

This is the North End

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Goal

Mason City, Iowa, is a city of roughly 28,000 residents in North Central Iowa and is the county seat for Cerro Gordo County, Iowa (Mason City Iowa, n.d.). Recently, the city has focused some resources and efforts into revitalization of the North End neighborhood, including business loan matching grants, parking lot paving, and urban renewal project ideas. The goal of this project is to create a communication campaign for Mason City centered on the revitalization of their North End neighborhood. It is through a carefully planned promotional campaign, with messaging about the historical and personal significance and beauty of the people and places in the North End that we plan on bringing interest back into the area in hopes it will stimulate more investment in time, resources, and efforts into making the neighborhood a vibrant and lively place to live and do business. Change on the scale needed in the North End will not come from city mandates alone; it must come from citizens of the neighborhood and the city itself. By creating buzz about the area, our goal is not only bring some much-needed excitement about the North End, but also to bring the neighborhood together behind our campaign, to foster cohesion and pride in the historical and storied area with the end goal of renewal and rejuvenation as a product of the cohesion.

Significance of Problem

Importantly, neighborhood perception is not only vital to driving change and development but is impactful to self-rated health and social cohesion. In studies focused on neighborhood perceptions and health, the association between perceived social disorder and health is often a factor in the evaluation of surroundings in addition to objective environmental qualities (Latkin et. al, 2009). While the linkage between neighborhood disorder and health outcomes are influenced by socio-demographic characteristics, it is arguably more affected by

characteristics on perceptions of disorder (Latkin et. al, 2009). Ultimately, these neighborhood perceptions carry extra meaning to an individual's well-being (Wen et. al, 2006). The North End is often described as a low-income part of Mason City that is in need of economic and structural revitalization. In July of 2015, a focus group comprised of Mason City administration and community members met to discuss present conditions of the North End/Federal Avenue area (City of Mason City 2015). The group reviewed the City's efforts to revitalize the area in addition to potential initiatives. In a resulting SWOT analysis, the group discussed stigma that surrounded the North End area associated with crime, drugs, and "slum-lords" (City of Mason City 2015). With these perceptions confirmed, it is plausible that North End residents suffer from the misunderstanding of their neighborhood.

Through conducting formative research in the form of intercept interviews, "crime" is frequently noted as a perception of the North End. However, when comparing crime rates within the neighborhood to those of the rest of the Mason City community, there are fewer reported incidents of crime at 44 and 53 per 1000 individuals respectively (Bochner et al., 2017). Although the North End neighborhood experienced slightly higher rates of assault and breaking and entering, the area reported fewer incidents of property crime, theft, and drug use when compared to Mason City as a whole. Regardless of how perception conflicts with reality, these attitudes are reflected in higher rates of vacancy and renter-occupied units, lower value homes (Skipper 2016), dilapidated businesses, and a lack of community organizations. Further constraints in regards to transportation may cause residents to feel trapped, which in addition to lacking social connections may further encourage the correlation between negative neighborhood perceptions and health (Latkin et. al, 2009).

The strong sense of community pride in Mason City's rich cultural heritage, architecture, retail, and once industry is not to be understated (Bochner et al., 2017). However, formative research focused exclusively on the North End neighborhood has evidenced that these community ideals and social cohesiveness are fragmented. This inherent bias toward the North End further perpetuates a lack of fiscal or community investment, social connection, neighborhood pride, and self-perceived health. In addition to these public health concerns, upcoming plans for the city to invest money into the North End neighborhood further drive the need for community cohesion and ownership. The following proposal coincides with aims of the Urban and Regional planning course at the University of Iowa to develop a revitalization strategy for the community. In order to encourage support and meaning for these efforts, social cohesiveness and community buy-in will be instrumental. Moreover, to facilitate these feelings, negative perceptions need to be targeted in order to not only drive support of investment and change, but to "encourage activities which help to create more livable and socially engaged neighborhood" (Latkin et. al, 2009).

Partnerships

Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities (IISC)

The IISC, affiliated with the University of Iowa, is a community engaged learning organization located within the Office of Outreach and Engagement. The primary mission of the IISC is to enable communities to meet various social, economic, and environmental needs of community through various sustainable and impactful initiatives. The group not only supported the campaign budget, but facilitated communication efforts between our team and city of Mason City officials. They have provided aid in providing feedback on messaging options, testing, and proposed rollout.

Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Iowa

In tandem with our health campaign focused on de-stigmatizing perceptions the North End neighborhood, the Urban and Regional Planning course at the University of Iowa aims to develop a revitalization plan for the area. Over the course of the project, our groups met frequently to ensure goals are aligned, resources and data are shared, and that the public health perspective is included in planning discussions. We've discovered that in our efforts to promote social cohesion and neighborhood pride, our campaign subsequently seeks to drive support for our counterpart's end goal: future economic development and restoration. This partnership not only allows the unique opportunity for interdisciplinary collaboration, but also the melding of different initiatives and brainstorming efforts.

Cerro Gordo County Public Health and Department of Development Services

We have additionally partnered with individuals within the Cerro Gordo County Public Health Department and Development Services Department in Mason City Iowa. Over the semester, these partners have provided us with a general context, background, and understanding of previous/in progress development efforts in the North End neighborhood. These organizations have additionally distributed and advertised campaign surveys and provided feedback on proposed messaging materials. As the campaign moves forward, we anticipate that Mason City officials will guide decisions related to campaign marketing, facilitating community ownership of the project, and making the campaign relevant to future goals for the neighborhood. These groups will be provided our final products and recommendations, and will continue work in the North End with the Urban and Regional Planning Group toward revitalization efforts.

North End Business Owners

Finally, our campaign has worked to develop meaningful connections with local businesses in the North End neighborhood. Individual business owners have taken an active role in the campaign by hosting the “Taste of the North End” event, providing feedback on messaging, and even being the face of campaign images. Owners from Little Chicago, the Blue Heron, Burke’s Bar and Grill, and Northwestern Steakhouse were helpful to these endeavors. These relationships are ultimately not only useful in conducting formative research, but also in exploring potential avenues for creating and disseminating our campaign materials. As outlined in the mass communication plan, these partners may play a part in campaign rollout.

Audience

Based on our formative research and pilot testing within and outside of the North End in Mason City, the core of our campaign will be a series of ads and pictures that feature people and places in the North End with the tagline “This is the North End” and the slogan “Play, Imagine, Visit, Enjoy” Mason City’s Historic North End. We will introduce and re-introduce people in the city to places in the area and people who live in the area through these images.

The audience for these ads will be the entirety of Mason City; we have purposely chosen not to segment beyond that. Because this is a general awareness campaign, we want to reach as many people as possible, so we are tailoring our messages to Mason City and keeping them general and widely appealing. Table 1 is a summary of demographic information that we have taken into account when thinking about the audience.

Table 1
Mason City Demographics

	Mason City	Iowa (whole state)
Total Population	28,709	3,134,693
% 65 and over (2010)	17.1%	14.9%
Median gross rent (2011-2015)	\$622	\$697

% Under 65 with a disability (2011-2015)	11.2%	7.9%
% over 25, high school graduate or higher (2011-2015)	92.8%	91.5%
Median income (in 2015 dollars)	\$43,525	\$53,183
% in poverty	14.7%	11.8%
% White	93.8%	91.4%
% African American	1.8%	3.7%
% Native American	0.3%	0.5%
% Asian	0.9%	2.5%
% Hispanic or Latino	5.1%	5.8%

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2017).

In designing the visuals and verbiage for the campaign, we are keeping these demographics of our audience in mind. The ads will remain uncontroversial, simple, with clean lines, fonts, and images. For Northside residents, it is our hope that they get a renewed sense of pride and feeling of neighborhood cohesion through these messages. For those outside of the boundaries of the North End, it is our hope that there is a new interest in the area as a viable place to conduct business, visit, stay, play, and invest time and resources. If there is a gradual de-stigmatization done of people and places in the North End, revitalization can occur less encumbered and more organically with full support of the whole city. It has become clear from our preliminary research that people are tired of talk and would like to see action; it is our hope that our campaign will represent action.

