

IMAGINE COLLEGE HILL!

Vision Plan



**Public Review Draft
February 2021**



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College Hill
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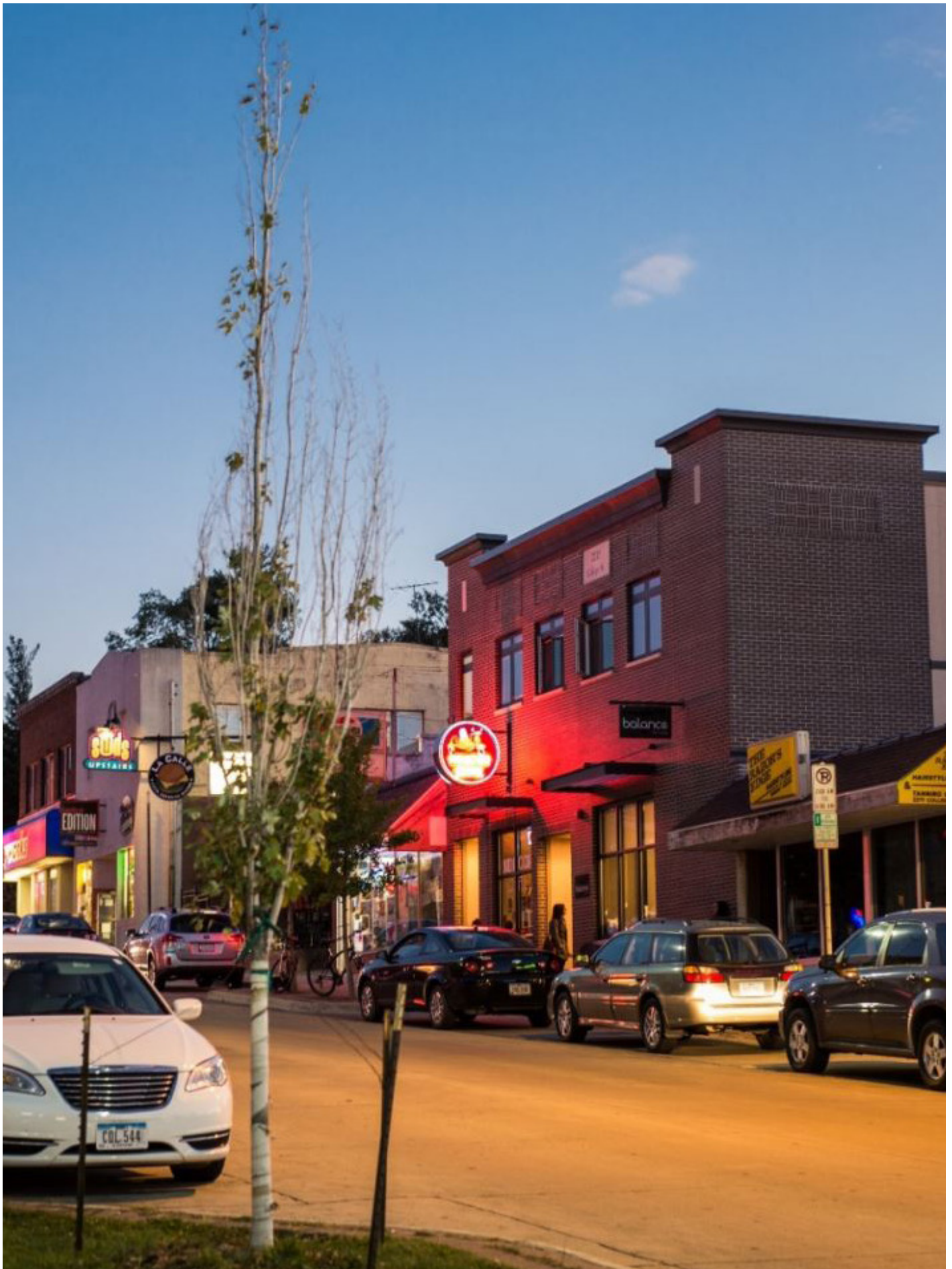
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

College Hill is one of the older, more diverse, and densely populated areas within Cedar Falls. It is dominated by the University of Northern Iowa (UNI), related student-oriented businesses, and housing. The neighborhoods surrounding UNI were primarily developed from the late-nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century, with ongoing infill and redevelopment up until the present day. Over the past few decades, there have been ongoing community discussions about the importance of stabilizing and revitalizing the area, resulting in the 1993 College Hill Neighborhood Plan, the creation of the College Hill Partnership, and the College Hill Overlay District.

Despite these efforts, there remains a feeling that College Hill could be better. It is the “front door” to UNI with the potential to be a vibrant entertainment district and neighborhood main street for the surrounding areas. However, student housing has continued to creep outward from the campus and heart of College Hill into the neighborhoods. Residents are concerned that, with more and more houses becoming student rentals, the neighborhood will be destabilized and prompt disinvestment in the area. There is something of a “chicken and egg” situation for College Hill—it requires more residents, including more students, to support a wider variety of local businesses and it requires more and different types of businesses to attract the local neighbors who have options elsewhere in Cedar Falls for spending their discretionary dollars.

Proximity to the University is a double-edged sword. While students are the life-blood of the area, they also create issues for the surrounding neighborhoods: parking, rental housing, student-oriented businesses. How do you balance the needs and desires of permanent Cedar Falls residents with those of students, who will only reside on the Hill for a few years? How best to promote a walkable area, while accommodating car storage? Students want to be near campus, but they also want easy access to a car when needed. New(er) development demands higher rents—existing houses that have been converted to apartments keep rents low. Some people who might want to live in a College Hill neighborhood are put off by the “student party house” vibe. Where should student housing end and traditional neighborhoods begin? Are the City’s rental permit program and code enforcement the (only) answers? The community wants redevelopment and revitalization, but the demand for new commercial space (office or retail) is limited—current parking requirements, in particular, make the development of new residential units on small lots difficult, and push rental rates for new units to the highest price points. In addition to the above, some recent redevelopment proposals have gotten bogged down with debates concerning the City’s implementation of on-site parking requirements.

While within the College Hill Partnership, business owners, property owners, and the University have been talking to one another, a unified vision or road map would better insure stakeholders are not working at cross purposes as revitalization gets underway. Those meetings, discussions, and efforts culminated in the public planning charrette that produced this document: the *Imagine College Hill! Vision Plan*. (Hereafter, the *Imagine College Hill Plan/Project*.) The plan will provide a general framework for public policy decisions and investment, in tandem with clear aspirations for the scale and character of private development in the heart of College Hill and the surrounding neighborhoods, to be followed by new objective development standards. Any new zoning code standards or processes should create a level playing field for all involved, to produce the desired scale and character of development to implement this plan.

Throughout the College Hill visioning process, the community—elected officials, business and property owners, and residents—consistently indicated a desire for a more diverse, economically viable, walkable, mixed-use district, surrounded by stable neighborhoods comprised of owners and renters. While College Hill has some similarities with Downtown, it is also fundamentally different. Urban design concepts such as placemaking and walkability warrant similar approaches in both locations. However, the student demographics and more limited and targeted market create different issues (and different opportunities) with different potential solutions. The City and University will play critical roles; however, the ability of current business and property owners to participate in the redevelopment process through small-scale, incremental infill will be the key to the revitalization of College Hill. In addition, the opportunity to create, encourage, and support a true multi-modal district on College Hill should not be missed.

The *Imagine College Hill Plan* includes: an overview of the planning process; a summary of input gathered from the community during kick-off events; consultant team analysis; the “Big Ideas” (the main concepts) from the virtual Community Visioning Workshop; prototypical redevelopment scenarios; and recommendations for implementing the community vision.

This plan is graphic intensive, with before and after photo-imaging and drawings of example development projects, aiming to help community members visualize change before it occurs. It envisions incremental growth within the current College Hill context, recognizing that UNI enrollment in combination with market conditions will greatly influence the rate with which redevelopment occurs.

Although this plan document is organized around the visioning process, individual issues, prospective “what if” design scenarios, and approaches to implementation, all are interrelated and should be viewed holistically. Urban design and revitalization issues are multifaceted. Achieving the vision will take place over a number of years, and require multiple tools and approaches, frequently used in conjunction with one another. The implementation tools used—policy, regulatory, and financial—should be coordinated to reinforce the overarching vision.

VISIONING PROCESS AND PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

In the early winter of 2020, the consultant team conducted stakeholder interviews, a kick-off community event, and began site analysis of the study area. However, due to COVID-19, the plans for a Spring 2020 Community Hands-On Visioning Workshop were put on hold. After adapting to life in a pandemic, the public outreach and engagement were rethought and moved to a virtual process in the Fall of 2020. The following plan is the result of that visioning process.

In addition to the site analysis and current zoning, the team reviewed the recent College Hill parking study, and studied the current demographics and market information for the College Hill study area, with a focus on student housing and retail and commercial opportunities. All of this information was used to test development scenarios that were informed by ideas from the community in the virtual public design workshop, against the development and market realities within the College Hill context, and to establish a framework for future growth and development.

The *Imagine College Hill Plan* anticipates the public and private sector (and University) working together—with the public sector “setting the table” for growth through investment in the public realm and establishing rules to provide certainty for the private sector to invest, (re)develop, and intensify the business district, fulfilling the community vision for the Heart of the Hill. Simultaneously, the Plan includes specific ideas for stabilizing the surrounding neighborhoods, with emphasis on maintaining and improving the existing context with limited direct intervention.

The Plan addresses several topics and includes recommendations for creating a vibrant, mixed-use, walkable district with improved connectivity to the neighborhoods and Downtown. These can broadly be identified as either matters of physical design and placemaking; or technical policy and management issues, to help implement or reinforce the community vision. Some topics fall into both categories and many are interrelated. These design concepts and policy recommendations include the following.

Build on the work of the College Hill Partnership. Explore opportunities to create synergy between businesses, neighborhoods, the University, and the City. The College Hill Partnership and Community Main Street should continue to look for opportunities to coordinate.

Define the public realm with active building facades, improved sidewalks, and additional street trees. Development regulations should foster buildings that define and enhance the public realm—typically the public streets and sidewalks (from building face to building face) as well as the parks and plaza (and the future greenway along Dry Run Creek). The uses inside the buildings can and will change over time; but buildings that are designed for an urban context and made of durable materials, will continually be reused, just as some buildings near College and 23rd Streets have been for close to 100 years. This will be especially important for “reconnecting the Upper and Lower Hill” which was one of the most consistent ideas heard during the College Hill virtual charrette.

Ensure that future street and sidewalk rebuilding enhances walkability. The existing street and block network is mostly a great framework for people to move in and around College Hill efficiently. The mega-block between 22nd, 20th, College, and Merner Streets is a central exception. The eventual extension and completion of the grid should be logically approached and incorporate environmental solutions for Dry Run Creek. The targeted public investment in the pedestrian realm will make walking a more viable transportation option and encourage more reinvestment by current property owners as well as new infill development. This effort should include the planting of street trees throughout the district. The importance of street trees cannot be overestimated. Not only do they provide shade and assist with stormwater runoff, they help to define the pedestrian realm, increase pedestrian comfort, and calm traffic. In addition, in a generally built-out condition such as College Hill, with limited opportunity to create new public green space, streets should be celebrated as the preeminent public space that they are.

Support a multi-modal environment. Right-size the streets to enhance the walking and biking environment. Improve the pedestrian comfort and safety by widening sidewalks, providing viable street tree plantings, and enhancing street crossings with targeted ‘bump outs’ at key intersections, and reduce crossing distances with appropriate neighborhood lane widths and posted speeds.

Understand the market—particularly as it relates to student housing, new construction, and parking—to leverage opportunities for growth on College Hill. College Hill has remained stable for several decades; the demographics in the area are unique in the city. Its future is directly intertwined with the student enrollment at UNI. Increasing the number of students living in close proximity to the campus can create opportunities for new and more varied businesses on the Hill, and relieve pressure on the surrounding neighborhoods to convert more houses to rental properties. College Hill can support a walkable “car free” environment for people who choose that lifestyle. Current parking requirements limit the amount of student housing that can be accommodated near campus, both driving up the cost of new construction and increasing the cost of the existing supply of nearby rental housing.

Create gateways to College Hill to provide a sense of arrival. Consider key locations, such as the intersections of Main Street and Seerley Boulevard, 18th and College Streets, and along the University Avenue corridor. Gateways are much stronger when the streetscape and built environment work together to narrow the perceived roadway width and slow traffic, signaling that people are entering a special place—one designed for people rather than cars. Much more than simple directional signage (The University of Northern Iowa with an arrow and distance) true gateways convey a character and create a welcoming environment for pedestrians and cyclists alike.

Explore opportunities for new/improved public spaces. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of flexible outdoor gathering places—now and for the future—whether “green” or hardscape, or for active or passive uses. Such spaces are important for the community and can support a range of retail and dining options as well as special events and activities, at different times of the day, the week, and the year.

Adjust the rules for development (and parking). The context analysis included a review of the current zoning and development review process. The general sense during the virtual public process was that any new development in the neighborhoods should respect the scale and character of the existing context, with a desire to promote more owner-occupancy and continue with code enforcement (particularly for rental properties.) However, the desire for more intense student housing near campus will require some changes for current development standards. The current development and parking standards create a mismatch between cost of construction and return on investment. The parking cannot be provided at the ratio currently required to achieve aspirational densities without building structured parking (either above or below grade), which then makes new construction cost prohibitive—leaving rundown rental properties in place. This plan illustrates ways for context-sensitive infill in the neighborhoods, while permitting redevelopment in the Heart of College Hill that can accommodate both more intensity and the variety of uses currently allowed.

Recognize that College Hill (and nearby neighborhoods) play a unique role within Cedar Falls and warrant a targeted approach.

The rules and procedures for development should reinforce placemaking concepts at the street and block level, rather than on an isolated parcel-by-parcel level, so that in the future, College Hill becomes an asset for the City and University alike. These areas are not just comprised of individual buildings on individual lots, but rather buildings that relate to one another, and to the streets, sidewalks and create public spaces throughout the district. Build on the inherent town and gown synergy to create a thriving college town and neighborhood “main street.”

Create a better process for development review and approval. Establish more consistent, objective design and development standards and use refined zoning requirements as one tool in a new approach to redevelopment and parking management within the College Hill study area.

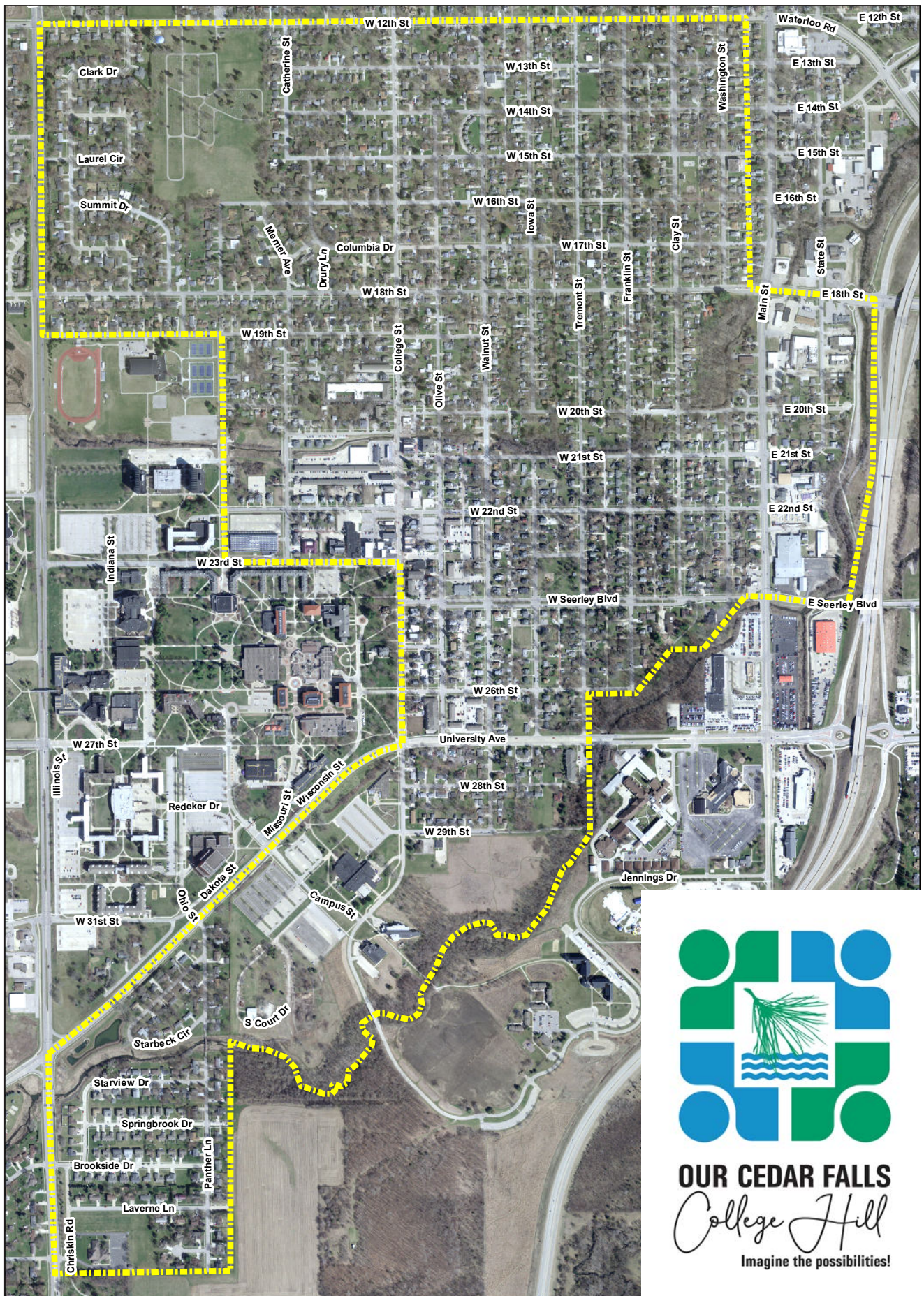
Establish a true bicycle network. The community would like to make bicycling easier. As the City invests in street rebuilding and pedestrian infrastructure, it should consider improved wayfinding and bicycle infrastructure to move beyond the current “patchwork” and enable cycling to be a true transportation option for a range of skill levels. The City has a grid street pattern in this area that is bike-friendly—short blocks with low traffic volumes. This plan envisions enhancing that pattern by designating a network of bikeways—complementing and in support of the 2020-21 update to the Cedar Falls Bicycle Plan (which was originally published in 2009)—to truly connect disparate areas of the City, especially College Hill, Downtown, the river trails, and the neighborhoods.

Coordinate parking supply management. The College Hill parking study provides a wealth of information and approaches to managing public parking. This plan builds upon several of those through a lens of placemaking and walkability, and recommends updating the current requirements in order to achieve the desired outcomes. Because the City and University are not using similar systems or pricing, the City has been providing free or inexpensive parking to University students and staff who don’t want to pay for University permits. Parking supply should support a “park once” environment and the goals of the *Imagine College Hill Plan*—not be an end in-and-of itself.

CONCLUSION

The City initiated the visioning process to provide a framework for the future growth of College Hill. The goal of the *Imagine College Hill Plan* is to define that framework—building on community aspirations, and incorporating urban design and placemaking principles—within the existing College Hill context. This community vision will also lay the foundation for tailoring the City’s new form-based regulations specifically to implement the College Hill vision plan. The plan provides illustrations of one or more ways in which development could occur, over time, on specific study area sites. Each example addresses one or more of the plan goals and recommendations to achieve the community vision for a compact, walkable, mixed-use district. These concepts (and more) are further defined, explored and illustrated through “before and after” computer visualizations, photo examples, and drawings in the *Imagine College Hill Plan* that follows.

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PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The Imagine College Hill Project is an interdisciplinary, multi-month public process to engage the community in the development of a vision for the future of College Hill, and update the city's development regulations to implement that vision.

BACKGROUND

College Hill is one of the older and most densely populated areas of Cedar Falls. Adjacent to the University of Northern Iowa, it has long been a neighborhood with a clear identity, with older homes along tree-lined streets, neighborhood parks, and a neighborhood center with local businesses that are oriented toward the neighborhood and university community. However, over the past several decades, the area has seen a reduction of owner-occupied houses and a related increase in student rentals, with businesses becoming increasingly focused on bars, tattoo parlors, vape shops, and quick dining—with less community serving retail. The future of College Hill is closely intertwined with the future of UNI. There is some opportunity for gradual growth and reinvestment, based on market forces—but it will be very slow without a clear plan for strategic public investment, coordination with the university, and a straightforward approach to development review and approval to encourage private (re)investment.

The current development standards and processes were originally established approximately 50 years ago, with periodic amendments to address specific situations—such as the College Hill Overlay District, created to protect and enhance the character of the College Hill business district and stabilize the immediately adjacent neighborhoods. The overlay was one of several recommendations from the 1993 *College Hill Neighborhood Plan*. The overlay and other aspects of the plan have seen some success, but after almost three decades, it is time to review the plan and revisit the implementation, with an eye towards developing new strategies through the lens of the current economic, environmental and social context. In particular, the community desired a more holistic, fine grained approach to direct and incentivize redevelopment for a walkable, mixed-use district such as College Hill and further stabilize the nearby neighborhoods. The City initiated the *Imagine College Hill Project*—a public visioning process and a zoning code update to implement the new vision plan—to build on the City's recent *Imagine Downtown!* effort.

The College Hill Study Area generally includes all of the non-University property south of 12th Street and north of University Avenue; west of Main Street and east of Hudson Road; along with some residential areas south of University Avenue between Hudson Road and Main Street; and a small area east of Main Street between 18th Street and Seerley Boulevard. The current zoning includes areas of C-1, C-2, and C-3 (which permit retail, office, professional services, lodging, and several other commercial uses); R-3 and R-4, (which permit “medium density” residential uses along with some office, professional service, and lodging); and R-1 and R-2 (which permits single-family homes and duplexes). (See the aerial on p. 6.) The *Imagine College Hill Plan* is the result of the public process for envisioning the future of this area.

THE PROCESS

Prior to a public kick-off event in January 2020, the City Council established project priorities (*highlighted on the next page*) to provide a guiding framework for the public outreach, virtual design charrette, and plan that follow.

The visioning process began in the winter of 2020. The consultant team conducted a series of stakeholder interviews and began analyzing the project study area to understand the historic and recent development patterns on College Hill. The team also led a public kick-off event at the University of Northern Iowa Center for Energy and Environmental Education to engage the community on topics related to placemaking and gather input on local perceptions of College Hill and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Before and after the kick-off event, the team worked off-site by reviewing the existing zoning code, the recently completed parking study, and current economic, demographic, and traffic data.

The project has a website (www.OurCedarFalls.com) to provide information and updates, including video of the public presentations, as well as to solicit additional community input from individuals who were unable to attend the various public events.

Following the initial kick-off activities, the *Imagine College Hill* project was delayed for several months due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Once restarted, the planned public design charrette was converted to a week-long virtual community design workshop the first week in October 2020—with all members of the consultant team working off-site in a virtual design studio and all live community engagement meetings being conducted via internet streaming, and additional input gathered via the project website. These virtual charrette activities comprised the *Imagine College Hill! Public Design Charrette*:

- a Saturday morning public virtual hands-on design workshop in which community members broke into small facilitated on-line groups to discuss the College Hill Study Area map, identifying strengths and weaknesses and opportunities for the future;
- two open “Q&A” sessions during the week, where the public was invited to “drop-in” virtually and hear about what the team was working on as well as ask questions;
- a web-based survey, targeted to UNI students; and
- technical meetings to verify that the workshop design ideas would work in the physical and economic context of Cedar Falls.

The virtual charrette was concluded by a public “work-in-progress” presentation the following week, to make sure the team understood what the community had said and was on the right track before further developing and refining the *Imagine College Hill Plan*.



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Imagine College Hill!



College Hill Work-In-Progress

Key Dates

Oct 14 College Hill Vision Plan -- Work-in-Progress Presentation

Document Library for Download

Adopted Downtown Vision Plan
File

College Hill Schedule

 **Kick-off Meeting**

Project web page for Our Cedar Falls



**Cedar Falls City Council
College Hill Vision Plan Project Priorities
Adopted January 2020**

1. Create a thoughtful vision plan to manage change over time.

- Reflect on the past, consider the present, look to the future
- Respect the unique character and identity of College Hill
- Plan for the diversity of people that desire to live and work in the neighborhoods and College Hill area

2. Vision will be based on broad community input, gathered through a robust community outreach process.

- Affirm ongoing community efforts and explore new ideas
- All are welcome
- Feedback is appreciated and essential
- Partner with UNI to encourage participation of University stakeholders – students, faculty and staff, administrators

3. Take into account market realities and changing demographics for all types of development.

- Future technology needs
- Future transportation needs
- Future housing needs and how that complements our neighborhoods
- Consider the significant influence of UNI

4. Maintain/foster a unique sense of place.

- Thriving and dynamic mixed-use business district
- Pedestrian-oriented design
- Attractive interface with UNI campus to enhance visitor experience
- Residential neighborhoods with a compatible mix of housing types that meets the diverse needs of the community

5. Encourage economic development based on the adopted vision.

- Maintain/enhance existing properties
- Encourage new development and redevelopment that creates a distinctive sense of place
- Encourage mixed-use development that will expand the customer base for College Hill businesses

6. Foster healthy residential neighborhoods.

- Stabilize neighborhoods by fostering a healthy balance of housing for both owners and renters
- Focus new housing options for college students in areas adjacent to campus
- Preserve and enhance housing opportunities for long term residents
- Create a seamless transition between more urban campus edge areas and residential neighborhoods

7. Establish clear and objective zoning standards to achieve the adopted community vision.



ANALYSIS

Prior to the visioning effort, the team studied College Hill and surrounding neighborhoods, including: stakeholder interviews and general public engagement to gather local perspectives on the current environment for living, working, going to school, and playing in the area; on-site analysis of the built and natural environments; analysis of local market conditions and demographics; and review of existing policies, regulations, and historic plans specific to College Hill.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: UNDERSTANDING HISTORY, CURRENT PERCEPTIONS & ACTIVITIES

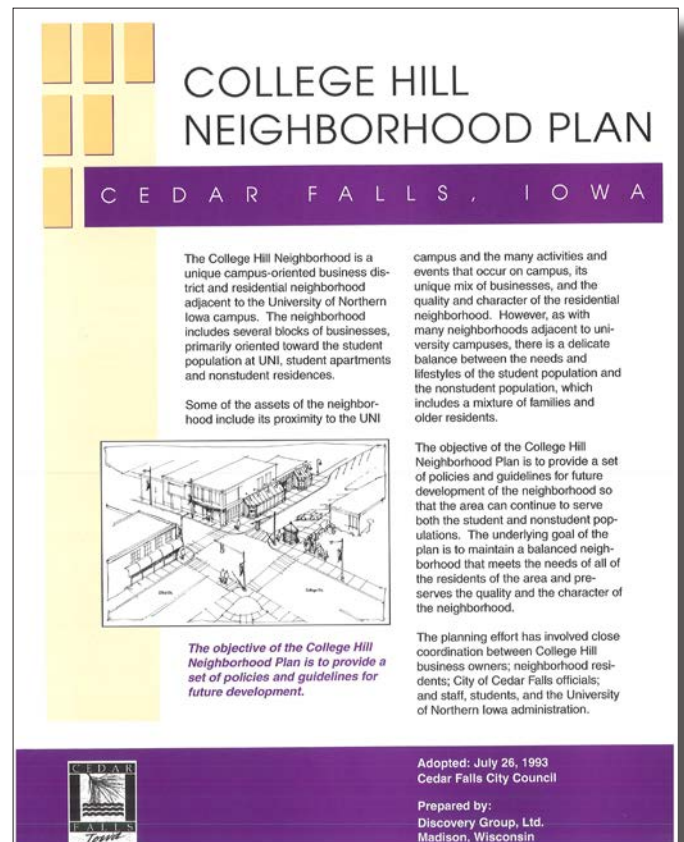
Gathering public input and ideas was a priority for the *Imagine College Hill Project and Plan*. The engagement effort included a series of stakeholder interviews, a public kick-off event, several virtual activities, and an interactive project website (which grew in importance as a tool for communication and public participation under the pandemic restrictions.) The consultant team reviewed the history of the neighborhood and previous plans, to better understand, and build on, the good work that has been completed previously. This is a Community Vision—and its very foundation is the aspirations of the residents and business owners for the future of their neighborhood.

