

# **Report on the City of Bettendorf Community Listening Sessions**

February 22-23, 2012

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## Executive Summary

On February 22 and 23, 2012, the City of Bettendorf hosted two community listening sessions at which 86 individuals expressed their opinions on the City's past accomplishments and future directions to provide data to validate or suggest a change to the City's vision for the future. Participants divided into six tables each night with each group answering two common, overarching questions and two specific questions designed to elicit a deeper analysis of key aspects of the vision statement. One or two tables each night answered the specific questions (see Appendix C).

Overall, attendees expressed very positive impressions of the City, its past accomplishments, their perceptions of its future direction. City services, the education systems, Learning Campus, bike trails, and city leadership all received high praise as important city accomplishments over the preceding five years. The need for a comprehensive riverfront development plan that leverages the river's unique amenities and general economic development led the desired future directions of the City.

When delving deeper, these ideas cluster around three dominant, interrelated themes: economic development, family centeredness, and city services. Questions of regionalism and civic pride as well as an extended discussion of the bike paths and recreational trails (as a pending City Council issue) emerged as secondary themes. All participants agreed that Bettendorf should continue with its past accomplishments (e.g., the high quality of city services, the Learning Campus, education, etc.). As we delved into specific ideas for realizing the City's future direction, fewer consensus emerged.

- All agreed that **downtown needs planned development**, likely after completion of the new I-74 bridge (also hailed as an important future project), but visions for downtown differed. Some preferred primarily a retail shopping destination, while others voiced a desire for primarily an event, entertainment, and recreational area that builds upon and takes advantage of the river.
- A strong and deep desire exists to **gain use of and access to more of the riverfront** (as part of downtown redevelopment) with a mixed-use approach that includes shopping, restaurants, walking trails, festivals, living options, and green spaces.
- **The city needs to grow**; how and by how much became the points of contention. Strong encouragement existed to develop the I-80/Middle Road area for high technology, white-collar jobs, leveraging the strengths of and developing ties to Scott Community College and the Bettendorf school districts. The need for affordable housing and maintaining the quality of existing housing and infrastructure were important concerns while adding new projects.
- Many felt that Bettendorf **caters to families** with low cost, high quality activities for pre-school through elementary school children. However, this may trade-off with a sufficient number and quality of activities and support for other segments of the population (e.g., teens, young professionals, elderly). Many suggested that downtown and riverfront development and future parks and recreation programs focus on these constituents groups.

Overall, the respondents' commented very favorable about Bettendorf, the City's past accomplishments and their views of the future direction of the City. No one voice concern about the overall future direction of Bettendorf. Suggestions instead came more in the vein of ways to build upon these successes and move the City ahead more quickly – or less quickly in some cases. As such, this group validated the City's vision statement.

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## **Background Information**

The City of Bettendorf hosted two community listening sessions on February 22 and 23, 2012, at the Waterfront Convention Center in downtown Bettendorf to find out from a cross-section of invited residents their perceptions of recent city accomplishments and, more importantly, their desires for the future direction of the city. The city developed their vision in 2003 (see Appendix A for current vision) and validated it in 2006 with a focus group of approximately 70 people. They felt that sufficient time had lapsed to justify another review of their vision by their citizens.

The city released their 2012 budget the same evening as the first session so many citizens had the budget on their minds; likewise, the City Council was in the midst of contemplating the extension of the bike path which they tabled from a meeting prior to these session to a meeting in March. Regional transportation discussions continued across the Quad Cities with attempts to fund an Amtrak route from Chicago to the Quad Cities approved in concept and funding for the new I-74 bridge advancing slowly. Construction on the 53<sup>rd</sup> Street interchange as part of the broader I-74 project had begun the prior summer; the State of Iowa continues to purchase downtown properties that this project will displace.

Nationally, the primary season for the 2012 presidential elections had just begun with the Iowa caucuses about 6 weeks prior. Unemployment and the economy continued to dominate the national headlines, with the Quad Cities generally spared from some of the economic extremes that impacted other communities. Quad-City unemployment rate for February was 8.5%, slightly higher than the national average of 8.3% and much higher than the statewide rate of 5.3%. This represented a slight decline in local unemployment compared to January (8.7%) and the same level as a year prior. The Quad Cities' two major employers – Deere and Alcoa – continually posted record or near record profits in recent quarters, signaling the overall economic vitality of the region. Internationally, uncertain economies in Europe and Asia impacted the national economy and economic confidence while the withdrawal of troops from Iraq and pending withdrawal from Afghanistan changed the nation's military footprint around the world.

## **Listening Session Logistics**

The City Administrator, mayor, city staff, and City Council members developed a list of invitees from those who serve in different official and volunteer roles throughout the city. For example, the invitation list included the superintendents from both school districts, students and teachers from the three high schools, and citizens who serve on the park board, library foundation, school foundations, as well as graduates of the Citizen's Academy. Review of the list for representation of various constituents revealed a shortage of young professionals who were added as well. All totaled, 37 individuals attended the first evening (February 22) with 49 the second evening for a total of 86 voices represented in this report.

Prior to each meeting, city staff randomly assigned attendees to one of six tables, assuring balanced representation across tables as much as possible. City staff and City Council members attended as informational resources and to listen to comments first hand but did not actively participate in the discussions. They circulated around the room, stopping at different tables as people had questions within their area of expertise or as the topics caught their interest.

The meetings began with a welcome from the mayor followed by a logistical explanation by Linda Wastyn of Wastyn & Associates who, along with co-leader Randy Richards, developed and implemented this project. A trained facilitator, recruited from among the faculty and staff at St. Ambrose (list in

Appendix B), led each table’s discussion. Facilitators walked their table through four questions – the first two of which all tables answered and the next two were answered by one or two tables each night – taking notes and audio recording the comments. This report comes from those notes and audio recordings. All totaled, participants answered eleven questions (see Appendix C for list of questions). Groups discussed each question for approximately a half hour with facilitators assuring that each person at their table participated. Each table reported their conclusions to the entire group during the final hour. Each meeting lasted from 6:00 pm until approximately 10:00 pm, with the City Administrator thanking participants upon the conclusion of the meeting. Participants enjoyed a complimentary sandwich buffet and snacks throughout the evening.

### Section 1: Bettendorf’s Most Significant Accomplishments

The first question – answered by all participants – served both as a warm up to get individuals thinking about the city’s accomplishment and a way to begin to gather perceptions about what these individuals feel is important for the city to accomplish. The question asked:

*What would you say are the City of Bettendorf’s three most significant accomplishments in the last five years?*

Responses grouped into 15 themes; the frequency of each appears in Table 1. Two items nearly tied as the top improvements mentioned by participants: city services and education. Because of this and close ties among many of the remaining items, we discuss them in tiers. The relative rank of each tier better reflects their significance among participants than the ranks within each tier. That is, whether the Learning Campus ranks ahead or behind city leadership becomes less important than the fact that both reside in the second tier among respondents.

City Services: Overall, participants expressed the sentiment that “City services are specular – garbage picked up on time, snow removed, recycling, city website – things that are supposed to work, work. That’s not always true, especially when there are challenges.” Perhaps because we met at the end of February, many people mentioned snow removal as one of the exemplary services the city provides. Another individual appreciated that the city has “maintained the quality and responsiveness of services in spite of the downturn of the economy and uncertainty.” Finally, another individual noted that “there were not talks of cuts” to city services, which he especially appreciated in light of the budget conversations occurring in some of the neighboring cities.

Education ranked as a close second as a point of pride for the participants attending these listening sessions. Most participants recognized the importance of a strong educational system for attracting residents to Bettendorf, especially more white-collar and middle- and upper-management types. At the same time, they caution that the city needs to assure a sufficient stock of affordable housing (see below)

**Table 1: Most Important City Improvements**

	Number	Theme
Tier 1	25	City Services
	24	Education
Tier 2	16	Learning Campus/Library
	16	Bike Trails
	15	City Leadership
	14	Overall perception/Civic pride
	12	Parks and recreation
Tier 3	11	Housing
	9	Retail
	8	Waterfront Convention Center
	7	Downtown
	6	Riverfront
	6	I-74
	5	Growth
5	City infrastructure	

for Bettendorf residents, especially the teachers who staff the schools; many cannot afford to live in the community where they teach. While most participants recognize that the schools' management and the city's management differ, one participant described the city and schools' relationship as "symbiotic" and "reciprocal," recognizing that "we can't have a good community without good schools and schools attract good people for the city." Others mentioned how well the city has worked with the schools, ranging from coordinating the street project in front of Bettendorf High School with the opening of the school year, jointly negotiating materials for the Bettendorf High School auditorium project with other city construction projects to save money on materials, to the land swap with Pleasant Valley Schools that will allow the construction of Forest Grove Park and construction of a new elementary school.

Learning Campus, including the Bettendorf Library, Bettendorf Family Museum, and the newly-added Faye's Field, ranked as the third most mentioned top accomplishment from attendees and begins the second tier. They liked how Faye's Field both used the long-vacant Eagle's building and complemented both the library and museum, creating more of a campus-like feel. Specific aspects of the library mentioned included its continued development, upgrades in technology, teen center, Young Adult area, book selection, media center, and its overall appeal to residents from across the Iowa Quad Cities. The listed museum's benefits included its responsiveness to community needs, especially for children from preschools through school-aged; interactive exhibits that encompass the sciences, arts, and health; and as a "great place for kids." Going back beyond the five years this question sought, one participant noted that:

The spirit in this community was manifested with the library, Children's Museum, and Lincoln Center many years ago. The organizations were going to merge. Two directors went into a room and decided how to merge the organizations and what was best for the community. This is indicative of how things get done around here – with a spirit of collaboration.

