



# THE LAND USE BULLETIN

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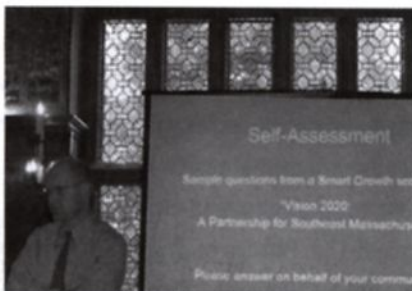
## Des Moines Area Leaders Work to Improve Communities

On Tuesday, April 18, over 40 planners, elected officials, and planning and zoning commissioners from the Des Moines metro area gathered at the Salisbury House to discuss good land use planning and what it should look like in their communities.

The workshop was part of an EPA grant to 1000 Friends of Iowa to help communities analyze how their codes and ordinances promote or inhibit development patterns that create healthy, vibrant communities that enhance environmental quality.

Gary Taylor, Assistant Professor & Extension Specialist in Community & Regional Planning at Iowa State University, and graduate student Lucy Wilkinson will provide educational presentations and materials to participants, as well as conduct a "smart growth audit" of the codes and ordinances of 15 metro area communities.

(Right) Gary Taylor, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist in the Department of Community & Regional Planning, speaks at the kickoff workshop on April 18 in Des Moines.



(Below right) Jay Howe, City Development Board member, and Mike Smith, Legal Counsel to the City Development Board, at the kickoff of 1000 Friends' Smart Growth Audit project.



### The Impact of Poor Land Use Planning

Gary shared some of the existing research on the impacts of poor development patterns. According to the study "Measuring Sprawl and Its Impact" by Reid Ewing, Rolf Pendall, and Don Chen, "sprawling" development is characterized by:

- Rigidly separated land uses (live, work, shop in different parts of town).
- Road networks characterized by huge blocks and poor access.
- Lack of / underdevelopment of well-defined centers of activity (downtowns, town centers).

*continued on page three*

## 1000 Friends of Iowa Annual Meeting A Great Success



Nearly 70 members and supporters of 1000 Friends of Iowa gathered in Iowa City on April 8 to learn more about responsible land use around the state.

Craig Malin (left), City Administrator for Davenport, provided the keynote speech for the day. He emphasized that in order to build successful communities that protect

farmland and natural areas, we have to invest in and value cities. "I love cities," he said. "They are the places across the millennia where people have been the most free and equal, and they've been the best economic engines. They provide marketplaces where people can build social connections and allow local businesses to prosper."

### Vernon Hills, Illinois

When he was City Administrator for Vernon Hills, IL, a suburb north of Chicago, a large developer approached the community with a plan to build conventional large-lot, cul-de-sac subdivisions. The community had already decided that they wanted to use a new transit line to recreate themselves in the image of the old commuter-rail communities in the area, focusing on a mix of housing with the station and train line as the center.

According to Malin, "the developer, which was the largest homebuilder in the region, said, 'But we're Town and Country Homes. This is how we do it.' The citizens responded, 'Well, thank you very much for your interest, but we ARE the community, and this is how we want to do it.'"

### Davenport, Iowa

In his discussion of Davenport, Malin emphasized Davenport has a multi-faceted plan for redevelopment, which includes downtown revitalization and infill as well as appropriate development on the fringe.

The project of greatest interest to 1000 Friends' members is likely the Prairie Heights development, which was created with direct input from over 300 citizens through design preference workshops and surveys. The neo-traditional development will include more than 1,100 new residences over 630 acres, 220 acres

*continued on page three*

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*The mission of 1000 Friends of Iowa  
is to promote  
responsible development that:*

*• conserves and protects our  
agricultural and natural resources*

*• revitalizes our  
neighborhoods, towns and cities*

*• improves the quality of life  
for future generations*

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## LETTER from the PRESIDENT

by Laura Belin

# Why Support 1000 Friends of Iowa?



If you are like me, you frequently receive letters asking you to join non-profit organizations. And if you are like me, you sometimes forget to renew your membership in an organization you support. Or, you may wonder whether it's worth renewing your membership, especially if a battle you once cared deeply about is over.