Stakeholder Interviews

In the winter of 2020, the consultant team interviewed a broad cross-section of stakeholders, including: business and property owners; neighborhood residents; retail, restaurant, and bar owners; University of Northern Iowa (UNI) leadership; landlords; UNI student leaders; local developers and real estate professionals; College Hill Partnership board members; City public safety, planning and community development staff; and the parking enforcement staff for the city and university.

The groups identified several overlapping and consistent concerns and interests, although with different priorities, including:

- the importance of continuing the code enforcement and landlord accountability programs;
- the need to keep the student population close to campus and the College Hill business district;
- the importance of treating all landlords and property owners fairly and consistently;
- the desire for more diverse businesses to attract non-student customers;
- need to emphasize property maintenance and general appearance of streets and buildings serving as the “front door” to the University;
- more/better engagement between students and the community;
- the desire to attract more families/non-students to live in nearby neighborhoods;
- improved parking management for streets and City lots;
- a desire to improve connections between College Hill and Downtown; and
- maintaining a unique identity and character for College Hill and nearby (historic) neighborhoods.



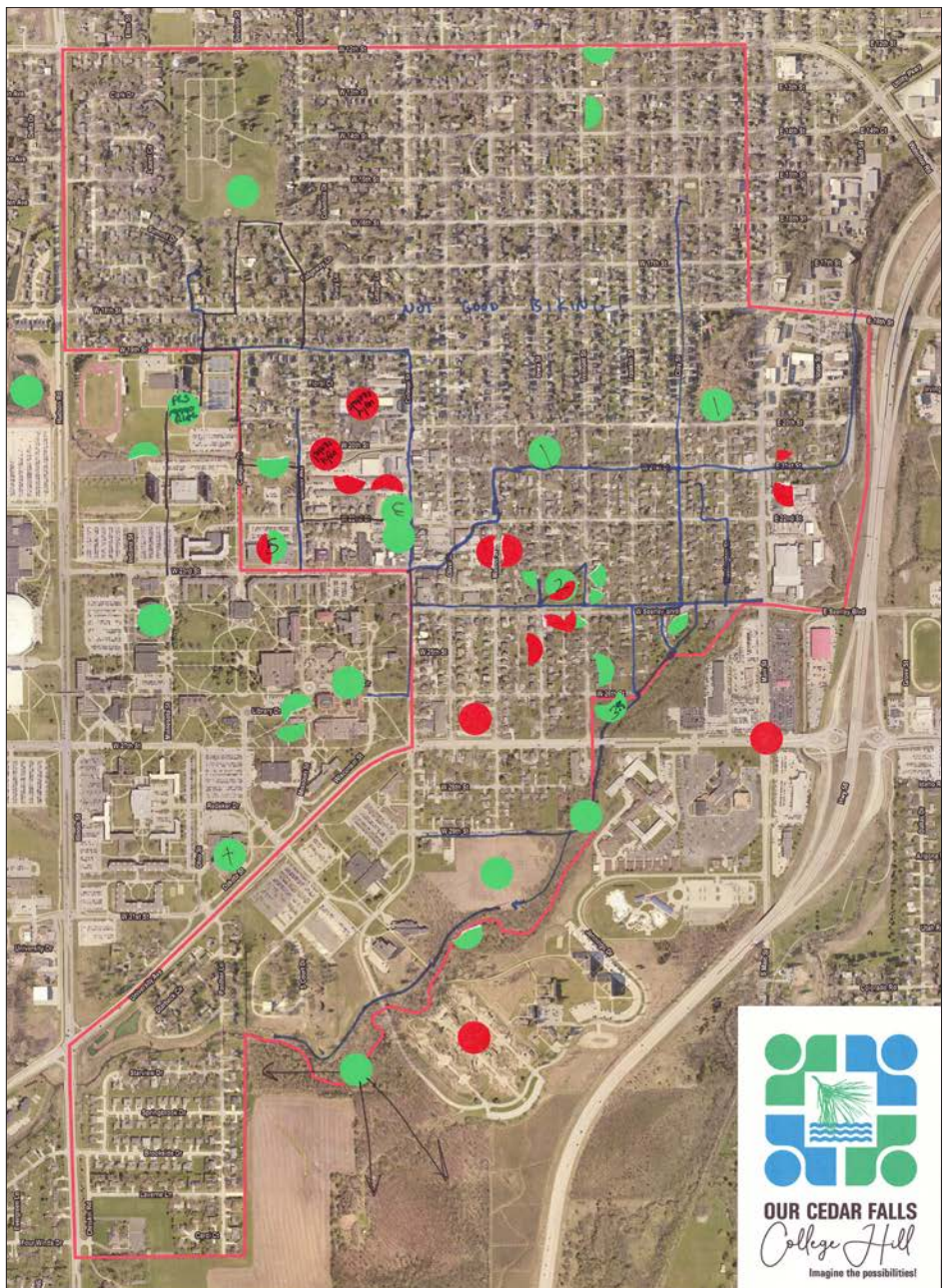
Public Kick-Off Event

Approximately 50 community members attended the *Imagine College Hill!* Kick-Off Event at the University of Northern Iowa CEE in January. Following a welcome by the mayor, the consultant team provided a project overview and a visual introduction to urban design concepts, such as placemaking, urban form and character, and walkability.

Before and after the presentation, the team used several activities to engage participants, promote discussion and gather input—to get to know the College Hill study area and understand some of the issues and concerns that the *Imagine College Hill Vision Plan* needed to address. The engagement activities included:

- a small group mapping exercise (*photos at right*) with two components—first, people marked their primary walking and cycling routes to and through the study area; and second, they identified areas of “strength and weakness” in the area (those locations that they liked or felt need improvement) by marking them with green and red stickers, and provided additional explanatory comments, if desired;
- a visual preference exercise, in which attendees could “vote” on images of buildings, streetscapes, and parking, to indicate whether they felt the character and scale were appropriate for future development on College Hill and in nearby neighborhoods; and
- a survey about individual interest in the visioning project and when, how, and why individuals visit College Hill.

The mapping exercise revealed considerable consistency between groups. Although only a snapshot



of opinions, the visual preference exercise revealed several consistent community “likes” and “dislikes.” Some highlights:

Residential development in adjacent neighborhoods

- Preferred – small front yards, 2-3 stories, with generally traditional architectural detailing
- Not preferred – no front yard, garages or parking in front, continuous repetitive designs

Commercial & mixed-use in the College Hill business district

- Preferred – street-oriented buildings with shopfronts
- Not preferred – buildings oriented toward parking lots

The street-space or public realm (the area between the building façade and the curbs)

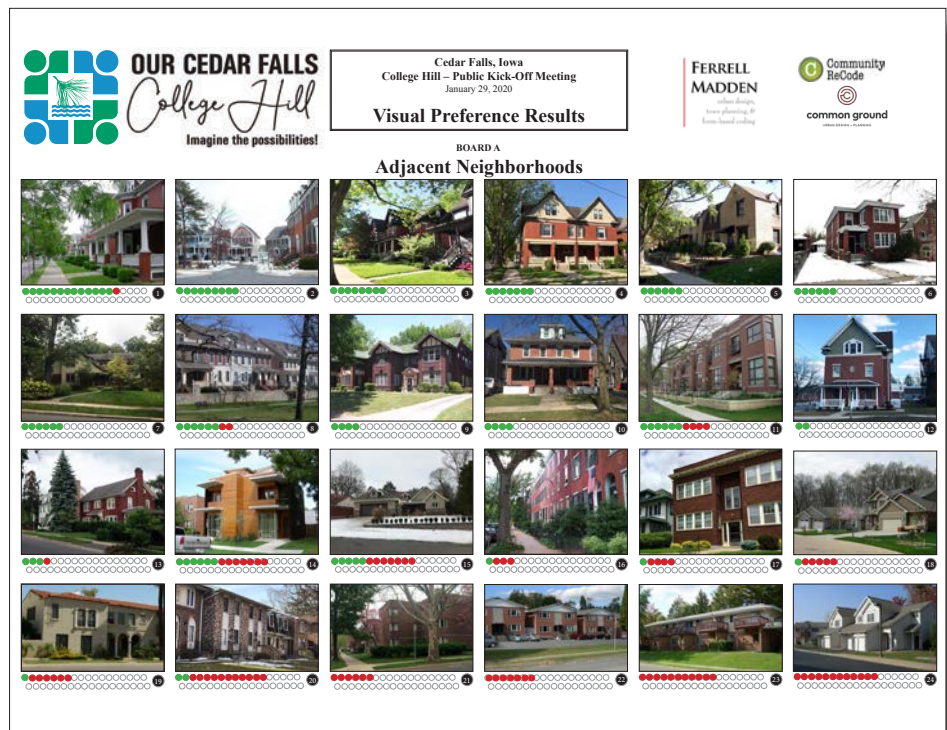
- Preferred – generous sidewalks with street trees (both for business district and neighborhoods)
- Not preferred – narrow sidewalks, lack of street trees, and inactive street frontage

Residential in business district

- Preferred – medium-scale, discrete individual buildings oriented to the street
- Not preferred – larger-scale, monolithic designs, oriented toward parking

The kick-off survey revealed that most participants drive to College Hill for work and other activities, but they indicate that they would like alternative transportation options that are either not currently available or are perceived unsafe or inconvenient.

Images of the “strength and weakness” maps, a tally of the visual preference exercise, and the full survey results are provided in the Appendix.



Studying the Context

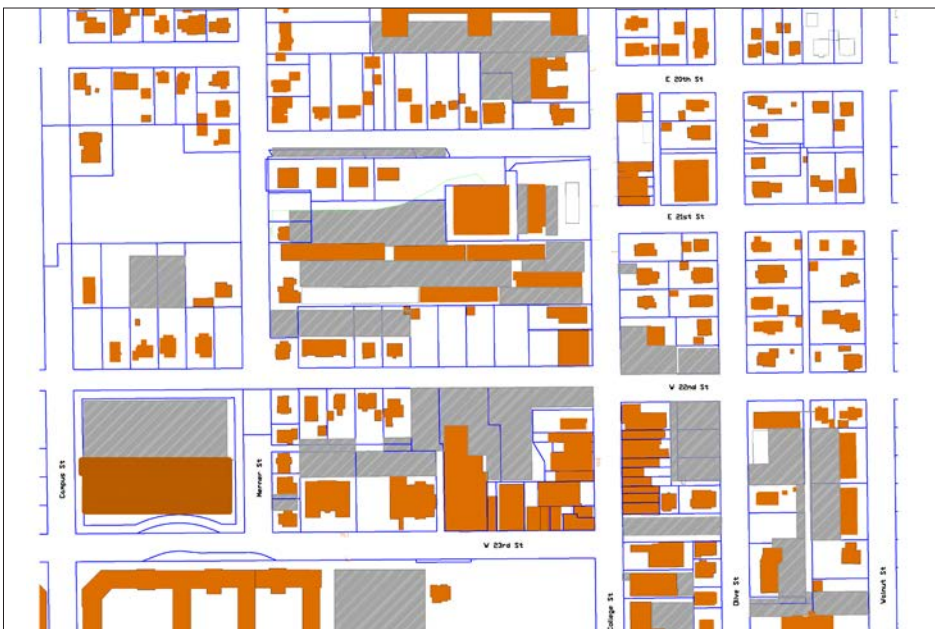
Site Analysis: Understanding the Physical Context

The team drove and walked around the entire study area to experience the existing physical context, noting the character of historic and recent development, taking photographs and identifying potential (prototypical) redevelopment sites. Street widths, traffic patterns, parking locations and availability, public open spaces, and the existence and health of street trees were also examined.

The team examined the overall pedestrian experience based on details such as: interesting shopfronts and active building facades (or the lack thereof); available activities and potential destinations; street lights; and the absence of wayfinding signage for pedestrians or cyclists.

Several features of particular importance were identified:

- the close proximity of the neighborhoods to campus and the business district;
- the fact that there were very few vacant shopfronts along College Street within the business district;
- the range of property maintenance, particularly in proximity to the university campus;
- the historic houses along with some more recent examples of incompatible infill for the existing context—both urban commercial and traditional neighborhood environment;
- the gap in the street frontage along College Street, from the Upper to Lower Hill;
- the high ratio of surface parking lots to building (*diagram at right*);
- the opportunity for using the flood control infrastructure as an amenity; and
- the proximity to (yet disconnection from) the bike trails, the Cedar River, and Downtown.



Understanding College Hill

The study area includes the area considered the College Hill business district along with several of the surrounding adjacent neighborhoods. The mixed-use center has a wide range of building styles dating from throughout the 20th century and more recent. The neighborhoods include many historic homes dating from the late 19th century through the Second World War, along with more recent infill.

A section of the Main Street corridor is also included in the College Hill study area; however, it seems physically and psychologically separate, with a mixture of neighborhood-serving retail large-scale retail and semi-industrial uses, along with a few houses.

While most of the commercial buildings within the core of College Hill are street-oriented urban fabric buildings, there are a few that stand out due to their auto-orientation. Many of the apartment buildings are less successful, turning their sides and backs to the street and ignoring the existing context. Many older homes have been chopped up and converted into student apartments. While they maintain the scale and character of the street, they also create other problems, such as insufficient parking and lack of basic/routine maintenance and upkeep.

Activities on College Hill are dominated by the University, but also include a range of eating and drinking establishments, some retail, and other student oriented businesses such as a laundromat, a copy business, and vape shops and tattoo parlors. There is currently little to attract people from beyond the university community or surrounding neighborhoods.





Economic and Demographic Context

The economic and market analysis was based on local demographic, tax base, and real estate data in combination with stakeholder interviews. Key findings included the following.

College Hill has remained very stable over the past 20 years when measured in terms of population and household counts; however, the number of rental properties has increased. As one would expect, the student population is concentrated near the university. That concentration of students, including their location within the overall study area, has a definite impact on both the residential and commercial markets within the study area. The dynamic and market potential of College Hill moving forward depends heavily on the University of Northern Iowa enrollment.

The extent and pace of new housing development will be gradual, as College Hill can only support small increments of new housing, and even that growth will be constrained without adjustments to the current residential parking requirements. High on-site parking requirements for apartments and other rental properties dramatically increase the cost of development and translates directly to higher rents. New residential development in the core of College Hill is very unlikely to occur without a solution to the parking quandary. Requiring one parking space for every bedroom imposes a cost that the market cannot bear. The densities that can be supported with that level of parking will not justify replacing the existing, obsolescent housing that depresses College Hill's appearance and appeal.

Given the importance of walkability, compact development, and population density to support a healthy neighborhood business district, it will be important to pursue alternative approaches to the current residential parking requirements, including lower ratios and permitting off-site locations. Additional parking management tools should be considered in the future, if needed, to deter students and University commuters from parking in surrounding neighborhoods (to avoid paying for City or University parking) or monopolizing the short-term on-street parking that is needed to support College Hill businesses. (*Parking considerations are discussed further on p. 21.*)

Conversion of student housing back into single-family use will not be likely close to campus, but may be possible in the neighborhood areas a few blocks away. However, the appeal to non-student buyers or renters will be greatly influenced by the overall character of the neighborhood.

Although College Hill businesses are heavily oriented to UNI students, some serve the surrounding neighborhood as well, attracting residents during summer months and some early-evening hours. The district needs a bigger retail base (of both students and full-time residents living and working nearby) to support a larger number and greater diversity of businesses. Simultaneously, more diverse or unique businesses can attract customers from a larger geographic area. The size and stability of the business and residential areas typically have a symbiotic relationship. Retailers would also benefit from a seamless connection between the Upper and Lower Hill, creating a continuous walkable retail frontage along College Street.

These demographic and market realities have direct implications for the *Imagine College Hill Plan*.

The full Market Considerations report is provided in the Appendix.

MOBILITY ON COLLEGE HILL

College Hill is primed to be one of the preeminent multi-modal neighborhoods in Cedar Falls. It is already compact and mixed-use, with an interconnected street network and the University of Northern Iowa students and surrounding neighborhoods in proximity to provide the desired foot-traffic. The area can provide a wide range of activities and services nearby, with trip origins and destinations in such proximity that active modes of transport such as walking or cycling can be more attractive than driving. It should be easy for people to move in and around College Hill safely and efficiently without using an automobile—if a person chooses to do so. College Hill should be the neighborhood in Cedar Falls where UNI students and other city residents who want to live car-free should be able to—with all of their daily needs within a short walking distance.

Getting the design of the streets “right” can mean the difference between a vibrant, walkable, and economically successful neighborhood “main street” district and one that motorists simply pass through without any consideration of visiting. (Or one in which people only walk from their car to their destination, and then back to their car for their next destination, even if it is only a few blocks away). The goal is to plan and design a place for people, accommodating cars but not designing primarily for their use for every trip.

Pedestrian-oriented, multi-modal districts should give residents and visitors true choices about their mode of travel—walking, bicycling, ride-sharing, taking transit, and driving. Individuals can choose the mode that is best suited for their current trip or activity. Complete Streets principles are a way to make sure that people have those choices. In the College Hill study area, there are several guiding principles to support such an environment, both in the core and in the surrounding neighborhoods. Although several College Hill streets have been rebuilt in the past decade and are not due for additional improvements in the near-term, all future street reconstruction projects in the district should include the following ideas.

- Right-size streets (number of lanes, lane widths, slow speeds, and equitable accessibility for the active modes) based on context to enhance the walking and bicycling environment
- Improve sidewalks and fill in gaps—create continuous system for walking
- Enhance crossings for safety and accessibility: with curb bulb-outs, high-visibility markings and active warnings such as Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons where needed; improve interface between trails and streets; and use measures like protected intersections where appropriate
- Implement transit shuttle (like former Panther Shuttle); seek funding partnerships when available. Make transit efficient and reliable
- Implement comprehensive pedestrian and bike network wayfinding for destinations and routes (distance and time to popular destinations by walking and biking)
- Establish working partnerships with College Hill businesses, residents, City, and UNI



Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon

Walkability

Walkability depends on several factors, including pedestrian safety, comfort, and interest. While active building frontages and people-places provide interest, slow-moving traffic with wide sidewalks and short pedestrian crossing distances are fundamental for safety and comfort. Perceived safety is particularly important for pedestrians when crossing streets. Both vehicular speeds and the distance from curb-to-curb (the time the pedestrian is in the travel lane) effect this perception. Reducing the crossing distance by a combination of installing corner bulb-outs and narrowing lanes will greatly improve pedestrian safety and comfort.

Generous sidewalks are the best practice for mixed-use, high foot-traffic areas—15 to 20 feet in a “main street” environment, providing enough space for clear passage, street trees, and outdoor dining. Urban sidewalks should be understood as a combination of the ‘clear walkway’—the continuous and unimpeded sidewalk width and the ‘tree lawn’



width, a generally continuous soil trench that can have special pavements between the trees that can add 6 feet or more to the pedestrian zone width.

For example, the pedestrian crossing distance on 23rd at College Street is more than 39 feet (*see Diagram below*). By reducing the travel lane width and eliminating the free-flow right turn lane, that distance could be as little as 22 feet, almost cutting the crossing distance (and time) in half. This would greatly increase pedestrian comfort and walkability for one of the highest pedestrian-traffic areas in the city. The traffic geometry for the Vision scheme in the diagram below proposes narrower travel lanes, bulb-outs, and a 25-foot radius at these core intersections. This design frees-up space for 14-foot sidewalks along most streets.

Built-out areas such as College Hill are often physically constrained and must balance competing priorities—such as on-street parking, street trees, and clear sidewalk widths. Street rebuilding that involves relocating curbs is expensive. In the short term, trade-offs may be required; but when there are opportunities to reconfigure and re-balance the street-space allocation—such as when streets are rebuilt, properties are redeveloped, or zoning standards are revised—installing wider sidewalks and corner bulb-outs should always be a priority.

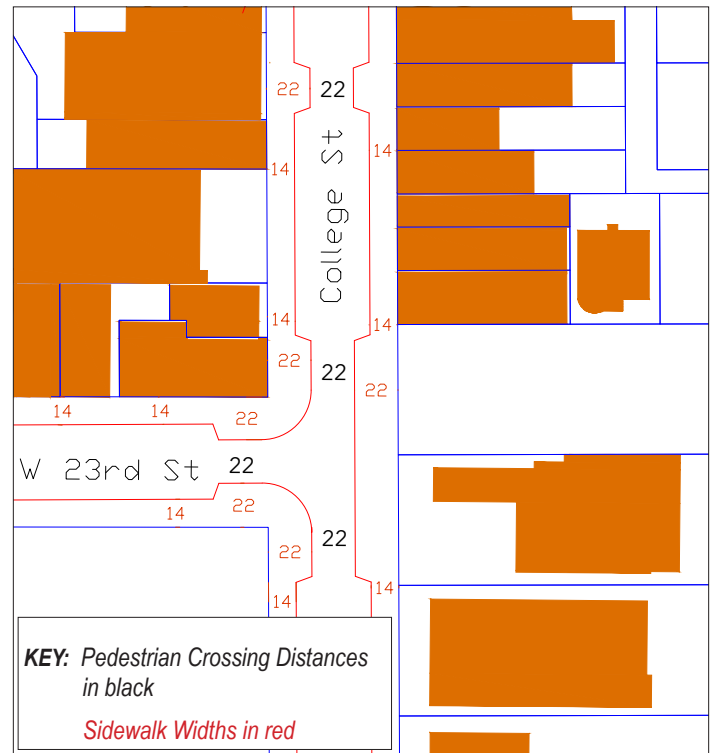


DIAGRAM: A comparison of the pedestrian realm dimensions near the intersection of 23rd and College Streets: Existing (left) vs Vision proposed (right)

Reallocating the street-space has multiple benefits, including increasing the sidewalk width to accommodate street trees and activities such as outdoor dining, as well as decreasing the distance for pedestrians crossing the street, which improves pedestrian comfort and safety.

Bicycles as a Viable Transportation Option

Cedar Falls has a visible and vocal bicycling community (as evidenced by both the existing bicycling trails and shops, and cyclists' enthusiastic participation in the College Hill visioning process). However, even amongst this group, the comfort and skill level varies. In the stakeholder meeting with the Pedestrian & Bicycle Committee, different people identified different “preferred routes” as the best way to get from the Cedar Valley Trail to College Hill and from College Hill to Downtown. This is similar to other US cities, which typically have a small group of “strong and fearless” bicyclists who will ride in almost any environment; but a much larger cohort of about 70% of people who fall into the “enthused and confident” and “interested but concerned” groups that have been proven to ride more with improved facilities and infrastructure. Separation from and calming of vehicular traffic is key to these users, and right sizing of the streets is key to providing that calming.



Wayfinding both from and to bicycle trails



Protected intersections can be used to enhance crossing for cyclist at larger intersections, such as Main Street at Seerley Boulevard
(Image Source: NACTO Guide)

As one participant stated, today Cedar Falls has “more of a patchwork than a network” for bicycles. With a connected bicycle network comprised of a combination of dedicated facilities and safer streets more conducive to use by this 70%, bicycling can be a practical and efficient mode of transportation (rather than just for recreation)—particularly for College Hill residents and employees. In addition, while wayfinding on the trails and greenways clearly identifies nearby points of interest, the reverse is not true. For the uninitiated cyclist on College Hill, the routes to the trails and Downtown are not marked. Such wayfinding is important for visitors and students new to UNI alike. Completing this patchwork into a cohesive network for cycling will require physical modifications to certain streets, augmentation of crossings, and comprehensive wayfinding that ties the system together.

The concepts in this *Imagine College Hill Plan* and the 2020-21 update to the Cedar Falls Bicycle Plan (which was originally published in 2009) should be complementary—most streets in the College Hill study area will remain the same, while others may only need designation of a route and wayfinding. A few may be identified for modification, such as: protected intersections, crossing enhancements, or separated facilities for pedestrians and cyclists alike through “completing the street” by narrowing or reallocating lanes for the active modes.

From an economic development perspective, cities that invest in cycling infrastructure such as trails, greenways, and on-street cycling facilities see reinvestment in the community to tap the visitors using the newly available mode of transportation. Greenville, SC and Travelers Rest, SC have seen significant economic impacts as a result of the Swamp Rabbit Trail; the communities in Northwest Arkansas have seen a significant return on the investment in the Razorback

Why Rethink College Hill Parking Requirements?

Requiring each future infill residential or redevelopment project to provide all of its parking on-site will work against the environment envisioned in the **Imagine College Hill Plan** for the following reasons.

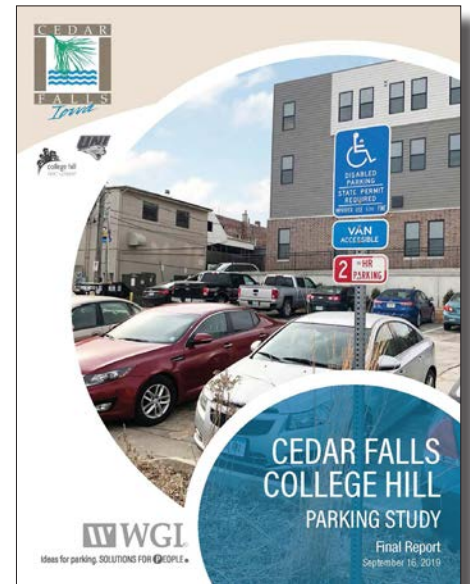
- On-site parking reduces the redevelopment potential of individual lots—particularly in relation to intensifying student housing close to the UNI campus. (See the Appendix for additional information.)
- Surface lots limit the developable area and create “dead zones” on the street if poorly located.
- Excessive on-site parking increases the cost of redevelopment (and therefore the cost of new units).
- It is contrary to creating a walkable, “park once” environment.

Regional Greenway; and cities across the country can tie entire neighborhood revitalization efforts to physical street and infrastructure changes like complete streets that allow people to walk and bike. Such long-term investment in “quality of life” infrastructure could assist with stabilizing the College Hill neighborhoods.

COLLEGE HILL PARKING

The design team reviewed the recent College Hill Parking Study through the lens of urban design and placemaking. While generally in agreement with the proposed approach, the team recommends that additional strategies be considered, particularly in relation to university and private parking management and resources, to better support the goals and vision of the *Imagine College Hill Plan*.

Within the context of the broader College Hill urban design, mobility, and market analysis, and building on the parking management strategies in the study, the following should be key implementation priorities to produce the desired environment (and parking supply). Unlocking the redevelopment potential on College Hill will require managing parking through a multi-pronged approach, in addition to improving the pedestrian and bicycle environment as described above.