Another looked at Faye's Field as an indicator of how the City of Bettendorf does the best thing for the community, without always focusing exclusively on the bottom line:

The city recognizes that the greater good sometimes has to be had through compromise. The almighty dollar does not always rule, but they look at what is good for the city. Faye's Field does not generate revenue, but costs while a commercial district would have generated tax income.

More about this spirit of cooperation and collaboration appears in the discussion of the city's work with the schools and will continue below with the discussion of the overall approach the city staff and elected officials take when approaching problems and opportunities.

Bike Paths and Recreational Trails: A separate report described in more depth the discussion surrounding the biking and walking trails across the city (included as Section 8). It tied with the Learning Campus atop the second tier. Every group mentioned the increase in bike or walking paths and trails as one of Bettendorf's three most significant accomplishments in the last five years. Often it emerged as one of the first things the groups mentioned, meaning it was top of mind to them. They especially voiced appreciation for the diversity and quality of the trail system. One participant called it "short-term pain [from taxes] for long-term gain." Support was enthusiastic and appreciative, especially the completion of the trail along the riverfront. They described that aspect of the trail as "beautiful," "a point of pride," and "the greatest and proudest part of the city." One participant revealed that he frequently encounters out-of-towners on the riverfront bike path who comment on its beauty.

City Leadership ranked next in the most important accomplishments in Tier 2 noted by participants. The things that participants mentioned under this theme included the ability and willingness of city officials to collaborate with other organizations and entities for the good of the community (as noted in education and the Learning Campus discussions) as well as collaborations with the business community and developers. One participant called their willingness to collaborate “stupendous.”

Two other sub-themes emerged under this topic as well: (1) the city’s ability to get things done without divisive infighting and (2) financial strength. One person commented on this first subtheme as:

There is a positive perception of our city government that can function without fighting among themselves; they are respectful and stay out of the newspaper. People actually like their government.

Another person added that such cooperation does not result in stagnation, and that the city achieves its goals, not through “rancorous things where someone hijacks an issue.” Instead, the city does a “good job accommodating the disaffected people including those displaced by the I-74 bridge and those who disagree on the bike path. People may disagree with their decisions, but they make good decisions and aren’t as divisive as some of the other cities.” Finally, one table summarized the city’s approach as “transparent and cooperative” which they attributed to this positive perception. These listening sessions were mentioned as an example of the city’s desire for transparency, cooperation, and community input into decisions and was noted as something that not many other cities offer.

The other area where citizens expressed their appreciation for the city government revolved around fiscal responsibility. Many mentioned that the city uses “careful budgeting; living within our means” as a strength. Other expressions of these theme included that the “fiscal budgets are under control for a long time; we are not operating in the red” and that the city has experienced “continued financial strength over some challenging economic times. Bond rating stayed strong. Not many towns across the country can say that.” Others drew parallels to some of the other Quad Cities who faced multi-million dollar budget shortfalls and appreciation that Bettendorf does not face that same problem.

Civic Pride also ranked within the second tier. These items generally expressed quality of life and recognitions the city has received. Some of the items discussed as point of civic pride include its recognition as a “great place to live” along with other national recognitions received in the last few years. Others noted the friendliness of Iowans and Bettendorfers as the reason why they moved back, often from Chicago. Yet another noted that “it is hard to find a place as comforting and accommodating as Bettendorf; in many other places, you hear lots of complaints. There is no negativity in Bettendorf.”

Parks and Recreation: Like the Learning Campus, many participants specifically mentioned parks and recreational programs as a specific city service that is a point of pride. Under the parks theme, people mentioned the amount and quality of green space within the city as a major accomplishment as well as the recent purchase and beginning development of the new Forest Grove Park north of the city by I-80 and Middle Road. Others mentioned that the parks department gets things done and the recent meeting about the Forest Grove Park that 40 people attended to provide input on the planning for that park. The sports programs and recreational opportunities for children and families round out the things people expressed about the parks and recreation programs that they liked.

Housing finishes the second tier. People expressed pride in both the diversity and growth in the housing stock in the city of Bettendorf. One person noted that “you have everything from trailers to million dollar homes and have the benefit of great schools and a wide variety of people in the schools.”

Another participant noted that this diversity in homes makes Bettendorf accessible to people of all socio-economic levels which she noted as a benefit of the city. Other noted that home values have grown in Bettendorf which not all cities can say. They point to the growth of new homes, especially north of the city in the Pleasant Valley area, as a positive sign that home values will continue to grow or hold steady.

Tier 3 items received fewer mentions and do not rise to the level of a top item of pride among the participants. For example, people like how the storefronts on Spruce Hills and Cumberland Square have changed, creating a brighter and more appealing look for these retail centers. The development of the Duck Creek area, 53<sup>rd</sup> Street corridor, and Waterfront Convention Center also emerged as points of pride from the last five years. Improvement to the downtown – especially as they relate to the preparations for the I-74 Bridge – and developments along the riverfront also emerged as items noted as important improvement over the last five years. General city growth – that has allowed the city to keep the tax rates lower – and maintenance of the city’s infrastructure completed the third tier.

Summary and Conclusions for Question 1: Many of the themes noted in the answers to this first question appear throughout the listening session and this report in more depth and with additional information. This section sought only to summarize the discussions as they related to the first question. Coding error and multiple themes included in a single answer means that the exact number of mentions of each theme may vary slightly from that reported here. However, the overall frequency of each mention compared the other themes remains valid. That is, the most mentioned themes of city services and education appeared more than the second tier (Learning Campus, bike trails, city leadership, civic pride, parks and recreation, and housing) which appeared more than the final tier (retail, the Waterfront Convention Center, downtown, riverfront, I-74, growth, city infrastructure, and the arts).

Likewise, many of the accomplishments discussed by the participants occurred outside of the five year window outlined in the question. Facilitators were guided to use the questions as a discussion starter and not use them to place parameters around the discussion, because we wanted attendees to think broadly and creatively about the questions. In this one particularly, many of the accomplishments noted either emanated from Bettendorf’s tradition and culture or occurred longer than 5 years ago. We do not believe this invalidates the data in this section, however, as the answers do reveal the kinds of things about Bettendorf and the city’s accomplishments that these individuals find most important.

Interestingly, most of the themes that emerged in response to this first question reappear in the more in-depth questions even though participants did not know their questions in advance. This indicates that we chose questions with themes that resonated with the most important issues on the mind of the participants and citizens of Bettendorf. Other possibilities include a self-selection bias among the participants invited for these session or a bias based on the parameters set by Bettendorf’s current vision statement from which we drew the in-depth questions. More on these topics appears in the conclusion of this report as a whole.

## **Section 2: Priorities for Next Five Years**

The second question, also answered by all participants, asked:

*Imagine it is 2017. Looking back on the last five years, what would you like to see as the three most important accomplishments the City of Bettendorf has made?*

Again, responses grouped by themes as outlined in Table 2.



Interestingly, the top eight themes, which represent nearly three out of every four ideas put forth, all revolve around economic development. More on the overall theme of economic development appears in Section 3. Here, we focus on the general topics provided in response to question 2 while Section 3 provides a more in-depth analysis of all of the economic development ideas generated during these two evenings.

Riverfront Development dominated the suggestions made throughout this section of each evening with more than one in ten suggestions directly related to riverfront development and many more indirectly related. Overall, people expressed a very strong desire for development along the riverfront with “something other than the casino and hotel.” Many recognized the constraints under which the City operates when it comes to developing the riverfront and do not fault the City for its current condition. However, if they could “dream” of a future riverfront, some of the ideas that emerged include:

- Open venue like a band shell that would let people use the riverfront more for things like a large festival (of which Bettendorf has few compared to the other cities)
- Theater on the river
- Senior citizen condos on the river
- Green space along the river
- Create a destination for visitors along the riverfront with smaller boutique shops (much like LeClaire), arts, restaurants, festivals, nature trails, etc.
- Residential areas along the riverfront
- A marina
- Parks, such as Kelly Cottage, if Alcoa would open it up
- Observation deck on the bike path to overlook the swamp land and look at the birds who are feeding in the shallow water; could include educational material as well
- Develop Point Mississippi and Depot Street into a park
- Develop the riverfront as the focus of the city center and use it to make Bettendorf a tourist destination

Some of the riverfront development ideas assumed that the Isle of Capri would build a land-based casino which participants supported. One participant noted that for gambling to survive and grow as an industry, the casino will have to move to a land-based operation and become more of an entertainment venue rather than strictly relying on gambling for its revenue and customer draw. Participants urged the City to work with the Isle of Capri if they begin to develop a land-based casino to encourage them to develop the riverfront area currently used by the Isle of Capri riverboat for some of the ideas noted above.

One participant correctly noted that much of riverfront development emerged from generations of city planning that the current or future administration cannot undo easily or quickly. This person noted that “it is too bad [the riverfront] developed as it did because there is no way to go back. But to the extent

Table 2: Future Desires

Number	Topic
25	Riverfront development
21	General economic growth
16	Housing
16	Middle Road/I-80 development
14	Attracting young professionals
14	Parks and recreation
14	Restaurants and retail
10	Education
8	City services
8	Downtown development
7	Arts
6	Bike trails
6	City finances
6	Civic pride
5	Environmental concerns
5	I-74 Bridge completion

that we can influence and develop the riverfront, it is an asset and much of the city is closed to the riverfront. If there is a way to redevelop the riverfront, the city should take advantage of that opportunity.”

