



Proposed design concepts in Independence.

Concept Overview

During the Design Workshop Open House, residents were encouraged to come learn about the Community Visioning process, review the analysis that had been done, and give input on design concepts that were guided by the steering committee. Residents had an opportunity to review all the analysis boards provided by Iowa State University, interact with the design team, and leave feedback on the projects. The open house was an essential part of the process for the design team to better understand and finalize conceptual ideas based on the community's desires.

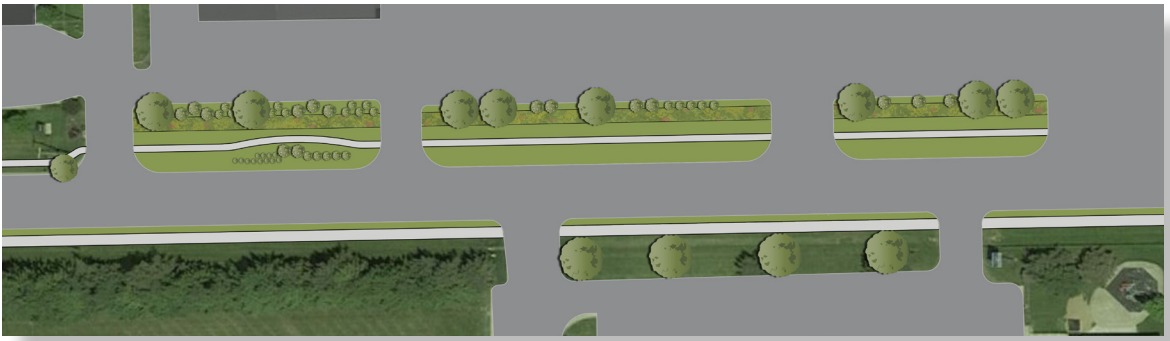
1st Street W improvements focus on safety, drainage issues, aesthetics, and amenities. During the Design Workshop, residents were able to manipulate a streetscape model that showed different elements such as lawn areas, trees, trails, sidewalks, and bioretention areas. Residents used Wikki Stix to show alternative routes that would alleviate congestion on 1st Street W. The design team used input from both exercises to shape the conceptual design of 1st Street W.

Residents of all ages expressed interest in creating more trail and sidewalk connections throughout Independence. Workshop participants had the opportunity to draw the routes they frequent or wish to utilize safely. From this activity, the design team was able to prioritize new sidewalk connections and the desired routes for walking trails. Community members also showed an interest in adding amenities to all the trails throughout Independence.

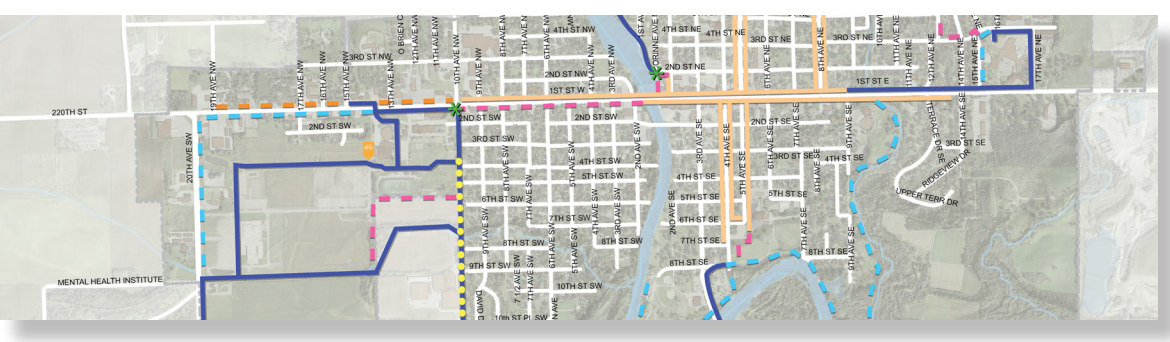
Using the existing Independence logo, adding additional way-finding signage throughout Independence can help residents and visitors find destinations in town such as Liberty Trail or Riverwalk Park. Additionally, signage can help with "branding" of the community and create a cohesive palette for signage.



