

Downtown Assessment - Montezuma, Iowa

May 21 – May 23, 2025



Iowa Downtown Resource Center
Iowa Economic Development Authority





Introduction

- Survey
- Community Meeting
- Driving Tour
- Walking Tour
- Focus Groups
- Presentation
- Written Summary



Why is downtown important?

Heart of Community

Connects Community

History

Unique



Public Input Survey

57 responses



What is downtown's greatest strength?

- Appearance (22)
- Cleanliness (16)



What is downtown's greatest weakness?

- Not enough to do (26)



If you were given \$100,000 to invest in the downtown, what would you use the funds for?

- Restore Historic Buildings / Facelifts (9)



What type of new business do you think is most needed downtown?

- Restaurant (19)
 - Ma & Pa Café, Sandwich, Fast Food
- Clothing/Shoes (11)



What type of new activity would make you want to spend time in the downtown area?

- Performing arts stage/Live Music/Dance/Concerts (9)
- Workout classes/Exercise/Gym/Rec center (4)
- Outdoor seating/For coffee/Patio (4)
- Splash pad (4)
- Farmers Market (4)
- Park for families/Kids play area (4)



What public amenities do you think are most needed downtown?

- Places for kids (29)
- Public art (19)
- Street seating (16)



What is your age?

| | | |
|-------------------|----|---------|
| 14 & Under | 0 | 0.00% |
| 15-25 | 2 | 4% |
| 26-35 | 11 | 19% |
| 36-45 | 15 | 26% |
| 46-55 | 8 | 14% |
| 55-65 | 11 | 19% |
| 66+ | 9 | 16% |
| Prefer not to say | 1 | 2% |
| Total | 57 | 100.00% |

Community Assets/Strengths

- School: FFA (flowers)
- City Utilities
- Dairy King
- Grocery
- Trails
- Diamond Lake
- Lake Ponderosa Community
- Core employers



Downtown Assets/Strengths

- Building Stock
- Library
- Courthouse, Freedom Rock
- Carnegie Library
- Memorial Hall
- Space Maximization/Multiple Uses
- Car Dealership
- 4th of July, Hometown Holidays, Car Show
- Thursdays on the Square
- Town Square



Opportunities

1. Buildings
2. Signs/Storefronts
3. Commercial- Capacity- Collaboration- Communication
4. Public Space
5. Activate Downtown
6. Resource Identification & Development

Buildings

- Montezuma: Nice, building stock
- Historic district
- CDBG Project: 2012
- Investment in downtowns



Buildings: Everytown USA

- Great rehabs
- Deferred maintenance
- Demolition: missing teeth
- Inappropriate rehabs



Montezuma has all of these examples

Buildings: Inappropriate rehabs



Buildings



Incentives

Local: Component grants
 State: Catalyst grants



Community Catalyst Building Remediation

This grant program assists communities with the redevelopment or rehabilitation of buildings to stimulate economic growth or reinvestment in the community.

Program Definition

- Provides financial assistance to cities
- Must stimulate economic growth
- Strong application will be a catalyst for additional growth
- Exhibit appropriate design
- Be well-funded and demonstrate partnerships

Program Details

- Applicant must be a city
- Grant \$100,000
- 40% of funds will be awarded to cities with populations under 1,500
- Mandatory pre-application process
- Applications are by invitation only
- City must provide financial resources

Buildings: Design Guidelines



Buildings: Ordinances, Code Enforcement

Minimum Maintenance Ordinance Vacant Building Registry

- Sometimes you need a carrot
- Ground floor housing ordinance
- Vacant and "inappropriate use" ordinance
 - Encourage "regular public business hours"
 - Discourage storage (inside and outside)
- Minimum Maintenance
- Health and Safety/Building Code

Buildings: Downtown Housing

Hot downtowns have upper story housing!!!
Many opportunities in Montezuma

- Inventory
- Tours
- Grants



Buildings: History Awareness

- News stories
- Plaques
- Architectural Awareness Contests

Follow This Route

- 1 Modern**
This picture shows a tiny piece of the tallest building on the square. Built in 1966, it is an example of the **Modern style** of architecture.
- 2 Mansard Roof**
The **Mansard roof** was a popular update to the front of downtown buildings during the 1970s.
- 3 Lintel**
This building was built in 1875. It has interesting **lintels** above the windows that are made of cast stone.
- 4 Mosaic**
The arrow points to parts of this building's original **Prairie style**. Now, the most notable feature is the tile mosaic map of Greene County.
- 5 Ionic Columns**
The north and south sides of this building have 6 **ionic columns** each. The ionic style of columns had scrolls at the top (see the arrow in the picture above).
- 6 Corbel**
This building was fixed in 2011. At the top edge it has stair-stepped brick **corbels**.
- 7 Arched Window**
This building has 3 sets of these unique, **arched window** groupings.
- 8 Metal Facade**
The entire upper two floors are covered in a decorative metal face (also called **façade**). This may be Iowa's largest surviving metal-faced building.

Buildings: The Elephant in the Room?



