

## DELMAR COMMUNITY VISION PLAN

Completed by: Maggie Richardson  
May 2018

Faculty Advisors: Dr. Charles Connerly  
Course: Independent Study | School of Urban & Regional Planning

*In partnership with*  
**East Central Intergovernmental Association**



This project was supported by the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities (IISC), a program of the Provost's Office of Outreach and Engagement at the University of Iowa that partners with rural and urban communities across the state to develop projects that university students and faculty complete through research and coursework. Through supporting these projects, the IISC pursues a dual mission of enhancing quality of life in Iowa while transforming teaching and learning at the University of Iowa.

Research conducted by faculty, staff, and students of The University of Iowa exists in the public domain. When referencing, implementing, or otherwise making use of the contents in this report, the following citation style is recommended:

[Student names], led by [Professor's name]. [Year]. [Title of report]. Research report produced through the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities at the University of Iowa.

This publication may be available in alternative formats upon request.

**Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities**

Provost's Office of Outreach and Engagement

The University of Iowa

111 Jessup Hall

Iowa City, IA, 52241

Email: [iisc@uiowa.edu](mailto:iisc@uiowa.edu)

Website: <http://iisc.uiowa.edu/>



# DELMAR COMMUNITY VISION

A Guide for Planning Future Community Projects

Maggie Richardson

The University of Iowa School of Urban and Regional Planning

[richardsonmargaret9@gmail.com](mailto:richardsonmargaret9@gmail.com)

April 2018



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Project History ..... 3  
    Delmar Storytelling Project ..... 3  
    Delmar Community Vision ..... 3  
Common Findings ..... 4  
    Community Assets ..... 4  
    Challenges ..... 4  
Future Projects ..... 5  
    Recreation and Outdoor activities ..... 5  
        Railway trails ..... 5  
        Community Ball Field and Disc Golf Course ..... 6  
        Community Gardens ..... 7  
    Entertainment ..... 10  
        Permanent Music Venue ..... 10  
    Downtown Revitalization ..... 11  
        Main Street Building Cleanup ..... 11  
Community Engagement ..... 14  
Conclusion ..... 15  
Appendix 1 ..... 16  
    Additional Resources ..... 16  
        Delmar Storytelling Project ..... 16  
        ECIA Community Project Funding Guide ..... 16  
Appendix 2 ..... 17  
    Community Engagement Tools ..... 17  
        Delmar Community Vision Survey ..... 17  
        Delmar Vision Hotline ..... 17  
Appendix 3 ..... 18

Community Vision Survey Responses ..... 18  
Delmar Vision Hotline Responses ..... 20

## PROJECT HISTORY

### DELMAR STORYTELLING PROJECT

In the spring of 2017, graduate students from the University of Iowa's School of Urban and Regional Planning worked with the Delmar community to engage local residents through the process of storytelling. The graduate students worked with 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students from the Delwood Community School District to develop interview questions about the community and its most important characteristics. The Delwood students then interviewed long-time Delmar residents, while the graduate students recorded the conversations. The interviews focused on the storytellers' favorite memories, the ways that the community has changed over time, and the elements they would like to see preserved in the future. The graduate students used footage from the interviews to create documentary-style videos about the community.

The interviews were followed by a bookmaking workshop with the Delwood students. Based on their conversations with the storytellers as well as their own creative ideas, the students created accordion books telling the story of the past, present, and future of Delmar.



An accordion book made by a Delwood student. **Source:** Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities.

The project culminated with a community event held at Delwood School. The graduate students premiered their videos and the Delwood students displayed their books for viewing. In remembering the past and envisioning the future, the event reminded residents of the importance of their community's shared values. The

<sup>1</sup> Developed with assistance from the Orton Foundation's Heart and Soul Guide to Community Engagement.

project, which connected residents young and old, was intended to build on Delmar's strong community pride. The revived interest in community development inspired the Delmar Community Vision plan described in this report.

### DELMAR COMMUNITY VISION

To build on the success of the Delmar Storytelling Project, one of the participants from the University of Iowa reengaged the community in the spring of 2018. The goal was to include all of the community's residents in an engagement process seeking ideas for projects, events, and an overall vision for the future of the city. With the goal of engaging as many residents as possible, the planning student sought to provide unique opportunities for participation aside from the traditional public meeting. They established a telephone number, coined the Delmar Vision Hotline, which allowed residents to leave voicemails with their responses. Additionally, an online survey provided the opportunity to share written responses. Both platforms urged participants to think about and respond to the following questions<sup>1</sup>:

1. What do you love about this community? What is currently happening here that you are excited about?
2. What would change to make Delmar better?
3. What is your wish for this community? What do you hope Delmar looks like in 20 years?

The open-ended format of both the voicemail and online surveys encouraged participants to share any stories, thoughts, or ideas that would contribute to their vision for the future of Delmar.

Posters and fliers were displayed in public locations and at local businesses as well as distributed to Delwood students. Members of the Delmar Development Group assisted in distributing the promotional materials as well as sharing information about the project via social media.

Resident input was collected for one month. During this period, a total of twelve responses were received—three Delmar Vision Hotline voicemails and nine completed online surveys. These responses aligned with and built upon the themes and ideas discussed throughout the course of the Delmar Storytelling Project. This report discusses ideas generated by participants of the Community Vision process as well as those from Delwood students as documented in their accordion books.

