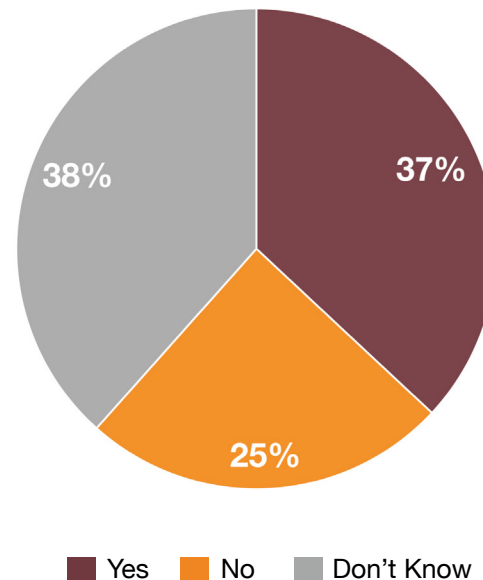


Figure A.20 - Providing accessible, quality, and a variety of public services, facilities, and health care options is a priority of Cedar County.



Online Survey

Please indicate whether or not you agree, disagree, or don't know with the following statements ...

Figure A.21 - Cedar County has up-to-date infrastructure and facilities.

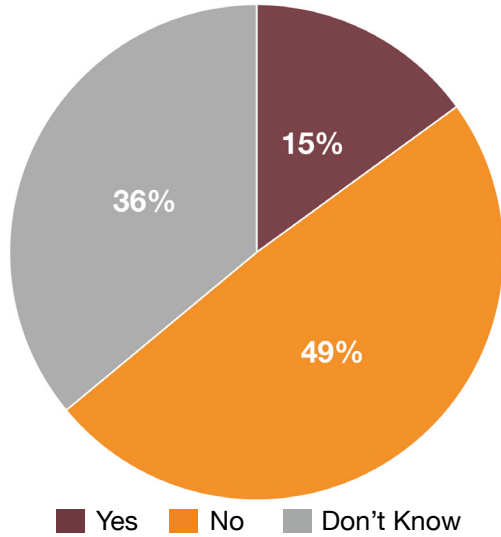


Figure A.22 - Cedar County offers and provides access to healthy and locally grown food options.

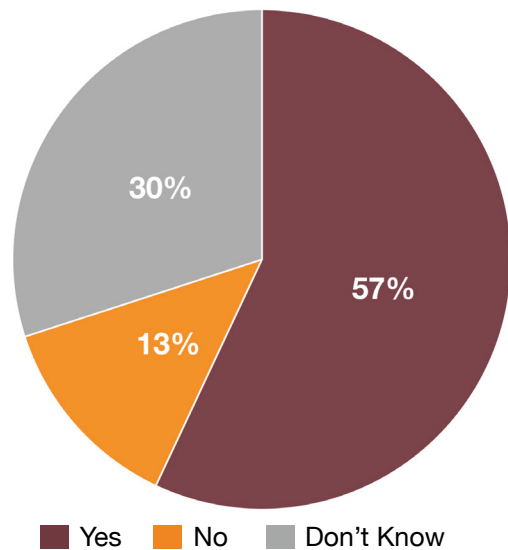


Figure A.23 - Accessible parks, recreation facilities, and open space is an important aspect of rural lifestyles in Cedar County.

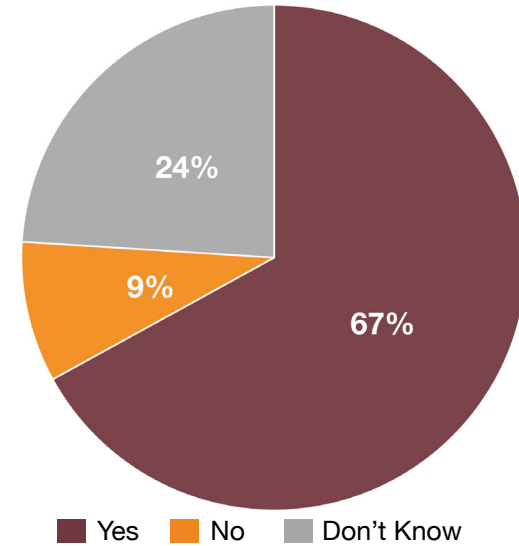
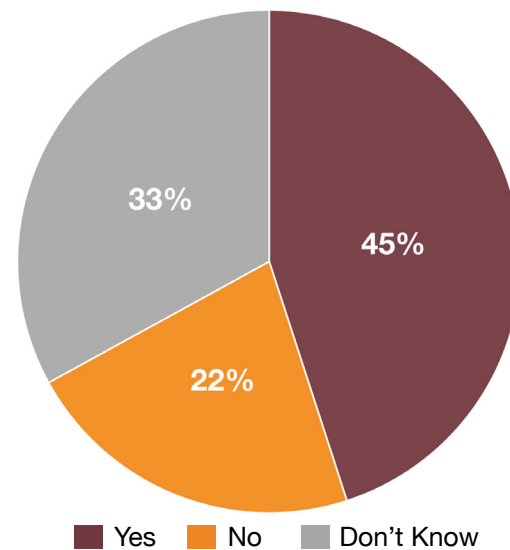