Buildings: Potential



FAÇADE DESIGN CONCEPT

CONCEPTUAL DRAWING ONLY - NOT INTENDED FOR CONSTRUCTION

205 E MAIN STREET | MONTEZUMA, IOWA

Buildings: Potential



• OLD TELEPHONE BUILDING



- QUICK AND EASY VOLUNTEER PROJECT:
 - REMOVE PAINT AND SHUTTERS
 - PAINT DETAILS WITH BRIGHT CONTRASTING COLORS
 - UPGRADE DOOR WITH MORE HISTORIC MATERIALS AND DETAILS
 - ART FILM IN TRANSOM MAKES IT PERSONAL AND INTERESTING (IRIS' FROM ACROSS THE STREET)

Buildings: Potential



- NICE RENOVATION
- NEED BOLDER MORE COLORFUL SIGNAGE WITH USE OF ICONS
- CREATE MORE "SIZZLE" WITH HIGH CONTRAST COLORS MORE HISTORICALLY APPROPRIATE (LESS BEIGE)
- BRIGHTER LIGHTING INSIDE SHINING ON MERCHANDISE NEAR WINDOWS
- RESTORE TRANSOM WINDOWS TO LET LIGHT DEEP INTO STOREROOM
- LIKE THE LACE "LOVE" IN THE RESIDENTIAL ENTRY TRANSOM



Signs/Storefronts

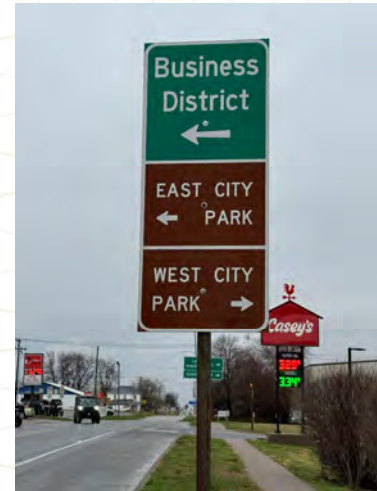
- Signs
 - Wayfinding
 - Informational
 - Blade signs
 - Window graphics
 - Flags
 - Sandwich boards
 - Store hours



Signs/Storefronts

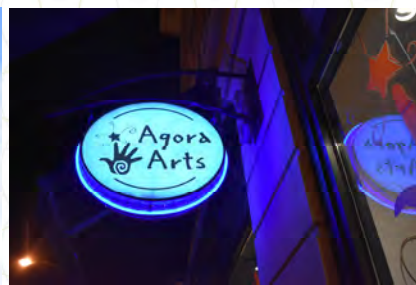
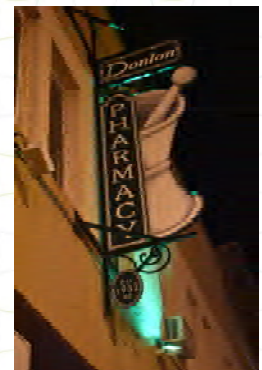
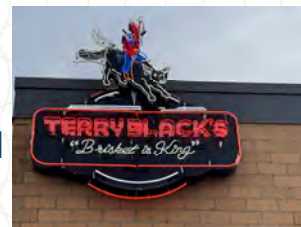
Wayfinding

- Locate strategically
- 4-way flashing stop at highway intersection
- Proper size for location/vehicle speeds
- Highlight historic district



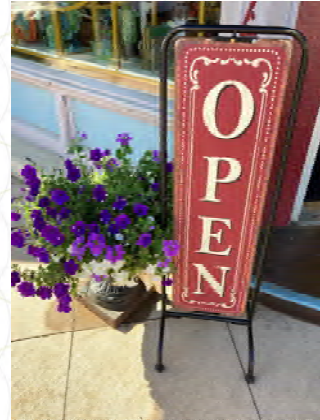
Signs/Storefronts

- Does sign represent quality
- What you sell / services provided
- Think quality, creative, color
 - The EVERY 20' EXPERIENCE



Signs/Storefronts

- Flags
- Sandwich Boards



Signs/Storefronts

- Window graphics



Signs/Storefronts

- What do you see?
 - Take stroll
 - Clean up
 - Scavenger hunt
- Have interesting window displays
 - Local artists
 - Local interior designers
 - Look to other windows for examples



