

PRIORITY ACTIVITIES PROGRESS REPORT

NOVEMBER 2020

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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.

BUSINESS CAPITAL

Kathryn Kunert, Rick Sanders and Geoff Wood

Central Iowa will remain a regional leader in economic growth.

HIGHLIGHTS, PROJECTS, AND WINS

ISU Research Park

- ISU and the Research Park are feeling optimistic, as they work towards enhancing relationships with businesses and partner organizations. There are many innovations in agriculture flourishing in Ames, at ISU and across the region. There are ongoing partnerships deepening within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the USDA Lab, agricultural expertise in DSM, the Ames Lab and everything else that is HQ-ed in the region. ISU and its partners continue to work to leverage the benefits of the Cultivation Corridor.

The Greater Des Moines Partnership

- The Partnership, Polk County, Warren County and nine cities awarded 265 small business recovery grants. In October, the Partnership launched Extend the Season grants and distributed 300 heaters to 60 restaurants in DSM.
- The Partnership has selected HR Green as the consultant for a regional broadband study. Partnership staff along with HR Green are meeting with board of supervisors in the ten-county region to seek their financial support of the study. Boone and Story Counties are also considering participation.

Entrepreneurial Community

- Techstars Iowa started their first cohort in Q3 of 2020 at Gravitare Coworking in Des Moines. Brad Feld, co-founder of Techstars, author of 'Startup Communities' held a statewide virtual call for the Iowa entrepreneurial community to discuss his new book 'The Startup Community Way' with 165 participants in late October.
- Clay & Milk announced their inaugural 'Startup Iowa Awards' to honor and recognize the top individuals, early state companies and support organizations who led the entrepreneurial community in Iowa in 2020
- Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses—Iowa is underway with Cohort IV, the first to be completely online.
- The Economic Growth Working Group of the Governor's Economic Recovery Advisory Board wrapped up their efforts. IEDA and the Governor's office will issue a report for the entire Board's work in the coming months.
- The Startup Factory accelerator at Iowa State University, originally structured within the ISU Research Park, is now located within the ISU Pappajohn Center for Entrepreneurship, a part of the Ivy School of Business. They are currently interviewing for the Director position.
- The West Des Moines Business Incubator suspended all services on August 21, 2020 as the City of West Des Moines reallocated resources to public safety.
- The Mid-Iowa office of the Small Business Development Center relocated from West Des Moines to Windsor Heights in September.

- \$1M+ investment rounds raised in Central Iowa in Q3 include the following:
 - Gross-Wen Technologies in Slater - \$2,350,000
 - Growers Edge in Johnston - \$40,000,000
 - Haber Technologies in Ames - \$1,300,000
 - MakuSafe in West Des Moines - \$4,000,000
 - Pitchly in Des Moines - \$2,500,000
 - PowerPollen in Ankeny - \$13,000,000

Gravitate Coworking

- Gravitate Coworking opened a new coworking location in Windsor Heights on September 1.
- Construction work is nearing completion on Gravitate's first rural coworking space in Jefferson/Greene County with a target to open in late November.
- Coworking utilization has slowly started to ramp up again this fall as members/guests look for alternatives to working from home and many traditional offices are not open to employees. Specifically, members are citing issues related to distractions of children in the home doing remote school and general COVID fatigue as reasons for venturing outside the house.
- Revenues are still down significantly from the pre-COVID time frame.

MidAmerican Energy Company

- Despite some of the challenges of COVID, due to Iowa's manufacturing and agriculture sectors the strength of the state's economy has been resilient and in some cases have been able to maintain their forecasts and perhaps have even been able to accelerate production.
- MidAmerican will be defining "normal" differently as we continue to navigate through the impacts of COVID...and we are not through this storm yet...and are still determining what tomorrow's normal is. Our focus is on how we stay out in front of our customers, partners and stakeholders with the resources needed to continue to drive business growth and sustainable communities. Given that MidAmerican provides an essential service, they have been back in their offices since summer, and worked to combat COVID and natural disaster, showing that essential services know how to be essential.
- MidAmerican's GreenAdvantage® program provided 61.3% of its generation by renewable resources in 2019 to its Iowa customers and are on track to delivering more than 80% renewable energy in 2020...along with having the 13th lowest rates in the US.

Prairie Meadows

- At Prairie Meadows, the hotel is back open; café and events center are still closed though AJ's is open to the public at this time. All in all, the casino is doing well. Prairie Meadows granted \$2M this fall; \$1M to United Way, \$500k to Food Bank and \$500k to DMARC.
- At this time, the plan is for Legacy and Community Betterment Grants to open back up as usual in Q1 of 2021. Safety is Prairie Meadows top priority and we have the following safety procedures in place:
 - Every 15 minutes, 100% of the air inside the building is exchanged for fresh air.
 - Prairie Meadows is cleaned and disinfected daily and throughout each shift.

- Face coverings are required while on property. A face mask vending machine was installed for guests that may have forgotten theirs.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

- While the DSM metropolitan statistical area (MSA) unemployment rate has fallen from 6.7% in August to 4.7% in September, there are 15,960 individuals that are unemployed. In addition, DSM's total employment in September 2020 is down 22,800 jobs from September 2019 figures.
- The single largest issue in the business community remains the global health pandemic and Iowa's response to it. Iowa's handle on the uncontrolled spread of COVID continually stunt the ability for small businesses to recover. How can we expect any business owner to plan for recovery when the situation gets more dire daily, and little, if anything, is being done to halt the trend?

EQUITY & INCLUSION

- MidAmerican launched an internal DEI platform in 2019 and is building on its framework throughout the year.
- The Partnership formed a Broadband Committee to review the 8 proposals that were submitted and to select a consultant that had diverse representation of race, age and background. Furthermore, the committee included business and school districts representation from urban and rural counties. Social Capital's 4 Equity Tool was utilized in formation of this committee.