Board 8a: 1st Street W Improvements



Board 8b: 1st Street W Improvements



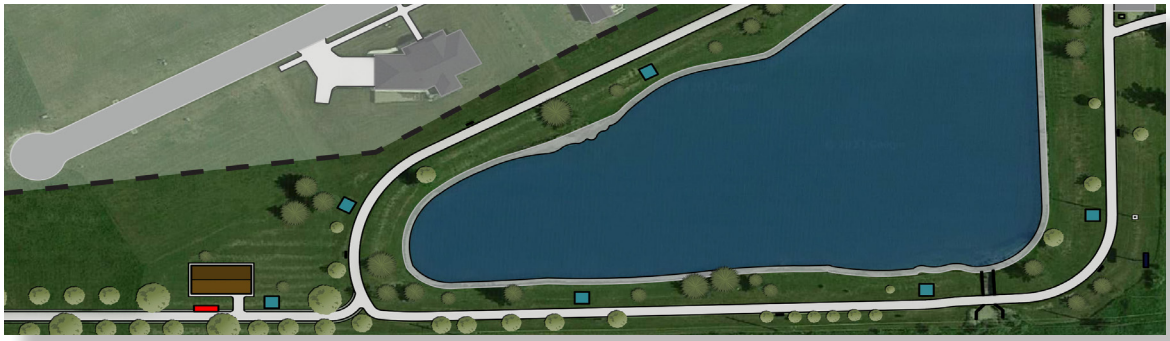
Board 9a: Trail Connections



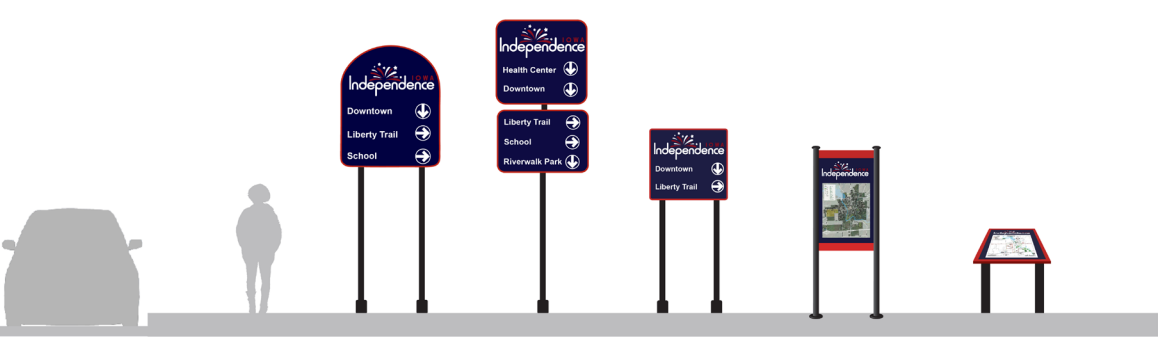
Board 9b: Trail Connections



Board 9c: Trail Connections



Board 10: Triangle Park Trailhead



Board 11: Signage & Way-finding

Independence

Concept Overview

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Intern: Andrea Fager, Iowa State University
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1st Street W Corridor






1st Street W is a major thoroughfare for Independence, carrying between 5,000 to 8,400 vehicles per day (Iowa Department of Transportation 2021 Daily Traffic County). As you enter Independence from the west, there is no welcome signage. You are greeted with vacant buildings, very little green space or trees and a lot of concrete. The Independence Elementary and Middle Schools are located along 1st Street W and create traffic issues throughout the day, especially during drop off and dismissal times.

During the What, Where, Why meeting, the steering committee prioritized improving the aesthetics and addressing safety and traffic issues along this important corridor. The intersection of Iowa Avenue and 1st Street W is a prime location for a single-lane roundabout that would improve traffic flow and safety. The center of the roundabout would include entrance signage, decorative brick paving and low-growing plant materials, creating

an inviting entrance feature as you enter Independence from the west and south. Independence lacks uniform streetscape furniture. The steering committee suggested a palette of furniture that fits the historical nature of the community. The proposed streetlight was chosen by the committee because it is a cross between two of their existing streetlights and continues the historical/period theme. This palette could be used throughout Independence and begin to unify the improvements to the community.

The north side of 1st Street W has major electrical lines in the right-of-way; the design team is suggesting ornamental trees to soften the appearance of these lines and aid in the overall aesthetics. The south side of the road would accommodate overstory tree plantings. The design team suggested locations for tree plantings that would not impact existing business signage or building facades along this corridor.

Legend

-  Overstory Tree
-  Understory Tree
-  ① Proposed Entrance Signs
-  ② Proposed Roundabout
-  ③ Proposed Parking Lot Realignment
-  ④ Proposed Sidewalk



The proposed roundabout would improve traffic flow and create an inviting entrance into Independence from the south and west.

Streetscape Furniture Palette



The steering committee suggested a light fixture they had photographed in a different community. This fixture combines the acorn style fixture and modern fixture present in downtown Independence.



Bench: Victor Stanley CS-10



Backless Bench: Victor Stanley CS-296



Litter Receptacle: Victor Stanley SD-42

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1st Street W Corridor

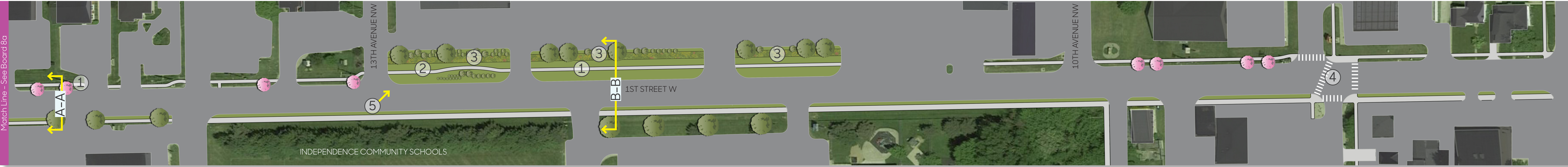
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Legend

