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Great Places Community Action Plan for Coon Rapids, Iowa

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GREAT PLACES COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN
FOR COON RAPIDS, IOWA

Prepared for:
The Coon Rapids-Whiterock Great Places Steering Committee, a committee of the Coon Rapids Development Group

Prepared by:
Steven Brown, Brian Craig, Ryan Newstrom, Nikhil Sikka, & Drew Westberg
Field Problems in Planning 102.210
Instructor: Heather MacDonald, Associate Professor
Advisor: James Throgmorton, Professor
Graduate Program in Urban and Regional Planning
The University of Iowa

May 8, 2007

Property of Urban and Regional Planning
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2005, the combined entities of the City of Coon Rapids and Whiterock Conservancy—a newly established non-profit land preserve—were jointly designated an Iowa Great Place. The primary goal of the Coon Rapids-Whiterock Great Places offer was to shape the area into a tourist destination to revitalize and strengthen the local economy. To guide this effort, the Coon Rapids-Whiterock Great Places Steering Committee was formed as an inter-institutional alliance between the City, Whiterock Conservancy, and the Coon Rapids Development Group (CRDG). The committee, responsible for implementing proposed projects valued at more than $35 million, requested our assistance in completing several technical studies and in developing recommendations to improve the effectiveness of project implementation.

The city of Coon Rapids is a small, rural community in the southeastern corner of Carroll County, Iowa. Like many small, rural communities in the Midwest, Coon Rapids’ economy is primarily agricultural. This lack of economic diversity coupled with the city’s distance from large employment centers like Des Moines and Omaha results in economic vulnerability. Though relatively isolated from large population centers, the city is home to several valuable resources, such as Whiterock Conservancy, Thomas Rest Haven, and Coon Rapids Municipal Utilities, that demonstrate residents’ strong civic mindedness. These as well as other community recreational assets have been targeted by the Steering Committee as anchors around which to mold the Coon Rapids-Whiterock area into a tourist destination. The Steering Committee has created a list of more than 20 projects that build upon these local assets.

Implementing these projects has raised challenges. Early in the process, it became clear that finding project leaders would be a difficult task, though the talent certainly exists. When project leaders were identified, there was limited oversight from the Steering Committee because its members were busy performing other administrative tasks as well as managing projects themselves. This resulted in uneven progress among projects. One constant challenge is acquiring the funds to finance projects. Much funding is yet to be raised, and grant writing is time-consuming, requiring a constant search for new sources of funding.
The community as a whole faces challenges. Residents are older than the state average. Youth have few employment opportunities, making it difficult for the community to retain students after high school. Employment opportunities within the four-county region of Audubon, Carroll, Greene, and Guthrie Counties have decreased and as a result, many county residents work in other counties. Furthermore, Coon Rapids lacks strong “export-oriented” businesses that bring money into the local economy.

Based on a multifaceted community assessment, we developed a series of recommendations. First, we recommend several organizational changes to improve the overall effectiveness of the Great Places Initiative. Three specialized committees should be formed under CRDG: The Business Development Committee, the Rural Tourism Committee, and the Community Development Committee. Each proposed project could be assigned to the appropriate committee, spreading the workload and allowing for greater specialization in tasks such as fundraising. We also recommend creating two staff positions: an executive-level grant expert and a small business liaison.

In addition, we recommend several new projects for each committee. Each new project recommendation is assigned to the appropriate committee within the proposed institutional framework. New tasks assigned to each committee are listed below.

**Business Development Committee:**
- Direct work of the small business liaison
- Establish a small business incubator
- Improve high-speed internet and cellular service.

**Rural Tourism Committee:**
- Create a tourist-oriented calendar of events for the area; distribute to surrounding communities and various media outlets
- Construct an observatory to take advantage of Coon Rapids’ dark skies.

**Community Development Committee**
- Community Outreach
- Maintain Community Character as growth occurs
- Explore Downtown Redevelopment
- Historic Preservation
- Alumni Newsletter
PROJECT CONTEXT

Purpose
This Community Action Plan recommends action steps for the Coon Rapids-Whiterock Great Places Steering Committee to implement the Great Places Initiative and to maximize its positive impact on the community. The Steering Committee, an inter-institutional alliance between the City of Coon Rapids, Whiterock Conservancy, and the Coon Rapids Development Group (CRDG) seeks to strengthen existing businesses, support new businesses, improve infrastructure and aesthetics, and foster the creation of a vibrant community of local microentrepreneurs. The recommendations in this report are based on a multifaceted community assessment including background research, economic analyses, and community outreach.

Community Profile
The rural community of Coon Rapids is located along state highway 141 near the intersection of Audubon, Carroll, Greene, and Guthrie Counties. This small, close-knit community in the southeast corner of Carroll County is situated along the scenic banks of the Middle Raccoon River. Relatively isolated from major economic and population centers, Coon Rapids is more than 70 miles from Des Moines and Ames, the nearest metropolitan areas. The next

Figure 1 – Coon Rapids and the surrounding area
closest urbanized area is Omaha, just over 100 miles away; Sioux City is approximately 120 miles from Coon Rapids.

As of the 2000 Census, Coon Rapids had 1,305 people in 543 households. However, much like Carroll County and the four-county area, a relatively small share of those residents were between the ages of 20 and 54. As of 2000, the majority of Coon Rapids’ population was either older than 65 years of age (25%) or younger than 20 years of age (26%). The city’s share of senior citizens far exceeds the state average of 15%, yet its share of persons under the age of 20 is below the state average (28%).

The 2000 median household income in Coon Rapids was just under $33,000 and the per capita income has consistently been less than the state average in all four counties since 1994. In 1989, Coon Rapids had lower rates of poverty in both overall population and among children than Carroll County, the four-county area, and the State of Iowa. However, just ten years later Coon Rapids had higher poverty rates than all of these geographic levels among both children and the overall population.

The Coon Rapids area is home to a remarkable set of assets including Whiterock Conservancy, a non-profit land trust; the award-winning Thomas Rest Haven elder care facility; the 125-year-old Coon Rapids Enterprise weekly paper; the new Tall Corn Ethanol Plant; and the historic mainstay of Coon Rapids, the Garst Seed Company.

The Garst & Thomas Hybrid Seed Corn Company was founded in 1930 by partners Roswell Garst and Charley Thomas. The company prospered from its inception, sustaining the economic and employment base of Coon Rapids throughout much of the 20th century. Local ownership ended in 1989 with the sale of the Company to a multinational corporation. The Coon Rapids facility is now owned by Syngenta Global, a firm based in Switzerland, creating concern among its employees and local residents about the economic security of the city. Presently, employment at Garst Seed is growing due to increased corn planting as a result of ethanol production growth. However, the community is vulnerable, as evidenced by the 2004-2005 layoffs of nearly 40 workers. Because of the relative lack of diversity in the local economy, the fate of Coon Rapids is still highly dependent upon the actions of the Syngenta subsidiary.
Figure 2 – Main Street in downtown Coon Rapids

Coon Rapids lags far behind the surrounding region in the rate of employment among teenagers. In 2000, 31% of Coon Rapids residents aged 16 to 19 were employed compared to 62% for Carroll County and 54% for the four-county area. Among residents between the ages of 20 and 24, 78% were employed, compared to 87% in Carroll County and 82% for the four-county area. Appendix C provides more detailed descriptions of the area’s demographic structure.

Coon Rapids had a lower per capita property valuation in 2005 than both Carroll County and the four-county area. In fact, the per capita property valuation in Coon Rapids was less than half that of the other geographic levels. In addition, as of 2006 per capita sales tax collected in Coon Rapids was lower than that of Carroll County, the four-county area, and the State of Iowa per capita averages. Appendix C shows specific values and comparative graphs.

In both Carroll County and the four-county region, the three largest sectors of employment in 2004 were health care, retail trade, and wholesale trade (data was not available for the City of Coon Rapids for this measure). Among those industries, employment in the wholesale trade and health care sectors has risen substantially since 2001 at both geographic levels, while retail trade employment has remained nearly constant. A Business Needs Survey conducted in 2007 indicated that at least five retail businesses were established in Coon Rapids within the past three years, a sign that retail
trade may be on the rise (See Appendix E). Another economic boost for Coon Rapids came in 2002 with the opening of the Tall Corn Ethanol Plant. This facility was financed by the cooperative investments of local farmers, and produces 40 to 50 million gallons of ethanol per year.

Coon Rapids is unique for a city of its size in the quality of its public and recreational services. City residents and businesses purchase all major utility services, including high-speed Internet, from the publicly owned Coon Rapids Municipal Utilities (CRMU). The community enjoys a nine-hole public golf course, a recently constructed aquatic center, 3.5 miles of paved walking and biking trails, and a park shelter. Coon Rapids is also geographically positioned between three major regional bike trail systems but is yet to be linked to them.

Another major asset for the city is an award-winning city-owned nursing facility, Thomas Rest Haven, which serves elderly and disabled residents. Thomas Rest Haven is undergoing expansion to serve a larger and more diverse client base with the addition of assisted living units.

**Whiterock Conservancy**

Whiterock Conservancy, a private land trust located just southeast of Coon Rapids, is the centerpiece of the Coon Rapids Great Places Initiative and a potential magnet for rural tourism. Since its establishment in 2004, 5,000 acres of forest, prairie, grazing pasture, trails, ponds, and wetlands along the river, valued between $6 and $7 million, are being incrementally donated to Whiterock by the Garst family, whose roots in Coon Rapids date back to 1869. Whiterock’s mission is to restore, reconstruct, and protect native prairies and wetlands.
wetlands along the Middle Raccoon River. Its founders describe the Conservancy as “an ecological land laboratory.” Currently, the Conservancy has a full-time executive director, several full- and part-time staff members, and an annual total of approximately 4,000 visitors. It also contains Whiterock Resort (formerly Garst Farm Resorts), a bed-and-breakfast housed in the Garst family’s former home, which is currently the primary option for overnight lodging in or around Coon Rapids. The Conservancy is still in its developmental phase, and its directors hope to increase annual visits in the short-term to 20,000, with a long-term goal of 50,000 annual visitors.

Great Places
The Great Places Program was established by Governor Tom Vilsack in 2005. The initiative’s mission is to “make good places great by bringing together the resources of state government to build capacity in communities, regions, neighborhoods or districts that cultivate the unique and authentic qualities that make places special.” (http://www.state.ia.us/government/dca/greatplaces/index.htm) In the pilot year of the program’s existence, Coon Rapids was one of three communities awarded this honor. The
foundations of the Coon Rapids-Whiterock Great Places “offer” included opening Whiterock Conservancy to the public, expanding Thomas Rest Haven, and making the area a rural tourism hub with regional trail connections. The proposal also sought to add new vitality to the city’s stagnant economy by attracting restaurants, lodging, and in the long term, a National Corn Museum. Overall, the proposal included more than 20 additional projects to enhance and support the major projects and to strengthen and diversify Coon Rapids and the surrounding area. For a complete listing of Coon Rapids-Whiterock Great Places projects see Appendix A.
COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Methodology
The community assessment is derived from five research components:

- A literature review
- A business needs survey
- Baseline data collection and analysis
- Economic analysis
- Community outreach efforts.

The literature review was performed on the following topics: rural tourism development, consensus building, economic analysis, and microenterprise development. The business needs survey was divided into two survey components: one survey focused on existing businesses, and a second targeted at existing and potential tourism-related microentrepreneurs. Both surveys collected information on the operation, marketing, employment demographics, future plans, and asked respondents how the city and CRDG could better serve the business community. Additionally, a wide assortment of baseline data from various sources was collected, including:

- Population Demographics
- Housing
- Employment
- The economy
- The regional workforce
- Taxes
- Tourism

Further analysis included an economic impact assessment for specific Great Places projects. Finally, two community forums were held to gauge Coon Rapids residents’ perceptions of the community’s strengths and weaknesses, to link projects with specific community goals and strengths, and to brainstorm strategies for successful implementation of Great Places projects.
The following section describes Coon Rapids’ Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities. The purpose of this analysis is to provide the community with a more comprehensive, holistic, and current assessment, and to provide a basis for our recommendations. We evaluate Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities from the point of view of tourism development potential.

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**Community Strengths**

*Whiterock Conservancy*

The Whiterock Conservancy private land trust was widely seen by community residents as a vital and exceptional local resource and an anchor for a tourist-oriented economy. Because of its size, topographical variety, and biological diversity, the 5,000-acre land trust can host several outdoor recreational and educational opportunities that could draw tourists to the area. Whiterock will not only attract general recreational enthusiasts, but also specific groups such as bird watchers, astronomers, equestrians, and scientific researchers. Research and education are a central component of the conservancy’s mission.

*Community Activism & Leadership*

CRDG is the central source of skilled and motivated leadership in Coon Rapids. This organization has members from all sectors of the community and has made it a priority to
seek out other citizens eager to help implement Great Places projects. CRDG members and leaders have drawn on Coon Rapids’ more than 80 social, religious, and civic-minded organizations to build support and volunteer assistance for the Great Places Initiative. Rural tourism development literature emphasizes the need to maintain widespread community support in addition to a strong pool of volunteer labor. Maintaining strong connections between CRDG and the city’s social networks will help achieve these goals.

**Municipal Utilities & Infrastructure**

One of the most unique characteristics of the Coon Rapids community is its municipal utility agency. Coon Rapids Municipal Utilities (CRMU) offers gas, electric, water, sewer, cable television, telephone, and high-speed Internet services to all residents of the city, and is one of the only municipal agencies in the United States to offer all of these services under a single provider. In addition to CRMU, the Coon Rapids community is served by excellent recreation facilities for a city of its size, including a recently-completed aquatic center, nine-hole golf course, and multiple public parks. All of these assets could accommodate both residential and tourism growth in the future, and complement the Coon Rapids tourism package.

**Thomas Rest Haven**

Coon Rapids’ award-winning elder care facility is one of the city’s largest employers. Expansion plans for Thomas Rest Haven include the addition of assisted living and dementia facilities. These additions will not only result in new jobs, but will also create more flexible living options for elders in the region. This is part of a larger strategy to encourage older residents and their families to remain in or return to Coon Rapids.

*Figure 6 – Thomas Rest Haven*
Community Pride & Identity

One theme that was prevalent throughout the first community forum was a sense of community pride and identity among Coon Rapids residents. Participants described a friendly small town atmosphere with a strong social fabric as one of the strongest assets of Coon Rapids. Preserving, enhancing, and marketing these characteristics should be an important part of any rural tourism development strategy.

Unique Natural Tourist Characteristics

Whiterock Conservancy’s regional appeal will be strengthened by several unique attractions. Coon Rapids and Whiterock have already begun capitalizing on one of the area’s most distinctive characteristics, its remarkably dark skies, by hosting an annual amateur astronomer gathering. An ongoing osprey reintroduction project and a bird species inventory provide a destination for bird watchers. Additionally, Coon Rapids is uniquely located at the proposed intersection of three long-distance bicycle trails which would connect the city to three nearby metropolitan areas. Finally, the region is distinguished by several unique geologic formations, including glacially sculpted topography and sandstone formations that give Whiterock Conservancy its name.

Challenges

Institutional Organization

The Coon Rapids-Whiterock Great Places Steering Committee has maintained the momentum generated from the original Great Places designation. However, the scope of the effort has evolved since 2005, growing both in size and complexity. Though this growth is desirable, it presents a fundamental challenge to the institution’s organizational structure.

The Great Places designation was, and remains, a tremendous opportunity for the Coon Rapids-Whiterock area. Whiterock is moving quickly toward its goals and will soon be a popular tourist destination. However, if the positive impacts of Whiterock are to be fully realized, the City of Coon Rapids and its residents must successfully complete the complementary projects and infrastructure improvements laid out in the Great Places
Offer. This requires the leadership and collaborative effort of residents throughout the community.

The Steering Committee has an ambitious list of Great Places projects and objectives. Many projects are underway, with some already completed. The Committee relies heavily on the volunteer labor of its own members and other interested citizens. Because all projects are simultaneously the ultimate responsibility of the Steering Committee, it is challenging to provide the necessary oversight to ensure that each project is progressing as it should. The challenge before the Steering Committee now is to develop a method to delegate project management to the greatest degree possible while still maintaining the unified Great Places vision.

**Funding & Fundraising**

The task of raising funds for these projects is daunting. The Corn Museum, the Town Loop Trail, and regional trail connections will each cost millions of dollars. These projects will require a mix of funding from public, private, and quasi-public sources. At present, members of the Steering Committee are working diligently to secure these funds. However, this distracts attention from other projects and imposes undue burdens on individual members of the Committee. This enormous task may ultimately be better served with a single individual devoted to organizing, networking, and applying for monies from these myriad sources of capital.

**Community Age Profile**

Rural communities throughout Iowa are struggling with the dual phenomena of aging populations and the exodus of young professionals; Coon Rapids is no exception. In 2000, 57% of Iowa residents were between the ages of 20 and 64, compared with 52% in Coon Rapids and 49% in Carroll County.

