

City Administrator Report to Mayor & City Council

2017-09-22, Edition No. 281

WEEKLY UPDATE:

- Leverage Activity: Please see the attached document. This section is pulled from the CAT grant and provides nice summary of the many great things going on in Muscatine.
- Library: The Library Board will be considering a name change to the library at their upcoming meeting. HNI is supportive of the change. The name would simply be reversed...The Musser Public Library and HNI Community Center.
- Day of Caring: Here is a quick summary related to city activities.
 - MMHA had Day of Caring crews going to Sunset Park and Hershey Manor for yard clean up.
 - DPW had 40 kids from Central Middle School sorting and stacking bricks for the Mississippi Drive Project.
 - Fire: Joe Timmsen headed up their Day of Caring activities. The plans were to place smoke detectors and do a quick home safety survey with each contact. Joe was looking at around 20 volunteers and the department was to supplement with around 4 fire fighters. Typically we break the volunteers into teams and match them with a fire fighter. The plan was to hit the trailer park on Jody/Jeff/Jill; our recent efforts have focused on the trailer courts due to the impact fire has on mobile homes. If there are enough resources we will start to hit some of the areas near downtown. We have about 100 detectors ready to be placed and will be pushing to get as many as we can into the homes. One of the benefits to partnering with Red Cross is that they have their paperwork and may be able to help us with follow up, so that people we miss, we can catch at a later time. Joe has been doing an excellent job with this program and has made a dent in the issue.
 - Art Center - Below are the projects on our list for the Day of Caring
 - Clean out and weed along fence row.
 - Clean out and weed Cedar Street entrance.
 - Wax the Sculpture - Prayer of Peace - in the courtyard
 - Weed and trim the Japanese Garden.
 - Wash the lower windows of the house and the linkage.
 - Wire brush the wrought iron fence and paint.
 - If time ...Weed and trim around the rest of the grounds including the house and the E. Bradford Burns Performing Arts Park.
 - Parks: Day of Caring projects that Parks and Recreation were involved with:
 - Assist Zoo Garden committee with cleanup on hillside in the Zoo Garden
 - Sod in front of the baseball mounds
 - Replace rubber pads in front of baseball dugouts with ag-lime
 - Paint Monsanto shelter posts
 - Paint Fuller shelter posts
 - Clean up trees and branches throughout the disc golf course
 - Cut down and remove trees and weeds from the levee from Millennium

Plaza to Musser Park

- Plant 45 donated trees from Rotary throughout parks
- Mulch trees and landscape beds in Weed Park
- Transplant prairie grasses from Mark Twain to other prairies in parks
- Iowa League: I will be attending the Iowa League of Cities conference next Wednesday through Saturday, but will be available phone cell or email.
- Servadio: Please see the attached request for council resolutions on race, ethnicity, national origin and DACA.

Resolution: The Iowa Democratic Party supports all DACA recipients and calls on the U.S. Congress to pass the DREAM Act and establish a clear pathway to citizenship.

****NOTE:** this resolution will also be sent to the Iowa Congressional Delegation

Resolution: The State Central Committee of the Iowa Democratic Party encourages Democrats to reach out to local government bodies and employers to have the difficult conversations on race, ethnicity and national origin, and to ask what their policies are and identify our allies.

Resolution: A resolution, stating that Iowa should be recognized as a safe state for DACA recipients.

These Resolutions were passed by State Central Committee, and it is my request that City Council considers these resolutions and passes them for our City and encourages these resolutions be addressed by our elected officials at every level of governance.

Muscatine County is 18% Latino and we have several other immigrant populations affected by these DACA policies. This is relevant to our population and our socioeconomic growth and development and our potential source of employees for the hospitality, healthcare and industrial industries that make our community thrive.

