



Outreach Highlights

January 13th and 14th 2016

❖ Senior Focus Group | Westside Community Center

- Valley Junction is a wonderful, safe and interesting area;
- Westside Community Center is a great facility, but needs to be expanded;
- Area needs a better selection of dining options like sit-down restaurants (steak, Italian, sushi, etc.) and an ice cream place;
- A theater and/or more entertainment would be good;
- Rising property assessments is a concern – need to keep the area affordable for folks on fixed incomes;
- Parking is a concern, particularly near the Westside Community Center and during events like the Farmers Market – consider bringing back the shuttle bus that ran from Hillside Elementary;
- Need to do a better job of celebrating the areas railroad history – consider converting the train station into a museum;
- Need more ‘decent’ affordable housing for handicapped/seniors – Valley Station is too expensive.

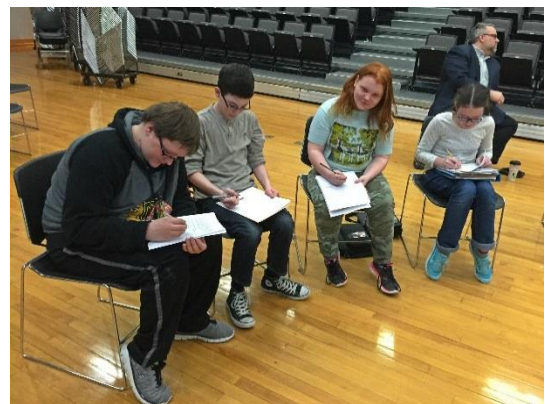
❖ Student Focus Group | Stilwell Junior High

Q1: What do you love about living in the neighborhood / business district?

- The people;
- The vibe - it feels like you're stepping back in time / feels like home;
- Eclectic mix of shops;
- Small-town uniqueness;
- Events;

Q2: What could be added / what should get built?

- More landscaping, particularly shade trees;
- Reduce visibility of parking lots (landscaping);
- Bike parking;
- Daycare for parents who want to shop;
- Community center for teens
- Bike lanes on side streets so you aren't on the busy streets;
- Apartments;
- Fix-up existing houses;
- More food trucks;
- A ‘big kid’ playground, fountain, or sculpture to climb on;
- Fewer bars, more kid and family friendly restaurants and snack food places;
- More sculpture/public art – perhaps some done by students!





❖ 'Today + Tomorrow' Workshop | Vision Madlibs Results

Valley Junction Business District		
Keyword Descriptors	Existing Destinations	Desired Improvements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Great vibe · Play · Shop · Eat · Meet people · Local · Unique/eclectic · Quaint · Variety · Accessibility · Busy · Friendly/fun · Edgy · Safe · Quiet/peaceful · Historic · Clean · Attractive · Walkable · Vibrant · Convenient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Valley Junction · 5th Street · Railroad Avenue · Raccoon River Park · Farmers Market · Legion Park · Browns Wood · Antique shopping · Coopers · Historic City Hall · Holiday Park · Listen to live music · Val Lanes · Finding Iowa · Longest Yard · Jordan Creek 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Signage · Streetscape · Flowers · Bike friendly · More restaurants · Energy independent · Infrastructure · New shops · Vendors · Outdoor stage · Building restorations · Preservation · Best breakfast in town

Surrounding Neighborhoods		
Keyword Descriptors	Existing Destinations	Desired Improvements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Affordable · Walkable · Active · Convenient · Safe · Neighborly · Friendly · Historic · Connected · Close to amenities · Schools · Small town living · Unique · Well preserved · No place like it · Area parks · Beautiful · Diverse · Character · Bike paths · Atmosphere · Central location · Transitional homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Local Parks · Raccoon River · Holiday Park · Valley Junction · Local Brewery · Farmers Market · Legion Park · Close to DSM Airport · Close to downtown · Jordan Creek Mall · Phenix Park · Union Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Dog Park · Outdoor Concerts · Bike connectivity · Bike parking · Advance parks · Celebrate parks · Building maintenance · More lighting · Streetscaping



❖ 'Today + Tomorrow' Workshop | Group Discussion / Priorities

Valley Junction Business District		
Groups	Assets	Challenges
<i>Group 1</i>	1. Locally owned / unique shops 2. Walkability 3. Convenience (short drive from anywhere)	1. Ped/Bike access across Railroad (tracks and road) 2. Parking on Thursday nights 3. Lack of space for new shops
<i>Group 2</i>	1. Access 2. Historic buildings 3. Shopping	1. Parking 2. High rents 3. Preservation / maintenance
<i>Group 3</i>	1. Local owners/concern for district 2. Affordable to start a business 3. Small town feel 4. Walkability 5. Artistic appeal	1. Inconsistent business hours 2. Ped/bike access across Railroad Ave./tracks 3. East Village gets more attention due to nightlife, proximity to cultural amenities 4. Need to promote more outside 5. Need to do a better job of telling areas story/history 6. Building owners unwilling to improve/preserve structures
<i>Group 4</i>	1. Historic 2. Diversity (Shops, owners, collegial atmosphere) 3. Sense of Community Other – Walkability, affordability, seasonal streetscape, plowing	1. Disparity of codes 2. Need better diversity of types of shops & ownership 3. Parking/Handicap access/congestion Other – Need to respond to completion from East Village, need more greenery and trees
<i>Group 5</i>	1. Variety of businesses 2. Family friendly 3. Walkable	1. Event parking 2. Renovation of older buildings/businesses 3. Limited space for new businesses

Surrounding Neighborhoods	
Assets	Challenges
1. Walkability/access to services 2. Pride in community 3. Parks/mature neighborhood	1. Incentives for home improvements 2. Home owner education 3. Sustainable opportunities
1. Variety/character of housing 2. Neighborly 3. Diversity	1. Off-street parking 2. Affordable family housing 3. Property/home maintenance
1. Convenient location to I-235/Hwy 5 2. Parks 3. Small town feel 4. No high rises 5. Diverse place to live and work 6. Unique	1. Maintenance of properties is spotty 2. Technology/access to information 3. Code requirements 4. Can be noisy 5. More connection between residents and businesses 6. Rental maintenance 7. Cost of rental can't be too low
1. Availability of starter homes 2. Affordability 3. Proximity of parks 4. Safe 5. Good schools	1. Alley maintenance 2. Dilapidated facades/buildings (apartment buildings unkept) 3. Phenix closing 4. Lack of sufficient home improvement funding
1. Affordable 2. Parks (neighborhood) 3. Long-term ownership	1. Code enforcement 2. Infrastructure 3. Low-income housing concentration

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MASTER PLAN



Today + Tomorrow Workshop | Each group presented their discussion findings and priorities (as listed in the matrix on the previous page).



Mike Hoffman, Project Manager, began the evening with a brief presentation on the project objectives.



Workshop participants chatted with consultants and each other following the evening's activities.