

Regional Vision and Focus Areas – Creating our Path

Comments received during the regional assessment process relate back to one theme that represents the vision for the future of Iowa’s Creative Corridor. Below is the vision, including key strategies from each of the three key focus areas that will work to achieve the vision. Since this document will also serve as the long range transportation plan, additional attention is given to transportation within the community development focus area.

Your Regional Vision

“In 2040, we will achieve sustainable and equitable prosperity in Iowa’s Creative Corridor”

Economic Development

“We will grow and sustain our regional economy.”

“We will define our regional brand.”

Workforce Development

“We will enhance our regional talent base.”

“We will promote our region to prospective talent and capital investment.”

Community Development

“We will enrich our quality of life.”

Realizing Our Vision

Before moving forward, it is often helpful to look back. Looking backward can serve as a reminder of our potential for progress and as a foundation for future success. A number of accomplishments can be noted since the completion of the initial CRDS in 2011. Below is a summary of those accomplishments.

Regional Accomplishments Since the Last Update

Economic Development Accomplishments

In 2012, the Corridor Business Alliance completed a rebranding process and is now implementing strategies to market the brand, including the hiring of a brand manager and the development of creativecorridor.co, a website to serve as a resource for those visiting, living or relocating to the region.

Since 2011, the ECICOG Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) has made 49 loans, valued at over six million dollars. These loans have resulted in the creation of 562 jobs in the Creative Corridor. In addition, ECICOG has partnered with area organizations to administer and underwrite multiple local revolving loan fund programs, including City of Cedar Rapids MicroLoan, Marion Economic Development Corporation RLF, Czech Village NewBo RLF, City of Cedar Rapids RLF, and City of Marion/Marion Chamber of Commerce RLF.

Workforce Development Accomplishments

In 2015, with input from over 200 participants, a Workforce Development Plan was developed for Iowa's Creative Corridor to ensure that the region's current and future workforce meets the needs of regional employers. Action items from the plan have been incorporated into the tasks noted later in this chapter. In addition, the creativecorridor.co website has been developed to serve as a one-stop resource for those living in, or considering a move to, Iowa's Creative Corridor.

Community Development Accomplishments

Housing: Since 2011, housing trust funds have been established to serve all counties in the region. The Housing Fund for Linn County (HFfLC) and Housing Trust Fund of Johnson County (HTFJC) serve Linn and Johnson Counties, respectively. All other counties are served by the East Central Iowa Housing Trust Fund (ECIHTF). In the past five years, the three housing trust funds have been awarded over \$4.7 million from the Iowa Finance Authority's Local Housing Trust Fund Program. These funds, combined with contributions from local lenders and local governments, have assisted in the development or preservation of over 1,000 affordable housing units.

Natural Environment and Resiliency: Since the catastrophic floods in 2008, Cedar Rapids and Linn County have made significant progress toward recovery, have come back stronger, and are continuing efforts to become more prepared and build resilience to future flood events and other hazards. In recent years, Linn County has partnered with Resilient America Roundtable to explore a variety of resilience priorities, including:

- Understand and build on current community strengths
- Engage diverse voices in resilience building efforts
- Build resilience within vulnerable populations
- Effectively communicate risk to the public
- Build trust within the community
- Build multi-stakeholder, multi-generational partnerships
- Develop real-time decision making capability during a disaster.

This project, which serves a national pilot project for the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine can also serve as a local pilot, when complete, to replicate in other counties throughout the region. Since 2011, each county in Iowa's Creative Corridor has also completed a Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan to identify hazards and plan for recovery and/or mitigation techniques.

In that time, a number of Watershed Management Authorities (WMAs) have formed in the region to manage water resources and water quality. New WMAs include Indian Creek WMA, Clear Creek Watershed Coalition, English River WMA and Middle Cedar WMA.

Transportation Accomplishments

Since the completion of the plan in 2011, the region has investigated and implemented a number of new modal options in Iowa's Creative Corridor. The Iowa Commuter Transportation Study indicated that a variety of public transit options, including carpool, vanpool, express bus, and subscription bus, should be feasible for the region. In October 2016, the CorridorRides brand was launched. The brand includes the CorridorRides.com website that provides an online opportunity for carpool matching and a regional vanpool program operated by vRide. The regional transit system, formerly known as East Central Iowa Transit, has also been rebranded as CorridorRides.

In the past five years, the region has formed two new advisory committees to enhance the regional transportation planning process. The Regional Trails Advisory Committee (RTAC) was established to assist in regional trail planning efforts and to review and recommend regional Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) priorities. The Passenger Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC) provides input on the region's Passenger Transportation Plan and its annual updates.

Other accomplishments include the organization of a regional Multi-Disciplinary Safety Team (MDST), the rehabilitation or reconstruction of 16 bridges and 22 roadways, the construction or resurfacing of four trail segments, and advocacy for multiple primary road projects. Iowa DOT has also completed portions of the long-planned US Highway 100 project in Linn County.

In addition, Iowa DOT has entered into a partnership with HERE North America, the University of Iowa, and Iowa State University to develop strategies that further the research, development, testing, operation, and implementation of automated vehicles in the State of Iowa. A portion of I-380 is slated as a test site. The site was chosen because of the relatively high traffic volume, and because it provides an example of both rural and urban traffic.

Moving Toward our Vision

As we move forward, key strategies have been identified for each of the focus areas to help us fulfill the region's vision for the future. The strategies and action items outlined on the following pages were determined based on the regional trends as shown by data in this plan and from public comments listed in the regional assessment.

Economic Development Key Strategies

Iowa's Creative Corridor's economy is diverse and growing, but must better capitalize on its assets and opportunities. Therefore...

WE WILL GROW AND SUSTAIN OUR REGIONAL ECONOMY BY:

- *Improving our competitive climate for business.*
- *Better assisting our existing employers.*
- *Strengthening our entrepreneurial ecosystem.*

Iowa's Creative Corridor must strive to identify and capitalize on its most catalytic potential economic opportunities. Therefore...

WE WILL DEFINE OUR GLOBAL BRAND BY:

- *Confirming the economic opportunity through research and outreach to top regional experts.*
- *Pursuing the economic opportunity through development of an actionable plan for growth.*

The Creative Corridor is fortunate to have a truly diverse economy. This diversity was the key to not only surviving an economic downturn in 2008, but doing so while experiencing one of the worst natural disasters in Iowa history. The region should embrace and celebrate the strength

and resilience of an economy that's been diversified significantly since the 1980s when the farm crisis devastated the regional economy that at the time didn't enjoy that kind of diversity.

That foundational economy of the region does not, however, portend a dramatically different future. It should be sustained, nurtured, and aided to consistent and steady growth. But to gain the kind of growth that will fundamentally change the economic path of the region, the Creative Corridor must do more than rely on that foundation alone. It must seek opportunities for exponential growth in focused sectors where the region holds (or can develop) a unique advantage over other regions. In some cases, those may be foundational sectors that also happen to be poised for growth. In other cases, there may be emerging sectors in which proactive strategies can get the Creative Corridor into new opportunities.

