

Site Revisioning Plan 230 and 236 Main Street Bennett, Iowa



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Chapter 1: Introduction

Purpose of Plan

This Site Revitalization Plan (Plan) provides a framework for the coordinated redevelopment of two prominently underutilized properties located at 230 Main Street and 236 Main Street in Bennett, Iowa. Reuse of these sites represents a unique opportunity to improve the appearance and function of Main Street, expand community gathering spaces, and support long-term reinvestment of the surrounding area.

This Plan was shaped by public input which emphasized the need for cost-conscious options that offer broad community benefit, increased main street activity, and improvements to the built environment that serve the community's families and future generations.

In response this Plan:

- Identifies opportunities and constraints affecting redevelopment of 230 and 236 Main Street
- Documents community priorities and preferences
- Establishes a realistic reuse direction for each site
- Provides implementation guidance to support future landscape design, grant opportunities and other funding sources, and attract development interest

What this plan does:

- Guides redevelopment of 230 and 236 Main Street
- Reflects community input and priorities
- Provides realistic implementation steps
- Positions projects for funding opportunities

Brownfield Basics

Brownfields are properties where redevelopment may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of contamination. Programs such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Program helps communities evaluate these conditions and plan for reuse. In Bennett, this revitalization planning effort is tied directly to that framework. In addition to land use and design, the process considers site readiness, building conditions, and implementation feasibility, which are factors that shape how aging main street properties are reused.

This context is important because revitalization may require extra coordination, evaluation, and phased investment before improvements can move forward. Planning for these conditions early helps position both sites for realistic and achievable redevelopment.

Study Area

The study area includes two adjoining City-owned properties on Main Street. These sites were selected because of their visibility, redevelopment potential, and importance to the future of the community.

- **230 Main Street.** This 0.06-acre vacant lot was formerly a metal fabrication shop and is owned by the City.
- **236 Main Street.** This 0.16-acre property includes a 2,688 square foot building and 0.95-acre surface parking lot. It was previously utilized by a bank before abandonment and eventual acquisition by the City.

Together, these two sites create an opportunity to strengthen Main Street through complementary uses. One site focuses on creating an inviting outdoor public gathering spot, while the other invites an indoor experience for the community to come together. Both offer an avenue to increase foot traffic on Main Street and support the area's overall vitality.

Planning Process

The Plan was developed through a phased process moving from early visioning to actionable redevelopment direction. The process combined site analysis, stakeholder coordination, public engagement, and concept development into a single framework.



The initial stakeholder meeting with representatives from the City, Bennett Community School, local Community Group, and residents established several goals and challenges to be considered during plan development. These included preserving Bennett's identity, incorporating a veterans' memorial, creating usable gathering spaces, exploring public-private partnerships, and maintaining transparent engagement for the residents.

Public input was later gathered through a project website, a community survey (112 responses), and an in-person visualization exercise at the 2026 Bennett Spring Vendor Event (51 participants). This comprehensive outreach approach allowed the planning process to move from general priorities to more specific design preferences.

Across all engagement methods, several consistent themes emerged:

- Land use decisions that fully evaluate costs to the City's budget and taxpayers
- Broad community use
- Flexible space that supports everyday activities for families
- Strong interest in a library-centered reuse of 236 Main Street

Community input also demonstrated that veterans' memorial features, which were mentioned several times as part of a potential reuse plan, are most effective when integrated into a broader public space rather than functioning as the sole purpose of a site. These themes provided a clear and consistent foundation for the concepts and recommendations in this Plan.

Project Partners

Successful redevelopment of 230 and 236 Main Street will depend on continued collaboration among local leadership, community partners, private investment, and residents. The planning process initiated new community partnerships, shaped by a range of voices, each contributing to moving the Plan from early visioning toward implementation.

As the current landowner of both sites, the **City of Bennett (City)** serves as the lead implementation partner and as the entity responsible for advancing redevelopment decisions, coordinating future improvements, and aligning projects with community priorities. The City will play the central role in carrying this Plan forward. City leadership has been directly involved throughout the planning process, helping shape priorities, identifying site-specific considerations, and coordinating community engagement activities.

The **East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA)** has supported the project through its administration of the EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant. This role has provided the structure and resources needed to evaluate site conditions, better understand redevelopment constraints, and support a coordinated path toward reuse of both properties.

The **Bennett Community School District** is an important institutional partner reflecting the broader civic role the school plays in Bennett. Stakeholder discussions emphasized that school-community collaboration will be important to supporting youth, families, and shared programming opportunities.

Residents and community stakeholders have been central to shaping the direction of this Plan. Through meetings, surveys, and in-person engagement activities, community members provided clear input on their vision for the long-term use of the sites. Continued community involvement will remain important as Bennett moves from planning into design, fund procurement, and construction.

Eocene Environmental Group served as the planning and technical assistance partner, supporting stakeholder coordination, public engagement, and overall plan development. In this role, Eocene helped translate community input, site considerations, and redevelopment opportunities into a practical framework for implementation.



Chapter 2: Property Background



This chapter summarizes the background, prior use, and known environmental conditions information for 230 Main Street and 236 Main Street. While the two sites are adjacent and planned together, they are at different stages of the redevelopment process. Because of these differences the type and depth of available information vary between the properties.

Historic and Current Use

230 Main Street

Available records indicate that 230 Main Street historically supported industrial and service-related uses. Historic Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, local residents' accounts, and EPA records show the site previously functioned as a garage, agricultural store, and warehouse before transitioning to a metal fabrication and recycling-related uses.

The former building was demolished in spring of 2026, and the site now sits vacant. The property presents an opportunity for a new community space on Main Street, but further environmental investigations should be considered prior to redevelopment activities.



236 Main Street

236 Main Street most recently operated as Liberty Trust & Savings Bank building. The existing structure was constructed in 1968 and remained in use until 2024. Historic uses and prior buildings of the property supported multiple commercial enterprises such as a bank including a bakery, a hardware store, a public hall, and a showroom.

The building is a one-story commercial structure with a full basement and approximately 2,668 square feet of space. Through the planning process, it emerged as the preferred location for a future library and community-serving space, reflecting strong interest in maintaining it as an active public use on Main Street.

Previous Investigations

The two study area properties have received varying levels of environmental investigation. 236 Main Street has undergone formal environmental review, while 230 Main Street is supported by more limited documentation tied to prior site activity and demolition-related work.

Environmental Site Assessments

230 Main Street

There is not a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) associated with this property. However, the site's long-term industrial history suggests environmental considerations should remain part of redevelopment planning.

Stakeholder discussions and a 1920 Historic Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps identified the potential for 270-gallon gasoline underground tank on the property, and regulatory records associate the former use with an air-regulated industrial operation. These factors support approaching the site with appropriate environmental due diligence as design advances.

While the site is now vacant, future work should confirm subsurface conditions, utilities, and any remaining environmental considerations to support safe and efficient redevelopment.

236 Main Street

A Phase I ESA completed in September 2025 identified a recognized environmental condition (REC) related to historical gasoline tanks on nearby properties, including one immediately south of the site and another across Main Street to the northeast. The Phase I did not identify a documented on-site release. However, because the REC is

tied to historic nearby tank use, a Phase II ESA or targeted subsurface investigation should be completed before redevelopment advances to final design or construction. This step would help determine whether petroleum impacts are present and whether any cleanup, design, or construction considerations should be addressed before reuse moves forward.

The Phase I also identified age-related building concerns, including the potential presence of asbestos-containing materials and lead-based paint, as business environmental risks associated with reuse of the structure.

Hazardous Materials Assessment

230 Main Street

City records indicate that an Asbestos Containing Material (ACM) survey and abatement activities were completed for the former building prior to demolition. Because the building has been removed, this information serves primarily as historical context. Future redevelopment considerations will be focused on site conditions rather than building-related hazards.

236 Main Street

An ACM inspection completed in October 2025 identified ACM in several building material categories within 236 Main Street.

Materials identified included floor tile, floor tile mastic, drywall compound, wall panel mastic, ceiling surfacing, carpet mastic, HVAC seam tape, rolled linoleum flooring, exterior door frame caulk, and exterior wall tar. The extent of abatement needed will depend on the prevalence of these materials within the building and whether they are disturbed by the final renovation scope. The presence of ACM does not preclude reuse of the building, but it does mean that renovation planning should account for abatement of ACM that would be disturbed by future work. The inspection did not include roof materials, which were excluded from the scope.

In addition, the Phase I ESA identified lead-based paint as an age-related risk. While not formally tested as part of this effort it remains a consideration that may need to be addressed during renovation.