NEWS & EVENTS

- On December 10th at 11 AM, the Partnership, CIRAS, IEDA, ABI and IADG are sponsoring a Reshoring webinar featuring Harry Moser, President of the Reshoring Institute. CIRAS is covering the speaker's fee.
- The Startup Iowa Awards, a new effort to recognize the top individuals, early stage companies and support organizations who let the entrepreneurial community in Iowa in 2020, have been announced. Nominations are open now at <https://clayandmilk.com/startup-iowa-awards/>

COLLABORATION

- Collaborated with public sector partners on the Small Business Recovery grants.
- Collaborated with affiliated Chambers on the Extend the Season grants.

CAPITAL CORE

Colleen Wittmack, Everett Miles and Scott Sanders

The urban core of Central Iowa will continue to enhance its role as the region's principal activity, hospitality, and employment hub and benefit from safe, dynamic, desirable and affordable neighborhoods.

HIGHLIGHTS, PROJECTS, AND WINS

City of Des Moines CDBG update *(note: these are NOT final numbers, only estimates, compiled as of 11/16/2020)*

- CDBG-CV Emergency Housing Payments: All funding in round one has been obligated to nearly 500 households in Des Moines. The City is awaiting its second round of funds to apply toward housing assistance. The second round will be more than \$900,000.
- CDBG-CV Small Business Recovery: Approximately 30 small businesses were assisted with CDBG-CV. More than 100 businesses were assisted with other sources such as the GDM Partnership, Polk County, and the City's general fund.
- CDBG-CV Emergency Food Distribution: More than 20,000 meals have been served this summer.
- ESG-CV Homelessness Prevention: As of the end of the October, more than 60 households were assisted with homelessness prevention/rent assistance.
- A second round of CDBG-CV and ESG-CV funding will be available in the next couple months. The CDBG-CV round 2 funds will go toward more housing assistance as administered by IMPACT, childcare services, or facilities expansion as a result of COVID, and mental health services or facilities expansion as a result of COVID. Proposals for the childcare or mental health services are due November 25.
- The second round of ESG-CV to address homelessness will also have a request for proposals. It's scheduled to be disbursed to providers on November 24 and will be due in mid-December.

City of Des Moines

- The city executed the small business recovery grant program (where ~130 businesses in Des Moines received funding), worked with the Partnership on the "Extend the Season" program granting over 300 outdoor heaters and blankets to various businesses.
- An agreement between City of Des Moines-EPA-DICO was reached for environmental clean-up and land transfer to City. Krause Group expressed interest in using DICO site for professional soccer arena.
- Invest DSM has been focusing on rolling out our Homeowner Renovation Program, which makes grants available to homeowners in our four Special Investment Districts for larger interior or exterior renovation projects. We have a waiting list of nearly 100 interested homeowners and are currently working our way through the process with those projects.
- Invest DSM also closed out our Block Challenge Grant program for the year, which spurred nearly \$1.1 million of investment in exterior home and property improvements across the four Special Investment Districts. For every dollar Invest DSM spent, property owners spent \$1.51. This is significant, as that money most likely would not have been invested in the housing stock otherwise.
- The Oak Park / Highland Park business district is seeing a major renaissance, with 8 different projects complete or underway. Housing units that have long been vacant will be re-occupied as a result, new

businesses have opened, and all these buildings are undergoing significant renovations that will improve their long-term viability and desirability.

Operation Downtown

- Brenton Skating Plaza skating season opens November 20 with skating sessions to limit capacity and aid in contact tracing (masks required).
- Various ongoing special projects (including placemaking), new ambassador office space and more.

Other Downtown Updates

- Alternative events for the World Food & Music Festival and Holiday Promenade in the Historic East Village (now titled the "[12 Days of Promenade](#)") were created in Q3 and Q4 given COVID.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

- COVID impacts, including many businesses with employees working remotely, curtailed business and recreational travel, and cancelled events straining downtown restaurants, hotels, retailers, arts, culture and entertainment venues.
- The pandemic has made it difficult to build relationships and trust with neighborhood residents.

EQUITY & INCLUSION

- Equity and inclusion efforts have been consistently underway in the Capital Core. There are ongoing negotiations for workforce and affordable housing in downtown Des Moines.
- In addition, the opening of Edna Griffin Building redevelopment completed with building re-naming and the Civil Rights memorial recognition plaque, mural, video, and media coverage were wins for equity and inclusion in our downtown.
- The 4 Equity Tool was utilized to help market the small business recovery grant.

NEWS & EVENTS

- [Downtown Farmers' Market](#) presented by UnityPoint Health – Des Moines will hold a Drive-Through Winter Farmers' and Makers' Market this year in lieu of the traditional indoor Winter Market. The Drive-Through Winter Market will be held Saturday, Nov. 21 from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. at the Principal Park parking lot located at 1 Line Drive in Downtown Des Moines (DSM). The Drive-Through Winter Market will include vendors selling a variety of products, gift items from local artists and makers, food and drink options and more.
 - 40 vendors will be set up along the perimeter of the parking lot at Principal Park. Customers can either pre-order items online and attend the Drive-Through Winter Market to pick them up or may shop in-person from their vehicles. This alternative market layout will allow customers to connect and purchase from vendors who would typically be at the indoor Winter Market.
- The City of Des Moines is working to support small and local business + downtown arts/culture venues whenever possible over coming months. A reminder to all to shop local and support the East Village in the 12 Days of Promenade!
- Invest DSM [announced \\$1.1 million of investments](#) in Des Moines neighborhoods.

COLLABORATION

- Collaboration continues with the Physical Capital on workforce housing and action items from the 2019 study.
- Invest DSM is partnering with Bravo and the Cultural Capital to host an artist-in-residence through June 2021. Eleanor Kahn will be focusing her attention on bringing a renewed sense of place and identity to the Dogtown business district in the Drake Neighborhood.
- Ongoing collaborations continue between the City of Des Moines, Downtown businesses, Polk County, and Operation Downtown.

