

CORALVILLE, IOWA
IOWA RIVERFRONT MASTER PLAN



MARCH 2012

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The City of Coralville and the design team would like to thank the following participants of the Community Action Team for their time and dedication creating a collaborative Riverfront Master Development Plan:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE VISION:
Coralville's Riverfront is a celebratory public landscape with regional appeal which offers unique and varied seasonal opportunities for recreational, educational, social, and cultural experiences.



IOWA RIVERFRONT MASTER PLAN

ABOVE: In the heart of the Iowa Riverfront Master Plan is the Iowa River Landing Riverfront Park and the Landing at the Iowa River.

BELOW: The Riverfront is envisioned to be a place of great diversity, offering activities throughout the seasons for people of all ages.



INTRODUCTION

In the autumn of 2010, the City of Coralville retained RDG Planning & Design and its planning and design team consisting of EarthView Environmental, LLC and VJ Engineering to create a Framework Plan and Master Plan for the Coralville riverfront of the Iowa River (hereby known in this document as the Riverfront). This plan is also intended to guide the development of the Clear Creek area immediately west of the Riverfront leading to Biscuit Creek and the 5th Street corridor leading to the Coralville Town Center due to their ability to connect to commercial, civic, residential and recreation areas of the community to the Riverfront.

The team was tasked with reviewing all existing planning efforts for and within these areas, understanding the regional context of the Riverfront and discovering the pertinent adjacencies and connections of the surrounding areas. Once this understanding was achieved, the team worked to dovetail the many planning elements into one cogent Master Plan for the future of the area.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was of great importance to the City of Coralville that the citizens of the community have the opportunity to

participate in the project by providing input regarding current and future use of the Riverfront. The design team and City agreed that it would be important to engage the public in multiple ways.

Community Action Team

The City created a Community Action Team (CAT) which was composed of citizens of the community, representing a range of ages and interests. The CAT participated in more than a dozen meetings, provided consistent input and direction to the planning team throughout the year-long planning process, and composed the vision for the future of the Riverfront.

Public Open Houses

Two public open houses were held to gain greater public participation. These large group meetings were highly valuable to the public input process. The open houses were conducted as forums where the



ABOVE: CAT Field trip to the whitewater park in Charles City, Iowa, Fall 2011

public could come and go. Each session also had a formal presentation where questions could be posed to the design team by those in attendance. In these sessions, information regarding project intent, scope and deliverables was presented by the design team. Feedback was gathered regarding the Framework Plan and Master Plan from those in attendance.