Essentially there are three key aspects to regional economic development. They include:

- Existing business retention and expansion
- Entrepreneurial development
- Marketing and attraction of outside business

While separate and distinct organizations, infrastructure, programs, and strategies may drive these three aspects, all need to be coordinated, ideally around economic sectors identified as key growth or emerging markets. The shared focus on key drivers allows the region to be proactive in its economic development outreach and build common support sectors.

Iowa's Creative Corridor Economic Sectors

The Creative Corridor economic development plan includes proactive and reactive strategies around both vertical and horizontal "threads."

Vertical threads are the key economic sectors with potential to drive exponential growth in the region. Each vertical thread has: a foundational presence in more than one specific area in the Creative Corridor; the potential for exponential, rapid and transformational growth; a component that allows this region to leverage a unique advantage over other regions.

Horizontal threads are both the support structures and enablers for the vertical threads. Literally, the vertical threads cannot thrive or even survive without them. Horizontal threads may have growth potential as well, and are certainly essential to the sustainable, resilient nature of the regional economy. Strategies and tactics around attraction, retention, creation and growth of horizontal sectors very likely differ from those of the vertical sectors. But the threads are unmistakably intertwined and interdependent.

These sectors have been identified through interviews with key leaders and the analysis of regional economic data from the Regional Assessment Report and other sources.

Creative Corridor Horizontal Threads

1. Health Care
2. IT
3. Business Services
4. Insurance & Finance

Creative Corridor Vertical Treads

1. Life Sciences (Bio, Ag, and Food Science and Technology)
2. Educational Services and Technology
3. Innovative Production Technology (also referred to as advanced manufacturing)
4. Transportation and Logistics

Description of Horizontal Threads in the Creative Corridor

Health Services

The health services sub-sectors in the Creative Corridor employ over 20,000 people and serve as critical contributors to the local economy. It is very likely that the Creative Corridor, its two major health systems, and largest hospitals attract patients from outside the seven-county regional geography; but to truly represent a “traded” opportunity, health services would need to have a more expansive reach and impact. Critical efforts like the MedQuarter Regional Medical District are important strategies to expand health care companies in the Creative Corridor and build supportive assets for existing employers. To compete with traded health services regions such as Rochester, Minnesota, however, is unrealistic in the context of an external marketing campaign. For comparison, Rochester’s plan to grow its health services economy – branded Destination Medical Center (DMC) – is a \$6 billion public-private initiative to transform Downtown Rochester and the Mayo Clinic campus into a world-class destination for “health tourism.”

Information Technology

At its core, information technology (IT) is a platform with applications to all industries. However, some subsectors position IT as their principal employment focus, while others use IT as a key yet supportive component of their operations. For the purposes of this report, the IT sector contains

Creative Corridor firms that leverage technology as their principal product or service. The definition includes software development and publishing, data storage, computer system design and programming, data and web hosting, and data analytics.

Local Employers: Involta, GoDaddy, Leepfrog Technologies, MediRevv, Siemens PLM Software, General Dynamics Information Technology (previously Vangent), Higher Learning Technologies, Ruffalo Noel Levitz, and Connect Five, among others.

Business Services/ Insurance & Financial

The Creative Corridor's business services sector encompasses companies that are engaged primarily in insurance related activities and back office functions such as customer care and support operations. As a prime source of "white collar" employment, ranging from accountants to general operations managers, the business services sector is often instrumental in retaining recent college graduates as well as attracting professionals into a community. The sector is important because it offers points of workforce entry for multiple classes of skill set, experience level, and educational attainment. Ensuring a steady supply of young professional in-migration and rooting recent high school, college and soon-to-be college graduates in the Creative Corridor will be paramount to the resiliency of its business services sector.

Of the business services subsectors, insurance is one of the most stable and is less tied to the rise and fall of economic cycles as banking, mortgage financing, brokerages, investment houses, and other services dependent on disposable income. In fact, insurance-based investment tools like annuities are safe havens when national and international financial markets become volatile.

Local Employers: Transamerica, GEICO, United Fire Group, U.S. Cellular, Hibu, Verizon Business, and TrueNorth, among others.

Description of Vertical Threads in the Creative Corridor

Life Sciences (Bio, Ag, and Food Science and Technology)

The Creative Corridor boasts a wealth of resources related to life sciences. The region's proximity to raw materials and crops used in research and production, the distribution networks to move product inputs to processing facilities, highly concentrated manufacturing employment, and health care services and research activities at the University of Iowa and the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics System strategically position the Creative Corridor to compete aggressively for growth in life sciences. In this way, the Creative Corridor can apply many of its competitive strengths – agriculture, manufacturing, logistics, research, and services – to the advancement of the life sciences sector. All Creative Corridor counties contain concentrations of life sciences jobs ranging from a few dozen to a few hundred. Of all its opportunities, life sciences provides the best chance to connect Corridor communities across the full spectrum of the employment value chain. From the farmers that harvest the crops to the scientists studying new uses for it, life sciences is a common thread that unites the region. The Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO) estimates that for every job created in the renewable chemicals or biofuel industry, another five positions are generated in the rural economy.

Local Employers: Cargill, Archer Daniels Midland Co. , Integrated DNA Technologies, DuPont Industrial Biosciences, Diamond V, KemPharm, Viewpoint Molecular Targeting, Emmyon, Lesaffre Group, Ingredion, Penford, the University of Iowa Pharmaceuticals, and J. Rettenmaier & Söhne GmbH, among others.

Educational Services and Technology

Despite the daunting competition, the Creative Corridor has the legitimate capacity to become a player in this sphere. This is largely because of the large presence of the headquarters of ACT and major educational measurement operations of Pearson. In fact, the region has the highest density of psychometricians in the nation. Additionally, the University of Iowa has an Educational Measurement and Statistics Program, and the MA and the PhD in Psychological and Quantitative Foundations offer a focus in Educational Measurement & Statistics. Employment growth in educational measurement has largely been fueled by the growing focus on measurement and assessment in state and national educational policy. Because its growth is projected to be so exponential, many U.S. and global regions are building the capacity to compete in the subsector, including New York, Austin, Research Triangle, Silicon Valley, Los Angeles, Atlanta, and others. This further escalates the competitive dynamics for growth in this niche.

Local Employers: ACT, Pearson, HLT, Ruffalo Noel Levitz, LeapFrog, Pear Deck, Stamats, College Raptor, among others.