Structural Assessments

230 Main Street

With the former building removed, traditional structural concerns are no longer applicable. The focus for 230 Main Street is site readiness, including grading, utilities, drainage, and subsurface conditions that could influence design and construction. Addressing these factors early will help support efficient design, avoid rework, and position the site for phased implementation. floodplain.

236 Main Street

No standalone structural assessment has been completed at 236 Main Street. However, building conditions and renovation feasibility were central issues shaping its future reuse.

Stakeholders and community input

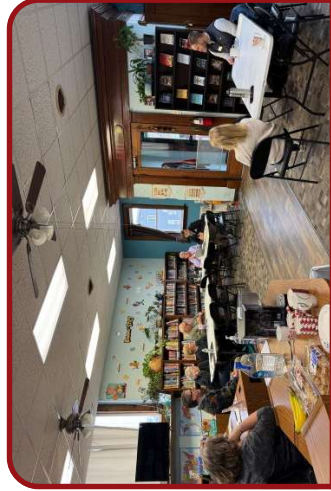
highlighted several considerations, including:

- ADA-related upgrades
- General code compliance improvements
- Renovation cost and feasibility

These factors suggest that while reuse is strongly supported, implementation will depend on how improvements are scoped, phased, and funded. A staged approach that prioritizes essential building upgrades can help establish a viable path forward while allowing incremental improvements over time.

Site Readiness	
230 Main Street	236 Main Street
Vacant site	Existing building
Site readiness focus	Renovation focus
Potential subsurface conditions	Asbestos & ADA upgrades
Easier early-phase implementation	Requires phased investment

Chapter 3: Community Input and Redevelopment Direction



Initial Stakeholder Meeting



Site Visit of 236 Main Street



Spring Vendor Event

The Plan was shaped through an intentional community engagement process designed to understand how residents currently use Main Street, what they want these sites to become, and what would make future improvements benefit the community as a whole.

Rather than relying on a single meeting or survey, the process used multiple forms of outreach to allow participation at different stages. Across the engagement methods, several consistent themes emerged:

- Cost-conscious decision-making
- Broad community benefit
- Improvements that support a more active and welcoming Main Street

These priorities provided a clear basis for the redevelopment concepts presented in this Plan.

Engagement Approach

Community engagement was organized as a phased and iterative process, moving from broad input to more focused feedback over time. Early stakeholder discussions identified

priorities and concerns, while later outreach tools were used to test ideas, and refine direction.

This process included:

- Stakeholder meetings
- A project website
- A community survey (112 responses)
- An in-person visualization exercise (51 participants)

Using multiple outreach formats helped reach a broader cross-section of the community. Online tools allowed wider participation, while in-person engagement provided more detailed feedback on design features and site use.

These themes carried throughout the rest of the planning process.

Project Website

The project website served as the central hub for information, project updates, and public engagement. From launch through early July 2026, the website recorded approximately 781 visits, with increases in traffic aligning with key project milestones

such as the survey and the Spring Vendor Event. The website provided a consistent way for residents to stay informed outside of meetings and events.

Community Survey

The community survey was open from March 3 through April 13, 2026, and received 112 responses. Outreach was supported through the project website, local social media, and flyers distributed during Taco Wednesday Events.

The survey gathered input on:

- Preferred future use for both sites
- Main Street priorities
- Barriers to redevelopment
- Desired features and amenities

This input helped identify both overall priorities and site-specific direction.

Spring Vendor Event

An in-person visualization preference exercise was held during the April 11, 2026, Spring Vendor Event at Bennett Community School. A total of 51 participants reviewed concept boards and voted on preferred features and uses.

This step helped move the discussion from general ideas to specific design preferences, including:

- Seating, shade, and layout options for 230 Main Street
- Confirmation of library reuse and supporting uses for 236 Main Street

These added clarity to the preferred direction and strengthened the connection between public input and the final concepts. Just as importantly, it showed that support for the preferred concepts did not come from a single comment or one isolated event.

Design Priorities

Public Input showed a high level of consistency across all engagement methods. Rather than competing ideas, feedback pointed toward a shared direction: making Main Street more active, useful, and connected to everyday community life.

Across the engagement process, residents emphasized three key priorities:

- Multi-use spaces that serve different age groups
- Practical and achievable improvements
- Investments that provide long-term community value

These themes appeared consistently across stakeholder discussions, survey responses, and in-person engagement activities, reinforcing a clear and shared direction for both sites. They also reflect a broader goal of supporting a more active Main Street environment, where regular use and community activity help sustain local businesses and services over time.

Main Street Priorities

At the broadest level, input showed strong interest in strengthening Main Street as a community destination. Residents identified priorities such as:

- Supporting local business opportunities
- Improving appearance and overall aesthetics.
- Expanding gathering space and opportunities for community events.

Cost sensitivity was also a constant theme. Residents expressed the need to balance investment with long-term maintenance and community benefit.

This reinforces the need for improvements that are not limited to occasional events but contribute to regular activity on Main Street.

230 Main Street Priorities

For 230 Main Street, the clearest direction was support for a flexible outdoor community space. A flexible outdoor event space ranked as the top future use in the survey.

Key Preferences from respondents included:

- Space for small community events (63.0%)
 - Seating (36.6%)
 - Welcoming design (25.9%)
 - Shade (25.0%)
- The visualization exercise provided additional input, and demonstrated:
- A strong preference for built-in benches over individual chairs (35 votes to 8)
 - Preference for permanent shade structures over temporary options (29 votes to 11)
 - Support for incorporating engraved bricks (24 votes) and greenspace (26 votes)
 - Preference for flags (27 votes) and a stone memorial (27 votes) within the veterans' memorial

From the beginning of the public input engagement, the integration of a veterans' memorial was important as a feature of the space. Follow up activities approached this element as being more meaningful when integrated into a larger gathering space rather than serving as the sole purpose of the site.

236 Main Street Priorities

For 236 Main Street, public input consistently supported reuse of the building as a library and community-serving space.

Key themes included:

- Strong interest in library use (reflected in survey comments and visualization feedback)
- Support for additional uses such as childcare (24 votes)
- Small programming and informal gathering space (19 votes)

Residents also identified barriers to reuse, including:

- Renovation cost (42%)
- Limited development interest (35%)
- ADA compliance challenges (17%)

The combination of strong support and practical concern suggests a reuse approach that remains community-serving while being phased and financially realistic.

Public Input's Influence on the Plan

Community input provided a clear direction for both properties, supporting two complementary site roles:

- 230 Main Street as a flexible outdoor gathering space
- 236 Main Street as a library-centered community building

Together, these uses respond to the community's goal of creating a more active and useful Main Street in Bennett.

From Ideas to Site Direction

The engagement process moved from broad priorities to site-specific direction over time.

- Early discussions identified the needs and constraints
- The survey confirmed areas of strongest support
- The visualization exercise refined design preferences

This progression helped establish a clear and realistic path forward, grounded in both community priorities and site conditions.

Preferred Direction for 230 Main Street

The preferred direction for 230 Main Street is a flexible outdoor space that can accommodate everyday use, small events, and integrated veterans' memorial features.

Key takeaways include:

- Strong preference for usable, comfortable, gathering space
- Importance of seating, shade, lighting, and durable site features
- Value of integrating veterans' memorial elements

As a visible and accessible site, 230 Main Street can help create more regular activity and strengthen Main Street as a gathering place.

Preferred Direction for 236 Main Street

The preferred direction for 236 Main Street is adaptive reuse, the repurposing of an existing building for a new function, as a library and community-serving space. Adaptive reuse avoids additional release of environmental factors associated with demolition and new construction and preserves local heritage, while supporting economic resilience.

Public input supports a concept that:

- Maintains a public-facing use on Main Street
- Provides space for programs, study, and informal gathering
- Remains realistic in terms of cost, accessibility, and phased implementation
- Addresses the library's current space constraints

As a daily-use destination, the building has the potential to bring consistent activity to Main Street and support broader community use over time.

Open House

A public open house was held on July 21, 2026, at the Bennett Public Library to present the draft Site Revitalization Plan and gather final community feedback. Approximately 27 residents attended and reviewed the proposed concepts, renderings, implementation strategies, and funding opportunities. Feedback was generally positive and reinforced the preferred redevelopment direction established through previous stakeholder meetings, surveys, website engagement, and the Spring Vendor Event. Discussion primarily focused on the appearance of the Cedar Poly building, the future use of the current library building, and long-term operational considerations associated with the proposed library and community space.

