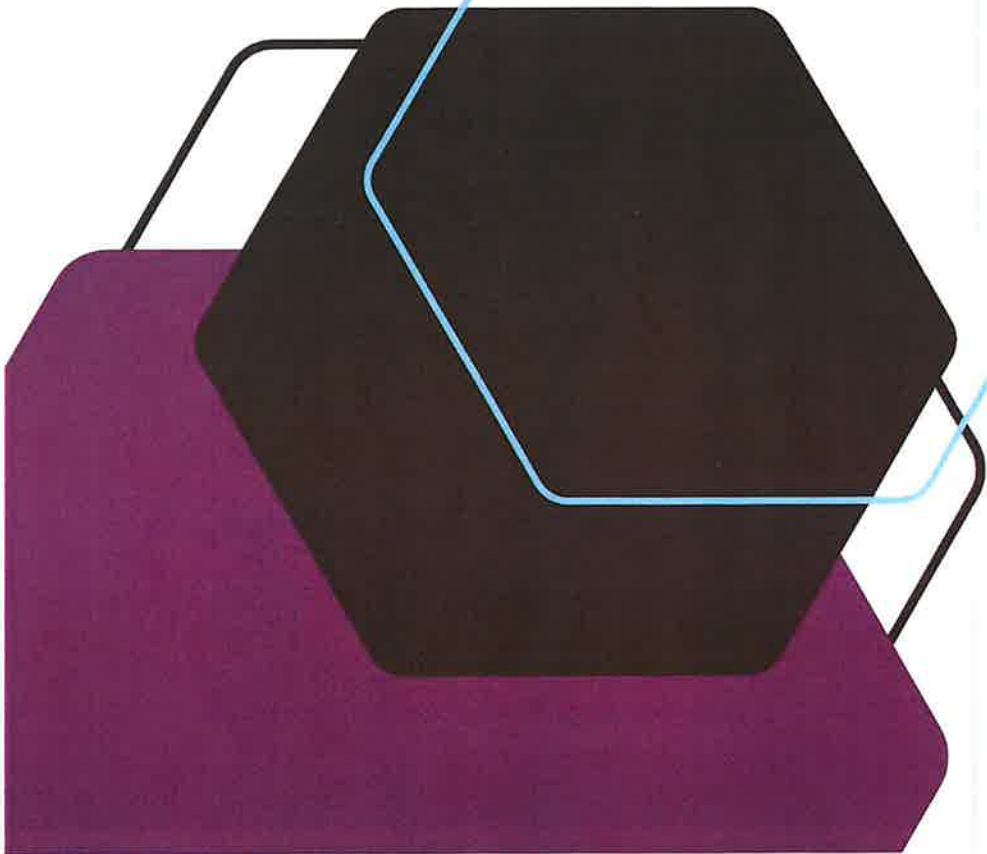
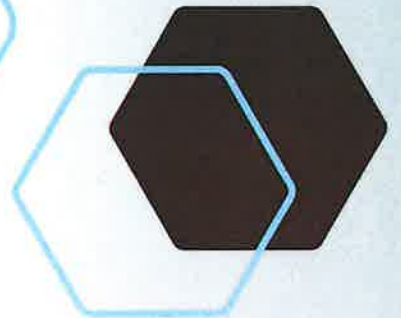


**COMPREHENSIVE
NEIGHBORHOOD
REVITALIZATION PLAN**
December 11th, 2024



INTRODUCTION

The following neighborhood revitalization plan results from community visioning, public engagement, and prioritization of the improvements the neighborhood and city leaders feel are the most important to their residents. This plan contains information about the city of Murray's demographics, strengths, deficiencies, and the desire to make Murray a stronger and more viable community. This plan will go in-depth on the revitalization of a targeted neighborhood and why the changes impact the neighborhood and the city as a whole.

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HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Murray, Iowa, is a small city in Clarke County in the south-central part of the state. Its history is deeply intertwined with the broader patterns of settlement, railroad expansion, and agricultural development that shaped much of Iowa in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Early settlement in the region around Murray was initially inhabited by Native American tribes, notably the Ioway and the Sioux, before white settlers arrived. In the mid-19th century, following treaties and land cessions, pioneers began to move into the area, drawn by the promise of fertile farmland and opportunities in a rapidly growing state. The city was laid out in 1868 when the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy (CB&Q) Railroad extended its line through the area.

Murray's economy was predominantly agricultural, with farming being the primary livelihood for most residents. The fertile soils of Clarke County were well-suited for growing crops such as corn, soybeans, oats, and raising livestock. Agriculture remained the foundation of the local economy throughout the 20th century.



In the latter half of the 20th century, modern Murray experienced many of the same challenges as other small cities across rural America: population decline, the consolidation of family farms, and the gradual reduction of local businesses as people traveled to larger cities for shopping and services.

Within the last decade, the closure of a small factory, formerly a Bunn coffee manufacturer, significantly impacted Murray. Following closely behind was the closure of other businesses downtown, leaving only a handful of small businesses, with the only retail being Casey's.

Despite the challenges Murray has faced, it has maintained its strong sense of community. Today, Murray is home to approximately 700 residents. The city and community members are consistently working hard to make Murray a desirable community. In the past few years, the city has sought and received funding for the following projects:

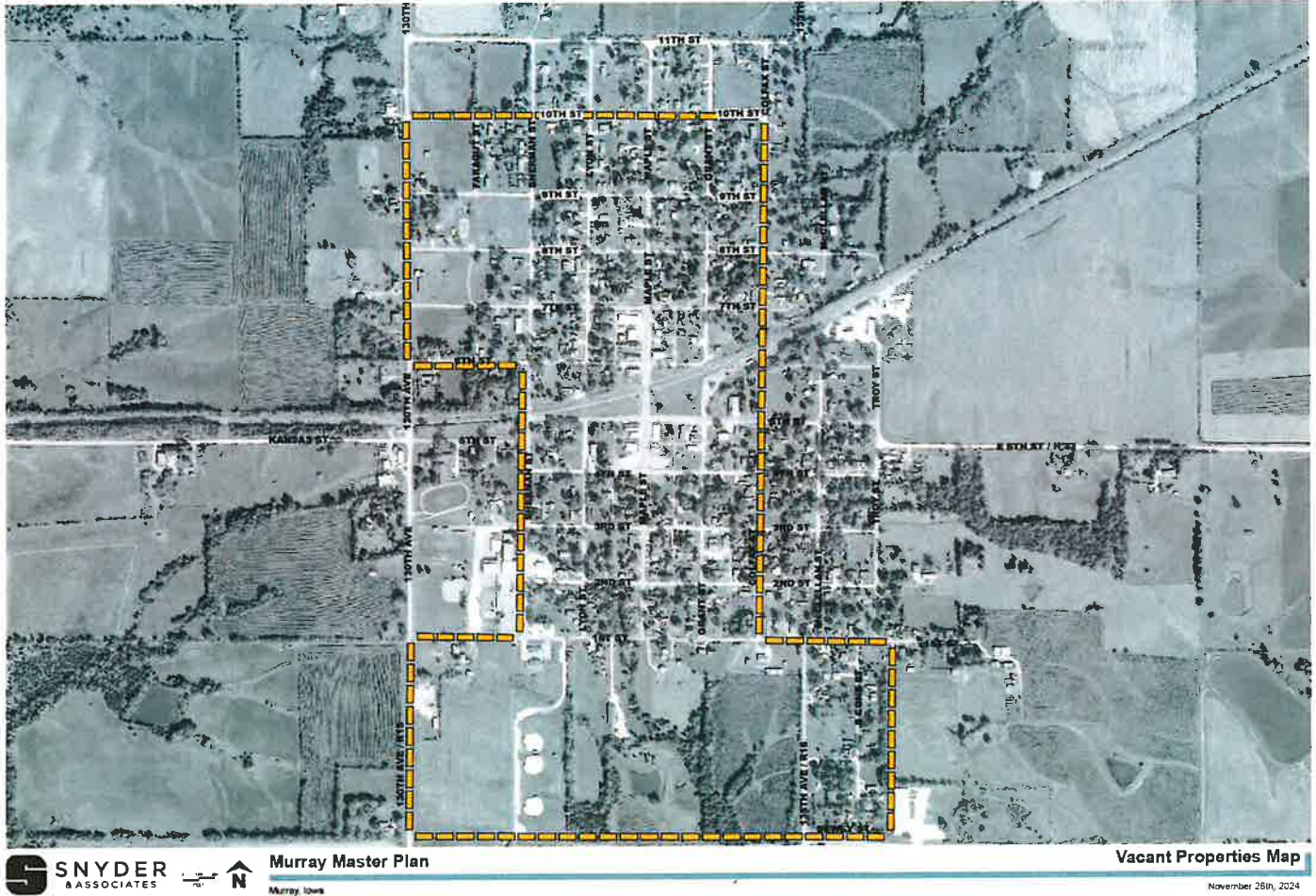
- Murray Recreation Complex – Raised \$1.5 million in grants and donations to develop a recreation complex consisting of three Little League fields, a concession stand, restrooms, and a walking path.
- Mallory East – 6 residential lots adjacent to Mallory Park (5 have been sold).

- Mallory Park Splash Pad – Fundraising has begun and a \$50,000 grant has already been secured.
- Residential Improvement Projects – Has obtained 8 properties through the 657A process to date. Three properties were rehabilitated, one is currently being rehabilitated, two properties have new homes on them, another property will have a storage unit and laundromat built on it and the City just obtained the deed for the eighth property. The City of Murray contributed \$50,000 to this effort. Five of the 657A properties are now assessed at a total of \$811,210 where their total assessment prior to the city obtaining them was a total of \$30,000
- Invested \$3 million into improving our existing water mains through grants and low interest loans.
- Invested \$1 million into our storm water system through grants, low interest loans and cash on hand.
- Invested \$1.5 million into the recreation complex through grants and donations.
- Invested \$1.3 million into our streets through loans and cash on hand, with a 5 year plan to chip seal all streets in Murray which is an estimated \$600,000.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING AREA