This report highlights both challenges and opportunities for Delmar. In sharing these findings in the form of a community plan, the project aims to further discussions among community members about the future of Delmar. This plan and continued community engagement efforts should help the city achieve the future its residents envision.

## COMMON FINDINGS

### COMMUNITY ASSETS

Responses demonstrated an appreciation of Delmar’s small town atmosphere. Community members enjoy close-knit relationships and share a strong sense of trust and safety. Delwood School, ranked as the best elementary school in the state in 2016<sup>2</sup>, continues to serve as a source of pride for Delmar residents. People of all ages recognized the importance of the school as a community anchor. Despite a trend of school closures and consolidations across Iowa’s small towns, Delwood Elementary continues to thrive. The current \$1 million facility expansion demonstrates the community’s commitment to continued educational success.

Residents also identified the community’s churches, Grossman Hall, the Depot, and the park as assets and acknowledged continued efforts to grow and improve. Many respondents highlighted the Delmar Development group as an organization working to bring new opportunities to the community. The group has worked to revitalize the historic Depot, host concerts and events, and seek donations and grant funding to build a splash pad and basketball court in Norton Park. Momentum seems to be building. Residents are encouraged by plans for a downtown bar and grill, a new

retail building on Main Street, the establishment of a “little library” and the construction of new homes across the community.

### CHALLENGES

Although exciting things are happening throughout the community, residents understand that there are further improvements to be made. Many are concerned with the downtown streetscape. They agreed that the vacant and deteriorating buildings do not project a positive image of the town and are not representative of the progress happening in other areas of the community. Many wish for downtown revitalization and additional restaurant and business options. Downtown was also a prominent theme throughout the Delmar Storytelling Project. Older participants recalled the lively Main Street that once supported a variety of businesses. They too worried that the loss of these businesses and the neglect of the buildings would negatively impact the character of the community over time.

Participants of the Storytelling Project and the community survey both emphasized the importance of local events and organizations in connecting residents and celebrating the community. However, residents new to the area described the challenges of learning about these opportunities and called for improved communication. Some identified the City website as potential tool for communication, but noted that its current format is not effectively meeting the needs of residents due to outdated information.

---

<sup>2</sup> Rankings by StartClass Research Company and reported in Sioux City Journal. 2016. [http://siouxcityjournal.com/lifestyles/parenting/ranking-the-top-elementary-school-in-every-state/collection\\_83677994-f684-57ee-ba90-b22f8b292dbb.html](http://siouxcityjournal.com/lifestyles/parenting/ranking-the-top-elementary-school-in-every-state/collection_83677994-f684-57ee-ba90-b22f8b292dbb.html)

## FUTURE PROJECTS

The storytellers' interviews, Delwood students' books, and local residents' survey responses demonstrate the hope that Delmar residents have for the future of their community. Residents met identified challenges with creative ideas for growing and improving their town. The following sections of this report outline these ideas and present potential options for funding and implementation.

## RECREATION AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

### RAILWAY TRAILS

Responses indicated a desire for increased recreational opportunities in Delmar. One participant suggested developing a trail following the old rail line. A railway bicycle and pedestrian trail would build on Delmar's heritage as an important rail hub, while also providing increased opportunities for physical activity and enhanced connections between existing amenities throughout the area.

Because Delmar is located within proximity to a number of regional natural amenities, a trail development project would be most effective if facilitated in partnership with other cities or a regional entity.



The dashed line shows the location of an abandoned railway and a potential railway trail connecting Delmar to the Brookfield Recreational Trail. **Source:** Google Maps.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.mycountyparks.com/county/Clinton/Park/Brookfield-Recreational-Trail.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.railstotrails.org/build-trails/trail-building-toolbox/>

The former Milwaukee Road rail corridor, which runs through Delmar, has already experienced a rail-to-trail conversion not far from Delmar. The Brookfield Recreational Trail is a 21-acre area developed in the abandoned Milwaukee Road right-of-way<sup>3</sup>. Further trail development within this corridor would help to connect Delmar to the recreation area.

There are a number of resources available to communities interested in completing rail-to-trail conversions. The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to building trails from former rail lines as a way to connect corridors and expand trail networks. RTC provides a Trail-Building Toolbox with information to assist public agencies with starting as well as maintaining a new trail. The toolbox contains sections on the basics of trail-building, organizing and gaining support within the community, acquiring right-of-way, funding the project, planning and designing the trail and trail corridor, and managing and maintaining the completed project<sup>4</sup>.

The Iowa National Heritage Foundation (INHF) also often plays a role in rail-to-trail conversions and has assisted with the creation of over 65 percent of the railway trails in the state. The foundation acts a community partner, able to assist at various stages in the process. INHF has worked with communities to provide technical assistance, acquire land, and raise funds through marketing and promotion. The foundation is especially useful in assisting communities with the planning process so that new trails connect to and expand on statewide networks<sup>5</sup>.

### POTENTIAL SOURCES OF FUNDING

The Iowa Department of Transportation administers two annual competitive matching grant programs for trail development and management<sup>6</sup>.

