

# GREATER DES MOINES, IOWA

## Capital Crossroads



*The Market Street team did excellent work facilitating our Capital Crossroads Regional Vision Plan for Central Iowa. From the inclusive process to the comprehensive final plan to the aggressive implementation phase, Central Iowa continues to embrace Capital Crossroads as our regional road map to the future.*

Jay Byers, CEO, Greater Des Moines Partnership

### Background

Central Iowa was at an important crossroads in 2012. Iowa's capital region had vibrant neighborhoods, a strong business community, dynamic arts and recreational attractions, and a desirable quality of life. But the region also had its challenges. Local leaders felt the time was right to take advantage of opportunities and address challenges through a clear vision and plan for Iowa's capital region. This process, branded **Capital Crossroads**, resulted in a comprehensive five-year vision strategy for the region. Different than previous regional strategies, Capital Crossroads broadened the planning area beyond the Des Moines metropolitan area to include a 50-mile-radius labor shed drawn from the state capitol. This geography enabled Capital Crossroads to capture the world-class research and dynamism of Iowa State University in Ames. Market Street has since completed a Capital Crossroads mid-course adjustment in 2014 and Capital Crossroads 2.0 in 2017, the follow-up to the hugely successful 2012 effort.

All three strategic processes have been led by a diverse steering committee of business and community leaders and included detailed quantitative research and comprehensive qualitative outreach. The online survey for the 2012 project garnered the most responses in Market Street's history. Interviews and focus groups were held for every process addressing issues such as education, diversity, health care, arts and culture, recreation, environment and quality of life. An innovative framework developed for the 1.0 plan has been carried through to the Capital Crossroads 2.0 strategy. The structure focuses on ten "strategic Capitals" that touch every aspect of how central Iowa competes for jobs and talent. These capitals are:

- **Capital Core** – Strong core = Strong region
- **Business Capital** – Attraction, retention and expansion, and small business and innovation
- **Capital Corridor** – Dynamic opportunities between Ames and Des Moines
- **Wellness Capital** – Potential to become one of the U.S.' healthiest regions
- **Human Capital** – Workforce skills, capacity and social well-being
- **Social Capital** – Leadership, diversity and civility
- **Cultural Capital** – Arts supporting economy, quality of life and community-building
- **Physical Capital** – Smart planning, competitive infrastructure
- **Governance Capital** – Regionalism, efficiencies, advocacy
- **Natural Capital** – Recreation, trails, protection, management



### *Implementation Highlights*

Throughout its ongoing implementation, nearly 700 community volunteers have agreed to serve on one of ten Capital committees and multiple sub-committees and task forces focused on implementing each of the strategic Capitals. These stakeholders, working with Capital Crossroads' implementation staff and partners, have achieved hundreds of victories since the 2012 launch. They are profiled on the Capital Crossroads website at: <http://www.capitalcrossroadsvision.com/accomplishments/>.

Some of the top implementation highlights include:

- Launched the Cultivation Corridor brand and marketing organization for central Iowa in 2014. The Cultivation Corridor was critical to the development of the nation's first statewide Biorenewable Chemical Tax Credit and has also played a direct role in securing more than \$700 million in new capital investment and the creation or retention of more than 850 jobs.
- Facilitated the creation of the Local Government Collaboration Project designed to help 15 cities and 3 counties in central Iowa use collaborative approaches to government efficiency and effectiveness. The LGC Project already has resulted in a model building code through the Central Iowa Code Consortium, common testing days for police recruits, and a shared training opportunity for area librarians.
- Secured the sale of a vacated downtown fire station to a local arts group to serve as an arts incubator. The Des Moines Social Club now spans two buildings with a gallery, theater, restaurant, café, non-profit office space, and numerous performance spaces and classrooms.
- Launched a regional mentorship program, Community Connect, to create connections and peer mentoring opportunities in a small-group setting. The program has graduated three classes and is launching its fourth process.
- Launched a comprehensive cradle-through-career training alignment initiative called EDGE (Education Drives our Great Economy). EDGE's goal is for 75 percent of Greater Des Moines working-age adults to have degrees, certificates and other credentials by 2025 that align with workforce needs.
- Launched in 2016 a major international talent strategy to complement an international trade and investment strategy, both branded as Global DSM.
- Successfully developed sector-specific accelerators for central Iowa's two top industries: insurance and agricultural technology. The accelerators have secured funding and mentorship commitments from the top regional firms in these sectors and have already seeded multiple startups.
- Opened a new Hilton-branded convention hotel adjacent to the Iowa Events Center that enabled Greater Des Moines to attract the 2018 ACCE Conference.
- Has coordinated and launched a series of regional events focused on positive mental health outcomes for regional residents.

