

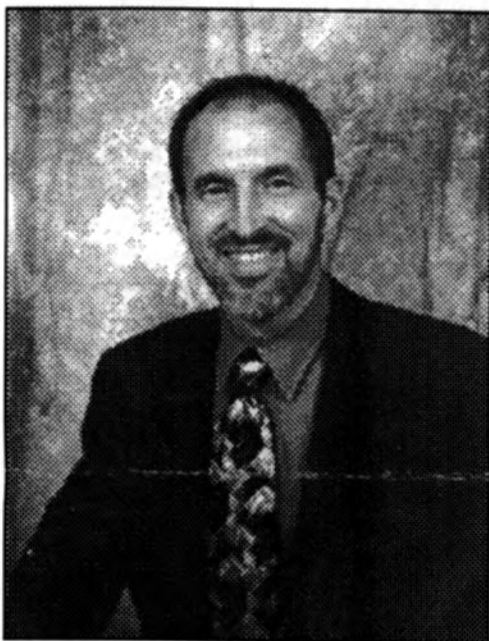


The Land Use Bulletin

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BOARD MEMBER PROFILE: *NORM McCOY*



I live in Cedar Rapids and work for Rockwell Collins in the Flight Management Systems group. We incorporate various Collins instruments with the current equipment in an airplane's cockpit. This allows us to replace the rows and rows of gauges and switches in the cockpit with a few computer screens and keyboards. Everything that used to be displayed on the gauges is now displayed on the screen.

This simplifies the work of the pilots but is an extremely difficult project for the software and hardware engineers. Just keeping track of our customers' requirements is a complex process. Meeting those requirements more quickly and cheaply than our competitors is an even greater challenge. A relatively new branch of engineering — Systems Engineering — has grown up to solve complex problems like these.

In a way, 1000 Friends of Iowa is involved in the same sort of engineering. Urban sprawl is just a symptom of a complex group of interrelated problems, including economic, political, social, agricultural, transportation, and public infrastructure issues. Changing one of them is

likely to affect the others. Knowing how to change them wisely is a project for a systems engineer!

Besides working for Rockwell, I have a small produce farm near Des Moines. This summer I am telecommuting so I can have more time in the fields after work. I have a foot in two worlds, and benefit from a healthy economy in both the industrial and farming sectors. I also benefit from cheap highway transportation, and yet I realize the importance of mass transit.

Part of our job as advocates for responsible land use is to find a good balance. Solid land use planning can boost the farm economy without hurting the urban economy. We can develop a more diverse public transportation system without sacrificing our first-class network of highways.

With your participation in 1000 Friends of Iowa, we can get the job done!

The mission of 1000 Friends of Iowa is to educate the citizens of our state about the long-term benefits of halting urban sprawl, conserving and protecting our agricultural and natural resources, and revitalizing our urban neighborhoods.

1000 Friends of Iowa

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KFOI HOLDS FIRST ANNUAL MEETING

by LaVon Griffieon

It was with much anticipation (and a little trepidation) that the Board of Directors recently hosted the first annual meeting of 1000 Friends of Iowa. As a fledgling organization, we are constantly in a state of assessment. What better way to showcase our accomplishments and gather comments than to invite our members to join us for an afternoon?

Fifty members from around the state met for lunch at Hoyt Sherman Place in Des Moines. After lunch, members were challenged to compose Farma-Save slogans. Modeled after the old Burma-Shave slogans for roadside advertising, the Farma-Save variety promote responsible land use. Some very creative ones were stockpiled for later possible roadside appearances!

Board members reviewed the mission of 1000 Friends of Iowa, the three year Long-Range Plan and our first year's accomplishments. Discussion followed with many excellent suggestions from our members. The remainder of the afternoon involved a presentation by Ed Fallon and LaVon Griffieon, which fostered some lively discussion.

Thanks again to all who attended. We hope to see the rest of you there next year!

LAND USE FORUM SET FOR APRIL 18th

On Sunday, April 18th from 3:00-4:30 p.m., Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ in Des Moines will co-sponsor a forum on land use issues with 1000 Friends of Iowa.

Panelists include LaVon Griffieon, Tom Dunbar, Rob Thompson, Ed Fallon, and Bill Knapp II. They will address the loss of farmland and natural areas, sprawl's impact on urban centers, and concerns facing developers. The general public is invited to attend.

The program includes brief presentations by each panelist followed by questions from the audience. *For more information about the forum, contact Marcia Martin at (515) 288-5364.*

DON'T MISS OUR FIRST PUBLIC FORUM!

- ◇ Des Moines has lost 16,000 people since 1970.
- ◇ Des Moines contains 5,500 vacant, buildable lots.
- ◇ Iowa loses about 26,000 acres of farmland each year.
- ◇ Let's stop all this losing already! We'll see you and your friends April 18th!

Clip and mail with your check, payable to 1000 Friends of Iowa. Please help us reach our goal of enrolling 1000 Founding Friends by the end of 1999. A donation of \$100 or more designates a Founding Friend, but any donation is welcome!

