



CEDAR VALLEY *River Experience*

**WATERLOO | CEDAR FALLS
VISION DOCUMENT**

July 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CEDAR VALLEY
River Experience



The **Cedar Valley River Experience** is an ambitious initiative that proposes a number of projects and recommendations to fulfill a regional vision centered around the **Cedar River**.

The Vision pushes the Cedar Valley to continue leaping ahead and growing through transformational placemaking projects. A recent workforce poll commissioned by the Iowa Chamber Alliance found that Iowa is the only state in the union that has not doubled in population since 1900, which creates a talent deficit for economic growth. At the local level, the Waterloo-Cedar Falls MSA working-age population declined by 2,574 from 2014 to 2019. This reality has elevated talent attraction and retention conversations and made quality of life a top priority for the state and the region. Given this, the time is now to think big and put forth a collective vision of ideas and opportunities that together grow the Cedar Valley and position it as the region of choice.

CAPITALIZING ON STRENGTHS

ICA found that Iowans are dissatisfied with Iowa's entertainment opportunities – about twice as many think they're inferior to those in other states. The opposite is true for Iowa's outdoor recreational opportunities. **Highlighting Iowa's outdoor entertainment options could be a winning message.**

Source: ICA Poll of Working Age Iowans, Dec. 2021

The Cedar Valley River Experience Vision seeks to accomplish just that. It focuses on enhancing and amplifying the Cedar Valley's greatest assets, in particular, the Cedar River. The Vision's goals are to:

- **Link** downtown Waterloo and downtown Cedar Falls by a durable natural asset – the Cedar River;
- **Increase** outdoor recreation opportunities and create new tourism opportunities to support the area's hospitality and retail base;
- **Increase** the density of destinations linked by the river to put the Cedar Valley area on the map and distinguish it within the State of Iowa and the Midwest;
- **Bring** new business to the region and attract and retain workforce in the Cedar Valley;
- **Transform** the region into a competitive force for state and federal funding to implement the Vision's key projects.



Starting with collaboration.

Waterloo and Cedar Falls are not often viewed as a connected economic development unit, **but local leaders understood that in order to be competitive for funding opportunities, the two communities had to come together as a unit to collectively position itself for the betterment of the Cedar Valley.** The Cedar Valley River Experience Vision Steering Committee creation was the beginning of a collaboration between the two communities. The Steering Committee, composed of community leaders and stakeholders, was a critical part of the process and helped inform community and regional assets, identify projects and opportunities, and identify next steps. The Steering Committee met three times over the course of the project. They were invaluable to the process and their constructive feedback and local knowledge was key to developing the final document.

As part of the process, over a dozen stakeholders were interviewed and asked about their current plans, projects, and initiatives, particularly those related to the river. These conversations helped inform the final list of Opportunities.

PROCESS SCHEDULE



KEY STAKEHOLDER FINDINGS:

- Need for more accessible and reliable transportation between both communities.
- Perception that river is not navigable from Cedar Falls to Waterloo.
- Need for combined marketing efforts and a centralized location for communication of events – neutral party to promote both communities / provide community tours.
- Great place to raise families but lacks the urban feel and amenities that attracts young talent.
- Would like to see amenities closer to the river (i.e. river dining, “San Antonio Riverwalk”, “food containers at the beach”)
- As communities become more ethnically and culturally diverse, there needs to be more spaces and places to allow more cultural celebrations that embraced and welcomed.
- Need for four season outdoor programming and facilities.
- Would like to see shared events and experiences – music festivals, food festivals, lantern shows, dragon boat races, etc.
- Main Streets are already working together to promote assets but could use more support

Our community today.

The Cedar Valley region as referred to in this document, is defined by the cities of Waterloo and Cedar Falls. The two anchor cities in Black Hawk County have a combined population of over 100,000 and growing. It's people, culture, unique assets, and small city, big opportunity-feel are the foundation of the Cedar Valley. A snapshot of the region is provided below.

2%

Population growth since 2010

Median Age

36.7

Waterloo

27.3

Cedar Falls

Median Household Income

\$46,942

Waterloo

\$64,809

Cedar Falls

Post-Secondary Educational Attainment

23%

Waterloo

49%

Cedar Falls

Economy

47,877

Jobs in Waterloo

24,227

Jobs in Cedar Falls

35%

of jobs are filled by residents

20%

of jobs are filled by residents

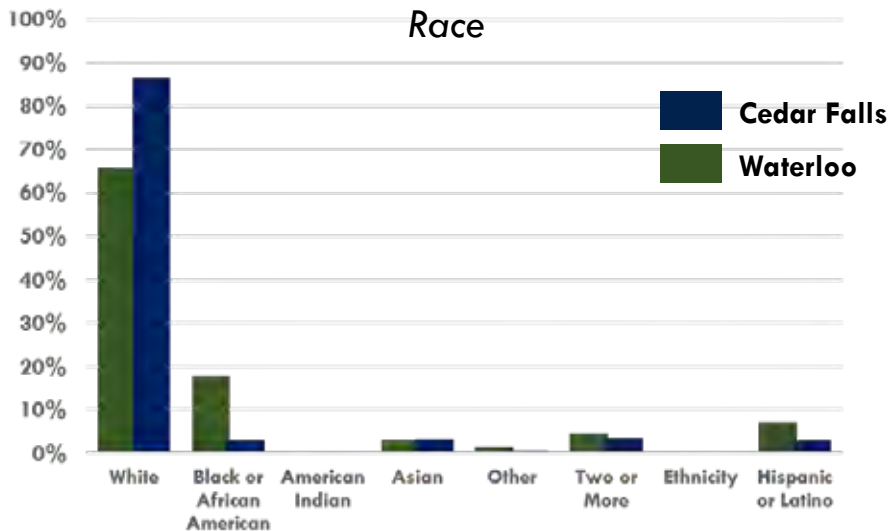
31%

of residents leave City for work

44%

of residents leave City for work

Race





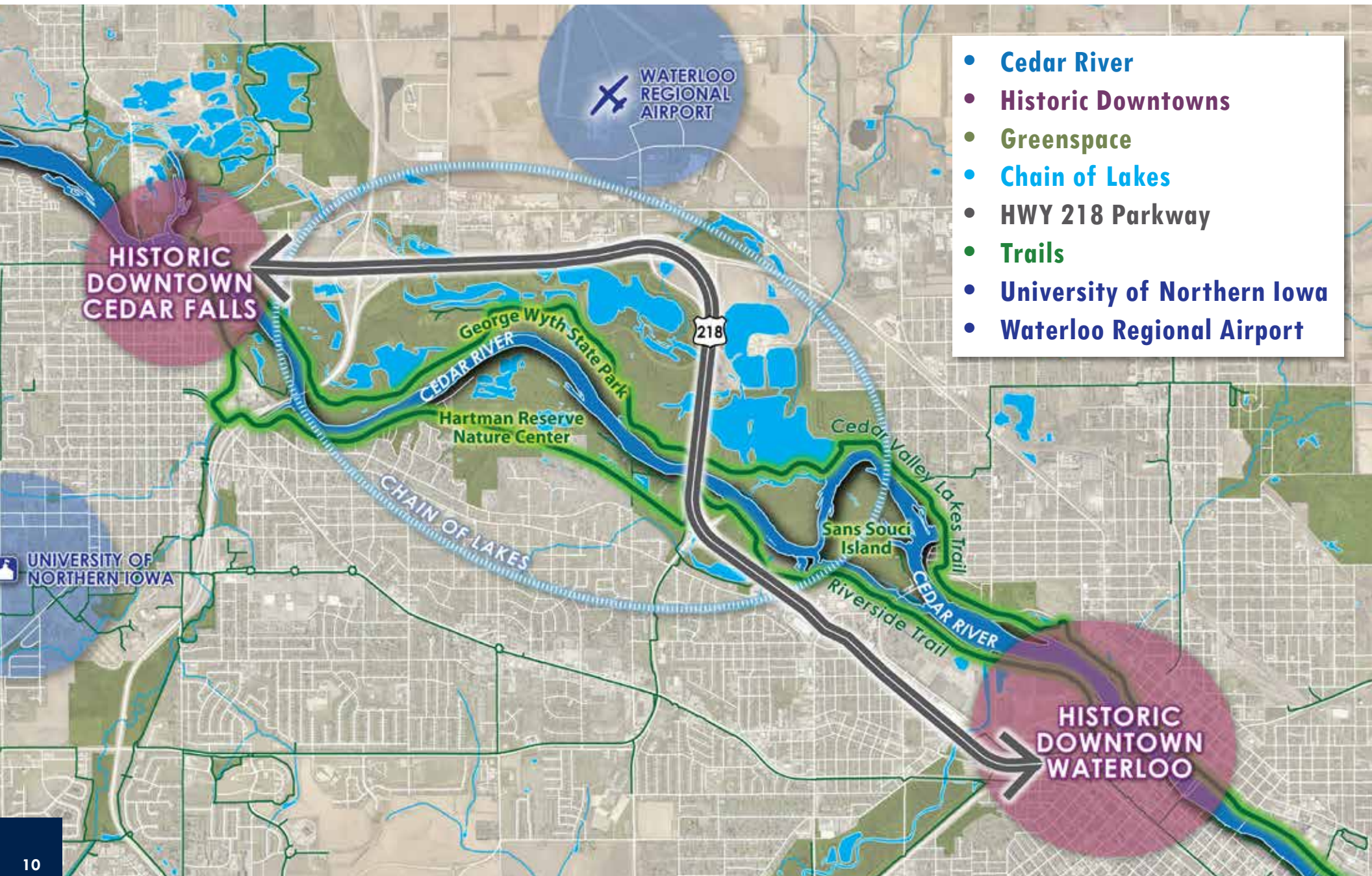
Regional Assets *and* Contributing Projects

Presented by
Vernian
IOWA IRISH FEST
Waffle

Welcome to the Irish Merchandise Market

- Lincoln Park
- City Hall
- Courthouse

CEDAR VALLEY FOUNDATIONAL ASSETS



- Cedar River
- Historic Downtowns
- Greenspace
- Chain of Lakes
- HWY 218 Parkway
- Trails
- University of Northern Iowa
- Waterloo Regional Airport

Leading with our strengths.

The Cedar Valley region is characterized by its unique geography within the state. It is one of the few areas in the state with two anchor communities minutes away from each other and with many shared natural assets and resources. While Waterloo and Cedar Falls are their own unique communities with individual assets and activities, they are linked and tied together by the Foundational Assets.

The Foundational Assets start to form a connected economic development region with the Cedar River at its heart. The region only becomes stronger as efforts are coordinated and completed together towards one common goal – **to achieve the Regional Vision.**

The Foundational Assets are those that *the Cedar Valley River Experience* will build upon, strive to improve, and leverage to achieve the Vision.

- **Cedar River:** This unifying natural asset links the two communities.
- **Historic Downtowns:** These **nationally recognized downtowns** are uniquely different from each other and offer distinctive experiences.
- **Parks & Greenspace:** Between George Wyth State Park, Hartman Reserve, and San Souci Island, there are more than **1,500 acres of parkland** to enjoy.
- **Chain of Lakes:** Within those 1,500 acres are **four lakes** that generate a variety of recreational activity and opportunity.
- **HWY 218 Parkway: Ten-minute pleasurable drive** connects directly into each downtown.
- **Trails:** More than **120 miles of trails** have been developed for more than twenty years. The system of loops allows you to “choose your adventure”, hopping between each downtown or enjoying a stroll around the lake.
- **University of Northern Iowa:** More than **\$1.6B in income was added to the Iowa economy in 2018**, which has positively affected the region.
- **Waterloo Regional Airport:** This non-hub primary commercial service airport serves the Waterloo-Cedar Falls region with opportunity for service growth.

Throughout the years, efforts have looked at the abundance of recreation opportunity in the region. The following are two important efforts worth noting and highlighting as part of this project.

Past Planning Efforts and Initiatives to Build Upon

Black Hawk County Water Trails Plan

The Black Hawk County Water Trails Master Plan is the guiding document for park and recreational developments along the Cedar River and Black Hawk Creek. The Master Plan covers a wide variety of topics, including project recommendations for more than two dozen river access areas. The primary purpose of the Plan is to classify the Cedar River and Black Hawk Creek as a State-designated water trail. Rivers become known as water trails when people paddle on them and organize amenities to support paddling, such as parking areas and launches.

Advancing and supporting the Water Trails Plan recommendations through the Cedar Valley River Experience project is key to ensure the region capitalizes on the economic impacts generated by water recreation.

Source: Black Hawk County Water Trails Plan



The Cedar Valley Lakes

Initiated in 1986, the Cedar Valley Lakes project represents a multi-jurisdictional success story in which the entire state can take pride. With the infusion of millions of dollars into the metropolitan highway system in the mid-'80s, the Cedar Valley Lakes Board was formed under the INRCOG umbrella of organizations to oversee the expansion of water recreation opportunities in the metro area. Taking advantage of numerous borrow areas needed for construction of the highways, the Lakes Board developed the Cedar Valley Lakes Master Plan with the assistance of Craig Ritland, Landscape Architect. The Master Plan has catalyzed development of water recreation and recreational trails in the area, resulting in more than 500 acres of surface water and more than seventy miles of recreational trails that local citizens and visitors can enjoy.

Source: Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments

Harnessing our assets.

The Cedar Valley is not only gifted with natural resources to leverage and harness, but it has many other great assets that distinguish this rich region and tie our communities together. Many of these assets were identified by the Steering Committee and through several stakeholder conversations. The collection of people- and place-based assets start forming a unique destination in the region.



Diverse Industry Mix: From John Deere and Tyson to UnityPoint Health, MercyOne, and the many downtown mom and pop shops, the Cedar Valley region is home to many diverse businesses. It is ranked in the top thirty-five percent of communities for industry diversity across the country. Beyond a thriving business mix, major employers like John Deere contribute a diverse workforce to an ethnically rich community.



Educational Assets: The region has well-known and highly respected educational institutions like University of Northern Iowa, Hawkeye School, and the Van G. Miller Adult Learning Center. Together with exceptional Pre-K to grade 12 schools and career centers, the Cedar Valley is invested in providing top-notch educational opportunities.



Entrepreneurship & Innovation: The Cedar Valley has a strong infrastructure in place to transform ideas into businesses. From the thirty-acre TechWork Campus to the 24/7 BLAC Business & Entrepreneurship Accelerator, instrumental in growing and supporting black-owned businesses, many community resources in the area support entrepreneurship and nurture innovation.



Rich Ethnic & Cultural Diversity: The Cedar Valley region prides itself in welcoming people from all backgrounds and ethnicities. Community leaders recognize that creating a culture of inclusion is critical for community development, which in turn is essential for workforce and economic development. Celebrating, embracing, and supporting the region's ethnic cultural diversity is evident in local initiatives and investments such as the English Language Learner (ELL) through Hawkeye and the courses offered by the Adult Learning Center.



Cultural Attractions: There are numerous cultural attractions located near the Cedar River that contribute to the region's quality of life, including more than a dozen museums. These assets play an important role in celebrating the people that have shaped the Cedar Valley region.



Sports Entertainment & Recreation: Cedar Valley has a high concentration of sports entertainment and recreation activities for all ages, from the Waterloo Bucks to the Waterloo Black Hawks. In addition, recreational soccer, competition volleyball, and basketball have become increasingly growing youth sports in the community.



Weekend Trip Destination: From paddle sports to fishing to dining by the river or enjoying a concert downtown, the Cedar Valley has much to offer within a ten-minute drive. It offers all the ingredients to become the ideal destination weekend getaway.

CEDAR VALLEY CONTRIBUTING PROJECTS

The following are river-oriented placemaking projects that have been completed in the past 15-years.

\$50 M+
of Investment



Uniting around our shared asset.