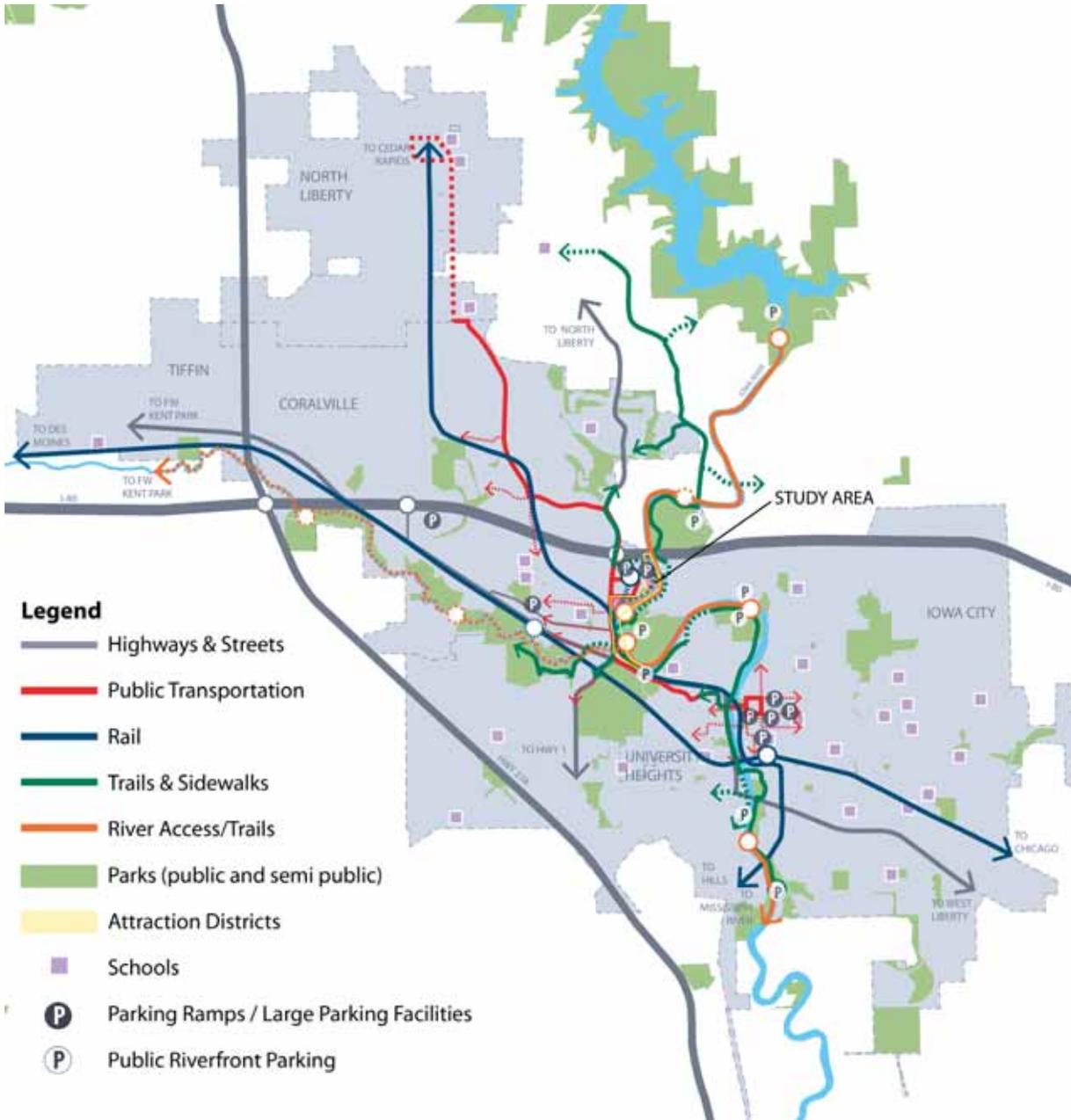
Internet Based Public Participation

To obtain greater participation from the general public, the design team created an internet-based questionnaire. The questionnaire allowed the public to rate the importance of a given aspect of the existing and potential Riverfront. The format also allowed participants to provide specific written feedback regarding the Riverfront. This information has allowed the design team to target areas of public concern throughout the process. The comprehensive results of this effort can be found in Appendix Section 8.1 of the full master plan document.

FRAMEWORK PLAN

The completed Framework Plan is a “high altitude” context study focusing on an inventory and connectivity assessment of Johnson County and the Coralville/Iowa City area’s public recreational, cultural and commercial amenities, places and events. The result of this effort is a comprehensive understanding of the existing context’s natural, commercial, cultural and recreational infrastructure and resources.

This plan is of critical importance to the creation of the Master Plan because it assisted the design team in building a strategy for the maintenance and reinforcement of the existing context’s strengths. It also allowed the design team and CAT to identify potential approaches to resolving framework deficiencies. For a comprehensive listing of Framework Plan recommendations please see Chapter 3 of the full master plan document.



FRAMEWORK PLAN CIRCULATION SYSTEM INVENTORY

The framework planning inventory revealed how the Riverfront in Coralville is at a key crossroad in the circulation system in the Iowa City/ Coralville metropolitan area. The design team recommends that the City of Coralville capitalize on and strengthen these relationships to create a vibrant Riverfront that can be enjoyed by all.