- Recreational Trails Program (Federal): *To provide and maintain motorized and non-motorized recreational trails and trail-related projects.*
  - Public agencies and non-profits or private organizations with a public agency co-sponsor are eligible to request funding
  - 20% match required
  - Current annual funding level: \$1.3 million

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.inhf.org/what-we-do/trails/>

<sup>6</sup> [https://iowadot.gov/pol\\_leg\\_services/Funding-Guide.pdf#page=34](https://iowadot.gov/pol_leg_services/Funding-Guide.pdf#page=34)

- Application deadline: October 1
- Recreational Trails Program (State): *Established to fund public recreational trails.*
  - State agencies, counties, cities and non-profit organizations may sponsor applications
  - 25% match required. Matching funds may include grants from other state agencies and donated labor, materials, equipment and services from a third party (in-kind). Proposed projects must be part of a local, area-wide, regional, or statewide trail plan.
  - Current annual funding level: \$2.5 million (varied by year depending on allocation by state legislature)
  - Application deadline: July 1

The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy also offers a competitive grant program for trail development.

- Doppelt Family Trail Development Fund<sup>7</sup>: *To support organizations and local governments that are implementing projects to build and improve multi-use trails.*
  - Non-profit organizations; state, regional, local or tribal government agencies; and other organizations may apply
  - All applicants must join RTC's Trail Expert Network to apply
  - Community Support Grant – 3-4 grants awarded in the \$5,000 to \$10,000 range
  - Project Transformation Grant – 1-2 grants awarded in the \$15,000 to \$50,000 range
  - Application deadline: January 31

The charitable foundation within the People for Bikes coalition also provides funding for trail development.

- Community Grant Program<sup>8</sup>: *supports bicycle infrastructure projects and targeted advocacy initiatives that make it easier and safer for people of all ages and abilities to ride*
  - Eligible applicants include: non-profits with a focus on bicycling, active transportation, or community development; city and

county agencies or departments; and state or federal agencies working locally

- Grant requests can be for less than 50% of total project costs and up to \$10,000
- 1-2 open grant cycles per year (fall and spring)
- Applicants must first submit a letter of interest by the posted deadline. Qualified applicants will be notified and invited to complete a full application

---

## COMMUNITY BALL FIELD AND DISC GOLF COURSE

Throughout the Delmar Storytelling Project, fond memories of playing sports with friends crossed generations and connected residents of all ages. Community survey responses confirm that continuing to provide these opportunities for future generations is important to residents. Survey respondents envision an improved community ball field and a disc golf course in Norton Park.

According to residents, the baseball field near Delwood School is in need of updates. Investing in a field renovation will help to support increased physical activity as well as foster community pride.

Additionally, some residents wished for a local disc golf course. Due to the flexibility of course design and the limited equipment needed to play, many communities have created their own disc golf courses for residents to enjoy. Currently, the closest disc golf courses to Delmar are in DeWitt and Davenport. Delmar residents would benefit from a local course.

Though some courses span many acres and traverse forests and fields, others have succeeded in small city parks. Iowa City established its own disc golf course at Wetherby Park in 2013. Wetherby Park provides a good model for Delmar as it is similar in size and contains many of the same amenities. Surrounded by a residential neighborhood, community members can easily access its basketball courts, playground, splash pad, outdoor shelter, and a nine-hole disc golf course.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.railstotrails.org/our-work/doppelt-family-trail-development-fund/application-instructions/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://peopleforbikes.org/grant-guidelines/>



Wetherby Park in Iowa City. Source: City of Iowa City. [www.icgov.org](http://www.icgov.org)

According to the Professional Disc Golf Association, the cost of building a disc golf course varies depending on access to land and the course's level of sophistication. Acquiring land and clearing through woods contribute to the most substantial portion of total development cost, so communities with access to land and little to no required clearing benefit from significant savings. Though a full service course with a professional design and high quality equipment and materials can cost up to \$1,000 per hole, a basic installation without professional design assistance and light-duty equipment can be completed for approximately \$350 per hole<sup>9</sup>.

Delmar may consider consulting an organization such as DG Course Review for pricing, design and construction assistance. They provide an online contact form that allows communities to easily communicate with representatives from the organization. Find the form here:

[https://www.dgcoursereview.com/course\\_design.php](https://www.dgcoursereview.com/course_design.php)

---

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.pdga.com/faq/course-development/estimated-course-cost>

---

## POTENTIAL SOURCES OF FUNDING

There are various grant opportunities available for large-scale projects involving the development and expansion of sports facilities and athletic programs in local communities. If the City of Delmar is interested in investing in this type of project in the future, they should look to the Baseball Tomorrow Fund—one of the largest grant-making funds focused specifically on sports organizations and facilities. However, for a smaller-scale project aimed at improving recreational facilities in the City, the local community foundation provides a potential funding source.

- LincolnWay Community Foundation Grant<sup>10</sup>: *To fulfill its mission of inspiring communities by connecting people with causes and resources for all generations*
  - Non-profits that provide services within Western Clinton County, non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations, public institutions, and/or organizations without non-profit status partnering with a fiscal sponsor organization are eligible to apply
  - Only one application can be submitted in a single calendar year
  - Applications due: March 1

---

## COMMUNITY GARDENS

Establishing community gardens was a popular idea among participants of both the Delmar Storytelling Project and the Community Vision survey. Residents identified various potential garden locations including the school, the Depot, and Norton Park. They were enthusiastic about the opportunities for increased community engagement as well as improved access to healthy food.

Gardens and gardening provide many benefits for communities. They bring together neighbors and residents of all ages in an activity that is both socially and physically productive. Furthermore, gardeners gain an increased sense of local and environmental stewardship and an enhanced sense of community pride.