In 2000, the median age of Coon Rapids residents was 42.9, almost eight years older than the national average. An aging population (25% of Coon Rapids residents are over 65 years old, versus only 15% statewide) indicates that a greater share of the population will be dependent upon fixed incomes and therefore less able to shoulder the burden of increasing property taxes. This will be of particular concern if property values and tax
assessments rise as a result of increasing tourism activity. This issue may require the attention of city officials to create some form of protection for low- and fixed-income residents.

**Local Employment Opportunities**

Between 1990 and 2000, workers within the four-county region of Audubon, Carroll, Greene, and Guthrie counties increasingly had to look outside their resident county for employment, and the number of residents commuting more than 15 minutes to work has grown. According to several business owners, people commuting out of town to work also creates extra problems as commuters make many of their purchases out of town. Over 70% of respondents to the business needs survey cited lack of customer base as their number one challenge. This is indicative of the recent decline in local businesses throughout the four-county region, and the vulnerability of many small-town economies to events such as the Syngenta layoff of 40 employees.

The lack of local employment opportunities in Coon Rapids is particularly acute among high-school-age workers, a group that may have greater discretion in deciding whether or not to take a job. In 2000, only 31% of Coon Rapids residents between 16 and 19 years old held jobs, compared to a Carroll County average of 62% and a statewide average of 56%.

**Location**

Coon Rapids faces a challenge similar to many rural communities in its relative isolation from large population and employment centers. With the nearest metropolitan area (Ames) over 70 miles away, Coon Rapids needs to create and market its unique natural assets to attract tourists from these distant locations. Additionally, Coon Rapids’ location limits the City’s opportunities to attract large employers due to the relatively small labor pool from which to draw. Coon Rapids is too far from the nearest metropolitan areas to become a “bedroom community” of significance.

**Child Poverty & Declining School Enrollment**

Coon Rapids experienced an increase in the number of children living in poverty between 1989 and 1999. In 1989, only 9% of the city’s children lived in poverty compared to
more than 11% at the state level. By 1999, Coon Rapids had nearly 14% of children living in poverty, equal to the state level. Coupled with increasing child poverty, the Coon Rapids-Bayard School District is struggling with falling enrollment levels, evidenced by the recent closing of the Bayard Intermediate School in 2004. Total enrollment in the district has declined from 571 students in the 2000-2001 school year to 485 in the 2006-2007 school year.

**Lack of Export Industries**

Too few industries bring money into the local economy. Carroll County’s share of manufacturing employment was well below state levels in 2000. Garst Seed, the largest employer in Coon Rapids, can be thought of as an export business because its revenues come primarily from outside the local economy. However Garst Seed is no longer locally owned so profits are no longer retained in the local economy. The Accommodation & food services; Arts, entertainment & recreation; Transportation; and Manufacturing sectors employed a relatively smaller share of the Carroll County workforce than averages for the region and the state (see appendix F). Thus, a focus on recruiting or developing these value-added industries could pay strong dividends to the continued strength of the local economy.

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**Opportunities**

**Whiterock Conservancy**

Whiterock Conservancy forms the core of Coon Rapid’s vision of becoming a prime tourist destination in Western Iowa. Once fully developed, it will be a source of jobs and serve as a vehicle for other types of business development opportunities for local residents. The 2007 operating budget for Whiterock Conservancy exceeds $400,000 and
according to the Conservancy’s executive director, is likely to double within 5 years (See Appendix F). If the budget reaches its projected level, Whiterock Conservancy could generate an economic impact of up to $1.5 million and 28 jobs in or around Carroll County annually by the year 2012. Many jobs at Whiterock and at subsequent businesses that will grow around Whiterock will not require highly skilled labor, and lower skilled local residents (especially teenagers) can readily work as food servers, retailers, and hospitality workers.

**Dark Skies**

Coon Rapids has some of the darkest skies in Iowa as a result of the community’s remote location and CRMU’s commitment to “sky-friendly” street lights. The Whiterock Starfield already in place to serve amateur astronomers can be further promoted through marketing and collaboration with state universities. Efforts by the community to pass local lighting ordinances to protect the area’s uniquely dark night skies would further serve to attract astronomers and catalyze increased tourist volume.

**Microentrepreneurship Sector**

In addition to its natural resources, the Coon Rapids area is also home to a growing number of artisans and other potential microentrepreneurs who stand to contribute to and benefit from the development of tourism traffic in the area. Currently, there are over 20 such microentrepreneurs in the area loosely affiliated through participation in CRDG. According to the microentrepreneurial business needs survey, 73% of respondents stated they plan to expand in the next three years. However, the realization of other Great Places projects could help make these small scale activities into genuine sources of income for these business owners and economic growth for the community. To be successful, these entrepreneurs will need collaboration, effective marketing, and a venue to sell their products and services. Every respondent identified marketing and advertising as their first

![Figure 7 - Stained glass art created by one of Coon Rapids’ many resident artisans (photo from www.flickr.com/photos/citizen110)](attachment://stained_glass_art.jpg)
or second need for assistance. In terms of collaboration for promotion, several respondents mentioned assembling a newspaper insert with coupons once or twice a year. Several respondents also identified provision of small business loans as a way to help address the challenge of lack of expansion capital. Seventy-three percent of respondents currently sell their products from their home or building on their personal property. This situation is fine for most of these businesses; however, several respondents cited lack of physical space as their toughest challenge and half of respondents are interested in participating in shared space in a centrally located building. (See Appendix E for further detail.)

**Low Property Values**

As of 2006, the per capita property valuation for Coon Rapids was less than half that of Carroll County and the state average (See Appendix C). These statistics imply that the area has low tax assessments and may reflect the city’s relatively low property values, particularly among its commercial properties. Low property values can act as a strong incentive for capital investment among relocating firms if there is reasonable evidence that these values are likely to rise in the future. Continued increases in tourist volume coupled with a positive local business climate should be an effective means of enticing interested businesses. Other opportunities presented by low property values include reduced startup costs for small businesses and greater potential for residential development.

Continued investment in business development should result in future property value increases and thus increased tax revenues for the City of Coon Rapids. Low property tax base valuations make tax increment financing (TIF) a more appealing tool for public investment, particularly where large increases in assessed value are expected.

**Visitor Spending**

Visitor spending is one of the primary ways in which tourism will positively impact the area economy. Future Whiterock Conservancy visitor numbers are projected to be upwards of 50,000 persons per year once Whiterock is fully operational. Estimated tourism spending spurred by a particular attraction generally comes from tourist surveys.
No such surveys have been completed thus far. Consequently, we employed the findings of a similar study done for the Effigy Mounds National Monument area in northeast Iowa\(^1\) to estimate average visitor spending in Coon Rapids. In that study, visitor spending was estimated through surveys itemizing spending within 50 miles of the attraction. Average visitor spending ranged from as low as $35 per party per visit for local visitors to as high as $268 per party per visit for parties that stayed overnight at a motel.

The total economic impacts of this hypothetical spending were estimated using an input-output economic modeling program that analyzed the effects in the Carroll County economy. The results, rounded to the nearest dollar, are shown in Table 1 on a per-5,000-party basis, and suggest fairly robust impacts for the region. For example, if 5,000 parties of visitors come to Coon Rapids and stay in a motel in one year, the total economic impact to Carroll County would be the injection of nearly $2 million into the local economy and the creation of 40 jobs. The difference between the impacts of day users versus overnight users, shown in Table 1, is a strong endorsement of the Steering Committee’s goal of promoting overnight visits through development of camping facilities and recruitment of a motel. For a complete discussion of economic impacts, see Appendix F.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure Type</th>
<th>Local Output ($)</th>
<th>Local Jobs</th>
<th>Day Trip Output ($)</th>
<th>Day Trip Jobs</th>
<th>Camp Output ($)</th>
<th>Camp Jobs</th>
<th>Motel Output ($)</th>
<th>Motel Jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motel/Hotel</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>913,475</td>
<td>20.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camping Fees</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>170,000</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants/Bars</td>
<td>90,477</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>90,477</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>187,914</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>389,747</td>
<td>9.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groceries, Take-out food/drinks</td>
<td>84,197</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>14,033</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>182,427</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>126,296</td>
<td>2.15</td>
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<td>Gas &amp; Oil</td>
<td>79,208</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>59,406</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>198,020</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>151,816</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission &amp; Fees</td>
<td>16,339</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>40,849</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>89,867</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>114,376</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Souvenirs &amp; Other Expenses</td>
<td>27,682</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>41,523</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>173,013</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>166,093</td>
<td>4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>307,904</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>246,288</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,091,242</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,861,802</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to direct visitor spending as measured in the previous paragraph, the positive impacts of tourism development can also take other forms:

- Increases in local purchases and decreases in imports by local residents as the number of locally available goods and services increases;

\(^1\) The study was done in 2006 by Daniel J Stynes of the Department of Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies at Michigan State University. The study was partially funded by the National Park Service.
• Increased local purchases by residents as fewer residents regularly leave the area for employment;
• Capital investment in the local economy by external sources; and
• Increased tax base as the population grows.

**Investments in Renewable Energy**

Rural communities like Coon Rapids are extremely well positioned to reap the economic benefits of renewable energies and technologies. Iowa’s rapidly growing ethanol production industry is already the largest in the country, and Iowa is also a major player in the wind energy market. Investments in wind turbines are proving to be low risk and rewarding. Additionally, the continued push for reduced reliance on foreign oil will encourage the development of additional investment in bio-fuels. Investment in renewable energies is currently being promoted as a viable approach to improving the economic situation of rural regions across the country, and may actually provide a mutually beneficial complement to natural resources-oriented tourism initiatives such as those being promoted in the Coon Rapids-Whiterock area. Such a relationship between industrial activities and tourism is unusual and a very exciting prospect for rural Iowa.

Coon Rapids has already experienced some of the potential benefits from these investments with the success of the Tall Corn Ethanol Plant, which opened in 2002. Additional investment in the renewable energy sector could bring excellent benefits to the area. The wind power industry was specifically identified by community residents as a possible target for future business recruitment in the form of both wind generation and turbine manufacturing.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the Community Assessment, this section contains a variety of recommendations aimed at capitalizing on strengths and opportunities while mitigating challenges. The first set of recommendations relates to changes in the institutional and management structure of the Great Places CRDG that could improve the effectiveness of project management and make better use of individual strengths among CRDG leaders. Following that are recommendations for new or redefined staff positions at CRDG. Finally, we propose additional complementary Great Places-related projects and tasks.

Restructuring Great Places Project Management

Institutional changes aimed at ensuring a more equitable distribution of tasks and a more responsive process to match qualified project leaders and volunteers with specific projects could greatly improve the overall implementation of the Great Places Initiative. We recommend that the Coon Rapids-Whiterock Great Places Steering Committee consider transferring each existing Great Places project to the organizations best suited to implementing them, primarily CRDG and Whiterock Conservancy. Among the projects transferred to CRDG, we recommend they be assigned to three specialized committees:

- The Business Development Committee, which already exists;
- The Rural Tourism Committee, which would need to be created; and
- The Community Development Committee, which would be created by merging three existing CRDG committees: The Community Beautification, Community Enhancement, and Community Diversity Committees

Utilizing this new committee structure for Great Places project management would help CRDG leadership streamline and more effectively delegate Great Places-related project work among a greater number of qualified project leaders who can work directly with volunteers and relevant parties to accomplish objectives. Under this recommendation, the Steering Committee would continue to exist to provide oversight and a comprehensive perspective on Great Places progress, and would act as liaison between CRDG and Whiterock Conservancy. The Steering Committee would be comprised of individual committee chairs, the grant expert (discussed in the following section), and the executive directors of CRDG and Whiterock Conservancy. Figure 8 shows the recommended
institutional structure of CRDG, including the role of Whiterock and the Great Places Steering Committee.

![Diagram showing the institutional structure of CRDG](image)

*The Community Development Committee is created by merging the Community Beautification, Community Enhancement, and Community Diversity Committees*

Figure 8 – New specialized committees under CRDG, the new role of the Steering Committee, and CRDG’s relationship to Whiterock Conservancy (for more details, see Figure 10 on page 22)

The remainder of this section describes the purpose of each committee and the existing Great Places projects (proposed or ongoing) for which that committee would be responsible. For more detail on individual Great Places projects, see Appendix A.

**Business Development Committee**

The role of the Business Development Committee would be to promote and enhance current businesses, incubate new small business ventures and microenterprise businesses, and recruit new businesses to relocate to the community. Existing Great Places projects for which the Business Development Committee would be responsible include:

- Sponsor *Buy Local* Initiatives
- Attend trade shows
• Encourage development of lodging options
• Promote evening and winter recreation activities

Among other members, the Business Development Committee should have representation from the city's two banks; established businesses from different sectors of the economy; current and potential microentrepreneurs; the City Council; and CRDG leadership.

**Rural Tourism Committee**

The purpose of the Rural Tourism Committee would be to focus on all projects relating to the development of a multidimensional tourism industry in the Coon Rapids-Whiterock area that are not the direct responsibility of the Whiterock Conservancy. Below is a list of current projects which would be the responsibility of this committee:

• Dark Skies Protection and Promotion
• Regional Bike Trail Promotion
• Promoting Art, Culture & History
• Khrushchev Film & Corn Museum
• Tourism Events & Marketing

Among other members, the Rural Tourism Committee should have representation from Whiterock Conservancy; tourism-oriented businesses; and the police and fire departments.

**Community Development Committee**

The Community Development Committee would be responsible for community outreach for all projects, maintaining community character, and enhancing community infrastructure. Projects falling under the purview of the Community Development Committee would include:

• School-Community Connections
• All Infrastructure Projects (except regional bike trail promotion)
• Middle Raccoon River Watershed Protection (in cooperation with Whiterock)

At this time, CRDG does not have a Community Development Committee. Three committees—The Community Beautification, Community Enhancement, and Community Diversity Committees—have responsibilities that are similar in scope to the
above-listed projects. We recommend merging these committees into one Community Development Committee.

Among other members, the Community Development Committee should have representation from the Coon Rapids-Bayard Community School District; CRMU; local social organizations; the historic preservation commission; and interested citizens.

**The Role of Whiterock Conservancy**

Now that Whiterock Conservancy has a full-time executive director, a growing staff, and a growing budget, it is appropriate for some Whiterock-specific Great Places projects previously managed by the Steering Committee to be turned over to Whiterock. Some projects, such as dark sky preservation and watershed protection, have components that extend beyond Whiterock’s borders and should therefore remain the responsibility of CRDG. Additionally, Whiterock would maintain a close relationship with CRDG by means of the Coon Rapids-Whiterock Great Places Steering Committee. Figure 9 lists existing projects that Whiterock could take control of, as well as a new project recommendation, discussed further on page 29.

**New Staff Positions**

**Grant Expert**

We recommend that CRDG establish a permanent executive position responsible for grant writing and other fundraising activities. This person would work with committee chairs and project managers to link specific projects with possible funding sources. Since the Steering Committee has thus far been successful in identifying and securing funding from various sources, it would make sense for this position to be filled by an existing CRDG / Steering Committee member.
Existing Projects
• Sponsor Buy Local initiatives
• Attend trade shows
• Encourage lodging options
• Promote evening and winter recreation activities

New Tasks
• Small business liaison
• Business incubator
• Enhanced cellular & high-speed Internet services

Existing Projects
• Dark Skies protection and promotion
• Regional bike trail promotion
• Promoting art, culture, and history
• Khrushchev film & National Corn Museum
• Tourism events & marketing

New Tasks
• Publish a calendar of events
• Build and observatory

Existing Projects
• School-community connections
• Manage all infrastructure projects
• Middle Raccoon River Watershed Protection (w/Whiterock)

New Tasks
• Community Outreach
• Maintain Community Character
• Explore downtown redevelopment opportunities
• Historic preservation
• Alumni newsletter

* The Community Development Committee is created by merging the Community Beautification, Community Enhancement, and Community Diversity Committees

Figure 10 – Proposed Restructuring of Great Places Projects in CRDG
Small Business Liaison

We recommend that CRDG create a paid staff position for a Small Business Liaison. This person would work with and for the Business Development Committee and CRDG as a whole and would support CRDG’s small business and microenterprise development goals by performing the following functions:

- Reach out to potential microentrepreneurs.
- Coordinate microenterprise and small business assistance programs; act as a contact person for funding applicants.
- Maintain relationships with and establish links between small business owners, artisans, and trades people, for information sharing, resource sharing, and collective marketing.
- Develop a business development website for hosting and linking individual small businesses’ websites; provide technical assistance.
- Coordinate a trades mentorship program connecting those establishing new businesses with retirees/near retirees that possess relevant knowledge, skills, or information.
- Work with the Rural Tourism Committee to promote the “Coon Rapids – An Iowa Great Place” slogan and logo, and to encourage business owners to incorporate the Coon Rapids brand into their own businesses.