Over the past twenty years there have been concerted efforts to unite the region around the Cedar River. From the Cedar Valley Lakes Board's tremendous work to transform the Chain of Lakes into the recreational amenity it is today to more recently the region gaining the re-designation as a "Great Place" in Iowa. This designation opens doors to potential grant funding for various projects. The Cedar Valley is one of more than forty communities and districts designated under the Great Places program created in 2005.

The Cedar Valley River Experience builds upon the efforts that began with Great Places. After the Great Places Committee shifted their focus to flood recovery and river enhancements in 2008, all projects they prioritized in their original proposal have been completed today, including the Ice House Museum, Island Park Beach, Washington Park, Waterloo Boat House, and the Downtown River Renaissance projects (RiverLoop Amphitheater, Trails, and Expo Plaza). The momentum to utilize the Cedar River as an economic driver has continued with the recent completion of the Hartman Reserve renovation and River Place Plaza and soon the artistic 4th Street Bridge & Cascade Lighting in Waterloo.

Placemaking projects such as these important civic infrastructure projects also have catalyzed private investments in the downtowns, such as River Place and Art Bloc, adding to a thriving economy. This combination of investments is key to building the urban fabric and creating the quality of place that attracts and retains talent in the region.



Iowa Great Places History

In 2009, the Cedar Valley was designated as a Great Place under the Iowa Great Places program. A Visioning Committee was established to pursue Great Places designation prior to the 2008 floods. After the floods, the committee decided to wait one year to submit a Great Places application. Because of the floods, the committee decided to shift the focus of the Great Places application to the Cedar River with an emphasis on rebuilding and expanding riverfront amenities. The proposal submitted for Great Places consideration included five projects with budgets, timelines, and funding sources identified for each project.

In 2019, the Cedar Valley was re-designated by the Iowa Great Places program. As part of the re-designation process, several community stakeholders came together to develop the 2019 Cedar Valley Visioning Plan, including Grow Cedar Valley, Cedar Falls Tourism and Visitors Bureau, Experience Waterloo, City of Cedar Falls, City of Waterloo, and INRCOG. The Vision Plan's goals include improving quality of life, developing recreational facilities, and creating spaces that support living, working, and playing. The top vision area identified by the plan is building a connection to the rivers. In 2021, the Cedar Valley was awarded \$150,000 by the Iowa Great Places program to develop and improve river access in downtown Cedar Falls and downtown Waterloo.

Source: Black Hawk County Water Trails Plan



Region's Vision *and* Framework



The Cedar Valley River Experience is built on a foundational vision that illustrates what the Cedar Valley region wants to be in the future and how it can come together to be more connected on mutually beneficial efforts like workforce attraction and retention, tourism, and quality of life. The Vision is centered on a Vision Statement and critical elements and is supported by a Framework of key areas of focus that provide direction for this plan and when advanced will help the Region achieve its vision. The Vision Statement and Framework are shared below.

Vision Statement and Critical Elements:

The Cedar Valley is a connected community and economic development unit and a region united around a shared natural asset: *the Cedar River*

- 1 TRANSFORM** the Cedar Valley into a magnet for great talent retention and recruitment
- 2 PROMOTE** Cedar Falls & Waterloo's unique position in the State of Iowa as two distinctive yet connected communities
- 3 ELEVATE** our natural assets, resources, and cultural amenities at a regional, state, and national scale
- 4 ENHANCE** our regional economic impact & growth

Vision Framework

In forming the vision for the Cedar Valley River Experience, developed with input from numerous stakeholder groups and the Steering Committee, two critical objectives emerged that provide the framework for the plan's development, opportunities, and recommendations.

BUILDING THE CEDAR VALLEY PLACEMAKING SYSTEM

The Cedar Valley region has numerous natural and community-based assets from historic downtowns and entertainment and culture opportunities to natural resources and outdoor recreation attractions. To achieve the Cedar Valley River Experience vision, the different communities within the region, including Cedar Falls, Waterloo, and Black Hawk County, need to work together to build a placemaking system that enhances and highlights this system and also makes critical connections that enables residents and visitors to easily access all of these opportunities and destinations. The Cedar Valley River Experience placemaking focuses on the Cedar River to provide a critical connection between anchor projects and destinations in Cedar Falls and Waterloo. Elements and assets within the placemaking system include:

- ① Outdoor Recreation
- ② Natural Resources
- ③ Sports Entertainment
- ④ Downtown Living

ACTIVATING & CONNECTING THE SYSTEM

As the key project opportunities described later in this plan illustrate, with the enhancement of the Cedar Valley Placemaking System there also must be specific efforts made to activate and connect the system so that residents and visitors are aware of all the region has to offer and to be able to easily access and travel between each destination. Activation of the placemaking system includes opportunities to build the experience, character, and atmosphere of the different projects and destinations. This can include partnering with the private sector to make sure there are appropriate vendors, businesses, or amenities at each destination. This activation could include restaurants, riverside bars, boat tour companies, canoe and kayak outfitters, and bike rental opportunities. Coordinating and marketing events between the two downtowns is also important to avoid conflict and competition. This downtown-to-downtown approach enables visitors and residents to experience both downtowns in the same day or weekend. The Cedar Valley region is unique in the number of destinations present in a relatively compact area that easily can be traveled via a scenic highway, bike paths, and water trails. Connecting and activating the placemaking system requires updates to transportation and connectivity in the area to ensure multimodal accessibility to the region's many attractions.

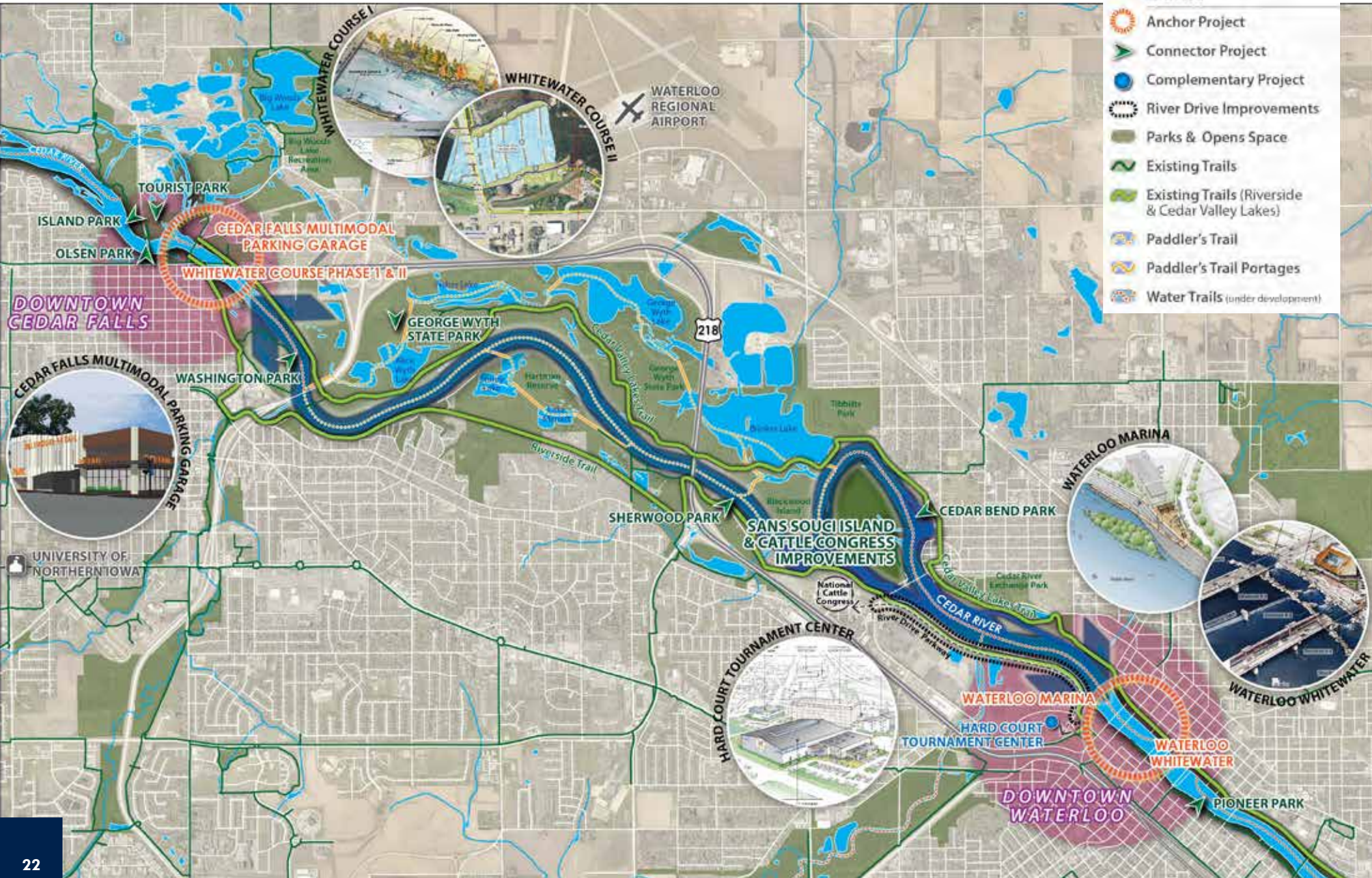
- ① Experiences & Activation
- ② Downtown to Downtown Programming & Events
- ③ Transportation/Connectivity
- ④ Collaboration/Regional Cooperation

The logo for Cedar Valley River Experience features a stylized map of the region in shades of green and purple. The text "CEDAR VALLEY" is in a white, sans-serif font, and "River Experience" is in a white, cursive font, both overlaid on the map.

CEDAR VALLEY
River Experience

Turning Assets *into* Opportunities – Key Regional Opportunities

VISION FOUNDATION



Illustrating our Vision.

The Vision Foundation is the graphical representation of the overarching vision for the Cedar Valley River Experience. It showcases the two historic downtowns, each with their own Anchor Projects that expand access to the river and, if marketed and programmed together, can generate tremendous impact for the region.

The Vision includes elements that framed up the Opportunities, whether it's natural assets like the river and state park that offer exceptional camping options or using the river with more active recreation like canoeing and kayaking in both communities and along the river through the Connector Projects.

The Vision not only focuses on actively using the river but also the space off the river with infrastructure opportunities such as transforming Highway 218 into a parkway or enhancing River Drive.

The Vision Foundation builds a region more connected and coordinated and one that works together to drive economic development, tourism, and talent attraction and retention. The intention here is to unite these projects and opportunities into one region.

Anchor Projects

- | | |
|---|--|
| a | Cedar Falls Whitewater Course Phase I & II |
| b | Cedar Falls Multimodal Center |
| c | Waterloo Whitewater Course |
| d | Waterloo Marina |

Connector Projects

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| a | Cedar Park Bend |
| b | Pioneer Park |
| c | Riverview Recreation Area |
| d | River Road Improvements |
| e | River Road Deere Improvements (Match) |
| f | San Souci Island Master Plan |
| g | Olsen Park |
| h | Tourist Park |
| i | Washington Park |
| j | Island Park |

Complementary Project

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| a | Hard Court Tournament Center |
|---|------------------------------|

KEY REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

A. Celebrating the Water – Cedar Falls

B. Promoting the Chain of Lakes

These seven Opportunities are the placemaking elements that leverage the region's unique physical, cultural, and social assets; build off past efforts; and celebrate the link that unites the region – the Cedar River.

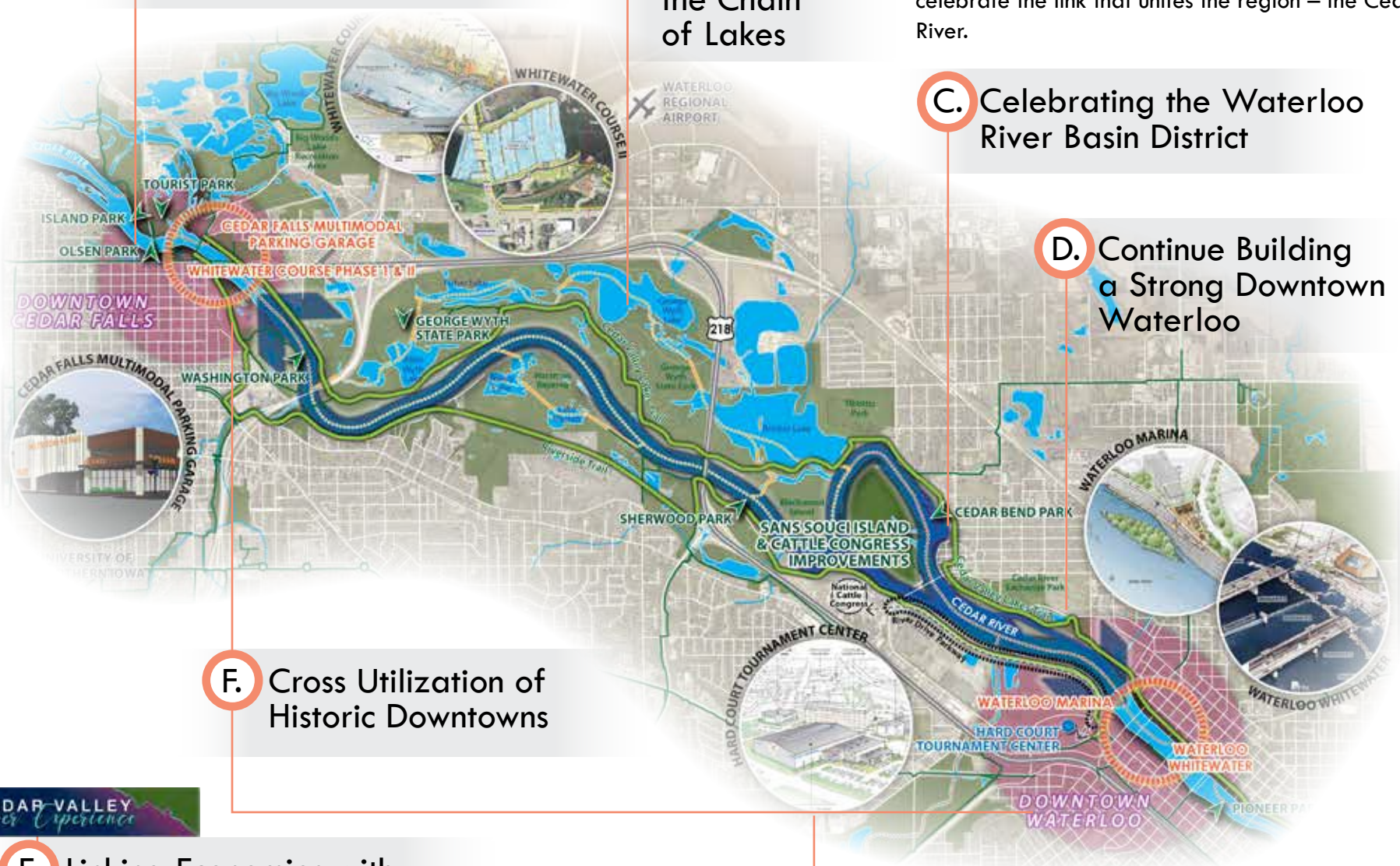
C. Celebrating the Waterloo River Basin District

