

## **Nomination Category: Implementation**

**Nominee: City of Marshalltown and Marshalltown Central Business District**

### ***Summary of Entry***

A plan is more than a book on a shelf; it is a map into the future. In 2007 the APA-Iowa Chapter awarded the City of Marshalltown and RDG Planning & Design with an Excellence Awards for Best Practice for the Marshalltown City Center Plan. Ten years later the successful implementation of the plan is something our community is extremely proud of. The City Center Plan identified numerous opportunities for new construction and redevelopment within downtown Marshalltown.

What does success look like? In Marshalltown, it is having more than \$80 million in improvements made over a ten year period. It is a thriving downtown. It is new housing and business development. It is public/private partnership.

In a single block \$20 million of improvements has resulted in 81 new or renovated housing units. Iowa's first LEED Gold Certified Library was constructed in 2008. Improvements have been made through public/private partnerships. In 2014 Marshalltown was designated an Iowa Great Places Community in large part because of the community visioning plans conducted during the past decade. As a community we have followed the map into the future and have found success.

## Narration

**Originality and innovation.** Document how your entry presents a visionary approach or innovative concept to address needs. Explain how the use of the planning process in this context broadened accepted planning principles within the context of the situation.

In 2005 City staff and Main Street representatives met with James Levy a leader at the time in housing development. It was with his urging that Marshalltown initiated a downtown visioning process with RDG Planning & Design. Shortly after the plan was completed Mr. Levy passed away but his excitement for Marshalltown and housing served as a launch pad for redevelopment in our community.

Community members serving on the task force completed a survey ranking priorities for implementation. Projects such as the Library construction and redevelopment of the Iowa Wholesale building ranked as critical priorities. Both of these projects have been completed.

In 2007 the community began a visioning process known as IMAGINE. More than 3,000 individual ideas were submitted and then they were narrowed down to seven. Revitalize and Strengthen Downtown as presented in the City Center Plan was one of the top seven final ideas. This process strengthened the communities support for planning. We have continuously looked back at these efforts when making decisions.

The Marshalltown community has embraced the importance of planning for the future and community collaboration has led to many successful projects.

**Effectiveness.** Indicate the level of consistency of this implementation effort since its start. State how your entry addressed the need or problem that prompted its initiation. Be explicit about how the results have made a difference in the lives of the people affected. Convey the level of effectiveness your entry can have over time.

The City Center Plan encouraged positive growth in downtown Marshalltown. More than 100 residents attended the final presentation of the plan and community leaders made a commitment to pursue successful implementation.

One of the most immediate results was the 70% vote of approval for a new library in 2006. The community had been in flux about the location and the plan presented a concept that aided in the campaign for a new library. Completed in 2008 the library was the first LEED Gold Certified Library in the State which has since received the National Medal for Museum and Library Service.

In 2009 we began having discussions with Cohen-Esrey Affordable Partners LLC about redevelopment of the historic Iowa Wholesale building. With a HUD HOPE VI Main Street grant, LIHTC, State and Federal Historic tax credits and other local support, the 28 unit senior housing project is now fully occupied.

In 2010 we began working with CommonBond Communities on the Historic Tallcorn building. This historic renovation embraced 17 funding sources and resulted in 49 incredible housing units. Most importantly it turned a failing building back into something we can be proud of.

**Overcoming challenges.** Address what steps have been taken to build momentum and public support for your entry. Detail any changes, derailments, or improvements throughout the implementation phase. Identify funding challenges or support for this effort. Report any political changes that might affect, for better or worse, the effort's long-term funding.

Implementation of the City Center plan has had challenges. The plan covers a large amount of land and some of the opportunities relied on cooperative owners and financial opportunity. Both of our housing projects had multiple applications to the Iowa Finance Authority for Low-Income Housing Tax Credits before receiving an award. They both worked hard to navigate the historical preservation requirements while improving building efficiency. Today they are fully occupied amazing examples of historic renovation.