Literature Review and Theoretical Background

To understand our approach to this project, it is necessary to elaborate on the theoretical and methodological literature that our formative research and campaign design was based on. We drew from three primary bodies of literature in our background review which include the following topics: community engagement in conducting needs assessments, stigmatization

theory, and neighborhood social cohesion and its impact on health outcomes. Providing a full review of each of these topics is beyond the scope of this paper, but we will present a brief review of these three bodies of literature.

Methodology

As stated previously, the goal of our campaign is to garner excitement around the North End revitalization project and target neighborhood social cohesion. We first looked for methods to help us identify the needs of the community and peer-reviewed literature pointed us towards the importance of conducting health needs assessments (Wright, Williams, & Wilkinson, 1998). Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNAs) are a systematic method of collecting information not only on the health of a community, but also its needs, resources, strengths, challenges, and opportunities (Becker, 2015). These assessments are reliant on a number of data sources, including secondary data sets, interviews, focus groups, and community surveys, which are can then be triangulated to produce a summary report that can guide future community health projects (Johnson, et al, 2010).

An important goal of our entire project is to ensure that we are taking into account the needs and opinions of the people who live in this neighborhood and Mason City, in general, so we turned to community engaged research theory. Our literature review identified that a community based participatory research (CBPR) approach is an effective way of involving the community in formative research to ensure their voices were accounted for in the planning and implementation processes (Hergenrather et al, 2009; Israel, Eng, & Schulz, 2012). Utilizing a true CBPR approach requires a substantial time investment to build relationships and gain entrée into the community, which we unfortunately do not have the capacity to do. However the framework of our formative research is built on the principles of Eng & Blanchard's Action-

Oriented Community Diagnosis This framework relies on collecting data from multiple sources with the goal of translating needs assessment results into actionable items. (Eng & Blanchard, 1991; Israel, Eng & Schulz, 2012). Throughout our project we relied on the principles of these research approaches to guide our work in the North End. We followed Eng and Blanchard’s (1990) framework as closely as possible the steps of which are summarized below along with a brief commentary on how we achieved them.

Table 2
Action Oriented Community Diagnosis Steps and Actions Taken

AOCD step	Formative research steps taken
Specify target population	Phone call with Mason City officials and review of existing city materials on the North End
Review secondary data sources and identify possible sub populations of interest and geographic locations	Literature review, review of American Community Survey and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation statistics, review of notes on previously conducted focus groups
Conduct windshield tours of targeted area	September 17th and October 7th- visits to Mason City to tour North End neighborhood
Contact and interview local agency providers serving targeted areas	Informal conversations with Mason City government officials throughout project
Contact and interview community informants	September 17th- Intercept interviews conducted in North End
Tabulate results from secondary data and interviews and analyze the degree of convergence among needs identified	October-November- Occurred naturally during report writing process
Present findings in meetings with community informants interviewed and other influential community members	October 26th- Taste of the North End event was an informal presentation to neighborhood stakeholders December 5th- Presentation to community leaders and funders
Plan the next steps for finding answers to the questions	Second half of this paper presents future directions for this project

The rest of this section identifies the theoretical research that helped to frame our data collection activities, campaign messages and strategies.

Stigma Theory

Initial conversations with city officials from Mason City and exploration of previously conducted focus groups with North End residents revealed that there is a certain amount of prejudice against residents of the North End. Thus, we felt it was relevant to explore stigmatization theory and how perceived stigma can impact health outcomes. Stigma theory, which originated in the field of sociology with Emile Durkheim and Erving Goffman, posits that stigma can be an attribute, behavior, or even reputation that leads to “widespread social disapproval” (Bos, Pryor, Reeder, & Stutterheim, 2013). This phenomenon of perceived social disapproval, or stigma, against a neighborhood has been found to lead to negative health outcomes, including higher depression and lower self-rated health (Graham et al, 2016; Wutich, Rutha, Bewis, & Boone, 2014). This field of research suggests that once these “urban ghettos” are established, the structural inequalities are reinforced as a result of both their physical location, but also the negative public discourse that often exists in the community (Wacquant, 2007). Unfortunately, this stigma does not necessarily disappear when an individual moves away from a neighborhood, but it can actually be carried with them to their new location and result in a new stigmatized neighborhood. Research conducted with low income, African American individuals who moved from Chicago to Eastern Iowa found that these individuals experienced similar stigmatization in Iowa that resulted in social isolation in their new communities and negative health outcomes (Keene & Padilla, 2010). Given that several of our conversations with Mason City officials and residents have revealed that there is a population in the North End that recently moved from Chicago, we feel it is especially important to take into account the possibility of this phenomenon of spatial stigmatization. While this population is not identified to be the majority, we felt it was important to address the issue given that it was a common theme in conversations over the course of the project.

Neighborhood Social Cohesion and Health

Finally, there is a third body of literature that provided the background and theoretical justification for the development of our campaign messaging. While the link between neighborhood and health outcomes is well established, the specific pathways through which this relationship works are less well understood. One body of literature suggests that the degree of social cohesion in a neighborhood impacts the relationship between the effects neighborhood level socioeconomic status and health outcomes of residents (Kim & Kawachi, 2017; Rios, Aiken, & Zatura, 2012). Social cohesion is related to the idea of social capital and has been conceptualized in different ways but generally occurs when groups (in this case neighborhoods) are “self-maintaining with respect to the production of strong membership attractions and attachments” (Friedkin, 2004). Another related concept is that of collective efficacy which is the “willingness of people to intervene for the good of the community” and can be a reflection of the level of social cohesion in a neighborhood (Cohen, Finch, Bower, & Sastry, 2006). Thus, this literature suggest that influencing the level of social cohesion and collective efficacy in a neighborhood can be an important part of improving health outcomes.