Economic Growth in general emerged as a second significant theme for the future of Bettendorf. Near consensus existed among participants that the city needs to grow, though by how much and in what way differed among those who expressed an opinion. The ideas expressed about size of Bettendorf included:

- Physically bound so not a lot of room to expand; we cannot have an influx of population or we will be short of services such as housing. Maybe a slow expansion, not full throttle.
- Population growth should slow down, but not stop, so that the city can catch up.
- Business growth will come; don't want to lose the flavor of the bedroom community of the Quad Cities.
- Don't grow too fast
- Fearful of the future if we don't increase the employment base
- Job growth could come from anywhere in the Quad Cities but I would like to see Bettendorf grow their tax base
- Need a major economic development project if the city is going to continue to grow; we can't continue to grow the tax base on residential and multi-family housing alone.

Others elaborated on this theme of carefully planned growth and cautioned that the City needs to remain vigilant about the existing areas of the city, especially those with aging homes and infrastructures, so that the entire city remains attractive to residents. As one person eloquently stated:

We need a symbiotic philosophy: we need to have some kind of plan for sustainable development so that it doesn't get out of control. We need a philosophy of how we grow and how we manage the “more” that comes with growth. What kind of philosophy do we adopt with “more?” Do we fill in? Do we expand out? Moving out leaves the inner city to decay. That's part of what happened in Davenport, though downtown Davenport is coming back. We don't want “south of Spruce Hills” to become our “south of Locust” but it is heading that way.

Another resident echoed that sentiment, suggesting that “redeveloping parts of the community that are blighted or neglected should be prioritized over pushing out the boundaries” because “some parts of Bettendorf are in decline and starting to see crime because they are becoming older and dilapidated.” This person specifically pointed to the area south of Spruce Hills by I-74 as an area of concern.

When it came to the types of businesses that Bettendorf should seek to attract, near consensus again emerged. People did not want more industry, but instead suggested that the city focus on attracting commercial and white collar jobs that will bring more educated individuals into Bettendorf. A few groups suggested that the community colleges – particularly Scott Community College – could play an important role in attracting new businesses to Bettendorf and providing the education their workforces need to continue to grow and thrive once they arrive.

Another theme that emerged in terms of economic growth dealt with diversity, both of the types of businesses in the city and the population. One person noted that Bettendorf “should be able to attract a diverse business base that can really push us into another level. We need to get beyond the current business base.” In talking about diversity among residents, one individual recalled a book on the tanning

of America that indicates that non-diverse communities like Bettendorf will become increasingly rare as the country becomes more racially diverse. This individual and another both suggested that the city needs to take proactive means to help improve the diversity of Bettendorf residents, primarily in terms of racial and ethnic diversity but also in educational levels. She suggested that the City “talks about diversity but no efforts have been made to improve diversity” and that the City and local businesses needs to actively recruit diverse populations instead using the excuse that “no one is applying.”

Housing very closely relates to the economic development theme and has some overlap as many suggested that as Bettendorf grows as a city, it needs to assure a sufficient supply of quality, affordable houses without neglecting the older housing stock and allowing certain neighborhoods to decline while paying attention to new subdivisions. The need to focus on affordable housing also emerged as an important consideration over the next five years. Some suggested replacing the “box homes” build near Alcoa in the 1950s with townhomes or other types of affordable housing, much like the brownstones in downtown Chicago. Replacing these small, older houses in downtown would also enhance downtown development while addressing both the affordable housing issue and improving the housing stock and older neighborhoods in general.

The other housing theme that repeatedly emerged dealt with the affordability of existing homes. One participant noted that it is hard to find a solid house in a good Bettendorf neighborhood for a family of four that is in the \$125,000-\$175,000 range. Others commented that teachers in the district have trouble finding a starter home they can afford. Someone else noted that nicer homes in better neighborhoods exist in both Davenport and LeClaire for the price one would pay in Bettendorf which may syphon residents off, especially to LeClaire because they can attend Pleasant Valley Schools.

Some of the specific suggestions for addressing these issues include:

- Develop a community finance program to encourage home ownership or rent assistance (especially for teachers in the community)
- Develop and implement programs that will help clean up rental properties in the city
- Enforce tighter building and maintenance codes to assure a good stock of older homes
- Create incentives to rehabilitate older homes and properties

The Middle Road/I-80 Development Project also emerged as a specific project that participants would like to see completed or on which significant progress occurs over the next five years. One group who ranked their ideas placed this project as the most important for the city. People see this interchange as the last undeveloped I-80 interchange and that it can serve as a “front door” to the city, allowing Bettendorf to attract businesses that it could not previously. As is, people traveling down I-80 do not know that Bettendorf exists. Some of the specific ideas that emerged as they relate to this project include:

- Continue with the development of housing in the I-80/Middle Road area to make it attractive with a decent mix of pricing
- Develop a technology park rather than a truck stop or other commercial business for I-80 travelers
- Development needs to be high-tech manufacturing or logistics with monthly and annual salaries rather than hourly workers
- Completion of Forest Grove Road needs to go across the interstate to become a corridor
- Need to continue Utica Ridge to the Davenport city limits

- High-tech, white collar jobs that are new to the area instead of moved from within the Quad Cities or downtown Bettendorf
- Attract a major national corporation
- Manufacturing or technology, could be insurance
- Provide value-added to the city with 850-1,000+ new jobs
- Have to be willing to accept an “outsider”

One participant noted that developing the I-80/Middle Road corridor is far enough away from the city that people who work there can live either in Bettendorf or another community, lessening the impact on the city’s residential services and housing stock, while providing a good tax base for the city with the commercial taxes it will generate. This person saw this as a good balance of growth and maintenance of city services and the city’s character.

Attracting Young Professionals to the community emerged as another economic development theme. As outlined in Section 4, the strong family atmosphere was a theme that resonated throughout both evening’s discussions. However, many felt this traded off with providing sufficient attractions for young professionals, especially those without families. Many of the young professionals who participated in these sessions had grown up in Bettendorf, left to attend college, took their first job in another community, and returned to Bettendorf after a few years, many because they planned to start a family and wanted their children to grow up with the same community values that they had. While we can attribute some wanderlust to the natural maturation process of becoming an adult, these individuals felt that Bettendorf could do a better job engaging young adults in the community during their teenage years and providing a reason to return to the community after college (or to keep them in the Quad Cities for college). Both age groups expressed a desire for more things to do within the city. A number of the suggestions that arose regarding downtown and riverfront development (Section 3) sought to address those desires. More transportation options for teens who cannot drive – including walkable areas with multiple amenities – would better engage this age group while more employment opportunities for college graduates – especially with higher paying, salaried jobs – would attract more young professionals to the community. More than one person noted that they took a salary cut to move back to the Quad Cities from a larger city because of quality of life considerations, but could not or would not accept too significant of a salary decrease.

Parks and recreational activities could possibly attract young professionals and the groups encouraged the city to continue to develop and grow its parks and recreational programs. While they ranked the parks and recreation programs highly among the accomplishments they admired about the city, they also recognized room for improvement.

Many listed completion of the Forest Grove Park as a priority for the city over the next five years which coincides with the desire to complete the I-80/Middle Road industrial park. In completing that park, participants urged the city to consider the needs of constituents other than children and families including young professionals and the elderly. One person noted that in Southern California, parks have shuffle boards, horseshoe pits, places to play chess, and quiet areas where adults can enjoy the parks as well. Someone suggested looking at existing parks to see where under-utilization occurs; he suggested that parts of Crow Creek Park are undeveloped and could be used for quiet areas. Another suggested a dedicated facility for adults away from athletics and children’s play areas with amenities like lawn bowling, walking trails, and exercise stations (like Eastern Park in Davenport).

Some of the other suggestions include:

- Interconnect the parks by a road, stream or path
- Bike paths
- Combination building for the Bettendorf Community Center and Life Fitness Center that would expand and combine them for the whole community to use
- Expand the parks endowment to assure future park maintenance
- Nice sports facility that will allow Bettendorf to host state and national competitions (like the Muscatine Soccer complex)
- Develop a handicapped-accessible baseball field at Forest Grove Park
- Bettendorf pool gets a facelift
- Need more tennis courts
- Indoor water park
- Indoor, year-round track

One person cautioned that parks need maintenance to remain vibrant. This person saw a number of small parks “plopped in the middle of things” through the city that are not well cared for (e.g., Veteran’s Park) and do not allow streets to go through. This person would rather see parks as vibrant places where people in a neighborhood come together.

Enhanced retail establishments and restaurants also emerged as an important development consideration, especially for attracting and retaining young professionals. One group noted that the retail in Bettendorf does not match its demographics and would like to see more upscale retail. Others continued this theme, suggesting that Bettendorf try to attract smaller specialty stores and restaurants instead of the big-box retailers which could become Bettendorf’s niche and distinguish it from the other cities. As describe in more detail in Section 3, an evening out solely in Bettendorf for dinner and entertainment (movie, the arts, etc.) occurs rarely if ever.

