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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Partnership for Sustainable Communities Brownfield Pilots

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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and Department of Transportation (DOT) are working together under the Partnership for Sustainable Communities to ensure that federal investments, policies and actions support development that is more efficient and sustainable. This partnership is based on "livability principles" that guide inter-agency collaboration and support the integration of: safe, reliable and economical transportation; affordable, energy-efficient housing; and sustainable reuse of idle or underutilized land. In 2009, five brownfield pilot communities were selected through a competitive process by EPA's Brownfields Program, with input from HUD and DOT, to receive technical assistance and support from EPA, HUD, and DOT. The three agencies are working with the pilot communities to build on past investments, as well as identify opportunities to link housing, transit, brownfields, and coordinate sustainability resources.

### 1.1.1 Partnership Livability Principles

The Partnership for Sustainable Communities has established a set of livability principles to guide the agencies' efforts and other infrastructure investments to protect the environment, promote equitable development, and help address the challenges of climate change. The Livability Principles are:

- **Provide more transportation choices.** Develop safe, reliable and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.
- **Promote equitable, affordable housing.** Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.
- **Enhance economic competitiveness.** Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services, and other basic needs by workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.
- **Support existing communities.** Target federal funding toward existing communities—through strategies like transit oriented, mixed-use development and land recycling—to increase community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.
- **Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment.** Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy.
- **Value communities and neighborhoods.** Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban or suburban.

## 1.2 Iowa City Partnership for Sustainable Communities Brownfield Pilot

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### 1.2.1 Background

In 2009, Iowa City had a population of approximately 68,900, an increase of roughly 10% over 2000<sup>1</sup>. It is home to the University of Iowa where over 30,000 students enroll each year<sup>2</sup> and is the largest employer in the region with approximately 23,000 employees<sup>3</sup>. Iowa City enjoys the benefit of a strong education-based economy, active urban culture in downtown, and healthy residential neighborhoods with the historic and friendly feel of a smaller town.

Downtown Iowa City and the university campus are directly adjacent to the Iowa River. It is the Johnson County seat and during westward expansion in the 1800s was the capitol for the Iowa Territory and served as the state capitol until 1857 when the capitol was moved to Des Moines. The Riverfront Crossings District (RCD) (refer to Figure 1) is an area bordered to the north by Burlington Street and to the south by U.S. Highway 6, the Iowa River to the west, and to the east by Gilbert Street (approximately). The RCD includes sections of downtown Iowa City and the University of Iowa.

In recent years, Iowa City has been identified as one of the best places in the country related to livability, work climate, health care, and business friendliness by publications such as *Forbes*, *Money Magazine*, and *US News and World Report*. This standing will help Iowa City and stakeholders within the RCD realize their vision for redevelopment articulated in this report. Full demographic and other statistical information can be found here: <http://www.icgov.org/site/CMSv2/file/planning/econDev/2007CommunityProfile.pdf#pagemode=bookmarks>.

In 2008, extensive flooding of the Iowa River flooded many areas of Iowa City, including portions of the RCD. Figure 2 shows the impact of flooding within the RCD. With assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Iowa City has been repairing its infrastructure and planning to redevelop the RCD in a manner that minimizes or eliminates flood impacts in the future.

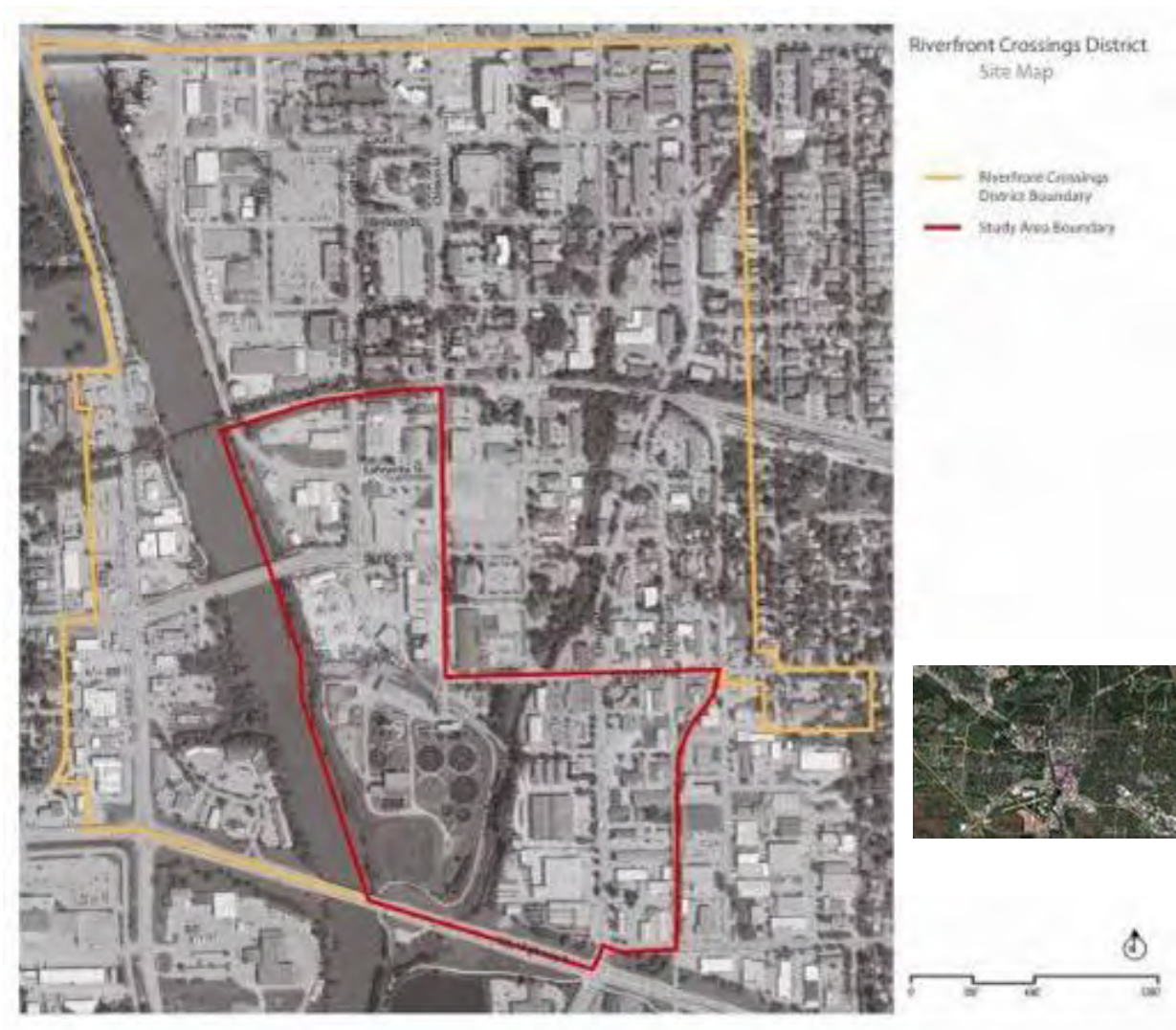
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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.city-data.com/city/Iowa-City-Iowa.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.uiowa.edu/homepage/about-UI/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.icgov.org/default/?id=1359>

Figure 1: Iowa City aerial with Riverfront Crossings District and Study Area



FEMA and EPA have been working together to apply smart growth principles nationally in areas rebuilt after natural disasters. In January 2009, the agencies partnered to provide direct technical assistance to Iowa City and five other Iowa communities as they embarked on redevelopment of flooded areas. Working through the Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO), the partnership recruited urban planning, design, and economic expertise to help guide Iowa City in its disaster recovery. For Iowa City, the project resulted in a Transportation Policy Options Memo, Market Study Overview, and initial urban design options for the flood impacted areas in the RCD in December 2009. (See Appendix A for executive summaries of these documents, and visit [www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/iowa\\_techasst.htm](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/iowa_techasst.htm) for the complete documents.)

In early 2010, Iowa City was selected to receive additional assistance from EPA as one of five Partnership for Sustainable Communities EPA Brownfields Pilots. This assistance builds on assistance provided by EPA and FEMA in 2009 and brings Iowa City to the next stage of realizing its vision for the RCD.

The Iowa City Partnership for Sustainable Communities Brownfield Pilot is focused on helping Iowa City articulate a sustainable, vibrant and transformative vision for an area within the RCD that will also minimize future flood damage by limiting development from areas within the 100 year flood plain.

The Brownfield Pilot study area is a 9 square block (78 acre) area in the southwest section of the RCD, as shown in Figure 2. It resides within the City's Comprehensive Plan Central Planning District. The area is bounded on the west by the Iowa River, on the north by the Iowa Interstate Railway, and on the south by U.S. Highway 6. The eastern boundary extends south from the Iowa Interstate Railway along Clinton Street, then runs east along Kirkwood Avenue, then extends south again along Gilbert Street until it reaches U.S. Highway 6.

**Figure 2: Flood Impacted Area**



### 1.2.3 Pilot Scope

The Iowa City Partnership for Sustainable Communities Brownfield Pilot focused on a 9 block sub-area of the RCD as shown in Figure 2. The scope of this pilot included the development of three key products:

- RCD Sub-Area Plan
- Design guideline and zoning code recommendations
- Brownfields and the RCD

The Pilot was conducted between August 2010 and April 2011, during which time three site visits were made by the consulting team, EPA and their federal partners on August 25 – 27, 2010, October 3 – 6, 2010 and January 27 – 28, 2011. The major component of the Pilot is the Sub-Area Plan which articulates a new and sustainable vision for the study area. This plan is supported by design guidelines and zoning code recommendations considered necessary for the plan to be realized. The brownfield strategy serves as another supporting piece to the realization of the RCD Sub-Area Plan. These three products are described in more detail in Sections 3, 4, and 5 of this report.

## 2. Project Team and Information Sources Reviewed

### 2.1 Project Team

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The project team included staff from the City of Iowa City Departments of Planning, Transportation, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, the Johnson County Council of Governments, and EPA Region 7 staff. Technical assistance was provided by a consulting team comprised of staff from SRA International, Inc., and HDR, Inc. Support was also provided by Johnson County and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Brownfields program, along with offices within the US Department of Transportation (DOT) and US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

In addition to participating in discussions and site visits, representatives from DOT Federal Transit Authority (FTA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and HUD worked closely with EPA Region 7 staff to identify ways in which their resources could best be used to realize the vision articulated in the Riverfront Crossings Sub-Area Plan. To that end, regional representatives from each agency submitted letters to EPA Region 7 identifying ways in which they could contribute further (see the letters in Appendix A).

### 2.2 Information Sources Reviewed

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Several documents and reports were reviewed to develop an understanding of Iowa City and the study area. This was important to both build a framework, recommendations and strategy that reflect the character of Iowa City and to create a vision grounded in economic, logistical, political, and environmental feasibility. Documents that were reviewed include:

- Iowa City Comprehensive Plan (adopted in 1997)<sup>4</sup>
- Iowa City Central Plan (adopted 2008)<sup>5</sup>
- Iowa City zoning code (select sections) (last updated 12/22/2008)<sup>6</sup>
- Riverfront Crossings District: Smart Growth Approach for Long-Term Community Recovery: Prepared for EPA and FEMA (April 2010)<sup>7</sup>
- Iowa City Development Policy Options (January 2020)<sup>8</sup>
- Iowa City Final Market Overview Memo: Prepared for EPA and FEMA (December 2009)<sup>9</sup>
- Iowa City Final Transportation Policy Options: Prepared for EPA and FEMA (January 2010)<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.icgov.org/default?id=1373>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.icgov.org/default?id=1496>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.icgov.org/default?id=1478>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.icgov.org/site/CMSv2/file/planning/urban/riverfrontXing/OverviewReport.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.icgov.org/site/CMSv2/file/planning/urban/riverfrontXing/DevPolicyOptions.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.icgov.org/site/CMSv2/file/planning/urban/riverfrontXing/MktAnalysis.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.icgov.org/site/CMSv2/file/planning/urban/riverfrontXing/TranspPolicyOptions.pdf>

# 3. Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan

## 3.1 Project Schedule and Milestones

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Creating the Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan involved in-depth coordination between the EPA, consulting team, and multiple stakeholders in Iowa City. In addition to regular communication via e-mail and teleconference calls, the team used a web-based document sharing tool called SharePoint to collaborate and share information and documents.

Prior to the site visits, information resources listed in Section 2.2 were reviewed and communication with City staff had already begun. During each site visit, EPA and the consulting team coordinated with several departments within Iowa City, Johnson County, and the Johnson County Council of Governments (JCOG). Coordination with Johnson County was important due to their ongoing plans for several County owned properties in the study area and the potential for recommendations from the pilot to impact their operations and to evaluate their capacity to partner in the sub area plan’s realization. JCOG serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Iowa City urbanized area, and as such is responsible for state mandated transportation planning. Due to anticipated recommendations to the transportation system within the study area their participation was critical.

The first of three site visits was made on August 26 – 27, 2010 to allow non-local stakeholders and the consulting team to become better acquainted with the project area and Iowa City partners, and to refine the scope of the pilot. During the site visit, EPA and the consulting team held meetings with several departments within Iowa City, Johnson County, and the Johnson County Council of Governments. In addition, Iowa City planning staff led the consulting team on a tour of the study area, RCD, and Iowa City to understand how the study area relates to the rest of the city. After the first site visit, the consulting team developed an initial concept plan for the study area.

The second site visit was made on October 4 – 6, 2011. On this trip, the consulting team facilitated a three-day design workshop with invitees from City of Iowa City departments, Johnson County, Mid-American Energy (local power utility), Iowa City Municipal Airport, JCOG, EPA, and FHWA. In general, the same participants attended all three workshop sessions of the second visit with approximately 20 non-consulting team attendees each day.

On the first day of the design workshop, the consulting team presented the initial concept plan (see Appendix B) and worked with representatives from multiple city departments and their partners to better articulate revitalization priorities, address constraints, and record details for integration into the next iteration of the draft plan. During and after the first day’s meetings, the consulting team visually interpreted and integrated changes to the initial concept plan for presentation and further refinement the following day.

The second day of the design workshop included another round of presentation and feedback that informed additional changes that were integrated into the plan and presented again on the third day (see Appendix C). Feedback offered by stakeholders on the third workshop day was recorded by the consulting team and integrated into the draft Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan over the following two months.

Each of the three design workshop days covered a comprehensive set of topics including (but not limited to):

- General land use
- Densities
- Open space and parks
- Iowa River and Ralston Creek
- Transportation system
- Transit potential (light rail, bus rapid transit, high speed rail)
- Design
- Infrastructure
- Housing
- Retail and Office Demand
- Airport height restrictions
- Zoning code and design guidelines



*Representatives from the City, JCOG, EPA, and the consulting team work through details on the draft plan*

For the two months following the design workshop, the consulting team worked with Iowa City and EPA to refine the conceptual framework and to prepare for a public forum to present and discuss the draft Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Concept Plan.

The third site visit was January 27-28, 2011. During this visit, the consulting team worked with Iowa City to host a public forum. The public forum began with a presentation by the Iowa City Planning Director for opening remarks and then EPA to provide an overview of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities and Iowa City's selection as one of five national pilots. Iowa City articulated the City's aspirations for the RCD and its plans for moving forward. The consulting team made a formal presentation of the draft Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan (see Appendix D). After the presentations, forum attendees had an opportunity to review presentation boards depicting the plan, ask questions about, discuss aspects of, and provide feedback on the plan.

The public forum was well attended with approximately 150 attendees. Each attendee was asked to fill out a comment form asking their opinion about the draft Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan. A summary of the public comments can be found in Appendix E.

After the public forum, the consulting team continued to refine and format the RCD Sub-Plan in their offices with regular communication with Iowa City staff and EPA. The final plan serves as an accompanying document to this report but can also be found on the EPA and Iowa City website ([placeholder for link](#)).

### **3.2 Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan Components**

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The Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan is a design framework that will help Iowa City achieve disaster recovery within the RCD, provide thoughtful flood mitigation approaches for the RCD, and establish a district-wide sustainable development vision that can be reflected in future City policy and practices citywide. A concept plan is one of the first steps taken in planning for the revitalization of an area. It is a planning tool that visually articulates a new built environment including buildings, transportation, green space, and other systems within the area. It is a planning tool used to inform policy and comprehensive planning decisions necessary for the area's structural and functional transformation.