CULTIVATION CORRIDOR

Billi Hunt

Central Iowa will become the global center for agricultural technology and associated employment.

HIGHLIGHTS, PROJECTS, AND WINS

- Cultivation Corridor held their first "Insight to Innovation" webinar in October around World Food Prize, focusing on COVID-19 and Animal Protein and insights learned from the first wave. Our next phase will be how working with ag related products companies of all sizes can help reach their sustainability goals. The next session will take place in February. There is excitement to grow this outreach effort and storytelling.
- Cultivation Corridor is working to re-launch Cultivo into a virtual academy with a new direction to be announced in December.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

- Cultivation Corridor is spending most of its time/energy on repositioning Cultivo to a virtual platform.
- Lots of businesses seem to be well-positioned to join Cultivo in the near-term. Cultivation Corridor has had global level businesses reaching out to get engaged in one of the many initiatives they have ongoing, many thanks to ag-funder advertising, marketing and branding.

EQUITY & INCLUSION

- A top opportunity is connecting with global innovators, many of whom are women in the industry.

NEWS & EVENTS

- Be watching for the upcoming Cultivo announcement and future dates for "Insight to Innovation" events.

COLLABORATION

- Natural environment and the Natural Capital – collaborating with the Central Iowa Water Trails project and how agriculture can support it; working to help make connections on both sides
- Collaborating with broadband work and the Empower Rural Iowa Council
- Engagement with Iowa Department of Agriculture and Iowa Economic Development Authority Agriculture

- ISU Administration, Faculty and Staff
- Cultivation Corridor Investors
- Iowa Agricultural Startup Business
- Iowa Innovation Corporation – board member

CULTURAL CAPITAL

Sally Dix, Greg Edwards and Myrna Johnson

Recommendations emerging from the Regional Cultural Assessment will be effectively implemented to maximize the role of arts and culture as vital contributors to Greater Des Moines' quality of life and economy.

HIGHLIGHTS, PROJECTS, AND WINS

Catch Des Moines

- Greater Des Moines successfully bid on NCAA Division 1 Men's basketball tournament and will again host the tournament's first and second rounds in 2023. The [Des Moines Register](#) ran several stories discussing what NCAA returning means to the Greater Des Moines community.
- Events have returned to the Iowa State Fairgrounds, and Catch Des Moines successfully hosted USA Wrestling Preseason Nationals at the Iowa Events Center.
- The Central Iowa Water Trails project has won several grants and was named by the Business Record as the "[Best Thing to Happen in Central Iowa](#)" in 2020.

Bravo

- **[Regional Cultural Assessment metrics](#) finalized and released** - Based on best-practice research and stakeholder input, the targets reflect the aspirational vision for an ongoing effort to capture progress using sustainable sources of data. The metrics also identify limitations in using this data to drive improvements. Bravo Greater Des Moines will begin baseline collection for metrics related specifically to the nonprofit cultural sector and Capital Crossroads leadership will reconvene in the first half of 2021 to further define additional partners and actions needed to continue to strengthen the role of arts and culture as vibrant contributors for powering growth, progress and change.
- **Bravo Greater Des Moines and Mid-Iowa Health Foundation partnered with Group Creative Services** to bring to life a pilot project (The Dream Cube) to demonstrate how art can align with regional priorities to drive change. The project focused on the issue of youth homelessness as a way to strengthen regional efforts already underway to address the challenge. A structure built entirely of pillows, made in collaboration by artist Kub Stevens and youth who've experienced homelessness, was placed in three different downtown locations to highlight that young people have the ability to imagine better futures for themselves—only if they have a safe place to dream. The Youth Action Council, Iowa Homeless Youth Center and Polk County Continuum of Care were instrumental partners in leading the collaboration. Supporting investors included the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines, the Iowa Arts Council and Capital Crossroads.

Other Projects in the Cultural Capital

- **Artist INC**, a professional development opportunity for artists working in all creative disciplines, was launched by the Des Moines Arts Festival last month. The program provides cutting-edge training seminars that address the specific daily business needs and challenges artists of all disciplines face. [The Artist INC](#) program emerged as the catalyst for delivering on the community's recognition of the vital role arts play as an economic engine and key driver to enrich the cultural vitality of the region. This recognition is grounded in the Central Iowa Regional Cultural Assessment that supports the Capital Crossroads vision plan. Identifying individual artists and creative entrepreneurs as one of the cornerstones of Des Moines' arts and cultural ecosystem, the assessment identified "Strengthening the Creative Economy by developing the talent and skillset of creative entrepreneurs and artists as one of the four cultural priorities." The program represents a formalized step toward advancing Des Moines Arts Festival's top strategic priorities to serve as a cross-discipline artist service organization, acting as a nexus for capacity building within the creative community, coordinating relevant programming, administering communication, and ensuring equity and inclusion using arts as a catalyst.
- **Mainframe Studios** has launched a new pilot program called **Iowa Creative Incubator** with a mission to forge new pathways between artists and businesses to build more collaborative, more vibrant, and more connected communities. The initiative includes a personalized 4-month fellowship program that helps artists navigate the process of broadening their career possibilities by partnering with organizations and industries on projects that prioritize social engagement. The 2020 Iowa Creative Incubator Fellows are:
 - Cameron Gray – A recent graduate of Iowa State University where he earned a Master's of Fine Art. Cameron combines his distinctive art practice with inclusive interactions, services and dialogues to impact meaningful community connections. He is seeking to advance his career that uses art to lift up marginalized members of society. | [@cam_gogh](#) |
 - Chrissy Jensen – Owner of Domestica, an independent artist-design shop that has supported the launch of numerous small creative businesses. Chrissy is developing a community print shop that uses the re-emerging Risograph machine method to connect civic initiatives and workforce development. | [domestica.shop](#) |
 - DeAn Michael Kelly – Describes himself as a "creative activist seeking truth, justice, peace and harmony." DeAn is looking to further his work with Beyond Walls, his self-improvement organization that uses Hip Hop, nature and body alignment to make positive changes in the community. | [gobeyondwalls.com](#) |
 - Amenda Tate – An established local artist recognized for employing technology to produce community-driven kinetic paintings using her "Manibus" machine. Amenda is exploring ways to amplify her performances that prioritize accessibility, participation and the act of witnessing to bridge societal divides, break down barriers and build empathy. | [amendatate.com](#) |
 - Jill Wells – Jill's paintings depict dynamic and colorful narratives informed by her work as an alcohol and drug counselor. Jill's project goals include working with Orchard Place and Polk County Juvenile Detention Center, aligning her creative process and counseling experience to address issues such as incarceration rates, mental health and substance abuse. | [jillwellsart.com](#) |

