

S A S A K I

City of CEDAR RAPIDS
FRAMEWORK PLAN
for REINVESTMENT and REVITALIZATION

December 2008



JLG Architects | Stanley Consultants | JMS Communications & Research | Conservation Design Forum | Parsons Brinckerhoff | ARUP | Anderson-Bogert

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

City of Cedar Rapids

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City Departments

Community Development
Public Works
Utilities (Water Department and
Water Pollution Control)
Parks + Recreation
Finance
Police Department
Fire Department
Code Enforcement Division
Cedar Rapids Public Library
CR Transit

With input from:

Recovery and Reinvestment Coordinating Team

Linn County Board
Cedar Rapids Community
School District
Cedar Rapids Area
Chamber of Commerce
Corridor Recovery
Hawkeye Labor Council
Four Oaks
CR Neighborhoods
Cedar Rapids Downtown
District
United Way

Coordinating Groups, Committees, and Organizations

OPN Architects
CDM
Cedar Rapids SSMID Board
PLAY
15 in 5 Development Group
Infill Committee
Environmentally Sensitive
Areas Committee
Historic Preservation
Committee
Replacement Housing
Task Force
Next Generation Council/
Access Iowa
Visual Arts Committee

Other Government Agencies

Vision Iowa Board and
Administrators
Office of Senator Harkin
Office of Senator Grassley
State Legislators
US Army Corps of
Engineers, Rock Island
District
United States General
Services Administration

Arts + Culture

Czech + Slovak National
Museum + Library
African American Historical
Museum + Cultural Center
Science Station
Theater Cedar Rapids
Cedar Rapids Symphony
Cedar Rapids Museum of Art
Mother Mosque of America

Medical

St. Luke's Hospital
Mercy Hospital
Physician's Clinic of Iowa

Railroads

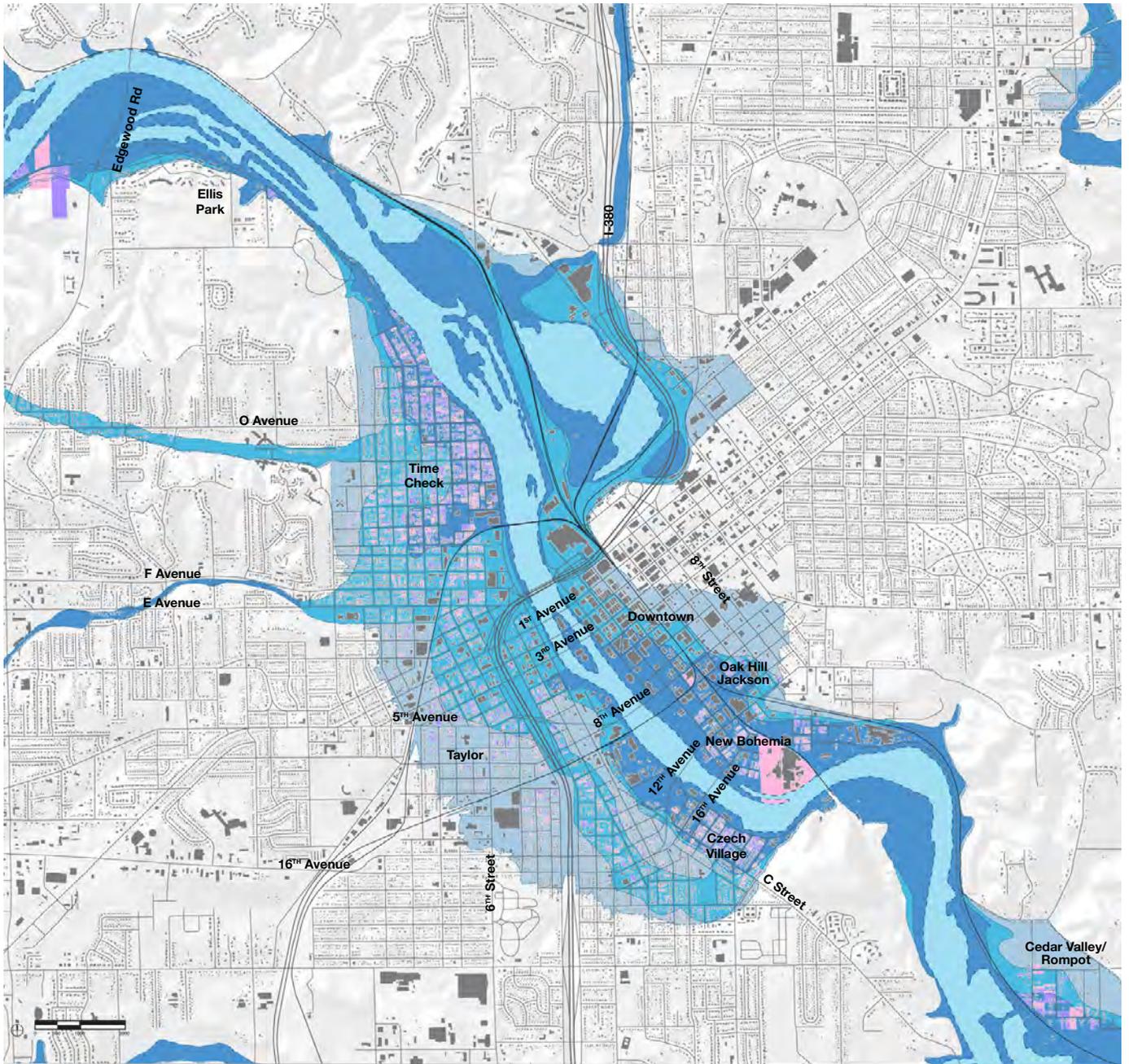
Union Pacific Railroad
Cedar Rapids and Iowa City
Railway Company
Iowa Northern Railroad
Canadian National Railroad

Industrial Stakeholders

Cargill
Diamond V
Weyerhaeuser
Quaker Oats
Penford
Alliant Energy

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Substantially damaged
 Significantly damaged
 River
 100 yr. Flood Plain
 500 yr. Flood Plain
 2008 Flood

Flood Impacts

INTRODUCTION



Cedar Rapids crowned 2008 as the “Year of the River,” a title meant to reinforce the connection between the city and the river, and to recognize the 100th anniversary of the city’s purchase of May’s Island. This name became more significant following an extreme flood in June 2008 that inundated the river-edge neighborhoods and a large part of downtown with a record breaking 31.5 feet of water. The “Flood of 2008” was 11.5 feet higher than any previous flood, forced many evacuations, and caused billions of dollars in damage.