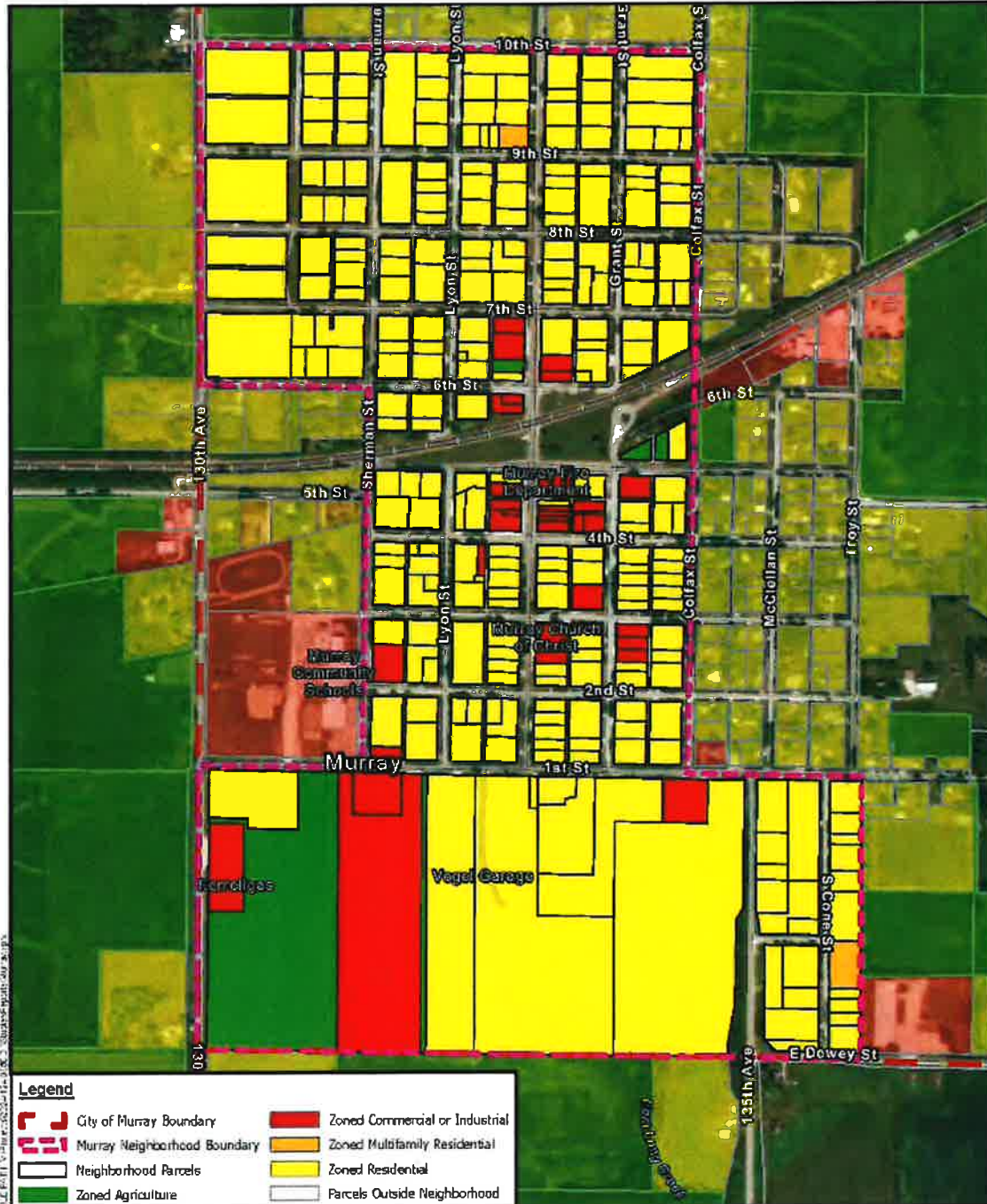
The targeted neighborhood is centrally located within Murray. The boundaries of this neighborhood are described as the southwest corner of the city on 130th Avenue, head east along the boundary of the city a half block past Cone Street, head north in that alleyway to 1st Street, follow Troy Street north to 5th Street, head west on 5th Street to Grant Street, head north on Grant Street to 10th Street, head west on 10th Street to 130th Avenue, and then head south to the point of beginning. The neighborhood includes most of the city, with the railroad splitting the city north to south with three active at-grade crossings. The downtown area is located two blocks south of the railroad crossing on Maple Street.

The qualifying criteria for the 2025 Comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization Plan limits the number of residential properties to 200 within the neighborhood boundary. The proposed neighborhood boundary contains 212 residences. This overage was discovered when conducting an updated 2024 Income Survey. If Murray's Comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization Plan is selected for funding consideration, the neighborhood boundary will be revised to comply with grant requirements.



CURRENT LAND USE

The majority of properties within the city and neighborhood boundaries are currently assessed as residential, and the majority of the commercial properties are also assessed as residential. The assessment category assigned by Clarke County was used to identify land use and evaluate current property values. The average Median Value of Owner Occupied Dwellings in Murray was \$66,000 based on the 2018-2022 American Community Survey (ACS) data compared to the \$127,200 Median Value of Clarke County in the same time frame. Evaluation of recently updated parcel data from Clarke County (November 2024) presents a Median Value of \$77,018.



SNYDER & ASSOCIATES  

Murray Neighborhood Land Use
 Murray Neighborhood Revitalization Plan | Murray, IA | 11/21/2024

NEIGHBORHOOD STATISTICS

POPULATION

2020 Census data indicates that the population in Murray has declined since the 2010 Census by approximately 9.5%, from 756 people to 684. However, the population in Clarke County increased by 5% in the same period, resulting in 9,748 people recorded in the 2020 Census. A city income survey completed in early November 2024 found the population to be 679. The population within the neighborhood planning area is 493, 72.6 % of the total population.

HOUSING

The 2020 Census for Murray reported 322 total housing units with a 7.8% vacancy rate. Meanwhile, the 2022 ACS reported 261 total housing units, of which 17.2% were renter occupied, and 82.8% were owner occupied. Clarke County has 4,268 total units with a 9.3% vacancy rate. Of the occupied housing, 72.4% were reported as owner occupied and 27.6% as renter occupied (2022 ACS). Overall, the City of Murray has a higher rate of home ownership and a lower vacancy rate than Clarke County. An Income Survey in October 2024 determined the current LMI rate is 54.9%. This is an increase from 51.4%, which is the data used at the beginning of the project based on ACS data published by IEDA.

<i>STATISTICS AT A GLANCE *</i>		
	NEIGHBORHOOD AREA	CITY OF MURRAY
Neighborhood Population	493	679
Number of Households	212	305
Percentage meeting LMI* Threshold	54.93%	54.91%
<i>*Based on the results of an October 2024 Murray Income Survey.</i>		

PERSONAL INCOME

In the recently completed Income Survey, all 212 occupied homes in the neighborhood boundary were surveyed. A total of 211 households were reached. The remaining house was considered “over” income. Based on the results of the survey, there are 493 people living in the area, of which 271 are considered low- and moderate-income (LMI). This equals 54.93% of the population, meaning the City of Murray qualifies for a Comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization Grant, should it be invited. The total population of Murray is 54.91% LMI.



The 2022 ACS data identified the median household income for the City of Murray as \$60,469 annually, slightly lower than the median for Clarke County at \$63,120. The City and County are lower than the State of Iowa median household income of \$71,433 annually. According to the 2022 ACS, 8.7% of Murray's population lives below the poverty line, lower than the Iowa state average of 11.3% for the same period.

Neighborhood Context

Murray recognizes the unique growth challenges it faces as a rural community. City officials are actively working to turn these challenges into opportunities for future planning and goal setting. The city has pressing needs, from housing and sidewalks to business development and other amenities. Among these, city leaders and community members have prioritized housing quality and conditions for immediate action. As a result, the city designated a boundary that includes the downtown and commercial areas, allowing the maximum number of residential units permitted under grant guidelines.

Through community assessments and public engagement efforts for this plan, a strong consensus has emerged around critical needs in Murray, including:

- Improved quality and availability of housing.
- Expanded outdoor recreational opportunities.
- Safer routes for children going to school and better navigation options for residents of all ages.
- Enhanced infrastructure to support both current and future development efficiently.

The City of Murray is committed to creating a vibrant community that meets the needs of current residents while fostering a sense of pride in attracting new ones. Maintaining the school in Murray is especially important, as schools in smaller communities serve as educational and social anchors. Active and planned improvements focused on Murray's youth and the priorities in this Comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization Plan demonstrate the city's commitment to fostering a vibrant community that will attract and support a younger, family-oriented demographic.



Schools are more than just educational institutions in rural communities—they play a central role in economic stability, social cohesion, and local identity. Without a local school, students in rural areas might face long commutes to the nearest school. This has long-term implications for community identity as the “sense of pride” associated with school transfers to a different community. This can lead to kids and families spending more of their time and money where the school exists based on the time demands of participating in extracurriculars, travel times, and economic stability through a loss of jobs.

A school can also attract new families to an area, keeping the population steady or even encouraging growth. Small class sizes seem to be a highly desired feature when considering a school district. A high-quality school system can significantly influence a family's decision to settle in a rural area. This is evident in the enrollment numbers in the Murray Community School District. The academic enrollment for the 2024-2025 academic year is 298, of which 103 are open enrolled in the Murray Community School District.

Additionally, it is known that services can be sparse in rural communities. Schools often provide more than education, serving as hubs for social services, nutrition programs, mental health support, and community events. Investment into the neighborhood is of vital importance, as approximately 46% (139) of their students are eligible to participate in the free and reduced lunch program.

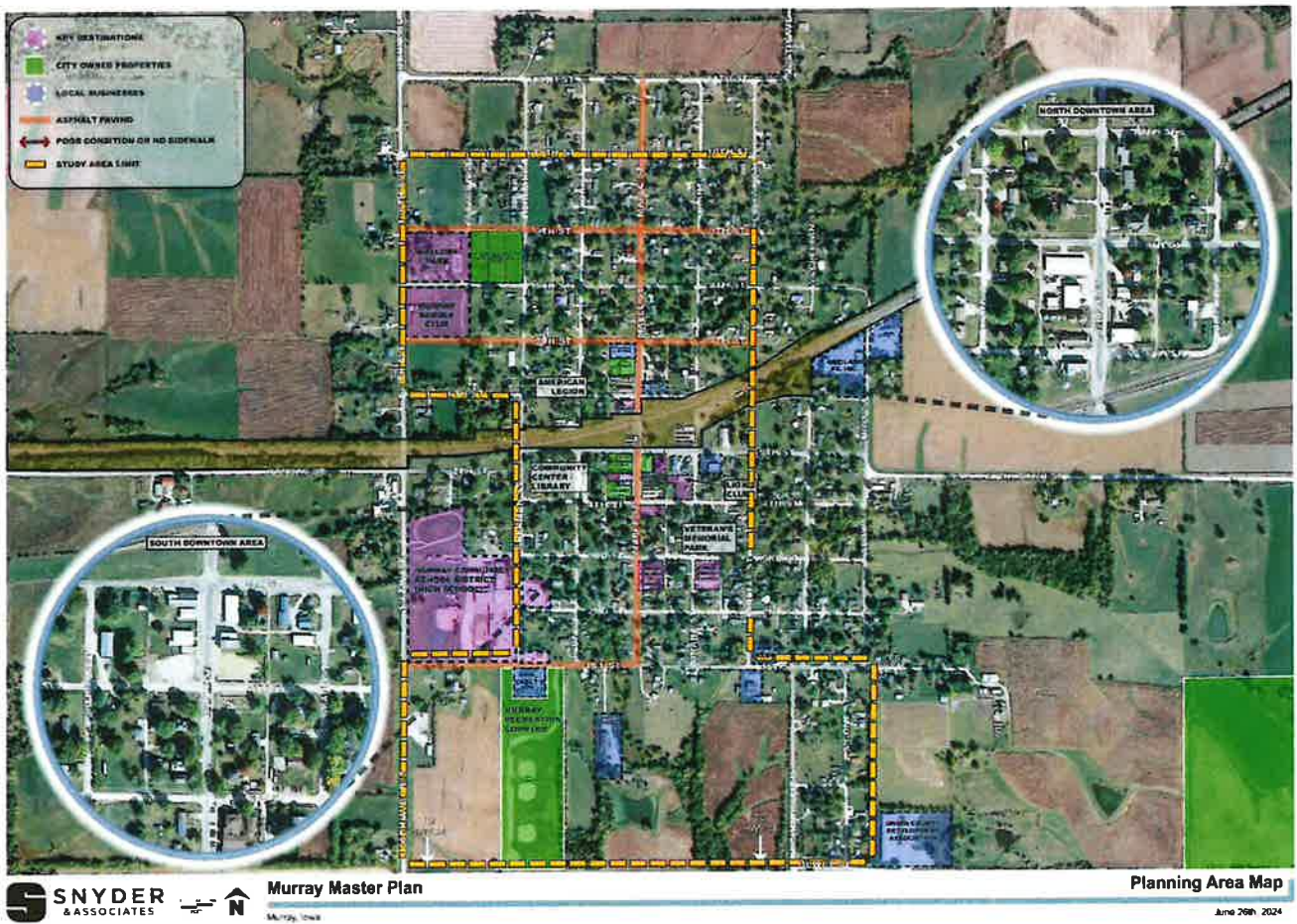


Photo of the north end of the Murray School.

COMMUNITY MAPPING

The following map was created after a site visit and visual survey of the neighborhood. What is depicted is based on early research and assumptions, to gather initial input from the community. This map identifies important features in the community, such as parks, commercial, and residential locations that comprise the fabric of the neighborhood. As well as features that should be considered for improvements, such as missing sidewalks, street improvements, and locations for potential residential infill.