Innovative Production Technology (also referred to as advanced manufacturing)

Overall, the regional manufacturing sector exported approximately \$13 billion in products in 2013, accounting for nearly a third of the Creative Corridor's total exports. Electronics manufacturing alone accounted for roughly 11 percent of total exports. One of the main strengths of manufacturing is that it is primarily export-oriented; thus it serves as one of the main drivers for wealth creation in the Creative Corridor. Additional revenue particularly benefits locally-owned companies. The region's strengths are particularly highlighted in the significant exports within its top differentiated subsectors:

- Navigational, Measuring, Electromedical, and Control Instruments Manufacturing: \$2.7 billion
- Household Appliance Manufacturing: \$882 million
- Soap, Cleaning Compound, and Toilet Preparation Manufacturing: \$618 million

Local Employers: Though not an exhaustive list, the following companies highlight local firms in the most concentrated subsectors:

- Electronics: Rockwell Collins, Schneider Electric, Hupp Electric, Clipper Wind Power, and Whirlpool
- Consumer Goods: Raining Rose, Procter & Gamble/Oral B Laboratories, ALPLA, and Evergreen Packaging
- Other Products: Kinze Manufacturing, International Automotive Components, PMX Industries, Centro, Bazooka Farmstar, Apache Hose & Belting, and Loparex

Transportation and Logistics

The logistics sector includes companies providing transportation services (truck, rail, and air), warehousing and storage, and wholesale trade. Establishments operating in these industries are engaged in the storage and activities related to the management of the flow of materials and goods. Products begin as a series of raw materials that must first be transported to a manufacturer for production, and then to the next user – a consumer, business, or another manufacturer – as a final good or product. Any activity along the way that involves the movement or storage of goods is captured in the logistics target. Additionally, wholesale activities fall under logistics because they are an integral, intermediate step in the

distribution of products from producer to consumer. Overall, establishments in logistics are primarily captured in three areas: transportation, wholesale trade, and warehousing and storage.

Transportation

- This section is not solely transportation as might normally be discussed but inclusive of two key subsectors:
 - *Autonomous vehicles (self-driving cars)*
 - *Avionics*

Logistics (Region is a hub, 4-5 hours from key Midwestern cities)

- The Creative Corridor's central location in the US, interstate connectivity, railroad access, available sites, flat topography, and lower cost structure make the region competitive for capturing future growth in logistics. Additionally, its agriculture base and production economy drives the movement of raw materials, agricultural crops, and finished goods, providing a strong basis for two-way shipping operations.

Distribution Centers

- Companies that operate in distribution are engaged in the storage and management of the flow of materials. Additionally, the wholesale process serves as the intermediate step in the distribution of merchandise from product to consumers. Online sales have enabled retailers to grow their customer base, increase their volume, and expand their product offerings. Given the dynamics of distribution operations, business services, logistics, and IT are all relevant to distribution.
- Additionally, while the products that are being moved may vary throughout the Creative Corridor, distribution services are a relevant and complementary to the region's other areas of economic activity.

Local Employers: Rockwell Collins, CRST, Inc., Heartland Express, Nordstrom Direct, Clickstop, United Natural Foods Inc. (UNFI), NIS, BHFO, Worley Warehousing, Van Meter Inc., DHL, FedEx, and Capstone Logistics, among others.

Entrepreneurial Development and Revolving Loan Funds (RLFs)

As one stakeholder commented during interviews with Market Street, "The bedrock of our community has been what we've built ourselves." The Creative Corridor boasts a number of homegrown companies and established entrepreneurs. Companies like Rockwell Collins, CRST, Hupp Electric Motors, True North, ACT, Apache, and Diamond V, all got their start in the region and have continued to provide jobs for thousands of local residents and serve as critical assets for worker retention and attraction.

While conceptions about what constitutes a "small business" vary, the Small Business Administration (SBA) Office of Advocacy defines them as companies with fewer than 500 employees. According to the Office of Advocacy, 63 percent of net new jobs created between 1993 and mid-2013 stemmed from these small businesses. As noted in the figure below, slightly under half of the Creative Corridor's jobs are in SBA-defined small businesses, with their growth from 2009 to 2014 trailing Des Moines and the State of Iowa.

Figure 5-3: Employees by Form Size, Q4 2009-2014

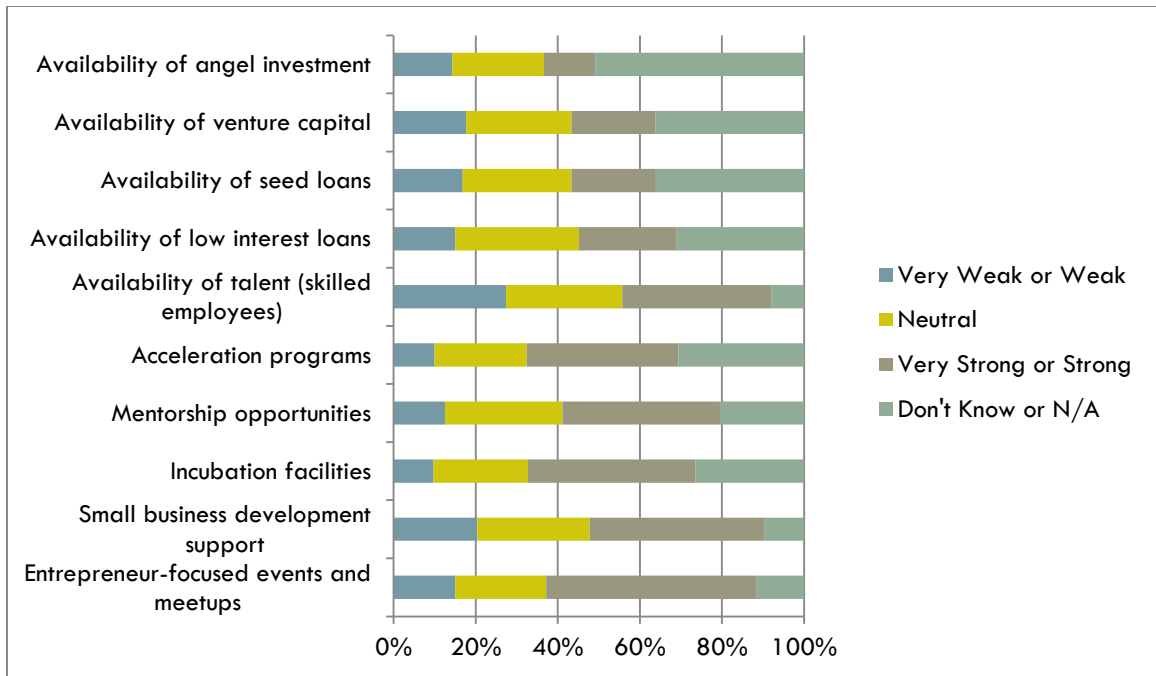
	Q4 2014 Jobs		5-year % Change	
	At Establishments with fewer than 500 employees	At Establishments with more than 500 employees	At Establishments with fewer than 500 employees	At Establishments with more than 500 employees
Creative Corridor	97,356	104,947	1.2%	12.8%
Des Moines	134,888	168,988	7.3%	9.6%
Iowa	677,402	613,908	2.0%	13.3%

Source: United States Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI)

Additional data cited in Market Street's assessment indicates that the Creative Corridor has a slightly less robust base of small businesses as the State of Iowa and Des Moines, and seen broadly, the small business momentum in the Creative Corridor is declining. Despite this conclusion, there have been recent success stories. These include Clickstop, which launched in 2005, Involta in 2007, Health Solutions in 2004, and Ready Wireless in 2008. Each of these firms has been on Inc.'s 5,000 fastest-growing private companies in America lists.

On the whole, public input participants were complimentary of the Creative Corridor's startup ecosystem and hopeful for the future. Figure 5-4 displays the viewpoints from the online survey completed by Market Street.