- **Revise the current parking standards as part of the zoning update.** There are several available approaches and tools. Ultimately, the solution to College Hill parking concerns will likely be “both/and” rather than “either/or,” as there are a myriad of competing interests for parking within the district. Right-sizing the parking requirements, particularly in the heart of College Hill within close proximity to UNI and the business district, is the place to start. From a market perspective, the current requirements of one on-site parking space per bedroom simply does not pencil out for small-scale redevelopment projects as envisioned for College Hill. Reducing the minimum residential requirements within the core character areas—the Heart of the Hill, General College Hill, and University Neighborhood (*see p. 35 for detailed character area descriptions and locations*), while permitting off-site parking within a defined distance, should be considered. Developers should be encouraged to help provide such additional parking supply, for residents and visitors to College Hill.
- **Coordinate parking management with UNI.** The parking fee structures, hours of public availability, and enforcement for the city and university parking should be similar. Currently, students and university employees alike take advantage of the “free” on-street parking supply in nearby neighborhoods rather than purchase parking permits. In addition, as the *Imagine College Hill Plan* is implemented, consider marketing College Hill as a place where students can live car-free and rely on a robust multi-modal system that is convenient, safe, and reliable for the bulk of trips that residents need to make in the district.
- **Continue to implement the parking study strategies.** Set triggers for next steps in the overall strategy and monitor the parking supply and demand on an annual basis to be able to proactively address concerns before solutions are needed. Evaluate each step’s effectiveness, and adjust when appropriate, as each strategy is implemented.
- **Consider additional parking management tools in the future, as needed.** These might include: a parking management district within a defined area close to the campus and business district and a fee-based residential parking permit program within the management district, if appropriate.

Zoning Review

A zoning code includes a range of tools that can be used to guide development, including: form standards, zone districts, use standards, site development standards, and review processes. Each tool plays a specific role in establishing an overall development pattern. Making sure the zoning standards are designed to implement the vision, goals, and policies of a comprehensive plan is a key step in ensuring the plan's long-term success.

The Cedar Falls 2019 *Imagine Downtown Vision Plan* zoning analysis notes that it will be important for Cedar Falls to undertake a more comprehensive and cohesive update to the current zoning code to both ensure that the plan can be implemented and, equally important, to ensure that the current regulations will not act as a barrier to the community's preferred development patterns that have been identified in the process of creating the *Imagine Downtown Plan*. The same analysis will be needed for this *Imagine College Hill Plan*. The College Hill zoning updates should be able to benefit from and be coordinated with the zoning changes made to implement *Imagine Downtown*. Key considerations should include the following:

1. Use All of the Zoning Tools Available. Even though zoning codes should include a wide range of tools that can be mixed and matched in a variety of ways, the current Cedar Falls zoning code is heavily focused on regulating through one tool—the individual zone district. As planning and the community have changed over time, new stand-alone zone districts have been created to address the problems of the day. The result of this approach is the creation of new base and overlay zone districts that are “layered” on to the existing zoning code. To accommodate the widening range of topics addressed by modern zoning, the newer zone districts include regulations that typically would have been addressed in another, separate section of the code. When a new commercial district was created, for example, it would include landscaping and sign standards applicable only within that district. The more generally applicable landscaping and sign regulations, included in the code outside of the zone districts, have been left to age in place. The idea behind this approach is good; new districts should have updated development standards. The problem, though, is that this approach has created multiple “parallel” codes; allowing the “old” regulations to be applied in those locations with “old” zone districts while limiting application of the new (and presumably more relevant) standards to the districts in which they've been drafted. This “siloe” approach to zoning ensures spotty and inconsistent development patterns. It also makes the zoning code difficult to navigate, for both the City and code users.

The City needs to create a set of modern, place-based zone districts with an emphasis on scale, form, character, and intensity to apply to the College Hill plan area. This should include both new districts and updates to currently applicable districts, such as the residential districts surrounding College Hill. Both the new and updated zone districts should be linked to generally-applicable, baseline site development standards as well as standards designed expressly for College Hill (e.g., parking, landscaping, stormwater, signs). The goal of these revisions would be to reconnect the various working parts of the zoning code and, while doing that, eliminating old regulations that are no longer useful. With these key pieces in place, the City will have a more highly connected zoning code that is both easier to use and easier to effectively amend.

2. Create Transitions between the University and Surrounding Neighborhoods. One aspect of College Hill that should be considered in the zone district revision process is how to design and regulate the area of transition between the more intense UNI and College Hill business district development and the surrounding primarily detached residential neighborhoods. The City's current residential zone district line up and development standards for R-3 and R-4 may need a boost through the creation of new districts and development standards with more emphasis on form and character, including parking and landscaping, that are designed to provide a physical transition between the more active mixed-use areas and the less intense neighborhoods.

3. Right-Size Use and Development Standards to Create Unique Places. Older zoning codes are more likely to regulate at a very general level, with one set of parking standards or one type of perimeter landscaping design. Codes drafted pre-2000 particularly tend to be more one-size-fits-all and not include a layer of regulatory detail that is focused on form, scale, and tailored site design. The current Cedar Falls zoning code attempts to modify this approach for College Hill through the College Hill Neighborhood Overlay (CHN). The CHN is a very detailed code section that is designed as an overlay (overriding amendment) to at least six underlying base districts, including

C-3, P, R-4, R-3, R-2, and R-1. This is a wide range of zone districts with many different purposes, and the CHN is a challenging document to navigate. The regulations incorporated in the CHN might be better addressed, and made easier for code users to understand, through updated zone districts that provide more site-tailored regulations including: creating a scaled approach to residential access and parking requirements, delineating design standards for that range of residential development types that set rules for context sensitive infill/missing middle development forms, and linking to proportionate compliance standards that clearly establish when existing development is required to come into compliance with current zoning regulations.

Similar to the Downtown zoning updates, focusing on form and scale is key for the full range of zoning standards in the College Hill core. The zoning update needs to synchronize the community aspirations of the *Imagine College Hill Plan* with context-specific regulatory standards that emphasize form, character, and intensity. The current regulations are focused on specific land uses and statistical measurements that are pretty easy to calculate but that do not make the connection between the plan preferences and the built environment. Updated districts that regulate form, character, and intensity are more holistic, allow the City to review not only individual structures on individual lots, but also the relationship between buildings, and between buildings and the public realm including the sidewalk and street. Outside of the College Hill core, zoning code updates should also include changes to the traditional residential districts surrounding College Hill that incorporate standards to protect the multiple site and structure design choices that reflect the existing neighborhood character.

4. Be Specific About Infill Standards. The zoning code needs to include specific infill standards and processes. Infill standards are designed to ensure that the zoning code does not inadvertently make infill development difficult or impossible by applying general standards that unique lots cannot accommodate. If the City wants to encourage applicants to take up the challenge of development or redevelopment, it will help to provide clear intent and be very specific about where the zoning code can help to fit projects into difficult lots and spaces. In the context of College Hill and the nearby residential neighborhoods, any new development standards should be drafted specifically for a redevelopment context, because the study area is built-out. This might include parameters for administratively adjusting some requirements—such as dimensional standards, landscaping/tree requirements, and preferred sign types—on a site-specific basis to address atypical situations.

The overall content of the zoning update for College Hill will build on the approach and format established for Downtown. Some initial concepts for new development standards are included in the Character Area and Frontage Type sections, beginning on page 34.



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VIRTUAL CHARRETTE: PUBLIC VISIONING WORKSHOP

The Community Design Charrette was a virtual process working with citizens and stakeholders to define a vision for the future of College Hill and nearby neighborhoods. The virtual charrette activities included a public hands-on design workshop, on-line design team Q&A sessions, video technical meetings, a web-based student survey, and a work-in-progress presentation.

Envisioning the Future: Working Together to Share Concerns & Aspirations

On Saturday morning, October 3, a group of Cedar Falls residents gathered on-line to discuss College Hill—both their perceptions of its current strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities for the future. Despite the limitations of meeting virtually, small breakout groups led by a facilitator discussed a series of questions about College Hill, using an aerial photo of the study area as a reference and to capture the groups comments and notations. The groups focused on topics like walking and bicycling; the natural features; local business; character and scale of existing and potential new buildings; opportunity sites for redevelopment; and [connections/the relationship] to Downtown and the Cedar River. (The use of the aerial photo maps encouraged people to be specific with their comments and recommendations, identifying both problems and opportunities in specific locations.)

After working through current issues and concerns and discussing opportunities for the future, the groups reconvened and the facilitators highlighted the major ideas and concepts for the future of College Hill to the entire group. Although there were differences of opinion, several areas of consensus were evident. These points of consensus were studied and tested throughout the charrette week and form the foundation of the *Imagine College Hill Vision Plan*.

Common Topics

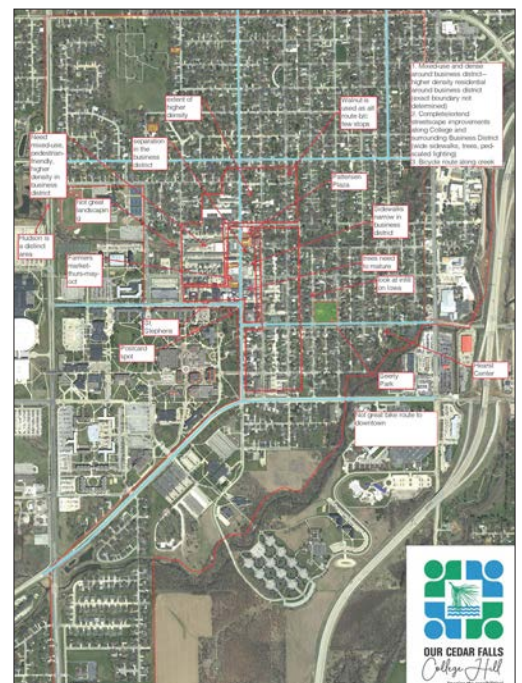
preserve neighborhoods

walkability & sidewalks

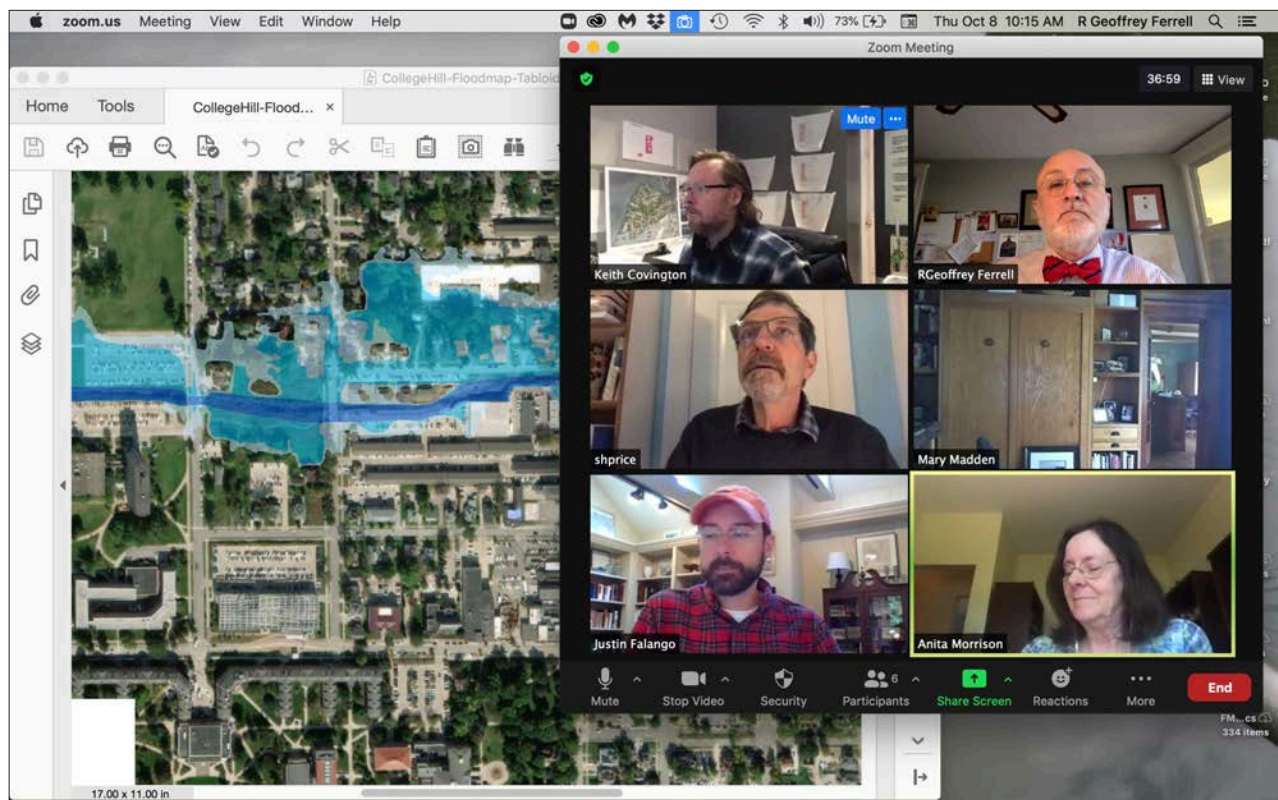
street trees & natural amenities

retail & dining options

bicycles



Open Design Studio & Technical Meetings



The design team working in the virtual studio

Refining the Vision

From October 3rd to the 14th, the consultant team worked together off-site in a virtual urban design studio where they combined the upfront analysis and the residents' ideas into a draft College Hill vision plan. Throughout the charrette, the team held a series of technical meetings with landlords and business owners; local developers; the bicycle and pedestrian committee; the transit authority; City planning staff; parking management staff from the city and university; University of Northern Iowa administrators; the College Hill Partnership; and members of the City Council.

These sessions provided an opportunity to gather additional information and test the community aspirations against real-world contingencies such as floodplains and other site constraints, property ownership, and local market and economic conditions. The technical considerations informed and shaped potential redevelopment scenarios, built on the residents' ideas—to ensure that the community vision for College Hill is rooted in reality.

The team explored several redevelopment scenarios, using prototypical parcels and sites within the study area to ensure they 'fit' within the College Hill context. Hand drawn and computer simulated "before and after" images of these development studies will help residents visualize potential change before it occurs.

Additional Virtual Charrette Activities

In order to engage the public throughout the charrette, the team held several other activities. There were two on-line Question & Answer sessions, in which people could "drop in" and ask questions about the project and provide additional input and opinions. Brief "studio video updates" were posted on each day's major activities and two "quick polls" about the College Hill character areas and appropriate buildings heights were also taken. Last but not least, recognizing the significant presence of students living and going to school on College Hill, an on-line survey targeted to UNI students seeking their opinions and perspectives on housing, transportation, entertainment, and shopping topics was also completed. (*Quick poll and student survey results are available in the Appendix.*)



The Virtual Charrette activities were concluded on October 14 with a “Work-in-Progress” presentation to the Cedar Falls Planning Commission via video conference. The team shared the preliminary work on the *Imagine College Hill Plan*, which was built on community input from both the January community kick-off and the week’s Virtual Design Workshop, stakeholder interviews, and technical meetings.

The overview of the work to-date included: the teams’ context and site analysis; College Hill mobility with an emphasis on streets, sidewalks, cycling, and parking; and the economic and demographic analysis. Highlights included several urban design and planning concepts, beginning with the “Big Ideas” from the analysis and public visioning effort and including the identification of character sub-areas within the study area. The presentation provided numerous illustrations of prototypical infill and development scenarios, including before-and-after simulations of potential redevelopment of real College Hill sites. It explored topics such as stable neighborhoods and context-sensitive infill; intensifying the compact, mixed-use heart of College Hill; improving the pedestrian realm with new retail and dining opportunities; treating Dry Run Creek as an amenity; and exploring options for shared parking on College Hill.

Based on the responses to an on-line survey that was available for over two weeks on the project website, almost 85% of the respondents felt the “Work-in-Progress” presentation was generally on the right track. (*Complete exit survey results are provided in the Appendix.*)

The following pages build on the “Work-in-Progress” presentation with new and improved images and additional information that make up the *Imagine College Hill Vision Plan*.

Imagine College Hill! **PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT**
February 2021

“Big Ideas” for College Hill

- Stabilize and enhance neighborhoods
- Concentrate & intensify student housing near campus
- (Re)Connect lower and upper Hill
- Improve walkability: safety, connectivity, comfort
- Increase retail and dining options
- Treat natural areas as amenities (add & maintain street trees)
- Make biking easier by improving connections to trails and downtown
- Manage parking better
- Improve Hidden Valley



IMAGINE COLLEGE HILL FRAMEWORK

In order to translate the “Big Ideas” from the Public Visioning Workshop into a conceptual vision plan, it is important to think in physical and place-specific terms and incorporate basic urban design concepts. These design concepts, the community aspirations, and context analysis provide the vision plan framework and lay a foundation for updating the development regulations for the study area.

URBAN DESIGN BASICS

Placemaking

A term describing the core task of good planning—how to make the ‘place’ that the citizens want. This requires focusing on the desired form and character of the built place, rather than the various technical aspects of development regulations. The “placemaking” approach leads by asking the question: “what kind of place do we want to live in?” The technical questions of how that place can be achieved are dealt with secondarily—they must be answered, but they should not lead the City planning and urban design efforts.

Walkability: Changing the character of College Hill Streets

A “walkable” place is much more than one in which there are sidewalks. It refers to an environment where walking can be a primary mode of transportation. In these locations, it is a pleasure to walk; there are places to go and things to see and do; and walking is safe and efficient.

Gateways: Creating a Sense of Arrival

A gateway is a physical location that marks the entry into a new place, in large part by being different. Gateways are important to placemaking because they can change behavior. For example: a gateway design could help calm incoming traffic, by bringing buildings close to the street and planting street trees, to mark the change from the outlying suburban or rural (and high speed) environment into the urban, constrained (low speed) and pedestrian environment. More than mere signage, the strongest gateways are made with distinct changes to the physical place.

“Park Once” Mixed-Use Environments

The fatal parking problem of suburban development is that it must provide multiple parking spaces for every car, at each different place: a space where you work, a space where you shop, a space where you worship, a space where you play, and a space where you sleep. Cities can better manage the parking issue by creating an environment where you can park your car in one spot and comfortably walk to multiple activities: where you work, shop, play, and where you sleep. For every one of those basic activities that can be combined in a “park once” environment, a parking space is effectively created—or ‘freed up’ to be used by someone else.

The Public Realm and Building Frontages

The spaces that people experience as they move through the city—typically the public streets and sidewalks (from building face to building face) and parks and squares, rather than private (building lot or home yard). The best public realm is a defined space with a sense of enclosure provided by building fronts or street trees. The public realm of a city is central to its quality of life—as well as its economy. Building frontages—where the building meets the street—are a key element of the character of the individual streets. The public realm creates the overall “sense of place” while allowing a great deal of variety within the urban framework.

Missing Middle Housing

Missing Middle refers to that in-between scale of building that seems to have been forgotten—from duplexes to rowhouses to small apartment buildings—and that can be comfortably integrated into traditional urban neighborhoods. Smart development regulations (zoning) can facilitate and enable a return of those kinds of neighborhood infill housing options. (*Missing Middle building forms are further described on pages 32-33.*)

"Big Ideas" – Community Aspirations

A vision plan includes both urban design and policy ideas. Translating the analysis and community aspirations from the Virtual Design Charrette into implementable actions is one piece of a vision plan framework. Not only are these concepts embedded within the overall *Imagine College Hill Plan* recommendations, this page identifies specific steps for realizing each "Big Idea" in the physical vision plan for College Hill.

1. Big Idea: Stabilize and enhance neighborhoods

Implementation Steps

- Establish zoning for new development that fits the scale and character of the place
- Expand the rental-to-single-family-owner conversion incentive program to permit more conversions each year and/or allow funds to be used for additional changes such as interior improvements
- Explore ways to increase the percentage of owner occupied units
- Continue the rental permit program and code enforcement efforts

2. Big Idea: Concentrate and intensify student housing near campus

Implementation Steps

- Make sure the rules enable the development of more intense student housing in the Heart of College Hill, General College Hill and University Neighborhood character areas, within walking distance to campus and the local businesses (*see p. 35*)
- Maintain regulations prohibiting the conversion of single-family houses into apartments outside of designated areas
- Adjust parking requirements to ensure College Hill is "the place" where students can live without a car
- Revise parking requirements to enable and encourage less expensive (market-rate) housing
- Work with UNI to promote car-free living for students



Image courtesy of the Cedar Falls Historical Society

3. Big Idea: (Re)Connect Upper and Lower Hill

Implementation Steps

- Encourage the redevelopment of underutilized parcels with clear development regulations
- Increase walkability through improved sidewalks and traffic calming along College Street (and throughout the district)
- Increase retail and dining opportunities by encouraging mixed-use development

4. Big Idea: Treat natural areas as amenities (add and maintain street trees)

Implementation Steps

- Redesign the Dry Run Creek flood control infrastructure to serve as public green space and bike/ped connection
- Add or replace street trees to “green” College Hill core and neighborhoods, help define the pedestrian realm and calm traffic.

5. Big Idea: Manage parking better

Implementation Steps

- Exploring opportunities for off-site residential parking
- Reduce residential parking requirements next to the university and core College Hill character areas
- Stop subsidizing low-cost parking for university students and staff (by coordinating parking fees with UNI and considering a fee-based residential permit system for long-term on-street parking, if needed)
- Enable the environment for College Hill to serve as a car-free neighborhood (for people who choose that lifestyle) by decoupling parking from some rental units
- Create a “park once” environment by improving walkability

6. Big Idea: Improve walkability

Implementation Steps

- Improve (and widen when possible) sidewalks in the high pedestrian traffic areas of the study area
- Improve pedestrian crossings, particularly in high foot-traffic areas close to campus and the heart of College Hill
- Reconfigure College Hill streets to be good city streets, not thoroughfares. Right-size the automobile travel lanes and add bump-outs at key intersections to decrease pedestrian crossing distances, lower traffic speeds, and increase pedestrian comfort
- Fill in gaps in the sidewalk network where they exist
- Maintain and improve connectivity: preserve small block size and the street and alley pattern

7. Big Idea: Make biking easier

Implementation Steps

- Provide a combination of bicycle lanes and sharrows in key locations as district streets are rebuilt
- Increase publicly available bicycle parking on College Hill (and increase visibility of what does exist)
- Improve wayfinding to direct bicycle traffic to Downtown and the trails
- Infill gaps in bicycle infrastructure to create a true bicycle network

8. Big Idea: Increase retail and dining options

Implementation Steps

- Continue supporting the College Hill Partnership—economically and politically
- Incentivize increased housing near campus to create more neighborhood support for retail and business options
- Coordinate shared parking with UNI to support College Hill businesses outside of peak university hours (nights and weekends)
- Create locations and provide opportunities for outdoor commercial and special event use, including wider sidewalks and flexible plaza space at 23rd Street

Missing Middle Housing

Often discussed by citizens during the charrette week, Missing Middle refers to the in-between scale of buildings that current developers (and municipalities) seem to have forgotten. Once common, these buildings are more intense than single-family detached houses, but much smaller than an apartment complex or high-rise. They complement traditional neighborhoods, and can help transition from more intense Downtown development to single-family detached houses. Missing Middle forms can provide new housing choices lacking in the marketplace today, often at a more affordable rate. They can also be designed and built in a context-sensitive form and scale.

Missing Middle housing can take many forms. Here is a sample of that variety—including some that exist in Cedar Falls today. Note that *context is important* and not all of these examples will be appropriate in every part of the study area.

Twins (duplexes)

A simple variation that can fit onto existing lots in single-family detached neighborhoods. They often appear to be single-family houses, comparable in size to those nearby. They may be configured with units side-by-side or over-under. The near-right building is a side-by-side configuration and is in the study area.



Small Apartments (small)

At the lower end of the range of scales, these can be almost unnoticed in the midst of a single-family detached neighborhood. They typically have small front, back, and side yards, similar to the surrounding context, and are more commonly found on corner lots.



Small Apartments (medium)

Typically found on corner lots or larger streets and avenues, these may have small front, back, and side yards; or be located at the back of the sidewalk, depending on the surrounding context.



Rowhouses

Rowhouses are attached single-family houses. Typically two- to four-stories tall, they may be configured with stoops or porches. Whether platted on narrow fee-simple lots or a single parcel, each rowhouse has direct street access and a rear private space. Parking is off the alley.



Cottage Courts

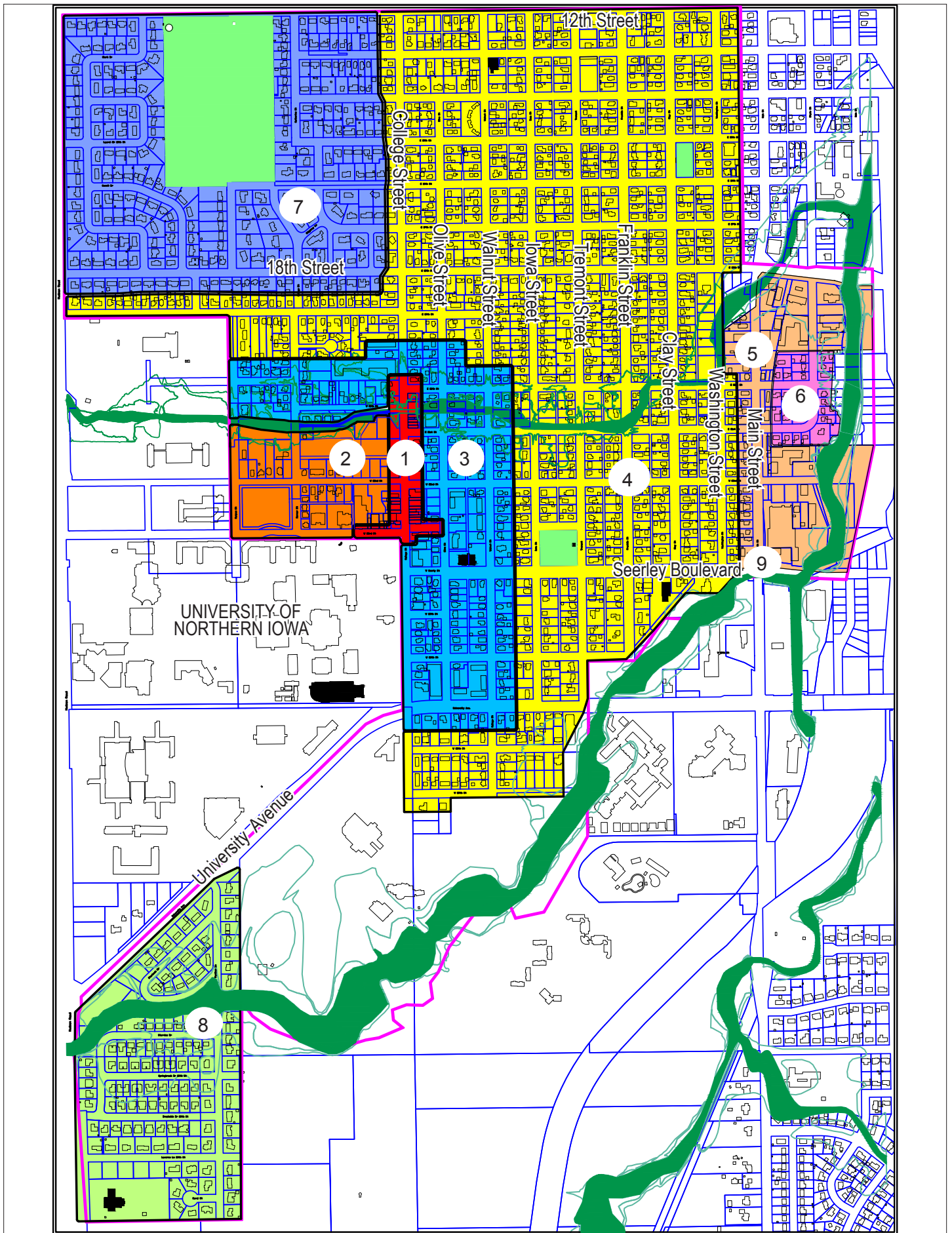
Small detached structures around a central green space, cottage courts can provide the feel of a detached home at a smaller scale. They may require oversize or atypical lots to fit within a neighborhood context.



Accessory Dwelling Units

Apartments that are part of an owner-occupied property and can be configured over a garage, as a basement unit, or as a standalone structure. Although not currently permitted in Cedar Falls, ADUs can provide affordable housing, as well as financial assistance to the homeowner.