The Small Business Liaison would provide an important resource for educating new business owners, connecting them with needed information and resources, and introducing greater efficiencies by helping small businesses to pool their resources. CRDG should make this new position a top priority, and may initially fill the position by rededicating existing staff resources in the near future. The position could initially be part-time, progressing to full-time as needed.

New CRDG Projects and Responsibilities

To complement the existing projects, we identified several additional projects and tasks that CRDG should consider pursuing to further the Great Places Initiative. These new projects and tasks, listed in Figure 10, are described below, categorized by the committee that would manage them.
Business Development Committee

- Directing Small Business Liaison: As discussed in the previous section, we recommend the creation of a Small Business Liaison position to provide staff support for CRDG’s many small business and microenterprise development goals. This person would work closely with members of the Business Development Committee. The committee would establish policies and goals and provide general oversight of the liaison’s work. In turn, the liaison would act as a staff advisor to members of the committee.

- Establish a Business Incubator: Business incubators are an effective method for helping fledgling business ventures survive the perilous startup period and develop into successful businesses. Typical business incubators provide low-cost office space, shared resources (copying, printing, presentation equipment, accounting, secretarial services, etc.), and access to a wide array of business training, counseling, and assistance programs. A business incubator in Coon Rapids could be a fairly small operation and might require one or two “anchor” firms to get the facility off the ground. One option would be for an established firm in the community to make excess office space available to host the incubator. Another potential location would be one of the ground-floor units on Main Street currently occupied by apartments. In order to establish a business incubator in Coon Rapids, it would be wise to seek a grant from the Iowa Department of Economic Development, or to explore collaboration with a university program, such as the Community Economic Development Extension at Iowa State University. The incubator could initially be managed by the Small Business Liaison until such time as a separate staff member is justified.

- Enhanced Cellular and High-speed Internet Services: Although cellular telephone and high-speed Internet services currently exist in Coon Rapids, residents and businesses alike have highlighted the need to enhance and expand these services. High-quality communications services are crucial in attracting new businesses or telecommuting residents, both of which are goals of CRDG. Cellular service in Coon Rapids is limited to only certain carriers; some of the
larger cellular service providers do not offer any coverage in the area. The Business Development Committee should attempt to build relationships with cellular providers to expand the availability of service. With regards to high-speed Internet, many businesses require a high level of service before they will consider any potential location. The Committee should work with CRMU and local businesses to develop a strategy for providing the highest-quality Internet service possible.

**Rural Tourism Committee**

- **Publish a Calendar of Events**: Annual festivals and other events could help attract visitors to Coon Rapids in the near term. The community already has the resources it needs to host them, and such events could raise the community’s regional profile and build awareness of Whiterock. Furthermore, residents and business owners have expressed strong support for festivals and events as a way to build community pride and boost the local economy. The Rural Tourism Committee should continue CRDG’s efforts to attract and market such events. We recommend that the committee publish and widely distribute a comprehensive calendar of events for the area to target visitors. The calendar should be published on the [www.coonrapidsiowa.info](http://www.coonrapidsiowa.info) website (separate from the existing Community Bulletin Board) and should be made available to the arts & culture staffs of newspapers in Carroll, Des Moines, Ames, Omaha, and throughout the region. This will not only potentially increase attendance at individual events but will also lead to greater public awareness of the Coon Rapids area.

- **Build an observatory**: The Coon Rapids-Whiterock Great Places Initiative currently includes a handful of ambitious construction projects alongside numerous smaller projects, including dark skies promotion and preservation. If the region is successful in promoting its extraordinarily dark skies, it may be appropriate to pursue another ambitious construction project: an observatory, either within Whiterock Conservancy or in another nearby location. The University of Iowa, Iowa State University and The University of Northern Iowa all offer astronomy programs, and all three campuses are within three hours drive
of Coon Rapids. Although an observatory already exists in Cedar Falls, a facility in Coon Rapids would certainly offer a clearer view of the stars than the existing facility, sited in the midst of an urban campus. A cooperative effort among the three universities and outside organizations may make a new observatory in remote, dark-skied Coon Rapids a feasible option in the next 10-20 years.

*Community Development Committee*

- **Community Outreach:** Community support and involvement in planning is widely seen as key to any successful rural tourism development strategy. Thus far, CRDG has effectively involved the community in the planning process, but community outreach must be an ongoing effort. As the tourism industry in and around Coon Rapids gains momentum, new issues of importance to local residents may arise. These include: rising property values and tax assessments; increasing municipal expenditures on road maintenance and emergency services; and issues of coexistence between residents and visitors. The best way to address these issues is to maintain strong communication between residents and community leaders. As the primary sponsor of tourism development in the area, CRDG should take the lead in ensuring that the community supports its tourism initiatives and fully understands the impacts—positive and negative—associated with increased tourist activity. Appendix B further discusses the importance of local buy-in to successful tourism development.

An additional issue raised by some community forum participants was the difficulty of involving the city’s youth in the Great Places planning process. The Community Development Committee could develop a stronger relationship with the Coon Rapids-Bayard Community School District. Examples of cooperative efforts could include performing educational volunteer activities at Whiterock Conservancy and including students in future community visioning meetings. The schools would act as an intermediary to getting students directly involved with Great Places activities.
• **Maintain Community Character:** It is important to ensure that the changes Coon Rapids may experience in the coming years do not compromise the quality of life its residents currently enjoy or diminish the city’s attractiveness as a rural tourism destination. One asset that Coon Rapids will market to potential tourists is its friendly, small-town atmosphere. To maintain this community character the Community Development Committee would ensure that growing tourism volume, increasing economic activity, and potential growth in the number of permanent residents, occur in harmony with the environment and values that made Coon Rapids appealing in the first place. One method of achieving this goal would be to host regular community open houses, where local businesses, residents, and government officials speak openly about issues of concern and devise strategies for mitigating these issues. The task of maintaining community character would also involve working with the City to protect older and low-income residents from the financial pressures of rising property values, either by means of legislation or through social services initiatives.

• **Explore Downtown Residential Opportunities:** Downtown housing issues in Coon Rapids should be addressed in the near future. Many of the upper floor spaces above existing businesses are vacant. Several ground-floor units, formerly storefronts, are currently in use as apartments. The issue of ground-floor apartments on Main Street was identified as an item of particular concern among community forum participants. One possible reuse for these spaces would be the small business incubator discussed in the Business Development Committee recommendations section.

The committee could also explore creative options for rejuvenating the downtown housing market. Upper-floor units could be converted into loft spaces for artists to live and work. This would capitalize on the attractiveness of these historic structures and could advance CRDG’s goals of attracting and networking artisans and craftspeople through its microenterprise initiatives. Adaptive reuse of vacant downtown apartment and office spaces would also result in important sources of supplemental revenue for downtown building owners. We recommend that CRDG
take a leadership role in identifying funding sources for such renovations. Specific strategies for achieving downtown redevelopment would include:

- Establish a consortium of local businesses to pool resources
- Pursue historic preservation grants (these do not necessarily require the establishment of a historic district)
- Pursue low-income housing tax credits
- Establish a revolving loan fund for downtown building rehabilitation (grants may be available for this as well)
- Encourage collaboration among local banks to establish a community investment fund

- **Coordinate Historic Preservation Efforts:** Historic preservation has received increased attention in Coon Rapids recently, especially with the establishment of a Historic Preservation Commission in 2006. The CRDG Community Development Committee should support these efforts. Coon Rapids’ tourist potential is rooted in the city’s past, and active historic preservation initiatives will ensure that that past is preserved. The Community Development Committee could offer technical assistance in applying for the National Register of Historic places. The committee could also work with the city to develop design guidelines for the restoration and preservation of significant historic structures and advocate for coordinated façade improvements along Main Street.

- **Establish a Coon Rapids Alumni Newsletter:** Several of the current leaders of CRDG are Coon Rapids “Alumni”; that is, they are people who left Coon Rapids for the majority of their adult lives only to return later in life. The Community Development Committee should actively seek to make contact with more potential alumni returnees and make them aware of the exciting metamorphosis that Coon Rapids is currently undergoing. Creation of an alumni newsletter would provide a warm and personal way to inform former residents of community goings on. This effort could be coordinated with the Coon Rapids Enterprise, the community’s 125-year-old weekly newspaper, to take advantage of existing resources and arouse the nostalgia of former residents.
Funding New CRDG Activities

While a full-time grant expert will help raise needed funds for Great Places projects, grant funding itself is only a short-term solution for covering CRDG’s administrative costs, which will increase if the recommendations in this plan are followed. To achieve a steady long-term funding source, CRDG should consider forming a local Community Development Corporation (CDC). Typically, CDCs are formed in partnership with local banks. This would be most appropriate for Coon Rapids as well. The two banks in Coon Rapids, Iowa Savings Bank and Carroll Savings Bank, could partner with CRDG to establish the CDC and offer low-cost capital for development projects. As a CDC, CRDG could take a financial stake in future development in Coon Rapids, and the revenue from such development could support the new administrative responsibilities outlined in this plan. The CDC would need to acquire 501(c)3 nonprofit status, which would also make it eligible for a greater array of grants than CRDG currently has access to.

The Iowa Department of Economic Development offers information and technical assistance on a variety of topics through its newly created Iowa Downtown Resource Center. Many of the resource center’s programs focus on fundraising, improving the downtown built environment, and the creation of downtown development corporations. For more information on the IDRC, contact IDED or visit http://www.iowalifefchanging.com/community/community/downtown.html.

New Whiterock Conservancy Task

- **Become a Wetland Mitigation Bank:** It may be in Whiterock’s interest to pursue the possibility of becoming a recognized Wetland Mitigation Bank. These banks receive payments for mitigation credits from developers who impact wetlands at other locations within the same watershed. These funds could be used to offset the costs of the planned wetland restoration within Whiterock. Information regarding the establishment of a Wetland Mitigation Bank can be found through the EPA, and inquiries into the establishment of a bank should be directed to the Army Corps of Engineers. Additional information about becoming a Wetland Mitigation Bank can be found at the following websites:
- http://www.midwestwetlandcredits.com
CONCLUSION

This action plan is one element of a larger body of work aimed at improving the lives of residents in and around the City of Coon Rapids. Our recommendations were developed from empirical research, survey responses, and several in-depth discussions with members of the Coon Rapids-Whiterock Great Places Steering Committee, town residents, and other experts. Dialogue with leaders and residents suggest that the citizens of Coon Rapids are ready and willing to embrace the goals and objectives of the Great Places Initiative.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

FOR AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW, SEE APPENDIX B.


APPENDIX A: GREAT PLACES PROJECT LIST

The following are all of the Great Places projects either underway or proposed by the Coon Rapids-Whiterock Great Places Steering Committee as of February 2007. All of the text contained herein is taken directly from the Committee’s February 2007 publication, “Coon Rapids-Whiterock Great Places Initiative Executive Summary and Project List.”

Non-infrastructure Projects

Great Places Coordination

An inter-institutional committee guides the Great Places process via strategic planning, coordination, communications, and development efforts. Alumni outreach, leadership training, a diversity assessment, green planning, and economic impact analysis further deepen and connect our shared version of an interdependent future.

Promoting Art, Culture, and History

We preserve and promote our unique sense of place and history by showcasing landscape artist Nancy Thompson, public art promotion, the digitizing of the Coon Rapids Enterprise, programs to involve school children in historic preservation, an inventory of our historic buildings, and the nomination of key structures to the National Historic Registry.

School Community Connections

Connections are deepened via involving students in environmental and historical initiatives, the creation of a CR-B school-community liaison position, more proactive approaches to diversity, and trail and park connections.

Dark Sky Protection & Promotion

Whiterock will continue to hold an annual amateur astronomer gathering. Whiterock and the Great Places committee will continue to promote dark-sky-friendly lighting locally and throughout the state via outreach to students, electricians, media, City Councils, and supervisors.
Regional Bike Trail Connections

Coon Rapids begins meeting with state and regional trail advocates to map out a strategy to promote the American Discovery Trail and to define and secure trail routes to Herndon, Audubon, and Carroll. Initial efforts will focus on securing a route to Bayard.

Tourism Events & Marketing

Develop annual events and activities to draw visitors to the community, with a special emphasis on extending the tourism season into spring & fall. We begin tourism marketing coordinating as much as possible with other regional actors in El Horn, Manning, and Perry.

Business Development

CRDG strengthens its business support activities, extending them in particular to rural tourism micro-enterprise entrepreneurs such as local artists, craftsmen, tour guides, B&Bs, local food producers, and eateries. A USDA project measures the economic impact of our Great Place investments.

Khrushchev Film & National Corn Museum

A film on the Khrushchev visit and planning for an eventual National Corn Museum in Coon Rapids showcase our amazing international and agricultural past.

Osprey Reintroduction Project

Each summer for five years fledgling Osprey trapped in other states will be raised in our hack tower to imprint on the land so they will eventually form wild nesting pairs using our nesting towers. Webcams will allow the public to share in this exciting process.

Protecting the Natural Resources of the Whiterock Valley

Within Whiterock, environmental inventories, the protection of remaining prairie remnants, and the redesign of grazing pastures give immediate protection to its most fragile areas and lay the groundwork for future large-scale native-species restoration efforts.
**Middle Raccoon River Watershed Protection**

Our watershed is protected through programs to encourage landowners to develop buffer strips and wildlife habitats, as well as ongoing water quality monitoring. We form the northern anchor of the Raccoon River Savannah Bird Conservation Area introducing landscape scale wildlife habitats.

**Phase I Infrastructure Projects**

**2006-2007 Assisted Living**

Our city-owned, award-winning Thomas Rest Haven adds an attached 12-unit assisted living facility.

**2006-2007 Shelter House for City Park**

The City Park gets a new shelter house able to handle large groups, providing a needed venue for large outdoor events and contributing to increasing usage numbers at our Aquatic Center.

**2006-2008 Riverside Park Improvements**

The Carroll County Conservation Board continues with improvements to Coon Rapids’ historic Riverside Park, including a canoe launch, an interpretive paddlers’ trail, an RV park bathroom, and trail repair. The Guthrie County Park adds a bird observation tower.

**2007-2011 Whiterock Access Infrastructure**

Signage, parking, restrooms, campgrounds, cabins, a dirt trail network, a Visitor Education Center, an astronomy field, remodeling of East Main Street buildings, and fishing pond improvements will enable the nonprofit Whiterock Conservancy to open its central 4,300-acre tract to some 50,000 visitors per year.

**2007-2010 Town Loop Trail – Whiterock Lands Portion**

A 4-mile paved interpretive trail featuring the historic Garst Farm house visited by Nikita Khrushchev, three fishing ponds, an osprey tower, and restored wetlands will join Whiterock to the Coon Rapids trail system and business district.
2007-2010 Streetscaping
Entryway signage, visitor kiosk, trail routing, streetscaping and public art installations help to pull highway traffic, walkers, and bikers up 5th Avenue and onto Main Street, improve the quality and usage of our public spaces, and contribute to Main Street revitalization.

2006-2010 Whiterock Fishing Pond Improvements
Weed control, restocking, bank stabilization, signage and handicapped accessibility.

2006-2010 Bike and Pedestrian-Friendly Community
Sidewalk improvements, community-wide signage, and trail linkages (School to Stagecoach, Main Street with City park, Riverside with Deal) better join our parks, schools and public-use areas.

Phase II Infrastructure Projects
2009 Brownfield to Greenway
A riverside brownfield on the eastern edge of Main Street is cleaned up and helps to provide a greenway from the riverside bike trail into the business district.

2009 Fire and Ambulance Facility
New city emergency facilities enable our fire fighters and EMT volunteers to vacate the small historic building where they are located (allowing its restoration) and to better respond to increases in outdoor recreation and prairie burns.

2010 Thomas Rest Haven Dementia Unit and Warm Therapy Pool
Construction of a dementia unit and warm therapy pool at the Thomas Rest Haven allow our city to provide all levels of elder care.

2012 National Corn Museum
The future National Corn Museum and Corn Industry Hall of Fame, located in downtown Coon Rapids, showcase our amazing agricultural past and high-tech future.
2012-2020 Regional Bike Trail Connections

A bike trail is built between Coon Rapids and Bayard. Local and national bike trail connections make Coon Rapids an important Iowa trail hub connecting three major trail systems: The Raccoon River Valley trail to the east (Herndon), the Sauk Rail Trail to the north (Carroll), and the T-Bone trail to the southwest (Audubon).
APPENDIX B: LITERATURE REVIEW

Summary

*Rural Tourism*

Many rural communities throughout the United States, including communities and counties inside the State of Iowa, are successfully using rural tourism development as a mechanism for economic growth. Common among these communities, is the ability to expand and market existing local assets (natural resources in most cases) that emphasize comparative advantages to would-be visitors, while maintaining the rural atmosphere that these visitors generally find appealing.

