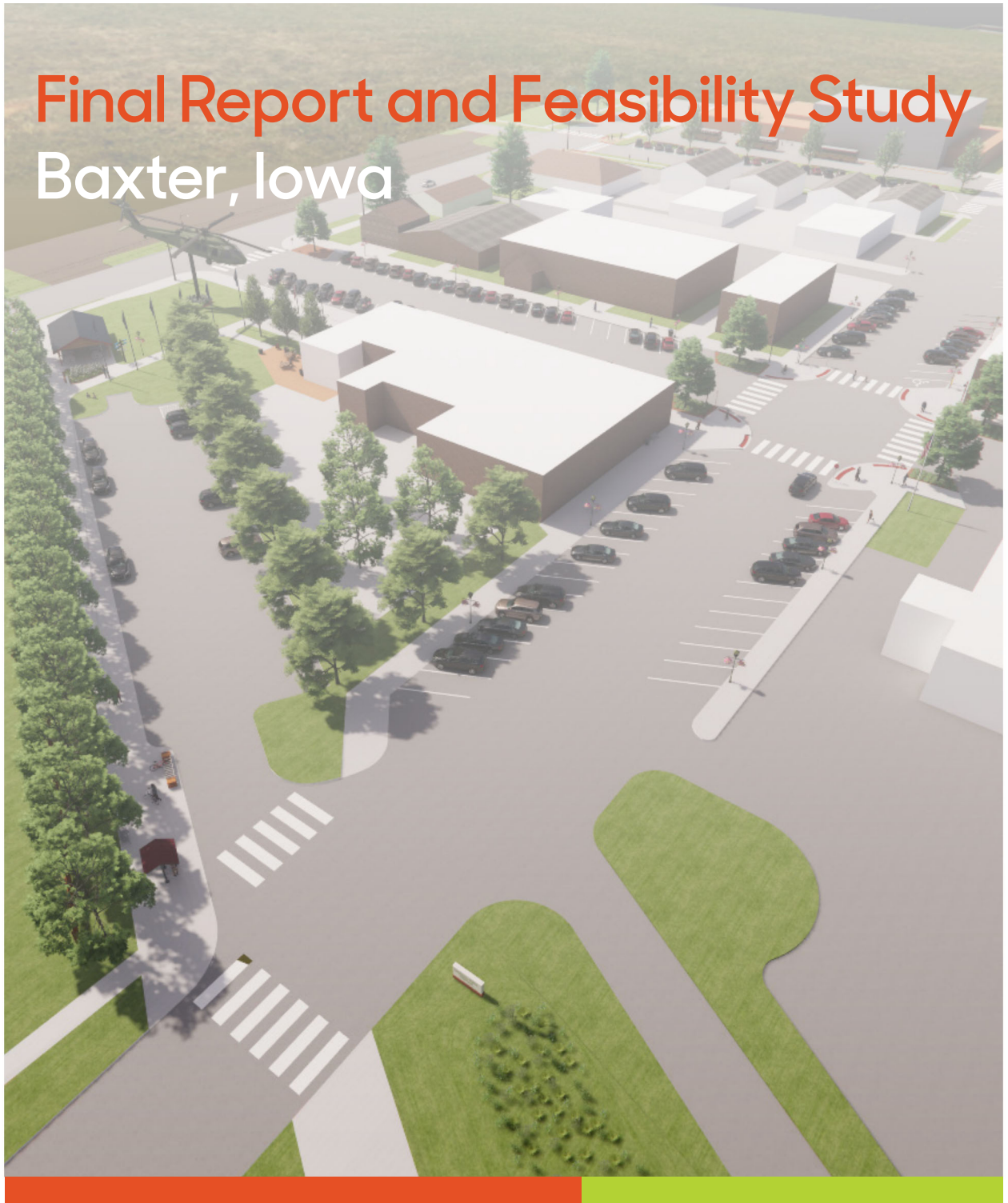


Final Report and Feasibility Study Baxter, Iowa



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Trees Forever
Iowa State University



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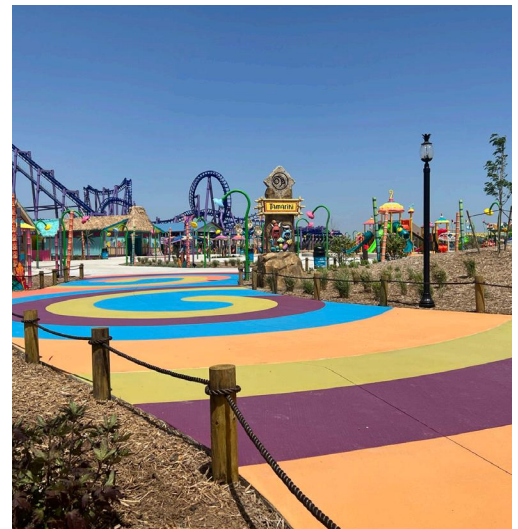
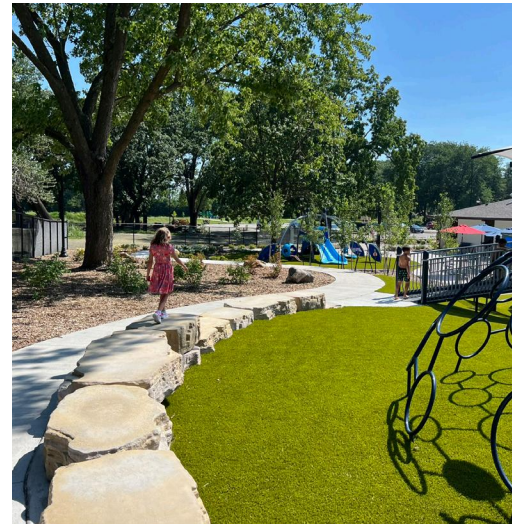
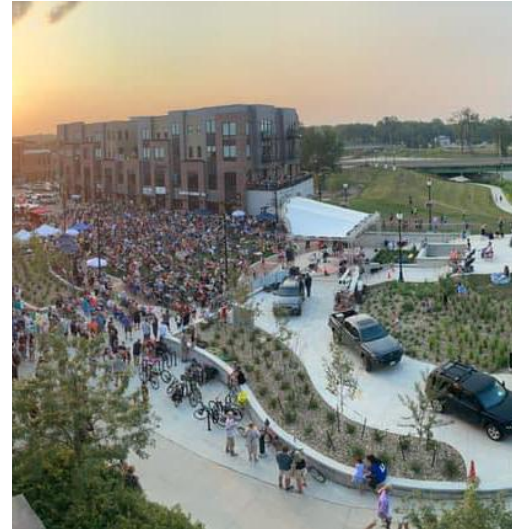
About RITLAND+KUIPER Landscape Architects

RITLAND+KUIPER Landscape Architects is a full-service landscape architectural firm with LEED accreditation and CLARB and State of Iowa registered Landscape Architects. Through teamwork, experience, research and careful assessment of specific project requirements, we are passionate about meeting individual client needs while providing creative and cost-effective solutions.

Craig Ritland originally founded the firm as Craig Ritland Landscape Architect in 1970 in Waterloo. Since developing the master plan for George Wyth Memorial State Park in the early 1970s, RKLA has participated in many of the important public improvements that have added to the quantity and quality of open space in Iowa. Throughout our history, RITLAND+KUIPER Landscape Architects has provided master planning and detailed design and construction services for a diverse array of public and private clients.

We enjoy utilizing a highly interactive process with our clients, often through the facilitation of public input. One example of this is our annual work over the past 28 years with the Iowa's Living Roadway's Community Visioning Program with Iowa State University and Trees Forever. We have guided the public input in almost 50 different communities and have helped them develop actionable plans that, in many cases, have led to successful community enhancements.

RITLAND+KUIPER has extensive experience working within complex community frameworks where stakeholders from a city, county, and the larger community need to be brought together to create ownership and consensus in successful design of public improvements. We have been very effective in helping clients successfully phase projects and procure funding from a wide variety of sources.





Scope of Services

Site Analysis and Feasibility Studies

- Existing Facilities Surveys
- Site Analysis and Selection
- Site Development Planning
- Watershed and Environmental Studies
- Athletic Facility Programming
- Golf Course Maintenance and Design Review
- Land Use Planning and Zoning
- Signage and Way-Finding Studies
- Tree and Landscape Inventories

Conceptual Design and Construction Documentation

- Community Visioning Projects
- Charrette Facilitation
- Transportation Corridor Amenities
- Urban Space and Streetscape Development
- Signage and Way-Finding Design
- Watershed Development
- Recreational and Educational Trail Systems
- Overall Site Design and Master Planning
- Golf Course Design
- Athletic Field Design
- Planting Design
- Irrigation Engineering
- Landscape Lighting Design
- Grading and Drainage Design
- Cost Estimating

Construction and Supplemental Services

- Construction Observation
- Maintenance and Operational Programming
- Post-Construction Evaluation
- Architectural Illustrations
- Marketing and Image Development
- Site and Landscape Maintenance Guidelines
- Guidelines for Establishment and Management of Native Vegetation

Program Overview

Baxter is one of 10 communities selected to participate in the 2025 Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning Program. The program, which selects communities through a competitive application process, provides professional planning and design assistance along transportation corridors to small Iowa communities (populations of fewer than 10,000).

Goals for the Visioning Program include:

- Developing a conceptual plan and implementation strategies with local communities
- Enhancing the natural, cultural, and visual resources of communities
- Assisting local communities in using external funds as leverage for transportation corridor enhancement

Each visioning community works through a planning process consisting of four phases of concept development:

1. Program initiation
2. Needs assessment and goal setting
3. Development of a concept plan
4. Implementation and sustained action

Each visioning community is represented by a steering committee of local residents and stakeholders who take part in a series of meetings that are facilitated by field coordinators from Trees Forever. Iowa State University organizes design teams of professional landscape architects, design interns, and ISU faculty and staff. The program is sponsored by the Iowa Department of Transportation.

Community Goals

The Baxter visioning committee identified a number of goals and priority areas during the visioning process, which are included below:

- Safe pedestrian connectivity to a variety of locations throughout the community including the sports complex, school, trailhead, and parks.
- Improved amenities at the trailhead of the Chichaqua Valley Trail, in the parks, and along Main Street.
- Parking solutions near the school.
- Improved pedestrian experience on Station Street.

**Refer to What, Where, Why, design board 5, for a complete summary of the community's goals.*

Capturing the Baxter Vision

Based on the needs and desires of the local residents, as well as a detailed inventory of community resources, the design team developed a conceptual transportation enhancement plan. This plan, as well as the inventory and analysis information, is illustrated in the following set of presentation boards. These boards include the Program Overview, The Influence of Landscape Factors on Transportation Systems, Transportation Assets and Barriers Assessment, Transportation Behavior and Needs Assessment, Transportation Inventory and Analysis, Concept Overview, and Community Design Boards.

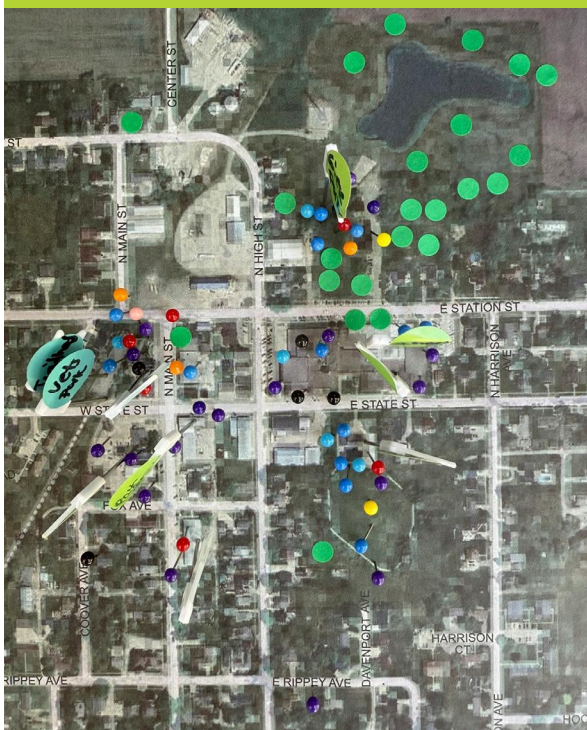
What, Where, & Why workshop in Baxter



Design workshop during Baxter Days



Design workshop activity - Where do you go in Baxter?



