

THE WINDMILL

City of Lenox Adopts Comprehensive Plan

In January, the City of Lenox’s city council adopted the comprehensive plan, which was prepared by SICOG with the assistance and collaboration of City staff, elected officials, and residents. The comprehensive plan was a full re-write, since the previous plan was over 25 years old. The plan is the result of extensive data collection and analysis that incorporated the ten Iowa Smart Planning Principles and thirteen Elements. This plan involved a community kickoff meeting, City employee session, and several topical focus group sessions. The final plan is rather lengthy and includes a very aggressive strategy for Lenox, which has shown population and employment growth. Vision statements, goals, and actions were created under the following categories: housing, economic development, public infrastructure, public facilities and recreation, community character, agriculture and natural resources, and land use and design. The implementation chapter details policies and strategies for carrying out the vision statements and goals.

Currently, SICOG is finishing a comprehensive plan for Creston and will submit the draft to the City in the next few weeks. Leon’s city administration and elected officials are reviewing the draft of their plan update. SICOG is available and motivated to prepare a comprehensive twenty-year plan for your community.

USDA Community Facility Funds Update

The USDA Community Facility Program is a popular program for our local governments, in large part because it funds those difficult to finance items, such as police cars, fire equipment, and road graders, that eat up municipal and county budgets. The manager of these funds at the USDA office in Indianola recently stated to SICOG that there are additional funds this year due to special disaster allocations. Governments covering areas that are 55% and 75% eligible towns, those with lower median incomes are highly encouraged to apply. Contact Jeremy at SICOG to see if your project(s) or need(s) could be met by this grant program. Safety and emergency equipment is a priority, but the grant program will fund other items as well. Grants can be up to \$50,000.

INDEX



A View From the First Tee

2



SICOG Exec. Board Minutes
Events Calendar

3



2020 CDBG Workshop
Draft Passenger Transportation Plan
2019 SICOG Partnerships

4



ISU Rural HSG Readiness
Assessment Program

5



Approaching Grant Opportunities

6



From the Planner’s Desk:
Pop-up Placemaking Tool Kit

7

SICOG Staff

Timothy Ostroski	Executive Director
Judy Brimm	Finance Director
Jeremy Rounds	Regional Planner
Joel Lamb	Regional Planner
Stu Burzette	Transportation/Regional Planner
Nancy Groth	Office Manager

Contact Us

Southern Iowa Council of Governments
 101 E. Montgomery Street
 Creston, Iowa 50801-2406
 Phone: 641.782.8491
 Fax: 641.782.8492
 Email: sicog@sicog.com
 Internet: www.sicog.com
 Facebook: www.facebook.com/SICOG
 To email individual staff, use last name@sicog.com



A View From the First Tee



February is full of special occasion days –Abraham Lincoln’s Birthday – George Washington’s Birthday – Valentine’s Day and Presidents Day. Just so you will not miss out, there is also – National Weatherman’s day (4th) – Boy Scout Day (8th) – National Pizza Day (9th) – Susan B. Anthony Day (15th) – Polar Bear Day (27th) and National Tooth Fairy Day (28th).

On March 25th, the Board of Directors will hold SICOG’s 46th annual meeting. The meeting will be the start of our 47th year. Yes, it was 47 years ago on September 12, 1973, that the Southern Iowa Regional Planning Agency incorporated.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT – Congratulations to Tim Ostroski! On February 1st he celebrated his 36th work anniversary with SICOG. As a side note, Tim worked for the members of SICOG as Planning Director for almost four (4) years prior to becoming executive director. For those of you who care, and there are many, on February 13, 2020, I will have worked for SICOG for 40 years.

Because you keep hearing how bad this flu season is, here are 5 tips to stay healthy and avoid colds & the flu:

1. Wash your hands
2. Wash your hands
3. Wash your hands
4. Wash your hands
5. Wash your hands

Are you or someone you know looking for short-term work? Working for the Census may be the answer!

