# Future Forward Cedar Falls 2025: Community-Wide Strategic Plan 2016

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Cedar Falls, Iowa (CFI)

Stakeholder(s):
Cedar Falls Future Forward 2025 Planning Team:
The Cedar Falls Future Forward 2025 Planning Team convened during the Spring of 2015 to undertake a process of envisioning what the community of Cedar Falls can and should be in the Year 2025. The Team met throughout 2015 and early 2016 to identify initiatives that could propel the community forward to become a community renowned for its people, sense of place and overall prosperity.

Therese Stevens:
Cedar Falls 2025 Planning Team Co-Chair — Madd Advertising, Director of Operations

Kris Hansen:
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Vision

... a community renowned for its people, sense of place and overall prosperity.

Mission

To envision what the community of Cedar Falls can and should be in the Year 2025.

Values

- **Progress**: We value: Progress, as characterized by our proactive efforts to position the community for the future.
- **Best Practices**: We value: Utilizing best practices and collaboration in and outside of the community to maximize the potential of our assets.
- **Education**: We value: Education, as characterized by lifelong learning processes available to all. It is our responsibility to help each individual reach his or her potential. We embrace that having an educated population is a key to being an adaptive and progressive community.
- **Health**: We value: A safe and healthy environment, as characterized by our expectation of clean air and water, our determination to preserve open spaces and natural areas, our provision for public safety services and the availability and accessibility of diverse recreational, cultural and wellness amenities. We encourage individual health, including quality, accessible healthcare services. A safe and healthy environment assures the mental, physical, and spiritual well-being and an overall higher quality of life for all of our citizens.
- **Safety**
- **Environment**
- **Inclusiveness**: We value: Inclusiveness and a sense of community, as characterized by our respect for all citizens regardless of ethnicity, nationality, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, economic class, age or disability. Our citizens feel connected to one another. Together they celebrate accomplishment and address adversity.
- **Sense of Community**
Connection

Economic Health: We value: Economic health and opportunity, as characterized by the availability of jobs which provide an improving standard of living. Key contributors include a local government that enables economic growth and the energetic encouragement of entrepreneurial activities.

Opportunity

Collaboration: Acknowledging the increasingly global nature of the economy, we seek opportunities to collaborate with our regional partners.

Connectivity: We value: Connectivity, as characterized by our continual pursuit of transportation and technical enhancements to empower all residents, organizations, visitors and businesses to communicate, commute, learn, access services and conduct business.

Communication
1. Business Climate

Outcome: A dynamic and nationally recognized business climate of innovation, job growth, talent development and investment and a diversified tax base fuel Cedar Falls’ economy

1a. Innovation & Entrepreneurship

Maximize innovation and entrepreneurship within Cedar Falls’ existing businesses and industries through award winning networking, education, mentorship and technology to strengthen retention and expansion opportunities

Timeline: 2018

**Stakeholder(s):**
- Greater Cedar Valley Alliance and Chamber
  - **Who is responsible**
- Community Main Street
- **College Hill Partnership**

**Experts Needed:**
- Community Main Street
- **College Hill Partnership**

1b. Services & Programs

Amplify Cedar Falls' business/innovation support services and incubation programs for small businesses and new startups through expanded business (private sector) partnerships and collaboration

Timeline: 2018

**Stakeholder(s):**
- University of Northern Iowa Center for Business Growth and Innovation
  - **Who is responsible**
- Community Main Street
- **College Hill Partnership**
- **Small Business Administration (Iowa)**

1c. Venture Fund

Coordinate and manage a venture fund of local investors targeting expanding and new Cedar Falls businesses

Timeline: 2017

**Stakeholder(s):**
- Black Hawk Economic Development
  - **Who is responsible:** Cedar Valley Growth Fund I
- Center for Business Growth and Innovation
  - University of Northern Iowa
- **City of Cedar Falls**

**Experts Needed**
1d. Public Relations

*Develop a national caliber public relations campaign to establish and maintain Cedar Falls as the preferred career destination for local university, college and high school graduates*

