



MAY 17, 2023

# IOWA ENGINEERING CONFERENCE

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REVITALIZING THE FORT DODGE REGION  
THROUGH STRONG PARTNERSHIPS AND  
UTILIZING STRENGTHS



*Carol J. Hiss*

# Contact Information

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# UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES



## Job Loss Population Loss Underutilized Assets

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- Massive number of jobs lost in the 1980s and 1990s
- Population decline of 21% since 1970
- Numerous assets within Fort Dodge that have been aging and losing usage/interest
  - Des Moines River
  - East Region Mall
  - Downtown District



# PLANNING FOR SUCCESS



# Re-Envision 2030 Comprehensive Plan

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## Houseal Lavigne / Snyder & Associates (2016)

- Extensive public involvement
  - The River is a character-defining element
- Concerns & Action Items
  - Community Image
  - Neighborhood Deterioration
  - Crime
  - Quality of Life
  - Recruitment of Qualified Labor
  - Community Recreational Facility
  - Downtown Revitalization
  - Expansion of Housing Opportunities
  - Zoning & Approval Process
  - Continued Communication & Collaboration
- **Riverfront Access & Utilization**
  - Trails, Bike & Ped Mobility



# Re-Envision 2030 Comprehensive Plan

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## Houseal Lavigne / Snyder & Associates (2016)

- Balance growth & development with the preservation of unique recreational & environmental assets in the Des Moines River and Lizard Creek
  - Provide additional opportunities for access of river
  - Encourage active & passive recreation along the Des Moines River
  - Modify or remove the Hydroelectric Dam & Little Dam
  - Preserve & restore significant and environmental features of the Des Moines River & Lizard Creek
  - Support local events that bring people to the riverfront & create awareness of its role in Fort Dodge