Education completes the economic development-related areas on which participants would like Bettendorf to focus its future improvements. With the K-12 systems as points of pride for the city, comments in this vein focused on keeping the school systems strong. Areas for improvement looked at post-secondary education with the suggestions:

- Tie into the expansion of Scott Community College
- Having Scott Community College in the community is an economic driver; to any extent that Scott is not a premier community in the college in the state or region, whatever we can do to make it that way is critical.
- Would like to see the city more involved in the programs at Scott so that Scott develops programs that make it an economic engine for the city
- The name “Scott Community College” doesn’t have much zing; needs a new, sexier name
- Have a branch of a four-year college in town
- City should partner with academic institutions to make the city more diverse

All other visions for the future took a back seat to economic development-related concerns and suggestions. For example, under city services, participants suggested that the city complete paving of Forest Grove Road and Tanglefoot, create and complete sidewalks in all residential areas, and create a better system of making priorities that balance new growth with maintenance of existing streets and alleys to maintain the older city infrastructure. One person also called the roundabouts “among the worst things that happened in the last five years.”

In terms of downtown development, residents encouraged the continued development of downtown to create a unique, vibrant community. Some suggested that downtown does not present a desired image of Bettendorf; other suggested that bringing more things to downtown and reconfiguring State and Grant streets would encourage people to travel to the downtown.

In the arts, people would like to see a more vibrant arts community in Bettendorf which the completion of the Performing Arts Center at Bettendorf High School should help encourage. Others suggested that an arts gallery or festival like Beaux Arts might help draw people to Bettendorf and that more arts and cultural amenities would help companies like Deere continue to attract and retain qualified management personnel.

For the bike and walking trails, they encouraged continued expansion with off shoots to neighborhood parks, lakes, I-80, and the planned Forest Grove Park, with a particular focus on staying away from busy roads. Numerous discussions of the future development of the riverfront suggested creating a pedestrian mall with the bike trails as an important component for getting to and through the newly developed riverfront. Others suggested adding amenities to the riverfront trails like educational signage of the views (especially those that explain the history of the Quad Cities) from the trail, maps, and mileage or distance indicators. One participant would like to see Bed & Breakfasts along the riverfront trail (in and beyond Bettendorf) to encourage multi-day riders to make the riverfront a destination spot.

People encouraged the city to maintain its financial viability over the next five years; some groups who ranked their answers placed this one near the top. Others discussed the availability of endowment funds for the parks and schools and encouraged better marketing of these opportunities to Bettendorf citizens as another way to help assure long-term financial viability.

In terms of civic pride, people presented a few suggestions of way to capitalize on the pride that Bettendorfers feel for their community while showcasing the city to others. These include:

- Hosting something of national impact
- Upgrade entry points to the city (including off-ramps) to create more of a gateway
- Succession planning at City Hall

Participants also commented that Bettendorf could do more in terms of environmentalism. Specifically, they suggested that the City:

- Do more for homeowners and businesses to recycle (e.g., recycle plastic bags instead of taking them back to the grocery store; not cost effective for school districts to recycle cardboard)
- Become a “cool” city like Davenport, Moline, and Rock Island for energy efficient buildings
- Plant more trees
- Recycle technology
- Discuss alternative energy solutions

Finally, participants hoped to see significant progress on the I-74 bridge made in the next five years, realizing its completion in that timeframe is unlikely.

Summary and Conclusions for Question 2: Economic development and related themes dominated participant’s vision and desire for the future. They cautioned, however, against growth for growth sake, preferring carefully planned growth that balances the needs of new businesses with the desire to

maintain the current level of city services and amenities and not neglecting the infrastructure of the older parts of the city. The desire for balance in terms of the types of businesses attracted, the cost of housing in the community, the diversity of residents, and serving the needs of residents of all ages emerged as important considerations.

One person summarized well the overall feel from residents responding to this question:

Bettendorf is the premier city. We need to maintain that in the next five years. Factors we have discussed are that way because we are a premier city. We need to stay ahead of everyone else. But, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." Look just as hard at what you are doing right as you do what is wrong so you don't lose sight of what is going well.

Cautions when interpreting the data for question 2 mirror those for the first question. While the exact number of times each response appears may vary slightly from the numbers reported here, the predominance of economic development themes and the subthemes reported are valid. Again, the themes occurring in this question echo those of the first question as well as the vision itself and the nine focused questions.

The remaining sections of this report describe the findings from the nine individual questions that one or two tables each night discussed. Because significant overlap existed in topics discussed across tables, we thought it would be more useful to report on five clusters around which the discussions centered regardless of the question that elicited that response: economic development, family centeredness, city services, regionalism, and perceptions and civic pride. Within each cluster, certain themes appear with some overlap across clusters as well. Where appropriate, we highlight those overlaps and provide our interpretation of their importance.

### **Section 3: Economic Development**

Economic development dominated the discussions with 322 comments (out of 781 total or 42%) falling within this cluster.

Downtown: Let's begin with comments and suggestions on downtown economic development. There were 42 comments about downtown.

Every group mentioned that the changes in downtown in the last five years were significant. Getting heavy play were the Convention Center, State Street improvements and the new more integrated visual appeal of downtown with building facades, plantings and greening of some areas in preparation for the new I-74 bridge.

In terms of the next five years, the picture is more mixed. Respondents wanted to see downtown improvements continue, but what counts as an "improvement" is less clear. While the bridge is seen as an opportunity to improve downtown, the overriding impression is that people are uncertain as to what direction the city should go with transforming downtown. One respondent summed it up, "We need to define downtown." The difficulty is clearly competing ideas about what to do exist.

Some common points of general agreement that emerged:

- The Waterfront Convention Center must figure prominently in the new downtown.

- Gaining more access to the river should be a key priority wherever the city can make that happen. Overall, it is especially important to have some access to the river in connection with downtown. (See the section on Riverfront for ideas that would also have relevance for downtown.)
- Downtown should be walkable and pedestrian friendly.
- Grant Street should be considered part of downtown, and it has been neglected.

Other suggestions, in order of emphasis, include:

- Needs to be more retail development. The downtown is more attractive, but what is the point if there is nowhere to go? Retail suggestions center primarily on places to eat and gather, although other shopping venues were also mentioned. (See the section on Retail Development for ideas that may also have relevance here.)
- Some respondents wanted to see festivals, concerts, and other events that would draw people to the downtown. Some mentioned that at one time the casino had plans for an amphitheater.
- Affordable housing in the downtown area was mentioned by a couple of the respondents.
- One person wondered if there was a town square in the plans.
- Two people mentioned that turning Grant and State Streets into two-ways would help stimulate downtown retail development.

Some tension exists in two ways. First, should downtown be primarily a retail shopping destination or primarily an event, entertainment and recreational (access to river theme) destination? While not mutually exclusive, a clear difference emerged in how people perceive how the downtown space should be used. Second, a somewhat related to the first, should downtown be another “family friendly” space or should be something more open to wider activities and audiences than just families? This crosses over the first question especially as it relates to festivals, concerts, and other events which may or may not fall under the definition of “family friendly.”

Perhaps the City staff and elected officials have a firm understanding of where they intend to take downtown development and improvements. If so then, these visions and plans need to be more fully articulated and shared with the general citizenry. If staff and elected officials do not have large vision and sense of direction about downtown, then this area would benefit from more concentrated attention.

Retail discussions fell into two subthemes: restaurants and clothing and boutique stores.

*Restaurants* were definitely on the mind of the respondents. Most people who mentioned places to eat indicated their dissatisfaction with the breadth of their Bettendorf choices. Those indicating this tended to lean toward smaller, locally-owned places. Respondents mentioned this several times. The upcoming opening of Pizza Ranch was a big hit with people in a couple of groups. One comment concerned getting a new McDonalds. Biaggi’s, Red Crow, and the Café Indigo drew praise and were cited as examples of the types of Bettendorf restaurants people wanted. Matching this up with comments about downtown showed that people are looking for restaurants in the downtown to stimulate people’s interest in a revived downtown.

*Clothing and boutique shopping:* The pattern here pretty much mirrors the restaurant comments and sentiments. Burlington Coat Factory drew a mention as did the improvements at Duck Creek and the shopping areas at Devil’s Glenn and Cumberland Square as positive retail developments. The Farmers



Market also drew a positive comment. Nonetheless, generally people see Bettendorf as a mediocre place to shop, comparing unfavorably to LeClaire, Galena and North Park Mall, for example. The overall sentiment seemed to be that retail shopping in Bettendorf poorly matches its demographics and that to shop, one was better off leaving Bettendorf for other locations. Lack of entertaining and attractive retail was best summed up by the comment, “Don’t make me leave town to have fun.” Matching this up with downtown comments showed that people seek more downtown shopping as a way to stimulate people’s interest in a revived downtown.

One group fashioned an alternative view of the interconnectedness of the river, downtown, and the other retail districts in the city. They believe that Spruce Hills and 18<sup>th</sup> should be thought of as the center of the city, not downtown, as this area connected to a series of other hubbed areas. The river then becomes a recreational area, but not the center of the city. In this vision of the city, the three areas worked out as:

- **Downtown** using casino as focus of an entertainment and the river connected with mixed used but still an urban experience
- **Cultural center** around museum, library, Faye’s Field, high schools, Cumberland Square area
- **North** (1-80/Middle Road) as business and industrial area

The River: The question about how to best use the riverfront crosses a couple of cluster groups. In this section of the report, we focus on those aspects connected with a broader understanding of economic development and see some cross over with downtown and retail development. The riverfront will also be a focus on sections on recreation, culture, healthy living and family friendliness. In short, the overall sentiment was that the city should take a mixed-use approach.

Let’s re-enforce what we noted above: *there is a strong and deep desire to gain use of and get more access to the river.* People understand that the city does not control much of the riverfront, but they do not want that to interfere with gaining more access to the river for retail and recreational development. Strong support exists for moving the casino off the river and on to near-by adjacent land, freeing up the riverfront for other uses. In addition to moving the casino off the river, participants would also like to see other old industrial plants and facilities further up river relocated to open up space for more shops, water front cafes, docking areas, marinas and places to walk.