While most case studies focused on areas around state or national parks, there is no reason to believe that the visitor profiles experienced in those studies would not apply equally to the Whiterock Conservancy as long as the Conservancy is compared with a public park offering similar amenities. In a wealth of literature evaluating communities’ efforts to create rural tourism destinations, themes of cooperation and coordination appear again and again. In “Stories Across America” the authors identify five factors contributing to successful, sustainable models in all their study communities—Collaboration; finding the fit between community and tourism; making sites and programs come alive; focusing on authenticity and quality; and preserving and protecting resources.

In “Factors for Success in Rural Tourism Development,” the authors weave together ten factors that all emphasize planning and coordination. The factors include strong leadership, effective partnerships, community and government support, and so on, all combined with a valuable attraction that is properly developed and marketed. Other anecdotal evidence makes clear that local residents understand the risks and negative impacts that may be associated with a major economic shift of this type. The need to acknowledge and address these issues cannot be overstated. Community support will often be crucial when it comes time to consider local government investments, zoning modifications, tax abatements, or other economic development programs.
Another common factor in maximizing positive benefits is the creation of a “total package” of attractions and amenities. This is often the crucial difference between a “place to visit” and a “place to stop on the way,” which can mean a world of difference when considering economic impacts.

**Tourism Multipliers**

The impact multiplier measures the multiplicative effects of new jobs or direct expenditures introduced into an economy. In the case of tourism this extra expenditure in an area can take many forms, including the following:

- Increased spending on goods and services by tourists visiting the area;
- Increases in local purchases and decreases in imports by local residents as the number of locally available goods and services increases;
- Capital investment in local economy by external sources;
- State or federal government investment in local infrastructure; and
- Increased tax base as the population grows.

The tourist multipliers can be used not only to assess impacts of changes in tourist expenditure, but also as indicators of performance and as a means of inducing local businesses and governments to take a financial stake in the success of a tourism venture. The studies have generally found that tourism output multipliers are positively correlated with population and the number of industries in a given region, while employment multipliers appear to be negatively correlated to population size and the strength of the existing economy. Based on a literature review of previous tourism studies, the type II sales multiplier, which relates direct, indirect and induced effects, is the most frequently reported multiplier and IMPLAN is the most commonly used impact modeling software. Studies that have used IMPLAN generally report a state tourism multiplier between 1.5 and 1.8. These multipliers may be more volatile when analyzing a more localized, less diverse economy.

Studies of the economic impacts of tourism tend to rely heavily on surveys as a method of estimating visitor expenditures. It is common to divide visitors into groups based on length of stay, distance traveled, and type of attraction visited, as these cohorts may exhibit widely varying tendencies from one another. Observing that overnight guests tend
to create a greater impact on a local economy (for obvious reasons), it can be surmised that Whitelock Conservancy’s economic impacts will increase over time as the initial attraction enables the success of other businesses, such as hotels and restaurants.

Microenterprise
Rural America’s traditional role in our nation’s economy is dwindling across the heartland. Residents of this shrinking population segment often work multiple jobs to make ends meet, job security is often lacking, and many communities are seeking to redefine their economic identities in order to remain vital. Although entrepreneurial opportunities may exist, individuals often lack the resources to appropriately invest in endeavors which could one day generate a steady revenue stream. Microenterprise Development Organizations (MDOs) can help. MDO’s provide small, short-term loans to purchase equipment, advertising services, or provide additional liquidity. These organizations are beginning to spring up throughout the country, offering rural entrepreneurs greater opportunities.

Green Infrastructure and the Green Economy
Although MDOs can help to counter rural decline at the individual level, these organizations alone will have only a minimal impact at the city, county or regional level. An emerging trend in rural regions involves strengthening the connection of and interplays between local historic or tourist amenities and greenways. These connections, referred to as “green infrastructure,” allow for pedestrians and outdoor enthusiasts to move freely from site to site. Local and regional connections also help facilitate and protect the migration of wildlife, and may provide additional game-watching opportunities.

Finally, rural residents are extremely well positioned to reap the economic benefits of renewable energies and technologies. Iowa’s rapidly growing ethanol production industry is already the largest in the country, and Iowa is also a major player in the wind energy market. Investments in wind turbines are proving to be safe and rewarding investments. Additionally, the continued push for reduced reliance on foreign oil will encourage the development of additional investment in bio-fuels. Investment in renewable energies is
Currently being promoted as a viable approach to improving the economic situation of rural regions across the country, and may actually provide a mutually beneficial complement to natural resources-oriented tourism initiatives. Such a relationship between industrial activities and tourism is unusual and a very exciting prospect for rural Iowa. Developing strong partnerships may yield fruitful results.

Annotated Bibliography

Example Rural Tourism Brochures

LANESBORO AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. 2006. LANCESBORO MINNESOTA—AREA GUIDE. The Lanesboro Area Chamber of Commerce has collected information from tourism oriented businesses throughout the region and compiled it into a guide for would-be visitors or new comers to the area. The comprehensive guide includes: a schedule of significant events, a history of the area, a map and guide of the trails in the region, parks, outdoor recreation options, lodging, shopping venues, opportunities to experience art and theater, as well as relocation information. They use colorful charts, tables, and pictures to display all of their information in a format that is easy to read and follow. Overall, the document explains what the area has to offer and why a person should choose it as a place to visit.

VILLAGES OF VANBUREN INC. 2006. VILLAGES OF VANBUREN 2006 VISITOR'S GUIDE. VAN BUREN COUNTY.

This brochure outlines the tourism amenities of the Villages of Van Buren County. These villages include the towns of Bonaparte, Bentonsport, Birmingham, Cantril, Keosauqua, Douds, Mt. Sterling, Farmington, Stockport, Selma, Milton and Lebanon. It contains information of year round events, points/areas of interest, general information about each village, parks and outdoor activities, accommodation, restaurants, accommodation, area business guide and a map.
Rural Case Studies


This article provides examples of over 19 stories of rural tourism across the country. Nine of the examples include in-depth coverage of communities’ tourism opportunities and the factors that contributed to their success. The authors provide more general detail for the remaining ten communities. Overall, the authors point that all examples represent the five guiding principles for sustainable agricultural tourism—Collaboration; finding the fit between community and tourism; making sites and programs come alive; focusing on authenticity and quality; and preserving and protecting resources.


This article offers a quick and concise overview of rural tourism and possible implications from tourism development in rural communities across the United States. Mostly, the article offers a semi-exhaustive annotated bibliography for those who desire more in-depth information. It offers articles, books, and papers, on rural tourism information including—tourism planning and development, tourism marketing, tourism and rural development, tourism and sustainable development, economic and other effects of tourism, heritage tourism, nature-based tourism/ecotourism and agritourism.


This article focuses on Jackson County, Iowa and how they incorporated marketing strategies to improve their rural tourism program. The author identifies a five-step approach to marketing which includes developing a slogan, establishing an image, cooperating regionally, exploring opportunities for historic preservation and marketing quality of life.
Economic Impacts of Tourism


This article seeks to measure the impacts of tourism spending by visitors of Effigy Mounds National Monument, an outdoor recreation area located just outside the town of McGregor, Iowa, along the banks of the Mississippi River. The study uses visitor surveys to determine the average visitor spending by visitor type: Local, Day Trip, Motel, Camp, and Other Overnight, and defines local spending as any money spent within 50 miles of Effigy Mounds NM. The survey findings indicate that average local tourism spending per party is $128, ranging from $44 per party for day trippers to $287 per party for overnight visitors that stay in motels. For each group, spending is broken down by expenditure type.

The article then describes the economic impacts of this spending by assigning the total spending to seven different industry sectors within the IMPLAN economic impact assessment software system. Impacts are measured in terms of Sales, Jobs, Personal Income, and Value Added.


The article presents examples of different approaches to estimating the economic impacts of tourism. The author applied three specific methods to illustrative cases in order to demonstrate some practical approaches. These are:

- The National Park Service’s “Money Generation Model”
- The Bureau of Economic Analysis’s (BEA) RIMS II user handbook
- The MI-REC/IMPLAN System

These represent a range of alternatives for estimating the economic impacts of visitor spending. The techniques covered range from methods that utilize secondary spending data and published multipliers, to the use of visitor surveys and input-output models. While the construction and operation of tourist facilities also has economic impacts, the article includes only the impacts of visitor spending.
OTTO, DANIEL. 2004. *ECONOMIC IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH IMPROVEMENTS TO STORM LAKE.* AMES, IA: CENTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY.

As part of their planning efforts, members of the Storm Lake Area Development Corporation were interested in having an economic impact analysis undertaken. They wanted to estimate the effects of increased visitor spending that would result from water quality improvements to Storm Lake and increased recreational facilities in Storm Lake and Buena Vista County. The study took advantage of information already collected by the statewide lake valuation study by economists at the Center for Agricultural and Rural Development at Iowa State University. In the lake valuation study, visitors were asked how improvements to Storm Lake would affect the number of visits they make to the area. Based on their responses, the study estimated that visitation rates would increase by about 55 percent. The lake improvements were expected to increase direct tourism spending by $12.6 million during the summer season. The study used the IMPLAN data and modeling system to configure a model for the economic region of Buena Vista County. After the project is completed, the local economy is stimulated by new visitors making retail purchases. Overall, they estimated that the total economic impacts on the region will include $28.4 million of sales, $10.7 million of new income, and 690 new jobs.


In this paper, the author uses an input-output (I-O) model to estimate the economic value of prairie restoration activities in Iowa. The model uses the costs of land, seed, herbicides, other chemicals, machinery, equipment, and labor to estimate the total input cost of prairie restoration, differentiating between “high quality” and “low quality” prairie. These costs are multiplied by the total number of acres of prairie of each type currently managed and applied to the model. The model then connects these expenditures with all appropriate industry linkages (the basis of I-O modeling) to determine the indirect, induced, and total economic effects. The impact multipliers generated are quite high, particularly those addressing labor income and value-added, which are both nearly 2.0.
The paper also attempts to measure the impacts of visitor spending that result from prairie management. Spending can be directly attributed to prairie restoration near areas such as Neil Smith Wildlife National Wildlife Refuge, a "nature enterprise" that advertises restored prairies as a tourist attraction. This paper estimates average out-of-county visitor spending around "nature enterprises" across Iowa at approximately $79,000 per 10,000 visitors, with a total economic impact of $125,726 per 10,000 visitors, resulting in $50,534 in labor income, $80,049 in total value added, and 3.5 jobs per 10,000 visitors.


This article describes the increasing trend in rural communities of turning to tourism for economic development. It begins by describing some of the benefits of rural tourism, such as the relative low cost of tourism development (compared to manufacturing, for example), lack of dependence on outside firms for economic vitality, and ease of integration with already existing industries (such as farming). The authors then discuss some of the drawbacks of rural tourism, such as low-wage jobs, seasonal employment fluctuation, and competition between communities. The body of the article describes a series of focus groups held in both communities that have successfully transformed into rural tourism destinations and those that have not been successful, with the purpose of drawing out the common themes that might determine the likelihood of success. They identify the following ten factors for success:

1. "A Complete Tourism Package" – In order to create "a destination rather than a place to stop off," a community must have a variety of activities, must be visually appealing, should be marketed as a whole community and not just one or two destinations, and must protect and never lose sight of what it is that brought tourists there in the first place.

2. "Good Leadership" – The focus group participants from both sides seemed to agree that community leaders must be open-minded, creative, and proactive, and must be willing to go the distance in terms of promotion, as well as funding.
3. “Support and Participation of Local Government” – Related to the previous item, government must participate by creating a regulatory climate where tourism can succeed, and should provide financial support, either in the form of direct funding or through infrastructure improvements or proper support of the local chamber of commerce.

4. “Sufficient Funds for Tourism Development” – In addition to government support, tourism depends on securing funding from the state, as well as private investors. Without seed money, a community cannot successfully transform itself.

5. “Strategic Planning” – It is critical that a tourism development plan be comprehensive, not piecemeal. There must always be a direction, and tourism should be integrated into a community’s overall planning process.

6. “Coordination and Cooperation between Businesspersons and Local Leadership” – Rural areas typically depend more heavily on volunteer leadership and public-private-nonprofit partnerships. Without strong coordination, the volunteer network is more likely to break down and funding avenues may dry up.

7. “Coordination and Cooperation between Rural Tourism Entrepreneurs” – For tourism to succeed, many goods and services must be available that currently do not exist. Business people must work together to provide a more cohesive product, and to share resources so that businesses that otherwise would not be viable can survive the startup period.

8. “Information and Technical Assistance for Tourism Development and Promotion” – In order to overcome technical and financial constraints, local planners must reach out to state, federal and nonprofit organization for grants and direct assistance in tourism development planning.

9. “Good Convention and Visitors Bureau” – A strong CVB will provide marketing assistance, coordination with state agencies, exposure at regional welcome centers, and business support services.
10. "Widespread Community Support for Tourism" – Local residents must accept the idea of tourism in their community. Their support will be necessary in modifying local zoning restrictions, approving bond measures, providing volunteer labor, and so on.

**English, Donald B. K., David W. Marcouiller and H. Ken Cordell. 2000.**


The purpose of this article was to develop and present a method for defining “tourism dependent” rural counties in the United States, and to then analyze the differences between these counties and the rest of the nation. The authors first identify four economic sectors that are significantly affected by tourism: lodging, eating/drinking establishments, retail, and recreation services. They divide the 2,261 rural counties in the United States into three regions, and then perform an analysis within each region, grouping similar counties. They then determine the amount of employment in each sector that is not attributable to non-resident business, and attribute the rest to visitors. Using a series of regression models, they attempt to separate non-resident economic activity into tourism and non-tourism groups.

Defining tourism-dependent counties as those in which the percentages of both jobs and income attributable to tourists were at least twice the national average, the authors found that 338 counties, or approximately 15% of all rural counties, were tourism dependent. Among these 338 counties, they found the following characteristics:

- Per capita income was much higher than in nondependent counties, although the proportion of the population living in poverty was not significantly different between dependent and nondependent counties. (This suggests that income disparities are greater in tourism dependent counties.)
- Tourism dependent counties generally had less diverse economies.
- The average house price was $13,000 higher in dependent counties, and vacancy rates were substantially higher.
- Tourism dependent counties are experiencing more robust growth, a pattern that has persisted since at least 1980.

This literature review explores prior studies that attempt to measure how residents respond to tourism development in their communities. Harrill reviews studies that related attitudes to a number of socioeconomic, spatial, economic, and community factors. With regards to socioeconomic and spatial factors, many of the results are inconclusive or contradictory, but he does conclude that the overall attitude appears to depend on distance from tourism facilities, density of tourism facilities, and economic dependence. In other words, residents that suffer the negative impacts without directly benefiting from tourism are most likely to speak out against it. Furthermore, he finds that inequitable distribution of tourism-related benefits tends to erode local support. Not surprisingly, this was also reflected in surveys showing that people who worked in traditional, non-related industries (manufacturing, etc.) were least supportive and most suspicious of tourism. Interestingly, residents were keenly aware of the risk of revenue “leakage” which occurs when tourism dollars leave the local economy because of non-local resource inputs or businesses that are not locally owned.

This article also briefly discusses a widely accepted model of resident attitudes toward tourism, known as the Irridex Model. This model describes a progression of attitudes that may be observed as tourism evolves. The phases are known as *euphoria; apathy; annoyance;* and *antagonism.*


This article describes an integrative approach to tourism planning. The purpose of this approach is “to improve the manner in which rural tourism development occurs” (337). The author’s goal is to identify common mistakes or pitfalls that occur early in the process. To avoid these miscues, he recommends an inclusive and open process.

In promoting his integrative approach, Marcouiller frequently stresses that including all relevant stakeholders not only promotes economic success, but also ensures community support of tourism initiatives, and that negative public opinion has considerable power to
derail a public project. Because tourism development always results in certain negative impacts, it is necessary to approach these head-on and develop a model that balances the benefits with the costs. The author, in calling for a more collaborative approach, reminds planners/community leaders to recognize interdependencies, incorporate all stakeholders, and ensure that stakeholders perceive their suggestions are heard and acted upon.

Finally, Marcouiller devotes considerable space to reminding planners to recognize an “expanded set of tourism development issues” (347). Chief among these are: the public costs of tourism; the quality of jobs created; negative impacts of seasonal fluctuations; price inflation; fostering a strong “host and guest relationship”; and environmental degradation. Again, he advocates for an inclusive and respectful planning process that foresees these pitfalls and takes affirmative steps to avoid them.


In this article, researchers from the USDA Forest Service and the University of Georgia used the Public Area Recreation Visitors Study (PARVS) and the IMPLAN economic impact modeling program to estimate expenditures at public parks and the economic impacts of those expenditures. In their study, the local impact region was defined as the county where the park was located plus all adjacent counties. PARVS data provided a multitude of information about park visitors’ expenditures before, during, and after a trip to a public park. The analysts divided these expenditures into different economic sectors and weighted in-transit expenses based on distance traveled in order to attribute a share to the local impact region. They then used IMPLAN to generate economic impacts for day versus overnight users at developed versus dispersed site locations.

