

QUARTERLY REPORT

MAY 2015

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Capital Crossroads is **a bold but achievable vision** pushing Central Iowans to dream big, not settle for good enough, think long term, and work together.

CAPITAL CORE

Mary O'Keefe and Scott Sanders

The Capital Core strategies are based on the philosophy that a strong, growing region needs a healthy central city in order to thrive. The Capital Core work focuses on three main areas: neighborhoods, downtown Des Moines, and public safety.

Over the last quarter, the **Neighborhood Improvement** subcommittee held the initial convening of the Eat Bank neighborhood catalysts to discuss common concerns and interests and identify potential roles. In early April, City Manager Scott Sanders attended the inaugural American Architectural Foundation's City manager Institute on Design. Each of the five city managers attending the three-day workshop brought a community design challenge to discuss with colleagues from around the country and a panel of design, planning, and development resources. Sanders's topic was addressing the challenge of attracting private development to existing urban neighborhoods.

The partners' coalition involved in the ongoing neighborhood revitalization work in the three East Bank neighborhoods (Capitol East, Capitol Park, and Martin Luther King, Jr., Park) is integrating tactics identified in the Neighborhood Improvement Plan. Significant accomplishments to date include improving the connections among neighborhoods and their schools, additional youth programming, development of a marketing plan to improve perceptions of the Capitol Park area, and major improvements to the housing stock and infrastructure in MLK Jr. Park. The *Viva East Bank!* Initiative is in year one of a five-year project. The City is awaiting announcements on several grants related to housing and other revitalization work in the East Bank neighborhoods.

A few other items of note include:

- The City's upcoming comprehensive plan update, which will create new guidance for investing in neighborhood commercial areas and for aligning that investment with public improvements like transit and streetscaping. This process began with a series of public meetings in February and is slated to extend through 2015.
- Using the tax sale process to acquire strategic properties for redevelopment will be a focus on a limited basis in 2015 to determine its efficacy.
- The City is looking at local option sales tax as one potential revenue source for the initiative. Changes to state legislation to allow a single jurisdiction to vote for local option sales tax (rather than requiring a county-wide vote) is a first step.

The **Downtown Des Moines** team continues to make progress on the convention hotel. The IEC Hotel Corporation, a non-profit entity, was formed by Polk County with board representation by the County and the City to own and operate the convention hotel. Preliminary financial incentives with the City, County, and private businesses have been approved. Negotiations are underway with a development team led by Weitz.

The downtown residential population is growing. With an almost non-existence vacancy rate, housing development will be expanding this construction season. Approximately 1,000 housing units are planned for 2015 construction.

Design and development have been approved for 420 Court, which includes 82 apartments and downtown's first full-service grocery store, a 35,000 square foot Hy-Vee.

Cowles Commons will open this summer; the first major event in the space will be Winefest.

Construction will continue on many of the downtown "key development sites" identified in the Downtown Core implementation plan this spring. These include:

- AC Hotel in the East Village;
- 201 E. Locust (full block redevelopment including extended stay hotel and market rate housing);
- 420 Court (Hy-Vee and market rate housing);
- Wilkins Building (western half of the former Younker's block);
- Hotel and housing in Gray's Landing;
- The Bridge District (formerly River Hills);
- Artisan Row townhomes;
- Polk County Courts district;
- R&T Lofts (conversion of former Register Building to affordable and market rate housing);
- Randolph Hotel conversion to market rate housing;
- Cowles Commons; and,
- Greater Des Moines Botanical Gardens.

BUSINESS CAPITAL

Kathryn Kunert, Mark Miller, and Mike Crum

With a continued focus on targeted industries, partners, entrepreneurship, and international, the Business Capital took on many activities during the first quarter of 2015.

The Greater Des Moines Partnership and the Ames Economic Development Commission, along with other local economic development partners, assisted the following firms on their expansion plans:

- **Barilla expands:** Created in Parma in 1877 out of a shop that made bread and pasta, Barilla is today among the top Italian food groups, a world leader in the pasta and pasta sauce businesses in continental Europe, bakery products in Italy, and the crispbread business in Scandinavia. Currently, the Barilla Group owns 30 production sites and exports to more than 100 countries. The company's facility in Ames is planning to add two production lines, raw material storage, and associated packaging and palletizing equipment to produce gluten-free pasta. The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) board awarded Barilla tax benefits via the High Quality Jobs Program (HQP) for this \$26.5 million capital investment that is expected to create 23 jobs, of which two are incented, at a qualifying wage of \$23.21 per hour.
- **Accu-Mold plans expansion:** Ankeny-based Accu-Mold began operations in 1986 and manufactures small and micro custom-designed precision plastic parts, lead-frame parts and subassemblies used by high-tech customers in diverse industries that include microelectronics, medical and optics applications. The IEDA board has approved tax incentives for the company through the HQP. The company plans to build an addition to its existing facility as part of its \$20

million expansion project. The project is expected to create 200 jobs, of which 36 are incented at a qualifying wage of \$25.52 per hour.

