



NIACOG NEWS

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NORTH IOWA AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Mar. –Apr. 2020

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NEW TRANSIT VEHICLES

The Iowa Transportation Commission approved more than \$9 million in funding for 107 new public transit vehicles to replace vehicles that have remained in service past their useful life as determined by the Federal Transit Administration.

The Iowa Public Transit Bus Replacement Project was funded through the Federal Transit Administration's Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program. Vehicle replacement projects were approved for 21 different public transit systems. The Region 2 Transit System was awarded funding to replace five units at a total cost of \$517,100. The grant will fund 85% of the total cost, or \$439,535.



Public transit is vital to enhancing the mobility of Iowans, getting them where they need to go. Iowa has public transit service in all 99 counties. For more information on the Region 2 Transit System visit: <http://www.R2bus.org/>.

EST. POPULATION MIGRATION IN NIACOG REGION (Source: US Census Bureau, 2017 Estimates)

KOSSUTH: Dom: -482 Int: 58 Net: -424	WINNEBAGO: Dom: -205 Int: -4 Net: -209	WORTH: Dom: -73 Int: -2 Net: -71	MITCHELL: Dom: -98 Int: 25 Net: -73
	HANCOCK: Dom: -497 Int: -17 Net: -480	CERRO GORDO: Dom: -1,184 Int: 255 Net: -929	FLOYD: Dom: -532 Int: -25 Net: -557

Map figures represent the following:

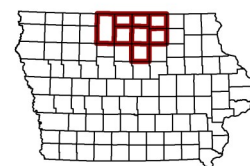
Dom = annual net inflow/outflow
of domestic population

Int= annual net inflow/outflow
of international population

Net: sum of the domestic and
international inflow and outflow

FRANKLIN:

Dom: -614
Int: 58
Net: -556



CLEANING UP NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING

Do you have homes in your community that blight your neighborhoods? Homes that, if removed or rehabilitated, could make a huge difference? The purpose of this article is to discuss some tools to help address these homes and enhance their neighborhoods.

DILAPIDATED HOMES

For dilapidated homes that are too far gone and may require demolition, the following tools are offered to assist in your decision about how to proceed with them.

Reconsider Saving It - Older homes are often oozing with character that, if restored, could be a real amenity to a community. Architectural features like decorative windows, wrap-around porches, spindles, and columns could be character-defining visual assets for your city if properly maintained. Also, the building materials used back then are often superior in quality such as 'old growth' wood. And, finally, it is typically far cheaper to save old homes than to build new. See the 'Save It!' section below for some financial resources to help save the older 'gems' in your city.

Non-Profit Partner – Creating a non-profit partner can be helpful in a couple of ways. First, when a dilapidated home is donated to a non-profit, the donor receives a tax deduction for the donation. This deduction can serve as an incentive for the owner to convey the property, and it costs the city nothing. Second, a non-profit does not have the same degree of regulation as a city in areas such as property conveyance and asbestos removal (as part of demolition).

Municipal Infraction – Using a 'municipal infraction' provision in your city code can help the court system to impose fines (up to \$750/day) for owners not taking care of their property. This can be a powerful motivational tool for the owners to either maintain the property or sell it for redevelopment. Having a code enforcement officer on staff can also provide the staff needed to proactively pursue dilapidated housing, as well as, weeds, junk cars, broken sidewalks, etc. The fines can assist in paying for staffing costs; these positions are sometimes combined with a rental housing inspection program.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) – If a non-profit will receive ownership of the property, TIF funding can be granted to them to fund the demolition of the dilapidated structure and construction of new housing. TIF can also be used to provide incentives for potential homeowners to build new housing; the incentives to homeowners is effectively repaid through the additional tax levy on the newly constructed homes. Since the cost to build a home is less than its value, TIF can subsidize the home construction and fill the gap between cost and market value.

Gaining Ownership with Iowa Code 657A – Obtaining ownership of a dilapidated property can be tricky especially when the owner is unresponsive and lives in some other state and the title for the property is cluttered with liens for mowing, unpaid taxes, and other debt. This relatively new provision of the Iowa Code allows for clearing title and making the property accessible for ownership and redevelopment. Bryce Davis, city administrator for the City of Eagle Grove, estimates the cost of this process at roughly \$2,500 per home in legal fees.

Demolition – When completing demolition, be sure to excavate the old basement to ensure that the lot is ready for reuse. This will add cost, but reusing the lot is the eventual goal in most cases. Bryce Davis estimates the cost of demolition at \$12,000 to \$15,000 per home.



Intro to Planning and Zoning Workshop

DATE & TIME: Thursday,
March 5th @ 5:30 pm

LOCATION: Best Western
Holiday Lodge, 2023 7th
Ave, Clear Lake

REGISTRATION ([Click Here](#))

ADDITIONAL DETAILS
([Click Here](#))

Happy
St. Patrick's
Day

March 17th

HAPPY
Spring

March 19th



SAVE IT!



As explained on the previous page, restoring decorative homes can be a real character enhancing activity for a community and is typically far cheaper than building new homes. The following is a list of financial resources available to help with rehabilitating homes. Please note that most of these programs can be used in combination with each other.

NIACOG HOUSING TRUST FUND: Homeowners apply to NIACOG. Eligibility: owner-occupied, generally elderly (62+) or disabled, reside in Cerro Gordo County. Projects average \$21,000 per grant. The income limit for a 2-person household is approximately \$33,360.

Contact: NIACOG @ 641-423-0491 x27

HOMEWARD, INC.: Homeowners apply directly to Homeward, Inc. The program funds up to \$7,000 as ½ grant* / ½ loan. Income limit is about \$44,400.

Contact: Homeward, Inc. @ 515-532-6477 (in Franklin, Hancock, Kossuth, Mitchell, Winnebago and Worth Counties)

USDA: Homeowner applies directly to USDA Rural Development. The program funds up to \$10,000 grant* (elderly only) and \$20,000 loan. In-

come limit is about \$27,800 for a 2-person household.

Contact: USDA Rural Development 15-332-4411 (Hancock/Kossuth/Winnebago) or 641-648-5181 (Cerro Gordo/Floyd/Franklin/Mitchell/Worth)

CDBG: City applies for funding, markets the program, and determines which homeowners receive assistance. Grants for up to 6 homes per city. Each homeowner can receive up to \$37,500 in grant* funds. City provides \$5,000 to cover pre-application expenses. Income limit is about \$44,400 for a 2-person household.

Contact: NIACOG @ 641-423-0491 x16

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY: Homeowner applies directly to Habitat For Humanity. The program provides free labor and 0% loan for materials. Income limit is about \$33,360 for a 2-person household; however, income calculation is reduced by medical expenses, etc. (Not available in Floyd or Kossuth County.)

Contact: Habitat @ 641-424-8978

*The 'grants' referenced above are typically forgivable loans. These loans typically require no repayment unless the home is sold within either 3 or 5 years after the home repair project is completed.



Calendar of Events

March

8th	Daylight Savings Time Begins	
9th	NIACOG Brd. Mtg.	Bennigan's CL @ 7 pm
19th	Housing Trust Fund Annual Mtg.	NIACOG Office @ 11:30 am
27th	Clerks Mtg.	NIACOG Office @ 9:30

April

8th	HAZMAT	NIACOG Office @ 1 pm
8th	Trans. Policy Brd.	NIACOG Office @ 2:30
13th	NIACOG Exec. Cmte.	NIACOG Office @ Noon
22nd	Earth Day/Administrative Professionals Day	