Community gardens have become popular at schools where students can learn about local food production and consumption. Some communities have even

<sup>10</sup>

[https://www.dbqfoundation.org/sites/default/files/inline/files/2017\\_lwcf\\_grant\\_guidelines1.pdf](https://www.dbqfoundation.org/sites/default/files/inline/files/2017_lwcf_grant_guidelines1.pdf)

established partnerships in which garden produce is shared with local schools and restaurants to be incorporated into menu items.

A successful community garden requires planning. The following is a guide adapted from the American Community Garden Association to help communities establish a successful garden<sup>11</sup>:

1. *Organize a meeting of interested people* – It is important to determine whether those interested have the time and the energy to commit to a garden. If so, the group must decide what to grow, what to do with the produce, and what everyone’s roles will be in starting and maintaining the garden.
2. *Form a planning committee* – A planning committee will move the process forward. There should be members to address specific tasks such as funding and partnerships, garden construction and maintenance, and events and activities.
3. *Identify all existing resources* – Identify existing and available skills, resources, and equipment within the community. Take note of additional resources that will be necessary to start and maintain a garden.
4. *Seek donations, grants, or sponsors* – Most gardens require funding to start the garden and to continue to provide seeds and tools to maintain it. A list of potential funding sources can be found at the end of this section.
5. *Choose a site* – It is important to choose a site that is good for the plants and for the community. The garden site should have enough sunshine, uncontaminated soil, access to water, and should be easy for gardeners to reach. If the potential site is owned by a private landowner, it should be available to lease for at least three years.
6. *Prepare and develop the site* – Most garden sites will require plenty of work before planting even begins. The planning committee should recruit volunteers to clear and prepare the site and gather materials.
7. *Organize the garden* – Gardeners should ensure that the site is designed effectively to include enough space for growing, pathways between beds, storage of tools and equipment, and raised beds if necessary.
8. *Determine the rules and put them in writing* – Gardeners should agree on how the garden will be used and maintained, how decisions about the

garden will be made, and the type of behavior expected by those working in the garden. Putting the rules in writing will hold gardeners accountable and ensure the long-term success of the garden.

9. *Communicate* – Effective communication between gardens ensures that all are actively participating in the growth of the garden. Gardeners should also consider using signage or a newsletter to share information about the garden with other community members. Active communication will help the entire community recognize the benefits of having a community garden.

An abundance of resources exist to assist communities at any stage of this process.

**Iowa State University Extension** provides an extensive community garden start-up guide with helpful information about acquiring land, garden planning, building community support, and garden activities for the entire year.

[https://www.extension.iastate.edu/blackhawk/sites/www.extension.iastate.edu/files/blackhawk/community\\_garden\\_start-up\\_guide.pdf](https://www.extension.iastate.edu/blackhawk/sites/www.extension.iastate.edu/files/blackhawk/community_garden_start-up_guide.pdf)

**Clinton County Master Gardeners** work through ISU Extension to provide local assistance and resources to gardeners in the county. The master gardeners can help connect other gardeners to current local and research-based horticultural information. They also assist in local garden programs and after-school activities. They could be an effective partner when establishing a community garden in Delmar.

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/clinton/page/clinton-county-master-gardeners>

**Kids Gardening** is an organization based in Burlington, Vermont that encourages communities to engage young people through gardening. They provide a Gardening Toolbox with information on Gardening Basics, Gardening Activities, and Growing Guides. The gardening basics section of the toolbox is helpful for communities in the planning stage of the community garden development process. Gardening Activities offers unique ideas for engaging residents of all ages and abilities in fun activities at the garden site. The Growing Guide includes specific growing

---

<sup>11</sup> <https://communitygarden.org/resources/10-steps-to-starting-a-community-garden/>

information for various types of fruits and vegetables, fruit trees, and edible flowers.

<https://kidsgardening.org/gardening-toolbox/>



A school garden with raised beds. Source: ISU Extension and Outreach.

**A Garden for Every School** is a free video training program administered through Keep Iowa Beautiful. The video series assists communities interested in learning how to start a school garden program. The videos were created by garden coordinators, principals, parents, and student organizations across Iowa and provide helpful information for the garden planning process. Those who complete the video training and create a school garden plan are also eligible for funding to help start a local school garden.

<http://www.teachers-going-green.com/teachers-going-green/school-gardens>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.hy-vee.com/resources/community-produce-garden-application/default.aspx#Requirements>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/apply-garden-sponsorship/>

## POTENTIAL SOURCES OF FUNDING

- Hy-Vee One Step Community Garden Grant<sup>12</sup>: *Designed to help groups teach others through hands-on gardening activities while sharing their produce with those in need in their communities.*
  - Community groups, schools, non-profits and others who are committed to teaching their communities about health and nutrition are invited to apply
  - Application deadline: January 31
- Gardening Know How Sponsorship<sup>13</sup>: *To help start or improve school and community gardens.*
  - Application requires a letter which includes where the garden is located, how the school or community will use the sponsorship money, and why the school or community garden should be sponsored
  - Awards 10-15 \$1,000 sponsorships each year
  - Application deadline: August 31
- Fiskars Project Orange Thumb<sup>14</sup>: *Provides tools and resources to help communities reach their goals for collaboration, neighborhood beautification, and healthy, sustainable food sources.*
  - Non-profit organizations may apply
  - Plans to award grants and tools to 30 groups in 2018
  - Typical grant award: \$5,000
  - Applications due late in the year and grants awarded the following spring
- Whole Kids Foundation US Garden Grants Program<sup>15</sup>: *To support a new or existing edible garden*
  - Available to a K-12 school, a 501(c)(3) non-profit working in partnership with a K-12 school, or a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization
  - Grant award: \$2,000
  - Applications due in November and grants awarded in March