The RCD Sub-Area Plan for the 9 square block study area envisions a pedestrian friendly mixed use urban community conducive to active recreation, bicycle transportation, green streets, and multi-modal transportation options. The concept plan incorporates and recommends green infrastructure and sustainable building practices. It consists of building types, densities, open space design, enhanced surface transportation system, and resilient urban waterways designed with the capacity to accommodate flooding.

The plan articulates an aspirational future for the district that builds on Iowa City's vibrant downtown. It seeks to create a district of distinction that responds to real estate market demand and trends not currently accommodated in

downtown. This includes providing non-student housing and amenities such as market rate housing for all age types, families, and commercial retail and office space that supports and is supported by them. While limited student housing is anticipated as a market reality, the main focus is to build on other market segments. Creating the plan involved in depth communication with Iowa City Departments of Planning, Transportation, Parks and Recreation, and Public Works, as well as their municipal partners the Johnson County Council of Governments and Johnson County. The City Planning Department acted as lead for the local participation.

The main components of the plan are:

- Land Use
- Mobility
- Building Height
- Frontages and Setbacks
- Parking and Access
- Special Requirements
- Public Realm



*The RCD district as envisioned in the sub area plan*

### *3.2.1 Land Use*

#### *Existing*

Existing land use patterns in the study area include a mix of large and small footprint commercial spaces along the main commercial corridor (Gilbert Street) with light industrial uses to the west. A municipal waste water treatment plant occupies 17.3 acres of land in the southwest corner of the district, directly on the Iowa River. Other uses in the district include the Iowa City Fire Department Training Center, Johnson County administrative offices and health services facility, ambulance center, small office, restaurants, and retail. In general the district consists of one- and two-story buildings, carrying a much lower density than downtown Iowa City which is located just a few blocks to the north.

#### *Proposed*

The intent of the Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan is not to displace the small commercial businesses and public service uses in the area, but to increase the capacity of the area to accommodate higher densities. At the

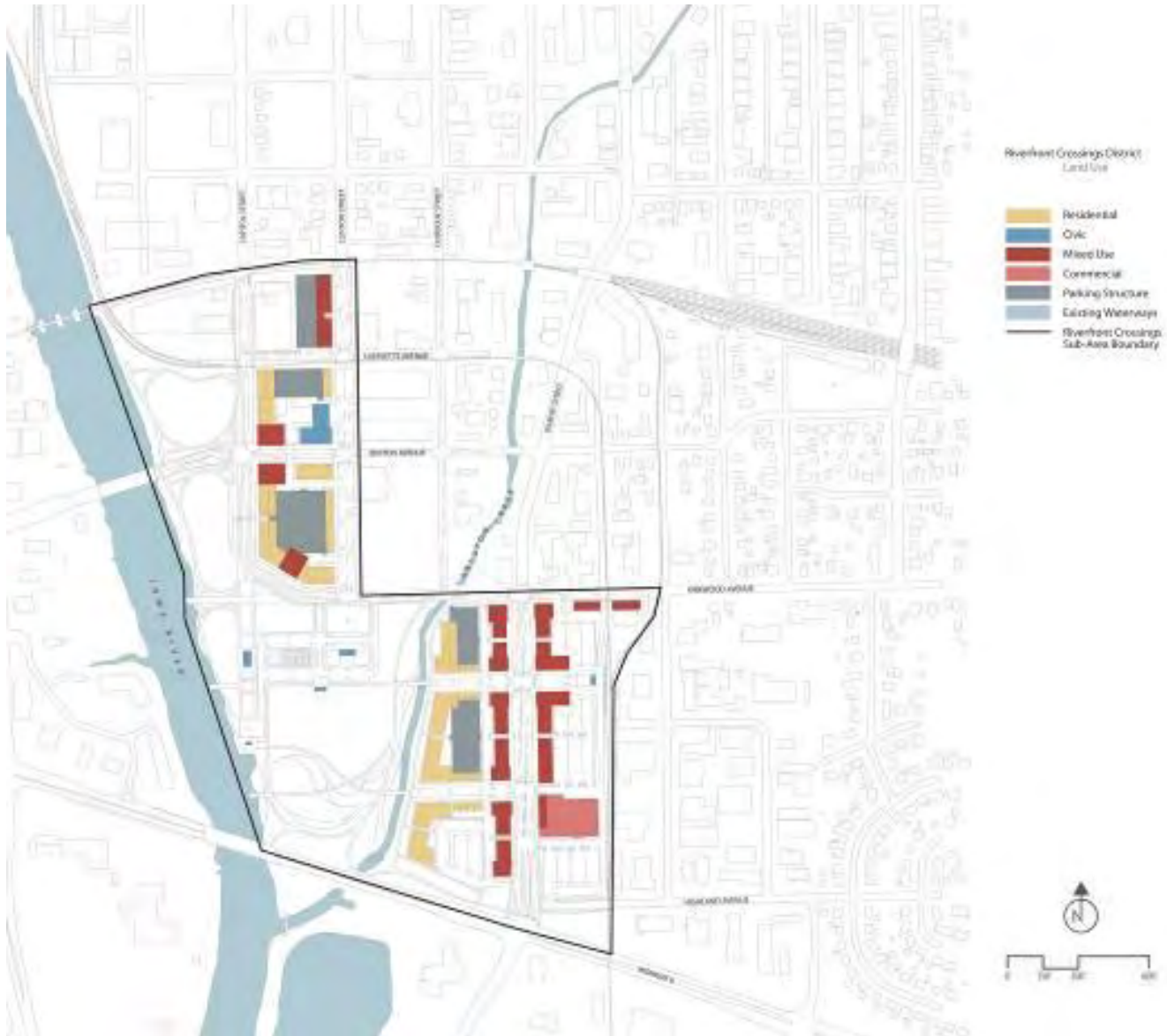
same time, the Plan establishes a new land use pattern that removes development from within the 100 year flood plain and uses that land for a riverfront park and constructed wetland.

In response to a growing demand for housing and office space near downtown Iowa City and the University of Iowa campus, the conceptual framework articulates an increased density that accommodates:

- Approximately 1,072,000 sqft (955 units) of residential units;
- 222,650 sqft of commercial space;
- On and off street parking, including structured parking; and
- A 26 acre park space and constructed wetland in the 100-year floodplain area.

Figure 3 below provides an overview of the new distribution of land uses.

**Figure 3: Land Use**



**3.2.2 Mobility**

A significant component of the Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan and its underlying analysis is mobility: how people move in, around, and out of the district.

**Existing**

The current road infrastructure is considered to barely accommodate the existing traffic demand, with a Level of Service C through most of the district. The RCD has a system of one-way streets that local stakeholders noted is confusing to drivers, has a high incidence of accidents, and is dangerous for driving, cycling, and pedestrians.

**Proposed**

One of Iowa City's goals for the RCD is to provide reliable, safe, and direct bicycle and pedestrian mobility. To meet this goal, the Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan proposes significant change to the transportation corridors. After careful analysis of the existing transportation system and several iterations of alternatives, the recommended enhanced transportation system includes restoring two-way traffic flow and extending the street grid to the proposed riverfront park to provide maximum visibility and accessibility for all transportation modes (see Figure 4). In addition, the plan anticipates the possibility of future regional and local passenger rail service along the two existing rail lines that cross through the district.

**Figure 4: Mobility**



### 3.2.3 Building Heights

#### *Existing*

In general the RCD is a low density area, consisting primarily of one- and two-story commercial buildings. This pattern of development does not reflect the aspirations for the district or the capacity for it to realize higher density commercial and residential development that will otherwise be developed away from the urban core.

#### *Proposed*

Several factors were considered in determining the proposed building heights in the Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan, including market demand, scale relative to surrounding land uses, and restrictions imposed from the neighboring airport.

This study based its understanding of the real estate market demand in the study area on the Market Overview Memorandum developed in 2009<sup>11</sup>. The memorandum suggested that there is strong demand in the study area for residential, retail, and office space and that the study area could support a mix of uses and densities.

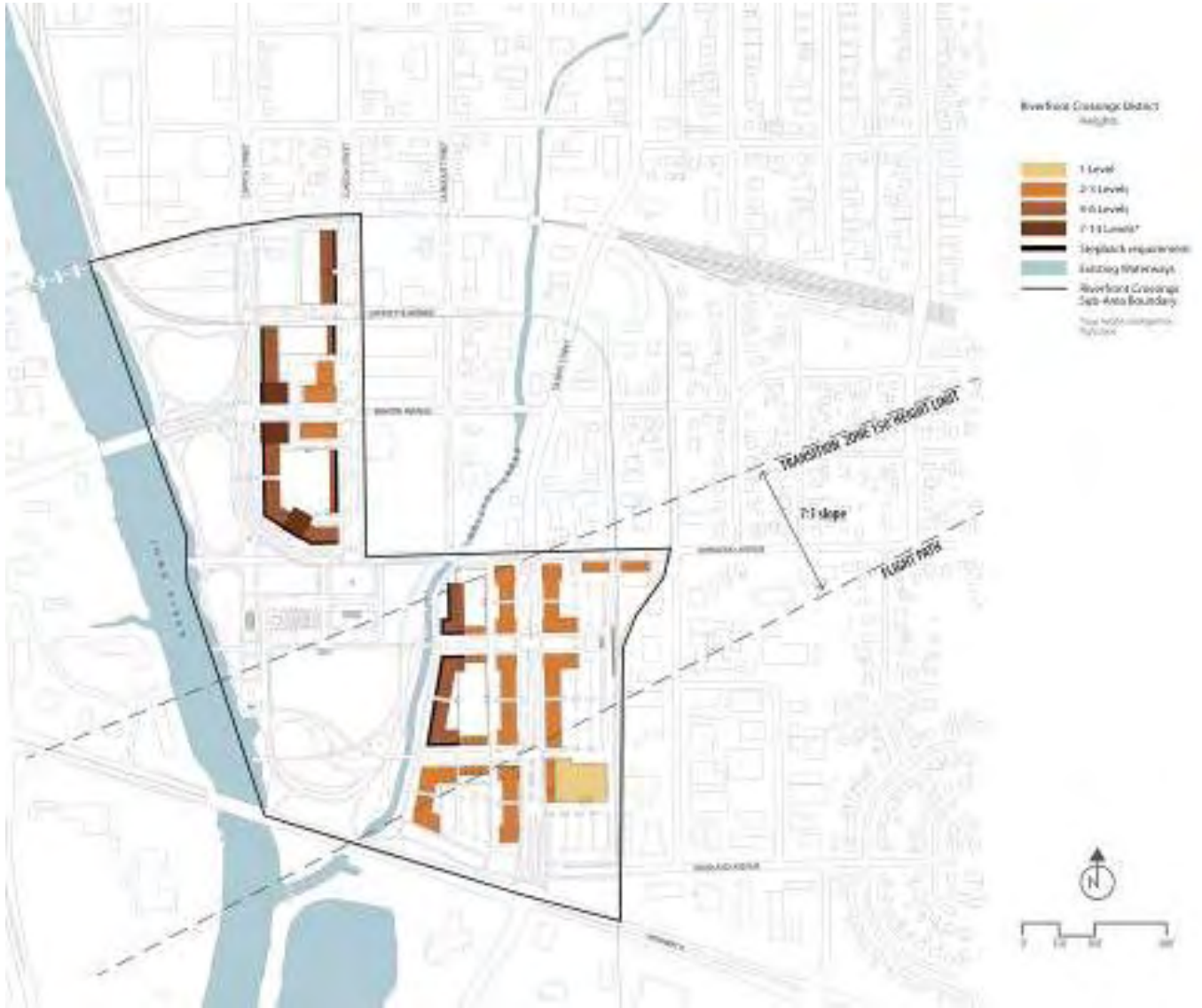
In general, the Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan proposes building heights that increase from south to north toward downtown with the tallest proposed buildings fronting the proposed park and the Iowa River on the north end of the district (see Figure 5). Buildings along Gilbert Street, the main commercial corridor in the district, graduate from one to two stories on the southern edge of the district to two to three stories heading north.

The study area is located directly northeast—and is in the flight path—of the Iowa City Municipal Airport. Although separated from the airport by the Iowa River, development in the RCD must comply with height restrictions imposed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The proposed building heights in the Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan are intended to reflect those regulations, but it is important to note that neither this report nor the Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Concept Plan serve as proof or testimony of compliance. Each future development project must satisfy its own regulatory obligations on this matter.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.icgov.org/site/CMSv2/file/planning/urban/riverfrontXing/MktAnalysis.pdf>

Figure 5: Building Height



### 3.2.4 Frontages and Setbacks

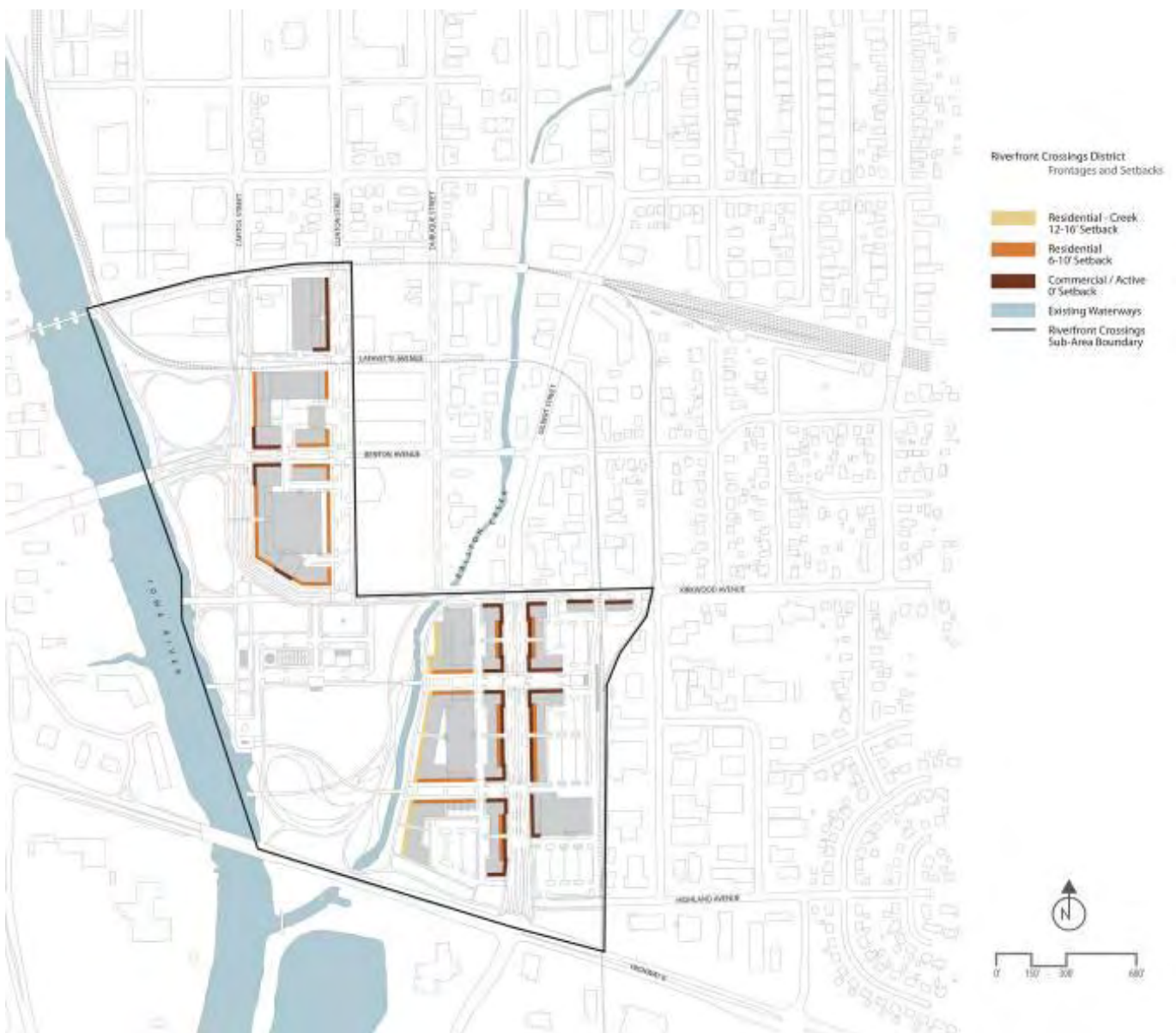
#### Existing

Existing street frontages and building setbacks across the study area typically include parking lots along the street and buildings set back along the far side of the parking lot, with very few structures directly engaging the street. These conditions do not provide for an engaging street presence for businesses nor pedestrians and have resulted in a very automobile centric functionality.