Thankfully support of the plan has continued to be positive. The City Council has referred to the plan in their annual goal setting sessions and supported multiple projects. The Marshalltown Central Business District has continued to operate with the plan as a guide for development. The inclusion of downtown development as an IMAGINE priority kept the opportunities at the forefront of our revitalization efforts.

After ten years of discussion, review, negotiations and volunteer efforts a small component of the plan has recently gained momentum. Pedestrian alleys leading visitors from rear parking areas to Main Street was identified as an opportunity. This summer a prominent alley has transformed into a welcoming passageway. Despite challenges we have realized success.

**Participation.** Explain how various public interests were involved and the extent of that involvement. Describe how your entry obtained public and private support. Clarify the role, significance, and participation of planners.

Plan development included almost forty people from various agencies. Members of the City Council, Plan Zoning Commission, Central Business District and City all participated in the project. A fourteen member task force was actively engaged and had regular meetings about

the plan. Representatives on the task force were from local industries, small businesses, the education system, the Chamber, local foundations and property owners. Several public participation opportunities were held and well attended. The Housing & Community Development Director and City Planner took the lead in organizing meetings, encouraging public participation and overall coordination of the project. RDG representatives facilitated the discussions, led community meetings and prepared the plan with guidance from the community. The community involvement in the planning process was the leading reason for continued support and implementation.

As we moved into the implementation phase of the plan it was critical to continue to engage participants in the process. As projects developed leaders supported the work since they actively participated in the plan. Funding was provided to CommonBond Communities and Cohen-Esrey Affordable Partners by several local agencies that also supported the initial plan. City planning staff was active in the development process by building connections and securing funds.

***Achievement.*** Describe how the longevity of this effort has increased the community's appetite for planning and the pursuit of similar initiatives. Clarify the extent that this effort's sustained success has been achieved beyond its general audience.

The successful implementation of the City Center Plan has proven to the Marshalltown community that a plan is much more than a document on a shelf if you actively refer to it and use it as a development tool. Marshalltown went through a large visioning process known as IMAGINE in 2007. This was an effort that engaged residents on all levels to dream big, if Marshalltown could have or do anything what would that look like? Planning efforts spun off of IMAGINE and plans were completed for 13<sup>th</sup> Street district and the Linn Creek area. Exceptional progress has been made in the 13<sup>th</sup> Street District.

Upcoming projects include investigating the feasibility of redevelopment of some key community buildings including the Veterans Memorial Coliseum located downtown. Marshalltown Central Business District Director Jenny Etter stated, "Since 2002 we have had over 27 million in private dollars invested in renovation projects in the downtown district. And, over 20 buildings have been able to acquire local incentive grant awards for façade renovation and building code upgrades. These projects represent a huge source of taxable revenue in the downtown, improve the district immeasurably and provide incentive for future renovation projects."





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[amorehead@preservingus.org](mailto:amorehead@preservingus.org)

July 15, 2016

APA – Iowa Chapter Awards Judge  
American Planning Association

RE: Implementation Award Nomination  
Letter of Support

Dear Iowa Chapter Awards Judge:

It is with great pleasure to write this letter of support for the City of Marshalltown's nomination for the American Planning Association – Iowa Chapter Implementation Award.

Our vision, mission and efforts are to preserve historic structures while providing affordable housing for low to moderate income residents. The collaboration with the City of Marshalltown in meeting the demand for affordable housing for seniors has been an asset to the residents, as well as the revitalization of the Marshalltown Historic Downtown.

Michelle Spohnheimer and the City of Marshalltown have been exceptional in creating a synergy of economic development that is inviting for developers and organizations like Preserving US. The motivation to create incentives and partnerships that welcome community and economic growth is essential in competing with the larger surrounding communities. The strategic planning and team of professionals with the City of Marshalltown have done that well. Their expertise in contributing to ideas that solidify positive development have been immeasurable.

