



GRANT WOOD LOOP MASTER PLAN

Executive Summary

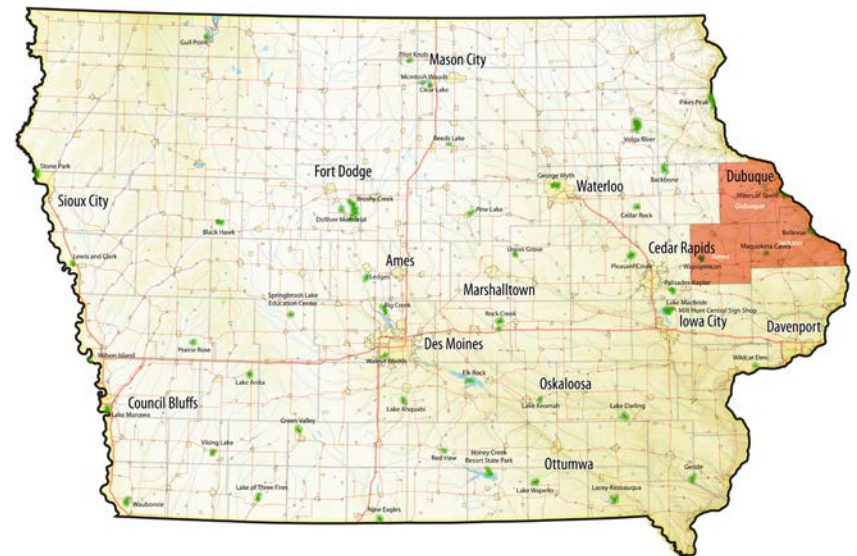
The Grant Wood Mississippi River Region (GWMRR) is a multi-jurisdictional, bipartisan, public-private partnership intended to create exceptional places and experiences for Iowans and visitors alike. This collaboration, Iowa's first Parks to People initiative, is working together to erase the boundaries and “enhance, promote, sustain, and connect” the region's cultural, natural and park assets. The region encompasses a three-county area now known as the Grant Wood Loop.

GRANT WOOD LOOP

The Grant Wood Loop encompasses Dubuque, Jackson, and Jones Counties and a population of just under 140,000. Our natural resources and thriving arts communities provide a perfect canvas for investing in our people, parks, and future. Town after town, park after park, offer the kind of experience that give residents and visitors alike the opportunity to connect with the outdoors, connect to friends and family, and create forever memories.

At the convergence of the Paleozoic Plateau, the Iowa Surface, and the Southern Iowa Drift Plain, the region is a rarity, boasting carved river valleys, majestic limestone bluffs and rolling hills historically dominated by prairie and timber. This diverse terrain has led directly to a region of rivers. The Mississippi, Maquoketa and Wapsipinicon Rivers come first to mind, but waterways dominate the landscape. Today, the ancient natural formations exist side by side with modern rural agriculture and river towns. These idyllic landscapes were the inspiration for many of Grant Wood's greatest works.

The region boasts a wealth of assets and opportunities for a collaborative effort to connect parks to people and places: unique and ancient land formations; 4,390 miles of waterways; four state parks, 50+ county parks and scores of city parks ranging in scale from regional to pocket parks; and innumerable cultural and arts events and facilities. Throughout the plan, these assets are discussed in the context of potential opportunities to expand and improve upon their existing qualities.



