



**AGENDA
CITY OF CEDAR FALLS, IOWA
STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 05, 2023
6:15 PM AT CITY HALL, 220 CLAY STREET**

Call to Order

Roll Call

Community Development Committee

1. Future Forward Cedar Falls 2025:Community Wide Strategic Plan (review current plan).
(35 Minutes, Community Development Director Stephanie Houk Sheetz)

Adjournment



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

City of Cedar Falls
220 Clay Street
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613
Phone: 319-273-8600
Fax: 319-273-8610
www.cedarfalls.com

MEMORANDUM
Administration Division

TO: Mayor Green & City Council
FROM: Stephanie Houk Sheetz, AICP, Director of Community Development
DATE: August 28, 2023
SUBJECT: Implementation Review of Future Forward 2025, Community-Wide Strategic Plan

A review of the implementation progress for Future Forward 2025 was requested in Council's November 2022 goal setting. From April-August, staff collected feedback from various organizations and individuals that were noted as responsible entities for the various objectives in the Plan. Enclosed with the packet is the Strategic Plan with details on implementation. Staff edited information received to avoid duplication, match the tone of the document and provide the most relevant information. For ease of use, an objective in the Table of Contents is hyperlinked to the page where additional details may be found.

At the September 5th Community Development Committee meeting, staff will provide an overview on the plan and selected topics that highlight implementation efforts.



Community-Wide Strategic Plan 2016

Facilitated by:





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Prosperity

1. A dynamic and nationally recognized business climate of innovation, job growth, talent development, and investment and a diversified tax base fuel Cedar Falls' economy
 - a. Maximize innovation and entrepreneurship within Cedar Falls' existing businesses and industries through award winning networking, education, mentorship and technology to strengthen retention and expansion opportunities

Timeline: 2018

Responsibility: Greater Cedar Valley Alliance and Chamber (Steve Dust, [now Cary Darrah & staff at Grow Cedar Valley](#))

Implementation Update 1: [Scientific Games - IEDA Incentive \(2016\)](#)

- [Scientific Games set to make a \\$49.5 million capital investment in the Cedar Falls operation creating 31 additional positions including: Senior, Core, Lead, Test Software Engineers, Producer, Associate Mathematician, Senior Game Designer among others.](#)
- [Scientific Games Corporation develops technology-based products and services, and associated content for the gaming and lottery industries worldwide. The company operates through three segments: Gaming, Lottery, and Interactive.](#)
- [Grow Cedar Valley \(GCV\) worked with Scientific Games and their consultant Hickey & Associates on IEDA application and support services.](#)

Implementation Update 2: [GCV provided sponsorship and staff assistance support to community-developed initiatives/events.](#)

Implementation Update 3: [GCV assisted entrepreneur community to establish Iowa's first Product Camp event in Cedar Falls attracting 112+ attendees. Product Camp events connect product development, marketing execution and management growth including taking ideas to commercialization.](#)

- b. Amplify Cedar Falls' business/innovation support services and incubation programs for small businesses and new start-ups through expanded business (private sector) partnerships and collaboration

Timeline: 2018

Responsibility: UNI Center for Business Growth and Innovation (Sarah Bey-[update by Patrick Luensmann and Paul Kinghorn, and Cary Darrah and Grow Cedar Valley staff](#))

Implementation Update 1: [UNI realigned business outreach activity at the University with the local support and programming for entrepreneurship under the purview of the John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center \(JPEC\). Advance Iowa | Center for Business Growth and Innovation now focuses our efforts on small-medium sized businesses of between 20-200+ employees. Our services support owners & senior leadership to grow and scale their operation, improve](#)



profitability and sustainability, and when applicable, plan for the successful transition of company ownership.

Implementation Update 2: John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center (JPEC): Support the Red Cedar organization in opening Millrace Coworking Space. UNI was a founding sponsor for Red Cedar to help them establish the coworking space in downtown Cedar Falls. This highlighted the effort to expand the partnerships and collaborations throughout the community to serve new start ups. We continued to host programming and support Red Cedar in event planning and direct services to start up companies.

Implementation Update 3: JPEC: Entrepreneur service provider roundtable: UNI convened a roundtable of leaders from UNI centers like the SBDC, JPEC, IDM, and CBGI as well as CF/Wloo Main Street directors, CF/Wloo city economic developers, entrepreneurs, Red Cedar, GCVAC/GCV, and INRCOG to coordinate efforts to support business support services throughout the community. This group coordinated a variety of events in Cedar Falls for the small business and start up community as well as increased the effectiveness of referrals between organizations to support business clients.

Implementation Update 4: JPEC: Expanded support services: UNI built out a variety of programs including Panther Biz Hub, Business Builder Workshops, Startup Week, and others to provide direct services to small businesses on business growth, marketing, and expansion services. These services have served dozens of Cedar Falls businesses in a direct service capacity.

Implementation Update 5: Grow Cedar Valley (GCV) is currently working (2016) with Cedar Falls and Cedar Valley companies to develop an accelerated software development training curriculum. This will build a funnel of future IT workforce to feed these growing businesses in Cedar Falls and the Cedar Valley. It will serve as a recruitment tool to encourage new business locations in Cedar Falls and the Cedar Valley.

Implementation Update 6: Mill Race Co-Working Space: GCV continues to support (2016) the entrepreneur-driven efforts to maintain and grow the co-working space by providing connections/relationships to existing industry and community partners.

Implementation Update 7: GCV continues to support (2016) entrepreneur-driven efforts through 1 Million Cups events. GCV provided sponsorship and staff assistance support for Start-up Weekend on December 2, 2016 and supports related events including the monthly Technology Association of Iowa's TechBrew events held in Cedar Falls. GCV is currently working with Cedar Falls and Cedar Valley companies to develop an accelerated software development training curriculum. This will build a funnel of future IT workforce for growing businesses in Cedar Falls and the Cedar Valley. The training curriculum will serve as a recruitment tool to encourage new business locations in Cedar Falls and the Cedar Valley.

Implementation Update 8: Cedar Falls Connect: Earlier this year (2017) on behalf of the campaign, GCV had four professional articles written about Cedar Falls companies: Jam City, iTracking Research Inc, Pixel Labs, and Red Lab Technologies. These articles will be featured in an upcoming CF Connect landing page (2017) which will be distributed to site selection consultants and IT companies in select geographic areas within the next 30 days. Jam City's article



has already been picked up and re-wrote by Silicon Prairie News. The articles distribution was over 2,000 select companies and site selection influences. Jam City's article was pushed out through an AP Wire service GCV subscribes -- reaching 1,000 online media outlets. Of those online media outlets approximately 97 picked up the article with a combined total subscribership of 11.38 million people. The Discida (iTracking Research Inc) and Pixel Labs articles were re-interviewed for an extended article by GCV's Communications Director for additional use.

Implementation Update 9: A companion "Talent" Survey with existing businesses will be conducted this winter (2017). Staff is working on the questionnaire. Industries covered include: Information Technology, Health Care, and Manufacturing. This data will help us adjust our programming for talent recruitment and retention, also aiding lower and higher education with occupational trends for CAPS programming among others.

Implementation Update 10: GCV continues to support (2017) the entrepreneur-driven efforts through supporting events like Startup Weekend Cedar Valley October 13-15, 2017 through sponsorship and lending staff to judge, promotion of One Million Cups through Facebook. GCV will continue to foster a culture & environment that encourages new innovation and business growth for existing businesses and entrepreneurs including collaboration with the Mill Race/Co-Forged initiative.

Implementation Update 11: Grow Cedar Valley is a founding cash and in-kind support of Red Cedar. Currently (2018) working with Red Cedar to develop program measurables and structure of the Regional Innovation Network that can successfully support entrepreneurs and early stage companies which Grow Cedar Valley will be part of the network. Grow Cedar Valley is also committed to supporting and promoting events and activities that Red Cedar leads in the community.

Implementation Update 12: Grow Cedar Valley is a member of the planning committee for Cedar Valley Startup Week. The 2019 Startup Week was the first annual weeklong series of events in October that brought 235 innovators and founders together to learn and explore at locations in Cedar Falls and Waterloo. The week was hosted in partnership with Hawkeye Community College, Red Cedar, Cedar Valley TechWorks, University of Northern Iowa, and Grow Cedar Valley.