Thank you,
Shelly Servadio RN
Chair Veterans Caucus IDP
President LimitlessRN LLC

Leveraged Activity

The Pearls of Progress Project is just one part of a much larger and ongoing effort to make Muscatine a better place to live, work, play, and do business. All four component projects of the Pearls of Progress Project, leverage past, present, or planned community improvement projects. They are also all part of various multi-phased development plans. This leveraged approach ensures the greatest benefit to the community for dollars invested in these projects, and will in turn stimulate additional projects and activities, both public and private, that will enhance Muscatine.

The Musser Public Library and HNI Community Center is part of a much larger package of projects that have the goal of revitalizing downtown and enhancing the quality of life in Muscatine. These projects include the Mississippi Drive Corridor Project, a railroad quiet zone, the Merrill Hotel and Conventions Center, the 2nd Street Enhancement Project, and HNI's improvements to its downtown campus. Taken all together these projects represent more than \$100 million investments in the downtown/riverfront area. The Pearls of Progress Project supports these investments.

During the period of 2012 – 2016, HNI Corporation invested \$51 million dollars in a portion of their downtown campus. A new manufacturing plant was constructed and equipped with state of the art, advanced manufacturing equipment. An existing HNI, 3 story 85 year old manufacturing facility, vacated by the building of the new manufacturing plant, was completely restored to become a new HNI Corporation headquarter facility and engineering product development and innovation center. Some additional HNI facilities were demolished and the downtown campus was completely re-landscaped to offer an attractive new gateway to downtown Muscatine. As a result of this investment, HNI Corporation gifted their existing \$5 million headquarter facility to the City of Muscatine to become the new Musser Public library and HNI Community Center.



New HNI Corporation Headquarters Building in Downtown Muscatine

The new library and community location will serve as one anchor of the downtown retail commercial core, Merrill Hotel and Convention Center which currently is under construction at the intersection of Mississippi Drive and Chestnut Street at the other end of the downtown retail commercial core, will serve as the other anchor. These two anchors will significantly enhance the downtown retail commercial core, by drawing both local and non-local visitors; the spillover will greatly stimulate the growth of nearby retailers and restaurants.



Rendering of Compel Merril Hotel and Convention Center

The Merrill Hotel and Convention Center will be a four-star boutique hotel featuring 122 guest rooms, extended-stay rooms, and a three-bedroom presidential suite as well as 12,732 square feet of conference space that caters to groups of 5 to 377. Included in the conference room square footage will be a 6th floor ballroom with reception and large balcony overlooking the river, which will take optimal advantage of Mississippi River views. Parking will be accommodated in an estimated 150 space parking garage located next to the hotel. This \$42,000,000 project will be completed toward the end of 2017.

The Merrill Hotel and Convention Center will also be a key tourist amenity, and one that will be helped by completion of Pearls of Progress Project. Currently no lodging is available in the downtown area. All other motel/hotel rooms in the Muscatine area are currently located within close proximity to the US 61/Highway 38 intersection on the northeast side of Muscatine, well away from all of Muscatine recreational and cultural attractions. Once open, the hotel will employ approximately 70 individuals and will bring approximately 80+ visitors to Muscatine's downtown area daily, \$2.56 million in labor income, and \$847,789 in property, hotel/motel and local option sales taxes. Over a 10-year span, the total economic impact of the project on Muscatine County is predicted to be approximately \$31 million.