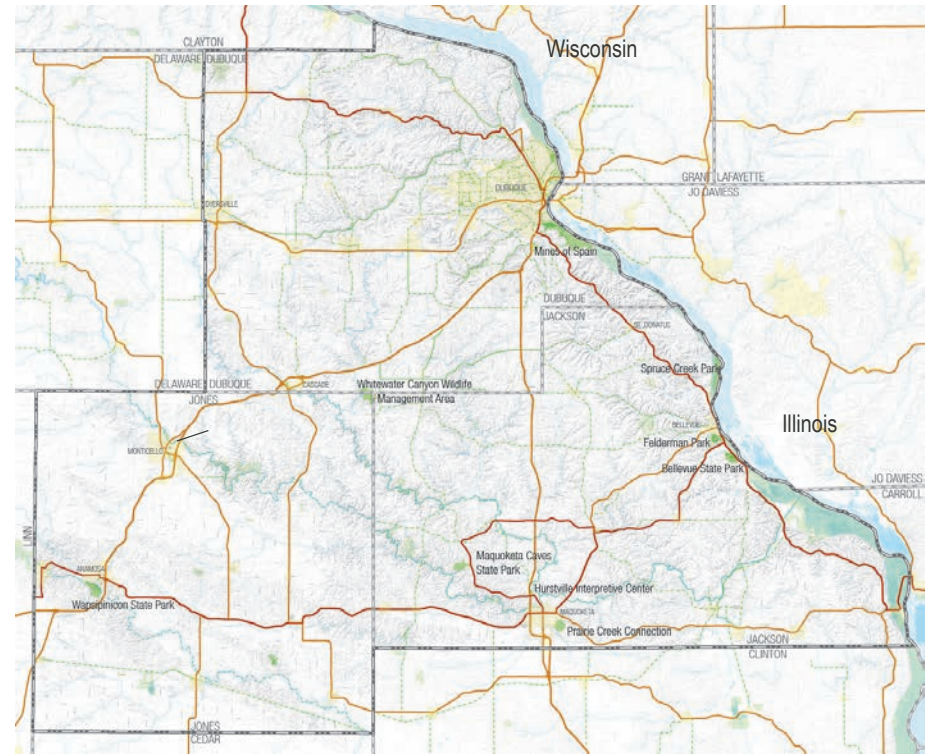
PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Grant Wood Loop Master Plan (GWLMP) is not a land use, operating, or capital improvement plan for any individual entity or facility. It is a roadmap and living document for collaboration toward a shared vision within the region to enact over the next 20 years. The Master Plan is both a guide for the sustaining stakeholders and a resource for residents and visitors. The Master Plan's purpose is to establish and implement an ambitious vision of connecting people to their communities and to each other through parks, trails, quality-of-life assets, and healthy living programming. We consider not just natural resources, but also the built environment; not just economics, but also public health; not just social gathering spaces, but also cultural events and assets. This document reflects these values through established strategic directions and identified priority initiatives.

RESULTS OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

Development of this plan has resulted in several major priorities and recommendations that the Leadership Team will focus on implementing in the coming months, years and beyond. These include:

- **Establish & Support a Formal Regional Collaborative.** Development of a GWMRR organizational structure and sustainable funding for project implementation and coordination. Enhance partnerships among existing entities and increased awareness of the strategic directions.
- **Priority Initiative: Maquoketa River on the Move.** A complete water trail, with community accesses and amenities, along the Maquoketa River through Jones and Jackson Counties.
- **Priority Initiative: Prairie Creek Connections.** New connecting trails from Prairie Creek Recreation Area, through the city of Maquoketa, to Hurstville Interpretive Center and on to Maquoketa Caves State Park. Includes enhanced amenities at Prairie Creek, Hurstville Interpretive Center and along the route.
- **Priority Initiative: The Mississippi Circuit.** New connecting trails from City of Dubuque, to Mines of Spain, through the City of St. Donatus, to Spruce Creek Park, through the city of Bellevue and Felderman Park, landing in Bellevue State Park. Circuit completed through enhanced accesses and signage along Mississippi River water trail. Includes amenities along route.
- **Priority Initiative: Crossing the Wapsi/Bridging History.** Connector trail from the historic Hale Bridge area to city of Anamosa. Includes Hale Bridge area upgrades and other enhancements.
- **Priority Initiative: Experience the Inspiration.** A collaborative brand and marketing of the region that culminates in creating user-driven destination experiences, supported by technological applications and coordination with tourism, natural resources, and cultural entities.



- **Build a Lasting Legacy.** Advocacy and stewardship efforts to develop sustainable funding and ongoing support for the maintenance and enhancement of our natural, recreational and cultural assets.

HOW TO READ THIS PLAN

The Master Plan is broken down into several sections that discuss the process, overarching strategic framework, priority initiatives, specific projects and implementation of the GWMRR Parks to People program.

Part One: The Planning Context and Process

The opening sections detail how the Parks to People process began, as well as the formation and work of the steering group to date. The public engagement process and how input has been incorporated throughout the Master Plan is discussed. Part One concludes with a discussion of the Strategic Framework, detailing the mission, vision and strategic directions. These strategic directions will be referenced throughout the Master Plan.