-  Overstory Tree
-  Understory Tree
-  ① Proposed Sidewalk
-  ② Proposed Green Space
-  ③ Proposed Bioretention Cells
-  ④ Existing Highly-visible Crosswalk
-  ⑤ Direction of view for existing conditions and proposed improvements eduts shown on the right

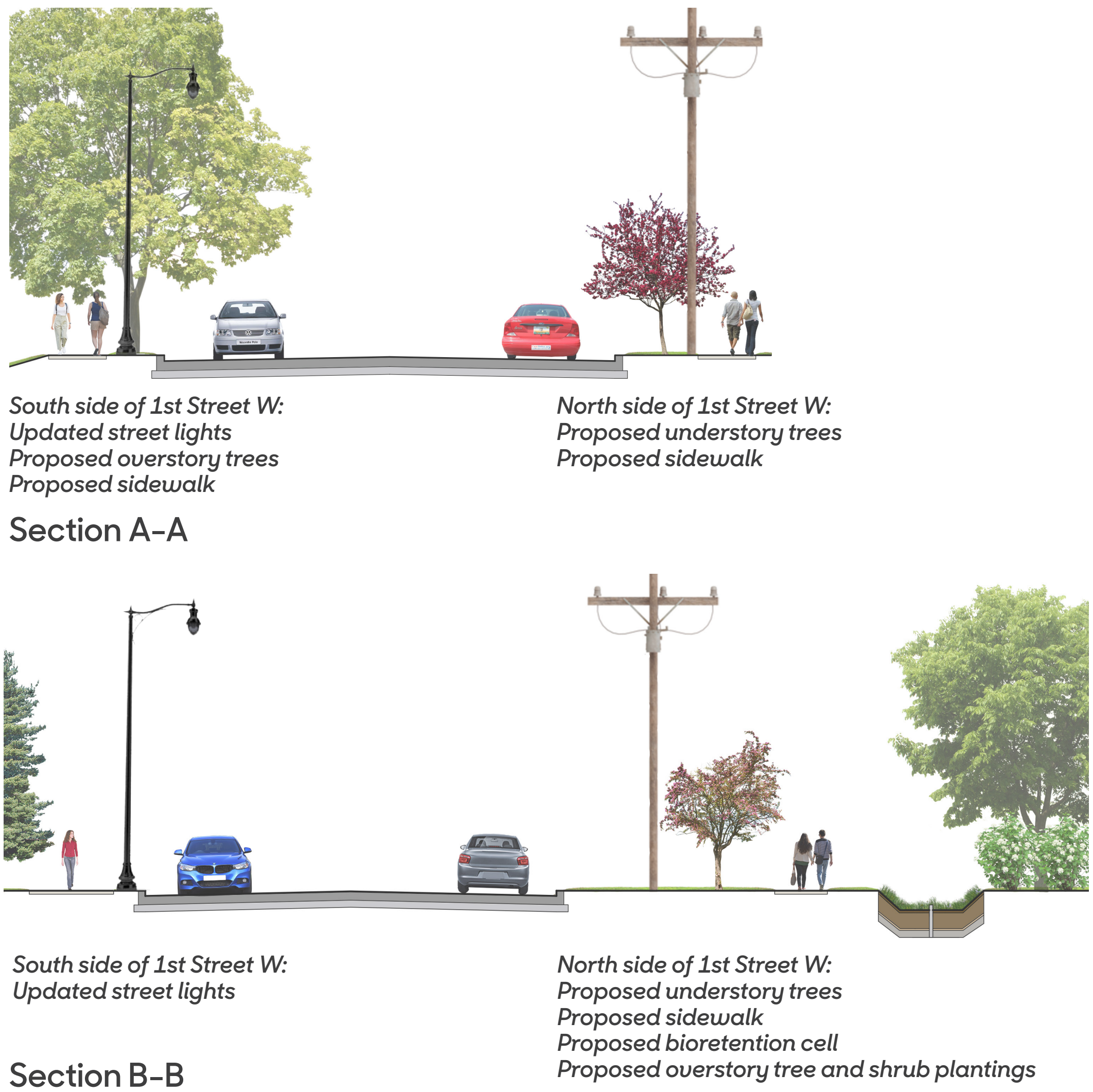
1st Street W Corridor

A portion of the parking lot between 13th Avenue NW and 10th Avenue NW, could be converted to green space with bioretention cells, plantings, sidewalk, and benches. The steering committee is working with Buchanan County and private landowners to break up the “sea of concrete,” as one steering committee member described it.

The bioretention cells could help alleviate some of the flooding issues along 1st Street W caused by the large amount of paved surfacing. In addition, the proximity to the schools creates a great opportunity for learning about bioretention areas. The design team recommends installing signage explaining the value of this best management practice for handling stormwater.

Substantial electrical lines run along the north side of 1st Street W. The design team is recommending ornamental trees along most of the north side of 1st Street W and overstory trees set back from the electrical lines in the proposed green space section.