D. Continue Building a Strong Downtown Waterloo

F. Cross Utilization of Historic Downtowns

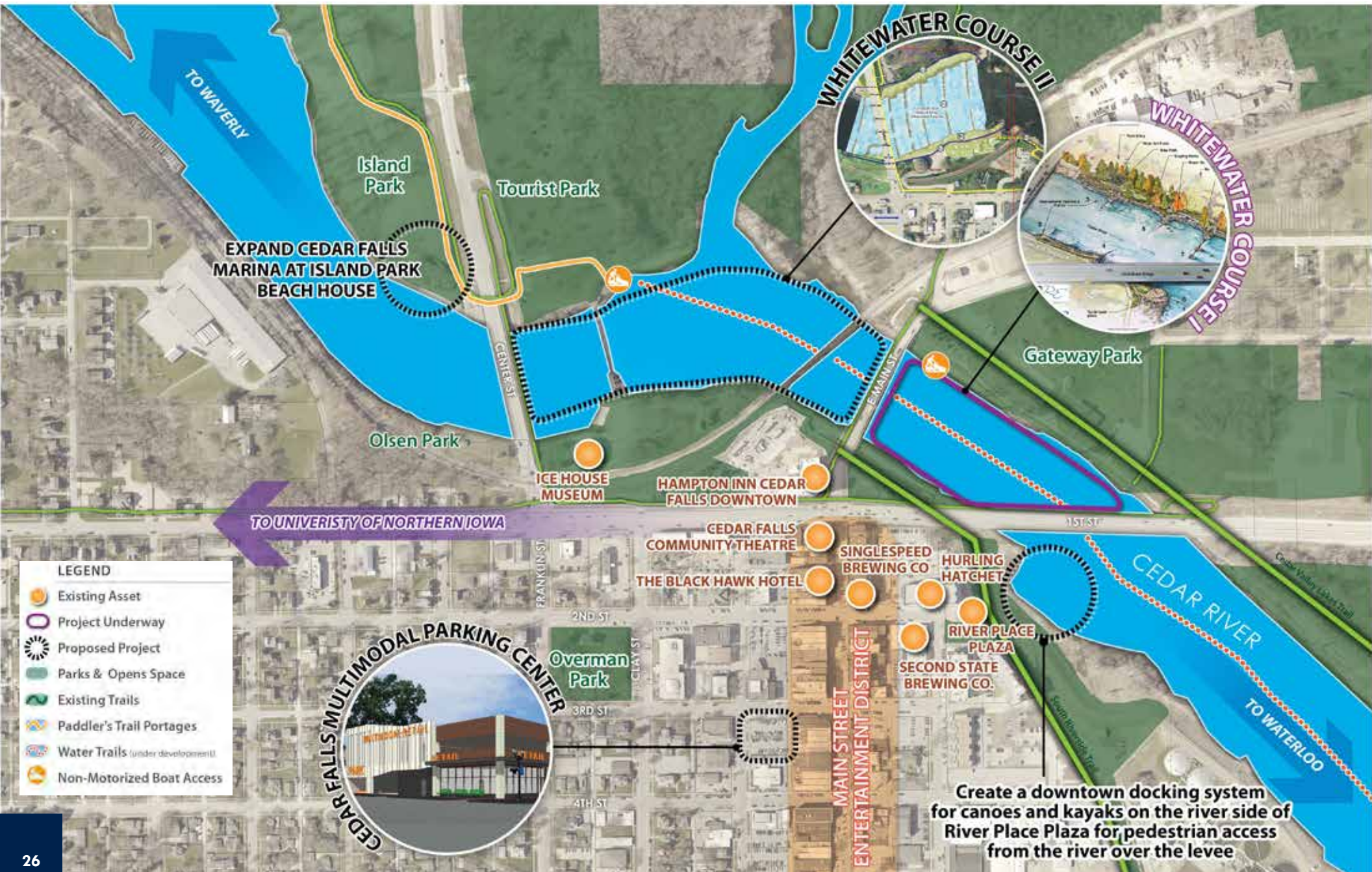
E. Linking Economies with Our Shared Brand and Key Economic Asset

G. Enhancing Regional Mobility





OPPORTUNITY A: CELEBRATING THE WATER – CEDAR FALLS



Targeted transformation.

Years of concentrated efforts have transformed downtown Cedar Falls into the dynamic and thriving downtown it is today. The twenty-nine-block historic district buzzes with activity from several restaurants and mom and pop shops that call Main Street home. Historic downtown redevelopment efforts have resulted in more than eighty million private dollars invested in rehabilitation during the past fifty years. This impressive growth in new businesses, new jobs, and private investment doesn't go unnoticed. Downtown is a recipient of the Iowa Cultural & Entertainment District, the Great American Main Street Award, and Great Places Iowa.

With the great successes of downtown redevelopment, the focus is shifting to creating stronger connections to the Cedar River. Celebrating the Water – Falls is the starting point of the Cedar Valley River Experience Vision. The projects and recommendations below create more river access, expand river recreation, and elevate downtown Cedar Falls as a vibrant downtown riverfront community.

PROJECTS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Capitalize on the whitewater course by exploring complementary private development opportunities such as a whitewater recreation specialty store, other river-oriented restaurants retail, and downtown housing.
- Advance the Cedar River Recreational project by developing phase two of the whitewater park.
- Develop the Cedar Falls Multimodal Parking Center.
- Expand the marina at the Island Park Beach House.
- Create a downtown canoe and kayak docking system near River Place Plaza for pedestrian access from the river over the levee.
- Add pedestrian lighting to the Main Street and Center Street bridges to enhance the nighttime experience.
- Advance the Cedar Falls EcoLoop.

Cedar Falls Projects to Highlight

Cedar Falls River Recreation Project

The Cedar Falls Recreation River project transforms downtown by connecting residents and visitors to the river, improving safety and accessibility for all, enhancing aquatic life and opportunities, and providing family-friendly activities. This is the outgrowth of the 2018 Cedar River Master Plan the City completed for the river corridor from Center Street bridge to the W. 1st Street bridge.

As part of the project analysis, the City commissioned an economic impact analysis that showed the project has the potential to attract 26,700-45,000 annual uses, generating an approximate annual economic output of six to nine million dollars.

Implementation of this multi-phased river recreation project is under way. The City successfully has secured enough funding to develop phase one – the whitewater park and amenities alongside downtown. The project will be bid on and begin construction late 2022.

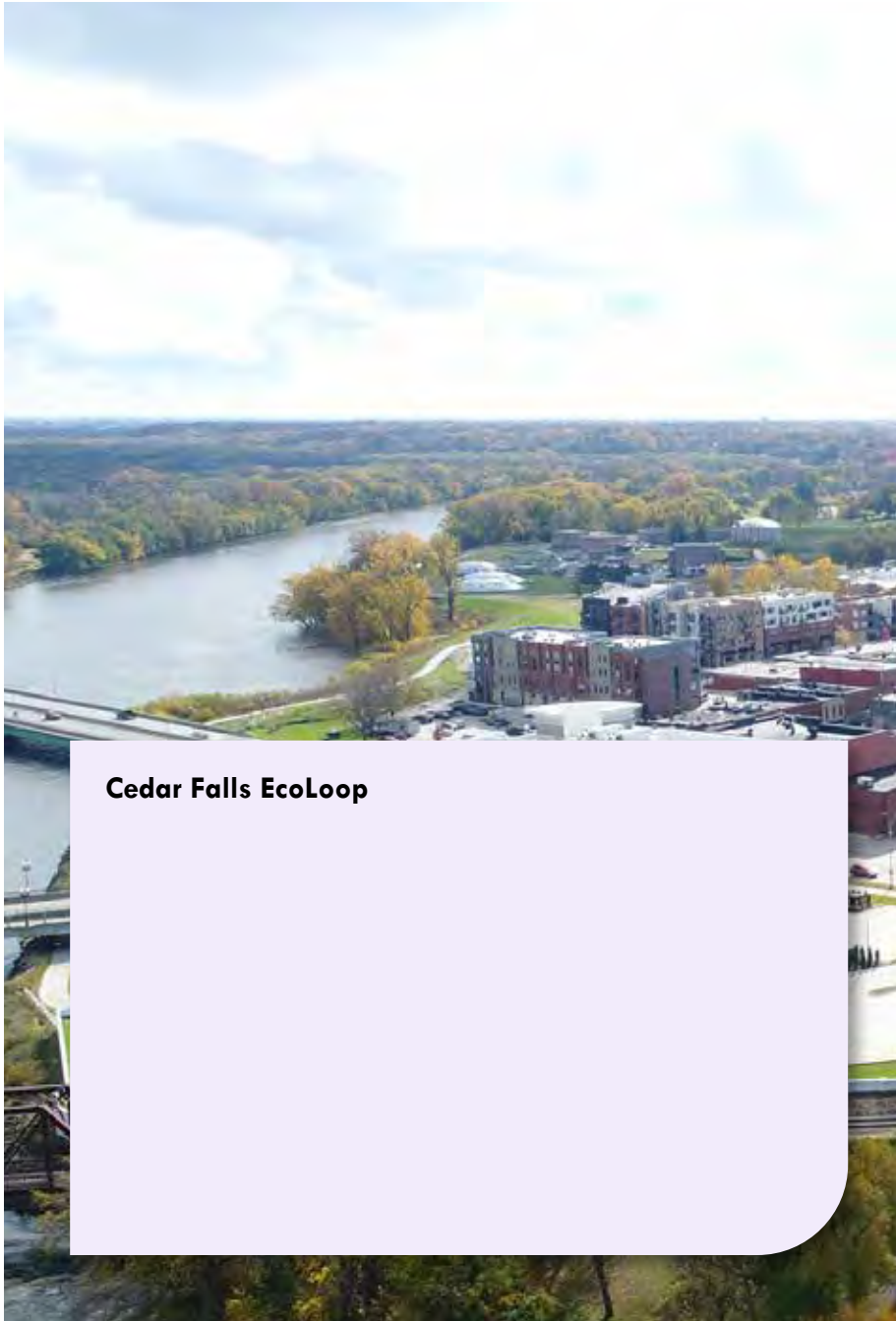
align

architecture & planning



Riverwise Engineering





Cedar Falls EcoLoop

Multimodal Parking Center

The Cedar Falls Multimodal Parking Center is being proposed in downtown to respond to parking demands. The City and CMS recently completed a Downtown Parking study that recommended the creation of a parking system. Building a public/private parking center is one strategy to address current parking issues.

While the site has not been selected, the parking center is essential to continue downtown development and support increased visitor activity from the future whitewater park.



OPPORTUNITY B: PROMOTING THE CHAIN OF LAKES



Iowa's hidden gem.

The Chain of Lakes is a unique water-oriented recreational greenbelt within an urban setting. Its scenic diversity and activities offer the weekend visitor plentiful activities to choose from. From camping to taking advantage of the Cedar Valley Paddlers Trail to fishing and boating in the lakes, it's just a short drive to take advantage of the amenities offered within the two anchor downtowns of Waterloo and Cedar Falls.

This urban oasis with all it has to offer deserves to be celebrated and elevated at a statewide level. By doing so, its potential will be realized as not only an unmatched recreational asset but as a regional economic development driver. Opportunity B – Promoting the Chain of Lakes outlines the recommendations to begin elevating the Chain of Lakes at a regional and state level.

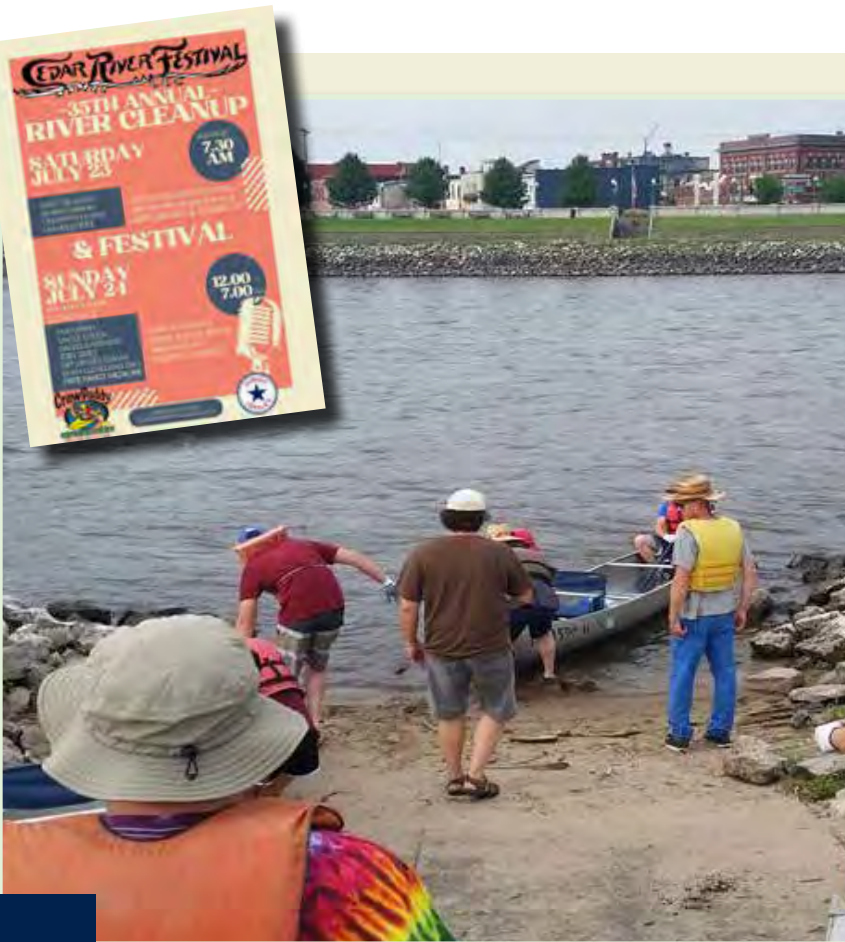
PROJECTS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Work with the local and state Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) to promote the Chain of Lakes in the state's Travel Iowa tourism magazine as a great fishing and paddling experience.
- Work with the local CVBs to amplify the marketing of the Cedar Valley Paddler's Trail.
- Work with the Walleye Club to establish the Chain of Lakes as a premier fishing destination.
- Develop a multi-jurisdictional maintenance plan to remove river hazards, including large obstructions, brush and overgrown trees.
- Explore opportunities to expand the number of primitive camping sites within the Cedar Valley Paddler's Trail.
- Work with the Cedar Valley Trails Partnership to install solar lighting along the trails within the Chain of Lakes to increase trail safety.
- Improve paddler connection between Brinker Lake and San Souci Island.

Existing Initiatives to Leverage

The Cedar River is a vital natural resource. Most of the Cedar River in Black Hawk is considered a priority for conservation by the Iowa Wildlife Action Plan because of several factors, including the Nature Conservancy's designation of the Cedar River as an aquatic habitat priority, the two 2000-acre complexes of land conserved, and the designation of the two Important Bird Areas.

The health and vibrancy of the Cedar River are important to consider for the Cedar Valley River Experience. Many local groups, organizations, and initiatives are focused on river cleanup today. These groups should continue to be encouraged to remain active and to advance their mission as river stewards, trail advocates, and recreation champions.



Cedar River Stewards

Maintenance of the Cedar River is spread among various jurisdictions with no one sole entity responsible for the entire system. There are many volunteer groups and local initiatives focused on water quality and maintenance:

- **Cedar River Festival Group:** This group has been cleaning up the Cedar River for more than thirty years. The mission of the Group is to educate the community about celebrating and preserving the beauty of the Cedar River as a local natural resource.
- **Black Hawk Creek Water and Soil Coalition:** The coalition was formed to restore, improve, preserve, and advocate for water quality, soil health, ecosystems, and recreational opportunities in the Black Hawk Creek Watershed. The is focused particularly on working with farmers to improve soil health over the long-term and reduce sediment runoff into the creek.
- **Two statewide community-based efforts** focus on water quality. Project AWARE engages volunteers in water quality and aquatic habitat enhancement through an annual seven-day trash removal expedition. IOWATER is a volunteer water quality monitoring program that collects and publishes their preliminary data.

Source: Black Hawk County Water Trails Plan



Cedar Valley Trails Partnership

Cedar Valley Trails promotes the continued expansion and safe year-round enjoyment of recreation trails in Black Hawk County, Iowa and surrounding communities. The organization was formed in 1995 to coordinate efforts with the Cedar Valley Lakes Board. Since their inception, trail advocacy has remained their core mission.