School parking and Station Street were notable topics during goal setting



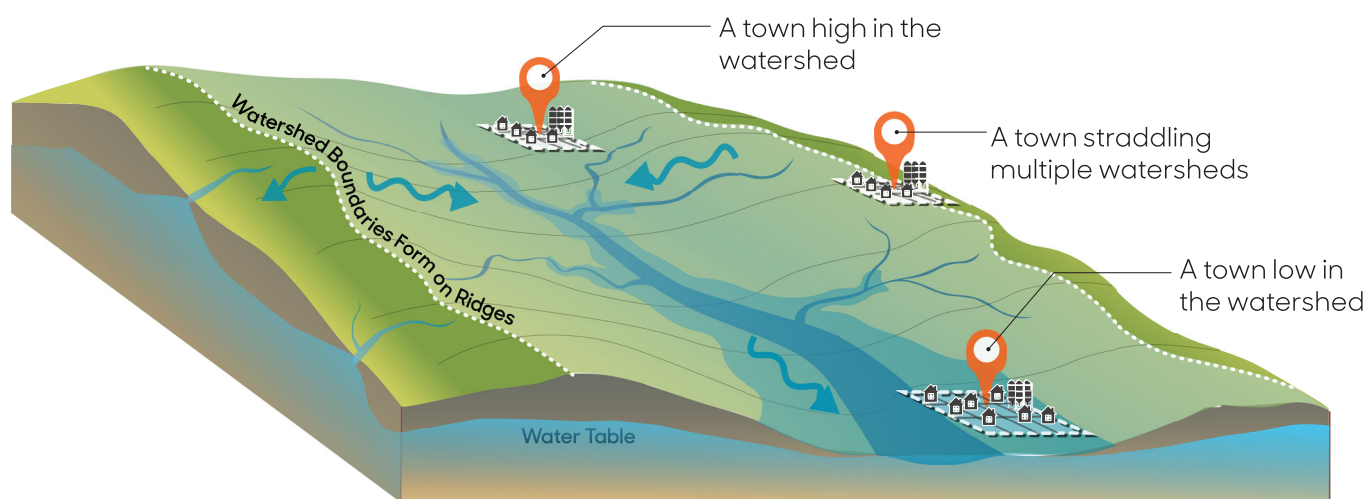
The Influence of Landscape Factors on Transportation Systems

Regional Watershed

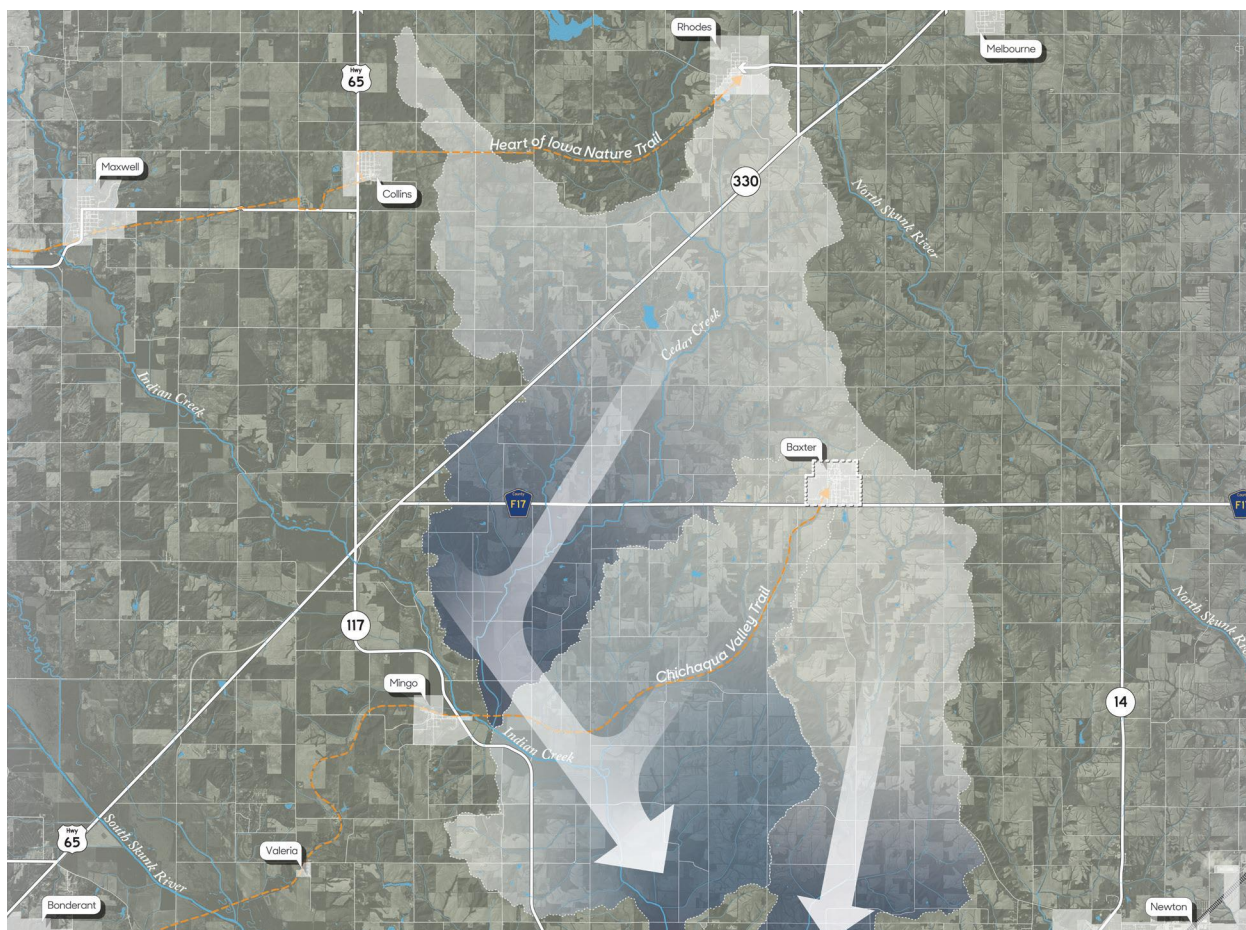
A watershed is an area defined by elevated boundaries that separate water flowing toward different rivers and creeks. These basins show the extent of a drainage area flowing to a single outlet point.

Where a community is located within its watershed(s) determines how much water flows into or through it. Location also influences the town's capacity to manage flooding issues. For example, a community located near the end of a watershed (close to the outlet point) will have little capacity for reducing the amount of water draining toward it from upland areas, and will receive greater volumes of water during flooding seasons than other communities located higher in the same watershed.

Development of channelized waterways, drainage tiles, and impervious surfaces also leads to increased quantities and speed of the water headed downstream; while a community located near the top of its watershed may not experience flooding, managing water will have a greater effect on neighboring communities downstream.



Axonometric diagram of the physical characteristics of a watershed.



Watershed map of Baxter, IA

Baxter is located along ridgelines dividing three watersheds. Water flows away from town to surrounding drainageways and small streams toward Indian Creek. This location poses a low risk for flooding, because no water routes flow into town.

Legend

-  River
-  Highway
-  City Limits
-  Water
-  Watershed
-  Watershed Flow

The map highlights your community within its surrounding watershed(s).

Where is your community located within the watershed(s)? Is water flowing to your community or away from it?

Is flooding an issue in your community?

How big is the watershed above your town? What conditions might increase or reduce flooding?

Are there conditions or practices happening in your community that could be creating risk for communities downstream from you?

Current Land Cover

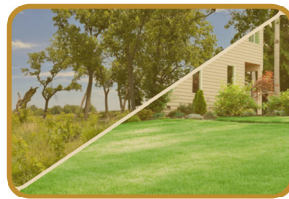
The land cover in most of Iowa's small towns today is a mix of residential lawns or neighborhood spaces dotted by trees. Streets and parking are paved and are sometimes flanked by sidewalks. Commercial and industrial zones are typically dominated by impervious surfaces.

The land cover around Baxter historically consisted of prairie that has been transitioned to mostly agricultural land. Most of the tree canopy is scattered throughout developed areas and along the old railroad line.