Preserving US, Inc., along with Cohen-Esrey Affordable Partners, LLC developed the Marshalltown Senior Residence community. Marshalltown Senior Residences was known to many residents as the Wholesale Plumbing Supply Building. This warehouse was constructed in 1898 and was known as the Letts-Fletcher Building during that time, which served as a wholesale grocery distributor for surrounding counties. This building holds historic significance as a contributing source to the Marshalltown Historic District with the National Register of Historic Places. This historic building now serves as a 28-unit affordable housing community for seniors 55 years and older. This community consists of one and two bedroom apartment units located on the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> & Main.

This project would not be possible without the partnership of the City of Marshalltown. This project, with a development cost of over \$5,000,000, was uniquely and successfully financed with several funding sources that were initiated through the City of Marshalltown. The Department of Housing and Urban Development granted the City of Marshalltown \$1,000,000 towards the

July 15, 2016

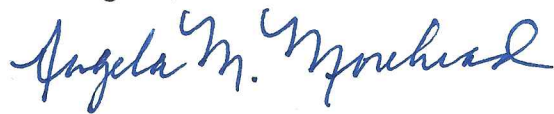
Page 2

development of Marshalltown Senior Residences. This source of funding was essential to the completion of the project. Their commitment to the Marshalltown seniors was also shown by providing tax incentives to insure that the project would be successful. The project was able to utilize Low-Income Housing Tax Credits Tax Exempt Bonds, Historic Tax Credits and private funds.

Preserving US has served communities throughout the United States, developing communities that serve low to moderate income families. The ease of working with the City of Marshalltown and the flexibility and innovation of ideas and creative planning in bringing development to their community was refreshing. Their ability to forecast growth has proved to be profitable not only to the senior residents, but to their city. The Marshalltown Senior Residences community was 100% occupied 3 months after opening to the public. It remains 100% occupied to date.

As a partner to the City of Marshalltown, we asked that you strongly consider the City of Marshalltown as a recipient of the APA Implementation Award. The City of Marshalltown is a front running as a thriving community committed to serving its all of its residents.

Best regards,



Angela M. Morehead  
Executive Director





July 18, 2016

To: American Planning Association - Iowa Chapter Awards Judge  
Re: Letter of Support for Implementation of the Marshalltown City Center Plan

CommonBond Communities is pleased to provide a letter of strong support for the City of Marshalltown's implementation of their City Center Plan. The City's dedication to this vision of a revitalized downtown Main Street community was the catalyst for all of the redevelopment seen today, including CommonBond's \$11+ million mixed-use redevelopment of the historic Tallcorn Hotel.

From the beginning, the City identified the Tallcorn building as one of its highest priorities and proactively supported its redevelopment. Over time, the property had deteriorated and was widely viewed as a serious problem property. Ultimately, with considerable new city funding and support, CommonBond's redevelopment was able to achieve complete redesign of the units into 49 affordable one and two bedroom units, with comprehensive common area amenities. The Tallcorn is now a vibrant mixed-income, service-enriched, and amenity-rich housing community. Residential amenities include a computer lab, community room, fitness center, library, craft room and central laundry. To the rear of the Tallcorn building, a small parcel of park land that was donated by the City now has a new playground and seating area that is shared by Tallcorn residents and the greater community.

In addition to producing high-quality affordable housing, the City supported CommonBond's comprehensive on-site resident service programming to assist youth to succeed academically, support adults in achieving greater economic self-sufficiency, and help residents with disabilities maintain independence. Several of Tallcorn's units are set aside for homeless and special needs households.

The redevelopment of the Tallcorn also included restoration of the first floor commercial spaces. The first floor of The Tallcorn has now been returned to its historic configuration, including recreation of the original doors, windows and canopy entrance. Tenants have moved in to the storefront commercial areas, and the completely restored historic ballroom is once again hosting festive community events.

The City's plan anticipated that replacing a truly blighted problem property with high quality, stable and safe housing would have a profound effect on the vitality of Marshalltown's downtown community. The City's extensive implementation efforts ensured the successful outcomes achieved to date.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Lee  
Associate Vice President

STABLE HOMES. STRONG FUTURES. VIBRANT COMMUNITIES.