Cedar Valley Walleye Club

The Cedar Valley Walleye Club (CVWC) was formed in late 2003 by a few dedicated walleye anglers with a shared vision to improve their local fisheries and to provide a vehicle for connecting with fellow anglers. A lot of their efforts are also concentrated on fostering kids interest in fishing.



Cedar Valley Paddler's Trail

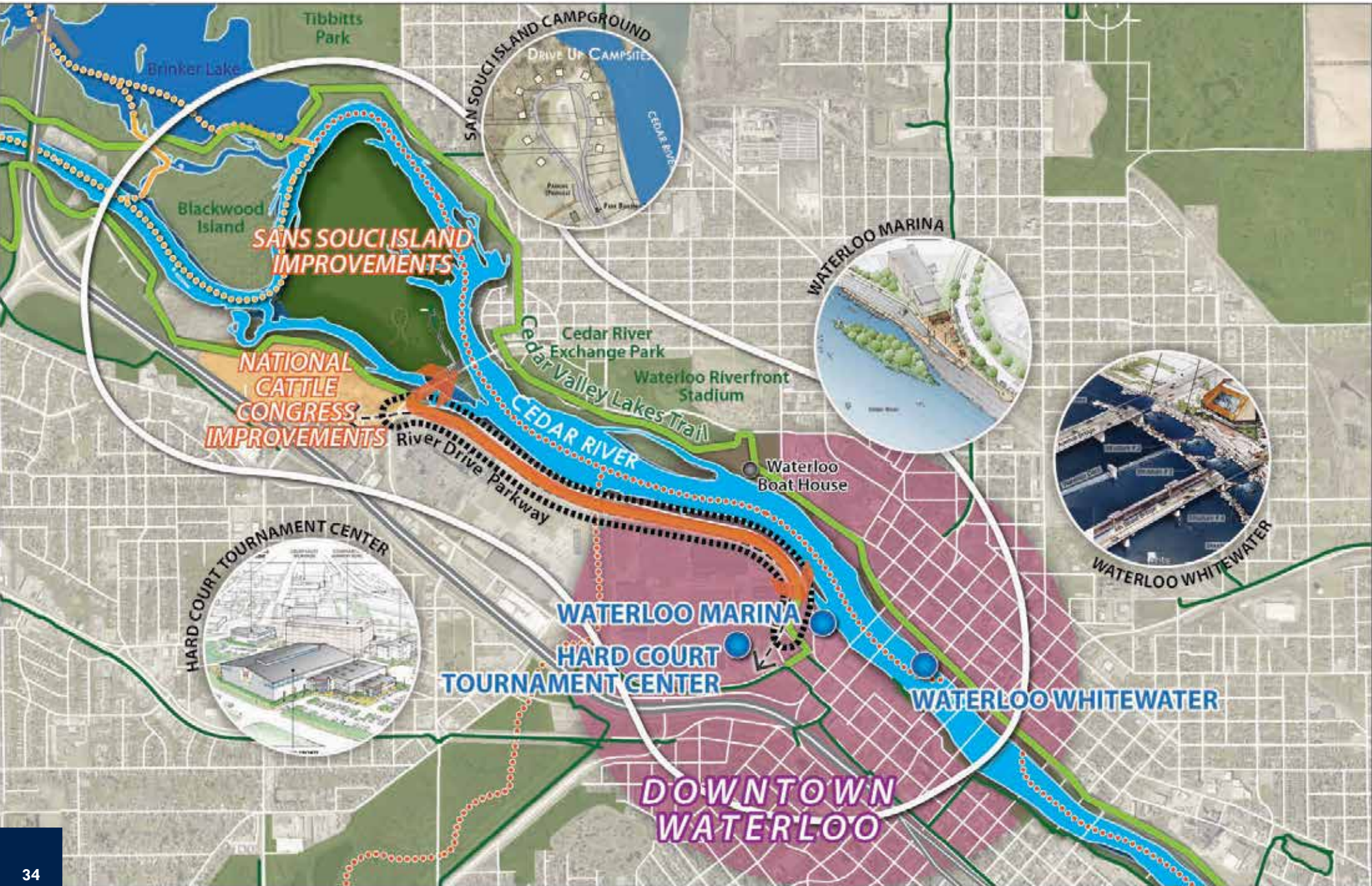
Cedar Valley Paddler's Trail is a 10-mile trail excursion that travels through the Chain of Lakes, down the Cedar River, and through George Wyth State Park before returning to the start. The trail consists of one main loop with some smaller offshoot options to lengthen or shorten the experience.



Great American Rail-Trail

The Great American Rail-Trail, is a project of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, the nation's largest trails organization. The trail is the nation's first cross-country multi-use trail and the Cedar River Valley Lakes Trail, which runs from Black Hawk Park in Cedar Falls to downtown Waterloo, is part of this great trail system.

OPPORTUNITY C: CELEBRATING THE WATERLOO RIVER BASIN DISTRICT



Linking venues & activating the river.

The Waterloo River Basin expands from San Souci Island, encompassing the National Cattle Congress, Waterloo Riverfront Stadium, Waterloo Boat House, and the Cedar River Marina District.

This Opportunity is focused on celebrating and strengthening the water-oriented assets concentrated in this area by linking venues and activating the river.

This Opportunity starts by developing a master plan for Cattle Congress to host more regional events and establish itself as a major destination connected to San Souci Island. The connection from Cattle Congress to downtown will be strengthened by improving River Drive to make it enjoyable to bike and walk along the river. As you work your way down the river, there are opportunities to establish a beach area at Robinson Crusoe Island, where kayakers can stop and hang out before docking at the Waterloo Marina to enjoy the diverse cuisine options of downtown.

Existing Initiatives to Leverage

National Cattle Congress

The National Cattle Congress is a regional asset that provides year-round events and activities for the Cedar Valley, surrounding communities and states. The campus has a long history tied to agriculture but today the organization is looking to reimagine how else the campus can continue serving the region. They are in the early stages of a strategic planning process that will inform the future of the campus.

Finally, the Hard-Court Tournament, which would not only be a year-round activity center, also would play a role hosting expos or shows in combination with Cattle Congress and the Convention Center. This combined use of venues could amplify events hosted in the community and further enhance regional economic impact.

PROJECTS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Develop a master plan for the National Cattle Congress to host more regional events and establish itself as major tourist destination connected to San Souci Island activities.
- Work with hotels, bars, and Waterloo Art Center to provide sunset cruise pontoon rides between San Souci and downtown.
- Establish campgrounds at San Souci Island for a unique camping experience.
- Explore the concept of a pedestrian bridge to San Souci Island.
- Coordinate river activities with the Waterloo Riverfront Stadium.
- Improve River Drive Parkway.
- Establish a beach area at Robinson Crusoe Island.
- Continue the Waterloo Marina development with expanded docking and private development.
- Advance the Waterloo Whitewater Course.
- Advance the Hard-Court Tournament Center project.

Waterloo Projects to Highlight

Whitewater Course

The Waterloo Whitewater Course project has been a part of the community's priority projects since 2015. To date, the City has completed 60% construction drawings for the whitewater course, but additional funding is required to complete the design and begin project implementation. The whitewater course spans from the Park Avenue bridge to the 6th Street bridge and it is envisioned to be a family-friendly course for all age groups, much like the Manchester, Iowa whitewater course. Advancing this project in combination with the Cedar Falls whitewater course, has the potential to solidify Northeast Iowa as a destination for kayak and whitewater enthusiasts.

Structure # 2

Structure # 3



Cedar River Marina District

The Cedar River Marina project is part of a multiphase project to activate the Cedar River waterfront, providing boating and water recreation services to fishermen, paddlers, and leisure boaters alike.

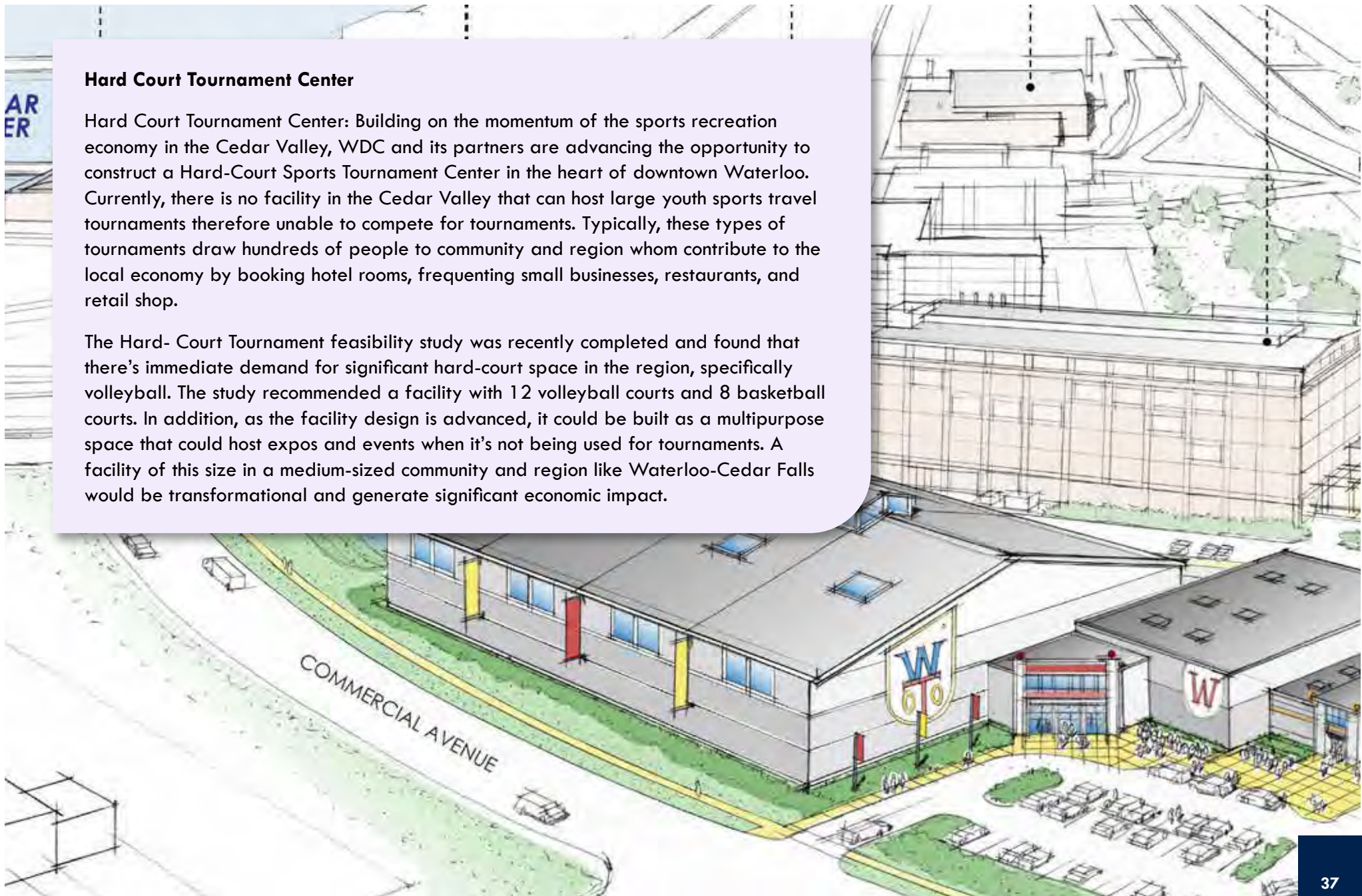
The Marina is an opportunity to draw regional kayaking and canoeing event races that weren't possible before. In the future, the site is planned to add a mixed-use development that would include residential apartment units with river views, and river-oriented retail and services.

The first phase of the project is funded and construction is underway. This includes grading and river excavation, trails, and kayak/boat access docking system. Future phases include a plaza, outfitter facility, and an expanded docking system.

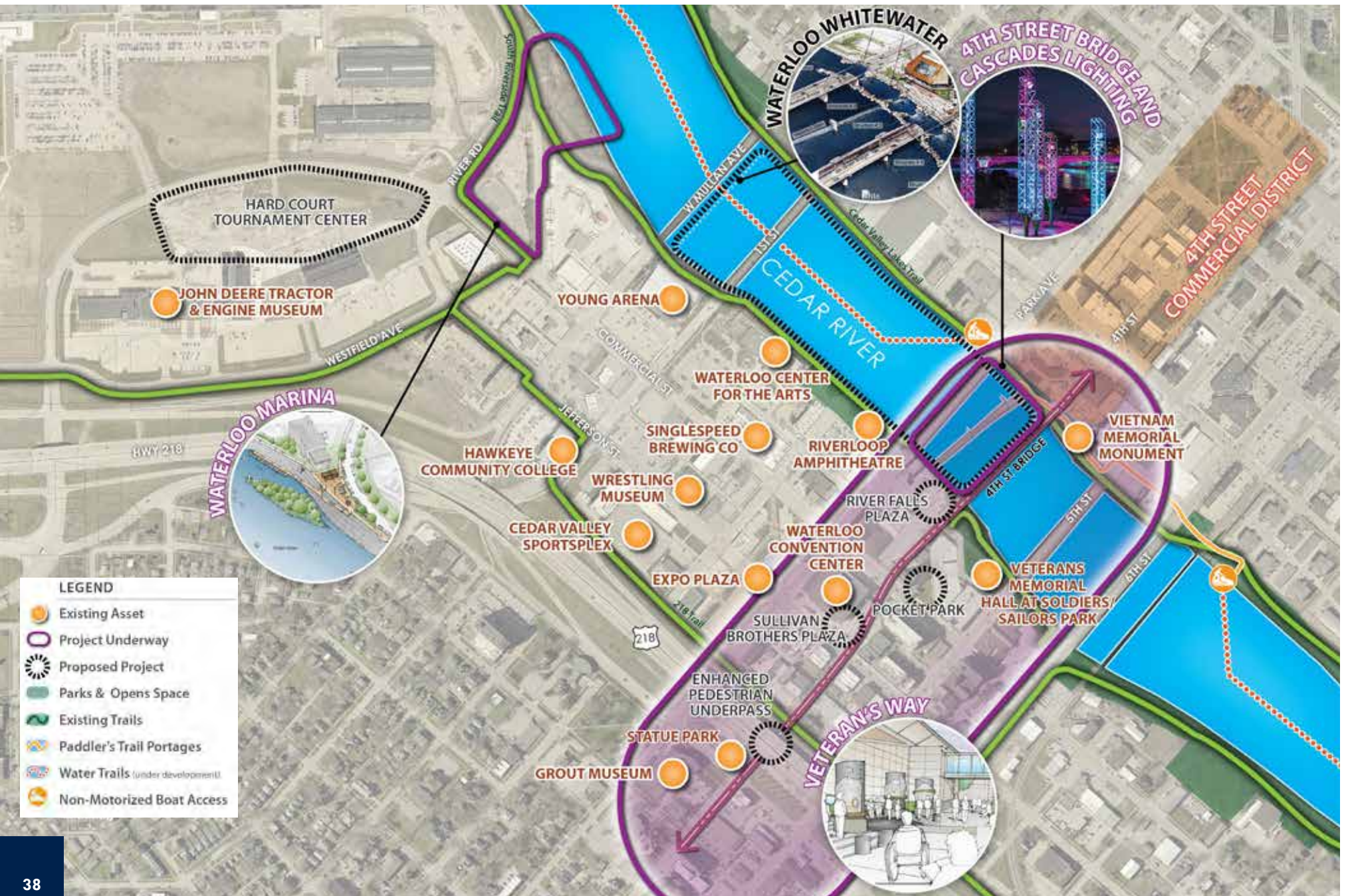
Hard Court Tournament Center

Hard Court Tournament Center: Building on the momentum of the sports recreation economy in the Cedar Valley, WDC and its partners are advancing the opportunity to construct a Hard-Court Sports Tournament Center in the heart of downtown Waterloo. Currently, there is no facility in the Cedar Valley that can host large youth sports travel tournaments therefore unable to compete for tournaments. Typically, these types of tournaments draw hundreds of people to community and region whom contribute to the local economy by booking hotel rooms, frequenting small businesses, restaurants, and retail shop.