Signs/Storefronts

- Remove the tinting
- Avoid reflectivity



Signs/Storefronts

- Remove the tinting
- Avoid reflectivity



Signs/Storefronts

- Backlighting
- Ambient light from shops light sidewalks



Signs/Storefronts

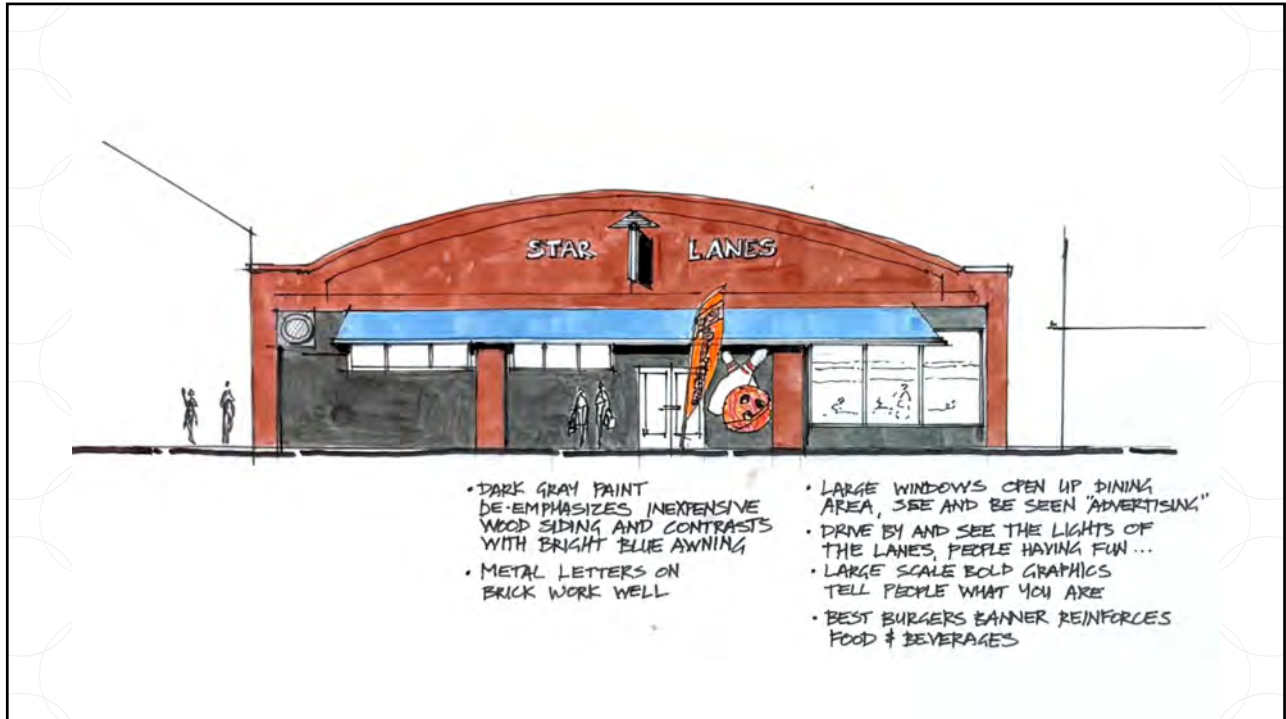
- Consider local matching grant
- Match businesses & local artists
- Local fabricator (Monte Manufacturing?)
- Community foundation art grant?