10th Avenue NW to 2nd Ave NW will be reconstructed in 2024 and will include an 8-foot trail along the south side of 1st Street W.



Existing Conditions at 1st Street W & 13th Ave NW



Proposed Improvements



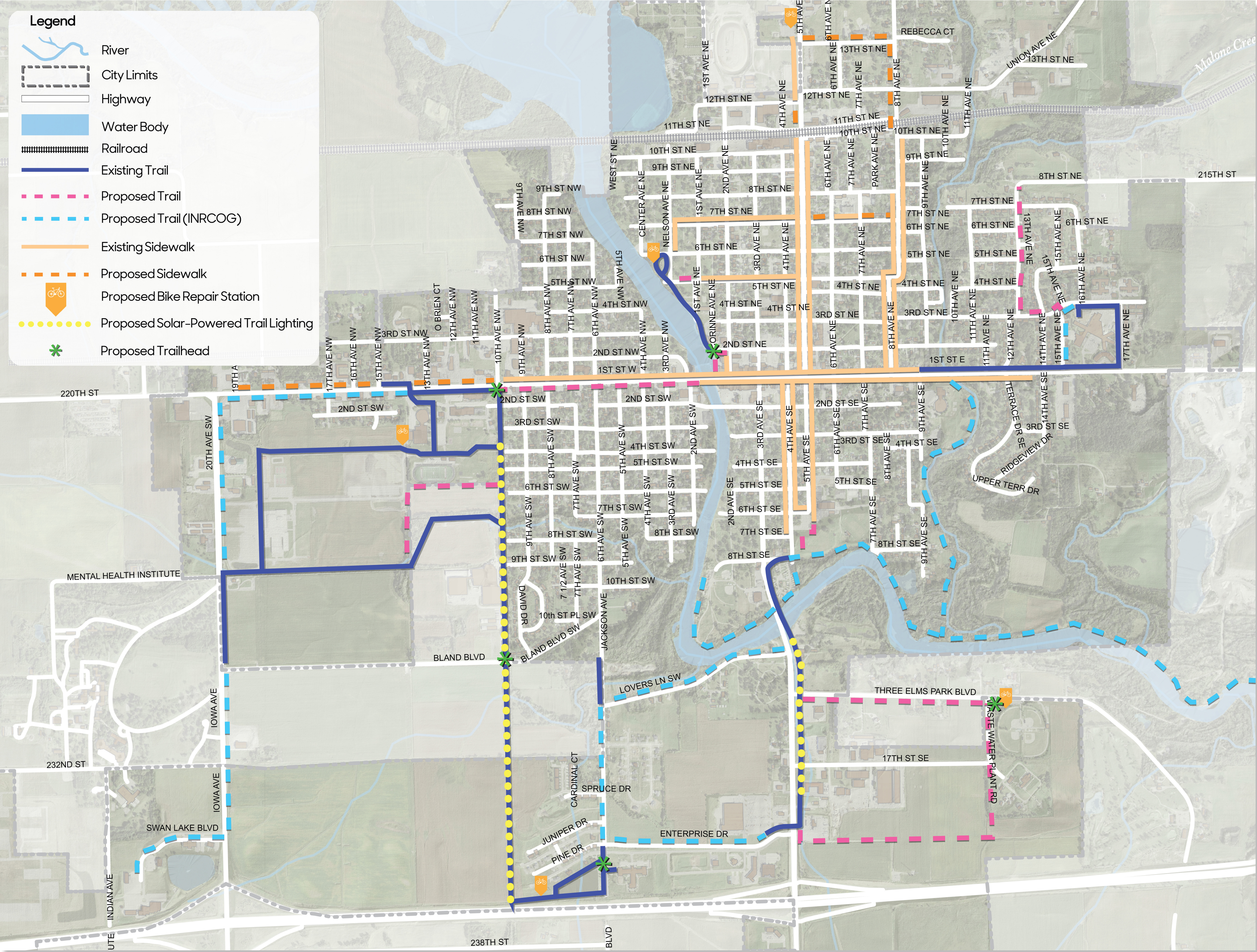
The proposed 30 feet of additional green space allows for both overstory and ornamental tree plantings, bioretention cells, sidewalk, benches, and lawn.

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1st Street W Corridor

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Existing and proposed trail and sidewalk connections in Independence.

Trail Connections

The existing trails and sidewalks in Independence are not connected, which is an issue for many residents. Improving trail amenities and connectivity was mentioned many times during the focus groups and design workshop. One resident mentioned, "There [are] areas where there [are] sidewalk and/or trails, and then there [are] areas where there's nothing and people are walking in the street," (re: What People Said, 3b).

The addition of trail amenities throughout the trail system would allow for a better user experience. Lighting on the existing trails is inconsistent and increased lighting was desired to improve trail safety and accessibility. During the design workshops aging residents expressed a desire for frequent resting places along the trails.