Key Public Input Takeaways

- Strong support for multi-use community spaces
- Emphasis on cost-conscious improvements
- Desire for more active and welcoming Main Street
- Preference for library reuse at 236 Main Street
- Support for integrating veterans' memorial features into a larger space

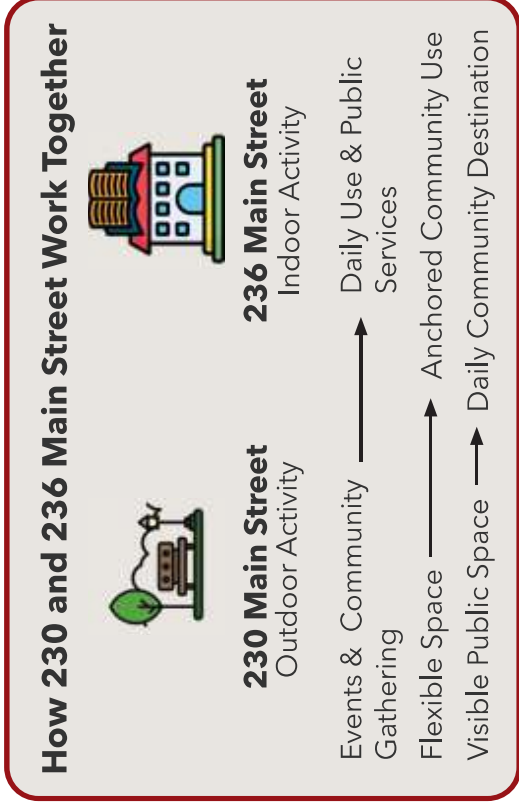
Chapter 4: Site Redevelopment Concepts

This chapter translates the community priorities into site concepts for 230 Main Street and 236 Main Street. These redevelopment concepts reflect what residents consistently emphasize: spaces that are useful, flexible, and realistic to implement.

The following concepts are not final designs or construction plans. Instead, the renderings establish a clear direction for each property and identify the features and functions that should guide future design and implementation.

The two sites are intended to function as complementary parts of Main Street with one providing outdoor gathering space and the other indoor community use. This combination helps create more consistent activity and strengthens Main Street as a shared community destination.

These improvements are intended to serve a broad range of community members, including youth, families, and older residents, by providing accessible and flexible spaces for both daily use and community events.



230 Main Street Concept Concept Overview

The preferred direction for 230 Main Street is a flexible public gathering space that supports everyday use, small community events, and integrated veteran’s memorial features.

This direction reflects both community input and the current condition of the site. With the former building removed, the property is well suited to an open, adaptable use that can evolve over time.

Key Elements and Community Benefits

Flexible open space. The site should function as an adaptable area that supports small events, informal gatherings, and day-to-day use. This was the strongest direction from community input.

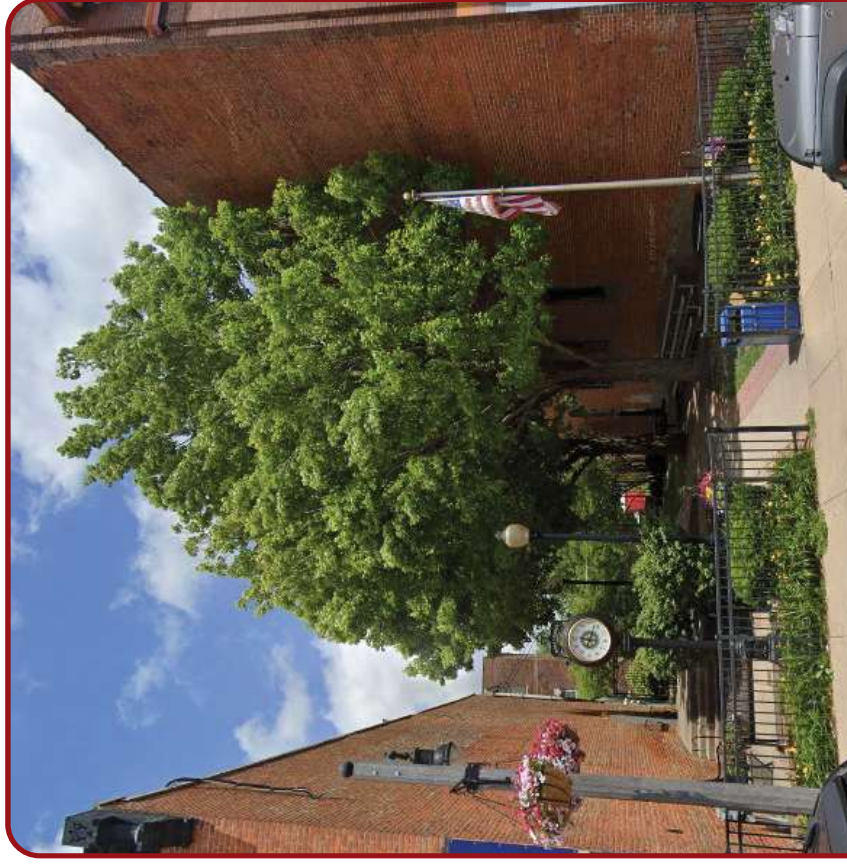
Increased pedestrian traffic from regular use and small community events supports nearby businesses and reinforces the area as a local destination. Pedestrian activity benefits from the following incorporated elements:

Seating and gathering areas. Seating is critical for comfort and frequent use. Built-in seating was strongly preferred and helps define the space as a place to stay rather than pass through.

Shade and comfort features. Shade directly affects how often the space is used. Permanent shade structures were preferred and will make the site more usable during warmer months.

Rain gardens and entry landscaping. Rain gardens were not identified as a specific community-requested feature but were added as a design-team recommendation to support community priorities for a greener, more attractive, and welcoming public space. These planted areas soften the street edge and may help manage stormwater runoff from paved surfaces.

Welcoming design and visual identity. The site should feel intentional and well-designed, not temporary. Lighting, simple landscaping, and cohesive design features can improve the appearance of Main Street while remaining easy to maintain.



Case Study Example

Ron-De-Voo Park is a small downtown gathering space used for concerts, children's festival activities, and community events. The park includes features such as seating, a stage, shade, and flexible event space, allowing it to support both scheduled programming and informal use. For Bennett, this example shows how a modest Main Street space at 230 Main Street could help create regular activity, support local gatherings, and provide a flexible setting for both everyday use and special events.

Source: West Liberty Parks and Recreation Department, West Liberty Area Arts Council, Image: GoogleMaps

Veterans' Memorial and Amenity Integration

Community input supports incorporating veterans' memorial elements as part of the site, but not as its sole purpose.

Integrating veterans' memorial features, such as flags, engraved elements, or interpretive components, allows the space to serve both as a place of remembrance and a space for everyday use. This approach supports both community identity and regular activity.

Additional features such as public art, engraved elements, or other local history information exhibits could be incorporated over time as part of phased improvements or partnership opportunities.

Design Considerations

The long-term success of the site will depend on keeping the design simple, durable, and flexible.

Key considerations include:

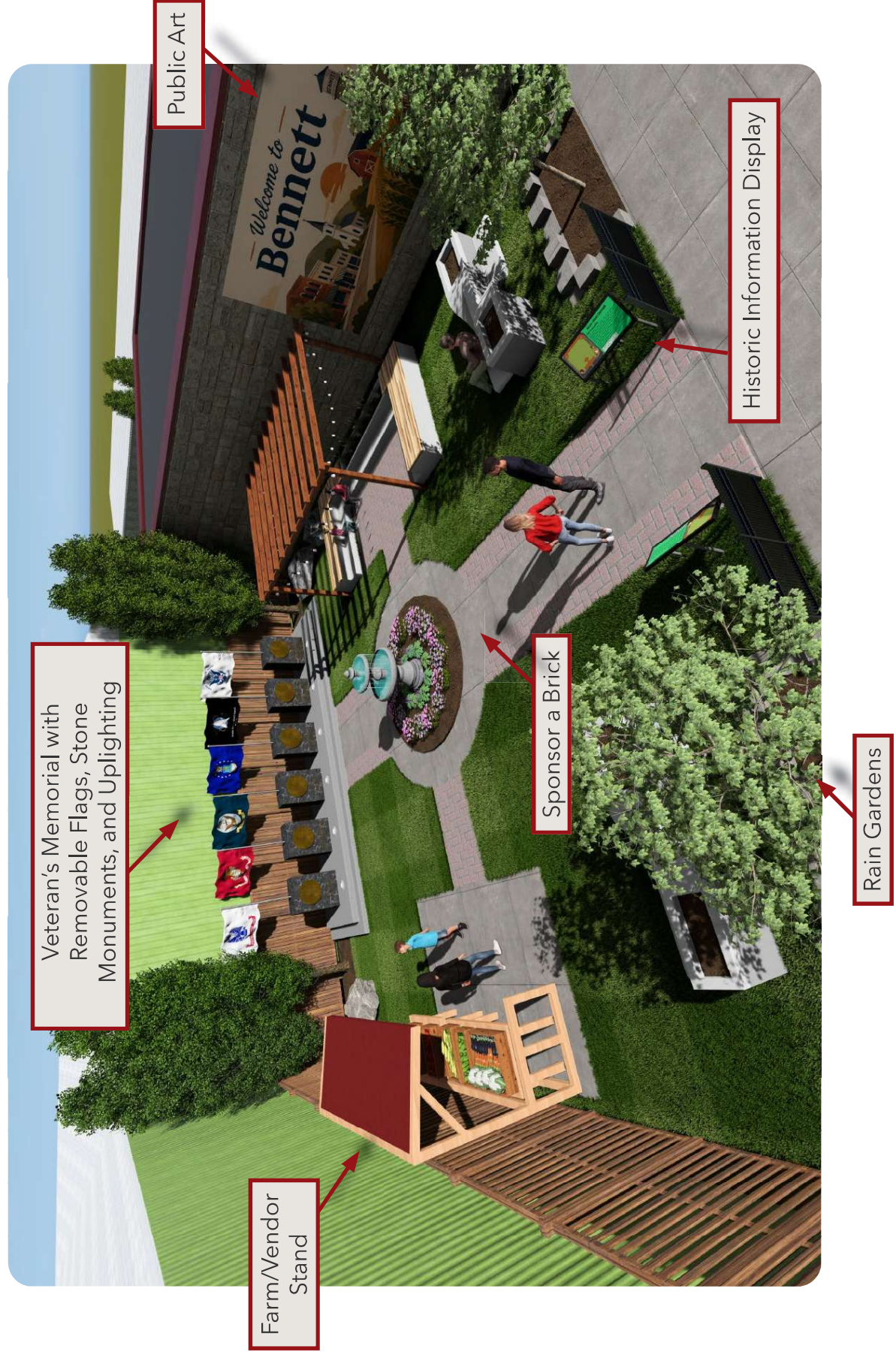
- Prioritizing low-maintenance materials and vegetation
- Allowing for phased improvements over time
- Confirming site readiness, including grading, drainage, and utilities

Because the site is vacant, it is well suited to incremental change. Early phases can establish basic function, with additional features added as funding becomes available.



230 Main Street: Concept Summary

- Flexible outdoor gathering space
- Designed for everyday use & small events
- Includes seating, shade, and simple amenities
- Integrates memorial elements
- Supports increased Main Street activity



Veteran's Memorial with
Removable Flags, Stone
Monuments, and Uplighting

Farm/Vendor
Stand

Public Art

Historic Information Display

Sponsor a Brick

Rain Gardens



236 Main Street Concept

Concept Overview

The preferred direction for 236 Main Street is adaptive reuse of the former bank building as a library.

This direction reflects consistent community support for maintaining a public use on Main Street while expanding the building's role as a place for gathering, learning, and everyday activity.

A library-centered concept is also a practical fit for the building. The current library location shares a 1,650 square foot space with the community's governmental offices. The space limits programming and circulation selection.

Key Program Elements and Community Benefits

Library as primary use. The library is the strongest and most consistent reuse direction. As a daily-use destination, the library would bring consistent activity to Main Street, helping support nearby businesses and reinforcing the corridor as a center of community life.

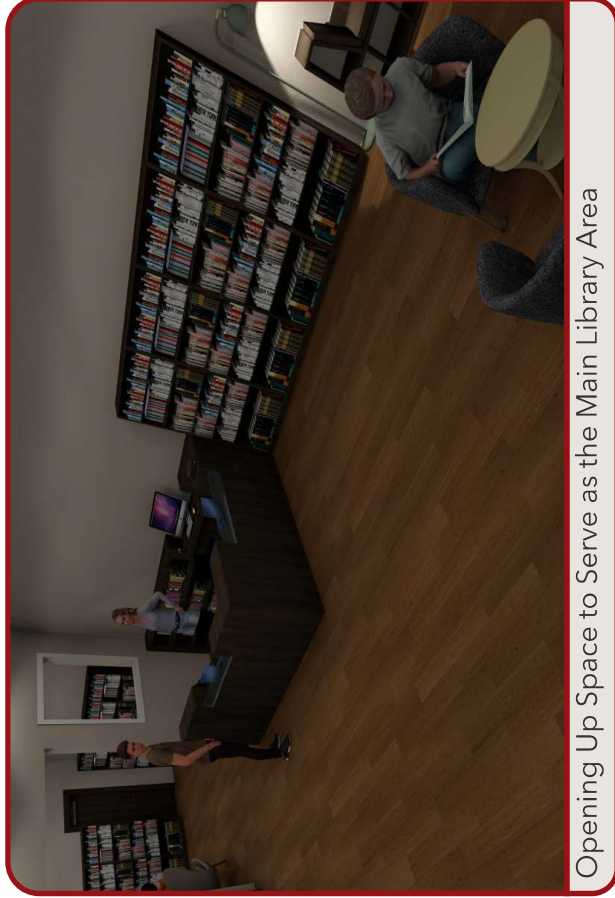
In addition to supporting informal gathering, a coffee or concession component could provide a modest supplemental revenue source to help offset operating costs, depending on the final partnership or operating model.