With support from Iowa Arts Council, Mainframe Studios offers participating fellows co-working space, up to 30 hours of customized professional development with consultant and composer Beau Kenyon, access to a team of advisors, and assistance in developing partnerships with businesses and organizations. The pilot program is in the process of

applying for grants and sponsorships to support artist stipends that cover their time and project development resources. The program is also developing a best practice guide for businesses looking to increase their engagement in the arts. Organizations curious about the Iowa Creative Incubator are encouraged to contact Mainframe Studios to learn more about how to get involved.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

- As the winter months approach, Catch Des Moines is focusing on safely and responsibly promoting events and opportunities to both locals and visitors. Catch's marketing efforts are emphasizing outdoor activities and encouraging patronage at local businesses. The coming months will be incredibly difficult for our hospitality partners as it becomes less comfortable to dine outside, so Catch Des Moines is working to fully support restaurant partners by sharing safe ways to dine and educating audiences on how to recreate and enjoy our community's attractions and amenities throughout the colder months. The [Des Moines Register](#) wrote a story about Catch Des Moines' efforts to promote outdoor recreation, and the [Business Record](#) covered their sales strategy.
- In August, Catch Des Moines partnered with DSM Magazine to promote DSM Restaurant Week, and continues to explore creative ways to promote and support the community's hospitality industry.
- The region's arts and cultural organizations continue to struggle as nearly all revenue streams remain negatively impacted by the pandemic. Advocacy for the vital role this sector will play in our community's recovery and support for investments that drive the creative economy are essential.

EQUITY & INCLUSION

- Catch Des Moines published The History Issue of the Catch Des Moines visitors guide featuring stories of the people, places, and events that have brought us together and shaped our community. The issue [included a reflection from Leo Landis](#), State Curator at the Iowa Historical Museum, discussing stories of notable Black figures who made an impact on central Iowa. The visitor's guide also included a feature on the Historic Jordan House in West Des Moines, highlighting the role James Jordan played in the Underground Railroad. You can download [the History Issue here](#).
- Catch Des Moines was proud to endorse the United Way of Central Iowa's 21-Day Equity Challenge and promoted the challenge to our audiences. Catch Des Moines recognizes that together, all can make Greater Des Moines a more welcoming and equitable place for residents and visitors who may become our future neighbors.
- Greg Edwards signed the Greater Des Moines Partnership's [CEO Commitment to Racial Equity](#); a pledge focused on increasing workplace and community equality in Greater Des Moines.
- The Des Moines Art Center recently unveiled its latest exhibit, Black Stories. On display now through January, the exhibit presents Black artists' artwork in the Art Center's permanent collections and invites audiences to share their personal stories in response to the works.
- Bravo Greater Des Moines was proud to work with our cultural partners to provide artwork for each day of United Way's 21-Day Equity Challenge. These moving, multi-media pieces connected participants to each day's topic and created platforms for conversation.

NEWS & EVENTS

- Catch Des Moines recently launch two new videos as part of the ongoing "S's are Silent" campaign. The [outdoors video](#) speaks to both visitors and locals, encouraging them to take advantage of outdoor amenities such as paved trails and water trails, as well as outdoor attractions. The "[Greater Des Moines Says 'Welcome!'](#)" video targets meeting planners, letting them know that Greater Des Moines is open for business with safety measures in place.
- In October, Greater Des Moines was listed by Livability as one of the "[2020 Top 100 Places to Live.](#)" As a follow up to the story, Livability ran a [City Spotlight: Why Des Moines is one of the best places to live in America.](#)

COLLABORATION

- **Invest DSM and Bravo 'artist-in-residence' collaboration** – In continued efforts to demonstrate the power of alignment of arts and social impact, an artist-in-residence pilot project collaboration between Bravo and [Invest DSM](#) is underway. Eleanor Kahn, an interdisciplinary artist primarily working in scenic design and installation, was selected as the AiR for this project. Kahn, an Iowa native and Iowa State University alum, has experience developing immersive and participatory theatrical environments, including an interactive sculptural installation in Millennium Park celebrating Chicago's 2019 Year of Theater. Kahn completed her first site visit on October 15 and is energized by initial ideas about opportunities for art to amplify economic and community priorities. Over the course of the 6-month collaboration, Kahn will focus primarily on the Dogtown neighborhood. Her creative process will be informed by a discovery process developed through community input resulting in a final project by mid-2021.
- Small business and restaurant support
- Shoreline Signal collaboration with CIWT
- Catch Des Moines recently launched the "Greater Des Moines Cares: [Stay Safe Pledge](#)" in collaboration with Polk County, The Greater Des Moines Partnership, Iowa Lodging Association, and the Iowa Restaurant Association. The pledge is a commitment to accountability for both businesses and patrons to agree to health and safety measures and support local businesses' economic recovery, particularly those in the hospitality sector.