This map was displayed during the public engagement forums to allow participants to visualize the planning area and have an open dialogue regarding potential improvements and changes to provide more focused input to the planning team. The proposed Comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization Plan reflects the conversations and input received based on these early conversations.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Two public engagement events were held to gather input for potential neighborhood improvements. The first event was held on June 26, 2024, in an open house format. The meeting was posted on the city's webpage and Facebook page. At this meeting, a brief introduction to the Comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization Grant was given, along with examples of types of projects that could be considered and eligible for grant funding. Participants were able to vote with stickers, leave written comments, and engage in conversations about what are essential improvements to them and what they considered to be necessary priorities for the city of Murray to undertake.










The second point of engagement was held during the Murray Jamboree. A tent was set up at Mallory Park, the main city park located within the neighborhood, on August 19, 2024. This event was more relaxed, with no formal presentation. The conversations and input gathered were based on direct conversations as people moved about the park. The same information boards were displayed, and dot sticker voting was available again. Between the two in-person engagement events, there were approximately 50 interactions. Additionally, a flyer with a QR Code was shared to direct people to the project's webpage and online survey for more ways to engage and provide input.

Dot sticker voting, while not valid statistically, is a sound process and allows participants to provide feedback less formally. Between the two engagement events, the priorities are:

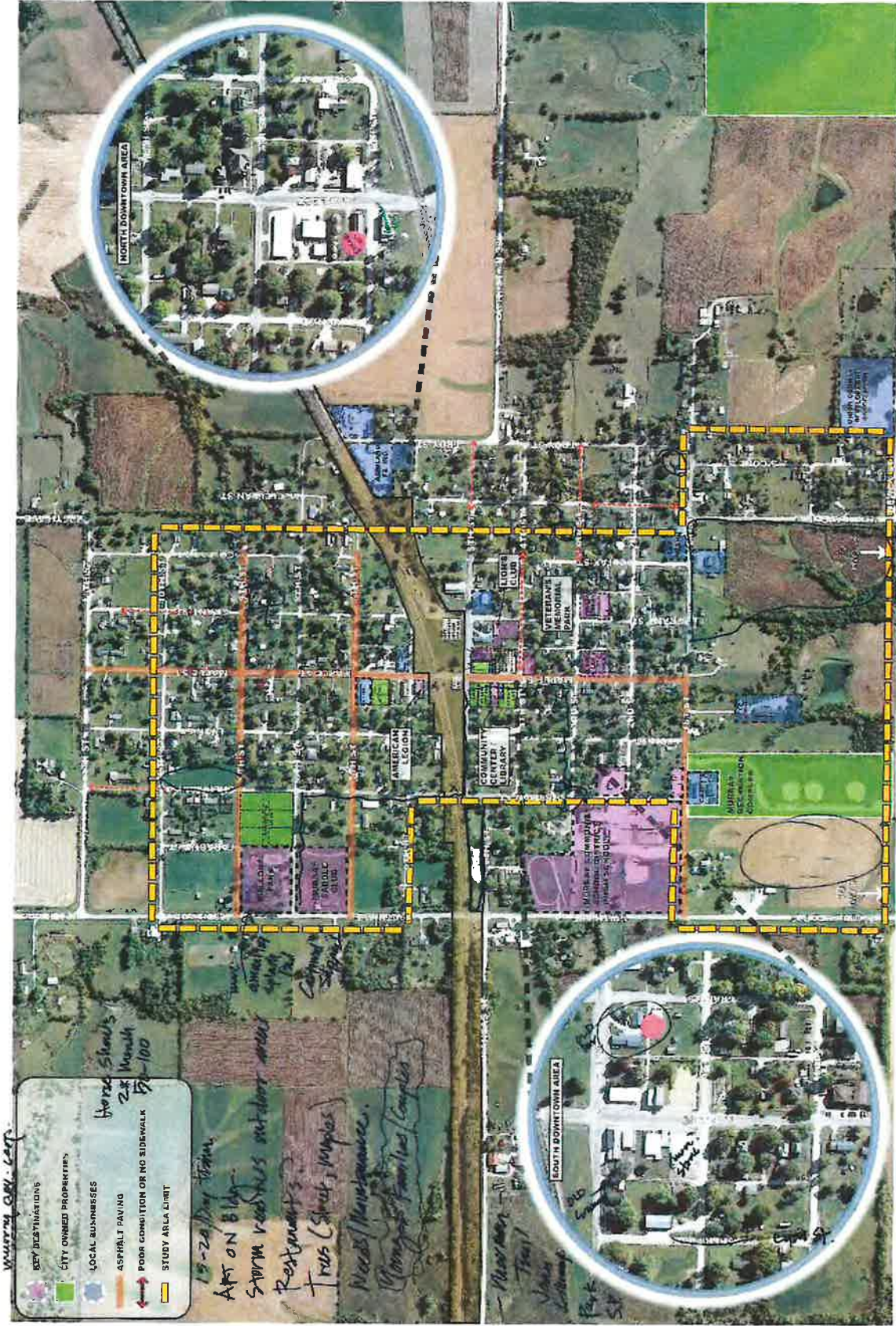
- Housing Rehabilitation
- Park Improvements
- Install/Improve Sidewalks
- Infrastructure Needs
- Downtown/Commercial Revitalization



Consider existing services, infrastructure and amenities in your community.
What needs improvements?
What new amenities would you like to see?

- **Street Trees** 
- **Park Space:**
 - Active Recreation (sports courts, playgrounds) 
 - Passive Recreation (benches, landscaped areas) 
- **Public Art** 
- **Improved Street Quality and Paving** 
- **Install / Improve Sidewalk** 
- **Improve Stormwater System** 
- **Housing Rehabilitation Programs** 
- **Historic / Cultural Amenities** 
- **Wayfinding Signage**
- **Other Ideas?**





Murray, IA - City

KEY DESTINATIONS

- CITY OWNED PROPERTIES
- LOCAL BUSINESSES
- LOCAL BUSINESSES
- ASPHALT PAVING
- POOR CONDITION OR NO SIDEWALK
- STUDY AREA LIMIT

Handwritten notes:

- Hard Shell's
- 2x Month
- 75-100
- 15-20 day storm
- Apt on Bluff
- Storm needs outdoor area
- Restaurants
- Trees (Street, parks)
- Needs Maintenance
- Murray Families Complex

WHAT DOES MURRAY NEED MORE OF?

(USE STICKERS TO INDICATE)



SNYDER & ASSOCIATES

Murray Master Plan

Murray, Iowa

Placemaking Features

June 26th, 2024

Park Improvements

Encouraging healthy and active lifestyles is an important goal for the City of Murray. Mallory Park, an existing city park, provides a great space for outdoor recreation and serves as a gathering space for community events. Immediately adjacent, south of Mallory Park, is the city horse arena. This arena is frequently used for horse shows and regular horse exercise by Murray residents.

Mallory Park is located in the northwest corner of the neighborhood. Given its non-central location, the park may feel isolated from most of the residential areas and not easily walkable. Based on the results of online surveys and public engagement events, the community ranked park improvements as one of the most desired improvements.

National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommendations for parks:

- Generally flat (less than 10% slope) open space consisting of 0.5 to 5 acres. Avoid properties mainly consisting of moderate to heavily wooded areas or low-lying areas.

- Within ¼ mile of residential areas, with consistent sidewalk and bicycle routes to the park.

- Minimum 50 feet of street frontage to support some vehicle parking and/or public access.

- Vacant, publicly owned, and controlled by the local jurisdiction

Desired Park Amenities

Murray has ample park space for a city of its size, especially parks within walking distance of residential neighborhoods. The city is passionate about and works consistently at improvements when budgets allow. Based on the above criteria, the following are existing park spaces within Murray that provide active and passive use:



Veteran's Park - Passive sitting area with a sidewalk with a monument to Murray Veterans



Red Hat Lady's Park - Park created by a local organization, Red Hat Lady's surrounded by ample open space.

Several park improvements can be considered to improve the community's recreation needs. The Red Hat Lady's Park is centrally located. However, it is located on railroad property owned by the Burlington Northern Railroad (BNSF) rail company. The play equipment is dated but there is ample open space. Making contact and working with railroads regarding transferring property acquisition can be arduous. If, in the future, the city wants to pursue acquiring the land, the potential outcomes may be worth the effort

During the engagement process, participants selected a mix of active and passive recreation activities based on the information gathered in the public engagement activities. By providing multiple recreational activities within a single property, the park spaces will be used frequently by a variety of users.



Mallory Horse Arena– Active horse arena with seating for shows and an accessory building.



Murray Recreation Complex–Community initiated project together to improve the recreational facilities at the south end of Murray with three ball fields and a building for concessions and restrooms.

The following park improvements were selected by the participants in the public engagement activities as being the desired park amenities:

- Splash pad
- Improved play structures
- Basketball/sport courts
- Restroom Facilities



Mallory Park play equipment that is slated to be replaced with other park improvements.

Preliminary Park Concepts

Due to its ample open space, Mallory Park is a vital community space for events. Mallory Park, pictured below, is a major gathering space for the entire town. It needs significant updates in order to provide appropriate space for community events such as the Murray Jamboree to continue. This is the main city park in Murray. Updating and replacing the deteriorating playground equipment and shelters are necessary to appeal to community members. Additional amenities will add even more appeal, leading to an increase in park use. Adjacent to this park, there are six newly parceled lots for the development of single-family homes.

CONCEPT A: PARK EXPANSION



This Park Expansion Would Include:

- **Open Multi-Purpose Lawn Space:** Provides a versatile area for community events and general green space activities.
- **Updated Play Equipment:** The playground will remain in its current location along the park's south side, with updated and replaced equipment.
- **Splash Pad:** An interactive and refreshing attraction for residents and nearby visitors during the summer months.
- **Restroom Facility Updates:** The existing restroom building will be replaced and updated, with improvements potentially required by state health codes due to the addition of a splash pad.
- **Basketball/Pickleball Court:** A combined court area would offer active recreation for a wide range of visitors and community members.
- **Auxiliary RV Camping Area:** The city-owned property to the south could serve as an RV camping area to support additional visitors.
- **Horse Arena Amenities:** The horse arena is frequently used, and a few trailer stalls with electrical hookups would be a highly utilized addition.
- **Parking Additions:** Parking stalls would be added along 9th Street for easy access to the splash pad and to improve existing parking on 8th Street.
- **Shelter Upgrades:** Improvements to existing picnic shelters and stage.

Concept B: UPGRADED AMENITIES

This concept better utilizes the space within Mallory Park by upgrading its amenities and infrastructure. With a larger splash pad and a regional playground attraction, the surrounding area will appeal more to developers and young families. The concept also includes an improved walking path throughout the park.



This Park Expansion Would Include:

- **Open Multi-Purpose Lawn Space:** Provides a versatile area for community events and general green space activities.
- **Updated Play Equipment:** The playground will remain in its current location along the park's south side, with updated and replaced equipment.
- **Splash Pad:** A slightly larger interactive splash pad than shown in Concept A.
- **Restroom Facility Updates:** The existing restroom building will be replaced and updated, with improvements potentially required by state health codes due to the addition of a splash pad.
- **Basketball/Pickleball Court:** A combined court area would offer active recreation for a wide range of visitors and community members.
- **Walking Path:** A walking path for users that could be paved or crushed limestone. One lap would be equivalent to a quarter of a mile.
- **Parking Additions:** Parking stalls would be added along 9th Street for easy access to the splash pad and to improve existing parking on 8th Street.
- **Shelter Upgrades:** Improvements to existing picnic shelters and stages.

