



American Planning Association  
**Iowa Chapter**

*Making Great Communities Happen*

American Planning Association - Iowa Chapter  
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DES MOINES, IOWA –

## **APA Iowa announces recipients of 2009 Iowa Planning Awards**

Each year, the Iowa Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA Iowa) asks its more than 350 members to nominate plans, projects, and individuals deserving recognition by the professional organization. Award nominees can be recognized in as many as thirteen categories ranging from planning excellence to distinguished leadership. Based on an independent review by a jury of professional planners from the Minnesota Chapter of the APA, four nominees have been selected to receive Iowa APA Awards in 2009, as follows:

### **Planning Excellence Award for Best Practice – City of Fort Dodge and Camiros, Ltd. – “Fort Dodge, IA Downtown Plan”**

In 2008, the City of Fort Dodge adopted a Downtown Plan as a means of stimulating new investment in a traditional core that had been stressed by vacancies, age, and a migration of commercial activities to peripheral arterials. Since then, several businesses have been retained, and new development proposals are coming forth. Federal stimulus funds were secured to revitalize neighborhoods that abut the downtown, and major infrastructure improvements are planned that will provide increased access and a new Central Park, the centerpiece of the Downtown Plan.

The Plan balances physical improvements, redevelopment, strategic actions, partnerships, and public policy to result in a document that serves as a manual for local leaders and members of the development community. By clearly articulating a vision and subsequently identifying the required steps for implementation, the Plan outlines a clear process for the improvements desired by the community and project Steering Committee.

A broad group of involved stakeholders crafted a common vision that provided the context for each group to achieve their individual goals while understanding a greater set of ideals. This involvement helped answer specific questions, such as “what is the

future of downtown?” and “what can I do with my property to help achieve plan goals?” These talks were essential in instilling local stewardship in the plan.

For questions or to request more information on this project, please contact Douglas Hammel, AICP, Camiros, Ltd., 312-922-9211 x.241 or [dhammel@camiros.com](mailto:dhammel@camiros.com).

### **Planning Excellence Award for Implementation – City of Council Bluffs and RDG Planning & Design – “The Downtown Council Bluffs Plan”**

Downtown Council Bluffs was once a vital and teeming retail center. The City undertook a massive redevelopment effort during the 1970s to retain this retail base, but ultimately lost out to more auto-oriented competition. Since then, parts of the central district adapted to change, but the overall district lacked cohesion and did not produce needed reinvestment. In 2003, the Downtown Council Bluffs Plan established a new blueprint for the district, based on restoring each of nine distinct “neighborhoods” to a state of health. During the subsequent six years, the City has achieved remarkable success in reigniting interest and development within its unique center.

The City has executed major public projects since the plan’s adoption. These include the reconstruction of Bayliss Park, the city’s traditional town square; streetscape improvements on Broadway, the district’s main corridor; and other public space improvements. These public improvements were matched by private investments, including the construction of new downtown housing, restoration and reuse of the former home of the city’s newspaper, restoration of commercial buildings on the historic 100 Block, continued reinvestment in the Haymarket historic district, and housing rehabilitation in the surrounding neighborhood. The momentum continues with the planned redevelopment of the south side of the 100 Block on Broadway, a major recommendation of the 2003 plan.

The plan focused on three basic categories of change: *Subdistricts*, describing the component districts of the central district. *Connections*, describing the linkages between the subdistricts and other points of importance, provide structure for development and represent the main ways that people move through downtown. They also have a processional quality, and represent Downtown’s most important public spaces. *Policies*, describing methods by which various needs and markets are met and projects are implemented.

For questions or to request more information on this project, please contact Gary Lozano, AICP, RDG Planning & Design, 515-309-3273 or [glozano@rdgusa.com](mailto:glozano@rdgusa.com).

### **Planning Excellence Award for Innovation in Best Practices for Sustainability – City of Dubuque, Cuningham Group Architecture, P.A., Economics Research Associates and Jeffrey Morton Architecture – “Historic Millwork District Master Plan”**

Dubuque’s Millwork District is located between Downtown and the River. The District - once the nation’s largest Millwork District - now covers 19 acres and contains over 1 million square feet of vacant warehouse space.

