



Des Moines, IA: The Tomorrow Plan for a Greener Greater Des Moines

“Preserving What Makes Us Special”

Central Iowa is a region on the rise. *Forbes Magazine* voted the Greater Des Moines area “America’s Best Place to Raise a Family” and the “Best Place for Business and Careers” in 2010. Despite national trends, the Greater Des Moines area still has a large affordable housing stock. Already the most populous area in the state, the region expects an additional 250,000 residents by 2050.

This impending growth threatens quality of life, potentially skewing the region’s unique balance of urban, suburban, and rural neighborhoods, and heightening flood risks through increased use of impervious surfaces. The Tomorrow Plan, a three-year planning effort funded by a HUD Regional Planning grant, fulfills Central Iowa’s need for a unifying vision that addresses how future growth will affect the region. In the words of project manager Bethany Wilcoxon, the goal of The Tomorrow Plan is to avoid “losing what makes us special.”

Positioning the Region for Success

The Tomorrow Plan is working to ensure the region’s future economic competitiveness through coordinated regional economic development. This includes efforts to attract businesses and to improve public amenities to make the region a desirable place to work and live.

"The Tomorrow Plan will position us to compete more effectively in a global economy and attract top talent. These efforts will allow our region to entice even more start-ups and sustain the businesses already located here." - Suku Radia, President and CEO, Bankers Trust

To enhance this component of the planning process, The Tomorrow Plan relies upon input from local business partners, such as the Greater Dallas County Economic Development Alliance and members of the Young Professionals Connection.

Description

Launched in July 2011, [The Tomorrow Plan](#) is fostering a sustainable Greater Des Moines region, building on a newly completed long-range regional transit plan and a strategic plan for economic and workforce development.

Federal Grants

- 2010 HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant: \$2,000,000

Local Partner Commitments

- Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority: \$706,978
- Greater Des Moines Partnership: \$75,000
- Community Foundation: \$75,000
- Des Moines Area MPO: \$61,200
- City of Des Moines: \$52,000

Local Partners

Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, Agribusiness Association of Iowa, Aging Resource of Iowa, Children and Families of Iowa, City of Des Moines, Black Ministerial Alliance of Iowa, and others.

Achievements

- The Tomorrow Plan’s outreach efforts have reached about 2,000 Greater Des Moines area residents thus far, allowing planners to better understand what residents value about their neighborhoods.
- The Greater Des Moines area has sparked statewide change. Localities in Iowa now look to Des Moines for guidance in sustainability planning.

For more information visit:

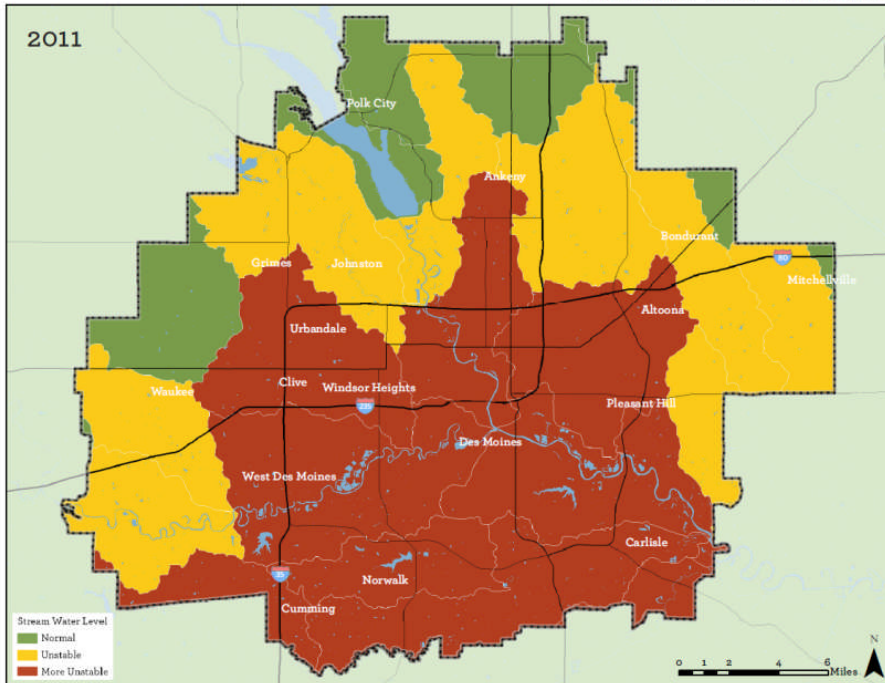
<http://www.thetomorrowplan.com>
hud.gov/sustainability.