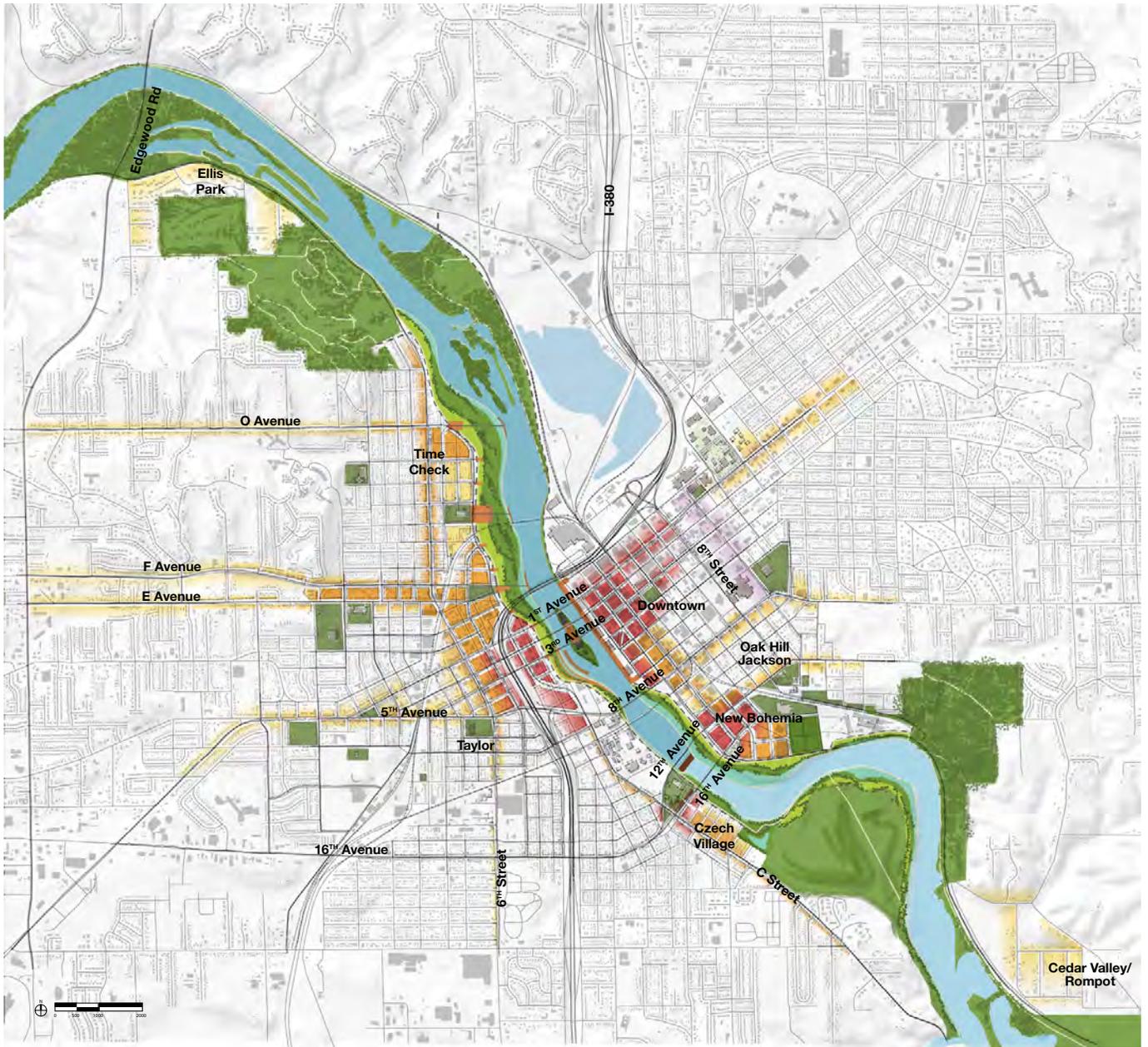
This report summarizes the process and conclusions of a four-month long planning effort by the City of Cedar Rapids and the Sasaki consultant team to develop a Framework Plan for Reinvestment and Revitalization following the flood.

The City’s Challenge

- Continue to ensure people are safe;
- Provide improved flood protection;
- Restore affordable workforce housing;
- Ensure vibrant neighborhoods;
- Restore business and downtown vitality, retaining and attracting jobs, and
- Restore community vitality.

Our Vision

Cedar Rapids must not only recover from the flood and be better, but greater. We must move towards our vision—“Cedar Rapids, a vibrant urban hometown—a beacon for people and businesses invested in building a greater community for the next generation.”



Intensity of use/revitalization (high to low)
 Existing building
 Greenway
 Culturally significant building

Framework Plan

OVERVIEW

Purpose + Goals



The flood's devastating impact to thousands of residents and many businesses necessitated the immediate transformation of the project scope to meet broader ecological, social and infrastructure challenges. Sasaki had been selected before the flood as a consultant for a Riverfront Park Master Plan. Following the flood, the City Council expanded the consultant team's scope of work to emphasize reinvestment in the affected river corridor neighborhoods, with a focus on the replacement of workforce housing, measures to enhance flood protection, and development options. Sasaki worked closely for the following months with the project team, City representatives, and the community to develop options that would address the City's questions, shown below and in the open house boards (in the appendix).

The planning process responded to these questions:

- What are the flood protection/mitigation options and what impact do they have on the City?
- What is the long-term framework for business reinvestment and revitalization of Cedar Rapids?
- How can the flood mitigation process be used to improve the city's connectivity, sustainability, and overall well-being?
- What new housing options can be made available for people who will not be able to return to their homes and neighborhoods?



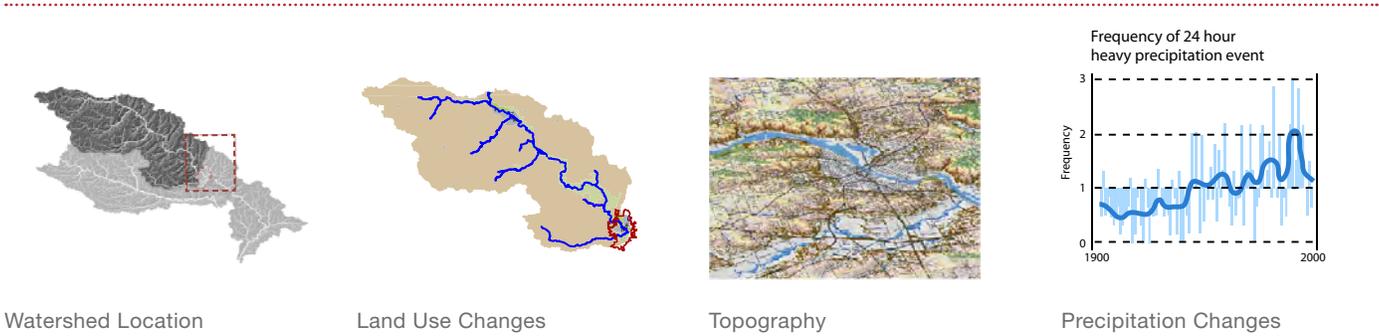
The goals of the process are:

- Rebuild high quality and affordable workforce housing and neighborhoods.
- Improve flood protection to better protect homes and businesses.
- Restore full business vitality.
- Preserve our arts and cultural assets.
- Maintain our historic heritage.
- Assure that we can retain and attract the next generation workforce.
- Help our community become more sustainable.