Several ideas emerged from the groups about riverfront economic development possibilities. The riverfront should be developed using TIFF monies to make the riverfront the nucleus of downtown development. Some mentioned a band shell, museum or theatre space on the river. Others called for using Milwaukee’s summer festivals as a model for Bettendorf. One person suggested that since train tracks already run along the river, why not have a train ride-kind of attraction along the river, much in the same fashion as the river taxi? The new marina received praised and a suggestion to expand it was added. Following the mixed use theme, renting bikes or Segways was offered as an idea. The idea that some kind of housing aimed at, in the words of one of the participants, “empty nesters” also came up. Some also questioned the status of plans to build an outlet mall as part of the original casino development plans.

North of Town: Several participants mentioned that continuing infrastructure development on I-80/Middle Road was crucial. This last interchange on I-80 needs to be developed to allow Bettendorf to attract some businesses that they could not previously. The sense of the suggestions for economic development in that area included using it for a tech, industrial, logistical, or commercial office

development rather than a truck stop. These would bring in higher paying jobs. Completion of Forest Grove Road was mentioned as a key element. Once these elements were in place, they would stimulate other retail economic development in the north end of town. Others thought that room should be made for a true park, not a sports park, somewhere in the I-80/Middle Road vicinity. More on the Forest Grove Park appears in the discussion of healthy living under the Family Friendliness cluster in Section 4.

Industrial and General Business Development: Several comments also addressed industrial and general business development outside of the I-80/Middle Road focus. The comments extend across a wide range of ideas and suggestions. A bifurcation of opinion existed on economic development for Bettendorf between the “land the big fish” people and “lure and grow the small, medium businesses.” This comment frames the question well:

What kind of business city do we want to be? Small business-oriented community? Or a community that wants to participate in larger companies? Attract industrial? Develop the talent to have the skilled workforce that will attract that kind of business.

The big fish idea looks more like this: “We need a big company expanding or other companies will go elsewhere or companies will look elsewhere.”

The small business sentiment: “I like staying with small-to-medium sized businesses rather than revolving around one large company. Three behemoths here – Deere, Alcoa, Arsenal – what if one of them left? That would devastate the region.” Generally speaking, the “attract and grow local small and medium business” group was more prominent.

Several people mentioned that the development of fiber optic was critically important in Bettendorf’s ability to attract business and industry in the future. Some questioned the efficacy of the current promoter of fiber optic, however.

Others saw connecting Bettendorf’s economic growth to the Rock Island Arsenal, Alcoa or Scott Community College as a possibility. Many mentioned the strong connection between economic growth and the development of human capital in Bettendorf. In this regard, the strength of the Bettendorf schools was often mentioned.

The final area of conversation centered on the role of the City of Bettendorf with economic development. Most people thought the city was doing a very strong job developing the infrastructure needed for future business growth. Many people also mentioned that the City was doing a fine job attracting new business. Others thought the City needed a more aggressive approach in going after more businesses.

Along similar lines, a duality of opinion exists about the role of taxes and incentives to bring in new businesses. Some folks support the idea of TIFF’s and other tax breaks to encourage business development while others objected to these tax incentive practices. Based on the number of comments, it was about equally balanced.

Finally, some people saw a need for a more fully articulated development philosophy that articulates some kind of a plan for sustainable development so that it doesn’t get out of control. Bettendorf does not want to become a “West Des Moines” that grows like crazy. They saw a need for a philosophy of how we grow and how we manage the “more” that comes with growth. As noted in Section 2, such a

philosophy should address both future growth and maintenance of existing facilities and infrastructure so that “south of Spruce Hills does not become south of Locust.”

Neighborhoods and Housing: Some expressed concerns that all of the emphasis on new growth and development might result in neglecting the older sections of town especially the neighborhoods. These people cautioned that the City needs to find a balance of slow growth with attention to maintaining existing neighborhoods and houses.

Following the line of thinking about neighborhood quality, several people expressed concerns about economic development in housing and neighborhoods. The cost of housing, especially in the Pleasant Valley School District, exceeds the capacity for many young families. Some people advanced the idea of finding ways to create more affordable housing or starter homes for young families who would like to move into Bettendorf. Other needs expressed include attending to the older neighborhoods with smaller houses; repurposing some old existing homes, especially the “box houses” from the 1950s (“Alcoa houses”); and creating room for the city to grow inside rather than on the edge (e.g., where old Children’s Museum sat, there are now about 6 homes).

On the other end of the scale, some suggested trying to attract more new home developers and higher end rental developers as important to the city. These people felt that housing north of the city in the Pleasant Valley district should be encouraged.

Other people noted that more variety in housing choices would be useful – not just focusing on families and “school district buyers.” These could be townhouses and affordable houses for those without kids or newer facility in comparable price ranges for newer families, and could almost be build out as in the downtown Chicago area (“brownstones”).

Finally, others pointed out that housing cannot be conceived simply by itself. Balance must be found among residential, commercial, neighborhoods, and schools. Hopefully some planning is being done that will allow people who work in a given area to walk or bike to work.

Arts as Economic Development: A number of the participants see arts and cultural events as a form of economic development. They suggested that such things as festivals, public arts projects, national events, theatres, historical celebrations, musical performances and more recreational activities would make Bettendorf a travel location. These suggestions often surfaced as part of the riverfront discussions.

#### **Section 4: Family Centeredness**

A second cluster revolved around the topic of family centeredness. Most participants talked about Bettendorf as a very family friendly community. As noted in Section 2, at times this focus on the family comes at the expense of older children (teens), young professionals without children, and the elderly, at least perceptually. The City would do well to consider these other constituents as well when designing future projects and programs.

Family centeredness revolved around six themes: city services and amenities, education, health lifestyles, safe neighborhoods, political leadership, and retail. This section discusses each of these themes, drawing connections to other clusters and themes as appropriate.

City Services and Amenities revolve around the family. Some of the family-friendly amenities and services mentioned by participants include the library, Family Museum, Faye's Field, and the Fourth of July parade and carnival. Others recommended that the riverfront could provide a new venue for additional family activities such as the annual fireworks display. Some proposed that both the library and Family Museum need expansions. Others advocated for a handicapped baseball field at Forest Grove Park, a year-round indoor track, and a theater district. Another person recognized that the city "offers a lot that is very family focused. There is a lot to do at a low cost."

Education received the most discussion as it relates to family friendliness of the city. Most of the discussion revolved around the quality of both Bettendorf and Pleasant Valley Schools and their roles in attracting and retaining high quality families and businesses to the community and the region. One person noted that "without the schools, the city couldn't be what it is, and the schools allow the city to be what it is. Schools draw the high income individuals who support the schools." Comparatively, they see Bettendorf and Pleasant Valley schools as "very safe compared to other Quad Cities schools." Another person credits "much of the success in the schools to the family. Because we are such a strong family-oriented community, it reinforces the schools. The city can continue to reinforce the family as a way to help school success."

The Learning Campus complements the formal school system by providing a place for children from the very young through high school to receive extra assistance or supplementary instruction in a variety of areas. They also both provide a place to socialize and meet in a safe environment. One young mother mentioned that the Family Museum became the place where she met other young parents when she moved to Bettendorf while her child learned in a quality environment. Likewise, the library has become a place where high school students congregate after school with a wealth of places to socialize, computers to work on, and a good selection of books. One student noted that her bus drops her off at the library after school instead of taking her home.

Others talked more directly about the role the city can and does play in the schools' successes. One person noted that the "city partners with the school system. The relationship the park board has with the school district is important; they have shared parks with the schools. Lots of collaboration exists between the schools and the city, especially through the parks system." Another person elaborated to say that the "city uses its resources to help the schools meet their needs," while yet another argued that "schools cannot exist in a vacuum. Schools, city, businesses, higher education and others need to collaborate." Because of the importance of such collaborations, a participant suggested that the city should foster "opportunities for the schools and keep open communication between the schools, business, higher education and others."

One group discussed the role that the school foundations could play in helping to attract their graduates back to the community or retain them upon graduation. Others talked about the value of the two school districts merging into one instead of retaining separate identities. However, others cautioned that the resultant large school district would have many of the same problems of other large districts (notably, Davenport) which would trade off with any perceived inefficiencies that having two systems engenders. Likewise, each district and school has its own strengths and character which attracts different types of learners. Having such diversity and choice, this person proposed, creates a strength for the community and children of Bettendorf.

Encouraging Health Lifestyles by offering amenities for exercise and recreation provide the next theme under family centeredness. One person suggested that "the design of the community seems to have a

focus on healthy lifestyle by making it easier on runners, walkers and bikers. You can go anywhere on foot easily without worrying about traffic and kids.” Participants pointed to the bike trails and plans to expand the trails throughout the community as a key component of the healthy lifestyle that the City promotes. One participant argued that Bettendorf is “second to none in youth athletic programs both indoors and outdoors.” Others pointed to the wide variety of recreational opportunities such as golf, parks, solid park board programs, and the soccer facility at Crow Creek. On the whole, people seemed to appreciate the wide variety of opportunities for outdoor recreation in safe, comfortable, clean environments throughout Bettendorf.