Understanding College Hill: Character Areas

The College Hill study area is comprised of several sub-areas, all different in physical character, intensity, scale, and context. Based on the site analysis, market conditions, and community and stakeholder input, the team identified the following Character Areas.

In planning for future growth, these Character Areas provide a framework of intent for the scale of growth and change that is desired. To what degree should each area be maintained, evolve, or be transformed? The *Imagine College Hill Plan* begins to answer that question.

1. Heart of College Hill: College Street between 20th and 23rd Streets (and the adjacent half-block of each cross street)—the traditional College Hill business district. Under the *Imagine College Hill Plan*, the walkability of this area will be enhanced by: filling the gap between the Lower and Upper Hill with infill shopfront buildings, more usable public open spaces, and additional mixed-use opportunities. As streets are reconstructed in the future, this high pedestrian traffic area will have wider sidewalks, more street trees, improved pedestrian street crossings, and right-sized automobile lanes to enhance the walkability of the area.

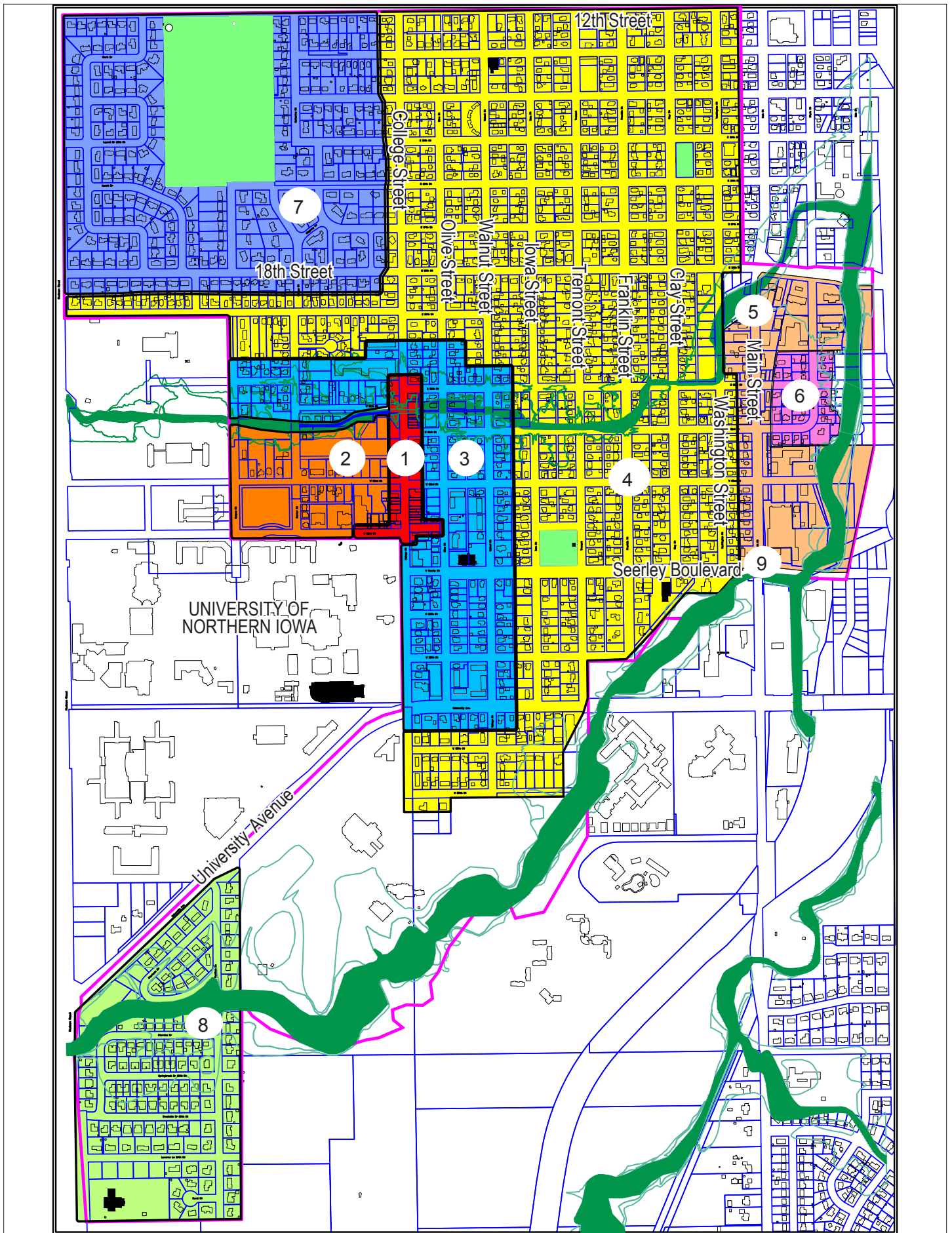
2. General College Hill: Under the *Imagine College Hill Plan*, the area close to UNI between 20th and 23rd Streets and to the west of College Street will allow for growth with more intense buildings—street-oriented, multi-story (maximum 4 to 5 stories), and aligned along the back of the sidewalk or a small dooryard, depending on location. The new buildings would be primarily residential—but will permit a mix of uses (however, new retail will not be encouraged). During the charrette, there were some advocates for larger buildings (above 5 stories) in this area as opportunities for more intense student housing in proximity to campus and the nearby University residential towers. However, given the (slow) growth rate of Cedar Falls overall and anticipated enrollments at UNI, taller buildings may not be economically viable and could result in a net loss for the area, including:

- Requiring more expensive construction types, thereby decreasing the affordability of the new units;
- Absorbing the demand for new growth on one or two sites, leaving other development sites to languish for a longer period of time;
- Increasing the costs to provide adequate parking (either in land area or in construction costs for structured parking);
- Creating an incentive for a developer to “cannibalize” another potential development site to provide the needed parking, creating an unfriendly pedestrian environment at the other site.

In general, it would be more economically beneficial to spread new development more broadly across this area of College Hill rather than concentrating it on one or two individual sites.

3. University Neighborhood: This is the close-in, primarily residential area immediately north of Dry Run Creek on the west side of College Street, and along Olive and Walnut streets, from 20th Street to University Avenue, on the east side. It currently includes a range of building forms, including medium to large apartment buildings as well as detached houses. This area serves as a transition from the business district and the University to the more single-family detached Seerley and Clay Street Park Neighborhoods. Under the *Imagine College Hill Plan*, new structures should be Missing Middle types; limited in scale with no more than four stories in height and 120 feet in frontage (façade length along the sidewalk). The buildings will be aligned, either along the back of the sidewalk or with small dooryards. Height and placement at the rear lot lines will also be limited, especially when adjacent to single-family houses in the neighborhood.

4. Seerley Park and Clay Street Park Neighborhoods: Residential neighborhoods of primarily single-family detached houses and duplexes, including numerous rentals. Careful incremental infill should be allowed—both more single-family and two-family detached houses at a scale that is sensitive to the existing houses, as well as accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Under the *Imagine College Hill Plan*, this area will be stabilized and enhanced. New structures will be no more than two-and-a-half stories in height and 60 feet in frontage (façade length along the sidewalk) with additional design, architectural and form standards to break down the building massing and require front yards that are consistent with the neighbors. Limiting the intensity allowed for new development will discourage the redevelopment of existing, viable, buildings. The development of vacant lots or derelict properties will be encouraged, but at a scale that doesn't stray far from that of the existing context.



5. Main Street Corridor (18th Street to Seerley Boulevard): This portion of Main Street has a mix of detached houses, apartments, small commercial buildings, and semi-industrial uses. It appears and feels physically separate from the rest of the College Hill study area. The properties near 18th Street and near Seerley Boulevard are currently in a primarily highway-commercial form, and underdeveloped. Residents and business/property owners provided minimal input about the area during the *Imagine College Hill* visioning process (likely due to that physical separation). This area has the potential to redevelop under this plan as a mixed-use, walkable corridor with improved sidewalks and street trees; more intense, Missing Middle housing; and continuing heavy commercial uses.

6. East of Main Neighborhood: A pocket of single-family detached houses and duplexes, including numerous rentals, is tucked between Main Street and the Cedar River Trail. Under the *Imagine College Hill Plan*, this area will remain residential, with the potential to accommodate Missing Middle housing forms.

7. Fairview Neighborhood: Located in the northwest corner of the study area, this neighborhood is predominantly detached houses from both pre- and post-World War II. It is currently the most stable (has the highest percentage of owner-occupancy) in the College Hill study area. It is anticipated the neighborhood will remain much as it is today, with any infill being respectful of the surrounding homes.

8. Southwest Neighborhood: This area was developed more recently than the rest of College Hill. It is more auto-oriented, with a cul-de-sac, no alleys, and many front-loaded garages. Because there are few (if any) vacant lots and the houses are generally of a more recent vintage, and much of the area is constrained by the floodplain, near-term redevelopment is unlikely. However, due to the quality of construction (common in houses of this vintage) and high percentage of rental properties, this area could be transformed over the very long term if there is increased demand for a different type of housing within walking distance of UNI. Under the *Imagine College Hill Plan*, opportunities to improve pedestrian and bicycle connections across University Avenue should be explored.

9. College Hill Gateway Seerley Boulevard at Main Street: This gateway intersection provides access to College Hill for both drivers and bicyclists; however, the roadway configuration and development pattern leaves much to be desired. New development standards should encourage or require any new building to better define the street edge and public realm, creating an improved pedestrian environment and “sense of place” rather than the current highway strip commercial pattern. Two- to three-story buildings and a wide range of uses could be accommodated in this location, including a more urban version of the existing gas station in a “gas backward” form, as this plan illustrates.

The following pages provide general parameters about specific building forms and street frontages for redevelopment in the study area. They describe the desired character of new buildings, their scale and placement on the lot, and details about the relationship to the street, including the range of variation in different character areas.

General College Hill Frontages



Maximum Building Height:

4-5 stories*

Facade Transparency:

Ground floor 33-80%;

Upper floors 20-70%

First Finished Floor Elevation:

Minimum 0-3 feet, depending on use
(residences at the street must be elevated)

Permitted Projections:

Awnings, bay windows, shopfronts, balconies, and signs

Ground Floor Ceiling Height:

Minimum 9-14 feet clear, depending on use and location

Frontage Build-Out:

Minimum 65-75%*

Permitted Uses:

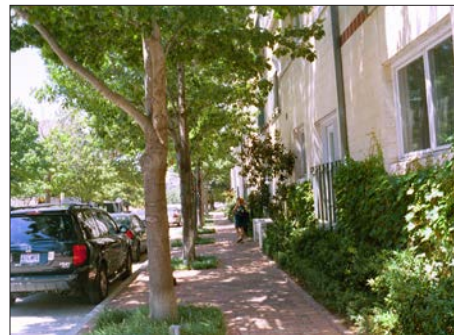
Ground Floor: Retail*, Restaurant, Office, Residential

Upper Stories: Office, Residential

Minimum Private Open Area: 15% of buildable area, at or above grade

Sidewalk: 6-8 feet (plus tree planting strip with pervious paving)

**varying with specific location and adjacencies*



This is the basic American “in town” street frontage, once typical in town and neighborhood centers across the United States. Multi-story buildings with closely spaced entrances and windows are lined up shoulder to shoulder behind the sidewalk, filling out the block-face.

This frontage will produce new street-oriented buildings. Required throughout the General College Hill character area, these buildings can accommodate a range of uses, including office or residential buildings, and/or mixed-use buildings, and allowing retail shopfronts in limited locations, with service access and parking lots in the block interior, accessed from the alley. Specific use and scale parameters will vary by location. Where adjacent to single-family residential areas, special setbacks and height restrictions will apply, to protect the existing neighborhoods.



College Hill Storefront Frontages



Maximum Building Height:

4 to 5 stories*

Facade Transparency:

Ground floor 50-90%;

Upper floors 20-70%

First Finished Floor Elevation:

At grade

Permitted Projections:

Awnings, covered entrances, bay windows, shopfronts, balconies, and signs

Ground Floor Ceiling Height:

Minimum 14 feet clear

Frontage Build-Out:

Minimum 85%

Permitted Uses:

Ground Floor: Retail, Restaurant

Upper Stories: Office, Residential

Minimum Private Open Area:

10% of buildable area, at or above grade

Sidewalk: 8-10 feet (plus tree planting strip with pervious paving)

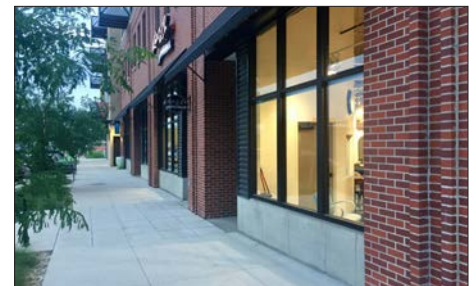
**varying with specific location and agencies*



The Storefront is the quintessential neighborhood “main street” frontage, with retail and restaurant uses on the ground floor and residences or offices upstairs. The overall building form is the same as the General College Hill frontage, but with large display windows across the ground floor facade and frequent entrances along the street.

This frontage will be required in the Heart of College Hill Area and permitted in some limited portions of the General College Hill and Main Street Corridor Character Areas.

Imagine College Hill! PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT
February 2021



University Neighborhood Frontages



Maximum Building Height:

2.5 to 4 stories* excluding basements

Facade Transparency: 30-70%

First Finished Floor Elevation:

Minimum 3 feet, maximum 6 feet above sidewalk

Permitted Projections:

Bay windows, balconies, porches, and stoops

Ceiling Height: Minimum 9 feet clear

Frontage Build-Out:

Minimum 50 to 75%*

Continuous Facade Length:

Maximum 75 to 120 feet*

Permitted Uses:

Residential, Home Office

Minimum Private Open Area:

15% of buildable area, at grade

Sidewalk:

5-6 feet (plus tree planting strip)

**varying with specific location. The half-story refers to allowing habitable space within the roof—an Attic Story*



The University Neighborhood frontages will fit comfortably within the existing context, with a range of residential forms, from detached houses up to the larger Missing Middle types. These frontages provide a physical transition between the more intense General College Hill and Storefront frontages and the surrounding, less intense Traditional Neighborhood frontages. It will allow some intensification of the UNI-adjacent neighborhoods.

These frontages generally have rear yards and parking accessed from an alley. The alignment of new building facades to the street and sidewalk will work with the existing context—the buildings may be placed close to the sidewalk with stoops, or further back with courtyards or front porches and small dooryard gardens.

Traditional Neighborhood Houses



Maximum Building Height:

2.5 to 3 stories* excluding basements

Facade Transparency: 30-70%

First Finished Floor Elevation:

Minimum 3 feet, maximum 6 feet above sidewalk

Permitted Projections:

Porches, bay windows and balconies

Ceiling Height:

Minimum 9 feet clear

Frontage Build-Out:

Minimum 50%

Continuous Facade Length:

Maximum 56 feet (non-corner lots)

Permitted Uses:

Residential, Home Office

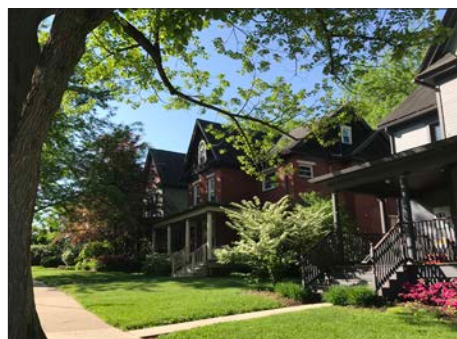
Minimum Private Open Area:

20% of buildable area, at grade

Sidewalk:

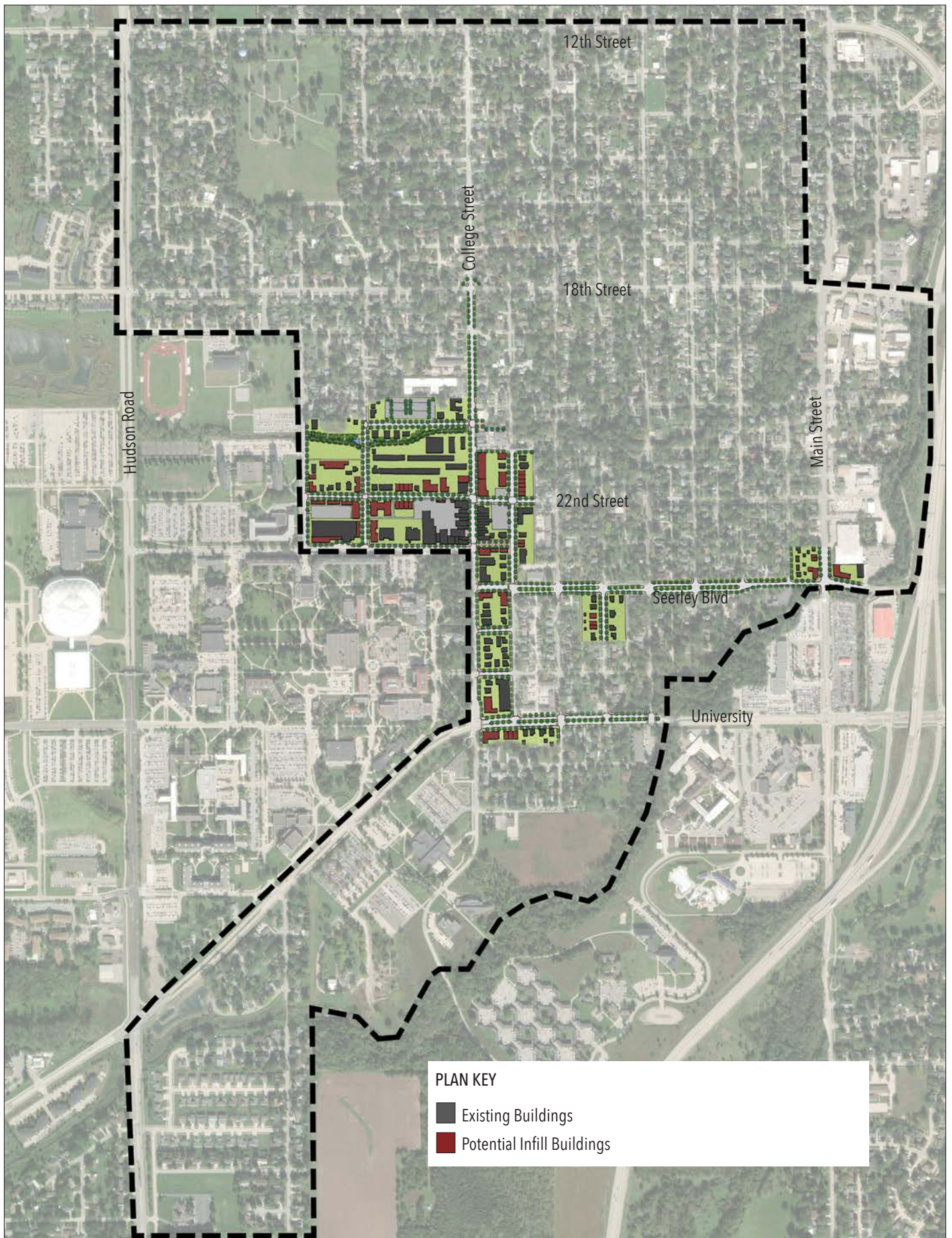
4-6 feet (plus tree planting strip)

**varying with specific location. The half-story refers to allowing habitable space within the roof—an Attic Story*



The character and intensity of the Traditional Neighborhood frontage varies but is generally moderate, linked to the individual Neighborhood Character Areas. It is typically a detached structure—configured as either single or duplex buildings, with accessory dwelling units (ADUs) accommodated.

Any infill redevelopment should reflect the surrounding neighborhood context, both in scale and location on the lot. These frontages typically have front yards and often generous porches, with rear parking, accessed from an alley. The alignment of new building facades will be closely tailored to work with the existing houses along the block frontage.



The Vision

*The **Imagine College Hill Plan** includes an illustrative master plan (at left and following page), showing prototypical redevelopment scenarios throughout the core/heart, incremental infill of neighborhood sites, and re-imagined College Hill streets. It is aspirational and provides a framework for future investment, growth and development. The focus is on the overall urban form and character of College Hill and adjacent neighborhoods rather than the design of individual buildings.*

This is a vision document, and it explores various “what if...” scenarios. It is built upon the public input from the hands-on session and further informed by the design team’s analysis. It illustrates urban design solutions within the Cedar Falls context that translate the “big ideas” from the citizens’ work into physical form.

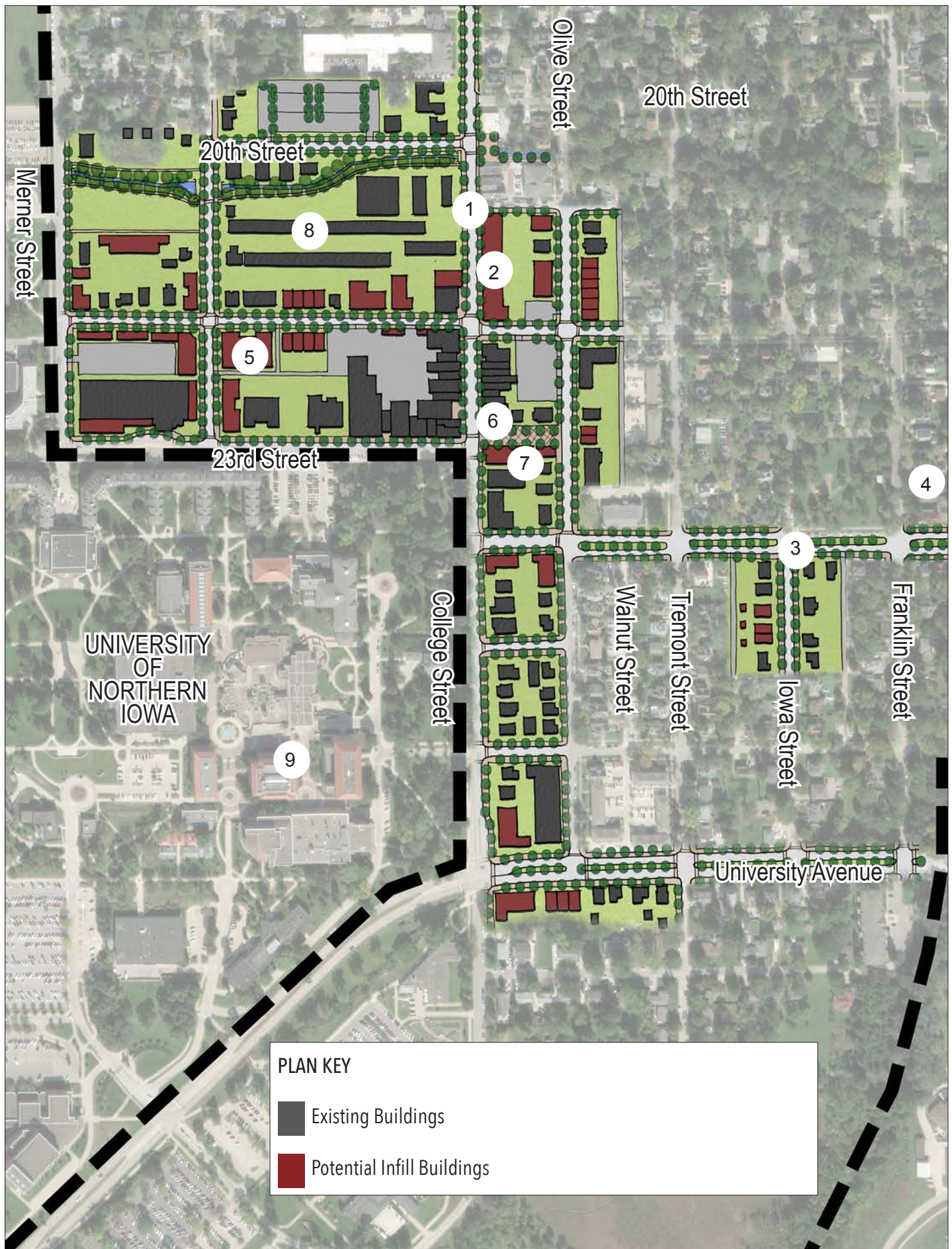
The illustrative master plan shows one way in which redevelopment might occur in the core of the College Hill study area—a possible future build out of the area, assuming most underutilized parcels are redeveloped. It includes the expectation that most of the nearby neighborhoods will remain much as they are today, with emphasis on maintenance and stability and small scale infill respectful of the existing context. The plan assumes no time line, as the market generally determines the pace of growth and investment. It suggests where mixed-use (residential with commercial) makes sense, as well as areas that should be primarily residential.

Charrette participants described a district where a limited variety of activities is currently possible, including living, working, and (primarily student) entertainment, all within close proximity. However, they expressed a desire for more—for broader shopping and dining options and better access to daily needs such as groceries and other activities. The district should be a place in which pedestrians and cyclists are safe, comfortable, and common. Bicycling and walking should be viable transportation options across College Hill and surrounding neighborhoods. This plan focuses on the urban design or overall form of the district. The buildings shown illustrate scale and character—there are multiple building designs that would fulfill the vision plan intent.

The economy and public infrastructure will play significant roles. How do you change the character of the public realm to make it more pedestrian friendly? What will it take to increase the number of residents needed to support a broader variety of retail and promote economic development? What will it take to encourage reinvestment in properties that have been allowed to deteriorate over time? Where are there opportunities for new public space? How do you improve the pedestrian and bicycle connections between College Hill, adjoining neighborhoods, the trail system, and Downtown? What needs to happen first? The pages that follow provide guidance and direction.

College Hill Vision Plan Design Principles

1. Buildings are aligned and oriented to the Street: buildings and street trees provide a sense of enclosure, framing and defining the Public Realm (or Street-Space).
2. Buildings oversee the Street-Space with windows, doors, porches, and balconies: these “eyes on the street” contribute to safe and vital public spaces.
3. Buildings in the core occupy block corners (reducing the perceived pedestrian crossing gap and maintaining the Street-Space)
4. Buildings are designed for the city environment: buildings aren’t simply pushed closer together (that is sub-urban development) but are designed for the urban setting. Views are directed to the street and rear yard/garden, not into the neighbor’s property.
5. Vehicle parking, garbage, and mechanical equipment, should be kept away from the Street-Space.
6. Reconnect or expand the street grid with a small block pattern whenever possible—always preserve existing streets and alleys.



Illustrative Projects: *Visualizing Change Before It Occurs*

The pages that follow illustrate several “what if” redevelopment scenarios to further explore what is shown in the Illustrative Plan (at left) in specific locations, at the scale of both buildings and streetscapes. For any of these scenarios there are several different building design possibilities, both in configuration and architectural style. The images are intended to provide a sense of an appropriate scale, massing, and siting.

- 1. Visualizing Change: Reconnecting Upper and Lower Hill**
- 2. Prototypical Project: Mixed-Use Buildings along College Street**
- 3. Prototypical Sites: Neighborhood Stability through Infill**
- 4. Visualizing Change: A Gateway to College Hill** (Seerley Boulevard & Main Street)
- 5. Prototypical Sites: Intensifying Housing along 22nd & Merner Streets**
- 6. Visualizing Change: A New Plaza at 23rd & College Streets**
- 7. Prototypical Project: Mixed-Use along 23rd Street**
- 8. Prototypical Project: Re-Imagining Hidden Valley**

1. Visualizing Change: Reconnecting Upper and Lower Hill

College Street within the Imagine College Hill Plan study has been rebuilt over the past ten to fifteen years. This is a long term visualization—and the increments of redevelopment illustrated may occur in a different sequence, dependent on potential zoning updates, market conditions, and future investment decisions by both the private and public sectors.