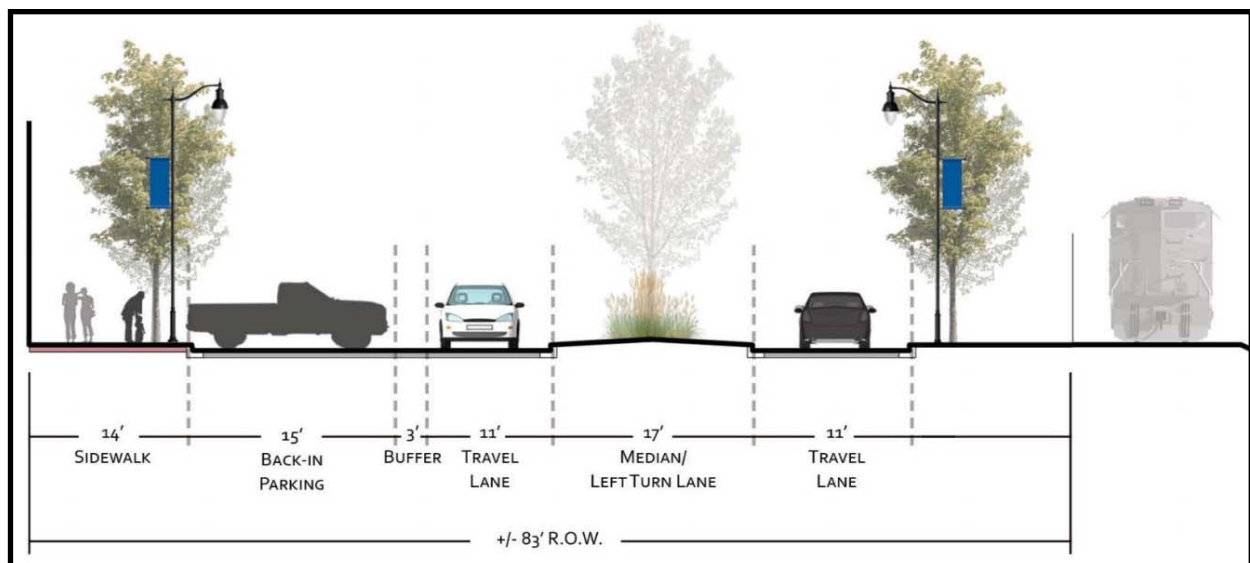


Merril Hotel and Convention Center (July of 2017)

The Mississippi Drive Corridor is a 1.6 mile segment of former state highway that runs through downtown Muscatine. Prior to the opening of the U.S. 61 Bypass in 1984, the corridor was part of U.S. 61. After the opening of the Bypass the corridor was re-designated as Business U.S. 61/State Highway 92 and remained under the jurisdiction of the Iowa Department of Transportation. In 2014 the Iowa Department of Transportation transferred jurisdiction of the Mississippi Drive Corridor to the City of Muscatine.

Mississippi Drive runs through the heart of Muscatine dividing the downtown from the riverfront. The Mississippi Drive Corridor Project fronts the site of the Musser Public Library and HNI Community Center on two sides by the. Like many communities across the U.S., the last sixty years of auto-centric transportation planning have caused Muscatine to turn its back on the riverfront. To add to the complexity, the railroad further divides Muscatine's downtown and riverfront. In addition, the railroad will be raising their tracks a foot due to the river flooding patterns, which will cause a significant grade change at the existing railroad track crossings. The City has positioned itself to leverage both of these changes as opportunities to envision and transform the Mississippi Drive Corridor in support of the community. Additional on-street parking is desired on the corridor serving as a traffic-calming tool to make the street pedestrian friendly.