<sup>14</sup> <http://www2.fiskars.com/Community/Project-Orange-Thumb>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.wholekidsfoundation.org/schools/programs/school-garden-grant-program>

- Annie's Grants for Gardens<sup>16</sup>: *To support edible school gardens growing fruits, vegetables, herbs, grains, etc.*
  - Public schools, 501(c)(3) or charity non-profit organizations supporting a garden at a public or a non-profit school, and school districts supporting a garden at a public or non-profit private school may apply
  - 48 organizations received grants in 2018
  - Applications made available in June

## ENTERTAINMENT

### PERMANENT MUSIC VENUE

In October of 2017, the Delmar Development group hosted rising country artist Jake McVey for a concert in the park near the depot. Organized as a fundraiser for the Norton Park Improvement project, the concert was a huge success attracting people from across the region. Survey responses reflect a desire for more outdoor concerts and events in the future. Participants envision a permanent stage or amphitheater near the depot to support additional events throughout the year. The development of an amphitheater would make it easier to organize shows and accommodate artists interested in performing in the area. Outdoor events will help to improve the quality of life for local residents as well as attract visitors from surrounding areas.

In 2010, the City of Cascade decided to build an amphitheater in Riverview Park. The \$135,000 project utilized funding from the city, two local grants, and revenues from local fundraising efforts. Since its completion in 2011, the amphitheater has introduced a number of new community events including the Rockin' on the River Music Fest with live shows throughout the months of June, July, and August and the Rockin' on the River Chili Challenge in October. Private groups or individuals can also rent the space for a fee of \$20<sup>17</sup>. Electrical outlets and handicap-accessible

public restrooms make the amphitheater accessible to all and available for various types of programs and events.



Riverview Park Amphitheater. **Source:** City of Cascade

The Jester Park Amphitheater in Polk County also provides an attractive model. Located within Jester Park in Polk County, the amphitheater consists of a 12 foot by 24 foot stage covered by a wooden arbor. Two tiers of block wall as well as open space surround the stage and provide seating areas for visitors<sup>18</sup>. The amphitheater was developed as part of the 2009 Jester Park Master Plan and has since been used extensively for educational programming, presentations, wedding ceremonies, live music, and other performances. Maintenance is completed by park staff as well as volunteer work days. A partnership between a local business and Polk County Conservation resulted in the refinishing of the wood on the stage and arbor in April 2016<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.annies.com/giving-back/grants-for-gardens/grant-application/grant-faqs>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.cityofcascade.org/parks-and-recreation/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.mycountyparks.com/County/Polk/Park/Jester-Lewis-A-Park/Facility/Jester-Amphitheater-Mini-Shelter-EVE-not-active.aspx>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.neumannbros.com/article.aspx?id=98&Saturday+at+the+Park>



Jester Park Amphitheater. **Source:** Polk County Conservation

## POTENTIAL SOURCES OF FUNDING

To develop a permanent structure or venue for outdoor entertainment, the City of Delmar should consider grant funding from local organizations supporting quality of life improvement projects.

- Clinton County Development Association Grant<sup>20</sup>: *To improve the overall vitality and quality of life in our county through their educational, social, cultural, and environmental programs and initiatives*
  - Available to 501(c)(3) charitable, religious, or educational organizations physically located within Clinton County, IA
  - Grant awards of up to \$100,000 with 25% match required
  - Two semi-annual grant pools available (Spring and Fall)
    - Spring deadline: 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday in March
    - Fall deadline: 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday in August

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.clintoncountydevelopment.org/grants.html>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/Community/Enhance>

<sup>22</sup> The EI Board leverages non-state funds as much as possible in order to invest in projects throughout Iowa. Applicants should NOT assume a 50 percent match is adequate. To be competitive in the application process, applicants should strive to

The Iowa Economic Development Authority currently offers grant funds to support projects that improve community vitality through recreational attractions through its Enhance Iowa program.

- Enhance Iowa Grants through the Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) fund<sup>21</sup>: *to assist projects that provide recreational, cultural, entertainment and educational attractions, as well as sports tourism. The funds help communities create transformational projects that enhance the vitality of a region and the state overall.*
  - Eligible applicants are cities, counties, and not-for-profit organizations
  - Typically, CAT awards range between 10-20% of project cost
  - At least 50% match required<sup>22</sup>
  - Applications reviewed quarterly, deadlines: January 15, April 15, July 15, and October 15

## DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

Delmar’s downtown streetscape is troubling for many residents. Young people and new residents are distressed by the appearance of the vacant and dilapidated Main Street buildings. Long-time residents who remember the many businesses that once gave life to the city, are also upset by its current appearance. Most residents agree that the neglect of this area is not representative of the pride people have for their community and the many efforts being made to improve the community in other ways.

## MAIN STREET BUILDING CLEANUP

Though community engagement through the Delmar Storytelling Project and the Community Vision survey highlighted downtown revitalization as a priority, the city currently faces a number of barriers to redevelopment. Most of the vacant downtown buildings are not accessible to the City or other developers due to private ownership. Unfortunately, there are not many short-term options for

have as many matching funds as possible before applying. CAT funding is “last dollar in,” which means the EI Board will not make an award until the funding gap is closed or they are confident the applicant can close the gap within 30-60 days. See Enhance Iowa FAQs:

<https://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/userdocs/programs/EIFAQ.pdf>

redevelopment if the current owner is unwilling to sell. The financing options outlined below involve long-term and large-scale projects that will require substantial local investment.