HUD Sustainable Communities Initiative

Cultivating Vital, High Opportunity Places

STREAM WATER LEVEL

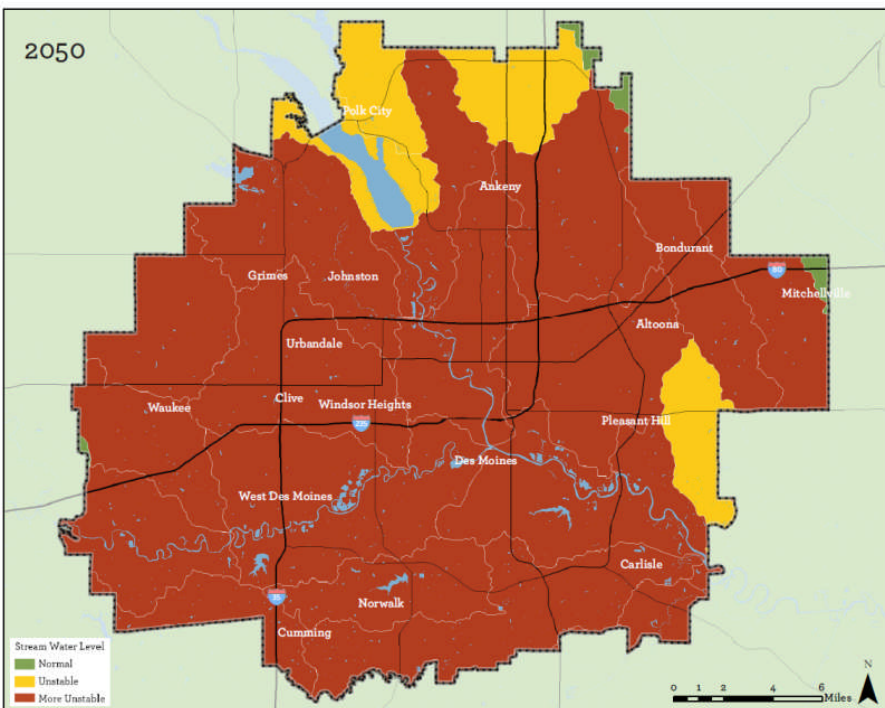


Regional Problems, Regional Solutions

While the Greater Des Moines area economy has largely weathered the storm of the national economic downturn, a marked increase in floods poses just as great a threat to their prosperity. In 1993, a large downpour halted rail and freight traffic, causing \$716 million in losses. A 2008 flood, called "Iowa's Katrina," left crop damage estimated at \$3 billion.

No locality was spared from the floods of 1993 and 2008, making it clear that this was a regional problem that required a regional solution. The Tomorrow Plan addresses how *all* of Central Iowa can become storm ready. Projecting future land use patterns, Tomorrow Plan researchers are charting the links between residential sprawl, loss of green space, and increased flooding. Now, local leaders are working together to plan for a future that prevents environmental hazards and sustains economic prosperity.

The Tomorrow Plan takes a similar approach to workforce development and transportation, collaborating across jurisdictions to ensure future success.



A HUD-funded study found that if Greater Des Moines continues with its current growth patterns, stream water level will be unstable in most of the region by 2050. This enhanced flood risk threatens farmland and key freight routes.