Buildings: Potential



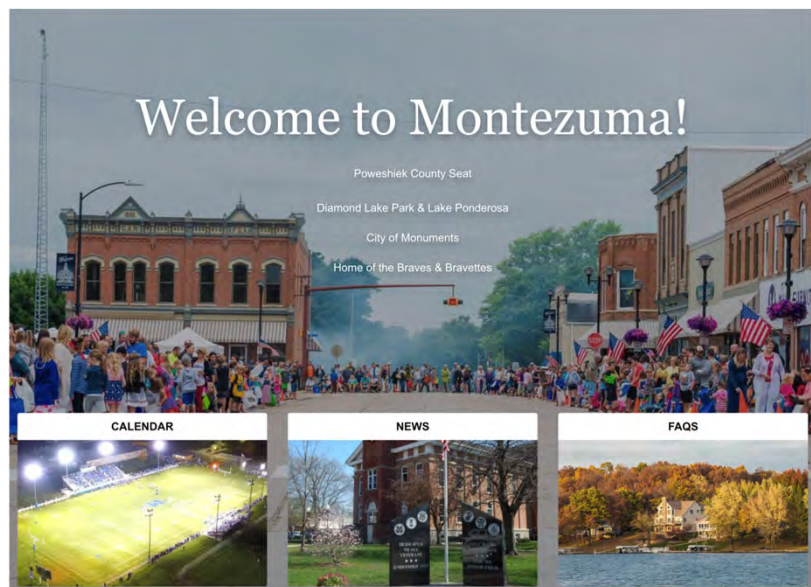


Commercial Collaboration Ideas

Easy Tools

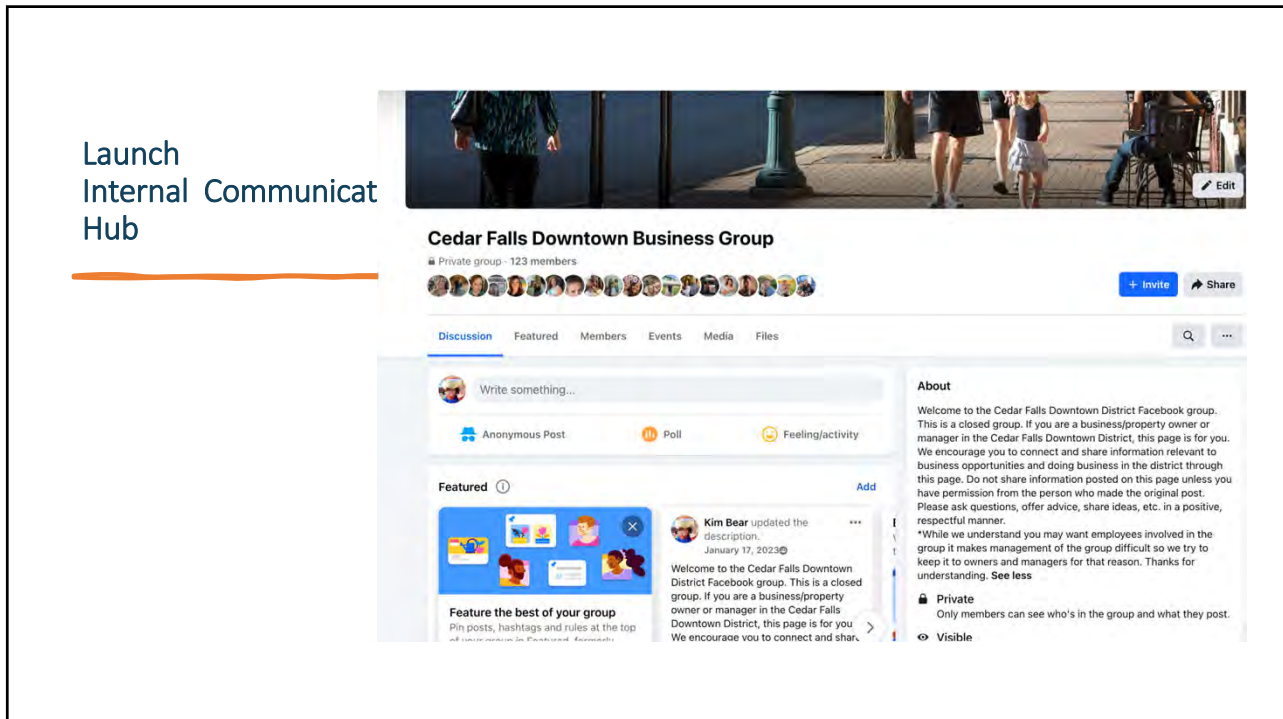
- Create a Business Directory
 - Collect business names, contact info, social handles, and services
 - Print versions for events or handouts
- Launch Internal Communication Hub
 - Create a private Facebook group, email newsletter, or text group
 - Share updates, reminders, and open calls for volunteers
- Show collaboration & connection

Business Directory





Print version



Launch Internal Communicat Hub

Commercial Collaboration

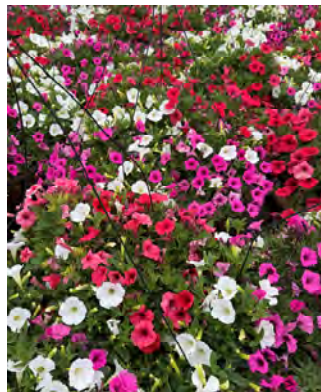
Easy Tools for Montezuma Community Development

- Establish business sub committee
- Hold quarterly meetings