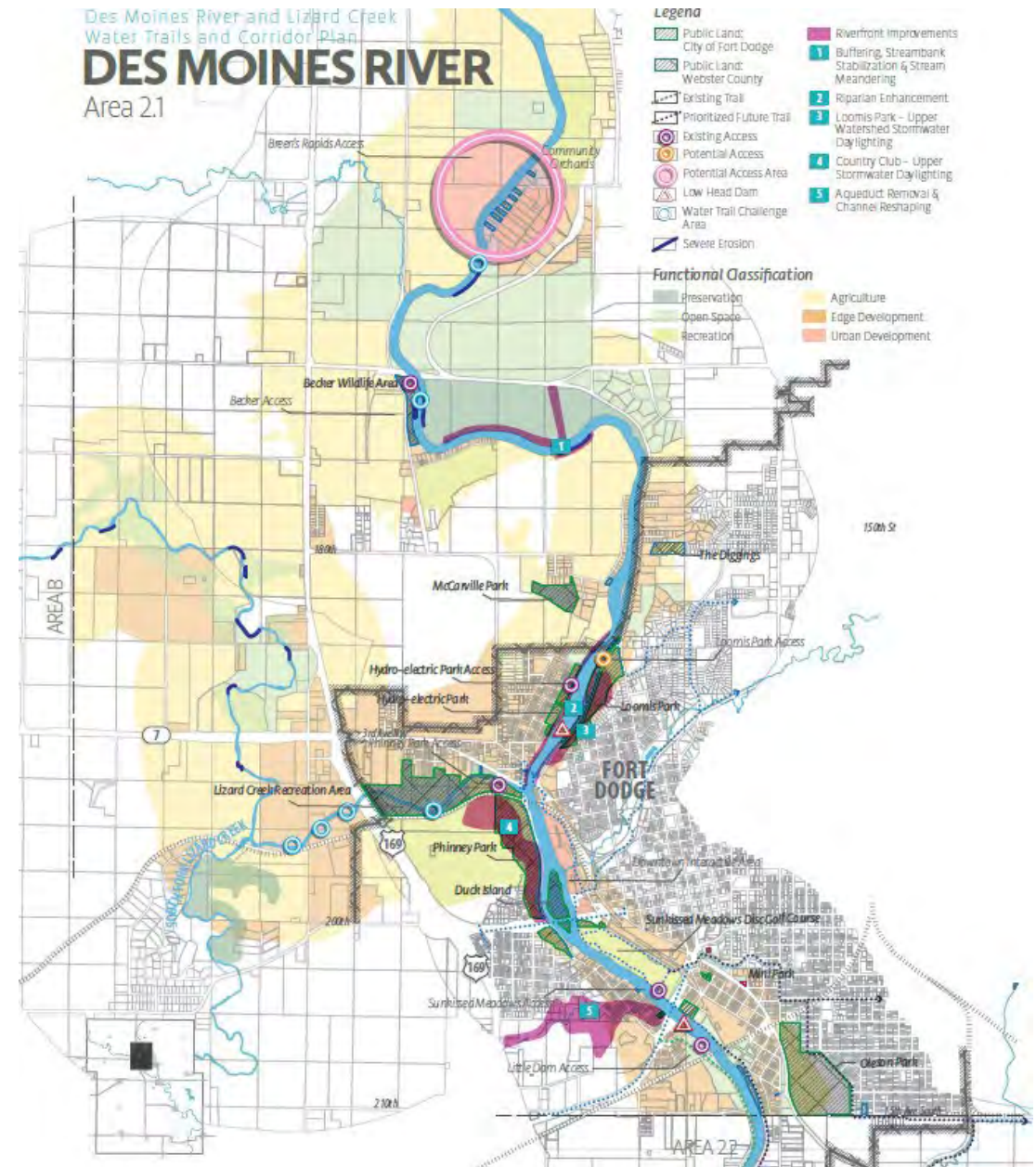




# Des Moines River & Lizard Creek Water Trails & Corridor Plan

Houseal Lavigne / Snyder & Associates  
(2017)

- Extensive public involvement
- Study of both streams within all of Webster County
- Hazard mitigation
  - Two high hazard dams
  - Existing bridges and old pilings
  - Class I-II rapids
- Environmental Constraints review
- River requires more activities and amenities to bring people to its banks
- Riverfront Improvement Plan
  - Protect the Natural Environment
  - Improve Water Quality
  - Identify & Enhance Recreational Activities
  - Improve Access to the River
  - Promote Sustainable Development
  - Protect the Natural Corridor of the River Valley
  - Riverfront Corridor Toolbox
  - Streambank Rehabilitation
  - Dam Modifications/Removals