#### Proposed

To achieve the level of aesthetic and functional quality envisioned by Iowa City, careful attention must be paid to the design and orientation of building frontages. The Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan identifies areas where street orientation is critical in providing a vibrant and walkable streetscape. It also proposes setback distances to serve the same purpose. Special attention is given to each site's relationship to the river and creek, the park, critical intersections and commercial corridor. See Figure 6 for more detail.

**Figure 6: Frontages and Setbacks**



### 3.2.5 Parking and Access

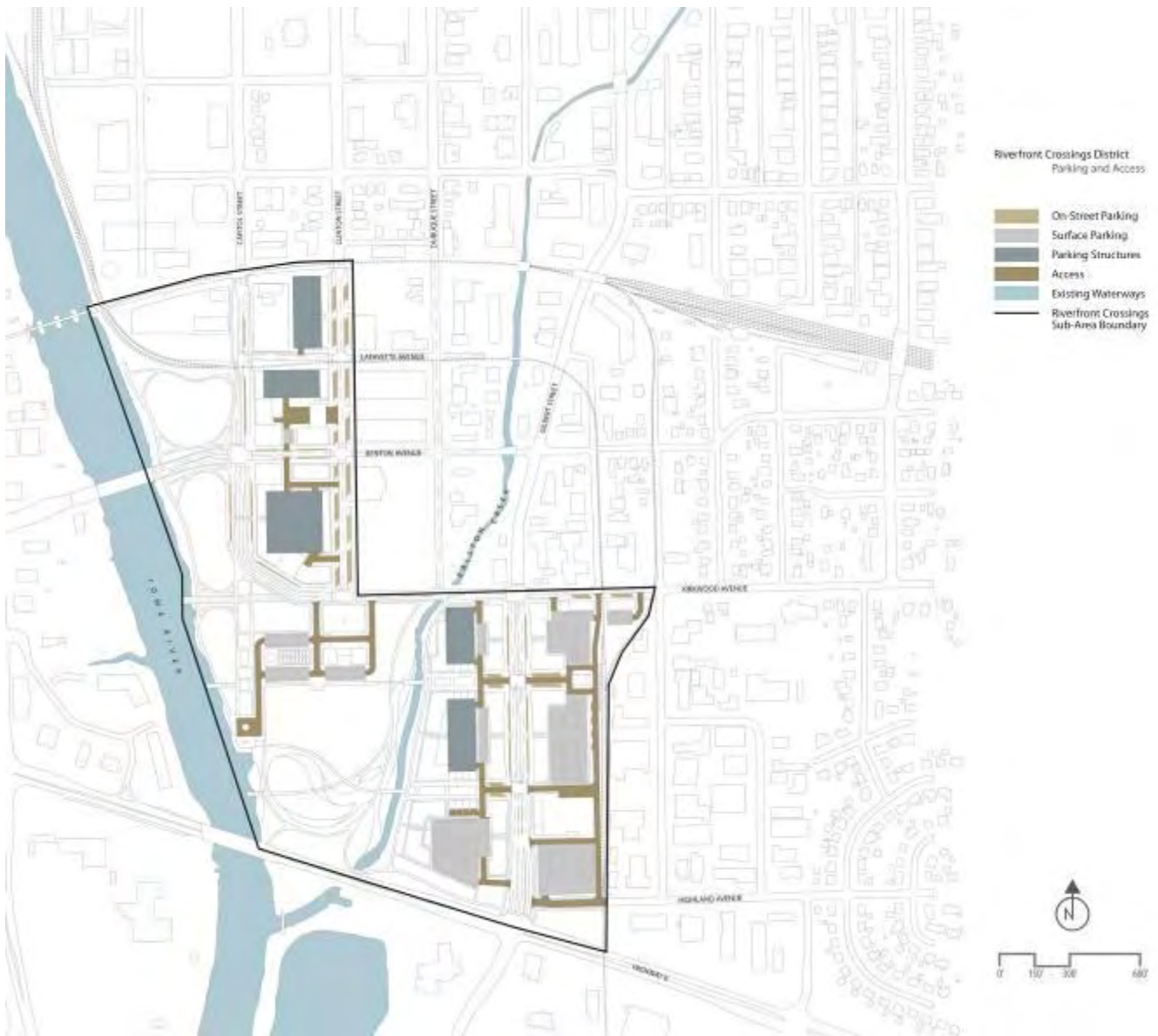
#### Existing

Parking and access is provided mostly through parking lots at the front of buildings with little to no access directly from the street. Very little on street parking exists.

#### Proposed

Increased density and housing will require parking needs be addressed in order to meet regulatory requirements or market demand. The Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan includes details for surface, structured, and on-street parking. The plan tries to minimize the degree to which structured and surface parking disrupt the streetscapes' appearance and function. See Figure 7 for more detail.

**Figure 7: Parking**



### 3.2.6 Special Requirements

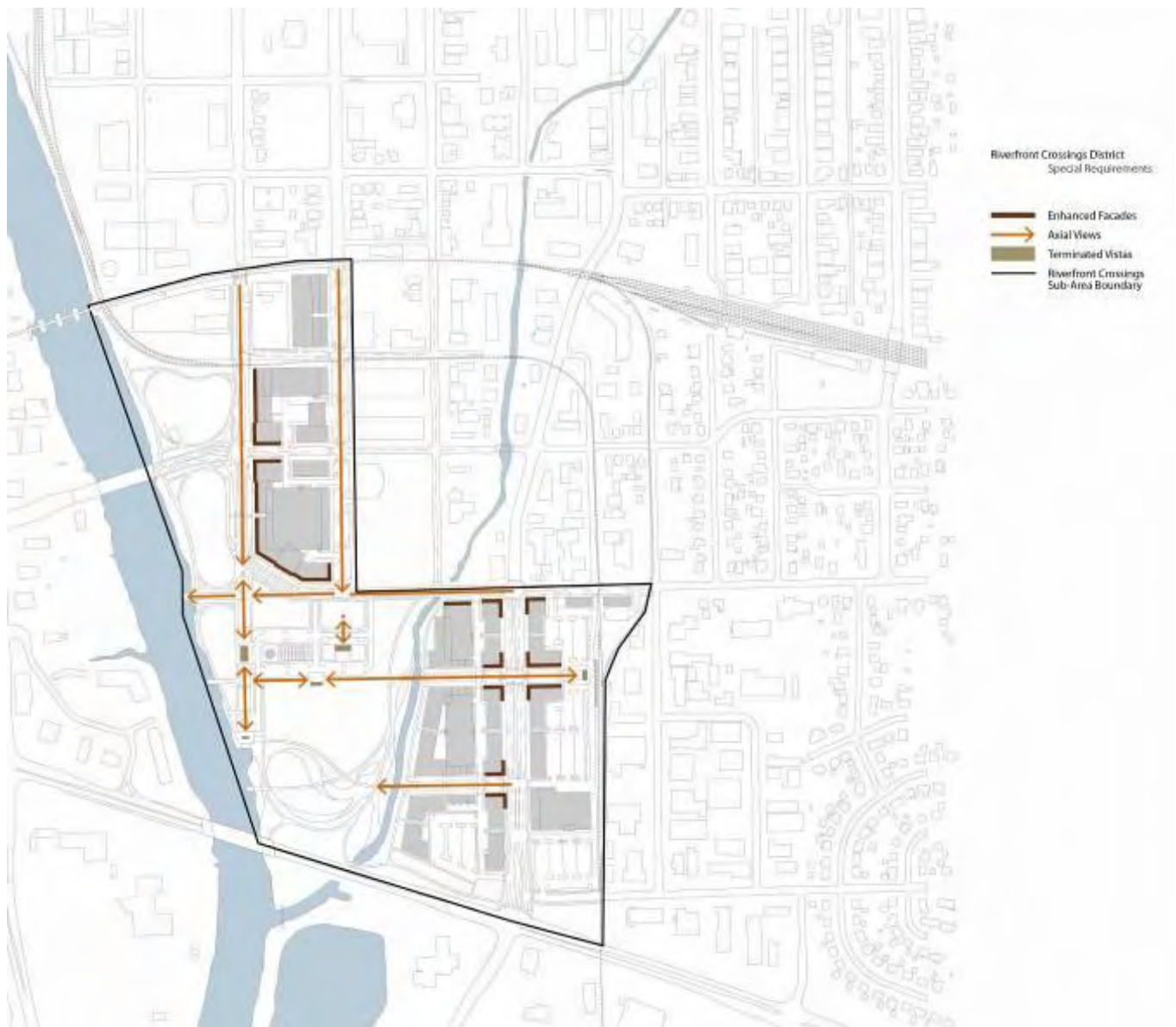
#### Existing

Under the current zoning code, there are no special requirements that development must comply with in order to provide the high quality of urban design and function articulated in the RCD Sub-Area Plan.

#### Proposed

Key locations, particularly intersections, gateways, and facades are identified to engage the public realm, and to achieve a higher quality of design and materials than might otherwise be provided through existing zoning codes. There is little certainty that buildings will reflect the high quality of design and functionality envisioned for the district if constructed under the existing code. Responding to this, Special Requirements provide greater assurance that the district will evolve as envisioned. Figure 8 identifies areas where these increased requirements are recommended. Specifics regarding those requirements are covered in the Zoning Code and Design Guidelines section of the report and full Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan.

**Figure 8: Special Requirements**



### 3.2.7 *Public Realm*

#### **Existing**

The public realm is the system of spaces accessed by the public in which they engage with each other, businesses, and the natural environment. Currently this system is limited to sidewalks with no formal access to the natural amenities in the area, primarily Ralston Creek and the Iowa River.

#### **Proposed**

The Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan includes areas such as sidewalks, public courtyards, and pathways as critical public spaces deserving of special design elements. The largest contiguous component of the public realm within the plan is the park and constructed wetland along the Iowa River.

Serving as both a civic treasure and flood mitigation system, the conceptualized park and constructed wetland, when realized, will provide unique access to the Iowa River. The importance of this park system is three-fold.

- It will serve as a tremendous amenity to the residents, businesses, and visitors to the district
- It will add a level of protection to the newly developed district from future 100 year flood events
- It will serve as a catalyst project to leverage private investment in the district essential for its transformation

Funding provided by a local option sales tax, State I-jobs grants, Community Development Block Grant, and a grant from the Economic Development Administration will assist in the removal of the waste water treatment plant. This provides a unique opportunity for the city to prove its commitment to the future vision of the district and make strides toward implementing the park system. The park design consists of constructed wetlands and an enhanced Ralston Creek on the south end of active park uses connected by trails. Figure 9 provides a basic overview of the park (please review the full Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan for greater detail, maps and renderings). Funding for site restoration and park development has yet to be secured. With funding secured through a local option sales tax, State I-jobs grants, Community Development Block Grant, and a grant from the Economic Development Administration already secured to assist in the removal of the waste water treatment plant, the City has a unique opportunity to prove its commitment to the future vision of the district. Figure 9 provides a basic overview of the park (please review the full Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan for greater detail, maps and renderings). The design consists of constructed wetlands and an enhanced Ralston Creek on the south end of active park uses connected by trails. Funding for site restoration and park development has not yet been secured.

Figure 9: Public Realm



### 3.3 Design Guideline and Code Recommendations

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Over the past several years Iowa City has been taking steps to amend its zoning code in order to achieve development that better reflects and facilitates a vibrant urban community. While these changes over time have resulted in developments that better achieve this goal, they are often times the result of negotiation during a rezoning or special exception approval process.

Technical assistance provided through this pilot includes a set of design guideline and zoning code recommendations thought to be necessary in order for certain elements of the Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan to be realized. Design guidelines and code recommendations are meant to supplement current zoning code requirements when development occurs and result in development with features that would not be required through application of the base code alone. These recommendations were requested to apply to the study area and for possible application citywide or to other select sub-areas as a means through which development can achieve the level of aesthetic and functional quality aspired to as described in Section 3.2. These recommendations fall into the following categories:

- Land Use
- Building Height
- Frontages and Setbacks
- Parking and Access
- Special Requirements

As previously mentioned, Iowa City has been amending its zoning code over the past several years in order to realize development that is more conducive to active streetscapes, reflects its local architectural heritage, and advances environmental goals. While these changes over time are resulting in development that better provides these characteristics they are not always the result of code compliance but rather are achieved through negotiation during requests for rezoning or special exceptions. An example of this is a recently developed corner lot apartment building whose design incorporates street orientation and engagement on each frontage, street trees, quality sidewalk treatments and additional landscaping. The existing code language only required engagement of one street side entrance, minimal landscaping and basic concrete sidewalks. The extra features were implemented in exchange for the increased density of an extra floor worth of height in addition to what is allowable under the zoning code. It was requested that assistance through this project provide recommendations on additional code amendments to achieve similar development through satisfaction of mandatory requirements rather than negotiation.

Please see the Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan accompanying this report for detailed recommendations.

## 4. Brownfields And The RCD

Due to the light industrial and auto related commercial uses within the district, there is an increased likelihood that some properties will require environmental site assessment, and perhaps remediation in order to accommodate redevelopment. To account for and address this situation, assistance provided to Iowa City includes a strategy to address brownfields in preparation for the plan's implementation.

As a municipality, Iowa City has an opportunity to help plan for potential brownfields projects. Support could include securing guidance and resources to proactively address brownfields issues so as to protect human and environmental health and ensure potential brownfields sites do not represent barriers to future redevelopment. This section includes specific information on:

- What is a Brownfield
- A Brownfields Inventory
- Brownfields Resources
- Local Incentives

### **What is a Brownfield?**

A Brownfield is a property that the expansion, redevelopment or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. In general, these are sites whose previous or current uses have potentially impacted the sites with contaminants needing evaluation through Environmental Site Assessments (ESA) and possibly remediation. Brownfield properties by definition are not necessarily contaminated. It is often the perception or potential of contamination which drives the need for assessment.

Examples of sites that can be considered brownfields include, but are not limited to former gasoline stations, dry cleaners, industrial uses, manufacturing facilities, or metal plating facilities. Essentially these are sites that may have been impacted by the existence or a release of pollutants such as asbestos, lead paint, petroleum products, solvents, heavy metals, and other substances into the soil, ground and surface water or within structures on site. Prior to their redevelopment, these issues need to be quantified through Phase I (site history) and Phase II (soil/water sampling) ESAs and perhaps made compliant with state regulatory standards through remediation. Remediation can include soil removal, groundwater treatment, institutional controls such as land use restrictions, or engineering controls such as impermeable caps.

There are a number of positive and negative reasons why it is important to consider brownfields in redevelopment planning. They:

- Represent real environmental and human environmental health threats.
- Can hinder economic development efforts and when left unaddressed can drive development to otherwise undeveloped land, effectively contributing to sprawl.
- Usually have existing infrastructure to support redevelopment.
- Represent unrealized tax revenue.
- Can serve as catalyst projects for corridor or district wide revitalization.
- Are eligible for available federal and state financial and technical resources to municipalities and non-profits.

Given the land use history of the study area, it is likely that previous or existing uses created brownfields and/or site conditions that could impact development potential. It is expected that these sites will require formal ESAs by a purchaser or lender and may require remediation in preparation for or in conjunction with redevelopment.

### **A Brownfields Inventory**

One of the first steps in addressing a planning issue is measuring it. A brownfields inventory offers a municipality many benefits and can be used to assess the number of sites, their economic and environmental impacts, the resulting benefits from their redevelopment, as well as be a tool to help prioritize resources for addressing these sites. A brownfields inventory is a collection of site-specific information for properties that are potentially

contaminated. The design and utility of these inventories exist in various forms with varying levels of complexity and serve complimentary purposes.