Existing Condition

Looking north up College Street, away from the University, toward the Lower Hill. Although the existing businesses are viable, this is a stark pedestrian environment. It is hard to imagine walking from this location at 22nd and College Streets one block to 21st Street, much less all the way to Pettersen Plaza and the businesses near 19th Street. The trip would require walking past several “missing teeth” created by vacant lots, surface parking, a gas station, and buildings setback from the street. The sidewalks from the University to 18th Street are irregular; they are interrupted by numerous driveway curb cuts, in addition to the street intersections, and have limited shade.



New Public Infrastructure

Public investment in infrastructure begins to re-shape the environment. The second image includes wider sidewalks with fewer curb cut interruptions, pedestrian-scale street lighting, proper planting areas for street trees, and narrower travel lane widths with bulb-outs, decreasing the pedestrian crossing distances. The public realm is improved for both pedestrians and automobile drivers.



A Sense of Place

The third and fourth images illustrate increased private sector investment. Underutilized sites are redeveloped with street-oriented, multi-story mixed-use buildings. The street is more welcoming for pedestrians and cyclists. Residents and office workers support a broader range of shopping and dining opportunities along the length of College Street, which in turn brings more potential customers—students and townspeople alike.



Visualizing Change: Reconnecting Upper and Lower Hill



The College Hill Vision in Full

In this view, all four corners of the intersection are developed, fully defining the street edges and providing a sense of enclosure, creating an outdoor room where there was none before. Pedestrian crossing distances are shortened. The street is multi-modal, with pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicular traffic sharing the space.

With the addition of viable street trees, improved sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and active building frontages, College Street is reclaimed as a “people place” and one can imagine walking from the gates of the University to the Lower Hill.

A comfortable and inviting public realm provides an excellent place for working, shopping, dining...*and living*. This is a street that is “good for business” and inviting to UNI prospective students—an incentive for even more private sector investment.

2. Prototypical Project: Mixed-Use Buildings along College



Existing conditions—College Street at 22nd Street, view to northeast



Existing conditions -- College Street between 21st and 22nd Streets, view to southeast



Mixed-use buildings with active street frontage—improving the pedestrian realm and reconnecting Upper and Lower Hill

Vision: Mixed-use Buildings
(to define the pedestrian realm and help reconnect the Upper and Lower Hill)

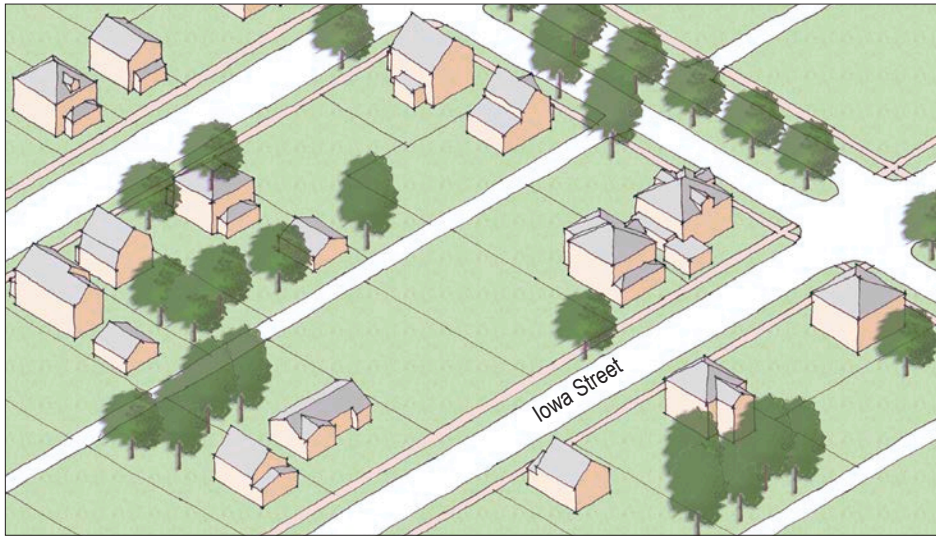
This prototypical redevelopment involves multiple parcels along College Street. It could be completed all at once, with separate owners working together; or over time, with owners redeveloping independently of one another.

The buildings would include active ground floor space fronting the sidewalk on College Street (accommodating the existing business operating in this location). Parking is behind and under the building. A drive-through facility could be maintained, if designed carefully and located away from the corner of 22nd and College Streets.

Although upper story uses could be flexible, the current market would likely demand/prefer residences, which would provide needed foot-traffic along College Street to support shops and restaurants throughout College Hill.

As illustrated, the ground floors could include retail storefronts as well as support functions (such as lobbies, mail rooms, and management office) for the residential units above. The smaller building at 22nd and College would include 18 two-bedroom, 1000-square foot units on the upper levels; the larger building at 21st and College would include 33 two-bedroom units of the same size. These site layouts could accommodate 40 surface and covered parking spaces under the back of the building on the northern lot and 19 surface spaces on the rear of the southern lot (which would provide an on-site ratio of .5 spaces per bedroom.)

3. Prototypical Sites: Neighborhood Stability through Infill



Existing Condition

Two adjacent, vacant mid-block parcels with rear alley. They are of typical size for most of the older College Hill study area neighborhoods.



Context-Sensitive Infill

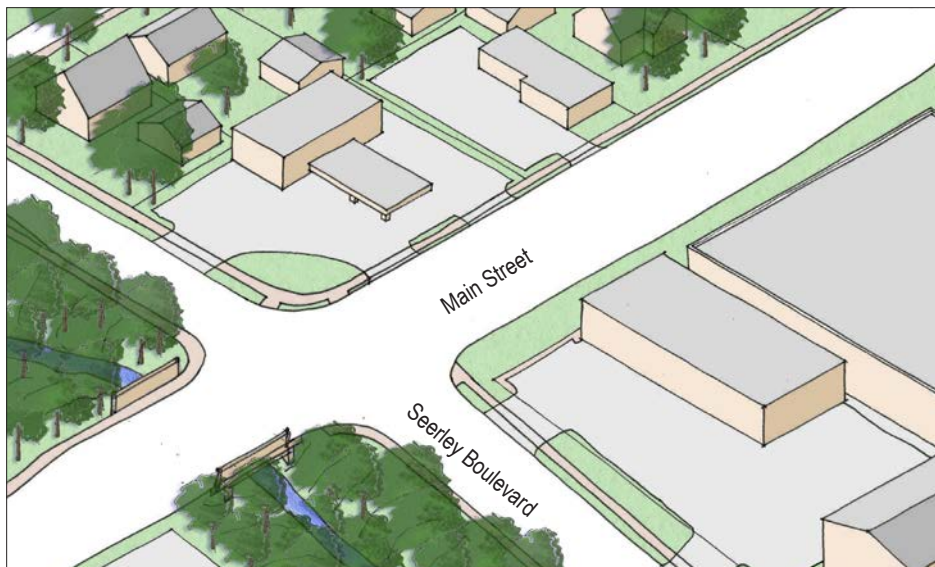
Vacant lots developed with a single-family house and a duplex, oriented to the street with front porches, similar in scale to the surrounding homes. Small structures at the back of each lot are detached garages accessed from the alley with potential for ADUs above.

Vision:

The neighborhoods surrounding the heart of College Hill are some of the oldest and most dense in Cedar Falls. The house styles span most of the 20th century; however, until the most recent decades, the overall form and massing was consistent. They were street-oriented, commonly with small front yards and front porches, and rear-loaded garages accessed from alleys. There have always been boarding houses close to the university, but their scale and character were compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods.

There are a few empty parcels remaining in the neighborhoods adjacent to College Hill, as well as a few houses that have reached a level of disrepair that complete redevelopment of the lots may be warranted. In these areas, particularly further from the campus, new housing (whether detached single-family homes or smaller-scaled missing middle forms) should be designed in a context-sensitive manner. Where alleys exist, rear-loaded garages should be required, eliminating curb cuts and reducing conflict points between vehicles and pedestrians. This site configuration improves neighborhood walkability. The pedestrian realm is defined by houses, front yards, and sidewalks, rather than driveways and garages.

4. Visualizing Change: A Gateway to College Hill



Existing condition: view to the northwest

Existing Conditions:

The intersection of Main Street and Seerley Boulevard was identified by charrette participants as one of the gateways to College Hill (and UNI) from Downtown and the river trail. In its current form, it leaves much to be desired. The buildings on the corner parcels do not address the street or define the public realm. Rather than creating a sense of entry to the neighborhood, the area appears to be a location that drivers simply pass through on their way to somewhere else. Most other commercial buildings along the Main Street corridor are auto-oriented as well. The existing crossing marks are worn and difficult to see.



Improved crossings for pedestrians and cyclists

Improved Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections:

Crosswalks should be repainted and pedestrian signals installed, providing drivers with a visual cue that this is a multi-modal area. Additional, long-term changes could include extending the recommended lane reconfigurations for Main Street in the *Imagine Downtown Plan*.



New "placemaking" gateway development

A New Gateway:

When the market supports redevelopment, new buildings should be street-oriented, of a scale to assist in defining the public realm of Main Street and create a "sense of arrival" at the intersection with Seerley Boulevard. Current uses could still be accommodated, such as the "gas-backwards" shown here on the northwest corner, with the building at the corner and pumps behind, shielded from adjacent homes by masonry garden walls. The driveway curb cuts are a safer distance from the intersection.

5. Prototypical Site: Intensify Housing at 22nd & Merner



Existing conditions: older houses converted into student apartments



Prototype 1: 22nd Street lots individually redeveloped as row houses or stacked flats



Prototype 2: When lots are consolidated, more intense redevelopment, such as medium-sized apartments, is possible



All: A mix of redevelopment types and intensities is possible, as above

One of the consistent ideas heard during the charrette was to intensify student housing closer to the University, particularly in those areas unlikely to convert back to single-family houses. This could be achieved through a couple of different approaches: “missing middle” house forms, redeveloped incrementally by individual owners, or with minimal lot consolidation; or alternatively, with greater lot consolidation, medium-sized apartment buildings, more similar in scale to the surrounding dormitories.

Prototype 1: Rowhouses or Stacked Flats.

Existing lots can each be individually redeveloped as three- to four-story buildings, facing the street with small front yards, and private backyards. Surface parking or detached garages accessed from the alley.



Prototype 2: Apartments.

Street-oriented residential buildings of a moderate scale, with a courtyard entrance or shared rear yard. Parking is accessed from the alley, in a combination of surface lots and “tuck under” spaces at grade in the building rear.

Building Height/Intensity and Parking

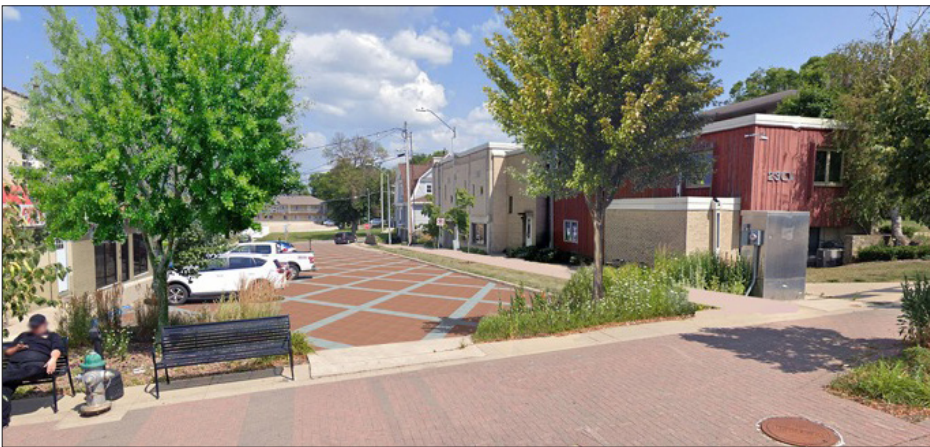
The prototype buildings shown here are of modest heights, illustrating typical building square footage that could also accommodate reasonable parking demand on-site without requiring a parking “ramp” above or below grade. As illustrated, these building heights and parcels can accommodate approximately 54 parking spaces on-site, or .75 spaces per bedroom, which is lower than current minimum parking standards. In order to intensify student housing, a new approach to providing and managing parking on College Hill will be necessary. (see p. 21). Building heights above 5 stories require a different and more expensive construction type as well as much more parking—often making taller structures cost prohibitive. (For more on required minimum parking ratios, see the Appendix.)

6. Visualizing Change: A New Plaza at College & 23rd



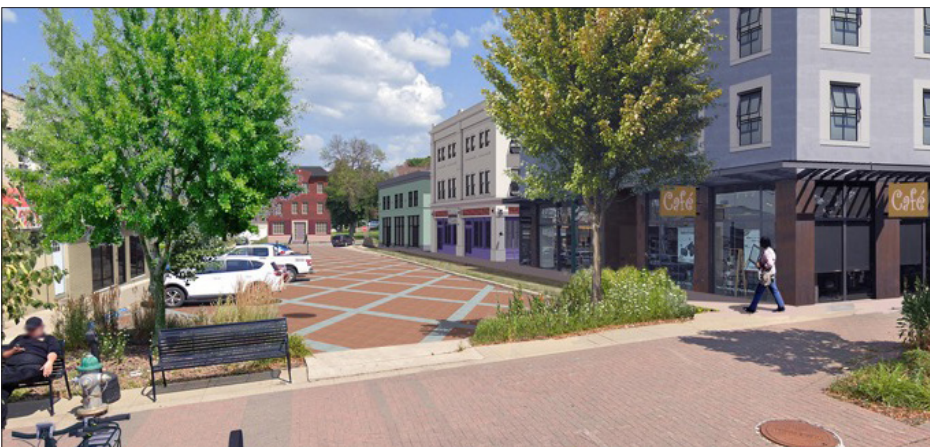
Existing Condition

View toward the east, looking down 23rd Street, from College Street to Olive Street. Since it is blocked off on the west end, with no vehicular access to College, this block of 23rd basically functions as a parking lot today. Located at the “front door” to the University of Northern Iowa, this area is a missed opportunity. The existing buildings on the south side of the block are in need of repair and contribute little to the public realm. The vista is terminated by a vacant lot.



Public Investment & Private Redevelopment

The next image shows the same block beginning to take on a new character, through street repaving or color treatment and sidewalk widening.



The bottom image illustrates the public and private sectors working together. Utilities have been buried under ground. Obsolete buildings have been replaced with new street-oriented, mixed-use buildings along 23rd Street. The eastern vista has been terminated by a new small apartment building, helping to provide a sense of enclosure, creating an “outdoor room.” Shopfront spaces help to activate the new flexible public plaza as 23rd Street begins to feel like a “people place.” This redevelopment could be undertaken separately by individual property owners, or all at once, through a coordinated effort.

Visualizing Change: A New Plaza at College & 23rd



Street Trees

Following building construction, the streetscape is completed, including the installation of pedestrian-scaled lighting. New street trees add shade in summer and help to provide human scale to the public realm year round, contributing to the pedestrian environment.



Full Vision:

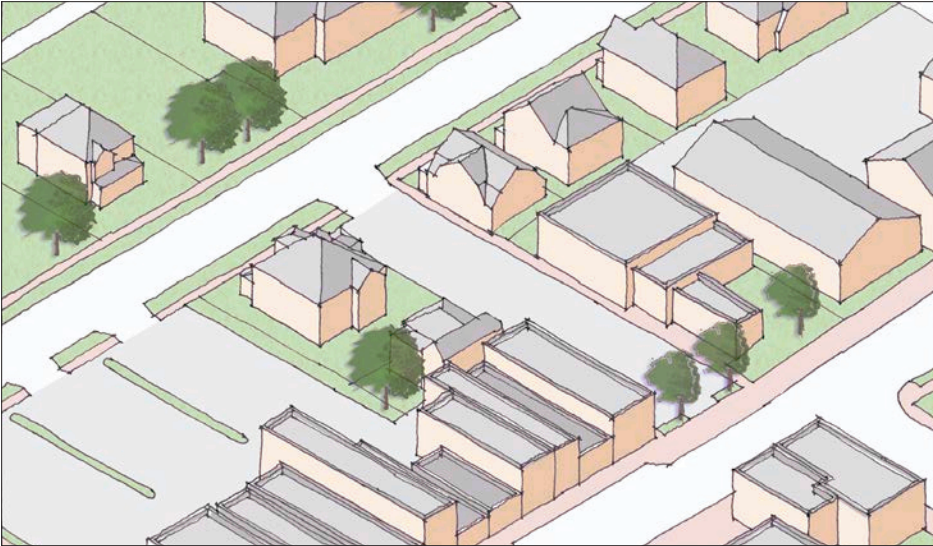
Investments in the public realm and private property combine to create a great new flexible festival street or plaza. While 23rd Street continues to provide needed parking on a daily basis, it can also accommodate outdoor dining or easily be converted into a unique space for activities such as the farmers' market or other special events. The buildings could house a range of uses. In addition to ground floor retail, the upper stories could be university offices, a small boutique hotel, or residences. The location—in the Heart of College Hill, immediately across from the UNI gate, and a short walk from the transit hub parking ramp—is ideal for creating an inviting destination shared by town and gown alike.

Creating the Plaza Space

In the near term, there are several possible techniques for creating the surface for a flexible plaza or festival street, to make it visually attractive while also durable and safe for vehicles and pedestrians alike. One option is through the use of a stencil and stain method to create a pattern on the street surface, as pictured at right.



7. Prototypical Project: Mixed-Use along 23rd Street



Existing Condition

View toward the southeast, looking from College Street to Olive Street. 23rd Street has been closed at College Street and therefore no longer carries through traffic, serving primarily as a parking lot. Located in a prime location in the core of College Hill across from the University of Northern Iowa, the buildings on the south side of 23rd are in need of repair and contribute little to the vitality of the street.



Redevelopment Scenario

In this option, the parcels on the south side of 23rd Street are redeveloped individually as separate mixed-use buildings with ground floor shopfront spaces. The upper floors could include residences, offices, or some other UNI facility. The street has been converted into a flexible plaza space, as described previously. A small apartment building has been constructed on the vacant lot on Olive Street at the east end of 23rd.



Alternative Scenario

In this option, the parcels on the south side of 23rd Street closer to College Street are redeveloped in combination, accommodating a building of a slightly larger scale and character. Street level spaces would still be configured for retail or restaurant uses, but the larger floor area on the upper stories could provide greater flexibility for a broader range of uses.

8. Prototype Project: Re-imagining Hidden Valley



Existing Condition: Built Environment

The block between 22nd, 20th, College and Merner Streets sits in the Heart of College Hill yet it is markedly different from the normal College Hill blocks that surround it. It is much larger, with a suburban arrangement of buildings and parking lots that do not support the *Imagine College Hill* vision of a vibrant, walkable neighborhood center.

Small blocks are a base condition for walkable places, yet this block has a 2,497-foot perimeter, while the typical College Hill block perimeters range from 993 to 1,400 feet. Although buildings along the 22nd Street side front the street in a normal manner, the rest of the block is an ad hoc arrangement of parking lots, suburban building types, and light industrial warehouses, with no clear fronts or backs. Reportedly more difficult to police than adjacent blocks, the land is underutilized, and the development pattern is anti-pedestrian. The buildings turn their backs (and parking lots) to the surrounding streets and to Dry Run Creek. The functions within the block—student housing and parking, a maintenance facility, a gas station and convenience store—are fine. It is the physical form and character that work against the vision for College Hill.

Fortunately there are positive steps that can be taken that will increase private property values, increase economic development, and improve the city tax base.



Re-imagining Hidden Valley (continued)



Dry Run Creek and the new reduced floodplain and floodway



Multi-use path and greenway along Dry Run Creek (above) and "green" parking lot (below)



Existing Condition: Floodplain

The Dry Run Creek floodplain and floodway have been reduced by the City's infrastructure improvements. Unfortunately, however, much of the land on 20th Street between Campus Drive and College Street remains in the reduced floodplain, with its development potential compromised.

Vision: A "What if..." Scenario

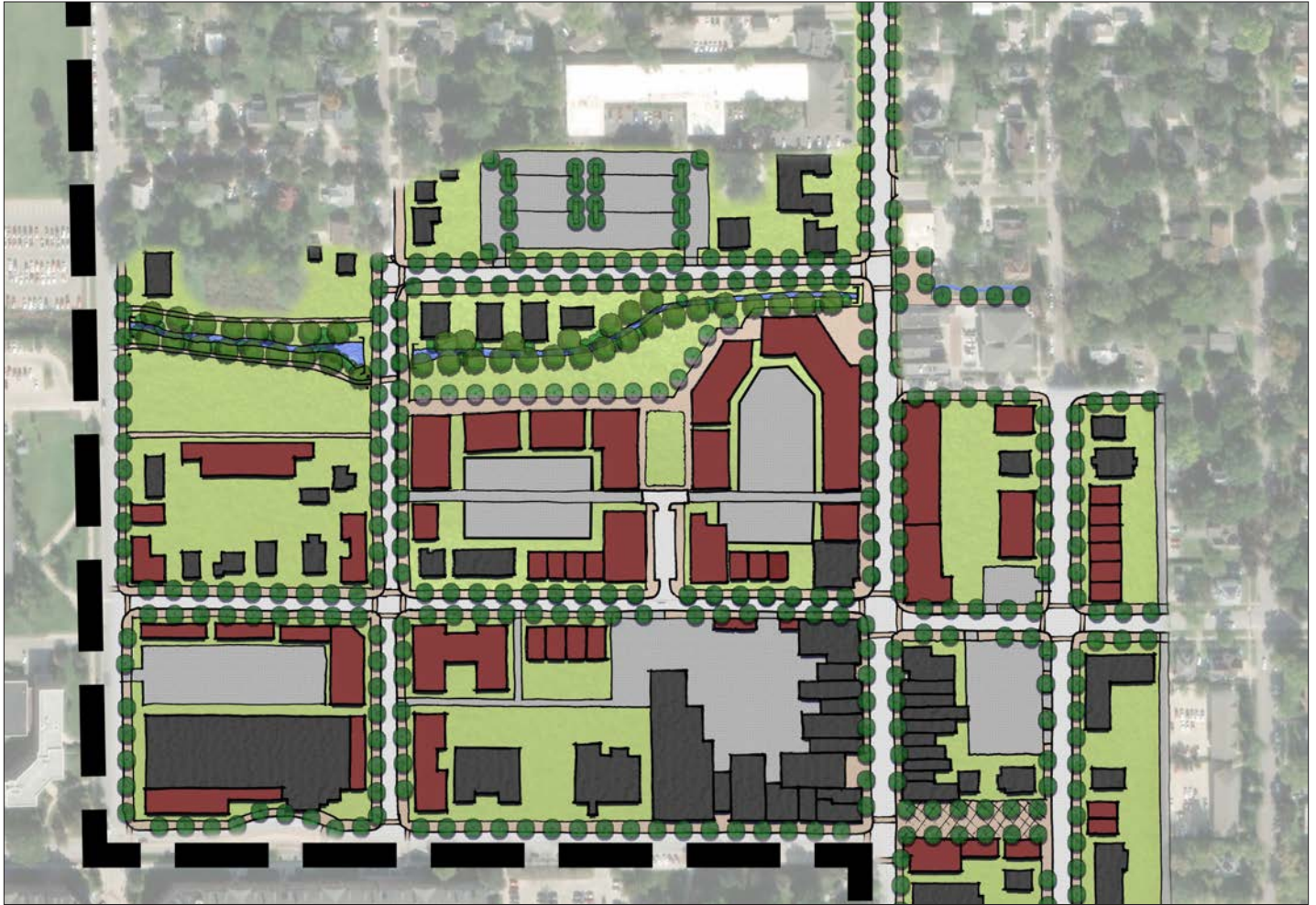
• Near Term-Step One:

Coordinate with UNI to build (and plant) a positive pedestrian and bicycle connection along Dry Run Creek from Campus Drive to College Street and use the floodplain between College and Merner as a public space. This will turn what is currently just stormwater infrastructure and unbuildable floodplain into an attractive public greenway. (Although there are plans to improve the sidewalks along 22nd Street, the existence of the "desire path" in this general location indicates that students are likely to continue to take the shortest route to the Lower Hill.) The drawings propose a multi-use path running along the creek between Merner and College Street, extending to Campus Drive to the west, with canopy shade trees planted along it. This will offer a more public, well-lit, and safer connection from the University residence halls to the shops of College Street. It will also complement the current plan to extend the pathway from Pettersen Plaza eastward to Olive Street.

• Near Term-Step Two:

This plan proposes the use of several parcels in the floodplain on the north side of 20th Street between College and Merner Streets as a carefully designed and environmentally sensitive "green" parking lot. The spaces would provide a 'parking sink', accommodating parking that would otherwise be required on redevelopment sites closer to the UNI campus and College Street. The lot would be shielded from the street with trees and hedges and it could provide bio-swales or rain gardens that would assist with stormwater management and provide bird and pollinator habitat.

Re-imagining Hidden Valley (continued)



Redeveloped Hidden Valley

- **Long Term–Step Three:**

Fortunately, the land within this block is underutilized and redevelopment into a form more supportive of the *Imagine College Hill* goals can generate extra value for the landowners. The illustrative vision plan, above, shows new 3- to 5-story apartments buildings along the perimeter of the block, defining the street edge, and helping to reconnect the Upper and Lower Hill along College Street. Along Dry Run Creek, the buildings oversee a new 3/4 acre greenway that sits in the floodplain and includes a 20-foot wide pedestrian/bicycle ‘street’ (no auto traffic) that fronts the new buildings.



The preceding pages illustrate potential redevelopment projects that show one way in which the *Imagine College Hill Vision Plan* might be implemented over time. Each example—whether *Visualizing Change*, a *Prototypical Project* or a *What If...* scenario—addresses one or more of the plan goals and recommendations. Those goals and recommendations are based on a synthesis of stakeholder interviews, site and market analysis, and community aspirations gathered during the course of the *Imagine College Hill Project*. Similar redevelopment projects could be undertaken in other locations within the Imagine College Hill study area.

The timing of plan implementation and sequence of redevelopment projects will depend on public, private, university, and non-profit sector involvement, decision-making, and investment, within the context of the local Cedar Falls market. This should be viewed as a long-term effort; some ideas may be implemented sooner than others. As new projects are proposed, they should be evaluated based on how well they fulfill the following.

SUMMARY OF PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

See the *Executive Summary* on pp. 2-4 for a brief description of each.

- Build on the work of the College Hill Partnership
- Define the public realm with active building facades, improved sidewalks, and additional street trees
- Ensure that future street and sidewalk rebuilding enhances walkability
- Support a multi-modal environment
- Understand the market—particularly as it relates to student housing, new construction, and parking—to leverage opportunities for growth on College Hill
- Create gateways to College Hill to provide a sense of arrival
- Explore opportunities for new/improved public spaces
- Adjust the rules for development (and parking)
- Recognize that College Hill (and nearby neighborhoods) play a unique role within Cedar Falls and warrant a different approach
- Create a better process for development review and approval
- Establish a true bicycle network
- Coordinate parking supply management

NEXT STEPS

*The **Imagine College Hill Project** was initiated not only to establish a road map or framework for future growth and development, but also to provide inspiration for the quality and character of that development. The ideas presented in this plan will be implemented in partnership between the City, the private and non-profit sectors, and the University—and at the behest of the citizens of Cedar Falls. Each group has an important role to play. Some tasks are already underway, while others can be undertaken in the near-term, with others requiring more time (depending on the completion of prior tasks, market conditions, etc.) to be implemented over the medium- and long-term.*

Recommended initial steps to implement the *Imagine College Hill Plan*

- Adopt new zoning for the entire College Hill Study Area, with the express purpose of plan implementation and an emphasis on a streamlined process and the appropriate form and character of new development.
- Move forward with plans to improve walkability and expand public spaces, including the completion of the sidewalk network, planting of street trees, and creation of new publicly accessible plazas and green spaces in accordance with this plan.
- Continue implementing the Parking Study strategies.
- Consider a defined parking district for the core character areas to better manage the available on-street parking in the plan area.
- Encourage greater collaboration between the City and University to create a true “car free” neighborhood through the recruitment and support of more diverse businesses and transportation options.