The Hard- Court Tournament feasibility study was recently completed and found that there's immediate demand for significant hard-court space in the region, specifically volleyball. The study recommended a facility with 12 volleyball courts and 8 basketball courts. In addition, as the facility design is advanced, it could be built as a multipurpose space that could host expos and events when it's not being used for tournaments. A facility of this size in a medium-sized community and region like Waterloo-Cedar Falls would be transformational and generate significant economic impact.



OPPORTUNITY D: CONTINUE BUILDING A STRONG DOWNTOWN WATERLOO



Capitalizing on investments.

Over the last two decades the City of Waterloo, WDC, and private partners have achieved a remarkable transformation of downtown – from the RiverLoop Amphitheater to the Cedar Valley SportsPlex to more recently the major Convention Center renovations, Veteran’s Way, and the 4th Street Bridge & Cascade Lighting, a project that truly will celebrate the river. Quality-of-place projects like these have been the building blocks to bring more people and activity to downtown. While these successes are significant, downtown redevelopment is not complete. This Opportunity’s key objective is to continue the revitalization momentum to create an even stronger downtown.

The recommendations in this Opportunity build off Opportunity C, which recommend the placemaking projects that encourage continued downtown redevelopment. This Opportunity will capitalize on those investments with more housing and targeted business attraction and recruitment.

PROJECTS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Continue the redevelopment of the downtown area to become a stronger destination for visitors and businesses.
- Expand downtown housing opportunities.
- Implement plans to add a competition swimming center at the Cedar Valley SportsPlex.
- Continue to work on a Main Street Business Attraction plan.
- Support cultural initiatives that reinforce diversity to ensure that minority business owners and all community members see themselves represented and reflected downtown.

Existing Initiatives to Leverage

Veteran’s Way Art & History Walk



Waterloo’s Veterans Way is a place-based art and history walk along 4th Street in Downtown Waterloo. The design concept includes multiple civic destination projects and a connecting walk, with thematic elements honoring Waterloo’s rich history of military service. Additional physical and pedestrian improvements will enhance safety, connectivity, and walkability.

Waterloo Convention Center



Since 2019, the Waterloo Convention Center at Sullivan Brothers Plaza has been undergoing a multimillion-dollar renovation and expansion. The Convention Center serves as the largest-capacity combined event and meeting room space in the region. Its more than 85,000 square-feet of gathering space can accommodate numerous conventions, events, and banquets from small parties to 10,000-visitor events. Therefore, the renovations and expansion were essential to be able to compete in the market and continue serving the region.

OPPORTUNITY E: LINKING ECONOMIES WITH OUR SHARED BRAND AND KEY ECONOMIC ASSET – THE CEDAR RIVER

Building an authentic story and disseminating a message that resonates. Opportunities A through D emphasize the elements that build the Cedar Valley River Experience, while Opportunity E shifts focus to boosting the awareness of this regional system of assets.

This Opportunity starts to lay a framework for developing a robust marketing campaign to link downtown hotels, restaurants, bars, and the business economy to the river and the river experience through combined advertising, community stories around the river, shared festivals, and more. This Opportunity can further be advanced by the Cedar Falls and Waterloo Convention and Visitors Bureaus and partners such as Grow Cedar Valley, who already market the region.



DEVELOP a ROBUST shared MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Create River Experience Co-op advertising: interactive map & website for river-themed restaurants, pubs, hotels, rentals, and shops, as well as parks, campsites, fishing

Build individual community identities around shared river link, promoting friendly river-themed or staged competitions

Build authentic supporting stories w/ river & riverfront assets, activities, culture/history for businesses to use in their branding

Share festivals and events stretching from downtown to downtown with stops in between

CEDAR FALLS TO WATERLOO:

IT'S A RIVER THING

*Linking hotels, restaurants, bars,
business economy and community
identity to the river and river
experience*



OPPORTUNITY F: CROSS UTILIZATION OF HISTORIC DOWNTOWNS

SPECIAL REGIONAL RIVER- THEMED FESTIVALS AND EVENTS LINK ACTIVITIES ACROSS BOTH COMMUNITIES



“WALLEYE DAYS”

Creating bigger impact together.

Building of Opportunity E to link economies to the river, Opportunity F explores how this can be executed. Cedar Falls has Sturgis Falls and Waterloo has Iowa Irish Fest, but what about more festivals and events spread across both downtowns? “Walleye Days” is one example of how one event could stretch between both communities with music on the river and festivities in each downtown, while at the same time celebrating the river and its assets and history through fishing derbies, kayak races, paddle and portage races, and more.

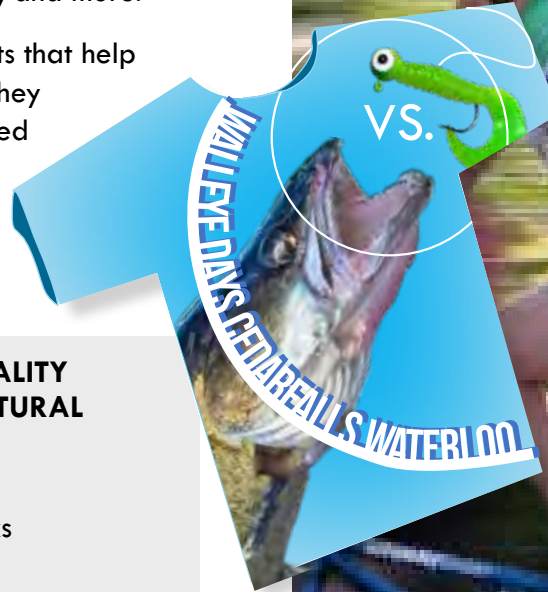
Both communities have extremely dedicated Main Streets that help organize many of the current festivals and events, and they are already working together to host smaller scale shared activities. Waterloo and Cedar Falls Main Street would be the most appropriate parties to spearhead an event of this scale.

ECONOMIC AND TOURISM BENEFITS

- Music and shows
- Restaurant special menus
- Food Carts
- Hotel packages
- Contests
- Camping & fishing packages
- Guided tours
- Radio remote broadcasts
- Sport store specials
- Event merchandise
- Regional awareness
- Trade show

COMMUNITY QUALITY OF LIFE AND CULTURAL BENEFITS

- Art fair
- Rides and walks
- Parades
- Parks and clubs fundraising
- Water quality awareness
- Identity and community pride
- Environmental education
- Fitness and skills training
- Foodshed expansion/access
- Parks and water access



OPPORTUNITY G: ENHANCING REGIONAL MOBILITY



CEDAR VALLEY
River Experience
REGIONAL MOBILITY
Waterloo, Iowa

DRAFT

HISTORIC DOWNTOWN CEDAR FALLS



UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

10-minute drive



HISTORIC DOWNTOWN WATERLOO

Strengthening connections.

This Opportunity improves connections and visual and physical access to the system. Opportunities A-F identify the hidden gems and exceptional assets along the Cedar Valley and elevate those assets with recommendations that include placemaking projects, initiatives, and events centered around the Cedar River. But in order to capitalize on Cedar Valley River Experience system, there needs to be intentional efforts to improve accessibility and connectivity between Cedar Falls, the Chain of Lakes, and Waterloo.

This Opportunity focuses on enhancing those connections by recommending a few initiatives such as establishing an event bus trolley during community-wide events like the possible “Walleye Days.” This would allow residents to enjoy the activities and events hosted in each community and along the river without the worry of driving or traffic, contributing to the success of the cross-utilization of downtowns and shared events. In addition, a dual city bikeshare program would provide increased access to the trail system between the two communities, and establishing multiple kayak and canoe outfitters would further activate increase use of the Cedar River and the Chain of Lakes.

PROJECTS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Establish an event bus trolley between the two communities.
- Establish multiple kayak and canoe outfitters along the Cedar River.
- Implement a dual city rideshare programs such as bikeshare and EV carsharing.
- Improve the bus connection between the two communities and the university.
- Encourage hotels to provide private bus service between the two communities.
- Transform the section of Highway 218 between downtown Cedar Falls and Waterloo to a scenic parkway drive.

The logo for Cedar Valley River Experience features a stylized map of the region in shades of green and purple. The text "CEDAR VALLEY" is in a white, sans-serif font, and "River Experience" is in a white, cursive font.

CEDAR VALLEY
River Experience

Generating Momentum - Key Projects

Identifying key projects to generate momentum.

The recommendations in Opportunities A-G describe what to do in order to advance the Cedar Valley River Experience Vision. It includes a lengthy list of projects and recommendations for various parties to advance the Vision. To focus efforts, a select set of transformational projects have been identified in the matrix in the following pages. These are the “Key Projects,” placemaking projects with the greatest potential to spark additional economic impact and leverage regional assets that define the community identity around the Cedar River.

In order to make the project list more feasible and achievable within a five- to ten-year timeframe, an organizing body, such as the Cedar Valley River Partnership as further described in Chapter X, will need to be formed to evaluate, prioritize, and advance the projects. To guide the organizing body’s actions, the Key Projects matrix acts as an action plan that identifies the status of each project, next steps, project partners, and funding partners and targets.

The Key Project list is not prioritized in any order. Instead the Cedar Valley River Partnership should work closely with project partners identified in the matrix to determine which project is the most feasible based on a set of criteria. A sample list of criteria has been developed to help guide decision-making. The matrix is intended as an example and should continue to be refined by the Cedar Valley River Partnership once the organizing body is formed.

SAMPLE CRITERIA LIST:

- **Funding Availability & Support:** Are there current grants available to implement the project? How do the available grants align with the project? Does the project have wide-community support?
- **Project Readiness:** How far into planning, feasibility, and design is the project?
- **Talent Attraction & Retention:** Does the project develop destinations for present and future residents, visitors, and workforce? Does the project advance our Cedar Valley River Experience brand in the region and reinforce our identity?
- **Talent Growth:** Does the project create and/or support new opportunities for entrepreneurial growth in the region?
- **Economic Impact:** Does the project have the potential to spur additional private investments in the region, including new housing, additional retail investments, and hotels rooms? Does the project attract new visitors to the region?
- **Market Demand:** Is there enough interest to justify the project? Is there enough market demand to support the success of the project long-term?

	A. KEY PROJECTS	B. COST ESTIMATE	C. PROJECT STATUS	D. NEXT STEPS
A	Waterloo Whitewater Course	\$12,000,000	Partially Designed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City/WDC contract with an engineer to advance design to 100% CD's • Pursue Destination Iowa Grant
B	Cedar Falls Multimodal Parking Center	\$21M	Conceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify site for Parking Center • Hire a design & engineer to advance concept • Work with private developer and City to develop funding package
C	Cedar Falls River Recreation Project Future Phases	TBD	Partially Designed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract with engineer to advance Whitewater Course Phase 2 design to 100% CD's • Prepare funding strategy, starting by investigating grant opportunities in Column G
D	Waterloo Marina Phase 2 & Phase 3	TBD	Conceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City contract with AECOM (Phase 1 engineers) to design Phase 2 & 3 of the Marina • Work on developer recruitment plan for private component of the project • Recruit kayak/canoe outfitter and pontoon boat rentals • Pursue construction grant (see Column G)
E	Hard Court Tournament Center	\$30M	Conceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFP for A&E • City work on site prep & pursue CAT grant for site prep • City pursue US EPA grant for site capping • Develop fundraising campaign • RFP for Operations Plan • Pursue construction grants simultaneously w/ fundraising
F	Cattle Congress Master Plan	\$100,000-- \$150,000	Conceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align strategic planning goals with Cedar Valley River Experience vision • RFP campus for master planning services • Implement master plan

E. IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS	F. POTENTIAL FUNDING PARTNERS	G. GRANT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Waterloo • WDC • US Army Corps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Waterloo - CIP/TIF • WDC • Black Hawk County • Local Foundations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination Iowa Program - construction • Iowa STR Program - trail design, restrooms, parking, walkways • Iowa TAP Program - trail construction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Cedar Falls • CFEDC • Private Developer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Cedar Falls - bond/TIF • Private Developer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance Iowa - for construction • US EDA Public Works - for construction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Cedar Falls • CFEDC • Private Developer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Cedar Falls • Whitewater Course Phase 1 Funding Partners • Local Foundations • Black Hawk County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance Iowa - construction • Iowa TAP Program - recreational trail components • Iowa SRT/FRT Program - recreational trail
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Waterloo • Kayak & Canoe Outfitter • Private Developer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Waterloo • Private Developer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance Iowa - plaza and parking • Iowa SRT Program - trail signs, parking, walkways • Water Recreation Access Cost-Share Program - docking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDC • Cedar Valley Sports Commission • City of Waterloo • Grow Cedar Valley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Waterloo • WDC • Private Foundations • Private sector/corporations • CVBs • Black Hawk Gaming Association 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iowa CAT Program - site prep • US EDA Public Works - construction • US EPA - site prep & remediation • Other Programs as they're announced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cattle Congress • Grow Cedar Valley • Cedar Valley Sports Commission • City of Waterloo • Black Hawk County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cattle Congress • Black Hawk County • Black Hawk Gaming Association • Various User Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Department of Agriculture