 - Half on education, half on topical
 - Print versions for events or handouts
- Highlight businesses

Easy Tools for Businesses

- Cross promotion
 - Use your social media following to cross promote

Community Collaboration



Community Collaboration

"Volunteers are not paid – not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless." - Sherry Anderson



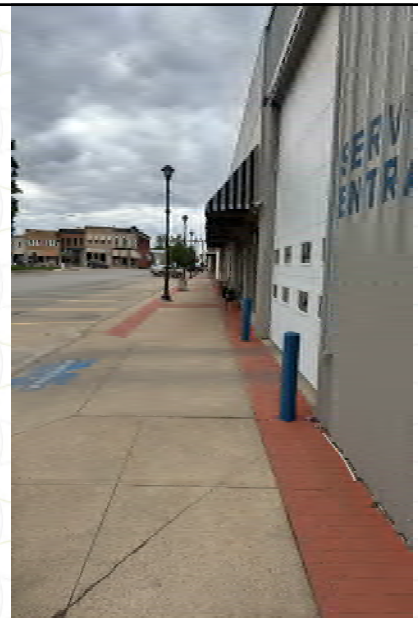
Public Spaces

- Downtown your front porch
- Opportunity to connect
- Activates downtown
- Activities for all ages
- Manage and program



Public Spaces

- Downtown Today



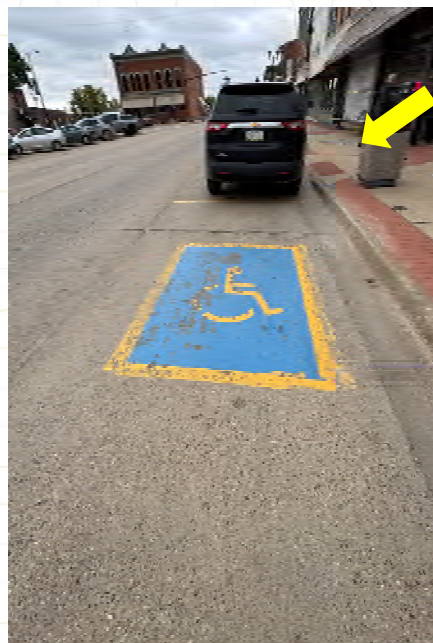
Public Spaces

- Downtown desired



Public Spaces

- Lay the foundation
 - Accessibility
 - Pedestrian friendly
 - Comfortable, colorful