For both public availability and internal planning purposes it is helpful if the inventory of sites be accompanied by site details such as size, zoning, utilities, elevations, etc. When accompanied by supporting information, the inventory also has the potential to serve as or inform the creation of a marketing tool used to promote private investment necessary for the realization of the Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Concept Plan.

Private development interests often view strategic public investment in a district as a source of confidence supporting the application of their private resources. Brownfield investments in environmental assessment and remediation bridge a financial and technical gap that serves that purpose. It reduces risk for development interests whether public, private, or non-profit which in turn helps facilitate partnerships necessary for the Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Concept Plan's realization.

An inventory of brownfield or potential brownfield sites in the Riverfront Crossings District serves as a basis by which opportunities are found both for private development interests and city investment. As discussed in greater detail below (Brownfields Resources), public financial assistance is available for eligible sites to cover the cost of Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments, cleanup planning, and redevelopment planning. In cases where a property is owned by a public or non-profit entity, resources are even available for eligible properties to receive financial assistance for remediation.

The inventory can also be used to further prioritize sites in support of other Iowa City specific goals. These might include but not be limited to:

- Sites with greatest potential to attract investment
- Sites targeted for projects with public/private partnership (affordable housing, etc.)
- Access to public transportation
- Greatest tax revenue generation
- Environmental restoration (Ralston Creek, Iowa River, envisioned constructed wetland, etc.)

**Please Note:** Some municipalities have been hesitant to maintain publicly available databases of brownfields for fear of conflict with property owners claiming to have negatively impacted their property value. Because each municipality has different thresholds of risk aversion, it is advised that the city attorney be consulted before creating or making public such a database.

#### *Developing an Inventory*

Some data sources for starting an inventory include:

1. Regulatory databases (state and federal)
2. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps
3. Old phone books
4. Windshield or walking survey
5. Self-selection from property owners

The first step is to review the sites enrolled in programs with the State of Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Contaminated Sites Section ([www.iowadnr.gov/land/consites/index.html](http://www.iowadnr.gov/land/consites/index.html) or <https://programs.iowadnr.gov/contaminatedsites/pages/search.aspx>). It is important to note that inclusion in programs or databases managed by the state does not mean that site is contaminated. Sites enrolled in state program are in various stages of assessment, cleanup, and reuse. A site specific inquiry must be made in order to determine if and to what degree the site is impacted. If a site is not listed in a database that does not mean that it might not have environmental contaminants. Sites not listed in state databases still might require an ESA and possible cleanup actions.

Another resource for developing an inventory is using Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. These maps originally were created for fire insurance liability reasons. These maps have been created of cities across the country since the late 1800s and include detailed information related to a site. One example of a feature of interest in these maps related to brownfield research is their record of Underground Storage Tanks (UST) known to be on site at the time the

map was created. Maps for Iowa City can be viewed online ([www.statelibraryofiowa.org/services/online-resources/resources/sanborn-login](http://www.statelibraryofiowa.org/services/online-resources/resources/sanborn-login)) or in person at the State Library of Iowa.

Old phone books are also an easily accessible way to investigate previous land uses at a particular address and are normally accessible at public libraries. By looking under particular business types, such as gasoline stations or metal plating facilities, we can identify specific addresses with past uses known to cause contamination on other sites. Again, this is not testament to a site's actual condition but highlights the need for further investigation.

Property tax information at the Iowa City Assessor's office is a resource where information related to site history can be found. While these records might not record specific site conditions, they do provide information related to the history of property ownership which may provide insight as to a site's previous uses.

Another method of identifying potential brownfield sites is to conduct a walking or windshield survey. This form of site identification is more art than it is science. Also, by identifying sites this way, it is not a statement that the site is contaminated, just that the site appears to be underutilized or vacant, and might have a use that could cause contamination. It is helpful to conduct such a survey with someone with experience in brownfield work, but not completely necessary.

Some signs of a site's history are displayed in plain sight. The following suggestions are by no means intended to serve as a comprehensive guide to site identification, nor are they intended to label sites with these characteristics as contaminated. They are however intended to sites to be further investigated. During the first site visit, a member of the consulting team with more than a decade of brownfield experience conducted a walking tour of the district to identify signs of potential brownfield properties, with a particular emphasis on Gilbert Street. During this tour, several properties had characteristics common to brownfields, such as former gasoline stations. Site characteristics observed included:

- Boarded up structures
- former fuel pump islands foundations
- Ground mounted fuel fill ports for Underground Storage Tanks (UST)
- Structures with large garage doors
- Ingress/Egress configurations for drive through vehicle flow common to gasoline stations
- Existing groundwater monitoring wells

**Figure 10: Examples of Site Conditions along Gilbert Street**



Another recommended course of action for identifying and inventorying potential brownfield properties in the district is by soliciting the self-identification from property owners who think their site might be a brownfield.

#### *Property Owners and Brownfields Communication*

Perhaps the most important player in the revitalization of brownfield properties is the property owner. Simply put, unless the site is under active regulatory enforcement, which is rare and definitely not the preferred situation, environmental assessment and remediation necessary for redevelopment is done voluntarily in support of the property owner's goals. Communication regarding their site condition is a delicate endeavor that should account for different variables and frame the goals of the city and other stakeholders in a way that supports the owner's vision.

Regardless of whether or not the current property owner caused the contamination that might be onsite, it is likely that the current owner is considered the responsible party. Understandably, this is a difficult reality for some property owners to accept. It is also a reality with which Iowa City can help. Principles to incorporate into the communication with property owners and communication regarding their land include:

- There are financial and technical resources potentially available to help.
- This is not a campaign against property owners intended to get them in trouble.
- Addressing the issue before it limits their development or sale plans for the site is critical.

In order to bring the message to a broad audience, a communication strategy specific to the brownfield issue should include both public informational meetings but also one-on-one communication with property owners, business owners, and residents. Support from the community-at-large can be an important factor in property owners volunteering to move forward with the first step of environmental assessments. Resources for assessments and remediation are discussed below (Brownfields Resources).

It is almost certain that brownfields exist in areas of the city other than the study area of this report and concepts presented in this section apply there too; however, framing the message as being in support of the Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan provides additional weight to the City's interest and assistance. The plan helps speak to the feasibility of redevelopment that should result from the property owners' commitment to move forward with ESAs and perhaps remediation.

During these public forums or one-on-one meetings property owners can request their properties be included in the database used by the city, either as an internal planning document or as used by the public.

Additionally, in situations where the existing property owner is not the entity to redevelop their property, investment and development interests might be hesitant to acquire and develop some property due to liability concerns. Federal legislation has established due diligence steps to take in order to obtain "Bona Fide Prospective Purchaser" ([www.epa.gov/swerosps/bf/aai/aaifs.htm](http://www.epa.gov/swerosps/bf/aai/aaifs.htm)) status and protection against federal enforcement for conditions they did not cause.

At the state level, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources provides limited liability protection ([www.iowadnr.gov/land/consites/lrp/conlrp.html](http://www.iowadnr.gov/land/consites/lrp/conlrp.html)) after issuing a No Further Action Certificate.

#### **Brownfields Resources**

Over the past several years, federal and state agencies have created and dispersed financial and technical resources to address brownfields with the intent of realizing redevelopment in support of their missions. Below is a brief list and description of proven resources. A comprehensive list and description of federal programs applicable to brownfields can be found on EPA's website ([epa.gov/brownfields/partners/2009\\_fpg.pdf](http://epa.gov/brownfields/partners/2009_fpg.pdf)).

#### *Federal*

United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

***Brownfield Assessment Grants*** ([www.epa.gov/brownfields/grant\\_info/index.htm](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/grant_info/index.htm)) – Available to public agencies to perform Phase I and II ESAs on eligible public or private properties.

***Brownfield Cleanup Grants*** ([www.epa.gov/brownfields/grant\\_info/index.htm](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/grant_info/index.htm)) – Available to public agencies and non-profit organizations holding title to the brownfield property.

**Brownfield Cleanup Revolving Loan Funds (RLF)** ([www.epa.gov/brownfields/grant\\_info/index.htm](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/grant_info/index.htm)) – Available to public agencies who then issue loans to eligible public or private entities for brownfield cleanup.

**Targeted Brownfield Assessments (TBA)** ([http://epa.gov/brownfields/grant\\_info/tba.htm](http://epa.gov/brownfields/grant_info/tba.htm)) – Provides Phase I and II ESAs by contractors hired by the EPA on an application basis.

**All Appropriate Inquiry (AAI)**

([www.epa.gov/swerosps/bf/aai/aaifs.htm](http://www.epa.gov/swerosps/bf/aai/aaifs.htm)) (<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/108/>) – Federally legislated due diligence requirements establishing liability protection against federal regulatory enforcement for “bona fide prospective purchasers” of contaminated land.

**Technical Assistance to Brownfield Communities (TAB)**

([http://epa.gov/brownfields/tools/tab\\_bifold.pdf](http://epa.gov/brownfields/tools/tab_bifold.pdf)) – Offers free technical assistance related to communities facing brownfields challenges.

United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

**Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)**

([www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/library/stateguide/](http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/library/stateguide/)) – When applied to brownfield properties, several site activities satisfy requisite HUD national objectives.

**Brownfield Economic Development Initiative (BEDI)**

([www.hud.gov/nofa/suprnofa/supnofa2/4363sec2.cfm](http://www.hud.gov/nofa/suprnofa/supnofa2/4363sec2.cfm)) – Grant fund available to public agencies for brownfield remediation and redevelopment planning in support of economic development. It must be used in conjunction with a Section 108 loan.

(<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/108/>)

State of Iowa

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)** ([www.iowadnr.gov/land/consites/brownfields/index.html](http://www.iowadnr.gov/land/consites/brownfields/index.html)) –

Manages financial resources to provide Phase I and II ESAs. Cleanup assistance is also available through mini-grants. These resources are available to public agencies, area development corporations, and non-profit organizations through an application process on qualified properties. Availability of funds is subject to legislative appropriation.

**Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED)** ([www.iowalifechanging.com/business/brownfields.aspx](http://www.iowalifechanging.com/business/brownfields.aspx)) –

Provides grant and loan packages for the acquisition, remediation and redevelopment of brownfield sites on an application basis. IDEC also provides tax credits for qualifying properties.

**Iowa Brownfield Reuse Guide** ([www.iowalifechanging.com/business/downloads/IWEBrownfields.pdf](http://www.iowalifechanging.com/business/downloads/IWEBrownfields.pdf)) – A statewide comprehensive guide including financial/technical resources, frequently asked questions, general background, and contact information.

### Local Incentives

In addition to grant and loan resources available from state and federal agencies, there are a number of tools and resources the local municipality can adopt to help facilitate brownfield redevelopment. Strategies include:

- **Tax Abatements** – In exchange for undertaking a brownfield project, the developer could in turn receive full or partial abatement of local property taxes in addition to what is available through the state.
- **Permitting/Fee Assistance** – Streamlined permitting schedules or fee waivers/reductions can offer an additional layer of savings and risk management that help make brownfield projects feasible
- **Infrastructure Assistance** – The city may provide improvements to infrastructure such as roads, water, sewer, and other utilities if the development is a brownfield project in cases where these improvements would otherwise be the sole responsibility of the developer.

- *Tax Increment Financing (TIF)* – At the time of this report, Iowa City is considering the creation of a TIF district that would include the study area and the rest of the Riverfront Crossings District. TIF can be applied strategically to brownfield projects, covering a wide range of activities including property acquisition, assessment, remediation, marketing, and infrastructure improvements.

Ideas for additional potential local incentives can be found at [www.nemw.org/index.php/policy-areas/brownfields/brownfields-incentives-and-financing#local](http://www.nemw.org/index.php/policy-areas/brownfields/brownfields-incentives-and-financing#local).

Despite the abundance of financial and technical resources managed through state and federal agencies, there are limitations in the scope, amount, and flexibility of these resources that makes the case for some municipalities to take more direct action.

As of the date of this report, it is the understanding of the consulting team that the City of Iowa City is not planning on acquiring property for redevelopment purposes and that the study area's redevelopment will be driven primarily by private development interests. Given this understanding and the limitations of IDNR's assessment funding, it is recommended that the city pursue its own Area-Wide Brownfield Assessment Grant ([www.epa.gov/brownfields/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/index.html)) from the EPA to help prepare the district for redevelopment. In doing so, the city may apply these federal resources on eligible privately held property to conduct Phase I and II ESAs, remediation planning, outreach, and other activity in support of the assessment, remediation, and redevelopment of brownfield properties.

Managing locally controlled brownfield funding makes sense for many reasons. Another limitation to resources available through the state or directly from the EPA is the amount of funding that is available. Because of funding constraints and high demand for each program or goals related to equitable geographic distribution, it is not likely that available existing resources can allocate enough funding or are otherwise unable to meet the potential demand within the study area. By managing its own brownfield grants, Iowa City gets closer to meeting the demand within the district.

These grants are available for either a specific site or for area-wide application. Because of the flexibility in selecting different sites for assessment, and to be consistent with the area-wide approach of the Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan, the consulting team feels the area-wide assessment grant is the best fit with the needs of the study area.

These grants are available for the assessment of petroleum contaminated sites, as well as hazardous substance (non-petroleum) contaminated sites. Given the mix of light industrial and automotive related uses in the study area, it is likely that any contamination in the Riverfront Crossings District could be both petroleum related and non-petroleum (metals, solvents, PCB's etc.). Because of this potential, it is recommended that Iowa City pursue each source of assessment funding. Each grant is available for up to \$200,000 for a project period of three years. With \$400,000 of federal funding available to provide Phase I and II ESAs and technical assistance, Iowa City can help ensure the brownfield issue will not be the obstacle in realizing the Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan.

In general, allowable expenses for these grants include outreach, developing a brownfield inventory, Phase I and II ESAs, remediation planning, travel to conferences, and more. Activity described and proposed here is thought to be included as allowable expenses through the grants; however, confirmation of allowable activity needs to be confirmed through EPA. Details regarding grant application guidelines, proposal dates, and more can be found at [www.epa.gov/brownfields/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/index.html).

# Appendices

# Appendix A: Support Letters from HUD and FTA/FHWA



## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT REGION VII

Gateway Tower II, Room 200  
400 State Avenue  
Kansas City, KS 66101-2406  
HUD Home Page: [www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov)

August 11, 2011

### **Iowa City Brownfields Sustainable Community Partnership Pilot**

The Obama Administration's Partnership for Sustainable Communities is a federal interagency joint venture between EPA, HUD and DOT with the goal of ensuring that the agencies' policies, programs, and funding consider affordable housing, transportation, and environmental protection together. Over the past year, HUD, DOT, and EPA have worked together to promote better outcomes for communities and more effective federal investments through better targeted federal resources, removal of existing federal regulatory and policy barriers to smart and sustainable development, as well as aligned agency priorities that will ensure lasting collaboration.

HUD supports Iowa City's plans to redevelop brownfields properties in the Riverfront Crossings District into a walkable, urban neighborhood close to a proposed light rail stop. To revitalize this area affected by recent flooding, HUD representatives can help the community leverage the public and private resources of HUD's community and housing industry partners. In particular, HUD staff can facilitate sustainable, mixed-use redevelopment by:

- Coordinating federal investments in infrastructure, facilities, and services – A HUD Sustainability Officer assigned to the Iowa City Pilot Project will coordinate HUD program delivery with the HUD's public and private partners to ensure that all investments meet multiple economic, environmental, and community objectives with each dollar spent.
- Applying and building upon working relationships between HUD, DOT, EPA and local stakeholders – HUD program officials will consult with representatives from the Iowa City Housing Authority, the City of Iowa City and property management companies serving the region about opportunities to leverage federal investments.
- Identifying barriers and opportunities for programmatic and policy changes – Regulatory barriers will be promptly addressed by HUD's Regional management team.

From "Leveraging the Partnership", please see the following descriptions of HUD sustainability programs that are available to Iowa City community developers:

## Public and Indian Housing

**HOPE VI:** The Hope VI Program provides competitive funding for the elimination or reclamation of severely distressed public housing developments. Funds can be used for demolition, major rehabilitation, and new construction of public housing; acquisition of sites in other locations for private new construction and supportive services for those relocated by the program. The HOPE VI program promotes the creation of mixed-income communities that are pedestrian-friendly, and transit-accessible. It also encourages high standards of green building for new construction projects through regulation and the prioritization of proposals with green features.