# Northwest River District Master Plan

## Snyder & Associates (2015)

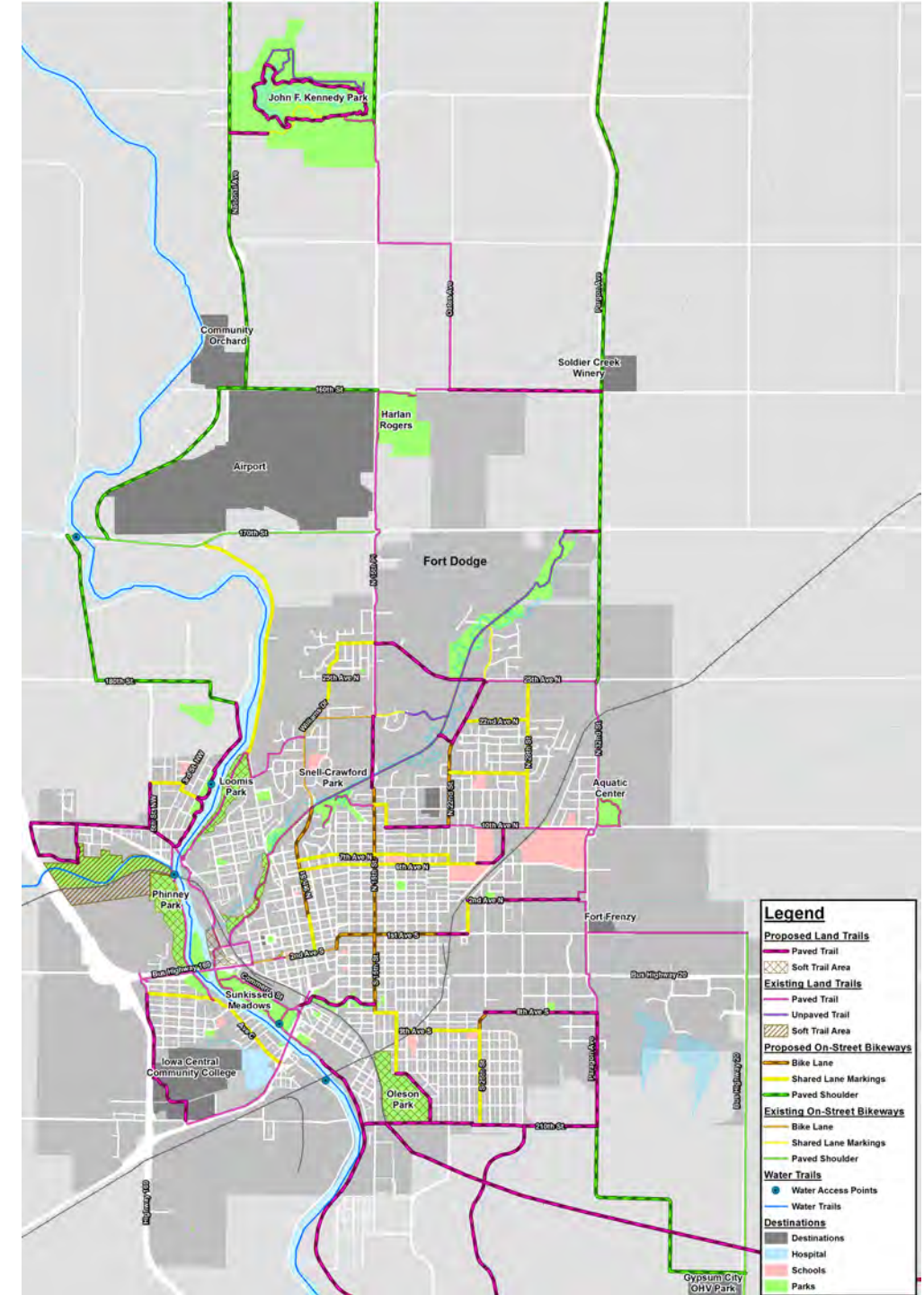
- Extensive public involvement
- America's Best Communities Competition
- Market Analysis
  - Retail needs for building materials & home furnishings
  - Grocery
  - Improved housing
- Revitalization Improvements
  - Regional Commercial Area
  - Mixed Use Area
  - Lizard Creek Recreational Area
  - North neighborhood
  - Western gateway
  - River Gateway
  - 3-lane roadway realignment and reconstruction
  - Intersection enhancements
  - Hydro Park
  - Create a community landmark (grain silo)
  - Establish a formal overlook
  - Create public art areas



# Hike & Bike Master Plan

## Snyder & Associates (2018)

- System Objectives
  - Ensure correct facility is used in each situation
  - Prioritize to make important connections
  - Take advantage of funding
  - Improve safety
  - Ensure policies & standards support biking & walking
- Trip Objective
  - Encourage biking and walking through fun events, celebrations, and incentives
- Marketing Objectives
  - Increase knowledge of Prairie Rivers Trails
  - Promote trail use
  - Make information easily available
  - Increase support for trail/bicycle facility development
- Safety Objectives
  - Increase knowledge of trail etiquette, bike maintenance & bike safety
  - Maintain system in good condition





# Central River District Master Plan

## Snyder & Associates (2021)

- Goals
  - Celebrate art, history & architecture
  - Expand recreational activities
  - Encourage resiliency & sustainability
  - Promote the district
  - Improve & enhance infrastructure





# Downtown Streetscape Master Plan

Snyder & Associates  
(2020)

