



[CITY OF]

OTTUMWA

West Main Multimodal Corridor Revitalization Project

Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant Application: May 2020



Location: Ottumwa, Iowa

Urban/Rural Designation: Rural

BUILD Funding Request: \$14,859,365

Primary Project Type: Transit – Multimodal Center

Total Project Cost: \$18,161,865

Secondary Project Type: Road – Complete Streets

Contact: Philip Rath, City Administrator | (641) 683-0600 | rathp@ci.ottumwa.ia.us

Appendices and support documentation may be found online at:

<https://www.ottumwariverfront.org/>

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1. Project Description

The City of Ottumwa, Iowa, respectfully submits this application for BUILD grant funding in the amount of \$14,859,365, for the Ottumwa West Main Multimodal Corridor Revitalization Project. The proposed project addresses myriad issues within a blighted downtown district anchored by Ottumwa’s historic Chicago, Burlington, & Quincy (CB&Q) railroad depot. The project will establish a multimodal hub at the depot which currently serves as an Amtrak station, providing access to local, regional, and national passenger transportation networks. Complete Streets radiating from the depot will provide safe, accessible connections for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists to the established commercial core, the riverfront, and beyond. Appurtenant utility infrastructure and parking lot improvements will support immediate private infill development opportunities while setting the stage for future private investment on brownfield/grayfield sites on the downtown riverfront.

Ottumwa has been working hard to re-invent its economy over the last two decades—with emphasis on downtown and riverfront revitalization (see Section 1.2). A recreational hub immediately across the river includes the region’s premier convention center, an indoor/outdoor water park, a campground, and a complex of outdoor sports fields/courts. These successes have launched several planning efforts to connect downtown to the river: reinventing the space as a mixed-use commercial, residential, and recreational area. The convention center is working to develop an on-site hotel, an indoor sports complex is being proposed next to the water park, and plans are being drafted to completely renovate the Ottumwa Park outdoor sports complex and campground.

Redevelopment of land along the downtown riverfront is a natural progression that will complement these planned activities, fill gaps in community needs, and reduce the need to expand infrastructure on the fringes of the city. These critical infrastructure investments will spur private development, fulfilling short- and long-term community visions of revitalizing the riverfront as a mixed-use commercial, residential, and entertainment area; clustering industry for economic growth; and cleaning up the community by remediating brownfield/grayfield sites.

Table 1-1 outlines ten activities included in this BUILD Grant request that will support the continued revitalization of downtown Ottumwa by improving transportation access and safety and leading to the creation of new job and housing opportunities. The activity numbers correspond with the numbers on the project map (Figure 1-1). Detailed cost estimates for each activity appear in Appendix C.

No.	Activity	Cost
1	Intermodal Station Improvements	\$ 1,415,014
2	Multimodal Site Improvements	\$ 1,464,606
3	Ballingall Park Improvements + Locomotive Display Relocation	\$ 990,497
4	Marion Street Parking Lot + Utility Improvements	\$ 1,867,602
5	Central Bus Transfer Station	\$ 422,620
6	West Main Street Complete Streets + Utility Improvements	\$ 2,988,414
7	West Main Street Parking Lot Improvements	\$ 1,693,098
8	Washington Street Complete Street + Utility Improvements	\$ 1,588,818
9	Market Street Complete Streets + Utility + Grade Crossing Improvements	\$ 2,440,984
10	Riverwalk + Levee Trail Connection	\$ 3,290,213
TOTAL		\$18,161,865

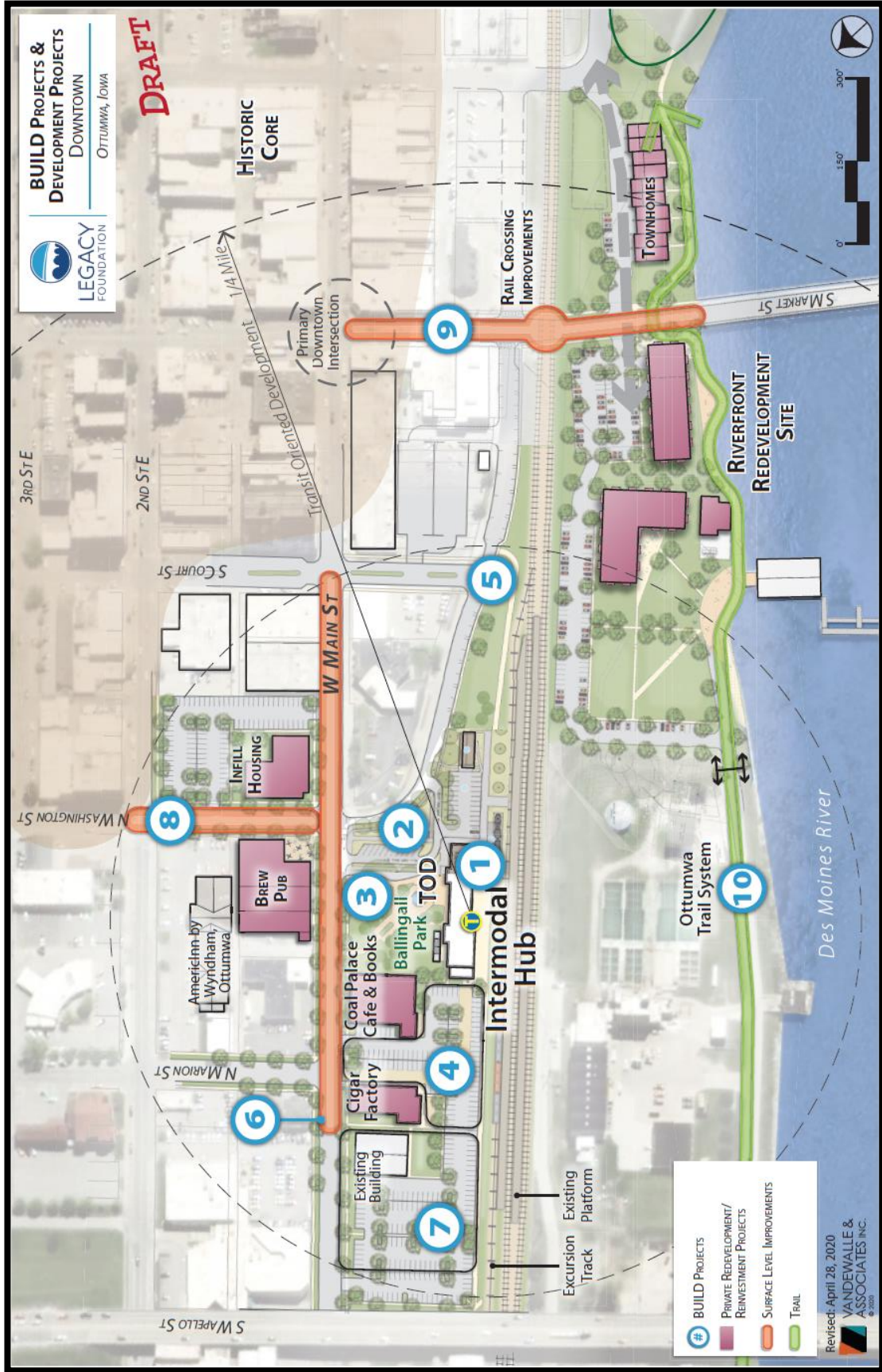


Figure 1-1. BUILD Grant Project Activities

1.1. Historic Context

Community Development

Ottumwa's growth and development have been tethered to that of the Des Moines River, railroads, and highways. Ottumwa's historic central business district is linear in design, nestled between the bluffs above the river and the present-day BNSF Railway tracks; its physical form characterized by perpetual evolution (Figure 1.2).

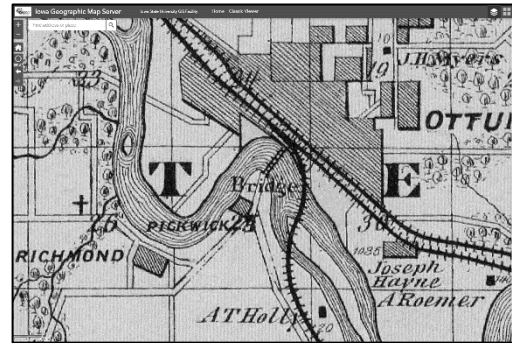
The town was settled in the 1840s and relied on steamboats to provide bulk transport of supplies until the first railroad came to town in 1859. By 1900, four major railroads served the city. The hub for railroad activity in Ottumwa was along the river, immediately south of downtown. All four railroads converged in the area between Market and Vine Streets.

A river channel was added south of downtown in the early 1900s during construction of the city's first dam. Ottumwa's first highways were constructed through downtown beginning in the 1920s. The Market Street bridge was the town's primary river crossing into the mid-1930s when the Jefferson Street Viaduct was built. During the post-War boom, the first downtown surface parking lots were developed off Market Street on a marshy area between the river and the railroad tracks.

The 1960s saw the last of the riverfront's major geometric changes as the river was re-channelized, a much larger dam was built, and the levee system was constructed. With the stream shifted, Ottumwa's first highway bypasses were created to alleviate heavy traffic downtown. The Wapello Street bridge was constructed in the late 1960s, elevating highway traffic above downtown. The last bypasses were completed in the mid-2000s, completely removing all highways from downtown.

Between 1900-1980, downtown development boomed and declined along with the railroads. Most railroad activity downtown had ceased by the mid-1980s, leaving behind large tracts of derelict, vacant, and underutilized properties. As railroad activity declined, most of the warehouse buildings in downtown succumbed to the "urban renewal" efforts that began in the 1970s.

Ottumwa's historic core began to deteriorate as auto-centric developments sprung up in the 1980s and 1990s. Many businesses and jobs left downtown for the new mall and downtown buildings were bought cheaply and received minimal maintenance for decades.



1875



1930s



1960s



2016

Figure 1-2. Ottumwa's Evolving Core

1.2.Complementary Investments: Recent, Ongoing, & Planned

A paradigm shift in the mid-1990s began a new era of community revival with extensive focus on riverfront redevelopment and downtown revitalization. A community planning process led to the creation of the *Downtown Development Guide* in 1996. Several key themes emerged from it, including:

- Traffic patterns downtown are more complicated than they need to be.
- The downtown streetscape needs more pedestrian scale elements.
- Voids in the continuous pattern of downtown storefronts tend to make the area feel disjointed.
- The City would benefit from a stronger connection to the Des Moines River.
- The riverfront open space provides a place for community activities to occur.
- The Coliseum has great potential to become a stronger community/convention center.