Implementation Update 13: LaunchCamp 2020 was an all-day virtual event packed with conversations and fireside chats from some of the most recognized entrepreneurs around Iowa. This event was hosted in partnership with Grow Cedar Valley, Hawkeye Community College, the University of Northern Iowa, Pixel Labs, and Red Cedar. Speakers like Marc Reifenrath of Spinutech shared how they identified problems and created solutions. Over 150 people attended virtually. (2020)

Implementation Update 14: Partnered with Cedar Valley Techworks, Red Cedar, University of Northern Iowa, and Hawkeye Community College on two important initiatives: INDUSTRY 4.0 - Grow Cedar Valley started reaching out to Cedar Valley manufacturers to identify the level of factor innovation in place and the need to compete in the global economy. This includes opportunities and threats to supply chain needs. This initiative is based on the State's release of the

"Seizing the Manufacturing 4.0 Opportunity: A Strategic Plan for Iowa's Manufacturing Industry" December 2020. INNOVATIVE PLACEMAKING - Identified community innovation needs over the next 15-20 years by surveying and meeting with businesses and communities across the Cedar Valley. Innovation supports the growth of existing businesses, regardless of industry sector, and creates a quality of life that aids in the recruitment and retention of the workforce. (2021)

Implementation Update 15: Innovation Initiatives: Partnering with Cedar Valley Techworks, Red Cedar, University of Northern Iowa, Hawkeye Community College and Iowa Economic Development Authority on initiatives to support integration of technology and upskilling workforce for our manufacturing sector. (2021)

Implementation Update 16: CO.STARTERS - Grow Cedar Valley this Spring began combining the previous work of Red Cedar to offer again CO.STARTERS, a 10-week business training program for new business startups. The program combines business training from experienced business mentors with a peer-to-peer cohort model. The Spring cohort launched on April 18th with seven Cedar Valley-based business startups participating. (2022)

- c. Coordinate and manage a venture fund of local investors targeting expanding and new Cedar Falls businesses

Timeline: 2017

Responsibility: Cedar Valley Growth Fund I – Black Hawk Economic Development (Steve Dust updated by Cary Darrah and Grow Cedar Valley staff, also Red Cedar Seed Fund by Danny Laudick)

Implementation Update 1: A venture capital fund ran from 2018-2022 (the Red Cedar Seed Fund). The fund has invested over \$350,000 in seed capital in Cedar Valley and Iowa-based companies, and over 70% of that funding has gone to companies founded by underrepresented founders (female or ethnic minority). The fund was designed to be a trusted first-funder of Cedar Valley-based business startups needing equity capital to grow, and Red Cedar worked with the business founders in advance to help them understand how to effectively raise capital and coach them on their pitch. Quite a few of the companies invested in went on to raise additional funds from other funds and/or the State of Iowa IEDA programs.

Implementation Update 2: Red Cedar Seed Fund is no longer making active investments (funds typically have a 5-year investing period). We keep in touch with the group of investors to help connect any companies needing to raise capital with them when needed. We unfortunately didn't see large demand locally for equity capital, so we didn't feel it was justified to start up a new seed fund at this time.

Implementation Update 3: A list of accomplishments for Red Cedar Seed Fund can be provided, upon request.



Implementation Update 4: Grow Cedar Valley (GCV) supported the entrepreneur-driven efforts to establish a Cedar Valley co-working space (Mill Race) by providing connections/relationships to existing industry and community partners. This support helped to drive the creation of an early-stage co-working space within a matter of months. GCV will continue to provide on-going relationships and promotion to existing industry and community partners, providing credibility and accelerating the growth of the entrepreneurially driven efforts. (2016)

- d. Develop a national caliber public relations campaign to establish and maintain Cedar Falls as the preferred career destination for local university, college and high school graduates

Timeline: 2017

Responsibility: Greater Cedar Valley Alliance and Chamber (Steve Dust updated by Cary Darrah and Grow Cedar Valley staff)

Implementation Update 1: LivetheValley.com features information important to people considering relocation to the Cedar Valley including: the cost of living, housing market, community profiles, entertainment & recreation, and education. The site also features video testimonials and helpful links to community resources. We encourage you to link LivetheValley.com to your company website and include it in your talent recruiting materials. (2016 – present)

Implementation Update 2: Live the Valley’s Facebook page connects unique Cedar Valley quality of life attributes with career opportunities. The page features weekly promotion of job openings on WorktheValley.org. Personality profiles feature the hobbies, special interests, and careers of people living in the Cedar Valley. Using Facebook’s robust targeted marketing, both job opportunities and profiles are promoted to areas of the country with a high concentration of Iowa natives and high unemployment. Posts are also targeted to users with similar careers or special interests. Traffic and engagement with the page have dramatically increased using these promotion tools. (2016 – present)

Implementation Update 3: Livability Cedar Valley Magazine - Grow Cedar Valley has partnered with Livability Media to begin producing a new top-tier talent attraction magazine. This annual publication will be distributed across regional hotels/motels, welcome centers, at all of our upcoming newcomer events and community tours, and free to use by businesses and area organizations to attract talent to the region. The publication was released December 2022 and the 2024 edition is currently in the works. (2022)

Implementation Update 4: Over the past year, Grow Cedar Valley along with our partners and Board of Directors, have developed a five-year Strategic Plan. One of the Strategic Priority Areas identified in the plan is: Placemaking/Image - Elevate the Cedar Valley as a place of choice for individuals and businesses. (2022)

- e. Implement innovative strategies to identify, attract and retain new talent to the Cedar Valley to ensure Cedar Falls employers can meet employment needs for operations and expansion

Timeline: 2016

Responsibility: Greater Cedar Valley Alliance and Chamber (Steve Dust updated by Cary Darrah and Grow Cedar Valley staff)

Implementation Update 1: “Addressing Workforce: Beyond the Numbers” – An event was held on May 12, 2016 to present the high-level workforce data developed by Grow Cedar Valley over the last year. Attendees represented all areas including K-12 and college/university, employers, social service organizations, tourism, city government and others. The presentation was followed by a collective discussion on how these stakeholders can work together to address the major workforce issues of labor force participation, labor force growth and alignment of training with industry needs. This is a starter conversation to begin a sustained conversation about addressing workforce on a comprehensive level and will be outlined in Grow Cedar Valley’s program of work for FY16/17. (2016)

Implementation Update 2: “Diversity & Inclusion: A Broader View on Talent & Workforce” – An event was held on April 26, 2016 to give an overview of the Cedar Valley demographic trends, including a presentation from Mark Grey of UNI, and a panel discussion of various service providers representing different workforce demographics (immigrant, disabled and second career/retired). The meeting’s intent was to inform employers how to tap these diverse workforce talent pools and make direct connections with service providers that can support existing businesses who hire a diversified workforce. (2016)

Implementation Update 3: Grow Cedar Valley (GCV) held a series of roundtable discussions with Healthcare organizations, educational institutions and immigrant service providers to develop new initiatives addressing both the healthcare workforce shortage and growing immigrant population (primarily Burmese). Outcomes included a series of career fairs at Hawkeye Community College specifically designed toward non-English speakers, and identification of several employment barriers facing the immigrant population. (2016)

Implementation Update 4: “Addressing Workforce: Beyond the Numbers” – September 29, 2016. The 80 attendees discussed specific topics including: Labor Force Participation (utilizing existing population), Training & Education (training the future workforce) and Talent Attraction & Retention (attracting new & retaining existing workforce). (2016)

Implementation Update 5: Leader Valley (LV) Council adopted the mission statement: “Lead a business education partnership to develop the leadership skills of Cedar Valley students.” (2016)

- The LV Council is currently engaged in the strategic planning process.
- Leader in Me investment Campaign fully underway.



Implementation Update 6: Cedar Valley Leadership Institute underway – 36 employees representing 27 Cedar Valley employers. (2016)

Implementation Update 7: Sell the Cedar Valley – Event was held Tuesday, May 9, 2017- 50 attendees’ registered. The “Sell the Valley” event provided information and material to help human resource managers, recruiters and others better recruit and retain talent in the Cedar Valley. (2017)

Implementation Update 8: GCV is currently updating the Live The Valley website and will be completed by the end of December and feature content, video and images in the City of Cedar Falls and the Cedar Valley. <http://livethevalley.com> (2017)

Implementation Update 9: GCV’s Livethevalley Facebook promotes job openings in Cedar Falls and the Cedar Valley along with the cultural amenities. Footage has been taken of Single Speed Brewing, Fondo Fest, Mill Race, Jam City staff, Williams Interactive staff, Gallagher Bluedorn events and other downtown venues to promote the quality of life and workplaces in Cedar Falls and the Cedar Valley. GCV engages in paid promotion to select geographic areas and demographics with these Facebook posts. (2017)

Implementation Update 10: Business Interviews “Industry Insights and Talent Surveys” 38 Cedar Falls companies participated in the “Talent Survey” while another 10 Cedar Falls companies were visited for the existing business “Industry Insights” survey. Data from the existing business interview program “Industry Insights” has been compiled and a report published. The aggregate data will help GCV, cities, utilities and other entities understand emerging trends with existing businesses to adjust programming as the needs of the existing businesses change. A companion “Talent Survey” with existing businesses was conducted and data compiled and interpreted. Report is being finalized. Industries covered include: Manufacturing, Health Care and Information Technology. This data will help us adjust our programming for talent recruitment and retention, also aiding lower and higher education with occupational trends. Information on both reports has already been shared with City of Cedar Falls Staff. (2018)

Implementation Update 11: Talent Connect – Workforce Development Initiatives

- GCV has updated the Live The Valley website featuring amenities in the City of Cedar Falls. <http://livethevalley.com>.
- GCV’s livethevalley Facebook promotes job openings in the City of Cedar Falls and the Cedar Valley along with the cultural amenities and some of the brags which have been attributed to Cedar Falls. GCV engages in paid promotion to select geographic areas and demographics with these Facebook posts.
- GCV recently signed on to the Technology Association of Iowa’s “The Iowan Project”. The Iowan Project is an initiative to gather together the hundreds of thousands of Iowa expatriates into one place to promote the technology jobs available in Iowa. This platform gives GCV an opportunity to promote Cedar Falls’ quality of life and IT job opportunities in the community. The early adopters in this project are: Iowa Economic Development Authority, Grow Cedar Valley, Des Moines Partnership, and West Des Moines. <https://iowanproject.com>

- GCV has already shared content and video with TAI regarding IT companies in Cedar Falls and CFU’s broadband capacity that have been published on The Iowan Project’s social media platforms and re-shared on GCV’s social media. (2018)

Implementation Update 12: Iowan Project – Grow Cedar Valley was one of four initial investors in this initiative, led by the Technology Association of Iowa, to bring tech talent to Iowa, focusing on Iowa expatriates.