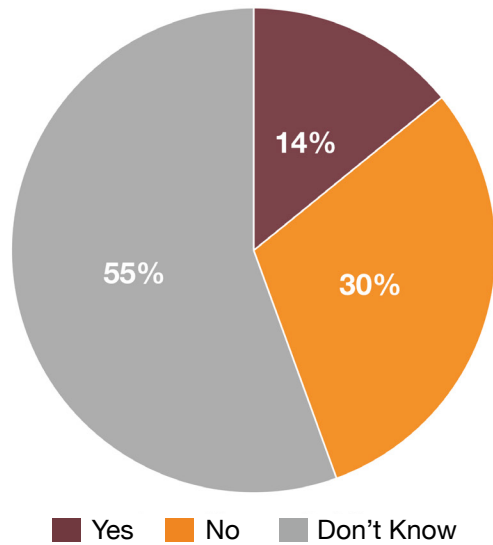
Figure A.24 - Increased highway safety and fast emergency responder time needs to be addressed in Cedar County.



Online Survey

Please indicate whether or not you agree, disagree, or don't know with the following statements ...

Figure A.25 Cedar County's regional transportation investments adequately support development.



Online Survey

Question 21 - Of the following hazardous areas, which do you think apply to Cedar County?

Figure A.26

Type of hazards	Considered a hazard by (no. of) people:	Notes
Floodplains	70	
Infrastructure failure	53	
Landfills/dumpsites	50	
Pipelines	47	
Hazardous materials	30	
Drought	25	
Steep slopes	24	
Sinkholes	14	
Expansive Soils	12	
Levee failure	6	
Other	6	Large powerlines, propane tanks, large junk yard in city limits

Question 22 - What areas and natural resources should be protected from development in Cedar County?

Figure A.27

What areas and natural resources should be protected from development in Cedar County?	Mentioned by (no. of) people:
Floodplains, wetlands, ponds, lakes, rivers, and streams	92
Wooded and forested areas	89
Prime agricultural land	65
Tall grass prairie	57

Question 23 - What areas and natural resources should be protected from development in Cedar County?

Engage in regional efforts (watershed management authorities, etc.)

Collaborate with multiple stakeholders, including farmers, to discourage fertilizer and pesticide and waste in sensitive areas

Incorporate recreational uses into conservation practices

Use best practices for management: cover crops, native plan buffer zones/strips, retention points

Education/outreach programs to raise public awareness and commitment on water conservation and water quality, eg: weed control options, lawn management, fertilizer reduction, etc.

Chapter 7

Performance and Evaluation Measures

Introduction

Performance and evaluation measures established in this chapter will guide elected representatives in implementing the plan. This chapter provides a timetable for completing goals and objectives, and carrying out strategies. ECIA and elected officials should meet annually to update this matrix, and prioritize strategies.

Matrix Structure

The matrix is broken into multiple categories: goal, theme, objective or strategies, performance measure, evaluation, status, and comments.

The goal, theme, and objective heading are used in the matrix to contextualize performance measures. Due to the large number of strategies in the plan, performance measures established in the table pertain to broad themes established in

the plan. Performance and evaluation measures for strategies for each community can be found in Appendix B.

Performance Measures

Performance measures are established for each community and governmental entity stakeholders in the County. Performance measures reflect the importance of intergovernmental coordination between communities, the County, and ECIA. Intergovernmental coordination will be the most successful approach for implementing the plan. The table for performance measures is shown on page 85. The performance measures are not all encompassing; additional performance measures may be necessary, and should be fine-tuned at each annual meeting.

Evaluation Measures

Evaluation measures assess the success of performance measures through quantitative and qualitative means. Evaluation methods that can be used to evaluate success can include surveys, records, and CIP's, among others. Suggestions for evaluation methods are provided, but the County is free to adjust the table as they see fit.

Status

The status tool is intended to track progress of the performance measures. For quantitative measures, the status should be marked as "Incomplete", "In Progress", or "Complete"; in addition, performance measures requiring investment should be marked as either "Unfunded" or "Funded". The funding source should be addressed in the 'Comment' section.