The Historic Millwork District Master Plan (“The Plan”) charts a course for the Millwork District to reestablish itself as a regional engine of growth. Upon completion, the District will contain over 1,000 new residents and 1,000 new employees. Individual properties and the public realm will function as an urban ecosystem, and the District will be a unit with high economic value and low environmental impact. The District will stay within its rainfall budget, approach carbon balance, create sustainable jobs and housing, and reinforce the importance of connectivity and diversity within the city.

The Plan provides a comprehensive approach for integrating sustainable practices throughout the implementation process. The Plan organizes the strategies according to five infrastructure systems, or layers, to provide a framework for understanding and implementing a healthy and sustainable plan. Blue Infrastructure addresses water use and treatment approaches that contribute to better water quality. Orange Infrastructure includes efficient electrical, heating, and cooling systems that minimize the District’s carbon footprint. Gray Infrastructure includes buildings, parking, streets, and other redevelopment that is essential to establishing a viable mixed-use neighborhood. Green Infrastructure includes vegetation, parks, and open space that contribute to a healthy ecosystem, better air and water quality, and improved public life. Red Infrastructure includes arts and cultural spaces, amenities, and expressions that reinforce the identity of an area.

For questions or more information on this project, please contact Andrew Dresdner, Cuningham Group Architecture, P.A. at 612-379-3400 or [adresdner@cunningham.com](mailto:adresdner@cunningham.com).

### **Planning Achievement Award for a Hard Won Victory – City of Cedar Rapids and Sasaki Associates – “Cedar Rapids River Corridor Redevelopment Plan”**

Cedar Rapids crowned 2008 the “Year of the River,” a title meant to reinforce the connection between the City and the Cedar River that runs through its core. This name became ever more significant following an extreme flood in June 2008 that inundated the river-edge neighborhoods and a large part of Downtown with a record-breaking 31.5 feet of water. The “Flood of 2008” crested 11.5 feet higher than any previous flood, forced thousands of evacuations, and caused billions of dollars in damage. Over 10 square miles were flooded, with upwards of 10 feet of water in flood-affected areas, catering on Downtown and nearside neighborhoods.

Since the flood, the City and its residents have mobilized to complete two phases of reinvestment and revitalization planning, while a third phase of implementation initiatives and projects is underway. With an ambitious scope and a need for quick action, cooperation was essential to the development of a viable plan.

Phase One, which began only days after the flood in June 2008, was a four-month public process to develop a flood-management strategy. Immediately following Phase One, Phase Two focused on developing plans for reinvesting in the flood-affected neighborhoods, including the Downtown. At the end of the Neighborhood Planning Process, an Action Plan was developed to guide redevelopment in neighborhoods over the next 10 to 15 years. At the heart the planning process is a desire to ensure that

Cedar Rapids will not only recover from the flood, but will become a greater city for future generations.

For questions or more information on this project, please contact Sasaki Associates, or more specifically Jason Hellendrung at [jhellendrung@sasaki.com](mailto:jhellendrung@sasaki.com) or 617-923-7374 or Gina Ford at [gford@sasaki.com](mailto:gford@sasaki.com) or 617-923-7161.

### **Awards Ceremony**

An awards ceremony was held to honor the recipients on Thursday, October 29, 2009, with a reception beginning at 6:30 p.m. and the ceremony beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the Iowa Historical Building at 600 East Locust Street in Des Moines, Iowa. The ceremony was part of the APA Iowa Fall Conference hosted by the Iowa APA Chapter. This year's conference theme was "Yes We Can...Plan" and was held from October 28-30, 2009 at the Embassy Suites on the River in Des Moines. Each of the award recipients was introduced and given an opportunity to make a short presentation about their plan or project.

### **About APA Iowa**

The American Planning Association Iowa Chapter provides leadership in the development of vital communities by advocating excellence in community planning, promoting education and citizen empowerment, and providing the tools and support necessary to meet the challenges of growth and change. APA Iowa members consist of planners and other professionals involved in the development and sustainability of Iowa communities.