I'd like to remind you of some benefits of being a member. Through phone calls from our staff, our quarterly Land-Use Bulletin and occasional Public Policy Updates by e-mail, we give our members a heads-up about pending legislation related to land use, as well as proposals that may concern them but are rarely covered in depth (if at all) in the mainstream media.

For example, during the past year 1000 Friends of Iowa has brought the northeast Polk County beltway proposal to the attention of hundreds of people who otherwise may not have heard of it in time to express concerns with the Metropolitan Planning Organization or during the environmental review process.

In Cedar Rapids, we were able to help citizens fighting a proposal to widen First Avenue. Last summer, we made Dan Burden of Walkable Communities available for a presentation attended by about 120 people. Dan had the expertise to give the group alternatives and facts to back up their intuition that the project was a bad idea.

Finally, I want to thank all of you who have continued to support 1000 Friends of Iowa. Our members sometimes alert us about land-use issues that arose in their communities. Our members' energy and commitment help us spread the word about specific issues and our broader mission. Equally important, our members' financial contributions give us the resources to advise citizens without being excessively dependent on large grants.

In the past year, 1000 Friends of Iowa helped more than a dozen citizens with land-use issues that popped up in Madison County, Scott County, Clarke County, and elsewhere around the state. In some places we have even jump-started citizen groups who later organized their own local lobbying efforts. We are grateful to all of you who helped make this work possible.

Sincerely yours,

Laura Belin

### Des Moines Area continued from page one

Communities that were the most sprawling according to these criteria experienced:

- Greater risk of fatal automobile accidents.
- Higher rates of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per person.
- Increased levels of ozone pollution.
- Low rates of walking and alternative transportation use.

According to the Brookings Institution, the cost of providing infrastructure and delivering services can be reduced nationally through thoughtful design and planning. Over the next 25 years, communities that focus on infill development; compact, walkable neighborhoods; and providing choices in transportation and housing options could save:

- \$110 billion in road construction costs.
- \$12.6 billion in sewer and water costs.
- \$4 billion for annual operations and service delivery.

### Measuring Good Land Use Planning in Iowa

Gary and Lucy then shared with the group their compilation of the best "smart growth audit" criteria from around the country and asked for feedback. The goal was to determine whether these are the right criteria to use for development in Iowa. The participants spent an hour in small groups analyzing and providing feedback on the study model.

### Next Steps

This summer, Gary and Lucy will use the audit criteria to analyze the zoning codes and ordinances in 15 Des Moines metro area communities. They'll report back on the results in November, and the results will be used to determine what additional resources communities need to grow and develop in ways that benefit the whole community.

*Eventually, 1000 Friends plans to make the audit materials and educational workshops available statewide.*

*Please contact us if you are interested in using this resource in your community.*

### Annual Meeting continued from page one

of which are owned by the city. The mixed-use plan includes some retail area on the 53rd Street side, a 126-acre public park, and environmental/green-space corridors throughout.

One participant commented, "Malin's presentation was excellent in that it demonstrated an actual project using the best land use concepts available. One doesn't normally associate Davenport with a progressive activity so it was particularly heartening to see what kind of difference Malin and his colleagues made. I think highlighting real life experiences are essential if we are to make a larger impact on Iowa."

Go to [www.ci.davenport.ia.us/images/latest/prairie](http://www.ci.davenport.ia.us/images/latest/prairie) for more information about Prairie Heights.

For further details and photos from the Annual Meeting, including information about the Best Development Award winners, go to [www.kfoi.org](http://www.kfoi.org).

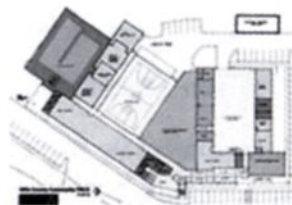
**"Most good ideas come from a front porch."**



1000 Friends' members listen attentively to Davenport City Administrator Craig Malin's keynote address at our 2006 Annual Meeting in Iowa City.