Impervious Surfaces



Grassland/Lawn



Agricultural Land



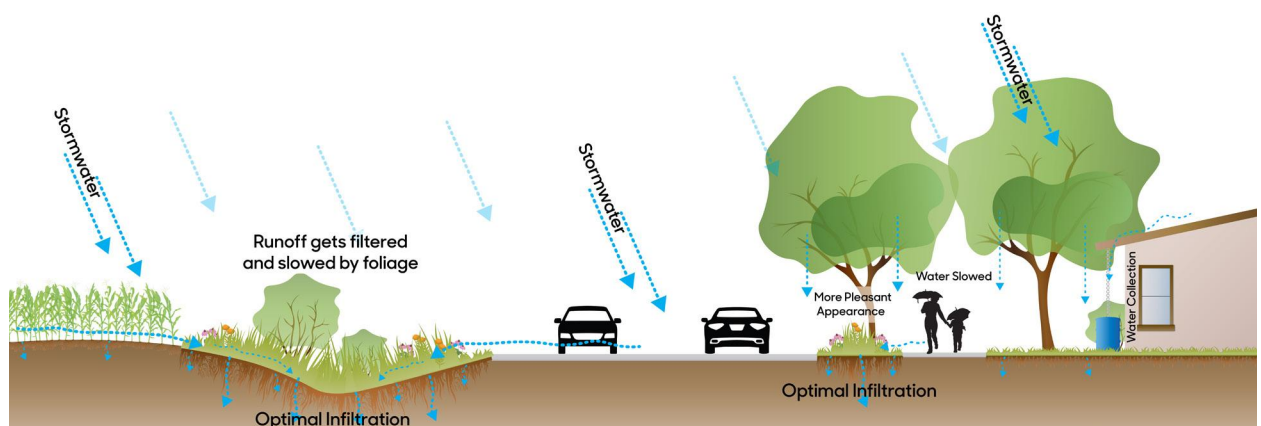
Tree Canopy

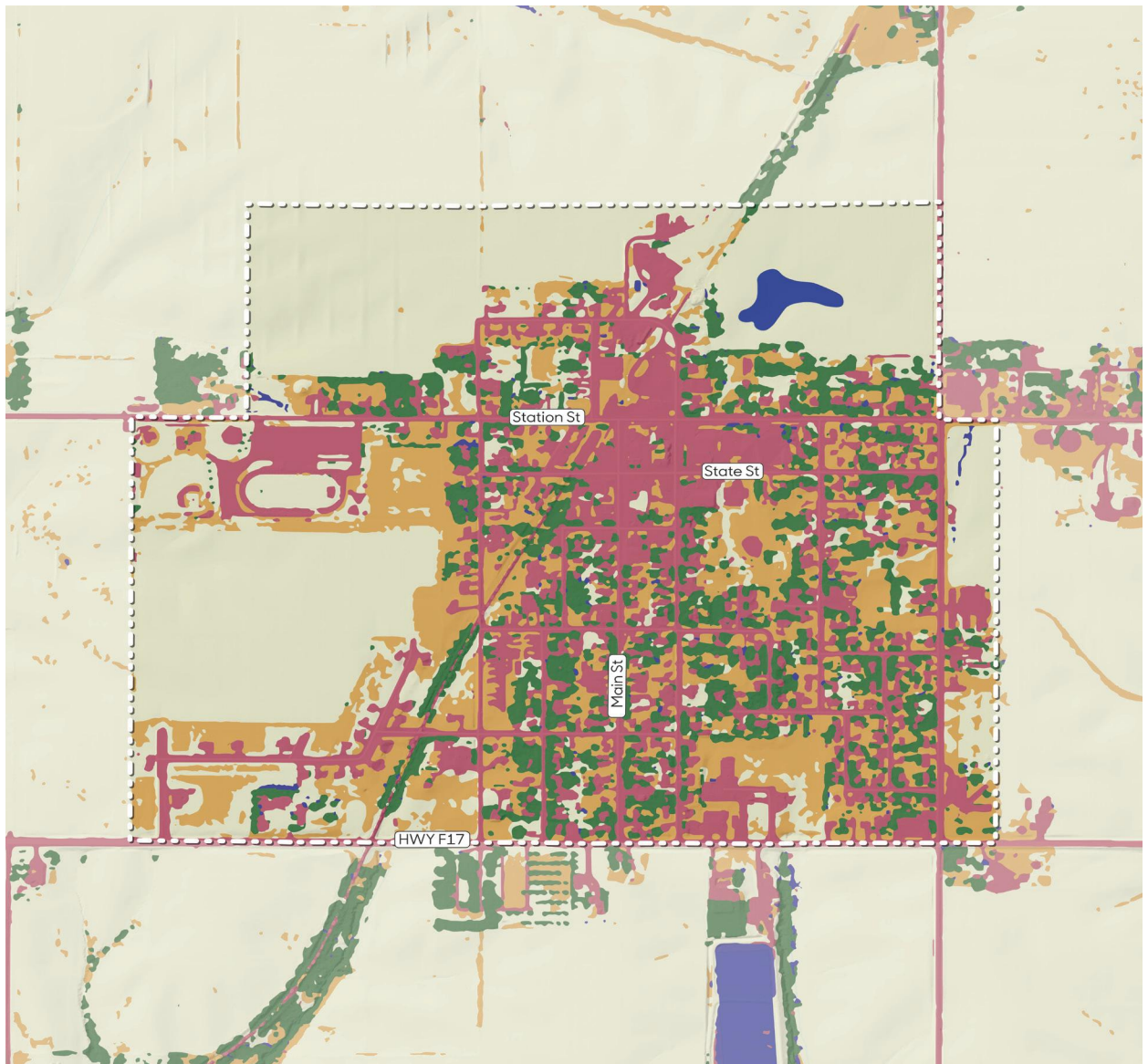


Vegetation Benefits

Native grasslands with deep-rooted plants aid in infiltrating stormwater, while dense foliage slows and filters stormwater from other areas. Practices such as bioswales and natural roadsides capitalize on these benefits to improve water quality.

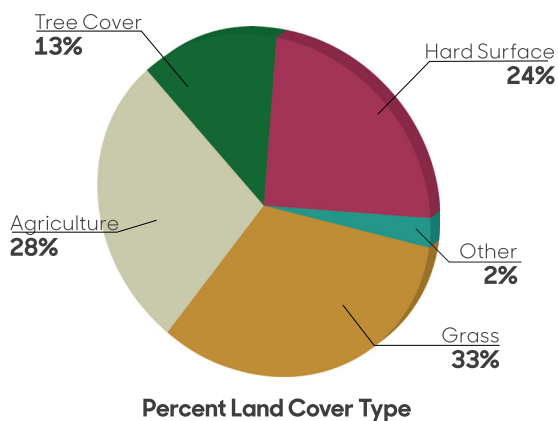
Trees offer many advantages. They clean the air, create shade, and cool the atmosphere. They intercept rainfall, which helps mitigate stormwater runoff and flooding. They consume groundwater, which lowers the water table and makes space for water storage below ground. Carefully chosen and placed trees create community identity and make spaces comfortable for residents. Grasslands and trees provide habitat for pollinators and birds, which provides enjoyment for residents.





Land Cover Map of Baxter, IA

The downtown of Baxter is dominated by impervious surfaces with very little to no tree cover. In the residential areas of the community there is a better balance between impervious surfaces and vegetation.



Looking at the heart of your community, does your downtown core have trees?

How does this change as you move from the downtown into residential areas of town?

Reflecting on your own experiences, where do you feel most comfortable on a hot summer day?

How do you think visitors see this space?

Groundwater Concerns

The depth to the water table refers to the distance from the surface that groundwater fully saturates soil. In places with a high water table (zero or only a few feet below the surface), groundwater can well up and cause localized flooding. Rivers and natural lakes are generally areas where the water table is above the ground. These rivers and lakes receive most of their water from groundwater with some surface-water runoff from rain or snowmelt. This is why rivers can still be seen even if it hasn't rained in a while.

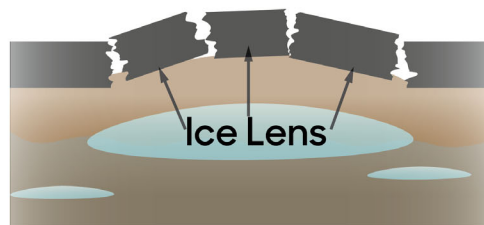
High water tables can have effects beyond just surface pooling, such as in the case of "frost boils." Frost boils result from groundwater freezing during winter and forming bubbles of ice called "ice lenses" that expand and push up from the ground. When the ice thaws, the frost boils collapse, leaving a divot in the surface. With certain kinds of flexible pavement, such as asphalt or gravel, these frost boils form potholes.

High groundwater tables can also have detrimental effects on one's home. Houses with basements surrounded by a high water table develop cracks or damaged walls due to water pressure. Typically a tile drain mitigates some of these effects, but wet foundations can require "dewatering," which can be expensive.

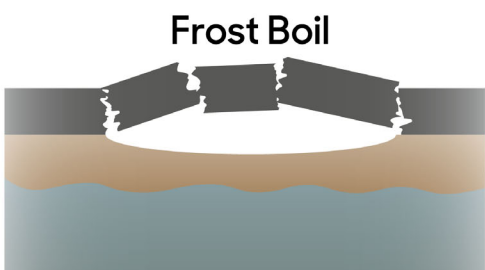
Developing landscapes with high water tables requires more expensive maintenance, construction, and paving. Creating public spaces or parks in these areas makes good sense.



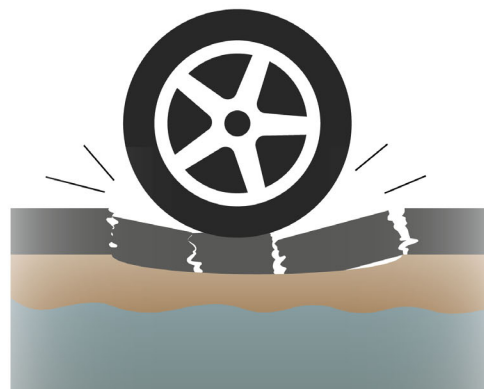
High water table saturates soil



Water freezes and expands



Ice thaws and saturated soil collapses



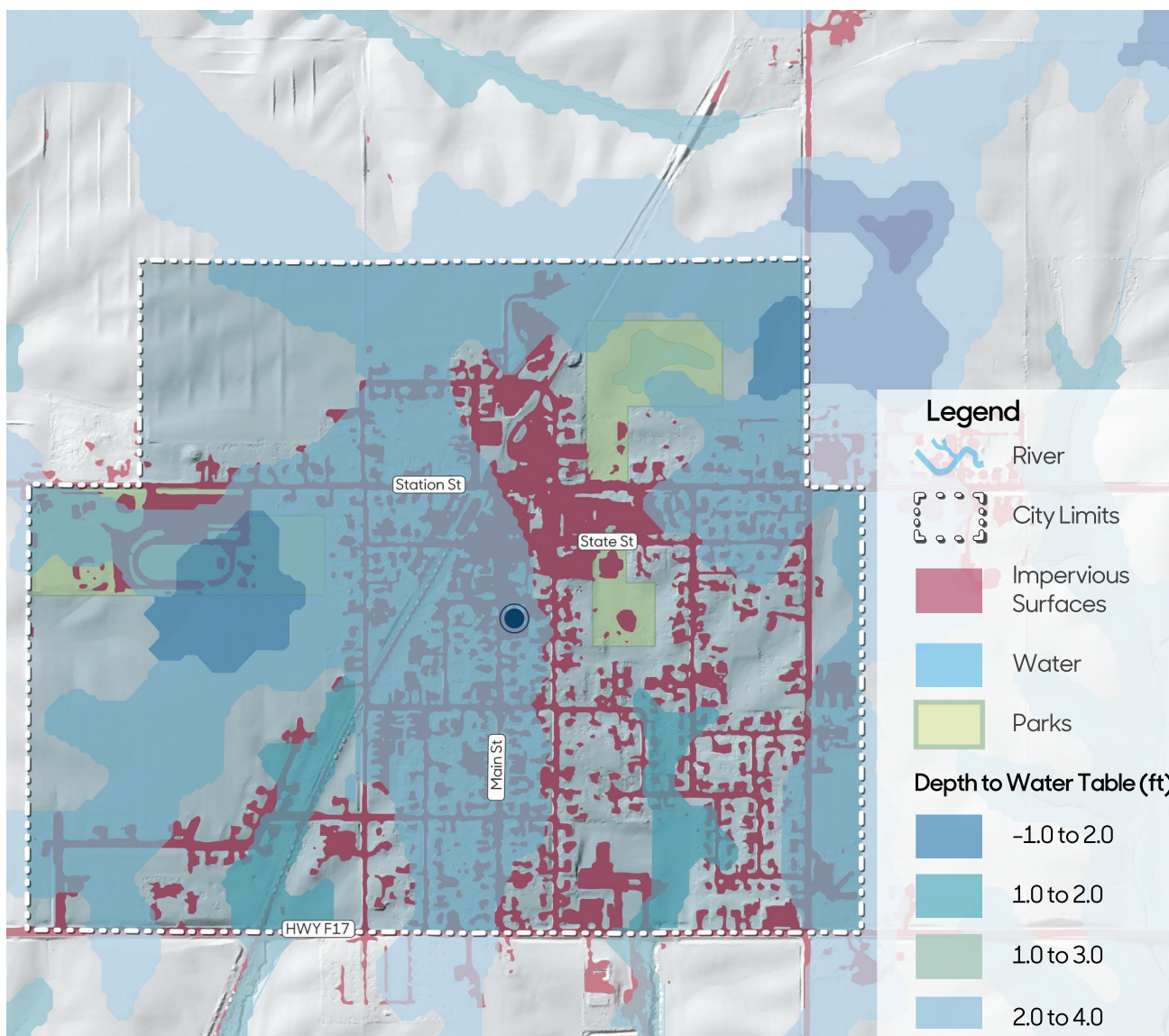
Traffic breaks bubble and wears surface

Diagram of the process by which frost boils affect roadways.

Example Community



Emmetsburg's high water table has caused repeated damage on streets and even parking lots. The highway shows signs of continual repairs.



Groundwater and impervious surface map of Baxter, IA
Some parts of the community have higher groundwater and may experience more water issues. However, many of these areas are already being utilized as green and open spaces.

Surface Water Conditions

The elevation and flow map displays topographic differences in elevation using a combination of contour lines and the color gradient depicted in the legend.

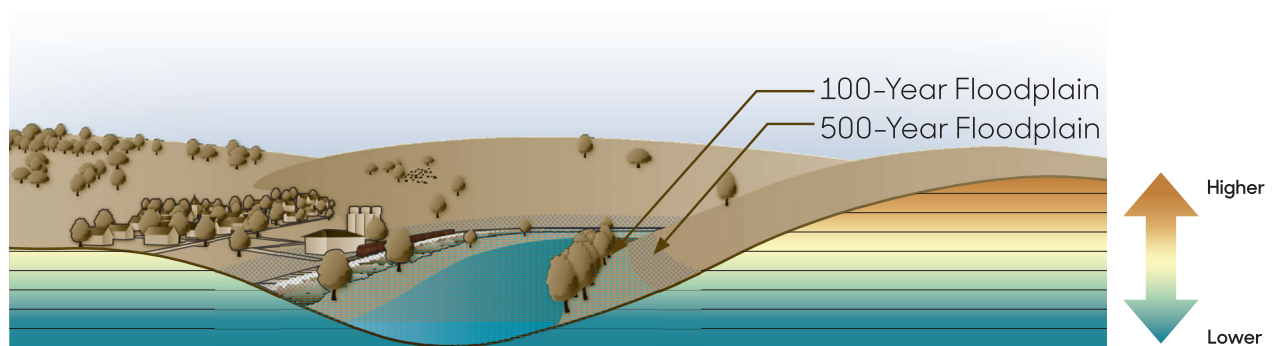
The central region of the state is known for rolling prairie hills that had relatively flat ridges and fertile soil that provided great opportunities for agricultural development. The flatness of the landscape also would have made it easy to create transportation corridors for railroads. Baxter is outside the floodplain, with no creeks or rivers immediately nearby.