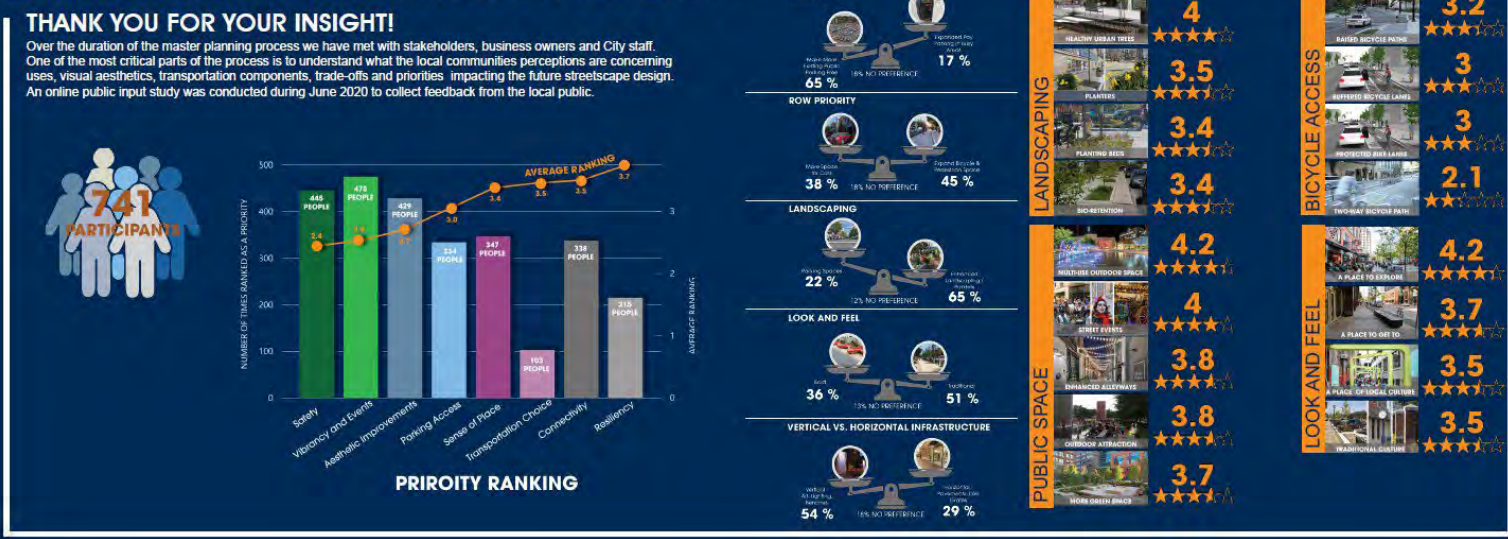
- Plan Benefits
  - Distinctive & cohesive streetscape design
  - Improved safety, comfort & accessibility
  - Enhanced bike accommodation
  - Improved lighting
  - Replace aging infrastructure
  - Equitable & sustainable strategies
  - Celebrate & compliment historical character
  - Economic vitality
  - Promote downtown
  - Build partnerships & seek funding

## STREETSCAPE FRAMEWORK

Similar to the 2010 Fort Dodge Design Guidelines the Downtown Streetscape Master Plan is set up in geographic areas to which varying levels of design requirements and styles are applied. The plan above identifies the boundaries of (6) six different districts.



## EXPLORATION & ENGAGEMENT



# IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES



# Dam Removals & Stream Mitigation Bank

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## Snyder & Associates (2020)

- Removal of two high hazard dams (Hydro and Little)
- Streambank mitigation created
- Over 80,000 mitigation bank credits available for sale





# Lizard Creek Mountain Bike Trail

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## Volunteer Group (2020/21)

- Built a mountain bike trail located on the south side of the confluence of Lizard Creek and the Des Moines River
- Adjacent to the Lizard Creek Water Trail Access #1





# Northwest River District Phase I

## Snyder & Associates (2022/23)

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue NW Reconstruction to three-lane urban corridor
  - Des Moines River west to 7<sup>th</sup> Street NW (5 blocks)
  - Improved roadway geometry through sharp curves
  - 10' sidepath and 5' sidewalk
  - Improved water and storm sewer
  - Roadway – federal aid (STBG)
  - Removal of dilapidated / abandoned homes
  - Facilitating redevelopment from 5<sup>th</sup> Street NW to 10<sup>th</sup> Street NW
    - IEDA Comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization Planning Grant