## BEST DEVELOPMENT AWARD WINNERS (clockwise from top)

- **Best Civic Development:**  
Glenwood – Mills County YMCA, Glenwood
- **Best New Commercial Development:**  
Grundy National Bank, Conrad
- **Best Renovated Commercial Development:**  
Beauty Bank, Central City
- **Best Renovated Residential Development:**  
Watertown Place Condos, Cedar Rapids
- **Best New Residential Development:**  
Riverfront Village, Waterloo
- **Best Mixed-Use Development:**  
SoHo Redevelopment Project, Des Moines



# MATCHING GRANT

## *Your contribution automatically increases!*

Thanks to a generous matching grant from the Iowa Foundation for Education, Environment & the Arts, contributions to 1000 Friends of Iowa are being matched on a 2:1 basis.

For example, for any contribution of \$100, the Foundation will contribute an additional \$50!

Says Laura Belin, President of the Foundation, "We feel that 1000 Friends' hard work on development issues will pay off in the long run . . . thanks for fighting the good fight!"

.....  
**Clip and mail with your tax deductible check, payable to: 1000 Friends of Iowa / 3850 Merle Hay Road / Suite 309 / Des Moines, IA 50310**

## MEMBERSHIP

*We are now over 1,000 members in 75 counties.*

*Our board has set a goal to reach 1000 Founding Friends in 2005.*

*Of course we gratefully accept annual members at \$20 and up as well.*

### FRIEND LEVELS

- ☐ Revitalizing Friend (\$5000 +)
- ☐ Sustaining Friend (\$1000-\$4999)
- ☐ Nurturing Friend (\$500-\$999)
- ☐ Supporting Friend (\$250-\$499)
- ☐ Renewing Friend (\$100-249)  
Subsequent gift of \$100 +
- ☐ Founding Friend (\$100-\$249)  
First gift of \$100 +

### MEMBER LEVELS

- ☐ Friend (\$50-\$99)
- ☐ Student/Senior (\$20-\$49)
- ☐ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I would like to be listed anonymously.
- ☐ Monthly Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(See form below)
- ☐ Enclosed is my tax deductible check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
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Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
Month Day (1<sup>st</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup>) Year

Amount per month (\$8.34 minimum)\* \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total annual gift (\$100.00 minimum)\* \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\* Because we are charged a fee for each automatic payment, this option is only available for **Founding / Renewing Friends** level and above.

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January 1 – April 18, 2006

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Iowa Foundation For  
Education, Environment  
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\* Contribution to the  
Legal Defense Fund

# 13 Iowans Bring back Info from the Partners for Smart Growth Conference in Denver, Colorado



By Dale Edwards, FOUNDING FRIEND, Ames

For me, the Denver Smart Growth conference was wondrous. With over 1200 people from all over the country and every state in the union (except one of the Dakotas), you got a sense of what a national movement Smart Growth has become.

We had mayors, city councilors, and real estate agents. There were health care workers, DNR personnel, EPA members, and neighborhood organizers. And of course, many people like us from smart growth organizations that have sprung up in most large cities around the country.

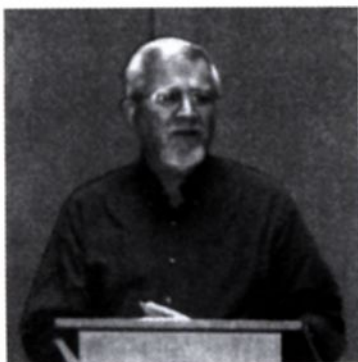
There were multiple meetings on Smart Schools, form based codes, new parking strategies, the retrofitting of ugly commercial strips, working cooperatively with developers, and using tools to evaluate smart growth principles in local areas. My spiral bound notebook was full notes and references by the end of the conference.