The results of the study indicated economic multipliers that ranged from 1.48 to 1.97. The article also details the breakdown of these economic effects between direct, indirect, and induced effects and also discusses multipliers of compensation, employment, property, and value-added. The authors conclude by saying that these results should be used to induce businesses that stand to benefit most to contribute to the tourism development initiatives.
Microenterprise


Microenterprise development organizations (MDOs) serve as “lenders of last resort” to budding entrepreneurs who are unable to acquire market-rate financing. These “microlenders” take on risks that typical financial institutions do not, such as smaller loans to poorer rural persons. MDOs take on this additional risk namely to adhere to the program’s mission, which generally targets specific persons, groups, or genders. Advocates of MDOs claim that they provide disenfranchised members of society the opportunity to become self-sufficient. However, others argue MDOs are simply another form of welfare that keeps these “marginalized” persons stuck on the economic fringe. Servon concludes that those marginalized persons are actually helped by microenterprise programs but these programs do nothing to reconnect those cut off completely from the economy.


The field of microenterprise is a recent phenomenon here in the United States, emerging just over twenty years ago. Microenterprise programs originally focused on assisting women to improve their economic station, but these agencies and organizations soon began focusing on other underserved segments of the market such as ethnic minorities, racial minorities, disabled persons, and more. These Microentreprenurial Development Organizations (MDOs) have become highly advanced sources of technical assistance, business training, and small loans for members of society trapped on the economic fringe.

These MDOs provide several financial services to microenterprise businesses—defined by FIELD as firms requiring less than $35,000 in start-up capital whose owners are low-income. These financial services, to name a few, include individual and peer microloans, grant assistance, microequity investments, Individual Development Accounts (IDAs). Other services include intensive assistance with business plans, coaching, post-establishment management assistance, and networking.
Depressed rural communities are becoming prime targets of local, regional, and state-level MDOs. Self-employment is quickly becoming "the best" option for many small-town residents who do not wish to leave their communities. Self-employed persons accounted for 22-percent of all non-farm employment and almost 60-percent among Midwestern rural counties between 1990 and 2000.


The article attempts to identify the ideal characteristics for a rural microenterprise program. Using international examples, the author suggests that a successful rural MDO should: offer small, short-term loans at or above market-rates; utilize mandatory savings programs such as individual development accounts; apply principles of peer-lending—lending to small groups in which individual members are collectively responsible for repayment—to minimize administration costs; operate the program like a business charging fees for services; establish stable sources of funding; and utilize market-based operational strategies. The article also provides a list of Federal Funding Opportunities for Microenterprise Programs.


The author focuses on identifying the likely challenges a rural Microenterprise Development Organization (MDO) would face. The isolation of many rural areas and identifying sources of funding are the greatest of these challenges. Rural MDOs need to create local, regional, and national partnerships to address funding concerns. The most successful of rural MDOs have focused on providing specialized markets such as arts & crafts and gourmet foods. The Association for Enterprise Opportunity has recently published two rural MDO resources entitled, Rural Microenterprise Development Training Manual and Innovations in Microenterprise Development from the Rural Experience.
Microenterprises are not new in rural communities. Rural residents have long been performing several services throughout the community. MDOs though can provide these multi-taskers with the resources to get more from their skills through additional capital and training. The author writes, “[MDOs are] designed to deliver capital to places where it’s been scarce, to deliver training and technical assistance, and to connect people to information networks and markets in ways that would not happen on their own.”

Rural MDOs now focus mainly on three strategies: increasing self-independence, revitalizing local economies, and/or connecting microentrepreneurs to new markets. Successful rural MDOs have focused on only one strategy. The author provides some examples of programs for each strategy. Entrepreneurship Development Systems (EDS) are programs offered by some rural MDOs with the goal of increasing the number of entrepreneurs in the community/region and subsequently increasing self-independence. A second strategy involves creating a “regional flavor,” which seeks to utilize a region’s unique assets to create a particular experience for a given market segment. The final strategy involves assisting local entrepreneurs access larger markets. Successful programs following this strategy include: AceNet in Ohio, HandMade in American from North Carolina, WREN in New Hampshire, and Grow in Nebraska.

The author suggests that rural MDOs should focus on fostering one sector or industry. Also, providing opportunities and access to wider markets through the use of the internet (web malls), or creating retail spaces to sell client products. Individual technical training is also very important to be successful.

Green Planning

2002. LINKING NATURAL AND HISTORIC ASSETS: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN LENOIR COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA. GRADUATE STUDENT WORKSHOP, DEPT. OF CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING. UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL.

This green infrastructure plan was constructed for Lenoir County, North Carolina. The plan emphasizes utilizing the Neuse River, which runs throughout the region and directly
through several towns, as a major tool in redeveloping the area. The plan focuses on three components: heritage tourism, passive recreation, and active recreation. Several locations throughout the county fitting one of these three components are identified; 14 potential greenway segments and additional canoe launches are identified in the plan, which if developed would connect the historic and recreational assets of Lenoir County.


This report attempts to identify strategies that small, rural communities can utilize to help rebuild their local economies. The author notes that a basic policy of “marketing their historic, cultural, and locational attributes” is an essential starting point for these communities. The report also offers a great deal of additional resources that cities and counties alike have called on to assist their redevelopment efforts. Finally, the report concludes that there are at least three common characteristics for successful revitalization: a critical mass of community leaders dedicated to the objective; recognition of the areas natural, locational, historic, and cultural assets; financial and technical support.


This special report identifies a growing trend in Minnesota with farmers and local communities pooling resources to invest in ethanol, bio-fuels, and wind power. The author discusses the benefits that accrued throughout the community from investments in the local ethanol plant. In terms of wind power, a couple from Dolliver, Iowa earned over $150,000 simply by selling the energy to the electrical company. Other green investments include anaerobic digesters which convert manure into methane gas. The report notes that a farmer with as few as 300 cattle or 2,000 pigs can create enough methane gas to heat an entire farm—most likely with some left over to sell back to the grid. The author notes that in the next decade, bio-fuels and wind energy production alone will create over 250,000 (mostly rural) jobs.
Modeling Multipliers

BAAIJENS R., P. NIJKAMP, AND MONTFORT K. 1999. EXPLANATORY META-ANALYSIS OF TOURIST INCOME MULTIPLIERS, VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS.

The article demonstrates the potential of quantitative comparative research (e.g. meta-analysis); in particular in the field of tourism research and how that knowledge achieved in the past can be transferred to new situations that have not been investigated before. The author notes that tourism multipliers cannot only be used to assess impacts of changes in tourist expenditures, but can serve also as indicators of tourism performance from the perspective of the local population. The article first presents the usefulness of calculating tourist income multipliers. For that purpose, it considered the economic motives for developing a region as a tourist destination. Attention was paid to two types of models used to calculate multiplier values: the input-output model and the ad-hoc multiplier model. Next, hypotheses were made about the factors that determine the size of a multiplier value which was further tested by estimating some regression equations that explain the size of the multiplier. Finally the results of the regression analysis were employed to derive an interval of plausible values for the unknown average tourist income multiplier of the Greek island of Lesvos. The average tourist income multiplier for this area estimated to fall in between 0.55 and 0.67.


The purpose of this study is to find out the regional tourism multipliers for the state of New Hampshire, and to elucidate why these multipliers vary across different state regions. This study serves as an extension to the state’s data on regional tourist spending and provides a tool for estimating the economic impact of recreation and tourism demand within the state. The study found that tourism output multipliers seem to be positively correlated with population and the number of industries in a given region, and employment multipliers appear to be negatively correlated to population size and the strength of economic bases. Based on a literature review of previous tourism studies, the type II sales multiplier is the most frequently reported multiplier and IMPLAN is the
most commonly used system. Studies that have used IMPLAN generally report a state tourism multiplier between 1.5 and 1.8.

The study first identified the tourism sector which included hotels & lodging, eating & drinking, recreation & amusement, and retail trade. In the second stage, output and employment multipliers were estimated for each region in New Hampshire, and tourism multipliers were calculated based on a region’s tourist budget distribution. Next, models are used to allocate direct and indirect impacts of spending using Regional Purchase Coefficients (RPCs). Finally, separate regression models for aggregate tourism output and employment multipliers were estimated. The variations in this multiplier across the seven regions in New Hampshire ranged from 1.32 to 1.48. The author concludes by mentioning that the misapplication of these tourism multipliers may lead to an inefficient distribution of state resources such as funding, protection, or advertising; and could ultimately result in incompatible business developments, unsustainable natural resource use, loss of jobs, and loss of local identity.


This paper gives the step by step methodology of constructing a tourism income multiplier. The article first highlights the methods that communities may use to collect estimates of total dollars spent by visitors to their area – diaries, exit interviews, mailing surveys at home, and surveying tourist-related business. Next it provides the methods to measure the impact of tourist expenditures on local revenue:

1. Adapt coefficients from existing national or regional studies.

If a multiplier is not available, a rough estimate can be made by taking into account the following factors:

- The estimate will probably fall within the range of 0.3 to 0.5.
- The multiplier will tend to be at the upper end of the range if the region is urban (more self sufficient) rather than rural, and if tourists buy products which require considerable local labor in production (e.g., hotel-motel expenditures, purchase of local arts and crafts).
2. Develop specific impact relationships for the community being studied

If the community has a substantial tourist business, it may be better to develop a custom multiplier. Information required is:

- The pattern and volume of tourist expenditure in the region.
- The percentage of goods and services produced locally.
- The percentage of local revenue that is spent locally.

Finally the paper gives an example of how tourist expenditure can affect local revenues using the case of Western City, Oregon.

Community Forums


Conducting Community Forums details the best practices for organizing and implementing a community forum. The book is organized sequentially from planning the forum to following up after the forum concludes. Sample documents and spreadsheets are included in the appendices. The book is organized into four sections: 1) Planning the Forum and Obtaining Resources, 2) Preparing for the Forum, 3) Orchestrating the Event, and 4) Sustaining the Results.

The first chapter discusses the differences in the three types of forums [1] community education forums, 2) community engagement forums, and 3) community action forums]. The second chapter details suggestions for marketing and promotion of the event and logistics. The third chapter discusses how to manage the meeting and react to an array of unexpected events; this chapter focuses on how to make the meeting flexible and reactive to the audience. The fourth and last chapter lists the steps required to ensure the meeting results are beneficial; the suggested elements of sustaining the results are making a website, following up on unsatisfied questions or comments, and communicating with the attendees.

Conducting Community Forums served as our main resource for organizing and preparing the content of the forum. We utilized some of the strategies for marketing and
promotion and will follow the instructions for sustaining the results; we have developed a results website and we are in the process of contacting attendees.
APPENDIX C: COMMUNITY BASELINE DATA

Executive Summary

Coon Rapids

Coon Rapids is a small, aging community within Carroll County. The town has a comparatively high share of senior citizens and relatively low share of residents below the age of 20. By 1999, Coon Rapids was facing a growing problem of child poverty with rates nearly equaling statewide levels and exceeding Carroll County levels by more than a 2:1 margin. Additionally, only 31% of its residents between the ages of 16 and 19 were employed in 2000. The town fares somewhat better in terms of employing residents between the ages of 20 and 24. In 2000, 78% of this age cohort was employed compared to the state average of 75%.

The ethnic makeup of Coon Rapids is displaying signs of change. Though still predominantly white, the town is beginning to experience the in-migration of racial minorities—mainly Latino households. In 2000, the percent of foreign-born residents rose slightly to 0.4%, but this remains the lowest share among the varying geographic levels of analysis examined. Home ownership rates among these small minority populations hover near 50%.

The Four-County Region

Coon Rapids is located adjacent to the intersection of Audubon, Carroll, Greene, and Guthrie Counties. Carroll County is the economic and population anchor of the region, and it is the only county of the four to experience a net gain in population in the 20th Century. In terms of employment, Carroll County is by far the most successful of the four counties, employing 87% of its workers between the age of 20-24 and 62% of workers ages 16-19. The County also claims the smallest percentage decline in county residents workers. The economic outlook for the four-county region is mixed. Guthrie County is experiencing some benefits from the continued growth of the Des Moines metro area; however, the remaining counties are not likely to gain from this growth for some time.
Population Growth

Figure C-1 displays the population growth trends for the four counties of Audubon, Carroll, Greene, and Guthrie since 1900. Of the four counties, only Carroll County’s population was greater in 2000 than 1900. Overall, the four-county region has experienced a steady decline in population. Individually, Carroll County is the only county to have experienced any growth. Audubon and Greene Counties have both lost nearly half of their populations since the beginning of the 20th Century. Guthrie County lost population every decade from 1920 to 1990 but has grown since 1990. The County’s recent growth is likely the result of its relative proximity to the Des Moines metropolis.

The population of Coon Rapids has experienced a similar decline in population, mainly due to the exodus of its middle-aged workforce. In 2000, 328 residents of Coon Rapids were over the age of 65, more than one quarter of its population, far higher than the state average of 15%. In terms of young residents (under the age of 20) Coon Rapids is less than the state average of 28%. Figure C-2 shows each geographic area’s 2000 population breakdown by age group.

![Population Graph](image)

*Figure C-1 – Historic County Populations, 1900-2005 (Source: U.S. Census Bureau)*
Figure C-2 – Population by Age Group, 2000 (Source: U.S. Census Bureau)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bayard</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>637</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coon Rapids</td>
<td>1,305</td>
<td>1,266</td>
<td>1,448</td>
<td>1,381</td>
<td>1,560</td>
<td>1,676</td>
<td>1,533</td>
<td>1,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedham</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area</strong></td>
<td><strong>1920</strong></td>
<td><strong>1910</strong></td>
<td><strong>1900</strong></td>
<td><strong>1890</strong></td>
<td><strong>1880</strong></td>
<td><strong>1870</strong></td>
<td><strong>1860</strong></td>
<td><strong>1850</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bayard</td>
<td>727</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coon Rapids</td>
<td>1,328</td>
<td>1,084</td>
<td>1,017</td>
<td>873</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedham</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table C-2 – Population share by age group by city, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>0-19</th>
<th>20-34</th>
<th>35-54</th>
<th>55-64</th>
<th>65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bayard</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coon Rapids</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedham</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table C-3 – Population share by age group by city, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>0-20</th>
<th>20-34</th>
<th>35-54</th>
<th>55-64</th>
<th>65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50029</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50058</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51440</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Income, Employment, and Poverty
Between 1969 and 2004, per-capita incomes in each of the four counties generally kept pace with or slightly lagged behind statewide per-capita incomes, as illustrated in Figure C-3. Still, in the past ten years, all four counties have lost ground to the state per-capita figures, especially Audubon and Greene Counties. However, the last two years of that span suggest that all four counties may be closing the deficit.

Figure C-4 illustrates the change in poverty rates at different geographic levels of analysis between 1989 and 1999. In 1989, Coon Rapids had lower rates of poverty as a share of total population (9.6%) and among the city’s children (10.2%) than Carroll County (10.4% overall/11.2% children), the four-county region (11%/13.3%), or the State of Iowa (11.1%/14.1%). Ten years later Coon Rapids had higher poverty rates than these other comparison levels in both child and overall poverty. Furthermore, Coon Rapids was the only geographic area examined in this study in which child poverty increased between 1989 and 1999. Overall poverty declined during this period in all areas examined, including the city of Coon Rapids.