Residential Housing

Adequate housing in Murray is a pressing issue within the neighborhood, with deteriorated properties posing significant health and safety concerns for residents and the surrounding community. For many in this low - to moderate-income (LMI) area, maintaining and improving housing is challenging, as work and transportation demands often place costly repairs and upkeep at a lower priority. Improvements may be difficult for those aging in place to complete on their own, requiring the hiring of contractors and impacting the price of the improvements. Many homes urgently require upgrades due to both the age of the properties and that of the residents.

The area's median construction year of homes is approximately 1961, with many of these homes having seen little to no investment or rehabilitation over the years. Notably, around 30% of Murray's housing stock consists of older mobile homes, which are not designed for longevity and are increasingly in poor condition. A mobile home would not qualify for funding based on the grant requirements unless changes to the home removed anything that would allow it to be moved. They would need to be permanently placed on a foundation.



Over several years, some properties have had minimal investment, highlighting the need for immediate revitalization. The project area also includes downtown Murray, which contains several blighted buildings eligible for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. Planned development projects will require new infrastructure, including road and sidewalk improvements, to support both residential housing and downtown revitalization. The city also considers retaining the Murray School and public amenities like the new sports complex vital

to community sustainability. Additionally, future development projects—such as water and sewer infrastructure upgrades — will impact these essential community assets.

Over the past several years, Murray has utilized CDBG funds to make many needed improvements, including the renovation of six homes. Continued efforts will be necessary to address the housing challenges in Murray, such as the lack of quality or affordable housing, which poses a barrier to attracting new residents and workers to the area.

Housing Program Requirements

Deteriorated structures reduce property values and decrease the tax base, limiting redevelopment potential in the surrounding area. While housing improvements are costly, they are essential to revitalizing the neighborhood. Securing additional funds would allow for an expansion in both the number of properties served and the range of rehabilitation programs available.

The Southern Iowa COG Housing Trust Fund currently supports housing rehabilitation across multiple communities within the eight-county region of the Southern Iowa Council of Governments (SICOG). However, more than the funding provided by SICOG alone is needed to fully address the needs of each community it serves. By combining funds from this grant with other programs administered by SICOG, there is an opportunity to reach more residents and broaden the impact across a wider array of housing improvement projects.



Immediate housing rehabilitation programs to implement:

A budget allocation for the rehabilitation of ten homes within the neighborhood will be supported with these funds. An application process and list of applicable housing improvements will be created along with guidelines for administering the funds. This effort will be in conjunction with the help of SICOG administering the funds.

The City will consider purchasing 3 to 4 blighted properties within the neighborhood where rehabilitation programming will not benefit the existing property or structure. Funds will be used to demo, remove blight, and install needed infrastructure to prepare the property for new construction.

Coordinate and promote funding of the SICOG program that currently provides financial assistance.

Work with SICOG, not-for-profit organizations, and local builders and contractors to build partnerships with organizations willing to work on home repairs and infill housing construction. Local trade programs at the high school or a surrounding community college may be an option for some additional labor force.

Long Range Programming to Implement as the Housing Rehabilitation Program Progresses:

Explore the option of a cost-sharing program based on a sliding scale. A carefully designed cost-sharing program may allow dollars to stretch further, allowing for more projects to be completed.

Create a fund that would offer down-payment assistance for first-time home buyers looking to purchase a property with an agreement to construct new single-family residential.

Consider the completion and implementation of a Comprehensive Plan in order to guide future improvements to Murray.

Create a Zoning Ordinance for the City of Murray that allows (re)development and reinvestment to occur in Murray in an efficient and effective manner.

Use this plan as the basis of a housing study and continue to work with school and area employers in order to pursue Housing Readiness Assessment funding and Iowa Thriving Communities designation.

Meet with private landowners to explore and encourage the redevelopment of larger lots for affordable housing projects, likely connected with one of the above programs.

Consider creating Urban Revitalization area district that could provide property tax relief to incentivize residential redevelopment projects and new construction.



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The Lists Below Identify Possible Action Steps for Both Residential Rehabilitation and Housing Redevelopment Programs.

Residential Rehabilitation

Common home improvements that could be targeted for a rehabilitation program that the City of Murray could manage could include the following:

- Replace electrical systems
- Replace heating and cooling systems
- ADA improvements
- Replace doors and windows
- Structural repairs
- Kitchen and bathroom updates
- Roof repairs or replacement
- Replace siding
- Correct code violations
- Exterior painting
- Termite and pest control
- Smoke detector installations

Housing Redevelopment

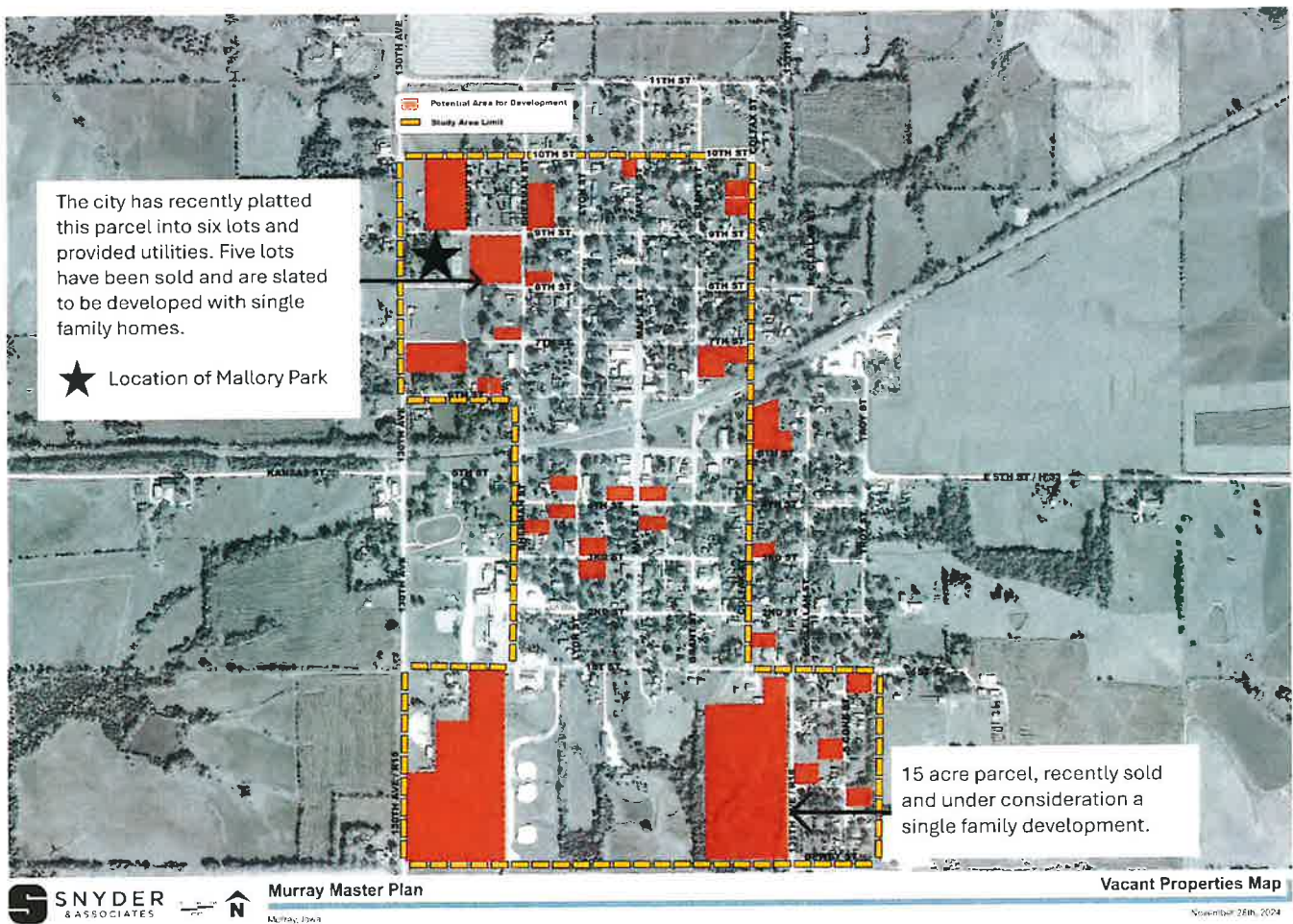
Redevelopment improvements and expenses that could be targeted through a housing rehabilitation program that the City of Murray could manage include the following:

- Platting, easement and title work
- Extend or replace utility services
- Construct sidewalks
- Clear and clean up vacant property
- Removal and disposal of structures
- Construct concrete curb and gutter improvements
- Stormwater management improvements

POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT PROPERTIES

There is momentum in Murray for new housing. The strong enrollment numbers in the school and the city's action on abandoned properties signal to those in the community that quality of life and growth are priorities. This fact is further supported by the highlighted properties below. Five of the properties adjacent to Mallory Park have been sold, and there are early discussions exploring the possibility of a seventeen-acre single-family development in the southeast corner of the neighborhood.

The map below shows an inventory of vacant and underutilized properties within the neighborhood boundary. The shaded properties are those without an existing structure and appear large enough to support at least one dwelling unit. Part of a proposed housing rehabilitation program would be to further identify these potential properties and reach out to their owners to gauge their interest in participating in these programs. Additional properties exist in this area that are in varying degrees of blight and should be considered for program eligibility.



PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION AND SAFETY

Most of the community resources, local facilities, and basic services that exist are in the center of town and the west/southwest corner of the city. Casey's General Store, the school, and the youth sports complex are located in this area. Murray is laid out on a standard grid pattern of developments with streets running north-south/east-west. During a visual survey of the community, it was found that there were very few sidewalks that existed in any condition.

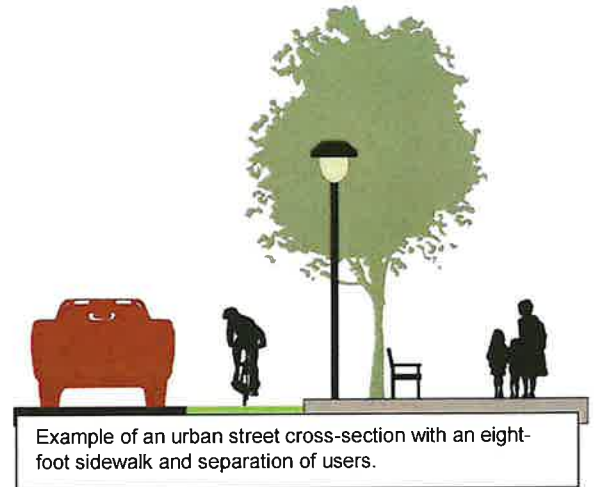
In our review of what sidewalks do exist in the targeted neighborhood area, several routes are interrupted by a gap in the sidewalk, poor pavement conditions, or poor maintenance. This plan prioritizes the connections within the neighborhood. Given its centralized location within the larger community, it will aid in the planning of primary routes to be extended to important destinations.



PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION PATHWAYS

By prioritizing important connecting routes, the neighborhood can maximize its investment in sidewalk and bicycle pathway improvements. The Pedestrian Routing Map on page 30 shows the establishment of a multi-use pedestrian/bike trail along Maple Street, providing a connection from north to south in the center of the city. Based on community input, these are the streets most used by kids on their way to and from school and other locations in town located on the west side of the city. These priority sidewalks were identified as the most used by pedestrians to navigate through town to the school, Mallory Park, and other key destinations.