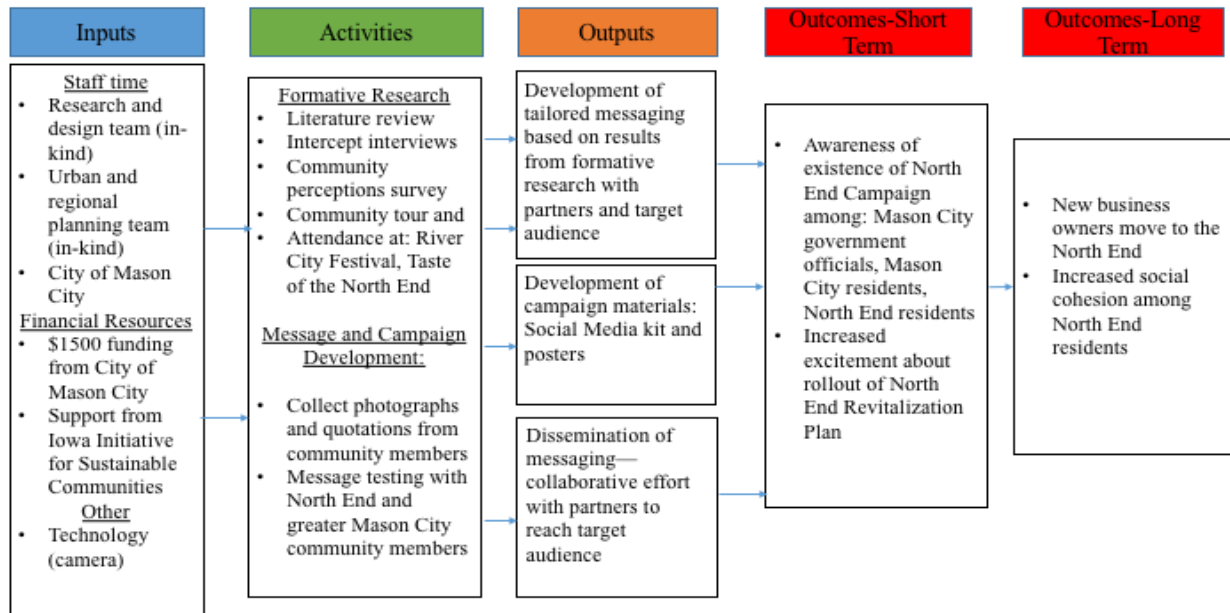


Figure 1: Logic Model

Formative Research

This project was conceptualized by city government officials in Mason City who determined a need for revitalization work in the North End Neighborhood of Mason City. We first spoke to city leaders and public health personnel via Skype to get a sense of the nature of the problems facing the neighborhood. We wanted to speak to leaders in the revitalization effort, to hear their thoughts on the area and found out that none of them live in the North End. Thus, it became clear that there was a need for formative research to be conducted with residents of the neighborhood given that the people who will truly be affected by any revitalization are people with the most at stake in any projects in the area. During our initial call, it became clear that the North End was dealing with a couple of different issues; problems with stigmatization from the rest of Mason City and actual problems that come from living within the neighborhood itself. These latter issues are mainly centered a result of the lack of services for residents and lack of transportation to services outside of the neighborhood. We based our next steps on learning more

about these issues, first from secondary data sources available to us, and more importantly from the residents of the North End as well as the greater Mason City area.

Secondary Data Analysis

Our formative work began with gathering readily available secondary data from sources including the Robert Woods Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings and information that was available at the zip code level from the census and the American Community Survey. All of Mason City is encompassed in one ZCTA and therefore we were not able to find any data that was specific to the North End neighborhood. Cerro Gordo County, which Mason City is the seat of, is ranked 70th (out of 99) for health outcomes by RWJF in the state of Iowa, but 30th for health factors (RWJF, 2017). This discrepancy is most likely due to the fact that the health factors rankings are driven by indicators like number of health care providers per resident and Mercy Medical Center has a large facility in Cerro Gordo County.

While the County Health Rankings are helpful for understanding how the county compares to the rest of Iowa, we looked to more specific ZCTA level information that was summarized above in Table 1. Although the census data is not specific to the North End, it highlights a few challenges that Mason City faces in general. There is an aging population that continues to grow and the city needs to catch up to ensure infrastructure and systems are in place to support that. However, potentially more relevant to our project is that housing costs are higher than expected (though lower than the state average), considering this is not a big city in a centrally located place, and median income is substantially lower than the rest of the state. Our anecdotal evidence identified that these two facts are especially true in the North End.

Finally, our third set of secondary data, that actually is specific to the North End are the results of an informal SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) that was conducted

in community meetings on July 6th and 8th, 2015 by city staff with North End residents. Full results can be found in Appendix 1, but we will summarize them here as well.

Strengths. The group highlighted the proximity of the neighborhood to the exit to highway 65 and that it is in a high traffic area, which is good for businesses. The historic nature of the neighborhood and its architectural appeal were also mentioned as was the fact that many of these buildings are currently vacant which would make it attractive for new businesses. Finally, a strong sense of community identity was mentioned along with the fact that there is an “entrepreneurial spirit” in the community.

Weaknesses. Among the weaknesses identified many of them were generally related to the bad reputation that the neighborhood has in the rest of Mason City in terms of cleanliness and crime. Other weaknesses were related to the physical condition of the buildings, sidewalks, and parking lots.

Opportunities. In this meeting, the city council expressed a strong interest in revitalizing the North End and this commitment from the city was identified as an opportunity. Others mentioned that there is a lot of space for new businesses to move into and that there are simple changes like hanging flowers or installing wayfinding signs that could be impactful.

Threats. Again, in this discussion crime was mentioned as was the idea that the neighborhood is “too far gone.” Cost of investment in rebuilding or renovating buildings was also identified as a barrier to any revitalization efforts. Although this analysis was conducted in 2015, there has not been much progress on the North End project since, and therefore we felt these results were still valid. Taken together, these secondary data sources helped to inform the design of our next steps in the data collection process.

Intercept Interviews

Once we developed a profile of this secondary data, we turned to primary data collection activities. Our first step was to spend time in the neighborhood, going to the few local businesses there and walking around and observing the physical characteristics of the area. It was important for us to understand the physical layout of the neighborhood as it is well documented that there are many aspects of the built environment that have an impact on health (Rollings, Wells, & Evans, 2015). As a part of this, we also conducted on-street interviews with 42 individuals that we encountered in the neighborhood (see Table 3 for a summary of demographics). These interviews were key to our understanding of the neighborhood for several reasons. In the first place, once we started talking to people, clearer distinctions within the neighborhood became apparent, and we understood the streets and blocks that we would have to canvass in order to talk to- renters versus homeowners- for example, and altered walking routes accordingly. Secondly, we were able to better understand the perspective of North End residents about the issues that were previously identified by Mason City government officials as priorities for the area.

Table 3
North End Neighborhood Resident On-street Sample Demographic Characteristics, N=42

Demographic	Mean or %
Average Age	45.5
Average number of Years in Mason City	9.5
% Female	75%
% Male	25%
% Homeowners	57%
% Renters	43%

Key findings of intercept interviews. City busses only run through the neighborhood from 8am to 5pm Monday through Friday. Elderly and disabled people have the option for rides through a ride service with the city bus for these groups, but these must be organized in advance and waitlists are long. There are taxi services in Mason City, but they are costly. Many residents

reported traffic being a problem throughout the area. Other concerns included a lack of traffic signals being dangerous and speed limits too high for them to feel safe walking places. Many residents reported the need for a grocery store in the area, since the nearest one being on the very southern edge of the location, which is hard to reach on the weekend when there are no busses running. During the weekends without public transport, the only places for residents without cars to procure food is three small convenience stores, which stock the bare minimum of processed and pre-packaged foods. A number of residents reported they have a hard time making it to the grocery store and buying fresh fruits and vegetables regularly is difficult. The area is a quasi-food desert.

Older residents especially reported the lack of doctors, clinics, and pharmacies in the area as being hard on their health. There are no health services within a 3 mile radius of the neighborhood. The closest medical center is Mercy Medical center on the south side of town, which, again requires busses that do not run through the North End on the weekends or after 5pm on the weekdays, or self-transport by car. There are plans to relocate the public health building to the North End, but those plans have not been finalized, and many residents I talked to were not aware of the plans. If this were built, it would add some much-needed health services to the area. People reported missing medications and going without needed services when they cannot get to clinics and pharmacies.

The area's main street, Federal Boulevard, houses retail space, but many of the spaces sit vacant, and are boarded up and filled with garbage and discarded refuse. The area has three restaurants, two liquor stores, three convenience stores, a dog grooming business, and an appliance store. A Kraft Foods plant is located at the far northwest section of the neighborhood;

however, it is not technically part of the neighborhood, but many residents reported working there at some point.

Infrastructure in the neighborhood is in need of revitalization and attention. The sidewalks in many areas are un-walkable: uneven, broken, overgrown with weeds, and unlit at night. While there were marked bike lanes throughout the neighborhoods, the streets on many blocks were in need of re-paving. At the time of this paper being written, there is no concrete plan by the city to address these issues. However, some of these issues have been identified by the Urban and Regional planning group as being priority issues and their report may cover plans in more detail. Residents reported letting their children ride their bikes to many areas both within and without the neighborhood, thanks to the bike lanes.

Residents of certain areas of the North End, particularly those who own their homes, point to tenant-occupied homes on the northernmost end of the neighborhood as the ‘problem area’ of the neighborhood; there is further stigma within the stigmatized neighborhood, even amongst its own residents. Respondents also suggested that people perceive more drug and violence problems in the northernmost part of the area than elsewhere in the city. The state of residential buildings in the area varies widely. Many of the houses are from the early 1900’s and despite there being a number of well-kept homes, a large number of residents reported wanting support to “fix up the houses” in the neighborhood and feel many are a blight on the area. Furthermore, many residents of the North End feel this is the best first step towards revitalization. There are three parks in the area, distributed evenly throughout, which makes a park within walking distance for all residents. Each have a new playground with safe, clean equipment suitable for young children. Two of the parks also have large green spaces and soccer

fields for sporting. Additionally, the area has a public pool, a large childcare/daycare facility, and an elementary school.