Performance Measures: Downtown Revitalization

Goal	Objective	Performance Measure	Evaluation	Status	Comment
Encourage downtown revitalization to strengthen community identity.	Sponsor events and activities that promote heritage, educate residents, and increase tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand the number of historically preserved buildings across the County. - Continue restoring and expanding Prairie Village. - Local events such as farmers markets, fairs, etc. are held in downtown areas. - Existing Little Free Libraries are expanded; new Little Libraries are installed across the County. 	Land Records Data Collection Funding Allocation Capital Improvement Program		
	Encourage policies that enhance the appearance and functionality of downtowns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - >50% of downtown vacancies are filled and aesthetically compatible with surrounding land uses. - Downtown overlays are established with accompanying building codes in incorporated communities. - An incentive program modeling Tipton's is established to encourage renovation of incorporated communities' downtowns. 	Housing Analysis Codified Building Code Incentive Program		
	Coordinate efforts between County, City, and advocacy group officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ECIA, the County, and Cedar County communities will hold annual meetings to coordinate implementation efforts. - Conflicts between events are minimized. - Objectives and strategies in the comprehensive plan are realized. 	Surveys		

Performance Measures: Arts and Culture

Goal	Objective	Performance Measure	Evaluation	Status	Comment
Increase entertainment opportunities through art and culture programs in the County.	Develop family-friendly amenities throughout the County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand the number of vendors at farmers markets. - New community garden programs are established in Cedar County communities. - Identified opportunities for family-friendly amenities are pursued. 	Data Collection Survey		
	Prioritize grassroots efforts when developing arts and cultural opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Hardacre Theatre is restored and serves as an event center for residents. - Restaurant weeks to promote local restaurants are established. - A new branding program for Cedar County is developed and implemented. 	Capital Improvement Program Data Collection Survey		
	Highlight each communities' unique identifiers through creative placemaking strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Cedar County Office of Tourism is created - The Cedar County App is developed. - A promotional video highlighting unique landmarks across the County is developed. - Each incorporated community has a painted mural that highlights their community identity. 	Capital Improvement Program Data Collection Survey		

Performance Measures: Natural Environment

Goal	Objective	Performance Measure	Evaluation	Status	Comment
Enhance recreation and outdoor amenities to increase quality of life outcomes.	Develop a county-wide trail system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Cedar County Recreation Trail Plan is developed and adopted. - The Hoover Nature Trail is 75% paved; plans are in place to pave 100% of the trail. - Recreation trails are developed and expanded across the County. - Tipton and West Branch are connected by bike trail. - Recreation trails are established in Cedar Valley Park. 	<p>Land Records</p> <p>Transportation Improvement Program</p> <p>Data Collection</p> <p>Capital Improvement Program</p> <p>Surveys</p>		
	Improve accessibility to Cedar County landmarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visible wayfinding signage will be installed near each landmark. - Every landmark in the County will be documented in the app. - Highlight pages are developed for landmarks in the County magazine. 	<p>Data Collection</p> <p>Inventorying landmarks</p>		
	Preserve and enhance Cedar County's parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase the number of visitors to County parks. - Opportunities to create or expand County parks are identified and pursued. - Existing campgrounds are upgraded; new campgrounds created. - Existing trails in County parks are maintained; new trails are blazed. 	<p>Data Collection</p> <p>Surveys</p> <p>Capital Improvement Program</p> <p>Transportation Improvement Program</p>		

SWOC Analysis

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges (SWOC) identifies the advantages and disadvantages a site or place has relative to other locations. It can be used to help identify and understand if goals and objectives are achievable, and identifies the challenges associated with achieving goals.

A SWOC for each community and unincorporated Cedar County are shown below. Sites were picked based on how often they were brought up between project partners and workshops. Each community has a site represented in the SWOC.

Tipton

Hardacre Theatre

Strengths

- Centrally located in downtown Tipton.
- On the National Register of Historic Places.
- Summer Film Festival.
- Well-known landmark in the County.
- Community efforts to restore the theatre.

Weaknesses

- Building needs approximately \$3.8 million in renovations.
- Has been closed as a movie theatre since 2013.
- Limited renovation options due to status as a historic place.
- Unlikely to be restored to LEED standards.
- ADA compliance.

Opportunities

- Eligibility for variety of grants due to status as a National Historic Place.
- Can be re-opened as an everyday movie theatre.
- Has space to accommodate community theatre productions.
- Space for use as a social club.
- Marketing can promote and expand the Hardacre Summer Film Festival.

It's a trendy development.

Possible redevelopment as a mixed-use building.

Use existing space to promote and host art events.