- Iowan Project email newsletters are sent to 1,500 contacts
 - Average open rate: 35.5% (Industry average is ~25%)
 - CFU internet, Jam City, and Scientific Games are highlighted in these emails
- Participated in Iowan Project networking events in Denver and Chicago, representing Cedar Valley companies hiring tech talent, including Cedar Falls based CBE, DISTek, Far Reach, Jam City, John Deere, Scientific Games and Spinutech. (2018)

Implementation Update 13: Live the Valley is a talent attraction and retention initiative that celebrates and promotes the opportunities to live, work and thrive in the Cedar Valley of Iowa. Since launching the new site in August, livethevalley.com has been viewed 50,000 times and Live the Valley has reached over *one million people* through social media. It includes a brand new cost of living calculator. We wanted to make understanding cost of living easy and why it is an important metric to consider when looking to relocate. On livethevalley.com/cost-of-living, a user can easily compare the cost of living in the Cedar Valley to almost any metro area in the country. (2019)

Implementation Update 14: This Is Iowa: This year, Live the Valley partnered with the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) on This Is Iowa, Iowa's talent attraction campaign. A video was produced highlighting the Cedar Valley, its amenities, low cost of living, and beautiful communities. The video was promoted in the This Is Iowa campaign and was shared by KCCI. It was viewed by over 62,000 people! (2020)

Implementation Update 15: Partnerships & The Iowan Project - Messaging that is sensitive and timely is the name of the game. Live the Valley has partnered with the Iowa Economic Development Authority in a Co-Op marketing program to promote the Cedar Valley through the statewide marketing initiative, This Is Iowa. Additionally, Live the Valley continues to partner with the Technology Association of Iowa and the Iowan Project. In October, Will Frost, director of talent, and Aaron Jarnagin, digital marketing specialist, joined the Iowan Project in Denver, CO with the help of Pixel Labs, a local marketing agency. Will and Aaron wanted the Cedar Valley to stand out at the Iowan’s project event, typically a networking event. The team put together virtual reality experiences that allowed the technology expatriates to “step into” the Cedar Valley, even though we were hundreds of miles away. The response was incredible, with many expatriates being from the area, remembering the old, and marveling at the new. The team covered Lost Island waterpark, the downtowns, and bike trails! There are plans in place to expand this project into its own Cedar Valley virtual tour. (2020)

Implementation Update 16: Over the past year, Grow Cedar Valley along with our partners and Board of Directors, have developed a five-year Strategic Plan.

One of the Strategic Priority Areas identified in the plan is: Workforce Development & Talent - Grow and diversify the quality and quantity of the Cedar Valley's workforce. (2022)

2. Retail, commercial and service offerings in Cedar Falls mirror or exceed similar amenities found in metro areas throughout Iowa
 - a. Develop attraction destinations within Cedar Falls' existing, local businesses and/or new commercial businesses which create high level-shopping, dining and entertainment experience capable of retaining and draw-in spending

Timeline: 2020

Responsibility: Community Main Street, Waterloo/Cedar Falls Board of Realtors, and College Hill Partnership (Carol Lilly, Tanner Westburg – now completed by Kim Bear, Hannah Crisman, & Stephanie Houk Sheetz)

Implementation Update 1: Visions adopted for Downtown & College Hill (2019 & 2021).

Implementation Update 2: Due to our solid base of restaurants, new dining has come to the downtown and we have elevated the experience over the past five years.

Implementation Update 3: The pandemic has changed the face of retail. The downtown continues to have a great retail base.

Implementation Update 4: Community Main Street completed a Market Study & Strategies report in 2022 identifying strategies of focus on the tourism economy, enhanced visibility of the Downtown District brand, and continued investment in the district (private & public).

Implementation Update 4: 2020-2022 downtown streetscape was under construction: new brick sidewalks on the Parkade, side streets now include same brick pattern for the sidewalks and trees were added, and newly reconstructed streets for two blocks on 2nd, 3rd & 4th Streets was completed.

Implementation Update 5: College Hill continues to have very dedicated businesses and a passionate neighborhood, advocating for the Hill. There are continued opportunities for new businesses and redevelopment on The Hill.

Implementation Update 6: Pettersen Plaza expanded east to Olive Street, including a pedestrian mall for access between the Hill and adjacent neighborhoods. Also creates a larger venue for public events on the Hill. (2023)

Implementation Update 7: Seerley Park improvements: new playground, grading work to support access, new shelter planned through partnership in fundraising by the neighborhood group (2024).

Implementation Update 8: College Hill Partnership has developed goals for 2023-2025 focused on economic development priorities, organizational goals, and neighborhood goals.

- b. Complete a mixed used area in the Downtown District which includes micro-retail incubator space

Timeline: 2019

Responsibility: River Place Development (Audrey Kittrell)

Implementation Update 1: The River Place Development was completed in 2020 and is now a mixed-use, multi-generational neighborhood home to 120+ Downtown residents, ~ 20,000 SF commercial retail space fully occupied with new and legacy businesses, ~ 10,000 SF of micro-retail space designed for new businesses to start small while testing new business concepts (fully leased), a dynamic coworking space for local entrepreneurs and remote workers, and a vibrant public Plaza that is home to dozens of community events and even more impromptu social gatherings.

- 3. Cedar River-related attractions, activities and beautification generate escalating economic impact through visitor revenues and residential/commercial development
 - a. Create a nationally recognized Cedar River Whitewater District complete with river assets, shops, restaurants, trails, events and activities capable of enhancing community and economic development, expanding recreational offerings and mitigating flood related concerns

Timeline: 2020

Responsibility: City of Cedar Falls Community Development and Parks Division, Cedar Falls Tourism and Visitor’s Bureau, & Community Main Street (Carol Lilly, Kim Manning, updates from Jennifer Pickar and Kim Bear)

Implementation Update 1: River Recreation project delayed due to high bids, additional funding needed, and construction challenges. Project to start construction early Fall 2023 and be completed late Summer 2024.

Implementation Update 2: V&T promotes future experiences at Canoecopia in Madison, WI and the Iowa Bike Expo in Des Moines 2022 and beyond.

Implementation Update 3: V&T is creating a plan for marketing and promotion once the River Recreation project is completed.

4. Highly attractive and unique housing options to attract/retain talent and wealth with emphasis on millennials and retirees

- a. Develop downtown housing by creating multi-aged complexes that are closely positioned and connected to the Cedar River Whitewater district

Timeline: 2020

Responsibility: Western Home Communities and Community Main Street (Sonya Thrall, Carol Lilly, [reported by Kris Hansen & Kim Bear](#))

Implementation Update 1: [Western Home Communities has a rental model at our Willowwood building located on Grove Street in Cedar Falls. We've acquired lots on Grove Street next to Washington Park. We're interested in turning part of our existing campus at our historic building previously known as Stanard Family Assisted Living into housing.](#)

Implementation Update 2: [RiverPlace has a large range of ages in its four downtown buildings. 250 State Street, the building closest to the River, currently has the highest number of new retirees in it.](#)

- b. Expand mixed-use development within Cedar Falls' including business and technology parks to increase businesses and housing units attractive to millennial and knowledge workers

Timeline: 2020

Responsibility: City of Cedar Falls Planning and Community Services Division

Implementation Update 1: [Developments with MU zoning have updated plans \(Pinnacle Prairie, Greenhill Village\).](#)

Implementation Update 2: [New building projects continue in Downtown & College Hill.](#)

Implementation Update 3: [Creekside Technology Center Master Plan adopted in 2019 for 160 acres along Hwy. 20/Ridgeway/Hudson Rd.](#)

Implementation Update 4: [Visions adopted for Downtown & College Hill \(2019 & 2021\).](#)

Implementation Update 5: [New Downtown Zoning Code adopted \(2021\).](#)

Implementation Update 6: [City purchased 200 acres for industrial park expansion \(2019\) and additional 76 acres in 2023.](#)

Implementation Update 7: [City is developing 150 acres of the new area in 2022.](#)



- 5. A sustainable local foods co-op within Cedar Falls
 - a. Open a permanent city market for residents and visitors featuring the community's food co-op, farmers' market, artists, related small businesses and entertainment

Timeline: 2018 (Current goal to open: 2024/2025)

Responsibility: Cedar Falls Co-Op (Tom Whickersham, update provided by Kate Dunning)

Implementation Update 1: Recruit 1000 members as a proof of local interest. Rooted Carrot Complete- 2019 Yes, current membership is 1,210.