GOVERNANCE CAPITAL

Mayor Bob Andeweg, Mayor Sara Kurovski and Art Wittmack

Central Iowa governments will sustain partnerships to optimize process coordination and regional governance.

HIGHLIGHTS, PROJECTS, AND WINS

The stormwater efforts have been progressing across the region. A two-day training was held the week of November 16 by the Iowa Storm Water Education Program. Over 50 individuals from the region attended. This comprehensive training provided a design approach to manage both small and large storm events to improve water quality and reduce water quantity. It went over how to design and review stormwater systems. The new Iowa Stormwater Management Manual, design tools, and approaches that will achieve compliance with the USC were covered. Most cities are on track for Q1 2021 implementation.

Urbandale has been focused on responding wisely to the challenges of the pandemic while continuing to deliver the projects and services that the community relies on. Urbandale continues to evolve its Onward Urbandale COVID-19 response guide according to public health data. This has meant a move to hybrid City Council meetings and a gradual re-opening of city facilities. It can be considered a “win” that the City’s experience with employees becoming sick with COVID-19 has been limited.

Urbandale has completed major infrastructure projects, including the reconstruction of 72nd Street, a one-mile long section of 104th Street and worked with the IDOT to open the Urban Loop Meredith Drive half-diamond and Iowa 141 flyover bridge.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

By far the biggest challenge has been the complications of COVID-19 as it impacts nearly every area of work for the city’s across our region. There is an associated, as-yet-undefined financial impact that will become clearer as city’s enter the budget season.

EQUITY & INCLUSION

The Urbandale City Council held a listening session on race and diversity this summer. During the session which was attended by nearly 100 people in-person and online, the Urbandale Mayor, City Council, Police Chief and City Manager listened to the experiences of people in Urbandale regarding issues of race and diversity. Last month, the City Council held a work session to act on what they heard, defining five areas that they could take action on to improve. Staff is now working on responses to those areas.

NEWS & EVENTS

- The opening of the Urban Loop interchanges is a benefit not just for Urbandale, but the neighboring communities of Grimes and Johnston, too. We expect the economic development impacts to be a benefit for the entire Metro.
- The City of Urbandale is awaiting the results of our bi-annual citizen survey.
- Urbandale is currently evaluating the potential impact of participating in the development of the Central Iowa Water Trails Program; no decision has been made yet.
- The Urbandale City Council approved and adopted the 2018 International Residential Code, International Building Code, International Existing Building Code and the International Swimming Pool and Spa Code ordinances; the Fire Code ordinance; the Electrical Code ordinance; the Mechanical Code Regulations ordinance; and the Plumbing Code Regulations ordinance. In doing so, the City improved its ISO rating to 3 for both commercial and residential properties.

COLLABORATION

- Urbandale collaborated with Polk County, the Greater Des Moines Partnership and private business to assist nearly three dozen small businesses negatively impacted by COVID-19 through the Small Business Relief Grant.

HUMAN CAPITAL

Elisabeth Buck, Renee Miller, Mary Bontrager and Greg Nichols

Central Iowa will feature a workforce with the skills and training necessary to support optimal economic development.

HIGHLIGHTS, PROJECTS, AND WINS

- After the Partnership paused their digital talent attraction campaign for several months, the campaign relaunched in July with a new theme: "This Must Be the Place." To date, there have been 1.3 million impressions in 2020. As anticipated, we are experiencing high interest and activity from larger metropolitan cities with high-density populations. The top performing geographic locations are: Chicago, Los Angeles, Dallas - Ft. Worth, San Francisco-San Jose, Sacramento, Washington D.C., Houston, Detroit, Atlanta and Boston. The campaign includes targeted messaging focused on attracting remote workers. Over 85% of sessions are with new users.

Education Adaptation and Back to School / Return to Learn

- United Way continues to track daily updates across the 20 school districts.
- In early November, United Way launched a free text message support initiative, TextSupport: Central Iowa Schools. Students, parents, caregivers, and supportive service providers of students attending school in Polk, Dallas, or Warren county schools can sign up to receive updates about their schools and community resources via text message. TextSupport: Central Iowa Schools sends weekly customized text updates and announcements for each district to subscribers, including information on where to receive free meals, transportation, rent/utility support and other critical community resources in an effort to help students focus on their education and provide awareness of organizations and programs that are available to help families meet their needs during this challenging time.
- In January 2021, United Way will launch a homework hotline. This hotline will be easily accessed by calling 211. Volunteers will answer support calls from students, families and care providers needing assistance in navigating virtual and hybrid learning experiences through the "Homework Hotline."

Childcare

- There has been an expansion of several traditional childcare centers to integrate school-aged children in support of hybrid and virtual learning.
- Continued advocacy with the state of Iowa to extend childcare center supports because of the pandemic. This would extend the option for DHS to reimburse for two units of childcare assistance for school-aged children and reimburse childcare centers based on enrollment vs attendance.

Central Iowa Works

- Central Iowa Works was awarded a grant by the National Fund for Workforce Solutions to focus on developing recovery plans for new economic conditions and redesign local jobs alongside employers to create more inclusive economies that enable frontline workers to achieve financial resiliency and ultimately economic mobility. The grant includes two phases: 1) a planning phase focused on recovery and 2) an

implementation and evaluation phase focused on redesign efforts. This award aligns with United Way's Thriving Workforce initiative that has its foundation in job quality outcomes for marginalized populations.

Transportation Gaps Analysis

- The Transportation Gap project has moved into a second phase utilizing a social impact lab framework. Carlos Rojas and Steve Whitty are leading a strategically identified, diverse, team through a design thinking process where solutions will be identified and tested before full implementation and scaling.
- DART and others are actively utilizing the Transportation Gap Analysis as a key input as they continue to design and reimagine transportation solutions.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

- The opportunity to transition the Community DEI vision statement, guiding principles and measurement tool work to the umbrella of Capital Crossroads.
- Challenges remain those systemic issues – the most vulnerable are the most impacted. How can we work to provide solutions to those that need it most?

