

**Strategic Place-Based Planning for Urban Regeneration:
Lessons in Sustainability from Mid-American Cities
New Partners for Smart Growth Conference Kansas City, MO
February 9, 2013**

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THE CITY OF
DUBUQUE
Masterpiece on the Mississippi

**Dubuque, Iowa
Case Study**

Roy D. Buol, Mayor, City of Dubuque

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Where's Dubuque, Iowa?



2010 population
City: 59,000
County: 93,000

Racial mix:
92% white
4% black
4% other races

Population within 100 miles: 3 million

Dubuque: A Historical Perspective

196

Dubuque was a **strategic** industrial, wholesale, and retail center **dominating** a vast tri-state marketland, with **unemployment at 1.5%**.

\$98

“Dubuque’s plight is **becoming desperate**. It has for the past three years had the **highest unemployment rate** of Iowa’s largest cities. It has been **losing both industry and retail business** consistently for the past decade. Dubuque is **losing its people**. Recent estimates show **10% of the housing stock vacant or available for sale.**”

3

1983 Chamber of Commerce Publication

Dubuque: Problems & Challenges

“what happened?”

- Blighted downtown area with many vacant storefronts
- Bleak riverfront with dilapidated buildings, abandoned storage tanks and polluted ground
- Decaying street system and aging park system
- Lack of economic diversity and 4-lane connections
- Vacant and abandoned homes and buildings

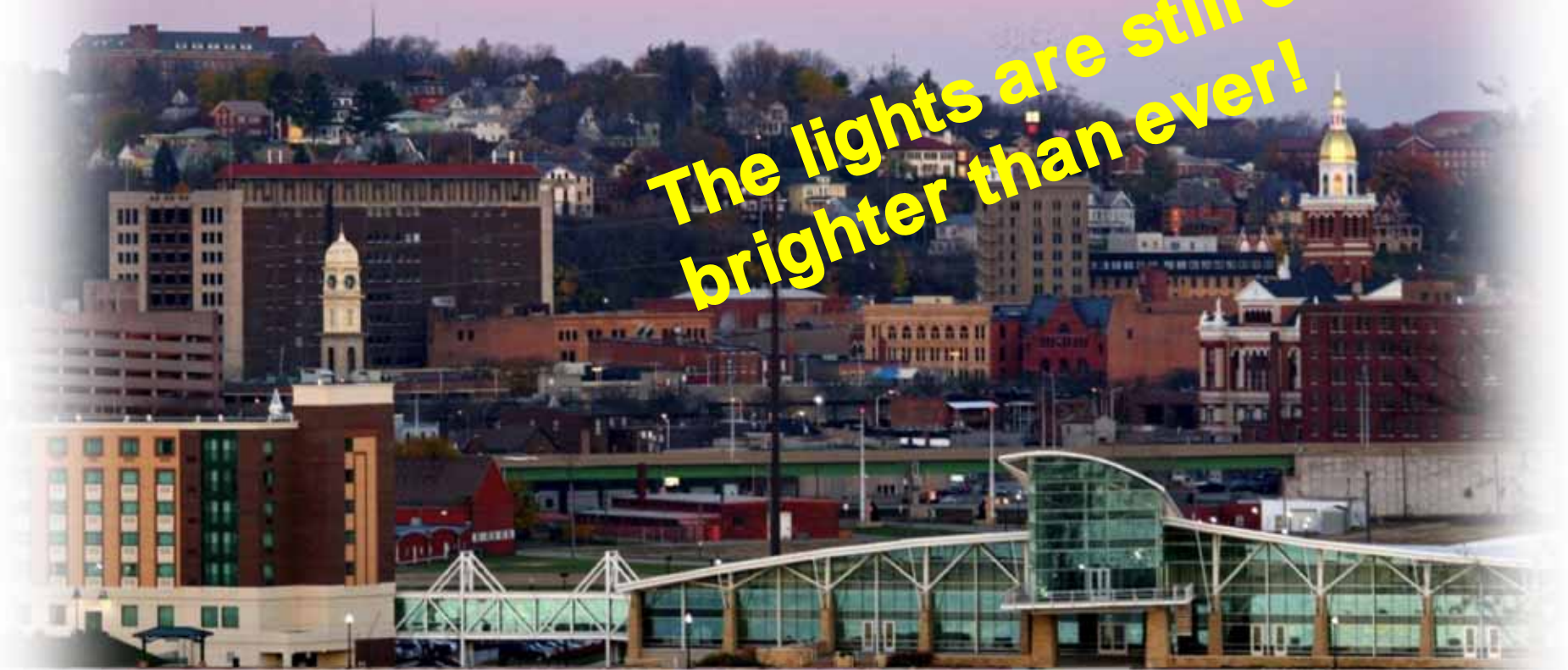
Dubuque: Problems & Challenges

*“last one out of Dubuque,
turn off the lights”*

- Dubuque averaged **8.9%** unemployment (4,000 people) through the 1980s
- In January, 1982, unemployment was **23%**
- Dubuque lost **7.8%** of its population from 1980 -1990
- The average value of a home fell **9%** from FY1985 to FY1986 and did not rise again until 1993

Where are we now?

*The lights are still on,
brighter than ever!*



SUSTAINABLE
CITY

- The Beginning
- Citizen Engagement from the Start
- An Organized & Collaborative Approach By and For Citizens
- Community Engagement is Occurring Across a Broad Spectrum
- Sustainable Dubuque is the City's Brand



How do we use our Sustainability strategy to involve and address our residents with the greatest challenges and needs?