- **Advanced Analytical expands:** Advanced Analytical Technologies, Inc. (AATI) develops, manufactures, and markets high-throughput, fully-automated nucleic acid and genetic analysis systems. Due to rapid growth in sales, AATI has outgrown their existing facility in Ames. The IEDA board has approved \$500,000 in direct financial assistance as well as tax incentives for the company through the HQJP. The company plans to lease space at the LGI Business Park in Ankeny as part of its \$2 million capital investment. The project is expected to create 57 jobs at a qualifying wage of \$25.52 per hour.
- **Hy-Vee Corporate Headquarters Expansion:** Hy-Vee, headquartered in West Des Moines, is an employee-owned chain of 235 supermarkets located throughout Iowa and the Midwest. The company is planning to expand its conference center and office space in West Des Moines. The IEDA board awarded Hy-Vee tax benefits via HQJP for this \$70 million capital investment that is expected to create 102 jobs at a qualifying wage of \$25.52 per hour.
- **Pillar Technology to open regional office in Des Moines:** Pillar Technology Group, LLC, is a high-tech computer software consulting firm that expands the boundaries of traditional software creation. It uses an innovative approach called "Speed to Value" and serves a broad range of companies from Fortune 500 to start-ups. Pillar does this work through an innovation center called the Forge. Pillar Technology Group, LLC, has facilities in Ohio, Michigan, and Silicon Valley, and is considering opening a regional office in Des Moines. The company is planning a \$450,000 capital investment that includes leasing office space. The IEDA board approved \$200,000 in direct financial assistance from HQJP for this project that is expected to create 40 jobs at a qualifying hourly wage of \$25.52.

The Global Insurance Accelerator launched with six technology firms serving the insurance industry:

- **LifeDB's** goal is to bridge the gap between a life insurance policy and the intended beneficiary. Its software makes it easier and faster to facilitate the payment of a life insurance claim.
- **CityMile** seeks to use mobile technology solutions to bridge the gap between humans, their vehicles, and their insurers, saving drivers money and improving safety.
- **ClinicNote** is a software platform designed to simplify the relationship between private-practice therapists and insurance companies by eliminating inefficiencies by automatically aggregating therapy session notes to generate required insurance reports and reimbursement claims.
- **Drive Spotter** - The "Rumble Road" team uses wearable devices, image processing, and other patent pending technologies to reduce driver distraction and other risks of interest to the insurance industry.
- **Pablo** is a next-generation global insurance platform that connects targeted travel insurance to small travel retailers.

- **Tyche** is using legal, financial, and insurance data to build predictive models of legal risk. It plans to help stakeholders in lawsuits understand, manage, and value their litigation portfolios.

Finally, the Advanced Manufacturing Council met on March 5th and heard a presentation by Bridgestone Firestone on their Employee Engagement Program. Approximately 20 companies attended the council meeting.

CULTIVATION CORRIDOR

John May

The Cultivation Corridor is focused on completing the build-out of the initiative and on maximizing its impact moving forward. The top accomplishments from the first quarter of 2015 include:

- Development and implementation of ‘Rooted in the Cultivation Corridor’ co-branding campaign; more than 30 percent of targeted local and regional economic development organizations have adopted the brand to include in physical and/or digital identity collateral
- Messaged more than \$207 million in AgBioscience and agribusiness-related project activity in the region
- Represented region at three AgBio trade shows, including Next Generation Bio-Based & Sustainable Chemicals show in New Orleans and World Bio Markets 2015 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands

The Corridor saw achievements across its three work platforms in the first quarter, including the successful implementation of a region-wide co-branding campaign, lead development and messaging more than \$200 million in project activity in the region, and extensive travel to represent the region’s AgBio competitiveness. Marketing collateral was developed for several paid placements, including large placements at the Des Moines International Airport and *Site Selection* magazine. The Corridor continued work on its Statewide AgBio Asset Inventory project that it is partnering with the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA), Iowa Biotechnology Association, Iowa State University (ISU) and University of Iowa on. Additionally, the Corridor continues to participate in a strong coalition of business and economic development groups pushing to secure legislation to create a first-in-the-world bio-based chemical tax credit in Iowa via legislation sponsored by IEDA. The Corridor has created an internship program and brought on Dana Melcher, a junior at ISU, as Communications Intern.