*An equal opportunity & affirmative action organization | [commonbond.org](http://commonbond.org)*



July 28, 2016

Re: American Planning Association - Iowa Chapter for Implementation of the  
Marshalltown City Center Plan

APA-Iowa Chapter Awards Judge:

It is with enthusiasm and appreciation from which I pen this letter of support. The downtown plan that was completed by RDG in 2006 has had a tremendous impact on our community. Reflection of the past ten years provides testimony to the success of the implementation success.

Imagine 2011 followed upon the heels of the 2006 plan. This effort incorporated input from the entire community which identified 7 big ideas to be implemented in Marshalltown by 2011. Hundreds of individuals provided input which resulted in 3,000 ideas that were narrowed down to 21 top areas of interest. This was put to a community wide vote which resulted in 7 big ideas for our community, one of which was to revitalize and strengthen the downtown. The specific areas identified in the City Center Plan were the basis of the work set forth for our community. The 2006 Marshalltown City Center Plan was the foundation of which significant progress has been accomplished. This includes well over \$50 million in improvements. Progress can be readily seen though the new Marshalltown Public Library, renovation of the historic Orpheum Theater, improvements to many Main Street business façades, development of the Emerson Technology Center along with enhanced south entrance to downtown, public improvements of curbs gutters, sidewalks, lighting and parking and the renovation of the Tallcorn and Iowa Wholesale Supply buildings.

Further implementation of the City Center Plan is noticed as improvements continue throughout the downtown district. Through the intentional focus of the plan, others have been inspired to take on further enhancements such as the artistic alley way and parking access for the downtown.

Given the depth of success and resulting growth from the 2006 plan, I would ask that you give serious consideration to Marshalltown for this prestigious and well deserved award.

Thank you,



Karn Gregoire, Executive Director  
Martha-Ellen Tye Foundation



**Marshalltown Regional Partnership**

709 South Center Street, Marshalltown, IA 50158

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August 8, 2016

Dear APA-Iowa Chapter Awards Judge,

Thank you for the opportunity to explain why the Marshalltown Regional Partnership believes the City of Marshalltown should be considered for an Implementation Award from the American Planning Association for the Marshalltown City Center Plan.

The Marshalltown Regional Partnership is made up of the Marshalltown Chamber of Commerce, Marshall Economic Development, and the Marshalltown Convention and Visitors Bureau. The Marshalltown Regional Partnership has partnered with the City of Marshalltown on various opportunities brought about through the Marshalltown City Center Plan.

Marshalltown has made significant strides in redeveloping a number of buildings in our City Center District. As a result of these redevelopments Marshalltown has gained some valuable housing options in our City Center District. Both the Tallcorn Towers and the Iowa Wholesale Building projects have been redeveloped and added 77 new housing units. Marshall Economic Development worked very closely with the City and Marshalltown Central Business District on these projects. The added vibrancy of Marshalltown's City Center has provided more positive opportunities for the Marshalltown Chamber of Commerce and the Marshalltown Convention and Visitors Bureau to attract, create and retain various businesses, including ethnically diverse businesses, and community activities to the City Center District. Latino, Asian, Burmese, and Vietnamese restaurants, and grocery stores now call Marshalltown's City Center home. These new ethnically diverse businesses provide for a more diverse Chamber of Commerce Membership, which is an asset for all of Marshalltown. Marshalltown's City Center also values our Arts Community; and has become home to the Marshalltown Arts Walk and the Marshalltown City Center Artistic Door Designs.

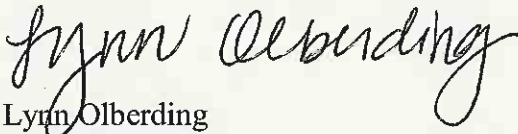
APA-Iowa Chapter Awards Judge  
August 8, 2016  
Page 2

With the help of many, Marshalltown's City Center has truly come to life and the Marshalltown City Center Plan has been the impetus for many of these improvements. The Marshalltown Regional Partnership and our Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development, and CVB organizations are proud to have collaborated with the City of Marshalltown on our positive developments and momentum!