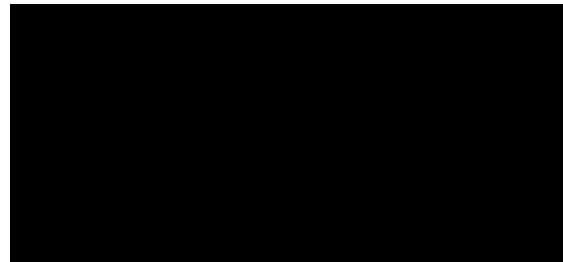
Project HOPE

Helping Our People Excel

- designed to serve as a catalyst with the community
- gathering service providers, education providers, employers, and job seekers
- to build bridges and establish rewarding, long-term employment



Community Health Center



Mixed use rehabbed warehouse in low income neighborhood:

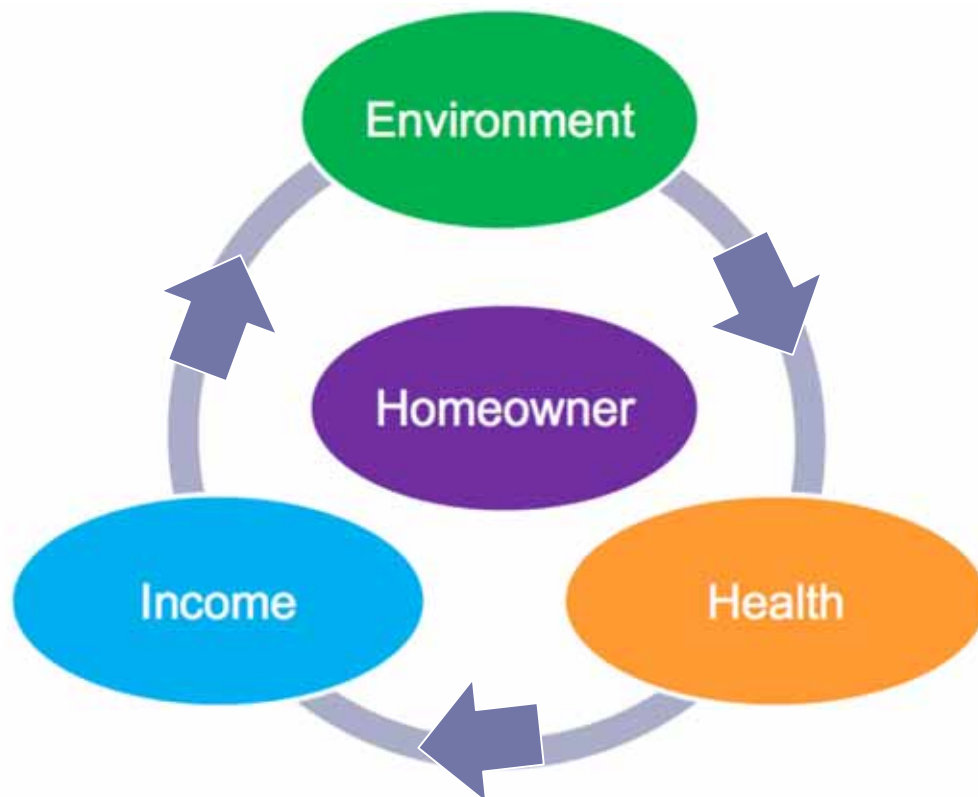
- Income-qualifying apartments with universal design
- Social Services onsite
- Medical/dental services for uninsured and underinsured

Health care is open to Tri-State area!

Green & Healthy Homes

Home – Family – Environment

- Assessments and Interventions
- Transforming Lives



- ❖ Healthier Families
- ❖ Healthier Neighborhoods
- ❖ Healthier Communities

Multicultural Family Center

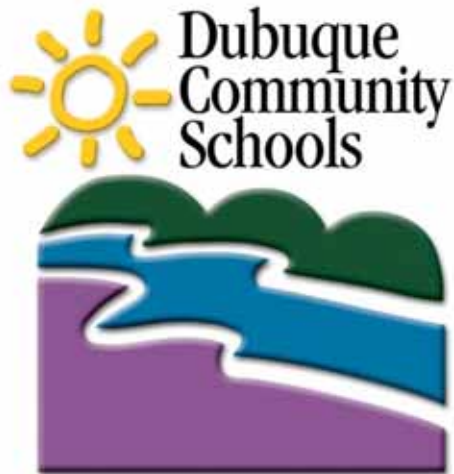
Nonprofit 501c(3) Board of Directors with City rep: fundraising for annual operations -- events, grants, and private donations

City of Dubuque: funds 1 FT and 3 PT staff, facility, utilities, and custodial services

building unity out of diversity



New Downtown School



Learning · Leading · Living



Completed in 2006

From 50% turnover a year to an arts magnet school with a waiting list

City provided **\$250,000** for a neighborhood resource center inside and public playground equipment outside

Serves our lowest income and highest minority neighborhoods

HEART Program

Housing Education and Rehabilitation Training
Helping at-risk students & 1st time homeowners
in our lowest income and highest minority areas



Before



After



Bee Branch Creek Restoration



Serves our lowest income and highest minority neighborhoods

Protects 1,155 properties from flood damage

Improves water quality and controls storm water

Educational resource and community attraction

Lessons Learned

Successful initiatives focus on:

- Planning
- Developing Partnerships
- Community Engagement
- Sustainability



Lessons Learned

International Livable
Communities Awards

LivCom

2010

3rd Place Finalist
Gold-Standard Community



For a viable, livable and equitable community, initiatives must address:

- **Economic Prosperity**
- **Environmental Integrity**
- **Social/Cultural Vibrancy**