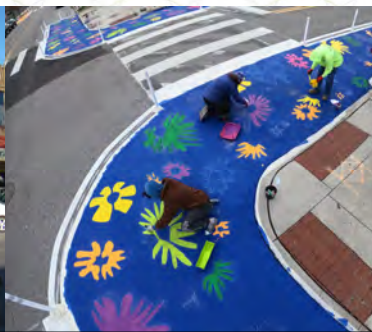
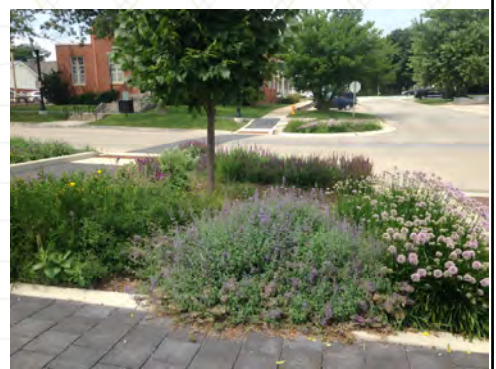


Public Spaces

- Lay the foundation
 - Accessibility
 - Pedestrian friendly
 - Comfortable, colorful



Public Spaces



Public Spaces

- Comfortable, colorful



Public Spaces

Opportunities for Activation



Public Spaces

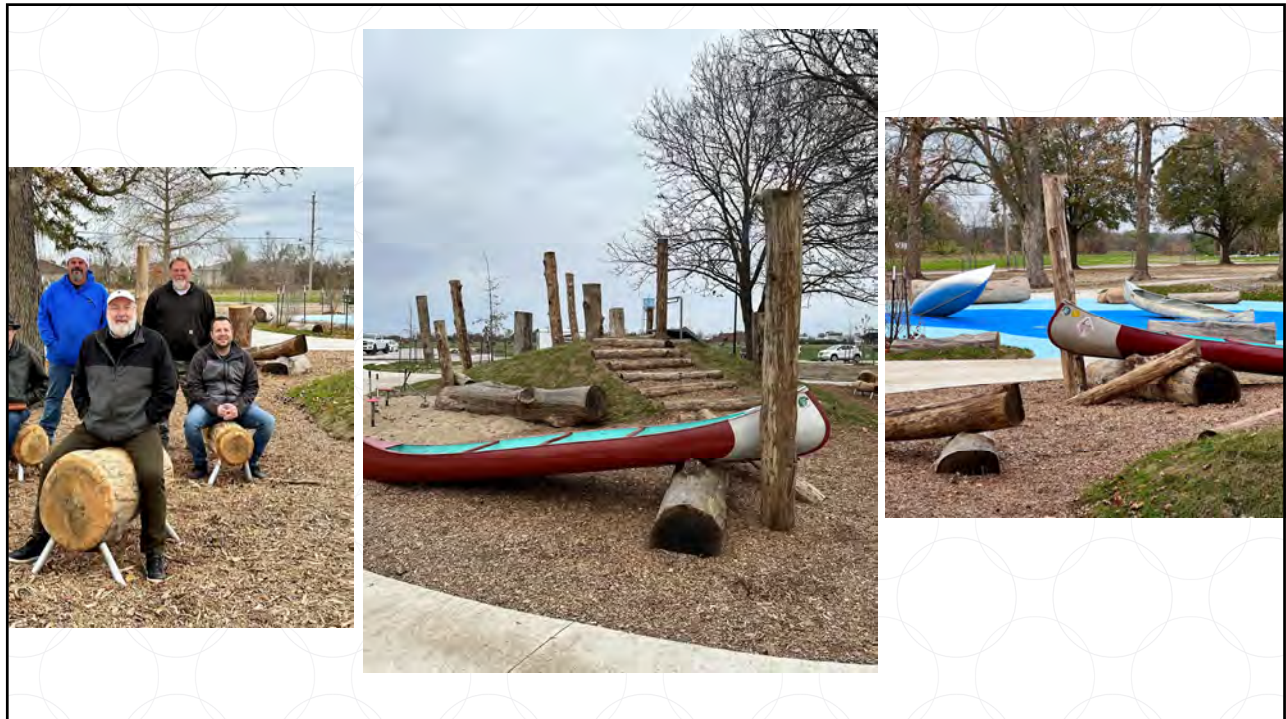
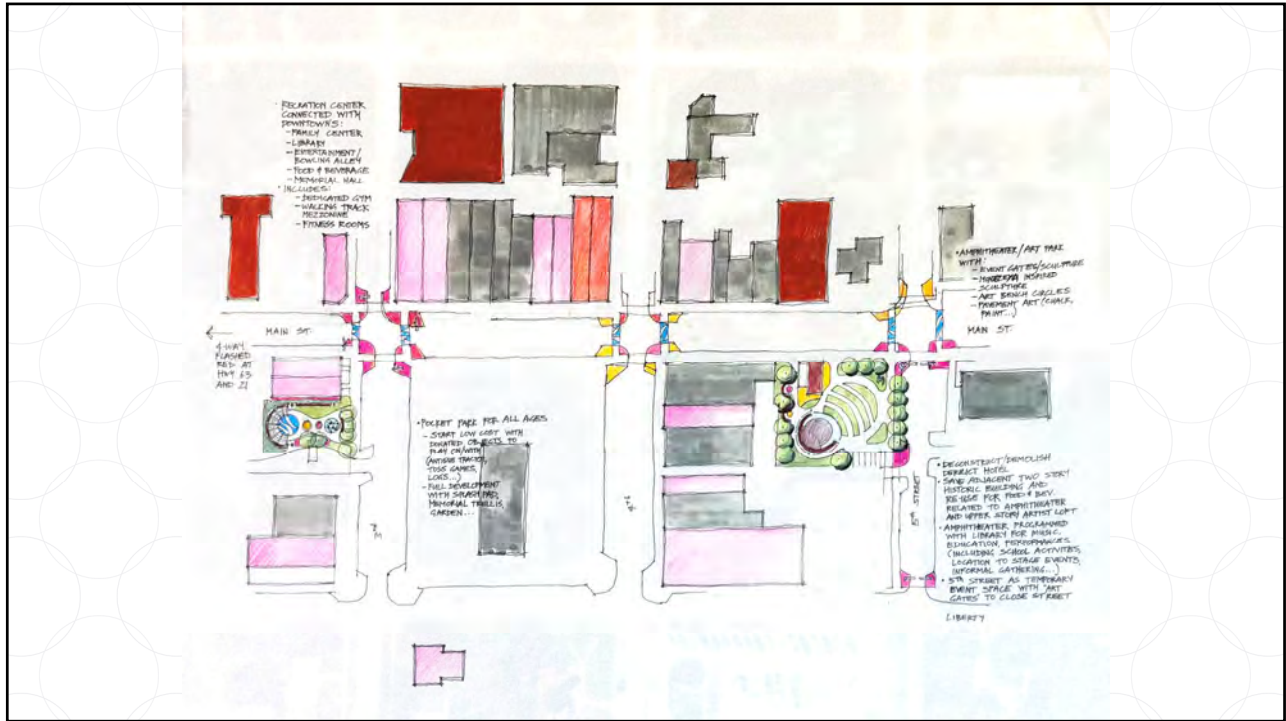
- Murals
 - Visibility
 - High impact
 - High traffic
 - Strategic location
- Projection Art