The Corridor has been accepted into the USDA’s Agricultural Research Partnership Network, a national collection of public- and private-sector organizations in the agricultural economic development space. The network is focused on developing connections between member organizations and industry partners to identify new opportunities and solve problems.

The Cultivation Corridor wrapped up 2014 with inclusion on several year-end media impact lists. The economic development brand that did not exist nine months ago was named the region’s Top Economic Development Deal by the Des Moines Business Record in December. The Corridor also appeared on the Business Record’s economic wish list for 2015 and was named a top story of 2014 by the Ames Tribune. Plus, several Corridor board members were named among the most influential in the region.

The Des Moines *Business Record* on February 25 held the first 2015 installment of its popular Power Breakfast series, and the Cultivation Corridor was the topic for the sold-out event on the 34th Floor of the Ruan Tower in downtown Des Moines. ISU President Steven Leath, business leader Steve Zumbach, Partnership CEO Jay Byers, and Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance CEO Dee Baird were featured panelists. The discussion was broad-reaching and touched on issues from how the Corridor effort can benefit businesses not directly tied to agriculture to the experience of established regional industry cluster models like Research Triangle Park in North Carolina and what lessons we can glean.

Finally, the Corridor traveled to Kansas City to meet with and learn from a handful of peer organizations, including the Kansas City Animal Health Corridor, a regional cluster-based economic development initiative that has been active in the KC market for ten years with notable success.

WELLNESS CAPITAL

Jami Haberl and Rick Kozin

The Wellness Capital is focused on developing a Healthy Community Toolkit, ensuring effective coordination, and conducting a Wellness and Community Study. The Wellness Capital took on several activities to support these goals during the first quarter.

The Healthiest State initiative will be hosting their first annual “Taking Back our Health” conference on June 18 at Des Moines University’s Olsen Center. The event will feature keynote presentations by Mark Fenton – a well-known transportation, planning, and public health consultant and a representative from the Surgeon General’s office, as well as the presentation of the Healthy Iowa Awards by Governor Branstad. Formal invites are going out soon.

The YMCA has begun hosting monthly luncheons for those tasked with implementing wellness programs within their own organizations. The Corporate Employee Wellness Networking Group is open to anyone in the metro. Please let Meg Fitz (mfitz@desmoinesmetro.com) know if you are interested in participating.

Every five years, the Iowa Department of Public Health expects local health departments to conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). At the same time, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act requires non-profit hospitals to conduct a CHNA every three years. Both of those calendars and requirements coincide this year, allowing for the creation of a single multi-county, multi-hospital regional CHNA.

The Greater Des Moines Partnership, in collaboration with Capital Crossroads, is facilitating the development of this CHNA along with a Steering Committee comprised of hospital and health department representatives as well as other key stakeholders. The group identified five areas to address in the CHNA: Access to Care, Youth, Physical Environment, Workforce, and Mental Health. These work groups are in the process of identifying priorities and targets within each of their focus areas. The CHNA is expected to be completed by the end of the calendar year.

HUMAN CAPITAL

Dave Wilkerson and Chris Littlefield

The Human Capital is divided into two focus areas: 1) a comprehensive Cradle thru Career approach to education and talent preparation called EDGE – Education Drives our Great Economy; and 2) talent retention & attraction. The EDGE initiative is a collaboration of the Business Education Alliance and the Greater Des Moines Partnership and is under the direction of the EDGE Board of Director. The talent attraction & retention work is being directed and implemented through the Partnership’s Workforce Development/Education Board and staff.

The **EDGE initiative** continues developing goals and metrics for work group Pre-K – 20 and plans to finalize details soon. The goals and metrics for the Lifelong Learning work group will be finalized in the coming weeks as well. The initiative also secured a grant from Nationwide and on-boarded two new EDGE board members, Monica Friedman, Vice President of Human resources with Nationwide, and Beth Townsend, Director of Iowa Workforce Development.