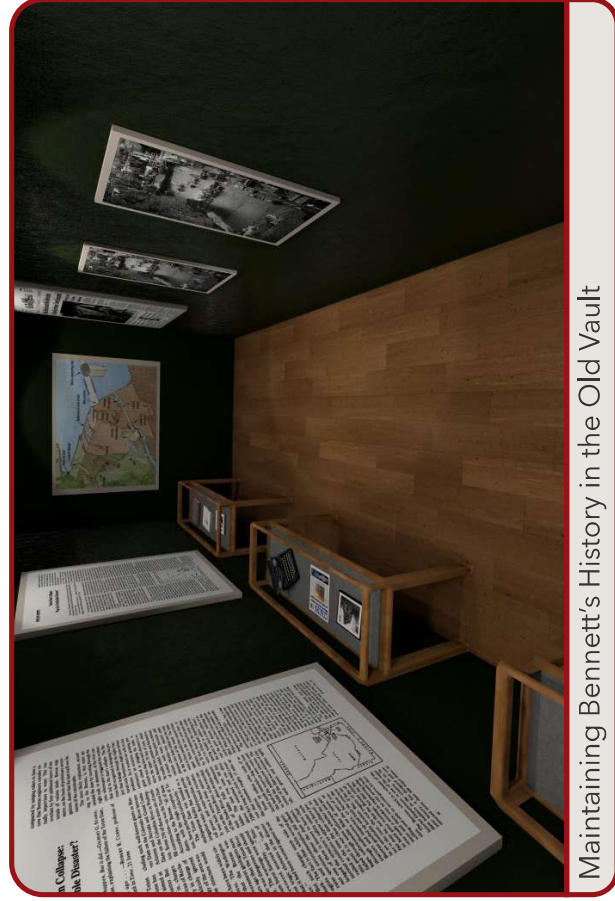
First Floor



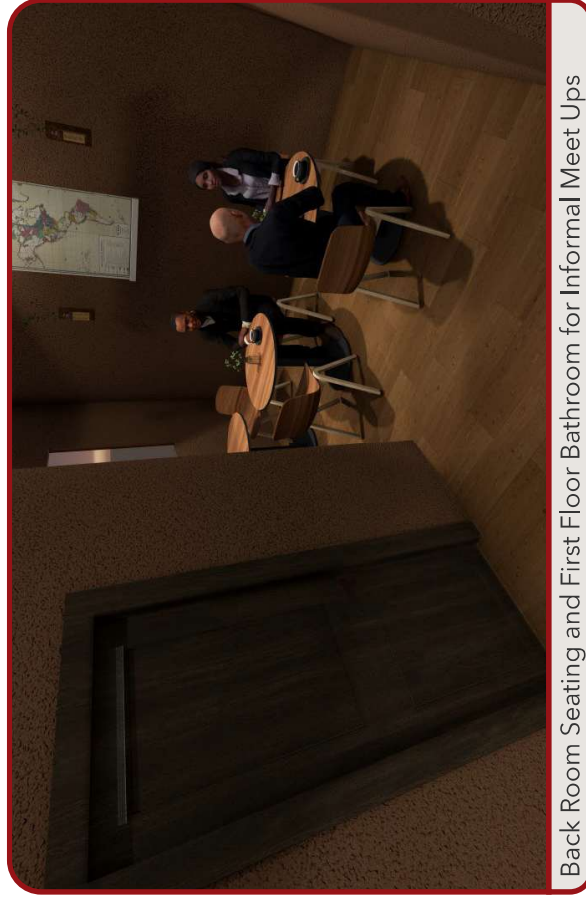
Basement



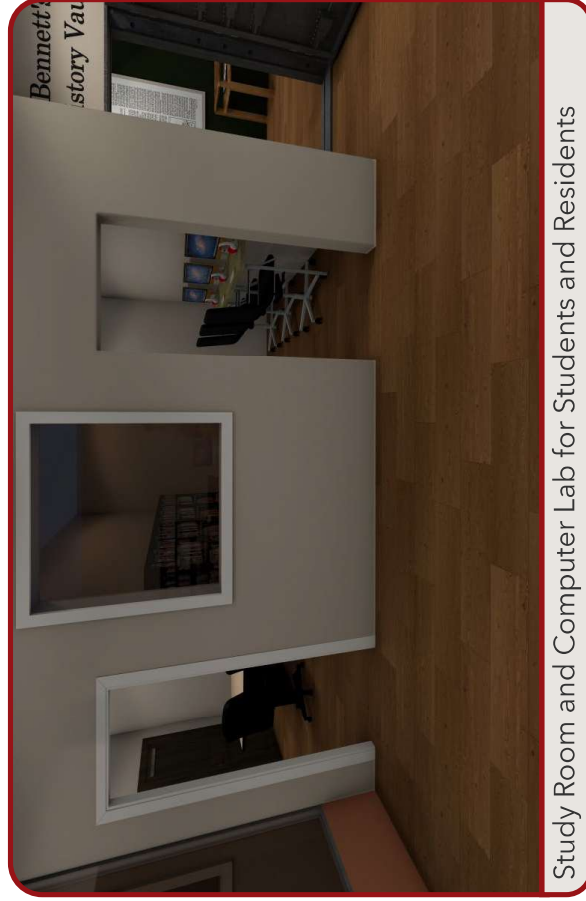
Opening Up Space to Serve as the Main Library Area



Maintaining Bennett's History in the Old Vault



Back Room Seating and First Floor Bathroom for Informal Meet Ups



Study Room and Computer Lab for Students and Residents

First Floor

Study and quiet space. Providing quiet areas for reading, studying, and informal work supports students, families, and residents and integrates the building into everyday use.



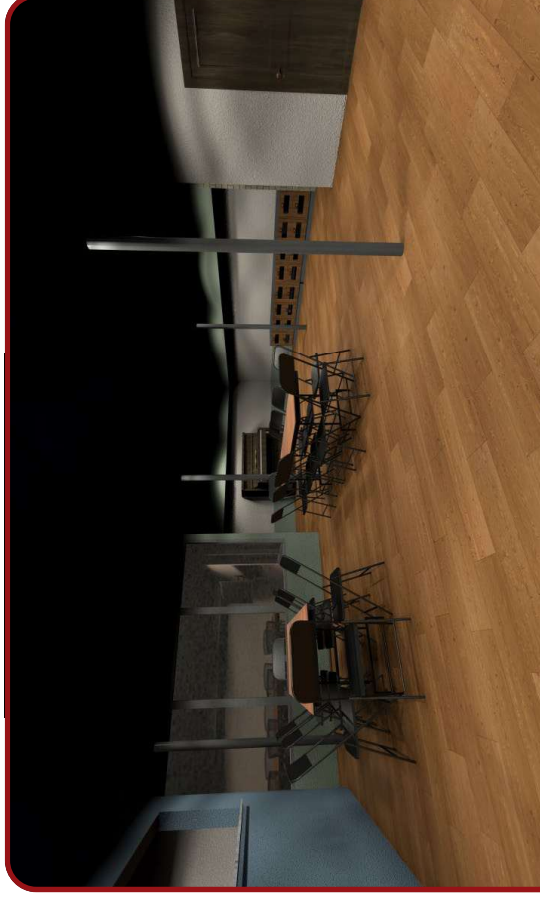
Using Windows to Make Conference Room Feel Larger



Updated Kitchen and Bathrooms to Support Programming Needs



Incorporating a Chairlift for Additional Accessibility



Keeping Open Area for Gatherings and Programing

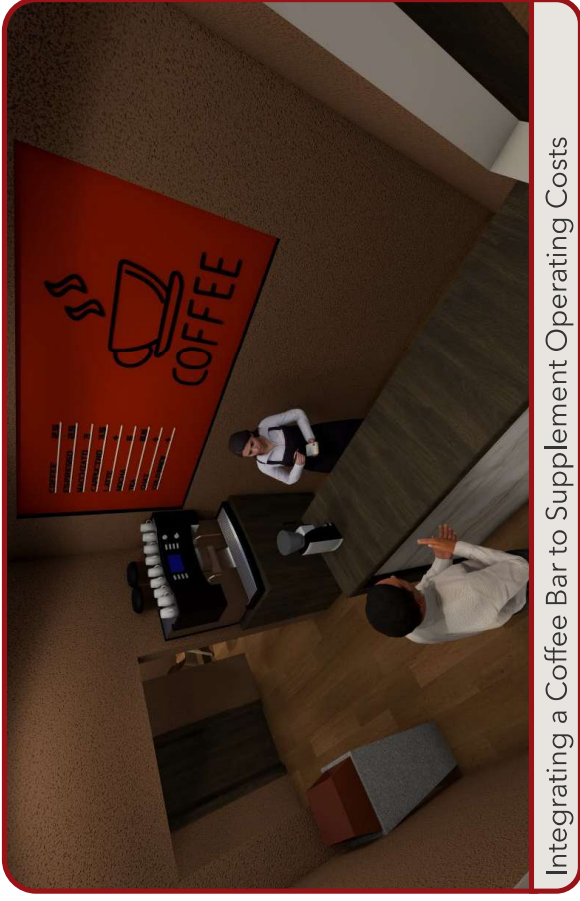
Coffee bar and informal gathering space.

An informal gathering area, such as a coffee bar, can support social interaction and increase use beyond traditional library functions.



Case Study Example

Java Works operates inside the Mason City Public Library Commons through a partnership with 43 North Iowa. The coffee shop provides coffee, tea, and treats while creating purposeful employment and job-skill development opportunities. This model shows how a library coffee bar can serve as both an informal gathering space and a partnership-supported community use. For Bennett, a similar approach could help 236 Main Street function as a welcoming “third space” while supporting daily library activity and community connection.
Source: 43 North Iowa



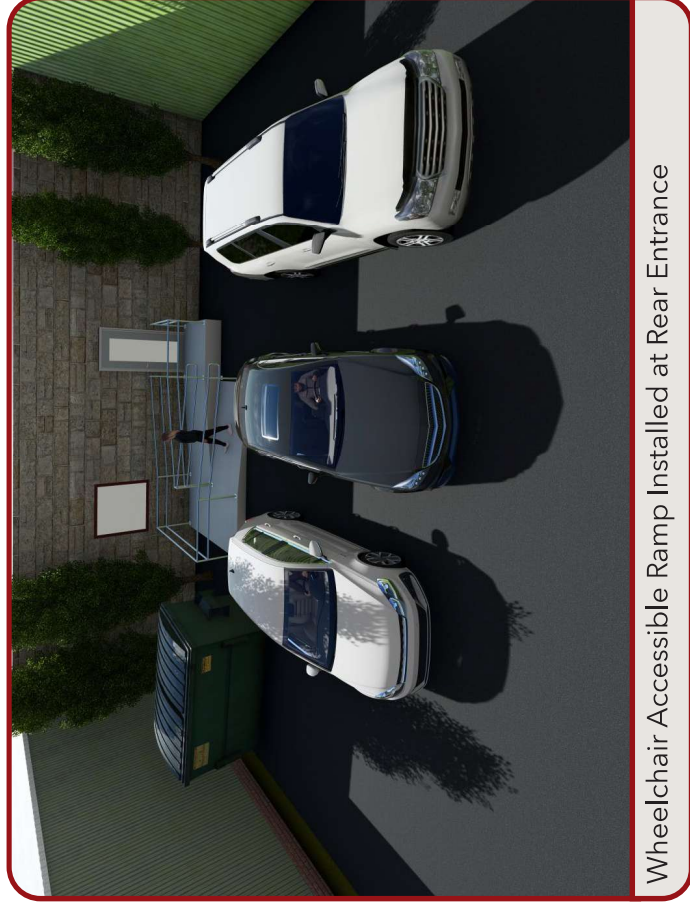
Integrating a Coffee Bar to Supplement Operating Costs

Building Improvement Considerations

While community support for reuse of 236 Main Street is strong, implementation will depend on addressing key building needs. These improvements are informed in part by environmental assessment findings, including confirmed asbestos conditions and age-related building risks identified through the EPA Brownfields process.