It is important to note that because Delmar is primarily a residential community, commercial development does not have to be the focus. Most recently, large community improvements have brought attention to the depot, the park, and Delwood School. Enhancements in these areas complement the city's residential character and continue to improve quality of life for all residents. For this reason, these achievements should be celebrated regardless of their location.

Community projects in any part and all parts of the city contribute to Delmar's success. However, knowing that downtown is vital to the health and the identity of the community, the best action the City can take to revive it is to prepare a plan for future revitalization. If and when the opportunity to acquire the buildings arises, the City should be well-informed of its options and prepared to act in a way that has the most cost effective and sustainable outcomes for the community. Engaging in a community planning effort now will help build support among residents and provide thoughtful content for effective future grant applications. This report aims to provide information and resources to help the City of Delmar understand the potential scenarios that could occur in the future and to help them be prepared with various options. Any significant improvement to Delmar's downtown will take time and planning. Awareness of the types of assistance programs for which the city may be eligible in the future may help guide this planning effort.

#### POTENTIAL SOURCES OF FUNDING

The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) offers a program that provides grants to communities to stimulate economic growth or reinvestment through catalytic projects that support redevelopment, rehabilitation, or deconstruction of downtown buildings. To be eligible for this program, communities must submit a pre-application. Pre-applicants approved by the IEDA will be invited to complete the official grant application. To prepare a strong application, the community must show the potential for its project to stimulate economic growth, to significantly impact building appearance and safety, to make use of unused building space, to display design standards that support sustainability and smart growth principles,

and to be well funded. A limited number of successful pre-applicants will also receive a \$5,000 planning grant for future projects<sup>23</sup>.

All approved pre-applications will be invited to complete an official program application.

- Community Catalyst Building Remediation Program<sup>24</sup>: *Helping grow stronger communities and vibrant downtown areas.*
  - Cities are eligible to apply. 40% of program funds will be awarded to cities with populations under 1,500.
  - Maximum grant: \$100,000. City must provide financial and/or in-kind resources.
  - Funds available for the rehabilitation of one commercial building per community or two buildings with same ownership that are adjacent. Deconstruction is allowed in dire situations or for safety reasons.
  - Pre-application deadline: January 29



A building in downtown Woodbine, Iowa damaged by a fire (top) and restored through the Community Catalyst Building Remediation Program (bottom). **Source:** Iowa Economic Development Authority

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.iowagrants.gov/insideLinkOpps.jsp?documentPk=1504717793290>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/Catalyst>

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Solid Waste Alternatives Program funds a grant dedicated to addressing derelict commercial and public buildings in rural communities. The main goal of this program is to reuse and recycle building materials to divert waste from landfills. It also focuses on eliminating hazards to the community posed by vacant, dilapidated buildings.

- Derelict Building Grant Program<sup>25</sup>: *To provide financial assistance to address environmental hazards posed by derelict commercial and public buildings.*
  - Any county or municipal government with a population of less than 5,000 may apply. An applicant may partner with a local non-profit organization on a project.
  - Any commercial or public building that a local government has ownership of or intent to own is eligible.
  - Applications due early spring
  - Various assistance types and funding options

Assistance Type	Reimbursement	Max. Cost
<b>Certified ACM (asbestos-containing material) Inspection:</b> Certified asbestos inspectors will investigate derelict structures to determine the presence, prevalence and condition of asbestos.	100%	\$10,000
<b>Removal and Disposal of ACM:</b> Certified asbestos removal contractors will properly remove, manage and dispose of ACM. A 50% cost share is required for costs exceeding \$10,000.	100%	\$10,000
<b>Structural Engineering Analysis:</b> Licensed structural engineers will inspect derelict structures to assess the overall structural condition of the building.	100%	\$1,500
<b>Phase I Environmental Assessment:</b> Review of known environmental records and land use information about the site and vicinity. Applicant is responsible for all costs exceeding \$3,000.	100%	\$3,000

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environmental-Protection/Land-Quality/Waste-Planning-Recycling/Derelict-Building-Program>

<b>Phase II Environmental Assessment:</b> Actual soil, groundwater, and structural material sampling to confirm or deny if contamination is present. The need for this assessment is driven by the results of the Phase I Assessment. Applicant is responsible for costs exceeding \$5,000.	50%	\$2,500
<b>Building Deconstruction:</b> Dismantling of structures with the purpose of maximizing recycling and reuse of materials to minimize landfill disposal. Goal of 30% landfill diversion by weight.	50%	\$50,000
<b>Building Renovation:</b> Using waste minimization, reuse and recycling practices, including the use of salvaged or recycled content material during the renovation process. For offsetting costs related to removing materials for reuse, either at the site or offsite, or for recycling. The grant also compensates for the purchase and installation of reused or recycled materials that will be incorporated into the project.	50%	\$50,000



The City of Malvern used program renovation funds in conjunction with façade and CDBG funds to revitalize a large downtown building. Once vacant, the renovated building now contains a pharmacy and home care business and two upper-story loft apartments and has encouraged further investment and redevelopment downtown. **Source:** Iowa DNR

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

At the end of the Storytelling Project, the participating University of Iowa students heard from Delwood students and other Delmar residents that they appreciated having an opportunity to share their ideas for the community. Unfortunately, young people and older residents are not always directly engaged in community planning processes. However, the Storytelling Project demonstrated that these residents – who represent the potential of the future as well as the preservation of its history – can provide a unique and important perspective.