Implementation Update 2: Identify a location for developing the physical location. Rooted Carrot Actively checking feasibility on various sites, with one option receiving devoted focus currently.

Implementation Update 3: The site team is working as diligently as ever in seeking lease occupancy within established buildings that can either be rehabilitated or torn down to start fresh. Over the years, multiple prospects have been vetted for feasibility, including size, layout, location, parking, access, etc. Each person on the site team is a volunteer responsible for all communications with real estate developers, architects, contractors, store planners, grocery consultants, and members of city staff. The site team includes Kate Dunning, Christine Sexton, Terry Stewart, Deanna Wheeler, and Tom Blanford. The team is performing at high capacity and as always, your confidence and efforts in teaming with us on this initiative is important - thank you!

Place

6. Cedar Falls is ranked in the top ten nationally for quality of place driven by lifestyle amenities in all Cedar Falls' neighborhoods
 - a. Revitalize existing public parks as needed including interactive play features and public art

Timeline: 2025

Responsibility: City of Cedar Falls Public Works & Parks Division [also Community Development/Community & Recreation Programs](#)

Implementation Update 1: Proposed CDBG funding for two parks to replace equipment & incorporate inclusive play items. (HUD questioned analysis eligibility, the level or HUD scrutiny led City to abandon such funding.)

Implementation Update 2: New equipment installed at North Cedar Elementary (2020).

Implementation Update 3: Bess Streeter Park playground improvements & new equipment (2022-2023).

Implementation Update 4: Island Park improvements to include potentially relocating park access to the north (on Center St.), adding 9-hole disk golf course, adding a pétanque & adding horseshoe pits (2023-2024). Wetland work planned in the future.

Implementation Update 5: Seerley Park improvements: new playground, grading work to support access, new shelter planned through partnership in fundraising by the neighborhood group (2024).

Implementation Update 5: Orchard Hill Park improvements: expand Pickleball courts & parking lot, new shelter, move playground equipment planned through partnership in fundraising by Pickleball Club (2024-2025).

- b. Develop inclusive parks and public venues featuring innovative design and features for individuals with special needs

Timeline: 2020

Responsibility: City of Cedar Falls Public Works [and Parks](#) Division and City of Cedar Falls Recreation and Community Programs Division

Implementation Update 1: Place to Play Park completed (2019)

Implementation Update 2: Parking additions to Place to Play (2021)

Implementation Update 3: City Hall remodel improved accessibility in Council Chambers, with ramps in Chambers and behind, for easier elected officials & public interfacing.

Implementation Update 4: River Place Plaza completed by developer. City's incentives supported this. Trail on the south side connects to Plaza for ADA accessibility (2020). Plaza hosts a variety of public events.

Implementation Update 5: Pettersen Plaza expanded east to Olive Street, including a pedestrian mall for access between the Hill and adjacent neighborhoods. Also creates a larger venue for public events on the Hill. (2023)

Implementation Update 6: Bess Streeter Park playground equipment has several inclusive swings added (2022-2023).

Implementation Update 7: Seerley Park improvements anticipate several inclusive play items with the playground. (2024)

- c. Develop an on-line social network of residents to strengthen neighborhood communication

Timeline: 2016

Responsibility: City of Cedar Falls, Cedar Falls' Neighborhood Association (Rob Green)

Implementation Update 1: City staff is liaison to several active neighborhood groups: Community Main Street, College Hill Partnership, North Cedar Neighborhood Association, attending the meetings monthly for City-neighborhood communication/collaboration. Others are attended as requested.

Implementation Update 2: 2019 – The City establishes a free “public agency” account on Nextdoor.com, a national, online neighborhood social network.

Implementation Update 3: 2020 – The City Communications Specialist begins posting city announcements to Nextdoor.com.

Implementation Update 4: 2023 – As of July 1, 2023 the Cedar Falls Nextdoor site contains 7,765 members, representing 5,904 households and 40 distinct neighborhoods.

Implementation Update 5: 2023 – A short user survey will be posted in Fall 2023 on Nextdoor to gauge citizen response to the City’s posts, with input to help direct the city’s future use of the system.

- d. Create an advisory committee of neighborhood association members to oversee collaboration between associations and the formalization of new neighborhoods within Cedar Falls

Timeline: 2025

Responsibility: College Hill Partnership, Community Main Street, North Cedar Neighborhood Association, Overman Park Neighborhood Association

Implementation Update 1: 2020 – A detailed roster of all known neighborhood associations and homeowners associations has been developed and is maintained by the Mayor’s Office.

Implementation Update 2: 2023 -- Due to COVID-19 challenges, and other priorities, the formal advisory committee has not yet been pursued.

Implementation Update 3: 2023 (Planned) -- During FY24 the Mayor will hold an exploratory meeting with interested neighborhood leaders to determine feasibility of a formal advisory committee.



- 7. Cedar Falls is recognized as having a variety of convenient, quality and advanced wellness and healthcare services
 - a. Remain a national model of community Blue Zones sustainability, via long-term financial support and resident/business commitment and engagement

Timeline: 2025

Responsibility: Cedar Falls Blue Zones (Sue Beach)

Implementation Update 1: Complete streets, sidewalk infill program, and other park/infrastructure aspects are part of City policies and regularly implemented.

Implementation Update 2: UNI programs have integrated many Blue Zones policies and are continually advancing on healthy initiatives.

Implementation Update 3: Program transitioned to Healthy Hometown, to focus on community-specific aspects and seek to have individual businesses/organizations respond to their needs.

Implementation Update 4: Hopeful that the groundwork completed through Blue Zones contributes to thoughtful approaches to healthy opportunities for our community for many years to come.

- b. Establish Cedar Falls as a national destination for healthcare professionals at all levels seeking employment, education, continuing education/training, research and community outreach opportunities

Timeline: 2025

Responsibility: Iowa Works – Health Sector Board (Sonya Thrall, reported by Kris Hansen)

Implementation Update 1: Western Home Communities implemented the International Internship Program in 2022.

- 8. Cedar Falls is a national model for state of the art connectivity for technology and transportation serving all residents, organizations and businesses
 - a. Address transportation accessibility, affordability and parking-related issues for residents, students and workers at all mobility and income levels and in all areas of the community

Timeline: 2020

Responsibility: City of Cedar Falls Community Development, Public Works, and Finance and Business Operations

Implementation Update 1: University Ave. included bus shelters, sidewalk & trail

Implementation Update 2: Sharrows added on corridors.



- Implementation Update 3: MET route restructuring under consideration.
- Implementation Update 4: CDBG 5-Year Consolidated Plan identifies need for transportation accessibility (2019)
- Implementation Update 5: Updated Bike-Pedestrian Plan in 2022.
- Implementation Update 6: Trails snow removal map created for understanding on trail that may be cleared in the winter, based on priority and conditions.
- Implementation Update 7: Parking studies completed for Downtown (Feb. 2019) and College Hill (Sept. 2019).
- Implementation Update 8: Implementation of multiple recommendations from the parking studies completed including: 50 new spaces downtown, paid parking on the Hill, 48-hour limit to parking, and parking ramp study anticipated (FY24).
- Implementation Update 9: Main Street reconstruction project (6th Street south to Seerley) started in 2023. Project includes on-street bike paths, sidewalks the full extent on both sides, and nine bus stops).
- Implementation Update 10: MET initiated a transit study (March 2023) to evaluate route restructuring, seek community input, perform a comprehensive analysis of current ridership, fares, routes, stops, and service, and develop a fleet & facility transition plan (considering state of technologies).

b. Remain a leader in advancing Internet and connectivity-related technology serving Cedar Falls

Timeline: 2025

Responsibility: Cedar Falls Utilities (Betty Zemen, now Mollie Strouse)

- Implementation Update 1: Cedar Falls Utilities updated the fiber optic internet network serving the city to world-class 10 gigabit technology in 2020. Cedar Falls was the first community in Iowa to have 10 gigabit internet service available city-wide.
- Implementation Update 2: CFU has fully diverse fiber paths to the three most highly connected internet backbone networks in the country. This robust external network means lower costs, higher reliability and low latency.
- Implementation Update 3: CFU is currently extending fiber optic services to 1,000 new customers in rural Cedar Falls and surrounding areas.