Priority improvements include:

- ADA accessibility upgrades
- Hazardous materials abatement
- Functional improvements such as a main-floor restroom
- Building code and life-safety improvements



Wheelchair Accessible Ramp Installed at Rear Entrance

Potential Programming Opportunities

The concept for 236 Main Street is strongest when understood not only as a library building, but as a flexible community space that can support a variety of programs over time.

Potential programming opportunities may include:

- Children's and youth programming
- Study and homework support
- Small community meetings
- Workshops and community events
- Informal drop-in and gathering space

These possibilities are intended as flexible opportunities rather than fixed requirements. The long-term value of the building will come from its ability to support a mix of uses over time.

236 Main Street: Concept Summary

- Adaptive reuse as a library and community space
- Supports programs, study, and informal gathering
- Designed for phased renovation
- Includes accessibility and building improvements
- Provides consistent daily activity on Main Street

These needs suggest a phased approach. An initial phase should focus on core building functionality, code compliance, accessibility, and hazardous materials response. Additional improvements, furnishings, amenities, and program-related features can then be added over time as funding becomes available.

The building should be planned as a flexible community asset rather than a single-purpose facility. While the library is the primary use, the space should be able to support a range of programs and activities as community needs evolve. This flexibility will help maintain long-term relevance and support consistent use of the building.

Chapter 5: Implementation Strategy

How Implementation Works

- Start with small, achievable actions
- Build momentum through early improvements
- Pursue grants and partnerships for larger projects
- Complete projects in phases based on funding and readiness

This Plan is intended to guide action, not simply describe a preferred future. Moving the concepts forward for 230 Main Street and 236 Main Street will require a practical approach that reflects community priorities, site conditions, project readiness, and limited local funding capacity.

Implementation should be approached in phases. Some actions can begin with relatively modest investment and help build momentum, while others will require additional planning, partnerships, and outside funding. This phased approach also supports long-term Main Street viability by prioritizing early actions that increase visibility and activity while positioning larger improvements that contribute to sustained community use and local economic support. Through identification of environmental conditions, building constraints, and phased reuse concepts, this Plan positions both sites for feasible redevelopment and future cleanup and investment funding.

Implementation Approach

Implementation actions in this Plan were based on three basic considerations:

- **Alignment** – whether the action supports community priorities and the preferred direction for each site.
- **Feasibility** – whether the action is realistic given Bennett’s staffing, funding, and project readiness.
- **Impact** – whether the action would make a meaningful difference in how the sites function and contribute to Main Street

This approach helps distinguish between near-term actions and those that depend on future funding, technical refinement, or outside partnerships.

Planning Level Cost and Delivery Considerations

Because this Plan is intended to guide implementation, cost information is presented at a planning level. These categories are used to compare the relative scale of recommended actions, support phasing decisions. They are not final budgets and should be refined through later design, scoping, and procurement.

This distinction is especially important in Bennett, where implementation will depend on a mix of local leadership, phased

improvements, partnerships, fundraising, and outside funding.

Cost Categories

- **Low** – staff time, coordination, modest materials, or small-scale implementation
- **Moderate** – targeted capital improvements, scoped design work, or moderate site/building upgrades
- **High** – significant improvements requiring dedicated capital funding
- **Major / Grant-Dependent** – actions likely beyond local budget capacity without grants or major partners

Delivery / Funding Approaches

- City-led / staff time
- Local funds / small capital
- Donations / sponsorships
- Partner-supported
- Grant-supported
- Grant-dependent / phased capital

These categories help identify not only the scale of each action, but also how it may realistically move forward.

Phasing Strategy

Phasing of redevelopment actions will be essential to transformation change. Not all improvements need to occur at once, and in many cases they should not. A phased approach allows the City to build momentum with early actions while allowing time for strategizing and fundraising for larger improvements. Both sites were supported by community input, but they differ in cost, complexity, and readiness.

For that reason, the implementation strategy is organized around readiness, funding fit, and timing rather than a single full-buildout

scenario. Early actions should focus on clarifying scope, confirming first-phase improvements, preparing funding packages, and addressing conditions that could affect cost or timing.

In general, phasing should follow three tracks:

Near-term actions should focus on readiness, coordination, and early momentum. These include confirming site layouts, defining first-phase scopes, organizing fundraising efforts, preparing grant applications, and addressing environmental or building-related steps needed before construction.

Mid-term actions should focus on initial physical improvements and phased reuse.

- For **230 Main Street**, this includes core site improvements, seating, veterans' memorial features, and site amenities.
- For **236 Main Street**, this may include asbestos and lead-based paint abatement, restroom/accessibility improvements, and initial interior renovation for library and community use.

Long-term actions should focus on completing the broader buildout and sustaining activity over time. These may include expanded amenities, furnishings, programming, coffee bar activation, and other improvements that depend on funding, partnerships, and operational capacity.

Funding Strategy

Funding should be pursued in the same phased manner. Smaller actions may be advanced through staff time, local funds, donations, or sponsorships. Larger actions should be matched to state, federal, foundation, or partner-supported funding sources based on project type. Cleanup and asbestos-related work at 236 Main Street may align best with brownfields or cleanup-focused resources, while library improvements may be better suited to library, community facility, or foundation funding. Public space and memorial elements at 230 Main Street may be more appropriate for pocket park, placemaking, sponsorship, or local fundraising opportunities.

The following tables are intended to help Bennett move from concept to action.

- **Tables 1 and 2** identify chronological implementation actions for both sites, including likely timing, planning-level cost, lead responsibility, partner roles, funding paths, and initial next steps.
- **Table 3** identifies potential funding and delivery paths that may help support implementation. These sources are not guaranteed, but they provide a starting point for matching project phases with appropriate funding opportunities. partnerships.



Implementation Matrix

The implementation matrix organizes recommended actions by timeframe, cost, funding approach, and next steps. This is intended to help the City move from planning into coordinated execution.

Table 1. Chronological Implementation Strategy Matrix for 230 Main Street

Action	Timeframe	Cost	Lead Entity	Partners	Likely Funding / Delivery Approach	Implementation Focus	First Step to Initiate
Form local memorial committee	Near-Term	Low	City of Bennett	Local veterans' representatives, interested residents	Staff time	Establish local project leadership	Identify 3-5 committee members and designate a City contact to coordinate meetings.
Confirm final site layout, memorial placement, and phased concept plan	Near-Term	Low to Moderate	City of Bennett	Memorial committee, design/planning support	Staff time / consultant support	Establish project scope / readiness	Hold a working meeting to review the concept, preferred memorial elements, and first-phase improvements.
Develop memorial fundraising and sponsorship strategy	Near-Term	Low	City of Bennett	Memorial committee, veterans' groups, donors, community organizations	Donations / sponsorships	Secure local match and community investment	Draft sponsorship levels, donor recognition options, and a process for accepting contributions.
Prepare first-phase project package for 230 Main Street	Near-Term	Low to Moderate	City of Bennett	Planning/design support, local contractors as needed	Staff time / grant preparation support	Position project for funding and implementation	Create a simple project sheet with scope, planning-level cost range, funding need, and preferred phasing.
Pursue grant funding and partner resources	Near-Term and Ongoing	Low	City of Bennett	ECIA, Community partners, potential funders	Grant-writing / partner development	Support ongoing delivery	Build a funding calendar and match grant programs to specific project phases.
Complete first-phase plaza improvements (basic layout, seating areas)	Near- to Mid-Term	Moderate	City of Bennett	Local contractors, grant partners, community volunteers as appropriate	Local funds / grant-supported / phased capital	Create usable public space	Refine the first-phase scope into a bid-ready or quote-ready package once funding is identified.
Install major memorial elements	Mid-Term	Moderate	City of Bennett	Memorial committee, veterans' groups, donors, sponsors	Donations / memorial fundraising / grants	Complete identity and community features	Confirm final memorial materials, vendor options, donor language, and installation sequence.
Install Shade, lighting, and secondary site amenities	Mid-Term	Moderate to High	City of Bennett	Grant partners, community groups, local contractors	Grant-supported / phased capital	Expand comfort and long-term use	Identify which amenities are best suited for a later grant-funded phase and confirm maintenance responsibilities.
Establish annual implementation review process	Ongoing	Low	City of Bennett	Community partners	Staff time	Maintain implementation alignment	Add a recurring annual agenda item to review progress, funding status, and next-year priorities.