It took until the mid-2000s to reach construction on these visions, but Ottumwa has enjoyed immense progress in the last fifteen years. Tens of millions have been invested so far and this BUILD Grant application represents the keystone to the next major phase of Ottumwa’s evolution. Table 1-2 outlines recent public-private investments activities that have been completed or are ongoing that complement the activities proposed in this application.

Years	Activity	Cost
2006-2018	Ottumwa Trail System Development	\$ 2,100,000
2007	Bridge View Center Construction	\$22,000,000
2012-2019	ADA Compliance Activities	\$ 763,000
2013-2015	300 E. Main Façade Improvements Project	\$ 989,000
2014	One-way to Two-way Conversion on Main and Second Streets	\$ 24,000
2014-2016	Upper Story Housing Disaster Recovery Project	\$ 4,287,000
2015-2016	West Main Flood Mitigation Project	\$20,278,000
2015-2018	Market Street Bridge Reconstruction	\$ 3,178,000
2015-2020	Fiber Optic Communication Upgrades	\$ 663,000
2016-2017	100-200 E. Main Façade Improvements Project	\$ 1,190,000
2015	Jefferson Street Green Parking Lot	\$ 636,000
2016	Canteen Alley Green Infrastructure Project	\$ 736,000
2017-2020	The Beach Ottumwa Renovation Project	\$ 2,800,000
2018-2019	BNSF Quiet Zone Grade Crossing Improvements	\$ 280,000
2018-2020	E. Main Street Reconstruction (Jefferson Street to Vine Street)	\$ 2,807,000
2019	Upper Story Pilot Housing Project	\$ 1,057,000
2019-2020	E. Main Street Reconstruction (Court Street to Jefferson Street)	\$ 5,955,000
2020-2021	E. Main Street Reconstruction (Vine Street to Van Buren Street)	\$ 5,200,000
TOTAL		\$74,663,000

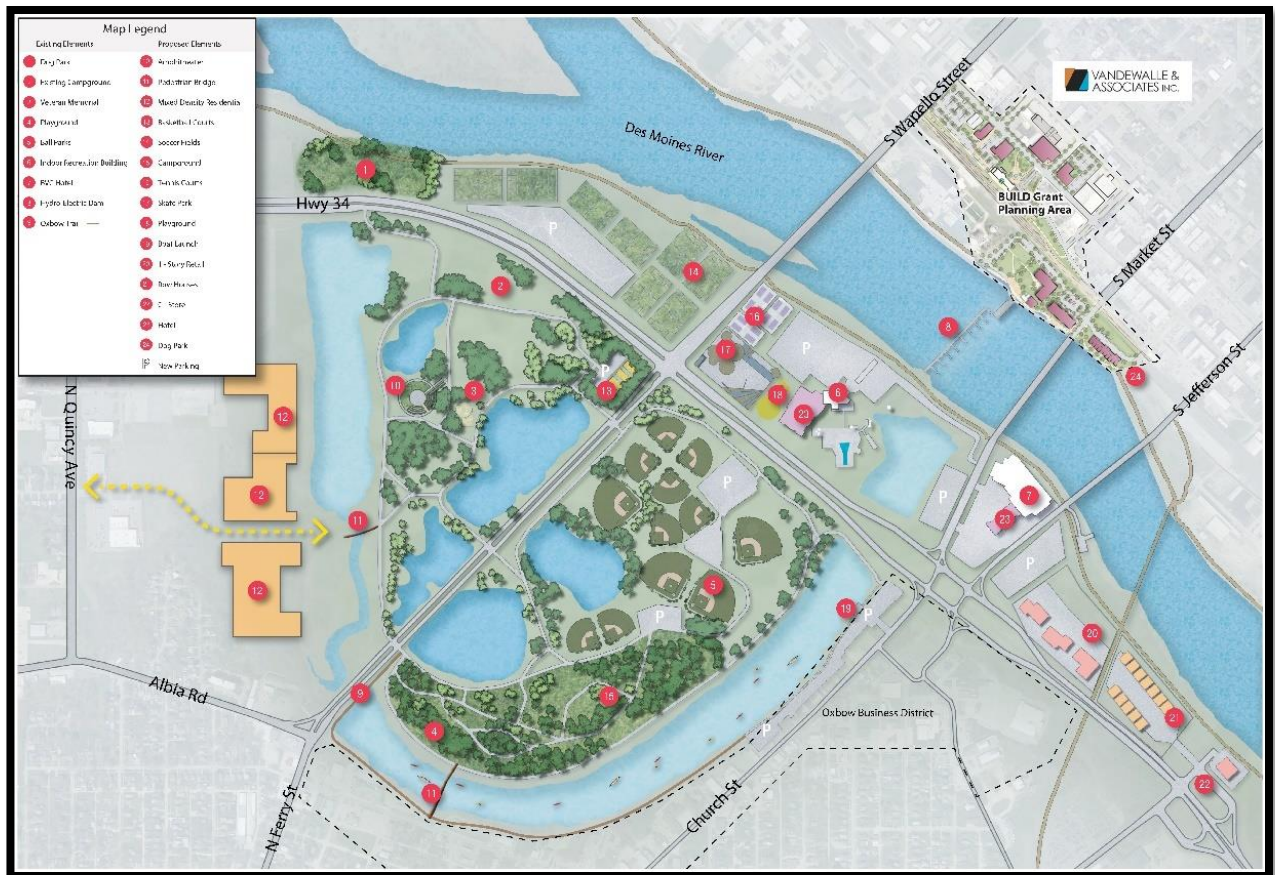
Although a great deal of progress has been made, Ottumwa’s renaissance is only beginning. As projects are implemented, new planning processes continue to emerge. The City and its partners have led numerous public participation exercises to determine what to do in the future. These efforts are summed up in the City’s newest [comprehensive plan](#), due to be approved in Summer 2020.

The comprehensive planning process included its own community-wide survey to identify future growth and investment strategies. The key priorities for future investments mirrored those of the 1996 process,

including: Downtown Revitalization, Riverfront Development, and Streetscape Improvements. Table 1-3 outlines several planned investments that will benefit from Ottumwa’s proposed BUILD grant project.

Table 1-3. Summary of Planned Investments		
Years	Activity	Cost Estimate
2020-2022	Trail System Improvements (Milner Street & Oxbow Connection Trails)	\$ 750,000
2020-2023	ADA Compliance Activities	\$ 480,000
2021	Downtown Flood Wall Improvements	\$ 500,000
2021-2022	Studio 229 (Ottumwa Theater Project)	\$ 5,500,000
2021-2022	Amtrak Platform Improvements	\$10,000,000
2021-2022	Bridge View Center Hotel & Parking Improvements	\$13,000,000
2021-2023	Indoor Sports Complex at Sycamore Park	\$ 8,500,000
2022-2023	BJRY Rail Port Relocation	\$ 5,000,000
2025-2030	Ottumwa Park Sports Complex & Campground Improvements	\$15,000,000
2026-2031	U.S. Highway 34 Reconstruction/Realignment (Wildwood-Vine)	\$29,000,000
TOTAL		\$87,730,000

Figure 1-3. Long-term Riverfront Redevelopment Concept Plan



Northern Riverfront/Downtown Revitalization

Historically, Ottumwa's downtown (northern) riverfront has been linked to the utilitarian functions of water treatment, hydro-power generation, railway interchange, and vehicle storage, although it was used occasionally for special events (Figure 1.4). As most of the freight rail interchange ceased downtown, the area started to be viewed as an amenity. Concurrently, parking lots were established on sites of former warehouse and multi-story buildings within downtown, reducing demand for parking in the parking lots on either side of Market Street between the river and the railroad tracks.

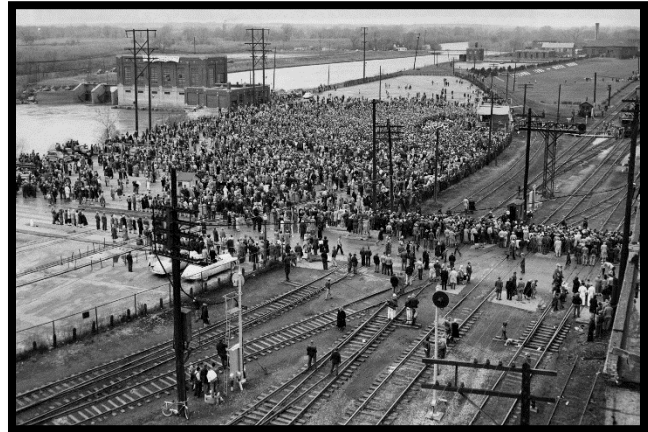


Figure 1-4. Market Street Parking Lots in 1950.

Abandoned railroad tracks were torn up in the 1990s; the area smoothed and left as open grassland. Once the City's primary downtown surface parking lot, the Market Street parking lot is now its most underutilized (Figure 1.5). The eastern segment of the Market Street parking lot was reconstructed as a skate park in 2000. The western segment of the Market Street parking lot remains a deteriorating patchwork of concrete and asphalt. River Hills Community Health Clinic staff are the only daily users of the parking lot today, although downtown retailers use it to stage delivery box trucks and truck drivers use the west end to park their semis for hours of service rest.



Figure 1-5. Market Street Parking Lots in 2020.

Main Street is one block north of the railroad tracks and 2nd Street is two blocks north. Most of downtown's major revitalization efforts over the last fifteen years have happened here, totaling over \$20 million in private investment. Since 2006, over 200 downtown building projects have been completed, over fifty net new businesses have been created, and nearly sixty new upper-story housing units have been constructed. The Main Street Ottumwa district is becoming an increasingly attractive place to live and work; upgrading transportation and utility infrastructure and enhancing recreational opportunities have become major needs.

Central Ottumwa's last active railroad transload facility is situated one block east of the BUILD project area. The City and its economic development partners are interested in the redevelopment potential of that site as well as the feasibility of expansion of the railroad's activity on a site further east. In 2019, Greater Ottumwa Partners in Progress was awarded a planning grant and are currently engaged in a rail port relocation feasibility study, estimated to be complete later in 2020.

Southern Riverfront & The Oxbow

The Market Street Bridge (center of Figure 1-6) is a major gateway from downtown to Ottumwa’s major regional social and recreational amenity zone as well as the Oxbow Business District. The Oxbow Business District is Ottumwa’s former streetcar commercial district that wraps around the south and west sides of the former Des Moines River oxbow (on Church and Richmond Streets). Historically it has served basic commercial needs for Ottumwa’s south side residents, industries, and Ottumwa Park. Church and Richmond Streets became highway routes around the same time that buses replaced streetcars. Eventually, they were reverted to collector streets when the highway bypasses were developed through the area.