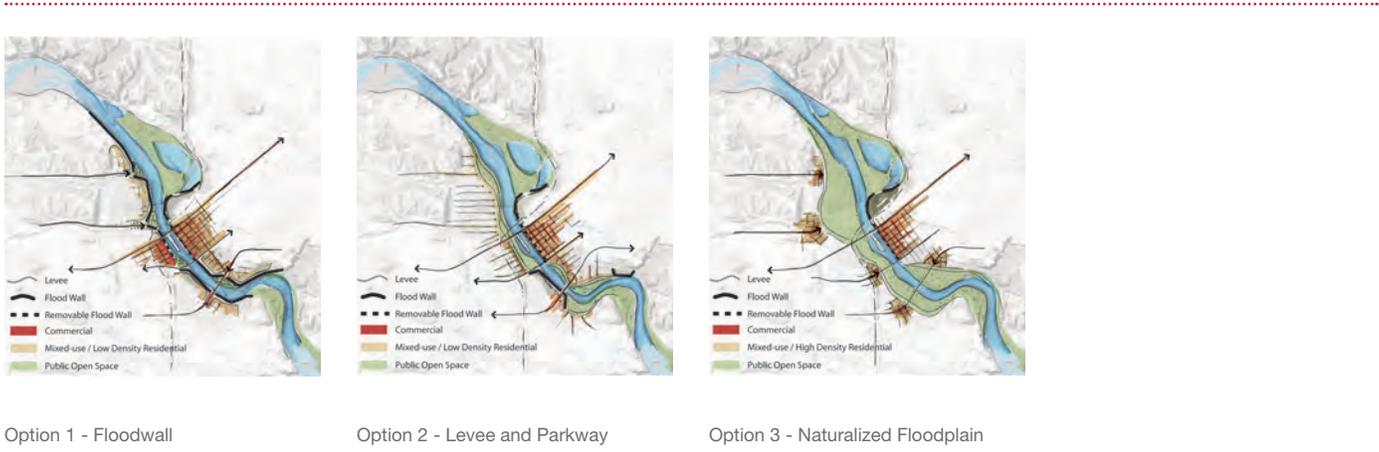


Flood Impacts

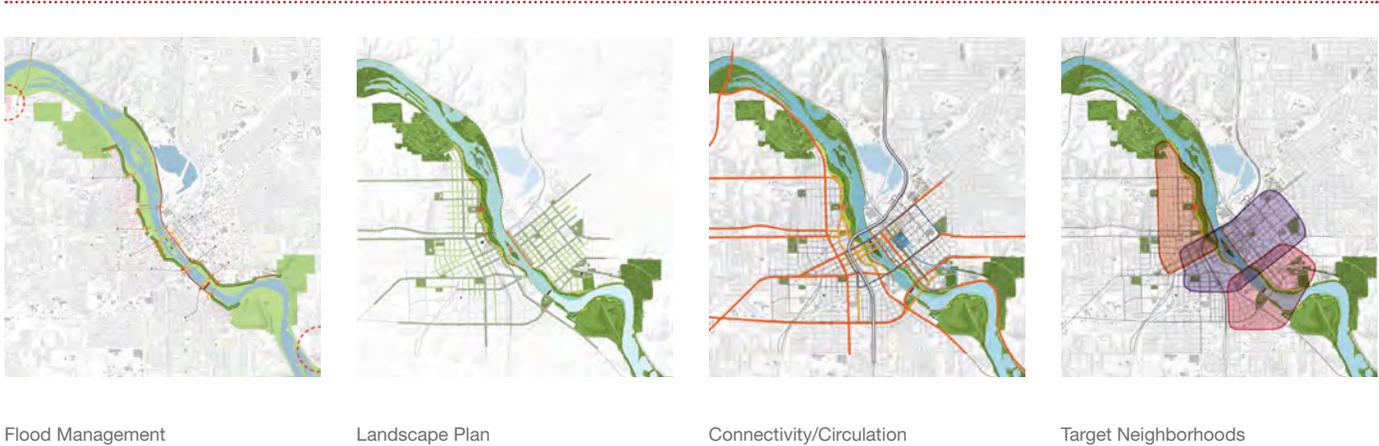
Open House 1: Analysis (July 29, 2008)



Open House 2: Flood Management Options (September 11, 2008)



Open House 3: Framework for Reinvestment and Revitalization (October 16, 2008)



OVERVIEW

Chronology + Process



Open House 1



Open House 3



Open House 3

Developing the strategy required the participation of city representatives, Federal Agencies, and the Cedar Rapids community at three open houses between June and October 2008.

These open houses allowed the public to view options for housing, flood management, and community revitalization, and to provide valuable feedback to form a collective vision to steer the revitalization efforts in a positive direction. The comments received at these meetings shaped the formation of three strategies for flood management and revitalization (“Floodwall,” “Levee and Parkway,” and “Naturalized Floodplain,” on the previous page) and later the solidification of a framework plan that combined many of the ideas from each.

Post-Flood Timeline

June 17, 2008 - The City Council expands Sasaki/JLG scope of work to include the expanded flood-impacted area, and directs them to provide a plan for reinvestment in river corridor neighborhoods including replacement of workforce housing, measures to enhance flood protection, and neighborhood and development options.

July 29, 2008 - City holds the first in a set of three open houses for the River Corridor Redevelopment Plan to receive feedback from residents on the preliminary community analysis.

September 11, 2008 - City holds second of set of three open houses for the River Corridor Redevelopment Plan to receive public feedback on three flood management options, housing, neighborhoods, transportation, arts and culture, open space and recreation, and public facilities.

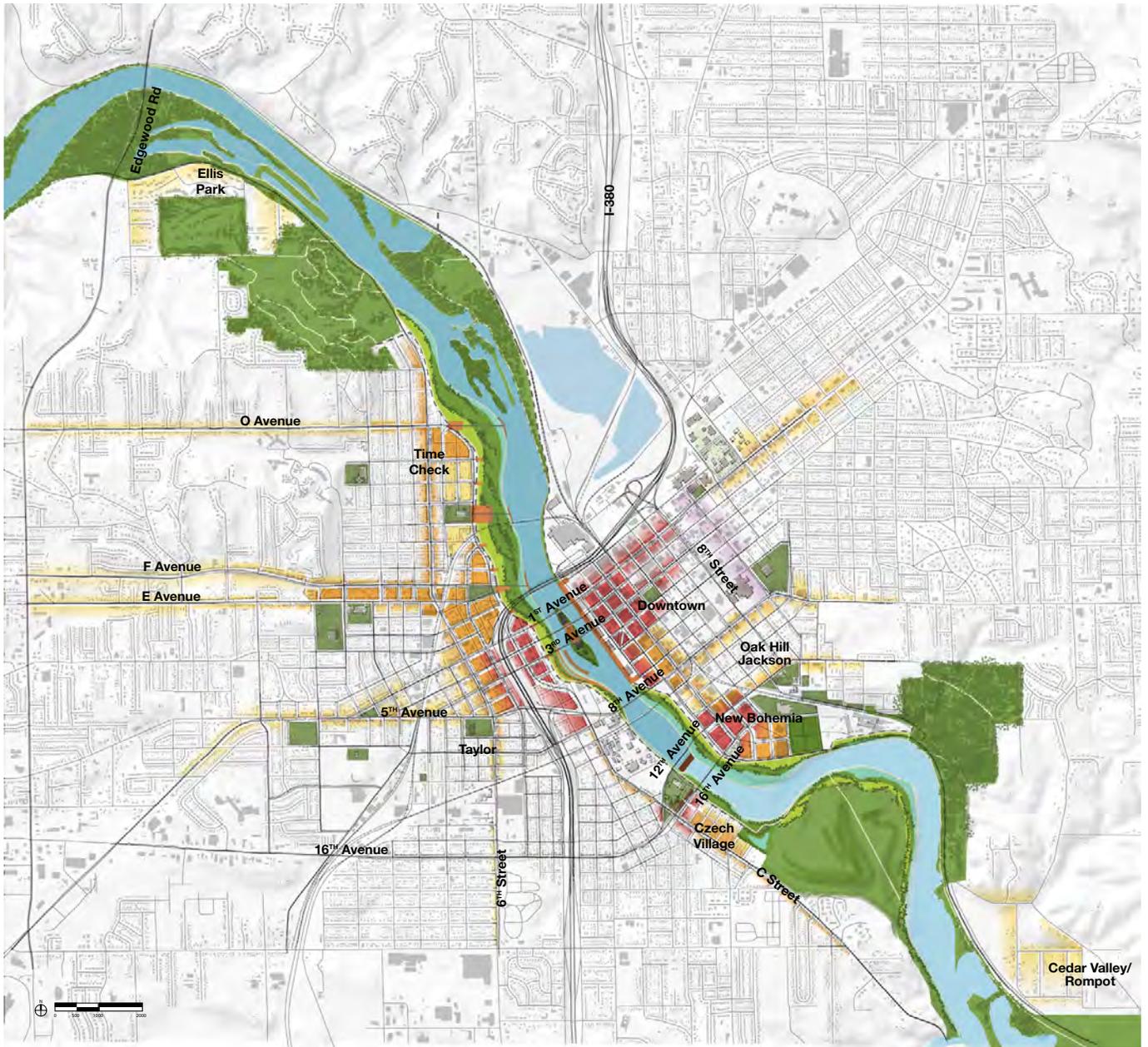
September 24, 2008 - City Council holds four-hour work session on flood management strategy and River Corridor Plan.