Enhance Iowa provides Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) funds to assist projects that provide recreational, cultural, entertainment, and educational attractions. The next application deadline is tentatively April 15, 2020. April grant submittals will be awarded in the next fiscal year. SICOG has submitted approximately 20 applications for this program and to date, all have been funded. Previously funded projects include: community and convention centers, libraries, aquatic facilities, trails, camping and cabin facilities, museums, and conservation centers.

We are preparing our year-end report for SICOG and SIDG. Also, planning for the annual board of director’s meeting is well underway. The staff is preparing our interim report on the progress and condition of our revolving loan funds, as well as our regular activities for our members.

Speaking of available money! The SICOG Industrial Revolving Loan Program also has funds available. We have money to assist businesses expand and/or locate. If you are aware of a project, please contact your SICOG Board Member or myself.



As always, if there is anything I can do, please

let me know.

Our phone number is 641.782.8491.

Remember, we are working for you.

Timothy Ostroski



SICOG Executive Board Meeting of January 7, 2020

Chairman Christensen called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. with the following members present: Christensen, Davidson, Fitch, Lesan, McCann, Minnick, Riley, Trickey, Twombly, and Zabel.

Staff present: Ostroski and Brimm.

McCann made a motion to approve the agenda. Twombly seconded the motion, all ayes. Motion carried. McCann made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2019 meeting. Fitch seconded the motion, all ayes. Motion carried.

Riley made a motion to approve the financial reports for the month of December. Lesan seconded the motion, all ayes. Motion carried.

Trickey made a motion to hold SICOG’s annual meeting on Wednesday, March 25, 2020 with the meeting starting at 1:00 p.m. Twombly seconded the motion, all ayes. Motion carried.

Trickey made a motion to authorize opening a new bank account for the USDA Rural Development revolving loan funds. Riley seconded the motion, all ayes. Motion carried.

Other items discussed included: Partnership Program, CEDS, Annual Dues Letters, Annual Project Board Meetings, Empower Rural Iowa, Audit, CDBG Report, Grant Reports for 2019 & 2020, Budget – New Contracts, and EDA-RLF Semi Annual Reports.

Twombly made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:32 p.m. Minnick seconded the motion, all ayes. Motion carried.

Minutes Submitted by Brimm



February 17, 2020 – SICOG office closed for President’s Day

**February 19, 2020
CDBG Application Workshop, Ankeny**

**February 20 – 21
ICOG 2020 Staff Training, Grinnell**

**March 3, 2020
SICOG Executive Board Meeting, 1:00 p.m.
SIDG Board Meeting immediately following**

**March 10, 2020
RPA / 14 ATURA Policy Board Meeting, 1:00 p.m., Ringgold County**

**March 25
Annual Legislative Breakfast, Des Moines**

**March 25
SICOG Annual Meeting, 1:00 p.m.**



2020 CDBG Workshop

SICOG staff will attend the 2020 CDBG application workshop later in February. While we do not have the details on the program for this year yet, now is the time for local governments to start thinking about CDBG projects. Be reminded that CDBG is one of the largest sources of federal funds for our local governments. Your city should at least consider how the program could benefit you. The workshop will include housing, community facilities, and downtown revitalization projects. Contact SICOG for more details and watch for the March Windmill to dive deeper into the program for 2020.

Draft Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP)

SICOG serves as transportation planning staff to the five-county ATURA Transportation Planning Affiliation Region (Adams, Adair, Taylor, Ringgold and Union Counties)

The RPA 14/ATURA 2021-2026 Draft Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP) is now available for public review and comment. The draft can be viewed at: <http://www.sicog.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2021-2026-PTPDRAFT.pdf>

The purpose of this document is to promote joint, coordinated passenger transportation programs that further the development of the local and regional public transportation systems in Adair, Adams, Ringgold, Taylor and Union Counties.

There will also be a public hearing regarding the adoption of the Passenger Transportation Plan by the ATURA Policy Board on March 10, 2020 in Ringgold County (exact place TBD) around 1:30 pm. Please direct all comments and questions to Stu Burzette by email burzette@sicog.com or by phone (641-782-8491). Thank you.



