

Imagine

7 big ideas by 2011

PROGRESS REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

What a great experience we've had since late 2006 when the *Imagine* process began at a public forum focused on Marshalltown's future. This grass-roots visioning process was a shot in the arm for the community, a positive focus aimed squarely at giving all of us the power to create the future. From that time and through the early weeks of 2007 hundreds of people — young and old, newcomers and those who were born here, grade school students and grandparents — put on their thinking caps and came up with 3,000 ideas to make Marshalltown a better place to live, work and raise a family.

Following the dictates of a similar process implemented in Dubuque and readily shared with us by leaders there, the Imagine Steering Committee then enlisted a broad-based 15 member selection committee to winnow the 3,000 ideas down to 100 — a task that was accomplished in four months.

In April 2007, the community weighed in on the list of 100 and voted for their favorite 21 ideas, many in public meetings. Three hundred and fifty also voted online. With those 21 ideas on their plate, the final task of the Selection Committee was set: Choose the final seven big ideas by July 7, 2007. Within two weeks of the public announcement, committees were formed around each idea and the work began. The Imagine Steering Committee is pleased to provide this progress report on the work, share with you some lessons learned and talk about next steps.

Thank you,

The *Imagine* Steering Committee



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Imagine

SO MUCH MORE THAN 7 BIG IDEAS!

■ **Process Matters!** Imagine 2011 was not as much about the accomplishment of the seven ideas in all their detail, but more about trusting that the community would ultimately decide where Marshalltown was headed. Today, as Imagine approaches its five-year anniversary, we are witnessing the positive impact of believing in ourselves. Our community can set its own course.

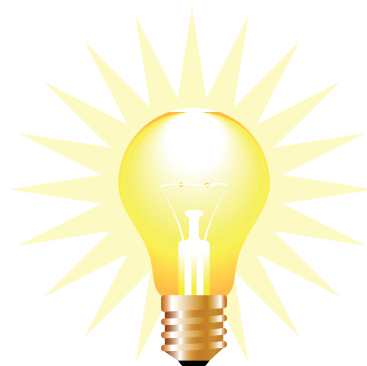
■ **The Journey is More Important Than the Destination!** Imagine 2011 taught us that our goals are perpetual and evolve and change with the needs of our community. Just as the Imagine grassroots visioning plan evolved from the five-year strategic plan developed by community leaders in 2002, Imagine too will move onward and evolve into some yet unknown next step in making Marshalltown an ever better place to live, work and raise a family.

■ **Imitation is the Sincerest Form of Flattery!** To tell the truth, the Imagine Steering Committee stole this wonderful idea lock, stock and barrel with the enthusiastic support and invaluable counsel of our fellow Iowans in Dubuque. In fact, the Imagine 2011 process has been recognized, honored and emulated by cities in Iowa, the Midwest and the nation.

■ **Let's Get Excited!** Imagine 2011 energized, excited and ignited a community hungry to get involved by individually sharing their big ideas. And what a response — 3,000 ideas — all of them directed at improving our community.

■ **Many Organizations Deserve Credit!** A number of groups picked up the Imagine banner and garnered additional public support for work that was on their plate. A couple of examples: Imagine 2011 reinforced the community's support for the City Center Plan being rigorously implemented by the City of Marshalltown and the Marshalltown Central Business District. Also, the Marshalltown Community School District has realized a number of the infrastructure projects included in the Imagine idea focused on the public schools as has the City's Park & Recreation Department.

■ **Dream Big and Big Things Happen!** The seven ideas were all huge and creative goals, but we came to realize that most of them could be segmented into manageable bites and addressed one by one. Great things can happen when you dare to dream big!



1. Create a Pedestrian and Bicycling Friendly Community

Make walking/bicycling safe and accessible by building sidewalks; implementing the city's bike route plan; appropriately placing bike racks; building a pedestrian railroad overpass at South 2nd Street; expanding and improving the trail system throughout the city/county by creating mountain bike paths and trails, and by connecting the existing path from the Grimes Farm to the Melbourne bike path.



