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APRIL 14, 2022



# GREATER DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROJECT RAISE 22

2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION



FULL APPLICATION AND ALL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE ONLINE AT

<https://www.eastmoline.com/408/RAISE-Grant>

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## I. Project Description

On the shores of the Mississippi River in northwest Illinois, East Moline’s downtown tells a story of a proud manufacturing history, recent economic challenges, and a bright future built on equitable investment and redevelopment. The City’s Greater Downtown Revitalization Project is the catalyst for that future, designed to improve safety, connectivity, economic opportunity, and quality of life.

In 1980s, the *New York Times* referred to the Quad Cities – a cluster of cities along the Mississippi River in western Illinois and eastern Iowa – as “to tractors and combines what Pittsburgh was to steel and Detroit to the automobile.”<sup>1</sup> Much of that farm equipment was produced or stored in East Moline at International Harvester and John Deere plants between the City’s downtown and its waterfront. These factories and associated facilities helped drive the City’s economy, but the farm crisis of the 1980s took a major toll on the region, including East Moline. While John Deere maintains a significant presence at its Harvester Works there, it closed its foundry facilities in 1991. More recently, a 156-acre combine plant owned by Case-International Harvester closed in 2004 after 77 years of operation along East Moline’s riverfront.

Among the Quad Cities, East Moline may have been most significantly hit by the loss of Case, Farmall, and International Harvester. In a town of 20,000 people, the Case-International Harvester plant alone once employed approximately 4,300 workers. However, the City, its residents, and local businesses have adapted and are planning for a brighter future.

Since the early 2010s, the City and private and nonprofit partners have been actively reinvesting in the downtown area and working to revitalize a formerly industrial riverfront. With significant local investment, the latter, which formerly housed the Case-International Harvester plant and associated facilities, has developed into two local attractions: The Bend District and The Rust Belt District. These areas are redefining the City of East Moline. The Bend District includes a new 112,000 square foot expo center, a hotel, as well as apartments and a riverfront park. The Rust Belt District includes a 4,000-person capacity music venue – unique in the Quad Cities region – that is already drawing sell-out shows, as well as a brewery and shops.

Despite these successes, the energy and foot-traffic from this redevelopment has not yet translated to revitalization of the City’s downtown business district. Accessibility issues make these shops and restaurants feel segmented from a walkable tourist destination and the riverfront. Key issues include active railroad tracks, limited active transportation facilities and crossings, and aging infrastructure that does nothing to convey a sense of place.

The City of East Moline’s Greater Downtown Revitalization Project would safely connect a downtown corridor with jobs, recreation, and an emerging tourist district by:

- Enhancing pedestrian connectivity through trail connections, a multi-use trail on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, added crossings, and improved sidewalks
- Converting a passive pedestrian at-grade rail crossing at 7<sup>th</sup> Street to an active crossing, improving safety and facilitating connection between the districts
- Giving residents and visitors more transportation options through improved access to transit stops, bike facilities, sidewalks, and trails

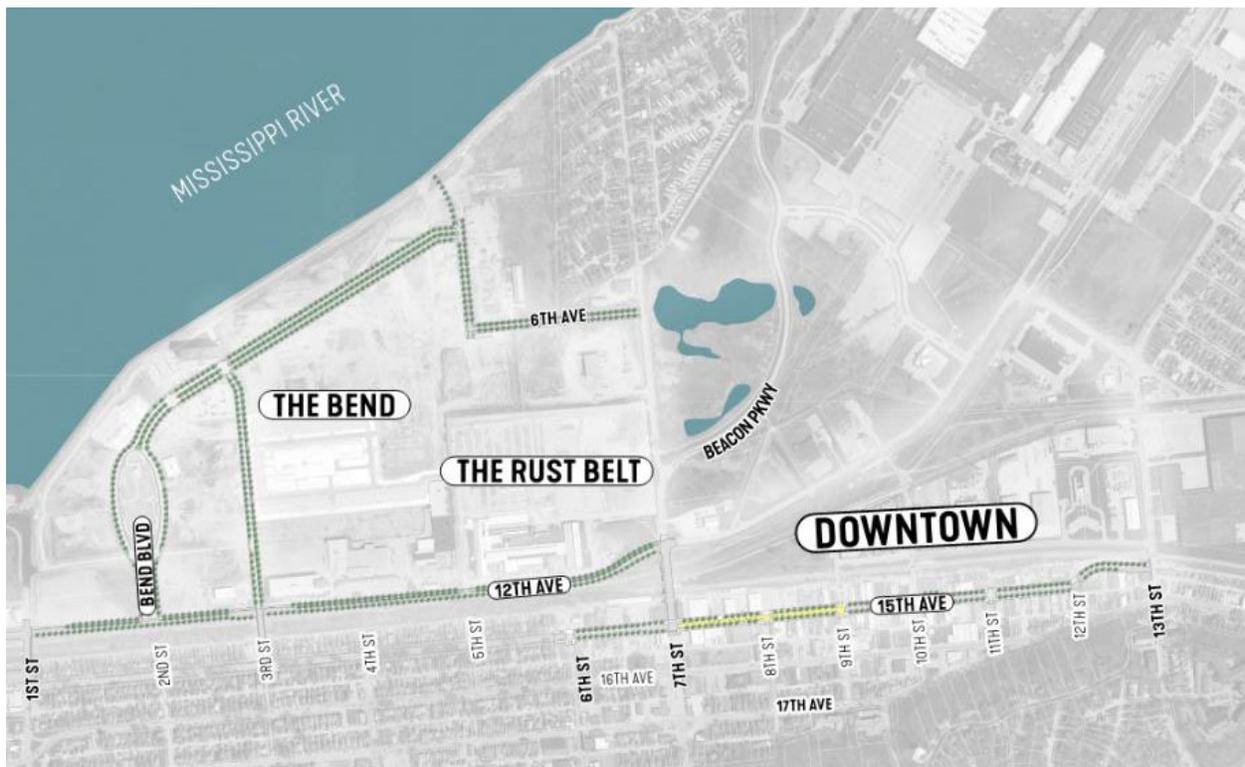
<sup>1</sup> Greenhouse, Steven. “Bitter Time for Quad Cities.” *The New York Times*, December 25, 1984. <https://www.nytimes.com/1984/12/25/business/bitter-time-for-quad-cities.html>



- Providing blocks of curbsless, accessible “festival” streetscaping that creates a multi-use pedestrian zone between shops and streets, building a more flexible and inviting downtown for the future
- Reducing stormwater runoff through use of green infrastructure throughout downtown
- Improving quality of life and strengthening economic development through a renewed sense of place
- Developing a more equitable and accessible East Moline by deliberately investing in historically disadvantaged communities and reclaiming a historic riverfront for all

The improvements in this project are located in three districts of Greater Downtown East Moline (Figure 1). **The Bend District**, on the site of the former Case-International Harvester (Case-IH) plant, includes improvements to existing Bend Boulevard and its extension to connect with 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and on to 7<sup>th</sup> Street. **The Rust Belt District** connects 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue and The Bend District by improving active transportation connections and state of repair on 7<sup>th</sup> Street and 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue. **The Downtown District** includes the revitalization of 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue from 6<sup>th</sup> Street to 13<sup>th</sup> Street.

**FIGURE 1: GREATER DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS AND DISTRICTS**



## Transportation Challenges

In its current configuration, 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the railroad tracks that run parallel to it act as a barrier between the City's downtown core and the redevelopment on these former industrial sites. **Specifically, 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue has the look and feel of a corridor taken to get through the City, not a destination in itself.** The street is a main connector between downtown East Moline and the Moline riverfront to the west. While the street is landscaped and runs along the Mississippi River in Moline, its history as a connection to the manufacturing facilities is still evident at the Moline-East Moline line, where the speed limit increases and the Great River Trail branches off to the north along the river. In the absence of this trail, there are no sidewalks or bicycle paths along the corridor (Figure 2). With the Rust Belt and The Bend District between 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the Mississippi, the street loses the boulevard feel it has while running along the riverfront. As a result, pedestrians and bicyclists avoid the area rather than exploring, despite this stretch serving as a gateway to both the City's Downtown District walkable entertainment at The Rust Belt District and The Bend District.

**FIGURE 2: CURRENT CONDITION - 12TH AVENUE IN THE RUST BELT DISTRICT**



For residents of the City's downtown, the jobs, recreational opportunities, and events along the river may feel inaccessible without a car. In addition to the issues with 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, railroad tracks serve as an additional physical barrier. The Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) and Iowa Interstate Railroad lines run through the project corridor parallel to 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, separating The Downtown District from the two other project riverfront districts. Three grade crossings are located on 7<sup>th</sup> Street between 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, where these rail lines cut through the heart of the project corridor. While vehicles encounter active grade crossings at these points – with gates and lights – pedestrians face an imposing passive crossing across three separate sets of tracks (Figure 3).