**Timeline:** 2017

**Stakeholder(s):**
- Greater Cedar Valley Alliance and Chamber: Marketing Steering Committee: of local advertising/marketing firms
- UNI Office of University Relations
- University of Northern Iowa Business and Community Services
- Hawkeye Community College Business and Community Services

**Experts Needed**
- Cedar Falls Tourism and Visitors Bureau
- Community Main Street
- College Hill Partnership
- UNI Office of University Relations
- UNI Office of University Relations
- University of Northern Iowa Business and Community Services
- Hawkeye Community College Business and Community Services
- Technology Association of Iowa

1e. Talent

*Implement innovative strategies to identify, attract and retain new talent to the Cedar Valley to ensure Cedar Falls employers can meet employment needs for operations and expansion*

**Timeline:** 2016

**Stakeholder(s):**
- Greater Cedar Valley Alliance and Chamber: Hawkeye Community College
- Cedar Valley Young Professionals
- Cedar Valley Society of Human Resource Managers
- Technology Association of Iowa
2. Retail, Commercial & Service Offerings

Outcome: Retail, commercial and service offerings in Cedar Falls mirror or exceed similar amenities found in metro areas throughout Iowa

2a. Attractions

Develop attraction destinations within Cedar Falls’ existing, local businesses and/or new commercial businesses which create high-level shopping, dining and entertainment experiences capable of retaining and draw-in spending

Timeline: 2020

Stakeholder(s):
Community Main Street:
Waterloo/Cedar Falls Board of Realtors:
College Hill Partnership:
Experts Needed

Cedar Falls Tourism and Visitors Bureau
Greater Cedar Valley Alliance and Chamber
UNI Business and Community Services
Hawkeye Community College Business and Community Services
City of Cedar Falls Community Development

2b. Mixed Use Area

Complete a mixed used area in the Downtown District which includes micro-retail incubator space

Timeline: 2019

Stakeholder(s):
River Place Development:
Experts Needed

Business Improvement Committee:
Community Main Street

Greater Cedar Valley Alliance and Chamber
Center for Business Growth and Innovation:
University of Northern Iowa
3. Economic Impact

Outcome: Cedar River-related attractions, activities and beautification generate escalating economic impact through visitor revenues and residential/commercial development

3a. Cedar River Whitewater District

*Create a regionally recognized Cedar River Whitewater District complete with river assets, shops, restaurants, trails, events and activities capable of enhancing community and economic development, expanding recreational offerings and mitigating flood related concerns*

Timeline: 2020

**Stakeholder(s):**
City of Cedar Falls Community Development and Parks Division:
Who is responsible

Cedar Falls Tourism and Visitors Bureau:
Who is responsible

Community Main Street:
Who is responsible

Experts Needed:
Greater Cedar Valley Alliance and Chamber

- Iowa DNR
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- White Water Association
- Cedar River Communities
- Black Hawk County Conservation Commission
- Cedar Trails Partnership
- INRCOG
4. Housing

**Stakeholder(s)**

**Millennials**

**Retirees**

Outcome: Highly attractive and unique housing options to attract/retain talent and wealth with emphasis on millennials and retirees

4a. Downtown Housing

*Develop downtown housing by creating multi-aged complexes that are closely positioned and connected to the Cedar River Whitewater district*

Timeline: 2020

**Stakeholder(s):**

- Western Home Communities: **Who is responsible**
- Community Main Street: **Who is responsible**
- Experts Needed

4b. Mixed-Use Development

*Expand mixed-use development within Cedar Falls including business and technology parks to increase businesses and housing units attractive to millennial and knowledge workers*

Timeline: 2020

**Stakeholder(s):**

- City of Cedar Falls Planning & Community Services Division: **Who is responsible**
- Businesses
- Millennial Workers
- Knowledge Workers
- Experts Needed
- Business & Technology Park Human Resource Staff