Note the relationship of your community to the surrounding elevation: is it located in a valley, on high ground, or is it split between the two?

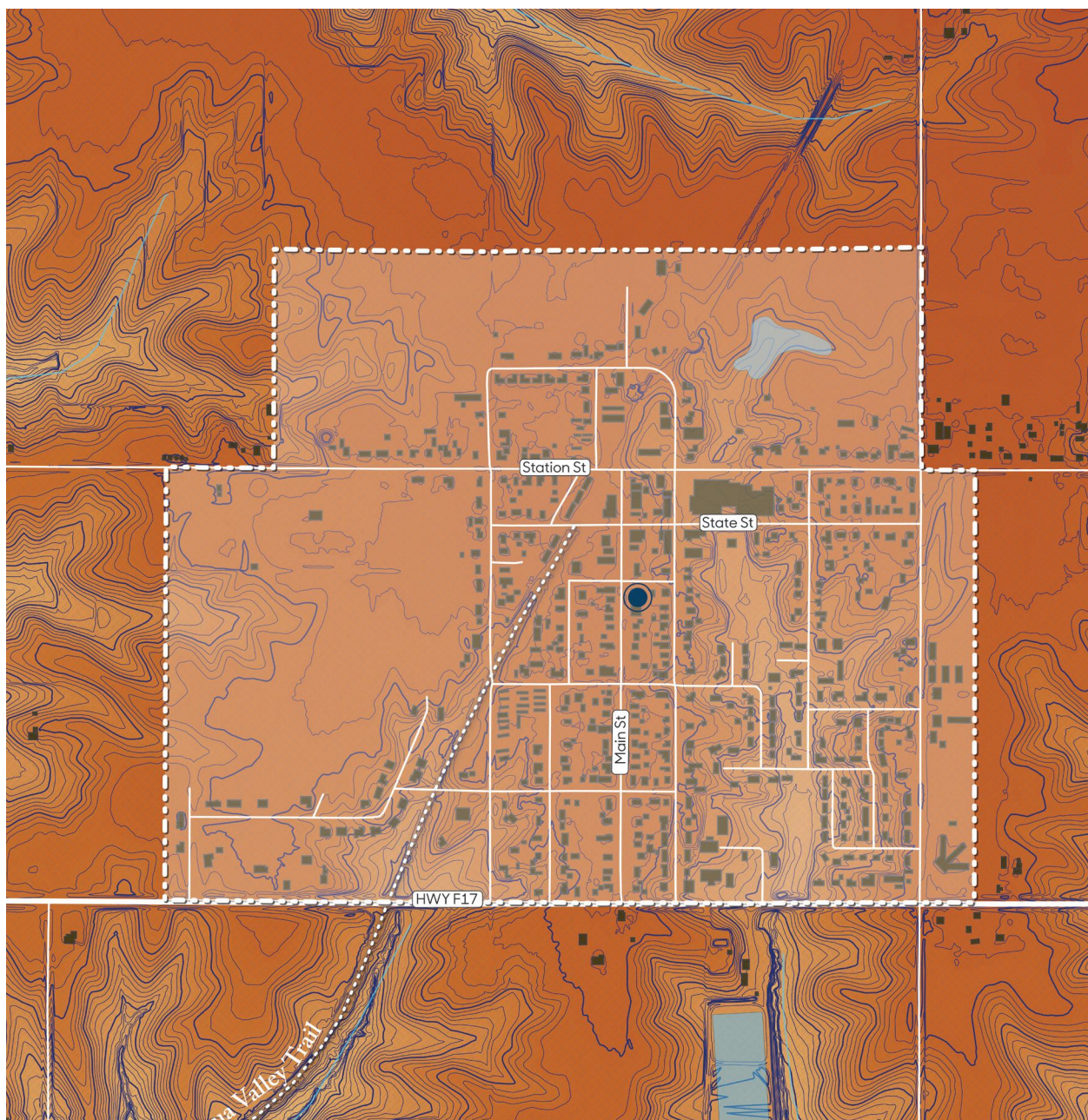
Which parts of the community are low or high in the landscape?

Why might this be the case?

What landform conditions might have driven development decisions?



Sectional diagram depicting the scale of elevation in relation to topographic features and development patterns.



Elevation and flow map of Baxter, IA

Because Baxter is located at a high elevation away from surrounding rivers and streams, there is no flood risk to the community. The topography of this area made it easy to develop the railroad, which played a major role in establishing the community.

Legend

	Trail		Water		Higher Elevation
	River		2ft Contours		Lower Elevation
	City Limits		100-Year Flood		
	Road		500-Year Flood		
			Water Well		

Transportation Assets and Barriers

Overview

Transportation is integral to small-town life and a vibrant economy. In the context of the Community Visioning Program, we recognize walking, biking, and driving as quintessential modes of travel to various destinations important to residents and visitors. Access to these destinations is crucial for many everyday activities—getting to work and school, participating in community events, and providing for basic needs such as food, health care, and healthy activity.

In this participatory assessment, we want to find out which factors and conditions affect transportation use in Baxter, where these factors and conditions are most prevalent, and how they influence route and transportation choices locally. Because residents have the best knowledge of how Baxter's transportation system works, we use focused, small-group conversations, mapping, and photos of the best and worst to understand local transportation.

Different Users = Different Needs

To capture insights about transportation from a variety of perspectives, we invited Baxter residents with different transportation needs to participate in focus groups. A total of 63 residents attended Baxter's workshop. Participants were separated into five user groups and the Baxter steering committee.



Actives

(9 participants) This user group represents those in the community who engage in outdoor recreation, including cycling, walking, running, swimming, skiing, etc. The availability of multiple venues for outdoor recreation matters to this group.



Mobility
Challenged

(7 participants) This user group is directly affected by accessibility barriers such as high curbing and uneven sidewalks that make it difficult to operate mobility-aiding equipment effectively. Handicapped parking, curb ramps, and smooth surfaces are critical transportation features.



Older Adults

(14 participants) Accessibility—both in terms of physical access and proximity—is a major concern for this user group. Because some people in this user group do not or are unable to drive, having goods and services within walking distance is important.



Youth

(9 participants) This group uses primarily non-motorized modes of transportation, so pedestrian- and bike-friendly streets and sidewalks are important. These users value the ability to get to destinations on foot or via bicycle and having goods and services within walking distance.



Parents

(12 participants) Safety of their children is a primary concern of this user group. Access to safe and easy routes to school activities is another significant factor to this group. Parents of young children desire smooth, wide surfaces for strollers.



Steering
Committee

(12 participants) The common denominator for this user group is that their observations are influenced by special knowledge of the transportation system acquired during the Community Visioning assessment process. As a result, this group is more representative of decision makers.



The paved surface, natural scenery, shade, rest areas, and clear visibility make the Chichaqua Valley Trail safe and comfortable for people of all ages.



The deteriorating roadway, potholes, and absence of sidewalks at south end of West Ave make it difficult to navigate for all modes of travel.



The trail loop in the school playground is widely used. The paved, tree-lined path features a storywalk that is popular among parents and kids.



State St is heavily trafficked, creating a barrier for kids crossing to get to school and is a temporary one-way, which creates confusion for drivers.



Residents take pride in Main St because the sidewalks are well maintained and the large trees provide shade and are beautiful especially in the fall.



Station St poses a safety issues for kids trying to cross it to school because of high-speed, heavy traffic and limited visibility created by parked vehicles.

What People Said



"[To get to] some...places—because there's no sidewalk—is an issue...you have to walk on the road...And we have young kids, so that's not always ideal. It starts out sidewalk, and then I have to get on the road to get to the bike trail."

"...the trail [at the school playground] is a safe place to walk and [is] nice and smooth... [It] has a cool story[walk] all the way around it too... we walk our [child] around there and read the pages, and they change the books periodically."

"...the bike trail's really great during [the winter] because [the tree canopy] blocks a lot of the wind. So, I like to run there..."

"I think the whole community is a good place and a very safe place to walk and to ride your bikes...It's... just [that] the roads and the sidewalks need to be improved."

"[E State St] front of the school...should be... closed throughout the day...it's one way, but people still go down it both ways...Because kids...walk across [E State St] to get to the [school] park [and] the [FFA] building...And they don't pay attention."

Actives



"...S High St [from Rippey north to the school] is...a busy road [during school hours] because people are going to and...from school... but...it is [in] general [a] busier road in town...you can park on both sides of the street [and] that makes it hard for two-way traffic."

"[On the southeast corner of State and High Sts] where the sidewalk comes off and meets the road, and it's a crevice...you couldn't successfully push a stroller through it, it's such a deep, deep pit. I just take the grass if I'm pushing the stroller, or I watch my kids wipe out on a bike..."

"If you're coming in from out of town [off F17] and never been here...driving in on Main St...is pretty impressive compared to a lot of towns of 900 people. It's beautiful in the fall."

"[The] trail crossing on [F]17 [is] sketchy...F17 is really busy, people don't slow down...you[ve] got kids crossing there...the speed limit is 35, but...[traffic is] still cruising into town."

"...Main St [is] a wide street. People tend to go a little bit faster down that street...I worry [about] sending my kids walking to and from school."

Parents



"When you're trying to get to school...and the snow pile is in the middle [of Main St], we have to [drive] around...but then there [are] cars on the other side that are trying to get [through, so [you get] stuck."

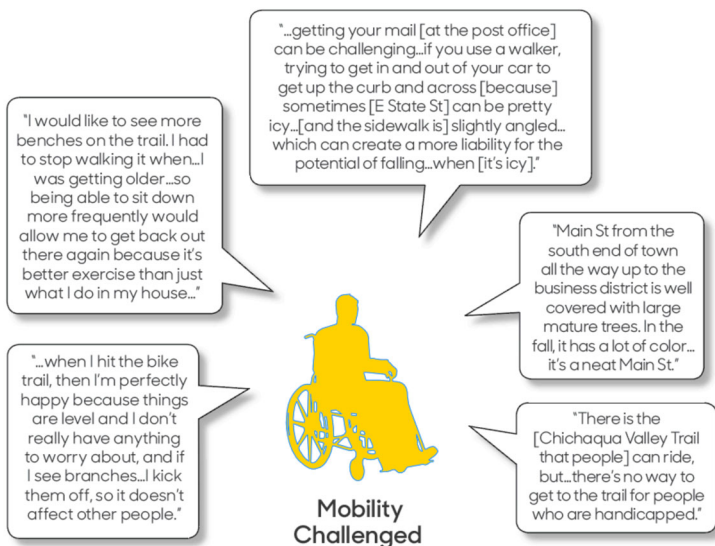
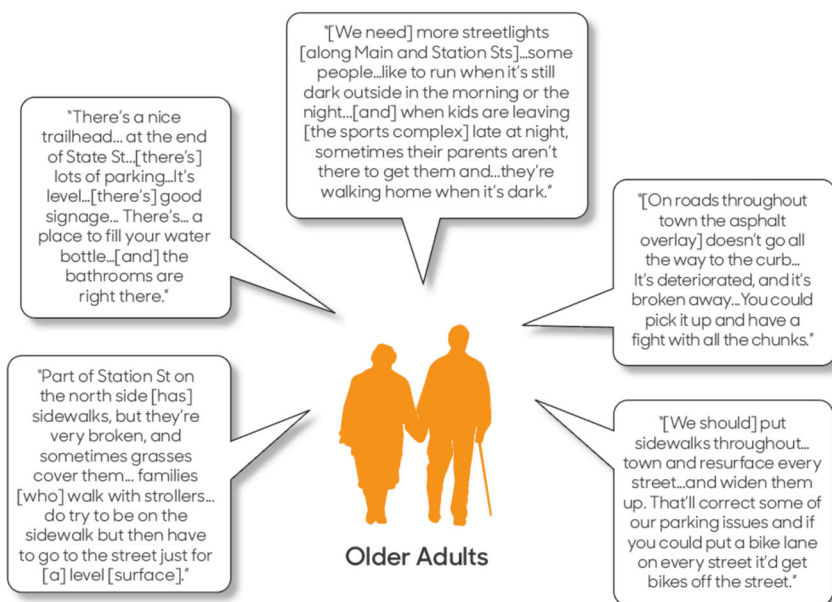
"...when it's time to leave school, it's hard to see...when you're getting out of...the pickup line [on E State St]...there [are] buses parking there and [the pickup line] goes far back, and it's hard to get out sometimes."