2011 AND BEYOND

TODAY

- Established city bike routes with help of the city and published a community bike route map.
- Bike routes marked with 300 signs purchased with private dollars.
- Bike lanes established and painted on East and West Main Street, South 6th Street, Westwood and Campbell Drive.
- \$1.4 million raised to extend Linn Creek Trail from Grimes Farm to Melbourne. Work in progress.
- Funded and constructed locally, bike racks located downtown with strong business interest.
- Federal Safe Routes to School grant secured. Will pay for some sidewalks to promote walking to school as well as curriculum additions.
- Worked with the City to set aside \$50,000 a year for sidewalk extensions/ improvements in targeted areas over a two year period.
- Bike rodeo co-sponsored with Police Department at all six elementary schools to promote bike safety.
- Established a Community Y Day Camp bicycle safety program.
- Worked with Park & Recreation to develop new trailhead at Riverview Park.



FUTURE

Short-term, the Iowa Valley Bicycle Club plans to organize Saturday morning rides for riders of all abilities. Long-term, the group intends to gather public input and data on bicycling and walking so that in partnership with the city and the county, they can develop multi-year plans around these activities for Marshalltown and Marshall County.



Mary Wertzberger and Terry Briggs, Co-Chairs



2. Develop Linn Creek Riverwalk

Transform the Linn Creek banks into a gathering place for casual and planned events that feature a theme-based museum with interactive displays, restaurants, band shell/amphitheater, annual jazz/film festival, Friday After Five events, indoor/outdoor sports complex and a connecting footbridge to an improved Tye Theater with a trolley stop to downtown.

2011 AND BEYOND

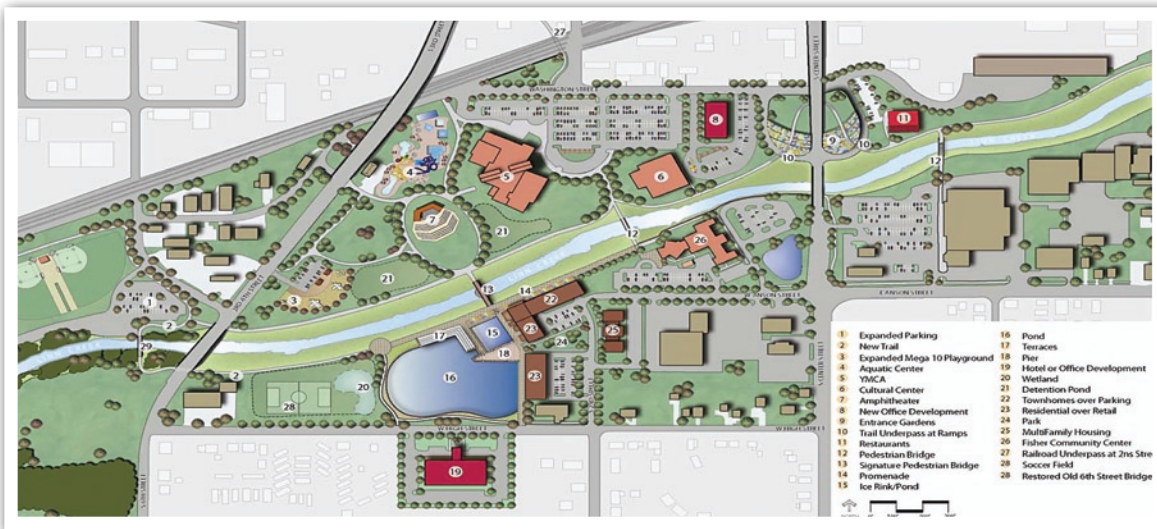
TODAY

- Raised \$35,000 for a riverwalk concept plan by RDG Associates.
- Business owners in proposed area positive after hearing plans.
- Gathered public input on three potential RDG concepts.
- Final concept includes pedestrian bridges, public art, retail stores, an amphitheater, etc.
- City open to TIF district possibilities to help fund projects.

FUTURE

Though the economic downturn in recent years put a temporary damper on some funding possibilities, this big idea is poised for the next steps in development.

Mike Miller and Carol Hibbs, Co-Chairs



3. Develop Riverview Park and Beautify the North Entrance

Showcase the north entrance to the community and Riverview Park area by creating pedestrian friendly crosswalks/streets and by developing water and recreational attractions at Riverview Park including a boat ramp, canoe rental, expanded camping facilities, bathhouses, skate board park, concessions and an enhanced hiking/biking path trailhead.