- River Place Development,
- Home Builders Association of NE Iowa
- Local Housing Developers
- Cedar Valley Young Professional Groups
- Local Commercial Developers
5. Foods Co-op

Outcome: A sustainable local foods co-op within Cedar Falls

5a. City Market

Open a permanent city market for residents and visitor featuring the community’s food co-op with the possibility of farmers' markets, artists, related small businesses and entertainment

Timeline: 2018

Stakeholder(s):
Cedar Falls Co-op:
Who is responsible

Experts Needed
Cedar Falls’ Farmers Markets Leadership
Local Artists

Art and Culture Board
Co-op Market Developers:
Developers of like co-op market
Community Main Street
College Hill Partnership
Cedar Falls Public Art Committee
6. Quality of Place

Outcome: Cedar Falls is ranked in the top ten nationally for quality of place driven by lifestyle amenities in all Cedar Falls' neighborhoods

6a. Parks

*Revitalize existing public parks as needed including interactive play features and public art*

Timeline: 2025

Stakeholder(s):
City of Cedar Falls Public Works & Parks Division: Who is responsible

Experts Needed

Cedar Falls Parks and Recreation Commission

UNI Facilities Planning: grounds keeping and sustainable landscaping

UNI Department of Art
Hawkeye Community College: Landscape and Turf Management

UNI School of HPELS: National Program for Playground Safety
Art and Culture Board

Bo's Beautiful Blessings
Cedar Falls Public Art Committee

6b. Inclusiveness

*Develop inclusive parks and public venues featuring innovative design and features for individuals with special needs*

Timeline: 2020

Stakeholder(s):
City of Cedar Falls Public Works and Parks Division: Who is responsible

Experts Needed

Cedar Falls Parks and Recreation Commission

UNI Facilities Planning: grounds keeping and sustainable landscaping
UNI Department of Art
HCC-Landscape and Turf Management
UNI School of HPELS: National Program for Playground Safety
Bo's Beautiful Blessings
Cedar Falls Public Art Committee
6c. Social Network

*Develop an on-line social network of residents to strengthen neighborhood communication*

Timeline: 2016

**Stakeholder(s):**
- City of Cedar Falls: *Who is responsible*
- Cedar Falls’ Neighborhood Associations: *Who is responsible*

**Experts Needed**
- Technical Advisors: *to select, maintain and update the on-line forum*

6d. Advisory Committee

*Create an advisory committee of neighborhood association members to oversee collaboration between associations and the formalization of new neighborhoods within Cedar Falls*

Timeline: 2025

**Stakeholder(s):**
- College Hill Partnership: *Who is responsible*
- Community Main Street: *Who is responsible*
- North Cedar Neighborhood Association: *Who is responsible*
- Overman Park Neighborhood Association: *Who is responsible*

**Experts Needed**
- City of Cedar Falls Planning and Community Services Division
7. Wellness & Healthcare

Outcome: Cedar Falls is recognized as having a variety of convenient, quality and advanced wellness and healthcare services

7a. Blue Zones

*Remain a national model of community Blue Zones sustainability, via long-term financial support and resident/business commitment and engagement*

Timeline: 2025

**Stakeholder(s):**
Cedar Falls Blue Zones:
Who is responsible

Experts Needed
UNI School of HPELS
Black Hawk County Health Department
Pathways Behavioral Services

**INRCOG**
UNI-Center for Energy and Environmental Education
ISU Extension
Cedar Valley Grows
Cedar Valley Healthy Coalition

7b. Healthcare Professionals

*Establish Cedar Falls as a national destination for healthcare professionals at all levels seeking employment, education, continuing education/training, research and community outreach opportunities*

Timeline: 2025

**Stakeholder(s):**
Healthcare Professionals
Iowa Works-Health Sector Board:
Who is responsible

Experts Needed
Cedar Falls Blue Zones
UNI School of HPELS
Allen College
Hawkeye Community College
Iowa Workforce Development