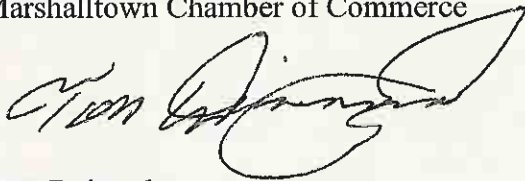
Regards,



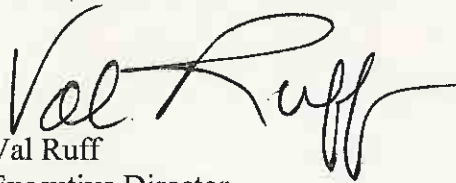
David Barajas, Jr.  
CEO  
Marshalltown Regional Partnership



Lynn Olberding  
Executive Director  
Marshalltown Chamber of Commerce



Tom Deimerly  
Executive Director  
Marshall Economic Development



Val Ruff  
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Marshalltown Convention & Visitors Bureau



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August 10, 2016

Dear APA-Iowa Chapter Awards Judge,

On behalf the Marshalltown Public Library, I am enthusiastically supporting the City of Marshalltown's submission for the Implementation Award.

In 2006, our community completed a downtown visioning plan titled the City Center Plan. A key component of this plan included the construction of a new Library to replace our 1902 Carnegie Library. At the time a number of locations were being considered, when a local company offered a generous donation of property. The City Center Plan was instrumental in promoting public support for the new library.

In fall of 2006, the voters of Marshalltown overwhelming said "Yes" to a \$5 million dollar bond measure and in December of 2008 the new library opened. This \$9.7 million dollar library was the first newly constructed Gold LEED public library in the state of Iowa. Since our grand opening the library has seen a daily average of 800 visitors.

In 2013, the Marshalltown Public Library was awarded the National Medal for Library Service by the Institute for Museum and Library Services. The nation's highest honor is conferred on museums and libraries for service to the community. The National Medal celebrates institutions that make a difference for individuals, families and communities. Medal winners were selected from nationwide nominations of institutions that demonstrate innovative approaches to public service, exceeding the expected levels of community outreach. The National Medal was presented to the Marshalltown Public Library in a White House ceremony on May 8, 2013. We are the only public library in Iowa that has received the National Medal.

The Marshalltown Public has established itself as a key community resource. Each day the library makes a significant and exceptional contribution to the community with a fulsome range of programs and services that respond to community need for education, recreation and cultural awareness. With significant demographic changes in our town, the library has been at the forefront of welcoming new residents. In an era of such significant change, the library has shown an extraordinary track record for developing innovative approaches to public services that contribute to the capacity of Marshalltown and its residents to learn, adapt and flourish.

In choosing to keep the library in the city's downtown, it has helped to spur redevelopment and confidence at the core of our community. Since the library was approved for funding, it is my understanding that over \$50 million dollars worth of additional projects have been completed in Marshalltown. In addition to being an economic engine, the library is a highly prized amenity that helps attract young families to our community. It is my firm belief that the strong City Center Plan was vital in the library's success. I highly support this nomination for the implementation award.

Sincerely yours,



Sarah Rosenblum  
Library Director  
Marshalltown Public Library  
105 West Boone St.  
Marshalltown, IA 50158





This is a graphic we use as a handout to illustrate the impact planning has on the community. The return on investment is beyond impressive.

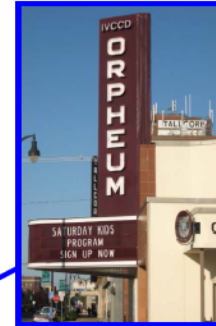
Historic Carnegie Building  
Renovation Completed  
August 2010 - \$1.4 million



Historic Tallcorn LIHTC project  
(49 units) \$10.1 million  
project. Opened April 1, 2014



Historic Orpheum Theater  
Redevelopment  
completed June  
2010 - \$3.5 million



Façade/Code update projects in Main  
Street Area - \$269,966 Local TIF plus  
\$4,147,800 private investment