9. Proven and emerging approaches to sustainability and environmental conservation are in practice throughout all sectors of Cedar Falls
- a. Implement state of the art recycling programs and recycling related education throughout Cedar Falls including the recycling of hazardous waste (e.g. batteries, paints, solvents)

Timeline: 2020

Responsibility: City of Cedar Falls Public Works & Parks Division

Implementation Update 1: Household Hazardous Waste events held twice per year for drop off of such items.

Implementation Update 2: Transfer station accepts battery recycling and e-waste appliances. Education about proper disposal is completed by the Black Hawk County Solid Waste Commission.

- b. Implement progressive water quality, conservation and energy planning strategies

Timeline: 2020

Responsibility: City of Cedar Falls Community Development and Cedar Falls Utilities (Betty Zemen, now Mollie Strouse)

Implementation Update 1: Energy planning: The Cedar Falls Utilities Board of Trustees has set emissions reduction goals for CFU provided energy sources. The goal is to reduce CO2 equivalent emissions 45% from 2010 levels by 2030. CFU is on track to meet that goal.

CFU participates in a regional energy market that is highly renewable. In 2022, 65% of the energy purchased through the market and distributed in Cedar Falls came from carbon-free sources.

Strong customer partnerships to reduce local energy consumption and the growth of renewable energy in the Iowa energy market mean the community's energy-related greenhouse gas emissions have shrunk considerably. In 2023, the total CFU CO2 equivalent emissions are 33% less than in 2010.

Implementation Update 2: CFU opened a 1.5-megawatt community solar array in 2016 which gave 1,250 customers the opportunity to purchase units and support renewable energy.

Implementation Update 3: CFU also served on the committee which developed the City's Resilience Plan 2020-2022, which includes a variety of conservation-related objectives.

Implementation Update 4: CFU will continue to evaluate all energy sources available to provide sustainable, reliable and economical power to the community.

Implementation Update 5: Permeable alley program continues (2015-present).

Implementation Update 6: Clay Street Park REAP grant for bioswales & permeable alley (2020).

Implementation Update 7: All City building projects evaluate life cycle costs & sustainability, most recently completed in 2020 as City Hall remodel plans were developed.

Implementation Update 8: Resilience Plan developed, received & filed (2022)

Implementation Update 9: Stormwater master planning started in 2023 for Downtown Drainage Basin, College Hill Drainage Basin, and Sunnyside Circle Drainage Basin. Support from a federal Building Resilient Infrastructure & Communities (BRIC) grant was received.

Implementation Update 10: Stormwater studies conducted for individual projects such as the Olive Box Culvert (2022-23).

- c. Plant 300 trees annually in Cedar Falls neighborhoods and public spaces

Timeline: 2016

Responsibility: Cedar Falls Utilities Trees Committees (Betty Zemen, now Mollie Strouse) and City of Cedar Falls Public Works Operations/Maintenance Division

Implementation Update 1: Cedar Falls Utilities administers the Plant-A-Tree Program. From 2018 to 2021, 250 trees were planted annually with the program's support.

Implementation Update 2: The City developed a tree nursery in 2020 to assist with EAB replacement trees. The City currently has an inventory of approximately 600 trees to be planted on public property. In 2022 the City planted 300 trees on public property.

10. A wealth of art, culture, recreation and entertainment offerings accentuate all aspects of life in Cedar Falls

- a. Expand and create events, festivals, activities and high quality entertainment targeting young professionals and families

Timeline: 2020

Responsibility: Cedar Falls Tourism and Visitors Bureau (Kim Manning, reported by Jennifer Pickar)

Implementation Update 1: Following is a listing of events, festivals, activities & entertainment:

- River Place Plaza venue and annual entertainment May - October
- Expansion of Cedar Basin Music Festival - 2022
- New Youth Athletic Events/Tournament in CF – 7v7 Football, JVA UNI Volleyball Challenge, IAWrestle Night of Conflict 2021-2023
- BienVenu opened 2020 hosting large conferences such as Big Soil Health Event, Irons Sharpens Iron youth wrestling camps, and Bossard trainings

- Hampton Inn opens downtown in 2020 generating additional visitation to the area
- FIT Courts opened (2019) serving locals and hosting regional athletic events
- UNI’s Homecoming Parade moving downtown 2021-2022 and Main Street Madness 2022 heightened awareness and community engagement
- New comic book and trading cards shows at College Square Mall in 2022-2023
- Hurling Hatchet opened 2019.
- New golf simulator, Golf Lab, opened in downtown in 2022
- Halloweek and other holiday light tours 2020-2022
- Four new public art projects since 2020
- Creation of the Cedar Falls Beer Trail 2021-present
- Collaboration by Cedar Falls Tourism & Community Main Street on new photos focusing on a younger, more diverse audience

- b. Create a public splash pad and recreation area in coordination with the Cedar River White Water District and Downtown District

Timeline: 2018

Responsibility: Community Main Street, River Place Development (Carol Lilly, Audrey Kittrell and Kim Bear)

Implementation Update 1: The River Place Plaza was designed as the heart of the River Place neighborhood – a grand finale 10+ years in the making! Eagle View, a locally- and family-owned company, has spent the last decade building River Place, a multi-generational neighborhood that provides a new a lifestyle opportunity in Cedar Falls. River Place’s mission is to provide “The freedom to live an urban lifestyle in a small city.” To expound, River Place aims to provide all of the best parts of downtown urban living—such as proximity to downtown shopping, bars, restaurants, recreation and events, connectedness to the community and neighbors.

The Plaza ties the neighborhood together both literally and figuratively; It’s designed as the nexus of both impromptu neighborhood gatherings and planned community events. It maximizes connection among neighbors and within the greater Cedar Falls community. It reconnects the historic downtown to its roots on the Cedar River. And it reemphasizes Downtown Cedar Falls as a hub for arts, culture, and music. In summary: The River Place Plaza is a hub for community connection, and celebrates Cedar Falls as an arts, culture, and music destination.

The River Place Plaza fills the niche of an events venue within the fabric of the downtown where so much excitement is already happening. Community Main Street, the REC Center, The Jaycee’s/Live to 9, Cedar Basin, the Cedar Valley Sports Commission, the Waterloo- Cedar Falls Symphony, and numerous other

non-profits, fitness instructors, local businesses and local folks with a great idea have already begun calling the Plaza home for their community events.

Furthermore, the Plaza invites local food trucks and downtown restaurants to participate in events held at the Plaza, increasing their exposure and earning potential. Too often do non- local vendors get priority to sell at large community events. This is truly a support-local venue!

Construction on the River Place Plaza was completed in 2020 during the height of the pandemic. The first event season started in earnest in the early summer of 2021.

Implementation Update 2: The amenities planned in the first phase of the Cedar River Recreational Project, to start construction in Fall 2023, include a River Art Plaza (interpretative/learning/seating area), multiple jetties for fishing and kayak play, trail access to all these areas, put in/take out points, and Turtle Back Landing (another interpretive area and dock like feature near the downtown). The project continues to be supported by Community Main Street.

- c. Develop and/or enhance public gathering places/venues to including but not limited to amenities such as zip lines, live music and park equipment for making music (harmonic park).

Timeline: 2020

Responsibility: City of Cedar Falls Public Works and Parks Division

Implementation Update 1: Place to Play Park completed (2019)
Island Park Master Plan developed (2021).

Implementation Update 2: Peter Melendy Park enhanced to match Downtown Streetscape Project (2019).

Implementation Update 3: River Place Plaza completed by developer (2020).

Implementation Update 4: Island Park Master Plan developed (2021) and improvements starting in 2023 as described in item 6a.

Implementation Update 5: River Recreation Project construction to start in late Summer/early Fall 2023 with completion in 2024.

Implementation Update 5: Pettersen Plaza project expanded east to Olive Street as described in item 6b (2023).

- d. Develop public mixed-use spaces for artists to create, exhibit and sell their works, while raising the community's overall appreciation for art

Timeline: 2019

Responsibility: Art and Culture Board,, UNI Department of Art (Martin Arthur, [now reported by Jennifer Pickar](#))

Implementation Update 1: Red House Studios created in 2019, located next door to the Hearst Center, offers four studio space to local artists. The UNI Art Department partners to award a recent graduate a sponsored space at the Red House. The Hearst Center also offers an annual “Artisans in the Garden” event in the Summer to promote local artisans by offering space for creators to display and demonstrate their arts & crafts to the public. Our Café (Creative Arts for Everyone) outreach program provides opportunities for creative expression to the ADA community. Partnering with the Northeast Iowa Food Bank, the Hearst hosts free annual workshops in ceramics to the public for its “Empty Bowls Workshop”.