Liberty Trail currently links the west side of town to the schools, but there are no trail connections to the east side of the community with the Wapsipinicon River being the divider. "I ride my bike to...different places, and I find that all of the sudden...if you're on a trail—poof—you're off a trail... it isn't always easy to reach a destination by bike," (re: What People Said, 3b). The design team worked with INRCOG to determine what the existing connectivity issues were and what areas additional sidewalks or trails could be added. The design team recommended the addition of sidewalks and trails throughout town to better connect the systems as a whole.

Proposed trailheads throughout the community would provide trail users with a location for a rest stop, bike repair station, dog stations, trash receptacles, and directional way-finding signage to popular destinations.



Proposed trail amenities such as solar lighting, benches, trash receptacles, and signage could be added to existing trails such as Liberty Trail shown above.

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Trail Connections

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Trail Connections

Many residents expressed their disappointment in the disconnect to some of their favorite destinations within Independence. The Independence Baseball/Softball Complex and the Falcon Civic Center are among the top destinations that residents felt unable to access via walking or biking.

The existing pedestrian/cyclist route to the Independence Baseball/Softball Complex is a paved shoulder trail. Residents think this thye of trail is not a safe way for youth to access this destination. Many residents preferred an off-road trail solution that would run along Three Elms Park Boulevard but would have a buffer between the trail and the roadway.

The Falcon Civic Center located on the north end of Independence is a great resource for the community, but people have to drive to get there because the current sidewalk stops two blocks short of this popular location. The creation of a sidewalk or trail in front of the Buchanan County Visitor Center would allow residents to walk or bike to the Falcon Civic Center since adjacent sidewalks are already in place. It would also make it easier for people to get to the visitor center on foot or on a bike.

Existing



There is no sidewalk connection to Buchanan County Visitor Center or Falcon Civic Center from 11th Street NE. Only one block of sidewalk is needed to connect to these popular destinations.

Proposed



The addition of one block of sidewalk or trail in front of the Buchanan County Visitor Center would allow people to access the visitor center and the Falcon Civic Center by walking or biking.



Residents feel the paved shoulder trail is not the safest option to access the Independence Baseball/Softball Complex on Three Elms Park Boulevard.