MASTER PLAN

The Master Plan utilizes the knowledge and understanding of the area's opportunities and constraints gained from the Framework Plan to knit together the multiple existing planning efforts into one coherent experience. This cohesion will be achieved by forging stronger physical connections between the Riverfront and the Coralville/Iowa City area and the continued repetition of design elements along these connections and throughout the project area.

Improved Physical Connections:

- Connection of existing trails to the Riverfront;
- Creation of new trails that lead users to Riverfront;
- Enhanced public transit with more frequent Riverfront stops;
- Improved wayfinding (vehicular, bicycle & pedestrian) from all areas of Coralville directing potential users to Riverfront.

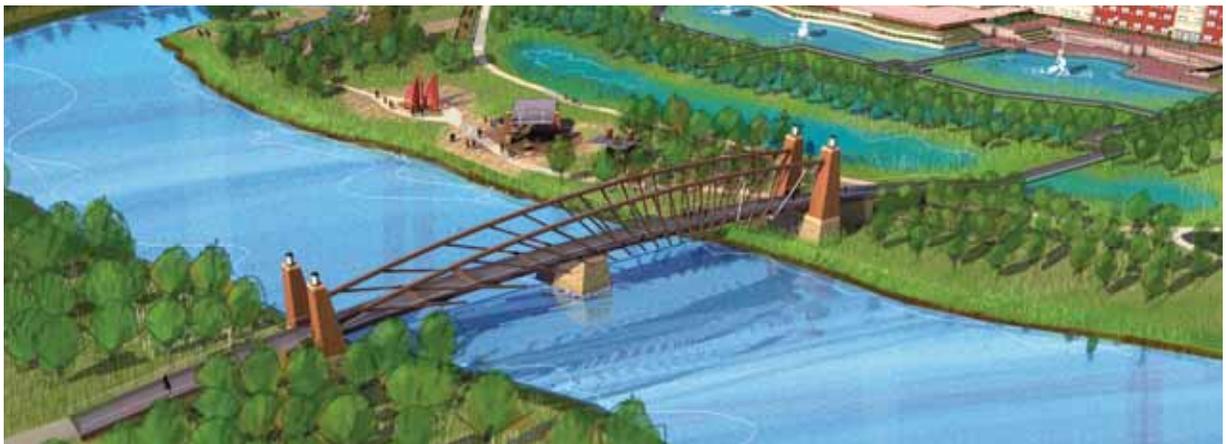
Consistent Application of Design Elements:

- Architectural Forms;
- Similar Materials;
- Color Palette;
- Site Furnishings;
- Landscape.

For a full overview of the proposed Riverfront development, please see Chapter 5 of the full master plan document.

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The area south of Interstate 80, east of 1st Avenue, and north of Clear Creek is highly connected to the Coralville community. The Iowa River Riverfront is not. These two statements seem contradictory given that the Riverfront and the aforementioned area are immediately adjacent to one another. However, after engaging the public in multiple formats, it was



ABOVE: A perspective rendering illustrates a proposed pedestrian bridge over the Iowa River near the Marriott Hotel.



ABOVE: A perspective rendering illustrates a ground level view of proposed riverfront trails, zipline, picnic shelters and seating.



ABOVE: A perspective rendering illustrates an expansion to the Iowa River Landing Wetland Park.