October 1, 2008 - City Council selects preferred flood management strategy option for public comment and review.

October 2008 - Developers Skogman and Sherman Associates/MetroPlains, and Hatch Development Group plan for first replacement housing units to begin land development process.

October 16, 2008 - City holds third open house for the River Corridor Redevelopment Plan to present the Framework Plan.

November 12, 2008 - City Council approves the Framework Plan.



Framework Plan

FRAMEWORK FOR REINVESTMENT & REVITALIZATION

Framework Plan



Environment



Societal



Natural Resources



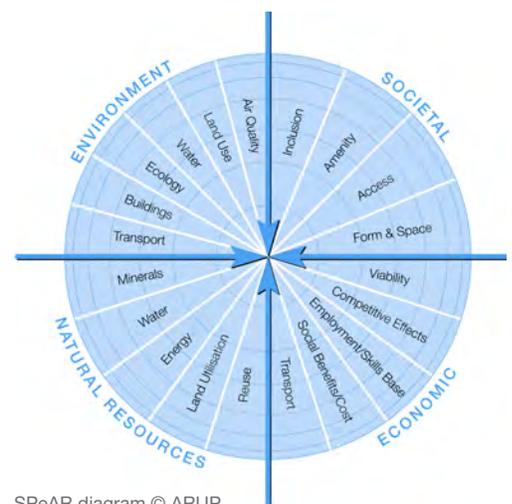
Economic

At the core of the Framework Plan for Reinvestment and Revitalization are the fundamentals of sustainability: environment, resources, society, and economics. The Framework Plan's objective was not only to plan for flood recovery, but also to move towards a greater vision of "Cedar Rapids, [as] a vibrant urban hometown—a beacon for people and businesses invested in building a greater community for the next generation."

The framework integrates the plan elements into three main themes expressed categorically as:

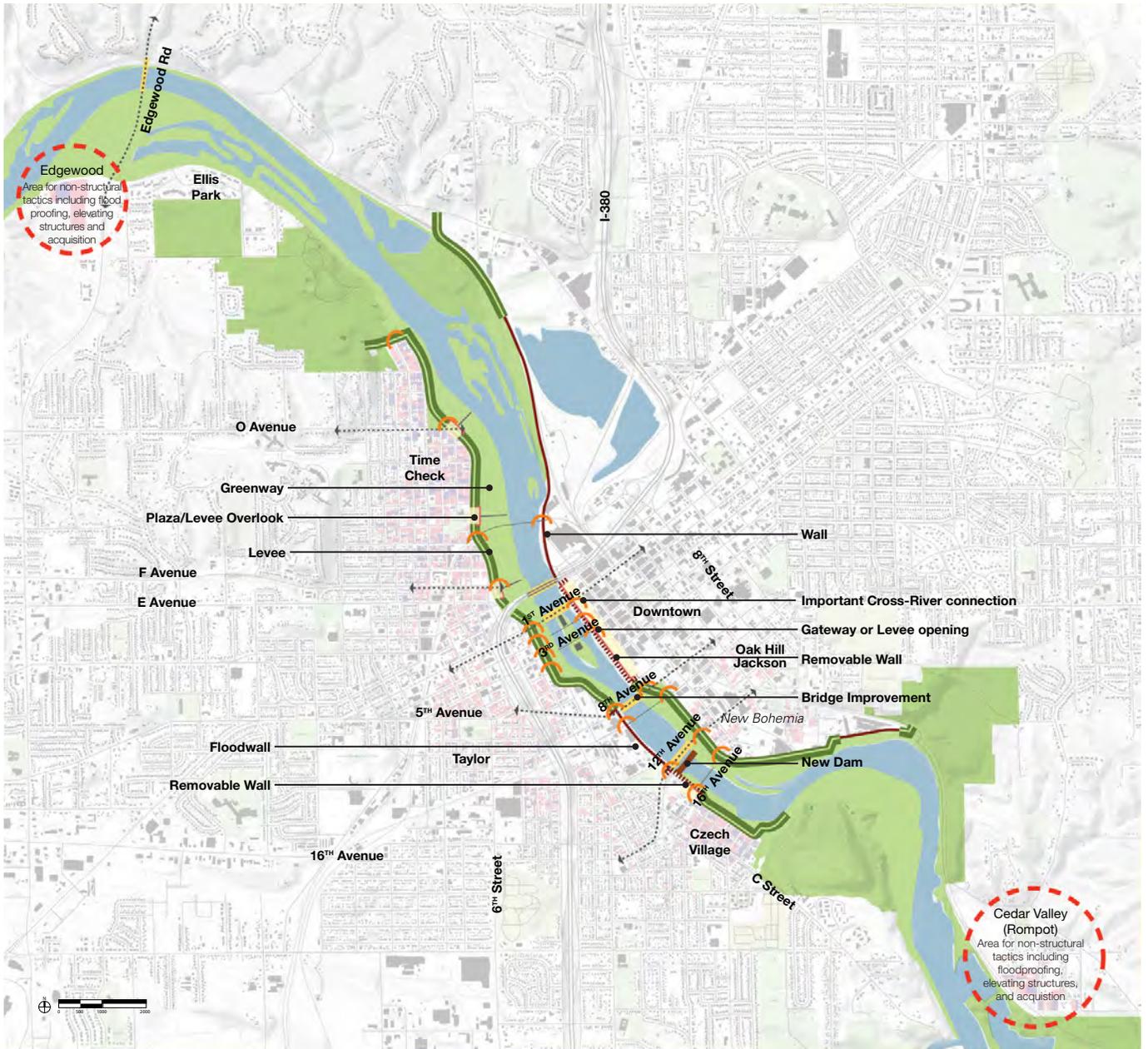
- Flood Management Strategy—Illustrates the tactics used to provide increased protection against future floods and to leverage the flood management strategy to create a Great Riverfront Park for Cedar Rapids.
- Connectivity—Knits together the City and its neighborhoods via improvements to public transit, trail systems, the street grid system, rail operations and specific streetscapes.
- Sustainable Neighborhoods—Targets affected areas within the City to realize opportunities for reinvestment and revitalization that would provide housing, strengthen neighborhoods, enhance the downtown business and arts communities, and improve public facilities.

Sustainability is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. To ensure a sustainable revitalization process, decisions were evaluated based on the SPeAR framework at left to capture and prioritize actions.



SPeAR diagram © ARUP

If all the aspects on the chart on the right (the "labeled pie wedges") are made more sustainable, then the entire project benefits. For example, if land utilization prioritizes concentration of new development on brownfield sites, it contributes to the overall project sustainability.



- Greenway
- Levee
- Important Cross-River connection
- Plaza/Levee Overlook
- Gate or Levee opening
- Removable Wall
- Floodwall
- Future study: Area of non-structural flood tactics
- New Dam
- Bridge Improvement

Flood Management

FLOOD MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Flood Management



River Level Control for Water Activities Downtown



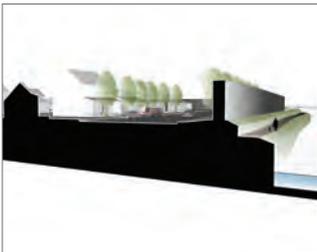
A flood management strategy is critical to the success of the reinvestment and revitalization of Cedar Rapids. The flood management planning process initiated by the City identified the outstanding causes of flood events in Cedar Rapids with regard to location within the watershed, topography, land use changes, and frequency of precipitation events. Multiple flood management tactics were evaluated to compare how well they increased conveyance of the water while reducing runoff into the river and minimizing damage to the City's infrastructure, neighborhoods, and businesses.