Joe Lynch arranged for a group of us to see "Highlands Garden Village," an award winning smart growth development where we were given a tour by Perry Rose, the owner. With a small pot belly, longish thinning hair and a mottled face, he looked a little Dickensian at first. He explained the importance of smart growth principles but didn't hide the difficulties of building mixed use, varied income areas with good urban design. He showed where things worked and where they didn't and explained how he'd do it again. He was open, intelligent, and non self-promotional. And in his advocacy for housing for people of modest incomes and for senior citizens along with the middle and upper middle class, he seemed democratic in the true sense of the word. The first developer I've ever met who was a successful businessman but also seemed a humanitarian.

I brought back a sense of excitement about the way we could live in this country if we wanted:

- It is possible to create dynamic urban spaces, bustling and energetic, with a nice mix of walking and biking and cars.
- Streets can be constructed to move traffic efficiently while actually reducing the number of lanes,
- Building codes can bring beauty and form back into our cities and actually create less hassles for the developers and allow them more profit,
- Good urban design is intimately related to our physical health in ways we've never realized, and . . .
- We can once again have a built environment that promotes civility, a dynamic social and cultural interchange and, in the long run, democracy itself.

*Founding Friends Kamyar Enshayan, Joe Lynch, Erv Klaas, Janet Klaas, Richard Luther, and Jim Popken also attended the conference. Other Iowa attendees included Eric Carstens, City of Ankeny; Matt Flynn, City of Ames; Jeff Geerts, DNR; Eric Jensen, IA Chapter APA President; Mike Murray, Ames; John Page, City of Cedar Falls; John Peterson, City of Ankeny; William Spencer, Regency Land Development Services; and Tony Wernke, Futurus Publications, Dubuque. Due to 1000 Friends of Iowa's recruitment efforts, Iowa's representation at the conference increased by over 600% (from 2 to 13) between 2005 and 2006. The next conference will be held February 8–10, 2007 in Los Angeles, California. Please plan to attend!*



Many thanks to Mr. Dana, Iowa's poet laureate, for reading at our annual meeting and granting kind permission to reprint this poem.

# "Selling the Earth and Everything On It"

from *Summer* by Robert Dana

Last night, at the town council meeting, what was it we were trying to save? One council member dozed; the other four were glassy eyed; bored with arguments they'd disposed of months before. The air in the brand new, stale, utilitarian chamber smelled of done deals. And anyhow, what do citizens know? "We appreciate your sincerity," one member says. "Yes, and you've brought a lot of emotion to the issue," says another. "But you don't understand the figures." The tongues of the grass, though they be without number, don't speak to them. They've had our figures. And the grass has no rights. Trees have no rights. The fat, baseball capped developer with his shirt-tail hanging out and suspect financing, who addresses council members by first name, makes *that* clear. "If there's an alfalfa field there now or a stand of trees—anyone who buys from me will know up front that that's

not going to be an alfalfa field or trees very long. I bought this land to build on." So the deer in the meadow along the nearby creek have no rights, the creekwater no rights, nor the air. No rights for the hare or the hawk, red-headed woodpecker, white-throated sparrow; no rights for the fox. And the farmland disappears and then the farmer, and then . . . If, as Paul Valery once wrote, "Politics is the art of keeping out of the process those who will be most affected by it," then I guess you could say we got politicked. And pretty good, too. By day, young brokers roar on the floor of the exchange. By night, to our north, suburbs metastasize. Circuit boards of a trivial and pointless future. As we file out — "Goodbye! Goodbye!" — across the frozen parking lot to our separate cars, thank god it's dark and cold and winter's first hard snow is blowing.

# Student Speaks Out for Better Transportation Options in Des Moines

As part of a field trip, 11-year-old Zeke Gunnink and his classmates were to learn the ins and outs of getting around Des Moines using public transportation. Even with the assistance of the internet, Zeke and his friends had difficulty getting to where they wanted to go, including the Science Center, the grocery store, and the doctor's office. Their trouble was due to lack of bus service in the suburban area and buses not running routes frequently enough. In addition to increases in those areas, Zeke would also like buses to stop more often along the routes.