"...if I want to go into town, I'll just go on the bike trail, and that's kind of nice...usually you're not ever going to be in someone's way running or jogging because our bike trails...are pretty safe. I [Even] with all the...trees, you can still see both ways..."

"When we go to the [new] school [playground] for our second recess...there's no crosswalk [on E State St], so the teacher has to help us so we don't get hit by cars."

"I notice sometimes when I'm walking around town...[that] there [are] not a lot of sidewalks. We have a couple sidewalks on our main streets and that's it."

Youth



Emerging Themes

Discovering themes and consistencies among user groups helps the steering committee to identify solutions to address the needs of all. The chart on the opposite page displays each user group's collective thoughts on particular issues in comparison with the other user groups in the community.

Actives walk, bike, and run for exercise and to get to local destinations. They also drive. This group would like to connect the Chichaqua Valley Trail to Hwy 330 and eventually to Marshalltown and the High Trestle Trail. Actives suggested repurposing the park at Westfield Horizons so that more people would use it. They also proposed closing E Station St during school drop-off/pickup times to facilitate better traffic flow.

Mobility-challenged individuals walk, drive, and use wheelchairs. Smooth surfaces and curb ramps at intersections are important to them. This group expressed frustration about the gravel parking lot at the sport complex, the absence of wheelchair access from the ball fields to the restrooms, and the porta potties at the trailhead that are not handicapped accessible. They would like a guide rail/grab bar outside the post office to make it easier to get their mail.

Older adults drive and walk to get around town. They like walking on N East Ave because there is little traffic and they enjoy the view of the agricultural fields. This group proposed painting bike lanes on all major streets in town. Older adults would also like a water source at the veterans memorial to make it easier to water the flowers. They noted that the bike trail isn't cleared in winter, making it hard for kids to use it.

Youth walk, bike, run, roller-skate, and ride hoverboards. Older youth also drive, and identified the intersection of S Harrison Ave and Queen Ann Ct as difficult to maneuver when cars are parked there because the turn is sharp. Younger kids would like the basketball hoops replaced and the court resurfaced at the school playground.

Parents drive, walk, and bike. They are primarily concerned for the safety of their children. This group mentioned that the trees and the sun—depending on the time of day—create visibility issues at the trail crossing on F17, while the angle of the trail crossing at S West Ave and Rippey Ave poses similar problems. Parents would like a bike lane on Main St to narrow the roadway and slow traffic.

Steering committee members walk, bike, and drive vehicles, golf carts, and side-by-sides. They proposed making State St between Harrison and High Sts by the school permanently one-way to reduce confusion. This group would also like to replace the old laundromat on Main St with a pocket park to attract trail users downtown. In addition, they suggested planting native prairie in the green spaces along the trail.

User Types	Valued Destinations, Activities, and Qualities				Undesirable Qualities and Features				Most Desired Improvements and Activities					
	Main St Corridor	Chichaqua Valley Trail & Trailhead	Walking Path at the School Playground	Geise Park	Deteriorating Roadway Conditions	High-Speed, Heavy Traffic	Limited Pedestrian/Cyclist Connectivity	Inadequate Sidewalk Infrastructure	Parking & Traffic-Flow Issues at the School	Greater Connectivity for Walkers & Cyclists	More & Better Parking Options	Chichaqua Valley Trail & Trailhead Improvements	Safety Features for All Modes of Transportation	Additional Outdoor Recreation Opportunities
Actives	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Mobility Challenged	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Older Adults	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Youth	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Parents	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Steering Committee	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Residents take pride in the appearance of Main St. and the veterans memorial add to the appeal of downtown. The Chichaqua Valley Trail and trailhead are considered valuable assets by all user groups and runners use the trail around the clock. Walkers and bikers have the sport complex, water bottle and bike repair stations, seating, a caboose, and a helicopter. People of all ages take advantage of the facilities at the sport complex. Walkers and runners can use the track around the clock. The complex has a variety of many visitors to town. The walking path at the school playground is popular among both adults and youth for its smooth, safe surface and the school adults and youth for its smooth, safe surface while their kids are engaged in other activities in the park. People appreciate Geise Park for its current amenities—including a zip line, playground and running on bike path—as well as the potential for developing the park's which they described as "beautiful." Deteriorating roadway conditions throughout town create problems for all modes of transportation. Specific safety concern, for example, rail users cross Ft. or a point where high-speed vehicles are crossing Ft. or a Station State and High St. experiences heavy traffic. The safety of walkers and bikers is compromised by gaps in connectivity to local destinations and speeding foot or a bike are the gaps station. All user groups are seeking to fill these gaps from the school to the street. Broken areas across Geise Park, and the need for more parking—especially of the school—could be limited to one side. The hot on-street parking for adult groups want a paved lot at the sports complex. Adults suggested improvements for the trailhead and trash cans, bike racks, and lighting along the trail. All groups called for increased safety for others, walkers and cyclists. Examples cited were for more benches, crossing lights at the sections near the school and playground, and picnic areas for the trailhead and playground. The proposed adding a walking trail and picnic area in Geise Park, parents want a bigger playground at the sports complex and more activities at the school playground, and youth would like a water park.														

Transportation Inventory and Analysis

Knowledge of the transportation systems in and around a community is critical for sustainable transportation enhancement planning. Baxter's transportation system includes roadways, sidewalks, and an active railroad.

The Baxter visioning design team met with the local officials to identify existing, past, and future transportation system capital improvements, maintenance activities and issues, and other transportation-related constraints and opportunities in the area.

Baxter is located in northwest Jasper County near Turkey Creek, a tributary of the South Skunk River. This active community is expecting to participate in a comprehensive planning effort in 2026 following their participation in Community Visioning.

Baxter currently faces challenges related to poor sidewalk conditions and inconsistent pedestrian circulation. There is no Safe Routes to School plan in place. The school building, located at the corner of E State Street and N High Street, serves students in kindergarten through 12th grade and enforces one-way traffic on adjacent streets during school hours. Pedestrian safety is a particular concern along Station Street, which is frequently used by students walking to the Neil Seales Sports Complex. The city has started to address sidewalk issues by replacing sections throughout town with five-foot-wide sidewalks.

Similar safety problems exist in the downtown area. A majority of residents have to pick up their mail from the post office near the corner of N Main Street and E State Street because mail delivery is only available on one road in town. Front-in, angled parking spaces near this intersection require drivers to back out into traffic with limited visibility, raising concerns for both pedestrian and vehicle safety.

Two Farm-to-Market routes on E Avenue and County Highway F17 run through Baxter and accommodate heavy truck traffic and higher volumes of vehicles. Future improvements are planned for other routes that carry a large volume of traffic, including resurfacing along N 95th Avenue W to W 76th Street N.

Flooding is another issue the community faces due to a high water table. In response, a large retention pond was designed in Geise Park with a secondary basin location carved out in the park space to catch overflow. Existing infrastructure was opened up to expand flow south of S Harrison Avenue and allow more water through. A second basin is planned for a new residential development on the west side of town. This development presents an opportunity for a new community park with a desired future connection to the sports complex.

At the center of town is a trailhead for the Chichaqua Valley Trail, a 29.2-mile trail that passes through several small towns and connects to trail systems leading to Ankeny and Des Moines. Maintenance is needed on the section of the trail that heads south out of town; this portion is under the jurisdiction of Jasper County Conservation.

Currently, there are 10 to 12 wayfinding signs throughout Baxter, all following a consistent design palette.



Legend

- Flooding Issues
- Farm-to-Market Route
- Vehicular Visibility Concern
- Pedestrian Safety Concern
- IDOT Traffic Counts
- Snow Drifting
- Planned Work
- Existing Trail
- Parade Route
- Water Flow
- One-way Route

Intersection of State and Main Streets, facing west, showing challenging parking and accessibility to the post office.



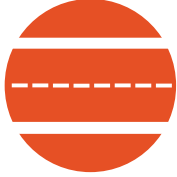
Image Credit: Google Earth

What, Where, & Why

The What, Where, & Why meeting is a critical component in the development of a successful project. Setting and prioritizing goals allows the design team to focus its efforts and resources more effectively to help the community develop a vision for Baxter based on its goals.

The design team met with the Baxter steering committee to discuss its goals. The steering committee presented its takeaways from previous discussions about the focus group findings, transportation analysis, and information on the impacts of landscape factors. The committee members considered the information provided as well as their own knowledge and opinions of Baxter to reach a consensus on what priorities to focus on for design improvements.

The chart shown here reflects these major themes and potential project locations as expressed throughout the goal-setting process. The chart moves through the key themes identified, what the broad outcomes or big dreams would be, reasoning for identifying these components, and how the design team translated these goals into the final design.

Community Themes/Issues Based on Assessments	Broad-based Outcomes/Goals	Why Change Anything?	What Exactly & Where?
Sidewalk Connections 	• Include more sidewalks throughout town • Make connections to existing sidewalks • Make new connections to popular locations and sites • Create a safer way to travel through town	• Makes the town easily walkable • walking on a sidewalk is safer than walking on the street • Provides a direct route from point A to point B • More sidewalks would be an attractive feature to residents, potential new residents and visitors	• From the school to the sports complex (Station Street) • Connecting frequently visited locations to parks and bike trails (e.g. from the school to the sports complex) • Around Geise Park • Connecting to the Chichaqua Valley trailhead
Trail and Trailhead 	• Create a welcoming experience • Update amenities • Add signage	• Want an inviting sense when entering Baxter from the trail • Provides a landmark for visitors or travelers to stop at as a destination and rest area • Could attract more people to Baxter	• New signage with something flashy that draws attention so people can take pictures with it upon arrival • Update bathrooms, drinking fountain, bike pump, etc. • Improve shelter and seating at the Chichaqua Valley trailhead
Parking 	• Increase school parking • Increase parking for events • Improve street parking • Add handicapped parking and ADA-accessible sidewalks and curb ramps	• During school, the parking lot is not large enough to accommodate all the vehicles • Street parking obscures views and feels unsafe to anyone nearby • During events, all available parking is used, resulting in parking issues for businesses in the surrounding area • Currently, there are no or minimal handicapped parking spots at locations • There are difficult, non ADA-friendly routes from parking to access locations	• More parking areas around the school in order to not take parking spots from surrounding destinations • Integration of handicapped parking spaces in the parking lots • Inclusion of ADA-accessible paths from parking areas to destinations, specifically focusing around the post office
Traffic and Streets 	• Create safe street crossings • Add drop-off/pick-up zones • Explore reasonable and safe vehicle speeds and potential measures to discourage unsafe driving • Make pavement updates	• High vehicle speeds feel unsafe when walking alongside or trying to cross certain streets • Congested traffic occurs on the streets surrounding the school during drop-off and pick-up times	• Speed humps on State Street • Drop-off/pick-up zones near the school (consider one-way street opportunities) • Repave Station Street on the north side of the school • Crosswalks on Station and State Streets • Four-way stops at intersections

Community Concept Plan

Baxter is a focused community that is tuned in to the needs of residents and visitors. many different organizations in town have been working on city wide improvements laying the ground work for addressing specific projects. Pedestrian safety and connectivity to local destinations emerged as a top priority, particularly around the school and along Station Street.

Transforming Station Street into a pedestrian corridor with improved sidewalks, an 8' trail where applicable, colored concrete intersections with tactile warning panels, improved signage and lighting, and streetlight banners creates a safe way for pedestrians to access all the destinations along Station Street, which include the sports complex, Chichaqua Valley trailhead, downtown businesses, Geise Park, Baxter Community School, and Chad Flora Ball Field.

Allocating a portion of the park located south of Baxter Community School presents an effective solution to meet the school's parking needs. By utilizing this area, the school can address its shortage of parking spaces, providing much-needed accommodations for students and visitors.

Updates to the Chichaqua Valley Trailhead and Veterans Memorial provide a unified space for various users. New features such as a picnic shelter with restrooms, signage, seating, pollinator gardens, art, and an improved informational kiosk were added based on design workshop feedback.