1000 Friends of Iowa

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Student/Senior	___ \$20	Patron	___ \$250
Individual	___ \$35	Silver	___ \$500
Family	___ \$45	Gold	___ \$1000
Organization	___ \$100	Steward	___ \$2500
Founding Friend	___ \$100	Other	___

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1000 Friends of Iowa

104 Southwest 4th Street, Des Moines, IA 50309

Iowa Public Policy Update

(as of March 29th)

by Ed Fallon

This year's General Assembly has seen the introduction of many bills relating to land use. The one that addresses urban sprawl in a comprehensive manner is SF 293. Some of its main provisions include:

- The creation of the "Land Development Management Act," whose purpose is the preservation of agricultural, natural, cultural, and historical areas, and to provide for the orderly development of cities;
- The creation of a state land use strategic development council, composed of the heads of state agencies, to oversee and coordinate state sponsored development projects;
- A state land use planning board responsible for approving local strategic development plans and all boundary adjustments, including both voluntary and involuntary annexations;
- An increase in the real estate transfer fee from \$5 to \$9 and to reimburse cities and counties for the costs of preparing strategic development plans;
- The continuation of ISU's collecting and updating of land use inventories;
- Most significantly, a requirement that every county and each city within that county adopt a growth plan (this is much stronger language than appeared in the original bill);
- The strong encouragement of state agencies providing development incentives to target funds to planned growth areas.

Other bills of interest include HF 476, which seeks to protect farmers from condemnation of their property for development purposes. Condemnation of farmland in a city is still allowed for individual development, but century farms are off limits.

An annexation bill, HF 112, is still alive. Under the bill, if a city involuntarily annexes territory and fails to provide services within three years, the state will initiate a petition for severance of that territory. Services means water, sewer, solid waste, and police and fire protection. This bill, or possibly SF 293, are still potential vehicles for addressing concerns of rural residents about involuntary annexation.

A land use bill of specific interest to those concerned about the Loess Hills is HF 218, which clarifies the structure of an entity responsible for promoting preservation of the hills. The bill also provides for a process of establishing conservation easements.

HF 482 would establish a state historic tax credit program which could provide some much-needed assistance to those trying to save older homes and buildings.

Finally, HF 462 seeks to refine the Tax Increment Finance (TIF) laws to assure greater restraint and balance in the use of this helpful but over-committed program.

BUILDING UP, NOT OUT, IN PORTLAND, OREGON

by Tom Dunbar

Portland, Oregon is the model of a metropolitan area controlling its own destiny. Over the last 25 years, Portland's Urban Growth Boundary has demonstrated how communities can grow without a continued outward, low density growth pattern. Portland is looking now at the next twenty-five years and

how to preserve neighborhood livability and protect the Urban Growth Boundary.

One project is "Bridge the Divide and Cap I-405", which would reclaim a part of Portland's inner city presently lost to Interstate 405. The idea is to build over the top of the highway.

(continued on page 4)

("Portland," continued from page 3)

Possible uses include parks, houses, a variety of buildings, and parking facilities. The vision driving the plan emphasizes the need for: 1) encouraging private investment, 2) creating an inviting atmosphere, and 3) building structures at a human scale.

Public involvement has been a critical component. Citizens were encouraged to dream, comment, draw, and actively participate in the project's design. Presently, the focus is to reclaim five key locations along I-405. As the details are fleshed out, this creative recapturing of land could lead to 1,000 housing units (2,000 residents); 650,000 square feet of commercial space (generating 1,800 permanent new jobs); 2,200 parking spaces; 6 acres of parks; 2 acres of indoor recreational uses; and 50,000 square feet for civic/exhibition uses.

Is this type of critical creative thinking applicable in Iowa? Absolutely! Our job is to find our own vision for recapturing land lost to highways and other poor land uses. Furthermore, we need to identify opportunities for creating livable neighborhoods on under-developed urban land so that continued consumption of Iowa's prime agriculture land will no longer be necessary.

DAVENPORT ALDERMAN: "PAVE OVER 3/4TH OF IOWA!"

by *Loxi Hopkins*

When Wal-Mart first came to Davenport 10 years ago, it started a flurry of activity that many citizens believe has spiraled out of control. Wal-Mart now proposes to move 1.5 miles north of its current location, which will leave 3 large empty stores on a development site built only ten years ago....

After one recent city council meeting, I tried to discuss my concerns about urban sprawl with one of my aldermen. He told me that my concerns were unjustified, and that farmers are in trouble not because of urban sprawl but because of over-production. He suggested to me that "the kindest thing we could do for the farmer is to pave over 3/4's of Iowa so they couldn't overproduce!"

I can only hope he was speaking out of anger and wasn't serious. At any rate, citizens are becoming more concerned about the fiscal and social costs of current development trends in the Quad Cities, and are challenging elected officials to think and act responsibly. For more information about how you can get involved, contact Quad Cities Interfaith at (319)322-4910 or <loxihopkins@yahoo.com>.

■ The average farm in America is 487 acres compared to Iowa at 343 acres.

■ The average farm size nationally shrank 1% between 1992 - 1997.

■ Between 1992 and 1997, America lost 13,441 farms.

Farm Facts taken from the 1997 USDA census:

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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