**Public Housing:** The Public Housing Program provides funding to local housing agencies for operating expenses and repairs to public housing developments. Funds are allocated based on the continuing needs of the authorities, especially the number of units they own. Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) are encouraged to use environmentally responsible practices through regulations, guidance, and incentive programs like Energy Performance Contracting (EPC). The EPC program provides funding to make public housing units more resource efficient through the implementation of energy and water conservation measures and the installation of renewable energy systems. By freezing utility subsidies for the length of an EPC contract, PHAs are able to utilize the monetary savings that result from resource-efficiency improvements to repay the upfront costs of those improvements. Historically, the EPC program has generated over \$2 in savings for every \$1 in investment.

**Housing Choice and Project-Based Vouchers:** Housing Choice and Project-Based Voucher Programs provide funding to local public housing agencies for rental subsidies for units that are chosen by the tenant in the private market (Housing Choice Vouchers) or for use in specific developments or units (Project-Based Vouchers). Housing Choice Vouchers allow tenants more flexibility in deciding the location of their residence, giving them more of an opportunity to live closer to work, family, amenities, or services.

## Community Planning and Development

**Community Development Block Grants (CDBG):** The CDBG Program provides formula funding directly to larger cities and counties and through state governments for small units of local government. Funds can be used for most kinds of development as long as it meets one of the following national objectives: 1) benefits low- and moderate-income persons; 2) aids in the prevention or elimination of slum and blight; or 3) meets certain community development needs having a particular urgency. CDBG is a flexible program that provides resources to address a wide range of community and economic development needs, including decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanded economic opportunity.

**Section 108** is the loan guarantee provision of the CDBG program that provides public entities loan funds for businesses or other entities to carry out approved economic development, housing, and public facility projects. The public entity may carry out eligible projects itself.

**Brownfields Economic Development Initiative (BEDI):** BEDI is a competitive program used to spur the return of brownfields to productive economic reuse. BEDI grants must be used in conjunction with a new Section 108 loan. Both Section 108 loan proceeds and BEDI grant funds are initially made available by HUD to public entities approved for assistance.

**HOME Investment Partnership:** The HOME Program provides formula funding directly to larger cities and counties, to consortia of local governments, and to state governments. The HOME program is designed to create affordable housing for low-income households and can take the form of direct assistance or loan guarantees. Funds can be used for most kinds of housing development, including acquisition and rehabilitation in the creation of low-income housing. Additionally HOME program funds can be used for homebuyer assistance and for Tenant-Based Rental Assistance.

**Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS:** HOPWA provides formula funding and competitively-awarded grants to states, cities, and nonprofit organizations. Funds can be used to develop and support housing for people with AIDS and may be used for certain supportive services.

**Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP):** NSP comprised two one-time only grants, in 2008 and 2009, to states, local governments, and selected non-profit organizations to help communities address their serious housing foreclosure problems. Funds are being used to acquire and rehabilitate abandoned or foreclosed housing in distressed neighborhoods.

**Rural Innovation Fund:** HUD's FY 2010 appropriations include \$25 million for a new Rural Innovation Fund to address the problems of concentrated rural housing distress and community poverty.

**Homeless Programs:** Homeless Programs provide formula and competitive funding to state and local governments and private nonprofit organizations. Competitive funds are awarded in connection with the Continuum of Care planning group, a communitywide group that plans for and provides services to homeless people. Funds can be used for services and for development of emergency shelters and transitional and permanent housing to serve the homeless.

### **Housing Programs and FHA Mortgage Insurance Resources**

**Supportive Housing for the Elderly (Section 202) and Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities (Section 811):** These programs provide competitive funding to nonprofit agencies developing housing for the elderly and persons with disabilities. Funds consist of capital grants to assist in the original construction and annual project rental assistance to support operating and maintenance costs to ensure that rents remain affordable to very low-income people.

**Mortgage Insurance for Rental Housing:** Several FHA mortgage insurance programs can be used to facilitate the new construction and substantial rehabilitation of multifamily rental projects. Some FHA programs can be used to refinance and acquire existing multifamily projects not requiring substantial rehabilitation. These programs include:

- Mortgage insurance pursuant to Section 220 may be used to insure loans for multifamily housing projects in designated urban renewal areas, code enforcement areas, and other areas that local governments have designated for revitalization.
- Mortgage insurance pursuant to Section 221(d)(4) and Section 221(d)(3) may be used to insure mortgages used to construct or substantially rehabilitate multifamily rental housing. The former program may be used by for profit sponsors and the latter by nonprofit sponsors.
- Mortgage insurance pursuant to Section 207/223(f) may be used to insure mortgages made for the purpose of acquiring or refinancing existing multifamily rental housing. Projects requiring substantial rehabilitation are not eligible for the program.
- Eligible owners and purchasers utilizing the above programs apply for the FHA insurance through HUD-approved lenders. The programs have differing maximum mortgage limitations and requirements.

**Mortgage Insurance for Condominium Units:** FHA also insures mortgages on condominium units in developments that are proposed or under construction, existing projects, or conversions. Generally, approval of the condominium project must be obtained from an authorized lender.

**Housing Finance Agency Risk Sharing Program:** Under this program, HUD provides credit enhancement on loans underwritten and closed by a state or local housing finance agency (HFA). Loans made pursuant to Section 542(c) are for affordable housing which includes new construction, substantial rehabilitation, elderly housing, and refinancing. Eligible owners and purchasers apply for the program through the appropriate HFA.

## Partnership Assistance (EPA/HUD/DOT) – Implementation

### Federal Transit Administration

1. Apply funding for "green buildings" features on mixed-use affordable transit-oriented development as well as constructing "green infrastructure." This would include additional layer of incentive, or perhaps incentive made exclusively for brownfield redevelopment projects in the district as well as citywide.

**FTA:** *FTA will pay for costs associated with implementing LEED standards or other sustainable building practices in transit facilities.*

*FTA also funds "Joint Development" referring to the development of real property near public transportation. Funds can also be used for land acquisition, site preparation including demolition, fill, utility relocation, grading, landscaping, accessible path to transit (such as landscaping, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, lighting and signage, pedestrian and bicycle improvements and development of certain community health, day care and police substations facilities as part of a transit improvements.*

**Joint development** is a form of transit-oriented development that is often project specific, taking place on, above, or adjacent to transit agency property. It involves the common use of property for transit and non-transit purposes. Proximity to transit has been shown to enhance property values and can increase the opportunity for fostering community and development partnerships. The most common joint development arrangements are ground leases and operation-cost sharing. Most often, joint development occurs at rail stations surrounded by a mix of office, commercial, and institutional land uses. However, examples of public-private joint ventures can be found among bus-only systems as well, normally in the form of joint intermodal transfer and commercial-retail space at central-city bus terminals.

2. Implement streetscape and branding plan
  - a. Develop a "brand" for the area, which would be carried out through entranceway features, signage, streetscape elements, lighting, public art, etc.
  - b. Develop "brand" for public transportation system in the area as well as plan for public transportation amenity improvements (bus stops, incentives, messaging, etc).

#### **FTA**

- *FTA/FHWA planning funds (Iowa City currently utilizes this funding to fund their transportation planning activities)*
- *FTA Section 5307 Funds (Iowa City currently uses these funds for operating assistance but they can be used for transit capital purchases as well)*
- *FTA Section 5309 Bus Discretionary Funds*
- *Other USDOT funding programs (i.e. TIGER) if they are continued.*

3. Funding to construct the transportation system planned for regarding engineering-level plan for new street configurations.
  - a. Engineering-level plan for new bicycle-, pedestrian-, and transit-friendly street configurations - transforming the current auto-oriented streets into the desired mixed-use urban street frontages and extending the street grid to create new mixed-use development sites that are currently industrial use with potential brownfields.

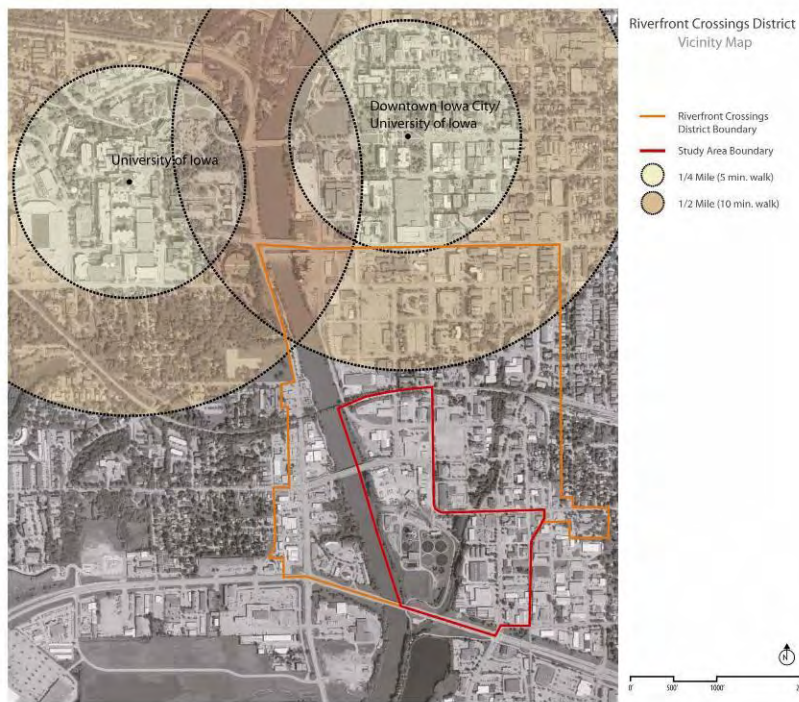
**FTA/FHWA**

- *FTA/FHWA planning funds (currently used to fund transportation planning activities)*
- *Transportation Enhancement (TE)*
- *Surface Transportation Program (STP)*
- *Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program*
- *Transportation, Community, System Preservation Program (TCSP)*
- *Other USDOT funding programs (i.e. TIGER) if they are continued.*

Appendix B:  
Design Workshop: Opening presentation

# Riverfront Crossings District Conceptual Master Plan

October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010





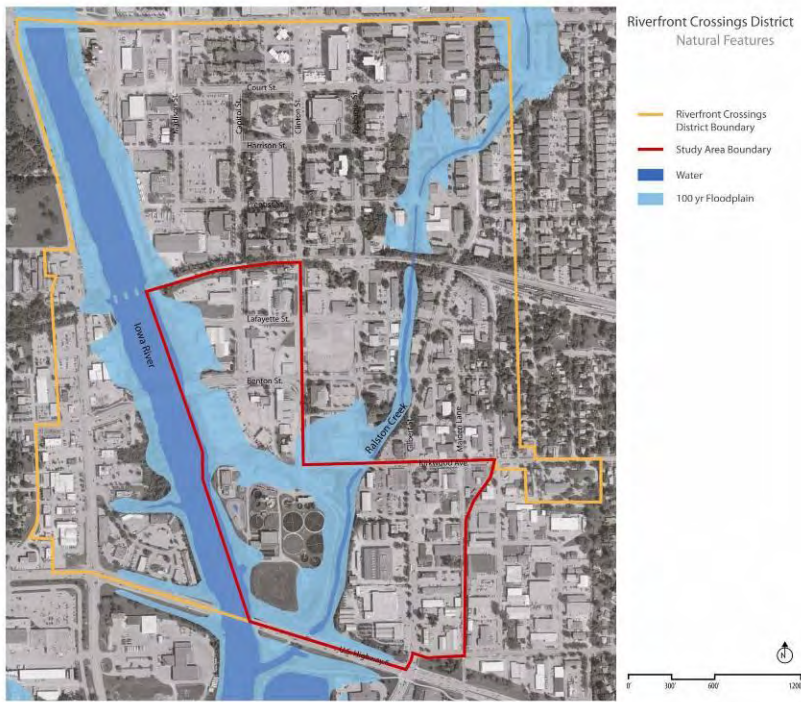
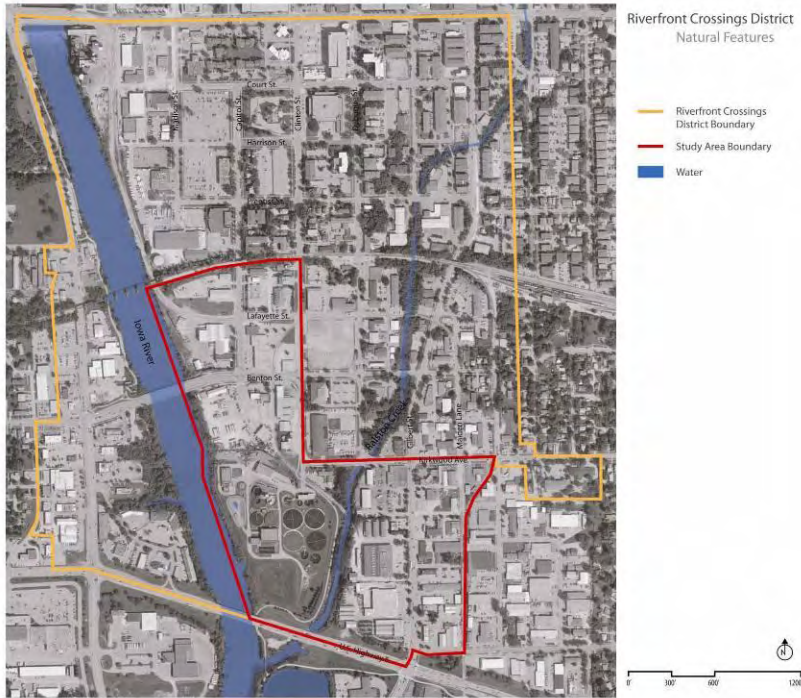
Riverfront Crossings District Site Map

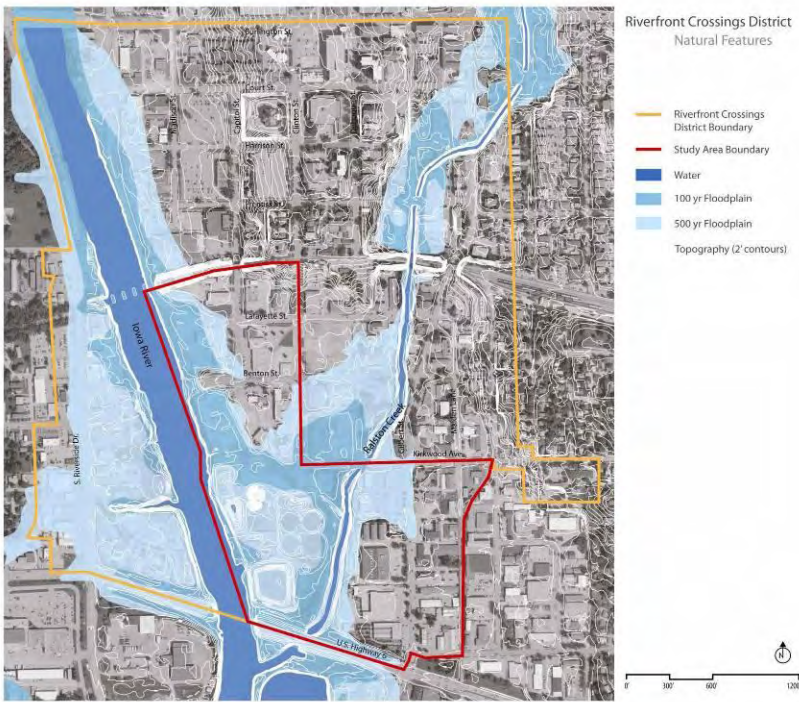
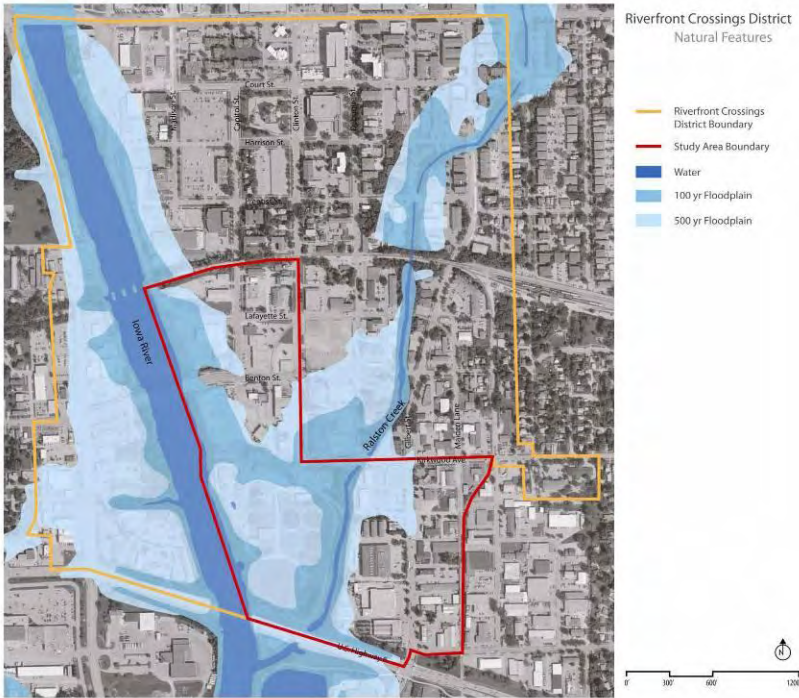
— Riverfront Crossings District Boundary