**FIGURE 3: CURRENT CONDITION - 7TH STREET AT-GRADE CROSSING FACING SOUTH TO THE DOWNTOWN DISTRICT**



**FIGURE 4: NEED FOR ADDITIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE BEND DISTRICT – CURRENT CONDITION**



Meanwhile, The Downtown District and The Bend District face very different challenges. The redevelopment successes so far in The Bend District are driving additional planned commercial and residential redevelopment that requires updated, accessible infrastructure to support it. The district’s road network, including Bend Boulevard, ends at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, as seen in Figure 4. (The Hyatt Place/Hyatt House is in the upper right.) This leaves considerable acreage between The Rust Belt District and the river vacant and less attractive for redevelopment, despite the momentum there. Pedestrian infrastructure, bike connections, transit stops, and connections to the riverfront trail also

require additional investment and build-out to fulfill the City’s vision for The Bend District.

On 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue, reinvestment is needed to build a cohesive Greater Downtown and ensure that the benefits of growth in The Rust Belt District and The Bend District translate into the City’s existing downtown core (Figure 5). **Historically, the closure of the manufacturing facilities adjacent to downtown contributed to loss of traffic and a general decline.** While businesses and non-profits are investing in facilities along the 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue corridor, the physical

**FIGURE 5: CURRENT CONDITION - 15TH AVENUE**



infrastructure for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists shows significant wear and is stark in comparison to the other districts in the project area. Large swaths of pavement contribute to stormwater runoff. While pedestrian infrastructure exists, the street is automobile-centric, with little room for flexible uses like sidewalk events and outdoor dining. Functionally, the focus is predominantly on vehicles instead of pedestrians. Considerable space is devoted to parking, but visual impediments and unnecessarily wide vehicle travel lanes make crossing as a pedestrian more dangerous and imposing. Aesthetically, the street lacks greenspace and plantings that would invite visitors to stay, shop, and explore. **This contributes to a sense of one “new” East Moline at The Bend District and The Rust Belt District and an “old” downtown on 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue.**

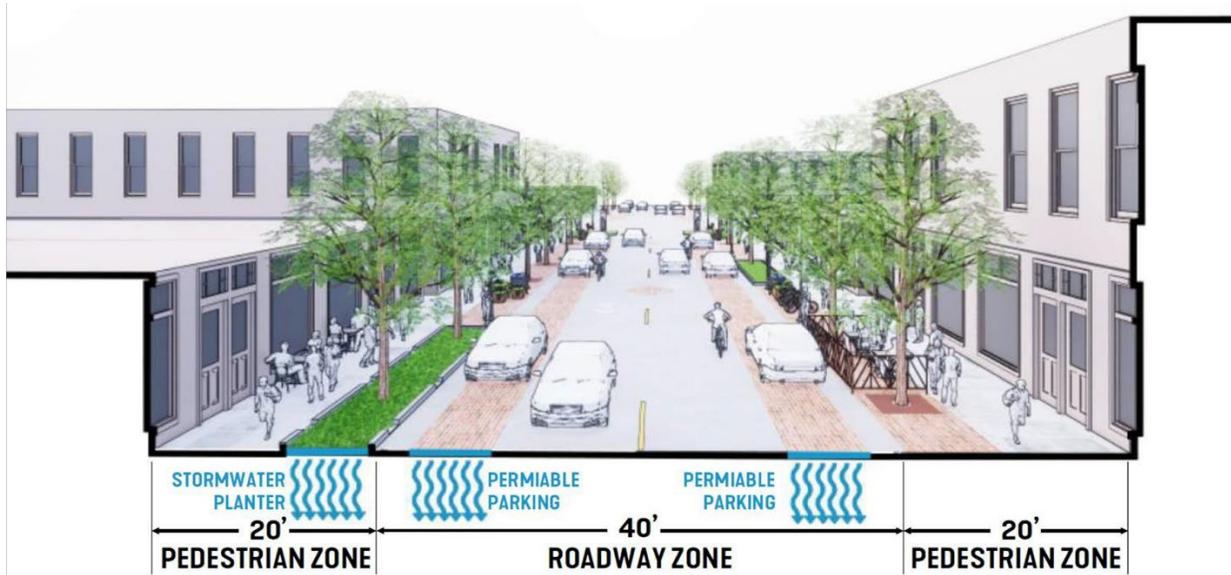


## Solution

The Greater Downtown Revitalization Project proposes to create a single connected community through a set of integrated, sustainable improvements to walkability, access, and quality of life in East Moline.

In The Downtown District, 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue will be fully reconstructed and transformed into a curbsless “festival street,” with widened pedestrian zones (Figures 6 and 7).

**FIGURE 6: REVITALIZATION OF 15TH AVENUE - PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS**



**FIGURE 7: "FESTIVAL STREET" IMPROVEMENTS ON 15TH AVENUE - PROPOSED**



Multi-use spaces between shops will allow for outdoor seating, markets, or gathering places. The new configuration will also give the City flexibility moving forward for events and festivals. This includes the City's annual Firecracker Run, which draws more than 3,000 runners and thousands more race observers and festival-goers to downtown, as well as existing weekly outdoor concerts and related events. Pedestrian ramps and sidewalk pathways will be improved to enhance access for active transportation users and address ADA compliance issues. Lighting improvements, wayfinding, and signage will improve continuity with The Rust Belt District, The Bend District, and the City's riverfront, building one "Greater Downtown" that residents and visitors can all access and enjoy.

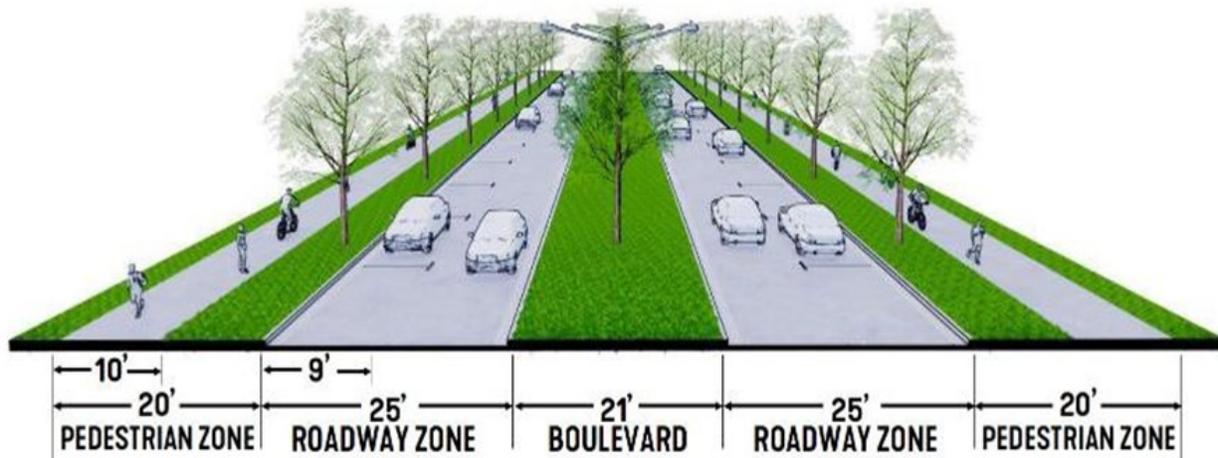
**FIGURE 8: PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS - 12TH AVENUE IN THE RUST BELT DISTRICT**



Enhanced connections and traffic-calming features around The Rust Belt District will provide a safe and direct link between this area and The Downtown District and The Bend District. A new multi-use path will be added on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue from 1<sup>st</sup> Street to 7<sup>th</sup> Street (Figure 8), where no pedestrian or bicycle infrastructure currently exists. The automobile speed limit on this section will be reduced to 30 miles per hour, matching nearby Moline. Traffic-calming features and landscaping will be added using a complete streets approach. Sidewalks and streetscaping will also be added on 7<sup>th</sup> Street, which provides the connection between The Downtown District and The Rust Belt District with an existing signalized crossing. New active at-grade crossings for pedestrians will improve safety while reducing the perception of the railroad tracks as a barrier to access between these areas. Wayfinding and signage will also improve the continuity between these districts.