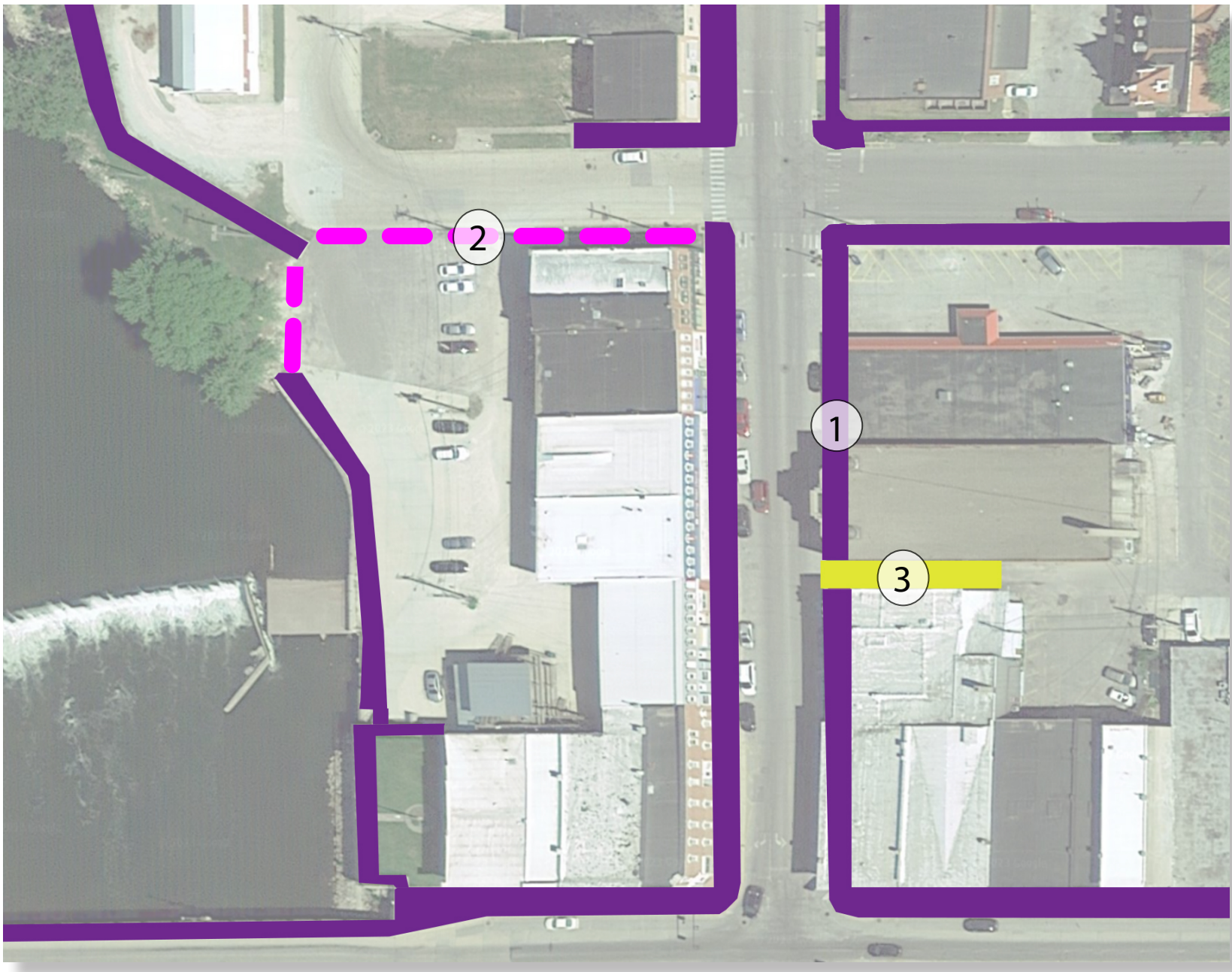


Residents would prefer an off-road trail to Independence Baseball/Softball Complex because there is adequate space and this type of trail is safer.

Trail Connections

River Walk Trail is a beautiful trail along the Wapsipinicon River that dead ends in a parking lot, with no clear route to get to Brimmer Park to the south or 2nd Ave NE to the east. Both routes lead to Independence’s business district on 1st Street E. The design team suggested a new sidewalk on the south side of 2nd Street NE. This link would allow River Walk Trail users to be connected to the business district via a hard surface trail or sidewalk. Improvements to the parking lot where River Walk Trail ends would create a better user experience and would include signage directing users where to go to access the nearby shops, restaurants, and businesses.

The steering committee suggested the alleyway south of Malek Theatre be turned into a public plaza area with outdoor seating, art, festoon lighting, and decorative pavers. Changing the alley drive would also allow for replacing the curb and adding a parallel parking spot on 2nd Ave NE. The plaza area would not impact the existing parking area to the east nor the egress for the adjacent buildings.



- Legend**
- ① Existing Sidewalks or Trails (Typical)
 - ② Proposed Sidewalks (Typical)
 - ③ Proposed Public Plaza



A worn "cow path" shows the desired connection along 2nd Street NE to Riverwalk Park.



The proposed trail connection to Riverwalk Park includes a crosswalk to the existing trail and provides a paved walkway to 2nd Ave NE.



The steering committee suggested utilizing the narrow alleyway to the south of Malek Theatre for a public plaza area.



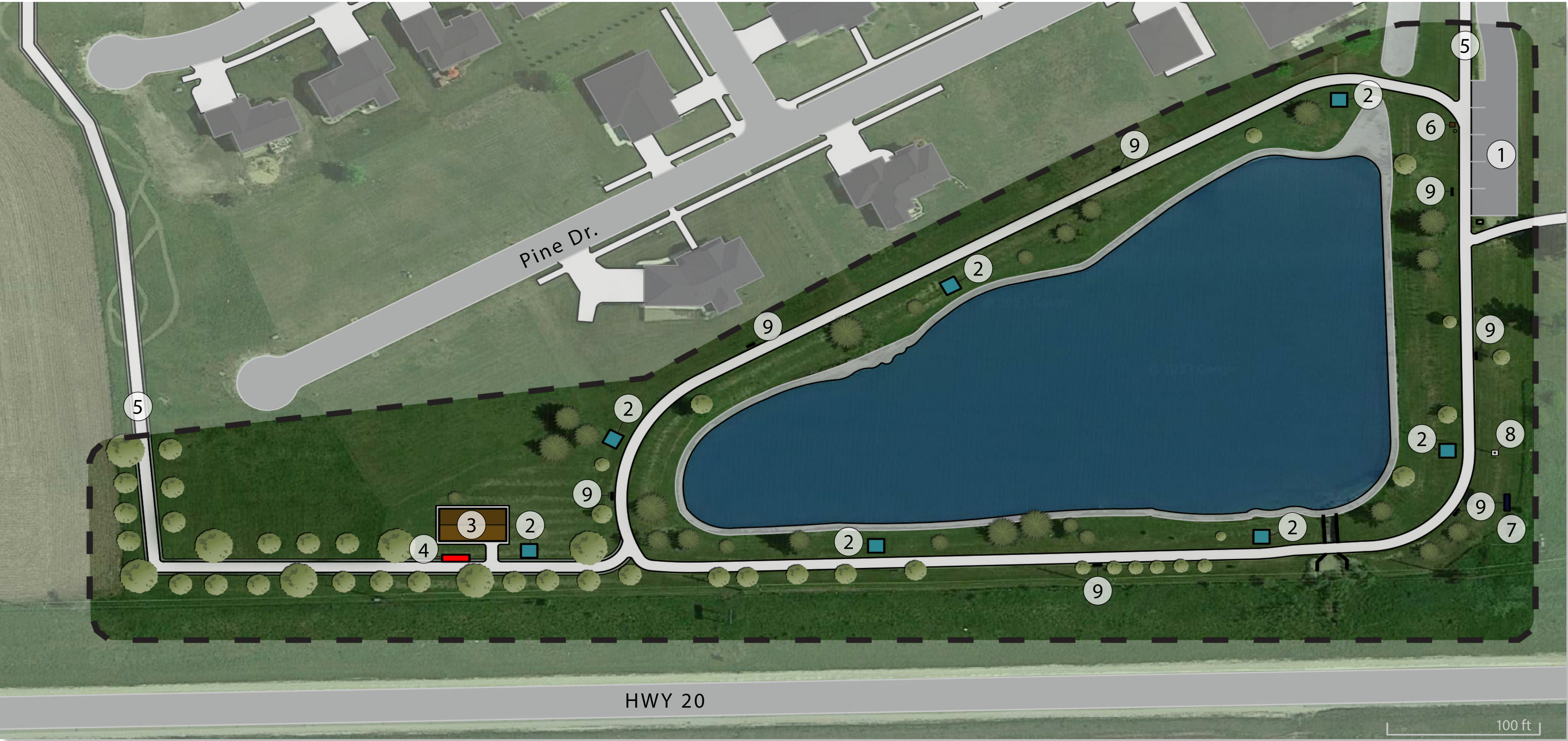
The proposed plaza space could include art, festoon lighting, planters, trash receptacles, outdoor seating, and decorative paving.