Figure 1-6. Looking toward Southern Riverfront/Oxbow Area

Ottumwa Park is a 340-acre park bound by the levee system of the current Des Moines River alignment on the north/east and the oxbow of the former Des Moines River alignment on the south/west. The park is split into four quadrants bisected by the intersection of U.S. Highway 34 and Iowa Highway 149 (Wapello Street). The park is comprised of trails, ponds, campgrounds, playground equipment, shelters, baseball/softball fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, soccer fields, sand volleyball pits, a horse arena, and an off-leash dog park. Ottumwa Park is showing its age; however, as are several other recreational amenities across town.

A new Ottumwa Park master plan (Figure 1.3) is being developed to build upon previous riverfront and park planning efforts to better utilize this unique regional amenity. The reimagined park calls for a complete overhaul that consolidates and centralizes ball fields and courts from around the community. The campground, shelters, pond areas, and dog park will be improved. The existing skate park downtown will be replaced by a modern skate park within this recreational district. The park plan provides for better vehicular circulation and parking, pedestrian tunnels beneath the highways for safe access to each quadrant, and pedestrian bridges across the oxbow ponds to access the Oxbow and Quincy Business Districts.

The Beach Ottumwa—a regional waterpark—was among the first amenities built on the riverfront back in 1992. A four-year, multi-phase improvement project began at The Beach in 2017 and is expected to be complete this year at an estimated final cost of \$2.8 million. Across the street, the former Army National Guard Coliseum was replaced in 2006 by the region’s premier conference center, the Bridge View Center. The City and venue representatives are working with developers to construct a convention hotel at the Bridge View Center with adjacent parking lot and Church Street upgrades.

In August 2019, the Iowa DOT and City of Ottumwa partnered to review traffic operations, safety, and future corridor goals for approximately 2.5 miles of U.S. Highway 34 from Wildwood Drive to just east of the Vine Street interchange with U.S. 63. A public meeting updated residents and stakeholders on concepts being developed to improve the corridor, environmental constraints along the corridor, safety and operational concerns, and obtain public feedback regarding corridor improvement options. The Iowa DOT anticipates the project to be included in the 2022-2026 five-year highway program with major reconstruction and interchange improvements expected to begin in the mid-2020s at a cost of \$25-30

million. As the Iowa DOT completes the Highway 34 improvement projects in the area, it is anticipated that additional retail and townhome redevelopment may occur along the river northwest of Vine Street.

Trails Network + ADA Accessibility Improvements

In the early 2000s, the Wapello County Trails Council began planning for multi-use trails atop the City's extensive levee system along the Des Moines River. In 2006, they acquired the abandoned Wabash Railroad bridge just south of downtown and adapted it for trail use in 2007. Between 2007 and 2010, they paved most of the levee system on both the north and south sides of the river, providing South Side access to the Oxbow Business District, Ottumwa Park, and the neighborhoods adjacent to John Deere's manufacturing plant. More recently, they provided funding to the 2014 Market Street Bridge reconstruction project to add a separated pedestrian path across the river. The last major construction project the Trails Council undertook was the Highway 34 underpass that provides levee trail access underneath the 4-lane highway to the Quincy Place Commercial District. To date, the Wapello County Trails Council has spent over \$2 million in trails development since 2006.

The existing trails system includes over twelve miles of paved multi-use trails along the river and into neighborhoods on the City's south and west sides. The City made ADA improvements to curb cuts and driveways along W. 2nd Street between the city limits and its fork with W. Main Street in the spring of 2020. The City will start a major reconstruction project on Milner Street in the summer of 2020 that will create an 8-foot trail south $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from Richmond Street to Mary Street. The Trails Council is also securing easements for the last $\frac{3}{4}$ miles to complete Oxbow Trail circuit from Ottumwa Park behind the Oxbow Business District. Construction is anticipated for that project in the next five years. Costs for these two projects will total another \$750,000 in trail investments.

The City of Ottumwa has been working toward compliance with the City's 2012 *ADA Transition Plan*, as well, by installing sidewalk drops and detectable warnings throughout the community. City-owned and maintained intersections are one portion of the ADA requirements and the City will award its ninth contract for improvements in May 2020. Since 2012, the City of Ottumwa has spent over \$763,000 on ADA improvements and has budgeted an additional \$120,000 annually through FY23 when the program is expected to be complete.

Sewer Separation

In 1999, Ottumwa was notified by the Iowa DNR that it would have to take major steps to separate its combined sewer system in order to comply with national clean water standards, reduce the amount of pollution being discharged into the oxbow lagoons and Des Moines River, and lower incidence of raw sewage backups in residents' basements. The combined sewer area within Ottumwa encompasses approximately 85% of the City's 129 miles of sewer. Because of the overwhelming amount of combined sewer work necessary, Ottumwa was the first Iowa community to receive a 25-year compliance schedule to complete its sewer separation activities.

Work on the Ottumwa sewer separation has been underway since August 2006. Ottumwa's long-term control plan was first completed in 2007 and outlined a nine-phase improvement strategy. The City has completed Phases 1-7 so far at a cost of nearly \$42 million. Phase 8 will begin in 2020 and is estimated to cost nearly \$55 million over the next ten years.

1.3.BUILD Project Components

Ottumwa's West Main Multimodal Corridor Revitalization Project is a holistic approach toward marrying the city's northern and southern riverfronts through enhancements to its local, regional, and national transportation networks.

Multimodal Station Area Improvements

The proposed multimodal station is located on a site key to Ottumwa’s development—the Historic Railroad District. Reengaging the train depot and Ballingall Park to create a regional, transit-oriented district (TOD) will further activate the downtown Main Street corridor as a vibrant mixed-use area. A truly multimodal station will build on Ottumwa’s existing assets and resources by integrating local and regional bus service with the national reach of Amtrak passenger rail. In addition to train service, the station will connect travelers to larger regional transportation centers such as Des Moines, Chicago, and Denver. The multimodal station will become the centralized destination for transit in Ottumwa, providing access to the riverfront, private developments, new housing, and commercial opportunities. The proposed intermodal station area improvements (Figure 1-8) include Activities 1-5 on Table 1-1.



Figure 1-7. Historic Railroad District



Figure 1-8. Multimodal Station Area Activities

The Multimodal Station not only will improve transit facilities and critical infrastructure, it also will drive economic opportunity, integrating rural communities into a regional economic development strategy, and increasing the regional economic reach to new opportunity centers by providing new workforce opportunities. Enhancing transportation connections between Ottumwa and major employers throughout the Midwest provides convenient, car-free access to activity centers. This is a major

recruitment tool as employees will increase their ability to travel to Chicago or other locations without a personal vehicle, something that is particularly appealing to young adults. Additionally, a potential outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic is a shift to remote employment and working from home. Ottumwa is well suited to serve this need.

The scope of Activity 1 includes interior and exterior upgrades to the existing train depot. The building will be tuckpointed and windows and doors will be repaired or replaced as necessary. The main-level interior will be updated and modernized, providing for a better passenger experience, and allowing for on-site ticketing. Additional security features will be installed to enhance the safety of the facility as further described in Section 4.1.

The scope of Activities 2 and 3 seek to improve access to the station for buses and travelers and to make the overall site fit better within the context of a walkable downtown. The historic Ballingall Park will be renovated to make the space safer and more functional. Relocating the CB&Q steam locomotive will help activate the site and provide a point of interest for travelers and community members alike. The triangular space east of Ballingall Park will be reconfigured to a plaza-like area. This work will add more short-term parking for visitors and the drive lane will be repaved with an adjacent sidewalk to provide a safe zone for the intercity buses, taxis, or rideshare services to drop-off or pick-up passengers. Amtrak’s current long-term parking lot is part of a disorganized, multi-parcel extension of Marion Street west of the depot. Activity 4 will completely overhaul this uninviting area, providing for a new street with defined sidewalks and new underground utilities, as well as a paved parking area that includes stormwater retention features and plenty of new lighting that does not exist currently.

The City’s bus transfer station currently is located several blocks from the multimodal site and must be relocated due to ongoing street improvements in that area. Activity 5 proposes constructing a new bus transfer station along River Drive at the intersection of S. Court Street. The new bus station will be oriented to align with adjacent train tracks and designed to pay homage to the historic rail canopy structures and depot’s architectural character by using similar forms and materials (Figure 1-9). River Drive, a four-lane street, has excess capacity and will be narrowed to two lanes with a bus queuing zone along the south side from the Railroad Clubhouse to S. Court Street.



Figure 1-9. Proposed Bus Transfer Station

Complete Streets, Safer Road and Railway Intersections, & Utility Improvements

The project will make significant roadway improvements to the streets within the intermodal station area. New street pavement; enhanced street intersections; replacement of curbs and gutters; ADA-compliant sidewalks and curb ramps; replacement of sanitary sewer, storm sewer, and water distribution system infrastructure; and an enhanced railroad grade crossing with signal upgrades are included within the scope of rehabilitation of Activities 6-9 on Table 1-1.

The project will continue Ottumwa’s recent effort to implement Complete Streets downtown and in neighborhoods throughout the community (Figure 1-10). Adding features such as bump-outs and “sharrows” (see Figure 4-1) helps promote walkability and non-motorized accessibility across the downtown and into the surrounding areas while also reducing vehicle speed through the corridor.

Connecting to the Riverfront

While the southern riverfront has experienced development success, the north side remains underdeveloped, unproductive, and unattractive. These parcels—most of which are former railroad parcels now owned by the City of Ottumwa—present the greatest opportunity for transformation downtown. Redevelopment of the north side, particularly between Green Street and the Ottumwa Water Works, will establish a critical connection from downtown to the Des Moines River and the City’s south side.

The riverwalk and trail projects proposed in this application are important components to the corridor’s overall revitalization and solve important transportation challenges by expanding pedestrian and bicycle access and closing critical gaps in the trail and transportation networks. The riverwalk and levee trail will connect visitors from the downtown multimodal station to the riverfront, regional trails, and improve pedestrian access to Ottumwa’s south side. The proposed riverwalk and levee trail will be constructed on top of the existing levee, which in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources and Army Corps of Engineers, is set to be updated to improve safety and flood mitigation along the river.

The riverwalk will include a 10-foot concrete path for joggers and bicyclists, a promenade for casual walkers and visitors, and a scenic overlook area for enjoying the river views and fishing (Figure 1-11). Lighting improvements will increase safety for users and increase the accessibility and functionality of the riverwalk. Conscientious design will be applied to the landscaping, including planters as well as the implementation of safety features like steel cabling along the river edge to create an attractive space and enhance the riverfront’s natural beauty.