Community Surveys

Formative research was also conducted by collecting survey responses to questions regarding attitudes and perceptions about the North End (see Appendix 2 for a copy of the survey). The survey was designed to gain a better understanding of the positive aspects of the neighborhood and to measure neighborhood social cohesion. Where applicable, questions were taken from surveys previously conducted and published in peer-reviewed literature. The first question which asked people to list five words that they associated with the North End Neighborhood was previously utilized in a study examining the association between neighborhood perceptions, social cohesion, and health (Wutich, Rutha, Bewis, & Boone, 2014). The second set of questions regarding social cohesion, were adapted from the neighborhood Community Survey conducted in Chicago in 1994-1995 (Earls et al, 2007).

We identified the River City Renaissance Project community forum, held on October 7th, as being a potential venue to conduct our surveys and to meet residents of Mason City. Using this forum presented sampling bias, as surveys were not randomly distributed and the individuals attending a community forum are likely not representative of the average Mason City resident. However, given time constraints and a lack of access to an easy way to distribute materials to North End residents, we feel this was an appropriate choice.

There were 15 respondents in total, with the average age of respondents being 60 years old and 75% of respondents being male. Although none of the survey responses were from people living in the North End of Mason City, this information resembles an outside perspective of the attitudes, perceptions, and ideas for the community. We first assessed the collective list of words respondents used to describe the North End. Two members of the research team

independently coded the responses as positive, negative, or neutral. In cases of disagreement, the coders discussed discrepancies with a third research team member to reach a decision (Full coding results can be found in Appendix 3). Of 35 unique words or phrases used to describe the North End, 37.1% were coded as positive, 25.7% coded as neutral, and 37.1% were coded as negative. Among favorite parts about the North End, survey respondents mentioned restaurants such as Little Chicago, Northwestern Steakhouse, Blue Heron Grill, and Burke's. Many people also mentioned that their favorite parts were the historical memories of the neighborhood, efforts to keep business going, the improvement of many properties, and future potential (see Appendix 3 for a complete list). Respondents were also asked to suggest changes they would like to see in the North End. Multiple responses were related to the changing the negative impression and narrative of the neighborhood and building community spirit. Other responses mention adding more parking on Federal Street, remodeling older buildings, and bringing more businesses to the neighborhood (see Appendix 3 for a complete list of word-association responses).

When asked questions regarding neighborhood cohesion and community relations within the North End, majority of respondents agreed with statements such as "this is a close knit neighborhood" and "people in the North End are willing to help their neighbors." A majority of respondents also disagreed that "people in the neighborhood generally don't get along with each other" and people in this neighborhood do not share the same values." Figure 1 displays a complete report of survey responses to such questions.

Perceived Community Relations in the North End

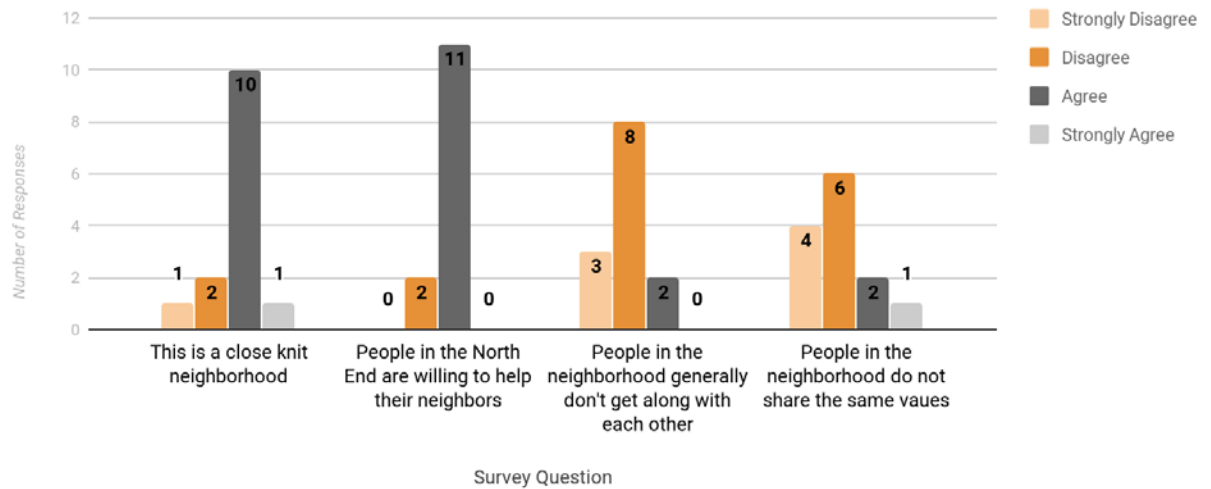


Figure 2: Survey responses regarding neighborhood cohesion and community relations within the North End neighborhood.

Taste of the North End Event

The Taste of the North End (TONE) event was hosted on October 26th, 2017 as a collaboration between North End restaurant owners and the Urban and Regional planning students. The goal of the event was to bring North End residents together to discuss priority neighborhood issues while highlighting local businesses. The evening was organized as a “crawl” beginning at Burke’s Bar and Grill and ending at Little Chicago Pizzeria. At each of the stops, the Urban and Regional planning group focused the discussion on a different issue: housing, transportation, health, and community organizing. Two members of the team attended with two goals: (1) take photos that could be used for campaign images and shared with project partners and (2) test initial campaign message ideas. This was accomplished through conversations with participants about their connection to and perceptions of the neighborhood throughout the night. Neighborhood pride and identification of the strong history of the area were continuously identified as strengths of the area. These conversations echoed sentiments conveyed throughout our interview and survey process and confirmed that dually focusing on

neighborhood pride and history would be an effective strategy to guide initial message development.

Message Development and Testing

Message Development

In general our conversations with Mason City officials, examination of secondary data sources available to us, and our own data collection revealed similar findings. Along with a general sense of pride in the historic nature of the neighborhood, there is an interest in revitalization and increased economic investment in the area, however, there is also a widespread perception that this neighborhood faces many obstacles in accomplishing this. Based on formative research and message testing surveys, the core of the North End campaign is the “This is the North End” and “We are the North End” signage. The idea being to show that the North End of Mason City is made up of much more than what are the current perceptions. This is being achieved through a planned campaign of visual materials, online and social media, and radio ads. The campaign ultimately hopes to reframe conversations surrounding the North End from focus risky and undesirable, to a more hip, family friendly, and up and coming neighborhood. This is paired with a strong sense of community and a lingering sense of past looking to the present and future. A messaging platform will be developed and will include our key message of “This is the North End” or “We are the North End” and will show images of people and places within the North End neighborhood. It will also define the neighborhood’s boundaries with signage. The messages will feature simple black and white photos that are simplistic in composition and nostalgia provoking. They will include the slogan “Play, Imagine, Visit, Enjoy (which lined up will spell the word “LIVE”) Mason City’s Historic North End.” During intercept interviews and

conversations with individuals attending the “Taste of the North End” event, residents expressed nostalgia and pride in the history of their neighborhood. Therefore we felt that this was an integral aspect to the brand of our campaign. Tactics, details, and messaging materials were consolidated and outlined in a mass communication plan (Appendix 6) and further described further in the Implementation portion of the report.