Implementation Update 2: UNI and the Public Art Committee partner regularly collaborate on Public Art including local artist murals (added 2022) and UNI student rotating piece on the Miller pad. Every other year, the Hearst Center’s “First 50” exhibition offers a unique opportunity for artists of all ages, mediums, and levels of experience to display artwork for the public. The first 50 people in line at the Hearst’s designated drop-off date and time get into the show. This allows artists exposure and is an encouragement for all in the community to get to know local artists, or the impetus to create more art to sell!

Implementation Update 3: Local coffee shops, breweries, stores in the Downtown District offer artists an outlet for exhibition and sales. The Hearst Center provides a venue for local writers, illustrators, poets, and songwriters to sell their publications. We feature publications from UNI’s Final Thursday Press, as well as independent publishers.

Implementation Update 4: The Artapalooza annual event, continued Public Art Committee projects, The Hearst’s annual Cedar Valley Student Art Show, a well-attended community event, raises awareness of the arts offered in the Cedar Valley.

11. Development of North Cedar as a featured location for residential, commercial and recreational growth

- a. Increase annual development in North Cedar based upon a plan outlining connectivity, housing, bikability and funding opportunities

Timeline: 2025

Responsibility: City of Cedar Falls Community Development and North Cedar Neighborhood Association (Kurt Gravett, update provided by Stephanie Houk Sheetz, Jim Newcomb & N. Cedar Neighborhood Association Executive Board)

Implementation Update 1: Two trails added: Center Street (N. Cottage Row Rd. to Lone Tree Rd.) 2020 and Lake Street (Central Ave. to Big Woods Rd.) 2022, following the North Cedar and Center Street Framework Plan (adopted January 2011).

Implementation Update 2: City met with developers to explore more residential development (2019).



- b. North Cedar neighborhood development addressing the Center Street project, connectivity and funding strategies

Timeline: 2019

Responsibility: City of Cedar Falls Engineering Services Division and North Cedar Neighborhood Association, **and Community Development** (Kurt Gravett, **update provided by provided by Stephanie Houk Sheetz, Jim Newcomb & N. Cedar Neighborhood Association Executive Board**)

Implementation Update 1: Trail along Center Street completed in 2017-2018 (through support of a grant).

Implementation Update 2: City held discussions with Neighborhood Association from 2017-2019 before starting design work & in the early stages of design work of today's Center Street Streetscaping project. Center Street Alternatives A-C in the North Cedar and Center Street Framework Plan (adopted January 2011) were discussed. Full curb would be a future improvement, at the time a full reconstruction of Center Street is needed.

Implementation Update 3: Neighborhood Association worked with City, fundraising to support adding amenities of decorative lighting, benches, bike racks & trash receptacles to the project (2021).

Implementation Update 4: Center Street Streetscaping project started in June 2022. Completion is anticipated in 2023.

People

12. Cedar Falls is identified as a national leader in community engagement with colleges and universities

- a. Establish a co-learning center which provides an alternative to in-seat models of education to encompass all learning styles. The Center will introduce a variety of career paths which are diverse to meet the adaptive needs of employers

Timeline: 2020

Responsibility: Cedar Falls Public Library (Jennifer Rodenbeck, [completed by Stephanie Houk Sheetz](#))

Implementation Update 1: A Collaborative Laboratory (Co-Lab) was completed at the Cedar Falls Public Library in early 2019. It hosts classes and is a space for users to reserve for individual or group use. Patrons and cardholders age 18 or older may use the Co-Lab. Open lab hours are hosted by library personnel to learn more about the equipment and receive guided instruction. A listing of items inside the co-lab is on the Library's website, including items such as button maker, Cricut 12x24 mats and tools, rotary mat, sewing machines, Washer Stamper jewelry kit. Outside of the co-lab, the library has a number of other items available for use such as Apple iMac, Adobe Creative Suite, Sketchup Pro, flatbed scanner, MakerBot Replicator+ 3-D Printer, VHS to DVD Conversion Station.

- b. Increase enrollment at UNI by elevating intentional community, business and university engagement through promoting learning, service and internship opportunities throughout Cedar Falls

Timeline: 2018

Responsibility: Cedar Valley Alliance and Chamber, UNI (Steve Dusk, Michael Hager [and Cary Darrah and Grow Cedar Valley staff](#))

Implementation Update 1: UNI: In 2022-2023, of all internship credits earned by students at the University, about 25% interned in Cedar Falls. In addition, with the addition of the nursing program in Fall 2024, clinical placements will increase in the much needed field of nursing.

Implementation Update 2: UNI: Since December 2022, 178 UNI students have registered to volunteer through the Volunteer Center of Cedar Valley registration system.

Implementation Update 3: UNI: Hosted a Service-Learning workshop for faculty and since 2016, 9 projects have been with Cedar Falls organizations/businesses.

Implementation Update 4: UNI: New student enrollment for Fall 2023 is anticipated to be up.

Implementation Update 5: College Student Engagement - UNI Career Fair: Grow Cedar Valley (GCV) participated in the University of Northern Iowa Fall Career

Fair and spoke to approximately 50 students about opportunities for employment in the Cedar Valley post-graduation. (2018)

Implementation Update 6: Summer Series: Every summer, GCV hosts a series of Series events to connect students interning and working part time in the Cedar Valley over the summer. This year, events were hosted at Lost Island, SingleSpeed in Waterloo, and Mill Race.

- 200 attendees at 3 Summer Series events
- 40 students were from out of state
- 64 students from UNI
- 13 Cedar Falls companies sent students, including John Deere, Target, Mudd Advertising, Amperage, DISTek, Viking Pump, and Braceability (2018)

Implementation Update 7: GCV hosted the Economic Inclusion Conference in partnership with the University of Northern Iowa at the Diamond Events Center in Cedar Falls on October 12, 2018. Conference statistics:

- 370 attendees
- The keynote speaker, Nika White, received a 4.6/5 rating by 109 attendees who took a post-conference survey. (2018)

Implementation Update 8: UNI Career Fairs: Grow Cedar Valley attends these events to speak with students about employment opportunities in Cedar Falls and the Cedar Valley post-graduation. (2019)

Implementation Update 9: UNI & Wartburg Career Fairs: Grow Cedar Valley attends these events to speak with students about employment opportunities in Cedar Falls and the Cedar Valley post-graduation. (2019)

Implementation Update 10: One Cedar Valley Getting to Work: In partnership with IowaWorks, the University of Northern Iowa, Child Care Resources, the cities of Cedar Falls and Waterloo and many other organizations, Grow Cedar Valley is helping to create a multifaceted method to address our workforce barriers. This includes providing eligible unemployed and underemployed people with job and life skill training to secure and maintain new employment providing employers with new pools to pull talent. (2019)

Implementation Update 11: Summer Social Series: Promotes the livability of the Cedar Valley to students interning and working part-time over the summer. Last year over 200 interns participated in these events, one of four events this year is a CEO panel that will be sharing their tips for success to students on June 25, 2019 in Cedar Falls.

Implementation Update 12: The Economic Inclusion Conference is Iowa's premier conference on Diversity, Equity and, Inclusion. This joint conference is between the University of Northern Iowa and Grow Cedar Valley and is made possible with tremendous collaboration of other area stakeholders and organizations. This year, as part of our COVID-19 response, we modified the program to accommodate safe practices. We used a virtual platform and hosted the event over two days in place of the one day originally planned. We are happy to say that we experienced the highest turnout to date. Over 380 participants registered representing employers, employees, educators and other community leaders. (2020)



Implementation Update 13: UNI & Wartburg Career Fairs: Grow Cedar Valley attends these events to speak with dozens of students about employment opportunities in Cedar Falls and the Cedar Valley post-graduation. (2020)

Implementation Update 14: A member of the GCV team served on the Civic Action Planning Team 2.0 to outline community engagement aspirations and determine the most strategic approach to making community engagement opportunities central to UNI and available to all students. (2020)

Implementation Update 15: Training & Education (aligning training) In addition to specific programs outline below, Grow Cedar Valley provides advisory support to a range of training & development programs across the Cedar Valley, acting as a liaison to help connect the business community and our region’s educational partners. Those partners include, but not limited to, the following: Cedar Falls Schools & Cedar Falls CAPS; Waterloo Community Schools & Waterloo Career Center; HCC program advisory boards and regional industry sector boards; UNI Career Services. (2021)

Implementation Update 16: Economic Inclusion Conference is held again in 2021. This joint conference is between the University of Northern Iowa and Grow Cedar Valley and is made possible with the tremendous collaboration of other area stakeholders and organizations. The day-long Summit welcomed more than 200 attendees. The keynote address provided by Cedar Valley native Sailu Timbo (now executive for Hy-Vee Corporate) highlighted how one of the largest grocery retailers has embraced diversity, equity and inclusion as they grow their workforce throughout the Midwest.

Implementation Update 17: In April 2021, a member of our team participated as a project judge in the UNI Community Engagement Celebration.