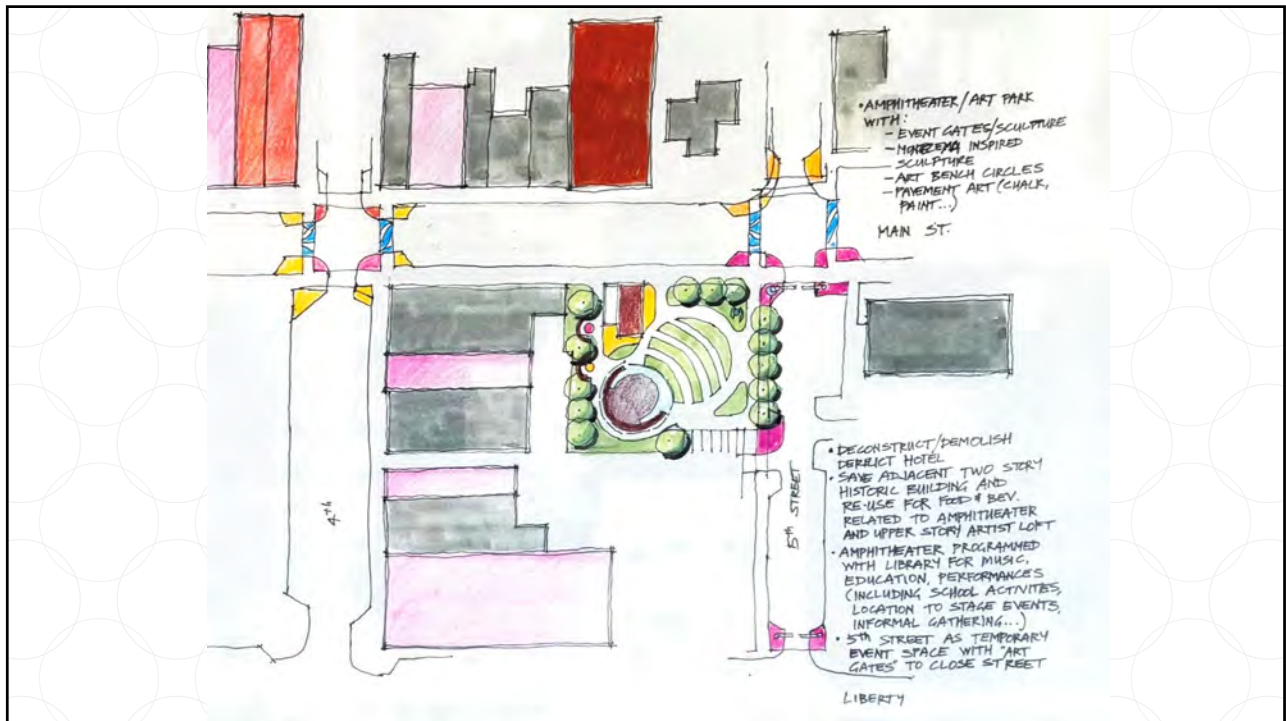
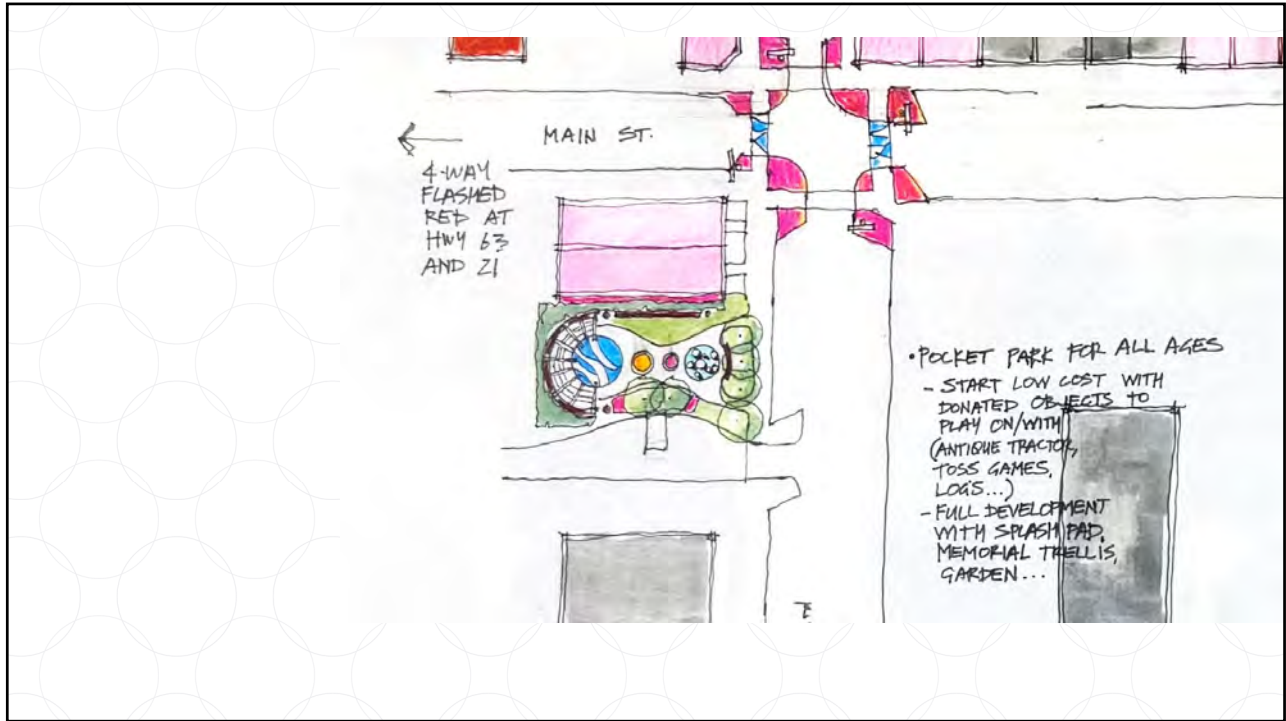