Message Testing

Due to the timeline of the campaign and distance to Mason City, it was difficult to comprehensively test campaign messaging and channel strategies. Despite time limitations, we were able to field an online survey with Mason City and North End residents with the help of local businesses and our Mason City government partners. The questionnaire was advertised on Facebook page for the Historic North End, the Mason City Facebook page, and on the social media pages of North End restaurants. As an incentive to participate, individuals who responded were given the chance to win a \$15 Walmart gift card as a raffle prize. A full copy of the survey is included in Appendix 4. The survey asked participants where they lived, their thoughts on campaign slogan and images, and encouraged individuals to provide qualitative feedback on the proposed messaging.

Summary of message testing survey. In total, 62 individuals responded, 59.7% of whom either currently or at one point lived in the North End Neighborhood, and 77.4% of whom currently live in Mason City, IA. Full results of the survey are presented in Appendix X, however the general results will be summarized here as well. In general, the survey helped to identify several important themes: importance of highlighting “Mason City’s Historic North End,” respondents wanted to see images of historic buildings and current residents represented, and respondents wanted the images to be unmistakably identifiable as being in the North End. In

many cases, these results were unsurprising and confirmed what was learned in formative research. For example, “Mason City’s Historic North End” was reported to be the most well liked slogan of the five offered, which echoes the sense of pride in the neighborhood’s history that was highlighted throughout data collection and specific ideas about the text and formatting. Among other suggestions identified by the survey were the inclusion of a greater diversity of featured individuals

Interestingly, despite the generally positive response to closed-ended questions about the campaign images, responses to the open-ended questions were predominantly negative. Research shows that individuals who view messaging or other materials negatively are more likely to respond and provide feedback, compared to individuals that felt moderately positive (Mazor et. al., 2002). Given the discrepancy between the negative open-ended responses and the more positive reception in the closed-ended questions, it is possible there is a level of response bias present in the results. Ultimately the results of this survey allowed for refinement of the messaging strategy and resulted in altering some of our messaging to include clearer text, more building imagery compared to specific individuals, and attention to the slogan used. The City of Mason City or Urban Regional Planning group may choose to conduct additional focus groups on the campaign message to reach a broader audience and elicit more qualitative feedback.

Implementation Plan

After finalizing our messages and designs, a mass communication plan was created for “This is the North End.” This plan will be made available to the City of Mason City, as well as the Urban and Regional Planning group and include proposed campaign materials and their modes of dissemination. A full copy of this plan is included in Appendix 6 at the end of this report. The proposed marketing strategies include:

- Flyers: to be placed throughout Mason City
- Tote Bags: to be given to North End business owners to distribute to customers
- Light post banners: To be hung throughout the North End
- Social media posts: For things such as the North End Facebook page
- Postcards: To be mailed to residents of Mason City.
 - Postcards could also include \$5 coupons to North End businesses with the goal of increasing attraction to the area.
- Involvement of North End and Mason City residents in the creation of future materials

We have budgeted for each of these proposed marketing materials and developed a menu of strategies for Mason City to choose from. An example budget for these materials can be found below in Table 4.

Table 4
Budgeted cost per proposed marketing item.

Item	Cost
Flyers (1000)	\$500.00
Totes Bags	\$500.00
Light Post Banners (6)	\$1,000.00
Postcards with \$5 Coupon (200)	\$1,000.00
Postcards without Coupon (1000)	\$550.00

Upon receiving the Communication Plan, the City of Mason City can choose which messaging strategies they would like to implement. North End business owners will be integral partners in the dissemination process and the success of this campaign.

Evaluation Plan

Given that there is not time to conduct an evaluation of the campaign, we propose the following evaluation guidelines that could be completed by Mason City partners. This evaluation is primarily aimed at understanding the reach of the campaign and initial reactions of Mason City residents. While the overall goal of the campaign is to decrease stigma around the North End and

increase social cohesion in the neighborhood, these outcomes would be difficult, if not impossible to measure. Therefore the plan proposed below will instead attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What was the overall reach of the “This is the North End” Campaign?
 - a. What was the reach of each channel? (Postcards, tote bags, etc.)
2. To what extent are campaign images and messages recognizable to North End residents? To the greater Mason City community?
3. What are citizens’ perceptions of the campaign in the North End? In the rest of Mason City?
4. How do project partners, including the City of Mason City, perceive the reactions to and impact of the campaign?
5. Is there sustained support for the campaign in the form of individual submissions for “This is the North End”?

Process Evaluation

Tracking campaign materials. Depending on the marketing strategies that are chosen, we would want to conduct a process evaluation by tracking specific dissemination efforts including, the number of flyers distributed throughout Mason City or the number of social media posts per month and their reach. Or for example, if the City decides to distribute postcards with \$5 North End business coupons attached, the number of coupons collected by businesses could be tracked as well as the dollar amount of business that the postcards generated. Tracking the dissemination and reach of these materials will provide the answer to the first evaluation question proposed.

Outcome Evaluation

In order to address evaluation questions two - five, we propose three different strategies used for outcome evaluation:

Focus groups. Focus groups should be conducted with people living in the North End. We recommend at least three focus groups be conducted with 10 people in each group if possible. Focus groups will include questions about awareness of the campaign and excitement

surrounding it. Questions about perceptions of the campaign and their perceived impacts on the community could also be asked. Participants should also be asked for feedback on the campaign in order to further the work being done in the North End.

Intercept interviews and surveys. Intercept interviews should be conducted with residents of Mason City who do not live in the North End. These brief interviews should primarily focus on campaign recollection and perceptions of campaign messages. Unfortunately, given the lack of pre-campaign data collection and lack of any comparison group, it will be hard to actually measure any changes in perceptions or social cohesion. One option to at least partially overcome this could be to administer the community survey that was used preliminary research (Appendix 2) prior to implementation of campaign activities and then several months post implementation. It is important to note that any perception changes could not be attributed specifically to the campaign given the lack of a comparison group and the many other activities that are taking place in the North End. However, this survey may be a good tool to use to generally assess changes in the perceptions of the neighborhood as the Urban and Regional planning students continue to work in the area.

Formal Interviews. Formal interviews should be conducted with our partners who work for the City of Mason City to receive feedback on the campaign. Questions should address any perceived changes since implementation and should also explore ways to further the campaign and ensure sustainability of the messages it provides. Formal interviews should also be conducted with business owners who participated in the Taste of the North End event. These interviews could serve as a way to assess progress being made by business owners charged with distributing campaign materials. Questions should also be asked about any perceived changes in business since the start of the campaign.

Project Timeline

Below is a detailed timeline of the work that was conducted on this project between September 1st and December 8th, 2017. We have also provided a proposed timeline for the rollout of campaign materials and evaluation activities.

Table 5
Project Timeline-Completed Activities

Activity	Date
Literature Review - Preliminary Research	September 1st- September 26th, 2017
River City Fest - Preliminary Data Collection (Intercept Interviews and tour of North End)	September 17th, 2017
Renaissance Forum - Preliminary Data Collection (Community Surveys and tour of North End)	October 7, 2017
Project Report (Part 1) Due	October 17, 2017
Taste of the North End Event - Photo Collection	October 26, 2017
Message Development, Design and Refinement	October 27 - November 21st
Message Testing	November 21st-December 3rd
Paper Edits	October 6 - November 24
Presentation to IISC and Mason City Partners	December 5
Final report submitted to IISC and Mason City Partners	December 12

Table 6
Project Timeline-Proposed Activities

Activity	Date
City makes final decisions about campaign strategies based on menu of available options and communication plan	December 12, 2017- January 1, 2018
Dissemination of campaign materials chosen	January 1-May 1
Process evaluation begins	January 1
Outcome evaluation activities (surveys and interviews)	May 1-June 1

Budget

Funding for this project was provided by through Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities. The City of Mason City allocated \$1,500 to the “This is the North End” project. These funds were used to cover the costs related to travel and can be used for any printed materials for the campaign. All other costs associated with this project were covered by in-kind donations of student time.