Implementing the *Imagine College Hill Plan* will require cooperation and collaboration between all involved. The city can write the rules and provide the infrastructure, but it will require private sector investment to build the compact, mixed-use walkable neighborhood center envisioned by the community. The updated zoning and new development review process should make it easy for people who meet the new standards to build the community vision for College Hill.

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APPENDIX

*The following documents and studies were produced during and in support of the **Imagine College Hill Visioning Project** process.*

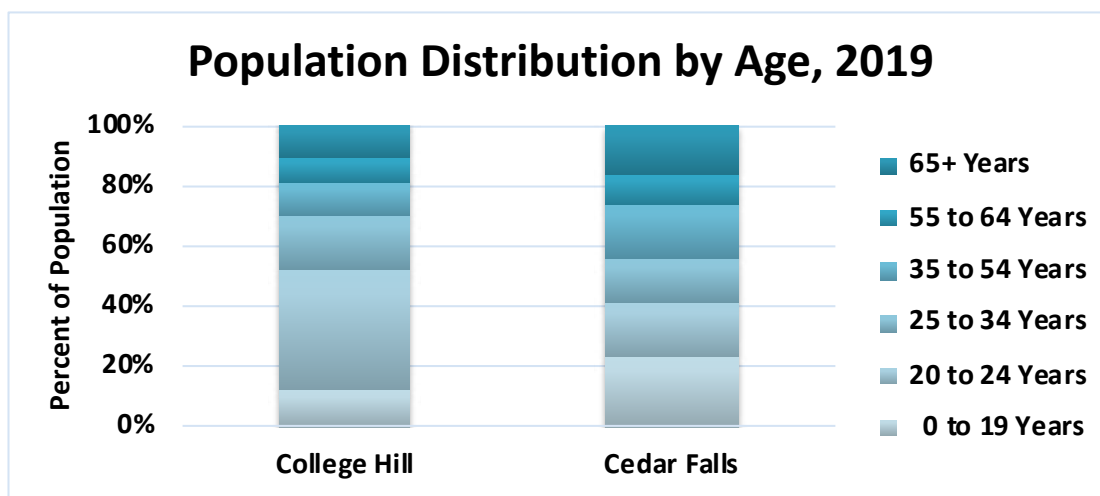
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Market Considerations Report

Demographics

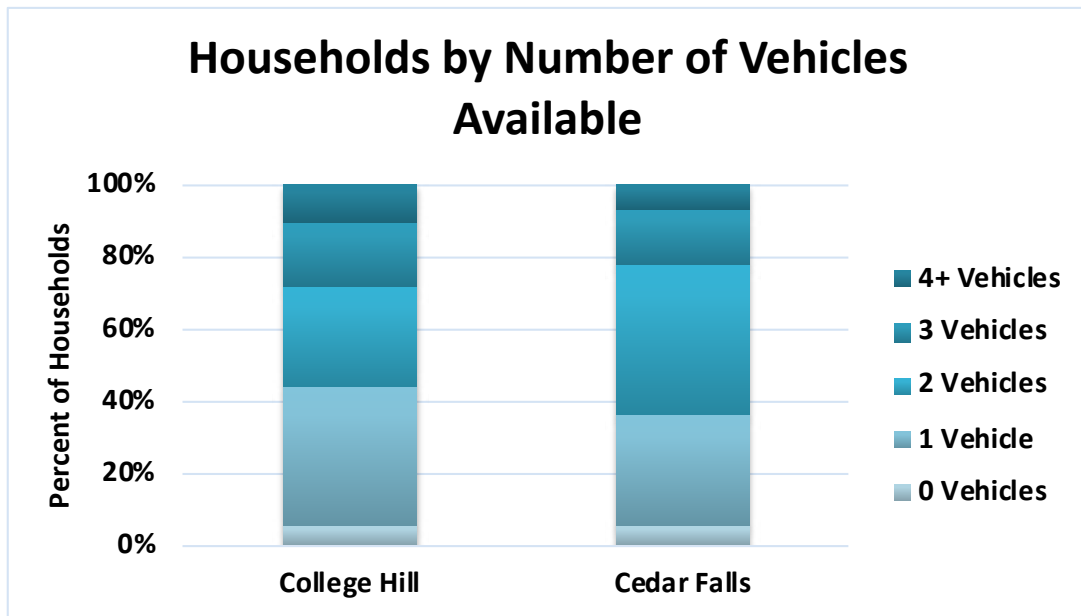
College Hill has remained very stable over the past 20 years when measured in terms of population and household counts. The study area had 2,589 residents in 2019 living in 2,009 households according to ESRI, a national demographic data provider. That represents an increase of 59 people (1.1 percent) and 62 households (3.2 percent). During the same period, Cedar Falls grew by 4,938 residents (13.6 percent) and 2,641 households (20.5 percent).

As one would expect, the student population is concentrated in College Hill – 39 percent of residents were aged 20 to 24 in 2019 as compared with their 18-percent share of citywide population. Another 18 percent of College Hill residents are 25 to 34 relative to 15 percent of city residents, reflecting graduate students and other older students as well as young families.

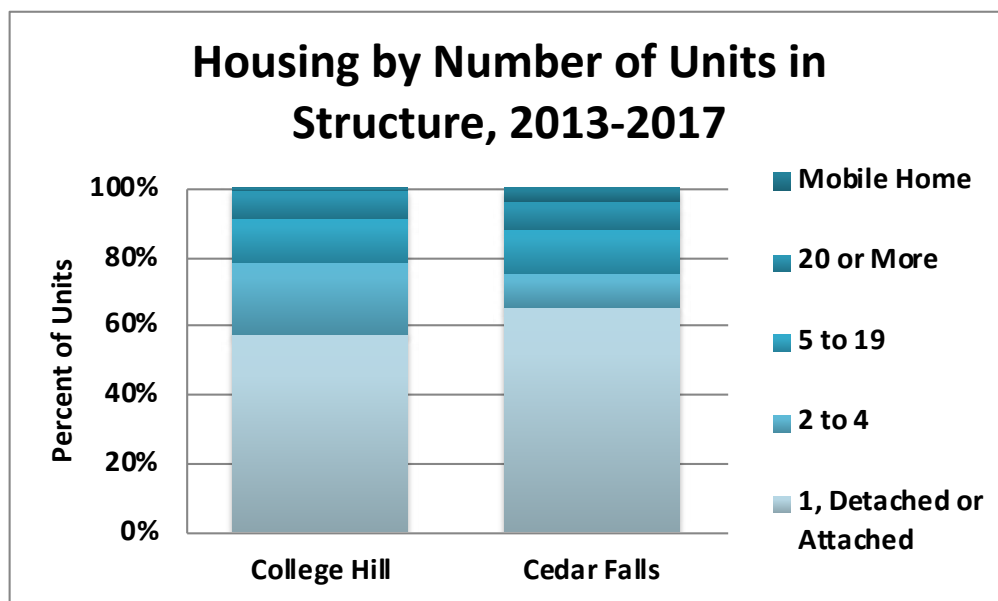


With that concentration of students, the nature of College Hill households is different with just less than one-third of its households in families as compared with 55 percent of city households. The median age of 24.3 is significantly lower than the 30.6 median age citywide. Household incomes are distinctly lower in College Hill – a median income of \$39,665 versus \$59,519 in the city. Renters represent 58 percent of College Hill households and 36 percent of city households.

College Hill residents are somewhat less dependent on driving alone to get to work; 11.1 percent walked to work and 1.9 percent bicycled or motorcycled in 2019 as compared with 8.5 and 1.6 percent of the city's employed residents, respectively. However, both groups still were much more likely to drive alone – 78.7 percent of College Hill residents and 81.2 percent of Cedar Falls residents. Car ownership was somewhat different as well.



College Hill has more than twice as many housing units in buildings with two to four units (22 percent) than elsewhere in Cedar Falls (10 percent). This can be explained by the extensive dividing of large older single-family homes and former boarding houses into multiple apartments for students.



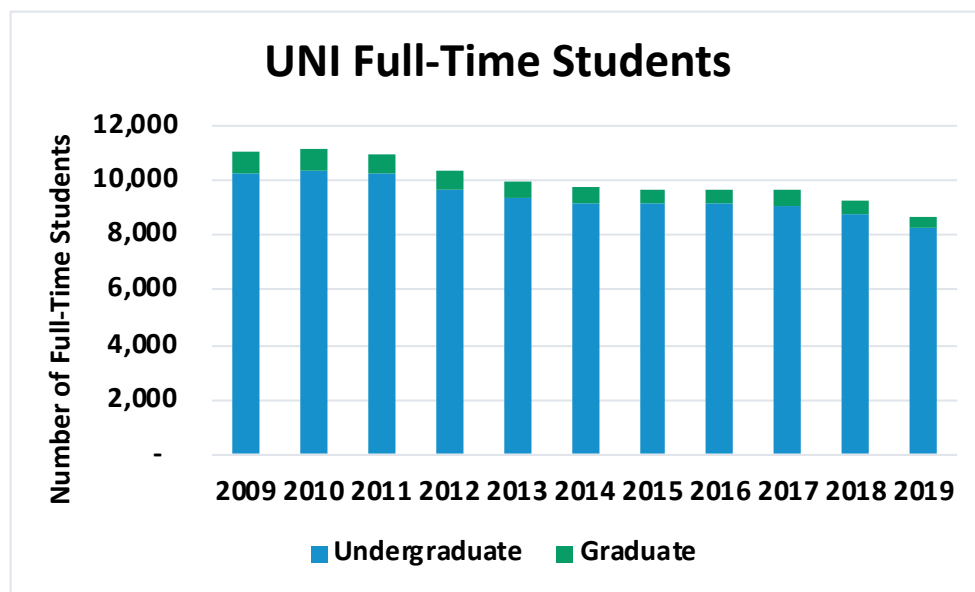
To some extent, using statistics for all of College Hill obscures the distinctions within the study area. Looking at subareas within College Hill underscores the variations between student neighborhoods near the campus and more established single-family neighborhoods.

Table 1. Selected Characteristics of College Hill Neighborhoods						
Indicator	18th to 23rd Street Next to Campus	North of 18th Street	Seerley Park Neighborhood	South of 26th Street	Total College Hill	Cedar Falls City Total
Selected Characteristics						
Percent Families	20%	53%	30%	27%	35%	55%
Median Age	23.1	31.6	23.4	23.5	24.8	30.6
Median Household Income	\$24,101	\$65,462	\$33,360	\$29,598	\$39,665	\$59,519
Percent Renter	77%	29%	67%	70%	58%	36%
Median House Value	\$180,357	\$178,383	\$158,209	\$192,188	\$172,360	\$199,035
Source: ESRI, 2020; Partners for Economic Solutions, 2020.						

The northern portion of College Hill (bounded by 12th Street, Washington Street, 18th Street and Hudson Road) is markedly higher in incomes with a significantly lower share of renters than in other parts of College Hill closer to campus.

University Trends

College Hill's dynamics and market potentials depend heavily on the number of University of Northern Iowa students on campus. Student enrollments have dropped significantly over the past seven years due to changes in on-campus programs, increasing competition from the University of Iowa and Iowa State University, demographic changes in the number of college-aged students, a declining number of international students and low unemployment. Total UNI enrollment has fallen from 12,273 in 2012 to 10,497 in 2019 – a 15-percent drop. During that same period, the number of students enrolled in college nationwide declined 11 percent, according to data from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. Over the last five years, UNI enrollment has dropped by 12 percent, and 2019 saw a 6-percent decline from the preceding year. Due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Fall 2020 enrollment is down to 9,522. That represents a 7-percent decline in full-time enrollment. However, the freshman class is larger than last year's class, and some students have delayed starting until the Spring semester.



Going forward, the demographic picture looks less promising with a national drop in college-aged students. However, the Iowa Department of Education has documented the number of high school students in schools across the state. It projects the number of seniors increasing for the next seven years until the Class of 2028, which is likely to be four-percent smaller than the Class of 2027.

The University has responded with an increase in new scholarships, a renewed focus on constraining increases in tuition and fees, increased recruitment of out-of-state students and greater emphasis on student retention and graduation.

Housing Market

Student housing, as defined by the real estate industry, typically rents by the bed rather than by the unit with each individual responsible for his or her own rent rather than being responsible for roommates' rent as well. Cedar Falls has three key student housing developments:

- Hidden Valley Apartments developed in 1993 has 273 beds in 102 units on College Street between 21st and 22nd streets. In 2019, CoStar, a national real estate data provider that owns Apartments.com, reports that Hidden Valley units rent for \$345 per bed. Amenities include a small fitness center and stand-up tanning.
- Located west of Hudson Road on 27th Street, The Quarters at Cedar Falls offers 450 beds in four-bedroom apartments built in 2001 for \$435 per bed. The complex offers a fitness center, basketball court, clubhouse, game room, racquetball court, spa, volleyball court and walking/biking trails.
- Hillcrest Park provides 528 beds in 132 units built in 2003 on University Avenue one mile from the western edge of the UNI campus. Its amenities include a basketball court, courtyard and volleyball court. Rents average \$380 per bed.

In comparison, UNI on-campus apartment rents are \$709 to \$879 per month with no obligation to pay rent over the summer.

Of course, students live in many other apartment buildings and houses throughout College Hill. CoStar tracks six larger buildings with a total of 114 units. The rents for those units average \$798 per month or \$1.18 per square foot. Rents range from \$649 for a studio apartment to \$691 for a one-bedroom unit, \$949 for a two-bedroom unit and \$1,500 for a three-bedroom unit. As of September, the units were 98.5-percent leased. Historically, these developments have maintained high occupancy rates, well above the 95-percent rate typically considered healthy. Some of the older units that have not been updated took much longer than normal to lease due, in part, to the uncertainty associated with the pandemic and the overall decline in UNI enrollment, and others remain vacant.

Urban Flats, located at 2015 Olive Street and 917 W. 23rd Street, have been built next to campus in 2018 and 2020 with rents from \$900 for a one-bedroom unit to \$2,200 for a large four-bedroom unit. The rents of \$1.25 to \$1.65 per square foot top the market.

Zillow lists multiple houses available for rent at \$1,500 to \$1,600 for four bedrooms and \$1,295 to \$1,290 for three bedrooms close to campus. A few blocks further away, monthly rents drop by \$100 to \$300.

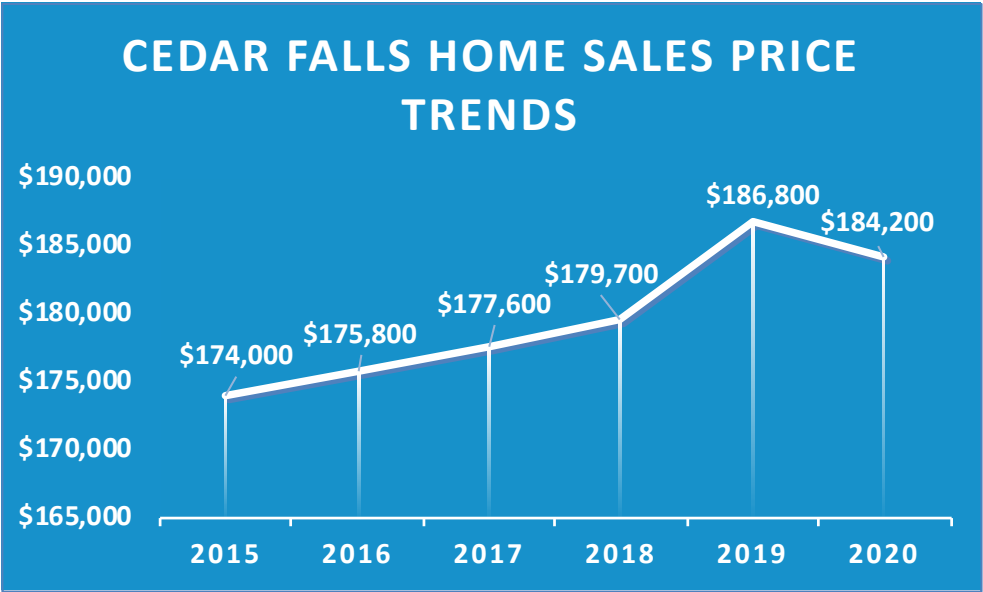
Newer large apartment complexes have been developed south of town past Greenhill Road with rents averaging \$971 to \$1,272 per month or \$1.02 to \$1.20 per square foot.

A key constraint on the development of new apartments near campus is the College Hill Neighborhood Overlay District zoning requirement for on-site parking at a rate of one space per bedroom plus visitor parking. Urban sites typically lack sufficient land to accommodate that much parking on a surface lot. Structured parking significantly increases the costs of development. Given the importance of walkability, compact development and population density for the health of a commercial business district/urban neighborhood, it will be important to pursue alternative approaches to accommodating residents’ vehicles, including remote parking alternatives.

The other primary constraint on new development close to campus is the cost of assembling properties that are still being actively leased. The continued economic life of the existing buildings raises the acquisition price and the resulting cost of land for the new development. Typically, development economics require that new development replace existing building space at a ratio of four units for every demolished unit. Achieving such a ratio of new development is very difficult with the amount of on-site parking required by the current zoning.

Nationwide, development costs have been increasing faster than the cost of living. The high costs also limit the amount of new development by requiring that the new units achieve rents high enough to cover the development costs. Only a segment of the market will be able and willing to pay higher rents even for the convenience of living in a vital business district within easy walking distance of campus. New urban housing should be delivered in small increments of 20 to 40 units so as not to overwhelm the market.

On the single-family side, Zillow reports that home sales prices averaged \$186,800 in 2019, up from \$174,000 in 2015, an increase of 7.4 percent or an annual increase of 1.8 percent. College Hill neighborhood prices are below the citywide prices, reflecting the age and size of many of the units. Prices are highest in the ~~southern~~ area south of 26th Street and in the neighborhood north of 18th Street.



Source: Zillow, 2020.

Single-family housing that has not been broken up into separate apartments retains the potential for leasing to families and other non-students. However, the units' appeal to non-students depends on the nature of the surrounding neighborhood. Houses in student-dominated neighborhoods west of Iowa Street and south of 18th Street are unlikely to find non-student buyers or renters. Opportunities to reclaim student housing for family use will be better north of 18th Street where owner-occupied housing still prevails.

Commercial Market

The College Hill Business District, known as “Cedar Falls Entertainment District,” is dominated by eating and drinking establishments, as is common in college retail clusters. College Hill restaurants, grills, bars and take-out food establishments include Chad's Pizza and Restaurant, Great Wall, Greenhouse Kitchen, ICON Donuts and Sweetery, Insomnia Cookies, The Library on the Hill, Little Bigs, Milkbox Bakery, Mirch Masala Grill, Octopus, Oh My Grill, The Other Place, the Shaker, Sharky's Fun House, Sidecar Coffee Shop, Studio House, Sub City and Suds Upstairs on the “Lower Hill” and Domino's Pizza, \$5 Pizza, Hydrant Firehouse Grill and Jimmy John's on the “Upper Hill.”

Though College Hill bars, restaurants and stores are heavily oriented to UNI students, some serve the surrounding neighborhood as well, attracting residents during summer months and some early-evening hours.

We distinguish among types of retail space because they have different characteristics and somewhat different markets. Neighborhood Goods & Services include grocery stores, drugstores, services and other businesses closely tied to the local population base; customers typically choose among them based on convenience. On the convenience goods side, College Hill offers Bani's Liquor, Buzz Smoke & Vapor, College Hill Farmers Market, Hill Street News & Tobacco, Kwik Star and Masala Market. Service establishments include College Hill Barbers, College Hill Laundry, Copyworks, Dragon's Cave Tattoos, the Finishing Touch Tattoo + Barbershop, The Razor's Edge, Third Eye Tattoo, Voya the Salon and Wild Hair Salon.

Traditional retailers offering merchandise typically found in a department store are relatively limited on the Hill – Limited Edition Comics, Mohair Pear, Price Check Kicks and UNI Bookstore. The Hill does not offer a large enough number and variety of apparel and gift shops to allow people to comparison shop. Most customers seek out such shops in the mall or elsewhere.

According to inventory and occupancy statistics amassed by CoStar, the business district has 12 retail buildings with a total of 43,210 square feet of retail space. There are currently no vacancies, and the vacancies that have developed through the years have been quickly filled. The most recent additions have been 925 W. 22nd Street at College Street opened in 2019 and the Urban Flats building with first-floor retail space at 917 W. 23rd Street opened in 2020. These buildings have been occupied by The Finishing Touch Tattoo + Barbershop, The Shaker, Buzz Smoke & Vapor, Great Wall, Greenhouse Kitchen and ICON Donuts and Sweetery.

College Hill serves a trade area roughly bounded by 16th Street to the north, Iowa Street to the east, Laverne Lane to the south and the student housing developments beyond Hudson Road to the west. This trade area probably generates 85 to 90 percent of the resident sales. College Hill's connection to UNI allows it to serve students,

faculty, staff and visitors to the campus. To a much lesser extent, the business district also serves nearby neighborhoods.

We compare the supply of stores and other businesses measured by sales to the demand for retail goods in the trade area measured by residents' expenditures for different types of goods based on data provided by ESRI and Infogroup. Comparing the sales by all the stores in this trade area to the residents' expenditures suggests a major gap among Neighborhood Goods & Services. This reflects the lack of a grocery store and the few drugstores in the area. Shown in Table 2, the grocery store gap is estimated at \$5.4 million in potential annual sales, enough to support a small grocery store of 8,000 to 10,000 square feet. However, it should be noted that the Hy-Vee just outside the trade area is serving many of the trade area customers. The new food co-op opening in downtown Cedar Falls will also attract some trade area residents to shop. The challenge for College Hill lies in identifying an appropriate operator and a site that can accommodate both the store and its parking needs. While walk-in traffic would alleviate some of the parking need, such a store would still be likely to need 25 to 50 parking spaces and a site of 0.5 to 0.8 acres.

Table 2. College Hill Trade Area Sales and Expenditures by Retail Category, 2020				
NAICS	Industry Group	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Existing Retail Sales)	Retail Gap
Neighborhood Goods and Services				
445	Food & Beverage Stores	\$5,869,000	\$574,000	\$5,295,000
4451	Grocery Stores	\$5,433,000	\$0	\$5,433,000
4452	Specialty Food Stores	\$257,000	\$0	\$257,000
4453	Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	\$179,000	\$499,000	-\$320,000
446, 4461	Health & Personal Care Stores	\$1,655,000	\$245,000	\$1,410,000
	Total Neighborhood Goods and Services	\$7,524,000	\$819,000	\$6,705,000
Eating and Drinking				
722	Food Services & Drinking Places	\$3,122,000	\$6,978,000	-\$3,856,000
7225	Restaurant and Eating Places	\$2,844,000	\$6,548,000	-\$3,704,000
7223	Special Food Services	\$60,000	\$0	\$60,000
7224	Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	\$218,000	\$395,000	-\$177,000
	Total Eating and Drinking	\$3,122,000	\$6,978,000	-\$3,856,000
Shoppers Goods (General Merchandise, Apparel and Accessories, Furniture and Furnishings and Other)				
452	General Merchandise Stores	\$5,252,000	\$0	\$5,252,000
448	Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	\$1,128,000	\$0	\$1,128,000
442	Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	\$838,000	\$0	\$838,000
443	Electronics & Appliance Stores	\$1,073,000	\$1,061,454	\$11,546
451	Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	\$781,000	\$7,597,695	-\$6,816,695
453	Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$1,352,000	\$545,000	\$807,000
	Total Shoppers Goods	\$10,424,000	\$9,204,149	\$1,219,851
Source: ESRI, Retail Marketplace Profile, 2020; Partners for Economic Solutions, 2020.				

College Hill retailers would benefit from closer physical ties between the Lower Hill and the Upper Hill, which points to the importance of filling in the gap along the west side of College Street between 21st and 22nd streets. Over the long run, relocating the Kwik Star gas station from College Avenue would provide a site for more compatible retail uses.

Implications for the Vision Plan

- Encourage additional retail space development to expand the inventory and provide a more well-rounded mix of stores, restaurants and bars.
- Where possible, develop mixed-use space with residential units above the first-floor retail space to develop a higher density of residential uses.
- Bring in new retail customers through new residential and mixed-use development.
- Exercise caution in developing retail uses beyond College Street, 23rd Street and possibly 22nd Street. Focused energy is important to the district's vitality.
- Enhance pedestrian and bicycle connections from the campus and other surrounding areas to help bring additional customers to College Hill. Use improved connections to draw UNI students out to explore more of the community's offerings. Provide bike racks to encourage greater use of bikes to reach local restaurants and retail shops.
- Scale or phase new residential and mixed-use development in small to medium-sized projects timed to meet the market demand.
- Create gathering places for outdoor dining and periodic events to draw more people to College Hill. Improvements to Pettersen Plaza and creation of a plaza on the extension of 23rd Street east of College Avenue will help to support events.

New residential development in the core of College Hill immediately north of campus is very unlikely to occur without a solution to the parking quandary. Requiring one parking space for every bedroom imposes a cost that the market cannot bear. The densities that can be supported with that level of parking will not justify replacing the existing, obsolescent housing that depresses College Hill's appearance and appeal.

- Work with the University to find alternatives to building as much on-site parking as the zoning now requires for new residential development.
- Explore possible solutions to accommodate parking off-site within two to three blocks of new development, if possible.
- Adjust the on-site parking ratios for new development to require one-quarter to one-half of on-site parking now required, and allow developers to meet the remaining demand with off-site parking lots.
- To prevent residents of new developments with reduced on-site parking requirements from monopolizing on-street parking, consider a program of issuing and enforcing residential parking permits.