Can become an economic and cultural driver for Cedar County if renovated.

Challenges

- Competition from theaters in larger urban areas in adjacent counties.
- Somewhat dependent on donations from community.
- Potential redevelopment conflicts with historic preservation code.
- Limited market in Cedar County.
- Cost of renovating and making the building ADA compliant.
- Maintenance upkeep.

Downtown Tipton

Strengths

- Recently completed streetscape project.
- Location of Cedar County Courthouse.
- Many community events are held in downtown Tipton.
- Variety of businesses and restaurants.
- Compact, walkable downtown.
- Healthcare services are located downtown.
- Streetscape and amenities encourage pedestrian use in downtown.
- Downtown Revitalization Incentive Program.

Weaknesses

- Lack of bicycle amenities.
- High-volume truck traffic on Highway 38 runs through downtown Tipton.
- Noise pollution associated with trucks and other vehicles.
- Many vacant buildings.
- Renovations needed for many downtown buildings.
- Lack of ADA accessibility hinders potential customers, and increases costs for business owners to become ADA compliant.

Downtown Tipton Opportunities (cont.)

- Expand Tipton's Downtown Revitalization Incentive Program.
- Increase entertainment opportunities such as seasonal events and parades (Christmas, for example).
- Partnership between Tipton and the Cedar County Bicycle Coalition to install bike racks and improve bicycle access in downtown.
- Renovate and redevelop vacant downtown buildings for mixed-use development.
- Open space in town square for arts, murals, or other cultural exhibits.

Challenges

- Distance from I-80/Highway 30 corridors.
- Competition with other communities for economic development.
- Growth on outside fringes of town.
- Lack of communication with other communities.
- Lack of coordination for events between municipalities.

West Branch

Herbert Hoover Presidential Museum and Library

Strengths

- National Park Service site.
- Important economic contributor to West Branch.
- Brings tourists and other visitors into West Branch.
- Enhances the educational, cultural, and general welfare of visitors and locals alike.
- Well-marketed along I-80.

Opportunities

- Utilize the strengths of the site to increase historic preservation and planning in West Branch (already completed) and other Cedar County communities.
- Increase accessibility for cyclists.
- Use site to promote other historic locations and activities in Cedar County to

tourists.

- Partnership between the County, NPS, and Cedar County schools to provide field trips and other educational opportunities to students.
- Partner with the University of Iowa to give students in history and related fields opportunities for experience.

Challenges

- Competition or lack of available federal funding.

Downtown West Branch

Strengths

- Many downtown buildings have historic designation.
- Agglomeration of antique stores.
- Downtown has Main Street Community designation.
- Updating the West Branch historic preservation plan should strengthen existing historic buildings in downtown.
- Fairly accessible for pedestrians and other non-motorists.

Weaknesses

- ADA accessibility.
- Lack of bicycle facilities.
- Limited shopping opportunities.

Opportunities

- Improve streetscape to improve downtown aesthetics and fall in compliance with ADA requirements.
- Obtain CLG status.
- Cater businesses to lure in visitors from nearby historic sites (Herbert Hoover Presidential Museum and Library, for example).
- Destination in a regional trail or recreation system.
- Location for an underground railway trail system or tour.
- Improve bicycle facilities to encourage bicycle usage.
- Locate farmers market in downtown.
- Site potential for community mural.

Downtown West Branch Opportunities (cont.)

Incorporate goals, objectives, and strategies from Vision Plan into West Branch comprehensive plan update.

Challenges

Competition with Iowa City.
Limited retail opportunities due to proximity to Iowa City.
Funding for renovating and restoring vacant historic buildings.
Maintenance and upkeep of existing historic buildings.
Cost of building and maintaining bicycle infrastructure.

Clarence

Downtown Clarence

Strengths

Designated Main Street Community.
Public library proximity to downtown.
Multiple murals are located downtown.
Original Highway 30 (Lincoln Highway) runs through downtown.
Open space including vacant lots and a Veterans Pocket Park.
Community grassroots organization for improving downtown.

Weaknesses

Located near industrial sites.
Numerous abandoned store fronts.
Noise pollution from truck traffic through downtown.
Incomplete sidewalks; existing sidewalks in poor condition.
A lot of buildings in need of renovation.

Opportunities

Abandoned storefronts can be redeveloped.
Development potential on vacant lots (either building or open space use).
Existing buildings can be redeveloped for mixed-uses.

Reconstruct highway to include bike lanes or allow for increased sidewalk width.

Use funding from Main Street designation for downtown landscaping project.

Can be used as a destination spot if Lincoln trail is established.

Additional murals can be painted.