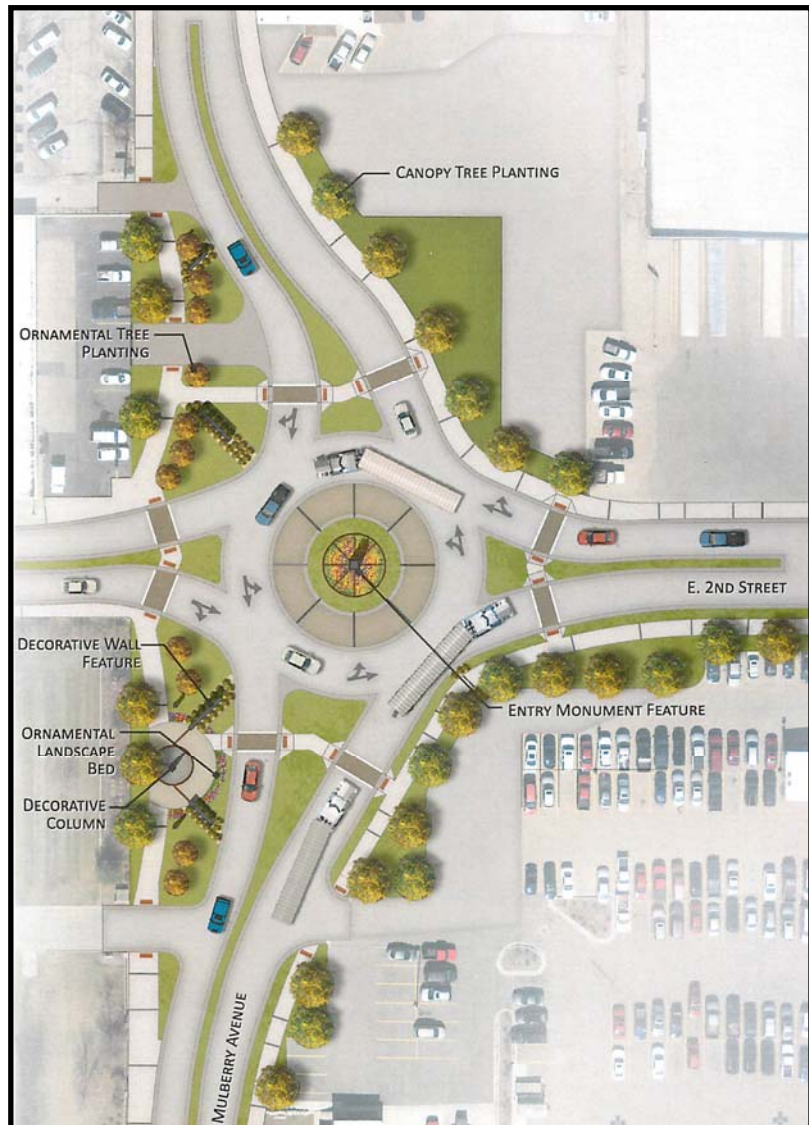
The railroad only allows four crossing points to access the river—two are open to all modes of transportation at Cedar Street and Iowa Avenue. The crossings at Sycamore Street and Chestnut Street are pedestrian/bike crossings. These are key locations where new innovative tools should be applied to enhance the safety and efficiency for all roadway users while optimizing public access to the riverfront. Transforming Mississippi Drive Corridor will serve as a catalyst for enhancing economic development, quality of life, community health and well-being.



Mississippi Drive Corridor Project Design Profile through Downtown Muscatine

As part of the Mississippi Drive Corridor Project, the Mulberry Avenue/2nd Street intersection, the Musser Public Library and HNI Community Center will be located on the southwest corner of this intersection, will be reconstructed as a roundabout. This roundabout includes provisions for an entry feature monument, this in conjunction with the new library and community center creates an opportunity to create a truly welcoming entry gateway into the retail commercial of downtown Muscatine.

The Mississippi Drive Corridor Project will be the largest single public works project ever undertaken by the City of Muscatine. Ground was broken on this project in the spring of 2017, with completion being targeted for the end of the 2018 construction season.