**FIGURE 9: BEND BOULEVARD EXTENSION AND IMPROVEMENTS - PROPOSED**



In The Bend District, added pedestrian, bike, and transit infrastructure (Figure 9) will improve access to the Great River Trail, which runs along the Mississippi River through the Illinois Quad Cities. This infrastructure will also connect visitors to a new Channel Cat water taxi dock. This separate project – funded by a \$1.85 million grant from the Federal Transit Administration Passenger Ferry Grant Program – will be the fifth stop in a system that connects The Bend District to other entertainment and tourism hotspots in the area: John Deere Commons and the TaxSlayer Center in downtown Moline, Riverbend Commons on the Ben Butterworth Parkway in Moline, the Isle Casino Hotel in Bettendorf, and Lindsay Park in the Village of East Davenport. Additional bus and trolley stops will also be added in this area. An extension of Bend Boulevard and improvements to 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue will create a new vehicular and pedestrian connection from the existing apartments, hotel, and event center to 7<sup>th</sup> Street. These improvements will facilitate additional planned redevelopment on the site and connect to improved crossings to 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue and downtown. Pedestrian and cyclists will utilize this direct connection to the newly constructed Grand Illinois Trail along 7<sup>th</sup> Street and the newly resurfaced Great Mississippi River Trail via the Beacon Harbor Parkway Trail. Improved wayfinding, landscaping, and signage will underscore the connectivity between The Bend District, The Rust Belt District, and The Downtown District.

Green infrastructure throughout the project – including stormwater planters, permeable parking (shown in Figure 10), and increased tree plantings – will help reduce stormwater runoff that can carry contaminants from the former industrial sites into the Mississippi River.

**FIGURE 10: PERMEABLE PARKING DOWNTOWN - PROPOSED**



## Statement of Work

The East Moline Greater Downtown Revitalization Project includes the following:

### The Downtown District - 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue

- Full street reconstruction
- Reconstructed/improved streetscaping in commercial district along 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- 2 blocks of curb-less street (festival street) on 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue from 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> Street
- Wayfinding, signage and streetscaping to establish districts
- Creation of amenity zones and destinations
- Green infrastructure/stormwater improvements and increased canopy/shade
- Landscaping and lighting
- Improved pedestrian safety, accessibility, and connectivity including upgraded pedestrian ADA ramps and widening sidewalk pathways

### The Rust Belt District – 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 7<sup>th</sup> Street

- Multi-use path along 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue to improve connectivity
- Increased lighting for pedestrian safety
- New sidewalks/trails and streetscape on 7<sup>th</sup> Street, improving connections to The Bend District and The Downtown District
- Upgraded railroad street crossings and safety enhancement
  - Maintain active vehicular crossings
  - Convert passive pedestrian crossings at 7<sup>th</sup> Street to active crossings
- Full reconstruction of 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Integrated wayfinding

### The Bend District – Streetscaping and Extension

- New sidewalks and landscaping that fit with planned development
- Buildout of street network – extension of Bend Boulevard and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 7<sup>th</sup> Street
- Multi-modal connections, including a bike route, transit infrastructure, and pedestrian connections to the Mississippi River and trails
- Wayfinding system and gateways



## Project History

The Greater Downtown Revitalization Project is the result of a community-driven effort to not only recover from the Case-International Harvester closure but to build a stronger, better connected, more resilient and sustainable East Moline. The project was developed through a collaborative downtown master planning process that matched resident and local business goals with targeted improvements.

Major declines with the manufacturing industry starting in the early 1980s forced many industrial manufacturing businesses within East Moline, including the John Deere Foundry and Case-International Harvester (Case-IH), to close or relocate out of the area. The closing of these business entities along the riverfront – shown in Figure 11 – had significant negative effects on the City’s economy and sense of community.

**FIGURE 11: HISTORIC PHOTO OF THE BEND DISTRICT AND THE RUST BELT DISTRICT SITES AS INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER PLANT**



In the early 2010s, the City, alongside private business entities and local partners, began the process of rebuilding the Greater Downtown area after the exit of Case-IH. This effort focused on improving sense of place and state of good repair for downtown infrastructure, increasing economic opportunity for residents with added businesses and growth of tourism, and enhancing connectivity and quality of life. All these opportunities would involve investing in the City’s existing downtown while better connecting it to the Mississippi riverfront.

Original redevelopment plans in the early 2000s planned for new condos, a sports complex, office buildings, restaurants, and residential housing. These plans did not materialize due to lack of funding. Development plans resurfaced again in the early 2010s as the City was able to find the right partner. This public-private partnership with property owners in the area – which remains



**FIGURE 12: EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE BEND DISTRICT - BEND BOULEVARD**



strong to this day – resulted in a massive redevelopment effort of the former Case-IH property. This redevelopment is now The Bend District. With this partnership in place, the City of East Moline prioritized upgrades that would generate new economic activity and financed more than \$12 million in streets, sidewalks, utilities, and related infrastructure in The Bend District through a tax-increment-finance district (TIF) created for the project (Figure 12).

In recent years, The Bend District and The Rust Belt District have begun to bring life back to the area. A \$40 million Hyatt House and Hyatt Place

hotel was built in The Bend District in 2019 (Figure 13), with extended stay suites available to cater to John Deere, contractors, and other local businesses. A 400-seat event center and reception hall opened, along with the new Combine Restaurant. A 112,000 square foot expo center for Mecum Auctions, an apartment complex, and an outdoor bandshell in newly-constructed River Bend Park were all privately funded and now draw additional visitors to the area.

New developments within The Rust Belt District include a 4,000-person music and entertainment venue (Figure 14), restaurants, a brewery, and retail locations. In total, these districts have received nearly \$100 million in private and City investment in the last decade.

**FIGURE 13: HYATT HOUSE/HYATT PLACE HOTEL IN THE BEND DISTRICT - EXISTING**



The next phase of improvements – included in the Greater Downtown Revitalization Project – were developed as part of a 2020 Greater Downtown Master Plan. This master-planning process will be further discussed in the *Partnership and Collaboration* section.