Table 7
Total Project Budget

Budget: The University of Iowa						
						Totals
	Personnel (in-kind)	FY17 Salary	FY17 Fringe %	BP % Effort	Budget Category	8/26/2017-12/12/2017
	Kloft, Samantha	23,233.00		10.00%	Salary	1,196.50
			23.00%		Fringe	275.19
	McCullough, Katherine	23,233.00		10.00%	Salary	1,196.50
			23.00%		Fringe	275.19
	Ribar, Zoe	23,233.00		10.00%	Salary	1,196.50
			23.00%		Fringe	275.19
	Ryan, Grace	23,233.00		10.00%	Salary	1,196.50
			23.00%		Fringe	275.19
					Personnel	5,886.78
					Travel	191.40
					In State: 3 trips to Mason City	191.40

					Other	3,636.25
					Research Subject Incentives \$15 ea.	15.00
					Proposed materials- 50 Posters	100.00
					Proposed materials-1000 Flyers	500.00
					Proposed materials- 150 Tote bags	500.00
					Proposed materials-6 Light Post banners	1,000.00
					Proposed materials- 175 Postcards with \$5 coupon	971.25
					Proposed materials-1000 Postcards without coupon	550.00
					Modified Total Direct Costs	9,714.43
					Total Cost	9,714.43

Budget Justification

This project budget reflects personnel time, travel costs, and potential costs related to production and dissemination of materials. A brief justification of the following categories is provided below:

Personnel. All of the staff time for this project was an in-kind donation by students from the University of Iowa team. Rates are based on Graduate Research Assistant salary and fringe rates are set by the University.

Travel. The team was able to visit Mason City three times over the course of the semester. This budget was spent on rental of vehicles from Fleet Services at the University of Iowa.

Proposed materials. The budget for these items was determined based on market rates. The team reached out to local manufacturers for each of the items to determine an average price. These prices are subject to change depending on what vendors the City of Mason City chooses to use for production of the materials.

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Appendix 1

SWOT Analysis Results- July 6 and July 8, 2015

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● High traffic area and visibility● Highway 65● Cheaper and more cost effective living● Strong sense of community in neighborhood, good people● Neighborhood watch● Busing available for schools● Parking in the rear of buildings● Lighting● Buildings have history, architectural interest● Buildings are visually interesting● Buildings are available for businesses and new investment● Less industry – quieter, cleaner, fewer environmental hazards● People know where the North end is, strong identity● Walkable community● Trees● Entrepreneurial spirit● No national chain, mostly locally owned businesses● Easy access● Distinct business district with a good mix● Proximity of Downtown● Nature Center● Family Dollar	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Lack of lighting● Traffic travels at a high rate of speed● Bad sidewalks● Poor reputation, high crime reputation● Homeless in the area● Less pride than there used to be● Condition of properties, old buildings● Vandalism● Empty store fronts● Cost to renovate may exceed profit. Financial risk, low return on investment● Transient residents, bad tenants● West-end competition has hurt retail activity● Lenders are not willing to invest in North end● High priced merchandise does not sell in North end● Negative perception of North end by others in Mason City for real estate● Loss of employment centers in North end, Decker plant and Holcim● Loss of Wonder Bread Outlet store● Lots are not very deep● Too much blight● Rental properties● Lack of enforcement for trash, snow and lawns● Not a destination area● No on-street parking on Federal● Condition of parking lots● No fast-food restaurants● Nowhere to store snow● DOT snow crews travel fast down the highway● Closeness of buildings to streets for snow plowing● State jurisdiction over streets● Number of police calls
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Opportunities:

- City Council is interested in revitalizing the North end – Commitment
- Put traffic light in to reduce speed
- Improve lighting for safety
- Have building available for businesses that want to move in; lease or own
- Vacant land to be developed
- Promote historic center
- Way-finding Signage – direction to Lime Creek
- Banners inviting to the North end
- Hanging flowers and other beautification efforts
- Public amenities near the North end
- Similar businesses increase business for all
- Market study; what kinds of businesses will work on the North end
- This is a place entrepreneurs could prosper
- Tourism and visitors
- Change in demographics
- Census data; American Community Survey
- Start over with a buildable lot or take down buildings beyond repair for parking
- New housing; new population within walking distance
- Grocery store
- Walk-in clinic
- Subway, Hardee's or other restaurant or coffee shop
- Bike trails
- High line – park on old UP Rail line
- Engaged and committed care of interested owners
- Volunteerism
- Main Street District approach to marketing

Threats:

- Lack of funding
- Cost of rehabilitation
- No return on investment
- Lack of jobs
- Too far gone; too much work (perception)
- Crime (actual or perception)
- Condition of the buildings
- Lack of police response to North end
- Regulations
- Cultural bias
- Fear of safety/crime
- Young people are not moving into the North end
- State highway regulations and jurisdiction
- No way to connect both sides of the street

Appendix 2
Community Survey

What five words that you would use to describe the North End Neighborhood?

1. 4.
2. 5.
- 3.

For each of these statements, please respond by placing an X in the corresponding box based on how you see the North End Neighborhood:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
This is a close knit neighborhood				
People in the North End are willing to help their neighbors				
People in the neighborhood generally don't get along with each other				
People in this neighborhood do not share the same values				

What is your favorite part of the North End?

What is something you would change about the neighborhood?

Do you live in the North End Neighborhood?

- Yes
- No

If yes—how long? (Number of years)
(Neighborhood)

Age:	Gender:
------	---------

If no—where do you live?

Appendix 3
Coded Community Survey Responses

Question: What five words that you would use to describe the North End Neighborhood?	
Word or Phrase	Code (positive, neutral, negative)
Blue collar	Neutral
Rough	Negative
Safe	Positive
Opportunity	Positive
Improving (3)	Positive
Potential (2)	Positive
Misunderstood	Positive
Revitalizing	Positive
Rundown (2)	Negative
Old (3)	Neutral
Unwelcoming	Negative
Low Income	Negative
Helpful	Positive
Historic (3)	Neutral
Good people	Positive
Reputation slow to change	Negative
Shrinking	Neutral
Investment (2)	Positive
Junky - North Federal	Negative
Trashy	Negative
Families	Neutral

Formerly industrial	Neutral
Interested in the future	Positive
Becoming more vibrant	Positive
Observed	Neutral
No words	Negative
Concerning	Negative
Friendly	Positive
Frontline	Neutral
Tired	Negative
Generalizable	Neutral
Needs to be welcoming to those entering from North End	Negative
Abandonment	Negative
Important	Positive
Frightening	Negative

Question: What is your favorite part of the North End?	Question: What is something you would change about the neighborhood?
Northwestern Steakhouse (3)	Bad impression/perceptions (4)
Little Chicago (2)	Available variety of uses
New restaurants/other businesses (2)	Street parking on Federal (2)
Blue Heron Grill	Owners clean up rundown properties
Improving properties/remodeling (2)	More public businesses
Barts Auto & Frame	Remodeling
Older buildings	Sidewalk widening
Historic memories	North Federal curb appeal

Potential future	Junky buildings
Burke's Bar and Grill	More community spirit to work together to fix it
Cozy Corner	
Lumber Co.	
Ball Parks	
Butchers	
Efforts to keep businesses going	

Appendix 4
 Message Testing Survey

North End-Message Testing

Q1 Thank you for participating in our survey! We would like to get your feedback on a public campaign we have created to increase excitement about the North End Neighborhood in Mason City. We would appreciate if you took a couple of minutes to answer the following questions and provide us with your thoughts. Everyone who responds to the survey will be entered into a drawing to win a \$15 Walmart Gift Card. Please provide us with your email address at the end of the survey to be eligible for the drawing.

If you have any questions about the project or this survey, you can email Grace Ryan (grace-ryan@uiowa.edu).

Q16 Do you currently live in Mason City, IA?

- Yes
- No

Q15 Do you currently or have you ever lived in the North End neighborhood of Mason City, IA?