Over the last quarter, the **talent attraction and retention** team continued to grow utilization of the CarpeDM Career Center. Through employer postings and “scraping” from Indeed.com, there are approximately 10,000 Central Iowa job postings, of which 200 are for summer internship opportunities. There currently are 955 registered job seekers and 213 registered employers.

CarpeDM (www.seizedesmoines.com) traffic has grown substantially in 2015. Since the beginning of 2015, user sessions have increased by nearly 19,000 (58%) for a total of 48,500. Of those coming to the site, 66.8% are new users and 33.2% are returning visitors. Visitors represent all 50 states, 101 countries, and 2,521 cities.

For four days in March, the Partnership showcased Des Moines to a national and international audience at SXSW in Austin by taking Des Moines to the heart of the SXSW scene for the first ever **Des Moines Embassy**, a four day music showcase in the heart of downtown Austin.

The Des Moines Embassy provided a unique opportunity that gave the Partnership a new, larger audience to showcase the arts and culture, and particularly the music scene, in Greater Des Moines. The music culture of a community is important to many people, whether it is how they make a living or how they live their passion. Showcasing musicians from Des Moines and being part of the music scene at SXSW supports this and helps tell the region’s story.

The Partnership has been involved with SXSW for more than seven years. This year, the Des Moines Embassy made a bold statement that Des Moines is a proud thriving region to an unexpected audience that could choose to make Des Moines home. In collaboration with LiveNation and Sonic Factory Studios, the Des Moines Embassy featured 65 bands (including a special Des Moines music showcase), hosted thousands of attendees, had over 250,000 people experience the regional brand in person, and had the potential for over 4 million social media impressions via the hashtag #HellYesDM. In addition to local broadcast, print, and social media coverage, the Embassy was featured in a blog and print story by the Omaha World Herald, was rated the #6 best *Thoughtfluencers* of SXSW 2015 in a blog by motherboard.vice.com, and had mentions in over 25 additional national media outlets.

Finally, in March, the Partnership released the results of our 2014 Central Iowa Human Capital Survey, in collaboration with the Robert D. and Billie Ray Center and the Institute for Ethics & Excellence. Approximately 4,000 respondents took the survey, which measures how embedded the local talent is in the community and in the workplace.

Survey results show residents feel a high level of connection to the community. Some highlights of the survey include:

- 93 percent of respondents say they live a healthy and productive life
- 93 percent agree this is a good community in which to raise a family
- 93 percent say they are proud to be a member of the community and would recommend it to others
- 92 percent feel safe in this community
- 90 percent believe people are treated with civility and respect
- 89 percent believe they can achieve the things in life that are important to them

This is the second year in a row the survey has been offered to the community. Additionally, this survey had a workforce component to measure how engaged local talent is in the workplace. Some highlights:

- 89 percent of respondents agree individuals in the workplace demonstrate ethical conscience and competence
- 88 percent agree individuals in their workplace exhibit hard work and self-motivation.
- 88 percent agree individuals in their workplace go beyond basic mastery of skills to enhance their performance
- 88 percent agree individuals in their workplace act with integrity

SOCIAL CAPITAL

Angie Dethlefs-Trettin and Phil Hodgkin

The Social Capital team is focused on leadership, diversity, and civility. The committee has subgroups for the Regional Leadership Council, Community Connect, the Diversity & Inclusion Council, the Civility Initiative, and the Emerging Leaders Collaborative; their respective reports are as follows.

The Regional Leadership Council (RLC) submitted an application to host the 2016 Association of Leadership Programs (ALP) Regional Conference in Des Moines. The group feels optimistic and should know if it has been selected by June. The RLC also is planning the second Converge Conference for area leadership programs alums and directors this fall. The event will focus on communication as it relates to civility, conflict resolution, and active listening. Through their quarterly meetings, the RLC has identified a list of informational topics they would like to discuss and share resources on with each other at upcoming meetings; these topics include retention, diversity and inclusion challenges, fundraising, and budgeting. The Community Foundation and United Way are continuing their work in developing a board matching tool, which should launch by the end of the year.

The Community Connect program successfully launched under the Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute. The curriculum has been significantly enhanced to offer more personal development opportunities that will ultimately connect people to the community. The group made a few mid-point

adjustments to better leverage the mentors, and participants seem pleased with the curriculum. The wonderful mentors offer diverse experiences, and the equally amazing participants are eager to engage in the community and with the mentors. Community Connect has discussed providing opportunities to program alumni, which will be another significant enhancement and will provide lifelong connection and learning opportunities.