Unity Point Hospital
Mercy Health Network-Sartori Hospital
Greater Cedar Valley Alliance and Chamber
Western Home Communities
Care Initiatives
New Aldaya Lifescapes
Cedar Falls Health Center
Bickford of Cedar Falls
8. Connectivity

Outcome: Cedar Falls is a national model for state of the art connectivity for technology and transportation serving all residents, organizations and businesses

8a. Transportation & Parking

Address transportation accessibility, affordability and parking-related issues for residents, students and workers at all mobility and income levels and in all areas of the community

Timeline: 2020

Stakeholder(s):
City of Cedar Falls Community Development: Cedar Falls Utilities
Who is responsible
INRCOG
Met Transit

Experts Needed

8b. Internet & Connectivity

Remain a leader in advancing Internet and connectivity-related technology serving Cedar Falls

Timeline: 2025

Stakeholder(s):
Cedar Falls Utilities: Technology Association of Iowa
Who is responsible
Greater Cedar Valley Alliance and Chamber
University of Northern Iowa
Hawkeye Community College

Experts Needed

Local Tech Related Businesses
9. Conservation & Sustainability

Outcome: Proven and emerging approaches to sustainability and environmental conservation are in practice throughout all sectors of Cedar Falls

9a. Recycling

*Implement state of the art recycling programs and recycling related education throughout Cedar Falls including the recycling of hazardous waste (e.g. batteries, paints, solvents)*

Timeline: 2020

**Stakeholder(s):**
- City of Cedar Falls Public Works and Parks Division:
  - Who is responsible

Experts Needed
- UNI's Iowa Waste Reduction Center
- Rite Environmental
- Waste Trac
- Cedar Valley Recycle
- Iowa Waste Exchange
- Black Hawk Solid Waste Management Commission
- UNI Center for Energy and Environmental Education
- Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments

9b. Water & Energy

*Implement progressive water quality, conservation and energy planning strategies*

Timeline: 2020

**Stakeholder(s):**
- City of Cedar Falls Community Development:
  - Who is responsible

Cedar Falls Utilities:
  - Who is responsible

Experts Needed
- UNI Center for Energy and Environmental Education
- Black Hawk Soil and Water Commission
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments

9c. Trees

*Plant and maintain 300 trees annually in Cedar Falls neighborhoods and public spaces*

Timeline: 2016

**Stakeholder(s):**
- Cedar Falls Utilities Trees Committees:
  - Who is responsible

Experts Needed
- City of Cedar Falls Public Works and Parks Division
- UNI Center for Energy and Environmental Education
- Americorp
- Black Hawk County Conversation
- Iowa DNR

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Stakeholders (continued)

- Iowa Urban Tree Council
- Green Scene
- Trees Forever
10. Art, Culture, Recreation & Entertainment

Outcome: A wealth of art, culture, recreation and entertainment offerings accentuate all aspects of life in Cedar Falls

10a. Events, Festivals, Activities & Entertainment

Expand and create events, festivals, activities and high quality entertainment targeting young professionals and families

Timeline: 2020

Stakeholder(s):
Cedar Falls Tourism and Visitor Bureau:

Experts Needed
Community Main Street
City of Cedar Falls Public Works and Parks
Oster Regent Theatre
Cedar Valley Young Professional Groups
UNI Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center
Cedar Falls Historical Society
Cedar Valley Jaycees
Junior League of Waterloo-Cedar Falls
UNI Student Groups
Greater Cedar Valley Alliance
Cedar Valley Cyclists
Cedar Valley Bicycle Collective
Waterloo-Cedar Falls Symphony
Cedar Trails Partnership
Cedar Valley Acoustic Guitar Association
UNI Outdoor Recreation Services
UNI School of Music
Cedar Falls Municipal Band
Live to Nine Organizers
Sturgis Falls Organizers
Cedar Valley Association for Soft Trails
Cedar Valley Sports Commission
Hearst Center for the Arts
Art and Culture Board