2011 AND BEYOND

TODAY

- New master plan for Riverview Park developed and accepted by the City Council.
- \$150,000 from state Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) grant used to connect park amenities by trail.
- Old Apgar pool removed. Tennis court and basketball court will soon be installed.
- Determined better location for Skate Park on South 6th Street and applied available funding to begin purchasing equipment.
- A new restroom, new playground equipment as well as a new parking lot at the community building.
- Independent citizen task force raised over \$30,000 to establish Dog Park in Riverview Park.
- Dredging of lagoons completed.
- Linn Creek trailhead to be developed soon with private funds.
- New signage at Marshalltown's north entrance funded and installed.

*Paul Hermanson and Jerry Gaffney, Co-Chairs –
with City Park & Rec Director Terry Gray*



FUTURE

Other big ideas to fuel future efforts include a boat ramp and canoe rentals at the park, an improved disc golf course, additional trails, a tower or pier to view the river plus campground improvements, an improved road system and parking, and a dedicated park entrance off 3rd Avenue.

4. Build Clear Creek Lake

Plan by working with the DNR to acquire the 1,760-acre ISU Research Farm near Rhodes and the Harvester paving the way for a public/private partnership for a 778-acre lake development that would encompass 5,087 acres in southwest Marshall County and greatly enhance our quality of life while contributing significantly to our overall tax base.

The efforts toward the Clear Creek Lake plan have stalled in recent years due to land acquisition, Department of Natural Resources concerns, and others. We do not anticipate planning for this idea to move forward at this current location. This does not diminish the fact that Marshall County would benefit greatly by having a state park and or lake recreation resource.



5. Target on Beautification

By expanding the Cleaniac effort; making all entrances to the city focal points of community pride; cleaning up abandoned industrial sites; revitalizing the 13th Street area to serve as a proud community gateway to our Iowa Veterans Home; offering free/expanded recycling; establishing neighborhood associations; improving city park system and offering incentives to revitalize homes.

2011 AND BEYOND

Shawn Meyer and Andrea Maxwell, Co-Chairs

TODAY

Make all entrances to the city the focus of community pride by expanding the Cleaniac effort. Create a proud community gateway to our Iowa Veterans Home by revitalizing 13th Street.

- Cultivated relationships with area businesses, Embers retirement community and Iowa Veterans Home.
- Raised \$14,000 for RDG Associates to develop a concept plan for the 13th Street area.
- Businesses helped purchase and install lamppost banners, flags and flower planters to better define the 13th Street neighborhood.
- Held public events to draw people to the area with food and music during 4th of July celebrations in conjunction with the fireworks display at IVH.
- City's work to install redesigned culvert on 13th Street has begun with input from Imagine committee and reference to the RDG plan.
- Former Seberg Pharmacy has become a dance studio. Laundromat will be developed into professional office space. Morning Glory Bakery soon to open.
- The Franklin Field Gateway project — successfully raised over \$140,000 to restore the historical ticket booths, which will be an eye catching entrance to the 13th Street neighborhood.

FUTURE

Current redevelopment is very exciting, particularly the prospect of much increased activity on 13th Street from neighbors and residents in general who come to shop, dance, do business or visit IVH. Other development is welcome, some of it already in the planning stages. Take a drive down 13th Street and see one of your community's big ideas coming to life.



6. Strengthen the Public School System

Offer lower student/teacher ratio; improve or renovate the Roundhouse and Miller Auditorium; improve inside/outside appearance of all schools; increase technology; expand bi-lingual education; offer pre-school system-wide; install geothermal/wind at all schools and develop a college tuition grant plan all of which would position Marshalltown as the best place to educate youth.



2011 AND BEYOND

Various community groups are involved in these efforts including the Renovate the Roundhouse Committee, Marshalltown Area Chamber of Commerce and the Marshalltown School District, and others.

TODAY

A number of organizations have addressed aspects of these ideas including the Marshalltown Community School District, business and community leaders who created the Marshalltown Education Partnership, Mid-Iowa Community Action who initiated the place-based initiative at Roger's Elementary School and most recently the Marshalltown Area Chamber of Commerce.