The levee trail will extend the 10’ concrete path to Wapello Street, connecting the riverwalk to the Ottumwa Trail System, a network of over 12 miles of paved trails throughout Ottumwa. The proposed levee trail will complete the only missing segment of separated trail along the entire riverfront through town. This increased trail access provides new opportunities for an active and healthy lifestyle while also bring people into downtown to enjoy a unique natural asset like the Des Moines River.

These improvements will complement and spur additional private investment downtown and along the riverfront. As outlined in Ottumwa’s comprehensive plan, future phases of riverfront development are planned for the areas adjacent to the riverwalk, including townhomes, mixed-use development, other retail and restaurant development, and a destination park (tentatively known as Electric Park). This development, supported by the riverwalk and levee trail connections and the other projects in this application, will create new opportunities in Ottumwa for people to live and visit and add a cultural and entertainment destination along the Des Moines River. Both outcomes will have substantial economic impacts for the community, as described in the Benefit-Cost Analysis (Section 6 and Appendix B).



Figure 1-10. Complete Streets Concept

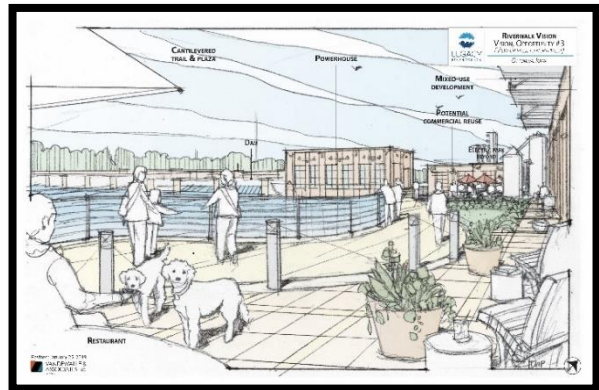


Figure 1-11. Riverwalk Concept

2. Project Location

Ottumwa, the county seat of Wapello County, Iowa, is located approximately 70 miles southeast of Iowa's state capital, Des Moines. Ottumwa is a rural micropolitan community, anchoring a large portion of southeastern Iowa, extending into northeastern Missouri.

Ottumwa is within a two-hour drive of Ames, Des Moines, and Iowa City—major centers of employment in financial services, insurance, health care, logistics/distribution, education and retail headquarters. The region within a two-hour drive time Ottumwa also includes strong manufacturing and agriculture economic sectors.

Although Ottumwa is not in an Opportunity Zone, it does have the highest number of low- to moderate-income individuals of all HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) non-entitlement communities in Iowa at 13,240 (55%). Ottumwa is and will continue to be a workforce community with a regional role as a hub for retail, educational, and healthcare services.



Figure 2.1. Regional Context of Ottumwa

John Deere Ottumwa Works and JBS USA are the largest employers within Ottumwa and provide a strong ag-industry presence in equipment manufacturing and animal [pork] food processing. Within an hour's drive are several company headquarters and branches with over 500 employees. Cargill Corn Milling, Musco Lighting, Traffix Devices, Pella Corporation, and Vermeer are large manufacturing employers located within forty minutes of Ottumwa. Other companies in retail distribution, food processing, manufacturing, and consulting services provide a range of skilled workforce opportunities for economic sustainability within Ottumwa's core laborshed.

In addition to large regional employers, Ottumwa also has substantial access to renowned universities and institutions, including Grinnell College, Drake University, Grand View University, Central College, William Penn University, and Maharishi International University.

Ottumwa is within a four-hour drive to several major metropolitan areas, including Omaha, Kansas City, and St. Louis. The *California-Zephyr* provides connections to major tourism and employment centers including Chicago and Denver. These regional transportation connections are critical for Ottumwa and its surrounding rural areas. Access to these metro areas allow Ottumwa to be an attractive location for employers and employees looking for a small-town community atmosphere, but close connection to the economic, recreational, and cultural opportunities of large cities. Enhancing critical infrastructure, as proposed in this application, will allow Ottumwa to grow more prestigious as a destination in the Midwest.

2.1. Demographics

At its peak in the 1950s, Ottumwa was a city of nearly 35,000. Despite a population decline of 28% between 1960 and 1990, the City of Ottumwa's population has held steady near 25,000 over the last thirty years. Population projections from the new comprehensive plan anticipate slight increases in Ottumwa over the next twenty years to nearly 26,000 by 2030 and 29,000 by 2040.

Ottumwa's largest employment sector is Manufacturing, accounting for 25% of all jobs. The next major industries are Health Care and Social Assistance (16%), Retail Trade (14%), Educational Services (11%), and Accommodation and Food Services (8%). Ottumwa is home to Iowa's third-largest non-metropolitan public school district, as well as Indian Hills Community College.

While the average age in the State of Iowa (38.1) is slightly higher than that of the United States (37.8), the average age of Ottumwa's population (35.7) is over two years younger. Ottumwa is a significantly more diverse community than the average Iowa community, as well, with nearly 15% identifying as Hispanic or Latino and 8% identified as "some other race alone." These represent increases of 9% and 7%, respectively, as compared to the State of Iowa.

As a reflection of being a younger and more diverse community, the median household income in Ottumwa (\$39,193) is approximately 30% lower than the statewide median household income (\$56,570) and 32% lower than the national median household income (\$57,652). Approximately 45% of Ottumwa households earn less than \$35,000 annually.

There is a significant divide between the median household income of homeowners and renters in Ottumwa, as well. The median household income for owner-occupied (\$49,421) is more than double the median household income for renters (\$21,430). Approximately 33% of Ottumwa housing units are renter-occupied, which is about 4% higher than the statewide average.

2.2. Housing

A major community vision in Ottumwa's 2019 comprehensive planning process focused on the need for improved housing in the city. As Ottumwa's housing stock is composed of mainly older housing units, housing is both a major opportunity and challenge for the community. Nearly 40% of homes were built before 1940. Another 36% of homes were constructed between 1940 and 1969. Collectively, this means that nearly 80% of homes are at least fifty years old. Very few homes have been constructed since 2000, with only an estimated 5.4% constructed in the last twenty years.

A certain amount of new housing is needed to help attract new workforce age residents while retaining the older generations, as well. Although single-family homes make up most of Ottumwa's housing stock and likely will continue to do so, other types of housing are needed to meet the needs of existing and future residents. Public input from the comprehensive planning process identified strong support for more affordable entry-level townhomes for Ottumwa, as well as a need for more affordable multifamily housing and senior-focused housing options.

2.3. Transit

With intercity rail and intercity, regional, and local bus service, few Iowa communities have a network of transportation options as diverse as Ottumwa. Ottumwa is served by Amtrak (intercity rail), Burlington Trailways (intercity bus), 10-15 Transit (regional bus), and Ottumwa Transit (local bus). The five-year average ridership across all modes is nearly 172,000 (Table 2-1).

Table 2-1. Transit Ridership					
Mode	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Amtrak	10,322	11,043	12,209	12,087	10,983
Burlington Trailways	1,331	1,363	1,438	Not Available	Not Available
Ottumwa Transit	140,000	138,618	147,253	151,436	161,579
10-15 Transit*	20,037	14,564	9,197	7,118	8,378
TOTAL	171,690	165,588	170,097	170,641	180,940

*Ottumwa Demand Response service rides only.

Ottumwa is on Amtrak’s *California Zephyr* route between Chicago and the San Francisco Bay Area, with intermediate stops in Omaha, Lincoln, Denver, and Salt Lake City metro areas. Ridership was consistent between 2012 and 2017. Ottumwa lost its depot agent May 1, 2018 and has had slight ridership declines the last two years. Most of Ottumwa’s passengers (69%) are going to or coming from Chicago, Omaha, or other stations in Iowa, Illinois, and eastern Nebraska. The next major segment of trips (16%) are to Denver and the remainder (14%) are trips to Utah, Nevada, or California. Over 85% of trips are less than 800 miles, indicating that people are using Amtrak as more of a regional travel option to/from Ottumwa than a cross-country option.



Figure 2-2. Amtrak’s California Zephyr in Ottumwa

Ottumwa is on Burlington Trailways’ Denver-Indianapolis intercity bus route with direct service to sixteen cities and connections at Des Moines and Burlington to fifteen other cities (Figure 2.3). Trailways lost its local station agent in May 2017. At that time, Trailways left its post in the depot and has been utilizing the City’s bus transfer station at the intersection of Market and Main Streets downtown since that time. Trailways officials attribute ridership declines over the last two years to losing their agent and moving from the train depot.



Figure 2-3. Burlington Trailways Network Map

Ottumwa is also served by local and regional bus providers. Ottumwa Transit is the primary operator of fixed-route and paratransit services within the City of Ottumwa. 10-15 Transit is a regional provider of demand-response, medical, and other contract transit services in a ten-county area in Southeast Iowa. In addition to Wapello County where Ottumwa is located, 10-15 Transit operates in nine other nearby counties of Appanoose, Davis, Jefferson, Keokuk, Lucas, Mahaska, Monroe, Van Buren, and Wayne. According to 2018 Census estimates, 10-15 Transit service is available to over 137,000 Iowans.

In May 2020, the City of Ottumwa accepted 10-15 Transit’s proposal to take over the fixed-route service within the City. The transition is ongoing, and 10-15 Transit will fully assume the role of the City’s official transit provider in July 2020. This new synergy between local and regional bus transit services provides an exciting opportunity to streamline service options and rethink how local/regional bus transit services fit within the greater context of the national transportation network.

2.4. BUILD Project Area

Until the mid-20th Century, the CB&Q depot downtown was the primary gateway for passenger travel into and out of Ottumwa. Between 1881 and the late 1920s, residents and visitors had access to a robust streetcar network that brought passengers from the depot to the other areas of town. Gradually, buses replaced the streetcars, but the intermodal connection at the depot remained. The face of downtown Ottumwa began to change as intercity passenger rail began to decline along with the rise of the personal automobile.

“Urban renewal” activities in the 1970s and 1980s scarred downtown’s urban fabric, especially near the railroad tracks and the river. Approximately 80% of the buildings that once made up the commercial district within the BUILD project area were demolished in that time. As multi-story commercial and warehousing buildings were razed, single-story commercial buildings and surface parking lots were constructed in their place while streets were prioritized for automobiles. Main and Second Streets—the former streetcar trunk lines—became one-way, multi-lane thoroughfares with minimal consideration for pedestrians. With more surface parking lots within the downtown, the large Market Street Parking Lot now sits mostly empty; a deteriorating wasteland that produces an immense amount of stormwater runoff that discharges directly into the Des Moines River.