Riverfront Crossings District Site Map

— Riverfront Crossings District Boundary  
— Study Area Boundary





Appendix C:  
Design Workshop: Final Presentation

Riverfront Crossings District  
Conceptual Master Plan

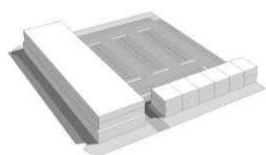
October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010

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Development Framework

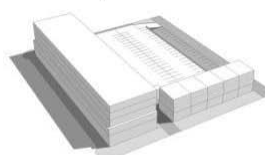
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### Density Framework



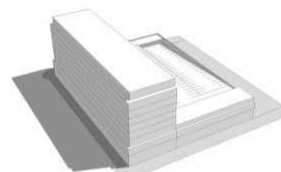
Option 1

- 25K s.f. retail
- 40 residential units
- 6 tuck-under townhomes
- 144 surface parking spaces
- 22.3 d.u./acre



Option 2

- 25K s.f. retail
- 80 residential units
- 5 tuck-under townhomes
- 195 surface/deck parking spaces
- 41.1 d.u./acre



Option 3

- 25K s.f. retail
- 25K s.f. office
- 160 residential units
- 390 garage parking spaces
- 77.4 d.u./acre

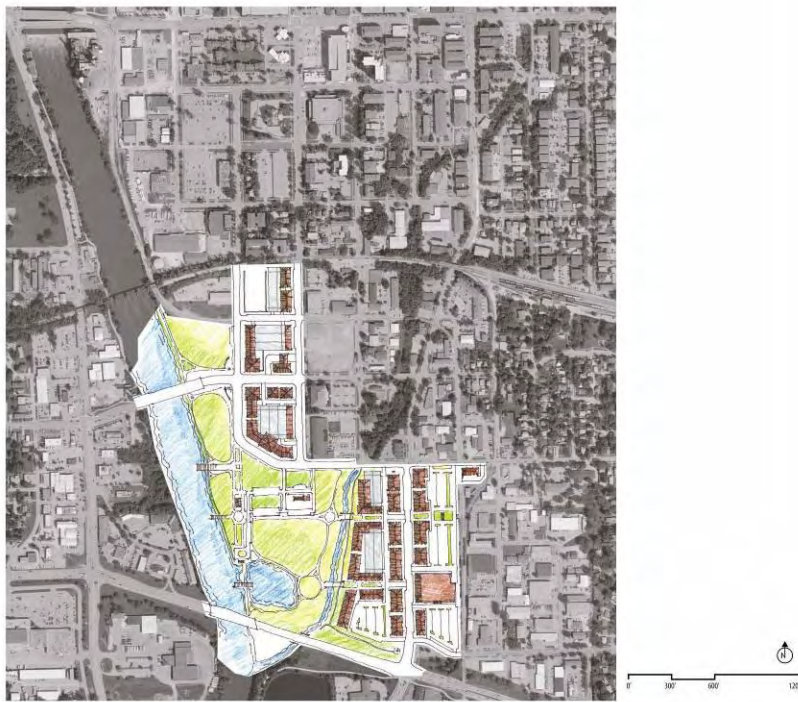
- Combination of all three options
- Heavier density, based on market demand, to the north
- Options for mid-rise at key locations overlooking the park
- Lower density/height along Gilbert, corresponding to airport height restrictions

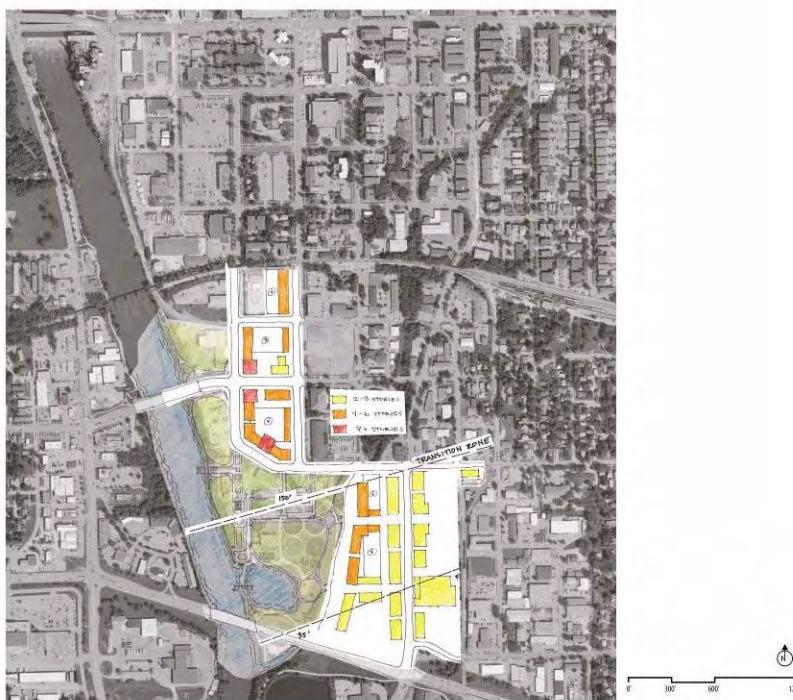
### Traffic Framework



- Two-way concept
- Establish concept plan/density, run numbers to gauge impact on LOS
- Focus on key intersections: Gilbert and Kirkwood, Gilbert and Benton, and Capitol and Benton

# Concept Plan

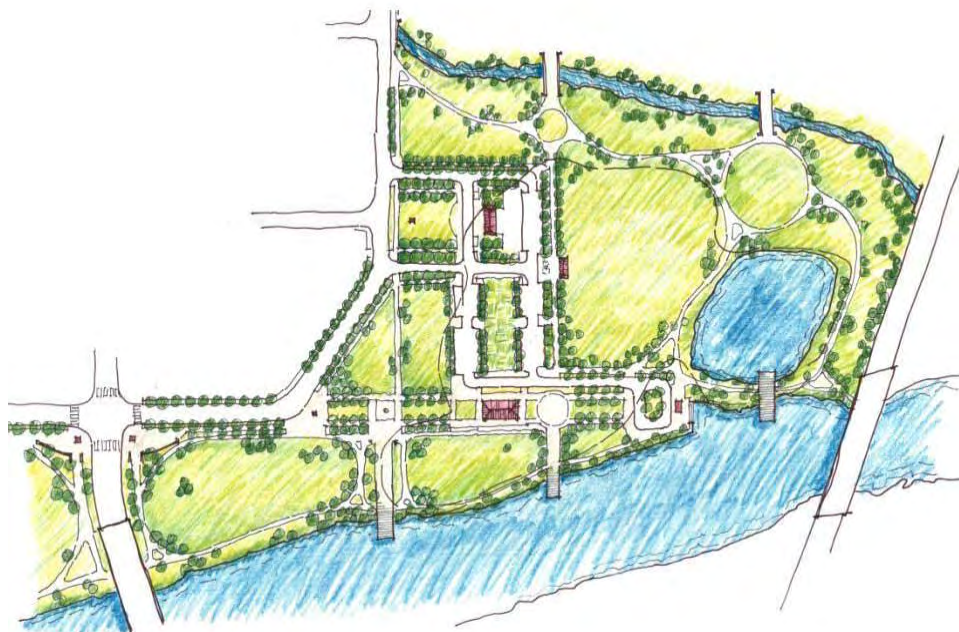




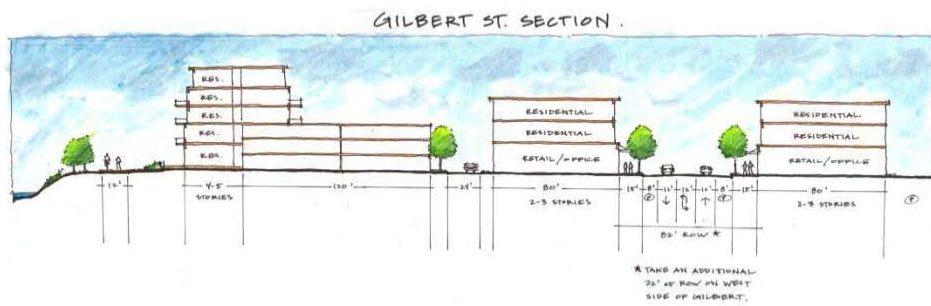
## Development Program

- Commercial (retail/office)  
180,000 sq. ft.
- Residential  
1,180 units
- Parking:  
500 Surface  
1,100 Structure  
1,600 Total

# Park



# Gilbert Street Section

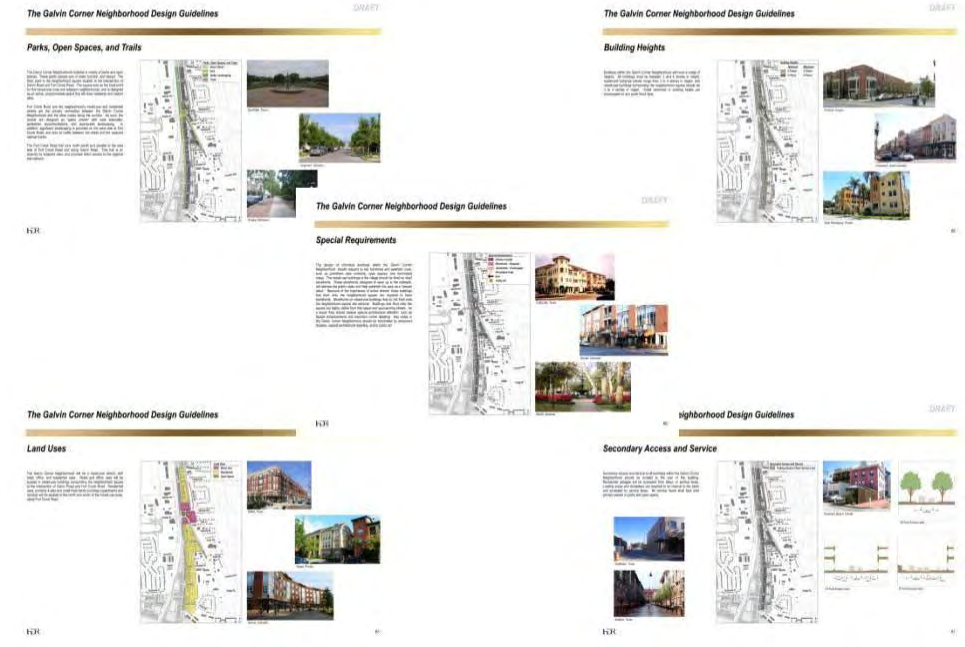


# Product

Plan and Renderings



# Design Guidelines



Next Steps  
and  
Discussion

Appendix D:  
Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area Plan  
Final Presentation

# Riverfront Crossings District Sub-Area

January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011



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## Introduction

Jeff Davidson

Director of Planning and Community Development

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## Partnership for Sustainable Communities Initiative

David Doyle

EPA



Environmental Protection Agency



Department of Housing and Urban Development



Department of Transportation

## Livability Principles

1. Provide more transportation choices.
  2. Promote equitable, affordable housing.
  3. Enhance economic competitiveness.
  4. Support existing communities.
  5. Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment.
  6. Value communities and neighborhoods.
- 

## Brownfields

Clark Henry  
SRA International

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## Brownfields?

- Light industrial and automotive related commercial history within the Riverfront Crossings District potentially creates issues related to contamination on some properties, representing hurdles to redevelopment.



- Guidance includes strategic steps that address contamination in order to realize redevelopment



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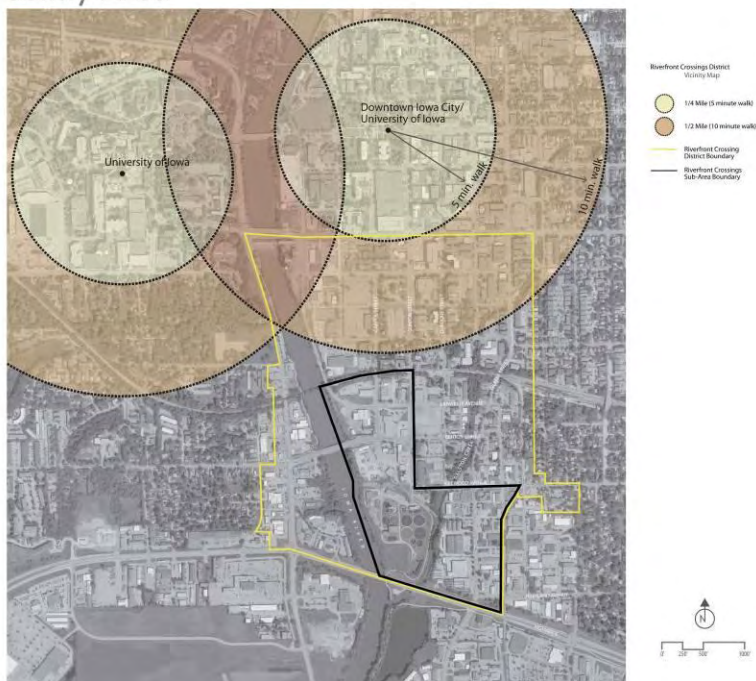
## Framework Plan

Doug Bisson

HDR

# Existing Conditions

Study Area



### Existing Built Form



Study Area looking East

# Floodplain

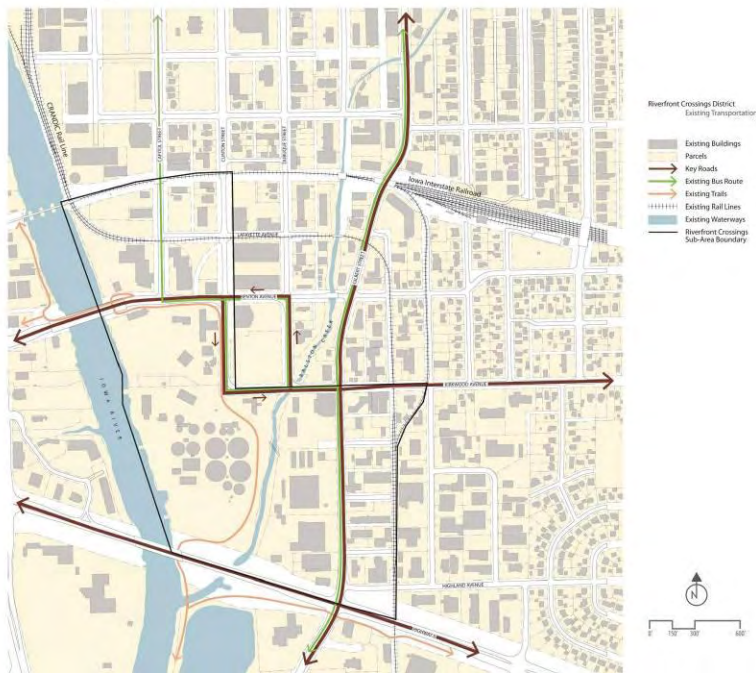


June 2008

### Topography



### Existing Mobility



Existing Conditions Character Photos



Framework Plan

## Goals

- Develop a new mixed-use pedestrian-oriented district
- Create a resilient riverfront park system
- Enhance Ralston Creek to become a community asset
- Develop a multi-modal transportation network
- Create a network of green streets in the district
- Promote sustainable design practices within the district