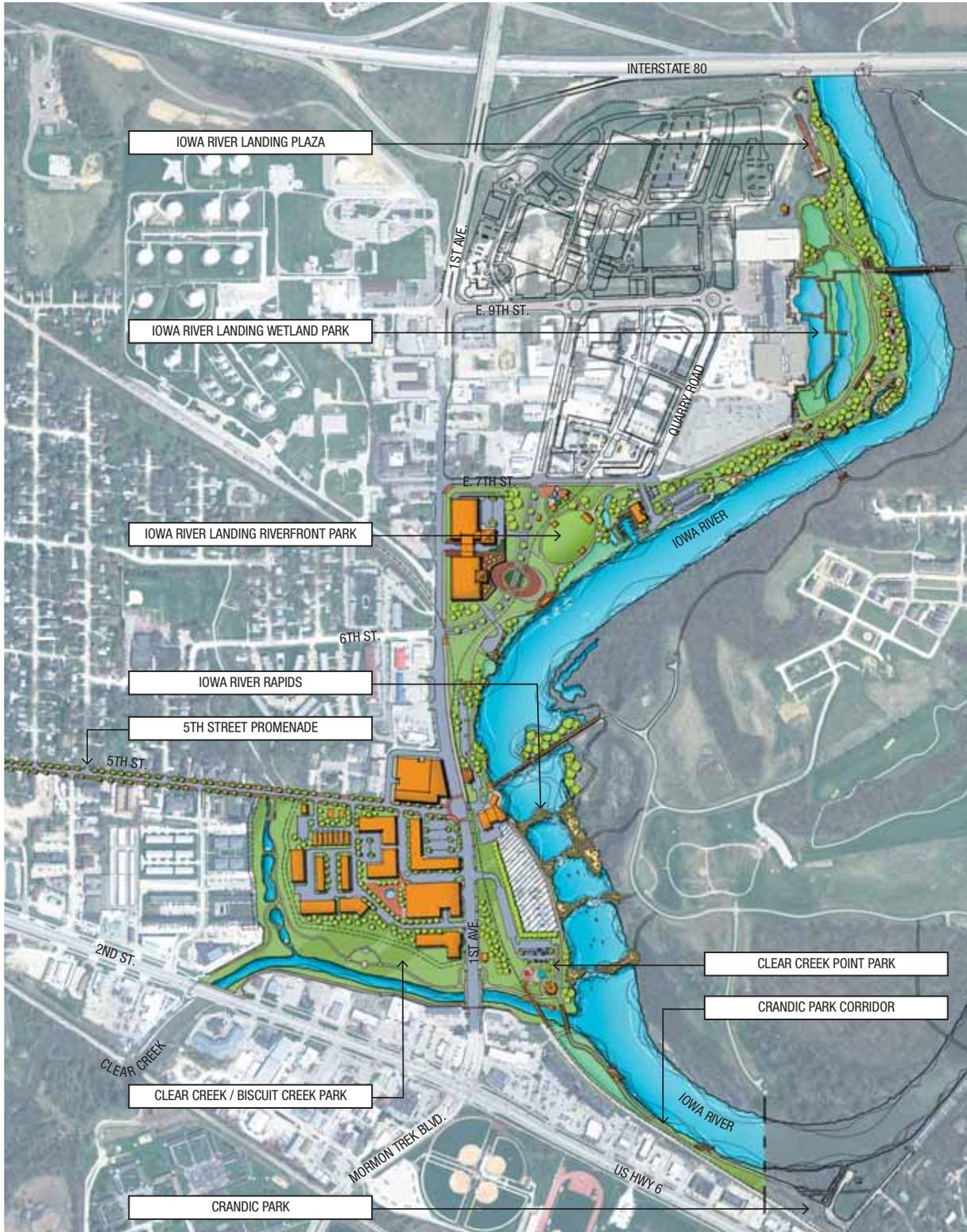
determined that these two statements are true. This is true of many communities that formed around river industry. The City of Coralville, Iowa, is no different in this respect. As commerce and industry at the Iowa River's edge were supplanted by commercial and residential development away from the river, the community lost its daily connection to the Riverfront. Until recently, a portion of the Riverfront south of Interstate 80 did contain recreational uses, but access to the Iowa River itself was primarily cut off by residential development. These circumstances have led the greater community to forget the great aesthetic and recreational value found at the Riverfront. Interestingly enough, while the human population of the area has largely forgotten the potential of the river,

the area's wildlife have not. The Iowa River within Coralville has become well known to those who enjoy watching the American Bald Eagles that nest and feed at the foot of the Iowa River Power Dam during the winter. The interest generated by this seasonal occurrence is a good example of the potential impact of rediscovery of and improvement to the Riverfront.