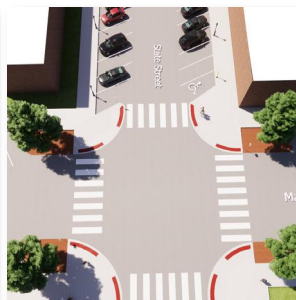
A series of aesthetic improvements are planned along Main Street to promote beautification and create a more inviting environment for residents and visitors. In addition to beautification efforts, measures to improve pedestrian safety are being prioritized. The installation of bump-outs and upgraded crosswalks will help protect pedestrians by shortening crossing distances and increasing visibility at intersections. Together, these improvements support a safer, more accessible, and vibrant Main Street for the entire community.



Station Street
Corridor



Baxter Community
School Parking



Main Street
Improvements



Trailhead
Improvements

Station Street Corridor

Inadequate infrastructure makes it difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to access the many popular destinations along the Station Street corridor, including the sports complex, the Chichaqua Valley Trailhead, the downtown district, Baxter Community School, Geise Park, and the Chad Flora Ball Fields.

Both the north and south sides of Station Street have sidewalks; however, they are deteriorating and missing in several places, are not well lit, and lack crosswalks. Residents are concerned for the safety of kids who walk—often in the street—from the school east to Chad Flora and west to the sports complex, which houses the school’s practice fields, the football stadium, baseball fields, and track.

“[We need] more streetlights [along Main and Station St]...some people...like to run when it’s still dark outside in the morning or the night...[and] when kids are leaving [the sports complex] late at night, sometimes their parents aren’t there to get them and...they’re walking home when it’s dark,” commented an older adult during the focus group meeting (Re: What People Said, 3b).

On the south side of Station Street, an eight-foot trail can be placed from the Chad Flora Field to the sports complex, providing a safe and accessible route spanning east to west through Baxter and connecting many important destinations, including the Chichaqua Valley Trail, which continues south through the community.

The design team recommends installing pedestrian-scale lighting on the north side of the road with banner arms and adding streetlight fixtures to the existing wooden poles on the south side in areas where the current lighting is inadequate. The intersections along Station Street would include highly visible crosswalks, colored concrete intersections with tactile warning panels and at-grade ramps to increase accessibility. The additions of pedestrian-scale features, trees, highly visible crosswalks and colored concrete intersections will provide much needed traffic calming for this corridor.

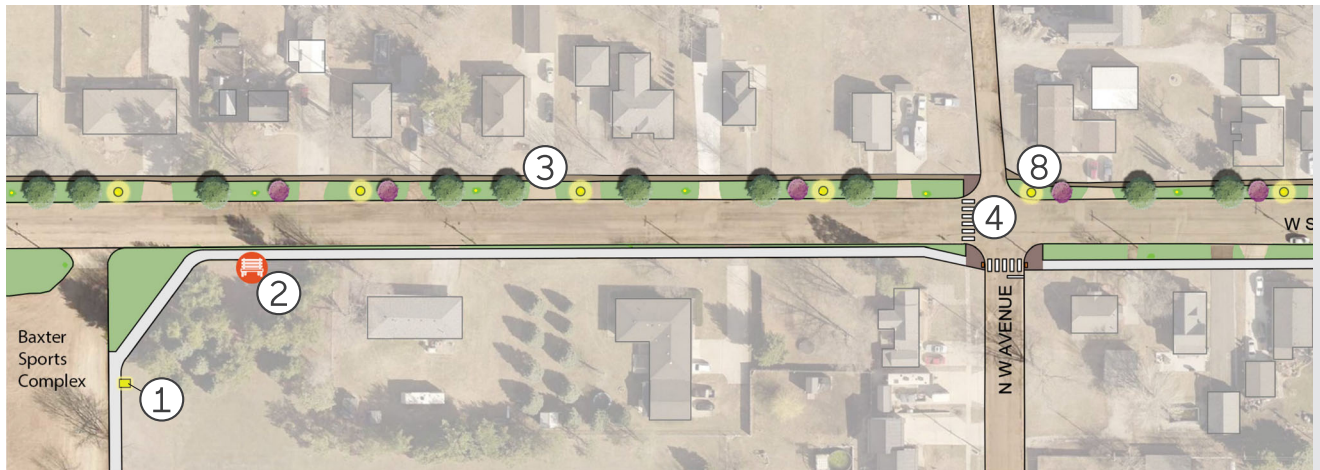
Baxter lost some tree canopy during the 2020 derecho and residents would like more trees within their community. On the north side of Station Street, where overhead power lines are not an issue, both shade and ornamental trees could be planted in the right-of-way.



Poor existing sidewalk conditions, lack of tactile warning panels, and few crosswalks along Station Street are problematic for students walking to and from the Baxter Sports Complex.



Proposed improvements along Station Street include an 8-foot trail with an emphasis on creating a safer pedestrian experience. Traffic-calming methods at each intersection include improved lighting, colored concrete to draw attention to the area, tactile warning panels, and highly visible crosswalks.



Continues on Page 29



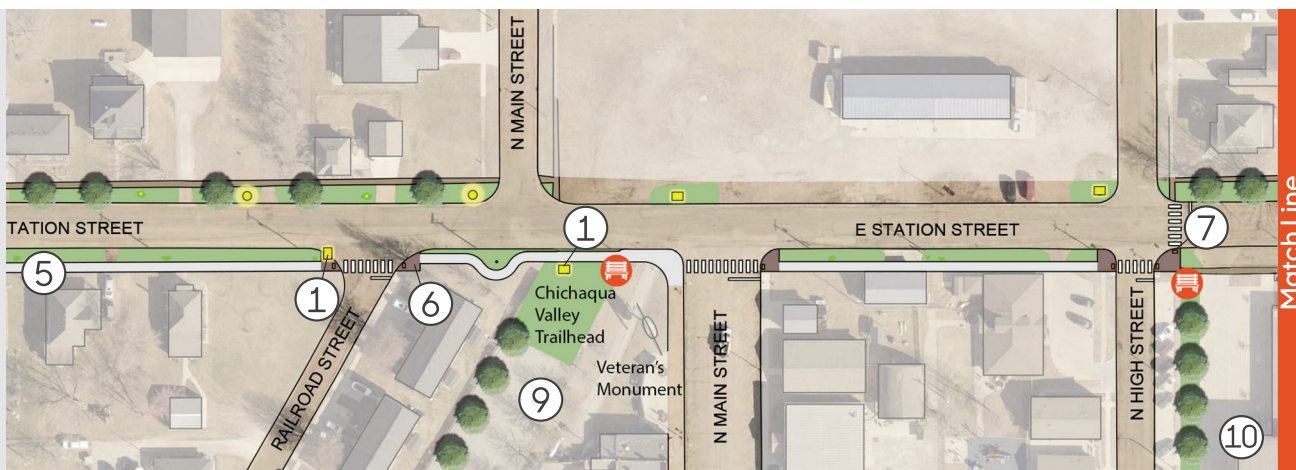
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Legend

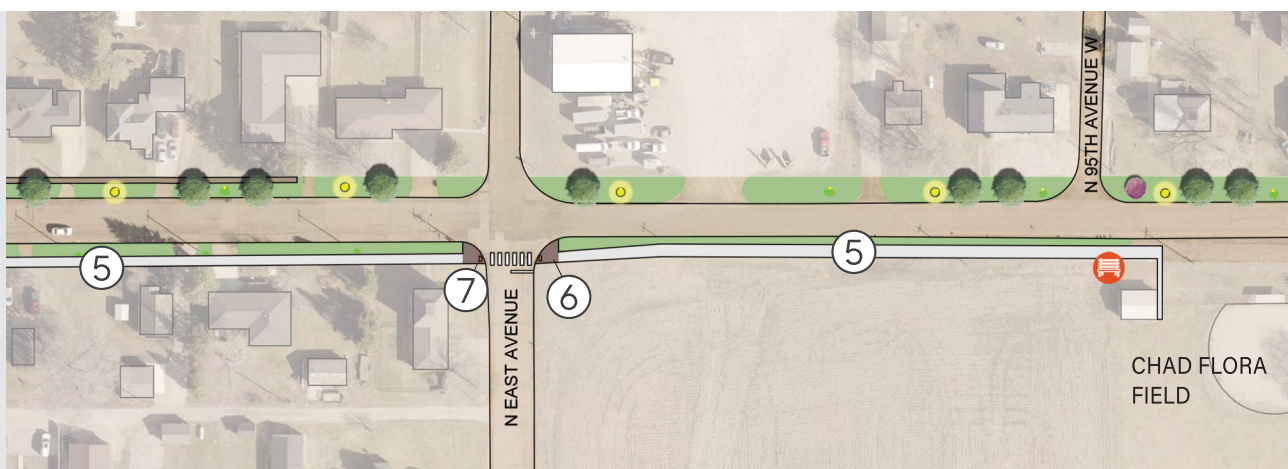
- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ① New Streetlights (Typ.) | ⑥ Colored Concrete (Typical) |
| ② Benches (Typical) | ⑦ Tactile Crosswalk Panel (Typical) |
| ③ Existing Sidewalk (Typ.) | ⑧ Pedestrian Lights (Typical) |
| ④ Proposed Crosswalks (Typ.) | ⑨ Chichaqua Valley Trailhead |
| ⑤ 8-Foot Trail | ⑩ Baxter Community School |



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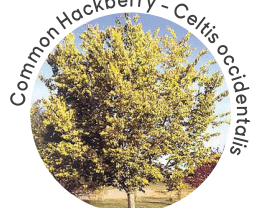
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Shade Tree Recommendations



Red Oak - *Quercus rubra*



Common Hackberry - *Celtis occidentalis*



Skyline Honeylocust - *Gleditsia triacanthos f. inermis 'Skyline'*

Ornamental Tree Recommendations



Crabapple Species - *Malus sp.*



Thornless Hawthorn - *Crataegus crus-galli var. inermis*



Japanese Tree Lilac - *Syringa reticulata*

Photo credit for tree photos: RITLAND+KUIPER Landscape Architects

The design team recommends planting a diverse palette of tree varieties. These examples are just the starting point for recommendations. A tree study completed by the Iowa DNR in 2012 showed that more than 60% of Baxter's tree species on publicly-owned land were maple varieties. The 2020 derecho did reduce the tree canopy in public areas, but given the high percentage of maple species the design team advises replanting with other varieties such as oak, thornless honeylocust, ginkgo (male cultivar only), elm (varieties resistant to Dutch Elm Disease, hackberry, and Kentucky coffee tree (podless cultivars).

Existing



There are no sidewalks east of N East Avenue connecting the Chad Flora Field to the community.

Proposed



Proposed improvements along Station Street include an 8-foot trail that would connect Chad Flora Field to Baxter. The trail continues west of N East Avenue connecting to the Baxter Community School.

State Street Corridor – Opinion of Probable Cost

The following cost opinion is based on estimated material quantities and contracted installation prices. Project costs can decrease with donated materials, reduced cost materials, and volunteer labor. All quantities are estimates.

Abbreviations used in the following cost opinion include:

TBD = to be determined CY = cubic yard SY = square yard EA = each
SF = square feet

Station Street Corridor	QTY	Unit	Unit Cost	Subtotal
General Requirements				
Traffic Control	1	TBD		
Temporary Erosion Control	1	TBD		
Temporary Utilities	1	TBD		
Site Grading	1	TBD		
Demolition				
Excavation	812	CY	\$14.00	\$11,371.73
Pavement				
4" Paved Concrete Trail - 8' width	2,708	SY	\$65.00	\$175,991.11
ADA Curb Ramps with Warning Panels	12	EA	\$850.00	\$10,200.00
Colored Concrete with ADA Ramps	672	SY	\$100.00	\$67,222.22
Highly-visible Crosswalk Painting	9	EA	\$750.00	\$6,750.00
Plantings & Seeding				
Lawn Seeding (2' Each Side of Sidewalk)	24,368	SF	\$0.25	\$6,092.00
Overstory Trees - 2" Caliper	42	EA	\$700.00	\$29,400.00
Understory Trees - 1" Caliper	5	EA	\$500.00	\$2,500.00
Lighting				
Electrical	1	TBD		
Pedestrian Lights	19	EA	\$5,000.00	\$95,000.00
Streetlight	1	TBD		
Amenities				
Victor Stanley CR-10 Bench (4')	5	EA	\$2,300.00	\$11,500.00
Victor Stanley SD-42 Trash Receptacle	5	EA	\$1,515.00	\$7,575.00
Subtotal				\$416,027.07
Contingency (20%)				\$83,205.41
Mobilization (15%)				\$62,404.06
Design/Engineering (20%)				\$83,205.41
TOTAL				\$644,841.95

Design Expertise Recommended:

Projects may require help beyond the capability of the visioning committee or available staff. For this improvement project, the visioning committee should expect to engage the services of a landscape architect, civil engineer, and electrical engineer.