Implementation Update 18: A member of the GCV team served on the Civic Action Planning Team 2.0 to outline community engagement aspirations and determine the most strategic approach to making community engagement opportunities central to UNI and available to all students. (2020-2021)

Implementation Update 19: The Cedar Valley Manufacturers Association/Sector Board and Grow Cedar Valley began partnering with industry leaders in March ’22 to relaunch the Cedar Valley Manufacturing Association. The industry-led association, with the support of GCV, Hawkeye Community College, University of Northern Iowa, and Iowa State University-CIRAS is a peer association of industry leaders to prioritize common issues. Among them is educational support for upcoming workforce and ensuring the demographics of the manufacturing workforce match the demography of the community. (2022)

13. Welcoming inclusiveness is a key community asset for Cedar Falls so that all residents are empowered to maximize their quality of life

- a. Implement an expanded, community-wide model for engagement and inclusivity (i.e., training and education)

Timeline: 2016

Responsibility: Cedar Falls Human Rights Commission (Colleen Sole updated by Bailey Schindel & Chelsie Luhring, HRC Liaisons)

Implementation Update 1: Cedar Falls Human Rights Commission (CFHRC) hosted, sponsored, and/or participated in several community events encouraging community-wide inclusivity:

- a) 6/1/2023 CFHRC hosted an LGBTQIA+ Pride Month Recognition event for the community including education, speakers, resources and support
- b) June 2023 participation in the Sturgis Falls Parade to promote the CFHRC as a resource to the public
- c) 3/28/2023 CFHRC hosted a Women’s History Month event in partnership with the Cedar Falls Public Library including a speaker on women’s historical roles and rights, and recognizing three local women for their contributions to the Cedar Valley
- d) 1/2019, 1/2020, and 1/15/2023 CFHRC supported and attended the Martin Luther King Jr. Banquet in Waterloo
- e) 08/2018, 08/2019, 08/2021, 08/2022 and anticipated 08/2023 CFHRC participation in Cedar Valley Pridefest as a vendor offering support and resources
- f) May 2022 and 2023 annual Meet and Greet events hosted by CFHRC for the community to learn more about the CFHRC’s mission, its resources, and in turn, for the commission to hear from citizens
- g) 11/17/2022 CFHRC hosted a Native American Heritage event educating the public on Native American history and culture in partnership with the Cedar Falls Public Library
- h) 5/16/2022 CFHRC hosted a Juneteenth community educational event in partnership with the Cedar Falls Public Library
- i) March 2022 recognition of local women of achievement in the Cedar Valley for Women’s History Month
- j) 2/17/2022 CFHRC hosted a Genealogy Research Event for Black History Month in partnership with the Cedar Falls Public Library

Implementation Update 2: CFHRC presented many proclamations to City Council in support of inclusion and human rights topics including:

- a) Disability Pride Month-July
- b) Juneteenth Freedom Day
- c) LGBTQIA+ Pride Month-June
- d) Women’s History Month-March
- e) Black History Month-February
- f) National Native American Heritage Month and Native American Heritage Day-November

g) International Human Rights Day-December

Implementation Update 3: Other

- a) Added a “Resources” tab to the CFHRC webpage with helpful community inclusivity information and resources
- b) May 2023 CFHRC issued a signed resolution to the City Council supporting the Housing Needs Assessment and urging councilmembers to adopt the assessment for the benefit of the community.
- c) Development and continual advancement of CFHRC social media accounts and webpage for better public accessibility and inclusiveness, including a concern form and multiple avenues for the public to report human rights concerns to the CFHRC
- d) Annual sponsorship of a Courier publication honoring MLK Jr. Day
- e) Added an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement statement to CFHRC webpage to honor and recognize the history of the Indigenous peoples past and present-their heritages, cultures, beliefs and languages
- f) Continuation of building community partnerships and relations to advance community engagement and inclusiveness

b. Expand projects/organizations to provide life and job skills for Cedar Falls residents with disabilities, as well as to prepare employers to provide jobs to these individuals

Timeline: 2017

Responsibility: Goodwill Industries of Northeast Iowa and Exceptional Persons Incorporated (David Boyd, Chris Sparks, updated by Katie Slade of EPI)

Implementation Update 1: Life skills in the Cedar Valley

- a) EPI has served between 337-398 individuals annually in gaining greater independence, self-sufficiency and life skills to fully participate in their communities. (2017-present)
- b) EPI is supporting persons served in taking part in 1,000+ community activities each month (such as community festivals, classes, workshops, volunteering, wellness activities as well as visiting community establishments).
- c) These services are a part of EPI's every day mission to connect people, create opportunities, and nurture growth.

Implementation Update 2: Supported Employment Services in the Cedar Valley

- a) EPI has served between 113-148 individuals annually in gaining the skills to acquire a competitive community job. In this time, 20 individuals are established with employment and no longer require our supported employment services. (2017-present)
- b) These services are a part of EPI's every day mission to connect people, create opportunities, and nurture growth. EPI works to educate businesses through community education, speaking opportunities, as well as one-to-one job development opportunities.



Implementation Update 3: Prepare employers in the Cedar Valley

- a) EPI has prepare and worked with between 17-40 businesses annually in preparing them to work with a person with a disability. (2017-present)
- b) These services are a part of EPI's every day mission to connect people, create opportunities, and nurture growth.

14. Cedar Falls collaborates closely with Waterloo and other neighboring Cedar Valley communities

- a. Initiate a Cedar Valley regional vision and shared strategic plan addressing people, place and prosperity

Timeline: 2017

Responsibility: INRCOG (Kevin Blanshan [update provided by Brian Schoon](#))

Implementation Update 1: Phase I Placemaking Planning Project completed in July 2022 - Funded by INRCOG (EDA CARES Funding) and John Deere Foundation. Link: [Cedar Valley River Experience Vision Draft.pdf \(inrcog.org\)](#)

Implementation Update 2: Phase II Placemaking Planning Project is underway (as of May 2023) - Planning work funded by GCV. Development of a Non-Profit Organization led by INRCOG (legal work-IRS application, accounting, board of directors development, etc.).

Implementation Update 3: Grants have been requested to implement components of the plan. To date, we have been unsuccessful. However, prior to this plan, Cedar Falls and Waterloo obtained grants for their river projects.

15. Cedar Falls leads Iowa in learning and education for all ages

- a. Recruit Cedar Falls business/industry and residents to volunteer time, talent and financial support to the Cedar Valley MakerSpace and all local makerspaces, to promote collaborative learning, creative design, and manufacturing for people of all ages and skill levels.

Timeline: 2016

Responsibility: Cedar Valley Makers (Taylor Morris, [update by Mike Hoffman](#))

Implementation Update 1: Utilization/membership continues to grow year over year at a slow but steady pace, which is in line with forecast expectations and budgets.

Implementation Update 2: Cedar Valley Makers (CVM) attends a number of events at area schools, UNI, Hawkey, STEM Fairs, and other scheduled small group workshop, events, and projects in support of education and local social/civic organizations.

Implementation Update 3: The number of youth & adults served by this total 667 in 2022-23. With 297 volunteer hours toward the effort.

- b. Pursue official international “sister community” relationships to expand high school and college student exchanges and learning opportunities

Timeline: 2018

Responsibility: City of Cedar Falls – Mayor’s Office (Mayor)

Implementation Update 1: 2021 – City Council approves resolution to form a Sister City partnership with Ferizaj, Kosovo with the assistance of the Consulate of Kosovo in Des Moines.

Implementation Update 2: 2022 – Mayor Green begins attending receptions and special events at the Consulate of Kosovo to build working relationships with other Iowa cities which already have strong partnerships with cities in Kosovo.

Implementation Update 3: 2022 – Mayor Green creates the Cedar Falls Sister Cities Committee underneath the Art and Culture Board with similar advisory & action role as the Art and Culture Board.

Implementation Update 4: 2023 – Mayor Green signs the formal sister city partnership agreement with Ferizaj during a joint visit with the University of Northern Iowa.

- c. Recruit six Cedar Falls community leaders to receive Cedar Falls Futurist training to bring awareness of national and international trends, concepts and best practices to Cedar Falls’ organizations, business and government

Timeline: Annually

Responsibility: UNI Institute for Decision Making (Randy Pilkington [update by James Hoelscher](#))

Implementation Update 1: [Not implemented based upon later overall direction of the plan and emphasis on other goals.](#)

- d. Continue implementation of the 10-year facility plan and curriculum innovation to provide exemplary pre-k- 12 education

Timeline: Annually

Responsibility: Cedar Falls Community School District (Andy Pattee)

Implementation Update 1: The District, since the adoption of the plan, has completed construction of Aldrich Elementary, as well as additions and remodeling to North Cedar and Orchard Hill Elementary buildings. The new high school will be completed and open in August, 2024.

Implementation Update 2: Several innovative programs, one of which is the Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS), a model across the state and Midwest, have been created since the adoption of the plan.



Item 1.