Safe Neighborhoods also contribute to Bettendorf’s family centeredness. One participant who recently moved to Bettendorf from Chicago noted that the “quality of life here is amazing. In Chicago, you may not be able to get to your child’s sporting event because of commuting time. Here it is safe; you know your neighbors.” Another person “attributes the safe neighborhoods to families with young children. It is a safe place to live so bike paths give families a fun thing to do like going on a walk.” Another noted the emergence of more senior communities as an outgrowth of the safety that Bettendorf residents feel. One person cautioned that “we don’t want to lose the character of the city. We are a premier city with a high quality of life. We are an optimal size. If we go beyond that, we will become more crowded and likely experience more crime.”

Political Leadership also contributes to Bettendorf’s family environment. City officials received credit for maintaining good communication with citizens at all levels including the Citizen’s Academy and neighborhood meetings for those impacted by a planned project. Engaging more students and younger citizens with city decision-makers in events like the listening sessions reported here could provide city leaders with more of the youth perspective while creating better teamwork to implement needed changes. However, that said, the overwhelming sentiment emerged that they city’s cooperative spirit with all segments of the community with transparency and communication contributes to the quality of life in the community.

Retail – or lack thereof – concludes the section on family centeredness. The need for more shopping and other things to do in Bettendorf, especially for teens and young adults, emerged as the main complaint or drawback of the family-centered environment the city has created. Suggestions for creating more of a riverwalk or specialized boutiques and entertainment complexes along the riverfront emerged as possible solutions.

Summary and Conclusions for Family Centeredness: The City’s culture and focus on families appeared throughout both sessions as strong contributing factors to the overall strength and appeal of the city. They liked the variety of safe, low-cost, high quality activities available to families, especially those with young children, and recognized the symbiotic relationship between the city’s focus on the family and the strength of the school districts. While some suggest that combining the two school districts into one might result in economic efficiencies, others were not willing to sacrifice the distinctive qualities of each district to save a few dollars. All, however, recognized the importance of collaborations of all constituents – including the city – to keep the schools and families strong and strongly recommended that such collaborations continue or even increase in future years.

## Section 5: City Services

Participants' discussion of city services coalesced around these six areas: parks and recreation (including bike trails as recreation), transportation (including roads, snow removal, bike trails, and public transportation), police, garbage pick-up, financing and taxes, and the Learning Center Campus.

Parks and Recreation Service: In general participants expressed high levels of satisfaction with the parks and recreation opportunities in the city. Park services activities in the summer, e.g., Fourth of July and Splash Landing, created a sense of community. Summer time offers a good variety of options. They saw the Fitness center as an integral part of the park system like Splash Landing and a significant community asset. Bike paths, new Crow Creek Park, and baseball diamonds all contribute to very family-oriented areas throughout the city. The parks system was widely viewed as a benefit to the community and is seen as a concrete expression of the desire to for a healthy community.

More specifically, the Fitness Center's tennis courts were seen as an important asset and a unique amenity. If you want to play tennis indoors, your options are Bettendorf or Moline, although in Moline, you have to pay for a whole year while the Fitness Center is open to the public. The Fitness Center also has full-sized basketball courts (the Y's are smaller) and a 1/8 mile track. On the other hand, it is aging and needs some updating. Its hours also do not meet everyone's needs. Someone suggested expanding its hours of operations, perhaps like 6 AM – 8 or 9 PM. Remodeling the waterpark also emerged as a suggestion for improving the city parks.

Even with the high levels of satisfaction with the current parks and recreation offerings, participants offered several suggestions for improvements or expansion of services:

- Small parks that are “plopped in the middle of things” are not used or well maintained (e.g., Veteran's Park). These need better care to become vibrant places where people gather and neighborhoods come together.
- Create a park system for all ages, not just families. Most parks are built for kids with baseball fields, swing sets, skate park, or dog park. Bettendorf does not have a park dedicated to senior citizens or quiet areas for adults to enjoy the parks as well. Evaluate of all the parks to see if there are places in existing parks to put some quiet areas.
- Inter-connect the city parks by a road, a stream or a path. Crow Creek Park has areas that aren't even developed yet.
- Adult sports recreation leagues – e.g., softball, kick ball – could be expanded as a way to cater to young professionals. Are current adult sports league offerings easy to find?
- Pigeons Creek Park: Woodsy; could be used more as a riverfront park.
- Complete the bike trails along the riverfront and expand bike trails around the city, especially out by the 53rd Street roundabout was mentioned as important. Expand the bike trails across the city and in the right places with “off shoots” of the bike trail to neighborhood pocket parks.
- Finish the Forest Grove Road Park.
- Create a master plan for recreation services. We seem to do things (notably the trails) piecemeal. We need to get our hands around what we are going to go for.
- Look at the swimming pool at Middle Park: it is no longer centralized (but not far) with growth going to the north. Has it been updated? Do we need to duplicate further north? Tie to the fitness center?
- Minneapolis embraces winter and offers something to do every day in winter. For example, they have a holiday parade every day for a month with ice sculpture contests and shops open late.

- Palmer Hills least favorite in town but has great up keep. They don't like the layout, but noted that the city is changing the "worse part" of the 15th hole.
- Bettendorf pool needs a new facelift.
- Develop Point Mississippi and Depot Street into a park.
- An indoor water park would be a big draw.

Transportation: The sentiment of road construction and maintenance echoed that on parks and recreation: overall people were pleased with the way the city has been managing its transportation infrastructure. Traffic is rarely an issue in Bettendorf unless you are around one of the schools or other quirky things at certain times. The City has done a lot to improve roads, replaced under-improved roads, added sewer systems, and repaired streets. Tanglefoot and Maplecrest Drives were mentioned as major improvements because of the safety issues around the schools.

Respondents felt that Bettendorf Public Works was hands down the best in the Quad Cities. As noted previously, snow removal is evident as you cross city lines with Bettendorf's far superior. Snow removal stands out as an excellent service because you can go anywhere in Bettendorf.

Looking ahead, creation and completing of sidewalks in all residential areas should be considered a priority as is a better system of making priorities that balances new growth with maintenance of existing streets and alleys. Respondents do not want to hollow out the older city infrastructure as the city continues to grow. Finally, they felt that the City should keep connecting bike trails as an integrative transportation feature of the city.

Public transportation was a bit of a mystery to most of the participants primarily because they did not use the system. Generally, the groups did not have enough knowledge to discuss the availability of transportation options for those without a car. Nonetheless, a few ideas surfaced about the use of public transportation in the city. Some felt that even with gas projected to cost \$5/gallon, people will likely still drive. Others disagreed, feeling that more people seem already take the bus with the price of gas rising. People with access to cars find it hard to give up the convenience and freedom of a car, especially for the shorter commutes that most Bettendorfers have. Most people in Bettendorf probably stay within a 3 mile radius in Bettendorf for their activities of daily life. While the convenience of the public transportation system works for a larger city like Chicago, it works less well here. Hence the bus service serves only for a smaller segment of population who do not have cars including students who leave school before the end of the school day and need transportation home. Pleasant Valley High School has bus token for students who need it.

As well as the city communicates with the public, perhaps it could provide better access to information on the bus schedules. Does the bus go to where it needs to? What is the usage? Some suggested that the city market the bus system more and get more information out to people to encourage ridership. Others also suggested making work more accessible via the bus schedules by involving larger employers in promoting the bus. Likewise, The Loop goes through Bettendorf but doesn't seem to have very many riders and those who do ride it, rarely get off in Bettendorf. The Loop is used more to get to Davenport or Rock Island, especially the bar areas. At least one person commented that the Bettendorf bus drivers are maniacs, and the City needs to do something about them.

Police: Several people commented positively on the professionalism and effectiveness of the Bettendorf Police Department. Fast response time drew these praises: "Great response time for police. They were at my door in 5 minutes after I reported a credit card theft. Police rock!" Another noted that the police

have “efficient reaction time and know what they are doing. When you dial 911, you will have a uniform in your house in 3 minutes or less.” Part of the professionalism emanated from how the police respond to citizens:

I had an excellent interaction with police department a year and a half ago. On more than one occasion, a police officer drove by and let me know my garage door was open. They were very accommodating in dealing with a complaint of mischief in the neighborhood and handled it appropriately. A police officer gave an elderly friend his cell phone number to contact him if the problem continued.

The person favorably compared the Bettendorf Police Department to “Mayberry RFD” with the level of person service they provide.

Another person remarked that she felt “safe even when there are crime sprees in the community.” Others remarked that the police are well trained and professional. They like that they wear “real police hats” instead of baseball caps. The Police Department’s interaction with the schools drew praise. Participants liked getting phone alerts when there is crime in the area and hoped the city would continue to communicate to keep the citizens informed and assure they got the message.

Garbage and Recycling: Curb side pick-up services, garbage removal and recycling drew several comments from the participants. One person said that waste removal was “awesome.” The attention to these services makes everything look the same and neat. Some were pleased that Bettendorf was the first in the Quad Cities to provide automated garbage and curb-side recycling. Others liked the special clean up, extra removal services, lawn waste removal, bulky item pick-up, Christmas tree pick up, and the extra bag at Christmas. Being ecologically-friendly was important to some participants. Changes in the recycling system and garbage disposal have positively impacted families. One participant suggested that the city could improve services by picking up plastic bags rather than requiring citizens to take them back to the grocery store. Other cited a need for “tech recycling” like they do at the Scott County Waste Disposal.

Financing and Taxes: Overall, participants felt that they get the city services they want at a reasonable tax rate. City services were seen as very good especially in relation to the tax burden on the citizens. Here is a representative sentiment: “I used to cringe when writing checks to the City of Milwaukee; now feel like I get a good value for my taxes.” Further, the City is being run in a fiscally-responsible and sustainable manner as articulated in Section 1. People appreciated that fiscal budgets have remained under control for a long time, and that the City does not operate in the red. Evidence of this came from an increased bond rating and stable financial situation and working proactively toward issues connected with fiscal responsibility.