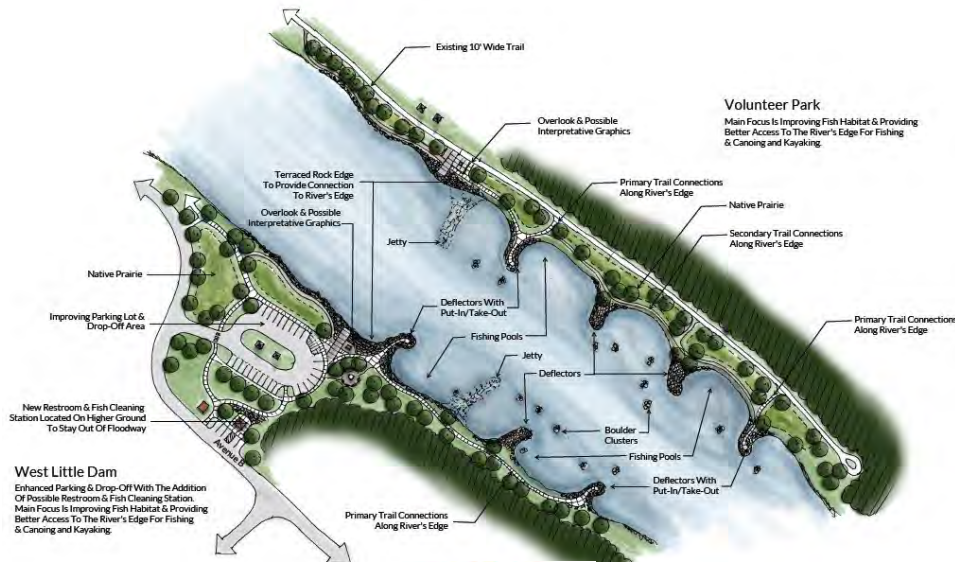




# Little Dam Park & In-Stream

Snyder & Associates, Shive-Hattery, & Riverwise (2023)

- Fishing jetties and boulder clusters
- Parking lot and small park space
- Deflectors with put-in/take-out
- Trail connections on each bank





# Webster County Conservation Center

## ISG & RDG (2024)

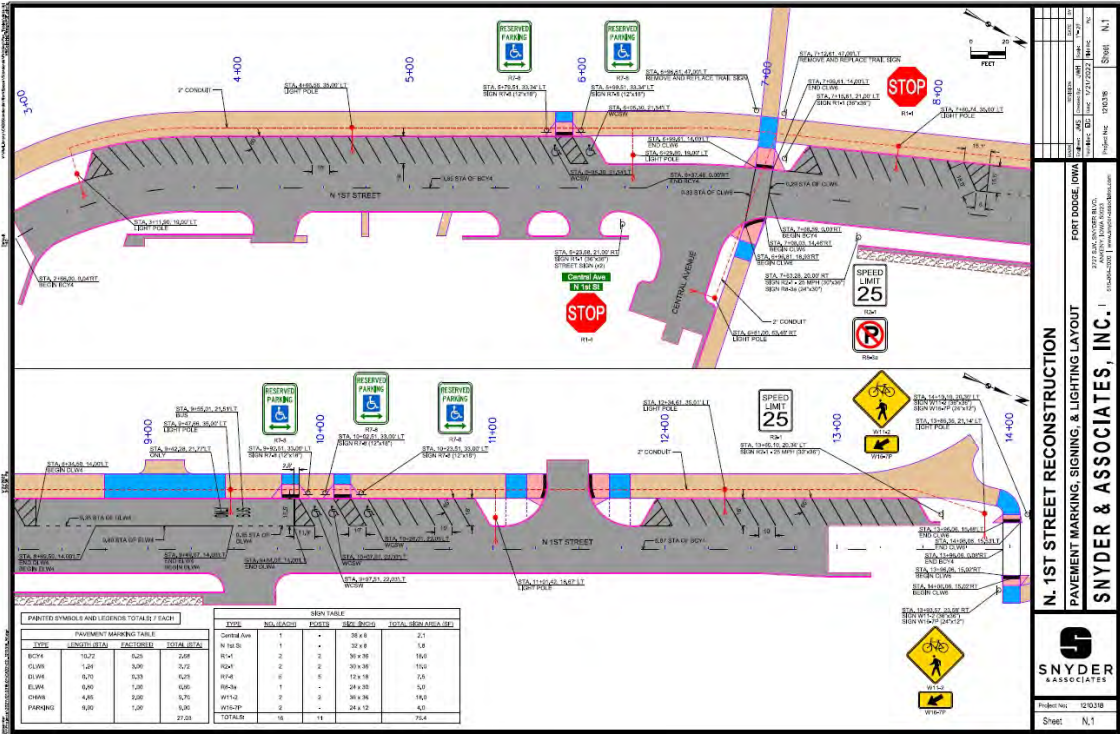
- 13,500 sf Conservation Center
- Eco-tourism area
- Natural playscape
- Riverfront access and circumferential trail network
- Soldier Creek in-stream and bank improvements
- Destination Iowa grant



# Central River District N. 1st Street

## Snyder & Associates (2023)

- Reconstruct N. 1st Street from two-lane to two-lane with parking for Conservation Center and Riverfront Park area
- 1st Avenue S. to Soldier Creek bridge
- 10' side path along west side parking
- Upgrade sewer, water, and storm
- Coordination with Webster County Conservation Center construction





# Central River District Front Porch & In-Stream

Snyder & Associates, Shive-Hattery,  
& Riverwise (2024 est.)