The primary recommendations of this Master Plan are intended to bring people to the Riverfront to experience its existing positive attributes; to create new venues for positive recreational, educational and commercial experiences; and to assist the rediscovery of the Coralville Riverfront's forgotten value.



ABOVE: A perspective rendering illustrates the proposed confluence of Clear Creek and the Iowa River.



OVERALL MASTER PLAN

The master plan above illustrates the Riverfront park system and the various program elements within the parks.

PROJECT PHASING

The phased implementation of the Riverfront Master Plan has been developed to allow for a flexible and predictable redevelopment of the area. While this plan recommends a Phase One effort to be accomplished within the next five years, it does not recommend particular subsequent phases. Instead, this plan has assembled packages of project elements that the design team believe can and should be implemented together. Each package is comprised of individual elements that are believed to be synergistic. Beyond Phase One, which provides primary preparation of the Riverfront for public use, this document recommends that each package be implemented as funding is available.

PHASE ONE RECOMMENDATION

Phase One will focus on implementing the public infrastructure needed to increase pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to the Riverfront, access to the edge of the Iowa River, and the basic physical improvements needed to facilitate larger public events (e.g. Fry Fest) at the Riverfront. The costs associated with new construction in Phase One are projected to be approximately \$1.4 Million. These costs are only for construction (i.e. they do not include soft costs such as design, engineering or permitting) and include

only elements of Phase One that are not currently designed or planned for construction (e.g. CRANDIC Corridor Trail, Clear Creek & Biscuit Creek Stormwater Improvements, etc.). For more information and greater detail concerning Phase One construction costs please see Chapter 6: Phasing and Budget Plan of the full master plan document.

Riverfront Preparation

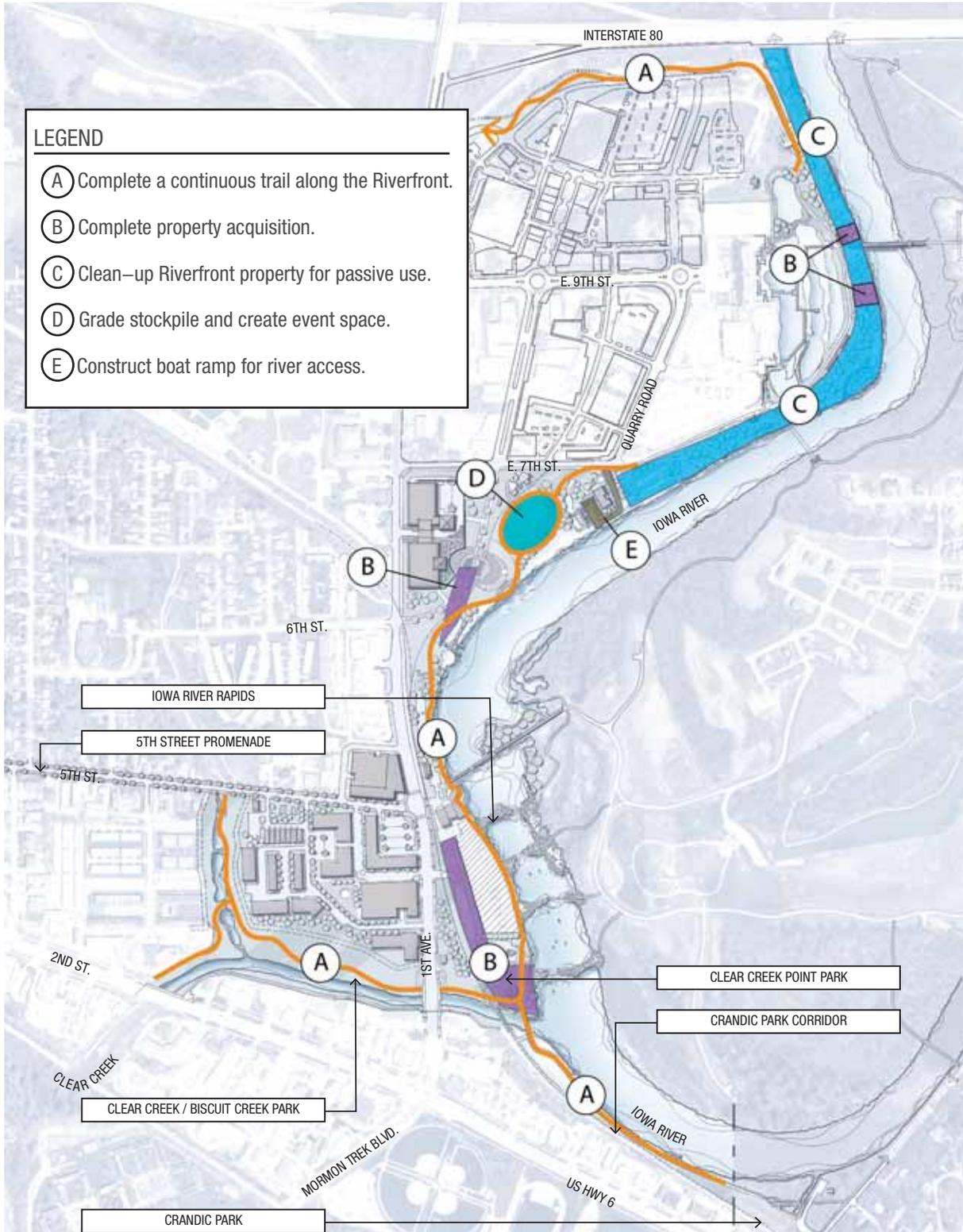
The following preliminary steps will need to be taken to prepare the Riverfront for public use and to set the stage for future development:

- Limited private property acquisition;
- General clean up and debris removal from existing public property, private property and riverbank clean up;
- Select grading and seeding of Riverfront property.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Connection

To improve pedestrian and bicycle connections from other parts of the community, a continuous trail network is needed throughout the entire length of the Riverfront. The following projects should be completed in the near future:

- Planned regrading and reconstruction of the CRANDIC corridor trail to connect with Iowa City trails.



PHASE ONE PLAN

The Phase One Plan illustrates the high priority Riverfront improvements that are critical to allowing community access to the Riverfront.

- Construct the pedestrian bridge over Clear Creek east of the CRANDIC Railroad bridge.
- Complete trail from the Iowa River Power Dam to Clear Creek.
- Construct Clear Creek and Biscuit Creek trails as part of the I–Jobs II Storm Water Improvements project.
- Construct trail from the Iowa River Power Dam to the intersection of E. 7th Street and Quarry Road, to connect to the Iowa River Landing Wetland Park.
- Construct the trail from the IRL Wetland Park, along Interstate 80 to 1st Avenue to connect to the Iowa River Landing Development and the 1st Avenue trail.

Riverfront Access

The Riverfront should be accessible to a variety of modes of transportation. Consider constructing the following:

- Boat ramp in the Landing at the Iowa River for access to the upper pool of the Iowa River.
- Temporary parking for trail users and Riverfront events in the IRL Riverfront Park area.
- Bus stops to access Riverfront trails.

Event Infrastructure

To improve engagement with the Riverfront, an event space is needed to host festivals and celebrations. The

event space will serve as the centerpiece of the Phase One Riverfront and should be heavily programmed to promote Riverfront awareness. The following steps will be required to prepare the Riverfront events space:

- Grade and seed the stock pile to accommodate the future park improvements.
- Install electrical, water, and sewer for future shelters, restrooms, and park lighting to minimize later disturbance.
- Provide temporary electrical connections for festivals and events.
- Construct oval trail around central event/open space field.
- Utilize temporary parking for events.

CONCLUSION

In the full master plan document you will find detailed information regarding the development of the completed Framework Plan and its recommendations, as well as the completed Master Plan for the Coralville Riverfront.

These plans are ambitious, yet achievable. With implementation, the potential value for current and future residents of Coralville is beyond measure, as people rediscover the Iowa Riverfront as a recreational, cultural, social and educational treasure.