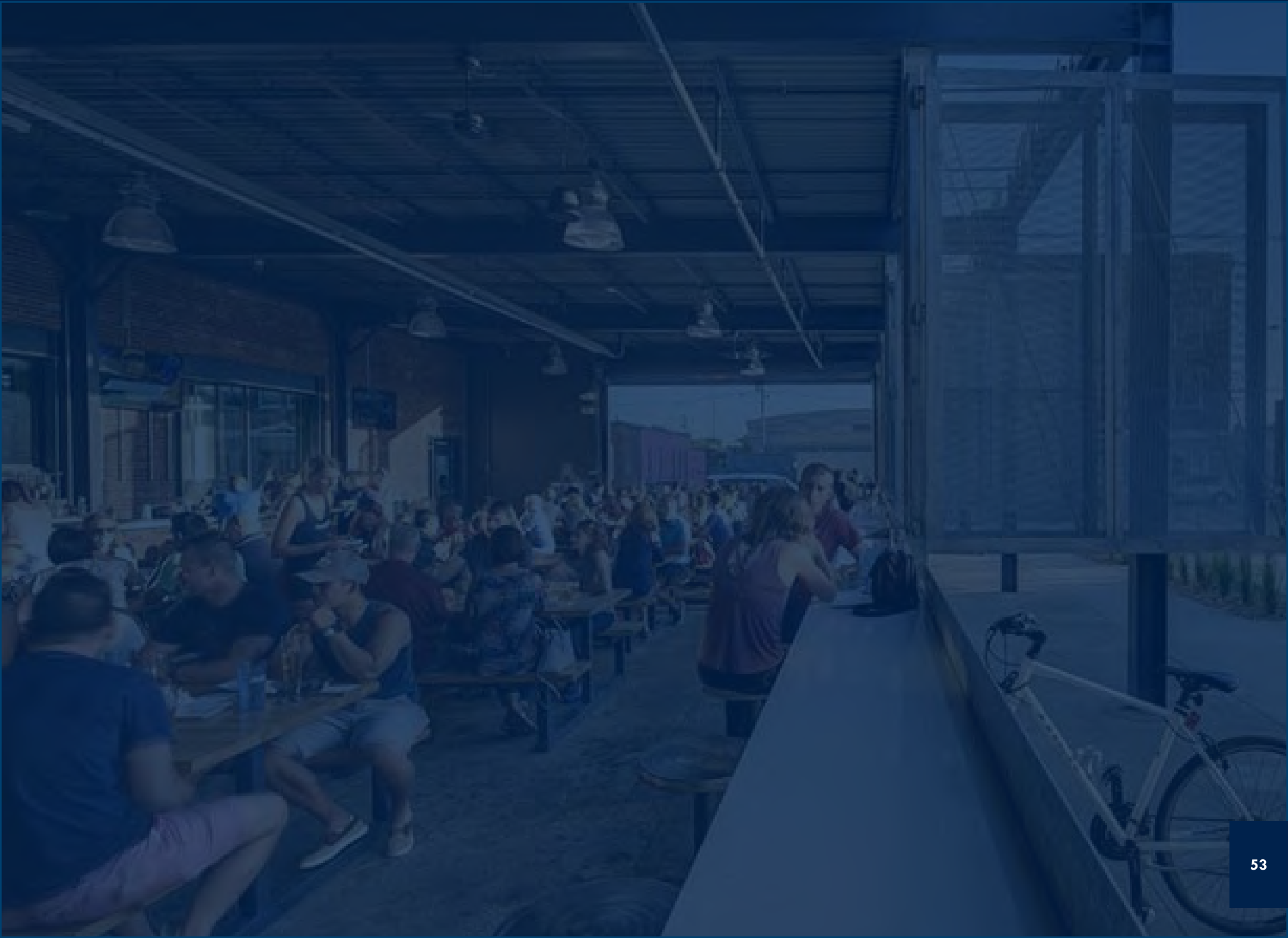
	A. KEY PROJECTS	B. COST ESTIMATE	C. PROJECT STATUS	D. NEXT STEPS
G	San Souci Island Campgrounds	\$300,000	Conceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RFP project for master planning and engineering services Implement master plan Pursue grants as needed
H	Cedar Falls Marina Expansion	TBD	Conceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RFP project to design and engineer marina expansion Pursue construction grant (see Column G)
I	River Road Parkway Future Phases Phase 1 will be submitted in Destination Iowa application	\$1,800,000	Conceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue grant for design/engineering Pursue grant for construction
J	Connector Projects Water Access projects between Waterloo & Cedar Falls identified in Water Trails Plan	\$570,000	Conceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue grant for design/engineering Pursue grants for construction (see Column G)
K	Cedar Valley River Experience Marketing & Promotion Campaign	TBD	Conceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize meeting with CVB's, Main Streets, and Grow Cedar Valley to discuss regional marketing strategy and collaboration Develop marketing & promotion campaign Pursue Iowa Tourism Grant to execute strategy Integrate regional marketing campaign with state marketing and promotion
L	Develop a multijurisdictional capital improvements plan for Cedar River Valley Experience projects	TBD		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize meeting with Cities, Iowa DNR, and Black Hawk County to discuss annual assessment of public amenities within the Cedar Valley River Experience project area Build off the Water Trails Plan to assess improvements and enhancements to public amenities within project area such as restrooms, lighting, trail improvements, signage, parking, etc.

E. IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS	F. POTENTIAL FUNDING PARTNERS	G. GRANT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Waterloo • Iowa DNR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Waterloo • Iowa DNR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LWCF - campgrounds • Iowa SRT/FRT - trails, lighting & restrooms, utility connections for trails • Water Trail Enhancement Grant - access
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Cedar Falls • CFEDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Cedar Falls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Recreation Access Cost-Share Program - docking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Waterloo • John Deere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Waterloo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iowa TAP Grant - transportation improvements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Cedar Falls • City of Waterloo • Black Hawk County • Iowa DNR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Waterloo • City of Cedar Falls • Black Hawk County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Recreation Access Cost Share Program • REAP City Parks & Open Space • Water Trail Enhancement Grant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVBs • Grow Cedar Valley • Main Streets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBVs • Grow Cedar Valley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iowa Tourism Grant - marketing campaign • Sports Tourism Grant - event launch
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cedar Valley River Partnership • City of Waterloo • City of Cedar Falls • Iowa DNR • Black Hawk County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Waterloo • City of Cedar Falls • Iowa DNR • Black Hawk County • INRCOG 	

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Implementing *the* Vision - Regional Roles & Partnerships



Regional Roles and Responsibilities

As demonstrated in the recommended opportunities and key projects, implementation and realization of the Cedar Valley River Experience will require numerous stakeholders within the region to come together in collaboration and cooperation. As a regional vision, the Cedar Valley River Experience is not the responsibility of a single entity or municipality. Instead, a non-profit initiative of stakeholders will work together to facilitate and monitor the implementation of this plan, ensuring coordinated action. While specific details, governing structures, and participation will be determined following completion of the plan, an overview of the implementation structure and stakeholder roles and responsibilities are described below.

Cedar Valley River Partnership

This plan recommends that Cedar Valley stakeholders revive the 501(c)3 non-profit established for the implementation of the Chain of Lakes plan and rebrand it as the Cedar Valley River Partnership. This group will be staffed and housed as a committee under INRCOG and will consist of individuals that have a role in advancing the Cedar Valley River Experience objectives and can help realize the region's vision.

The Cedar Valley River Partnership committee will meet annually and will be primarily responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the plan's various opportunities and projects and ensuring that these efforts are aligned with the Cedar Valley River Experience vision. It will likely not take an active role in applying for grant funding, likely this will fall to the Cities of Cedar Falls and Waterloo and other eligible stakeholder entities, but will help prioritize or tee up projects to apply for funding, monitor funding cycles, support funding applications, and help coordinate implementation strategies. The Partnership will utilize specialized subcommittees, comprised of on the ground organizations that will advance project implementation and help carry out the work of the Partnership. Subcommittees will be organized based on plan objectives and topic areas and include public and private sector stakeholders who are positioned to bring resources and expertise to project execution.

Partnership Objectives

- Coordinate bigger vision Cedar Valley River
- Assess projects annually based on grant funding cycles, community's interest, and capital improvement plans
- Develop and implement strategies for each recommendation
- Work with subcommittees to champion and advance projects

Partnerships Committee Members

- Cedar Falls CVB
- Waterloo CVB
- Main Street Waterloo
- Main Street Cedar Falls
- Grow Cedar Valley
- INRCOG
- Waterloo Development Corp.
- Cedar Falls Economic Development Corp.
- City of Waterloo
- City of Cedar Falls
- Black Hawk County
- University of Northern Iowa
- Iowa DNR (Statewide and Park Manager)
- Walleye Club, Paddlers Club, etc

Partnership Subcommittees

Financing & Grant Subcommittee:

- INRCOG
- City Planners
- Grow Cedar Valley

Marketing & Communications Subcommittee:

- CVBs
- Main Streets
- Silos & Smokestacks

Vendor & Rentals Subcommittee:

- Outfitter groups
- Main Streets
- City Economic Development

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Appendix

CEDAR VALLEY RIVER EXPERIENCE - COMPLETE PROJECT LIST

Key Project*

OUTDOOR RECREATION		JURISDICTION
Large Projects		
1	<i>Advance the Cedar River Recreational project by developing phase two of the whitewater park*</i>	Cedar Falls
2	<i>Establish campgrounds at San Souci Island to make it a unique camping experience*</i>	Waterloo/Regional
3	<i>Advance the Waterloo Whitewater Course*</i>	Waterloo
Small Projects		
1	<i>Expand the marina at the Island Park Beach House*</i>	Cedar Falls
2	Create a downtown canoe and kayak docking system near River Place Plaza for pedestrian access from the river over the levee	Cedar Falls
3	Advance the Cedar Falls EcoLoop	Cedar Falls
4	Work with the Cedar Valley Trails Partnership to install solar lighting along the trails within the Chain of Lakes to increase trail safety	Regional
5	Improve paddler connection between Brinker Lake and San Souci Island	Regional
6	Establish a beach area at Robinson Crusoe Island	Waterloo
7	Connector Projects*	Regional
	Cedar Bend Park	Waterloo
	Pioneer Park	Waterloo
	Riverview Recreation Area	Waterloo
	Olsen Park	Cedar Falls
	Tourist Park	Cedar Falls
	Washington Park	Cedar Falls
	Island Park	Cedar Falls

VERTICAL INFRASTRUCTURE & REDEVELOPMENT		JURISDICTION
1	Capitalize on the whitewater course by exploring complementary private development opportunities such as: whitewater recreation specialty store, other river-oriented restaurants retail, downtown housing	Cedar Falls
2	<i>Develop the Cedar Falls Multimodal Parking Center*</i>	Cedar Falls
3	Explore opportunities to expand the number of primitive camping sites within the Cedar Valley Paddler's Trail	Regional

4	<i>Continue the Waterloo Marina development with expanded docking and private development*</i>	Waterloo
5	<i>Advance the Hard Court Tournament Center project*</i>	Waterloo
6	Continue the redevelopment of the downtown area to become a stronger destination for visitors and businesses	Waterloo
7	Expand downtown housing opportunities	Waterloo
8	Implement plan to add a competition swimming center at the Cedar Valley SportsPlex	Waterloo

TRANSPORTATION SUPPORT		JURISDICTION
1	Explore the concept of a pedestrian bridge to San Souci Island	Waterloo
2	<i>Advance River Drive Parkway improvements*</i>	Waterloo
3	Establish an event bus trolley between the two communities	Regional
4	Establish multiple kayak and canoe outfitters along the Cedar River	Regional
5	Implement a dual city rideshare programs such as bikeshare and EV carsharing	Regional
6	Improve the bus connection between two communities and university	Regional
7	Encourage hotels to provide private bus service between the two communities	Regional

BUSINESS SUPPORT		JURISDICTION
1	Continue to work on a Main Street Business Attraction plan	Waterloo
2	Support cultural initiatives that reinforce diversity to ensure that minority business owners and community members see themselves represented and reflected downtown	Waterloo

TOURISM & MARKETING		JURISDICTION
1	Work with the local and state Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) to promote the Chain of Lakes in the state's Travel Iowa tourism magazine as a great fishing and paddling experience	Regional
2	Work with the local CVB's to amplify the marketing of the Cedar Valley Paddler's Trail	Regional
3	Work with the Walleye Club to establish the Chain of Lakes as a premier fishing destination	Regional
4	Work with hotels, bars, Waterloo Art Center to provide a "sunset cruise" pontoon rides between San Souci and Downtown	Waterloo
5	Coordinate river activities with the Waterloo Riverfront Stadium	Waterloo
6	<i>Develop a robust marketing campaign that links downtown hotels, restaurants, bars, and the business economy to the river and the river experience*</i>	Regional

PLANNING		JURISDICTION
1	<i>Develop a master plan for the National Cattle Congress to host more regional events and establish itself as major tourist destination that's connected to San Souci Island activities*</i>	Waterloo
2	Develop a multijurisdictional maintenance plan to remove hazards from river including large obstructions, brush and overgrown trees	Regional
3	<i>Develop a multijurisdictional capital improvements plan in collaboration with Cedar Valley River Partnership*</i>	Regional

CEDAR VALLEY RIVER EXPERIENCE - FUNDING RESOURCES

OUTDOOR RECREATION				
Grant Program	Agency	Project Description	Cedar Valley Projects Alignment	Resources
Water Trail Enhancement Grant	IDNR	Development of dam mitigation and water trail projects. Example projects include, but are not limited to: water accesses (carry-down, motorized, fishing), parking areas, access roads, pedestrian paths leading to waterways, restrooms, picnic areas, campsites that are easily accessible from waterways, paddle craft or bike racks / paddle craft lockers for shuttling purposes, and other infrastructure that supports a water trail plan.	Water Trails San Souci Island Improvements	https://www.iowadnr.gov/Things-to-Do/Canoeing-Kayaking#Water-Trail-Enhancement-Grant-Deadline-8-15-22-243
Fish Habitat Promotion for County Conservation Boards	IDNR	Development of fish habitat or acquisition of land to be used for fish habitat development purposes. Examples of eligible project activities are placement of fish habitats in ponds, lakes, pits and streams; armoring of lakes; construction of aeration systems; dredging; construction of ponds and lakes; repair of dams and outlets; manipulation of fish populations and aquatic vegetation. Project sites must be under the physical control of the applicant, either by fee title, lease, management agreement or easement	Promoting Chain of Lakes as a Fishing Destination	https://www.iowadnr.gov/About-DNR/Grants-Other-Funding/Fish-Habitat-Program
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	IDNR	Federal grant program that provides funds to incorporated cities and county conservation boards in the form of 50% reimbursement grants. Grants require a 50% match. Assistance ceilings have been established by population. Eligible projects include acquisition and/or development of land for outdoor recreation. Renovation of existing facilities is also eligible.	San Souci Island Expanded Camping around Cedar Valley Paddlers Trail	https://www.iowadnr.gov/Portals/idnr/uploads/forms/5420128.pdf
On-Stream Impoundment Restoration Fund Grant Program	IDNR	To improve water quality and recreational opportunities on eligible on-stream impoundments throughout Iowa. Examples of eligible projects include watershed improvement practices to reduce nutrient and sediment inputs to the impoundment, dam or other infrastructure repair or maintenance, and targeted dredging.	Cedar River Water Quality & Cleanup	https://www.iowadnr.gov/About-DNR/Grants-Other-Funding/On-Stream-Impoundment-Restoration-Fund
REAP City Parks & Open Spaces Grants	IDNR	REAP provides money to cities through competitive grants. Three city size categories have been established to assure grants are distributed to all sizes of cities. Grants are 100%. Eligible projects include park land expansion and multi-purpose recreation development. Athletic fields, ball fields, tennis courts, golf course and other organized sport facilities as well as swimming pools and playground equipment are not eligible for funding.	Improve paddler connection between Brinker Lake and San Souci Island	https://www.iowadnr.gov/conservation/reap/reap-funding-at-work/city-parks-open-spaces
Water Recreation Access Cost Share Program	IDNR	For constructing or improving boat access facilities to Iowa's lakes and streams. Projects can include boat launching ramps, loading/off-loading docks and other structures to enhance use by the public.	Cedar Falls canoe/kayak docking & access @ River Place Cedar Falls marina expansion	https://www.iowadnr.gov/Things-to-Do/Boating/Water-Rec-Access-Cost-Share
Iowa Transportation Alternatives Program	Iowa DOT	Eligible project activities for Iowa's TAP funding continue to include a variety of smaller-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, safe routes to school projects, and community improvements such as historic preservation, vegetation management, and some environmental mitigation related to storm water and habitat connectivity. Detailed information about Iowa's TAP program may be found in the program guidance	Waterloo/Cedar Falls Whitewater Course Hard Court Tournament Center River Road Parkway	https://iowadot.gov/systems_planning/Grant-Programs/Transportation-Alternatives
State Recreational Trails (STR) Program	Iowa DOT	The state recreational trails program (SRT) provides funds to establish recreational trails throughout Iowa for the use, enjoyment and participation of the public. The program is restricted to the acquisition, construction or improvement of recreational trails open for public use or trails which will be dedicated public use upon completion.	Waterloo / Cedar Falls Whitewater Course Trail section & ancillary uses San Souci Island trails & ancillary uses Cedar Falls EcoLoop Lighting w/in Chain of Lakes Trail network	https://iowadot.gov/systems_planning/pdf/state_rec_trail_program.pdf

Federal Recreational Trails (FTR) Program	Iowa DOT	Maintenance and restoration of existing trails; Development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages; Purchase and lease of trail construction and maintenance equipment; Construction of new trails (with restrictions for new trails on Federal lands; Acquisition of easements or property for trails; Operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection related to trails (limited to 5 percent of a state's funds).	Waterloo / Cedar Falls Whitewater Course Trail section San Souci Island trails Cedar Falls EcoLoop	https://iowadot.gov/systems_planning/pdf/Federal_Rectrails_Guidelines_Info.pdf
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VERTICAL INFRASTRUCTURE & REDEVELOPMENT