Public Spaces

- Opportunities for activation
- More things for kids







Activate Downtown

Small Business Saturday



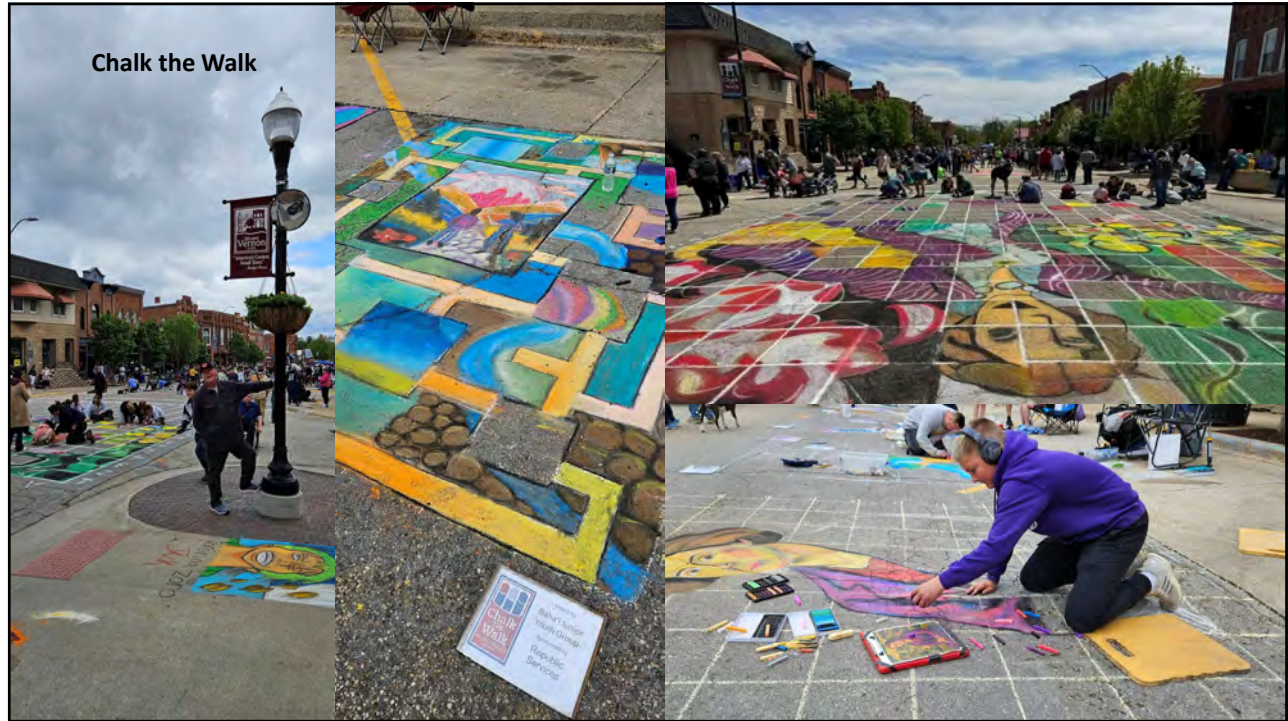
- Retail Promotion
- History Walk
- Pop Up Market



All About the Kids' Fun

- Safety Fest
- Inflatables & Laser Tag
- Homecoming Parade/Pep Assembly
- Chalk the Walk





PORCH FEST 2023
JEFFERSON, IOWA

JULY 2 MARTIN MCGINN
1:30 - 501 SOUTH OLIVE

PULLIN' STRINGS **JULY 2**
2:30 - 206 EAST PARK

JULY 2 HEATH PATTSCHULL
3:30 - 103 EAST PARK

TOM SPIELBAURER **JULY 2**
4:30 - 300 SOUTH CHESTNUT

JULY 2 NOLA JAZZ
5:30 - THOMAS JEFFERSON GARDENS
MEET AND GREET THE PORCH FEST ARTISTS

SPONSORED BY
JEFFERSON MATTERS - MAIN STREET TOWERS VIEW TEAM
THOMAS JEFFERSON GARDENS

Family, Fun, Food, Music

Farmers Market

- Courthouse Lawn on Saturday Morning
- Retailers have in store promotion
- Kids corner at market
- Music and Food Truck

Resource ID & Development

- Identify resources
 - People, policy, money
- Need a downtown champion
 - Is downtown a priority?

Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody. - **Jane Jacobs**

Resource ID & Development

- Is there a Downtown plan?
 - Plan
 - Vision
- Potential plan assistance
 - ISU Extension
 - ISU PLACE program
 - U of I Iowa Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities
 - Local facilitator

Resource ID & Development

\$1,726 taxes/yr.

.07 acres

\$24,657 taxes/acre/yr.



\$20,512 taxes/yr.

.80 acres

\$25,640 taxes/acre/yr.



\$2,952 taxes/yr.

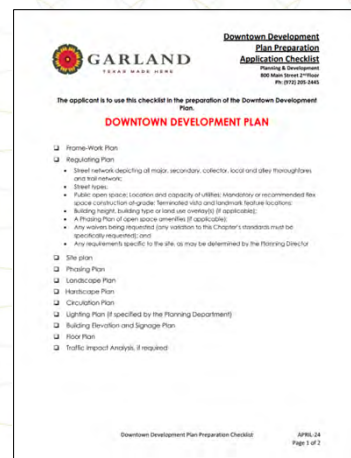
.51 acres

\$5,788 taxes/acre/yr.



Resource ID & Development

- Do you have a "Development Ready Downtown?"
 - What's the vision and plan?
 - Policies in place to get what you want?
 - Do developers know the process?
 - What spaces are available?
 - What incentives are available?



Resource ID & Development

- Leverage, leverage, leverage
 - Downtown revitalization
 - Community catalyst
 - Historic tax credits
 - Workforce housing tax credits
 - Foundations
- Everybody wants to be last money in?
- If you are not investing why should anyone else?

Resource ID & Development

- Host an incentive workshop
 - IEDA
 - Poweshiek County
 - Council of Government
- League of Cities trainings
- Field trips
 - Woodbine



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