Figure 2-4. BUILD Project Area Circa 1964



Figure 2-5. BUILD Project Area in 2020

3. Grant Funds, Sources, and Uses of Project Funds

The total cost for this project is estimated to be \$18,161,865. Table 3-1 provides cost estimates and cost share for each category of improvement included in the BUILD Grant request. Approximately \$400,000 in pre-application costs incurred by the City and other project partners are not included in Table 3-1. These costs include public planning processes, preliminary design, cost estimates, and surveying. To expedite the process toward construction, the City and its partners are proceeding with acquisition processes to ensure that full site control is achieved as quickly as possible.

Table 3-1. Ottumwa BUILD Project Cost Share

Category	Non-Federal Funds		BUILD Funds		TOTAL
	Cost	%	Cost	%	Cost
Final Design & Engineering	\$465,000	32%	\$1,005,184	68%	\$1,470,184
Station Area Improvements	\$425,000	14%	\$2,624,386	86%	\$3,049,386
Complete Streets, Trails, & Parking Lots	\$275,000	3%	\$9,097,785	97%	\$9,372,785
Sanitary Sewer Improvements	\$465,000	67%	\$227,500	33%	\$692,500
Storm Sewer Improvements	\$465,000	25%	\$1,370,500	75%	\$1,835,500
Water System Improvements	\$602,500	100%	\$0	0%	\$602,500
Construction Engineering	\$465,000	47%	\$534,010	53%	\$999,010
Grant Administration	\$140,000	100%	\$0	0%	\$140,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$3,302,500	18%	\$14,859,365	82%	\$18,161,865

The BUILD funding request for this project is \$14,859,365, approximately 82% of the project. The City of Ottumwa and its partners have committed to funding the remaining \$3,302,500, or approximately 18%. The City of Ottumwa has committed to funding \$1,000,000 toward the sanitary sewer, storm sewer, and grant administration components and have identified four grant sources in the amount of \$500,000 to help fund station area and trails improvements (see Section 4.2.). 10-15 Transit has committed an additional \$50,000 toward construction of the bus shelter. The Ottumwa Water Works has committed to funding the water system improvements, estimated at \$602,500. The Wapello County Trails Council will contribute \$150,000 toward the completion of the levee trail. The Ottumwa Regional Legacy Foundation has committed \$1,000,000 toward final design, engineering, construction oversight, and grant administration. Resolutions and letters of funding commitment may be found in Appendix F.

Nearly \$75 million of public or public-private projects have been completed in preparation for this project, and another \$87.7 million are planned that will complement the activities proposed in this application. These investments were discussed in Section 1.2.

4. Selection Criteria

The West Main Multimodal Corridor Revitalization Project will improve access to and enhance the operations of several modes of transportation both within the City of Ottumwa and across the region. The project will provide local benefit by improving infrastructure conditions, enhancing intermodal connectivity, supporting infill development opportunities for workforce and senior housing, and other environmental and health benefits that enhance the livability within the community. Regionally, the project will improve access to transportation choices and improve conditions for visitors and tourists. The expected success of this project is based on the solid foundation of Ottumwa’s redevelopment efforts over the past two decades (see Section 1.2) and can be established independently by the following criteria.

4.1. Primary Selection Criteria

Safety

This project is designed to solve a variety of safety issues that currently exist within the corridor. A fundamental objective of the improved road infrastructure and pedestrian-based infrastructure is to enhance safety for all modes of transportation. Indeed, most streets in downtown Ottumwa serve car movement extremely well but are seen as barriers to pedestrian and bicycle movement. Traffic volumes do not warrant the number and width of lanes in many cases, affording an opportunity to rebalance the streets to move people better, and not just cars.

As discussed previously, many sections of Ottumwa’s downtown street network maintain a legacy of being retrofitted to carry highway traffic. With the highways gone from downtown, the City has been taking an incremental approach toward making streets safer for motorists and pedestrians. This has happened primarily through striping and signage improvements. In 2014, Main and Second Streets were reverted from one-way to two-way streets. River Drive was re-striped from four lanes with no parking to two lanes with parallel parking on either side. Other opportunities to enhance geometric alignment downtown remain and will be addressed in time at the relatively low cost of restriping.

As evidenced through previous phases of roadway improvements along the Main Street corridor, implementation of context-sensitive Complete Streets principles during construction projects removes barriers to access. Additional improved safety measures include separating modes, reducing congestion conflicts, and enhancing intersections and grade crossings, potentially saving lives. Safety features and expected benefits of the proposed grant project are outlined below.

Reduced exposure to auto crashes on the existing roadway system

It is estimated that in the first year of completion, the project will reduce vehicle miles driven on Main Street, 2nd Street, Market Street, and Washington Street traveled by about 20%, or over 200,000 miles per year based on a total average trip length of 1.05 miles (see Benefit-Cost Analysis in Appendix B). Based on data from the Iowa DOT (IDOT), the average crash rate per million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in Iowa is about 3.1. According to data obtained through IDOT’s Crash Mapping Analysis Tool (CMAT), there have been 32 crashes and 96 additional incidents of property damage resulting from collisions along the West Main Multimodal Corridor over the past 10 years. According to the BCA, an assumed 40% reduction in accidents will result from safety improvements in the grant project area. Utilizing national Complete Streets best practices would result in annual cost reduction benefits of approximately \$187,612 annually for the 20-year post construction period.

Pedestrian safety improvements

Features in this project include ADA-compliant sidewalks throughout the corridor, adding bump-outs and mid-block crossings to reduce pedestrian exposure while crossing a street, and providing visual keys, such as signs and “sharrow” pavement markings (Figure 4-1) to highlight the presence of bicycles in the roadway. Overall, the safety component of this project enhances mobility and provides active transportation options for residents and visitors to downtown Ottumwa by providing safety features within the design of the Station, improving accessibility to public ways connected to the project, and by creating an active, more secure development in downtown Ottumwa.



Figure 4-1. Sharrow

Market Street intersection improvements

The section of S. Market Street between E. Main Street and the Des Moines River has numerous areas of conflict and is difficult to navigate for all modes of transportation. Within a span of less than 400 feet, S. Market has intersections with Commercial Street, River Drive, the BNSF double-track main line, and the

Market Street parking lots (Figure 4-2). The quiet zone infrastructure has exacerbated the alignment issues and increased congestion on that segment. Though the Market Street Bridge has a wide pedestrian path, there is no defined zone for pedestrians through the grade crossing to the bridge. The reconstruction of S. Market Street will fix those problems for motorists, reduce conflict points, and add the missing pedestrian link from downtown across the railroad tracks to the levee trails and to the bridge.

Security lighting

During the last ten years the police department reported 83 criminal incidents involving theft, burglary, battery, and other crimes that occurred at or near the existing station, which is very poorly lit (Figure 4-3). To provide a safe and secure environment, new lights will be installed within parking areas and along pathways to the station and along the riverwalk.

Enhanced accessibility and reduced tripping hazards

Most of the sidewalks and parking areas within the multimodal station area are in poor condition and do not meet ADA standards (Figures 4-3 and 4-4). All streets, parking lots, and sidewalks surrounding the multimodal station area will be reconstructed to provide safe travel for all users.

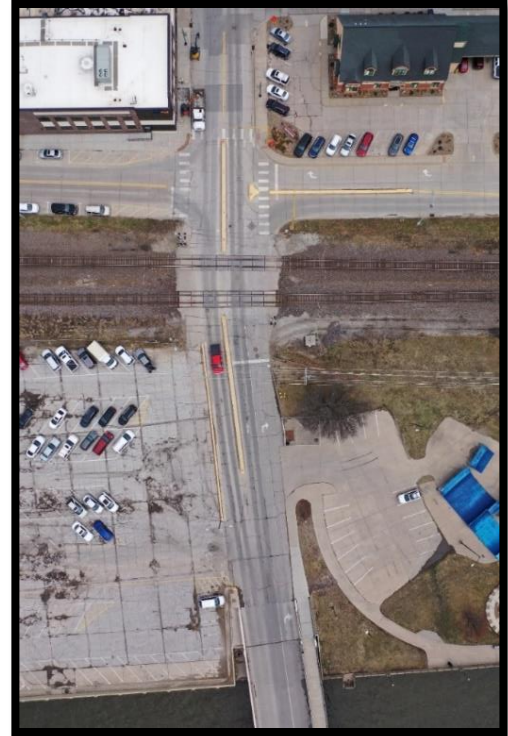


Figure 4-2. Market Street Alignment Conflicts



Figure 4-3. Marion Street Parking Lot Problems: Poor Lighting (left), Poor Surface & Drainage (right)

Improved waiting area conditions for transit users.

As the Station is not currently staffed by Amtrak during regular hours, it is imperative that remote security measures are implemented to facilitate passenger safety and comfort. The project will add a closed-circuit video security system to better monitor public activity within the waiting room and exterior areas of the station. This system will tie into the existing network of downtown security cameras maintained and monitored by Ottumwa Police Department—which is just one block west of the depot. Aggregating bus and rail service at the Station will also increase the number of users in the facility and discourage unlawful activities. Similar security cameras will be installed at the new bus transfer station location to be constructed on River Drive.

State of Good Repair

Ottumwa's original Chicago, Burlington & Quincy (CB&Q) railroad depot was built in 1889. This structure was razed and rebuilt by the CB&Q in 1950-1951. The building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2008. Using monies that Amtrak received under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the Ottumwa depot received a new wheelchair lift and enclosure in 2011. In addition, new striping for handicapped parking, static signage, and a ramp and a curb cut were installed to ease travel between the short-term parking area and the platform. Amtrak has plans to completely rebuild the passenger loading platforms starting in 2021—an estimated \$10 million investment. This BUILD grant project has been designed to complement Amtrak's commitment to providing a quality experience in Ottumwa by making wholesale investments in the area surrounding the station.



Figure 4-4. *CB&Q Depot & Ballingall Park*

The Wapello County Historical Society currently owns the depot, its museum and offices occupying the second floor. Despite being an historic property, maintaining a museum in a second-story location while continuing to host Amtrak—and potentially additional bus passengers—was deemed incongruent with their long-term plans. Further, the Historical Society's limited financial resources has resulted in a backlog of necessary capital improvements to modernize both interior and exterior passenger amenities. Thus, the Historical Society is in the process of relocating and has listed the building for sale.