Grant Program	Agency	Project Description	Cedar Valley Project Alignment	Resources
Enhance Iowa (CAT) Program	IEDA	Assists communities in the development and creation of multiple purpose attraction or tourism facilities. CAT awards can help position a community to take advantage of economic development opportunities in tourism and strengthen a community's competitiveness as a place to work and live. CAT projects may include but are not limited to the following: museums, theme parks, cultural and recreational centers, recreational trails, heritage attractions, sports arenas, and other attractions.	Hard Court Tournament Center	https://www.iowaeda.com/enhance-iowa/#:~:text=Enhance%20Iowa%20provides%20grant%20funds,region%20and%20the%20state%20overall.
River Enhancement Community Attraction & Tourism (RECAT) Program - not currently active	IEDA	The River Enhancement Community Attraction and Tourism program (RECAT) is designed to assist communities in the development and creation of multiple purpose attraction or tourism facilities. This program can help position a community to take advantage of economic development opportunities in tourism, and strengthen a community's competitiveness as a place to work and live.	Cedar Valley River Experience Vision Waterloo Whitewater Course	https://www.iowaeda.com/userdocs/documents/ieda/recatapplication.pdf
EDA Public Works Program	USEDA	Helps distressed communities revitalize, expand, and upgrade their physical infrastructure. This program enables communities to attract new industry; encourage business expansion; diversify local economies; and generate or retain long-term, private-sector jobs and investment through the acquisition or development of land and infrastructure improvements needed for the successful establishment or expansion of industrial or commercial enterprises.	Cedar Falls Parking Center	https://eda.gov/pdf/about/Public-Works-Program-1-Page.pdf
Brownfield Cleanup Grants	USEPA	Cleanup Grants provide funding to carry out cleanup activities at brownfield sites owned by the applicant.	Hard Court Tournament Center	https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/brownfields-cleanup-grants
Main Street Iowa Challenge Grant	IEDA	The Main Street Iowa Challenge Grant is a grant program provided by Main Street Iowa (MSI) and the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) for brick-and-mortar building projects in designated Main Street districts. Highly competitive applications include: Comprehensive building rehabilitation projects that provide increased business, housing or job opportunities; Projects that incorporate quality design and preservation-based strategies; Projects that support local revitalization efforts and stimulate additional district investment; Projects that are well planned and achievable within the two-year contract period.	Downtown redevelopment	https://www.iowagrants.gov/insideLinkOps.jsp?documentPk=1465245270610

TRANSPORTATION SUPPORT

Grant Program	Agency	Project Description	Cedar Valley Project Alignment	Resources
Low or No Emission Vehicle Program - 5339(C)	USDOT	The Low or No Emission competitive program provides funding to state and local governmental authorities for the purchase or lease of zero-emission and low-emission transit buses as well as acquisition, construction, and leasing of required supporting facilities.	Event bus/trolley	https://www.transit.dot.gov/lowno

Areas of Persistent Poverty Program	USDOT	FTA's Areas of Persistent Poverty (AoPP) Program supports projects that address the transportation challenges faced by areas of persistent poverty. In encouraging timely and efficient investment in public transportation, the AoPP program supports the President's Build Back Better initiative to mobilize American ingenuity to build modern infrastructure and an equitable, clean energy future. AoPP supports increased transit access for environmental justice populations, equity-focused community outreach, and public engagement of underserved communities.	Improve bus service between communities	https://www.transit.dot.gov/grant-programs/areas-persistent-poverty-program
Route Planning Restoration Program	USDOT	FTA will competitively award grants to undertake transit route planning activities that are designed to: increase ridership and reduce travel times, while maintaining or expanding the total level of vehicle revenue miles of service provided in the planning period; or make service adjustments to increase the quality or frequency of service provided to low-income riders and disadvantaged neighborhoods or communities.	Improve bus service between communities	https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/route-planning-restoration-program

BUSINESS SUPPORT

Grant Program	Agency	Project Description	Cedar Valley Project Alignment	Resources
Small Business Loan Programs	US SBA	Loans guaranteed by SBA range from small to large and can be used for most business purposes, including long term fixed assets and operating capital.	Downtown business support	https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans
Open 4 Business	Cedar Falls Community Main Street / Main Street Waterloo	The OPEN 4 BUSINESS competition is a chance for businesses within the Downtown Cedar Falls district to compete for up to \$20,000 to support their business development. Businesses must complete an application and submit a short video outlining their business idea and how it will benefit the local economic climate in their community. A 25% cash match is required.	Downtown business support	http://www.communitymainstreet.org/join/open-4-business.aspx

TOURISM & MARKETING

Grant Program	Agency	Project Description	Cedar Valley Project Alignment	Resources
Iowa Tourism Grant	Iowa EDA	The purpose of the Iowa Tourism Grant (ITG) program is to promote tourism in Iowa by funding tourism related marketing initiatives and events that benefit both local economies and the state's economy.	Cedar Valley River Experience marketing & promotion campaign	https://www.traveliowa.com/UserDocs/pages/ITG_FAQs.pdf
Sports Tourism Grant	Iowa EDA	Enhance Iowa's Sports Tourism Program will provide financial assistance for projects that market or promote sporting events in Iowa. Eligible sporting events include professional, collegiate and amateur level sporting events that occur in Iowa. Promotion/marketing activity can occur for up to two year	Kayak & Canoe Races; paddle sports recruitment or similar activity	https://www.iowaeda.com/enhance-iowa/sports-tourism/

CAPACITY BUILDING

Grant Program	Agency	Project Description	Cedar Valley Project Alignment	Resources
Cultural Capacity Building Grant	Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs	Cultural Capacity Building Grants provide support over a two-year period to small nonprofit organizations that demonstrate a commitment to enhancing their cultural and managerial excellence and community service.	Cedar Valley Partnership 501c3 support	https://iowaculture.gov/about-us/about/grants/cultural-capacity-building-grant

Community Impact Grants Black Hawk County	Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa (CFNEIA)	Black Hawk County Grants, through the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa (CFNEIA), are one-time grants awarded to organizations that benefit residents of Black Hawk County, Iowa. T	Cedar Valley Partnership 501c3 support	https://d2b1x2p59qy9zm.cloudfront.net/attachments/0488c8453df19f01a6cc2e77fd35ae9cb71070d2/store/c29619e6799550a6e94ac5df43d946e69e1e323b8d53832064d47c4a4c7b/2022-Fall+Grant+Guideliens.pdf
Community Placemaking Grants	Project for Public Spaces	US-based nonprofits and government agencies to address this inequality of access by working directly with local stakeholders to transform public spaces or co-create new ones. We do this by providing direct funding, technical assistance, and capacity building facilitated by Project for Public Spaces.	Cedar Valley Partnership 501c3 support	https://www.pps.org/community-placemaking-grants

Map 1: Chain-of-Lakes Ownership

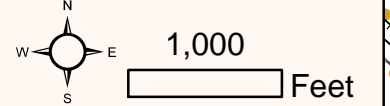
Cedar Valley Paddler's State Water Trail

- Paddle Segment
- Portage Segment
- George Wyth State Park
- Hartman Reserve Nature Center
- Other Public Park and Open Space Areas
- Municipal Boundaries
- Surface Water
- Rail

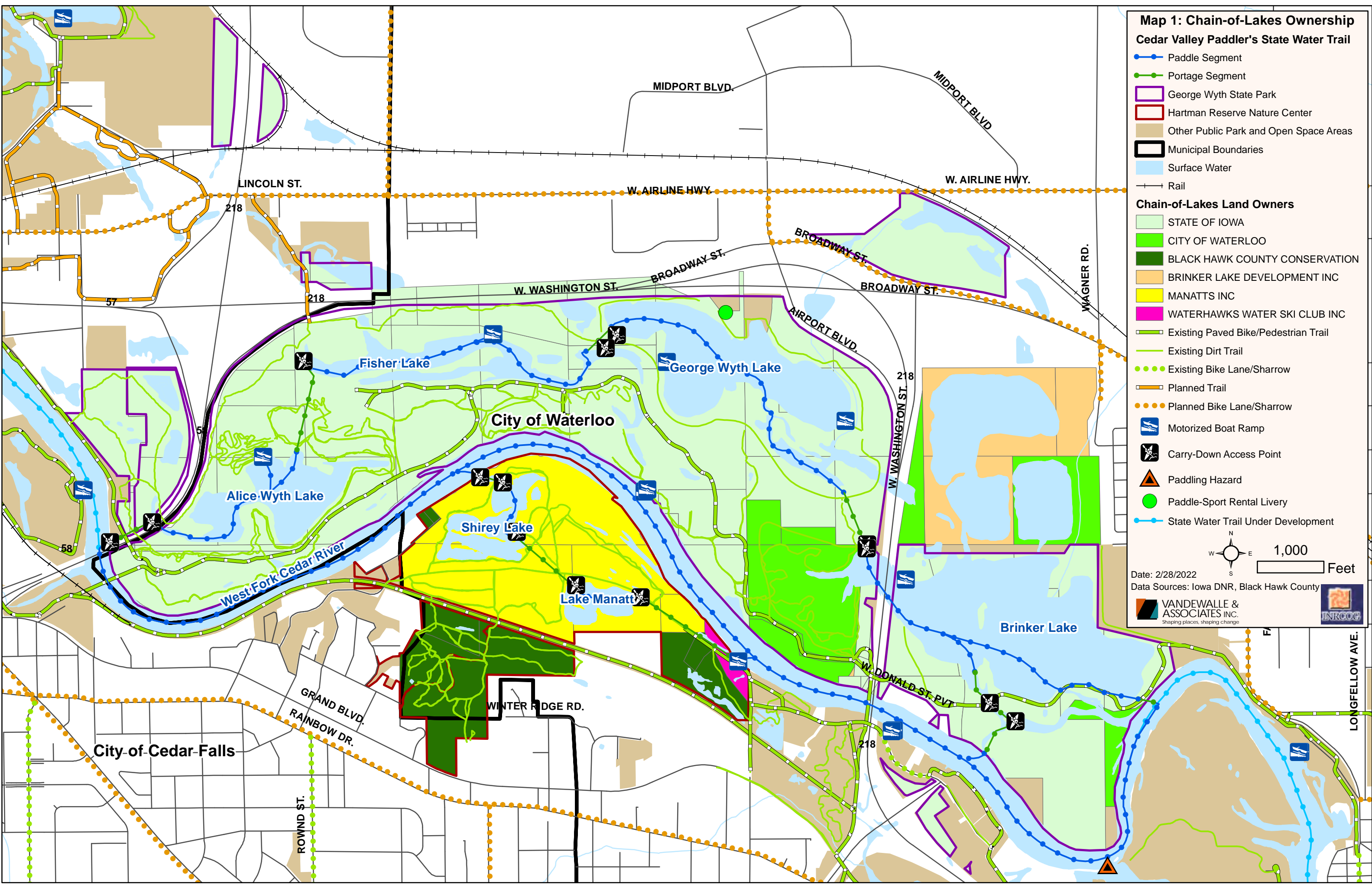
Chain-of-Lakes Land Owners

- STATE OF IOWA
- CITY OF WATERLOO
- BLACK HAWK COUNTY CONSERVATION
- BRINKER LAKE DEVELOPMENT INC
- MANATTS INC
- WATERHAWKS WATER SKI CLUB INC

- Existing Paved Bike/Pedestrian Trail
- Existing Dirt Trail
- Existing Bike Lane/Sharrow
- Planned Trail
- Planned Bike Lane/Sharrow
- Motorized Boat Ramp
- Carry-Down Access Point
- Paddling Hazard
- Paddle-Sport Rental Livery
- State Water Trail Under Development



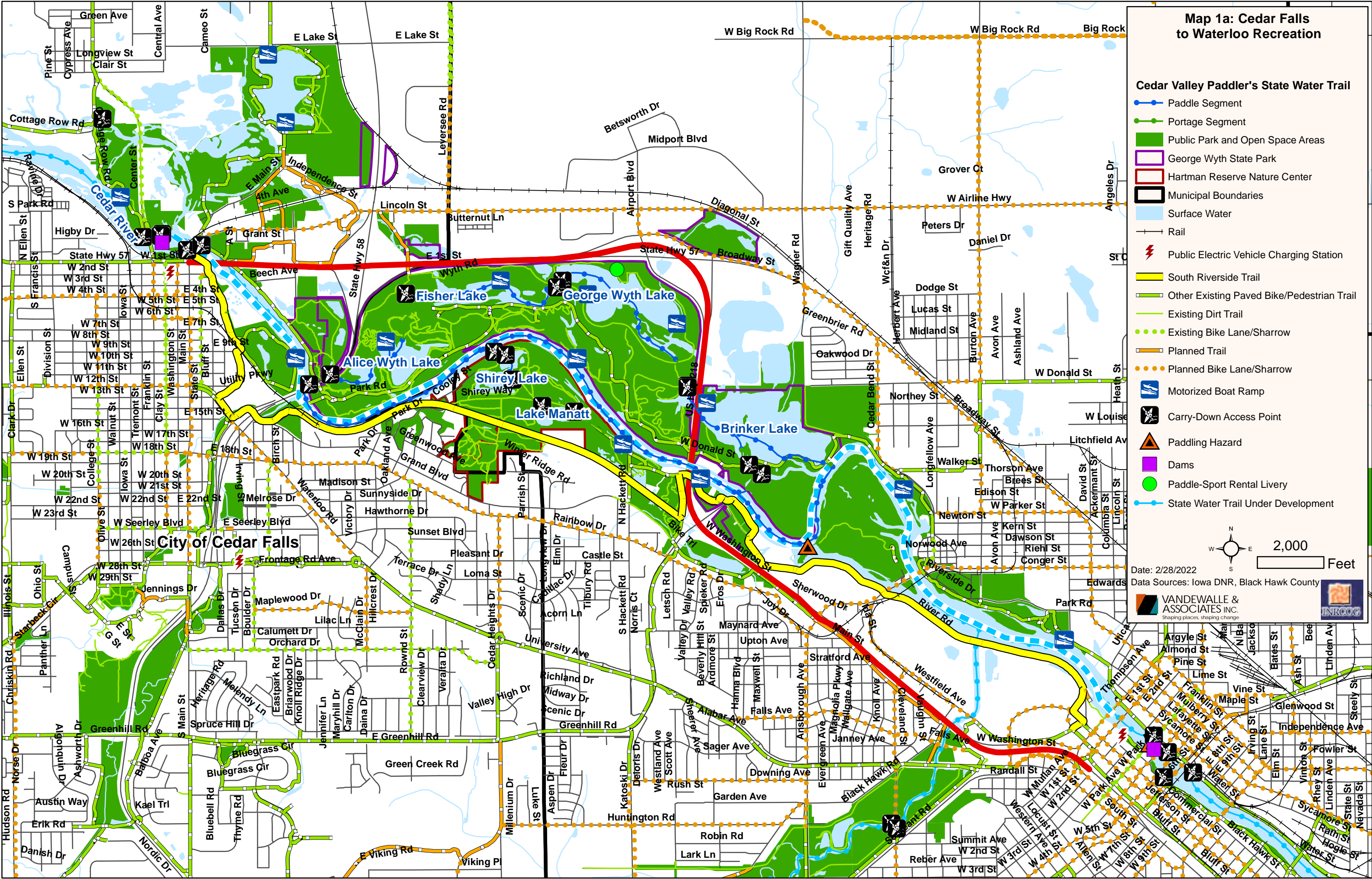
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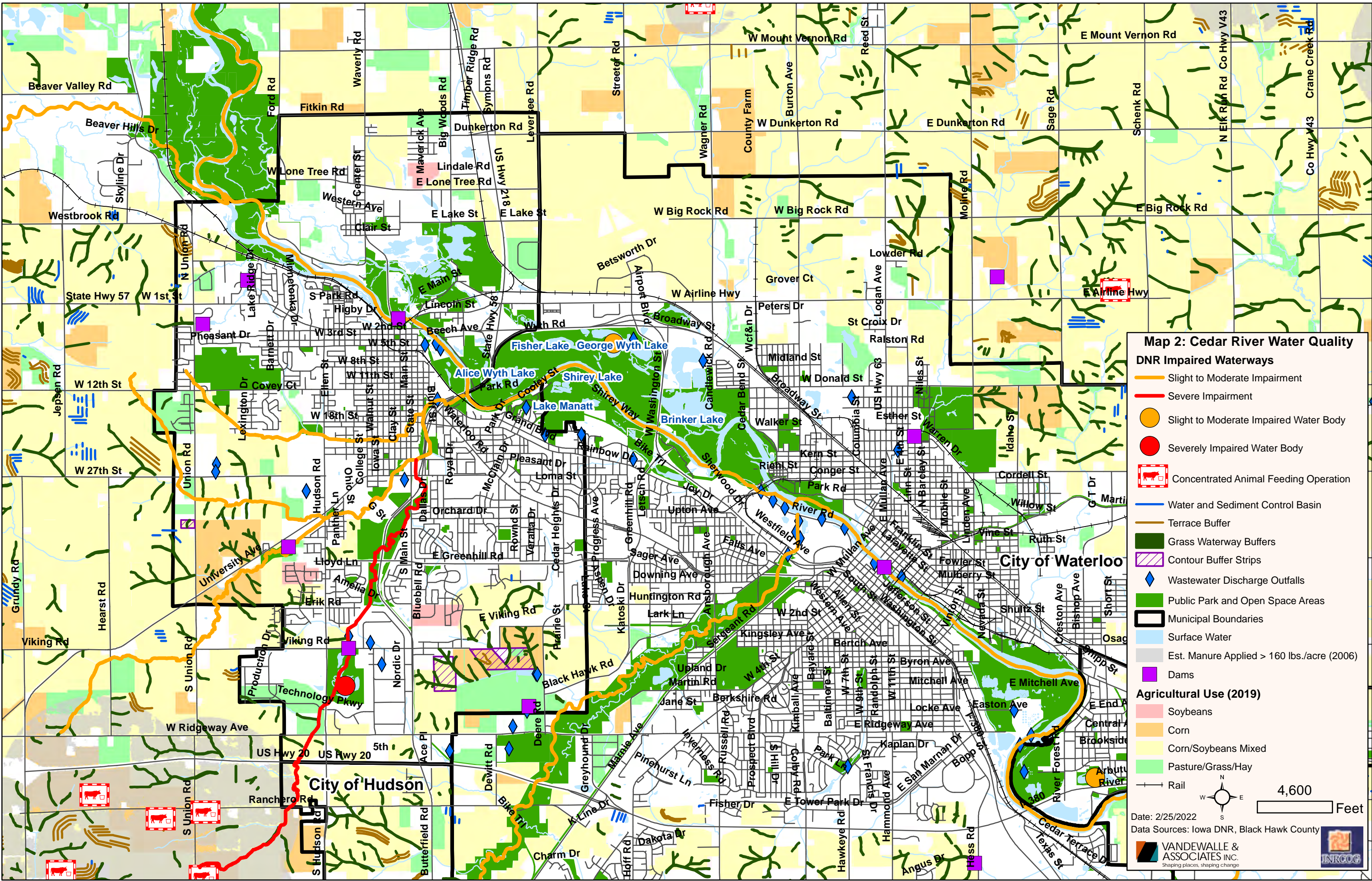