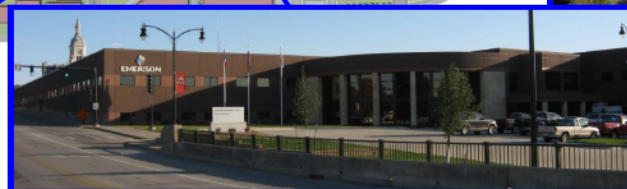


Marshalltown Senior  
Residences – Iowa  
Wholesale Building  
renovation HOPE VI  
Project - \$6.3 million

Marshalltown Medical Surgical Center  
Cardio. Cath. Lab - \$6.5 million



Emerson Process  
Management/Fisher Controls  
Technology Development Center –  
\$40 million

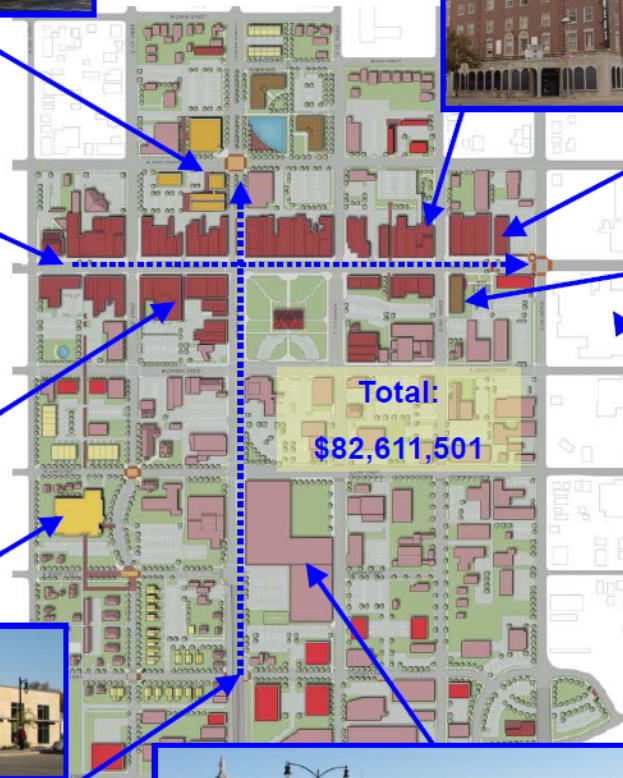


Infrastructure improvements including  
Streetscape, curbs, sidewalks, lighting and  
parking lot improvements - \$893,735

New Public Library completed in December  
2008 - \$9.5 million



Pedestrian  
alley project  
underway





The first pedestrian alley is almost complete with planters, benches, signage and public art. This space is now inviting to visitors.







The Historic Carnegie Library building was renovated upon completion of the new library and now houses City administrative services.



The Historic Letts-Fletcher building recently known as Iowa Wholesale was converted from warehouse/retail space into 28 senior residences.







The Historic Tallcorn building includes 49 renovated affordable housing units, two commercial spaces and a ballroom. Exterior space includes a transformed pocket park.



The Marshalltown Public Library was the first LEED Gold certified library in Iowa. Remaining downtown was essential to the revitalization efforts.





The Historic Kibbey building is under construction. It will include 4 new residences and commercial space. Adjacent is a future outdoor space including artwork.





The Historic Veterans Memorial Coliseum is a building in need of renovation. Future plans include a feasibility study to determine future action.





New building owners are undertaking extensive projects to renovate and reuse buildings which have deteriorated over the years.





## Potential



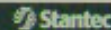
## Existing



Area 3  
Downtown  
Issues:

- Fast of the info - a unique neighbourhood assessment tool
- Identify weaknesses, efforts, difficult to communicate and some incorrect chart like feedback given
- Stakeholder meeting - focus community with strategic and case designation
- Local government meeting, interviews

Thank you  
for your  
kindness



## Draft Land Use Plan for Area 8 – Downtown



### ***Supplemental Materials***

A complete copy of the Marshalltown City Center Plan is available on the City of Marshalltown website.

[http://ci.marshalltown.ia.us/static/departments/housing/zoning\\_administration.php](http://ci.marshalltown.ia.us/static/departments/housing/zoning_administration.php)