Table 2. Chronological Implementation Strategy Matrix for 236 Main Street

Action	Timeframe	Cost	Lead Entity	Partners	Likely Funding / Delivery Approach	Implementation Focus	First Step to Initiate
Confirm renovation scope and phased reuse strategy for library and community use	Near-Term	Low to Moderate	City of Bennett	Library representatives, design/planning support	City-led / consultant support	Define minimum viable project	Hold a working session to identify the essential first-phase spaces, building needs, and program priorities.
Prepare project package for library reuse and funding pursuit	Near-Term	Low to Moderate	City of Bennett	Library representatives, design/planning support	Staff time / grant preparation support	Position project for funding and phased delivery	Create a project sheet with scope, planning-level cost range, funding need, match assumptions, and likely phasing.
Pursue grant funding and partner resources	Near-Term and Ongoing	Low	City of Bennett	ECIA, community partners, potential funders	Grant-writing / partner development	Support ongoing delivery	Build a funding calendar and match grant programs to specific project components.
Conduct lead base paint (LBP) inspection and abatement (if required)	Near-Term	Moderate	City of Bennett	Qualified LBP contractor, ECIA	Grant-dependent / partner-supported	Clarify hazardous materials requirements	Confirm inspection scope and complete testing before finalizing renovation of disturbance areas.
Prepare asbestos cleanup plan and define abatement scope tied to phased renovation	Near-Term	Moderate	City of Bennett	Qualified abatement contractor, ECIA	Grant-supported / cleanup-focused funding	Address environmental constraints	Use the ACM inspection to identify which materials would be disturbed in the first renovation phase.
Complete asbestos abatement needed to support initial reuse phase	Near- to Mid-Term	High	City of Bennett	Qualified abatement contractor, ECIA	Grant-dependent / phased capital	Prepare building for renovation	Obtain abatement pricing and complete required abatement before interior renovation work begins.
Add a main-floor restroom to support accessible everyday use	Near- to Mid-Term	Moderate to High	City of Bennett	Design professionals, contractors	Grant-supported / capital funding	Enable accessible daily use	Identify preferred restroom location and confirm code, plumbing, and layout implications.
Develop a library programming and activation plan	Near- to Mid-Term	Low	City of Bennett	School District, community groups, volunteers	Staff time / partner-supported	Support future operations and regular use	Identify core program types, likely users, and partner roles for early library/community activities.
Complete core interior renovation for library, quiet-use, and flexible program space	Mid-Term	Major-Grant Dependent	City of Bennett	Library partners, design professionals, contractors, grant agencies	Grant-dependent / phased capital	Establish primary building function	Advance preliminary design and construction scope after funding sources and required abatement are clarified.
Furnish library, study, and flexible program areas	Mid-Term	Moderate	City of Bennett	Donors, community partners, library funders	Grants / donations / local capital	Support daily library and program use	Create a prioritized furniture, shelving, technology, and equipment list by phase.
Establish coffee bar or informal gathering area as part of reuse concept	Mid-Term	Moderate	City of Bennett	Potential community or business partners, volunteers	Partner-supported / grant-supported	Expand use and activation	Determine whether the coffee bar should be City/library-operated, volunteer-supported, or partner-operated.
Establish an annual implementation review process	Ongoing	Low	City of Bennett	Library representatives, community partners	Staff time	Maintain implementation alignment	Add a recurring annual agenda item to review progress, funding status, and next-year priorities.

Table 3A. Potential Funding Sources to Explore

Core Building Reuse and Library Funding (236 Main Street)					
Funding Source	Potential Use	Best Fit Site	Implementation Phase	Relative Scale	Notes
Roy J. Carver Charitable Trust's Iowa Public Library Grant Award Program	Library renovation, furnishings, equipment, technology, and other library-related capital needs	236 Main Street	Mid- to Long-Term (library buildout)	Moderate / Project-Specific	Supports Iowa public libraries for construction, renovation, furnishings, equipment, and technology-related improvements. Grants are generally awarded up to \$80,000, with 20% of total need used as a general funding guideline. A minimum of 50% of total project cost must be secured or pledged before application, and the Trust does not fund accessibility-only requests or joint school/community library facilities.
USDA Rural Development – Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program	Library renovation, community space improvements, furnishings, equipment, and related public facility costs	236 Main Street	Mid-Term (major renovation)	Large / Project-Based	Supports essential community facilities in rural places under 20,000 population, including libraries and other public/community facilities.
Iowa Community Catalyst Building Remediation Program	Rehabilitation or redevelopment of a commercial building to support reinvestment and economic growth	236 Main Street	Mid-Term (building reuse)	Moderate to Large / Building-Focused	Supports rehabilitation of one commercial building per community, offers grants up to \$100,000, and reserves 40% of funds for cities under 1,500 population.
Iowa CDBG – Community Development & Facilities Fund	Community facility improvements tied to public benefit, including multi-use public buildings and community-serving improvements	236 Main Street	Mid-Term (Major Community Facility Improvements)	Large / Competitive	Supports community facilities and has a maximum funding request of \$600,000 for Community Facilities applications. Because the program is competitive and tied to low- and moderate-income benefit requirements, it should be treated as a strong but not guaranteed funding source.
IEDA Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) Grant	Major public facility renovation, library/community space improvements, or larger publicly accessible attraction/community amenity components	236 Main Street; possible for 230 Main Street if packaged as broader public amenity project	Mid- to Long-Term	Large / Competitive	Supports recreational, cultural, entertainment, and educational attractions and can fund major renovation. Applicants must demonstrate broad local support and have at least 65% of project funds raised. Awards are generally up to 20% of total project cost and capped at \$500,000.

Table 3B. Potential Funding Sources to Explore

Cleanup, Brownfields, and Redevelopment Readiness (230 and 236 Main Street)					
Funding Source	Potential Use	Best Fit Site	Implementation Phase	Relative Scale	Notes
EPA Brownfields Cleanup or Multipurpose Funding	Cleanup-related work, environmental response, and brownfield-focused redevelopment packaging	236 Main Street and potentially 230 Main Street if future site work warrants it	Near- to Mid-Term (Environmental Cleanup & Site Readiness)	Major / Grant-Dependent	Intended to support cleanup of brownfield sites owned by the applicant, and FY 2026 funding also included Multipurpose and Assessment grant options. This is an important funding pathway where environmental conditions or cleanup needs are linked to redevelopment readiness.
Iowa Department of Natural Resources – Brownfield Redevelopment Program	Cleanup planning, asbestos-related reimbursement opportunities, and limited cleanup cost-share to improve redevelopment readiness	236 Main Street and potentially 230 Main Street if future site work identifies additional needs	Near-Term (Cleanup Planning & Readiness)	Small to Moderate / Readiness-Focused	Provides technical assistance and limited financial support for eligible brownfield activities, including Phase I reimbursement, certified asbestos inspection reimbursement, and 75% cleanup cost-share up to \$25,000 for eligible activities such as asbestos removal, lead-based paint removal, and cleanup of soil or groundwater contaminants. Potentially redevelopment tax credits if a developer wants to take over the project.

Table 3C. Potential Funding Sources to Explore

Public Space, Placemaking, and Main Street Activation (230 Main Street)					
Funding Source	Potential Use	Best Fit Site	Implementation Phase	Relative Scale	Notes
Iowa CDBG – Pocket Parks	Small-scale plaza, greenspace, or public gathering improvements on a city-owned site	230 Main Street	Near- to Mid-Term (plaza development)	Moderate / Competitive	Iowa's 2026 CDBG updates include a Pocket Parks program for small park or recreation areas, with a maximum award of \$150,000 and a 25% match requirement. This may be worth exploring for 230 Main Street if the final concept and site dimensions fit program rules.
Iowa Arts & Culture / Creative Places Accelerator	Public-space activation, placemaking, arts-based features, and community programming	230 Main Street and selected elements of 236 Main Street	Near- to Mid-Term (Placemaking & Activation Features)	Moderate / Program-Based	Aimed at small to midsize communities using arts-based projects as catalysts for livability, economic development, and community connectedness. This is a better fit for placemaking, activation, and identity-building elements than for core construction.
AARP Community Challenge	Small-scale public space improvements, temporary or quick-build site activation, seating, signage, or other livability-focused enhancements	230 Main Street and potentially activation-related elements of 236 Main Street	Near-Term (small activation)	Small / Quick-Action	Focused on local “quick-action” projects that make communities more livable for people of all ages. The program is best suited to modest, visible improvements rather than major capital redevelopment.
Build With Bags Grant – Keep Iowa Beautiful	Recycled plastic benches, tables, or small outdoor furnishings	230 Main Street	Near- to Mid-Term (Public Amenities)	Small / Amenity-Specific	Good fit for smaller public-space amenities that support seating and daily use of the plaza. Best viewed as a supplemental source for furnishings, not core site construction.
Branching Out Grant – Alliant Energy & Trees Forever	Trees, shade plantings, and public landscape improvements	230 Main Street	Near- to Mid-Term	Small / Landscape-Focused	Potential fit for plaza shade, tree planting, or landscape improvements on public property. Best suited to planting and volunteer-supported landscape work rather than hardscape or structural improvements.
REAP – City Parks and Open Spaces	Public open space improvements, site amenities, landscaping, or park-like plaza elements	230 Main Street		Moderate / Public Open Space	Potential fit if 230 Main Street is advanced as a public open space or park-like community plaza. Eligibility and project fit should be confirmed based on final site programming and City application requirements.