Map 1a: Cedar Falls to Waterloo Recreation

- Cedar Valley Paddler's State Water Trail**
- Paddle Segment
 - Portage Segment
 - Public Park and Open Space Areas
 - George Wyth State Park
 - Hartman Reserve Nature Center
 - Municipal Boundaries
 - Surface Water
 - Rail
 - Public Electric Vehicle Charging Station
 - South Riverside Trail
 - Other Existing Paved Bike/Pedestrian Trail
 - Existing Dirt Trail
 - Existing Bike Lane/Sharrow
 - Planned Trail
 - Planned Bike Lane/Sharrow
 - Motorized Boat Ramp
 - Carry-Down Access Point
 - Paddling Hazard
 - Dams
 - Paddle-Sport Rental Livery
 - State Water Trail Under Development

Date: 2/28/2022
 Data Sources: Iowa DNR, Black Hawk County





Map 2: Cedar River Water Quality

DNR Impaired Waterways

- Slight to Moderate Impairment
- Severe Impairment

Water Bodies

- Slight to Moderate Impaired Water Body
- Severely Impaired Water Body

Other Features

- Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation
- Water and Sediment Control Basin
- Terrace Buffer
- Grass Waterway Buffers
- Contour Buffer Strips
- Wastewater Discharge Outfalls
- Public Park and Open Space Areas
- Municipal Boundaries
- Surface Water
- Est. Manure Applied > 160 lbs./acre (2006)
- Dams

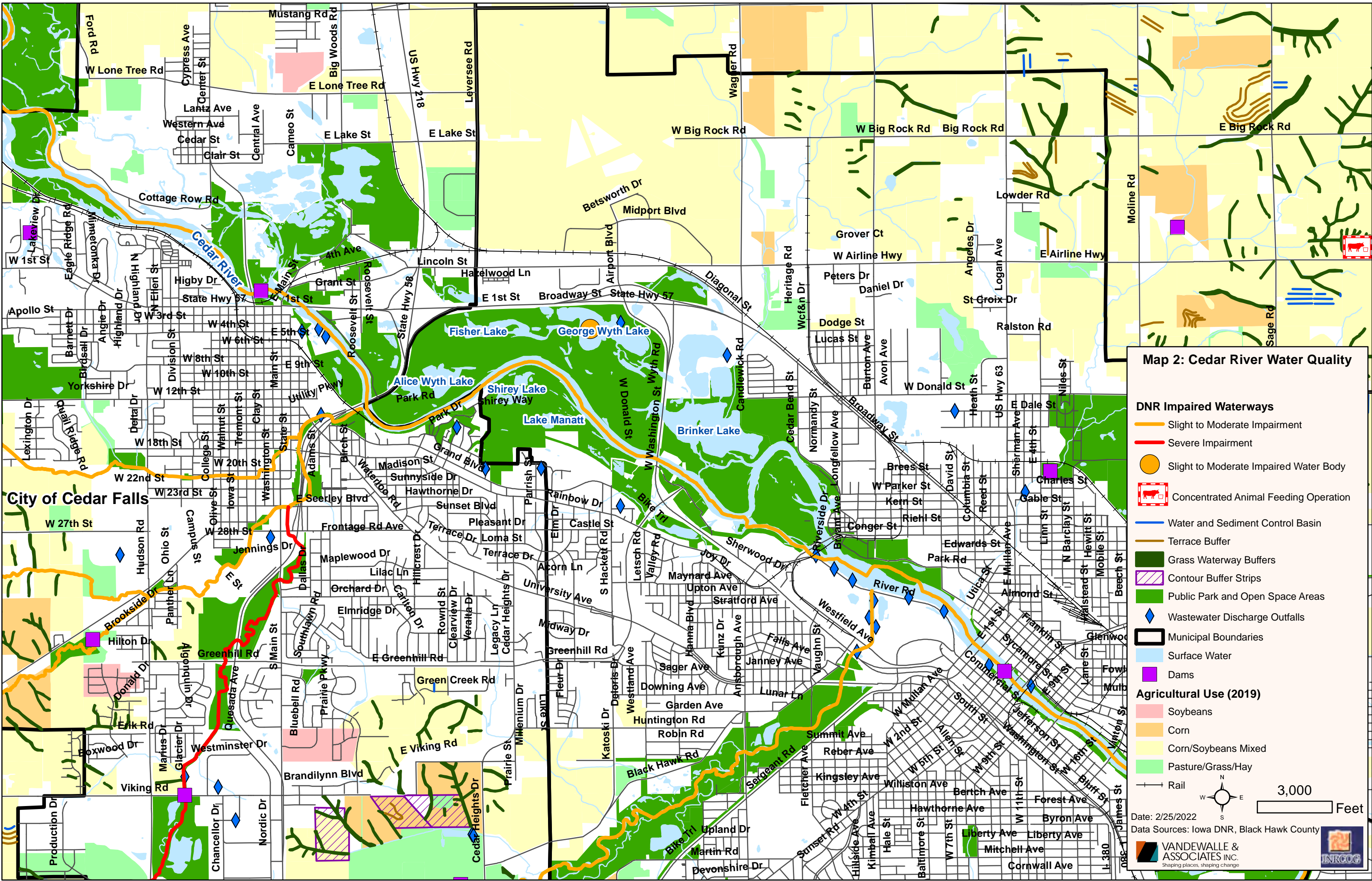
Agricultural Use (2019)

- Soybeans
- Corn
- Corn/Soybeans Mixed
- Pasture/Grass/Hay
- Rail

Date: 2/25/2022
 Data Sources: Iowa DNR, Black Hawk County

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Map 2: Cedar River Water Quality

DNR Impaired Waterways

- Slight to Moderate Impairment
- Severe Impairment

Other Symbols

- Slight to Moderate Impaired Water Body
- Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation
- Water and Sediment Control Basin
- Terrace Buffer
- Grass Waterway Buffers
- Contour Buffer Strips
- Public Park and Open Space Areas
- Wastewater Discharge Outfalls
- Municipal Boundaries
- Surface Water
- Dams

Agricultural Use (2019)

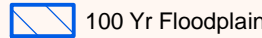
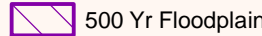
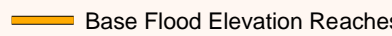
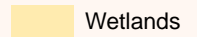

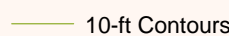
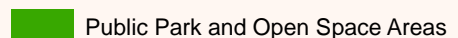
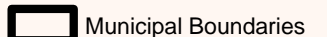
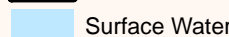

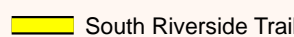
- Soybeans
- Corn
- Corn/Soybeans Mixed
- Pasture/Grass/Hay
- Rail

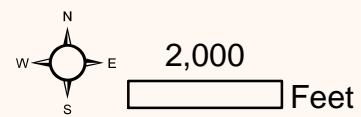
Date: 2/25/2022
 Data Sources: Iowa DNR, Black Hawk County

Scale: 3,000 Feet

Logo: VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES INC. Shaping places, shaping change. INRCOG

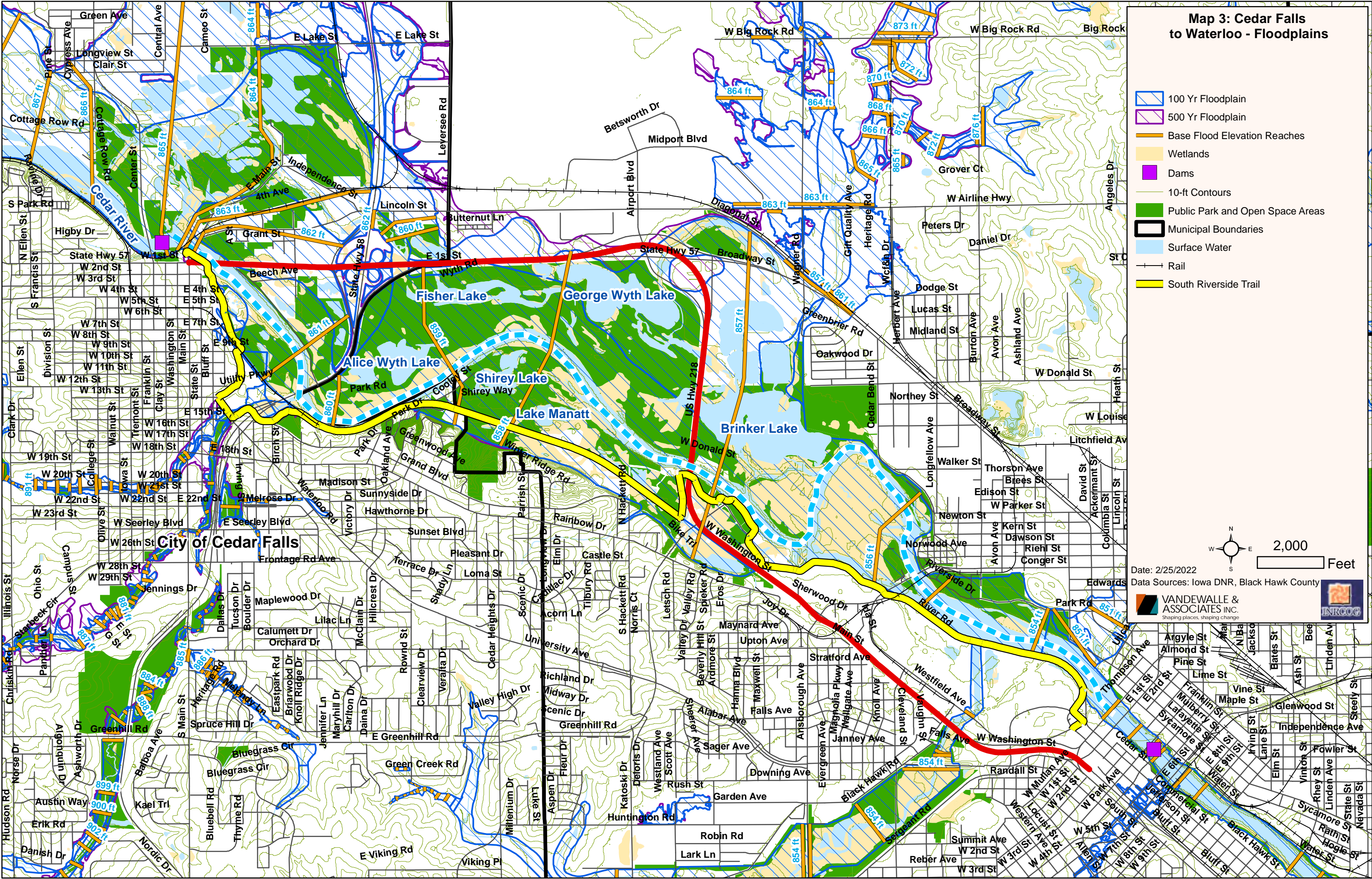
Map 3: Cedar Falls to Waterloo - Floodplains

-  100 Yr Floodplain
-  500 Yr Floodplain
-  Base Flood Elevation Reaches
-  Wetlands
-  Dams
-  10-ft Contours
-  Public Park and Open Space Areas
-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Surface Water
-  Rail
-  South Riverside Trail













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 Data Sources: Iowa DNR, Black Hawk County

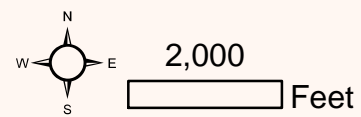
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Map 4: Cedar Falls to Waterloo - Fishing

-  Fish Attractor
-  Fishing Access
-  Motorized Boat Ramp
-  Carry-Down Access Point
-  Public Park and Open Space Areas
-  Urban Fishing Locations
-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Surface Water
-  Rail
-  Dams

- Common Fish in Chain-of-Lakes:
- Black Bullhead
 - Black Crappie
 - Bluegill
 - Channel Catfish
 - Common Carp
 - Largemouth Bass
 - Northern Pike
 - White Crappie
 - Yellow Bass



Date: 2/25/2022
 Data Sources: Iowa DNR, Black Hawk County