Figure 5-4: Please Rate the Following Components of the Creative Corridor's Entrepreneurial Climate



Input suggests that availability of talent, entrepreneur-focused events and meetups, and small business development support were strengths of the Creative Corridor.

Source: Market Street Services, Creative Corridor Regional Vision Strategy (2016)

Three principal challenges were identified by survey participants as the most pressing issues faced by regional entrepreneurs – talent, perceptions, and capital. Availability of talent and skilled employees had the largest percentage of respondents ranking it “weak”. A lack of programmers and coders was singled out as a need. Surveyed entrepreneurs also noted how difficult it was to compete for talent against large, established companies that can afford to pay premiums for the most in-demand talent. The lack of capital – especially in post-seed rounds – was noted by focus group and interview participants and online survey respondents.

RLFs

The establishment of several local and regional RLFs since the natural disasters of 2008 has provided additional access to capital. As part of the regional economic recovery, ECICOG established a regional RLF with funding from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) with a capital base of nearly \$4 million that provides low interest loans to business throughout the EDD. More recently, several locally-based funds have also been established, including city-funded programs in Cedar Rapids, Marion, and Iowa City. Additional RLFs have been established by economic development organizations such as MEDCO in Marion and Czech Village/New Bohemia Mainstreet District. With the exception of the Iowa City fund, these programs are being administered and underwritten by ECICOG. The following are goals and objectives of ECICOG’s RLF program:

Support entrepreneurship and business growth within the Creative Corridor

- Provide gap financing for new and expanding businesses that create or retain job opportunities
- Provide referral resources to entrepreneurs interested in locating in the Creative Corridor (Small Business Development Center, SCORE, Iowa Source Link, local lenders, etc.)

Provide public financing tools to enhance business assistance programs and services in the Creative Corridor

- Continue to administer locally funded revolving loan funds
- Look for opportunities to expand ECICOG's lending capabilities
- Assist local communities or organization to establish additional locally-funded revolving loan funds

Market success stories regarding entrepreneurial accomplishments with the region to entice potential investors

- Cite RLF-funded businesses in ECICOG newsletters and social media
- Advertise availability of RFL funds in local media and business publications
- Continue to attend regional job fairs and business development expos to promote the availability of RLF funds

Open lines of communication between local supports services, banks, economic development groups and businesses

- Meet with local lenders
- Attend business summits
- Meet with area public and private investors

Regional Brand

Iowa's Creative Corridor, the regional brand, was created to allow the region to gain economic growth and a competitive edge. Moving from brand, however, to an aligned coherent strategy will require that the concepts that informed the Creative Corridor label be expanded to a complete focus on all aspects of the seven-county region's competitive position, key challenges and opportunities, and vision for its successful future.

In addition, the plan has been formulated to provide solutions to the following issues listed as priorities by the brand drivers:

- Give leaders and stakeholders a common identity and message around which to rally
- Promote a culture of innovation throughout ICC

- Foster an appreciation for thinking and acting regionally, and promote a larger sense of regionalism and the benefits of regional thinking and action
- Provide common messaging and extended reach for area economic development and entrepreneurial development
- Provide a messaging framework for major area corporations and institutions to frame area assets for recruiting purposes
- Promote the University of Iowa as a major asset not only for athletics, but also for commercialization of research products and for entrepreneurial development
- Expand support and reach of the region's entertainment, culture and tourism assets and events
- Renew residents' appreciation of the areas assets – natural, educational, cultural, and economic
- Expand tourism market and help maximize tourism potential
- Celebrate regional history, industry, innovation, and culture
- Recruit and retain more young people to live in Iowa's Creative Corridor

Brand Narrative

The following brand narrative takes the foundation of the brand platform and breathes life into it through an artistic interpretation of language. Its purpose is to help residents and consumers connect and embrace the emotional story of the brand to their own lives. It represents inspiring language meant to describe the Creative Corridor's assets as they relate to your new brand and to garner excitement among brand drivers, brand partners, and regional stakeholders. Here is the Creative Corridor Brand Narrative:

The rich, fertile fields of amber grain belie the roaring waves of cultural, technological and industrial impact that ripple across the country. The winds of change blow out from east central Iowa across the prairies and states to touch the far corners of the world. In fact, listen closely and you can hear the voice of Iowa's Creative Corridor all the way from the East Coast to the Far East. Because, here, the evolution and growth of pioneering ideas that advance and improve life are the norm.

Every day, from the books we read and the films we see to the foods we eat and the healthcare we receive, Iowa's Creative Corridor touches our lives in many thousands of ways. By cultivating a culture of innovation, the seeds are sown for transformational thinking. And ideas are grown that sustain the world. In the urban and rural areas that lay along the corridor between Iowa City and Cedar Rapids, knowledge gets turned into power by a thriving creative network and powerfully connected entrepreneurial community that nurtures and supports idea generation and execution.

A remarkable combination of resources has conspired to make Iowa's Creative Corridor a wellspring of intellectual and artistic pursuits, as well as science, commerce and industry. The highly-esteemed Iowa Writers' Workshop, and iconic American brands such as Quaker Oats, General Mills and Rockwell Collins, have generated a strong current of talent and influence that continues to flow consistently from the region, touching and persuading lives of people everywhere. The mark they have left on our academic, literary, business and scientific landscapes is indelible.

Recognized as a center of creative and economic renaissance, Iowa's Creative Corridor draws innovators ranging from Pulitzer-Prize winning writers to research engineers and digital cottage industries to some of the world's most advanced companies. Here, their inspiration and energy are ignited, new directions are encouraged and positive change is generated.

A seed planted here in the rich soil of Iowa's Creative Corridor not only grows to its potential but its fruit finds its way to the far corners of the globe while its roots stabilize, support, and sustain an entire region.

Strategic Brand Platform

The strategic brand platform is used as a filter for the formation of creative concepts and implementation tactics. All communications, actions and product developments should connect to the essence of this relevant and defining statement.

For those seeking a place with infinite possibilities, the region from Cedar Rapids to Iowa City and the surrounding counties, provides a conduit that sparks knowledge to power, that motivates both learning and living, so every person, every idea, every business and every city is exponentially more successful.

Brand Themes

The planning process will also produce several brand themes and key words that will serve to inspire the region. The Steering committee will work to develop a key statement that will capture the essence of the Creative Corridor. As point of reference they will be similar to the following statements:

- Iowa's Creative Corridor: Where cutting edge innovation meets middle America
- Iowa's Creative Corridor: A culture of innovation and diverse collaboration
- Iowa's Creative Corridor: An assortment of assets sparking creative growth

Brand Attributes & Drivers

Brand attributes are those areas in which you are differentiated from those with which you compete. In reviewing the findings and reports, Iowa's Creative Corridor has several key distinctive points:

1. **Innovation** – within the vertical and horizontal economic sectors
2. **Diversity** – in the economic, workforce, and community development areas
3. **Education** – is a key, as it is both an economic driver AND an important support structure
4. **STEM** – is a common thread in both economic and workforce development

Iowa's Creative Corridor Brand Objectives

The brand objectives will be utilized to build the brand/marketing portion of the plan.

