GUIDING PRINCIPLES
“There is no logic that can be superimposed on the city; people make it, and it is to them, not buildings, that we must fit our plans.”

- Jane Jacobs, Author
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

ACHIEVE A UNIFIED VISION
LIVE HEALTHY
STRENGTHEN NEIGHBORHOODS
KEEP BUSINESS VIBRANT
CONNECT THE CITY
EMBRACE THE OUTDOORS
STREAMLINE SERVICES
EnvisionCR’s guiding principles reflect a community focused on a vibrant and dynamic future of lasting value - one that promotes public health, social engagement, a robust economy, natural resources and life-long learning. At the same time, Cedar Rapids embraces history and a future of artistic, cultural, scientific, and technical vitality.

The tragic flooding of Cedar Rapids in 2008 left a city of districts significantly ravaged. That the people’s spirit rose well above the river levels leaves a flood legacy dramatically counter to the original destruction. And now Cedar Rapids looks forward with enthusiasm. The city has done much planning post-flood. Residents could easily have grown planning-weary, unable to wrap their arms around yet another effort in the city’s recovery. That has not proved the case. The residents and leaders here have welcomed the opportunity to plan for a long-term future in the hopes they can continue on the post-flood trajectory of Cedar Rapids: better than ever.

The people of Cedar Rapids now plan proactively for their future. Their conversations point to a set of principles that should shape the city’s work ahead for years to come. It should be noted the four themes of sustainability, health, placemaking, and efficiency are ever present as an undercurrent to these guiding principles. These principles - intended to drive decision-making - are derived from the many stakeholder conversations and broad public input sessions held in support of this plan.

The guiding principles are followed immediately by the land use maps, as they are a direct result of these principles and foundational to the overall plan.
ACHIEVE A UNIFIED VISION

COLLABORATE TO ACHIEVE A UNIFIED VISION FOR THE CITY AND REGION.

REGIONALISM

Cedar Rapids desires to facilitate a regional environment that supports not just individual community or neighborhood needs, but recognizes the importance of regional collaboration and regional vision. The Cultural Corridor, annexation and utility agreements, and the trails network serve as features in getting this work underway. Enhanced regional functions and goals need to be a part of the future of Cedar Rapids and its surroundings.

CREATIVE HUB TO THE CREATIVE CORRIDOR

Cedar Rapids’ role in the Cultural Corridor referenced above reinforces this concept of regionalism. A cultural corridor implies cultural exchange, not single direction transfers. Cedar Rapids residents want to see NewBo, Paramount, the Czech-Slovak District, the McGrath Amphitheatre and more coalesce into a critical cultural mass with traction.
CREATE A HEALTHY AND DESIRABLE PLACE TO LIVE.

Healthy places support residents' mental and physical health and in so doing, quickly attain a "buzz" – a distinction as a place for families and young professionals to call home. Cedar Rapids has been designated a Bicycle Friendly Community and recently named an All-American City. These designations confirm Cedar Rapids’ alignment with this principle.

A COMMUNITY OF CHOICE
Cedar Rapids’ residents ask for options. Many speak to a desire to embrace diversity in all things. They want to walk as well as ride, promote entrepreneurship while embracing industry, connect to the river or enjoy an upland neighborhood. They welcome an opportunity to design daily living that meets their personal, family, inter-generational, and cultural needs.

DOWNTOWN VITALITY
The public sees the current downtown as mostly business interests - but they aspire to see boutiques and start-ups and artful spaces. They love NewBo and want more.

INDUSTRY EMBRACED
Cedar Rapids’ riverfront reflects its river-industry roots at key points in the heart of the city. How might Cedar Rapids embrace that history and tell its story - not just as economic advantage but as potential cultural icon? How do smokestacks shift from perceived blight to a source of texture, authenticity and appreciation? Residents anticipate this as a challenge they intend to address over time.
STRENGTHEN NEIGHBORHOODS

STRENGTHEN THE QUALITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS’ NEIGHBORHOODS. CREATE HOUSING OPTIONS FOR ALL.

TRADITIONS AND FUTURE NEEDS
Strong neighborhoods honor the traditions of the past, but keep a mindful eye to resident needs for the future – through social, cultural, work, health, learning and recreation opportunities. Historic preservation also helps play a key role in this endeavor. Developing neighborhoods rich in living options supports the community of choice theme and builds community character.