**FIGURE 14: "THE RUST BELT" MUSIC VENUE IN THE RUST BELT DISTRICT - EXISTING**

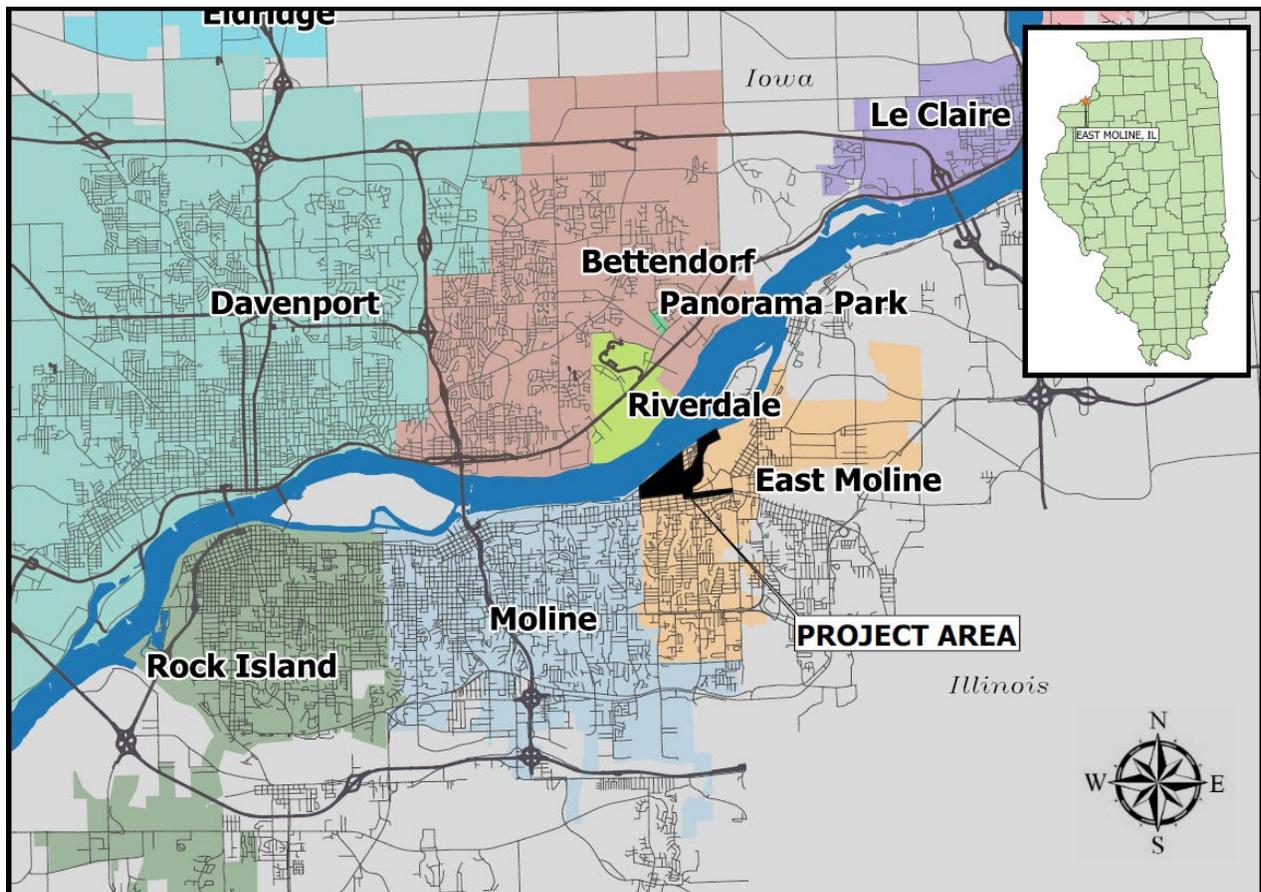


## II. Project Location

The City of East Moline was incorporated in 1907 along the east bank of the Mississippi River in Rock Island County, Illinois. Current city limits encompass approximately 14.6 square miles, and the City had a population of 20,374 according to the 2020 U.S. Census. The City is bounded by the Mississippi River from approximately river mile 488.5 to 491 on the Illinois side.

East Moline is located within the Davenport-Moline-Rock Island, IA-IL Metropolitan Statistical Area, which had an area population of 383,526 people in 2020. The project is in the Davenport, IA-IL urbanized area. The project is located in the northwest portion of the East Moline, closest to the City of Moline and less than three miles from the new I-74 bridge to Bettendorf, Iowa. East Moline's proximity to other Quad Cities communities – including Davenport and Bettendorf to the north in Iowa and Moline and Rock Island to the west in Illinois – presents additional economic opportunities for residents, provided they have sufficient mobility. The Rock Island County Metropolitan Mass Transit District, which operates as Quad Cities MetroLINK and also runs the Channel Cat water taxi system, is among the regional resources the City is able to plan around and partner with. However, as the smallest of the five Quad Cities, East Moline does not always have access to the same resources for investment in infrastructure and economic development as its counterparts along the river.

**FIGURE 15: MAP OF QUAD CITIES, EAST MOLINE, AND PROJECT AREA**



Improvements in The Downtown District encompass approximately 4,000 feet of 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue from 6<sup>th</sup> Street east through 13<sup>th</sup> Street, bounded by the public right-of-way lines to the north and south. The Rust Belt District improvements run from 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue on 7<sup>th</sup> Street and from 1<sup>st</sup> Street to 7<sup>th</sup> Street on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The Bend District encompasses approximately 175 acres of commercial, multi-residential, and green space located adjacent to The Rust Belt District and sandwiched between 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the south and the Mississippi River on the north, river mile 488.5 to 489.3.

In addition to the commercial districts and existing apartments in The Bend District, significant residential housing stock abuts the project area, both in the downtown area west of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and in a manufactured housing community at the north end of 7<sup>th</sup> Street along the river. John Deere Harvester Works – still a major employer in the region with a visitor center – remains on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, east of 7<sup>th</sup> Street.

**The project includes Census tracts 206 and 207 (Figure 16). The larger of the two tracts – 206 – is an Area of Persistent Poverty. Both tracts are listed as Historically Disadvantaged Communities by the U.S. Department of Transportation, under the environmental, equity, economy and transportation indicators.** East Moline remains convinced that our diversity is one of the strengths of our community, and this project represents an investment in that diversity.

The project is not in an Opportunity Zone, Empowerment Zone, Promise Zone, or Choice Neighborhood.

**FIGURE 16: HISTORICALLY DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITY CENSUS TRACTS (YELLOW) AND PROJECT AREA (BOUNDED BY RED)**



### III. Grant Funds, Sources, and Uses of All Project Funding

**TABLE 1: PROJECT COST-SHARE**

2022 RAISE Grant Funding Request	\$23,716,188
City of East Moline Local Match	\$5,929,048
Total Estimated Project Capital Cost	\$29,645,236

The estimated total cost of the Greater Downtown Revitalization Project is \$29,645,236. A detailed project budget and schedule for all major components of the project accompanies this application.

The City would provide \$5,929,048, or 20%, of project costs. The City of East Moline is requesting \$23,716,188 in 2022 RAISE grant funds for the remaining 80% of estimated project costs. No other federal funds are programmed for the project.

**TABLE 2: PROJECT BUDGET BY AREA**

East Moline Greater Downtown Revitalization Project				
Description	Estimated Cost	RAISE Funding Request	Non-Federal Funds	Matching Source
Rust Belt District - 12 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	\$8,188,819	\$6,551,055	\$1,637,764	City
	27.6%			
Rust Belt District - 7 <sup>th</sup> Street, 12 <sup>th</sup> to 15 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	\$1,810,939	\$1,448,751	\$362,188	City
	6.1%			
Downtown District - 15 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	\$12,121,221	\$9,696,976	\$2,424,245	City
	40.9%			
Bend District - Bend Blvd Streetscaping	\$753,789	\$603,031	\$150,758	City
	2.5%			
Bend District - Bend Blvd Extension	\$6,770,469	\$5,416,375	\$1,354,094	City
	22.8%			
Project Total	\$29,645,236	\$23,716,188	\$5,929,048	
	100%	80%	20%	

A detailed breakdown of project costs is available in the Appendix at <https://www.eastmoline.com/408/RAISE-Grant>.



## IV. Merit Criteria

### Safety

The Greater Downtown Revitalization Project is designed to improve safety with targeted infrastructure improvements, including dedicated active transportation paths, trails, and improved crossings. The project would also use complete streets to calm traffic on main corridors through East Moline.

The lack of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue presents significant safety challenges for residents and visitors. Installation of new bike trails and sidewalks along this street and throughout the project area will provide safe pathways for pedestrian travel. Pedestrians will not have to try and choose a best route along existing roadway corridors without sidewalks. The trails and sidewalks will provide safety for residents of adjoining neighborhoods and planned apartment complexes and condominiums within the project area. Residents will have safer passage to locations that are frequented through a complete streets design in the Greater Downtown and new trails in The Bend District, on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and along the riverfront.

Improvements on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue are also designed to give it the feel of a community street rather than a thoroughfare. Traffic-calming features along with a reduction in the posted speed limit should reduce actual vehicle speeds. Research has shown a correlation between reduced vehicle speeds and a reduction in the number and severity of roadway accidents, even in designated lower speed limit areas. Reduced speeds are also correlated with increased yielding to pedestrians at marked crossings.

Reconstruction and streetscaping on 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue will include installation of pedestrian crossing bumpouts, which will increase line-of-sight for both pedestrians and drivers. This area will also include shortened pedestrian crossings to reduce the exposure time to conflicts between pedestrians and other transportation modes.

Each of the streets in the project area will be reimagined as “complete streets.” In addition to their placemaking effects, complete streets have documented safety benefits. Case studies of roadways designed as complete streets have shown a crash reduction of up to 80% along those corridors, resulting in safer movement of pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles. Complete streets designate that each mode has its own assigned area minimizing conflict points with the vehicle lanes, bike lanes, bus stops, and pedestrian sidewalks and crossings. The narrower pedestrian crossings due to bumpouts reduce the exposure time to conflicts with other modes. Project planners project a crash reduction of 40% for these specific complete streets improvements, due to speed of traffic and current crash patterns. Under this scenario, the project is anticipated to eliminate approximately seven crashes per year on the corridor. While the number of crashes under the no-build scenario is already relatively low, these improvements will be critical with additional induced active transportation activity in the project area.

The project will also help address risks to pedestrians at major railroad crossings that divide East Moline’s downtown. Downtown East Moline is home to track infrastructure for Iowa Interstate Railroad and BNSF, which converges in three sets of tracks just west of 7<sup>th</sup> Street. Existing at-grade crossings of these tracks in the project area – all on 7<sup>th</sup> Street – have active crossing systems for vehicular traffic. However, the pedestrian crossings at these locations are passive systems without gates or any more than signage. This is particularly problematic given the distance between the first and third of these closely grouped crossings, which are approximately 150 feet apart.



Pedestrians may notice the lighted signal but try to guess which track the train will be on, leading to dangerous situations. According to data reported to the Federal Railroad Administration by Iowa-Interstate Railroad, which owns and maintains one set of tracks on the line, train speeds at these crossings range from 20 to 40 miles per hour.