EQUITY & INCLUSION

- The Partnership continues its increased focus on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) through programming, messaging and calls to action. In September, we unveiled the **CEO Commitment to Racial Equity** resulting in more than 200 CEO's signing the pledge. In partnership with United Way of Central Iowa and their 21-Day Equity Challenge, on Nov. 10 we hosted the annual Inclusion Summit: Rising to the Equity Challenge. Over 1000 individuals registered to participate in the day-long event featuring national keynote speakers and local panels of experts.
- In November, we concluded a 6-part webinar series focused on recruiting and retaining Untapped Talent. To assist businesses in this area, we have updated and enhanced our online Untapped Talent toolkit.
- As part of the Partnership's commitment to DEI, we committed to improving resources to manage equity, diversity and inclusion and ensure that it provides added value in respect to economic recovery. In November, we announced one new resource. In June of this year, Sanjita Pradhan, Director of Diversity and Inclusion, completed the Institute for Diversity Certification's Certified Diversity Professional (CDP)[®] program. Through a licensing agreement with the Society for Diversity, Inc., Pradhan will facilitate certification prep courses, as well as provide support for teams who seek certification in DSM.
- The United Way's 21 Day Equity Challenge reached more than 23,000 individuals, including many employees of central Iowa employers.

NEWS & EVENTS

- Success of the United Way's 21 Day Equity Challenge
- Success of the Summit

COLLABORATION

- Ongoing collaboration between the Physical Capital with the Transportation Gaps Analysis work
- Continued collaboration with Social Capital on DEI efforts

NATURAL CAPITAL

Hannah Inman, Larry James and Julie Stewart

Central Iowa will be recognized nationally as a best practice community for its environmental sustainability.

HIGHLIGHTS, PROJECTS, AND WINS

Central Iowa Water Trails

- The work of Central Iowa Water Trails (CIWT) continues with great momentum. There are several exciting updates to some of the regional projections for CIWT: the West Des Moines Boat House and portage path at Racoon River Park were completed; Polk County's Mally's Park Access site on Four Mile Creek was completed; Johnston's first site on Beaver Creek contracted with an outfitter over the summer and saw a great turnout for rentals; and their second site at Lew Clarkson Park is just about finished and should be complete by the start of the 2021 season; Van Meter completed Phase I of their water trail's project. In addition, the four BUILD Grant sites: 60% design for Scott Avenue, Prospect Park, Harriet Street and Birdland Marina is complete. The design teams are approaching their first major deadline with a submittal to the Iowa Department of Transportation for review. Next the teams will be working towards 90% design completion sometime in the Spring of 2021 with the ultimate deadline for design and permitting by June 2021. The teams are currently on track to reach these milestones on time and anticipate construction mobilizing in Q4 of 2021.
- The Governance process is also underway, and funding and maintenance agreements are working to be finalized in early 2021. Large group discussions with reviews of the 28E agreement drafts began in early October with plans to conclude in early 2021; CIWT is also working on the regional safety, signage and site buildout strategies and plans.
- CIWT continues to work with Strategic America and their partners Spawn Ideas, on a new name and brand for the project. The Marketing Committee, Branding Steering Committee, and Inclusion Committee of CIWT will all work closely together to continue moving this campaign forward.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

- Providing information on things to do outdoors in the winter; educating the public on things to do outside like snowshoeing, bird-watching and more (in tandem with Polk County Conservation)
- Outdoor seating, right of way, reimaging spaces and use of streets to create more destinations and experiential retail

EQUITY & INCLUSION

- The Social Capital met with Maggie on some upcoming efforts of CIWT.

NEWS & EVENTS

- Great Outdoors Foundations subscription boxes are still available. [Visit their website](#) to get signed up in time for the release of their Winter Wonderland box on January 7th.

- Great Outdoors Foundation is currently a contender in Veridian’s Spark the Spirit campaign. The Spark the Spirit campaign will award \$34,000 to nonprofits across Iowa and eastern Nebraska. From now through Thursday, November 26, visit <https://www.veridiancu.org/sparkthespirit/> to vote for GOF to make it into the Top Three and receive a portion of the campaign’s donation.

COLLABORATION

- Central Iowa Water Trails and the Great Outdoors Foundation continue to strengthen the upstream downstream partnership by collaborating with various other organizations including the Greater Des Moines Partnership, Iowa Soybean Association and Capital Crossroads. This group of stakeholders will be holding several meetings in the next few months to continue to extend their reach.
- Great Outdoors Foundation is also partnering with several organizations in the metro area, like Polk County Conservation, to help provide activities in their Winter Wonderland subscription box to encourage activity outdoors during the winter months.
- CIWT partnering with Greater Des Moines Partnership, Bravo Greater Des Moines and Iowa Arts Council to draft public art master plan, including the Shoreline Signals campaign—using public art to communicate water safety to users.

PHYSICAL CAPITAL

Todd Ashby, Eric Burmeister and Elizabeth Presutti

Smart planning, timely infrastructure development, and implementation of state-of-the-art technologies will sustain Central Iowa population growth for the present and future.

HIGHLIGHTS, PROJECTS, AND WINS

Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART)

- Electric Bus Unveiling - DART unveiled the state’s first electric bus in partnership with MidAmerican Energy on Oct. 1. Learn more about the public-private partnership that led to Iowa’s first all-electric [buses here](#).
- Service to Amazon in Bondurant - DART will implement its next service change on Nov. 15. This change includes an extension of Local Route 17 to the new Amazon fulfillment center in Bondurant—adding Fixed Route service to Bondurant for the first time.
- DMPS Partnership - DMPS and DART have worked closely together to ensure safe transportation for middle and high school students as DMPS returned to in-person learning this fall. DART resumed school service on Oct. 26 to middle schools, ensuring middle school students have a safe way to get to school.