Design for Mulberry Avenue/2nd Street Intersection

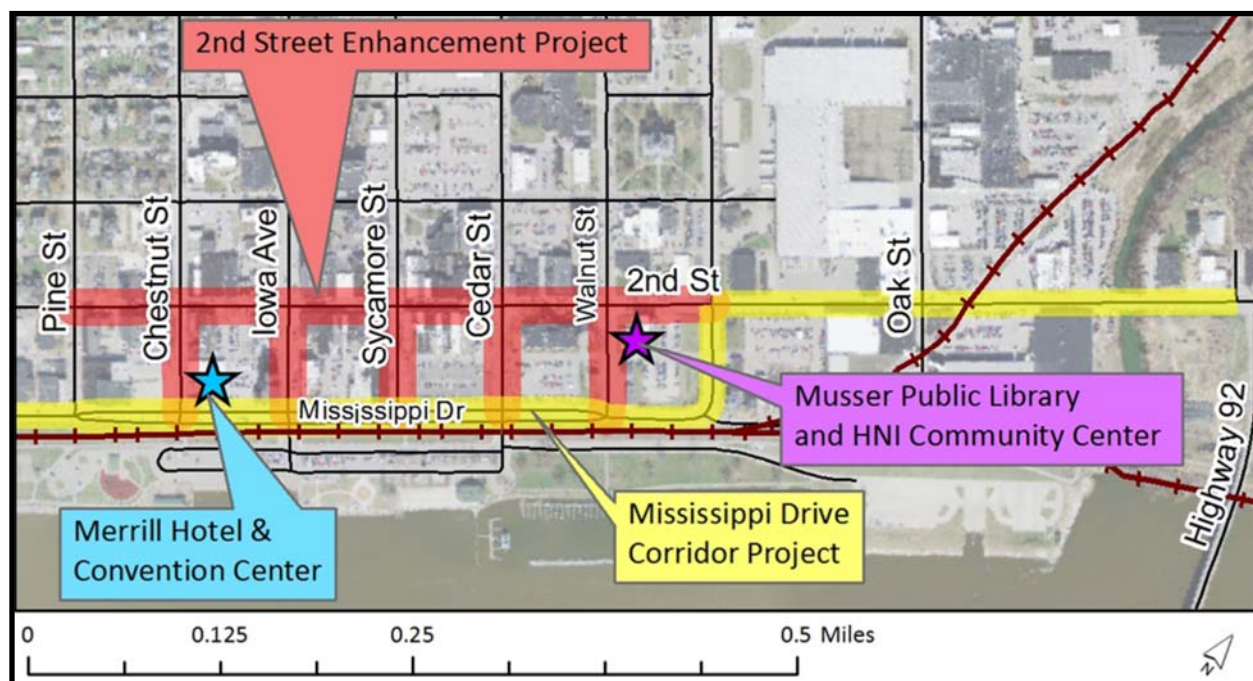


Mississippi Drive Under Construction in July of 2017

In conjunction with the Mississippi Drive Corridor Project, a railroad quiet zone encompassing six rail crossings in the downtown area. The 24-hour noise from train horns operating along the tracks that parallel Mississippi Drive has long been disruptive to those living and doing business in downtown Muscatine. The train horns affect as much as one-third of Muscatine's population and lowers property values for up to 5 blocks from the tracks. The quiet zone will scale approximately one mile in parallel to the Mississippi Drive Corridor Project. The quiet zone improvements, which are being funded by a privately funded with up to \$1 million, will address this issue and should be in place at the end of 2017. The Musser Public Library and HNI Community Center will greatly benefit from the establishment of the quiet zone, as it is located approximately 500 feet from a rail crossing currently at which train horns are frequently sounded.

The 2nd Street Enhancement Project, with an estimated cost of \$375,000, will be undertaken after the completion of the Mississippi Drive Corridor Project. With the completion of this project all four of the streetscapes bordering the Musser Public Library and HNI Community Center will have been upgraded and enhanced. The project is composed of the enhancement of 2nd Street between Pine Street and Mulberry Avenue and the 100 block of Pine St, Chestnut St, Iowa Ave, Sycamore St, Cedar St, and Walnut St, using the design principles established in the Mississippi Drive Corridor Project. Components of this project will include: repair and replacement of sidewalks; installation of ADA ramps; upgraded and resized tree planters; tree plantings; improvements to pedestrian crossings; upgrades signage; and other streetscape enhancements

This project will assist in the revitalization of Downtown Muscatine by leveraging off the completed Mississippi Drive Corridor. The need for improvement to the downtown 2nd Street streetscape has been a long-identified community need. This project will extend the design principles established with the Mississippi Drive Corridor project to 2nd Street. This will create an attractive and coherent downtown streetscape.



