Legislature-Requested iRIDE Study Confirms Need for Transit

1000 Friends’ members have advocated for a more balanced transportation system in Iowa for years. Members are encouraged to learn more about the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) or Council of Governments (COG) in their part of the state that determines decisions concerning local transportation options. In 2008 we asked members to voice opposition to our current TIME21 Transportation Plan that gives little attention to infrastructure repair or transit options and focuses on new and widened roads.

The 2008 Iowa Legislature approved TIME 21, but directed the Iowa Department of Transportation, in conjunction with the Iowa Office of Energy Independence and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to conduct a study to:

1. Quantify the amount of revenue available to support public transit.
2. Determine whether current revenue is sufficient to meet future needs.
3. Assess how well the state’s public transit network supports the current and expanding mobility needs of the state’s senior population.
4. Document the transit improvements needed to meet the state’s energy independence goals.

LaVon Griffieon represented 1000 Friends on the iRIDE Advisory Committee which helped guide the study that was completed in December. A final report has been submitted to the 2010 legislature.


1000 Friends is pleased with the final report. Section 7 calls for coordination of land use decisions and transportation plans. The report suggests that residential housing that has access to public transit be favored above auto-dependent subdivisions when plans are being approved. The study also suggested that access to public transportation be a determining factor when locating new medical facilities and asked that the Livable Communities concept be promoted in the land use decision-making process.

2007 Iowa Energy Consumption by Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
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<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>39%</td>
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</tbody>
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Continued page 7
Letter From the President
by Mary Ellen

It’s January, that means the Iowa Legislature is in session

Yup, the legislature is back at work (and setting an 80-day session this year instead of 100 days) so this is a good time to remind all 1000 Friends of Iowa members of the importance of keeping in touch with your local legislators. Our board and staff monitor pending and proposed bills and we send out Action Alerts when we feel the need for your one-on-one advocacy on an issue. These Alerts ask you to get in touch with your state representative and senator to let them know our stand on an issue. We will give you “Talking Points” to help you make your case; we do not send you a “suggested” letter as we want you to personalize your advocacy. This can be done by phone, email, postal service or in person.

Over the years I have found some basic “Tips for Lobbying Your Legislator” to be true:

- Do not try and be an expert on all the issues of concern. Pick the issue you are most passionate about, study it and become articulate on what it is you want to see happen.
- Most legislators hold weekend public meetings during the session; these are excellent opportunities to speak with them. This can be done during the public meeting or you can ask for a few minutes afterward.
- Give your legislator background material they can study later, they cannot be experts on everything and appreciate knowledgeable advocates.
- Make your case succinctly, personalize the issue; let them know why it matters to you.
- Be respectful, they are public servants with lots of issues on their plate and many constituents. Let them know you appreciate their time. Thank them for listening.
- Legislators send out e-newsletters; get on their mailing lists to more fully appreciate their priorities and also to learn their meeting schedules.

Constituents influence in two ways: by their numbers and by the effectiveness of their personal advocacy. Both are important; make sure our message is heard.

A great resource is www.legis.state.ia.us Here you can find your legislators, their committee assignments, bill activity, committee schedules, etc. Take some time to look it over. Finally, remember this, our democratic republic was founded upon the principle of citizen involvement. Each person has a voice and it is our right and freedom to use it. It is up to each of us to speak our message. It is as simple as that.

In your service,

Mary Ellen Miller
Board President
Dear Friends,

The legislature is officially in session and the Rebuilding Iowa Office is working on a proposal for a land use bill. The bill has the potential to truly bring about much needed change. We will continue to monitor the proposed bill, and will keep you informed with updates through our Action Alerts. Other current opportunities include commenting on the clean water revolving fund, attending and providing input at Department of Transportation meetings, and commenting on water quality issues for recreational lakes in Iowa.

Recently, LaVon and I met with representatives of eleven organizations at the 1000 Friends of Iowa office to collaborate on planning a community food project. The objective is to create a sustainable food system to provide locally grown, fresh foods to low-income populations in the Des Moines metro area. The goal is to eventually extend the system to adjacent communities and throughout the state. The success of this project relies heavily on the involvement of individuals living in low-income areas during the planning stage. The passion for protecting our rich Iowa soil and growing more food locally for purchase and consumption by Iowans was truly inspiring.

In our 1000 Friends of Iowa office, Crystal Leto and I have been working to improve the effectiveness of our operations behind the scenes. One area desperately needing our attention and updating is our technology. We are in the process of obtaining a new system to track our members in order to manage and grow the membership more effectively and efficiently.

Finally, 1000 Friends of Iowa recently met the membership goals necessary to receive matching gifts from Cole-Belin and the Leighty Foundations! In 2010, we hope to reach the match level prior to December 31st to reduce the last minute pressure. Thank you to those individuals who stepped up with major donations to help us secure the additional funding!

Linda Gobberdiel
Executive Director

Thank You Madella!