1. Establish an organizational structure for promoting and developing the brand
2. Establish the region as a center of creative innovation
3. Jump start the brand through the members of the Corridor Business Alliance
4. Develop a greater sense of regionalism through brand projects
5. Attract, support and retain business on a regional basis using the brand as a rallying cry
6. Integrate the Iowa's Creative Corridor brand into regional community infrastructure and initiatives
7. Attract and retain college graduates with the brand
8. Achieve tourism goals through brand-based initiatives
9. Gather your regional stories of innovation and transformation and share them via a structured public relations strategy

Next Steps

Sectors: The next steps will be to reimagine the approach to economic development given these new drivers. Given the focus, it is time to ask some key economic development questions, like what are companies located elsewhere within these sectors that would be a good fit for relocation? Or, who are some of the suppliers within these sectors that work with several companies located in the Creative Corridor that would benefit from a presence here? Do we go after specific companies if they don't fit into one of these sectors? These are just a few of the questions that those tasked with economic development in the region need to ask and build their plans around. Some of this thinking and these discussions are part of the planning process being undertaken by the Steering Committee for the Regional Vision Strategy. The Steering Committee will be working in the coming months to form working groups tasked with these discussions and the build out of action plans.

RLFs: The ECICOG RLF Administrative Plan will need to be updated to reflect changes to goals and priorities addressed in CRDS 2040.

Branding: The key is to refine the above terminology into a logical set of drivers, attributes and more importantly develop the talking points needed for all to utilize. One of the working groups being formed will continue this work.

Role of ECICOG – As the administrator of a number of RLFs within the region, ECICOG can assist with the financing of established and entrepreneurial opportunities that result in job growth or retention.

EDD – The EDD can assist businesses and organizations in the Creative Corridor to access federal programs for new starts, expansions that result in job growth or retention.

RPA – The RPA will be responsible for assisting with the preservation, improvement, and upgrading of the regional transportation system for efficient movement of goods and services in the Creative Corridor. The RPA can also assist in efforts to bring autonomous vehicle proving grounds to the Creative Corridor, and efforts to locate an intermodal hub in the region.

Workforce Development Key Strategies

Iowa's Creative Corridor is experiencing a talent-availability crisis. Therefore...

WE WILL ENHANCE OUR REGIONAL TALENT BASE BY:

- *Formalizing cradle-to-career talent pipelines for regional youth.*
- *Enabling all residents to participate in the region's economy, leadership, and governance.*

Iowa's Creative Corridor would benefit from greater talent in-migration and direct investment from home and abroad. Therefore...

WE WILL PROMOTE OUR REGION TO PROSPECTIVE TALENT AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT BY:

- *Optimizing online tools, electronic messaging, and external relationship-building.*

The people in a community are its greatest asset, which is why workforce capacity is a top concern for regions across the country. Because every business requires qualified, reliable employees, workforce availability and quality are key site location components and the most important competitive criteria in today's knowledge-based economy. Regions must ensure they are effectively satisfying employer needs in all sectors by effectively formalizing integrated college and career preparation "pipelines" as well as attracting top talent to the community. Opportunities should be provided for all residents regardless of race, class, ethnicity, age, gender, or personal background. Like the regional economic diversity, the Creative Corridor enjoys workforce diversity, which will be a key driver in growing a region's economy.

The most established indicator of a region's workforce skills capacity is its rate of educational attainment. Some of the top "talent hubs" in the nation now feature upwards of 40 to 50 percent of the working-age population with at least a bachelor's degree. However, the number of adults with two-year degrees and career-specific certificates is also critical to accommodating the labor demands of employers in production fields and other sectors.

Data show that higher levels of education lead to higher wages, lower unemployment rates, and, ultimately, higher levels of personal well-being and prosperity. In 2014, the average US unemployment rate for adults with a high school diploma was six percent with weekly earnings averaging \$668. For workers with a bachelor's degree, unemployment dropped to roughly 3.5 percent while earnings rose to \$1,101 per week. On average, a full-time worker in 2014 with a bachelor's degree would have earned approximately \$22,500 more than one with only a high school diploma.

Attainment rates show that the Creative Corridor has a well-educated workforce, with nearly half of adults possessing an associate's degree or higher. Compared to the benchmark communities, the Creative Corridor has a greater share of residents with an associate's degree or higher than Des Moines, Iowa, and the US. The region's percentage of bachelor's-plus degree holders notably trails Fort Collins, Colorado and Madison, Wisconsin, but it should be noted that these communities represent some of the best educated workforces in the nation. This is partially a reflection of the regions' dominant sectors; Madison has a large concentration of jobs in information and management of company's sectors while Fort Collins is especially strong in professional, scientific, and technical services employment. Overall, the Creative Corridor's bachelor's-and-above attainment rate of over 37 percent compares very favorably with most US regions.

Unlike many communities in Iowa, the Creative Corridor population is growing as its population diversifies. This is a positive and notable trend, although certain dynamics of this population growth and sub-regional variations in growth are potential concerns.

Population growth is often seen as a fundamental indicator of a region's attractiveness as a place to live, work, and play, though the components of population change are also important. For example, growth may be flat overall, but the percentage of higher-skilled residents may be increasing. In the case of the Creative Corridor, both overall growth and the dynamics of that growth are positive. This indicates that there are factors like job availability, quality of life, cost of living, and other elements that are compelling factors for talent retention and attraction.

The key moving forward is to continue the fine work being done while incorporating new thinking and plans related to the economic drivers defined for the region in the previous sections. Knowing that the drivers are different in than in the past, how do we modify existing plans to meet the new demands for workforce development in the future? This will be the task put forth to the committee working on the plan and implementation of workforce development strategies. What follows is the current workforce development plan.

Iowa's Creative Corridor Regional Workforce Development Plan

A regional, aligned approach to workforce strategies in the corridor to ensure the region's current and future workforce meets the needs of the employers in the Creative Corridor. Currently through Kirkwood Community College, Iowa City Area Development, and the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance an aggressive workforce development plan has been developed. This plan is in place and currently being measured and evaluated for success. The following are the goals and objectives.

1. **Goal 1:** Invest in the region's current and future workforce to grow capacity and align capabilities to meet key corridor needs.
 - a. **Objective 1.1:** Increase communication and collaboration between education, employers and economic development officials to focus on increasing the alignment between education and workforce needs.
 - i. **Lead Organization:** Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance, Economic Alliance Education Task Force, Metro Superintendents Group, Regional Superintendents Group
 - ii. **Support Organizations:** Corridor Alliance
 - iii. **Timeline:** Launch by early 2015
 - iv. **Progress Indicators:** Robust participation by students and employers. Students going into in-demand occupations. All high schools hold college/career nights.