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Trail Connections

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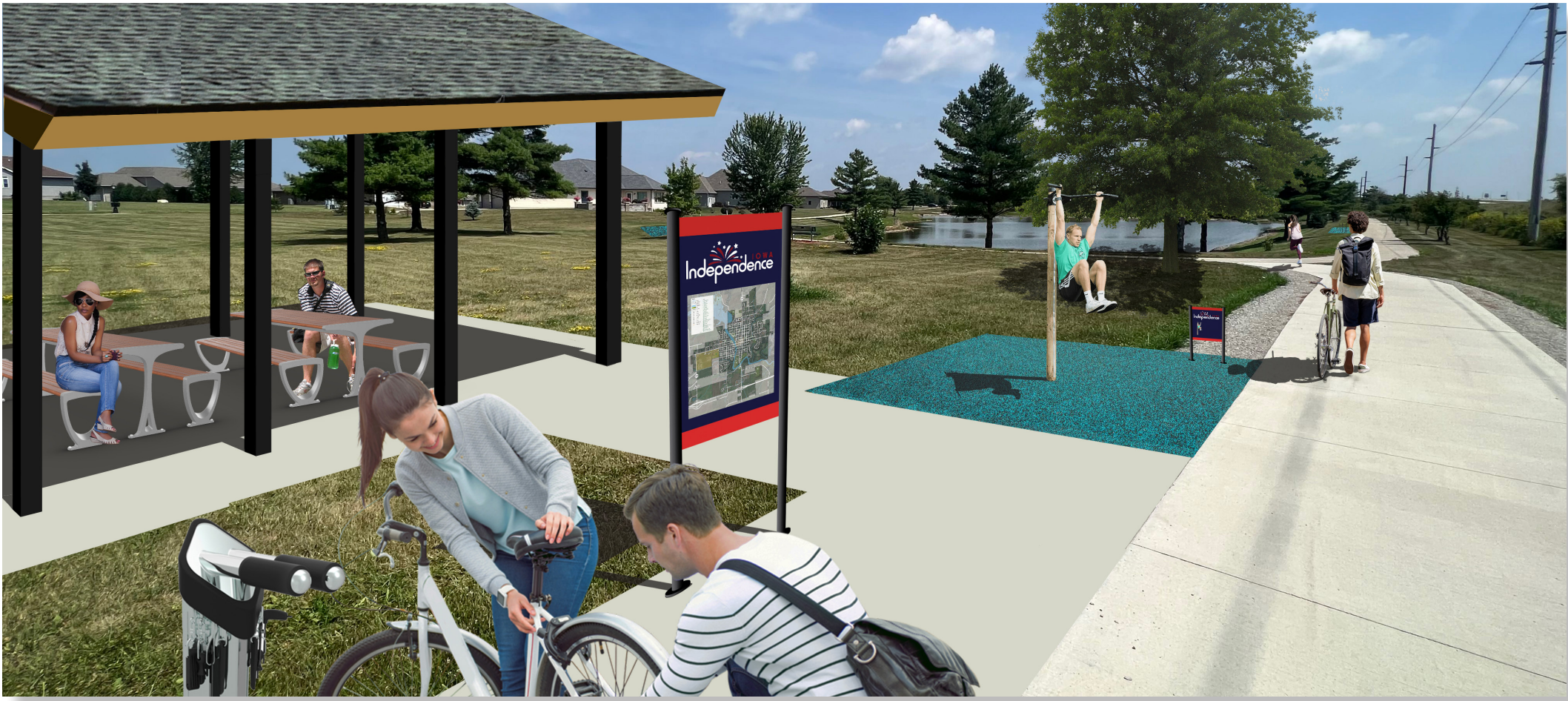




Proposed Triangle Park Trailhead improvements.