![Figure C-3 – Per Capita Income, 1969 – 2004 (Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis)](image-url)
Table C-4 – Income by city, 1990 and 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State of Iowa</td>
<td>39,469</td>
<td>26,229</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
<td>48,005</td>
<td>31,659</td>
<td>51.6%</td>
<td>19,674</td>
<td>12,422</td>
<td>58.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayard</td>
<td>24,444</td>
<td>17,950</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
<td>32,344</td>
<td>22,574</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>13,072</td>
<td>9,389</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coon Rapids</td>
<td>32,951</td>
<td>23,222</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
<td>39,800</td>
<td>27,744</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
<td>16,765</td>
<td>12,837</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedham</td>
<td>33,125</td>
<td>19,792</td>
<td>67.4%</td>
<td>37,639</td>
<td>23,750</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
<td>13,505</td>
<td>9,911</td>
<td>36.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table C-5 – Income by ZIP code, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Median Household Income 1990</th>
<th>Median Family Income 1990</th>
<th>Per Capita Income 1990</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50029</td>
<td>31,339</td>
<td>40,673</td>
<td>14,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50058</td>
<td>33,854</td>
<td>40,417</td>
<td>16,948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51440</td>
<td>36,786</td>
<td>38,625</td>
<td>12,713</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure C-4 – Population Living in Poverty, 1989 – 1999 (Source: U.S. Census Bureau)

Table C-6 – Poverty rates by city, 1990 and 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>2000 Overall</th>
<th>2000 Children</th>
<th>1990 Overall</th>
<th>1990 Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State of Iowa</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayard</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coon Rapids</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedham</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure C-5 – Employment among Teens and Young Adults, 2000 (Source: U.S. Census Bureau)

Figure C-5 shows the relative levels of youth employment in Coon Rapids, Carroll County, the four-county region, and the state of Iowa. In 2000, 31% of Coon Rapids residents aged 16-19 were employed, far less than the shares employed in Carroll County (62%), the four-county area (54%), or the State of Iowa (56%). This suggests that there is a lack of available employment opportunities for teenagers, a group that may not depend on income but is more likely to work if jobs are readily available. Among the 20-24 year-old age cohort, 78% were employed in Coon Rapids in 2000. Though this exceeded the state-wide level (75%), the figure lags well behind Carroll County and the four-county region (87% and 82% respectively).
Minorities and Foreign-born Residents

Figure C-6 shows the racial diversity of Coon Rapids and the surrounding region. Coon Rapids greatly exceeds Carroll County and the four-county area in the proportion of its population that is Hispanic and/or non-White (4.1%), but is still much lower than the state average of 7.3%. Hispanics are the largest minority group in Coon Rapids and make up nearly the state average (2.8%). Coon Rapids’ share of Hispanic residents is much
greater than both Carroll County (0.6%) and the four-county area (0.9%). Figure C-7 highlights the fact that the foreign-born share of the population of Iowa nearly doubled between 1990 and 2000 (1.6% to 3.1%). This group also gained population share in Coon Rapids (0.2% to 0.4%) but still lagged behind the four-county area (0.5% in 1990 to 0.9% in 2000) and Carroll County (constant at 0.6% from 1990 to 2000) and remains well behind the state average.

![Chart showing rent costs in different areas](image)

**Figure C-8 – Rents Paid for Housing in 2000 and Fair Market Rents\(^1\) in 2006 (Source: U.S. Census Bureau)**

**Carroll County Housing Stock**

In 2000, Carroll County had the lowest home ownership rate (74%) in the four-county region, although it still exceeded the state average of 72.3%. Additionally, the county had the second lowest rate of ownership among Hispanic or minority households (35.7%) in the state. Carroll County also had the lowest home ownership rate among households with incomes less than 80% area median income (AMI) at 60.2%. Coupled with low

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\(^1\) "Fair Market Rents (FMRs) determine the eligibility of rental housing units for the Section 8 Housing Assistance Payments program. Section 8 Rental Certificate program participants cannot rent units whose rents exceed the FMRs. FMRs also serve as the payment standard used to calculate subsidies under the Rental Voucher program. FMRs are gross rent estimates. They include the shelter rent plus the cost of all utilities, except telephones." - Fair Market Rents (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development)
rates of home ownership, Carroll County also had the lowest share of single-family units (82%) in the region. However, this may be related to the four-county area having a relatively lower share of cost-burdened households than the State average. Though Carroll County had relatively low home ownership rates, it did boast the youngest stock of housing in the region with a median age just over 50 years. Comparatively, Coon Rapids has a 50% home ownership rate for Hispanic/non-white households and a somewhat older median age of housing, approximately 65 years. Though home ownership rates are low, rents do not appear to be out of line in Coon Rapids, or the four-county region. Figure C-8 illustrates the prevailing rents paid by residents in 2000.

**Housing Hardship**

In 2004, Coon Rapids had no multifamily assisted units with active contracts. Of the 125 residential building permits issued in the four-county area in 2005, Carroll County accounted for 72, more than the other three counties combined. Coon Rapids had one-quarter of all (2 of 8) multi-family units constructed in 2005.

![Vacancy Rate Chart](Image)

**Figure C-9 – Residential Vacancy Rates, 2000 (Source: U.S. Census Bureau)**

**Vacancy Rates**

At 5.3% Coon Rapids had a lower vacancy rate than all other geographic levels used for this study. At the county level, Carroll had the lowest vacancy rate of the four counties, at
5.9%. The other three counties (Audubon, Greene, and Guthrie) had higher vacancy rates than the state average of 6.8% (See Figure C-9). In all instances, the rental vacancy rate far exceeded the homeowner vacancy rate. This indicates that neither Coon Rapids nor the surrounding area is host to a significant number of vacation or second homes.

### Table C-8 – Housing units by city, 1990 and 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Vacant</th>
<th>Owner-occupied</th>
<th>Renter-occupied</th>
<th>Average HH Size-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Percent</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayard</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coon Rapids</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>2.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedham</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayard</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coon Rapids</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>2.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedham</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Commuting Patterns Analysis

Between 1980 and 2000, the share of workers living and employed in the same county fell throughout the four-county area. In particular, Audubon and Guthrie County resident workers declined sharply, 20.4% and 16.5% respectively (Figure C-10). In 2000, Carroll County had the highest proportion of county residents employed within the county at 90.5%. Greene County had the next highest share of resident workers at just over 70%. The largest loser in terms of employing county residents was Audubon County, which lost over 10% of its share of resident workers between 1990 and 2000. During this period, the number of workers commuting to another county for work at least doubled in three of the four counties and nearly tripled in Guthrie County. However, coupled with more resident workers commuting to other counties, the share of non-resident workers commuting in has also been increasing rapidly (Figure C-10). These two patterns suggest that more residents of the four-county area in the workforce are commuting to counties other than those in which they live to find jobs, while at the same time a larger share of local jobs are being held by outsiders. This may suggest a growing mismatch between the
skills of the local workforce and available employment. Figure C-10 compares the number of in-commuters versus resident workers between 1980 and 2000.

Commuting times for workers within the four-county region shifted somewhat between 1990 and 2000. Over that ten-year period, the share of residents commuting more than 15 minutes to work increased substantially (Figure C-11). The number of workers within the four-county region commuting over 30 minutes increased by 1,360, though the median worker’s commute time did not change. In 2000, Guthrie County had the largest share of these long distance commuters (37%). Greene County had the second highest rate with 23% of residents commuting more than half an hour.

Figure C-10 – County Workers who reside in their workplace county (Source: U.S. Census Bureau)

Figure C-11 – Four-county Area Commuting Times, 1990 – 2000 (Source: U.S. Census Bureau)
Employment by Industry

Health care, retail trade, and manufacturing are the top three industrial sectors in Carroll County in terms of employment (Industry data is not available at the city level; ZIP code statistics are included in the supplemental data at the end of this appendix). Manufacturing ranks first in the state of Iowa whereas health care ranks first in Carroll County and the four-county area. This may be attributed to the fact that these areas have a larger share of senior citizens. In the State of Iowa, employment in the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting sector decreased markedly between 2003 and 2004. Carroll County followed the same trend, but in the four-county area employment in this sector has increased since 2003, apparently due to increased mining employment in Guthrie County. Employment in the construction sector has decreased in Carroll County and the four-county area, whereas employment in the wholesale sector is increasing at both of these geographic levels. The only sector which is showing an upward trend in all the jurisdictions is finance and insurance. In Carroll County and the four-county area, overall industrial growth from 2001 to 2004, as measured by employment, has been slow and steady. Figure C-12 compares Carroll County, the four-county area, and the State of Iowa in 2004. The complete employment trends for 2001 to 2004 are provided in Table C-9.

![Employment by Industry Chart]

Figure C-12 – 2004 Employment Share by Industry among Top Seven Sectors
### Table C-9 – Employment by Industry, 2001 – 2004 (Source: County Business Patterns)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>State of Iowa</th>
<th>Carroll</th>
<th>4-County Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>1,255,172</td>
<td>1,229,609</td>
<td>1,232,865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry, fishing &amp; agricultural support</td>
<td>1,750</td>
<td>1,786</td>
<td>1,758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>1,855</td>
<td>1,762</td>
<td>1,775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>4,733</td>
<td>7,344</td>
<td>8,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>58,895</td>
<td>57,740</td>
<td>58,159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>237,779</td>
<td>222,501</td>
<td>221,027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>64,527</td>
<td>61,706</td>
<td>60,262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>181,794</td>
<td>176,903</td>
<td>176,596</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>45,250</td>
<td>41,887</td>
<td>40,088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance &amp; insurance</td>
<td>81,243</td>
<td>83,565</td>
<td>89,833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate, rental &amp; leasing</td>
<td>14,051</td>
<td>14,418</td>
<td>14,406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific &amp; technical services</td>
<td>38,349</td>
<td>39,933</td>
<td>42,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mgt. of companies &amp; enterprises</td>
<td>22,001</td>
<td>23,173</td>
<td>19,133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin, support &amp; waste mgmt.</td>
<td>62,223</td>
<td>57,901</td>
<td>58,393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educ. Services</td>
<td>32,458</td>
<td>32,193</td>
<td>31,952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, entertainment &amp; recreation</td>
<td>19,301</td>
<td>19,874</td>
<td>19,819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation &amp; food services</td>
<td>102,977</td>
<td>103,784</td>
<td>104,189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auxiliaries</td>
<td>7,276</td>
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<td>7,355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Number of Establishments by Industry

The growth in number of business establishments between 2001 and 2004 followed the same trend as discussed in the previous section, with health care, retail trade, and manufacturing as the top sectors. However, in this case the data is also available for the Coon Rapids ZIP code (50058). The Coon Rapids ZIP code shows slightly different trends than other jurisdictions, with decreasing wholesale and stable agriculture sectors. Retail trade is the largest sector in Coon Rapids as measured by the number of establishments, but this number is decreasing. Construction establishments are increasing in Coon Rapids. Figure C-13 compares the number of establishments by sector in Coon Rapids, Carroll County, and the four-county area.

### Overall Change in Employment, Establishments, and Payroll

In the state of Iowa, non-farm employment decreased 2.55% from 2001 to 2004, while in Carroll County and the four-county area, non-farm employment increased 6.09% and 4.33% respectively over the same period. The number of establishments in Carroll County increased by 2.63% from 2001 to 2004, an increase higher than corresponding increases in the four-county area (1.15%) and the state of Iowa (0.23%).

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C - 13
Figure C-13 – Number of Establishments, by Sector, as Share of Total Establishments, 2004 (Source: County Business Patterns)

The change in annual payroll was also considerably higher in Carroll County (20.43%) and the four-county area (19.44%) as compared to the state of Iowa (6.63%), which suggests growth in higher-paying jobs over this period. Figure C-14 shows these trends.

Figure C-14 – Change in Employment, Establishments, and Annual Payroll, 2001 – 2004 (Source: County Business Patterns)
Table C-10 – Establishments, employees, and annual payroll by ZIP code, 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>50029</th>
<th>50058</th>
<th>51440</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of establishments</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of employees</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual payroll in $1000</td>
<td>1877</td>
<td>1766</td>
<td>1710</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure C-15 – Percentage Change in Type of Workers, 1990 – 2000 (Source: County Business Patterns)
Table C-11 – Number of establishments by industry by ZIP code, 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>50029</th>
<th>Industry Code Description</th>
<th>Total Establishments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation &amp; warehousing</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance &amp; insurance</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific &amp; technical servi</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care and social assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services (except public administration)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>50058</th>
<th>Industry Code Description</th>
<th>Total Establishments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry, fishing, hunting, and agriculture</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation &amp; Warehousing</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance &amp; Insurance</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate &amp; rental &amp; leasing</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific and technical services</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin, support, waste mgt, remed serv</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care and social assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, entertainment &amp; recreation</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomodation &amp; food services</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services (except public administration)</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclassified establishments</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Type of Worker
The share of self-employed workers and unpaid family workers is decreasing in all of the jurisdictions, whereas private wage and government workers are gaining. Carroll County and the four-county area have experienced this shift more rapidly than the state, reflecting reductions in agricultural employment and family farming, with a growing share of employment in retail trade and construction. One positive trend, however, is the apparent strength of the Carroll County private sector. Unlike the larger levels of analysis, the private sector within Carroll County has seen the largest increase in employment, with the county government experiencing the smallest percentage increase. Figure C-15 shows the change in worker types between 1990 and 2000.

Workforce Indicators
Table C-12 shows workforce indicators for the year 2005 in the four counties, broken down by quarter. Overall, Carroll and Guthrie counties show consistently higher average monthly earnings and lower turnover rates than Audubon and Greene Counties. Interestingly, these two counties are less competitive in regards to average earnings among new hires. These figures complement Figure C-15, indicating that more new jobs are being created in Carroll and Guthrie Counties.
### Table C-12 – Quarterly Workforce Indicators for 2005 (Source: Iowa Workforce Development)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>QWI Quickfacts</th>
<th>Audubon</th>
<th>Carroll</th>
<th>Greene</th>
<th>Guthrie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005(1)</td>
<td>Avg Monthly Earnings</td>
<td>$1,924.00</td>
<td>$2,127.00</td>
<td>$2,078.00</td>
<td>$2,179.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avg New Hire Earnings</td>
<td>$1,798.00</td>
<td>$1,298.00</td>
<td>$1,186.00</td>
<td>$1,179.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Job Creation</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Net Job Flows</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Hires</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>1,138</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Separations</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>1,394</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Employment</td>
<td>1,985</td>
<td>11,549</td>
<td>3,012</td>
<td>2,695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turnover</td>
<td>9.40%</td>
<td>7.20%</td>
<td>9.23%</td>
<td>7.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 (2)</td>
<td>Avg Monthly Earnings</td>
<td>$2,009.00</td>
<td>$2,264.00</td>
<td>$2,328.00</td>
<td>$2,165.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avg New Hire Earnings</td>
<td>$1,766.00</td>
<td>$1,543.00</td>
<td>$1,283.00</td>
<td>$1,339.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Job Creation</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>858</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Net Job Flows</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Hires</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>1,757</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Separations</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>1,737</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Employment</td>
<td>1,994</td>
<td>11,804</td>
<td>3,13</td>
<td>2,793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turnover</td>
<td>11.10%</td>
<td>7.60%</td>
<td>8.10%</td>
<td>8.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 (3)</td>
<td>Avg Monthly Earnings</td>
<td>$2,047.00</td>
<td>$2,389.00</td>
<td>$2,215.00</td>
<td>$2,372.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avg New Hire Earnings</td>
<td>$1,539.00</td>
<td>$1,523.00</td>
<td>$1,458.00</td>
<td>$1,451.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Job Creation</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Net Job Flows</td>
<td>-27</td>
<td>-269</td>
<td>-14</td>
<td>-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Hires</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>1,818</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Separations</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>2,398</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Employment</td>
<td>1,973</td>
<td>12,024</td>
<td>3,060</td>
<td>2,891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turnover</td>
<td>9.10%</td>
<td>9.60%</td>
<td>9.30%</td>
<td>9.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 (4)</td>
<td>Avg Monthly Earnings</td>
<td>$2,324.00</td>
<td>$2,411.00</td>
<td>$2,442.00</td>
<td>$2,923.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avg New Hire Earnings</td>
<td>$1,450.00</td>
<td>$1,539.00</td>
<td>$1,541.00</td>
<td>$1,721.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Job Creation</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Net Job Flows</td>
<td>-48</td>
<td>-65</td>
<td>-126</td>
<td>-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Hires</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>1,268</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Separations</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>1,727</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Employment</td>
<td>2,030</td>
<td>11,773</td>
<td>3,555</td>
<td>2,864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turnover</td>
<td>9.90%</td>
<td>8.30%</td>
<td>9.80%</td>
<td>8.80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Tax Analysis

Figure C-16 depicts the per capita property tax valuation for the various geographic levels of analysis. Both the four-county area and Carroll County are consistent with the state average, but the property valuation for Coon Rapids is significantly lower per capita than all three of the other geographic levels. In fact, the per capita property valuation is less than half that of the other levels. This may be attributed to an above-average share of residents living in multifamily housing and low property values in Coon Rapids, especially among commercial properties.
Figure C-16 – Per Capita Property Tax Valuation, 2005 – 2006 (Source: Iowa Department of Management; Property Valuations)

Figure C-17 – Per Capita Sales Tax Collected, 2006 (Source: State of Iowa Sales Use Tax Assessment)

Figure C-17 shows the per capita state sales tax collected for the geographic levels used in this analysis. The values contained in that figure are calculated by dividing the total state tax collected within a particular jurisdiction by residential population in that jurisdiction. While Carroll County exceeds the state average in per capita sales tax collected, Coon Rapids is lower than Carroll County and the four-county area. The four-county average is roughly 20% less than the state average.
Revenue and Expenditures

Figure C-18 shows revenue and expenditures on the county level for Carroll County in comparison to the four-county region and the State of Iowa. Carroll County’s revenue and expenditures just slightly exceed the state average, whereas the four-county area exceeds Carroll County in spending and revenue by about 20 percent.