A total of ten combined railroad crossing incidents have been recorded at the existing crossings within the project area. Increases in pedestrian and vehicular traffic will make it very important to enhance safety at all crossings within the corridor. The project will convert these passive pedestrian crossings to active crossings with pedestrian gate arms. This will help protect bicycle and foot traffic, which is expected to increase as navigating between 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue and The Rust Belt District and The Bend District becomes easier. The Greater Downtown Revitalization Project will implement new technologies to not only add active crossings for pedestrians but also to improve the existing crossings for vehicles. These technologies include dynamic envelope pavement markings and gate skirts to reduce the number of vehicles stopping on the tracks and violating warning signals.

## Environmental Sustainability

The Greater Downtown Revitalization Project is designed to revitalize industrial sites while adding sustainable features and green space to the City's downtown, building a more resilient city for the future.

### Encouraging Brownfield Redevelopment

The project leverages existing investment in former manufacturing sites along the Mississippi River and will serve as a catalyst for existing site cleanup and redevelopment. The Bend District sits on the former site of the Case-IH plant, with nearly 80 years of industrial history. These are beautiful riverfront sites but have suffered from this previous use. Rather than let these sites sit vacant and expand on farmland outside the City's downtown core, East Moline and its project partners have invested in revitalizing these existing sites and rebuilding them into sustainable, resilient neighborhoods and attractions.

Prior to this development, The Bend District required environmental remediation as a result of its prior use by Case-IH and other manufacturers and associated facilities. Environmental and remedial assessments have been performed to allow this area to be reused and to address contamination of soil within the area. Revitalize and Develop East Moline, a non-profit organization working with the City, provided multiple reports including a Comprehensive Site Investigation Report, Remediation Objectives Report, Remedial Action Completion Report, and Corrective Action Complete Report for this area starting in early 2010s. These reports were reviewed and approved by the Illinois EPA, granting the City no further remediation (NFR) determinations. The report also approved redevelopment of the land for residential or commercial use. Continuing to redevelop these brownfield sites provides a benefit to the community and will strengthen East Moline's Greater Downtown.



## Reducing Stormwater Runoff

The proposed project area consists of mainly industrial and deteriorated urban landscape that sheds stormwater into the City’s storm sewer system, which subsequently discharges directly into the Mississippi River. Much of the existing right-of-way consists of impermeable surfaces and little amounts of tree coverage or established vegetation. This creates environmental concerns that are likely to become worse as the City experiences more extreme weather events from climate change.

**FIGURE 17: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STORMWATER CAPTURE - PROPOSED**



Many of the improvements on 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue are designed to mitigate this issue. Reconstruction improvements within the project area will include installation of permeable paver parking spaces, as well as trees and plantings within planter box trenches along the roadway corridor in The Downtown District. Conversion from existing hard surfacing and installation of new permeable paver areas has the potential to improve stormwater runoff quality and air quality. A total of 151 new trees and 139 hanging plants are planned for this corridor. Tree planter installations (shown in Figure 18) will include underground infiltration networks prior to storm sewer connection, which significantly reduce stormwater runoff pollution. The installation of permeable pavers in conjunction with trees has been shown to decrease surrounding air and pavement temperatures.<sup>2</sup> The trees and planters also improve air quality by processing carbon dioxide. Overall, these improvements will help build a healthier and more sustainable City.

**FIGURE 18: TREE PLANTER AND PERMEABLE INFRASTRUCTURE - PROPOSED**



## Reducing Emissions

The project will reduce transportation-related emissions by providing additional, low-carbon options and multimodal connections for residents. Added and improved sidewalks will facilitate access to transit options, including MetroLINK busses and the Channel Cat ferry system, discussed further in the *Quality of Life* and *Mobility and Community Connectivity* sections. MetroLINK has aggressively worked to electrify its bus fleet, with 30% of its fleet soon to be made up of battery electric busses.<sup>3</sup> The enhanced multimodal connectivity after this project will allow more East Moline residents to rely on this system rather than individual cars. Other non-carbonized transportation modes will include additional pedestrian and bicycle use of multi-use trails. Improved rail crossings, sidewalks and a multi-use path on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and additional infrastructure in The Bend District will allow downtown residents to safely access the Great River

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, “Using Cool Pavements to Reduce Heat Islands.”

<https://www.epa.gov/heatislands/using-cool-pavements-reduce-heat-islands>

<sup>3</sup> “MetroLINK awarded \$5 million for charging expansion.” Kwqc.com. KWQC, February 9, 2022.

<https://www.kwqc.com/2022/02/09/metrolink-awarded-5-million-charging-expansion/>



Trail, which runs along the Mississippi River for 34 miles from Rock Island to Cordova, Illinois, with East Moline in the middle.

Complete streets within the downtown area and improved pedestrian and bicycle connectivity will also reduce vehicle miles traveled and corresponding emissions. Based on Federal Highway Administration case studies, the project's planners anticipate a 25% reduction in vehicle miles traveled as a result of the complete streets enhancements and improved transportation alternatives, which could reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by a corresponding 25%.<sup>4</sup> The reduction in emissions was a consideration in development of the Greater Downtown Revitalization Project and its programming in the area's Quad Cities Metro Transportation Improvement Program.

## Quality of Life

### Improving Accessibility for Disadvantaged Communities

Providing more connectivity within the area and encouraged development will help the overall quality of life for residents of East Moline. Downtown East Moline is an economically disadvantaged area of the City with lower income residents. As of 2019, according to U.S. Census American Community Survey data, the average estimated median household income in Census tracts 206 and 207 was \$45,352 with approximately 38.9% of residents in the project area considered living in poverty. The project area is located in two different census tracts, both of which are considered Historically Disadvantaged Communities by U.S. DOT. The larger of the tracts, which contains the majority of the improvements, is considered an Area of Persistent Poverty by U.S. DOT. The area is majority-minority, with 47% of residents identifying as white, 33.7% identifying as Hispanic, and 13.1% identifying as Black or African American.

The project is a deliberate investment in these historically disadvantaged and diverse neighborhoods, designed to improve the ability of residents to access jobs, recreational opportunities, and transportation options. Not only will the project add employment opportunities for residents of the adjacent neighborhoods, but it will ensure that these opportunities will be more easily accessible. It will facilitate better access to the City's riverfront trail system and transit options. Finally, it will help address decades of negative impacts of industrial and manufacturing development on these communities, including air and noise pollution.

### Improving Access to Services

In The Downtown District, the existing 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue corridor – known as East Moline's Main Street – is a key community corridor, home to festivals and everyday necessities. The corridor is served by two Mexican grocery stores and an Asian grocery store, catering to the area's diverse population of residents. Community Health Care's East Moline Clinic is located at 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 7<sup>th</sup> Street, the site of major accessibility improvements. Making the area around these locations more attractive and better accessible to all users will help ensure residents have access to these services and that they have the foot traffic to continue serving the area. With the expansion and upgrades to ADA accessible sidewalks and paths, connectivity to critical services will be improved drastically.

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<sup>4</sup> Federal Highway Administration, "Case Studies - Safety." [http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road\\_diets/case\\_studies/](http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road_diets/case_studies/)



## Removing Barriers to Jobs

Even in the early stages of their redevelopment, The Rust Belt District and The Bend District have created more than 200 on-site, permanent jobs, according to the U.S. Census. The redevelopment is already providing opportunities for area residents, and this number is expected to rise as infrastructure in these areas is fully developed. However, residents of the downtown area to the south and east currently face unnecessarily difficult journeys across the railroad tracks and 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue to get to these jobs in The Bend District and The Rust Belt District. Improved pedestrian facilities and an enhanced, active crossing on 7<sup>th</sup> Street will address this issue and allow residents of these historically disadvantaged communities to access job new opportunities.

The project itself is also expected to create jobs in the building trades. The City of East Moline has used Project Labor Agreements in the past and is open to using them on this project.

## Adding Green Space

The project will allow residents to better connect to parks and gathering civic areas adjacent to downtown areas. These connections and access to these green spaces will benefit the mental and physical well-being of residents. Areas like Runner's Park (Figure 19) hold gatherings and events that increase the unity and community spirit of the downtown area. These areas will be better connected by the project. Additional wayfinding plazas and added greenspace created by complete streets improvements will also help residents and visitors enjoy the Greater Downtown.