- b. **Objective 1.2:** Increase the number of K-12 and post-secondary students and employers participating in internships, job shadowing, and other career exploration opportunities.
 - i. **Lead Organization:** Higher Education Connection, Workplace Learning Connection, University of Iowa
 - ii. **Support Organizations:** Eastern Iowa Human Resource Association (EIHRA), Corridor Alliance, United Way of East Central Iowa, United Way of Johnson and Washington Counties, Industry Sector Boards (Advanced Manufacturing, Information Technology, Financial and Customer Services, Health Care), Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa, IWD Skilled Iowa
 - iii. **Timeline:** July 2016
 - iv. **Progress Indicators:** Increase number of students participating, employer participation
 - v. **Suggested Strategies:** Target students and parents to raise their awareness and knowledge of the broad range of career opportunities in the Creative Corridor region and the skills, education and training required for those careers.

- 2. **Goal 2:** Promote and enhance the region's image as a place to live, work, and thrive.
 - a. **Objective 2.1:** Expand coordinated marketing efforts to internal and external audiences promoting the Creative Corridor as a place to work and live.
 - i. **Lead Organization:** Corridor Business Alliance
 - ii. **Support Organizations:** Corridor Alliance
 - iii. **Timeline:** September 2014
 - iv. **Progress Indicators:** To be determined by the Corridor Business Alliance
 - b. **Objective 2.2:** Continue to develop appropriate informational materials and tools for employers to utilize in their employee recruitment efforts.
 - i. **Lead Organization:** Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance and Iowa City Area Development Group
 - ii. **Support Organizations:** Corridor Alliance
 - iii. **Timeline:** In progress
 - iv. **Progress Indicators:** Increase the number of employers using tools by 20% in one year.
 - c. **Objective 2.3:** Expand the resources available to regional employers to share best practices, products, processes and tools to enhance their workforce, recruitment and retention strategies.
 - i. **Lead Organization:** Iowa City Area Development Group
 - ii. **Support Organizations:** Eastern Iowa Human Resource Association, Iowa SHRM State Council, Iowa City HR Roundtable, Verisight Roundtable, IWD Employers' Council of Iowa
 - iii. **Timeline:** January 2015
 - iv. **Progress Indicators:** Development of an online tool, employer usage of the tool

- 3. **Goal 3:** Reduce barriers to workforce participation and engagement.
 - a. **Objective 3.1:** Create an initiative that fosters diversity and inclusion in the Creative Corridor region and recognizes employers for their efforts.
 - i. **Lead Organization:** Iowa City Area Development Group, Diversity Focus

- ii. **Support Organizations:** Employers, Kirkwood Community College, City of Cedar Rapids, Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance, Corridor Alliance
 - iii. **Timeline:** August 2014
 - iv. **Progress Indicators:** Number of employers participating
- b. **Objective 3.2:** Increase availability of training and resources focused on fundamentals of personal finance: financial literacy, credit repair, and debt management.
- i. **Lead Organization:** United Way of East Central Iowa and United Way of Johnson and Washington Counties
 - ii. **Support Organizations:** Financial institutions, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Kirkwood Community College, Horizons
 - iii. **Timeline:** Ongoing
 - iv. **Progress Indicators:** Increase participation

Next Steps

The next steps will be the continued monitoring of the *Regional Workforce Development Plan Dashboard and Scorecard*. Many of the above goals and objectives are underway and working effectively. The committee charged with development of the initial plan should begin the review of the economic development section thinking about the vertical and horizontal sectors to determine if any midcourse modifications are necessary to ensure alignment between these two key areas. As stated previously, regional growth will come with the alignment of education, workforce development, and the economic drivers.

Role of ECICOG – While ECICOG may not have a direct role in workforce development, a number of agency programs affect the quality of life for those working, or planning to work in the Creative Corridor, and therefore assist in the efforts of those in the region who are directly involved in workforce development efforts. Continued coordination and communication with these organizations, including Kirkwood Community College and the Corridor Business Alliance are essential.

EDD – The EDD can support the efforts of entrepreneurs and existing business to expand or retain employment opportunities in the Creative Corridor.

RPA – The RPA will make the Creative Corridor a better place to live and work by offering multiple transportation choices that are safe, accessible, and convenient.

Community Development Key Strategies

Iowa's Creative Corridor can improve talent retention and attraction by becoming a more dynamic place to live and play. Therefore...

WE WILL ENRICH OUR REGIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE BY:

- *Connecting and enhancing arts and cultural assets.*
- *Supporting the development of a diverse housing stock.*
- *Safeguarding our natural environment and resiliency.*

Community development can mean many things. In this case, it refers to the quality of life in the region relative to drawing and retaining of both new employers and a quality workforce. With the competition for talent more intense than ever and the trend of young professionals choosing a place to live before finding a job, community and economic development professionals have no choice but to consider quality of life and quality of place factors when assessing their own communities. An employment opportunity and job offer is no longer enough to attract workers; today's talent is demanding more from the communities they call home. Trends show that the presence of walkable neighborhoods, cultural activities, entertainment options, as well as old standbys such as good schools and safe streets are high on the lists of not only talent but also businesses looking for places to call home. Above all, the cultivation of community assets, amenities, and resources should provide a wide range of choices for individuals whatever their stage of life, race and ethnicity, personal or political preferences, or religions.

A key demographic to consider when thinking about quality of life and place is the young professional cohort. This cohort represents the future and will largely determine the long-term sustainability of regional businesses across multiple sectors. Without sufficient capacity of next-generation talent, employers will go elsewhere. Certainly, the University of Iowa is a major asset for the attraction of YPs in that thousands of students come to the Creative Corridor every year to enter the university. Doing everything possible to ensure that university graduates have options to stay if desired has been and should be a priority strategic concern for the region.

Many of the YP participants in focus groups and interviews were especially complimentary of efforts in recent years to make the downtowns of Cedar Rapids and Iowa City more dense, urban, and pedestrian and bike-friendly. Respondents spoke especially highly about the growth in the NewBo and Czech Village areas of Cedar Rapids. The subject of affordable housing came up often during conversations with young professionals. They reported that the issue is not just simply being able to afford a home, but more about being able to afford a quality home in the type of environment they prefer.

One reason for the development of new amenities in downtown Cedar Rapids and Iowa City as well as the revitalization of NewBo and Czech Village was the tremendous influx of capital following the 2008 flood. Over a billion dollars in reinvestment has led to the rehabilitation and redevelopment of dozens of high-profile projects in Cedar Rapids and Iowa City. To ensure investor confidence in potential new developments and

safeguard completed projects against future damage, it is critical that flood-control mechanisms be implemented to prevent against any future flood events.

District enhancements in Cedar Rapids and Iowa City have certainly benefitted more than just YPs. Indeed, many place-based benefits prized by millennials – walkability, proximity to amenities, diverse entertainment options – are also valued by adults at all ages. Similarly, factors like good schools and safe streets are also important criteria for millennials looking for places to live and work.