- Front Porch
  - Swings
  - Potential ice rink
  - Assembly area / shelter / rest rooms
  - Great lawn
- In-Stream
  - Fishing jetties, boulder clusters
  - Canoe/kayak put-ins/take-outs
  - Streambank stabilization
  - Small drops
  - Fish passage
- Destination Iowa grant



**A textures & landscaping**



textured colored concrete



low walls



landscaped terrace effect



river themed sculpture at entry

**B shade & lighting elements in plaza**



sail shade



shade structure

**C front porch area**



swing shade structure



front porch swings

**D park amenities**



restroom facilities



restroom facilities with open shelter

**E front entry feature**



ornamental shade supports



ornamental shade supports

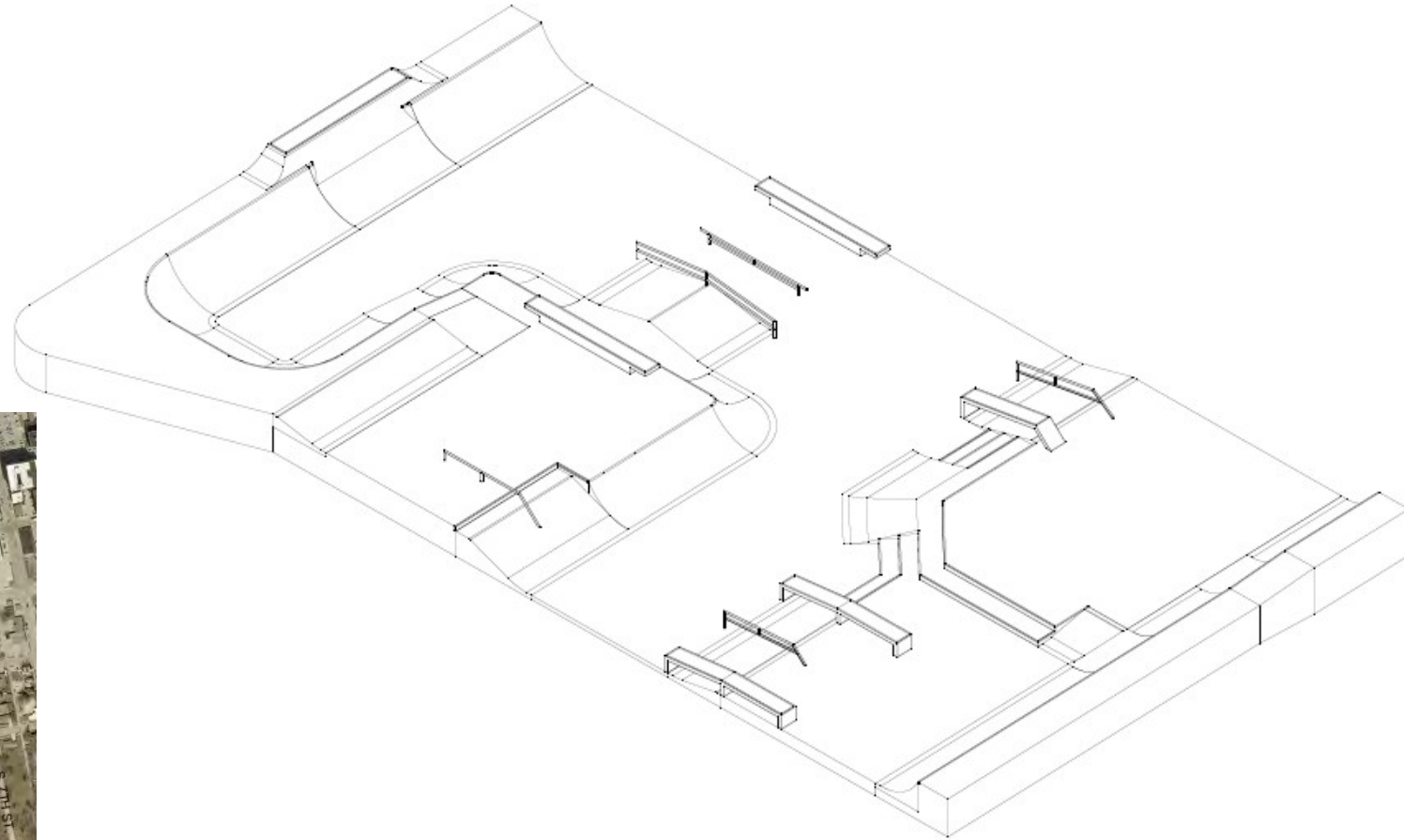