![Per Capita Revenue and Expenditures Chart](Image)

Figure C-18 – Per Capita Revenue and Expenditures, 2005 – 2006 (Source: Iowa Department of Management; County Budgets)

Tourism

Figure C-19 shows the per capita revenue from tourism for Carroll County, the four-county area, and the State of Iowa for 2004 and 2005. Each geographic jurisdiction generated greater revenue in 2005 than 2004. Carroll County generates just above the state average in per capita tourism revenue while the four-county area generates only about 60 percent of the state average.
Figure C-19 – Per Capita Tourism Revenue, 2004 – 2005 (Source: Iowa Department of Economic Development; Tourism Results)

Figure C-20 – Per Capita Tourism Payroll, 2004 – 2005 (Source: Iowa Department of Economic Development; Tourism Results)

Figure C-20 shows the spending on tourism related employment per capita. Iowa exceeds Carroll County in per capita payroll and Carroll County nearly doubles the payroll for the four-county area for both 2004 and 2005. It is interesting to note that while Carroll County exceeds the State average in per-capita tourism revenue, it spends less on payroll.
Figure C-21 shows tourism related employment per thousand residents. Consistent with trends in payroll and revenue, a far smaller share of the four-county area’s workforce is employed in tourism than Carroll County’s or the state, on average. Carroll County employs more tourism related employees than the state average and nearly twice as many as the four-county area average.

Figure C-21 – Tourism-related Employment per 1,000 Residents, 2004 – 2005 (Source: Iowa Department of Economic Development; Tourism Results)
APPENDIX D: COMMUNITY FORUM RESULTS

Community Forum #1: November 9th, 2006

Community Forum 1 was designed to draw out broad community goals and lay the groundwork for mobilizing community support for the Great Places Projects. Forum participants worked in small groups of 4 to 6 people to brainstorm lists of short responses to each of five questions posed to them. Participants were asked to present their collectively devised ideas to the whole group and then exchange comments openly about their answers. The underlying theme of the questions was an assessment of the community’s perceptions of its Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities. A secondary goal of Forum 1 was to gauge residents’ support for marketing Coon Rapids as a rural tourism destination. The pages that follow contain each question, a listing of each group’s responses, and a brief summary of the discussion that followed.

Question 1: What do you like most about Coon Rapids?

Group A:
- Small town environment
- Recreational services/Natural resources
- Safe environment
- Great place to raise kids
- Easy living
- Progressive attitude
- Close knit caring community
- School system
- Whiterock Conservancy
- Talented/Skilled Residents
- Natural beauty/Topography

Group B:
- Quiet and peaceful environment
- Friendly people
- Progressive attitude
- Great municipal utilities
- Visionary leadership
- Outstanding schools
- Great local natural resources/trails
- Willingness to tackle problems and succeed
- Strong Main Street for a small town like Coon Rapids
- Philanthropic spirit
Group C:
- Natural beauty – trees, Whiterock, surrounding town terrain
- Golf course
- Midpoint between two metro areas
- Variety of personalities of residents/Diverse population
- Schools – excellence, diverse opportunities for students, and other facilities
- Friendly residents
- Strong service organizations
- Good Fire/emergency services

Group D:
- Feels like home
- School system
- Utilities
- Friendly people
- Good emergency/fire services
- Safe
- County fairgrounds

Group E:
- Schools
- Cleanliness/Well maintained homes
- Churches
- Good public services
- Recreational facilities for all age groups

Question 2: What do you like least about Coon Rapids?

Group A:
- Limited job opportunities
- Lack of privacy
- Lack of arts/cultural places in area
- Limited shopping and eating
- Agricultural dominated economy-hamper other kind of development
- Lack of economic diversity
- Aging population
- Negative attitudes toward change
- Young people not returning after schooling

Group B:
- Not enough youth activities
- Some “small town negativism”
- Nobody voted for John Grettenberg for mayor
- Downtown apartments (store fronts)
- Properties that are not well kept

Group C:
- Terrain/Sidewalks – in need of repair
- Lack of racial/ethnic diversity
- Lack of shopping and cultural opportunities
- Lack of recreational facilities-especially for kids

**Group D:**
- Not the county seat
- Remote – people don’t know it exists
- No upscale dining
- No involvement of youth population – should be invited in these kind of community meetings

**Group E:**
- Lack of retail options
- Declining number of jobs
- Lack of quality rental property
- Lack of assisted living

**Discussion:**
- Groups were specifically concerned about losing young population
- No places to hang out like movie theatres or any other facilities for them – people have to drive at least for half an hour to access to these kinds of places
- Who is responsible for providing these kinds of facilities - School district or City/County?
- No youth involvement in community meetings
- Not invited in these kinds of meetings

**Question 3: How can Coon Rapids strengthen its economy?**

**Group A:**
- Tourism
- Encourage small scale businesses
- Advertise/Promotion
- Support Great Places and Whiterock Conservancy
- Promote residential development

**Group B:**
- More business – clothing stores, hotel, steak house etc.
- Annual community events
- Retirement housing – give people to come back to town
- Trucking facilities
- Sell the community assets – signs, advertising, etc.

**Group C:**
- Advertise real estate opportunities
- Discounted rate on home loans – helps alumni returning
- Build up/Improve existing businesses
- Improving quality of life and advertising it
Group D:
- Four-lane highway
- Bring mid size jobs into town
- Grow existing businesses
- Develop a good website

Group E:
- Build the infrastructure – “Build it and they will come....”
- Economic diversity – Community supported agriculture
- Recreational tourism – river canoeing, trails, biking facilities etc
- Explore e-commerce, arts, and small businesses

Question 4: Would you like to see Coon Rapids as a tourist destination? If yes, how?

Group A:
- Yes,
- Support of community
- Completion of trails – hub of three trails
- Promote corn museum

Group B:
- Yes,
- Promote Whiterock
- Trails
- Canoeing
- Biking
- Hiking
- Better recreational facilities and camping facilities

Group C:
- Yes,
- Trails
- Promote Whiterock Conservancy
- Visionary leadership
- Internet marketing – more publicity
- Need motel – full service restaurant
- Support great places projects

Group D:
- Yes,
- Promote Whiterock Conservancy
- Trails
- Corn museum

Group E:
- Yes,
- Bike trails connections
- Bird watching
• Advertise coon rapid’s natural assets
• Stage seasonal community art events

**Question 5: What challenges Coon Rapids would face in next 10 years?**

**Group A:**
• Declining school population
• Aging population
• Possible job losses
• Maintaining housing quality
• Maintaining emergency services
• Quality leadership
• City and school funding

**Group B:**
• Continued growth
• Keeping younger generation in town
• Help existing businesses to grow
• Encourage new business
• Keep younger people involved in our community

**Group C:**
• Declining school population
• Aging population
• Increasing energy prices
• How to pay for quality public services
• Maintaining Main Street
• How to involve young people in meaningful ways

**Group D:**
• Declining enrollment in Schools
• Aging population
• Challenge of keeping and bringing young families in town

**Discussion:**
• Community doesn’t think growth would be a threat but would prefer it to be gradual
• Make Coon Rapids and Whiterock Conservancy grow together
• Population of about 3000 people with wonderful touristy areas, outdoor living, etc
• How much business main street can handle? Is there any other area in town to be explored for future business growth?
• How to increase per capita income?
Community Forum #2: March 8th, 2007

Community Forum 2 focused on specific strategies for the implementation of Great Places projects and the realization of Great Places objectives for the community. Attendees were asked to select three projects from the project list (Appendix A) that were of particular importance to them. Though the question was not intended to suggest a community-wide level of interest in each project, three particularly stood out: Whiterock Conservancy, Infrastructure Projects, and Business Development. When asked about possible new projects, the discussion focused on developing better forms of small-business assistance. In particular, the group suggested the creation of a local business service center or incubator that could provide space for new start-up businesses and also provide technical and educational training to existing and future business owners.

The discussion then shifted to general Great Places implementation strategies. Questions were specifically tailored to target a variety of issues such as public financing (taxes, tax increment financing, and general obligation bonds), community involvement, matching new jobs with the local labor force, and specific industries to target for recruitment. A firm consensus emerged regarding the public’s lack of willingness to take on additional taxes. However, there was tentative to strong support for TIF financing options.

Discussion returned to the issue of community involvement throughout the meeting. Several specific suggestions were made, such as: establishing a volunteer fair, appealing to each of the more than 80 social organizations in Coon Rapids, one-on-one apprenticeship training, and/or recruiting volunteers from organizations outside the Coon Rapids area. Additionally, the point was made that it would most likely be more fruitful if volunteers were recruited for very specific tasks related to larger Great Places projects. Persons are more likely to volunteer for a finite time slot rather than an ongoing project. Also, utilizing relationships with school teachers and officials to integrate the community’s youth into the Initiative was identified as an important goal that the Steering Committee should consider.
The remaining time was spent discussing jobs, businesses, and industries that could be targeted for recruitment to the area. Suggestions included a fine dining establishment, an accountant, replacements for pending local retirees (such as doctors and dentists), and telecommuters from the Ames and Des Moines areas. The initial discussion focused on modest goals. After some prodding, the group began discussing larger industries. One suggestion in particular was to target businesses within the emerging renewable energy sector, specifically wind energy. Other well received propositions were to entice trucking firms to the area and the establishment of a hotel.

Additional ideas included: a 5K run along the proposed town loop trail, a bus tour of historic sites of local importance, free-range hog producers, and an RV Park.
APPENDIX E – BUSINESS NEEDS SURVEY

Methods
Over 70 surveys were mailed to existing businesses in Coon Rapids and the surrounding area. Thirty-five responses were received after a follow-up phone call, for a return rate of 50%. In addition 35 surveys were mailed to existing or potential microenterprise businesses in the area and 11 responses were received for a response rate of 34%. For purposes of this study, microenterprise businesses consist of businesses identified by the clients that are tourist-related, hobby businesses, or home-based. For many of the questions, the respondent was asked to rate several responses by importance or priority, with 1 being most important and 5 being least important. A copy of the survey is included at the end of this appendix. In each question, the summary tables show the percentage of respondents that rated each response as a 1 or 2 to capture responses that were of greatest interest to survey participants.

Results

Business Characteristics
Of the 26 existing businesses that responded to the survey, eight classified themselves as a retail business and seven as service-oriented businesses. None of the respondents classified themselves as manufacturing or agriculture production businesses. Figure E-1 illustrates the percentage of responses allocated to each category. Microenterprise businesses were either retail or service related, ranging from pottery production and sales, to taxidermy and daycares. Among survey respondents, 20 (83%) of existing businesses are independent, and four (17%) are franchise businesses.

Perhaps the most important finding of the survey was the increase in total employment among existing businesses, both full-time and part-time between the years of 2006 and 2007. Table E-1 shows the numeric and percentage change in full-time and part-time employment between these two years among existing business survey respondents. ET Video and National Warranties Inc. were the largest employers among respondents, with 53 and 20 total employees in 2007, respectively. Garst Seed did not participate in the survey.
Figure E-1 – Existing Business Activity Classification

Table E-1 – Employment Change between 2006 and 2007 among survey respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>Percent Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-Time</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average duration of operation of all existing business survey respondents was 29 years. However, 42 percent of all respondents’ businesses were 10 years old or less. The average is skewed by three businesses that have been in operation for over 70 years. In contrast, the average duration of operation of microenterprise business respondents was 6.6 years, with the longest tenure at 27 years and the shortest at only 9 months.

Customer Characteristics
Figure E-2 displays the businesses’ common customer types (first or second most frequent). 91% of all respondents list families, and 76% listed homeowners as their common customers. No business ranked international immigrants as their first or second most common customer type. However, 30% of respondents listed that category as either third or fourth most common. While figure E-2 represents data obtained from the existing business survey, a similar pattern can be seen in the microenterprise data as well. Eighty-
nine percent of existing businesses stated that their first or second most common customers were middle-aged persons, followed by 68% for elder/retirees, with children at 18%. In contrast, 71% of microenterprise business respondents stated that their first or second most frequent customers were children.

As expected, a majority (83%) of all responding existing businesses stated their customers commonly originate from the local area. Twenty-three percent of businesses’ common customers come from outside the Midwest and inside the United States. Only one business indicated some international customers. A similar pattern exists for microenterprise businesses.

![Bar chart showing customer types and percentage](image)

**Figure E-2 – Common customers: for each customer type, the figure shows the percentage of survey respondents that listed that type of customer as their first or second most common**

**Additional Microenterprise Characteristics**

When asked if their microenterprise business was their main source of income, 46% respondents replied yes. On the other hand, 69% replied that it was their *intent* for their business to be their main source of income.

Over half of respondents stated that their business was located in their home. Two of the respondents stated they were located in a business district, and four stated they were located in a building on their personal property. When asked about interest in sharing space with other microenterprise businesses, three of the thirteen respondents stated they
were most interested in sharing space in order to sell their products. There was also interest in sharing work or studio space, and little interest in sharing space to hold classes for teaching their respective crafts.

**Marketing**

Table E-2 displays the number of respondents and ranking for each method of advertising used to market their business. A majority of existing businesses listed their storefront signage as their greatest form of advertising with 77% listing it either first or second. To market outside their own place of business, owners most frequently use the newspaper, followed by the radio and direct mail. Interestingly, one third of businesses use eCommerce or a website most frequently to market their business and another third use it with moderate frequency. The microenterprise survey revealed that these types of businesses rely more heavily on “word of mouth” advertising to market their business. Forty-six percent of respondents stated that this was their most frequent method of marketing.

Consistent with the origin of customers, the main focus area for marketing is the local area, diminishing substantially at greater distances. However, other forms of marketing do appear to be stretching somewhat further than where most customers are coming from. For example, 23% of respondents chose “national” as their most frequent customer origin, whereas 33% listed “national” as their marketing area. Forty-two percent of respondents employ some degree of internet marketing for their business.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table E-2 – Frequency table of existing business marketing techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Storefront Signage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mail-order/Catalog</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>eCommerce Website</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fax</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Telephone</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct Mail</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shows &amp; Special Events</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Radio</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Customer Rewards</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Newspaper Ads</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Television Ads</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Challenges
Survey respondents with existing businesses identified a variety of challenges. The greatest challenge identified was a lack of customer base with 73% of respondents citing that as a great challenge. Other challenges that ranked highly were excessive government regulations (67%) and too many taxes (63%). Recruiting skilled employees was another prominent issue, identified first or second by 55% of respondents. Most respondents did not consider local competition or a lack of physical space as challenges. Seventy-five percent of microenterprise business respondents also cited a lack of local customer base as a great challenge, but even more (83%) cited lack of access to capital for expansion as a great challenge. On the other hand, few microenterprise businesses cited too many taxes or excessive government regulations as challenges.

Table E-3 lists existing businesses’ top priorities for assistance from CRDG. Over 62% of respondents listed advertising as their first or second priority, 50% chose legal or technical assistance, and 50% listed better public services. Other important areas include marketing assistance, small business loans, and skilled labor force development. Microenterprise businesses agreed with the need for legal/technical assistance, but were more interested in marketing assistance and help in obtaining small business loans.

Table E-3 – Top CRDG assistance priorities among survey respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>1 or 2</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% 1%</th>
<th>% 1 or 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal/Technical Assistance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Assistance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to information</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help writing a business plan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Business loans</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled labor force</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better physical location</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better public Services</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New complimentary firms</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Local Labor Force
While only 37.5% of respondents stated that they plan to increase the number of their employees in the next year, many listed skills in the present labor force that were in short supply. Seventy-eight percent of respondents listed general experience as their first or second need. Following that, the ability to work in teams (75%) and vocational training
(72%) ranked highly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table E-4 – Top labor skills in short supply among survey respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving Skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked about barriers to attracting or retaining skilled workers in the area, 100% of existing business respondents replied that the ability to provide an adequate wage was the first or second most important barrier. The availability for workers to find a job for their partner was identified by 75% of respondents as a top barrier, while child care ranked highly among 67% of respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table E-5 – Top barriers to attracting or retaining skilled workers among survey respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job for partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Business Location**
When asked to rank satisfaction level with their present business location on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 indicating the highest level of dissatisfaction), the average choice of all respondents was 6.96, and the median choice was 8. In addition, over a third of respondents selected 10. This indicates a general lack of satisfaction with respondents’ business location. These findings seem to conflict with the next part of the survey that asked more specific questions about their locations. One hundred percent of respondents
agreed that their site was appropriately zoned and that the regulations within their zone were appropriate. Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with each of the statements listed below. The average rate of agreement was 91.5%, suggesting a high overall rate of satisfaction:

- This site receives adequate water and sewer service.
- Roads providing access to the site receive adequate maintenance.
- This site is aesthetically pleasing to persons passing by.
- This site is the ideal location for my business.
- This site is easily accessed by my customers.
- The exterior appearance of my property is important to my business.
- This location is appropriately zoned for my business.
- Zoning regulations are appropriate.
- There are enough parking spaces for my customers.