Dissenters voiced comments like “The City cannot continue to tax and spend. We need to find the balance. We can’t be all things to all people.” Another noted that “The more you provide, the more people will want. Roll back has made taxes a tougher issue; the City needs to maintain the balance. It is easier to spend other people’s money than you own, so we need disciplined government.”

Strong support existed for continued financial stability and careful budgeting in the future by learning “to live within our means.” Some suggestions arose on how the City might accomplish this:

- Lower city corporate taxes, balance for long term stability, and significant jobs that would get people to move into the city. We need different rates for different kinds of companies.



- Is there ways to work with Scott County to share costs?
- Improve the economics of the services. Challenge to deliver those services in an efficient and economical way.
- Refinancing the bonds.
- One objection of city services is all of the fee for services for businesses. Why not add it to the tax bill instead of charging a fee for services (because then can deduct it)? Why a fee rather than a tax from the city's perspective?
- Don't complain when pay taxes and get the services of that you have paid for.

Learning Campus: Many participants expressed strong support for the Library and Family Museum as "huge assets for the community." Generally people were happy that the city supports them as a community asset. Faye's Field should bring "up" the age of people who use the Family Museum and library. A couple of questions arose:

- Is the family museum the right size for this community?
- Land locked?
- Have outdoor learning space?

### **Section 6: Regionalism**

With all of these ideas for what Bettendorf could or should do in the next five years, a minority of participants spoke about Bettendorf's role not as a city unto itself, but within the greater Quad City region. These people recognize that some of Bettendorf's strength comes from its position as one of the Quad Cities and that it will grow, thrive, and survive not on its own, but as one of the Quad Cities. One person suggested that the Quad Cities as a whole offers a wide range of cultural opportunities and festivals; Bettendorf does not need to create anything new. As one person noted:

Instead of replicating in all of the four Quad Cities, what should each city specialize in? We don't need a university in all four communities, but what isn't offered? Regional issues are the wave of the future in terms of fiscal responsibility. Bettendorf is considered to be the best of the Quad Cities communities. What do we have to lose to go regional? It makes sense economically and logistically. What can Bettendorf provide that the other communities cannot?

Another picked up on this theme and noted the symbiotic relationship between Bettendorf and the rest of the Quad Cities communities:

What we have in Bettendorf, we could not have without the larger Quad Cities. Alone, we could not support the Learning Campus or the convention center. We rely on the greater area and contribute to it. Regionalism is our number one benefit and challenge to work through.

When interpreting the data contained in this report, regionalism becomes an important underlying theme. That is, what suggestions contained here must Bettendorf implement to receive benefit and what can and should be implemented somewhere in the Quad Cities for Bettendorf and its residents to benefit? For example, bringing companies to the Quad Cities can result in more residents moving to Bettendorf as one of its premier bedroom communities. However, as some participants noted, attracting the "right" business to Bettendorf would expand the commercial tax base and lessen the city's reliance on residential taxes. Conversely, providing retail, recreational, or cultural amenities can occur

on a more regional level. In fact, many people misidentify the conjoined areas of Bettendorf and Davenport, not knowing in what city their favorite attractions reside.

### **Section 7: Perceptions and Civic Pride**

Sections 1 and 2 already discussed many of the themes that materialized under civic pride. A few new ideas from the other questions include a question of whether or not the city is “playing to its strengths” in terms of family friendliness, low crime and access to other markets when attempting to attract new companies. Another person noted that young adults will always leave the community because we do not have a large university to keep them here. This person also surmised that most young adults will not move back right out of school, but that they will return when they decide to start their families. In this way, remaining focused on the family-centeredness of the city will allow it to continue to attract new, young residents, avoiding stagnation.

### **Section 8: Bike Paths and Recreational Trails**

Every group mentioned the increase in bike or walking paths and trails as one of Bettendorf’s three most significant accomplishments in the last five years. Often it emerged as one of the first things the groups came up, meaning it was top of mind to them. They especially voiced appreciation for the diversity and quality of the trail system. One participant called it “short-term pain [from taxes] for long-term gain.” Support was enthusiastic and appreciative, especially the completion of the trail along the riverfront. They described that aspect of the trail as “beautiful,” “a point of pride.” and “the greatest and proudest part of the city.” One participant revealed that he frequently encounters out-of-towners on the riverfront bike path who comment on its beauty.

Every group also enthusiastically supports the extension of the paths and trails as an important development in the next five years. They encouraged continued expansion with off shoots to neighborhood parks, lakes, I-80, and the planned Forest Grove Park, with a particular focus on staying away from busy roads. Numerous discussions of the future development of the riverfront suggested creating a pedestrian mall with the bike trails as an important component for getting to and through the newly developed riverfront. Others suggested adding amenities to the riverfront trails like educational signage of the views (especially those that explain the history of the Quad Cities) from the trail, maps, and mileage or distance indicators. One participant would like to see Bed & Breakfasts along the riverfront trail (in and beyond Bettendorf) to encourage multi-day riders to make the riverfront a destination spot.

Discussion of the trail system also supported two other themes that emerged as important to the participants about the attractiveness of Bettendorf: a family-focus and creating a healthy living environment. The majority of the conversations about paths and trails intersected these two themes. In fact, participants saw the paths and trails as integral to the city realizing these two themes. While the image of Bettendorf as a family-friendly place existed prior to the latest development of paths and trails, it seems that paths and trails have become an essential element of that image. One participant noted that many families with young children use the paths as a safe place to walk and bike. People have also begun to see the trails as not simply recreational, but also connected to a healthy lifestyle and as an environmentally-friendly mode of transportation. Another participant noted that the community designers seem to have a focus on healthy lifestyles and that the paths make it easy for runners, walkers, and bikers to go anywhere in the city without worrying about traffic or their children around traffic. At some of the tables, conversations pointed out that people use the paths as an alternate

transportation mode and recommended keeping transportation needs in mind when planning and developing future trails. They liked the option of walking or biking to work or shopping and encouraged the continued expansion of the trails to access common workplaces and shopping areas. In both kinds of usage, people want to see the trails extended and connected both within Bettendorf and to trails and paths leading to and through Davenport.

A word of caution: just because participants expressed support for the trails and paths in general does not mean that certain stretches or aspects may not garner some opposition. Two counterpoints surfaced in this regard: (1) priority of other capital development of sidewalks and streets over extending paths and trails; and (2) in some specific locations, an extension and/or widening may be seen as unnecessary due to the existing infrastructure. One participant complained that the trail system has developed piecemeal although someone else at his table (perhaps a city staffer or certainly someone knowledgeable about future plans) pointed out that the city has completed only about 50% of the trail plan and that, as designed, it will be “second to none.”

These cautions points to the possible need that one table discussed to better market and inform the public about the planned trail system. One individual suggested that when you call them “trails,” people associate them with bikes which apparently carries some negative connotations for certain people who oppose them on that ground alone. Calling them “paths” eliminates that potential baggage, this person suggested. Another table suggested that the trails need a champion and a marketing campaign to show the public what they will become and lets them begin to envision their potential. They pointed out that if you focus only on the exercise aspect of the trails, the public may see them as frivolous, especially if the budget becomes tight (although overwhelming support and enthusiasm existed for the city’s fiscal responsibility particularly in this economy). This group felt that you might garner more public support if you market the trails as an alternative mode of transportation as well as an exercise or recreational option.

As the city considers extending or improving paths and trails, we suggest you pay attention to the question of balance and capital improvement priorities. (Although that said, no one expressed a strong capital improvement need other than downtown and riverfront development, most of which would involve private financing.) We also suggest that you consider how the public might perceive the attractiveness of the specific locations of future extensions or improvements. You can enhance your support by tying those extensions or improvements to the importance of city-wide (and regional) connectivity and re-enforcing both the themes of family recreational use and alternative transportation (i.e., connecting the parks so people do not have to drive there and children can more easily access them without riding in the street). Finally, we suggest that you look at your communication and marketing of the trails. While we understand that people will pay attention to those things that resonate with them at a given time, we suggest that you make an honest, critical assessment to determine if you have provided enough information about your short-term and long-term plans for the trail system to the public. An improvement that might not appear logical today might provide an important piece in the overall project puzzle, but the public may object simply because they cannot or do not see that larger picture.

## **Conclusions**

Consensus or near consensus arose around the exceptional quality of city services (notably, snow removal, infrastructure maintenance, parks and recreation, and Learning Campus) and schools, the desire for carefully planned and managed economic growth that includes a sufficient number of quality,

affordable housing options for individuals and families of all income levels; maintenance of existing neighborhoods and infrastructure while expanding into new areas of the city; expansion of retail and restaurant choices in Bettendorf; relocation of the casino off the river; and appreciation for Bettendorf's political environment and leaders that even created an event like this where citizens could voice their opinions about the future direction of the city.