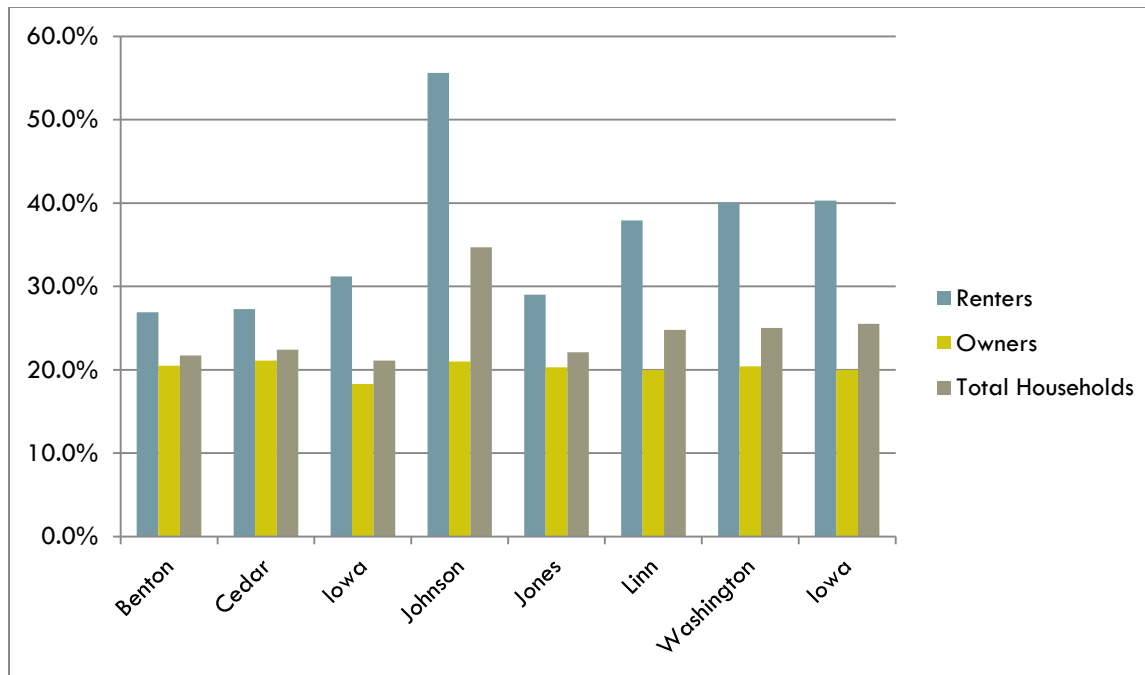
ARTS AND CULTURE, AND OTHER QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES

Quality of life can be broken down into several component parts such as quality health care, public safety, cost of living, and arts and culture finished strongly. However, for the Corridor, diversity of housing, shopping and nightlife, and quite clearly, mobility options that do not include a car were identified as some of the key concerns. Several of these key concerns will continue to be discussed through the Regional Vision Rising process, and their work will be incorporated into the document when complete. Noted below are the community development components that ECICOG can address as an organization, including housing, the natural environment and resilience, and transportation.

HOUSING

Especially as housing prices skyrocket in traditionally expensive markets across the country such as Seattle, the Bay Area, Southern California, New York, Boston, as well as formerly mid-priced regions such as Austin, Texas, Portland, Oregon, and others, the issue of housing cost and rental affordability has become an even greater place-based concern for businesses and talent. Lower cost markets are proving to be viable location alternatives for many individuals and firms priced out of higher-cost markets. In public input, feedback on relative housing-cost burden varied between the northern and southern nodes of the Creative Corridor. As noted in Figure 5-5, housing-cost burden is most significant in Johnson County, where 34.7 percent of all households (owners and renters) are paying more than 30 percent of their income toward housing costs. However, this issue is most significant for renters in Johnson and Washington Counties, where the percentage is 55.6 and 40.1 percent, respectively.

Figure 5-5: 2010 Percent Cost Burdened (Paying Greater than 30% of Income Toward Housing Costs)



Over 20 percent of households in the Creative Corridor are described as cost burdened. This is of particular concern for renters in Johnson County.

Source: U Of I Public Policy Center: Policy Report on Housing Affordability in Iowa Counties, April 2015

Three housing trust funds have been established in the Creative Corridor to address housing needs – the Housing Fund for Linn County (HFfLC), the Housing Trust Fund of Johnson County (HTFJC) and the East Central Iowa Housing Trust Fund (ECIHTF). The following goals and action steps have been established for the housing trust funds.

Goal 1: Increase resources for leveraging state housing trust fund dollars

- Pursue lender or larger community financial support for history of work done in their areas (ECIHTF)
- Increase the number of requests for funding to larger cities in metro area, foundations, and large employers (HFfLC)
- Maintain current local government support and make more requests for contributions to lenders (HTFJC)

Goal 2: Increase the number of safe, decent, and affordable housing units

- Award projects that secure other funding, lowering the per unit investment by the housing trust funds (ECIHTF and HTFJC)
- Give priority to new unit construction and improving unsafe housing (HFfLC)

Goal 3: Increase local and state awareness of housing trust funds

- Continue to meeting annually with Boards of Supervisors, and increase attendance at other entity meetings (ECIHTF)
- Increase attendance at local organization meetings and plan small gatherings for lenders, community leaders, or developers (HFfLC)
- Continue to support educational/advocacy work of the Affordable Housing Coalition and attend local meetings (HTFJC)

Goal 4: Re-visit ECICOG 2011 Regional Housing Assessment

- Promote development of senior housing options (all housing trust funds)
- Prepare land use regulation accordingly for future housing needs (all housing trust funds)
- Continue support for rehabilitation of existing rural and urban homes (all housing trust funds)

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND RESILIENCE

While the natural environment and resilience weren't significantly addressed during the public input process, leaders and residents of the Creative Corridor have grown to recognize their significance following the natural disasters of 2008. Each county in the Creative Corridor has prepared a multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plan. Efforts have undertaken better manage storm water and protect communities during natural disasters. The region has also come to recognize the need to coordinate solid waste management efforts to remain resilient.

Goal 1: Protect and improve surface and groundwater quality

- Encourage and implement practices to reduce nutrient export
- Encourage and implement stormwater management practices to hold water from a 2.5 inch or less rain event
- Encourage and implement practices to reduce E.coli bacteria in waterways
- Encourage policies and practices to protect drinking water sources.

Goal 2: Protect human life, property and surface water systems that could be damaged by natural disasters

- Review and replicate the work of the Linn County/Resilient America Roundtable in counties throughout the region and/or encourage regular updates to Hazard Mitigation Plans
- Encourage cities to go beyond floodplain management requirements
- Update policies and strategies to minimize damage in the 500-year floodplain
- Encourage and implement practices to reduce peak flows
- Coordinate flood risk management strategies among communities in a watershed

Goal 3: Coordinate, to the extent possible. With the Iowa Watershed Approach (a program of the HUD-NDRC)

- Assist the Clear Creek Watershed Coalition in watershed planning and grant administration
- Assist the Middle Cedar Watershed Management Authority in watershed planning and grant administration

Goal 4: Support opportunities for regional cooperation in solid waste management and waste diversion programs

- Provide a regional forum for solid waste planning area members to cooperate on training, safety, materials management, diversion programs, and grant opportunities
- Provide technical assistance and facilitate the contracting process for member waste facilities to manage materials, such as tire, appliances, and household hazardous materials
- Provide specific assistance to member cities, counties and solid waste commissions related to integrated waste management (contracts, 28E agreements, grant applications, DNR's Financial and Business Assistance programs, etc.)
- Preserve permitted solid waste disposal capacity through operation improvements, recycling, and other diversion programs (USDA grant, Technical Advisory Committee)

Next Steps: The *Regional Vision Rising* planning process will continue throughout 2017. Working groups are being organized to buildout action plans for those areas identified by the work of Market Street, but not addressed in this plan – including arts, entertainment, culture and public safety. ECICOG staff will be assessing the need for an update to the housing needs assessment, and coordinating over the next five years with local governments on watershed planning and grant administration. Once the Linn County Resilient America Roundtable work is complete in Linn County, staff will, if possible, assist with the replication of the process throughout the region and/or assist with the continued development of hazard mitigation plans.