**FIGURE 19: RUNNER'S PARK AT CORNER OF 15TH AVE AND 8TH ST**



## Increasing Transportation Choices

The Greater Downtown Revitalization project will greatly expand the transportation options for all East Moline residents. Connectivity between all three project districts and the riverfront will be greatly improved and provide multi-modal options for pedestrians and vehicular traffic to access these areas. Bike trails will be expanded, connecting the different districts and linking with existing riverfront trails within The Bend District and on the riverfront. Bike trails and expansion of the sidewalk network will provide direct access for pedestrians to access the riverfront from Downtown and for John Deere Harvester Works employees to access all three areas within the Greater Downtown. Bike gateways will be added throughout the project area to enhance existing and new bike path routes, as shown in Figure 20. General expansion of transportation choices and recreational path networks will promote a healthy lifestyle with more walking, running, and biking.



**FIGURE 20: AREA TRAIL, BIKE, AND TRANSIT NETWORK**



Downtown residents and tourists will benefit from enhanced pedestrian, bicycle, and bus transit access through The Downtown District, to neighboring communities, and to the Mississippi River itself. Bus shuttle transportation routes will be expanded through The Downtown District and connect to The Rust Belt and The Bend Districts. Bike trails and roadway networks within the project area will be connected to the Great River Trail and broader Mississippi River Trail system (Figure 21). The City of East Moline and nearby Silvis recently built an additional 2.4 miles of off-street path that help link up the Beacon Harbor Parkway Trail through downtown. Overall, the improved connectivity at The Bend District and downtown will feed into the 535-mile Grand Illinois Trail loop – running from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi and across to the Illinois River – and the 6,800-mile American Discovery Trail to give residents and visitors even more transportation options.

**FIGURE 21: EXISTING TRAILS ON RIVERFRONT, WITH THE BEND DISTRICT IN DISTANCE**



**FIGURE 22: CHANNEL CAT WATER TAXI DOCK, TO BE ADDED IN THE BEND DISTRICT**



This trail system connects to neighboring communities and to Channel Cat water taxi docks that allow for regional travel to downtowns and riverfronts across the Quad City metropolitan area (Figure 22). A new Channel Cat dock in The Bend District will be separately funded by a \$1.85 million FTA grant. Adding the pedestrian and bike infrastructure to connect residents and visitors to this dock and the surrounding area will be particularly significant in drawing additional tourist traffic. After these improvements are completed, visitors will be able to stay at a hotel in The Bend District, visit Moline’s John Deere Pavilion or

Bettendorf’s riverfront casino, and come back to East Moline to enjoy downtown restaurants, a brewery, or a show at the Rust Belt music venue, all without the use of a car.

### Facilitating Accessible Redevelopment

The extension of Bend Boulevard and the continued redevelopment of The Bend District’s street network will allow for more housing options in the City’s downtown area. Residents of Greater Downtown also have an interest in accessing shopping, restaurants and entertainment, jobs, and the City’s riverfront easily without the use of a car. These specific project improvements will facilitate construction of two planned market-rate apartment buildings that will provide new housing options for residents.

## Mobility and Community Connectivity

The project will dramatically improve connectivity, both between the individual districts in the project area and between Greater Downtown and other locations in the Quad Cities.

### Connecting Downtown

Most significantly, the project transforms a barrier to access between The Downtown District, The Rust Belt District, and The Bend District – 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue – into an established community corridor, with pedestrian and bike facilities, trees, and plantings. Currently, 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue has no pedestrian infrastructure surrounding the 7<sup>th</sup> Street crossing. Heading north to these areas from 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue – the most direct way to connect between East Moline’s “Main Street” and The Rust Belt District – one would have to walk in the street, on the grass, or on railroad tracks to get to the shops, restaurants, and concert venue there. This creates the perception that 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue is for cars and that a car is necessary to visit The Rust Belt District, The Bend District, and the riverfront. Adding prominent pedestrian infrastructure and multi-use trail facilities, as well as traffic-calming streetscaping and features, will help eliminate the sense that 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue is for cars and not active transportation users. It will also help eliminate concerns that 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue is not safe to cross.



**FIGURE 23: PASSIVE PEDESTRIAN AT-GRADE CROSSING ON 7TH ST, FACING NORTH TOWARD THE BEND DISTRICT AND THE RUST BELT DISTRICT**



Similarly, someone visiting The Bend District or The Rust Belt District from outside the area would have no indication that the City’s historic downtown core is mere blocks away. Signage, wayfinding, and streetscaping will create continuity in Greater Downtown and help visitors find their way to 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue and its existing businesses.

Improving the pedestrian at-grade railroad crossings will improve connectivity from both directions. The three sets of tracks make for an imposing crossing. Coming from The Rust Belt District and The Bend District, they give the impression that downtown is inaccessible to pedestrians. Coming from downtown (Figure 23), they

do not convey that the formerly industrial sites north of 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue have been truly transformed. In combination with streetscaping and wayfinding, adding active crossings at these locations will underscore that the tracks are safe to cross when no trains are active on the tracks and that it’s necessary to wait if trains are coming by. This knowledge will remove a barrier to connectivity and improve mobility in Greater Downtown.

Improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure will also feed into enhanced transit connectivity. East Moline is fortunate to be served by the Rock Island County Metropolitan Mass Transit District, which operates the Quad Cities MetroLINK bus system and the Channel Cat water taxi and ferry system. While the area’s bus connectivity is already strong, with frequent service along 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue, it will be improved by better, more accessible infrastructure for non-motorized travelers. Added sidewalks and trails on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue and in The Bend District will allow for expanded service. MetroLINK plans to add fixed-route or on-demand service to this area if the Greater Downtown Revitalization Project is completed, understanding the demand the project will generate among pedestrians and cyclists.

The added pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile infrastructure in The Bend District will also improve access to the planned ferry dock there, funded by a grant from the FTA. Overall, these efforts will help turn the Greater Downtown area into a multi-modal oriented destination that draws visitors from across the region there to enjoy the amenities and explore.

**“We are incredibly excited to add a fifth passenger ferry boat stop in East Moline, IL near The Bend, to support the continued development in the area by increasing multimodal travel between bus routes, paratransit and the riverfront bike trail network,”** said Jennifer Hirsch, Manager of Administration, MetroLINK.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Bohlman, David. “\$1.85 million dollar grant to expand Channel Cat to East Moline,” wqad.com. WQAD, February 19, 2022. <https://www.wqad.com/article/news/local/channel-cat-expand-service-to-the-bend-in-east-moline-thanks-to-a-18-million-grant/526-16cbe41b-d62d-4a48-885c-0a33b02cac02>



## Enhancing Accessibility

Expansion and rehabilitation of sidewalks and trails in all districts will increase pedestrian accessibility to the entire project corridor, add ADA compliant street crossings to an older downtown area, and improve connections to adjoining side streets to allow better access between neighborhoods and services and shopping areas. Adding improved at-grade railroad pedestrian crossings with pedestrian crossing arms and other notifications will increase safety and allow for connectivity between The Downtown District and the other districts along the riverfront, including for rolling and non-motorized travelers.

## Improving the Movement of Goods

While critical to the revitalization of East Moline's downtown and riverfront, the project remains very close to a major manufacturing facility at John Deere Harvester Works. Harvester Works produces combines and related equipment, and as of 2021, it is the sole production site of Deere's new X-9 combine. Maintaining existing freight routes to and from this campus as well as other industrial facilities in East Moline is critical and a core consideration of the project. No existing connections will be removed as a part of this project. Instead, the project will add new entrance and exit options for The Bend District, improving reliability and system flow. Improved pedestrian facilities, including the multi-use path and active grade crossings, will improve safety and reliability for freight and workers in this area.

## Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity

At the core of the development of The Rust Belt District and The Bend District, and now centered in this project, is the goal of revitalizing East Moline's economy and improving opportunities for residents. The full Greater Downtown Revitalization Project will continue this growth while using better connectivity to ensure that core downtown areas like 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue benefit from this redevelopment.

## Driving Downtown Reinvestment

Project improvements and reconstruction in the Greater Downtown and riverfront areas will accelerate momentum for commercial and recreational development within the area. Development will attract additional visitors to the area, spurring economic growth for the City. With more people visiting and staying longer, the total annual sales tax revenue for the City is anticipated to increase, creating more funds available for spending in this area. Similar effects occurred just upriver in LeClaire, Iowa, when the village undertook a major downtown streetscaping effort. Since this project was completed in 2007, 67 new businesses have opened and stayed in business.<sup>6</sup>

The project is also expected to increase property value within the area and adjacent areas. Project planners anticipate an increase of at least 5% in property values due to better connectivity and improved sense of place, as shown in the *Benefit-Cost Analysis*. Existing property values total a combined \$96.4 million within the Greater Downtown project area. The estimated total increase in value for these existing properties due to reconstruction and proposed improvements is \$4.8

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<sup>6</sup> DeWitt, Jennifer. "LeClaire plans next phase of downtown revitalization." Muscatine Journal, June 13, 2019. [https://muscatinejournal.com/news/local/leclaire-plans-next-phase-of-downtown-revitalization-copy/article\\_bce71745-a311-5a73-b1bc-089c0a6e5ace.html](https://muscatinejournal.com/news/local/leclaire-plans-next-phase-of-downtown-revitalization-copy/article_bce71745-a311-5a73-b1bc-089c0a6e5ace.html)



million.