A private buyer is in discussions with the Historical Society regarding the purchase of the station and adjoining property. Project partners have had discussions with the interested party and this person is agreeable to the future improvements to the multimodal station and site and has expressed willingness to sell the land necessary for the proposed bus transfer station project described in this application. COVID-19 has introduced limitations on completing the transaction and the sale of land needed for the bus transfer station.

The existing station has 18 short-term parking spaces, an unmanned ticket kiosk, a bike rack, an enclosed waiting area, and restrooms, all of which will require substantial upgrades to meet modern standards of safety and comfort. While the 2011 upgrades have improved accessibility, the station still lacks features such as an automated ticketing kiosk, WiFi, ATMs, baggage storage, and bike lockers found at many other transit hubs. As transit providers in Ottumwa seek to expand service in the coming years, it will be critically important to allow sufficient waiting space to prevent crowding and meet the needs of less mobile persons, particularly as the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to be felt for the next several years and will require social distancing measures to safeguard public health.

Ballingall Park is a central part of the surrounding NRHP-listed Historic Railroad District, also built in 1951 (Figure 4-4). It needs various improvements and repairs to remain functional and attractive to visitors as the adjacent depot is upgraded. The relocation of CB&Q 3001, the retired steam locomotive, will help facilitate multimodal station and site improvements. New landscaping, lighting, and benches and extensive cleaning and refurbishment of the flagstone walkways, limestone wall, wrought iron fence, and fountain will contribute to a fresh and inviting new look for the historic park.

The City of Ottumwa maintains approximately 170 miles of paved roadways and 60 miles of alleys, which translates into \$287.5 million when factoring in an average replacement cost of approximately \$1.25 million per mile. The City intends to repair and upgrade streets in the grant area while they are still in fair condition, ultimately costing less over their lifetime than waiting to fix these roads once they have fallen into poor condition. Rehabilitating and reconstructing streets within the grant project area is critical for the City to maintain a sustainable maintenance and operations system (Figure 4-5).

As stated in the *Economic Competitiveness* section, without the proposed roadway improvements, the City will have difficulty spurring the anticipated downtown and riverfront redevelopment project. This could mean a potential loss of over \$37 million in assessed valuation that can offset costs associated with maintaining the project infrastructure.

As mentioned in Section 1.1, the levee system in downtown Ottumwa was constructed in the 1960s. Recently, the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) have been updated and the City has been informed that it needs to raise the existing levee wall on the south side of the BUILD project. The City is working with an engineer to design levee wall improvements that will raise its height by one foot. The adjacent Market Street Parking Lot is severely deteriorating and makes current fishing practices risky (Figure 4-6). The proposed riverwalk will be constructed with enhanced bicycle and pedestrian features, as well as scenic overlooks and spaces for people to fish safely. This will safeguard the integrity of the levee wall's ability to provide proper flood control, help fight erosion, promote user safety by providing a barrier from the water's edge, and minimize the need for costly future repairs.

Economic Competitiveness

BUILD Grant funding will enable the City of Ottumwa and its partners to continue to capitalize on the economic momentum occurring in its downtown in recent years (see Section 1.2). However, the total number of jobs and residents in the census tract containing much of downtown have declined since 2010, 19.5% of residents live on incomes below the poverty line, and as of 2019 first and second floor vacancy rates are about 22% and 39%, respectively. Therefore, improving the efficiency and safety of connections among the city's major institutions and employers remain key to the city's long-term economic competitiveness by creating and sustaining jobs in the urban core, and connecting low-income residents to good-paying employment opportunities downtown.

Build on Momentum in Ottumwa River Renaissance and Downtown Redevelopment Efforts

The downtown district has the community's highest concentration of place-based assets that support Ottumwa's overall image, economy, and quality of life. Ottumwa's revitalization efforts have relied on a variety of public-private partnership between the City of Ottumwa, the Legacy Foundation, property owners, and many other local and regional partners. The 2015 *Riverfront Renaissance Master Plan* put



Figure 4-5. South Marion Street



Figure 4-6. Levee Wall in Market Street Parking Lot

forth a clearer vision for the city's downtown and its most prominent natural resource, the Des Moines River. In 2018, Ottumwa's public private partnership completed an *Opportunity Analysis and Implementation Strategy* that helped to identify additional public and private investment projects along the riverfront and on the Main Street corridor and coalesced partners and implementation framework.

An enhanced transit oriented district (TOD) centered on the Amtrak Station will include recruitment of private investment through inspiring historic rehabilitation of adjacent buildings, the addition of outdoor dining and activity areas, a destination brew pub and restaurant, and improved multimodal connectivity, such as enhanced drop-off and parking areas, bicycle parking, car rentals, and electric car charging stations. Adaptive reuse of existing buildings like the adjacent Hutchinson Wholesale and Cigar Factory buildings are targeted for redevelopment.

A proposed infill site on the Washington Street parking lot across from the station will add more downtown residents that can walk to the multimodal station and Main Street businesses. Interpretive themes that highlight Ottumwa's rail and river history could be incorporated into public art or place-based experiences in the TOD. Concentrated private and coordinated redevelopment in the TOD area will increase the vibrancy of the area surrounding the station for both residents and future visitors stopping in Ottumwa during travel between Chicago, Omaha, and beyond.

Increase Access to Employers and Workforce Mobility

A multimodal transit station not only will improve existing facilities and critical infrastructure, it also will drive economic opportunity by integrating surrounding rural communities into a greater regional economic development strategy. It will help to increase the regional economic reach to new opportunity centers, particularly by providing new workforce opportunities. As a center point for the surrounding rural workforce, Ottumwa's expanded transit through both train and bus has the potential to connect Ottumwa with major employers in the Des Moines and Chicago regions. Easy, car-free access to activity centers like Chicago can be a major recruitment tool as employees will increase their ability to travel to Chicago or other locations without a personal vehicle, something that is particularly appealing to young adults. Additional discussion of workforce mobility and economic impacts of the West Main Multimodal Corridor Revitalization project can be found in the Economic Impact White Paper found at <https://www.ottumwariverfront.org/>.

Create a Connected Visitor Destination

In addition to the perceived employment benefits the proposed project will create, Ottumwa's station will advance a new tourism strategy for the region. Emphasizing its Amtrak *California Zephyr* connection to major destinations will bring new visitors to Ottumwa from Chicago and Omaha for weekend stays. The centralized transportation hub will link them to other unique rural activities and destinations, including the downtown riverfront and future private investment and revitalization of buildings surrounding the Historic Railroad District. The greater Ottumwa area has a large pool of potential visitors from which to draw, including several colleges and universities in surrounding counties. A truly multimodal station will be a great resource to students who need travel options that do not require a personal vehicle.

Provide Essential Services to Rural Residents and Veterans

Ottumwa is also a regional destination for community services that particularly address the needs of rural residents. The Veterans Administration (VA) Outpatient Clinic based in Ottumwa is part of the VA Iowa City Healthcare System which serves over 180,000 veterans in Eastern Iowa, Western Illinois, and Northern Missouri. Ottumwa's VA Outpatient Clinic is a critical healthcare asset and is invested in the community. Within this project period, the Clinic plans to relocate and expand to increase its level of

services and accessibility. Expanded transportation alternatives for veterans and their caretakers will provide an enormous service to the community, particularly rural veterans where access to healthcare is a major challenge.

The proposed project will help residents and commuters avoid the cost of owning a car, particularly low-income households in Ottumwa. Providing stronger transportation choices such as improved transit, better walkability, and bike lanes help residents decide to forgo owning a personal vehicle and generate significant local purchasing power. Given the high cost of car ownership—an average of \$9,282 per year as of 2019 according to AAA—each vehicle that the project helps an individual avoid owning means significant funds are available for other expenses.

Increased property values and economic activity.

Given its strong assets and recent momentum downtown, the grant area is ripe for revitalization. Improved roadway and pedestrian-based infrastructure along Ottumwa’s downtown riverfront will increase property value in the downtown. The proposed implementation of “Complete Streets” along Main Street, 2nd Street, and at the Riverfront will help make these areas more accessible for people on foot or riding bikes. The National Complete Streets Coalition states that increased walkability leads to increased property values and has showed cases where property value increased \$3,000-\$9,000 as a result of Complete Street type projects (added trees, bike paths, sidewalks, green spaces, increased walkability, etc.). A conservative estimate of ten percent increase in property value due to accessibility for pedestrian travel and enhanced multi-modal infrastructure as a result of “Complete Streets” was applied to the existing downtown property value in Ottumwa (see the BCA in Appendix B).

The BUILD project will bring new commercial buildings for retail, office, residential, and restaurants to at least six adjacent properties that are currently in the early planning stages. The City is confident that each project will be realized after completion of the desired public improvements and has had advanced discussions with developers for each site. According to the BCA, redevelopment/infill for all six targeted properties are assumed to be completed over a 7-year period after construction. This analysis led to a total undiscounted benefit of \$37.5 million, or about \$5.36 million at a 7% discount rate.

Several of the identified sites for redevelopment are under City site control, vacant, or in poor condition and are part the larger citywide blight elimination efforts. Low-income residents near downtown and throughout the Ottumwa area will have greater access to downtown employment opportunities; land values will also rise along the improved corridors. These projects are estimated to generate the following localized impacts:

- Revitalization/addition of approximately 167,000 gross square feet of building space;
- Creation of 170 new residential units drawing approximately 350 new downtown residents; and
- Addition of 46,000 square feet of commercial space with potential to accommodate 135 jobs in retail, dining, office, and other high intensity uses.

The projects’ developers have indicated that they will not proceed without better transportation choices and public improvements like those proposed under this grant. Increased density and infill may induce higher capital and maintenance costs for public and private parking options, which may in turn provide greater incentive for residents and visitors to bike, walk and/or rely on transit. In addition, the proposed BUILD project will help connect unemployed and underemployed workers to Ottumwa’s job centers and educational opportunities. ADA compliance measures will further help connect disadvantaged Ottumwa residents, particularly those living in the census tracts closest to the proposed improvements.

Environmental Sustainability

Another important goal of the project is the protection of the environment and public health of the community through investment in pedestrian, bicycle, and transit improvements that have far reaching environmental benefits not only to the downtown area, but also the entire City of Ottumwa and greater region. These benefits include:

Mitigating Environmental Impacts and Improving Environmental Outcomes

Overall, the addition of street trees and green infrastructure increases the biodiversity of the area, reduces stormwater runoff, and helps protect the Des Moines River which flows southeasterly through Iowa and eventually into the Mississippi River. The river is a vital asset for the City of Ottumwa, region, and the overall state because it provides recreational opportunities, critical species habitat, natural and scenic beauty, and helps drive the tourism economy. The proposed improvements also promote redevelopment of underutilized, brownfield, and grayfield properties in the area; encourages environmental remediation efforts to reduce the volume and pollutants contained in stormwater runoff; and promotes increased density, mixed-use, and other smart growth development objectives.