- Yes
- No

Q2 Please indicate how much you like or dislike the following campaign slogans:

	Like a great deal	Like somewhat	Neither like nor dislike	Dislike somewhat	Dislike a great deal
I am the North End	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We are the North End	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This is the North End	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Play, Imagine, Visit, Enjoy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Mason City's Historic North End	○	○	○	○	○
--	---	---	---	---	---

Q6 Who or what do you think should be featured in campaign images?

- North End residents
- North End buildings
- North End business owners
- Parks or other public spaces in the North End
- Other _____



Q3 Above is a sample campaign image. Please respond to the following questions based on this image.

Q4 In the above image, how much do you like the picture that is featured?

- Like a great deal
- Like somewhat
- Neither like nor dislike
- Dislike somewhat

- Dislike a great deal

Q5 In the above image, how much do you like the messages?

- Like a great deal
- Like somewhat
- Neither like nor dislike
- Dislike somewhat
- Dislike a great deal

Q9 If you answered that you didn't like anything about the image please let us know what you did not like about it in the space below.

Q10 Please answer the questions below based on this image.

PLAY
IMAGINE
VISIT
ENJOY

Mason City's
Historic North End



We are the North End

Q11 In the above image, how much do you like the picture that is featured?

- Like a great deal
- Like somewhat
- Neither like or dislike
- Dislike somewhat
- Dislike a great deal

Q12 In the above image, how much do you like the text that is featured (color, size, etc)?

- Like a great deal
- Like somewhat
- Neither like nor dislike
- Dislike somewhat
- Dislike a great deal

Q13 If you answered that you didn't like anything about the image, please let us know what you did not like about it in the space below.

Q8 Thank you for taking our survey! Please use the space below to let us know if you have any other thoughts on this project or what should be featured in the campaign!

Q14 Please provide us with your email address to be entered into the raffle for a \$15 Walmart gift card.

Appendix 5
 Message Testing Results

Do you currently live in Mason City, IA?

	n	%
Yes	48	77.4
No	14	22.6

Do you currently, or have you ever, lived in the North End neighborhood of Mason City, IA?

	n	%
Yes	37	59.7
No	25	40.3

Please indicate how much you like or dislike the following campaign slogans:

	Like a great deal	Like somewhat	Neither like nor dislike	Dislike somewhat	Dislike a great deal
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
I am the North End	4 (6.5)	11 (17.7)	16 (25.8)	15 (24.2)	16 (25.8)
We are the North End	12 (20.0)	17 (28.3)	13 (21.7)	10 (16.7)	8 (13.3)
This is the North End	8 (13.1)	12 (19.7)	17 (27.9)	14 (23.0)	10 (16.4)
Play, Imagine, Live, Enjoy	9 (14.8)	15 (24.6)	17 (27.9)	11 (18.0)	9 (14.8)
Mason City's Historic North End	20 (32.8)	28 (45.9)	8 (13.1)	2 (3.3)	3 (4.9)

Who or what do you think should be featured in campaign images? (check all that apply)

	n	%
Residents	30	48.4
Buildings	45	72.6
Business owners	37	59.7
Parks or public spaces	34	54.8
Other	5	8.1

Summary of fill-in responses:

- A collage of all of the above
- Most recent business additions, current thriving businesses, recently renovated buildings, any beautiful architecture and any historical landmarks
- Radio testimonials from each group
- Residents, buildings, parks, businesses



In the above image, how much do you like the picture that is featured?

	n	%
Like a great deal	9	14.8
Like somewhat	19	31.1
Neither like nor dislike	9	14.8
Dislike somewhat	14	23.0
Dislike a great deal	10	16.4

In the above image, how much do you like the message?

	n	%
Like a great deal	9	14.8
Like somewhat	30	49.2
Neither like nor dislike	6	9.8
Dislike somewhat	8	13.1
Dislike a great deal	8	13.1

If you answered that you didn't like anything about the image, please let us know what you did not like in the space below.

- I feel like it's a stock photo. Not indicative of a Mason City.
- imply lights out
- It doesnt mean anything to me
- It needs color, excitement, life! As a photographer, I don't see the the draw, passion, or beauty from this image or the design of the campaign. It seems like it needs a clear focus and purpose. People are drawn to beauty, history, and the excitement of the unknown...I don't feel any of these from this image.
- It's an old run down scoreboard which to me portrays the current state of the north end. My opinion would be to find the hidden gems that would portray potential beauty of the north end.
- It's a score board. That's not the only thing of interest in the north end area.
- It's a scoreboard, that says nothing about mason city's north end. The along is okay but I think you can do better if your trying to help the north end. I feel like this isn't a slongan and more of a statement.

- Just makes me think of the fields for games on the far end of the North end, the image doesn't fit the entire scope that is Mason City so North end. It should have historic buildings in pic.
- Like the top right slogan. Don't like the 'This is the north end' seems tacky. As a young adult in the north end community I would like to showcase the excitement of the town and how the North End contributes. A picture of kids playing ball, lines at the concession stand, dining at the steakhouse, games at Monroe park, etc (just i
- Looks cheap
- Mason city isn't known for baseball, so it's confusing
- Not educated on what makes it historic. Explain that in an ad?
- Not sure what is in the picture. Is it scoreboards at the Little League fields?
- Only people who frequent the ball park might know that this is located in the North End; I would love to see less nostalgia and more 'this is the new/vibrant' North End - examples (happy kids playing at a park, brightly lite streetscape, busy restaurant, etc.
- Picture doesn't showcase the north end itself. Could be any score board from numerous baseball diamonds in town.
- That doesn't show anything about specific north end area- could be anywhere!
- The baseball field
- The font is overused in Mason City. Also photo of a the baseball sign is kind of boring.
- The image is to vague, has nothing to do with the north end to outsiders. That could be a scoreboard from ANYWHERE. Needs to be more specific.
- The picture
- The score board doesn't match the message
- The score board seems unrelated to the north end.
- this is the north end. play, imagine, visit l, enjoy(what?! ...find very confusing. do not find these words to describe the north end or the neighborhood).



In the above image, how much do you like the picture that is featured?

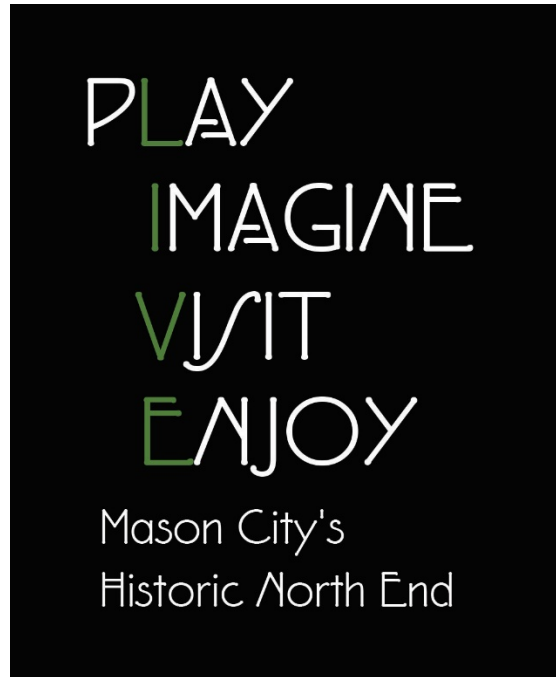
	n	%
Like a great deal	22	36.7
Like somewhat	29	48.3
Neither like nor dislike	6	10.0
Dislike somewhat	3	5.0
Dislike a great deal	3	5.0

In the above image, how much do you like the text that is featured?

	n	%
Like a great deal	14	23.3
Like somewhat	23	38.3
Neither like nor dislike	7	11.7
Dislike somewhat	13	21.7
Dislike a great deal	3	5.0

If you answered that you didn't like anything about the image, please let us know what you did not like in the space below.