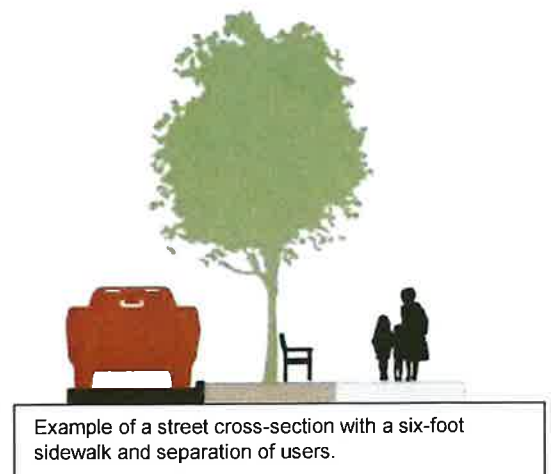
Shared-use paths are also shown on the Pedestrian Routing Map along 8th Street west of Maple Street, providing connectivity to Mallory Park. Priority of sidewalk installation should be given to 3rd Street, a section of 4th Street, and Sherman Street. These streets provide a central path that could accommodate an eight-foot-wide sidewalk on one side of the street in order to provide a shared-use path for bicyclists and pedestrians if desired by the community. In the future, to support further connectivity, these routes shown on page 30 can be expanded beyond to provide other safe routes to school and promote walking/biking within the community as improvements continue throughout the neighborhood.



Multi-Modal Cross-Section

Separation of vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrian areas is recommended when reviewing an existing sidewalk and street route for improvements. A multi-modal cross-section supports multiple modes of transportation and creates both physical separations, as well as visual separation to enhance the safety of the corridor. The cross-sections shown are examples of designs that incorporate a curb zone that includes elements that separate the vehicle and bike lanes from the pedestrian area. In residential areas, street trees and overhead street lighting can create this vertical separation. In commercial areas, such as near downtown along Maple Street, site furniture and decorative elements can be added to enhance this separation of the bike lane further. This cross-section is commonly used in commercial areas with adequate street pavement to safely dedicate a bike lane. It is also recommended that primary pedestrian and bicycle routes be established in the neighborhood area like Maple Street.

Shared use paths in urban settings typically have a minimum of eight feet in width in order to accommodate a safe amount of space for those traveling on foot or bicycle to pass each other. Most of the streets in Murray that are identified as priority sidewalk streets have an existing right of way that would accommodate the eight feet. Best practices would be to design and improve streets to incorporate the elements of a "Complete Street," but this may not be a one-size-fits-all design answer.



Given Murray's population and the amount of use these sidewalks will see, a six-foot sidewalk may be enough. When updated streets and sidewalks are designed, the pedestrian zone and drive lane should be designed to distinguish between the two travel zones. The six-foot sidewalk cross-section still allows for a separation between cars and could be addressed with streetscaping features such as street trees and parkway areas or curbs.



SIDEWALK PRIORITIES: IDENTIFYING GAPS

Given the community's importance in maintaining the school, sidewalks along Sherman Street and 3rd Street should be the first constructed to provide a safe route to the school that is already the most commonly used route.

The Pedestrian Routing Map on page 30, highlights gaps within the sidewalk system that can interrupt community connectivity. Although it does not identify all the sidewalk issues in the neighborhood, focusing resources on these priority routes will create a strong framework to start with for establishing safe and consistent pedestrian routes in Murray.

Sidewalk Improvements

In addition to reviewing the route for multi-modal adaptation, each priority corridor will be analyzed to determine the challenges and problem areas. These may include the following:

- Missing sidewalks (gaps)
- Poor pavement conditions, including cracking or heaving
- ADA access issues, particularly near intersections
- Poorly identified crossings and signage
- Inadequate sidewalk widths
- No designated bicycle route

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES

Previous water and stormwater projects have already been completed. Continuing infrastructure improvements within the neighborhood is another way the city is committed to revitalizing the neighborhood. Neighborhood streets are a continuous work-in-progress through a multi-year chip-seal program. All of the mentioned projects align with the community's needs and desires and the priorities of this Neighborhood Revitalization Plan.

Given the city's flat terrain, continuous investment in water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure remains crucial for future growth. A recent sanitary sewer study was completed and outlined where improvements are needed. Some of the improvements, like replacing leaky service lines with associated residential properties, could be included as part of this grant funding. Further analysis of the sanitary sewer study will help define neighborhood needs and develop a strategy to drive further improvements.

Infrastructure Recommendations & Programs to Implement:

Identify specific areas for development and provide utilities to that area, in order to ease development costs - i.e. northeast of Mallory Park.

Complete CDBG-eligible projects within the neighborhood that are found to be necessary through the recent sewer study.

Prioritize and select specific blocks to install water mains. Smaller specific areas could be funded through this grant money in coordination with larger projects with other CDBG funding.

Prioritize and select specific blocks to make needed sanitary sewer improvements.

Continue the ongoing work of chip seal street treatments.

Recommended Commercial Development Guidance

The downtown area is limited to a handful of commercial/office businesses and places of civic significance. Over the years, several local businesses in Murray have closed. Many of the commercial buildings have fallen into disrepair and have been demolished. The remaining commercial and industrial buildings still standing have been repurposed into uses such as storage or workshop space.

Murray is in a unique geographical situation. It is less than 10 miles from the most populous city in Clarke County, Osceola. Within Clarke County, it is located a mile north of US Highway 34, an east-west highway. Being offset north of the highway may present difficulties in attracting new commercial businesses since there is no commuter visibility.

Enhanced storefronts and a thriving downtown are another way to foster community pride and support economic growth in Murray. Organizations like the Murray Economic Development Group work to attract new development and commercial businesses. This group and the city will continue to work with SICOG to spur economic growth.

Downtown Rehabilitation Recommendations & Programs to Implement:

Continue to work with Murray Economic Development Group and SICOG to promote funding opportunities, such as the promotion of grants to assist with grants like the Iowa Community Catalyst Building Program.

Demo the Legion Hall. This building is in too poor of a condition to be salvageable. Demolition of this building and subsequent site work would provide a sizeable lot for either residential or commercial development.

Identify vacant lots downtown and consider potential site improvements to prepare development-ready lots. Some vacant lots exist but need utilities or other work done to be considered shovel-ready. Funds will be used to demo, remove blight, and install needed infrastructure to prepare the property for new construction. This may include purchasing 1-2 lots in the area.

Consider creating a financial incentive program for commercial developers, such as cost-share assistance, rebates, and support for CDBG-related programming.

Identify areas within this neighborhood where commercial development may occur to provide information for future local street network and utility improvements.

OTHER PLAN GUIDANCE

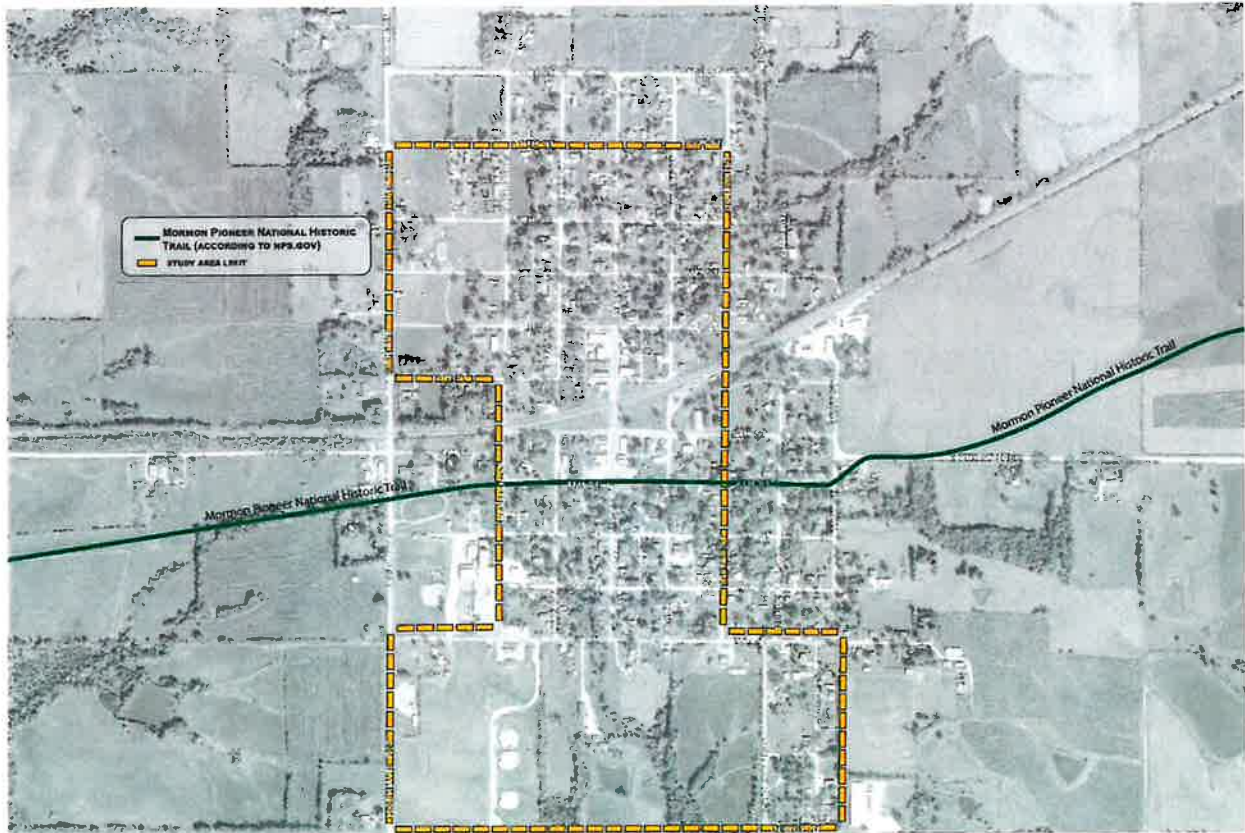
WAYFINDING MAP

Wayfinding is an important aspect of civic communication and community pride. By consistently and thoughtfully pointing out the important places in the community, these signs can not only guide visitors to experience the best parts of Murray but also give them a glimpse into their local history. Building from the colors, symbols, and materials observed within the community, wayfinding sign concepts can be created that are consistent with a potential theme that can be used to promote a consistent look and brand for the community. Wayfinding examples are shown.



Mormon Trail Walkway

The Mormon Trail's path through Murray connects the city to a rich history of resilience and exploration. As part of the larger story of the Mormon pioneers' journey west in the 1840s, the trail brings historical depth and character to Murray. Preserving and honoring this trail can enhance local identity, offering educational opportunities through signage, events, and interpretive markers. Additionally, the trail attracts tourists and history enthusiasts, supporting local businesses and community pride. By embracing its connection to the Mormon Trail, Murray celebrates a legacy of determination and adds a unique, meaningful link to American history.



Source of the trail path shown: <https://www.nps.gov/mopi/planyourvisit/iowa.htm>



ACTION PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The previous section laid out the neighborhood vision, describing the community's more immediate goals and needs on how they can be realized in a series of improvement projects. Although a considerable amount of additional funds will be necessary to complete all of the neighborhood goals, this section outlines the most important initiatives, actions, and improvement projects the City of Murray would like to complete in the next five years. These include the following Action Plan categories:

- Housing Rehabilitation Program
- Murray Park Improvements & Expansion
- Pedestrian Circulation and Safety
- Infrastructure Needs
- Commercial Development

Each Action Plan item is described below, with a brief scope of work and estimated budget amount. A schedule and a potential additional funding chart are included at the end of this section.

Housing Rehabilitation Program

The City of Murray will collaborate with regional partner SICOG to establish a city-sponsored local housing program, allowing residents and property owners that qualify under the CDBG LMI guidelines access to funds for rehabilitation and/or redevelopment of residential properties. The goal is to distribute a total of \$470,000 to fund the rehabilitation of ten homes and purchase blighted, abandoned properties for redevelopment. Additional monies in this category will be put towards other suggested projects to improve housing within the neighborhood, such as a housing study or development incentives.

Administration Costs:	\$ 30,000
Rehabilitation Distribution Costs:	\$470,000

Mallory Park Expansion

The existing park property improvements are likely to include the design and construction of a splash pad, replacement of existing play equipment, new bathrooms, improved sports courts, space enhancements, and six camper stalls with electric hookups. If funding allows, the horse arena and adjacent facilities located south of the park could be considered for improvements. In addition to using other potential grant monies outside of this program, the city could consider incorporating fees for using the horse arena and trailer stall reservations to maintain facilities. Two concepts for park improvements are provided with a rough estimate of costs.