SICOG Partnerships

PLATINUM (\$2,500)

- City of Osceola
- Clarke County Development Corporation
- John Wayne Birthplace Society, Ltd. of Winterset

DIAMOND (\$1,500)

- Creston City Water Works
- First National Bank of Afton & Creston
- Iowa State Savings Bank of Corning, Creston, Diagonal, & Lenox
- Lenox Municipal Utilities

GOLD (\$1,000)

- Garden & Associates, Ltd. of Creston & Oskaloosa

SILVER (\$500)

- American State Bank of Lamoni, Osceola & Winterset
- Corning Municipal Utilities
- First National Bank of Osceola
- Gilbert True Value of Leon & Osceola
- Greater Regional Medical Center of Creston
- JEO Consulting Group, Inc. of Ankeny
- Michael Foods of Lenox
- PCSB Bank in Clarinda, Corning, Creston, Lenox, & Mount Ayr
- Snyder & Associates, Inc. of Ankeny & Atlantic
- Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative of Corning, Mount Ayr, & Stanton
- Tyler Insurance Services of Creston & Mount Ayr
- Union County Development Association
- Veenstra & Kimm, Inc. of West Des Moines

BRONZE (\$250)

- Adams Community Economic Development Corporation
- Akin Building Centers of Corning & Creston
- City State Bank of Mount Ayr
- Clarke County Hospital
- Clarke Electrical Cooperative of Osceola
- Community Development Corporation of Greenfield
- Farmers & Merchants State Bank of Orient, St. Charles, & Winterset
- FNB Bank of Fontanelle & Greenfield
- Great Western Bank of Creston
- Lenox Development Corporation
- North Stone Apartments of Winterset
- Ringgold County Development Corporation
- Saylor Realty, LLC of Osceola
- Southwestern Community College
- State Bank of Brooks
- TS Bank of Corning
- Union State Bank of Greenfield
- Union State Bank of Winterset

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!

ISU Rural Housing Readiness Assessment Program

The Iowa State University Extension has developed a new housing assistance program, entitled the Rural Housing Readiness Assessment Program. It is designed to help communities create their own answers to the critical question, “Where do we start?”

The best feature of this program is that it is a relatively quick, simple, and affordable way to organize a community to identify problems and address housing needs. The program includes an initial meeting with ISU Extension staff and the provision of resources to begin the self-assessment process. A community participating in the RHRA process commits to the four components: a) fulfilling pre-workshop requirements; b) the RHRA Educational Workshop; c) a Public Input Workshop; and, d) Action Planning.

Integral to the success of the RHRA is the formation of a dedicated housing steering committee for the local community or the adoption of addressing housing as central to an existing committee or commission. It will be the committee who receives the educational workshop and, based on the knowledge and understanding gained from the workshop, will recommend the direction of local housing strategy in the action planning session. The committee will either be formalized as an advisory committee via ordinance or will have purview over housing included in their duties if drawing on an existing committee. In both scenarios, we encourage inclusion in city ordinance as a way to institutionalize housing as a central community concern and to demonstrate municipal support.

Before the educational workshop, existing documents, plans, and ordinances will be reviewed. The educational workshop is a 3 to 4 hour event for the housing steering committee and other interested city officials and community members. Using an interactive format, Extension specialists will walk through the workbook and the community’s workbook responses to demonstrate how the information discovered through the inventory process reveals factors that support or inhibit the provision of multiple housing options in the community. The workshop will discuss the broad range of housing options possible in communities.

After the educational workshop, they will be ready to develop elements of a local housing strategy. The committee will provide Extension specialists with the identified interest areas to focus on as part of their action plan. However, public input is crucial in order to help prioritize where resources and efforts should go. Extension specialists will conduct a 2-3 hour public input session that helps build consensus and prioritize action items.