Challenges

Decreased health of residents and visitors from transportation emissions, noise, and industrial activity

Expanding Highway 30 may route highway away from downtown

Lack of available funding for projects

Clarence Community Park

Strengths

Well-utilized by residents.

Trail around park provides health and wellness opportunity.

Gathering place for community events and for residents.

Little dedicated space for parking.

Numerous park amenities including: baseball fields, basketball court, playground.

Weaknesses

Located on the west side of the town, away from most residences.

Too much under-utilized space (i.e. grass fields).

Incomplete trail system.

Lack of bicycle facilities.

Lack of wayfinding signage within community.

Opportunities

Ample open space for additional community events.

Available space for arts or cultural opportunities.

Plant additional vegetation to improve air quality.

Clarence Community Park Opportunities (cont.)

- Use open space to build soccer field.
- Complete trail system to loop around the entire park.
- Build additional trail connectors to nearby neighborhoods.
- Increase wayfinding signage on roads leading up to park.
- Space to add community mural.

Challenges

- Limited funding in Clarence; funding uncertainty with available grant programs.
- Maintenance and upkeep.
- Funding community events such as youth sports.

Clarence Community Library

Strengths

- Community support.
- Proximity to downtown and residences.
- Good visibility/signage.
- Brand new building.
- Provides numerous programs and educational services to community.

Weaknesses

- Limited growth potential.

Opportunities

- Possible location for art mural.
- Expand programs and services available to residents.
- Partner with the County to improve access and services to more residents.

Challenges

- Limited funding.
- Stable to declining population in Clarence.
- Ability to maintain librarians.

Durant

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Strengths

- On the National Register of Historic Places.
- Unique architecture and design.
- Community investment.

Weaknesses

- Distance from Durant's main street.
- Lack of community events.

Opportunities

- Increase number of church events to increase sense of community.
- Apply for grants to maintain building.

Challenges

- Declining church population could hurt funding.
- Proximity to other community churches.

Mechanicsville

Downtown Mechanicsville

Strengths

- Downtown is very compact.
- Many historic buildings.
- Very accessible for pedestrians.
- JB's Bar serves as a downtown gathering point for residents.

Weaknesses

- There are many vacant buildings downtown.
- Façades of buildings need major restoration.

Downtown Mechanicsville Weaknesses (cont.)

Not very accessible for cyclists.

Downtown does not feel very inviting to visitors.

Opportunities

Renovate old opera house in downtown to serve as a community gathering space.

Apply for Main Street designation to help finance downtown renovations.

Implement downtown landscaping project to improve aesthetics and inviting feel of the downtown.

Renovate vacant historic buildings for mixed-use purposes.

Identify downtown site suitable for constructing a mural.

Move community events downtown.

Challenges

Aging, declining population.

Small population means limited funds to finance projects.

Lack of grassroots community organizations in town to help stimulate revitalization.

Employment in other communities reduces time Mechanicsville's residents spend in the town.

Stanwood

Stanwood City Park

Strengths

Park facilities are in good condition.

Located next to North Cedar High School.

Easy access for residents.

Quiet streets around the park encourage walking and bicycling.

Weaknesses

The park is underutilized.

Lack of bicycle facilities such as bike racks.

Little potential for expansion due to surrounding developments.

Opportunities

Coordinate with North Cedar High School to utilize tennis and basketball courts for physical education classes.

Install bicycle facilities to promote bicycle usage around the park.

Expand children's' playground.

Expand marketing to broaden awareness of the park to increase utilization.

Coordinate with local organizations to host community events at the park.

Improve sidewalks around the park to improve safety for pedestrians.

Challenges

Small tax base limits available funding to invest in the park.

Diversifying park amenities to attract a broad range of visitors.

Maintaining and improving existing infrastructure.

Bennett

Bennett School Park

Strengths

Playground and baseball field amenities.

Proximity to neighborhoods.

Promotes community building for students at Bennett Community School.

Weaknesses

Minimal room for expansion or development of new assets for park.

Lack of bicycle facilities.

Opportunities

Improve existing softball field.

Improve sidewalks around the park to promote active transportation for residents.

Challenges

- Funding improvements to the park.
- Consolidation of Cedar County schools.
- Maintaining the park.

Lowden

Lincoln Hotel

Strengths

- Ideal location in downtown Lowden.
- The building is on the National Historic Register, thus eligible for funding opportunities.
- The building name makes it an ideal candidate to tie in with the Lincoln Recreation Trail.
- The building is well-maintained, and structurally sound.
- Building operates as a bed-and-breakfast.

Weaknesses

- There is a lack of signage around the building that identifies why the building is historic and significant to Lowden.
- The building is not well-known outside of Lowden.
- The entrance to the Lincoln Hotel is not ADA compliant.