Chichaqua Valley Trailhead

Chichaqua Valley Trail, an almost 30-mile trail connecting several communities, ends in Baxter. Despite its significance as a regional connector, the current trailhead offers minimal amenities or wayfinding signage to encourage trail users to enter and explore the community. Recognizing the importance of this entry point, the visioning committee identified enhancing the trailhead as a key improvement opportunity. One notable feature at the terminus is an existing caboose, which, while historically significant, is currently in a state of costly disrepair.

The Veterans Memorial committee has made significant improvements at the corner of Station and Main Streets. Continued efforts were delayed so a unified set of improvements could occur linking the trailhead and Veterans Memorial and creating a cohesive space for multiple user groups.

The proposed improvements include everything on the wish list created at the design workshop and mentioned at the What, Where, & Why Meeting. Improved trailhead signage, pollinator plantings, benches along the trail, and an entrance sculpture piece using repurposed caboose parts greet trail users as they enter from the southwest.



The community could repurpose pieces of the caboose to create entrance sculptures on either side of the Chichaqua Valley Trail.



Existing trailhead is disconnected from Station Street and the Veteran's Memorial.



Proposed trailhead improvements enhance the overall cohesive atmosphere of the space as it relates to the downtown and Veteran's Memorial.



On the northern side of the area, a newly constructed picnic shelter with restrooms located at the rear of the building is located adjacent to the trail leading to Station Street. This facility offers a convenient location for gatherings and provides necessary services to enhance the comfort of trail users.



Across State Street, the trailhead parking area has undergone modifications, resulting in a reduction of parking spaces. In its place, a new, tree-lined trail has been introduced on the west side, providing a continuous connection all the way to Station Street. At the southern end of the parking area, visitors will find an updated information kiosk, designated bike parking, and benches. Additional benches and a bike repair station have been strategically placed along the trail on the west side of the parking lot.



Existing conditions at the corner of Main Street and Station Street.



Proposed improvements open up the trailhead and connect it to Station Street. A memorial sidewalk lined with flags representing each branch of the military connects the Veterans Memorial and the trailhead park area, newly planted trees act as a scenic backdrop, and a proposed brick plaza with seating provides park users with a peaceful place to sit and relax, further integrating the trailhead with the memorial and creating a unified, welcoming environment for all visitors.

Chichaqua Valley Trailhead – Opinion of Probable Cost

The following cost opinion is based on estimated material quantities and contracted installation prices. Project costs can decrease with donated materials, reduced cost materials, and volunteer labor. All quantities are estimates. Before any work should occur, an engineering survey is recommended.

Design Expertise Recommended:

Projects may require help beyond the capability of the visioning committee or available staff. For this improvement project, the visioning committee should expect to engage the services of a landscape architect, civil engineer, electrical engineer, and signage company.



A bird's eye view showing the relationship of the existing Veterans Memorial with the Chichaqua Valley Trailhead.

Abbreviations used in the following cost opinion include:

TBD = to be determined CY = cubic yard SY = square yard EA = each

LF = linear foot LS = lump sum SF = square foot

Chichaqua Valley Trailhead	QTY	Unit	Unit Cost	Subtotal
General Requirements				
Traffic Control	1	TBD		
Temporary Erosion Control	1	TBD		
Temporary Utilities	1	TBD		
Site Grading	1	TBD		
Demolition				
Excavation	409	CY	\$14.00	\$5,729.73
Lighting				
Electrical	1	TBD		
Pavement				
4" Paved Concrete Trail - 8' width	837	SY	\$65.00	\$54,383.33
ADA Curb Ramps with Warning Panels	2	EA	\$850.00	\$1,700.00
Highly-visible Crosswalk Painting	2	EA	\$750.00	\$1,500.00
Parking Lot Line Painting	514	LF	\$1.00	\$514.00
Brick Plaza	1,050	SF	\$15.00	\$15,750.00
Picnic Shelter with Restrooms				
Concrete Foundation	78	SY	\$65.00	\$5,055.56
Picnic Shelter with Restrooms (20' x 35')	1	LS	\$175,000.00	\$175,000.00
Site Furnishings				
Flagpoles with Military Flags (30' Commercial Quality installed with Footings)	6	EA	\$3,500.00	\$21,000.00
Bistro Tables	3	EA	\$1,500.00	\$4,500.00
Informational Kiosk	1	EA	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
Bike Racks	2	EA	\$500.00	\$1,000.00
Plantings & Seeding				
Lawn Seeding	24,368	SF	\$0.25	\$6,092.00
Pollinator Plantings (Plugs)	3,000	SF	\$1.50	\$4,500.00
Overstory Trees - 2" Caliper	16	EA	\$700.00	\$11,200.00
Understory Trees - 1" Caliper	3	EA	\$500.00	\$1,500.00
Planting Bed with Annuals & Wood Mulch	460	SF	\$1.00	\$460.00
Signage & Art				
Monument Signage	1	EA	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00
Sculpture	1	TBD		
Subtotal				\$327,384.62
Contingency (20%)				\$65,476.92
Mobilization (15%)				\$49,107.69
Design/Engineering (20%)				\$65,476.92
TOTAL				\$507,446.16

Proposed School Parking

Baxter's community school accommodates more than 500 students (K-12) and staff per school year. Over time, multiple additions have been made to the already landlocked building, but parking has remained limited. Currently, the school has about 100 official spaces and another 65+ informal spots. With too few designated areas, students and staff often park on nearby side streets, creating congestion, reducing pedestrian visibility, and limiting access to Geise Park and downtown parking. Safety is also a concern because students frequently cross between parked cars to reach nearby playgrounds, creating unpredictable conditions to drivers.

The design team studied parking patterns around the school and identified opportunities to reduce or eliminate problem areas to ease congestion and improve pedestrian safety. At a design workshop, a concept was presented for a new 132-space parking lot on the south side of the school. The majority of the workshop attendees supported this idea and location, but also raised concerns about potential traffic increases on Davenport Avenue, the use of gravel instead of pavement, and the loss of green space near the playground.

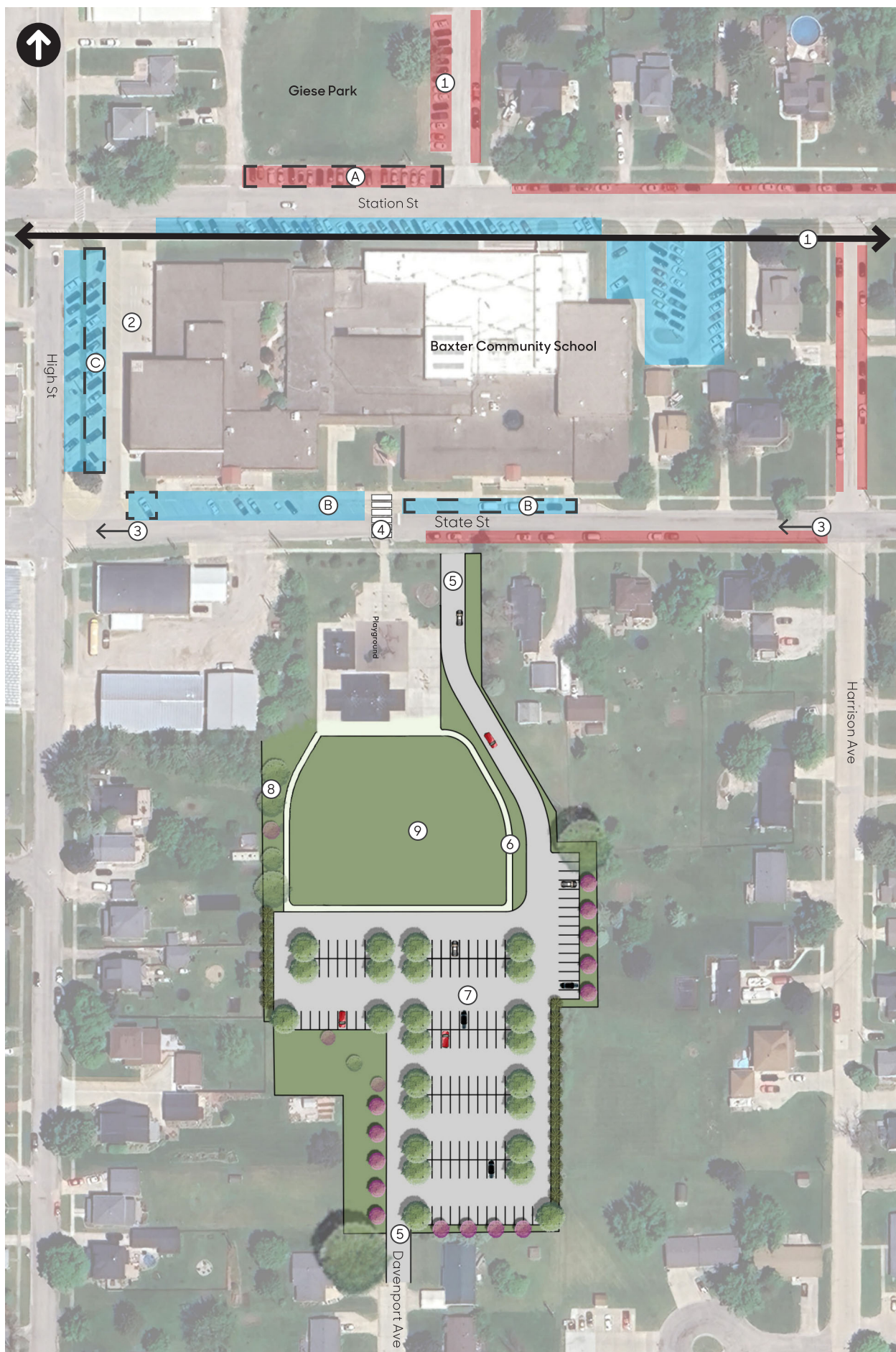
Legend

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| ① Proposed Pedestrian Corridor |  Ornamental Trees (Typical) |
| ② Bus Drop-off |  Shade Tree (Typical) |
| ③ One-way During School Hours |  Evergreen Tree (Typical) |
| ④ Proposed Enhanced Crosswalk |  Designated School Parking |
| ⑤ Parking Lot Entrance/Exit |  Undesignated School Parking |
| ⑥ Re-routed Story Trail |  Proposed Parking Removal |
| ⑦ 132-Stall Parking Lot | |
| ⑧ Existing Trees | |
| ⑨ Lawn | |

Ⓐ To improve pedestrian and vehicular awareness and safety along Station Street, the design team recommends removing front-in parking on Station Street in Geise Park.

Ⓑ To assist with vehicles leaving the proposed parking lot, the design team recommends limiting or removing parking on the southwest side of the school on State Street. A proposed pickup and drop-off area could be designated, allowing only bus traffic to continue on the west side of the school.

Ⓒ Eliminating the area of parking within the bus lane would allow bus drop-offs to occur without other vehicles entering or exiting the space. Better pedestrian access from the west side of the school to the south side to enter the playground could be established if parking in that area is reduced.



"...all around the school...safety is a concern...because... there's not enough parking [so] people just park how they can...then we've got inexperienced drivers coupled with some interesting parking situations and...the kids walking... come out between the cars...to go to the park after school."



"On the west side of the school there's also supposed to be a bus pull through, and they added parking to help out, but [there's] a lot of congestion...with buses pulling through."



The above image from Google Earth shows how congested the parking is around the school including all of Geise Park's parking spots being occupied by school parking.