"Kids become more independent as they get older and need more options in getting around," says Zeke. If there aren't trails to take him to where he needs to go, Zeke relies on his parents for transportation. Zeke says "If we had more bike trails they could be used for function and not just for recreation."

Admittedly, his involvement in transportation issues started when his mother "dragged" him to the first FFY 07-10 Transportation Improvements Program meeting to tell his story, but by the end of the meeting Zeke decided to become more involved because "transportation is an important thing and we need to change our current system."

(See details of the TIP process under "News from Friends Across Iowa").

## NEWS FROM FRIENDS ACROSS IOWA

### Iowa City: WAL-MART



In April, a judge ruled that the City of Iowa City and the Board of Adjustment had acted appropriately in rezoning to accommodate Wal-Mart. Our attorney is reviewing the decision to determine whether to appeal.

### Des Moines: TRANSPORTATION ISSUES EVALUATED



As part of our work on transportation issues in Des Moines, 1000 Friends evaluated the proposed draft of the FFY 2007-10 Transportation Improvements Program budget, which determines which transportation projects will be funded in the metro area, and alerted members to the public comment meeting at which they could present their views.

Founding Friends **Jane Clark, Jim Johnson, John Morrissey**, member Laurie Jones, and Mary Freimuth-Helt and Greta Hayward attended the meeting to advocate for more balanced transportation systems that give people options about how to get where they need to go.

Jane and Jim spoke strongly against a proposed interchange at NW 26th Street Interchange, which would pave the way for the extension of Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway. John spoke of the need to quickly implement better transit alternatives.

As of this writing, all projects in the FFY 2007-10 TIP have been postponed by the Federal Highway Administration because the Interchange Justification Report by the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Organization (DMAMPO) is incomplete. This means that the MPO has not done enough to justify the need for all of the transportation projects it has proposed.

In response to 1000 Friends of Iowa's request to incorporate more opportunities for public input throughout the TIP process, there has been discussion at the DMAMPO to revise their public participation policy to more effectively engage citizens.

*To become involved and find out more  
about transportation issues in the state,  
contact Jade Nagel at [jade@kfoi.org](mailto:jade@kfoi.org)  
or 288-5364.*



**1000 Friends of Iowa**  
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**“ Make no  
 small plans.  
 Make no  
 bad plans.”**

— Craig Malin <sup>5031 0\*1301</sup>  
 5224015554-23 CO

## 1000 Friends of Iowa welcomes New Transportation and Land Use Coordinator in Des Moines



Jade Nagel grew up on a wildlife rehabilitation center in Indianola, Iowa, which is where her interest in environmentalism began. After taking classes at Indian Hills Community College for Mass Media and Journalism, she returned to her hometown and has since begun taking classes at Des Moines Area Community College to transfer for a degree in Environmental Science and Policy at Drake University. Since starting with 1000 Friends of Iowa in February 2006, she has, amongst other things, been selected to sit on the Transit 2030 Task Force, which will

help shape the future of public transportation in the metro area, has joined a Bike and Pedestrian Roundtable, and has been working as a public participation advisor for Snyder and Associates during the NEPA process of the Northeast Polk County Beltway. In Jade's spare time, she enjoys spending time with her husband at their home in Clive, biking down the Neil Smith Trail, and tending her growing number of houseplants. For more information on transportation issues in the region or how to get involved, please contact Jade at (515)288-5364 or [jade@kfoi.org](mailto:jade@kfoi.org).

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

EPA Workshop .....	Pages 1 & 3
Annual Meeting .....	Pages 1 & 3
Letter from the President .....	Page 2
Membership Information .....	Page 4
Meet More Friends .....	Page 5
Smart Growth Conference .....	Page 5
Selling the Earth .....	Page 6
Student Speaks Out .....	Page 7
Around Iowa .....	Page 7