Implementation Update 3: Online learning, accelerated through the pandemic, has been growing as the District continues to expand and offer advanced courses and elective opportunities.

Cedar Falls Community-Wide Strategic Plan Update

September 5, 2023



Background on Strategic Plan

- Initiated Spring 2015
- Typically a Mayor's initiative with community-led team
- City endorsed in February 2017 (Resolution 20,382)
- Council Update on City-led initiatives August 16, 2021
- Council supported continued use of the 5-year community wide strategic plan (Nov. 2021)
- Council referred review of plan at Goal Setting (Nov. 2022) and new plan for 2025-2030
- CIP (FY23-FY28) includes Community-wide Strategic Plan in FY24-FY25 at \$25,000



Purpose of Strategic Plan

- Identifies projects and initiatives intended to:
 - Elevate the focus areas of the plan
 - Transformative opportunities
- Outcomes have potential for broad and influential progress on quality of life, business climate, and quality of place.



Cornerstone Values of the Plan

Item 1.

- Progress
- Best Practices & Collaboration
- Education
- Safe & Healthy Environment
- Inclusiveness & Sense of Community
- Economic Health & Opportunity
- Connectivity



Outcomes & Objectives of the Plan

Prosperity

⇒ 5 outcomes, 11 objectives

Place

⇒ 6 outcomes, 17 objectives

People

⇒ 4 outcomes, 9 objectives



Outcomes: Prosperity

Item 1.

1. A dynamic and nationally recognized business climate of innovation, job growth, talent development and investment and a diversified tax base fuel Cedar Falls' economy
2. Retail, commercial and service offerings in Cedar Falls mirror or exceed similar amenities found in metro areas throughout Iowa
3. Cedar River-related attractions, activities and beautification generate escalating economic impact through visitor revenues and residential/commercial development
4. Highly attractive and unique housing options to attract/retain talent and wealth with emphasis on millennials and retirees
5. A sustainable local foods co-op within Cedar Falls



Outcomes: Place

Item 1.

6. Cedar Falls is ranked in the top ten nationally for quality of place driven by lifestyle amenities in all Cedar Falls' neighborhoods
7. Cedar Falls is recognized as having a variety of convenient, quality and advanced wellness and healthcare services
8. Cedar Falls is a national model for state of the art connectivity for technology and transportation serving all residents, organizations and businesses
9. Proven and emerging approaches to sustainability and environmental conservation are in practice throughout all sectors of Cedar Falls
10. A wealth of art, culture, recreation and entertainment offerings accentuate all aspects of life in Cedar Falls
11. Development of North Cedar as a featured location for residential, commercial and recreational growth



Outcomes: People

Item 1.

12. Cedar Falls is identified as a national leader in community engagement with colleges and universities
13. Welcoming inclusiveness is a key community asset for Cedar Falls so that all residents are empowered to maximize their quality of life
14. Cedar Falls collaborates closely with Waterloo and other neighboring Cedar Valley communities
15. Cedar Falls leads Iowa in learning and education for all ages



Implementation Status

- 37 objectives for implementation
- Qualitative objectives
- Lead entities vary by objective: City, Grow Cedar Valley, Community Main Street, College Hill Partnership, UNI, local developers, Co-op, and more
- April – July contacted lead entities to request accomplishments related to objectives in the plan
- Compiled responses under each outcome/objective



Implementation Status: A dynamic and nationally recognized business climate of innovation, job growth, talent development, and investment and a diversified tax base fuel Cedar Falls' economy

Item 1.

1b. Amplify Cedar Falls' business/innovation support services and incubation programs for small businesses and new start-ups through expanded business (private sector) partnerships and collaboration

- John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center (JPEC) & Grow Cedar Valley (GCV): Support the Red Cedar organization in opening Millrace Coworking Space.
- Entrepreneur service provider roundtable: UNI convened a roundtable of leaders from SBDC, JPEC, IDM, and CBGI as well as local Main Street directors, city economic developers, entrepreneurs, Red Cedar, GCV, and INRCOG.
- UNI built out a variety of programs including Panther Biz Hub, Business Builder Workshops, Startup Week, and others to provide direct services to small businesses.
- GCV supports entrepreneur-driven efforts through events like Startup Weekend Cedar Valley.



Outcome: Prosperity

Implementation Status: Highly attractive and unique housing options to attract/retain talent and wealth with emphasis on millennials and retirees

4b. Expand mixed-use development within Cedar Falls' including business and technology parks to increase businesses and housing units attractive to millennial and knowledge workers

- Developments with MU zoning have updated plans (Pinnacle Prairie, Greenhill Village).
- New building projects continue in Downtown & College Hill.
- Creekside Technology Center Master Plan adopted in 2019 for 160 acres along Hwy. 20/Ridgeway/Hudson Rd.
- City purchased 200 acres for industrial park expansion in 2019 and additional 76 acres in 2023.



Outcome: Prosperity

Implementation Status: Cedar Falls is ranked in the top ten nationally for quality of place driven by lifestyle amenities in all Cedar Falls' neighborhoods

6a. Revitalize existing public parks as needed including interactive play features and public art

- New equipment installed at North Cedar Elementary. (2020)
- Bess Streeter Park playground new equipment. (2022-2023)
- Island Park improvements: adding 9-hole disk golf course, adding a pétanque & adding horseshoe pits. (2023-2024) Wetland work planned in the future.
- Seerley Park improvements: new playground, grading work to support access, new shelter in partnership with neighborhood group. (2024)
- Orchard Hill Park improvements: expand Pickleball courts & parking lot, new shelter, in partnership with Pickleball Club. (2023-2024)



Outcome: Place

Implementation Status: Cedar Falls is ranked in the top ten nationally for quality of place driven by lifestyle amenities in all Cedar Falls' neighborhoods

6c. Develop an on-line social network of residents to strengthen neighborhood communication

- City staff is liaison to several active neighborhood groups: Community Main Street, College Hill Partnership, North Cedar Neighborhood Association, attending the meetings monthly for City-neighborhood communication/collaboration. Others are attended as requested.
- The City establishes a free “public agency” account on Nextdoor.com, a national, online neighborhood social network. (2019)
- The City Communications Specialist begins posting city announcements to Nextdoor.com. (2020)
- As of July 1, 2023 the Cedar Falls Nextdoor site contains 7,765 members, representing 5,904 households and 40 distinct neighborhoods.



Outcome: Place

Implementation Status: Cedar Falls is a national model for state Item 1. the art connectivity for technology and transportation serving all residents, organizations and businesses

8a. Address transportation accessibility, affordability and parking-related issues for residents, students and workers at all mobility and income levels and in all areas of the community

- University Ave. included bus shelters, sidewalk & trail. (2016-2019)
- Sharrows added on corridors.
- Updated Bike-Pedestrian Plan. (2022)
- Trails snow removal map created.
- Main Street reconstruction includes on-street bike paths, sidewalks and nine bus stops. (2023-2025)



Outcome: Place

Implementation Status: Development of North Cedar as a featured location for residential, commercial and recreational growth

Item 1.

11b. North Cedar neighborhood development addressing the Center Street project, connectivity and funding strategies

- Trail along Center Street, with State grant. (2017-2018)
- Neighborhood Association fundraised to add amenities of decorative lighting, benches, bike racks & trash receptacles to the streetscape project. (2021)
- Center Street Streetscaping completed 2023.



Outcome: Place

Implementation Status: Welcoming inclusiveness is a key community asset for Cedar Falls so that all residents are empowered to maximize their quality of life

13a. Implement an expanded, community-wide model for engagement and inclusivity (i.e., training and education)

- Cedar Falls Human Rights Commission (CFHRC) hosted, sponsored, and/or participated in several community events encouraging community-wide inclusivity.
- CFHRC presented many proclamations to City Council in support of inclusion and human rights topics.
- Added a “Resources” tab to the CFHRC webpage with helpful community inclusivity information and resources.
- Continuation of building community partnerships and relations to advance community engagement and inclusiveness.



Outcome: Place

Implementation Status: Cedar Falls collaborates closely with Waterloo and other neighboring Cedar Valley communities

14a. Initiate a Cedar Valley regional vision and shared strategic plan addressing people, place and prosperity

- Phase I Placemaking Planning Project completed. (July 2022)
- Phase II Placemaking Planning Project is underway. (as of May 2023)
- Grants have been requested to implement components of the plan.



Outcome: Place

Recommendation

Discuss planning projects at Goal Setting:

1. Visioning & Zoning work for neighborhood areas such as
 - College Hill zoning (Vision Plan adopted 5/3/21) 2024-2025
 - High School/ Sartori/NW Cedar Falls (Vision Plan) 2025-2026
 - University Avenue & nearby neighborhoods (Vision Plan) 2026-2027
2. Major Thoroughfare Plan Review/Adoption 2024
3. Parks Master Plan 2025-2026
4. Revisit Comprehensive Plan and Strategic Plan 2027