Reducing Congestion, Emissions, and Oil Dependence

The added green infrastructure and bicycle and pedestrian facilities will work together to reduce the need for personal vehicle trips, decrease carbon emissions, and increase air quality (street trees absorb nine times more pollutants than more distant trees). According to the BCA, encouraging non-motorized transportation, increased transit usage and lower average daily traffic will save in fuel usage and lessen emissions, resulting in estimated vehicle operation cost savings of \$6.98 million (\$1.89 million discounted @ 7%) and \$665,000 (\$381,000 discounted) over 30 years.

Improving Energy Efficiency

Using LED streetlights will increase the efficiency of the existing light fixtures, lowering energy consumption (up to 75% less energy used) and costs (lasting up to 25 times longer). Over 130 new street trees to be planted throughout the grant area will increase the efficiency of the existing buildings along the streets and reduces the urban heat effect (a properly shaded neighborhood can reduce energy bills between 15-35%), lowering energy consumption. A single street tree returns over \$90,000 of direct benefits during its lifespan, not inclusive of the aesthetic, social, and natural benefits.

Quality of Life

Ottumwa is home to a very strong Main Street program, with formal affiliations with state and national Main Street organizations. Since its founding in 2006, the program has fostered a vibrant, dynamic, and healthy downtown through community engagement and collaborative partnerships. BUILD funding is crucial to fulfilling Main Street Ottumwa's Vision Statement for improving quality of life:

“Ottumwa will be the Southeast Iowa hub for arts, entertainment, commerce, residential and employment opportunities. Community pride will be evident in the restored buildings filled with restaurants, retail, and specialty shops. Business and building owners will be involved in retaining and attracting new businesses and professionals to the city center. Downtown will welcome new and returning Iowans and be home to more people who choose to stay or return to the community. Downtown's connection to the riverfront and the Bridge View Center will make it an exciting destination for entertainment, dining, shopping and meeting friends.”

The Area 15 Regional Planning Commission's 2017-2022 *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy* (CEDS) cites “Infrastructure Improvements” as its number one goal for the five-year planning period, including all types of transportation systems. “Improved Quality of Life” is another major goal and outcome of public investments in transportation, safety, and recreational amenities like those

envisioned under this BUILD grant. Indeed, the CEDS notes that maintaining and increasing quality of life amenities is essential in retaining and attracting new residents and businesses. Recreational facilities, arts and cultural opportunities, shopping and dining options, safe neighborhoods, and good schools are all important features of a vibrant community.

In addition, the Quality of Life objectives adopted as a part of the CEDS further underscore the community's commitment to utilizing transit as a means of enhancing the local quality of life:

- Increase awareness and support recreational and cultural opportunities to residents and potential residents and businesses;
- Encourage and facilitate planning and development of downtown revitalization projects including upper-story housing, facades, streetscapes and parking lots;
- Develop new, or improve existing, recreational facilities, especially youth-focused opportunities;
- Plan and program trail development/expansion projects; and
- Plan and program public transportation projects.

The proposed BUILD projects will further improve the quality of life in the region by:

[Increasing transportation choices.](#)

The project was conceived to provide safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices. Complete Streets and other pedestrian improvements along key downtown thoroughfares will provide safer opportunities for walking and biking. ADA compliance across the corridor will also provide easier opportunities for seniors, children, and persons with disabilities to reach their destination. Expanding transportation choices, will allow more Ottumwa households to forego car ownership or maintain one vehicle rather than two or more which is a significant economic burden for low-income residents.

Ottumwa has a growing network of paved trails based along the levee system on both sides of the river, ideal for walking, running and biking and offering a unique four-season vantage point over the river. However, a gap exists in the off-street trail network between Market Street and Wapello Street that represent the perfect opportunity for the addition of public amenities in concert with private riverfront redevelopment efforts on either side of the Market Street Bridge. BUILD grant funding will specifically support off-street bicycle and pedestrian extensions of the existing Ottumwa Trail System in the form of a paved levee trail and riverwalk segments on the north side of the Des Moines River.

[Expanding access to essential services, jobs, health care, and other critical destinations.](#)

BUILD investment is critical to helping connect people with employment, education, health care, and other important destinations. The economic prosperity of a community is dependent on its ability to move people and goods. However, that mobility is constrained in downtown Ottumwa by narrow sidewalks, a wide roadbed, long crosswalks, illegal turns, ADA non-compliance, and limited bike accommodations. The proposed improvements will enable residents and visitors from outlying rural areas to safely move about the community and save time and money along busy streets.

[Promoting a healthy lifestyle.](#)

At 36%, the Wapello County adult obesity rate is 4% higher than the state average. The BUILD grant project will help shift community habits and lifestyle choices by linking trails, sidewalks, and bike lanes which is expected to increase walking or bicycling. A key recommendation from the CDC for improving health through transportation policy includes promoting safe and convenient opportunities for physical activity by supporting active transportation infrastructure, such as: well-lit sidewalks, shared-use paths, and recreational trails; safe roadway crossings; creation of bicycle-supporting infrastructure including shared-use paths and interventions that reduce motor vehicle traffic and vehicle speed on

neighborhood streets; safe pedestrian and bicycling connections to public transportation; and safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycling connections to public park and recreation areas. Various project components implement these recommendations to encourage physical activity in the community.

4.2.Secondary Selection Criteria

Innovation

Innovative Financing

The City of Ottumwa established a Self-Supported Municipal Improvement District (SSMID) in 2019. The SSMID—which is managed by Main Street Ottumwa—levies a fee on commercial properties within its boundaries on a sliding scale of \$1-\$3 per \$1,000 of assessed value. While fees collected for 2020 are expected to be modest, revenues are expected to rise as property values increase and redevelopment takes place within the grant area. Part of the impetus for creation of the SSMID is to offset maintenance and operating costs for grant-funded improvements and may be expanded and/or reconfigure by 2025 to capture the full extent of expected redevelopment projects. These funds will help the City further leverage its other existing funding sources, including the downtown tax increment financing (TIF) district. By borrowing against the future revenues generated by new development projects expected to be stimulated in part by BUILD-funded improvements, the City can limit its reliance on general fund revenues and secure “last dollar in” support commitments from project partners.

The City of Ottumwa also intends to utilize State Revolving Fund (SRF) funds from its Clean Water Loan Program, the lowest cost source of financing for publicly owned wastewater treatment, sewer rehabilitation, replacement, and construction, and storm water quality improvements.

The historic preservation elements envisioned for Ballingall Park and the multimodal station façade improvements qualify for competitive grant funding through Iowa’s Historical Resource Development Program (HRDP), the Main Street Iowa Challenge Grant program, and the Jeffris Family Foundation. These funds will help the City and its partners preserve, conserve, interpret, enhance, and educate the public about local historical assets.

The City and its partners will also offer sponsorship and/or naming right opportunities where appropriate, such as for the riverwalk or parking area improvements. These provide a straightforward vehicle for areas businesses to fund specific improvements. Local fundraising drives will also help “crowdsource” amenities and promote community ownership through engraved bricks, plaques, or other appropriate means.

Innovative Technologies

The proposed project will incorporate the following technologies and best practices to improve its transportation infrastructure:

- **Complete Streets:** The City will transform outdated, poorly functioning streets and implement streetscape improvements along several key downtown corridors. Wider sidewalks and other streetscape improvements will support transit, walking and biking.
- **LED Lighting:** The project includes the replacement of existing incandescent streetlights on the enhanced Complete Street network with energy efficient LEDs, which will save electricity, reduce costs and lower emissions.
- **Stormwater Management:** The project will incorporate permeable pavers into all on-street parking areas and will include biocells in each parking area to mitigate storm water runoff. Sewer separation activities will further reduce the
- **Broadband:** Ottumwa Fiber LLC—a partnership with the Ottumwa Regional Legacy Foundation—has invested over \$663,000 into fiber optic infrastructure within or connecting to

the downtown area. Plans for another ten miles of fiber are being developed now. Although broadband is not a direct project component, the project area is connected to the latest in communication technology.

Partnerships

The Ottumwa West Main Multimodal Corridor Revitalization Project is the direct result of nearly a decade of revitalization planning and partnerships. This project has garnered broad support from organizations, businesses, industries, and economic development groups as well as state and federal legislators and the governor. Project support letters can be found in Appendix G.

A variety of sources will fund investment in the multimodal station and surrounding Historic Railroad District. Federal and state grants will supplement public-private partnerships to fund this collaborative vision for the future of downtown. Completion of the multimodal station improvements at this historic downtown landmark will build on Ottumwa's past work to make the riverfront area a transformed place. This transformation will leverage private investment in the redevelopment of underutilized site as well as the renovation of additional historic buildings in and around the site. Connecting the existing Amtrak station to local (10-15 Transit) and regional (Burlington Trailways) bus services, as well as bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure will extend the cultural and entertainment district being reestablished along Main Street. This activity center will also be supported by expanded residential housing types, increasing the number of downtown residents and creating a more active urban environment.

Private development efforts are ongoing in the Historic Railroad District, advancing a number of projects that will add vibrancy, tax base, and population density to the downtown, further supporting the multimodal station and other area improvement projects. These redevelopment projects include:

- **Downtown Housing:** Development of mixed-use, multi-family residential in two central downtown locations adjacent to the multimodal station, resulting in 80 new residential units and over \$10 million in new investment.
- **Riverfront Housing:** Development of multiple multi-family, mixed-used buildings along Ottumwa's Downtown Riverfront and adjacent to the proposed Electric Park. This development represents 200 new units of residential and over \$100 million in investment.
- **Electric Park:** An innovative park and destination concept that incorporates riverfront green space, interpretive art and education features, enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities, a unique hydro-electric power asset, and private development. This riverfront park will be a regional destination unlike any other in the area; located adjacent to the multimodal station and Historic Depot District it will attract residents as well as visitors from great distances. The development of this City-owned land to Electric Park will create a local economic impact of tourism spending and business generation to increase the City's tax base.