Role of ECICOG – ECICOG will continue to serve as staff for the Housing Fund for Linn County and the East Central Iowa Housing Trust Fund, and provide planning and administrative assistance to area watershed management authorities and the like.

EDD - The EDD will consider the quality of life opportunities necessary to retain and attract residents to the Creative Corridor.

RPA – The RPA will improve the transportation system to make it a safe place to travel for all users. The RPA will also make the Creative Corridor a better place to travel and live by offering multiple transportation choices.

Transportation Key Strategies

Iowa's Creative Corridor can improve talent retention and attraction by becoming a more dynamic place to live and play. Therefore...

WE WILL ENRICH OUR REGIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE BY:

- *Offering multiple transportation choices*
- *Making the system safe for all users*
- *Preserving the existing transportation system*
- *Maximizing available financial resources.*

The movement of goods and people around a region and connectivity to outside markets are important concerns for employers and residents. In public input, while congestion on I-380 was highlighted as a weakness, 45.5 percent of survey respondents still felt that overall mobility was a strength in the region. While some complained of the time necessary to commute from one end of the Creative Corridor to another, others with perspective on benchmark regions acknowledged that travel times across were manageable. Per the data, only Iowa drivers spent less time commuting than Creative Corridor residents. In fact, almost 80 percent of Corridor commutes take less than 30 minutes. This is compared to a little over 63 percent at the U.S. level.

Commuting options in the Corridor have been enhanced by new CorridorRides carpool and vanpool programs, and may be furthered by a new express bus service between Cedar Rapids and Iowa City slated to launch in the summer of 2018. While an exact route has yet to be formalized, expected stops include downtown Cedar Rapids, Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, perhaps Coralville, the University of Iowa medical campus, and downtown Iowa City. A study was also commissioned to examine options for rail connectivity between Cedar Rapids and Iowa City, but the results of the report are not yet available.

As noted in the Transportation Assessment section, the Market Street survey were asked to rate the current transportation system. Most responses centered on maintaining the current transportation network and expanding the system to allow for modal options. Based upon this input and the results of the assessment, the following transportation goals were developed.

Goal 1: Make Iowa's Creative Corridor a better place to travel, live, work and operate business by offering multiple transportation choices that are safe, accessible and convenient

- Continue work to implement the recommendations outlined in the Iowa Commuter Transportation Study, including express bus service between Cedar Rapids and Iowa City
- Maintain and market existing modal services, including public transit, carpool, and vanpool.
- Promote corridorrides.com to inform residents and visitors about transportation options.

- Complete construction of the trail connection between Cedar Rapids and Iowa City
- Coordinate with Jones County to designate and complete regional segments of the Grant Wood Loop Trail.
- Coordinate with adjacent counties to complete a plan for the American Discovery Trail Eastern Iowa Parkway Plan
- Work with partners to maintain and enhance the Cedar Valley Nature Trail
- Work with regional partners to update the regional trails plan and assist with implementation of local trails plans.
- Assist in the maintenance and enhancement of commercial air service at the Eastern Iowa Airport
- Work with regional airports to assist with implementation of master plans.
- Continue to assist with rebranding of regional transportation services
- Develop annual Passenger Transportation Plan to identify regional transit needs and opportunities for collaboration/efficiencies.
- Coordinate with Iowa DOT and area partners on passenger rail opportunities.

Goal 2: Improve the regional transportation system to make it a safe place to travel for all users

- Re-invigorate the Multi-Disciplinary Safety Team
- Participate in Iowa City Traffic Incident Management meetings to ensure effective coordination during Interstate 80/380 construction projects
- Identify and secure funding sources to implement needed safety improvements
- Participate in statewide traffic safety workshops and forums

Goal 3: Preserve, improve and upgrade the regional transportation system for efficient movement of goods and services

- Coordinate with Iowa DOT on development and construction of new Intermodal Hub in the region
- -Coordinate with Iowa DOT to ensure the timely completion of Highway 30 4-lane project in Benton County
- Coordinate with Iowa DOT on the completion of Interstate 80/380 interchange reconstruction
- Coordinate with Iowa DOT on the completion of Highway 100 from Edgewood Rd. to Highway 30 in Linn County
- -Coordinate with Iowa DOT on the completion of Forevergreen Road interchange in Johnson County
- Coordinate with Iowa DOT on possible 6-lane expansion of I-80 in Johnson and Cedar Counties
- Coordinate with Iowa DOT on possible 4-lane expansion of Highway 30 in Linn and Cedar Counties
- Assist Iowa DOT with the associated mapping or other support needed for future autonomous vehicle efforts

Goal 4: Preserve existing transportation infrastructure and maintain the system

- Educate regional partners on current best practices for transportation preservation
- Create plan for bridges that are fundamentally obsolete or structurally deficient
- Identify and secure funding sources to implement preservation projects
- Encourage regional partners to preserve, replace or upgrade existing infrastructure before building new infrastructure

- Prioritize regional funding applications for preservation/maintenance projects

Goal 5: Maximize the use of available financial resources and identify new opportunities for funding transportation improvements

- Work with local governments and agencies to pursue eligible federal, state, and local funding sources as well as new funding sources that arise
- Maintain a regional process that ensures geographic equity in the programming of STBG funding
- Work with state and federal legislators to increase existing or establish alternative funding mechanisms for all transportation infrastructure and services
- Work with state and federal legislators to pass a stable, long range transportation bill that will provide adequate programs and funding for rural areas
- Educate regional agencies on all transportation funding opportunities that are currently available

Next Steps

The RPA regularly updates necessary plans and programs, but survey input suggests that additional attention should be given to regional trail planning efforts. Following completion of the CRDS, staff will begin working to update the Region 10 Regional Trails Plan that was last approved in 2011.

The RPA may be required to implement transportation performance measures, some initial strategies are detailed in the *Measuring our Progress* section of this document. Accordingly, additional staff efforts will focus on creating possible baseline data, establishing an implementation timeline, and possibly maintaining and monitoring a database of these measures.

Role of ECICOG – ECICOG has designated the Policy Committee and designated staff to carry out the functions of the RPA.

Role of the EDD – The EDD will relay and help to identify the freight and employment-related transportation needs of area businesses.

Role of the RPA – The RPA will develop the plans and programs necessary to assure the effectiveness of the region's transportation network. The RPA will also meet regularly to discuss transportation issues of mutual importance, and coordinate with area MPO's and adjacent RPA's to cooperate on transportation issues that cross jurisdictional lines.