# Skate Park

## Snyder & Associates & Spohn Ranch Skate Parks (2023)

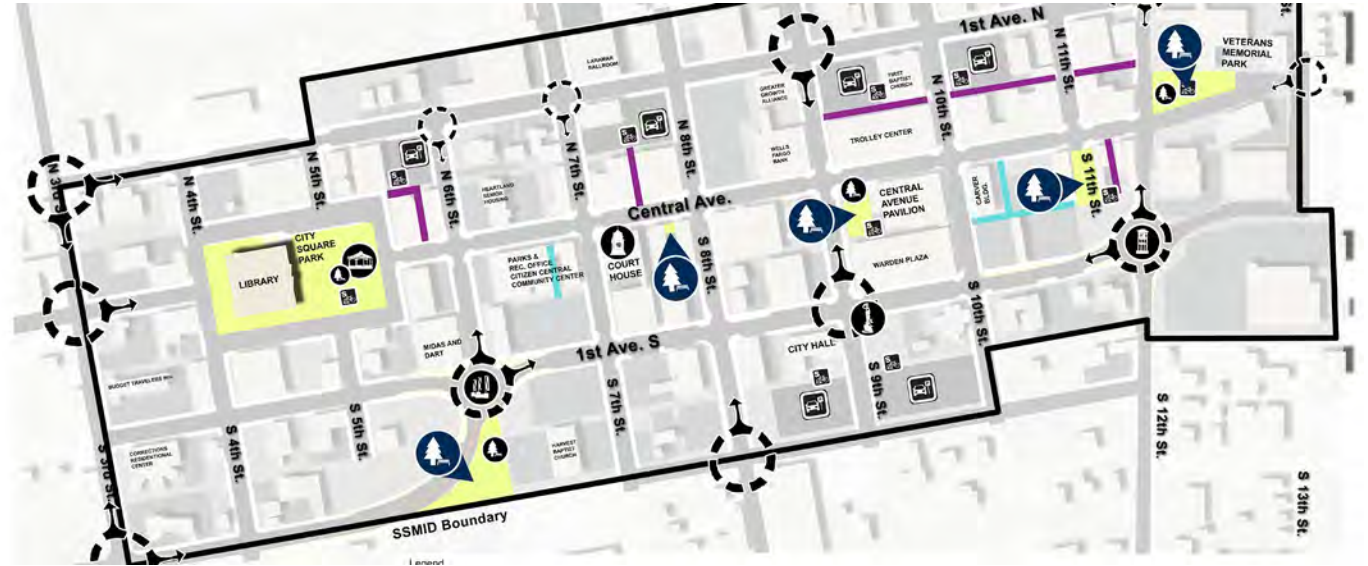
- Located just south of Central River District
- Includes minor parking lot expansion



# Downtown Alleyway Improvements

Snyder & Associates  
(2023)

- Main Street Fort Dodge led
- Design just getting started
- Public involvement





# Hydro Electric Park & In-Stream Features

## Snyder & Associates, Shive-Hattery, & Riverwise (TBD)

- Dam removal completed in 2019
- Mitigation bank established in 2020
- Funding needed to move park and in-stream features forward
  - Interpretive features at dam location
  - Fishing jetties, deflectors, boulder clusters
  - Playground expansion
  - Canoe/kayak put-in/take-out
  - Possible powerhouse foundation repurposing
  - Loomis Park improvements



# THANK YOU!

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