5. Environmental Risk Review

The West Main Multimodal Corridor Revitalization Project is a culmination of key objectives and recommendations from over two decades of community planning and public input processes. The various community plans cited in this narrative—all of which prioritize creating a multi-modal and connected transportation system for the health and wellbeing of the community—may be found on the Ottumwa BUILD Project website: <https://www.ottumwariverfront.org/>

5.1. Project Schedule

The City of Ottumwa and its project partners are prepared to begin the proposed planning, design, engineering, and construction work quickly upon award of the BUILD grant and all funds will be spent

expeditiously. The majority of work in the project proposed will be completed in existing right-of-way and on City-owned land, limiting the need for easements or land acquisition. All required acquisition, including that for the bus transfer station and parking lot improvements, will be completed prior to the BUILD grant agreement and is not an included expense in the BUILD project budget. The project schedule (Appendix D) outlines the proposed project phasing and details the activities required to complete the BUILD Transportation grant. As required by USDOT, all necessary pre-construction activities will be completed to all grant funds to be obligated no later than September 30, 2022 and facilitate completion of construction by December 2026.

Table 5-1. BUILD Project Schedule		2020				2021				2022				2023				2024				2025				2026												
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4									
Pre-Design																																						
	BUILD Grant Application																																					
	BUILD Grant Funding Award																																					
	BUILD Cooperative Agreement Execution																																					
	NEPA Compliance Completion																																					
	Land Acquisition																																					
	Topographic, Property Boundary Survey																																					
	Permits and Approvals																																					
	Grants and Additional Sources																																					
Design & Engineering																																						
	30% Design Development & Review																																					
	60% Design Development & Review																																					
	100% Design Development & Review																																					
	Bid Projects for Construction																																					
Administration & Construction Oversight																																						
	BUILD Grant Administration																																					
	Construction Oversight																																					
Project Construction & Buildout																																						
Phase	1																																					
		Intermodal Site Improvement																																				
		Multimodal Station Improvement																																				
		Ballingall Park + Locomotive Display Relocation																																				
		Bus Transfer Station																																				
		Riverwalk + Levee Trail																																				
		Washington Street Improvements																																				
		2	West Main Street Parking Lot Improvements																																			
		Marion Street + Parking Lot Improvements																																				
		3	West Main Street Improvements																																			
		4	Market Street Improvements																																			
	Project Completion and Grant Closeout																																					
		Grant Closeout																																				

5.2. Required Approvals

The West Main Multimodal Corridor Revitalization Project will be constructed in accordance with NEPA guidelines. The City of Ottumwa will complete and receive all required permits and approvals as needed to complete the projects within the proposed project schedule. The City and its partners have identified the required approvals and is prepared to begin the permitting process following the BUILD grant award.

The City has consulted with a number of NEPA professionals, including consultation with the HR Consults, a civil engineering firm with expertise in environmental planning and have received guidance on the NEPA requirements and timing for the West Main Multimodal Corridor Revitalization Project. HR Consults has prepared a technical desktop review to examine key areas of the NEPA review process and made recommendations for completing the full NEPA process (Appendix E).

In addition, the City has consulted with Marlys Osterhues, Chief Environment and Project Engineering with the Federal Rail Administration (FRA) Environment and Corridor Planning Division regarding the NEPA process. The City of Ottumwa has also been in conversation with Scott Marler, Director of the Iowa DOT regarding the West Main Multimodal Corridor, the project’s benefits to the rural community

surrounding Ottumwa, and completion of the NEPA process. The Iowa DOT supports this project and has provided a letter indicating their support. The City has also developed the proposed project with guidance from the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to identify and eliminate any potential conflicts with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Upon receiving the BUILD award and finalizing the agreement with DOT, the City intends to complete preliminary design by the second quarter of 2021 and will begin the NEPA process. Most of the work will be completed within public right-of-way and acquisition of private land will occur prior to the grant agreement and is not included in the project expense request of this application. Based on similar projects completed by the City involving state and federal funds, the City has experience with the NEPA process in other projects including many major improvements downtown and to the Water Treatment Plant. The City expects to have all NEPA documentation and all permitting completed by or before September 2022.

The NEPA Summary, completed by HR Consults, reviewed a number of key areas including woodlands, threatened and endangered species, right-of-way displacement, cultural resources, floodplains, wetlands, parks, regulated materials sites, air quality, environmental justice, and safety. The NEPA Summary (Appendix E) provides more information about each resource and found that impacts due to the Multimodal Corridor improvements are expected to be minor and this project will be consistent with federal, state and local law relating to the environment and with community plans. Overall, the preliminary NEPA review found that these projects will benefit those living and working near the Multimodal Corridor as well as the community of Ottumwa as a whole. Given the minor impacts related to this project, it is expected that a Categorical Exclusion (CE) would be appropriate. A CE process typically can be completed within 2-4 months and will be completed before project construction letting.

State and Local Approvals

Most of the project work will be completed within City public right-of-way and the City will issue the necessary permits, including the required road cut permits upon completion of environmental and plan reviews. Following completion of construction plans, the City will apply for Iowa DNR permits for water and wastewater as well as floodplain permits. Construction permits, including City building and electrical permits will be required for the Multimodal Station Interior Improvements. Also, as a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) community, Iowa DNR's General Permit No. 2 will be required.

As discussed in Section 1.2, the City of Ottumwa, its Public Works Department, and other key project partners have successful histories in completing projects similar to those included in this application. These projects included timely and efficient management of permitting processes. Should multiple grant sources be used to complete this project, the City will use a programmatic approach to permits and requirements to successfully implement all requirements. The City is also committed to adhering to all federal, state, and local labor standards in the completion of this project, including federal wage requirements.

Federal Transportation Requirements Affecting State and Local Planning

The West Main Multimodal Corridor Revitalization Project is identified in [Forward 2040](#), the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for Regional Planning Affiliation 15 (RPA 15). The City is coordinating with Area 15 Regional Planning Commission (Area 15 RPC) to include this project in RPA 15's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) in FY22. Both the RPC and the RPA have submitted letters expressing support for the project (Appendix G). Following the BUILD award, the City will work with these partners to take the necessary actions to proceed with the TIP amendment immediately upon BUILD award. Upon award, Area 15 RPC will provide oversight of the administration of the BUILD grant to ensure the project's compliance with applicable federal regulations.

5.3. Assessment of Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Preliminary coordination with environmental consultants, IDOT, and other stakeholders is underway in order to mitigate any potential risks with the project schedule. The project has been separated into different components to allow multiple construction timelines and permitting to proceed at different times. Potential delays could occur based on impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and effects of backlogs, work delays, or staffing issues at state and federal agencies, as well as private businesses. However, the City has experience working with various permitting agencies by beginning early coordination, the City is positive they can work together to acquire the necessary permits within the required timeframe.

Most of the work will be completed within the public right-of-way or on public property, therefore the City does not see acquisition as a risk for project. The only private land acquisition included in the project will be completed prior to completion of the grant agreement and is not a requested expense. Coordination with the potential landowner is underway. The project cost estimates will be updated at each plan submittal (30%, 65%, 90%, and 100%) and during the final design process to ensure the construction budget is in line with the project funding. While the budget is sufficient to accomplish the project, a fifteen percent contingency has been built into the budget to mitigate cost overrun risks. Finally, the City will work in a collaborative effort with its partners and state and federal agencies to closely monitor design, bid, and construction for all components of the project. Their combined expertise will ensure the project is completed successfully.

Overall, due to nature of the project and that the majority of the project is surface transportation improvements within the public right-of-way, the City does not foresee any significant risks that will prevent the project from successfully being completed with the identified timeline. Delaying the project will present more risk to Ottumwa as the City looks to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic by offsetting the loss of revenues through job creation from the proposed West Main Multimodal Corridor Revitalization project and the potential redevelopment projects it can spur.

6. Benefit-Cost Analysis

Following guidance provided by the US Department of Transportation in the Federal Register, a benefit-cost analysis was conducted for Ottumwa’s West Main Multimodal Corridor Revitalization Project. The full Benefit-Cost Analysis is included in Appendix B reference and review. The appendix and supporting spreadsheet may be found online at: <https://www.ottumwariverfront.org/>

Analysis for the project was based on a 20-year outlook, with all operations beginning in 2027 using dollars adjusted to 2018 dollars. The overall project benefit is projected to realize \$32,255,136 at a 7% real discounted rate, resulting in a benefit-cost ratio of 2.77 (Table 6-1). The Project Impact and Benefits Matrix (Table 6-2) provides additional context regarding the results of the benefit-cost analysis.

Table 6-1. Benefit-Cost Summary (2018 Dollars)	
	7% Discount
Total Benefits	\$32,255,136
Total Costs	\$11,660,104
BENEFIT-COST RATIO	2.77

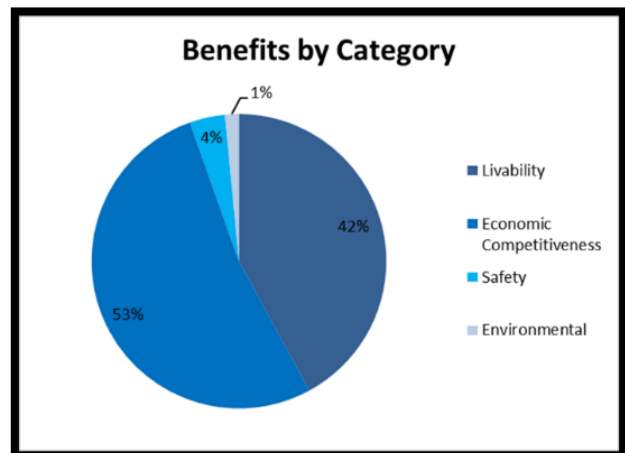


Figure 6-1. Project Benefits by Category

Table 6-2. Project Impact & Benefits Matrix

Type of Impact	Population Affected By Impact	Economic Benefit	Value (7% Disc.)	Page in BCA
Improved roadway and pedestrian infrastructure	Commercial and residential property owners within the corridor	Increased Property Value from Complete Streets	\$1,992,799	4-5
		Increased Property Value from New Construction	\$14,677,042	5-6
Increased Tourism, Additional Visitors	City of Ottumwa, Downtown District, Riverfront Area, Wapello County	Increased Business and Tourism	\$12,300,518	5-6
Multimodal transportation infrastructure improvements	Drivers, community	Vehicle Operating Costs (Reduced ADT)	\$1,892,814	6-7
	The community as a whole	Reduced Emissions (Reduced ADT) – Environmental and Public Health benefits	\$381,583	6-7
Safer roadway, grade crossing, and pedestrian infrastructure	All drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists in corridor	Reduction in Accidents	\$1,010,380	8