Framework Plan



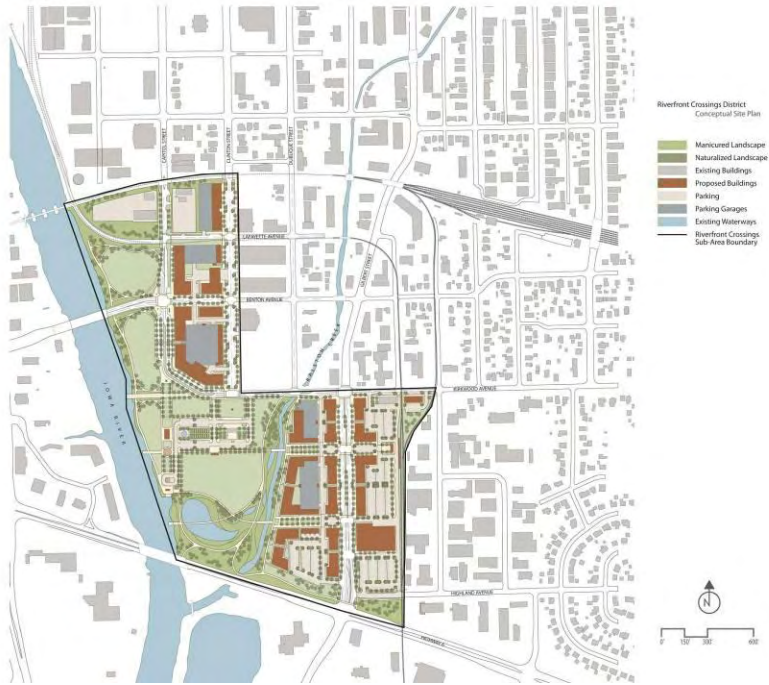
## Riverfront Crossings Character Rendering



### Yield Analysis

- Sub-Area Total
  - 76.80 acres
- Park
  - 25.99 acres
- Built Development
  - 25.77 acres
    - Residential Space
      - 1,072,000 sq.ft.
      - approx. 955 units
    - Maximum Ground Floor Retail/Office Space
      - 222,650 sq.ft.
    - Parking Spaces
      - 2,142 structured or surface spaces
      - 276 on-street spaces

Plan



Plan – The “Park Blocks”



The "Park Blocks" Character Rendering



Plan – The Gilbert Street Corridor



Gilbert Street Corridor Character Rendering



Plan – Riverfront Crossings Park



- Riverfront Crossings District  
Conceptual Site Plan
- Mitigated Landscape
  - Stream/pond/retention
  - Existing Buildings
  - Proposed Buildings
  - Parking
  - Parking Garages
  - Pedestrian Network
  - Riverfront Crossings
  - Site A-100 Boundary

Riverfront Trail Character Rendering



Constructed Wetland Character Rendering

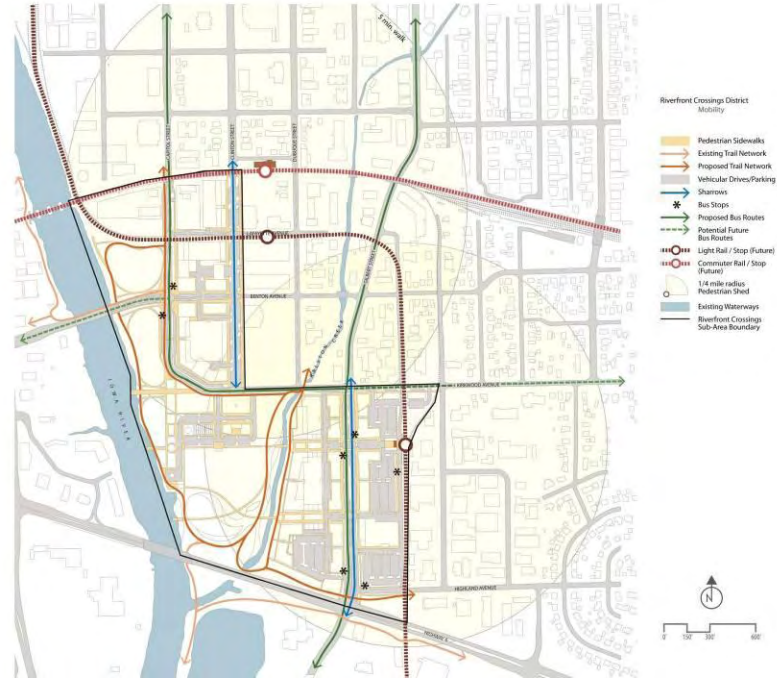


# Mobility

Mobility Character Photos

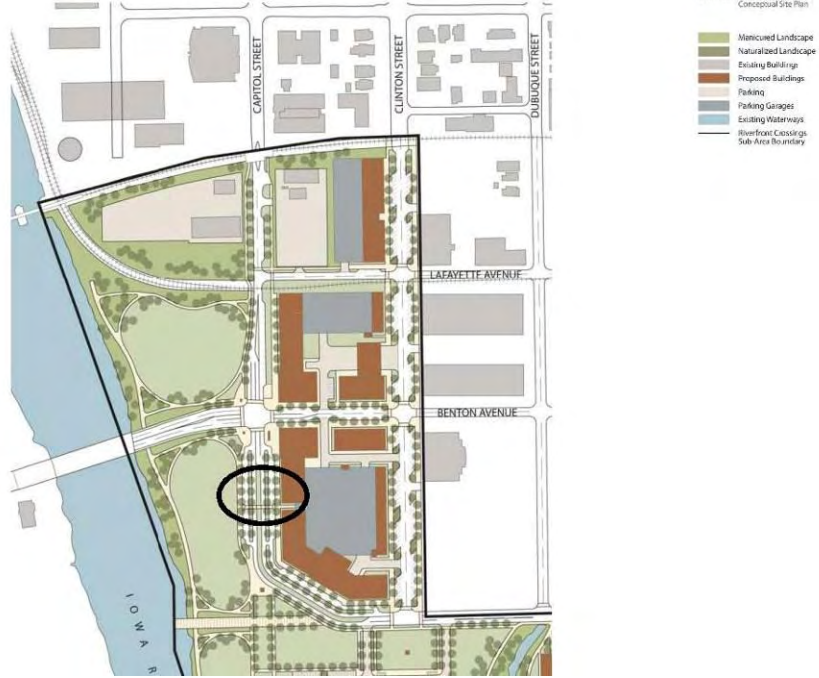


Diagram - Mobility



## Street Sections

### Capitol Kirkwood Connector



### Capitol/Kirkwood Connector



### Clinton Street



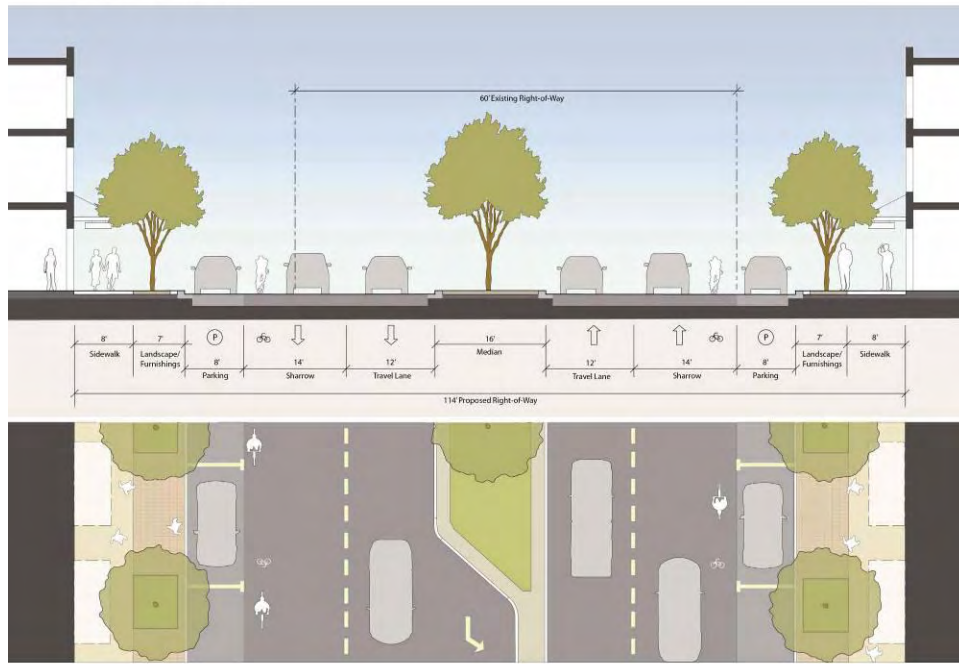
### Clinton Street



### Gilbert Street



### Gilbert Street



1<sup>st</sup> Street



1<sup>st</sup> Street



# Public Realm

Public Realm Character Photos



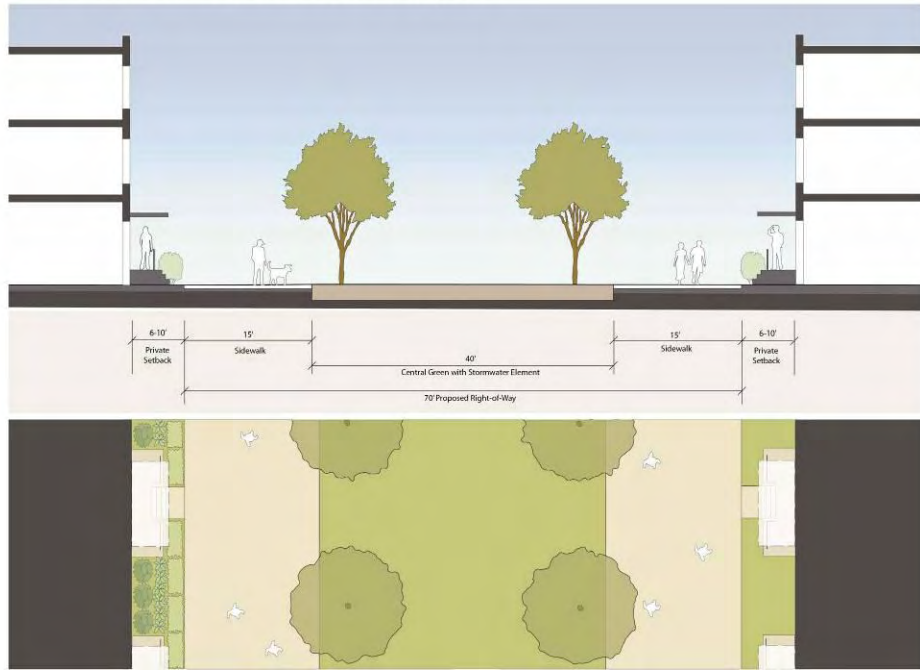
Diagram – Public Realm



Residential Courtyard



### 1<sup>st</sup> Street – Residential Courtyard

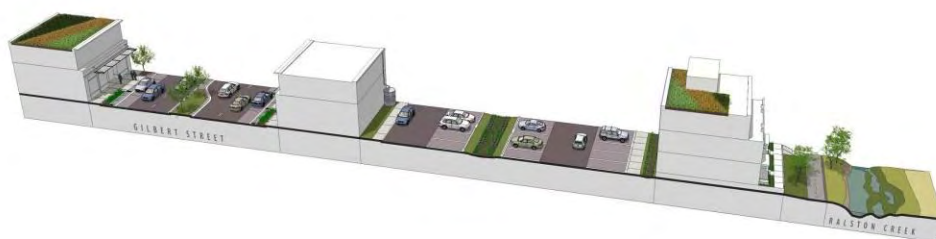


### Residential Courtyard Character Rendering



# Water Resources

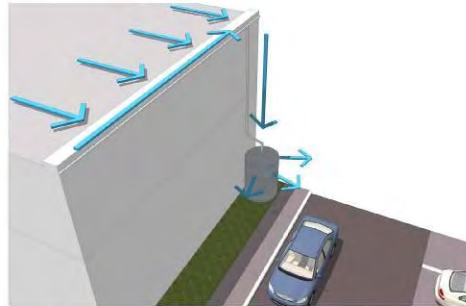
The Riverfront Crossings Transect



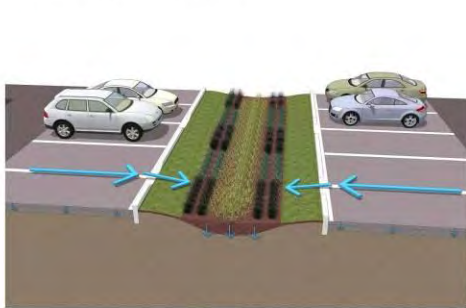
Planters and Pervious Paving



Rainwater Harvesting



Parking Medians



Swales



Green Roofs and Rain Gardens



Creek Restoration and Wetland Habitats



Ralston Creek Restoration

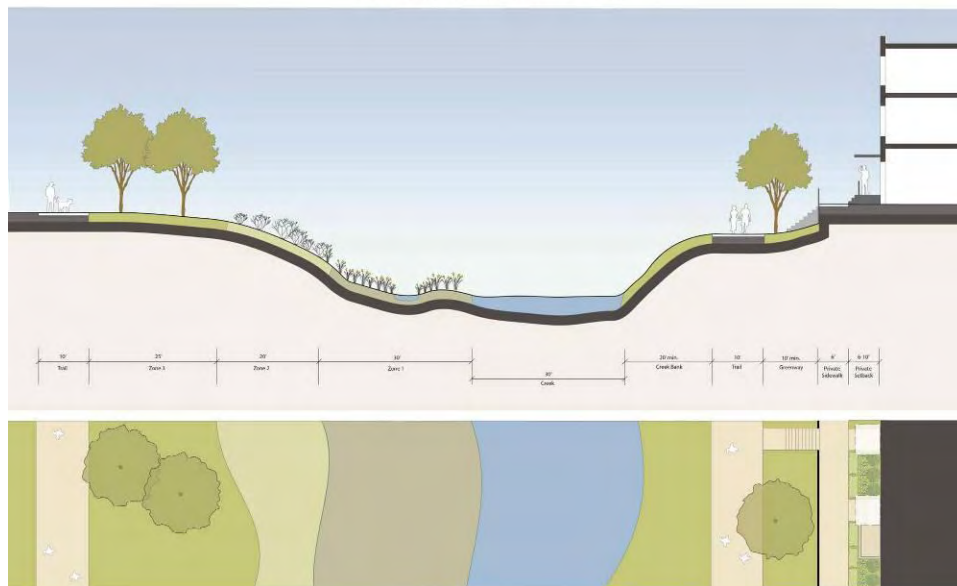
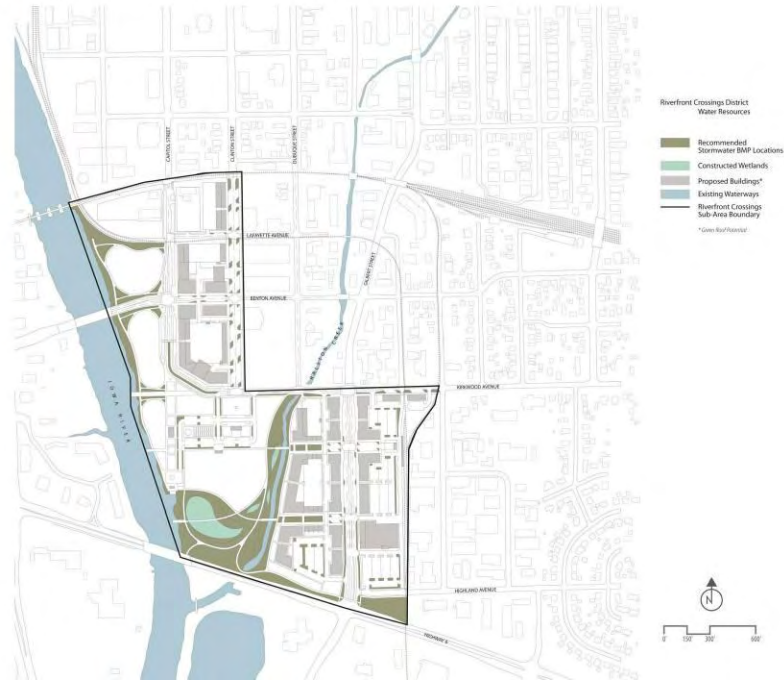