The Diversity & Inclusion Council participated in an LGBT and Transgender in the workplace seminar facilitated by One Iowa. The team also hosted a Roundtable event facilitated in collaboration with the Evelyn K. Davis Center, United Way of Central Iowa, and Veridian Credit Union on the topic of poverty in Central Iowa; forty-five individuals attended this event. In March, Veridian Credit Union hosted the quarterly multicultural reception that drew 270 people. Finally, the Council handed out INclusion Magazine to students and staff at 36 colleges and universities in Minnesota, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, and Iowa, and developed a web presence. The Council has made the magazine available at all of its events, at Welcome to Des Moines receptions, and in relocation packets. It should be noted the Diversity & Inclusion Council, in conjunction with Bankers Trust, will host the next Multicultural Reception on May 28th.

The Civility Initiative has continued to reach out to chambers of commerce, school boards, and city governments to provide resources for civility in their meetings. To date, information has been distributed to 75 city councils, 50 school boards, ten county boards of supervisors, and 31 chambers of commerce. The Civility Initiative now regularly publishes civility-related tips and resources on its website and has updated its Show Some Respect pledge form online. During the last quarter, the Civility Initiative developed a comprehensive plan to engage Drake University students, faculty, and staff.

Nineteen groups are actively participating in the Emerging Leaders Collaborative (ELC). The ELC recently completed its strategic plan for 2015. The plan focuses on membership development, retention, and best practices.

CULTURAL CAPITAL

Mary Cownie and Brian Laurenzo

With the completion of strategic planning for Bravo and master planning for the Department of Cultural Affairs, both organizations are working to support Cultural Capital initiatives during implementation of these plans.

The Department of Cultural Affairs continues to shepherd the Iowa NEXT initiative through the Iowa General Assembly. If passed, Iowa NEXT will substantially increase available funding for arts and culture institutions/initiatives statewide and throughout the central Iowa region.

Bravo Staff has developed relationships with the EDGE initiative to facilitate alignment between the Cultural and Human Capitals. Staying engaged in the work of each capital helps to identify areas where work can be combined, eliminates duplication of efforts and helps develop future collaborations.

In partnership with the Convention and Visitors Bureau and key cultural institutions, a cultural tourism insert was included in the Sunday, April 26 *New York Times* for subscribers in Minneapolis, Chicago and Kansas City. Marketing to the larger region stems from work completed by the Cultural Tourism sub-

committee. The goal is to help drive tourism from across the Midwest this spring and summer, celebrating central Iowa's diverse and vibrant cultural offerings.

The Cultural Capital Speaker's Roster (maintained by Bravo) was launched last July and provides events and panel discussions with references to arts & culture experts and speakers in the region. The Speaker's Roster sub-committee is working to evaluate the success of this program and determine next steps.

Top accomplishments from the last quarter include:

- Cultural Tourism – cooperative marketing with the Convention & Visitors Bureau and cultural institutions to place a cultural tourism insert in the *New York Times* for subscribers in Minneapolis, Chicago, and Kansas City (Sunday, April 26)
- Developing connections and alignment between the Cultural Capital and the EDGE initiative
- Start of implementation of Bravo and Department of Cultural Affairs strategic and master plans

PHYSICAL CAPITAL

Angela Connolly and Dave Caris

The Physical Capital committee is focused on three key components: transportation, stormwater and flood control, and communications. The first quarter was busy for the group, as evidenced below.

DART, the Des Moines Area MPO, and the Greater Des Moines Partnership held a successful Stand Up for Transportation event that focused on the need for a long-term transportation bill and for Congress to work on ways to keep the Highway Trust Fund solvent. There was a panel focused on business leaders talking about the importance of transportation and infrastructure to their decision-making process, attendees heard from Congressman David Young, and there was an outdoor event presenting to the public all of the combined transportation and mobility organizations that exist in our community.

The Fourmile Creek Watershed Management Authority (WMA) has completed its study. As part of this effort, Infrastructure and Policy working groups were formed from technical experts and local stakeholders to provide input and technical direction for the planning process. Their feedback was utilized by the WMA to set recommendations for implementation. The plan includes an implementation focus on monitoring for success, engagement with rural and urban partners, adoption of a greenway system to the 500-year flood, and several infrastructure improvements to reduce flooding and improve water quality.