Highlights from the City of West Des Moines – Community & Economic Development Department

Continuous Efforts by the City

Metro Home Improvement Program (MHIP) – Owner-occupied Rehabilitation Program for households less than 80% Area Median Income

- 8 cities in partnership since 2003 - Altoona, Ankeny, Bondurant, Grimes, Polk City, Urbandale, West Des Moines, and Windsor Heights

- Each city contributes funds to cover rehabilitation costs and administration by the City of West Des Moines
- City rehabilitation contributions are matched dollar for dollar by grant from Polk County Housing Trust Fund
- The type of work completed on homes includes: HVAC, electrical, roof, windows, weatherization, and health/safety items
- Maximum of \$12,500 is spent per house. Funds are offered to homeowner as a 5-year forgivable grant which is placed as a lien on the property

Dallas County Local Housing Trust Fund, Inc. (DCLHTF) – a 501(c)(3) organization managed by a board of directors and has an agreement with City of West Des Moines to administer programs

- DCLHTF offers an owner-occupied rehabilitation program for households less than 80% Area Median Income
- Funding for the Trust Fund comes from cities in Dallas County and the Iowa Finance Authority
- The type of work completed on homes includes HVAC, electrical, roof, windows, weatherization, and health/safety items
- Maximum of \$10,000 is spent per house. Funds are offered to homeowner as a 5-year forgivable grant which is placed as a lien on the property

Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) – The City of West Des Moines is an entitlement city and as such receives an annual allocation of CDBG funds from the federal government.

- The City has used these funds for a variety of programs; some focused-on housing including:
 - Transit Pass Program,
 - Homeless Prevention,
 - building of single family “green” homes,
 - LED lighting in public spaces of Valley Junction,
 - owner-occupied rehabilitation,
 - WI-FI access for low-income residents in Valley Junction,
 - Transitional Housing Program.

Neighborhood Finance Corporation (NFC) Program – The City provides \$200,000 annually from the general fund to fund a home repair and home purchase programs without income restrictions through NFC.

Woodland Hills Housing TIF District – The City established the TIF district as a housing TIF, meaning a portion of the funds must go toward affordable housing efforts. This fund is expected to generate approximately \$5 million toward affordable housing in West Des Moines. City Council has approved funding several programs including:

- Upper Story Housing in Valley Junction
- Owner-occupied Rehabilitation
- Down Payment Assistance

COVID-19 Programs

Homeless Prevention – The City has added additional Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to the existing Homeless Prevention program specifically to assist with rent, mortgage and utility payments for up to 3 months for those affected by COVID-19.

Other Housing Efforts by the City within last 15 years

Phenix Elementary

- Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recover assistance was utilized to rehabilitate Phenix Elementary at 415 7th Street.
 - Owned and operated by Community Housing Initiatives (CHI).
- Opened in September 2018 as 17 apartment units for mixed income households who are artists.

Valley Station

- Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recover assistance was utilized to construct two buildings on Lincoln Street.
 - Owned and operated by Community Housing Initiatives (CHI).
- Opened in April 2015 as 52 apartment units for mixed income senior households.

Infill Housing

- 221 8th Street & 225 8th Street – city purchased the lots and two new single-family houses for low-income households are being constructed
- 124 1st Street – City purchased lot – single-family home was constructed by Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity for low-income household
- 927 Maple Street & 931 Maple Street – city purchased the lots and sold them to HOME, Inc. who built a single-family house on each lot for a low-income buyer

Housing Needs Assessment – the City completed a housing needs assessment to look at all housing needs throughout the city in 2018.

Polk County Housing Trust Fund (PCHTF)

All episodes of Redlining in Des Moines are now streaming! [Join PCHTF on a five-part personal video tour](#) that explores the history of racially restrictive housing policies in the State of Iowa and the City of Des Moines.

Transportation

- The Transload facility development continues to move forward, with Des Moines Industrial reaching operational agreements with railroads and continuing to assemble land.
- The Iowa DOT's Integrated Corridor Management project has formed working groups to allow for local stakeholders to help develop solutions for the areas of personal mobility, traffic signal coordination, and freeway operations.
- An update to the Iowa Highway 5/US Highway 65 Freeway Corridor Interstate System Designation study, originally completed in 2012, has concluded. The updated study shows a reduced cost to upgrade the US 65/IA 5 bypass to interstate standards from the 2012 study due to changes in design requirements. The

MPO continues to work with the low DOT, Farm Bureau, and other stakeholders to move the project forward.

- The MPO has worked to prepare for its upcoming round of Surface Transportation Block Grant funding applications, in which it awards approximately \$13 million in US DOT funds to member governments.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

At DART, the increase in community spread of COVID-19 in our community has resulted in an increase in COVID-19 among DART employees. Fortunately, there have been no major disruptions to service as a result. DART is proactively testing all employees to prevent any further spread of COVID-19 in its workforce. In addition, there is an ongoing focus on minimizing revenue losses due to reduced ridership as many central lowans continue to work from home and limit their travel.

EQUITY & INCLUSION

At DART, they have:

- Developed a DEI Commitment statement
- Formed an employee-led DEI committee
- Started DEI training for all staff
- Utilized the 4 Equity tool as they develop a public participation plan to solicit feedback in 2021 on the future of transit services in the region

In addition, the MPO has been working to update its Environmental Justice (EJ) methodology. In this work, the MPO areas with a relatively higher degree of persons that are traditionally disadvantaged. This information is useful to help the MPO and its members pursue the reduction of inequities in the transportation system.