Flood Management Priorities from Public Feedback

- Use levees (as shown in Options 2 and 3 previously) more often than vertical floodwalls (as shown in Option 1)
- Maximize open space (as shown in Options 2 and 3 previously) while preserving existing neighborhoods (as shown in Option 2) as much as possible
- Preserve critical cultural and economic assets, including Czech Village/New Bohemia, Downtown, Quaker, Cargill, and Penford
- Address non-structural issues such as flood warning systems, watershed management, and land use/zoning practices
- Prioritize maintaining evacuation capability via bridge(s) in case of floods



Removable Floodwall at Downtown and Czech Village

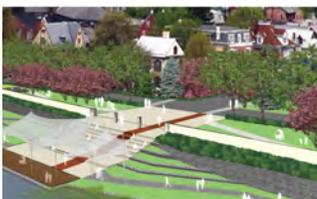


Permanent Floodwall at Penford



The flood management strategy balances the priorities of the community—to provide better protection, preserve neighborhoods and assets, and maximize open space—by combining the following tactics:

- Removable floodwall at downtown and Czech Village
- Permanent floodwall at Penford, Quaker, Cargill and the North Rail Yards
- Wall openings for neighborhood connections
- Levee park or greenway between flood control structures and river

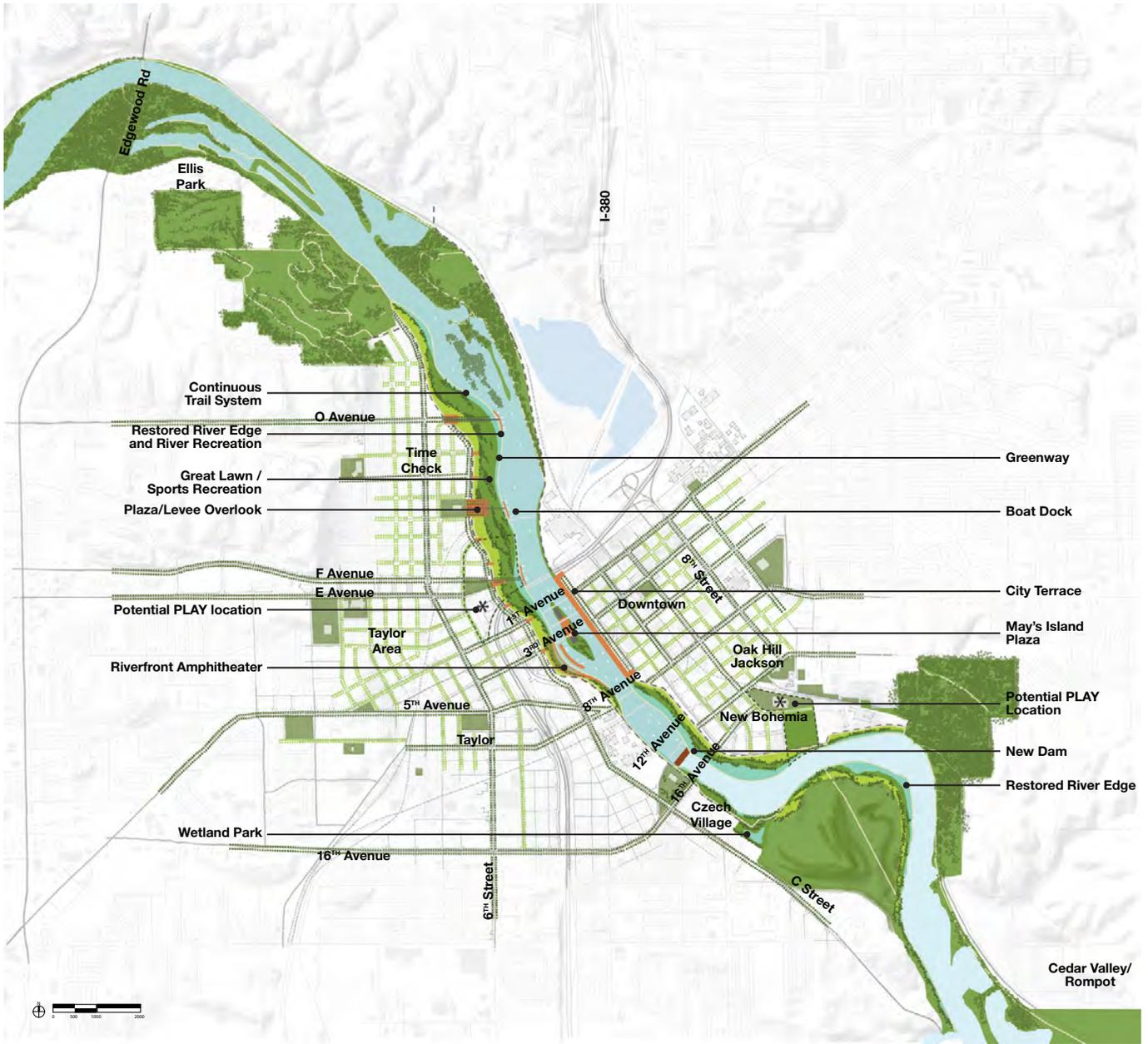


Wall Openings for Neighborhood Connections

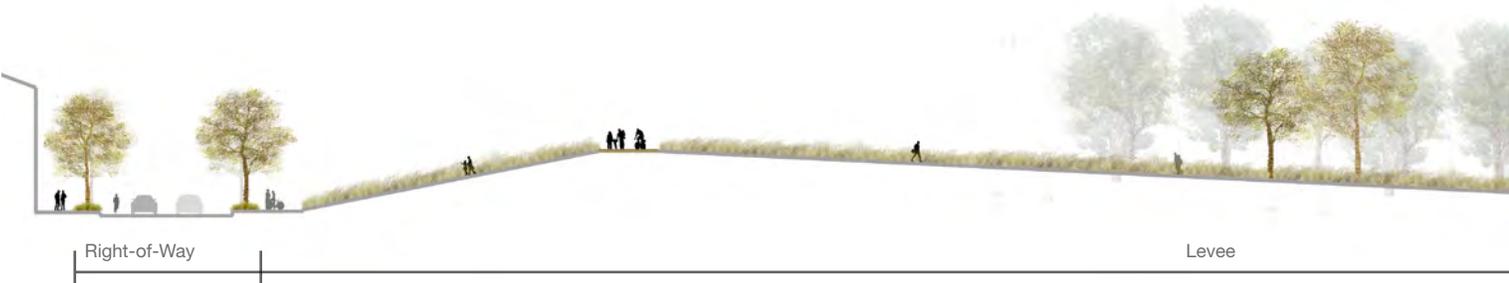


Levee Park / Greenway





Riverfront Park



Typical section of riverfront with extended parkland

FLOOD MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Riverfront Park



Restored river bank and recreational opportunities



The flood management strategy creates better protection while also creating a Great Riverfront Park for the City. The park within the floodplain maximizes open space and keeps the riverfront open to the public.

The river edge is restored along the majority of its course through Cedar Rapids, creating a natural, soft riparian edge with native plants and additional capacity to absorb water. The river banks will also provide access for water recreation activities such as canoeing, kayaking, water skiing and sailing.