Some responses from the Community Vision survey echoed this feedback. New residents wished for improved communication about local events and activities so as to participate more in community life. Others were interested in joining the Delmar Development Group and having a greater role in planning for the future of the community. Overall, residents seek new and improved ways to engage with their local community. The goal of the Community Vision survey was to provide opportunities for residents to share their thoughts in a ways more accessible than a traditional public meeting and thus, gain greater overall participation. The City should continue to expand and improve these efforts so as to include all members of the community in envisioning the future of Delmar.

---

### COLLECT RESIDENT FEEDBACK THROUGH SURVEYS AND PHONE CALLS

The Delmar Vision Hotline and online survey used to collect information for the Community Vision process can continue to be utilized by the City or development group to collect additional responses or resident feedback in the future. More information for reusing these tools can be found in Appendix 2.

---

### ENGAGE YOUNG RESIDENTS

The city should continue to work with Delwood School to engage teachers and students. Teachers support the anchor institution that is Delwood School and provide vital human and social capital to the community. Students have a crucial role in the future of the community and should be included in future planning processes. In Preston, Iowa, the city's Growth and Development board includes two student members who provide a voice for young people throughout the official decision-making process. Delmar should consider ways in which its young people can contribute more formally to the planning, decision-making, and implementation

processes. Furthermore, giving young people a greater stake in their community will give them more reason to remain in or return to the community as adults.

---

### IMPROVE INFORMATION ACCESSIBILITY

Some survey respondents expressed that they struggled to learn about community events and activities. Updating and improving the city website would provide both residents and visitors with information about upcoming events as well as other important local resources. Helpful community websites include a community calendar, information about local schools and businesses, information about ways to get involved in local groups and activities, and links to other related websites or social media pages. The city website can be useful for current residents interested in keeping up with local news and events. It can also be a platform used to showcase all Delmar has to offer to new and potential residents.

In addition to improving the city website, city leaders should work to directly engage new residents to ensure that they have the information they need to fully participate in local life.

## CONCLUSION

Both the Delmar Storytelling Project and the Community Vision process revealed the great pride Delmar residents have for their community. Storytellers described the physical changes that have occurred over time and acknowledged a need to preserve the strong relationships that exist among community members in Delmar. Many survey respondents described the community as a family, in the way that people support one another and encourage efforts that help the community grow and improve. With the work of the Delmar Development group and other dedicated community members, the city has already seen various successful projects.

The goal of this report is to build on the city's momentum. It provides information and resources to assist community leaders as they plan for the future of the community. The potential projects outlined in this report illustrate ideas described by Delmar storytellers, Delwood students, and other local residents through their survey responses. Though some are long-term projects that will require extensive planning and significant local investments, others can be more easily implemented in the near future. Though residents provided many different interesting ideas for future projects, those outlined here are not representative of the thoughts of *all* members of the community. Continued community engagement efforts will help the city achieve the future envisioned by all of its residents.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

---

DELMAR STORYTELLING PROJECT

This webpage contains information about the Delmar Storytelling Project conducted in the spring of 2017. The site contains images of the accordion books created by each of the participating Delwood students. It also includes the videos produced by University of Iowa graduate students which consist of interviews between long-time residents and Delwood students. Also included on this site are links to the interviews between the storytellers and students.

<https://iisc.uiowa.edu/delmar-storytelling-and-community-development>

---

ECIA COMMUNITY PROJECT FUNDING GUIDE

ECIA has developed a Community Project Funding Guide to assist communities with potential funding sources for projects. The guide includes over 100 pages of local, state, and national funding resources. Though it is important to refer to the specific program website for up to date information on funding opportunities, ECIA's guide provides a helpful starting point. Delmar should use this resource to help plan for future projects, especially those not included in this report.

Browse the guide here: <http://www.ecia.org/pdf/CommunityProjectFundingGuideMay2017.pdf>

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

DELMAR COMMUNITY VISION SURVEY

Google Forms was used to create a survey template for residents. Survey responses can be found in Appendix 3.

DELMAR VISION HOTLINE

To provide an additional platform for community feedback, Google Voice was used to collect recorded voicemails. Through Google Voice, users link an existing phone number to a new, Google Voice number in order to receive calls and/or messages through the new number. The service is free and only requires an existing US telephone number and a Gmail account.

How to use the existing Google Voice account:

1. Open <http://google.com/voice>
2. Log in using the email [delmarvision@gmail.com](mailto:delmarvision@gmail.com) and password *delwoodschoo*
3. Click on the Voicemail icon on the left side of the screen to see all recorded voicemails.
4. Choose any voicemail to read the transcription and listen to the audio recording.