By Linda Gobberdiel

Madella Smith, a Drake University student, selected 1000 Friends of Iowa for her fall 2009 internship. Madella grew up on a farm in northwest Iowa which led to her interest in land use and concern for land use related issues. Madella spent her time researching and updating facts in several pieces of literature. It was a pleasure to work with her, and 1000 Friends greatly benefited from Madella’s work.

“Iowa Farm Stats” was one piece of 1000 Friends literature Madella worked on. In addition to updated the facts & figures, she redesigned to make the content more reader-friendly. Following are stats related specifically to food production in Iowa:

1. According to two studies (conducted by Sales and Marketing Magazine the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship), Iowans spend between $6 and $8 billion a year on food.
2. 86% of Iowa’s food is brought into Iowa from out of state.
3. In 1929 Iowa produced vegetables on 52,915 acres. Today, 11,895 acres are used in vegetable production.
4. In 1929 Iowa had 63,185 acres of orchards. Today, only 2,724 acres are orchards.
5. Iowa was once a leader in food production and processing.
   ⇒ In 1924, Iowa processed locally grown sweet corn at 58 canning factories in 36 counties, leading the world in canned sweet corn production.
   ⇒ Madison County farmer Jesse Hiatt discovered the Delicious apple near Peru, IA in the 1870s. He called the variety Hawkeye.
   ⇒ In the 1920s, the Jonathon apple grown in Harrison County was thought to be one of the best varieties in the country.
   ⇒ Scott County became one of the two most prolific onion-producing areas in Iowa after the Civil War.
   ⇒ Sac and Ida counties became leading popcorn producers in the 1920s.
   ⇒ In the 1930s, SE Iowa was one of three primary sweet potato growing regions in the US.
   ⇒ For more info on Iowa’s past production of food visit: www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubs/staff/taste/taste.htm

Continued on page 7
2009 Best Development Award Winners!

1000 Friends of Iowa established the Best Development Awards in 2001 to recognize the development projects or policies of governments, companies, and individual Iowans that reflect the smart growth principles. The winners are models of responsible development practices – which enhance the community, protect the environment, and preserve our quality of life for future generations.

We are pleased to recognize the following winners of the 2009 Best Development Awards:

**New Commercial/Civic:** Marshalltown Public Library, Marshalltown

The Marshalltown Public Library was selected to receive the award for Best New Commercial/Civic Development due to the Library’s commitment to staying in the city center, creating urban open space, and developing the first Iowa LEED Certified Public Library.

**New Residential:** Court Avenue Lofts, Des Moines

The Court Avenue Lofts was selected to receive the award for Best New Residential Development due to the projects dedication to provide infill urban housing in the core of Des Moines and facilitating an active walkable environment.

**Renovated Commercial/Civic:** The Durrant Building, Dubuque

The Durrant Building development was selected to receive the award for Best Renovated Commercial Development due to The Durrant Groups dedication to staying in the Port of Dubuque and utilizing sustainable building practices.
2009 Best Development Award Winners

**Renovated Residential:** Westfield Avenue Lofts, Waterloo

The Westfield Lofts development was selected to receive the award for Best Renovated Residential Development because it is the first historical residential renovation project in downtown Waterloo and is a spark that will hope to encourage future revitalization for the downtown area.

**Mixed Use:** Plaza Towers, Iowa City

The Plaza Towers development was selected to receive the award for Best Mixed Use Development due to their success at transforming a Brownfield to a vibrant mixed-use facility that has enhanced the quality of life in Iowa City.

**Leadership:** Historic Millwork District Master Plan, Dubuque

The Historic Millwork District Master Plan was selected to receive the award for Best Leadership because it is a model for future communities in Iowa where historic preservation and sustainability can be combined on a grand scale to promote a higher quality of life.
On Monday, January 14, 2010, the Cedar Falls City Council passed a new ordinance impacting development on flood plains. This was a revised flood plain ordinance and Councilman Tom Hagarty successfully suspended the rule requiring three separate readings. Thus, the ordinance was passed in one meeting along with a 12-member task force that will review how the ordinance will work and recommend any changes going forward. The task force will review individual concerns, as well as how the ordinance affects the broader community.

City leaders anticipate that the new ordinance will have some unexpected consequences. One of the main components raises the level for base flood protection from the 500-year level to the 100-year level. Another requires homes to be elevated above the 500-year flood level (versus the 100-year level). There are also more restrictions on dirt or other fill used to elevate new homes and prohibits removal of buildings already elevated.

Rob Hogg, D-Cedar Rapids will be one of many legislators pushing for a statewide law similar to the Cedar Falls ordinance. Hogg believes that regulations have not been restrictive enough to prevent future flooding and associated damages. Susan Judkins from the Rebuild Iowa office expects interest from other Iowa cities to follow suit and pass similar measures.

There were mixed reactions to the Cedar Falls ordinance with residents whose home suffered damage in the 2008 flood supporting it, while others wanting to build new development on the flood plain were opposing it since no new development can occur.