Sports recreation



Open Space Priorities from Public Feedback

- Leverage flood management measures to maximize open space
- Keep the riverfront open to the public
- Develop pedestrian and bike trails along greenway corridor connecting downtown to the neighborhoods
- Use the riverfront for parks, high-quality mixed-use development, or public uses
- Implement desired greenway program including an expanded farmer's market, trails, a dog park, gardens, an amphitheater, wetlands and interpretive flood education
- Maintain views to the river



City terrace / May's Island plaza



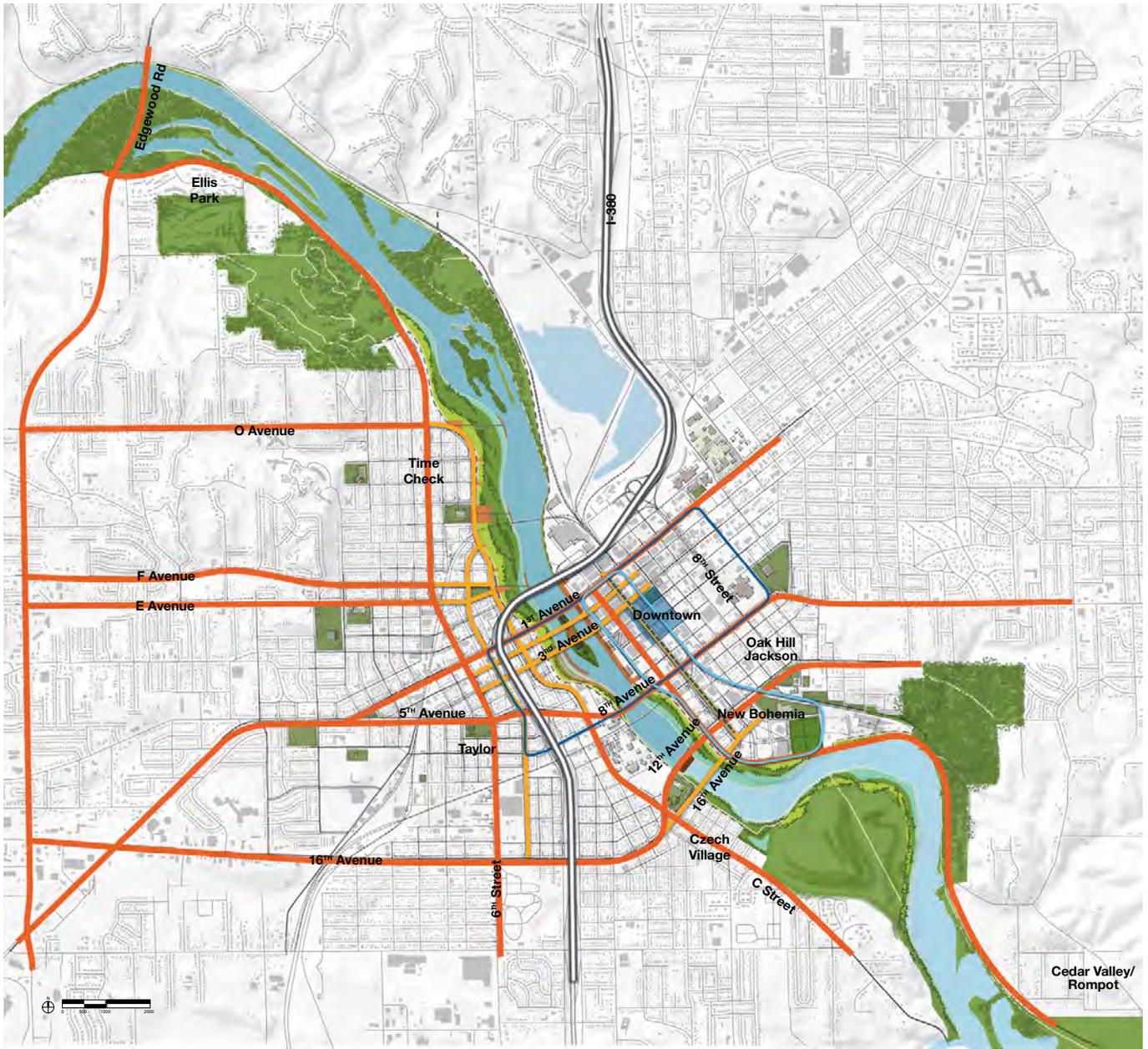
Riverfront amphitheater



Continuous trail system along river



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Circulation Framework

CONNECTIVITY

Circulation Framework



Pedestrian Mall, Boulder, Colorado



Multi-modal Transfer Station, Geneva IL



Bike/ Bus Lane, St. Louis, MO



Walkable Streets, Bethlehem, PA



Bus Mall, Portland, OR

The goal of the connectivity framework is to knit together the City and its neighborhoods via improvements to public transit, trail systems, the street grid, rail operations, and the sidewalk/streetscape.

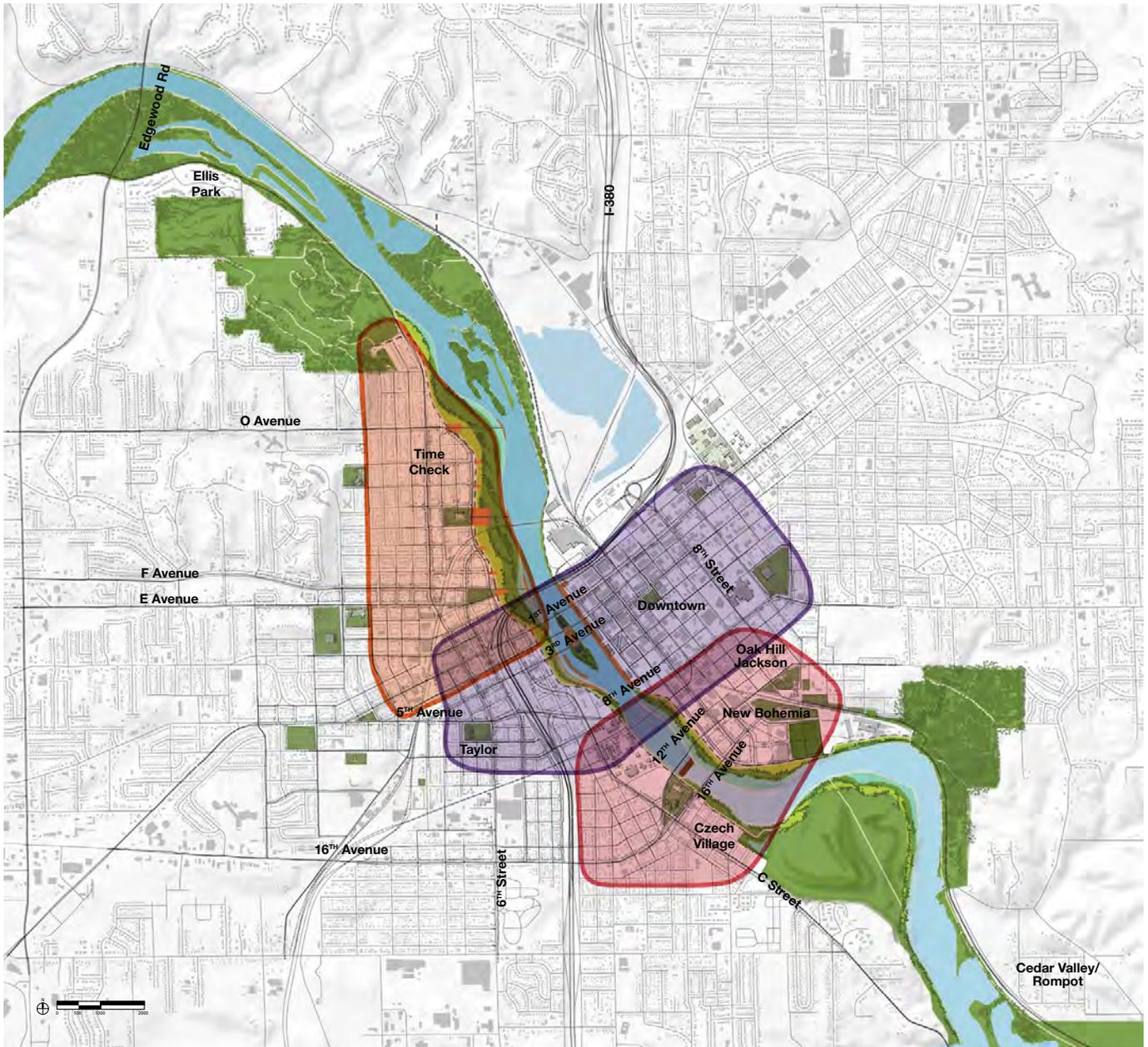
Circulation Priorities from Public Feedback

