

# Executive Summary of Success

Grant Wood Loop  
October 22, 2019

On September 29th, 2014 Governor Branstad in partnership with the Iowa Parks Foundation announced our region (Jackson, Jones, and Dubuque) as the Parks to People pilot region. Our task was to create public-private partnerships to leverage the \$1.9 million of State funds to accomplish \$12 million in projects.

It took a diverse group of stakeholders and a year-long public input and planning process with the help of RDG Planning, to define a shared vision: to enhance, promote, sustain, and connect our region's cultural, natural and park assets. This process breaking down silos and transcending jurisdictional boundaries created the trust and relationships necessary to truly work as a region. From there we established a Board of Directors, identified our priority projects, filed for 501(c)3 status, created a regional identity (Grant Wood Loop), completed a 20-year Master Plan, developed and launched a website ([www.GWLoop.com](http://www.GWLoop.com)), all while fundraising and managing the 70+ improvement projects region-wide. It's been a busy few years.

We are happy to say that after the pilot phase ending in December of 2018, we completed over \$52 million in projects amounting to over 70 individual projects across the region. More than \$5 million in private funding was raised to enhance and create the recreational opportunities in our region that make living in and visiting the Grant Wood Loop an incredible experience.

## What We Are Exploring Next!

We aren't stopping here. The Grant Wood Loop is already looking at what is next. We continue to work towards some of the goals included in our 20 year Master Plan related to expanding trail connections, as well as other opportunities like creating destination cabin developments. These efforts always refer back to our goals of creating last experiences for residents and visitors to engage in this landscape.

Additionally, we're looking at ways to better integrate an understanding for our natural spaces in the schools with a collaboration with the University of Iowa's School of the Wild. This effort is to establish an annual, weeklong, region-wide program that delivers curriculum based lessons in our region's parks through partnerships with the schools, county conservation, Iowa DNR, and the School of the Wild.

We hope you will come to the Grant Wood Loop and experience the inspiration for yourself!

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