Finally, Extension specialists will convene and facilitate a three-hour action planning workshop a few months later. Participants will develop housing related short and long term goals, and action plans for implementing those goals. Also during the process, additional key stakeholders, funding opportunities and responsibilities, and individuals/groups tasked with implementation will be identified, along with timelines for measuring accomplishments.

The fee for conducting this program is currently \$5,000. SICOG believes a service like this is valuable because it encourages communities to take specific actions on housing rather than simply identify needs and hope someone will come to town to address them. Contact your SICOG office to work on a housing assessment process.



Rural Housing Readiness Assessment



Approaching Grant Opportunities

The following are deadlines for popular grants our members and associated organizations should consider. **The SICOG due date is a date when the applicant should have all relevant information to SICOG to finish the application on time.** SICOG has the staff and experience to assist our communities in submitting the best possible applications for these funds. **There are many other sources, so if you have a project, please contact us.**

Source/Program	Funding Uses	SICOG Due Date
FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grants	Purchase fire equipment, personal protection equipment, training, station modifications, wellness programs, and vehicles. (Eligible: Fire departments and non-affiliated fire and EMS agencies)	February 15
CDBG Water and Sewer Program	Water and wastewater capital improvements: plants, mains, lagoons, pumps, towers, etc. (Eligible: local governments)	February 15 (next quarterly round)
Land and Water Conservation Fund	Outdoor recreational facilities, campgrounds, playgrounds, open spaces, and wildlife areas (Eligible: local governments)	February 15
Alliant Energy Hometown Safety Grants	Grants up to \$2,000 to purchase emergency equipment, such as Jaws of Life, AEDs in public buildings, thermal imaging cameras, etc. (Eligible: communities Alliant Energy serves)	February 15
Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT)	Tourism, recreation, and entertainment capital projects, such as museums, libraries, swimming pools, trails, large recreational areas, amphitheaters, etc. (Eligible: local governments, nonprofits, some private entities)	February 15
Iowa West Foundation	Community development, economic development, education, and human needs projects (Eligible: local governments, nonprofits in Adams and Taylor Counties)	February 15
IDPH Emergency Preparedness and EMS System Development	Funds for planning and system deployment (not purchase of EMS equipment) for regions (Eligible: any of the counties in one of the 8 designated regions of Iowa)	February 20
Decatur County SCICF Grant	Programs and projects the impact the quality of life, economy, and community needs in Decatur County (Eligible: Cities, the County, and non-profits in Decatur County)	March 1
Keep Iowa Beautiful Beautification Grant	Beautification programs – flower, tree and shrub planting, painting & fix-up and general landscaping; public nuisance abatement; litter prevention and recycling education, implementation, and public awareness (Eligible: Cities and non-profits in cities under 5,000 population)	March 1
FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (nearly \$4,000,000 Iowa allocation)	Hazard mitigation plans and projects, including tornado safe rooms, building and utility retrofits, minor flood control projects, elevations and relocations of buildings in flood hazard areas and storm water management projects (Eligible: local governments and some nonprofits)	March 1
Solid Waste Alternatives Program	Programs to encourage landfill alternatives – recycling, diversion, new technologies, new manufacturing processes, etc. (Eligible: local governments and solid waste agencies)	April 1
Iowa Arts Project Grant	1:1 matched grants for the creation and preservation of new artwork, development of an arts experience, or formation of an arts education program (Eligible: local governments, schools, artists, nonprofits)	April 1
Iowa Capacity Building Grant	Small grants support the general operations of cultural and arts programs. (Eligible: nonprofit arts and cultural organizations with limited budgets)	April 1
Iowa Cultural Heritage Project Grant	1:1 matched grants for the support of a community project that creates jobs for Iowans and provides access to a cultural heritage experience (Eligible: local governments, nonprofits)	April 1
Iowa Great Places Designation	Designation because the community has or is working on notable cultural and tourism efforts. This is for new designation only, which allows for future grant opportunities for projects identified in the designation process. Those grants open in autumn. (Eligible: local governments, nonprofits)	April 1
Iowa Cultural and Entertainment District Designation	Iowa Cultural & Entertainment District designation recognizes well-identified, walkable, mixed-use, compact areas of a city or county in which a high concentration of cultural facilities serves as the anchor. To be designated, a Cultural & Entertainment District must already be an area where arts and cultural activities thrive. (Eligible: local governments, nonprofits, for-profits)	April 1
Iowa Historical Resource Development Program	Larger grants to preserve, conserve, interpret, enhance, and educate the public about Iowa's historical assets. Provides funding for documentary collections, historic preservation and museums. (Eligible: local governments, nonprofits, for-profits, individuals)	April 1
Iowa Country School Grant Program	Small grants to assist in the preservation and maintenance of one-room or two-room country schools. Also for historical interpretation or educational activities relating to the school. (Eligible: local governments, nonprofits, for-profits, individuals)	April 1
Iowa Alliant Energy Hometown Safety Grants	Grants up to \$2,000 to purchase emergency equipment, such as Jaws of Life, AEDs, thermal imaging cameras, etc. (Eligible: Local governments and fires response agencies)	April 1, August 1, December 1
Highway Safety Improvement	Provides grants for low-cost, systematic safety improvements in the \$10,000/mile range, focusing on lane departure crashes. (Eligible: local governments)	Ongoing