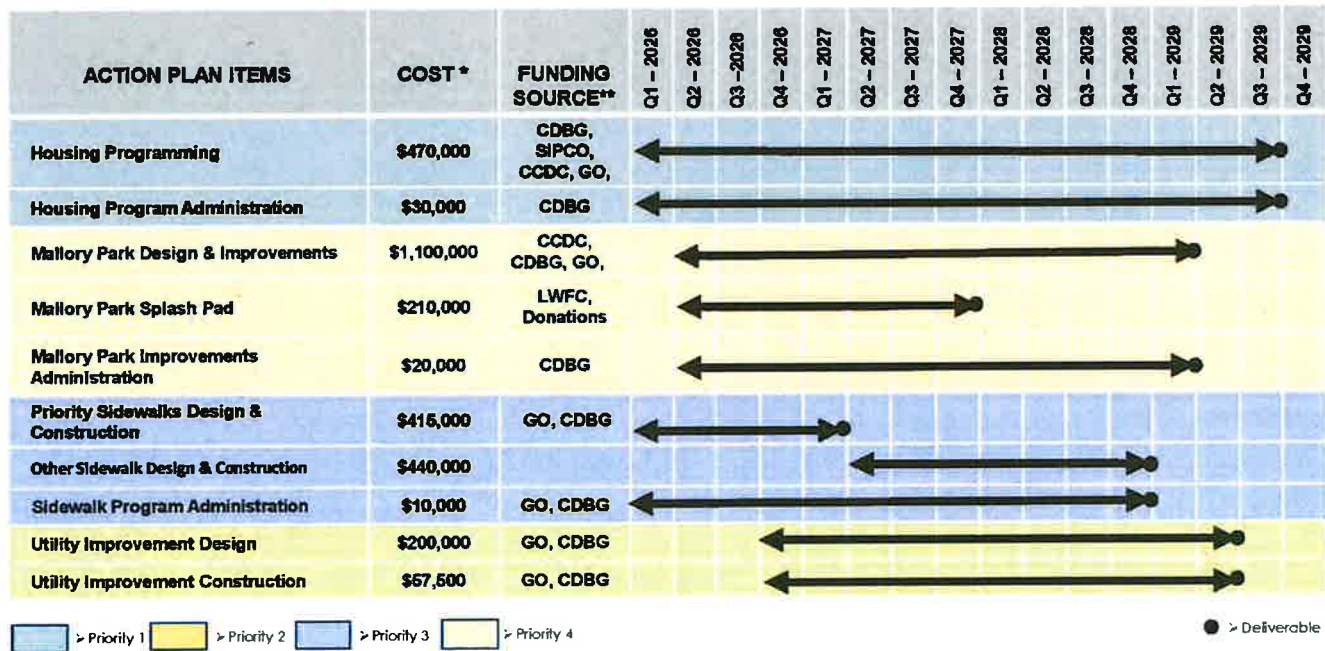
Administration and Design Costs:	\$ 20,000
Construction Costs:	\$1,310,000

Pedestrian Circulation and Safety

A sidewalk study will be conducted to determine the scope of the needed sidewalk improvements, prioritizing the infill of missing sidewalks along streets within the targeted neighborhood. Sherman Street and 3rd Street should be prioritized and evaluated for improvements as the most used pedestrian routes in Murray. Sidewalk improvements, such as streetscaping and reconstructing intersection ramps to conform to ADA requirements at street crossings, should all be considered. These improvements may be designed and constructed in a phased approach. As funds allow, the wayfinding signs could be fabricated and installed.

Administration and Design Costs: \$ 10,000
 Construction Costs: \$905,000

Action Plan Implementation Strategy



*Estimated cost of projects. Design details will be needed to refine accuracy of estimates.
 **Examples of funding sources. This is not an exhaustive list and is not intended to imply funding has been received.

The total anticipated costs for the above action plan initiatives are \$2,952,500, including \$60,000 for administrative fees to implement grant programming. The City of Murray acknowledges that the maximum amount of funds possible through this grant program is \$1,750,000, including up to \$70,000 in administrative fees. This plan lays out projects and cost estimates that may extend beyond the life of this grant program. Murray is a city that is resource savvy and successful at finding grants to offset costs. Additionally, this plan provides a strategic plan of improvements that can be done at a manageable and affordable pace.

IN-KIND SERVICES, DONATED FUNDS, AND LOCAL FUNDING

Based on the above Action Plan and its associated budget, the City of Murray will provide the required monetary match towards these initiatives. The Action Plan initiatives and projects to be funded allow for some flexibility in the design and construction of these projects and make up for inflationary effects over the four-year implementation schedule. Murray is aware of and will continue to seek out additional funding sources to assist in the implementation of this Neighborhood Revitalization Plan. Known funding sources include the Clark County Development Foundation, Alliant Energy Foundation Community Grants Program, and Rural Housing Readiness Assessment Grant.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

On December 11, 2024, the final plan was presented to the Murray City Council for approval. The Council approved the plan via Resolution _____ and directed city staff to submit the plan to the Iowa Economic Development Authority for consideration of funding through the Comprehensive Neighborhood Development Grant Program.

The citizens who live in this neighborhood that will be impacted by these changes were able to participate in identifying the goals for this plan. Through discussions at the two public outreach events, it was evident the community acknowledges deficiencies in the neighborhood and are excited for improvements and rehabilitation to their existing properties, public sidewalks, and park and recreation spaces.

Additionally, the greater Murray community supports the priorities of this neighborhood revitalization plan. Stable neighborhoods and a stable economy are a symbiotic relationship in a community. Several local organizations and businesses realize the importance of investment in this neighborhood, as stated in the included letters of support from local organizations are provided in Appendix A.

CONCLUSION

This Neighborhood Revitalization Plan creates community improvements and opportunities that extend beyond the life of this four-year timeline. This neighborhood area is not only the core but also the majority land area of Murray. This plan lays out project priorities with budgetary estimates and identifiable implementation steps. The revitalization of this neighborhood will foster further support and additional funding from the community, benefiting existing and future residents.

Appendix A



Robbins Lawn Service, LLC

PO Box 177 ♦ Murray, IA 50174 ♦ (515) 229-2781

December 12, 2024

reliable | experienced | full-service

To whom it may concern,

Murray, Iowa is a small town in South Central Iowa with a population of 684. As a resident, business owner and Mayor of Murray I am in full support of the Murray Comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization Plan. We as a community have worked very hard over the past 10 years to make continuous improvements to our community by implementing over \$6,000,000.00 in improvements to existing water mains system, storm water improvement, street improvements, a new baseball complex with concession stand with ADA compliant restroom facilities and infrastructure development for six new homes. We have also taken on the issue of abandoned homes by obtaining eight properties through the 677A process to date. Five of those properties were assessed at a total of \$30,000.00 when obtained by the City and now assessed at a total of \$811,210.00 due to new and rehabilitated housing.

There is a large push for affordable housing due to our increased school enrollment and families wanting to live in the community. We currently do not have a surplus of housing to support this need. Per a local realtor, homes in Murray are on the market for an average of 30 days. We are continuously looking and exploring opportunities to help fund our efforts to improve our housing for continued community growth, whether that be infrastructure, new housing, rehabilitation of existing homes or obtaining abandoned home through the 657A process.

Murray's Mallory Park host year around activities which includes an annual Lions Jamboree, Christmas lighting, Santa Claus visiting or families and youth using the park facilities. The age and extended use of the park's amenities has taken a toll on these items. We have received many inquiries regarding a splashpad, new and compliant playground equipment as well as new and ADA compliant restroom facilities for the park users.

Our city's sidewalk system is in complete disarray, outdated and needs to be completely revitalized. Our goal is to implement sidewalks providing safe routes to school and increase access from the north to southside of town. We will then focus on implementing a larger shared sidewalk plan throughout the community.

Murray is a small community with large goals. We have envisioned and accomplished many projects and goals, but with additional grant funding such as yours we can continue to grow and improve our community's health and stability for years to come.

Jeff Robbins

Mayor of Murray



December 12, 2024

RE: City of Murray Neighborhood Planning Study
IEDA Grant Consideration

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Clarke County Development Corporation (CCDC), I am pleased to provide this letter of support for Murray, Iowa's Neighborhood Planning Study, submitted for grant consideration by the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA). This grant application focuses on critical development and economic growth opportunities in rural Iowa. If awarded, the IEDA grant would enable the City of Murray to pursue several impactful projects, including:

- Housing improvements, encompassing new construction, rehabilitation, and demolition initiatives.
- Quality of life enhancements, such as the development of parks and playgrounds.
- Sidewalk improvements, ensuring safe routes to schools.
- Infrastructure upgrades, designed to attract new businesses and stimulate commercial development in the community.

The City of Murray has been a valued partner in addressing the needs of our shared community. As the CCDC looks toward the future, we view the Murray Neighborhood Planning Study as a vital and exciting component of our county's long-term success.

This program exemplifies the importance of state-level funding and Iowa's ability to invest in its communities. Housing development, quality-of-life improvements, business growth, and community enhancement are all critical drivers of statewide success and progress. At CCDC, we fully support these initiatives and commend the City of Murray for its forward-thinking vision and commitment to "Thinking Big."

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrew B. Clark
Executive Director
Clarke County Development Corporation

Kole & Tacy Vogel
616 1st Street
Murray, Iowa 50174

Dear Members of the IEDA Grant Committee,

We are writing to express our wholehearted support for the City of Murray's application for an IEDA grant. As 10 year residents of Murray and small business owners in the city, we have witnessed firsthand the dedication of our community to improving the quality of life for its residents while striving to attract new opportunities to our area.

Murray is a tight-knit community with immense potential. However, like many small towns, we face challenges that require strategic investment. This grant would allow us to address some of our most pressing needs: improving housing options, updating our beloved city park, constructing sidewalks to connect the town, and enhancing our infrastructure to support housing. Each of these projects would significantly impact the daily lives of our residents and contribute to our town's overall vitality.

As a teacher in our community, I understand how closely the success of our town is tied to the success of our schools. Growing our community means growing our school district, and this grant would directly contribute to that goal. Better housing options and improved infrastructure would make Murray more appealing to families, increasing enrollment and strengthening our school system. An updated park and safer sidewalks would create a more engaging and supportive environment for our students outside of the classroom, promoting healthy lifestyles and fostering a sense of community pride.

As owners of a small automotive repair shop and parents to three little kids that attend school here, we are deeply invested in the success of our town. I know that enhancing our infrastructure and amenities will help attract new businesses and families to our community. Improved housing and amenities would not only benefit current residents but also provide the kind of environment that encourages growth and prosperity for future generations to come.

I urge you to consider our application for this grant, as it represents an investment in the future of a town that embodies the values of hard work, determination, and community spirit. Thank you for your time and for considering this opportunity to support the City of Murray and our future.

Sincerely,
Kole & Tacy Vogel - Vogel Garage



**Murray Community Fire Dept
P.O. Box 117
Murray, IA 50174-0117**

As the Fire Chief of the Murray Community Fire District, this letter is in support of the City of Murray, IA applying for the Neighborhood Planning Grant. The Murray Community Fire District is a separate Corporation and operates under its own Fire District Board. We work closely with the City of Murray.

We see the need for areas the City is seeking grants for. Many parcels have older homes that are in need of updating or replacing the home with a new structure. We often respond to calls involving electrical or heating equipment issues. In a large number of the calls, the owner simply does not have the funds to upgrade on their own.

There are very limited opportunities for employment at businesses in Murray. This makes the availability to have Firemen in the daytime very limited. Most firemen work out of town, and simply not available during the daytime.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Werner'.