Diagram – Water Resources



## Design Guidelines

1. Land Use
2. Building Height
3. Frontages and Setbacks
4. Parking and Access
5. Special Requirements

# Land Use

Land Use Character Photos



Diagram – Land Use



## Building Height

Building Height Character Photos



Diagram – Airport Height Restrictions

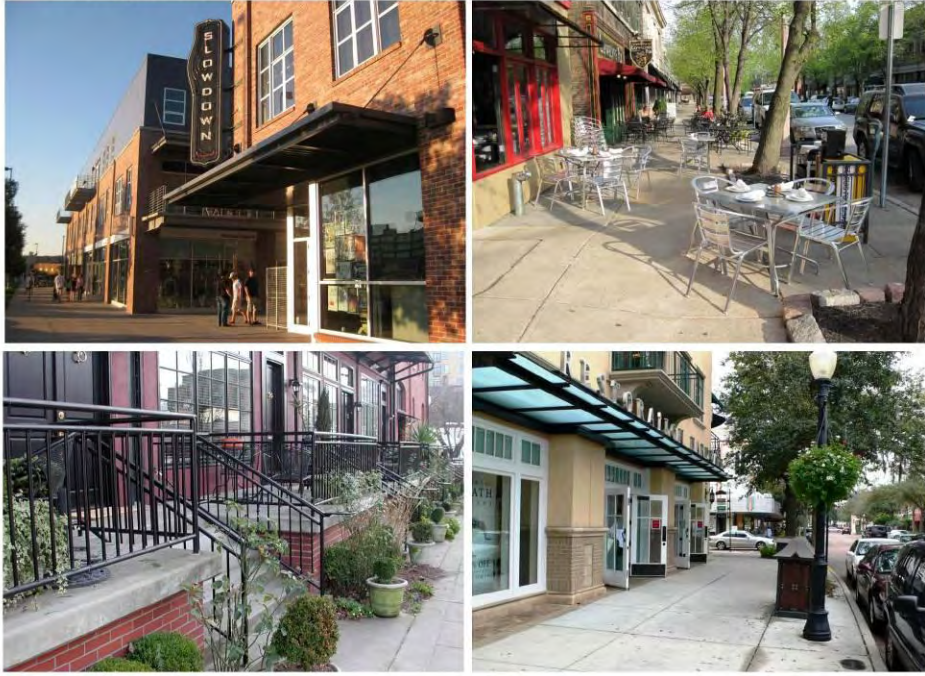


Diagram – Building Height



## Frontages and Setbacks

Frontages and Setbacks Character Photos



Contemporary Façade



Traditional Façade



Storefront Detail

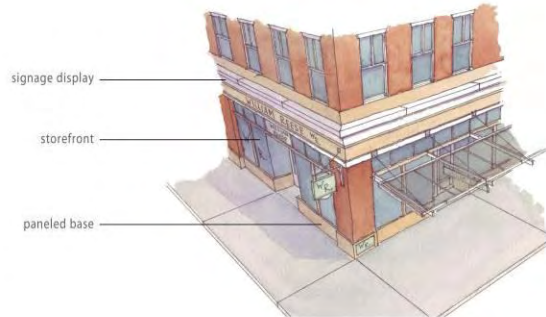
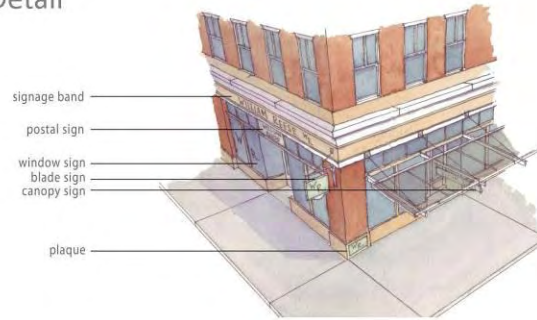
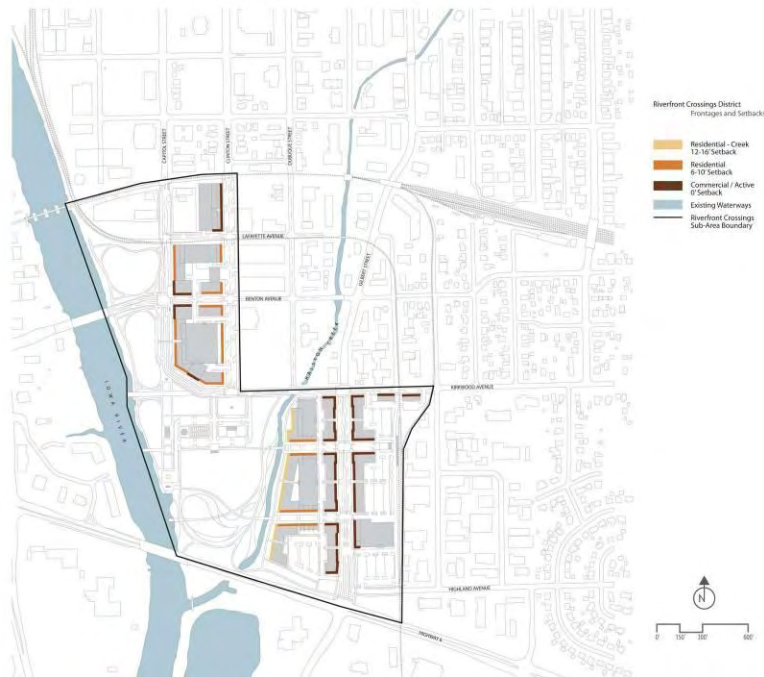


Diagram – Frontages and Setbacks



## Parking and Access

Parking and Access Character Photos



Diagram – Parking and Access

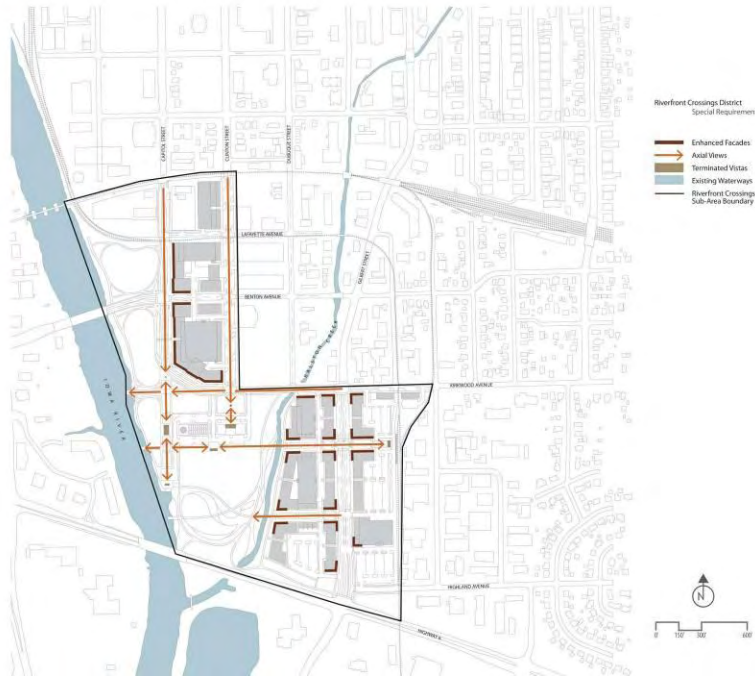


## Special Requirements

Special Requirements Character Photos



Diagram – Special Requirements



- Next Steps
- Open House Discussion



# Appendix E: Public Comments on Framework

## Riverfront Crossings Public Meeting 1.27.11

### Written Comments

#### Summary of Responses:

Generally comments are favorable regarding utilizing the river and creek as assets. Other popular concepts include mixed-use/walkability and park/green space provision. Multiple respondents are concerned about housing diversity, the high amount of surface parking, proposed changes to Gilbert Street, connectivity/competition with downtown, and the effect this will have on existing businesses in the district.

#### Question 1:

##### How did you hear about the Riverfront Crossings District?

Source	Responses
Newspaper	11
E-mail	9
City mailer	4
Friend	3
Neighborhood Association	1
City website	0
Other (Google Alert; Realtor; UI URP department (2); city staff)	5
No Answer	3

#### Question 2:

##### What do you like best about the proposed plan for Riverfront Crossings?

- We want Amtrak passenger rail service!
- I like the way the cross avenues were proposed. Having them be pedestrian routes only to encourage pedestrian access to the park system.
- Making use of the river's natural beauty. Ecology overall.
- Ralston Creek restoration and sustainable stormwater management
- The mixed use buildings. The wetlands and trails.
- Improvement in thought process, lovely drawings
- New park.
- Walkability. Stormwater management. Plan for light rail. Great job!
- Ambitious. Planning ahead for transit, reorienting streets. Pulling buildings to streetfront, parking behind.
- It is cleaning up along the river and (illegible)
- Redeveloping a "tired" underused area. Addresses floodplain issues. Multi-use and multi-modal.
- New urbanism feel. Sustainability elements. Mixed use. Park space and housing fronting it.
- Plans for light rail - let's do it - all the way to North Liberty through the North corridor to Cedar Rapids.
- I am enthusiastic about the proposed trails, wetland creation and increase of green space and mobility options for this area.

- Emphasis on natural green space - de-emphasis on mowing. Emphasis on natural-filtration of hard surface water especially at parking.
- Riverfront park system and water management concepts
- Open space.
- Multi-use (residential/commercial/public). Wetland area.
- Nice balance of building space and park space. Especially like the circulation systems and connectivity. Use of sensitive area and green roof top gardens
- Overall design concept - brilliant!
- Mixed use - retail with residential
- Park areas. Walking areas.
- Pedestrian and bike friendly. Open spaces. Use of rivers. Look forward to this project. Thanks for all your work.
- Nice use of mixed use buildings and walkable community concepts.
- Great, Exciting plan for the future of Iowa City.
- Capitalizing on River. Green areas. Inclusion of townhouse type structures.
- I think the flood has undoubtedly revised thinking about the city, so parkland is important. More importantly, having an overall plan is good. The idea of extending 1st St. is nice - it will give access to the park area.
- Very little. Iowa has winter - ground is frozen for most of four months - water does not perc into ice

### Question 3:

#### Are there concepts or ideas that you disagree with? Why?

- It will close multiple small businesses. That can not afford to move because they will lose their investment in buildings where they are tenants.
- The fact that there is no talk in the plan for folding existing buildings into the fabric. It seems that everything is new.
- No, just curious how the various elements will play out.
- I didn't like the wide streets with 3 medians. Seemed like a greater inconvenience - harder to get to parking spots and to cross, without an equivalent benefit.
- Bikes should never be segregated from traffic, event with "shar"-whatnots. Lacks true diversity. Few would actually use the park.
- Mixed use, public transportation is good.
- Why is Gilbert St being widened with light rail, bike use, walking, etc. all getting rid of the need for cars? Peak Oil also strongly suggests there will be fewer cars on the road in the future.
- How long this will take to implement. Hope this doesn't rely on the train to make this work. Hope this won't turn into a Peninsula neighborhood situation. Price of housing is very important to buyers and developers.
- Design too regimented.
- Concerned about large number parking spaces and increase in traffic. How the heck can people cross Gilbert if it becomes six lanes? Can bike lane be separate? Concerned that it may promote exclusivity (any affordable housing) and not be complementary but competitive to the downtown.

- Think it should have included Gilbert Court area and Gilbert St north to RR viaduct.
- Provide for a recycling drop off center if City Carton is to move out of the area. We need a place on a thoroughfare to drop off our recycling. How long will it take to attract redevelopment money? Will people lose "the vision" if too many years go by?
- I am a little worried that parking lots seem to occupy a lot of space in the plan, I'd like to see fewer lots and increased support of more enviro friendly transportation options. I also hoped to see affordable/mixed income housing, too.
- Branstad derailing the train budget.
- Too much surface parking. If the light rail concept is to ever take off you have to surround it with dense residential, not parking. Ride the L in Chicago for comparison. You won't find massive parking lots nearby the L system tracks or stations.
- How do you keep students from taking up housing for families? How much affordable, worker housing in the mix?
- Enormous construction effort. High speed rail - in doubt. Time frame?
- Not really! Lots of details need to be flushed out but this overall concept is very thoughtful. Connectivity to downtown and the U is important
- Surface parking adjacent to streets. Who wants to walk past boring open space? Hide parking.
- Light rail - is that really necessary - can't buses be used - where else is it going to go! Seems like too much!
- How many years to fill residential and retail? Very ambitious in a market that may take many years to recover.
- Would like to emphasize how important it will be to make major arteries (Gilbert, Burlington) more bike and pedestrian friendly. Don't want to have a pedestrian and bike-friendly enclave that is locked in by awful busy streets.
- Too much parking. Loss of passenger rail possibilities.
- I think great caution should be exercised so it enhances and does not compete with retail in the CBD.
- I think the Gilbert St remake is overly aggressive. I think the Coralville strip works quite well with 5 lanes - the center for turning. Center plantings look pretty by day but can be a hazard at night. I think it would be unnecessary to gauge (sic) out too many of the businesses to widen that section - especially as it cannot be widened further up. I don't like the current plans for the Music School - I think the UI should use the Sabin building.

#### Question 4:

##### Do you have other ideas for the area?

- Do a plan for this environment that accommodates small low income business.
- How could the recycling facility be a part of the design as well as other existing businesses and buildings? What practices could be implemented to improve existing buildings?
- Grants for current businesses to remodel.
- Could be used for off-leash dog park.
- Design more spaces to specifically grow food through edible landscaping
- Change name of District. Riverfront Crossings is very generic. Work with developers to make costs reasonable. Try to keep all maintenance costs to a minimum. Provided an event space (Indoor) at park for weddings, celebrations, etc.

- All landscape be (illegible) so the grass is green and water is from reservoirs underground. That the city maintain all common parks - can't take care of downtown now.
- Extend park planning and concept south of Highway 6 along river. Need to assure U of Iowa doesn't take over area. Opportunity for a destination attraction in park (arboretum)
- Find a place for the UI Art Museum - it would be a magnet use in this area.
- There are many great, locally owned businesses in that area, I'd like to see incentives to make sure they remain there and at land values consistent with their current ability to sustain themselves. As a local, and a planning student, these issues are most important to me.
- Mixed use - that should indicate a wide range of costs (rent) to draw and keep a similar range of incomes. (Not all expensive condos, not all welfare projects)
- Bike-ways (not bike lanes). Remove the bike riders from the auto lanes entirely. Be a leader in the bike movement, not a follower.
- Need more alleys to accommodate street parking on the rear, not the front.
- There needs to be a highly active, dynamic draw or feature to get people here. Outdoor concerts, sculpture park, moving water, winter events, maybe family related activities.
- Maintenance plan for park must include management of volunteer bushes and trees so the view of the river is kept open.
- Big questions - this feels like a new downtown, how are you going to integrate them?
- Personal rapid transit
- To continue the mobility efforts, what are the city's plans to connect downtown to the Riverfront Crossings? How to cross Burlington?
- An ice rink would be great if feasible.
- Perhaps the fountain idea could be incorporated into the lake area. Perhaps the area where there has been a gas station could be an amphitheater - so that grassy areas are definitely safe areas. Hope fully there will be shelters and use of prairie type plants where possible. I assume you will work with Project Green when it is time. The possibility of rail is very much in the balance but I hope we get it. It should be marketed to Coralville, Cedar Rapids and Des Moines as much as possible and there needs to be a parking area for CR people coming down I-380. the parking ramp for the IC station should not dominate the area. I actually find it annoying that Coralville does so much planning as if it is an area unto itself - this should be a joint area.

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US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