The ordinance applies to the entire city of Cedar Falls and not just to flood-prone areas.
Iowa Food Production Statistics continued from page 3

6. The value of the 2007 Iowa corn crop was $6 billion.

7. Iowa had:
   - 215,000 farms in 1940
   - 183,000 farms in 1960
   - 119,000 farms in 1980
   - 95,000 farms in 2000
   - 88,600 farms in 2006

Iowa lost 126,400 farms, or 58.8%, in 66 years.

The census defines a farm as any operation selling $1000 or more of agriculture products per year.

8. In 2007 the average size of an Iowa farm was 331 acres, down from 355 acres in 2005.

9. In 2002 the number of Iowa farms with 2000+ acres grew by 58%. In 2002 the number of Iowa farms with 500-999 acres dropped by 13.6%.

10. 41.2% of Iowa farms are between 1-99 acres.
    38.1% of Iowa farms are between 100-499 acres.
    12.7% of Iowa farms are between 500-999 acres.

11. Iowa’s total acres in cropland in 2007 were 26,316,332 acres, compared to 27,153,291 acres in 2002, and down from 27,713,041 acres in 1997.

12. Iowa had 34.8 million acres of farmland in 1950.
    Iowa had 32.5 million acres of farmland in 2000.
    Iowa had 30.7 million acres of farmland in 2007.
    Iowa lost 4.1 million acres of Iowa farmland in 57 years.

Almost ⅔ of that amount, 1.8 million acres, was lost in the past decade between 2000-2007.

13. A 1998 Iowa State University study showed that 88% of all recent growth in Iowa occurred outside city limits while 50% of the land inside our city limits is undeveloped.

14. In 2007, 38.6% of Iowa farms reported sales of less than $9,999
    15.3% reported $10,000-$49,999 in sales
    10.6% reported $50,000-$99,999 in sales
    25.4% reported $100,000-499,999 in sales
    10.2% reported more than $500,000 in sales

Nationally, 40.5% had less than $2,500 in sales in 2007

15. Iowa reported 136,068 farm operators in 2007. Of these operators, 24.2% are women, with 8,452 women as the principle operator, up from 6,169 in 2002. Nationally, 31.6% of farm operators are women, up from 30% in 2002.

16. In 2007:
   - 83.4% of the farms in Iowa were operated by individuals & families.
   - 7.5% of the farms in Iowa were partnerships
   - 6.5% of the farms in Iowa were family corporations
   - 5% of farms were owned by non-family corporations

17. 86.5% of the farms in the U.S. are operated by individuals and families

18. The average age of the Iowa farmer was 56.1 years old in 2007, up from 54.3 in 2002. Nationally, the average age of a farmer is 57.1 years old.

19. 78% of Iowa’s farmland is owned by people over 55 years of age.
    - 29% are over 75 years old.
    - 27% are 65-74 years old.
    - 22% are 55-64 years old.

A conservative estimate indicates approximately 15.75 million acres of our 31.5 million acres that Iowa has in farms (2006 Census Data) will change hands in the next 20 years.

20. In 2002, 52.4% of farmers stated farming as their primary occupation, down from 68.3% in 2002.

A conservative estimate indicates approximately 15.75 million acres of our 31.5 million acres that Iowa has in farms (2006 Census Data) will change hands in the next 20 years.

This information was taken from data collected by the USDA 2007 Census of Agriculture, the USDA 2002 Census of Agriculture, Iowa Ag Statistics 2007, Mike Duffy, ISU Extension, and “A Geography of Taste”, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture

I RIDE Study continued from page 1

This study lays a factual base that we hope our legislators will take seriously when making decisions. Another legislatively-funded and much touted study, “The 1998 Pilot Land Use Inventory” spelled out the need for comprehensive planning, farmland protection and better land management practices. Twelve years later little headway has been made by our legislature. We hope that the funding paid for these legislative studies is not wasted on research that is ignored in the end.
2010 Legislative Session Is Under Way! Stay Informed With Public Policy Updates & Action Alerts!

As bills concerning land use issues come up during the legislative session 1000 Friends strives to keep you informed in a timely manner. We will keep you informed through our Public Policy Updates and when we need your help to contact policy makers, we will send an Action Alert with our position. If you have changed your e-mail address or want to be certain you are on our listserv, please contact our office at 515-288-5364 or email kfoi@1000friendsofiowa.org. Don’t forget to add kfoi@1000friendsofiowa.org to your contact list to make certain the emails from our office aren’t being filtered as spam! We look forward to your help in moving smart growth forward in Iowa.

Share Events, Successes, and Other News From Your Community!

Were any land use resolutions passed at your caucus? Please e-mail us the resolution, kfoi@1000friendsofiowa.org, and let us know what was passed!

Do you have an idea for a story? Do you have an event in your area pertaining to land use that you would to publicize for free? The Land Use Bulletin is available for any of our members to submit articles, announcements or photos for consideration.