The Walnut Creek WMA involves 11 entities. This WMA secured an Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) grant to create a comprehensive watershed management plan and is now working with a consultant team to do just that. They currently are in the background and research phase and held an open house on April 29th.

The Mud, Camp, and Spring Creek WMA also secured an Iowa DNR grant to develop a comprehensive watershed management plan and is moving forward with its work. They have selected a consultant team and have finalized the scope of the project. Work on the stakeholder process and Land and Water

Resource Inventory will be the initial work efforts of the plan. The anticipated completion date of the plan is April 2016.

The City of Clive will launch a new master plan for the Clive Greenbelt. The City Council approved the hiring of a consulting team led by RDG to spearhead a comprehensive effort to re-imagine the greenbelt's future. The 16 month process will be guided by the city's strategic plan and build on Clive's Distinct by Nature brand.

Finally, the Iowa House passed broadband legislation (HF641) on April 21 and it will now go to the Senate. This "Connecting Iowa Farms, 26 Schools, and Communities Act" provides for the coordination and facilitation of broadband access in targeted service areas of the state and is focused on increasing the extent and availability of broadband infrastructure throughout the state.

GOVERNANCE CAPITAL

Gretchen Tegeler and Bob Andeweg

The Governance Capital committee is focused on reinvigorating the MAC, identifying opportunities to regionalize certain public services, and maintaining the momentum of the Local Government Collaboration Project.

The Governance Capital has recently chosen regional water as a focus area for regionalization efforts. Libraries and human resources have been chosen as the next two functional areas for collaboration in the metro area, using the Local Government Collaboration model already established. This year's Local Government Collaboration functions – parks & recreation and police – continued their work during the first quarter of the year, and the team also scheduled quarterly updates with MAC.

Jim Sanders, Johnston City Manager, has stepped forward to lead efforts in developing a uniform building code for the metro area. The project will encompass all aspects of the building code and aims to bring more consistency among the various communities. A variety of stakeholders will be involved.

During this quarter, three city librarians participated in a panel discussion on "Libraries in the 21st Century," and several new members were recruited to join the team.

NATURAL CAPITAL

Fred Hubbell and Bob Riley

The Natural Capital continues to make great strides in its four focus areas. While being addressed by different teams, the four areas – land use, zoning, and climate; outdoor recreation and trails; air/water/soil; and, marketing and education – all overlap, and the teams continue to collaborate when appropriate. It also is important to note that there is lots of work being done at the Capitol on the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund.

The **Urban Land Institute Iowa District Council** hosted several events during the first quarter of 2015. In January, ULI hosted a lunch and learn that focused on the proposed expansion plan for Des Moines International Airport. The council hosted Emerging Trends in Real Estate, a trends and forecast publication with a 35-year history, and the most highly-regarded and widely-read forecast report in the

real estate industry. In late March, ULI hosted “Walkability: A Formula for a Safer, Healthier, and More Desirable City.” The event featured city planner and urban designer Jeff Speck as well as Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett and focused on how the region can connect its many downtown amenities by making walking between them a pleasant, inviting experience.

The **Air/Water/Soil** continues its work in collaboration with the Physical Capital team to support the Watershed Management Authorities (WMAs) around the region. The Fourmile Creek WMA has completed its study. As part of this effort, Infrastructure and Policy working groups were formed from technical experts and local stakeholders to provide input and technical direction for the planning process. Their feedback was utilized by the WMA to set recommendations for implementation. The plan includes an implementation focus on monitoring for success, engagement with rural and urban partners, adoption of a greenway system to the 500-year flood, and several infrastructure improvements to reduce flooding and improve water quality.

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In the **Outdoor Recreation and Trails** realm, the region completed the Chichaqua Valley Trail extension, which connects the Chichaqua Valley Trail to the Gay Lea Wilson trail between Ankeny and Des Moines. The grand opening celebration was held on April 25th. In April, the Dallas County Conservation Board approved an alignment for the Perry-Woodward link trail that would connect the High Trestle Trail in Woodward to the Raccoon River Valley Trail in Perry. Additionally, the Des Moines Area MPO launched an interactive bike map, and the Android version of the Iowa by Trail app launched.

The **Marketing and Education** team continues to collaborate with the **Air/Water/Soil** and **Outdoor Recreation and Trails** team to move forward with a comprehensive technical analysis and marketing effort centered on trails, greenways, and the parks and recreation system. The team secured a \$4,000 grant from Growing Green Communities to support technical analysis and mapping, which will build off of previous MPO and Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation efforts.