As always, SICOG provides this un-exhaustive list of grants to generate ideas about possible projects and provide funding guidance. Grant funding sources are increasingly interested in creative solutions to problems and many are willing to support not only construction, but also operations. If your community has a problem that outside funding might address, please contact your SICOG office. We would be glad to help and can attend a local meeting at no cost to our members discuss the project or idea.

From the Planner's Desk...

AARP Pop-Up Placemaking Tool Kit

A lot of cities in our region are constantly looking for cheap or alternative strategies for improving quality of life for their residents. One resource that could be useful is the AARP Pop-Up Placemaking Toolkit. **This Tool Kit, written by AARP and Team Better Block**, guides communities that want to create and enhance spaces or an overall area to make it more of a destination place where people can gather and interact with each other. This is a concept called “placemaking.”

Pop-up demonstration projects typically involve community members working together to bring attention to overlooked spaces, address neighborhood issues, or demonstrate desired improvements within a public or sometimes private space such as a vacant building or underused lot.

Be sure to check out the web-sites below, as they offer many examples, photos, and beginner, intermediate and advanced “recipes” for pop-up placemaking, including:

Alley Activations

Wayfinding Signage

Parklets & Bike Lanes

Public Art

Pop-up Shops

Beer Garden

Intersectional Murals

Farmers Markets

Community Stage

Outdoor Games

Digitally Fabricated Seating

Identity Crosswalks

Pop-up Plazas

Colorful Crosswalks

Street Plazas

Click the links below to download, read, and share the tool kit with your network to kickstart placemaking demonstrations in your community!

<https://teambetterblock.com/>

<https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/tool-kits-resources/info-2019/what-is-a-pop-up-demonstration.html>



Southern Iowa Council of Governments Executive Board

Dan Christensen	Decatur County	Chairperson
John Twombly	Adair County	Vice-Chairperson
Karen Zabel	City of Lenox Representing Taylor County	Secretary
Ron Riley	Union County	Treasurer
Doug Birt	Adams County	
Marvin McCann	Clarke County	
Diane Fitch	Madison County	
Lyle Minnick	Ringgold County	
Doug Davidson	Private Sector Representative	
Vacant	Private Sector Representative	
William Trickey	Private Sector Representative	
Beth Waddle	Private Sector Representative	
Tom Lesan	Member - At - Large	



SICOG is a non-profit organization that provides and coordinates community and economic development services primarily through the delivery of planning services, technical program assistance, grant writing and administration to assist local governments and others in their efforts to improve the social and economic well-being of its eight county service area.

SOUTHERN IOWA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

101 E. Montgomery Street
Creston, IA 50801-2406