10b. Splash Pad & Recreation Area

Create a public splash pad and recreation area in coordination with the Cedar River White Water District and Downtown District

Timeline: 2018

Stakeholder(s):
Community Main Street:

Experts Needed
Cedar Falls Public Works and Parks
City of Waterloo
Whitewater Committee
10c. Places/Venues

*Develop and/or enhance public gathering places/venues including but not limited to amenities such as zip lines, live music and park equipment for making music (harmonic park).*

**Timeline:** 2020

**Stakeholder(s):**
City of Cedar Falls Public Works and Parks Division: Cedar Falls' Bicycle/Pedestrian Task Force
City of Cedar Falls Parks: Cedar Falls Park and Recreation Commission
Community Business District: Community Business District

**Experts Needed:**
Cedar Falls Public Art Committee

10d. Mixed-Use Spaces

*Develop public mixed-use spaces for artists to create, exhibit and sell their works, while raising the community’s overall appreciation for art*

**Timeline:** 2019

**Stakeholder(s):**
Artists: UNI School of Music
Art and Culture Board: Waterloo Center for the Arts
UNI Department of Art: Community Main Street
Who is responsible: College Hill Partnership
Experts Needed: Iowa Arts Council
River Place Development: UNI Center for Business Growth and Innovation:
Hawkeye Community College: Small Business Development Center
Department of Art: Cedar Falls Public Art Committee
11. Residential, Commercial & Recreational Growth

Outcome: Development of North Cedar as a featured location for residential, commercial and recreational growth

11a. North Cedar Annual Development

*Increase annual development in North Cedar based upon a plan outlining connectivity, housing, bikability and funding opportunities*

Timeline: 2025

**Stakeholder(s):**
- City of Cedar Falls Community Development: Who is responsible
- North Cedar Neighborhood Association: Who is responsible
- Experts Needed
- Housing Developers
- Cedar Falls Community Foundation
- North Cedar Business Owners
- Cedar Falls Utilities
- Cedar Falls Public Art Committee
- City of Cedar Falls Public Works and Parks Division
- North Cedar School
- Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments

11b. North Cedar Neighborhood Development

*North Cedar neighborhood development addressing the Center Street project, connectivity and funding strategies*

Timeline: 2019

**Stakeholder(s):**
- City of Cedar Falls Engineering Services Division: Who is responsible
- North Cedar Neighborhood Association: Who is responsible
- Experts Needed
- City of Cedar Falls Public Works and Parks Division
- North Cedar School
- Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments
12. Community Engagement

Stakeholder(s)

Colleges

Universities

Outcome: Cedar Falls is identified as a national leader in community engagement with colleges and universities

12a. Co-Learning Center

Establish a co-learning center which provides an alternative to in-seat models of education to encompass all learning styles.

The Center will introduce a variety of career paths which are diverse to meet the adaptive needs of employers.

Timeline: 2020

Stakeholder(s):

Cedar Falls Public Library : Cedar Falls Community School District
Who is responsible

UNI College of Education
Hawkeye Community College
Iowa Workforce Development
Iowa Advanced Manufacturing Center/ TechWorks

Experts Needed

Greater Cedar Valley Alliance and Chamber

Cedar Valley Non-profit Alliance

Co-Learning Center Developers :
those currently implementing similar pilot programs

12b. UNI Enrollment

Increase enrollment at UNI by elevating intentional community, business and university engagement through promoting learning, service and internship opportunities throughout Cedar Falls

Timeline: 2018

Stakeholder(s):

Cedar Valley Alliance and Chamber : UNI Non-Profit Leadership Center
Who is responsible

Volunteer Center of the Cedar Valley
Iowa Workforce Development

UNI : UNI Center for Energy and Environmental Education-Americorp
Who is responsible

Experts Needed

Cedar Valley Non-profit Alliance
13. Inclusiveness

Outcome: Welcoming inclusiveness is a key community asset for Cedar Falls so that all residents are empowered to maximize their quality of life