- Develop better connectivity and sense of community via community centers, mixed housing and sidewalks
- Bus or light rail commuter connection to nearby cities
- Encourage non-vehicular modes to/from and through downtown
- Expand/extend bus and connect to bicycle and parking facilities
- Improve pedestrian environments
- Convert 4th street rail to pedestrian or transit corridor
- Support development of inter-modal transfer station and transit infrastructure improvements
- Connect to and complement adjacent areas with the Sinclair area development
- Prioritize maintaining evacuation capability via bridge(s) in case of floods

The framework's strategy is to strengthen connections at multiple levels to re-establish regional identity, create strong north-south and east-west corridors, and support neighborhoods.

Connectivity Opportunities:

- Improve highway interchanges to reconnect with regional neighbors
- Use north-south corridors to create a stronger sense of connection to Cedar Rapids's north and south neighborhoods
- East-west corridors, create vibrant downtown character inclusive of both river banks
- "Neighborhood connector" streets provide focus for improvements and strengthen neighborhood identities
- Explore reuse of Fourth Street Rail Corridor as a pedestrian and/or transit corridor
- First Avenue Signature Street with strong retail and pedestrian activity
- Pursue phased opportunities to establish transit infrastructure
- Develop street hierarchy consistent with adjacent land uses
- Resolve conflict zones between rail, vehicles, and pedestrians



North Area (Ellis Park and Time Check)

South Area (Czech Village, Oak Hill Jackson, New Bohemia, and Cedar Valley/Rompot)

Central Area (Taylor, Downtown, and Medical District)

Neighborhoods

SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhoods

10 Principles for Livable, Sustainable Communities



Design on a Human scale:
A walkable pedestrian environment
(Charleston, SC)



Vary transportation options:
Dedicated bike lane
(Minneapolis, MN)



Provide choices:
A farmer's market supports the
local economy



Create neighborhood identity:
Active neighborhood center
(Washington Square, New York City)



Encourage mixed-use development:
Ground floor retail creates an active
street (Boston, MA)



Design matters: Well-designed space
makes a successful community
(Millenium Park, Chicago, IL)



Preserve urban centers:
Rehabilitation and preservation of
storefronts (Galena, IL)



Conserve landscapes: Preserved
wetland paired with recreation area
(Bay Trail, San Francisco, CA)



Protect environmental resources:
New compact developments
(South Dunn, Bloomington, IN)



Vibrant public centers: Create active
plazas and park areas near downtown
(Millennium Park, Chicago IL)

The framework plan targets areas within the City as priorities for reinvestment and redevelopment to provide housing, strengthen neighborhoods, enhance the downtown business and arts communities, and improve public facilities.

The neighborhoods targeted in the Framework Plan are:

- North Area (Ellis Park, Time Check)
- Central Area (Taylor, Downtown, Medical District)
- South Area (Czech Village, Oak Hill Jackson, New Bohemia, and Cedar Valley/Rompot)

Sustainable housing will be purposefully located within walking distance of important services and will also, where possible, incorporate sustainable design and construction strategies. New neighborhood centers will bring residents together for shopping and entertainment, and encourage interaction. These small “nodes” of higher-density development (likely including mixed-use buildings) will foster a strong sense of place by focusing on and recognizing each neighborhood’s unique identity.

Priorities from Public Feedback

- Encourage sustainable, walkable, mixed-use communities
- Build the necessary mix of market and affordable housing units
- Improve downtown utility service
- Explore more sustainable energy supply and storm water management
- Protect larger industrial community partners
- Restore historic buildings wherever possible
- Save and/or build on current artistic and cultural facilities within neighborhoods and downtown where possible, including support for churches and other religious communities
- Relocate important cultural resources, if necessary, to protected areas, memorialize their original location where appropriate
- Appropriately locate public/shared facilities

SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

North Area (Time Check and Ellis Park)

Revitalize this historic neighborhood by celebrating cultural and community assets, improving connectivity, and working with residents to strengthen neighborhood character by re-establishing traditional workforce housing stock.

Priorities from Public Feedback

- Diversify Ellis Park area profile with small-scale business and entertainment in addition to existing housing
- Balance the desire for acquisition with the need to preserve neighborhoods such as Time Check
- Maintain neighborhood character and identity in redeveloping impacted areas
- Provide incentives for homeowners to rebuild, rehab, or relocate in or near existing neighborhoods



View from the greenway at Time Check looking toward Downtown

SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

North Area (Time Check and Ellis Park)



Mixed-use Commercial - Residential, Kentlands, MD



Local Connector, Frostburg MD



Workforce Housing, Dundee & Geneva, IL



Townhomes and Single Family Mix, Stapleton, CO



Walkable Streets, Cincinnati, OH



Mixed-use Retail - Residential, Hudson, OH

North Area Neighborhood Development Opportunities

- Incentivize and encourage returning residents to re-establish neighborhood housing stock
- Work with neighborhood organizations to catalyze investment in the local business community
- Link to downtown by reconnecting the urban fabric in southeast Time Check and strengthening the Ellis Boulevard NW corridor, and F & E Avenues
- Explore refurbishment of existing or siting of new community resource/ recreation facilities
- Connect riverfront greenway to residential areas

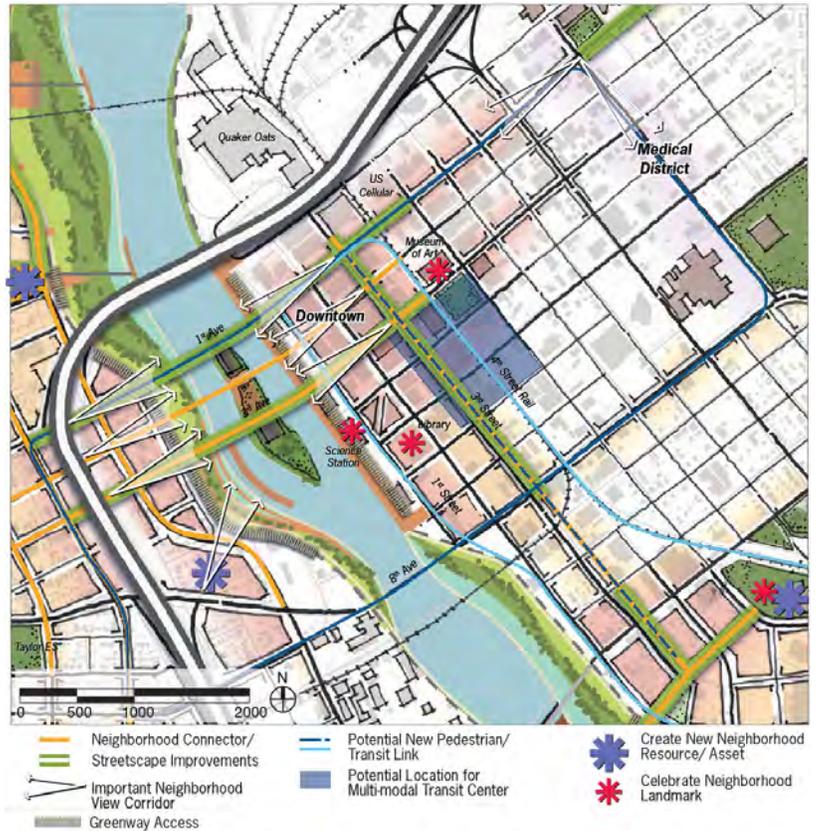
SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

Central Area (Taylor, Downtown, and Medical District)

Create a vibrant cohesive downtown character that diversifies the urban fabric, reconnects east and west, and accommodates key civic, business, and cultural resources.