Opportunities

- Improve the entrance to the hotel to become ADA compliant.
- Install a historic marker in front of the Lincoln hotel.
- The building can be tied-in with the Lincoln Recreation Trail, a segment of the proposed county-wide trail system.
- Install wayfinding signage around Lowden to guide visitors to the Lincoln Hotel.

Challenges

- Designation on the National Historic Register may make entrance renovations for ADA compliance difficult.

Maintenance and upkeep for historic buildings is not cheap.

Downtown Lowden

Strengths

- There are many historic buildings located throughout downtown Lowden.
- One of three grocery stores in Cedar County is located in downtown Lowden
- The downtown area is compact, and walkable.
- Variety of building façades and architectural designs provide a whimsical experience for visitors.
- There is sufficient parking and sidewalk width to meet driver and pedestrian needs.

Weaknesses

- Areas of sidewalk in the downtown area need to be replaced.
- Many curb cuts are not ADA compliant, and crosswalks are not marked.
- There is significant contradictions in building design (largely between older, historic buildings and newer structures).
- Utility power lines run overhead through much of downtown.
- Vacant residential properties.

Opportunities

- Develop a form-based code to create more compatible building design.
- Utilize vacant lots for community events and resources.
- Multimodal transportation.
- Create a historic overlay district over downtown to preserve the historic identity of Lowden.
- Implement creative placemaking strategies to enhance public spaces.
- Apply for historic designation for downtown buildings that are currently not protected.
- Create a Main Street Committee to apply for Main Street Designation for Lowden.

Downtown Lowden Opportunities (cont.)

Install signage to guide visitors to attractions and points of interest downtown.

Challenges

Intergovernmental coordination between Lowden, the County, and Cedar County communities.

Generating community interest to start grass roots revitalization efforts.

Funding downtown improvements.

Cedar County

Buchanan House Winery

Strengths

Historical Significance.

Multiple uses including hosting weddings, wine tasting.

Winery is an expanding business.

One of three wineries in Cedar County.

Good branding/marketing.

Weaknesses

No wayfinding signage to the site.

No restaurant or food related amenities.

Isolated location in Cedar County.

Privately-owned enterprise.

Winery does not have a very welcoming feeling to new customers or visitors.

Opportunities

It is a trendy destination.

Regional attraction for residents and neighboring counties.

Business growth potential.

Destination spot for a county bike trail.

Improving marketing for the winery and increasing wayfinding signage to increase visibility to potential customers.

Expansion to include a bed-and-breakfast.

Establishment of a van-pool to Cedar County communities for customers who do not wish to drink and drive.

Challenges

Competition with other wineries and breweries in the county and surrounding counties.

Isolated location from most Cedar County residents.

Poor wayfinding signage limits customers and visitors.

Lack of an eatery reduces customer base.

Rochester Cemetery

Strengths

One of the oldest cemeteries in Cedar County.

Site of prairie grasses and wildflowers.

Strong sense of place in the County.

Multiple community uses as both a cemetery and recreational area.

Proximity to I-80.

Masonic work on tombstones stands out.

Cemetery is well-maintained and prairie is managed.

Weaknesses

No wayfinding signage to the site.

Site possesses little economic opportunity.

Site requires constant upkeep which can be costly.

Opportunities

Trail establishment and connectivity potential.

Enhance existing prairie to strengthen environment and recreation opportunities.

Partner with schools to host educational events.

Cemetery would be eligible for designation on the National Register of Historic Places.

Rochester Cemetery Challenges

- Vandalism.
- Maintenance and upkeep.
- Lack of ADA accessibility.

Mill Creek Bridge

Strengths

- Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Visually appealing due to architecture of bridge.

Weaknesses

- Remote location.
- Deteriorating condition.
- Vacant structure.

Opportunities

- Renovate the bridge to accommodate a recreational trail.
- Include as part of a trail on a county wide system.
- Eligible for grants due to historic designation.