Based on the track record of growth from the first phase of the redevelopment in The Bend District and The Rust Belt District, the project is expected to bring more tourism downtown, open more businesses, create more jobs, draw residents and members of other communities to the downtown and riverfront, and create more private investment in downtown buildings. Increased tourism is expected to create demand for more restaurants, shops, and event spaces. Concerts at River Bend Park in The Bend District and the Rust Belt concert venue and events like downtown Halloween, 4<sup>th</sup> of July Firecracker Run, Freedom Fest, and Cinco de Mayo are already held in the Greater Downtown area on a regular basis, particularly in the summer. Depending on the event, these occasions can draw thousands of people downtown. However, the current configuration of 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Figure 24) is not conducive for visitors to stay and continue exploring. Creating a walkable, attractive downtown with places to gather will help ensure more of these visitors stay to patronize businesses and restaurants, generating revenue and economic growth.

**FIGURE 24: FIRECRACKER RUN, WITH EXISTING CONFIGURATION OF 15TH AVENUE**



The Greater Downtown region is starting to gain momentum and attract business with the new development of the Hyatt Hotel, the Combine Restaurant, the Rust Belt music venue, the Bend XPO Center for Mecum Auctions, and River Bend Park. Annual sales revenue in 2019 for the Greater Downtown was approximately \$17.8 million. Continuing the development of The Bend District and better-connecting downtown is anticipated to contribute to additional visitors and sales tax revenue and spending.

With extensions and new construction of transportation systems and recreational options provided by this project, connecting this region with the larger Mississippi River Trail will be invaluable in helping connect residents to and from neighboring cities within the Quad City Metropolitan Area. Bi-State Regional Commission conducts traffic counts on these trails, which find that portions of the Mississippi River Trail see average yearly traffic counts of 30,000 to 60,000. Improving connections between this trail network and Greater Downtown will help to directly link neighboring communities and visitors to this businesses and restaurants in the area.

### Harnessing Tourism

While the project is rebuilding from the decline of agricultural equipment manufacturing, it will also help ensure that East Moline residents benefit from the strong presence of John Deere in the Quad Cities. John Deere's facilities and brand draw tourists from throughout the Midwest, the



country, and the world. Downtown East Moline sits between John Deere Harvester Works – where tours make it possible to watch combines being built – and John Deere Pavilion in downtown Moline. Deere Harvester Works is immediately northeast of downtown East Moline. The two locations are less than 10 minutes apart by car, travelling down Moline’s River Drive and East Moline’s 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue. John Deere Pavilion, which was recently renovated, showcases equipment and displays and offers a large gift shop of John Deere merchandise. The site draws more than 200,000 visitors annually, making it wone of the top five visitor destinations in the State of Illinois.<sup>7</sup> Deere Harvester Works, the company’s largest combine factory, opened a 6,100 square-foot visitor center in 2007. While both locations have been closed for COVID-19, the position of East Moline’s downtown makes it an attractive location for visitors who come to see John Deere to stay and shop, eat, and play.

The John Deere Classic – the region’s only PGA Tour event – takes place a ten-minute drive from the project area at TPC Deere Run. More than 27,500 tickets for the event were distributed for the event in 2021, despite COVID-19-related capacity limitations. According to a study commissioned by John Deere and the Quad Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau, the tournament generates \$54,300,000 in economic benefits for the greater Quad Cities annually. Building a more attractive downtown in East Moline will help bring more of these benefits to the historically disadvantaged communities where this project is located. Improved sense of place through streetscaping and wayfinding will help attract visitors while also building a feeling of a continuous downtown that stretches from 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the riverfront.

Mecum Auctions and the Rust Belt music venue also draw visitors from out of town to the riverfront. In 2021, Mecum’s East Moline site drew 4,000 attendees to the Bend XPO for individual auction events featuring collector cars, motorcycles, and farm equipment. Outdoor concerts at a new park in The Bend District, seen in Figure 25, occur weekly downtown and are expected to generate more foot-traffic on 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue with better connections. With wayfinding and improved infrastructure, more of the economic benefits of these events will make it to East Moline’s Downtown District and the historically disadvantaged communities there.

**FIGURE 25: OUTDOOR CONCERT IN THE BEND DISTRICT**



## State of Good Repair

The project will restore and modernize a core downtown street of East Moline while also making former industrial sites usable for new development. The project includes a full reconstruction of 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue from 6<sup>th</sup> Street to 13<sup>th</sup> Street. Both the street and the adjoining sidewalks along this corridor are deteriorated and in poor condition. This failing infrastructure will require

<sup>7</sup> Turner, Jonathan. “After 20 months closed and a total overhaul, gleaming John Deere Pavilion in Moline back open.” Our Quad Cities, December 10, 2021. <https://www.ourquadcities.com/news/local-news/after-20-months-closed-and-a-total-overhaul-gleaming-john-deere-pavilion-in-moline-back-open/>



reconstruction with or without the project. The two other major roads in the project area will also be improved. Due to heavy truck traffic, 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue has deteriorated and will be reconstructed as a complete street as part of the project. The state of repair on 7<sup>th</sup> Street will also be addressed through these improvements.

The project will also improve the state of repair of older, existing roadways in the industrial portion of the project area, including 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, which will be connected to an extended Bend Boulevard as a result of this effort. Improving the connections of the existing grid in these reclaimed areas will contribute to growth while using infrastructure that's already available.

Longevity of the improvements will be prioritized in project design and overall maintenance costs are expected to be significantly reduced as a result of the project. Project design will take into consideration future maintenance of the proposed streetscaping and use high-grade construction materials to minimize the future maintenance of the area. Reductions in stormwater runoff will reduce the burden on the City's existing system and help extend pavement life in Greater Downtown.

## Partnership and Collaboration

Beginning in the early 2010s, East Moline has been building on a groundswell of grassroots efforts by residents to revitalize and better connect the project area. Private and non-profit partnerships with the City have resulted in expansion of businesses and events in the downtown. To build on these efforts, the City undertook a community-driven master planning effort in 2020 to develop the proposed project. More than 100 residents and stakeholders were involved in this process. The planning effort identified wayfinding, multi-modal connections, and improved streetscaping as top priorities for the comprehensive revitalization of downtown.

The following is an assortment of partners engaged in the overall planning and revitalization effort:

**East Moline Main Street** is a local not-for-profit made up of business owners and community members working to strengthen the City's downtown and make it a destination. This volunteer organization offers a cohesive downtown branding image, while also highlighting individual businesses. The organization was very involved in the master planning process for this project and has undertaken independent projects to try to revitalize the 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue corridor and Greater Downtown. These projects include adding hanging baskets, planted flowers, and light pole banners to add character to downtown. They have also conducted beautification projects to enhance Runner's Park and other common areas in the area that help improve the area's appearance. They will be a critical partner through project implementation and ongoing maintenance of the improved downtown.

**Revitalize and Develop East Moline (REDEEM)** is a second local not-for-profit organization dedicated to building economic partnerships and opportunities within the project area. They will remain involved in the development of project design and implementation.

Rock Island County Metropolitan Mass Transit District, operating as **MetroLINK**, has been a collaborative partner on the project, contributing to the planning phase and standing at the ready to add transit service to meet added pedestrian and bicycle demand upon completion of the project. The City and MetroLINK are working together on the Channel Cat terminal, additional sidewalk infrastructure to facilitate transit access, and ongoing service adjustments.



**CTL Properties** owns the Rust Belt music venue and other commercial development in The Rust Belt District and The Bend District. **Green Current Solutions** owns other property in The Rust Belt District along 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue. These private entities are also project partners and assisting with easements for the project, as discussed in the *Assessment of Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies* section.

Other private and not-for-profit entities that have been instrumental in growing the economic and social capital of the project area and are expected to be involved in the project's future include **East Moline Glass, John Deere Harvester Works, TBK Bank, Living Lands & Waters, EasMoMentum, Respect Abilities** and the dozens of other independent businesses owners located within the project area.

With its manufacturing past, including the long involvement of the United Auto Workers, East Moline has a strong union history. Organized labor, including building trades, are expected to be heavily involved in the construction phase of the project and contributed to the City's workforce development and employment goals.