Projection Locations

By the end of the 2018 construction season the following downtown projects will largely be complete The Pearls of Progress Project, the Mississippi Drive Corridor Project, the railroad quiet zone, the Merrill Hotel and Conventions Center, the 2nd Street Enhancement Project, and HNI's improvements to its downtown campus. The successful completion of these projects will give the community the momentum to undertake a major upgrade to the portions of the Mississippi Riverfront which adjoin the downtown. This vision for a riverfront, which both improves the quality of life in Muscatine and will be an attraction to visitors, was set forth in the updated Riverfront Master Plan which was finalized in June of 2016. Success of the Pearls of Progress Project will greatly help implementation of the updated Riverfront Master Plan. The next steps in the successful implementation of the Riverside Park Master Plan Update is for the City to start identifying special interest groups and/or committees that will be responsible for raising money, identifying priorities, and the overall implementation of the plan's updates.

The overarching goal of updating the Riverside Park Master Plan Update has been to identify the community's shared vision for the next evolution of the park, and to craft a means for achieving that vision. In 1997, the Consensus Plan Mississippi Riverfront Study was adopted by the City of Muscatine, Iowa. The purpose of this 2017 Plan Update was to update the 1997 Mississippi Riverfront Plans. Now, twenty years later, the City of Muscatine has successfully implemented the majority of the elements described in the original master plan. Implementation of this plan will continue to leverage the riverfront as an asset, helping to promote Muscatine's downtown as an opportunity for investment.

- Creating a performance/entertainment venue within the park.
- Developing a destination public gathering place at the former boat landing.
- Creating a destination for Mississippi Riverboat Cruises.
- Opportunities for food and beverage options along the Mississippi River.
- Increasing riverfront amenities.
- Increasing and improving pedestrian connectivity.

The Master Plan which was finalized in June of 2017, after a process of substantial public and stakeholder input, contains over 30 individual elements, with the following being the elements that will most increase the draw of the Muscatine Riverfront/Downtown to attract visitors from outside the area.

Amphitheater and Plaza and Lawn – A Tensile structure roof, with dual facing plazas for both large and small events. Small plaza backdrops existing athletic courts. The smaller plaza is an ideal location for outdoor classrooms or small gatherings. Integral to the overall design of the amphitheater is the ability to house the Muscatine Symphony by being able to hold up 75 musicians.

Riverboat Cruise Dock and Gangway - This dock is a vital component to increasing economic value within the park and Muscatine. By making Muscatine a stop for cruise boats, tourists will depart and arrive through Downtown Muscatine and Riverside Park. The location of this dock is strategically placed to entice passengers to explore Downtown Muscatine and Riverside Park. Tour buses have ample room to stage passengers in the parking lot as they board or disembark.

Transient Boat Dock - Provides room for large transient boats traveling the river. Boats could range from 30-60 feet long. In addition to boat dockage, this dock creates yet another opportunity for users to interact with the Mississippi River.

Public Scalloped Terrace - Multiple terraces overlapping each other. Offers users an experience of exploration as they make their way to the river. Curved planters help to mitigate the forces of flood waters against the shore and help to create open views not impeded by railings. Perched wetlands allow vegetation to thrive along the waters edge despite river fluctuations. These wetlands also help to deter people from falling in or accidentally entering the river.

Beer Garden Venue - Public/Rentable Space - A dedicated area within Riverside Park to enjoy food and beverages surrounded by picnic tables, lights and games. A new pile supported dock creates additional space on the river for the beer garden and outdoor entertainment. Area provides additional transient boat parking, or as a programmable barge dock. This beer garden has the potential to be an economic resource for the city through the operation of profit sharing and long-term lease agreements. Two large ramps on either end will continue to allow vehicle/bicycle/pedestrian access to the river's edge, making this an ideal venue for ending of RAGBRAI.

Excerpts from the plan that depict all proposed elements of the Riverside Park Master Plan can be found on pages 119 through 127.