Challenges

- Limited parks and recreation opportunities.
- Cost of renovating bridge may exceed benefits.
- Funding for restoration.
- Maintenance and upkeep.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Cedar County Asset and Attributes Matrix

Imageability and Function

1.1	Is there unique landscape and/or natural environment features present?	No = 0 Yes = 1 Potential = 2
1.1.A	How do they contribute to the unique or special nature of the space?	Notes:
1.2	Does the space accommodate pedestrians or others whose access to the space is by transit, bicycles, or other means?	No = 0 Yes = 1 Potential = 2
1.2.A	Is the space welcoming to those with physical disabilities or others with special needs?	No = 0 Yes = 1 Potential = 2
1.3	Does the space accommodate multiple activities?	No = 0 Yes = 1 Potential = 2
1.3.A	Describe the type of activities the space can accommodate? (Check all that apply)	Residential No = 0 Yes = 1
		Food related services No = 0 Yes = 1
		Retail and service-oriented businesses: No = 0 Yes = 1
		Government or community: No = 0 Yes = 1
		Open Space/Recreation: No = 0 Yes = 1
1.4	Does the space utilize existing topography, vistas, or geography?	No = 0 Yes = 1 Potential = 2
1.4.A	Does it provide interesting visual experiences, vistas, or other qualities?	No = 0 Yes = 1 Potential = 2
1.4.B	Describe the interesting visual experiences	Notes:
1.5	Are murals, public art, or other design features incorporated into the space?	No = 0 Yes = 1 Potential = 2
1.6	What purpose does it serve for the surrounding community? (Check all that apply)	Arts & Culture : No= 0 Yes= 1
		Historic Preservation : No= 0 Yes= 1
		Architecture : No= 0 Yes= 1
		Natural Environment : No= 0 Yes= 1
		Housing Options : No= 0 Yes= 1
		Amenities : No= 0 Yes= 1
		Entrepreneurial or Business: No= 0 Yes= 1
		Diversity : No= 0 Yes= 1

Appendix A - Cedar County Asset and Attributes Matrix (cont.)

Sociability

2.1	Does the space provide a sense of comfort and safety to people gathering and using the space?	No = 0 Yes = 1 Potential = 2
2.2	Does the space provide a friendly and welcoming atmosphere?	No = 0 Yes = 1 Potential = 2
2.3	Does the space encourage communication or interaction between strangers?	No = 0 Yes = 1
2.4	Does this place encourage use by a diverse cross section of the public?	No = 0 Yes = 1

Unique Qualities, Traits, and Characteristics

3.1	What makes this public space stand out? What makes it extraordinary or memorable?	Notes:
3.2	Is there variety, a sense of whimsy, an atmosphere of discovery, or pleasant surprise?	No = 0 Yes = 1 Potential = 2
3.3	Does the public have a sense of ownership over the space?	No = 0 Yes = 1
3.4	How many community members in workshops indicated the site's importance ?	0 = 0
		1 - 5 = 1
		6 - 10 = 2
		10 + = 3
3.5	Indicate significant dates associated with this place	Notes:
3.6	Does the site align with local identity ?	No = 0 Yes = 1
3.7	Does the site contribute to long-term economic, environment, or equitable sustainability in the community?	No = 0 Yes = 1 Potential = 2
3.8	Additional notes that make this space special and worth of designation as a Great Place	Notes:

To evaluate existing landmarks in Cedar County, this matrix was created using guidelines provided by the American Planning Association (APA). Potential was added to matrix criteria to determine sites that may be underutilized currently, or have the potential for new uses and redevelopment. Scores of existing landmarks will be adjusted as needed as input from the Cedar County Visioning Steering Committee is received.

Appendix B - Cedar County Communities: Performance and Evaluation Measures

Mechanicsville

Theme and Objective	Strategy	Performance Measure	Evaluation	Status	Comment
Natural Environment: Objective 3	Expand amenities in East End Park, such as a water fountain, playground equipment, picnic facilities, and recycling bins.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A water fountain is installed. - Old playground equipment is replaced with new equipment. - New picnic tables are installed at the park. - New recycling bins are added next to each garbage can in the park. 	Capital Improvement Program		
Arts & Culture: Objective 1	Revitalize the historic opera house downtown to serve as a community space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding sources for restoration are identified and pursued. - Accreditation on the National Historic Register is achieved. 	Capital Improvement Program Records		
Arts & Culture: Objective 3	Develop and install family-themed wall murals around town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of Cedar County Tourism Board. 	Focus groups Data mining		

Lowden

Theme and Objective	Strategy	Performance Measure	Evaluation	Status	Comment
Arts & Culture: Objective 3	Install creative light features, such as bistro lights, along and across Lincoln Highway.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding for lighting is raised or allocated. - Equipment for lighting is purchased. - New LED lighting is installed across downtown. 	Capital Improvement Program		
Arts & Culture: Objective 1 & 2	Create a railroad-themed pocket park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites for a pocket park are identified. - A plan for the park is developed. - Materials for the park are acquired. - Funding sources are applied for and funding for the park is allocated. - The park is constructed. 	Capital Improvement Program Records		