Residents asked for improvements along existing trails such as the trail around Triangle Park.



Proposed Triangle Park enhancements include a picnic shelter, bike repair station, tree plantings, signage, and exercise stations.

Triangle Park Trailhead

Triangle Park features a loop trail with parking, benches, a little free library, and shade trees. Additional amenities could be added to this park to make it a destination trailhead. The design team is proposing the addition of a picnic shelter, bike repair station, and several outdoor exercise stations. Community-wide improvements such as solar lighting, trash receptacles, benches, and signage could also be added along the existing trail.

Additional trail connections to the north along Jackson Avenue and east along Enterprise Drive will link Triangle Park to the proposed community-wide trail system.

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Triangle Park Trailhead

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Proposed way-finding signage for pedestrian and vehicular use

Proposed way-finding kiosk

Proposed interpretive signage could be used for way-finding or to showcase historical information about Independence.

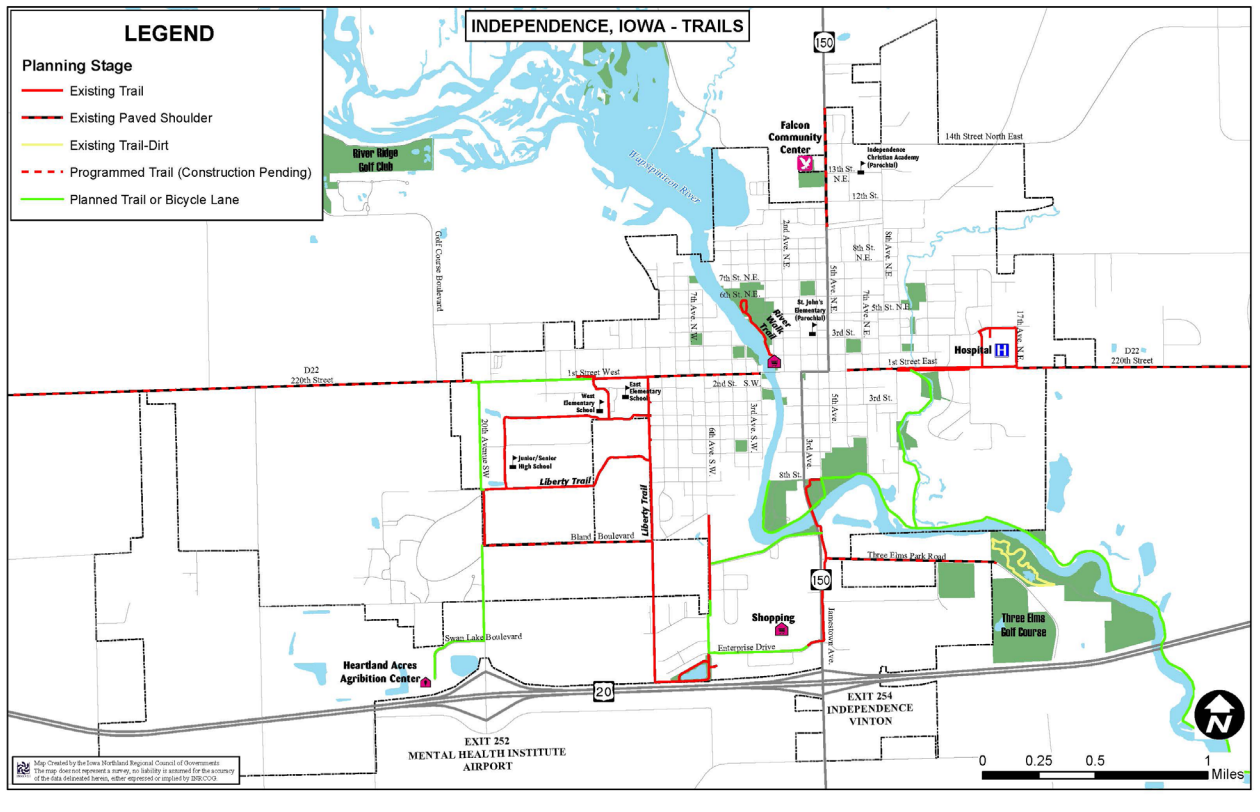


Existing entrance sign

Signage & Way-finding

The steering committee wants to create cohesive way-finding signage that could be used to help people locate destinations while visiting Independence.

During the focus group meeting one resident said, "...when [my family goes] biking, we usually look for a trail...but there [are none] that we know of...so we go on the sidewalks [on the east side of town], but then we have to stop because there's a lot of traffic," (re: What People Said, 3b).



Existing city trail map created by INRCOG.

The steering committee mentioned that visitors struggle with locating destinations in Independence, including restaurants, lodging, and entertainment (re: What People Said, 3b). The design team created a palette of way-finding signage using the existing logo that could showcase various destinations such as Liberty Trail, the downtown, and Riverwalk Park.



Proposed way-finding signage on 1st Street W directing people to Liberty Trail.

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Signage & Way-finding

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