Jeff Werner
Fire Chief



Murray Community School



Devin VanderMolen, Activities Dir.
Principal

dvandermolenr@murraycsd.org

Jenni Danley, Business Manager
Principal

jdandley@murraycsd.org

ksmith@murraycsd.org

Tim Kuehl, Superintendent

tkuehl@murraycsd.org

Deborah Chapman, HS

dchapman@murraycsd.org

Keegan Smith, Elem

Deborah Chapman
Secondary Principal, Murray CSD

216 Sherman Street
Murray, IA 50174
December 09, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for the City of Murray's Neighborhood Planning Study and their grant application to the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) for \$1.74 million in funding. This initiative represents a significant investment in the future of our community and will provide critical improvements to housing, infrastructure, and quality of life in Murray.

If awarded, these funds will support several impactful projects that align with the community's needs and priorities, including:

- **Housing Improvements:** Addressing critical housing needs through rehabilitation, new construction, and demolition of unsafe structures.
- **Park Enhancements:** Adding features like a splashpad, updated playgrounds, modernized basketball/tennis courts, improved bathrooms, and expanded RV camping spots to create inclusive spaces for recreation.
- **Sidewalk Development:** Constructing sidewalks to ensure safe routes to school and enhanced walkability for residents, particularly between the north and south sides of town.
- **Infrastructure Upgrades:** Laying the groundwork to attract businesses and housing development, fostering economic growth.
- **Commercial Development Grants:** Encouraging business growth through targeted financial incentives to revitalize the local economy.

These projects will not only address immediate community challenges but will also create long-term opportunities for economic development, enhance safety and accessibility, and improve the overall quality of life for Murray residents.

As a principal, I am particularly excited about the infrastructure upgrades and the positive impact it will have on our community and school. I wholeheartedly support this grant application and encourage the IEDA to consider the significant benefits this funding will bring to Murray.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me if further details are needed.

Sincerely,
Deborah Chapman, Ed.D.

To whom it may concern

I am writing this letter in support of a grant to allow the Murray Iowa city council to update and add new amenities to their parks. As a mother of 5 young children we utilize the current parks frequently. My mother also watches my children while I'm at work and utilizes the parks. Adding new play equipment and a splash pad will give our communities youth more activity to positively impact their childhood.

Thank you for reading
Jentry James

12/6/24

To Whom it may Concern:

We're writing this letter in support of the City of Murray's Neighborhood Planning Study and the goals that can be achieved with such an award. As lifelong members of this community we are proud to be raising our boys in a small town that takes pride in its history and sees the great potential in its future. The small-town values and willingness of our community to work as a team to achieve goals are just a few reasons why we call Murray home.

The continued improvement of infrastructure, parks and recreation, and housing, among other things is critical to both growth and long-term sustainability of small communities like Murray. Attracting people and families by continuing to offer a safe and family-friendly environment is important. Improvements in these areas would allow us to continue making positive steps towards reaching our community goals in offering a great place for people to live, work, and enjoy a great quality of life.

We thank you for considering Murray in this grant application.

Sincerely,


Trevor & Jodee Robins

To whom it may concern:

Please accept this document as a letter of recommendation/support for the City of Murray as they complete the Neighborhood Planning Study. Murray is a town that takes great pride in our presentation and the resources we are able to offer families. First and foremost, what makes our town "Murray Strong" is how we all come together in times of need, when individuals step up and volunteer their time and talents, when individuals offer monetary donations, and most importantly the strength of our school system!

With a solid school system in place, our school is always looking to grow and offer education to more students, this task is impossible if Murray fails to improve and repair the current city infrastructure. If awarded this grant, Murray would utilize this opportunity to it's fullest. Murray is a unique little town that is tight nit and a town of generations of residents giving back through volunteer work and donations towards activities such as touch up painting at the cemetery, the Lions Den, the Legion, the parks, horse arena and most recently the addition of our rec fields. The community is strong and will continue to thrive and grow with the assistance of this grant offering the city the opportunity to repair the streets in Murray so that they are safe for driving. Many residents have experienced car damage due to street conditions. There is a housing shortage in our town, we can't welcome new residents and students to our school if they do not have a place to call home. To make the town safer for students, families, and others need a way to get from one side of town to the other for school related events, exercise, or simply to get fresh air. A sidewalk system would be a welcomed addition to our community. Additionally, park restoration and improvement is greatly needed. Each year we have a town celebration called the Murray Jamboree that brings in hundreds of individuals from near and far. This grant could assist with offering improvements that will reach many, many individuals all year long and especially be accommodating during the yearly town celebration. We want our town to draw in individuals, we want graduates to return to Murray to raise their own children, we want businesses to have the accommodations to be able to come to our town and draw more attention to our town. A splash pad so our families don't have to travel up to 15 miles to get to a pool or splash pad, some new homes, restoration of existing homes are all necessary for the growth and development of our community.

The grant opportunity will be invaluable to our community and will allow for much needed infrastructure improvement. Without the grant opportunity, the burden of monetary donations will continue to be on the residents themselves and honestly, we are in desperate times in our current state of economy and we cannot count on personal monetary donations for the level of improvement the infrastructure of our city needs at this time. Thank you for your consideration of our community needs, the growth we will provide with your investment to our city, and your compassion and interest in making small towns thrive!

If you have any questions please contact me at 641-414-1632.

Thank you for your consideration!

Respectfully submitted,

Sherri Chew, resident of Murray

CLARKE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
CLARKE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

PHONE: 641-342-3641

OSCEOLA, IOWA 50213

The Clarke County Board of Supervisors have seen many improvements within the community of Murray, Iowa from water mains, stormwater improvements, street improvements, ball field complex, nuisance abatement, etc. We appreciate the Mayor, City Council and City Staff always striving to make positive impacts to not only grow their community but allow our county to grow as a whole. The Murray Comprehensive Revitalization Plan addresses the need for additional housing, infrastructure, sidewalks and park amenities within the Murray community. Murray has a sought-after school system and open enrollment numbers have increased over the last few years therefore making housing opportunities an increased need. As the community grows the amenities at Mallory Park need to be upgraded to support that growth along with sidewalks for safe routes to school. The Murray community has made many improvements over the last few years and have plans to implement many more. The award of these grant funds will have an immediate impact to the community and foster additional growth.

Austi Taylor Chair
Gene Robins Vice Chair
Randy Quaker



MURRAY LIONS CLUB
MURRAY, IOWA
50174



December 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

I'm writing on behalf of the Murray Lions Club to support the City of Murray in their effort to receive IEDA grant funds for a variety community projects and programs.

The Murray Lions Club encourages and supports community service and those projects and programs to promote opportunities for numerous improvements, updating infrastructure, new construction and commercial development. Enhancements that improve community environment and build pride in the community.

The IEDA grant program supports the making of a difference in the lives of citizens in many communities and on behalf of the Murray Lions Club thank you for the opportunity to support the City of Murray with your consideration of assisting our citizens that are striving to improve our community.

Thank you for your consideration of supporting our administration, staff and citizens with your program offerings as we strive to improve our way of life in rural Iowa. Thank you for being "Difference Makers."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dennis Jeter".

Murray Lions Club

Dennis Jeter, Club Secretary

On behalf of my husband and I, we would like to show our support of the Neighborhood Planning grant that is being applied for by our town of Murray. Being long time residents, we have seen many families and businesses come and go. We feel this is partly due to the decline of infrastructure such as roads, houses, buildings, and recreational areas. We believe this grant can go a long way in helping not only our small community, but the residents that live here. Many houses are in need of repair. Residents find themselves at a crossroads of whether to stay or leave due to the inability to afford the repairs they need. This grant would help those get the repairs they need and entice them to remain in the community. This grant could also help with constructing new housing to entice other families to choose our community as their own. Updating and adding options to our recreation areas would give our young residents a place to safely have something to do. Updating our infrastructure, such as roads, buildings, water drainage, etc would help restore this community and possibly entice those who are thinking of starting a new business. With Caseys being our only large business in town, the hope of making the changes possible with this grant would ensure that this business remains in our community. We have a small but amazing community that my husband and I feel this grant would benefit.

Pat and Carla O'Neil

As a resident of the town of Murray, I want to let you know of the support of this small town. We are a town of around 800 people who have always come together to make improvements to the town.

The town or people in it have always supported improvements to the school, archery club, boy scouts and the local volunteer fire department.

The people of Murray have come together numerous times and are willing to take the time out of their day to better the community by taring down abandon houses, working on street repairs, mowing the lawns for those who can no longer do this, they also have come together to help build on the addition to the Murray Church of Christ.

With the receive of this grant we could put in the splash pad for a place for kids to play, build some rental houses to bring in more people to our town and bring in some businesses like a grocery store and a restaurant.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to receive this grant.

Glenda Flaherty

I am in full support of the City of Murray applying for grant funding to make improvements to our community. I have seen a lot of changes over the years, some good, some not so good but the last 10 years our city staff, Mayor and Council have worked hard to improve our living situation. I am excited to have safer routes to school for our children and the ability to accommodate more families with additional or rehabilitated housing. The work planned at Mallory Park is needed simply because there have not been any updates done since the 1980's. Murray is a small town but we are proud of our community.

Sheila Purscell

To Whom It May Concern:

I currently serve as the president of the Murray School Board and a lifelong resident of Murray. I am writing to express my support for Murray City Council's application for the IEDA grant to enhance our community.

As a school board member, I have witnessed the impact that new and improved housing, sidewalks, and recreational opportunities can have on the well-being and quality of life of our residents. The proposed project will address the needs we have, including insufficient housing, lack of safe walking access, and limited recreational facilities. By securing this grant, Murray will be able to implement upgrades that may attract and keep people in our great community.

Improved housing and infrastructure will provide residents with safe, affordable, and comfortable living conditions, which is a huge concern. New and rehabilitating current housing will attract new families to the area, and also help keep our current families here. As a board, we hear many people say housing is the main reason they do not enroll their child(ren) in the Murray Community School District. Access to well-maintained parks and recreational areas is important for all ages. Research indicates the ability to have green spaces fosters both physical health and mental well-being. The ability to have sidewalks is vital to the safety of our students who walk to school. Currently, our bus routes are limited, which in turn, leads to many of our children walking to and from school without sidewalks. Please consider the Murray community for this grant, as we need and desire positive upgrades to our little town. Thank you for considering our application.

Sincerely,

Tara Page

We have lived in Murray since 1984 and have seen a lot of positive changes but there is still a lot of projects that could improve the citizens' lifestyle. We support the city of Murray's application for a grant. The grant could be used for new, demolition or rehabilitation of homes in Murray. Murray has a great school system but the only way to maintain the school is with young families with children. Children need activities and this grant could be used to improve our community park with such things as updating the basketball and tennis court and adding a pickle ball court. These activities not only appeal to kids but also to their parents which in turn improves family life. The bathrooms need to be either updated or replaced. In their current state families need to go home for bathroom breaks. Thank you for considering Murray, Iowa for a city improvement grant.

Ken and Marilyn Penick

November 14, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

Please accept this letter of support for the City of Murray in its request for a IEDA grant. This will provide valuable resources to our community for the future of our town. I fully support the City of Murray in it's efforts to improve our community.

Thank you for your time,

Tracy Hodges

929 Maple Street

Murray, IA 50174

We are proud of our small community and our school system. We are excited about the improvements that the city has planned for the grant funding if awarded. Housing is a huge issue as our incoming families struggle to find home available in the growing community therefore, they have to open enroll their students to our school system. Mallory Park has not been updated in years and our grandkids are excited about the potential of a splashpad and new playground. Murray has seen many improvements over the last few years and we hope that this grant funding will allow us to see many more.