Market Considerations Report prepared by



Visual Preference Exercise: Summary of Board A Results



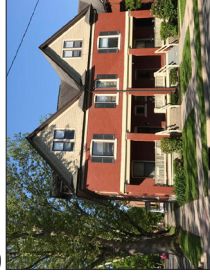
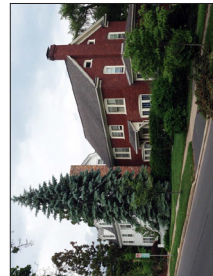
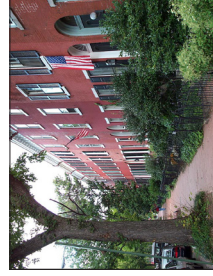
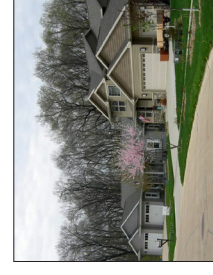
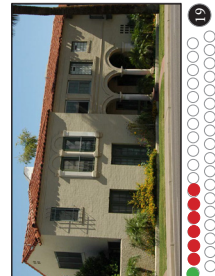
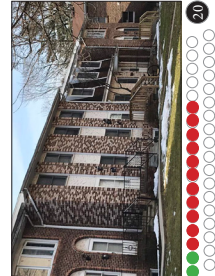
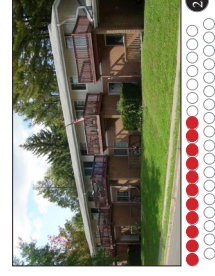
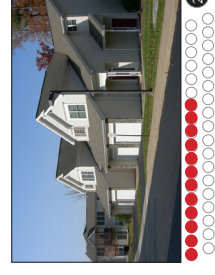
Cedar Falls, Iowa
College Hill – Public Kick-Off Meeting
January 29, 2020
Visual Preference Results



**FERRELL
MADDEN**
urban design,
town planning, &
farm-based cooling

BOARD A

Adjacent Neighborhoods

 1	 2	 3	 4	 5	 6
 7	 8	 9	 10	 11	 12
 13	 14	 15	 16	 17	 18
 19	 20	 21	 22	 23	 24

Visual Preference Exercise: Summary of Board B Results



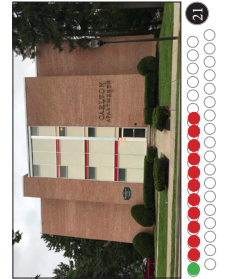
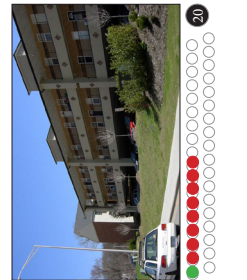
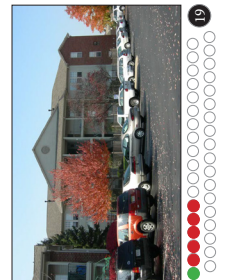
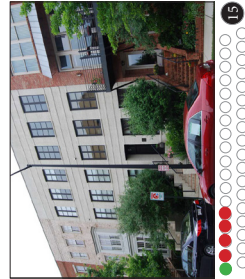
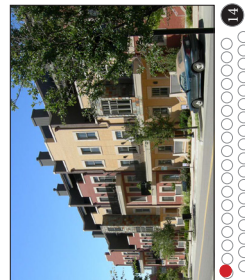
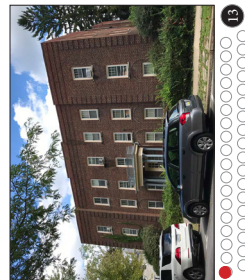
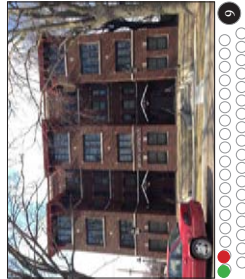
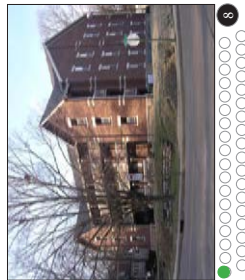
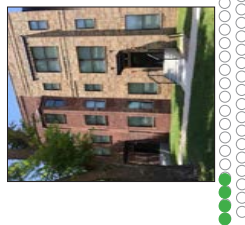
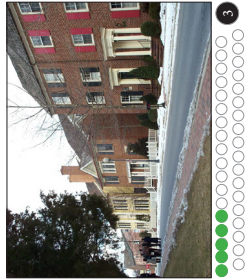
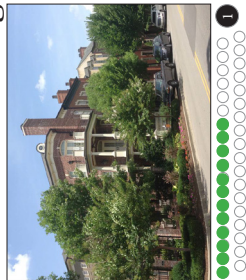
OUR CEDAR FALLS
College Hill
 Imagine the possibilities!

Cedar Falls, Iowa
 College Hill – Public Kick-Off Meeting
 January 29, 2020
Visual Preference Results

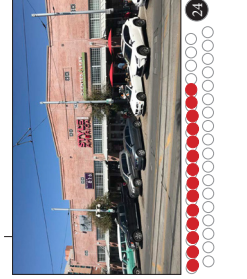
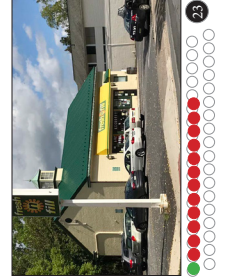
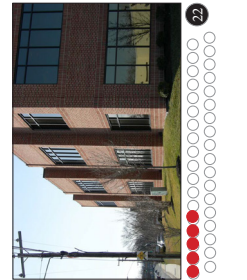
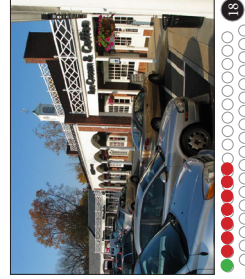
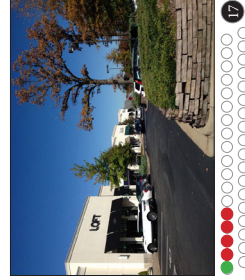
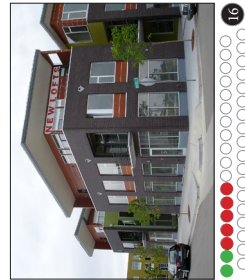
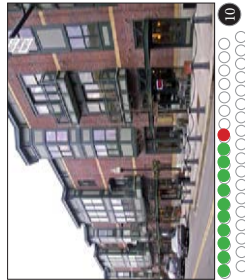
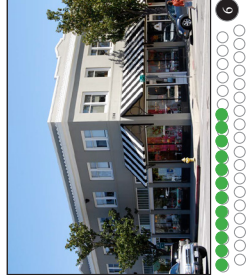
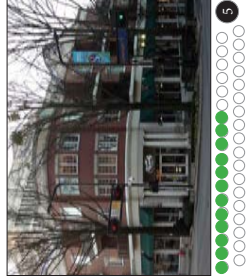
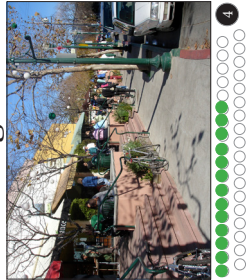


BOARD B

College Hill Center – Residential



College Hill Center – Commercial & Mixed-Use



Strengths & Weaknesses Exercise: Table Map 1

Cedar Falls, Iowa
Public Kick-Off Meeting
 January 29, 2020
College Hill Study Area
Perception Exercise

● strong - places you like
 ● weak - places you don't like

Strong Places:
 For more in-depth comments, put a number on your dot and write below

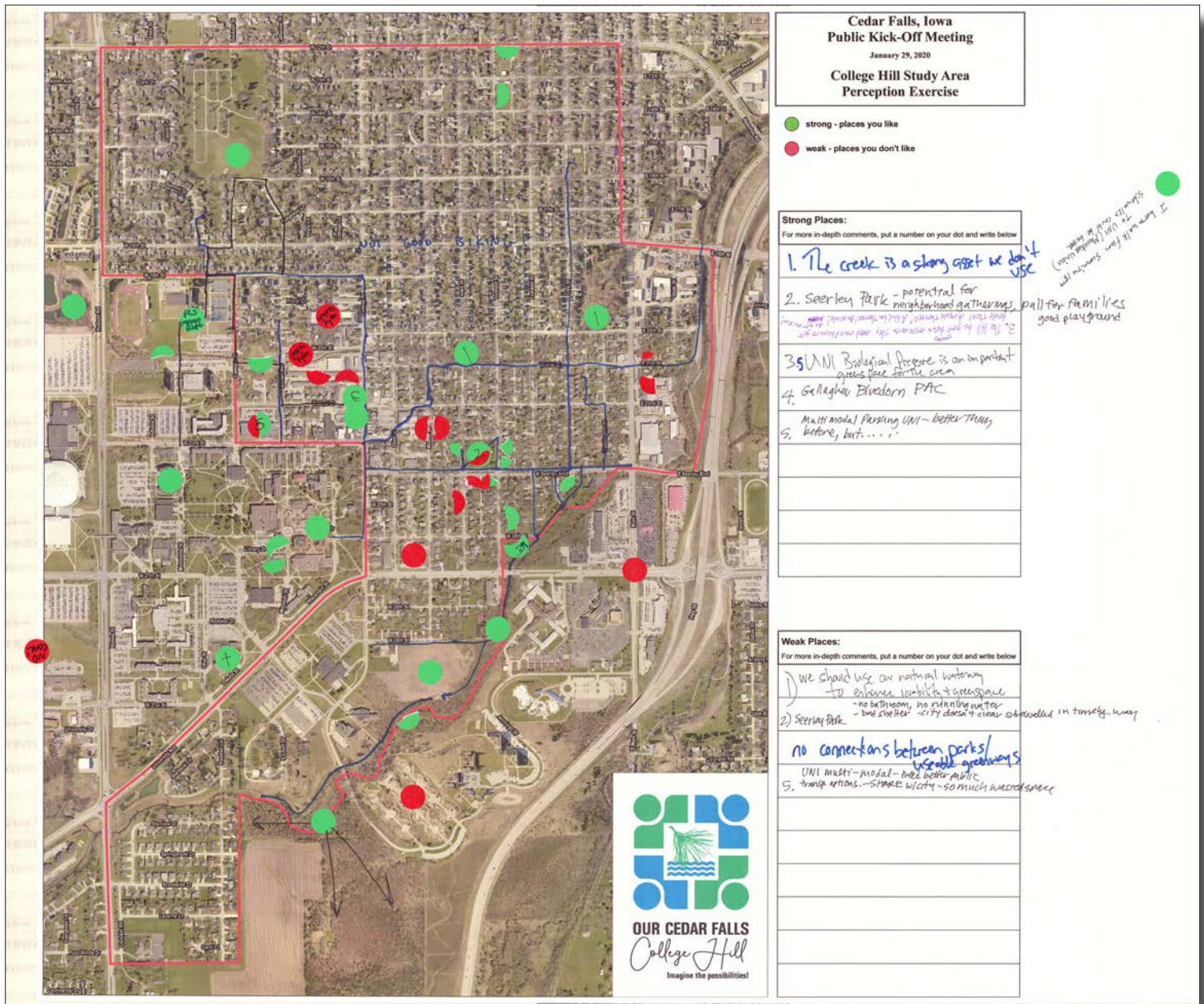
- ① most interesting part of the Hill!
- ② Sealey Park - a jewel, but needs some TLC.
- ③ Median on Sealey needs more upkeep - repair older cobblestones, help to protect bike traffic [from traffic]
- ④ Beautiful UNI presence. Nice trails!

Weak Places:
 For more in-depth comments, put a number on your dot and write below

- ① So ugly! These houses are falling apart! W. 22nd St. needs help!
- ② Join the upper & lower Hill. Should feel more urban on college st.
- ③ Help UNI Students find their way to the bike trail system. Little connectivity.
- ④ college to Hudson on 18th st needs further improvement on pedestrian access & bike lanes

OUR CEDAR FALLS
College Hill
 Imagine the possibilities!

Strengths & Weaknesses Exercise: Table Map 2



Strengths & Weaknesses Exercise: Table Map 3

Cedar Falls, Iowa
Public Kick-Off Meeting
January 29, 2020

College Hill Study Area
Perception Exercise

● strong - places you like
● weak - places you don't like

Strong Places:
For more in-depth comments, put a number on your dot and write below

1 Scurry Park + neighborhood

3 Great Business location/opportunities for the neighborhood/city. the heart of College Hill

4 Scurry Blvd with beautiful crabapple trees - but stop the speeding, this should be a highway

5 Main St center great commerce by transit

8 is in need of better Trail Access

9 Great trail Scurry/center

10 One of BEST/MULTI-USE AREAS to be develop/ utilized more

Weak Places:
For more in-depth comments, put a number on your dot and write below

College Hill needs to get rid of the CAGES in front of restaurants - it's important PLEASE to work w/ the city to get rid of the notion you can't have a beer or glass of wine in an open cafe.

5 LACK of bike accessibility/pedestrian ACCESS - need welcoming corridor to hill. There is ONE 25mph sign at this intersection and cars SPEED up Scurry Blvd (buses too) at 50-60mph so speed bumps?

6 Dangerous intersections

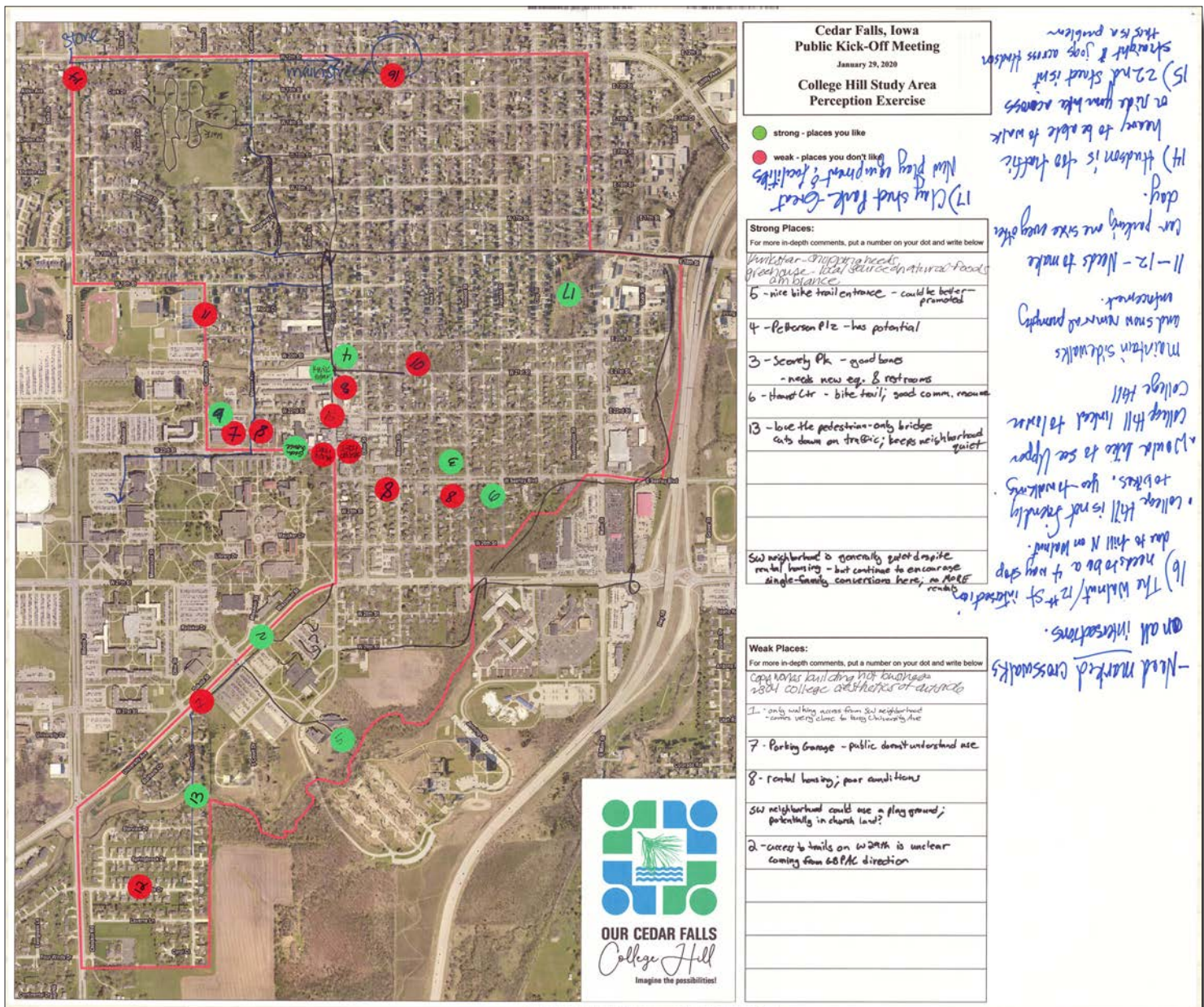
7 Scary pedestrian crossing

9 Unpleasant ugly

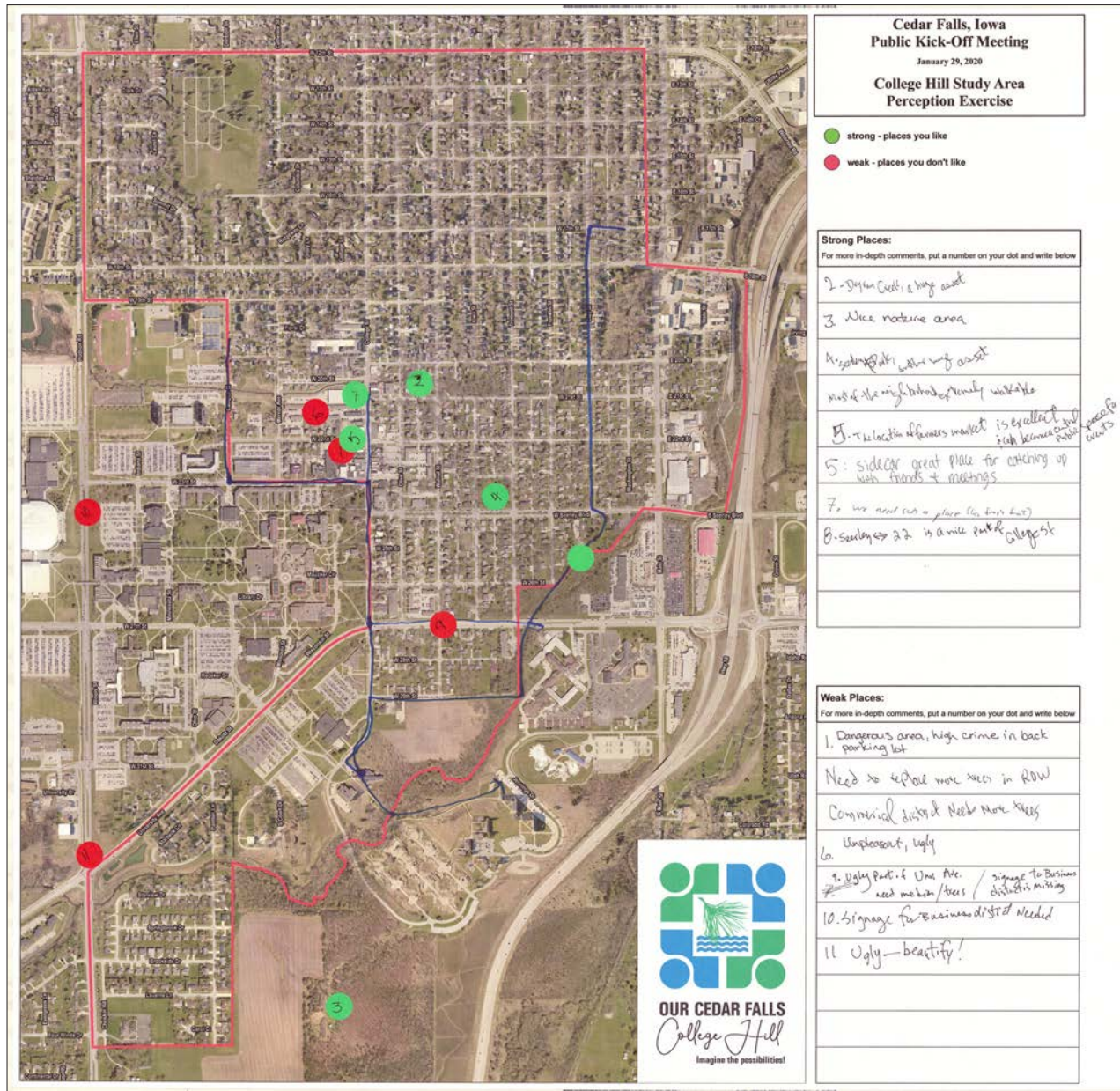
9 Trail crossing needs improvement

OUR CEDAR FALLS
College Hill
Imagine the possibilities!

Strengths & Weaknesses Exercise: Table Map 4



Strengths & Weaknesses Exercise: Table Map 5



Public Kick-Off Event – Survey Results

University of Northern Iowa Center for Energy and Environmental Education

Attendee Survey

Wednesday, January 29, 2020

SUMMARY of 18 responses

1. Do you:

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Other</u>
a. Live in the study area?	14	1	
b. Go to school in the study area?	2	11	1 (my kid does)
c. Work in the study area?	11	6	1 (university)
d. Own property in the study area?	13	1	

2. How often do you go to the College Hill Center – the College & 23rd Streets mixed-use area? (circle one)

Note: Some respondents provided more than one answer, noting that their schedule was “seasonal”

a. Every day	9
b. A few times a week	7
c. Several times a month	3
d. Once or twice a month	-
e. A few times a year	-
f. Never	-

3. How often do you go to the businesses along Main and State inside the study area? (circle one)

a. Every day	2
b. A few times a week	7
c. Several times a month	4
d. Once or twice a month	1
e. A few times a year	2
f. Never	2

4. What typically brings you to the College Hill Center? (circle all that apply)

a. Live there	7
b. Work there	12
c. Shopping	8
d. Restaurants	8
e. Parking for school	2
f. Civic activities (worship, library, etc.)	3
g. Special campus event (athletic event, theater, etc.)	6
h. Other: live music (2); visit UNI library and campus events (2); walking the dog; live comedy; support businesses; meetings; Mohair Pear; Kum N’Go	

5. When you come to College Hill, how do you usually get here? (circle one)

a. Drive (personal vehicle)	12
b. Take the bus	1
c. Walk	11
d. Ride a bicycle/scooter	2.5 (not often, not bike-friendly)
e. Ride-share (Taxi, Uber, Lyft, etc.)	-

Please provide any additional comments on the back. (see below)

- Please add better bicycle/pedestrian connections in the area to foster green practices. Make College Hill a biking destination to utilize the trail/bicycle system.
- Direct bike access to bike paths; “fill in” commercial area on College St. between 23rd & 22nd (replacing existing residential); vision for rentals in College Hill residential w/UNI enrollment down. Single family? Refurbish?
- We need space where art can be public
- Great food & restaurants on the Hill – but they need attractions to bring people to the bars & restaurants. Things like movie theaters or black box theaters or an art museum. Things like that. Smaller towns have black box theaters.
- The PPT you presented tonight needed to be oriented to College Hill/CF more. Even Streetview (Google) photos would have been better than looking at images from D.C. etc. It seemed lazy & unprofessional. You could also just rethink it by showing us ideas of what works in Europe/ped malls, cafes, etc. It would have been great to have learned something new tonight.
- Public transportation to the Hill is poor; bike facilities (roads, racks) are poor, too

UNI Student Survey

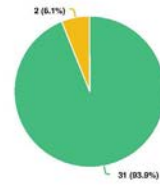
SURVEY RESPONSE REPORT
02 October 2020 - 08 October 2020

PROJECT NAME:
UNI Student Survey



UNI Student Survey : Survey Report for 02 October 2020 to 08 October 2020

Q1 Are you currently a UNI student? (pick one)



Question options

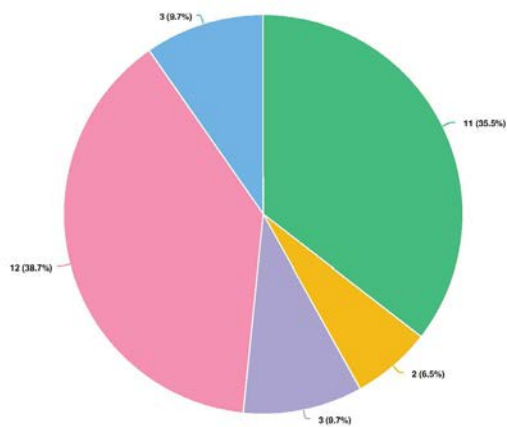
Yes No

Mandatory Question (33 response(s))
Question type: Radio Button Question

Page 2 of 27

UNI Student Survey : Survey Report for 02 October 2020 to 08 October 2020

Q2 What is your approximate standing? (pick one)



Question options

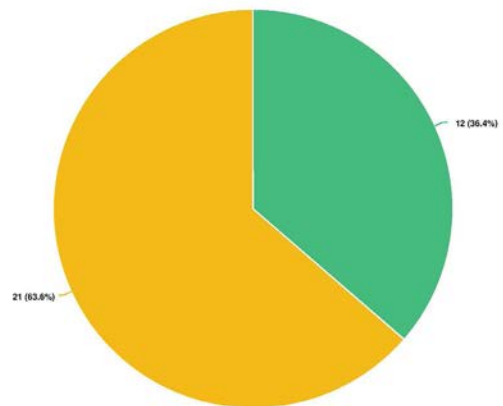
Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Graduate student

Mandatory Question (31 response(s))
Question type: Radio Button Question

Page 3 of 27

UNI Student Survey : Survey Report for 02 October 2020 to 08 October 2020

Q3 Where do you currently live?



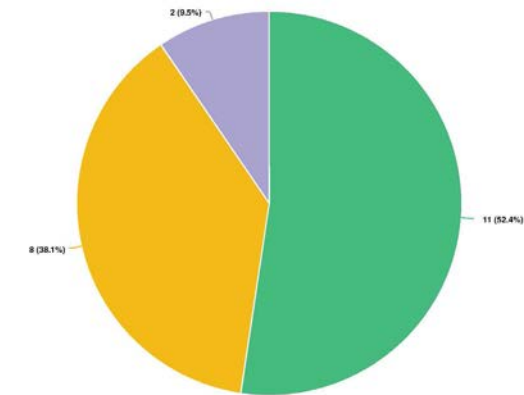
Question options

On-campus Off-campus

Mandatory Question (33 response(s))
Question type: Radio Button Question

Page 4 of 27

Q4 Where do you live off-campus?



Question options

- On College Hill (within 5 or 6 blocks of College & 23rd Streets)
- Off-campus, elsewhere in Cedar Falls
- Outside of Cedar Falls

Mandatory Question (21 response(s))
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q5 Approximately how much do you individually pay per month for rent?

Anonymous	435
10/03/2020 10:00 AM	
Anonymous	\$250
10/03/2020 10:06 AM	
Anonymous	433.00
10/03/2020 10:26 AM	
Anonymous	\$1,350
10/03/2020 07:04 PM	
Anonymous	\$395
10/04/2020 09:33 PM	
Anonymous	400
10/04/2020 09:29 PM	
Anonymous	370
10/04/2020 09:41 PM	
Anonymous	325
10/04/2020 10:08 PM	
Anonymous	\$355.00
10/04/2020 10:47 PM	
Anonymous	375
10/05/2020 06:47 AM	
Anonymous	415
10/06/2020 07:44 AM	
Anonymous	360
10/05/2020 09:04 AM	
Anonymous	\$580
10/05/2020 11:32 AM	
Anonymous	400
10/06/2020 11:49 AM	

Anonymous	\$360.00
10/06/2020 12:34 PM	
Anonymous	680
10/06/2020 01:35 PM	
Anonymous	Own the house
10/07/2020 10:46 AM	
Anonymous	\$425
10/07/2020 06:32 PM	
Anonymous	0
10/07/2020 07:04 PM	
Anonymous	365
10/07/2020 10:16 PM	
Anonymous	\$0.00
10/08/2020 09:26 AM	

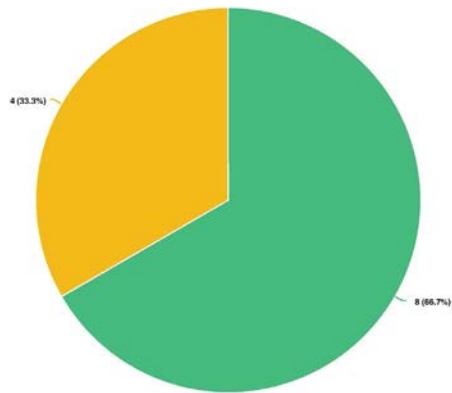
Mandatory Question (21 response(s))
Question type: Single Line Question

Q6 Approximately how much is the total house or apartment rent per month??

Anonymous	1740
10/03/2020 10:00 AM	
Anonymous	\$500
10/03/2020 10:06 AM	
Anonymous	1300
10/03/2020 10:26 AM	
Anonymous	\$1,350
10/03/2020 07:04 PM	
Anonymous	\$1580
10/04/2020 09:33 PM	
Anonymous	1600
10/04/2020 09:29 PM	

Anonymous	1100
10/04/2020 09:11 PM	
Anonymous	1300
10/04/2020 10:09 PM	
Anonymous	\$1500.00
10/04/2020 10:47 PM	
Anonymous	775
10/05/2020 06:47 AM	
Anonymous	1660
10/05/2020 07:44 AM	
Anonymous	1080
10/05/2020 08:04 AM	
Anonymous	\$1250
10/05/2020 11:32 AM	
Anonymous	1200
10/06/2020 11:49 AM	
Anonymous	\$1,800.00
10/06/2020 12:34 PM	
Anonymous	680
10/06/2020 01:35 PM	
Anonymous	Own the house
10/07/2020 10:46 AM	
Anonymous	\$850
10/07/2020 06:32 PM	
Anonymous	0
10/07/2020 07:04 PM	
Anonymous	1450
10/07/2020 10:16 PM	
Anonymous	\$785
10/08/2020 09:26 AM	

Q7 Do you have a car on campus?