Table 3D. Potential Funding Sources to Explore

Veterans' Memorial, Community Programming, and Smaller Supplemental Support					
Funding Source	Potential Use	Best Fit Site	Implementation Phase	Relative Scale	Notes
American Legion of Iowa Foundation	Veterans memorial elements, patriotic recognition features, and community-service-oriented components of the public space concept	230 Main Street	Near- to Mid-Term (Memorial Features & Community Identity Elements)	Small to Moderate / Project-Specific	Supports veterans' rehabilitation, youth programs, patriotic endeavors, and community service in Iowa, and Iowa Grants Guide materials indicate typical grant sizes in the \$250 to \$5,000 range. This makes it better suited to memorial features or targeted commemorative elements.
Alliant Energy Foundation	Library programming, literacy and youth-focused activities, small public-space amenities, park or gathering-space enhancements, and community activation features	236 Main Street and selected elements of 230 Main Street	Near- to Mid-Term (Programming, Amenities, & Community Activation)	Small to Moderate / Flexible	Secondary funding source for community-facing elements rather than major construction. Alliant Energy's giving priorities include libraries and literacy, after-school and summer reading, STEM and youth development, park updates, trail amenities, playgrounds, and community events.

Table 3E. Potential Funding Sources to Explore

Local Delivery and Gap-Filling Sources					
Funding Source	Potential Use	Best Fit Site	Implementation Phase	Relative Scale	Notes
Partner-supported implementation	Programming, coffee bar/gathering space, furnishings, activation, and selected small improvements	236 Main Street	Ongoing (Programming, Operations, & Incremental Improvements)	Small to Moderate / Flexible	Some parts of the 236 Main Street concept, especially programming, furnishings, or informal gathering component, may be more realistic if introduced through partnerships rather than as part of one large capital package. Iowa Rural Development Council may be a useful implementation resource for connecting Bennett with rural development partners, resource navigation, strategic planning support, and capacity-building opportunities.
Community Foundation of Cedar County / Quad Cities Community Foundation	Public space improvements, library enhancements, furnishings, programming, community gathering space amenities, and community-serving project components	Both Sites	Near- to Mid-Term	Small to Moderate / Community Benefit-Focused	Potential fit for projects that enhance quality of life, education, community engagement, and public spaces within Cedar County. May be particularly useful as gap funding or to support specific project components, furnishings, amenities, programming, or matching funds for larger grants.
Washington County Riverboat Foundation	Public space improvements, community beautification, library/community facility enhancements, educational or arts programming, and community-serving project components	Both Sites	Near- to Mid-Term	Moderate / Community Benefit-Focused	Strong fit for projects that improve quality of life, enhance community appearance, support community development, or provide lasting public benefit. WCRF prioritizes community development and beautification, economic development, education and arts, and human/social needs. The Foundation is especially interested in projects that leverage other funding sources and in facilities or physical improvements with a lasting positive impact on community image and quality of life. Governmental units, nonprofits, chambers, and veterans' organizations may be eligible applicants.
City-led / small capital or staff time	Early coordination, layout refinement, project packaging, annual updates, and pre-implementation work	Both Sites	Near-Term & Ongoing (Coordination, Scoping, & Early Implementation)	Small / Near-Term	Some early actions can move forward with limited cost, especially where the work involves scope refinement, fundraising setup, partner coordination, or project packaging. These actions are important because they help build readiness even before major capital funding is secured.

Chapter 6: Building Momentum Toward Reuse

The Plan identifies a range of actions that can help move the concepts for 230 Main Street and 236 Main Street toward implementation. For a small community with limited local capital capacity, the most effective next step is not to pursue every recommendation at once, but to focus on a manageable set of early actions that improve readiness, build momentum, and position both projects for future investment.

The near-term actions identified in this chapter are intended to reflect that approach. They focus on the steps that are most important to clarify project scope, strengthen partnerships, organize funding strategies, and begin visible progress on Main Street. These steps provide a practical starting point for turning the Plan into reality.

Early Actions for 230 Main Street

1. Form local veterans' memorial committee.

Because memorial features are an important part of the 230 Main Street concept, the City should begin by forming a small local committee to help guide memorial-related decisions. This group could include City representatives, local veterans' representatives, and interested residents. Establishing a committee early will help provide local direction on veterans' memorial placement, design preferences, donor recognition, and fundraising.

2. Confirm the preferred site layout and first phase of improvements.

The next steps for 230 Main Street is to confirm the overall site layout and identify which improvements should be included in the initial phase of implementation. This should include the location of the gathering space, memorial elements, seating, circulation, and other core features needed to make the site functional from the outset. Defining the first-phase scope will give the City a clearer basis for budgeting, fundraising, and future design refinement.

3. Organize a memorial fundraising and sponsorship strategy.

Because memorial features are an important part of the concept, Bennett should begin organizing how those elements could be supported through donations, sponsorships, and community fundraising. This can help reduce pressure on local funds while also giving residents, families, and local organizations a direct way to participate in the project.

4. Prepare for phased public space improvements.

Once the first phase is defined, the City can begin packaging initial site improvements in a way that is realistic for local capacity and future funding opportunities. This may include early site setup, seating, or other core public-space features that

create visible progress while leaving room for later additions such as expanded amenities, memorial buildout, or secondary design enhancements.

Early Actions for 236 Main Street

1. Confirm the renovation scope for library and community use.

The first step for 236 Main Street is to define what is necessary to support reuse of the building as a library and community-serving space. That should include core program needs, essential building improvements, and a realistic understanding of what should be addressed in an initial phase versus later phases.

2. Prepare the project for funding and phased delivery.

Before pursuing larger funding opportunities, the City should organize a basic project package for the building reuse concept. This should include the preferred scope, planning-level cost range, likely phasing, local match assumptions, and funding needs. Packaging the project early will make grant applications and partnership conversations more focused and realistic.

3. Prioritize essential building improvements and environmental readiness improvements.

Certain improvements will need to be treated as foundational to successful reuse. These include asbestos cleanup planning and abatement needed to support renovation, lead-based paint inspection and abatement if required, accessibility-related improvements, and key functional upgrades such as providing a main-floor restroom.

4. Begin planning for library programming and activation.

As the building reuse concept advances, the City and library representatives should begin identifying potential programs, user groups, and partnerships that could help activate the space. This may include children's programming, study space, community meetings, informal gathering uses, and other activities that support the building's role as a community-serving space.

Shared Next Steps

1. Pursue outside funding and partnership opportunities.

Neither site should be expected to move forward entirely through local capital alone. Bennett should continue working with partners to identify grant opportunities, funding packages, and local or regional partnerships that can help advance both projects over time.

2. Maintain a simple implementation review process.

The City should establish a regular way to review progress, update priorities, and respond to changing funding or project conditions. Even a simple annual check-in can help maintain momentum and keep the Plan active as a working guide rather than a one-time document.

3. Continue communicating progress to the community.

Public input has played a major role in shaping the direction of this Plan. Continuing to share next steps, progress updates, and future funding or implementation milestones will help maintain community support and reinforce that the Plan is moving toward action.

References

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- American Legion of Iowa Foundation.
- Branching Out Grant Program (Alliant Energy and Trees Forever).
- Community Foundation of Cedar County / Quad Cities Community Foundation.
- Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields Grant Programs.
- Iowa Arts Council and Creative Places Accelerator Program.
- Iowa Community Catalyst Building Remediation Program.
- Iowa Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Programs.
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources Brownfield Redevelopment Program.
- Iowa Rural Development Council.
- Keep Iowa Beautiful Build With Bags Grant Program.
- Roy J. Carver Charitable Trust Iowa Public Library Grant Program.
- USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Program.
- Washington County Riverboat Foundation.

Images, Photography, Graphics, and Visualization

- Project and Drone photography collected by Eocene Environmental Group.
- Google Maps. Aerial and street-level imagery reviewed for precedent studies and site context evaluation.
- Publicly available aerial imagery and mapping resources.
- Concept illustrations and renderings prepared by Eocene Environmental Group for this Plan.
- SketchUp Pro software utilized for development of conceptual site and building visualizations.
- Lumion visualization software was utilized to create final renderings and photorealistic site and building visualizations.
- Microsoft Copilot AI-assisted image generation tools were utilized during concept development and public engagement activities to explore and communicate preliminary redevelopment concepts.



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