13a. Engagement

Implement an expanded, community-wide model for engagement and inclusivity (i.e., training and education)

Timeline: 2016

**Stakeholder(s):**
- Cedar Falls Human Rights Commission
- Cedar Falls Ministerial Association
- Cedar Valley Society of Human Resource Managers
- Greater Cedar Valley Diversity and Inclusion Committee
- UNI LGBT Advisory and Advocacy Committee
- Iowa Center for Immigrant Leadership and Integration

**Experts Needed**
- Representatives from the Cedar Falls/Cedar Valley LGBT Community
- UNI International Students and Scholars Office
- UNI Office of International Programs
- AEA 267-River Hills
- Greater Cedar Valley Alliance and Chamber Diversity and Inclusion Partnership
- Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Inclusion Partnership
- Manpower, Inc.

13b. Life & Job Skills

Expand projects/organizations to provide life and job skills for Cedar Falls residents with disabilities, as well as to prepare employers to provide jobs to these individuals

Timeline: 2017

**Stakeholder(s):**
- Cedar Falls Residents with Disabilities
- Cedar Falls Employers
- Goodwill Industries of Northeast Iowa
- Exceptional Persons Incorporated
- Experts Needed
- Iowa Workforce Development
- AEA 267-River Hills
- Greater Cedar Valley Alliance and Chamber Diversity and Inclusion Partnership
- Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Inclusion Partnership
- Manpower, Inc.
14. Cedar Valley Collaboration

**Stakeholder(s)**

**Waterloo**  
Cedar Valley Communities

Outcome: Cedar Falls collaborates closely with Waterloo and other neighboring Cedar Valley communities

**14a. Vision & Plan**

*Initiate a Cedar Valley regional vision and shared strategic plan addressing people, place and prosperity*

Timeline: 2017

**Stakeholder(s):**

INRCOG:
- City Officials from Bremer County
- City Officials from Buchanan County
- City Officials from Butler County
- Black Hawk County Officials
- Grundy County Officials
- Bremer County Officials
- Buchanan County Officials
- Butler County Officials

Experts Needed

**Cedar Valley Regional Partnership**

**City of Cedar Falls Planning & Community Services Division**
- City Officials from Black Hawk County
- City Officials from Grundy County
15. Learning & Education

Outcome: Cedar Falls leads Iowa in learning and education for all ages

15a. MakersSpaces

Recruit Cedar Falls business/industry and residents to volunteer time, talent and financial support to the Cedar Valley MakersSpace and all local makerspaces, to promote collaborative learning, creative design, and manufacturing for people of all ages and skill levels.

Timeline: 2016

Stakeholder(s):
Cedar Valley Makers: John Deere
Who is responsible
Doerfer Engineering
Experts Needed
Cedar Falls Library
University of Northern Iowa
Hawkeye Community College
Greater Cedar Valley Alliance and Chamber

15b. Student Exchanges

Pursue official international "sister community" relationships to expand high school and college student exchanges and learning opportunities.

Timeline: 2018

Stakeholder(s):
City of Cedar Falls: Cedar Falls Rotary
Who is responsible: Mayor’s Office
Cedar Falls Community School District

Experts Needed
University of Northern Iowa
International Students and Scholars Office
Grundy Center: Grundy Center: and other model communities
15c. Futurist Training

Recruit six Cedar Falls community leaders to receive Cedar Falls Futurist training to bring awareness of national and international trends, concepts and best practices to Cedar Falls' organizations, business and government.

Timeline: Annually

Stakeholder(s):
UNI Institute for Decision Making
City of Cedar Falls Community Planning Department
Greater Cedar Valley Alliance and Chamber
Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments

Experts Needed
UNI Creative Life Research Center

15d. Facilities & Curriculum

Continue implementation of the 10-year facility plan and curriculum innovation to provide exemplary pre-k-12 education.

Timeline: Annually

Stakeholder(s):
Cedar Falls Community School District
AEA 267
Iowa Department of Education

Experts Needed
UNI College of Education