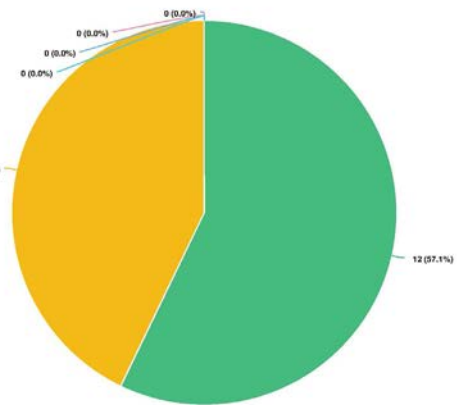


Question options

Yes No

Mandatory Question (12 response(s))
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q8 How do you typically get to campus? (pick one)

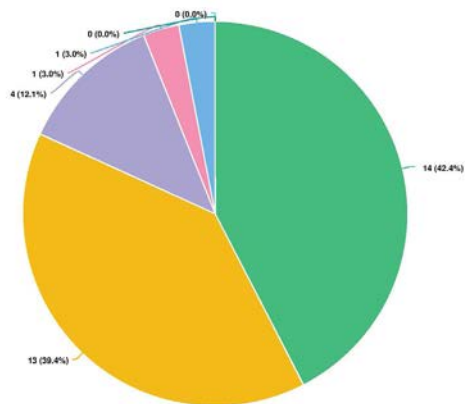


Question options

Drive (personal vehicle) Walk Bus/Parther shuttle Ride-share (carpool, taxi, Uber, Lyft, etc.) Bicycle Other (please specify)

Mandatory Question (21 response(s))
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q9 Excluding cost, what is the most important factor in choosing a place to live? (pick one)

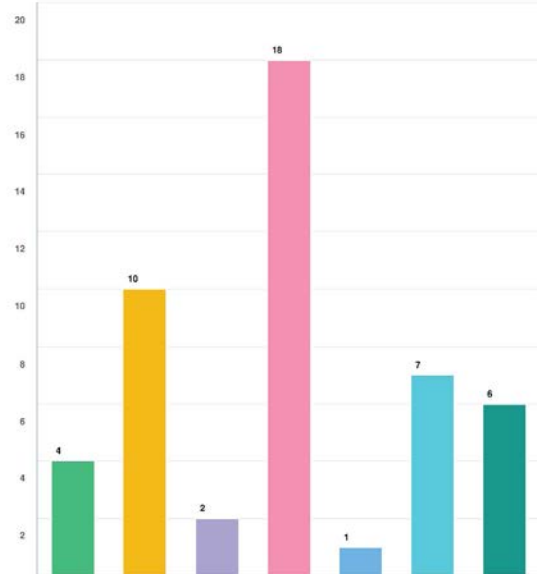


Question options

Location Room configuration: number of bedrooms and bathrooms (ability to live alone or share with friends) Amenities (such as laundry, swimming pool, pet/den, exercise room, party rooms, etc.) Security Availability of parking Age of house/apartment Other (please specify)

Mandatory Question (33 response(s))
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q10 Which of your regular activities can/do you complete in the College Hill Business District (not on campus)? (check all that apply)

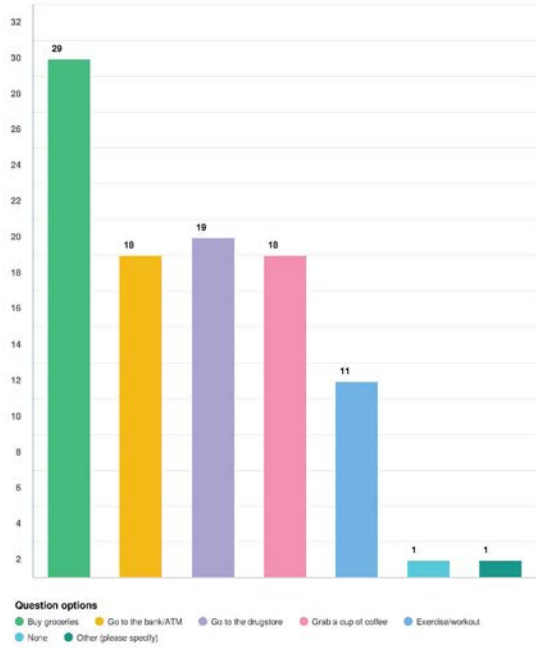


Question options

Buy groceries Go to the bank/ATM Go to the drugstore Grab a cup of coffee Exercise/workout None Other (please specify)

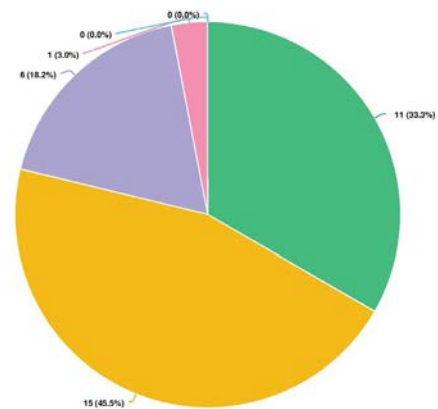
Mandatory Question (33 response(s))
Question type: Checkbox Question

Q11 Which of your regular activities do you complete in other areas of Cedar Falls (not on campus or College Hill)? (check all that apply)



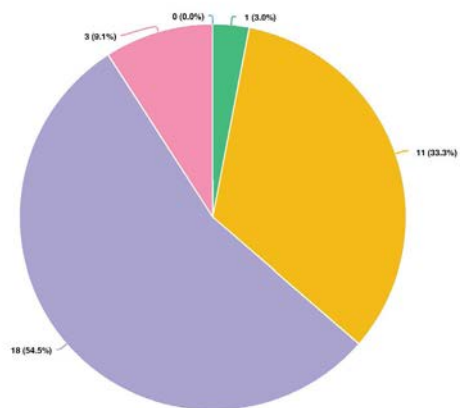
Page 14 of 27

Q12 How often do you go out to eat (for any meal) in the College Hill Business District? (pick one)



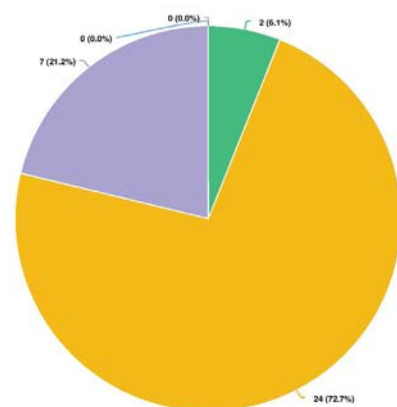
Page 15 of 27

Q13 How often do you go out to eat in Downtown Cedar Falls? (pick one)



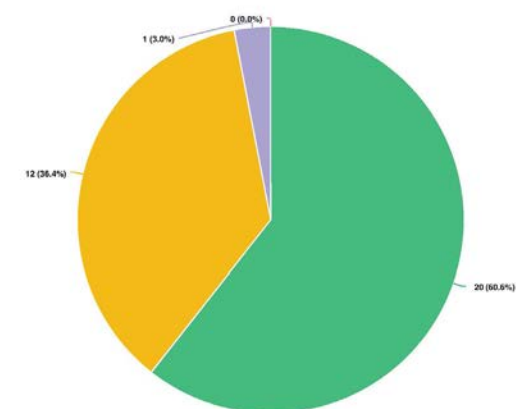
Page 16 of 27

Q14 How often do you go out to eat in Cedar Falls other than Downtown or College Hill? (pick one)



Page 17 of 27

Q15 How often do you go out to bars/clubs on College Hill? (pick one)

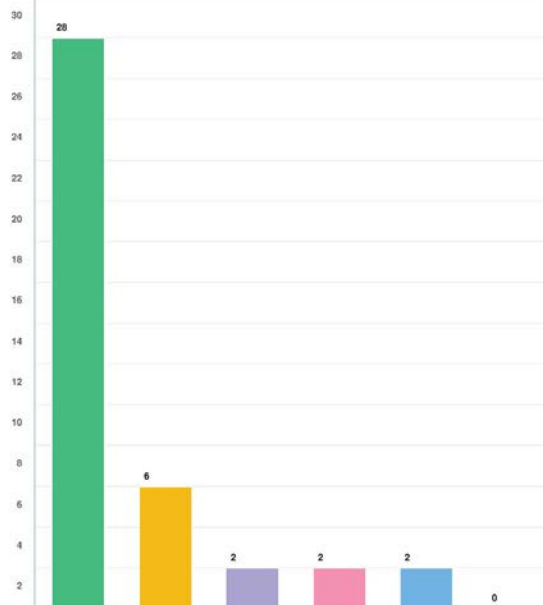


Question options

Never Most weekends Every weekend 3-4 times a week

Mandatory Question (33 response(s))
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q16 What modes of transportation do you personally have in Cedar Falls? (Check all that apply)

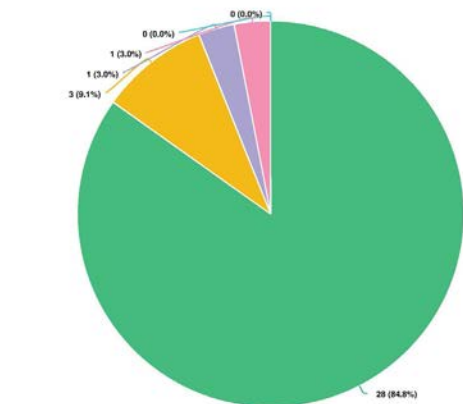


Question options

Car Bicycle Skateboard None Other (please specify) Scooter

Mandatory Question (33 response(s))
Question type: Checkbox Question

Q17 How do you primarily get around in Cedar Falls away from UNI campus? (pick one)



Question options

Drive (personal vehicle) Ride-share (carpool, taxi, Uber, Lyft, etc.) Walk Other (please specify) Bus/Panther shuttle Bicycle

Mandatory Question (33 response(s))
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q18 Is there a type of good, service, or activity that you wish were available on College Hill today?(Name as many as you would like)

Anonymous 10/03/2020 10:00 AM	PANCHEROS
Anonymous 10/03/2020 10:06 AM	Breakfast Place
Anonymous 10/03/2020 10:11 AM	More fast food options/non-local shops. Students without cars would do a lot more business on college hill if it wasn't mostly bars.
Anonymous 10/03/2020 02:56 PM	More food options
Anonymous 10/04/2020 01:31 PM	A cute coffee shop that has plenty of space inside for students to study, I feel like Cedar Falls lacks nice coffee shops like Smokey Row or Cafe Diem. A coffee shop like this would be a great addition.
Anonymous 10/04/2020 04:21 PM	Insomnia cookies and dominos
Anonymous 10/04/2020 09:33 PM	A breakfast cafe, nail salon, chick fil a, anything but another vape or tattoo place
Anonymous 10/04/2020 09:39 PM	Sit down restaurant, ice cream,
Anonymous 10/04/2020 09:41 PM	Breakfast food
Anonymous 10/04/2020 10:47 PM	A smoothie place
Anonymous 10/05/2020 06:47 AM	Grocery store
Anonymous 10/05/2020 07:02 AM	skateboard shop
Anonymous 10/05/2020 07:44 AM	McDonald's
Anonymous	More restaurants rolled ice cream

10/05/2020 08:04 AM

Anonymous
10/05/2020 08:38 AM

No

Anonymous
10/05/2020 11:32 AM

Grocery store

Anonymous
10/05/2020 11:49 AM

Anything other than more vape shops

Anonymous
10/06/2020 12:34 PM

sustainability shop weather it be reusable products or packaged food with less plastic

Anonymous
10/06/2020 01:55 PM

More food options, grocery store, gym

Anonymous
10/07/2020 10:48 AM

Grocery store, restaurant options with more food choices, a greener street with outside seating.

Anonymous
10/07/2020 06:32 PM

More local food options. Lots of fast food but not always my preferred choice.

Anonymous
10/07/2020 06:39 PM

Grocery, fast food

Anonymous
10/07/2020 07:04 PM

None

Anonymous
10/07/2020 10:16 PM

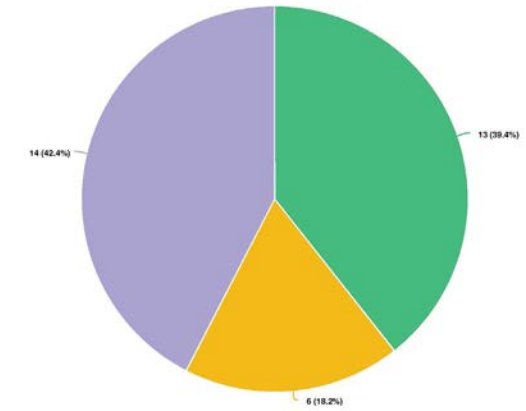
More food options that are cheap for college students.

Anonymous
10/08/2020 05:26 AM

Mini grocery store, karaoke bar, dance club

Optional question (25 response(s), 8 skipped)
Question type: Single Line Question

Q19 Should there be different off-campus housing options for students on College Hill?



Question options

Yes No Not sure

Mandatory Question (23 response(s))
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q20 What type of housing would you recommend?

Anonymous
10/03/2020 10:06 AM

More Tiny Houses

Anonymous
10/03/2020 10:36 AM

Just nicer places and better noise control

Anonymous
10/03/2020 02:55 PM

Apartment or duplex

Anonymous
10/04/2020 02:14 PM

more apartments

Anonymous
10/04/2020 05:41 PM

Nicer apartments

Anonymous
10/04/2020 10:47 PM

Apartments

Anonymous
10/05/2020 06:47 AM

Apartments that don't cost quite as much as other college hill places to live

Anonymous
10/05/2020 11:32 AM

More affordable options that are in good conditions and close to campus. Pet friendly.

Anonymous
10/06/2020 01:55 PM

Apartments

Anonymous
10/07/2020 10:48 AM

Condo style apartments

Anonymous
10/07/2020 06:32 PM

Off campus.

Anonymous
10/07/2020 07:04 PM

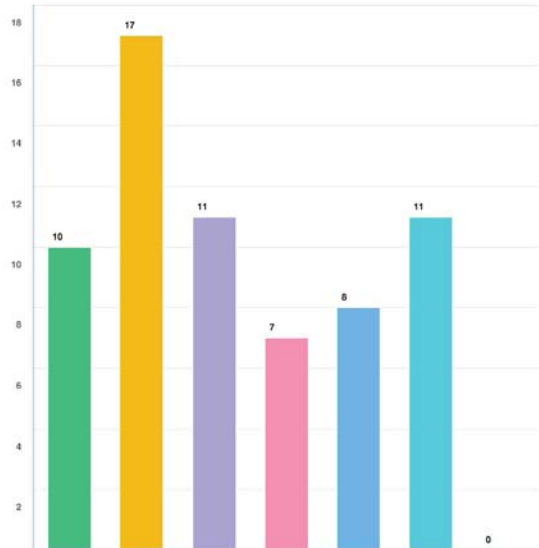
Full houses

Anonymous
10/07/2020 10:16 PM

Apartment

Mandatory Question (13 response(s))
Question type: Single Line Question

Q21 What would it take to make College Hill more bike-friendly? (check all that apply)



Question options

More bicycle parking More or improved bike lanes or shared lane markings
More or improved separated bike facilities, such as cycle tracks and trails/greenways
Better signage identifying location/access to bike trails and other destinations A bike-share program No idea
Other (please specify)

Mandatory Question (23 response(s))
Question type: Check Box Question

Q22 How could walkability be improved around College Hill, including from nearby neighborhoods to the UNI campus?

Anonymous 10/03/2020 10:00 AM	More bus systems
Anonymous 10/03/2020 10:06 AM	Unsure
Anonymous 10/03/2020 02:55 PM	I personally do not know
Anonymous 10/04/2020 01:31 PM	Not sure
Anonymous 10/04/2020 04:21 PM	NA
Anonymous 10/04/2020 09:33 PM	Improved sidewalks and signage
Anonymous 10/04/2020 10:47 PM	Better crosswalks
Anonymous 10/05/2020 07:32 AM	Somehow making the sidewalks not so cramped
Anonymous 10/05/2020 08:04 AM	More parking
Anonymous 10/05/2020 09:38 AM	Add sidewalks on all the streets
Anonymous 10/05/2020 11:32 AM	Put sidewalks on every street. This is a horrible accessibility issue. I live on a street without a sidewalk, and it's very dangerous.
Anonymous 10/06/2020 12:34 PM	directional signs
Anonymous 10/07/2020 10:46 AM	Ensuring the sidewalks are in better shape (22nd st is very bad), closing the street from 22 to 23rd St
Anonymous	More accountability of drivers. Several times walking to class was nearly hit

10/07/2020 06:32 PM	by drivers crossing streets in college hill district due to drivers not paying attention or always being aware.
Anonymous 10/07/2020 07:04 PM	Improved able to cross signage
Anonymous 10/07/2020 10:16 PM	Bigger sidewalks
Anonymous 10/08/2020 05:26 AM	No idea

Optional question (17 response(s), 16 skipped)
Question type: Single Line Question

Virtual Charrette "Work-in-Progress" Presentation – Web Survey Results

Presentation via Web Video Streaming

Wednesday, October 14, 2020

Work-in-Progress Survey

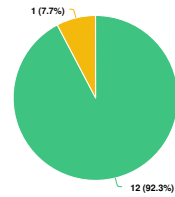
SURVEY RESPONSE REPORT

14 October 2020 - 01 November 2020

PROJECT NAME:
College Hill Work-in-Progress Presentation



Q1 Have you watched the Work-in-Progress presentation? (any version -- live planning commission meeting, video, or slides)



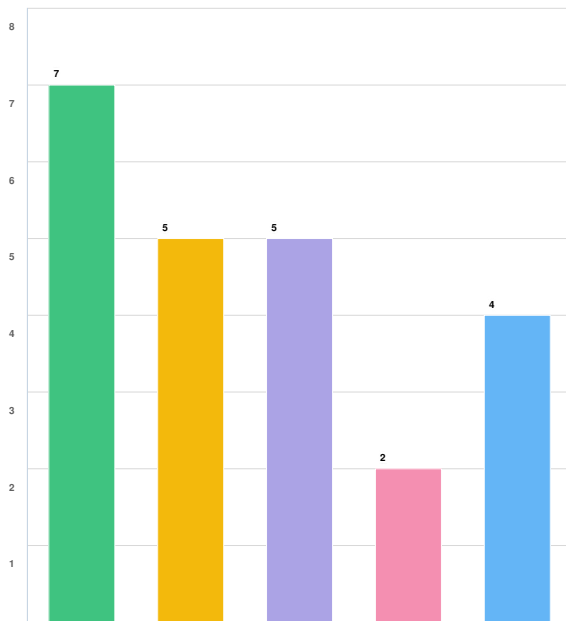
Question options

Yes No

Mandatory Question (13 response(s))
Question type: Radio Button Question

Work-in-Progress Survey : Survey Report for 14 October 2020 to 01 November 2020

Q2 What is your interest in the Imagine College Hill Vision Plan? (Please check all that apply)



Question options

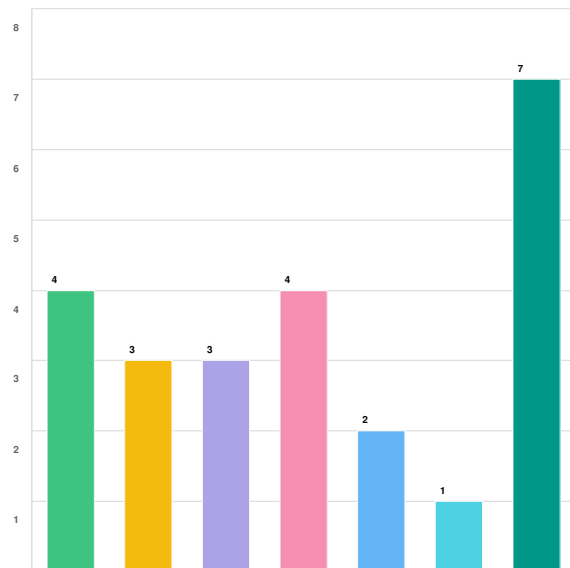
I live in the study area I work in the study area I own property in the study area I go to school in the study area Other (please specify)

Mandatory Question (13 response(s))
Question type: Checkbox Question

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Work-in-Progress Survey : Survey Report for 14 October 2020 to 01 November 2020

Q3 Which of the College Hill Vision Plan events did you attend or participate in? (check all that apply)



Question options

January 2020 Public Kick-Off event at CEEE January 2020 Stakeholder Interview Virtual "Hands-On" Community Design Workshop on Saturday morning, October 3 UNI Student Survey Virtual Open Studio Q&A on October 5 or October 7 Virtual Technical Meeting or Stakeholder Interview (Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday, October 5-7) The "Work-in-Progress" presentation is my first involvement

Mandatory Question (13 response(s))
Question type: Checkbox Question

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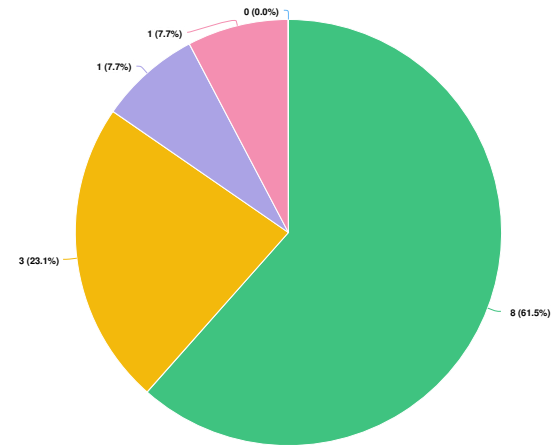
Q4 | What was the most important idea that you heard in the Work-in-Progress presentation?

Anonymous 10/16/2020 10:59 AM	Connecting lower college hill to upper college hill.
Anonymous 10/22/2020 02:50 PM	street trees
Anonymous 10/27/2020 11:18 AM	Better zoning practices in the immediate area of the Hill and school (upzoning)
Anonymous 10/27/2020 12:21 PM	Walkability increase and maintaining neighborhood character
Anonymous 10/27/2020 01:21 PM	Connecting lower and upper hill
Anonymous 10/27/2020 02:41 PM	In an earlier October discussion, I heard that one objective is to provide more or better alternatives for student transportation between campus and downtown. I didn't hear an obvious solution but the problem was clearly identified.
Anonymous 10/27/2020 08:29 PM	Stabilize and enhance neighborhoods
Anonymous 10/28/2020 05:39 AM	Improving the dining and shopping options in the area.
Anonymous 10/28/2020 07:11 AM	How to get College Hill to easily connect not just to campus but other areas of CF including Downtown
Anonymous 10/28/2020 03:14 PM	Changing parking requirements so development can happen. Putting garages BEHIND housing in new prototypes.
Anonymous 10/30/2020 08:16 AM	..
Anonymous 10/30/2020 08:17 AM	i didnt hear it
dvsnothere 10/30/2020 08:31 AM	Expansion of bike lanes and securing affordable, quality food items in the area to reduce automobile transportation.

Mandatory Question (13 response(s))

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Q5 | Based on the Work-in-Progress presentation, in your opinion, is the Imagine College Hill Vision project generally (pick one)



Question options

- On the right track
- Somewhat on the right track
- On the wrong track
- I'm not sure
- Somewhat on the wrong track

Mandatory Question (13 response(s))
Question type: Radio Button Question

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Q6 | Please provide any additional comments here.

Anonymous 10/27/2020 12:21 PM	We need not rewrite the code to make it cheaper for developers to build without parking and guarantee them a profit. I heard that in the presentation, that we must make it profitable for developers. This can't be done be eliminating all parking.
Anonymous 10/27/2020 02:41 PM	To clarify the presentation – State the objective or the problem to be solved. It isn't obvious to all. Who will benefit and how? The graphics would be easier to interpret if you label/show North and a recognizable landmark.
Anonymous 10/27/2020 08:29 PM	Looks great!
Anonymous 10/28/2020 05:39 AM	The area needs more greenery the potential options looked great. More multi use commercial/residential
Anonymous 10/28/2020 03:14 PM	Nice idea with gas station at Seerley and Main, too (gas in back), and connecting upper and lower Hill, and other infill ideas. Also, love the idea of the closed piece of 23rd street to a plaza for festivals.
Anonymous 10/30/2020 08:16 AM	..
dvsnothere 10/30/2020 08:31 AM	I am also in favor of creating more green spaces especially along Dry Run Creek so we integrate with the landscape and so more to connect with CF's resiliency and stormwater run off plans.

Optional question (7 response(s), 6 skipped)
Question type: Single Line Question

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Residential Parking: Required Minimum Ratios

During the Imagine College Hill Project, the consultant team reviewed the recent College Hill parking study and studied the current residential parking requirements from the perspective of both the local real estate market, and basic site layout and building design. The recommendations to reduce the minimum parking requirements in the *Market Considerations* (p. 17) and *Appendix* (p. 62); *Transportation Review* (p.18); and *Illustrative Projects* (p.45) sections of this plan are based on this analysis and the aspiration to have more students living within walking distance of campus.

The current minimum parking requirements are one space per bedroom, which in the College Hill/UNI context assumes that every student has a car. (While historically many college students shared bedrooms, the current student rental practices indicate that is no longer the case. Even the UNI dormitories have moved toward single-room occupancy.) Any renter who does not have a car will be paying for a space that they do not need and do not use. A mandated-but-unused parking space on College Hill is expensive land that could be put to a better use. The exact number of students who have cars may fluctuate a few percentage points from year to year, but it is always well below 100%.

The Prototypical Projects that are illustrated were created for this Vision Plan and based on real-world figures: typical apartment sizes (1000 square feet per 2-bedroom apartment) and standard parking space configurations. The table below provides the unit and bedroom counts for the projects as illustrated, with ground floors being non-residential, and including the increase in units created by adding floors to the building (with parking spaces remaining constant). The estimated amount of on-site surface parking that could be provided on each site is based on a calculation of: the area remaining after the building footprint area and the vehicular circulation area are subtracted from the total lot area. *Note that only one of the Prototypical Projects below would meet the current parking requirements, underscoring the importance of revising the standards if redevelopment and intensification of student housing near campus is the goal.*

TABLE KEY:

Yellow Boxes: the number of parking spaces that can fit on the lot as illustrated

Red Boxes: the parking provided does not meet the ratio at the top of the column; therefore the project would not be permitted

Green Boxes: the parking provided does meet the ratio and therefore the project would be permitted

The "parking sink" on the bottom row provides the number of parking spaces in the prototypical off-site parking lot illustrated on p.56.

IMAGINE COLLEGE HILL -- PROTOTYPICAL PROJECT PARKING SUPPLY					
Configuration	Site	Units/BRs	Current Rate 1/BR	.75/BR	.5/BR
# of Spaces	<u>22nd & College</u>				
	19 spaces				
3 Stories		12 du/24 BR	N	19 Y	13 Y
4 Stories		19/38	N	28 N	19 Y
# of Spaces	<u>21st & College</u>				
	40 spaces				
3 Stories		22/44	N	33 Y	22 Y
4 Stories		33/66	N	50 N	33 Y
# of Spaces	<u>22nd & Merner</u>				
	54 spaces				
3 Stories		25/50	Y	37 Y	25 Y
4 Stories		37/75	N	56 N	37 Y
# of Spaces	<u>23rd & Merner</u>				
	27 spaces				
3 Stories		14/28	N	21 Y	14 Y
4 Stories		21/42	N	32 N	21 Y
	<u>Parking Sink</u>				
	166 spaces				