Moreover, 84% respondents agreed that their site was in an ideal location. While this may seem to completely contradict their earlier response, this may be due to their interpreting the former question as their location in Coon Rapids compared to other communities.

Regarding general concerns respondents had about their business, parking ranked first or second among 77% of respondents. Following that, 53% of respondents were highly concerned about customer access to their business site, 50% wanted better Internet service, and 46% were concerned about property taxes. Businesses were least concerned about zoning (0% ranked first or second), sidewalks (9%), and their location (12.5%). Details on general concerns among existing businesses are shown in Table E-6.

Only 5 of the 26 respondents stated that they were searching for a new location. Of those five most were looking to locate in an industrial park or an existing urban area. They are not looking in research and development sites, rural business units, or small-scale starter units.
Table E-6 – Top general concerns about business among survey respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>1 or 2</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>1%</th>
<th>% 1 or 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation access</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property taxes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet service</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrounding property</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility service</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising space</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer access</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The City and Business

As shown in Table E-7, most respondents are happy about the way CRDG and the City of Coon Rapids support their business. Ninety-five percent of respondents agreed that Coon Rapids is supportive and helpful to their businesses while fewer than 14% feel that city regulations are burdensome and should be reduced. Ninety-five percent of respondents felt that CRDG and the city work well together, although only 58% agreed that the City and CRDG provide several opportunities for assistance with business and only 32% would be willing to pay a special assessment to improve the area in which their business is located. Only 15% agreed that their property taxes were inappropriate, leaving open the possibility of city-sponsored improvement and assistance programs.

Table E-7 – Survey respondents’ general feelings regarding Coon Rapids and CRDG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The City of Coon Rapids is supportive and helpful to the business community</td>
<td>95.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City regulations are burdensome and should be reduced</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to pay a special assessment to improve the area in which my business is located</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR and CRDG work well together</td>
<td>95.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City and CRDG provide several opportunities for assistance with business</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property taxes are inappropriate</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalks are in adequate condition</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next section of the survey asked respondents about additional services or resources that the city or CRDG could provide. Many existing businesses stated that the city could lower their utility bills and provide better Internet access. Several respondents suggested that CRDG could help attract more businesses to the area, thereby diversifying products.
and services available to the community. Most importantly, respondents were looking to both CRDG and the city for assistance with getting citizens to shop locally. Ideas identified by microenterprise businesses included improved marketing of local assets outside the area by CRDG, and featuring businesses in the local newspaper and television station on a regular basis.
APPENDIX F: ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Introduction
Developing a tourism industry in the Coon Rapids-Whiterock area will create new jobs and bring new economic activity to the region. The overall impact of this new economic growth depends on many factors. First, it will depend on the number of new visitors to the area. Estimating this accurately would require a market analysis, which is beyond the scope of this report. Another important factor is whether or not new economic activity will be the result of revenue from outside sources. In this case, those outside sources would be visitors from other parts of Iowa and beyond. Finally, the extent of positive benefits to the local economy will also depend on the ability of local tourist-oriented businesses to reinvest their revenues into other local businesses, rather than purchase goods and services from outside the economy. The first part of this section presents the results of the location quotient analysis to identify basic and non basic industries in the study area. The second part presents the estimated economic impacts that will accrue to the Coon Rapids area from the operations of Whiterock Conservancy and the money that visitors will spend while visiting Whiterock and the other attractions in and around Coon Rapids.

Location Quotient Analysis
Location Quotients are one method for studying the industrial economic base of a geographic area as compared with a larger region. This technique compares the local economy, in this case Carroll County, to a reference economy, in this case the state of Iowa. The technique characterizes the economy based on two divisions: 1) The basic (or non-local) sector, and 2) The non-basic (or local) sector. Basic firms manufacture more of a product than local needs require and therefore export their surplus outside of the community. These firms are crucial to the health of the local economy, as they bring new revenue into the economy and indirectly support the majority of non-basic jobs. A Location Quotient of 1.0 for an industry indicates that local production (as measured by employment, payroll, sales, or some other measure) is the same at the local level as it is at the reference level, implying that local production is approximately equal to local
demand. If the LQ is greater than 1.0, the local area is said to specialize in that industrial sector, and the sector is considered a basic industry. If the LQ is less than 1.0, than the area does not specialize in that sector, and is importing goods or services to satisfy that element of local demand.

In the case of Carroll County, the LQ is significantly greater than 1.0 for Forestry, fishing & agricultural support; Utilities; Wholesale trade; and Health care. The Accommodation & food services; Arts, entertainment & recreation; Transportation; and Manufacturing sectors have an LQ of less than 1.0, showing that Carroll County employed a relatively smaller share of its workforce in these industries than the state and the region (See Table F-1). Several of these sectors are critical for tourism development, and this analysis suggests that Carroll County needs to develop these sectors in order to fully capitalize on tourism development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Carroll</th>
<th>4-county</th>
<th>LQ-Carroll County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>1,206,353</td>
<td>11,156</td>
<td>17,921</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry, fishing &amp; agricultural support</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>1,954</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>3.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>61,166</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>219,188</td>
<td>1261</td>
<td>2,388</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>60,727</td>
<td>1882</td>
<td>2,458</td>
<td>3.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>178,251</td>
<td>1773</td>
<td>2,765</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>48,210</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>35,849</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance &amp; insurance</td>
<td>91,420</td>
<td>1070</td>
<td>1,461</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate, rental &amp; leasing</td>
<td>13,471</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific &amp; technical services</td>
<td>41,324</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mgt. of companies and enterprises</td>
<td>11,866</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin, support &amp; waste mgmt.</td>
<td>51,661</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educ. Services</td>
<td>24,920</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care</td>
<td>185,681</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>3,356</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, entertainment &amp; recreation</td>
<td>18,004</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation &amp; food services</td>
<td>107,271</td>
<td>803</td>
<td>1,399</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
<td>53,989</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>719</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auxiliaries</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Economic Impact Assessment

Potential economic impacts of several Great Places projects were estimated using the IMPLAN® economic impact modeling system, a software package that creates sophisticated Input-Output (I-O) economic models. I-O models examine specific industry-by-industry transactions, as well as final demand, total value-added, imports, and exports in a geographically defined economy. IMPLAN is designed to be used with its own companion data files, compiled from various federal sources, including the Economic Census, the Census of Population and Housing (The Decennial Census) and the U.S. Department of Labor (http://www.implan.com/database.html). The data used in this analysis are 2007 sector-by-sector I-O data at the county level. The model used in this analysis was for Carroll County. Carroll County has most of the resources and inputs that will be needed as Great Places projects are completed. The impact results generated using a Carroll County model will be the most accurate. In reality, some jobs and economic activity projected to occur in Carroll County in this model may actually take place in one of the three adjacent counties; however, the overall local results should be similar.

Three types of impact analyses were conducted: first, Whiterock’s impact is considered on the basis of the Conservancy’s estimated 2012 operating budget. Second, the impact of visitor spending is estimated based on likely per-person spending estimates. Current estimates indicate that tourist volume may reach as high as 50,000 annual visitors to Coon Rapids in the future. Rather than attempt to validate that estimate, the visitor spending impacts measured in this report are standardized to a per-5000-parties basis. Finally, the impacts of construction activities for the two largest Great Places infrastructure projects—The Thomas Rest Haven expansion and the National Corn Museum—are estimated based on current cost figures.

Whiterock Operational Impact (2012)

In 2007, Whiterock Conservancy will have an operating budget of just over $442,000. According to the Conservancy’s executive director, this budget can be expected to double in approximately five years, depending on annual visitor numbers and fundraising efforts.
We assumed a 2012 budget of $884,000. Furthermore, it was assumed that Whiterock would employ 20 people (not necessarily all full-time) in 2012.

Based on the current budget, Whiterock’s expenditures were divided between 20 industry sectors and processed through IMPLAN. After accounting for the share of spending that would likely go toward imported goods (from outside the four counties surrounding Whiterock) and assuming that 80% of salaries and wages re-enter the economy as disposable income, the following impacts resulted:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Indirect</th>
<th>Induced</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total Multiplier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Output</td>
<td>884,468</td>
<td>258,873</td>
<td>316,217</td>
<td>1,459,558</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value Added</td>
<td>510,315</td>
<td>122,423</td>
<td>183,349</td>
<td>816,087</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Income</td>
<td>477,971</td>
<td>98,582</td>
<td>99,551</td>
<td>676,104</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table F-1, impacts are measured in four basic ways: **Total Industrial Output**, **Total Value Added**, **Total Labor Income**, and **Total Jobs**. Total Industrial Output is the total annual sales value of all production in the industries that are affected by Whiterock’s direct expenditures, as well as by Whiterock itself. Value-added includes all “payments to factors” (wages, land rents, capital expenditures, taxes), as well as returns to investors and indirect tax payments. Total Labor income is a subset of value added. The final measure, total jobs created, is self-explanatory. The only thing to remember with this final measure is that it measures total jobs, not employment (some workers may hold multiple jobs). It should not be confused with the total workforce, or with “full-time-equivalent” jobs.

The aforementioned measures are divided into three categories. The first, **Direct Impacts**, refers only to direct expenditures and employment generated by Whiterock. Thus, direct industrial output, for example, is the assumed total of 2012 expenditures ($884,468). The second impact category, **Indirect Impacts**, includes all of the “upstream” industries that supply those that are directly impacted by Whiterock expenditures. Finally, **Induced Impacts** are those that occur when the employees of the
directly and indirectly impacted industries convert their new-found income into household consumption.

If Whiterock’s budget grows as currently expected, the $884,000 in annual expenditures can be expected to generate a total economic impact of almost $1.5 million in the Carroll County analysis area. The estimated 20 jobs at Whiterock will be responsible for an additional 8 jobs at other locations in the analysis area, for a total labor income of over $675,000.

Visitor Spending Impacts
The economic impacts of Whiterock Conservancy do not account for the additional spending that tourists will bring to the area beyond what they actually spend within Whiterock. Estimating how much visitors will spend is difficult, and is usually accomplished through the use of surveys. For the purposes of this analysis, visitor spending was estimated based on a recent survey of visitors to Effigy Mounds National Monument in northeast Iowa, performed by researchers at Michigan State University and the National Park Service. The Effigy Mounds study should offer a reasonable proxy for Coon Rapids-Whiterock per capita visitor spending because the areas offer similar attractions, draw visitors of a similar socioeconomic profile (by virtue of their proximity), and because the study was completed recently. Based on our analysis of that report, it appears that spending at a nearby Casino was not factored into the survey results.

In the Effigy Mounds study, spending was measured in terms of dollars per party per trip, rather than by individual visitor. Visitor parties were analyzed in four cohorts: Local Visitors; Day Visitors; Overnight Visitors Staying in Motels; and Overnight Visitors Staying in Campsites. The estimated per party expenditures for each of the cohorts were rounded to the nearest dollar. They are shown in Table F-3 on a per-5,000-parties basis. Multiplying by 5,000 allows a more meaningful analysis than attempting to look at the impact of a single visitor. In this case, the number of direct jobs created by this spending was estimated by total direct spending in each of these industrial sectors in Carroll County, dividing that number by the total existing employment in the county in that sector, resulting in a figure of “direct spending per job,” and then applying that factor to
the direct spending in the table. The resulting figure is shown in the “Jobs” columns for each cohort. It is important to remember that the spending figures depicted in that table are per 5,000 parties for each cohort, so adding the four cohorts together would mean a total of 20,000 parties.

Table F-3 – Estimated average direct spending and direct jobs created, per 5,000 parties, by cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure Type</th>
<th>Local Spending ($)</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Day Trip Spending ($)</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Camp Spending ($)</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Motel Spending ($)</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motel/Hotel</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>665,000</td>
<td>16.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camping Fees</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>170,000</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants/Bars</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>135,000</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>280,000</td>
<td>7.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groceries, Take-out food/drifts</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas &amp; Oil</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>115,000</td>
<td>2.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission &amp; Fees</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>55,000</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Souvenirs &amp; Other Expenses</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>125,000</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>3.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>225,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>175,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>765,000</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1,340,000</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table F-4 – Estimated total economic impacts of visitor spending, per 5,000 parties, by cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure Type</th>
<th>Local Output ($)</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Day Trip Output ($)</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Camp Output ($)</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Motel Output ($)</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motel/Hotel</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>913,475</td>
<td>20.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camping Fees</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>170,000</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants/Bars</td>
<td>90,477</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>90,477</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>187,914</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>389,747</td>
<td>9.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groceries, Take-out food/drifts</td>
<td>84,197</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>14,033</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>182,427</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>126,296</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas &amp; Oil</td>
<td>79,208</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>59,406</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>198,020</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>151,816</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission &amp; Fees</td>
<td>16,539</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>40,849</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>89,867</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>111,376</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Souvenirs &amp; Other Expenses</td>
<td>27,682</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>41,523</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>173,013</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>166,093</td>
<td>4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>307,904</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>246,288</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,001,242</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1,861,802</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to determine the economic impacts, each of the seven expenditure types listed above was assigned an appropriate industry sector in IMPLAN, with the appropriate industry multiplier applied. The results are shown in Table F-4 and suggest fairly impressive impacts for the region if tourism numbers reach the goals outlined by the Coon Rapids-Whiterock Great Places Steering Committee. For example, if 5,000 carloads of visitors come to Coon Rapids and stay in a motel in one year, the total economic impact to Carroll County (or shared between Carroll and the surrounding counties) would be nearly $2 million, as well as 40 jobs. Table F-4 also clearly demonstrates two important facts about tourist spending. First, overnight visitors create a significantly greater impact than visitors that do not stay overnight. Second, visitors that stay in a motel generate almost double the impact of visitors that camp. This is not only because of the cost of motel rooms, but also because of greater spending in restaurants.
and bars. These results add credence to the Steering Committee’s goal of recruiting a motel to the area, and, more broadly, of attracting visitors to stay the right.

**Construction Impacts – Thomas Rest Haven and the National Corn Museum**

Thomas Rest Haven and the National Corn Museum are the most capital-intensive construction projects currently included in the Great Places project list. Several improvements are planned for Thomas Rest Haven, with the first project, an assisted living addition to the complex, expected to commence in the near future. The National Corn Museum is a long-term goal of the Great Places Initiative, designed to illustrate the unique roles of Roswell Garst and the town of Coon Rapids in the development of hybrid seed corn technology. The Corn Museum is also expected to be a tourism anchor in the area and specifically seeks to draw visitors to downtown Coon Rapids (as opposed to Whiterock, which is located along the highway).

Construction impacts for the assisted living addition to Thomas Rest Haven, and for the National Corn Museum, were generated using estimated construction costs. For Thomas Rest Haven, the construction of the assisted living addition is currently expected to cost approximately $1.7 million and take two years. Those expenses were allocated to five industry sectors in IMPLAN and divided by two to reflect the two-year construction period. The resulting impacts are shown in Table F-5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Indirect</th>
<th>Induced</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total Multiplier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Output</td>
<td>870,454</td>
<td>124,689</td>
<td>210,790</td>
<td>1,205,932</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value Added</td>
<td>398,381</td>
<td>69,471</td>
<td>123,753</td>
<td>591,604</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Income</td>
<td>336,889</td>
<td>44,210</td>
<td>63,151</td>
<td>444,250</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Construction of the National Corn Museum is expected to cost approximately $8 million and take two years. Allocating those costs to four industrial sectors in IMPLAN and dividing by two, the impacts are shown in Table F-6.
Table F-6 – National Corn Museum construction impacts (two year construction)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Indirect</th>
<th>Induced</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total Multiplier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Output</td>
<td>3,677,000</td>
<td>490,352</td>
<td>820,573</td>
<td>4,987,924</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value Added</td>
<td>1,560,091</td>
<td>273,070</td>
<td>481,750</td>
<td>2,314,911</td>
<td>1.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Income</td>
<td>1,308,350</td>
<td>176,162</td>
<td>245,838</td>
<td>1,730,350</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>60.2</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INTERPRETING CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

There is an important difference between construction impacts and the types of impacts generated by a *permanent* change in the economy, such as the operation of Whiterock. First off, construction is temporary, meaning that once the construction is complete, the jobs and economic activity attributable to that project no longer exist. Second, and perhaps more important, is the fact that the construction industry is always dependent upon new projects that are finite in nature. In other words, the construction projects described here may not be creating *new* economic activity and jobs in the region, although in that case they would be *preserving* jobs and activities that might otherwise have disappeared. However, it is certainly appropriate to say that, during the period of construction, the economic activity described in Table F-5 and Table F-6 is *attributable* to those projects. It can also be argued that the impacts, particularly those that result from discretionary spending by construction workers, will be far more beneficial to the immediate area of Coon Rapids than if comparable projects were taking place in other parts of Carroll County or the region.