NEIGHBORHOOD HUBS PRESERVING COMMUNITY CHARACTER
Neighbors speak to a need for greater empowerment, identity, and a resulting strengthening of character and community. Cedar Rapids residents ask for connections throughout Cedar Rapids, but they still desire hubs of vitality dispersed throughout the community - allowing each neighborhood its focal point, its distinction.
REINVEST IN THE CITY’S BUSINESS CORRIDORS AND DISTRICTS. COMPETE SUCCESSFULLY FOR PRIVATE INVESTMENT.

Cedar Rapids continues to support and benefit from the long-term employers, many with agricultural, technological or other innovative roots. New opportunities emerge through entrepreneurship, incubators, and innovation corridors. Cedar Rapids has enjoyed success through attracting small satellites of larger businesses and encouraging their local growth.

Residents want to provide the foundation for experiences both tactile and technological, adventurous and reflective, entrepreneurial and artisan. The Maker Movement, “authentic networking,” local foods, and cultural creatives need increasing room(s) - indoors and out - to experiment, stretch and grow here.

Industry and economic development experts want Cedar Rapids to better integrate education and specific work-force needs in the community. They speak of a potential shortfall in the jobs they need filled and what the workforce can provide. Interest in improved integration of Cedar Rapids’ dynamic education centers into the fabric of the community surfaces here. Ongoing dialogue between businesses and academia are important.
CONNECT ALL PARTS OF THE CITY. INTEGRATE LAND USES AND ENCOURAGE PEDESTRIAN-SCALED DESIGN.

Cedar Rapids’ growth of the future includes increased linkages and/or bringing services and choices together for access, collaboration, and synergism.

PLACES AND PATHS

Residents seek physical connections that reflect the “community choice” theme. Walking, cycling, and public transportation must be as accessible as options for the car. Closer proximity of areas where residents can live, work, learn, and play allow for easy pathways and/or merged services.
EMBRACE THE OUTDOORS

PRESERVE NATURAL AREAS AND MANAGE IMPACTS. ESTABLISH A PREMIER SYSTEM FOR PARKS AND RECREATION.

A post-flood Cedar Rapids has already made great strides in embracing its natural systems. Relatively recent studies speak to the value of environmentally sensitive areas and large tracts of habitat to support diverse plants and wildlife. Residents need nature integrated into daily living for physical and mental health.

A GREENER CITY

The riverfront greenway is just one piece of a community seeking at every turn to make its mark in the arena of sustainability. Pockets of dynamic social spaces coupled with relatively high per capita park acres have inspired residents and leaders to promote public health in daily living, to support restoration, multi-family housing, energy conservation and alternative fuels, complete streets, sustainable sites, easy-access trails - the list goes on. They ask for a community that makes a commitment to sustainability.
 PROVIDE EFFICIENT URBAN SERVICES.

Many see the public-private partnership - in varied configurations - as one of the paths to Cedar Rapids’ future success. They see those partnerships most enriched through government systems that foster collaboration and coordination. One-stop-shops, all stakeholder roundtables and consistency across boundaries in rules and rule-making surface as potential tools for Cedar Rapids’ progressive future.
UNDERSTANDING MAPS

The Development Concept map, Map 1, shows land uses and road connections for potential growth areas. The elements of the development concept are explained in detail in the elements of this plan. The concept shows more land than needed to accommodate 2035 population projections.

The Future Land Use Map on the opposite page - combines the development concept with existing land uses and longer term growth areas. This map shows land use transitions that will not occur for many years, beyond the 2035 time frame.

Both the development concept and future land use map are based on the guiding principles and adopt an intensity-based approach to managing land development.

Important Points About the Maps

The maps depict new land uses for privately owned properties. The transition of these properties from their current use to the depicted use is expected to occur over time, in response to market demands, as property owners voluntarily sell, develop, or change the use of their land.
The Future Land Use Map presents the land uses envisioned for the future. The new land uses represented on this map will transition over time, as property owners voluntarily sell, develop, or change their property.

**Future Land Use Map.** The Future Land Use map provides flexibility for a variety of land uses within each Land Use Typology Area (LUTA). The map should provide guidance for:

- Levels of intensity and density.
- Generalized land use locations and transitions: Minor variations in land use, such as a small civic use on a residential block, are not reflected in this generalized map, but may still be permitted per new zoning regulations.
- Collector and Arterial Street connections: Critical arterial and collector street connections are specified on this map, though the exact routes will depend on detailed engineering studies. Local streets will be determined as development occurs. See ConnectCR.
- Critical Natural Resource Areas: Areas are based on the development suitability map in GreenCR. The boundaries of these areas should be given significant weight in decision-making.

**Guide for Land Use Decisions.** The Future Land Use map will guide the land use and development decisions of the City Planning Commission and the City Council. As such, it serves to inform property owners and encourage development proposals that are consistent with the community vision.