## Innovation

### Innovative Technologies

Mobility improvements to the project area include expanding transit bus service to The Downtown District and The Bend District. MetroLINK provides transportation services incorporating TransLoc Rider computer application to allow their ridership access to “up-to-the-minute next bus arrival information.” The project will also incorporate the latest in active crossing safety technologies – including dynamic envelope pavement markings and gate skirts to reduce the number of vehicles stopping on the tracks – and innovative stormwater solutions.

### Innovative Project Delivery

The City has phased the project in order to maintain maximum flexibility with workforce and supply issues while adhering to a schedule that will meet RAISE requirements.

### Innovative Financing

Previous improvements to prepare The Bend District have been completed through public-private partnerships, using a TIF. The City is pursuing this RAISE grant in order to expand those improvements and cohesively connect them to 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue, which has less potential for private investment without a kick-start of public funding to improve the state of repair and sense of place. Coordination with these private partners is ongoing to facilitate continued private investment in the area – and in the City's downtown core – and to ensure that development occurs quickly after the project's improvements are completed.



## V. Project Readiness: Environmental Risk

### Project Schedule

**TABLE 3: PROJECT SCHEDULE**

Project Element	2022				2023				2024				2025				2026				2027			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
RAISE Grant application creation and submittal	■																							
RAISE Grant review and selection		■	■																					
Design engineer selection																								
RAISE Grant agreement execution																								
Develop Downtown amenities concepts for stakeholder input																								
Begin ESA and NEPA evaluations																								
Design 12th Avenue and submit to IDOT for approval and permit																								
Design 7th Street and submit to IDOT for approval and permit																								
Design Downtown 15th Avenue Improvements and submit to IDOT for approval																								
Design and procure permits for railroad crossings																								
Design Bend Blvd Extension and Streetscaping projects and submit to IDOT for approval																								
Bid and award 12th Avenue and 7th Street project																								
Construct 12th Avenue project																								
Construct 7th Street project																								
Bid and award Downtown 15th Avenue project																								
Construct Downtown 15th Avenue project																								
Bid and award Bend Blvd Extension and Streetscaping projects																								
Construct Bend Blvd Extension and Streetscaping projects																								

A larger version of this schedule is available in the [Appendix](#). No right-of-way acquisition is necessary, which will reduce possible project delays. Meaningful planning efforts have already taken place, as discussed in the [Partnership and Collaboration](#) section.

### Required Approvals

#### Environmental Permits and Reviews

Because the majority of the work on this project will occur in existing City right-of-way and on previously disturbed sites, the City of East Moline anticipates a Categorical Exclusion determination for the project under NEPA.

The City also expects streamlined environmental and historical review from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the State Historic Preservation Office, respectively. Most project component areas have been previously disturbed by past construction, streetscaping, and development. The Downtown District and portions of The Bend District and The Rust Belt District are the only areas planned for full reconstruction of existing streetscaping and public infrastructure. Furthermore, none of the project sub-areas are considered historic. Because most of the land within the Greater Downtown project area has either been previously disturbed or had previous EPA approval for use as commercial or residential properties, the redevelopment of land should not provide any additional risk of project delay.

A variety of stakeholders from the project area – including business owners and residents of these historically disadvantaged communities – were consulted as part of the master planning process to identify priorities, understand these communities’ needs, and target investment. The project is a direct result of that process, and robust engagement is planned throughout the project. Additional stakeholder input will take place in 2023 if a grant is awarded.



## State and Local Approvals

The project is listed in the Quad Cities Metro Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for FFY 2022-2025 as five separate elements, which combine to make up the full Greater Downtown Revitalization Project:

- 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue – 1<sup>st</sup> Street to 7<sup>th</sup> Street
- 7<sup>th</sup> Street – 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue – 6<sup>th</sup> Street to 13<sup>th</sup> Street
- Bend Boulevard – Streetscaping
- Bend Boulevard – New Construction

The project will be broken into these separate phases of construction in order to reduce disruption of the downtown area. However, the full suite of these improvements is necessary to accomplish the project's goals.

## Assessment of Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Due to current uncertainties around material costs and supply issues, some risk exists around project timelines and budget. However, estimates were revised in March 2022 to account for current conditions and are adjusted upward in the project budget per U.S. DOT guidance. This should assure that current prices are accounted for, and a generous schedule for design and construction will accommodate minor delays if shortages arise.

Risks will be minimized by the lack of need for right-of-way acquisition. CTL Properties, which owns the Rust Belt music venue and associated development, and Green Current Solutions, which owns property west of the Rust Belt along 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, are project partners. Both parties have indicated willingness to provide Temporary Construction Easements or other easements as necessary for work and improvements on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

The greatest risk to project timelines is the need to coordinate with multiple railroads in the project corridor, which will be essential for improvements to the crossings on 7<sup>th</sup> Street. The City has had preliminary discussions with both Iowa Interstate Railroad and BNSF and received positive feedback about plans and timelines. While the City believes design and permit review can take place in three months, six months is budgeted in the project schedule in order to accommodate delays. The City maintains an excellent working relationship with the Illinois Commerce Commission and anticipates no issues in their review for permitting of this segment.

In the first year, additional outreach will be conducted to project stakeholders – including residents and historically disadvantaged populations – on downtown amenity concepts to ensure that the project and particularly 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue responds to community need. This will be a continuation of the robust master planning process undertaken in 2020.



## VI. Benefit-Cost Analysis

The cost-effectiveness and net benefits of the Greater Downtown Revitalization Project were quantified through a Benefit-Cost Analysis, following US Department of Transportation’s *Benefit-Cost Analysis Guidance for Discretionary Grant Programs* (March 2022).

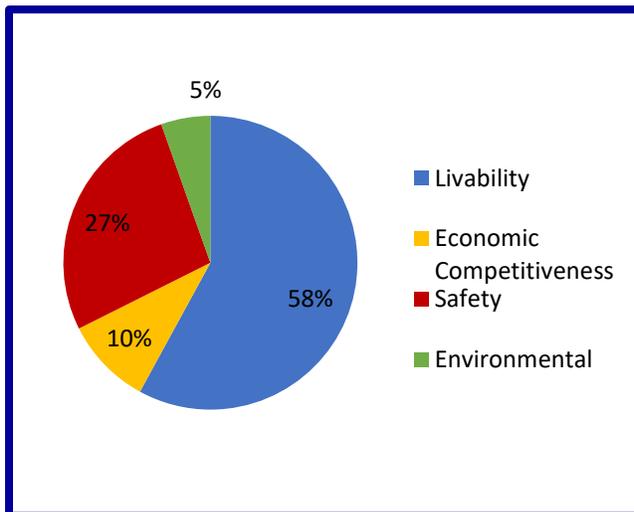
**TABLE 4: BENEFITS SUMMARY IN CONSTANT 2020 DOLLARS**

7% Discount	
<b>Total Benefits</b>	\$ 42,418,058
<b>Total Costs</b>	\$17,992,219
<b>Benefit-Cost Ratio</b>	2.36

Analysis for the project was based on a 20-year outlook, with all operations beginning in 2027 using dollars adjusted to 2020 dollars. The overall project benefit is projected to realize \$42,418,058 at a 7% real discounted rate,

resulting in a benefit-cost ratio of 2.36. See accompanying tables and graphs for the overall benefit-cost analysis results and the Impact and Benefits Matrix.

**FIGURE 26: PROJECT BENEFITS BY CATEGORY**



A detailed Benefit-Cost Analysis is included as an appendix to this narrative for reference and review. The appendix and supporting spreadsheet may be found online at: <https://www.eastmoline.com/408/RAISE-Grant>.

**TABLE 5: BENEFIT-COST SUMMARY IN 2020 DOLLARS**

Type of Impact	Benefit	Undiscounted Benefit	Value @ 7% Discount
Livability	Increased Property Value	\$ 4,821,700	\$ 2,806,273
	Health Benefits from Walking/Cycling	\$ 67,470,073	\$ 21,775,256
Economic Competitiveness	Vehicle Operating Costs (VMT Reduction)	\$ 12,694,659	\$ 4,097,068
Safety	Crash Reduction	\$ 1,040,247	\$ 420,370
	Sidewalk and Trail Improvements	\$ 34,149,349	\$ 11,021,343
Environmental	Reduced Emissions	\$ 2,210,776	\$ 1,114,435
	Reduced Noise & Congestion	\$ 3,666,463	\$ 1,183,312
<b>Total Benefits</b>		<b>\$ 126,053,267</b>	<b>\$ 42,418,058</b>