Currently, there are two disconnected trail networks in Muscatine. The first is the 3.5 mile system located in northwest Muscatine, which is comprised of trails maintained by the City of Muscatine, the Muscatine County Conservation Board, and the Muscatine Community YMCA. The second is an approximately 10-mile trail stretching from Deep Lakes Park along the Mississippi River through downtown Muscatine to the eastern terminus at Solomon



Kent-Stein Park to Deep Lake Park Trail. Under Construction

Road just east of the Muscatine city limits. The Westside Trail will not only link these two trail networks into a single community-wide trail, but it will also strengthen the trail network. The City of Muscatine is currently constructing the Kent-Stein Park to Deep Lake Park Trail. The construction of this 4.5-mile trail will reach completion in October of 2017. Upon completion of this trail, the Westside Trail is the next logical expansion of the Muscatine trail network, as is envisioned in the City of Muscatine Comprehensive Plan. Both the Westside Trail and the Kent-Stein Park to Deep Lake Park Trail will begin at the western terminus of the Riverfront Trail within Kent-Stein Park. This is an ideal location for such a major junction in the trail network.

The Muscatine Community Dog Park will be an entirely new type of recreational amenity in Muscatine, creating the opportunity for physical activities that do not currently exist. The proposal for the Muscatine Community Dog Park is envisioned as the initial phase of what is ultimately desired. It is anticipated that a future phase will significantly enhance this



Kent-Stein Park to Deep Lake Park Trail. Under Construction

park. The Muscatine Community Dog Park will also benefit from very close proximity to the Muscatine Canine Activity Center, a non-profit indoor facility that is used for dog shows, training activities, and other events.

The proposed dog park is within 100 yards of the junction of the Westside Trail, Kent-Stein Park to Deep Lakes Park Trail, and the Riverfront Trail. The dog park is also connected directly to this junction by a one-mile loop trail that runs on the west side of Houser Street around City-owned property that includes the Dog Park, a native prairie planting, the compost site, the Muscatine Transfer Station, and the Muscatine Slough. The ability for the parking lot, drinking fountains, etc. to also serve a trailhead provides substantial savings over the cost of separately developing such facilities for each of the three projects, and provides a much better return on the dollars invested for these establishments.

The siting of the Muscatine Community Dog Park has directly lead to the creation of the Houser Pollinator Park. When the City Council dedicated six acres of City owned land previously leased out for agricultural purposes, it left an additional eight acres of formerly farmed land with no designated use. The Houser Pollinator Park a joint project between the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the Muscatine Pollinator project launched a project in 2017 to plant this former agricultural field with diverse, native pollinator seed mixes. This seed mix will provide host plants and nectar sources for an array of pollinators to include butterflies, moths, beetles, bees, and bats while also providing food and shelter for birds and mammals, and other species. Native bees and the monarch butterfly, which have seen recent population declines, will benefit greatly from



Houser Pollinator Park



Trail in the Houser Pollinator Park

this restored habitat. In addition to providing critically-needed pollinator habitat, this site will function as an outdoor classroom to demonstrate the importance of pollinators in the landscape. Over time, and with proper management, this diverse prairie will provide structural heterogeneity across the project site and provide a collectable seed source for dispersal to other areas. returning degraded landscapes to healthy, diverse ecosystems through ecological restoration.

Currently the operations and maintenance of Deep Lakes Park is paid for entirely by the Muscatine County Conservation Board's general fund as there is currently no user fee associated with the park. The construction of the four cabins that are being proposed as part of the Pearls of Progress Project would increase the operation maintenance costs of Deep Lakes Park by an estimated \$16,000 per year. Project revenue from cabin rental fees is projected at \$48,000 per year. The creation of a revenue stream will help the County Conservation Board operate and maintain existing improvements to Deep Lakes Park as well as making it easier to make more of the improvements called for in the Deep Lakes Park Master Plan.

The construction of cabins at Deep Lakes Park will also support activities at the Muscatine Soccer Complex and Kent-Stein Park. which together attracts over 200,000 visitors per year, by offering those traveling to events there a place to stay that is only a 5-minute drive away and also directly connected via a multi-use trail.



Kent-Stein Park to Deep Lake Park Trail. Under Construction near the Site of the Deep Lakes Park Cabins