Priorities from Public Feedback

- Diversify downtown commercial profile
- Densify medical district
- Improve pedestrian connections
- Convert 4th street to pedestrian or transit corridor
- Invest in a “signature street” along 1st Avenue
- Support farmer’s market expansion
- Reinvest in library as an important civic resource
- Support local businesses with rebuilding and reinvestment
- Replace relocated civic facilities downtown within a vibrant dynamic commercial environment
- Invest in cultural/arts corridor along 3rd Street



View along the city terrace Downtown looking toward May's Island

SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

Central Area (Taylor, Downtown, and Medical District)



Civic Center - Canal Walk, Indianapolis, IN



Findlay Farmers Market, Cincinnati, OH



Mixed-use Retail - Entertainment, Newport, KY



Mixed Use Residential - Retail, Chicago, IL



Walkable Development, Burlington, VT



King Farm Arts/Education Center, Kentland, MD

Downtown Development Opportunities

- Locate and develop multi-modal transit hub in conjunction with phased development of transit infrastructure
- Activate riverfront park with vibrant local market place for regular farmer’s market, as well as periodic artisan and cultural fairs and festivals
- Develop a vibrant mixed-use district around a new civic center that consolidates civic services
- Create a “Downtown U” that fosters community gathering and learning
- Diversify retail-commercial profile of the business district to activate street edges and create a vibrant “destination downtown”
- Create signature street along 1st Avenue
- Maintain and support existing cultural facilities on 3rd Avenue and connect to cultural arts corridor along 3rd Street
- Develop street hierarchy consistent with adjacent land uses to locate appropriate parking resources, improve streetscape, and create a more walkable downtown
- Improve pedestrian infrastructure and streetscapes
- Add urban housing options to promote 24/7 activity
- Densify medical district to create vibrancy



Typical section of riverfront at Downtown

SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

South Area (Czech Village, Oak Hill Jackson, New Bohemia, and Cedar Valley/Rompot)

The goal for the South River Area is to knit together the Czech Village, Oak Hill Jackson, New Bohemia, and Cedar Valley/Rompot neighborhoods in a way that leverages community assets and investment for mutual benefit, supports diversity, and celebrates individual character.

Priorities from Public Feedback

- Diversify Czech Village with mixed use retail/commercial with residential on upper floors
- Connect to and complement adjacent areas with the Sinclair area development
- Maintain neighborhood character and identity in redeveloping impacted areas
- Provide incentives for homeowners to rebuild, rehab or relocate near existing neighborhood



View along 14th Avenue looking toward St. Wenceslaus Church

SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

South Area (Czech Village, Oak Hill Jackson, New Bohemia, and Cedar Valley/Rompot)



Mixed Use Development, Covington, KY



Mixed Use Development, Galena, IL



Streetscape Improvements, University City, MO



Neighborhood Connector, Galena, IL

South Area Neighborhood Development Opportunities

- Re-establish neighborhood cultural institutions like the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library, and the African American Historical Museum
- Celebrate significant neighborhood landmarks, like Saint Wenceslaus Church and the clocktower
- Streetscape improvements along neighborhood connectors link New Bohemia and Czech Village to new Sinclair residential district
- Create new neighborhood assets to catalyze development, like a community/ recreation center or civic open space/plaza.
- Connect riverfront greenway to residential areas



Neighborhood Connector, Charlevoix, MI

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SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

Housing

Housing Priorities From Public Feedback

- Protect housing from future flooding
- Ensure high-quality replacement houses are built quickly
- Provide affordable housing options
- Retain character of pre-flood communities
- Support sustainable neighborhoods where residents can walk to schools, parks and services

Goals for Sustainable Housing

- Rehabilitate existing housing where financially feasible
- Ensure high-quality replacement housing is built quickly
- Provide mixed-income neighborhoods
- Target scattered sites and infill opportunities
- Build on character of pre-flood communities
- Connect to schools, parks and services
- Preserve existing historical character of buildings where possible

RENTAL HOUSING NEED	
TYPE	UNITS REQUIRED
Market Rate	150
Affordable	230
Subsidized	86
Totals	466

OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING NEED	
TYPE	UNITS REQUIRED
Market Rate	210
Affordable	210
Subsidized	0
Totals	420

Source: Maxfield Research (August 2008)

Single-family Housing

- In-fill and new construction
- 800-1200 square feet per unit
- Traditional neighborhood feel



Sketch provided by Skogman Homes



Condominiums and Townhomes

- Neighborhoods with retail/office space
- Retail and office on ground floor
- Walkable and sustainable urban living



Sketch provided by Sherman Associates



Townhomes and Apartments

- In-fill and new construction
- 700-1350 square feet per unit
- Two to four-story apartment buildings
- 1-3 bedroom units



Sketch provided by Sherman Associates



NEXT STEPS

Timeline

Framework Plan

October 16, 2008 - City holds third open house for the River Corridor Redevelopment Plan to present the Framework Plan to the public

October 2008 – Developer Skogman begins new housing construction, with housing available starting in 2009

November 12, 2008 – City Council takes action on River Corridor Redevelopment Plan Framework for Reinvestment & Revitalization

Detailed Plan

Winter-Spring 2008/2009 – Neighborhood Planning Process starts, and will run until Summer 2009; Planning teams will meet with neighborhoods to develop plans for each neighborhood

- November: City Council/Neighborhood Groups formalize Neighborhood Planning Process
- December: Focus Groups from each neighborhood meet to identify needs
- January: Neighborhood Planning Process begins with kick-off and overview, followed by area meetings and open house work sessions every 6 weeks
- March: Preliminary neighborhood plan alternatives
- April: Preferred neighborhood plans and action plans
- May: City Council action

Late 2008 – Army Corps of Engineers begins its Flood Management Strategy feasibility analysis, projected to take 18 to 24 months, likely to conclude in 2011

Winter 2008/2009 – Plans and specifications are prepared for initial project

2009 – Planning and development of City/Community facilities begins

Construction

Spring 2009 – Construction begins on prioritized projects

2009 – Kickoff of feasibility determination for first downtown projects – cornerstone of downtown reinvestment and revitalization

2009 – Kickoff of multi-family housing construction

2010-2015 – Community facilities construction

2012 – Flood management system construction begins

APPENDICES

Appendix 1:

Open House 1 Boards

Appendix 2:

Open House 2 Boards

Appendix 3:

Open House 3 Boards

Appendix 4:

Technical Memorandum on Flood Management (Stanley Consultants)

Appendix 5:

Technical Memorandum on Transportation (Parsons Brinckerhoff)

Appendix 6:

Facilities Master Plan (JLG Architects)

