



# Corridor

FEBRUARY 2017



## NORTH IOWA CORRIDOR INITIATES LONG-RANGE PLANNING PROCESS

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**T**HE NORTH IOWA CORRIDOR AND several partners are embarking on a long-range strategic visioning process, and have engaged TIP Strategies to guide the development of a regional economic development strategic plan for Mason City, Clear Lake, and Cerro Gordo County. This initiative will create a framework to capture concepts, build strategies and partnerships, and develop a process to guide our efforts to achieve shared goals. Partners in the project include the Mason City and Clear Lake Area Chambers of Commerce, NIACC, John Pappajohn Entrepreneurship Center, Iowa Works North Iowa, and many more.

“We look forward to the opportunity to collaborate with our regional partners and the TIP consulting team to generate meaningful strategies that will accelerate the growth and prosperity of this area,” said Chad Schreck, president and CEO of the North Iowa EDC. “TIP has a 20-plus year track record of developing thoughtful and data-supported strategic plans for regions like North Iowa. Their experience will help us to better align resources and build consensus on how our communities desire to grow into the future.”

“TIP is honored to have been selected to assist in this important work,” said TIP Strategies Senior Partner Jeff Marcell. “We are excited to work closely with the North Iowa partners to design a blueprint that will ensure the North Iowa region is positioned for a bright economic future.”

The first phase of the project will kick off in mid-February when the TIP consulting team will conduct multiple stakeholder interviews and roundtables to understand the community’s economic priorities and successes. That information will be

combined with the latest statistical data available to inform the proposed strategies. The resulting plan will identify a diverse set of recommendations that will strategically position the North Iowa region among target industry decision-makers, bolster entrepreneurship and innovation in the area, support future growth sectors through effective workforce development initiatives, and enhance quality of place. The plan will balance the need to expand and diversify the region’s industrial and employment base with the needs and interests of existing businesses and the local workforce.

The strategic plan’s goal is to create new opportunities for growth for the region by building upon North Iowa’s existing strategic priorities, unique asset base, and past successes. Most importantly, the plan will be supported by a comprehensive implementation strategy that will outline the tools needed to effectively execute on the recommendations.

“We look forward to getting started and building on the foundation our communities and regional partners have built. Our first order of business is to get out in the region and meet with stakeholders and community members to help TIP glean as much about our area as possible,” Schreck said.

In the coming weeks a website, community survey, and more information about how to get involved in the process will be sent out. Stay tuned for more updates and opportunities as we work through the process, which is expected to play out over a 6-8 month timeframe.