- Again, it needs some spark and excitement! The photos should be taken by a professional and should tell a bit of a story.
- Again, more specific... this could be a couple or a business from anywhere....
- Bolder text
- business owners are not what is thought of when someone says the north end. also the slogan is horrible. i find it to be better said if it were describing up town. macnider or the library area. not the north end.
- I think the photo should be in color. Also how about more diversity in the photos. Mason city has Hispanic people and African Americans too. There are only white people in that picture.
- Larger font
- Larger text
- Text does not stand out, hard to differentiate from the background.
- Text needs to be bigger
- Text should be bigger
- Text xould be more eye catching
- The bottom font should be a bit larger ad wrll as the upper right box
- The color is wrong, maybe blue. Gets lost in the green. Love the font, bigger text might help
- The green font is difficult to see on the black background
- The green give the image an "old feel" not a historic feel.
- Too small wording
- Who are they?? Resturant owner's? The background is horrible....light above? Blank wall- guy in back?
- Wrong should be bigger easier to see



“This is the North End” Communication Plan

January 2018 – March 2018

Table of Contents

- I. Strategy Overview
- II. Communication Platforms
- III. Messaging
- IV. Proposed Timeline

Section I. Strategy Overview

Guiding Principles

1. This plan is made in the spirit of collaboration with members of the North End neighborhood, and should always bring representatives from the area in for consult wherever possible
2. This plan is made in the spirit of flexibility; if something works well, do more of it. If something doesn't work; stop doing it

Target Audiences

1. Citizens of Mason City- This campaign is meant to be broad in scope and to capture the imagination of everyone who lives in the city
2. Citizens of the North End- This campaign is meant to foster a sense of community and pride for the people who live in the North End
3. Potential Business Owners/Investors- This campaign is meant to help potential business owners imagine the possibilities in investing in or opening up spaces in the North End
4. Visitors to Mason City

Campaign Objectives

1. To increase excitement around changes in the North End neighborhood
2. To have a positive impact on the desirability of the North End as a place to live
3. To have a positive impact on the desirability of the North End as a place to do business
4. To have a positive impact on neighborhood pride and social cohesion within the North End neighborhood

Campaign Factors

Barriers

- Perception of the North End as being an undesirable place to live and work
- Lack of North End community organization
- Operational Constraints:

- Budget Constraints
- Time Constraints
- Inability of the Public Health Students to fully evaluate this plan, that must be done by the City-evaluation guidelines are outlined in the final report

Benefits

- Strong sense of history in the North End
- Mason City buy in for revitalization of the area
- Business owner buy in for revitalization of the area

Influencers

- Business owners (Burke’s, The Blue Heron, Landlords, Little Chicago)

Positioning Statement

This campaign will offer a counter argument to what many people of the city say about the North End. Through our messaging, we are trying to rewrite the talking points about the neighborhood and reframe the conversations surrounding the neighborhood from being an area that has high crime (It doesn’t) to talking the North End as being “up and coming” and a destination for living, working, and businesses of all kinds. Through our research and community resources, we were uniquely positioned to develop the campaign messages and dissemination strategy

Desired Actions of Target Audiences

- Visit the North End Facebook Page
- Acknowledge awareness of the campaign
- Visit North End businesses
- Invest in the neighborhood by starting a business
- Invest in the neighborhood by moving into area

Section II. Communication Platforms

Potential Communication Channels, Target Audience & Message Frequency

1. **Website**
 - Update Mason City Website with North End Materials
 - Target audiences: all
2. **Facebook- North End Facebook Page**
 - Two updates each week
 - Target audiences: all

3. **Facebook- Mason City Facebook Page**
 - Two updates each week
 - Share your story feature where people can share their story or the North End
 - Target audiences: all
4. **Posters**
 - “This is the North End Posters” to be hung in businesses and public buildings throughout Mason City
 - Target audiences: all
5. **Light pole Banners**
 - “This is the North End” Light Pole Banners to be hung on light poles in the North end neighborhood
 - Target audiences: all
6. **Tote Bags**
 - Tote bags with North End slogan and images on them to be given to local business owners to give out to patrons
 - Target audience: all
7. **Post Cards**
 - Post cards to be distributed to all Mason City residents featuring North End businesses
 - i. Potential for post cards to include a \$5 coupon to North End businesses
 - Target audience: all

Section III. Messaging

Campaign Outreach Strategies and Tactics

Strategic Foundation:

Strategies and tactics are designed to reach the target audiences directly and through the use of partners within the community- such as business owners. The core of the campaign is the “I am the North End” signage, the idea of showing that the North End is more than what people think. We’re doing this through a planned campaign of visual materials, online and social media, and radio ads. We are trying to reframe the conversations surrounding the North End from being a high crime, undesirable area, to being a more hip, family friendly, and up and coming neighborhood with a strong sense of community and a lingering sense of past, that is looking to the present and future

Tactic Prioritization Color Key

Red Font: Primary

Blue Font: Secondary

Strategy 1: Define and Promote a Call to Action

Tactic 1: Develop a messaging platform

- A messaging platform will be developed and will include our key message of “This is the North End” or “We are the North End” and will show images of people and places within the North End neighborhood. The messages feature simple pictures that are black and white and feature simplicity of composition and a bit of nostalgia. They will include the slogan “ P_lay, I_magine, V_isit, E_at” (which lined up will spell the word “LIVE”) Mason City’s History North End.

The campaign’s call the action will focus on encouraging people to think about the North End in a different light and to start seeing it as a lively place to go, as opposed to a place to avoid with high crime.

Tactic 2: Develop campaign tools and resources

Use photos and testimonials of residents and business owners of the North End to bring awareness of the uniqueness of the area

1. **Facebook posts**
2. **Posters**
3. **Light pole Banners**
4. **Tote Bags**
5. **Postcards**

Strategy 2 Create a favorable environment and a sense of community

Tactic 1: Develop advertising campaign

Roll out the visuals of the campaign so that people start to see and hear it in many places around Mason City. Mass media provides the opportunity to target our audiences, control the messages, and get the messages out with desired frequency we want in the community.

- Step One: Facebook pages and preliminary testing
 - Start by posting visuals on the Facebook page for the North End for some preliminary testing
 - Create Facebook polls for people to vote on which images they like best
 - Differences will be in text, slogan, and images themselves
- Step Two: City Websites: The City Websites and social media pages should be updated as appropriate with the visuals from the campaign, urging people to visit the North End

- Step Three: Print Campaign Phase One
 - The third wave of the campaign should be the light pole banners, which will ideally put up around the North End and in downtown Mason City leading into the North End and welcoming people to the area.
- Step Four: Print Campaign Phase Two
 - The fourth wave of the campaign should be posters, which will be hung up in local businesses, bus stops, in busses, and city buildings. And tote bags, which will be given to local businesses to distribute as they see fit
- Other ideas:
 - Murals, postcards with money for North End businesses, North End neighborhood walks

Tactic 2: Engage with the Community

The campaign strategy was built upon principles of community involvement. Engaging the North End and greater Mason City community in the campaign will help to foster a sense of community within the Neighborhood. There is potential for this to be done over the course of the next six months with the Urban and Regional Planning group as they continue to work in the area. Additionally, residents could be encouraged to submit their own pictures for inclusion in the “This is the North End” campaign. This would draw on the strong existing sense of neighborhood pride as well as to promote the longevity and sustainability of the campaign by continually updating visuals. Additionally, as community organization within the North End occurs campaign visuals could be altered specific community calls to action if an organizer wants, for example, a community meeting on a certain date.

Section IV. Proposed Timeline

Key Dates

2018

This outlines potential implementation items and proposed dates

January

- 50 Posters Printed
 - Images must be decided upon and chosen in advance
- 150 tote bags printed
 - Design is chosen
 - These can be given to businesses to be distributed as they see fit
- Choose Banner Designs

- Banners Printed
 - Two banners will be “Welcome to the historic North End” we must choose the other four designs
- **City Facebook pages updated with images from campaign**

February

- Light Pole Banners Installed
- Postcards printed

March

- Posters are put up around Mason City
- Postcard mailing campaign goes live- mass mailing of “this is the North End” postcards with business discount