Appendix B - Cedar County Communities: Performance and Evaluation Measures

Stanwood

Theme and Objective	Strategy	Performance Measure	Evaluation	Status	Comment
Arts & Culture: Objective 3	Install signage at Bell Tower Park to highlight its significance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites for signage are identified. - Funding for signage is allocated. - Equipment for signs is purchased and installed. 	Capital Improvement Program		
Arts & Culture: Objective 1	Coordinate with the school district to have “block party” style events on main street (E. Broadway St.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of interest for the school district and City are completed, along with feasibility analysis. - Analysis of Stanwood’s code book is completed, conflicting codes are revised, if necessary. - Community focus groups are completed. - Funding for block party events is allocated. - A review of the event is completed after the first year. 	Capital Improvement Program Interest and feasibility analysis Stanwood City Code		

Durant

Theme and Objective	Strategy	Performance Measure	Evaluation	Status	Comment
Arts and Culture: Objective 3	Improve signage to direct visitors towards St. Paul’s Episcopal Church.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Install signs near I-80 and 6th street. 	Records		
Arts and Culture: Objective 1	Implement community-themed murals at Dutton Park in downtown Durant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Install a wall mural in Dutton Park. - Durant volunteers participate in creating the wall mural. 	Survey Records		
Natural Environment: Objective 1	Support the Durant – Wilton trail as a part of county-wide bicycle network; provide connections to points of interest in Durant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Cedar County Recreation Trail Plan is developed and adopted. - A wayfinding sign is installed at the trail head to direct visitors off of the trail, towards points of interest in Durant. 	Records Survey		

Appendix B - Cedar County Communities: Performance and Evaluation Measures

Tipton

Theme and Objective	Strategy	Performance Measure	Evaluation	Status	Comment
Natural Environment: Objective 1	Develop an Underground Railway Recreation Trail, a segment of the county-wide trail system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are an increased number of stakeholder meetings. - Cedar County's trail plan is implemented. - The trail is constructed, with wayfinding signage installed. 	Capital Improvement Program		
Arts & Culture: Objective 3	Install an active transportation-themed mural near the RAGBRI bike in downtown Tipton.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinate with the property owner of the building adjacent to the RAGBRI bike. - Funding mural development. - Complete the mural. 	Capital Improvement Program		
Arts & Culture: Objective 2	Establish a Tipton "Restaurant Week" to celebrate local foods and community hangouts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approval of "Restaurant Week" by the Tipton City Council. - A marketing campaign is developed with local restaurants and eateries - A review of the week is conducted annually to improve and expand the event. 	Surveys Data Collection		
Arts and Culture: Objective 2	Create a historic preservation plan for Tipton.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The process for developing the plan is identified. - Stakeholder and community engagement is gathered. - The plan is developed and implemented. 	Data Collection		

Clarence

Theme and Objective	Strategy	Performance Measure	Evaluation	Status	Comment
Downtown Revitalization: Objective 2	Expand and complete sidewalks, increase vegetation, and prioritize façade improvements in downtown Clarence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A business façade program is established and downtown businesses are committed to participate. - Planters are installed in downtown Clarence. 	Records		
Arts and Culture: Objective 1	Expand opportunities at the Clarence Public Library.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A new program is established at the Clarence Public Library. 	Library Board Records		

Appendix B - Cedar County Communities: Performance and Evaluation Measures

West Branch

Theme and Objective	Strategy	Performance Measure	Evaluation	Status	Comment
Natural Environment: Objective 3	Create and maintain a community garden in existing green space.	- A community garden is installed in an existing green space on Main Street.	Records		
Natural Environment: Objective 3	Install amenities in Wapsi Park to include a shelter, more picnic tables, bicycle parking, recycling bins, grill, and a water fountain.	- New amenities are installed in Wapsi Park. - Wapsi Park visitors are regularly using new amenities.	Records Survey		
Natural Environment: Objective 1	Coordinate with Tipton and the County to develop an underground railway-themed recreation trail.	- The Cedar County Recreation Trail Plan is developed and adopted. - Historians are consulted to help develop the underground railway-themed trail.	Records		
Downtown Revitalization: Objective 3	Implement the goals and objectives in the West Branch Historic Preservation Plan.	- Goal 1 of the West Branch Historic Preservation Plan is realized.	Historic Preservation Commission agenda items Records		

Bennett

Theme and Objective	Strategy	Performance Measure	Evaluation	Status	Comment
Natural Environment: Objective 3	Expand the riparian buffer around Bennett Creek.	- Riparian buffer expands south from 240th street to 1st street.	Survey		
Natural Environment: Objective 1	Create a trail loop along Bennett Creek.	- The Cedar County Recreation Trail Plan is developed and adopted. - The Bennett Creek Trail is fully funded with Cedar County Conservation Board approved installation plan.	Records		

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