- Marshalltown Education Partnership began providing support and scholarships to first generation college attenders with financial need since 2006 .
- Pre-school now available in four of Marshalltown's six elementary schools.
- \$1.5 million applied to system-wide technology upgrade over a four year period.
- Geo-thermal installed at Woodbury and Roger's Elementary Schools.
- Bi-lingual education expanded through 9th grade as of 2010-2011 school year.
- Additions/improvements to Miller Middle School completed. Building upgrade in progress at Fisher Elementary. Second floor addition to MHS to begin this summer.
- Phase I of the Roundhouse improvements — A strong private-sector fund raising committee, facilitated by the Chamber of Commerce, will partner with the Marshalltown Community School District to raise sufficient funds to "Renovate the Roundhouse" and reestablish this facility as a premier athletic and activity center as well as a source of community and school pride.

FUTURE

The Chamber of Commerce is partnering with education to enhance school/business/community partnerships by forming a Business Education Alliance.





7. Revitalize and Strengthen Downtown

Improve Marshalltown by implementing the existing downtown City Center plan that includes: creating a pedestrian friendly downtown with expanded green spaces; restoring landmark buildings such as the Tallcorn; building a new coliseum/community auditorium; strengthening and expanding Wi-Fi services and revitalizing and developing the undertown areas under the viaducts.

2011 AND BEYOND

TODAY

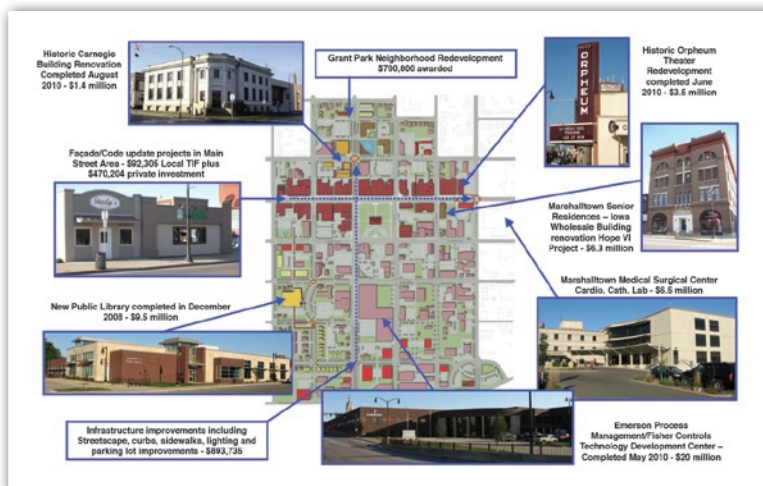
The projects listed below represent \$50 million in improvements, and that does not include many smaller individual projects taken on by individual property owners.

- \$9.5 million Marshalltown Public Library.
- \$1.4 million Historic Carnegie Building Renovation to accommodate city offices.
- \$3.5 million Historic Orpheum Theater.
- \$6.5 million Marshalltown Medical & Surgical Center Cardiovascular Catheterization Lab.
- \$20 million Emerson Technology Center plus enhanced south entrance to downtown and Emerson/Fisher campus.
- \$6.3 million in senior housing.
- \$.5 million + in Main Street business façade improvements.
- \$.9 million in public improvements by City of Marshalltown — curb and gutter, sidewalks, lighting and parking lot improvements.
- \$1 million grant as start to \$6.3 million required to renovate Iowa Wholesale Supply for senior housing.
- \$.7 million grant to city to begin redeveloping Grant Park neighborhood.

FUTURE

Implementation of the City Center Plan prepared by RDG is progressing. Facade improvements continue throughout the downtown district. The City is working closely with developers to secure funding for renovation of the Iowa Wholesale Building into 28 senior housing units and renovation of Tallcorn Towers into 49 affordable rental housing units with a target towards homeless and Veteran households. Plans to continue efforts on the development of the Grant Park Neighborhood district are also underway. The MCBF organization is working on a number of projects including downtown signage, streetscape and programming in order to improve the downtown.

City Housing & Community Development Director Michelle Spohnheimer, the Marshalltown Central Business District and various other groups.



More progress ahead!

As you can see the various Ideas are in many different phases of development and implementation. The work on these Imagine Ideas will continue into the future, with perhaps other ideas being developed along the way. As our community changes so may the ideas, but the general concept will remain, to develop BIG, innovative Ideas to make our community a great place to live, work and play. Thank you to everyone who has and will continue to participate in making these and other Ideas a reality. We hope you have found the information about the Imagine 7 Big Ideas by 2011 informative. If you'd like additional information on any of the ideas, or how to get involved go to our website at www.imagine2011.com.

Thank you,

The *Imagine* Steering Committee