Design Expertise Recommended for Proposed School Parking Lot Project:

Projects may require help beyond the capability of the visioning committee or available staff. For this improvement project, the visioning committee should expect to engage the services of a landscape architect, civil engineer, and electrical engineer.

Baxter Community School Parking – Opinion of Probable Cost

The following cost opinion is based on estimated material quantities and contracted installation prices. Project costs can decrease with donated materials, reduced cost materials, and volunteer labor. All quantities are estimates.

Abbreviations used in the following cost opinion include:

TBD = to be determined LF = linear foot CY = cubic yard SF = square foot
SY = square yard EA = each LS = lump sum

Baxter Community School Parking	QTY	Unit	Unit Cost	Subtotal
General Requirements				
Traffic Control, Temporary Erosion Control, Temporary Utilities, and Site Grading	1	TBD		
Demolition				
Curb Removal	24	LF	\$12.50	\$300.00
Excavation	3,538	CY	\$14.00	\$49,535.63
Lighting				
Electrical & Parking Lot Lights	1	TBD		
Pavement				
4" Paved Concrete Trail - 8' width	269	SY	\$65.00	\$17,506.67
6" PPC Concrete Parking & Driveway*	10,177	SY	\$65.00	\$661,512.22
Parking Lot Line Painting	2,412	LF	\$1.00	\$2,412.00
<i>*Alternate: Parking Area is Gravel & Driveway is Concrete deduct \$560,106.22</i>				
ADA Curb Ramps with Warning Panels	2	EA	\$850.00	\$1,700.00
Highly-visible Crosswalk Painting	1	EA	\$750.00	\$750.00
Plantings & Seeding				
Lawn Seeding	9,017	SF	\$0.25	\$2,254.25
Overstory Trees - 2" Caliper	30	EA	\$700.00	\$21,000.00
Understory Trees - 1" Caliper	14	EA	\$500.00	\$7,000.00
Restoring Former Paved Areas to Lawn	7,411	SF	\$2.00	\$14,822.00
Signage & Art				
Parking Signage	3	EA	\$300.00	\$900.00
Reinstallation of Story Walk	1	LS	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
Subtotal				\$779,692.77
Contingency (20%)				\$155,938.55
Mobilization (15%)				\$116,953.92
Design/Engineering (20%)				\$155,938.55
TOTAL				\$1,208,523.79
*Alternate Total Costs				
Subtotal				\$219,586.55
Contingency (20%)				\$43,917.31
Mobilization (15%)				\$32,937.98
Design/Engineering (20%)				\$43,917.31
TOTAL				\$340,359.15

Main Street Improvements

During the What, Where, and Why meeting, one steering committee member said, "Main Street is the focal point of our community because Main Street is the first place people see." Referencing What People Said, board 3b, a steering committee member said, "I think our Main St is picture perfect. It's like a Hallmark town." Building on that statement, targeted enhancements could improve both the functionality and safety of Main Street, while also elevating its visual appeal through added amenities.

Improvements to ADA-accessibility and more handicapped parking stalls, especially near the post office, were a common topic. Baxter is unique because much of the community must go to the post office to get their mail, so it is essential that improvements are made to ensure residents have a safe way to access this daily stop.

Overall improvements to the Chichaqua Valley Trailhead and Veterans Memorial, which are adjacent to Main Street and the downtown business area, could increase traffic to local businesses and improvements to Main Street will further enhance the trail users' overall experience and impression of Baxter as a community they would like to visit again.



ADA accessibility for post office users was discussed multiple times throughout the visioning process. A proposed handicapped designated parking stall and street level curbs allow all residents to be able to safely get their mail.

Existing



The existing crosswalk is 60 feet across. Shown below are proposed bump-outs that reduce the crossing width to 35 feet.

Proposed



Proposed bump-outs with trees continue the tree canopy down Main Street. The addition of pedestrian-scale light fixtures with brackets for hanging baskets or banners increases vertical interest. Benches and trash receptacles are strategically located throughout downtown.



In addition to continuing the tree canopy down Main Street, aesthetic changes such as improved lighting with planters or banners and quality site amenities were considered to improve the attractiveness of downtown for residents and visitors. Increasing pedestrian safety by using bump-outs at the intersection of Main and State Streets provides areas for tree plantings and reduces the width of the road for pedestrians. Highly-visible crosswalks, tactile warning panels, and pedestrian signage work together to create a safe environment for residents.



Main Street is a wide road with two lanes of traffic and parking on both sides. Existing mature trees lining both sides from Highway F17 to Fox Avenue create natural traffic calming, but the blocks to the north of Fox Avenue have minimal tree canopy.

State Street Corridor – Opinion of Probable Cost

The following cost opinion is based on estimated material quantities and contracted installation prices. Project costs can decrease with donated materials, reduced cost materials, and volunteer labor. All quantities are estimates. Amenity prices were included as a la carte items and could be added to grant applications in any quantity.

Abbreviations used in the following cost opinion include:

TBD = to be determined LF = linear foot CY= cubic yard

EA = each SY = square yard SF = square foot

Downtown Improvements	QTY	Unit	Unit Cost	Subtotal
General Requirements				
Traffic Control, Temporary Erosion Control, Temporary Utilities, and Site Grading	1	TBD		
Demolition				
Curb Removal	128	LF	\$12.50	\$1,600.00
Excavation	3,071	CY	\$14.00	\$42,987.44
Lighting				
Pedestrian Lights with Banner Arms	14	EA	\$5,000.00	\$70,000.00
Pavement				
4" PCC Sidewalks with ADA Curb Ramps	349	SY	\$85.00	\$29,702.78
Handicapped Parking Painting	1	EA	\$450.00	\$450.00
Handicapped Parking Sign	1	EA	\$200.00	\$200.00
ADA Curb Ramps with Warning Panels	16	EA	\$850.00	\$13,600.00
Highly-visible Crosswalk Painting	4	EA	\$750.00	\$3,000.00
Plantings				
Amended Soil for Tree Pits	117	CY	\$30.00	\$3,522.22
Overstory Trees - 2" Caliper	5	EA	\$700.00	\$3,500.00
Perennials	1,268	SF	\$4.50	\$5,706.00
Wood Mulch	1,268	SF	\$1.00	\$1,268.00
Site Furnishings				
Victor Stanley CR-10 Bench (4')	6	EA	\$2,300.00	\$13,800.00
Victor Stanley SD-42 Trash Receptacle	6	EA	\$1,515.00	\$9,090.00
			Subtotal	\$189,336.44
			Contingency (20%)	\$37,867.29
			Mobilization (15%)	\$28,400.47
			Design/Engineering (20%)	\$37,867.29
			TOTAL	\$293,471.48

Design Expertise Recommended:

Projects may require help beyond the capability of the visioning committee or available staff. For this improvement project, the visioning committee should expect to engage the services of a landscape architect, electrical engineer, and civil engineer.

Implementation Strategies

RITLAND+KUIPER Landscape Architects aims to continue serving Baxter as the city's landscape architecture consultant. Our deep understanding of the community and its visioning plans, combined with extensive experience in similar projects and their funding, positions us as a valuable asset for Baxter. To successfully design and implement the identified improvement projects, collaboration with a team of allied professionals will be essential. This collaborative approach will ensure that the community's goals are fully integrated into the improvements.

The Visioning Program is just the beginning of the planning process for implementation of projects that will contribute to an enhanced quality of life in Baxter. Although there is much value in data gathering, analysis, conclusions and recommendations, the greatest value is providing the residents of Baxter with the opportunity to look at their community from different perspectives and to motivate future positive change. It is the design team's intent to provide the community with a framework for significant future development and enhancement of community resources.

We recommend that projects be approached individually, keeping in mind some may occur at the same time or may require phasing to be completed. Baxter has many local organizations and certain projects may fall under the guidance of different groups. Short-term projects are those that can be more easily accomplished or address safety issues. Implementation of long-range projects is dependent on the availability of funds. Based on the strategy that early success builds momentum, we recommend the first projects be those that can be more easily accomplished and be highly visible.

Station Street Corridor: Improving pedestrian walkability and connectivity throughout Baxter will enhance safety, encourage healthier lifestyles through increased activity, and provide better access to local businesses and popular destinations. Baxter should explore grants and resources focused on pedestrian safety, complete streets, and economic development, such as the Iowa DOT Statewide Transportation Enhancement Funding, Iowa DNR Recreation Infrastructure Program, and Alliant Energy's Trees Forever Branching Out Program. One grant to explore further is the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). Administered by the Iowa DOT, this program supports smaller-scale transportation projects. It aims to enhance walkability and improve safety, and can be used for sidewalk replacements. The program operates through Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Regional Planning Affiliations (RPAs). More information can be found here: https://iowadot.gov/local_systems/Grant-Programs/Transportation-Alternatives. Station Street corridor is such an important project within Baxter that it should be considered as a project to start with. The project could be phased block by block. The heavy use of Station Street by students going back and forth to the sports facilities and the school requires adequate infrastructure be in place. Station Street was a common issue brought up during both focus groups and the design workshop.

Chichaqua Valley Trailhead: The trailhead improvements could be phased with the first step being the removal of the caboose which opens up the location for a shelter. If funding for a shelter with restrooms could not be secured in the short term, the shelter could be erected and the restrooms added later. The legion working on the Veterans Monument area should be included in the conversation to determine what it wants to include from the trailhead master plan. Improvements to the south side of State Street could be a starting point for the trailhead project with pollinator plantings being added for a relatively low cost. The following grants area available (and subject to change, so consult the back of this book for the latest information on available grants):

State & Federal Recreational Trails Program (SRT/FRT): Grants for acquisition, construction, or improvement of recreational trails and associated facilities (trailheads, linkage, etc.).

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF): Managed by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, this grant is federally funded. The grant provides 50% cost share for outdoor recreation area development and land acquisition in Iowa.

Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Grants: These grants support city parks, open spaces, and outdoor recreational projects, and could help fund trailhead development. REAP focuses on improving public areas for recreation and conservation.

Iowa DOT/Living Roadway Trust Fund (LRTF): Focused on roadside vegetation, environment, public awareness, etc. LRTF does not directly fund trailheads or park structures, but is sometimes relevant if there is vegetation/restoration, landscaping or interpretive nature signage or native plantings.

Baxter School Parking Improvements: The first step for this project would be to contact the school board and get it on an agenda for a future meeting to discuss what kind of partnership could occur between the school and the city.

Main Street Improvements: Better pedestrian walkability and connectivity throughout Baxter will enhance safety, encourage healthier lifestyles through increased activity, and improve access to local businesses and popular destinations. Bump-outs at the intersections reduce crossing widths on State and Main Streets by half. Baxter should explore grants and resources focused on pedestrian safety, complete streets, and economic development, such as the Iowa DOT Statewide Transportation Enhancement Funding, Iowa DNR Recreation Infrastructure Program, and Alliant Energy's Trees Forever Branching Out Program. As with Station Street enhancements, many community members have a vested interest in these improvements and may be willing to help with fundraising and volunteer efforts.

Available Resources

There are many creative ways that communities can raise the resources necessary to fund and implement projects. Below are links to several sources and opportunities for funding the projects conceptualized during the visioning process. This list of resources is not all-inclusive; it is meant to serve as a tool to assist in brainstorming ideas.



Iowa Community Foundations

<https://iowacommunityfoundations.org/>



Iowa Department of Natural Resources Grants

<https://www.iowadnr.gov/about/grants-funding>



Iowa Department of Transportation Grants and Programs

<https://iowadot.gov/grants-programs/>



Iowa Economic Development Authority Community Development Programs

<https://www.iowaeda.com/grow-your-community/>



Trees Forever Community Project Funding Guide

<https://treesforever.org/Community-Project-Funding-Guide/>



Community Mural Toolkit

<https://go.iastate.edu/Q3BTBT>



Community Mural Workbook (companion to the toolkit)

<https://go.iastate.edu/RFZ2HW>



Pop-up! A Toolkit for (fun, invigorating, life-affirming) Temporary Experiences

<https://go.iastate.edu/9QXH8A>



POW: A Plan of Work Template for Creative Community Projects

<https://go.iastate.edu/BTFDBT>