Lots of ideas but less consensus emerged on what they direction that future should take, other than continuing with the good things that Bettendorf has accomplished in the past. Some of the major themes that emerged where tension or different opinions exist include:

- **Downtown development:** All agreed that downtown needs a planned development, likely after the turmoil caused by the new I-74 bridge ends, but visions for downtown differed. Some preferred primarily a retail shopping destination, while others voiced a desire for primarily an event, entertainment and recreational destination that built upon and takes advantage of the river.
- **Riverfront development:** The discussion on the future of the riverfront mirrored that of downtown development and intertwined with that discussion as their developments will likely converge as well. Again, all agreed that the City needs to develop the riverfront or encourage private development of the riverfront to the extent possible. What that development should look like painted a less clear picture with overall a mixed-use approach emerging that includes shopping, restaurants, walking trails, festivals, living options, and green spaces. Regardless of what the waterfront looks like in 5 or 50 years, a strong and deep desire exists to gain use of and access to more of the riverfront.
- **General economic development:** Again, overall consensus emerged that the city needs to grow; how and by how much became the points of contention. Near consensus on where to grow (I-80/Middle Road area) and what types of businesses not to encourage (manufacturing) was as close as the participants got on this issue. Strong encouragement for high technology jobs for well-educated white collar workers with a strong tie to and leveraging the strengths of Eastern Iowa Community College and the Bettendorf school districts was also evident.
- That Bettendorf caters to families with an abundance of low cost, high quality activities for young children (generally defined as pre-school through elementary school) also emerged as one of the city's strengths and points of pride. The strong correlation between this family-centered community and quality schools was also mentioned. However, the possible trade-off with providing sufficient activities and support for other segments of the population (notably, teens and young professionals without children, although the elderly received passing mention) also emerged as a concern for future consideration. Many of the suggestions for downtown and riverfront development as well as future additions to parks and recreation programs sought to address this concern, implying that enough exists for families, so let the downtown and riverfront focus on young adults.

Overall, the respondents' comments were very favorable about Bettendorf, the City's past accomplishments and their view of the future direction of the city. No one voice concern about the overall future direction of Bettendorf. Suggestions instead came more in the vein of ways to build upon these successes and move the City ahead more quickly – or less quickly in some cases.

## Appendix A: City of Bettendorf Vision Statement

### **The City of Bettendorf is a premier city in which to live.**

The City of Bettendorf is a most livable community with rich educational, cultural and recreational opportunities where we enjoy a vibrant riverfront and a growing, competitive business environment.

We take pride in our great community.

#### **Premier City**

- Pacesetter
- Progressive community
- Excellence in city services
- Efficient city operations
- Uses best management practices
- Environmentally friendly and sensitive

#### **Most Livable Community**

- People feel safe and secure
- All generations feel welcome.
- People have convenient access to services, shopping and leisure amenities.
- People enjoy great parks, connected bike and hike trails, and green areas.
- Residents and businesses have access to state-of-the-art technology infrastructure.
- All generations from young singles to families to seniors find housing opportunities
- People have access to a variety of modes of transportation within and to/from Bettendorf

#### **Rich Educational, Cultural and Recreational Opportunities**

- Every family member has a choice of leisure time activity
- Citizens have the use of a top quality library that offers a variety of programs and services
- Residents and visitors have opportunities for life-long learning from the programs and services
- Everyone finds convenient opportunities through the programs and services offered at recreational facilities
- Students attend schools that are among the best in Iowa and the nation

#### **Vibrant Riverfront**

- The Mississippi River provides a beautiful gateway to Bettendorf
- The riverfront has a modern dynamic feeling and character
- Residents have access to the river for active and passive leisure
- Tourists are drawn to the Riverfront to enjoy anything from walking to gambling
- Healthy businesses exist along the river
- People enjoy unmatched views of the river
- Residential housing are located along the river

#### **Growing, Competitive Business Environment**

- High technology businesses locate here and build their companies here
- The I-80/Middle Road area is a successful high technology business park
- Multiple business and commercial centers exist within Bettendorf at downtown, Duck Creek, I-80 and along major corridors
- Medical businesses provide the best local healthcare and services available within Bettendorf
- Quality retail businesses provide convenient shopping opportunities
- City government is friendly to small business by being responsive and supportive

**Pride in Our Great Community**

- Citizens trust city government and community leaders
- Residents, businesses, schools and the city work together as partners by sharing resources for the benefit of the community
- Residents and businesses give to the community by contributing time and resources
- Community and neighborhood events pull residents together building a strong sense of community
- Citizens are well informed and are involved in shaping Bettendorf's future
- People are friendly, welcome new ideas and respect others
- Citizens are proud to say, "We are from Bettendorf, Iowa"

## **Appendix B: List of Facilitators**

Allison Ambrose, Ph.D., Associate Dean, College of Business, St. Ambrose University

Richard Dienesch, Ph.D., Professor of Management, St. Ambrose University

Dan Ebener, DBA, Associate Professor of Management, St. Ambrose University

Matt Hansen, Assistant Dean of Students and Director of Residence Life, St. Ambrose University

Amy Jones, Director of Alumni Relations, St. Ambrose University

Lance Sadlek, Director of the Galvin Fine Arts Center, St. Ambrose University

### Co-directors

Randy Richards, Ph.D., Professor of Management, St. Ambrose University

Linda Wastyn, Ph.D., President, Wastyn & Associates

## Appendix C: List of Questions

### Questions for all tables

1. What would you say are the City of Bettendorf's three most significant accomplishments in the last five years?
2. Imagine it is 2017. Looking back on the last five years, what would you like to see as the three most important accomplishments the City of Bettendorf has made?

### Topic Questions (2 per table):

1. **Riverfront:** As you look around the Quad Cities, each city has taken a different approach to developing and using its riverfront. Keeping in mind that Bettendorf does not own much of its riverfront property as some of the other cities do, if you were in charge, how would you use Bettendorf's riverfront? (*Facilitator's prompt:* Acquiring riverfront land is an option, but would greatly increase the cost of any city project along the riverfront. Encouraging private development could provide another avenue for riverfront projects. Help your group understand this caveat without unduly limiting their vision for the riverfront; help them keep it realistic while remaining visionary.)
2. **Downtown:** Downtown Bettendorf has seen a lot of development activities over the past several years. What do you like about the way the city had developed its downtown? What do you not like about the way the city has developed its downtown? What things (if any) should the downtown have that it does not?
3. **City Services:** When you think about all of the services that the city provides to the citizens of Bettendorf, which services do you feel they perform especially well? Which services could they improve? Why/How? As a Bettendorf resident, do you feel you receive a good value for the taxes and fees you pay to the city? (*Facilitator Prompt:* City services include things like fire protection, police services, streets, sewers, garbage pickup, buses, economic development, libraries, parks, building inspections, etc.)
4. **Recreation and Cultural Amenities:** When you think about the services a city provides, two important ones that enhance the quality of life of the residents are recreation and cultural amenities. How would you assess Bettendorf in terms of its recreational activities and cultural amenities? What recreational activities or cultural amenities do you feel that you don't have adequate access to? (*Facilitator's prompt:* Please probe for your table's views of the walking and biking trails among the other recreational options available in Bettendorf, asking about them specifically if not one brings them up.) NOTE: In night two, we also asked the facilitator to prompt about recreational activities in the winter.
5. **Retail:** Bettendorf has four main retail centers: downtown, Cumberland Square, Duck Creek and Devils Crossing. As you think about these four retail areas, what do you find especially attractive or enticing? What do you dislike? What is missing that the city might encourage from future developers?
6. **Health Care and Healthy Living:** In recent years, Bettendorf has seen significant growth in the number and types of health care facilities locating in our city, especially along the 53<sup>rd</sup> Street and I-



74 corridors. How would you assess the availability of health care for Bettendorf residents? How would you assess the quality of health care services and healthy living options available to Bettendorf residents? What else should the City of Bettendorf do, if anything, to improve health care and healthy living options in the city? (**Facilitator's prompt:** Note that like many of these other questions, the city cannot directly impact the health care of the community as the providers are private entities. While gathering opinions about the quality and accessibility of health care, keep your participants' expectations reasonable about the role the city can play in changing the current health care environment.)

7. **Business Environment:** One way a city can reduce residential tax rates is by promoting a vigorous business environment. How would you rate Bettendorf's business environment both from the perspective of a business owner or operator and from the perspective of a citizen whose taxes and quality of life are impacted by the business climate? What else should the City of Bettendorf do, if anything, to promote more business growth in the city?
8. **Education:** Bettendorf is served by two school districts: Bettendorf and Pleasant Valley, as well as a number of private schools. Each school district is run by their own set of elected officials with separate taxing authorities (in the case of the public schools). What information could or should the city share with the school districts and the private schools in our community in terms of how well they serve the needs of the city (both in terms of access and quality)? In what ways could they be improved? (**Facilitator's prompt:** A number of individuals invited to attend these sessions come from the schools, school boards, and school district staff. The intent is not to step on their toes in terms of wrestling authority from them, but to comment on the quality of the schools in terms of economic development for the city. Many residents and business who locate in Bettendorf comment that the quality of the education was a primary motivator for their choice of location. While we aren't trying to elicit a particular response from respondents, if you get push back from any of your participants, assure them that this question is intended to look at the quality of educational options as a quality of life and economic development question.)
9. **Transportation:** A lot of ways exist to get into and around Bettendorf: car, public transportation, walking, biking and, in the future, Amtrak and a new I-74 bridge. With all of these different modes of transportation, is it easy to get to where you want to go in Bettendorf? Now imagine you didn't have a car; would it be easy to get to where you want in Bettendorf? How can the city best leverage its transportation system to meet the needs of its citizens? (**Facilitator's prompt:** When looking at the city of Bettendorf and its very dominant car culture, members of your group will likely view walking and biking trails – while an important issue for the city – as more of a recreational amenity rather than a mode of transportation. Allow your table to talk about trails as a mode of transportation, but focus more on the cars, public transportation and future uses of Amtrak and the I-74 Bridge. Especially flesh out their views on the public transportation system.)