Crossing the Wapsi: Bridging History

Estimated Initiative Investment: \$1.5 million (2016 dollars)

The proposed Hale Bridge area improvements would help to complete the picture of the area as a more complete destination for visitors and residents alike. The addition of approximately two miles of trail from the Hale Bridge back to the park entrance is essential for connecting the park to the residents of Anamosa. The Hale Bridge area is frequently used by visitors to the park, and the addition of an open air shelter and bathroom at the Hale Bridge and improvements to the Wapsipinicon campground will increase the visitation and usage of the park. The improvements will give people a way to immerse themselves in nature and connect to the history of the community.

The Hale Bridge is a historic landmark in Jones County. Constructed in 1879 over the Wapsipinicon River to connect the Northern and Southern halves of Hale Township, the Hale Bridge was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998. Once no longer deemed worthy of vehicular traffic, the Jones County Historic Preservation Commission took the lead in its preservation and relocation to its current location within the Wapsipinicon State Park. In March of 2006, the bridge was moved by Iowa National Guard Chinook helicopters. The relocation event was featured on the History Channel's Mega Movers program. It now provides an eastern connection from the Wapsipinicon State Park to Shaw Road just east of Anamosa. Relocating the bridge was not inexpensive; many dollars were raised through fundraising and volunteer efforts. In addition, \$445,000 was secured through grants from the Iowa Economic Development Authority, East Central Iowa Council of Government, REAP, RACI and Silos and Smokestacks.

Key Elements—Crossing the Wapsi/Bridging History

Project	Champion
Wapsipinicon State Park - Interpretive kiosks	Iowa DNR
Wapsipinicon Trail connecting Hale Bridge to Anamosa	Jones Co. Economic Development
Hale Bridge lift and connector to Shaw Rd	Iowa DNR

Opportunity Projects—Crossing the Wapsi/Bridging History

Project	Champion
Wapsipinicon State Park - Replace shower building at campground	Iowa DNR
Wapsipinicon State Park - Shelter and restroom construction at Hale Bridge area	Iowa DNR
Wapsipinicon State Park - Redesign campground layout	Iowa DNR
Wapsipinicon State Park - Upgrade and enlarge 20 sites and add full hookups to 1/3 sites	Iowa DNR
Wapsipinicon State Park - Create kayaking course on Wapsi River	Iowa DNR
Wapsipinicon State Park - Restore historic entrance sign, portal and two stone bridges	Iowa DNR
Wapsipinicon State Park - Remove wooden restroom in the campground	Iowa DNR
Wapsipinicon State Park - Relocate and repurpose Boy Scout Lodge	Iowa DNR
Wapsipinicon State Park - Replace and relocate equipment storage building, park office, and shop	Iowa DNR
Wapsipinicon State Park – Add parking at picnic area	Iowa DNR
Wapsipinicon State Park - Parking at west end of Hale Bridge	Iowa DNR
Wapsipinicon State Park - Add permanent rental tent pad, stone seating, and fire pit at Rotary Lodge	Iowa DNR

CRITERIA MET:

- ✓ Regional Impact
- ✓ Addresses Strategic Directions
- ✓ Enhances Current Facilities & Programs
- ✓ Creates and Maintains Long-Term Diverse, Stewards and Partners
- ✓ Shovel-Ready with Public Support
- ✓ Distinctive Character: Attractive, Unique, Iconic
- ✓ Promotes Education and Awareness



Key Element Project - Wapsipinicon Trail

The Wapsipinicon Trail projects builds on past investments to save the historic Hale Bridge and make cultural and recreational assets more accessible to residents and visitors. In 2006, the Hale Bridge (the oldest bowstring arch bridge in Iowa) was relocated to connect the Wapsipinicon State Park with Shaw Road. The project included a three-year bridge restoration effort and relocation with assistance from the Iowa National Guard and a Chinook Helicopter.

The Wapsipinicon Trail project will further improve pedestrian and bicycle access to this historically important bridge and the State Park by connecting the city of Anamosa to the park via a 5k trail loop. The trail will run parallel to Shaw Road and will cross into the park on the historic Hale Bridge. The project is a joint effort between Jones County, the City of Anamosa, and the Iowa DNR. The larger project includes accessibility improvements to the bridge itself, connection to city bike routes and the downtown, and improved amenities on the park side of the bridge, in addition to further long-term connections to the Grant Wood Trail that extends from Linn County into Jones County.

