

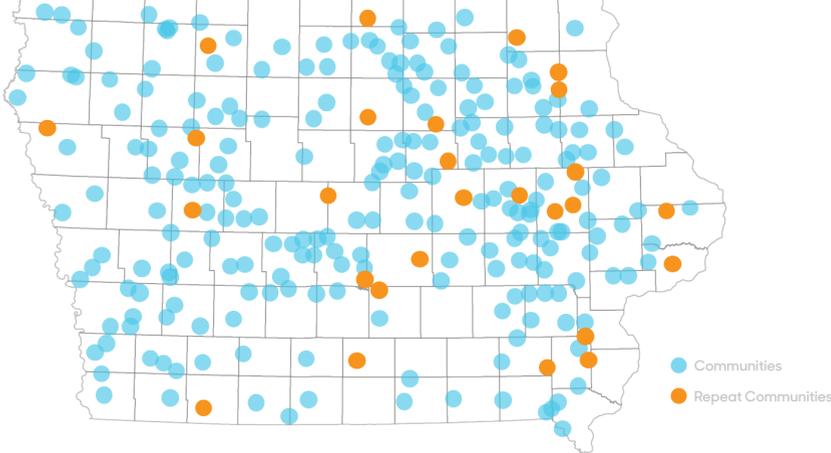


Iowa's Living Roadways community visioning



What is Community Visioning?

For 25 years, the Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning program has provided nearly 250 small Iowa communities with the planning and design resources needed to make meaningful transportation improvements to the local landscape. Community Visioning engages community leaders and volunteers in a multi-meeting process to develop solution-based conceptual landscape plans for the community's transportation system. The program involves collaboration between the Iowa Department of Transportation, Iowa State University, Trees Forever, landscape architects throughout the region, and the members of the communities that we work with.



Who is eligible to apply?

Iowa communities with populations of under 10,000 are eligible to apply to the Community Visioning program. Communities selected to participate in the program agree to form a steering committee that represents that community.

What support is provided?

- Expert facilitation of community meetings by Trees Forever
- Access to Iowa State University research capabilities
- Access to leading landscape design and planning firms
- Guidance on implementation

What opportunities does the program provide students?

Each year Community Visioning provides real-world design and community engagement experiences for multiple student interns. Students learn about the communities through an exploration of the landscape and its systems and gain valuable insight from community members through participation in focus groups about the town's transportation system. The program also provides opportunities to advance computer design skills and training on research-based planning protocols, including data analysis and interpretation.

98%

About 98% of visioning communities complete at least one project.

50%

Nearly 50% of visioning communities complete four or more projects.

75%

Nearly 75% of communities funded projects through local volunteers.

85%

Nearly 85% of visioning steering committees are still active in some way.

63%

Representatives from 63% of the communities reported that the program had a positive impact on their town.



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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Public engagement is one of Community Visioning's primary focuses. Throughout the history of the program our team has researched and experimented to develop innovative strategies for encouraging participation, leveling the field, and creating awareness around important issues facing our communities.

Introducing tactical urbanism

In 2020, our team began introducing many methods derived from tactical urbanism. These strategies often utilize inexpensive materials to create temporary installations that:

- Test design solutions,
- Create awareness, and
- Construct spaces for conversations about long-term goals related to the community's transportation system.

What we used

We built our tactical urbanism projects using simple materials, including

- Wooden kiosks
- Chalk paint
- Erosion control logs
- Milk crates
- Vegetation

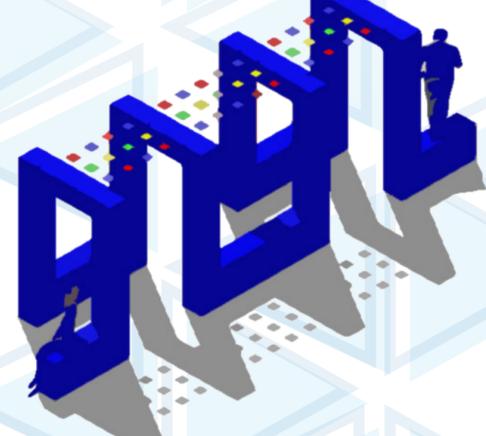
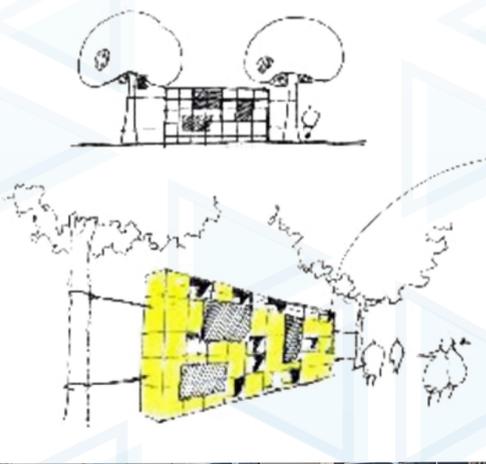
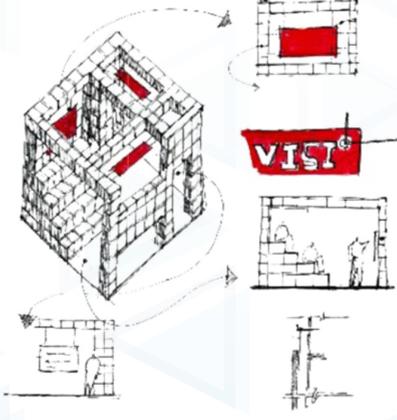
What we made

The team created temporary curb bulb-outs, crosswalks, streetscape furniture, signage, and parklets, just to name a few. These projects allowed communities to engage with and experience a portion of their design projects before implementation, creating short-term action toward long-term changes.

How we made them

The Threshold sculpture and other tactics we employed in this process were all part of a student-led design exploration, for which the group was responsible for the research, planning, design, examination, construction, and implementation of the work, as well as participation in the community engagement process.

Our process





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THRESHOLD

A Portal to Engaged Participation

The power of the milk crate

The team's biggest endeavor involved creating installations with the milk crates. The crates provide a playful module that can be manipulated to suit multiple scenarios in a community. They are easy to set up and take down, while durable enough to remain in the landscape for a longer period, increasing interest.

How we used milk crates

Over the course of the summer the milk crates were utilized to test temporary streetscape site furnishings (benches, planters, trash receptacles) and create artful social spaces like the *Threshold* sculpture. Plans for the crates include the creation of presentation/gallery display spaces to showcase the designs created for this year's communities.

Where we used them

Threshold was first designed for Calamus, Iowa, to be a landmark for the thousands of riders along the RAGBRAI route, which passed through Calamus' downtown. *Threshold's* seating, planters and overhead canopy provided a welcoming space that encouraged visitors and residents to gather, socialize and capture a picture of their experience passing through town. The sculpture was also a gateway to a presentation of the design work being developed by the landscape architecture team as part of Community Visioning.

In Princeton, Iowa, we installed *Threshold* in the riverfront park, creating a window out to the Mississippi River. The project was utilized as a beacon to attract participants to the Community Visioning design charrette during the town's Summer Fest. In this setting the sculpture became a park pavilion that celebrated the river, invited social interaction, and complemented the park's deep blue color scheme seen in their bench swings and signage.