NEWS & EVENTS

- Electric Buses starting service on Route 60 - DART's new electric buses will be added into service on the Route 60, the Ingersoll/University Avenue loop in Des Moines, in early December.
- Reduced Fare Pilot Program - DART will begin piloting a new reduced fare program for six months, beginning January 1, 2021. The new program will allow individuals who can demonstrate proof of unemployment, receiving food assistance or participating in workforce assistance or job training to receive half-fare following third party verification of their eligibility.
- An online public involvement opportunity is currently underway for the Integrated Corridor Management (ICM) project at <https://desmoinesicm.com/>.

COLLABORATION

- Cultural Capital – Thanks to funding from Bravo, DART is working with its member communities to expand access to public art by adding bus shelters with art throughout the region.
- Human Capital - Ongoing work with DMPS to ensure safe, school transportation is available for middle and high school students as well as staff.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

Angie Dethlefs-Trettin, Shaimaa Aly, Daniel Hoffman-Zinnel and Izaah Knox

Central Iowa will become the gold standard of the successful 21st century region.

HIGHLIGHTS, PROJECTS, AND WINS

- Social Capital continues to offer 4 Equity presentations at nonprofit board meetings to socialize the tool for local leaders and opens the door to organizational discussions around taking action around Equity at key decision-points. There are plans to present at the Proteus board meeting in December and also conversations underway with Hy-Vee.
- In development is Social Capital's "Connections 4 Equity," a how-to guide for outreach to include and engage diverse stakeholders with a directory of nonprofit organizations that could be partners in sharing opportunities.
- Social Capital provided feedback on plans for a DEI survey and the formulation of a Racial Equity in DSM Task Force.
- A major win for the community was United Way of Central Iowa's 21 Day Equity Challenge. All of Social Capital participated.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

- Equity and inclusion continue to be leading issues in our community and nationally. Leaders and organizations are at different stages of awareness and action and take varying approaches to the work. This creates both opportunities and challenges in striving towards shared understanding of what needs to happen to achieve racial equity in our community. Social Capital's philosophy has been to consult, coordinate and collaborate as appropriate on various initiatives, keeping the 4 Equity tool at the core of the work.

EQUITY & INCLUSION

- Equity and Inclusion is core to Social Capital's work, our goals, and informs all the projects we take on.

NEWS & EVENTS

- Capital Crossroads launched the "Events 4 Equity" calendar – to share equity-focused events throughout the region. You can see [the press release here](#) and the [calendar here](#).

COLLABORATION

- Social Capital welcomed Ryan Moon from the Partnership to ideate around opportunities to expand the diversity of the audience for the Partnership's Candidate Forum Series.
- The launch of the Events 4 Equity calendar involved extensive outreach to community groups and organizations hosting these events

WELLNESS CAPITAL

Jami Haberl, Suzanne Mineck and Brad Anderson

Lead in elevating the conversation and giving voice to the vast number of opportunities to improve the overall social and emotional well-being of the community through advocacy and awareness.

HIGHLIGHTS, PROJECTS, AND WINS

- The Wellness Capital is launching a monthly speaker series in 2021 titled “Intersections in Health.” It will feature a variety of speakers from numerous disciplines that focus on everything from wellness to social isolation to children’s health to mental health. The series will be announced in mid-December.

Make It OK

- Make It OK completed their six-week virtual mental health series, in tandem with the Greater Des Moines Partnership and Capital Crossroads, titled “6 Weeks of Make It OK.”
 - Over 300 individuals attended the sessions. They are all recorded and available online [at the link here.](#)
- Make It OK hosted six virtual ambassador trainings this fall.
- Make It OK sponsored the ‘Lifting the Veil’ series this October/November through Business Publications Corporation.

Iowa Healthiest State

- October was Healthiest State Month. 165 people attended the 5-2-1-0 (Virtual) Healthy Choices Count! Summit on October 15. There were 14,800+ visits to 5-2-1-0 Healthy Choices Count! content on the Healthiest State Initiative website from August to October.
- Iowans facing food insecurity have redeemed more than \$1 million in fruits and vegetables at farmers markets and grocery stores utilizing [Double Up Food Bucks](#) since it began as a pilot program in 2016. A total of \$1,029,461 Double Up Food Bucks have been redeemed as of October 12, 2020.
- Iowans in all 99 counties helped to mark the 10th anniversary of the [Healthiest State Annual Walk](#), presented by Delta Dental of Iowa, by teaming up to walk for 30 minutes on October 7.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

- A continued challenge is finding the ongoing financial support to fund the personnel time for coordinating the Make It OK efforts in Polk County. We’ve discussed organizing around working groups to take on some of the action items, however, that too takes time, energy and resources that are hard to come by.

EQUITY & INCLUSION

- Make It OK worked to be inclusive with its webinar series this fall, by including individuals from diverse sectors of our community.

NEWS & EVENTS

- Polk County supported the Make It OK campaign with dollars to fund a 'Winter Wellness' campaign around mental health and breaking the stigma. It launched at the beginning of November and runs through the end of December.
- Through a \$500,000 grant to Sesame Workshop from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, a coalition of child health advocates known as the Iowa Alliance for Healthy Kids is bringing the Sesame Street in Communities initiative to Greater Des Moines. The alliance plans to roll out the program in Central Iowa in 2021 and expand it statewide within the next two years.
- Sesame Street in Communities, an initiative of the Sesame Workshop, which produces "Sesame Street," is an online resource content hub for children and families that also offers professional development tools for childcare providers. The initiative seeks "to reach vulnerable children and families through an online resource content hub filled with videos, articles, games and tips to help parents with ABCs, 123s, healthy habits, and also how to help kids manage through difficult times and dealing with tough topics." The goal of the initiative is to raise public awareness of the importance of kids' social and emotional health, recognizing that helping children to build skills like managing emotions, building good relationships and making good choices is vital to their overall health. The [website created for our community is here](#).

COLLABORATION

- The Wellness Capital consistently overlaps with the Social Capital and Physical Capital, as all three Capitals are engaged in bringing Nikole Hannah-Jones to Des Moines in 2021.