Bruce and Peggy Shannon

Bruce & Peggy Shannon

December 6, 2024

To whom it may concern,

As a prior Mayor of Murray and City Council Member these grant funds would be a great support to the town for future projects. We could provide sidewalks for kids to have safe routes to school. We could improve housing and park improvements. So much more could be done. This would be a great improvement to our town and bring new businesses and families to Murray. These improvements would not only be good for the current residents but they would also be a great way to attract young people and families. So much good could be used by these grant funds to improve this small community.

Thanks for your support,

Kristi Frederick

December 6, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the Neighborhood Planning Study and grant support for the city of Murray, Iowa.

As a lifelong resident of Murray for 30 years, improvements to our town are much need to keep it safe and thriving. I grew up in town, walked to school, played at the park and worked at the Café in town growing up. As an adult, I still live in the town of Murray and coach at the high school. My passion and love for this small town and community runs deep. I hope to raise my future children in this town and updates would greatly help them have the same experience I did.

The ability to walk to school on safe side walks to avoid walking on the road will be peace of mind. It would be peace of mind now as a coach knowing I have athletes currently walking to practice. Being a part of the school system, I want to continue to keep students at Murray and our programs thriving. We need to improve our housing development to retain and encourage people to live in our community for student enrollment.

Adding additions and updates to our city park will attract people as well as give kids more opportunities for safe fun in our town. Growing up playing basketball at the park was something we did religiously as kids/teenagers.

With this grant I would love to see more small businesses in Murray. As I mentioned my first job was working at the café in town. Our community needs these businesses again that will hopefully allow good opportunities for employment and as consumers.

A grant like this will help a community I love to continue to sustain with the ability to thrive in the future as it did when I was growing up. There are many of us that have a love for our hometown and want to see our children continue that love and support.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Tessa Otto

Current Murray Resident

The City of Murray is working to improve our small town and develop new amenities that are hoped to bring new families into our community. With the development of housing, park improvements, sidewalks that will provide safe routes for walkers, as well as improvements with infrastructure. Each of these improvements would benefit our community. As a young adult who grew up in Murray, it would be great to continuously see improvements in our town for the future!

Chloe Timmons

Benjamin Heath
Heath Electric
702 Maple Street
Murray, Iowa 50174

To whom it may concern,

I am pleased to be writing a letter of support for the City of Murray to have the chance to receive grants through the IDEA. We strongly support this grant application and the focus the city has to improve its resources that make Murray such a great community to conduct business and raise a family in.

As a Business owner and father of 4 kids that attend the Murray School, we would first hand experience the benefit of these funds on all fronts. Whether its safe walking paths for our kids to get to school, improving housing to bring more families to our community to support small businesses, or new infrastructure to expand our business and keep it operating out of Murray.

We have been very impressed with the amount of surveying and community input that has been requested to figure out what would benefit the community most. I feel as though if Murray received these funds, that they would do their best to disperse the money through projects that would help the community in the most beneficial ways.

Best regards,
Benjamin Heath

To Whom it may concern:

I wish to share the following in a letter of support and my sincere wish for your consideration of a grant to our community.

The city administrator, city clerk, and city workers, as well as many town citizens have worked diligently the last few years to clean up dilapidated properties which, in turn, have encouraged many people to improve and take more pride and effort in their own homes.

The main hub of our community is the excellent school we have which is supported by the whole district, young and old alike! Our school is growing and we have a desperate need for good housing. When a nice house becomes available, which is seldom, it is sold within a few weeks or even days. People don't move away very often.

Individuals and community groups work hard to improve parks, landscaping, and other small projects but these things cost a lot of money and we just don't have the funds for much needed work on roads, tree planting, updated playgrounds, incentive for new business and more housing that we so desperately need.

We have the heart and the vision to greatly improve this small community. We just need the financial help.

What a blessing this extremely generous grant would be to our community in southern Iowa which many times is forgotten or pushed back in favor of larger, more prosperous communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen A. Chew".

Karen Chew

Hello,

I have lived in Murray for over 30 years and enjoy watching our small-town grow. As we grow, we are in need of community improvements. We could greatly use some funds to improve our parks and neighborhoods. This will help bring in more families and give something for our current residents to use and enjoy.

Crissi Tracy

I am submitting my letter of support for the Neighborhood Planning Study for
Murray, Iowa.

My wife and I moved to Murray 3 years ago and have seen tremendous potential for growth in our community here over the last three years. As Pastor of Murray Baptist Church, I have a deep interest in families and residents here. We have grown to full capacity and continue to see our children's ministry, teens and adults expand and thrive. My wife is a Special Ed. Associate at Murray Community Schools and sees the continued expansion in attendance there as well. With this evident growth there comes the obvious need for many improvements in our community. There is an overwhelming consensus that more housing is a necessity for Murray, along with improvements for parks, sidewalks, and many other general improvements. Having come to Murray from larger towns where we have lived, we see the need for businesses to be attracted to our community through commercial development. We are confident that with provided funds, Murray would continue to grow and become a sought-after alternative for residents seeking to find a rural community to be a part of outside of large city limits.

David Melton
Pastor - Murray Baptist Church

I was given this opportunity to write this letter today in hopes to give you a brighter picture of what all these improvements would mean to our town! My husband is originally from Murray and speaks highly of the childhood he was afforded by living in a small town. Unfortunately, raising our son and daughter here has been missing some key elements and having a happy, healthy and safe childhood. It seems like small towns get forgotten easily as time goes on but Murray is different. The community takes pride in where they come from and continues to try and improve in any aspect that they can. Being granted this money for these improvements would do just that, keep Murray thriving and our children growing up in a happy healthy place!

Thank you for your time,
Makayla and Joe Halverson

MURRAY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing in support of the City of Murray's opportunity in obtaining the IEDA grant money to go towards building and bettering our small community. The City of Murray and the residents have such an amazing sense of pride in our small town. It truly reflects the 'Small Town Iowa' feeling in every sense.

With the receipt of this grant, our town could make some big, beneficial changes that will serve current and future residents for many years to come.

As the Murray Development Corporation, for the past several years we have been trying to come up with ways to bring more housing options into our community. Unfortunately, with being a small-town organization and limited funds we haven't been able to jump that hurdle, but we are ready to assist in every way we can – starting with the rehabilitation of the current homes we do have. Whether that be helping monetarily in a small way or getting our hands dirty in helping our fellow community members, we're ready to assist if the City is able to be awarded these funds to help us get started.

Another issue with being a small, rural community – options/activities for the kids to partake in. We do have a city park, but the equipment is getting older and new is needed. With these funds, it would be great to have new options that all ages can use – equipment, courts, splashpad area and even updates to the current restrooms that are in need of repairs.

In conclusion, there are so many 'small' things that can be done to really improve our town, but small things add up monetarily very quickly and we unfortunately don't have the resources to support all of those things needed – this grant would be an incredible help to our small, amazing community!

Thank you for your consideration,



Kristin Flaherty, Board Chairperson

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this as a letter of support for the City of Murray, Iowa, to receive this grant.

I have lived in Murray for 24 years, 20 of those years being a homeowner. During the past 24 years, I have raised 2 daughters, and we all have been active in the community. Both of my daughters graduated from Murray High School and my oldest daughter currently works in the Murray school system. I actually moved our family to Murray for the sole reasons of the school system and the close-knit community. We all believe in the growth of Murray.

Some of the activities that my daughters were active in (as well as several others and the future kids) would benefit if Murray was to receive these grant funds. For example, updating the basketball/tennis court. There were numerous times when my daughters and their friends met during the off season to shoot some hoops at the court at the park. For some kids, that is the only opportunity they have to shoot hoops or play a quick game of HORSE. It isn't just a place to hang out. They work on skills, build friendships, and for some it is a time to get away from their home life/troubles if even for a short time.

I have watched the population as well as school enrollment grow. I have heard numerous comments about how "Murray needs more housing" or "that house could be fixed up" or "that house needs torn down." All these comments are true. I see it. I can't count the number of new teachers that come to town but can't live in Murray because of the lack of housing. Several drive 20-50 miles one way each day just to teach. The school enrollment isn't going to slow down, people will continue to want to live in Murray. These grant funds would help the housing issue in so many positive ways.

I could go on and on as to why Murray should receive these grant funds. The community, city leaders, school administration, students, and young children of our community love our town, and we want it to grow and be a positive place for the future. Receiving these grant funds would be one more step to making Murray even better.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jaci Smith



Murray Community School



**Devin Vander Molen, Activities Director
Principal**

dvandermolen@murraycsd.org

Jenni Danley, Business Manager

jdandley@murraycsd.org

Tim Kuehl, Superintendent

tkuehl@murraycsd.org

Deborah Chapman, HS

dchapman@murraycsd.org

Keegan Smith, Elem Principal

ksmith@murraycsd.org

December 4, 2024

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to express my support for the City of Murray in seeking a Neighborhood planning study to be submitted to the IEDA for the opportunity to receive \$1.74 million in grant funds. Murray is a small district that enjoys strong community support and draws approximately 30% of it's enrollment from open enrolled in students. Each year we have families trying to move to the district that express frustration at being unable to find housing.

The grant funds would provide improved housing opportunities for families, improved recreational opportunities for families, improved walking routes to/from school, and infrastructure to support residential and business growth in our town.

While being a huge positive for our town/community, it would also be a positive for our school district as well. I can be reached at 641-447-2517 if I could provide any more information.

Sincerely,

Tim Kuehl

12/4/2024

To Whom it May concern (re: Neighborhood Planning Grant):

As a longtime resident of Murray, IA and a father of three, I am excited to provide this letter of support for Murray's Neighborhood Planning Study grant. Murray is a great place to live, but the city has not been able to address the needs, that have developed over the years. This grant provides the city the needed funds to address safety concerns, such as sidewalks, for safe passage to and from school, as well as the necessary playground equipment so children can enjoy a healthy and safe experience at the city parks.

These funds can also help the elderly and low socio-economic families in town receive the needed improvements on their home, addressing both safety and comfort concerns for Murray residents. I hope this letter is beneficial to the process and I am happy to provide additional information if needed. Please feel free to contact me at the email listed below.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Harrison". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

Ken Harrison

krharrison72@gmail.com

524 1st Street
Murray, IA 50174

Dec. 4, 2024

To: Murray Administrator + Council Members

Bill + I completely support Murray applying for a grant to improve housing, park improvements, sidewalks, etc.

Hopefully these improvements would also bring business interest into Murray.

Even tho we are a very small town, our residents + children should be able to enjoy some of these things that bigger towns do

Wishing you success in the grant application.

Bill + Sharon Sheeley
702 Lyon St.
Murray, UT



Murray Community School



Devin Vander Molen, Activities Director
jshields@murraycsd.org

Jenni Danley, Business Manager
jdandley@murraycsd.org



Tim Kuehl, Superintendent
tkuehl@murraycsd.org

Keegan Smith, PK-5 Principal
ksmith@murraycsd.org

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for Murray City Council's application for the IEDA grant to enhance our community. I currently serve as the Elementary Principal in the Murray Community School District. It is from this experience that I will speak on.

As the Elementary Principall have witnessed firsthand the significant impact that improved housing and green spaces can have on the well-being and quality of life of our residents. The proposed project aims to address critical needs in our community, including inadequate housing, lack of safe play areas, and limited access to recreational facilities. By securing this grant, Murray will be able to implement vital improvements, such as repairing or upgrading homes, creating new parks, adding playground equipment, and repairing unsafe traveling surfaces.

These enhancements will not only provide residents with safe and comfortable living conditions but also foster a sense of community and belonging. Access to well-maintained parks and recreational areas is essential for promoting physical health, mental well-being, and social interaction among residents of all ages. I urge you to consider the positive impact that this grant will have on our community. The residents of Murray are eager for these improvements, which will contribute to a healthier, more vibrant community. Thank you for considering our application.

We appreciate your support and commitment to community development and look forward to the opportunity to work together toward a brighter future for Murray.

Sincerely,

Keegan Smith
PK-5 Principal
Murray Community School District

Keegan Smith