How to set up a new Google Voice account:

1. Log in through a Gmail account and create a Google Voice account here: <https://voice.google.com/signup>
2. Choose a Google Voice number. Search for available numbers by city or area code.
3. Enter a phone number to link to the Google Voice account. Inbound calls to your Google Voice number will be forwarded to this number.
4. Verify the linked number by entering the six-digit code sent by text message.
5. On the Google Voice home screen, navigate to the fourth icon on the left side of the screen and click settings.
  - a. If the user is only collecting recorded voicemails and does not intend to answer forwarded phone calls, they should turn on the “Do not disturb” icon so that phone calls will be sent straight to voicemail.
  - b. On the Settings page, the user has the option to record a voicemail greeting as well as to receive transcripts of voicemails by text message and/or email.
6. Adjust settings as necessary and start using the service.

COMMUNITY VISION SURVEY RESPONSES

<b>Question 1: What is something you love about this community?</b>
The sense of "family"
Small town, quiet community, good school
The people and the drive to grow!
I love the small town atmosphere, it feels safe for my family and kids, the school is so successful
Small school
Small town atmosphere. Friendly people
The people. The friendliness. The love the people have for this town!
The people, the school and the churches.
<b>Question 2: Tell us something that's happening here that you are excited about.</b>
Delmar Development has some great ideas; the Depot
Events at the Depot, Delwood school activities, Labor day town activities
A retail store building downtown (Dr. Appliance)
The new splash pad and Little Library
Splash pad... Adding to the park
Plans for splash pad at our already beautiful park.
Splash pad
The splash pad project. The concert they had last fall. The school.
How the residents are trying to improve the town but still keep the history intact.
<b>Question 3: What would you change to make Delmar better?</b>
Do something about downtown!
1. Add a bike trail along the old railway. Additional grants may be able to be had through 'Rails to trails' at <a href="https://www.railstotrails.org/">https://www.railstotrails.org/</a> Also perhaps adding on to that trail around town eventually as well. 2. Continue offering events at the Depot. (Concerts, classes, etc.) Perhaps building a partially covered stage by the Depot to make concert venues easier to be held at. In fact, maybe just an outdoor larger covered area that could be used for multiple uses including concerts. 3. Develop a new housing development and advertise it. This would help on many fronts including upping property value, bringing more tax money into the city, and bringing in new people and ideas. 4. Community vegetable and flower garden at the Depot.

More land for houses to be built on and a community ball field
Add a restaurant or somewhere to grab a sandwich for dinner
add businesses, especially a bar/restaurant
I am a new resident here. As a newcomer I would like to see more communication about upcoming events. We knew nothing about Festival of Lights until it was almost over. I would also like to know how (or if) I could get involved with Delmar Development.
Try to get more businesses in the downtown. Maybe a community garden. A community center.
Getting more businesses such as a restaurant/ bar. Add a disc golf course at the park and surrounding area such as the tracks. Remove that road that is splitting the park to gain more space. Build a public sporting complex such as baseball and softball fields and a batting cage that are appropriate for all leagues. A zip line like the one that Clinton, IA has at their park. Tear down the old horse stables and build a reception hall or an outside venue that could be rented for parties. Last but not least have a big Christmas light show at the park with music so people could walk around while looking at all the lights blinking to music. Maybe some kind of donation/ charity event 😊.
We need more businesses - and by that I mean shops, restaurants, etc.
<b>Question 4: What is your one wish for this community? Or what do you hope Delmar looks like in 20 years?</b>
Be sure the school is there and thriving, it's the main thing keeping it going
I would like to see Delmar as a slowly expanding, innovative community that has its own bike trails and new developments. A community that strives to be on the cutting edge of offerings for a town of its size and budgets appropriately to keep evolving and upgrading over time.
I hope in 20 years that Delmar is a thriving town with a couple local businesses and a school STILL ranked highly in our state.
I hope it continues to be a positive, welcoming community.
New business. Have a bar & restaurant
Would like to see improvement of the downtown. Buildings there don't really project a positive or representative image of our town.
Business growth and more outside activities for children and families.
For it to be thriving. With Businesses and people and the school doing well as always!
My wish is that the buildings downtown will be used correctly - not allowed to go into disrepair. I also think that if they are in the business district, they should be a business, not a residence. We have too many empty, decaying buildings.

## DELMAR VISION HOTLINE RESPONSES

Hi, I think we need more things in the park for our children. Definitely a bar and grill. Definitely clean up Main Street. Love the Depo. Love the small town living, love our neighbors, and we have some new homes going up, so I really think we're heading in the right direction and have a wonderful development committee that works hard. Thank you.

I'd like Delmar to not turn into a s\*\*\* hole so if we could put in a bowling alley that would be awesome.

Delmar is a really great bedroom community, but they need to clean up their downtown. There's some very old and dilapidated buildings that do not represent what Delmar stands for, and when new people come to the area, that's what they see is a very run down, not cared for downtown. I know some people are trying to revitalize it, but the city is not doing enough. The homes in Delmar, some of them are up kept very well, but I do believe that besides charging people for snow plow and mowing, the city needs to take a look at homes that are not being well taken care of. Be it siding, be it you know, run down garages. They need to start really enforcing the commonality amongst homeowners, and especially landlord's even if they are renting. They still have a responsibility to the community in general. I believe that instead of just planting flowers the city council needs to really address the home value in the entirety. Also, what they need to do, I believe that Delmar the city of Delmar website needs to be accurately updated. There are some outdated businesses that are no longer in the town and there are new businesses in the town that are not even on the list. I think that if they revamp their website, make it more updated, maybe when the new people who come to the town who have to get their applications for building permits or even the city water trash sewer web applications, when they go to that website, they can get a better clear view of the town they're moving to. Thank you, and hope they can correct some of these issues.