

# Summary Report

## Iron County Regional Trail

February 2, 2017

### Iron County Regional Trail Community Design Charrette

In Collaboration with:

Hurley Public Schools  
Iron County Regional Trail Committee  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
**Office for Coastal Management**  
UW-Extension Community Vitality + Placemaking Team  
UW-Extension Iron County  
Wisconsin Coastal Management Program Iron County

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 WISCONSIN COASTAL  
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Summary Report Prepared by:



Community Vitality + Placemaking Team



## Design Wisconsin Team

A research-based approach to community placemaking



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## Overview

In 2016, Iron County Wisconsin was awarded a Wisconsin Coastal Management Program Grant to develop

“...a citizenry much more connected to and engaged in the appreciation and protection of the community’s riverine resources. Towards that end, project outcomes include the development of new trailhead parks on the East and West branches of the Montreal River...to create the community and political enthusiasm and support for this broad aspiration, it is agreed that a visionary design for the trailheads and trail must be created.”

-Wisconsin Coastal Management Program Grant Application 2016.

Part of the proposal included a community design charrette in order to develop a shared vision for the trailhead designs. On October 4-5, 2016, a multi-disciplinary team of University of Wisconsin-Extension educators along with 7 local high school students facilitated a day-long community charrette that generated a shared “vision sketch” along with hand-drawn illustrations of future trailheads. The vision sketch process captured the hopes and concerns expressed by key stakeholders that directly informed the design process. The results were presented to the community October 5, 2016. The following text provides an overview of the charrette process as well as the outcomes.

## Process

The charrette is an intense planning and design process that features a variety of community engagement and planning activities to develop alternatives quickly. In this particular case, the process began with site visit at 9:00 AM and ended that evening at 7:00 PM with a final presentation. The schedule of activities are listed below.

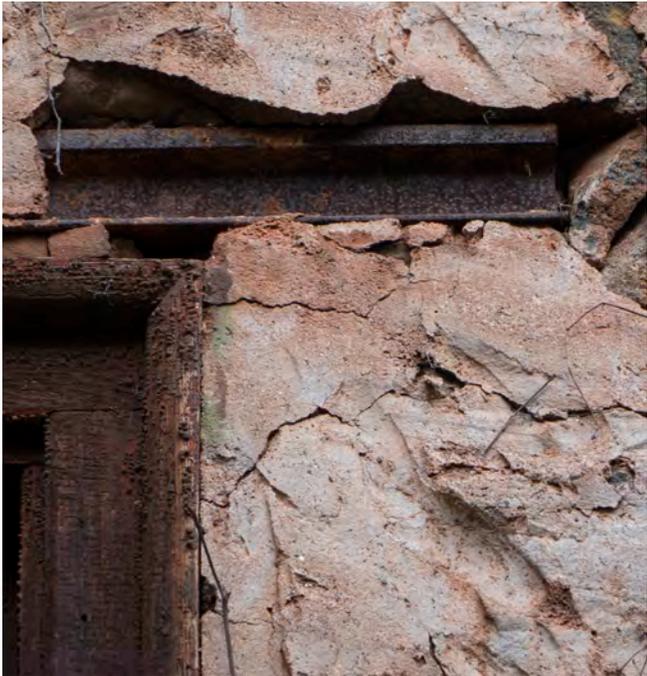
- 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM: Tour of trailhead sites
- 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM: Visioning workshop with stakeholders
- 2:30 PM - 6:30 PM: Team produces illustrations and presentation materials
- 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM: Team presents to community

Following the charrette, Team members contributed narrative content to provide further detail to the illustrations presented. The following text includes both the illustrations as well as notes describing each.



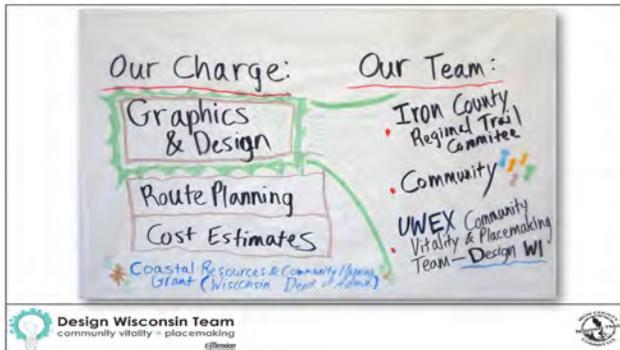
## Introduction

This opening slide is used to “set the stage” for the rest of the presentation. The image of the structure was found on the Iron County Historical Society website and captures the architectural essence that represents the culture of the area. This mine head building style could be used to inspire the design of pavilions and shelters, signs, and other built trailhead elements.



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## Our Charge, Our Team

The purpose of this slide is to orientate folks around the planning and design process identified in the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program Grant. As discussed in the "overview" section of this document, the University of Wisconsin-Extension's involvement is only one piece of a much larger puzzle.

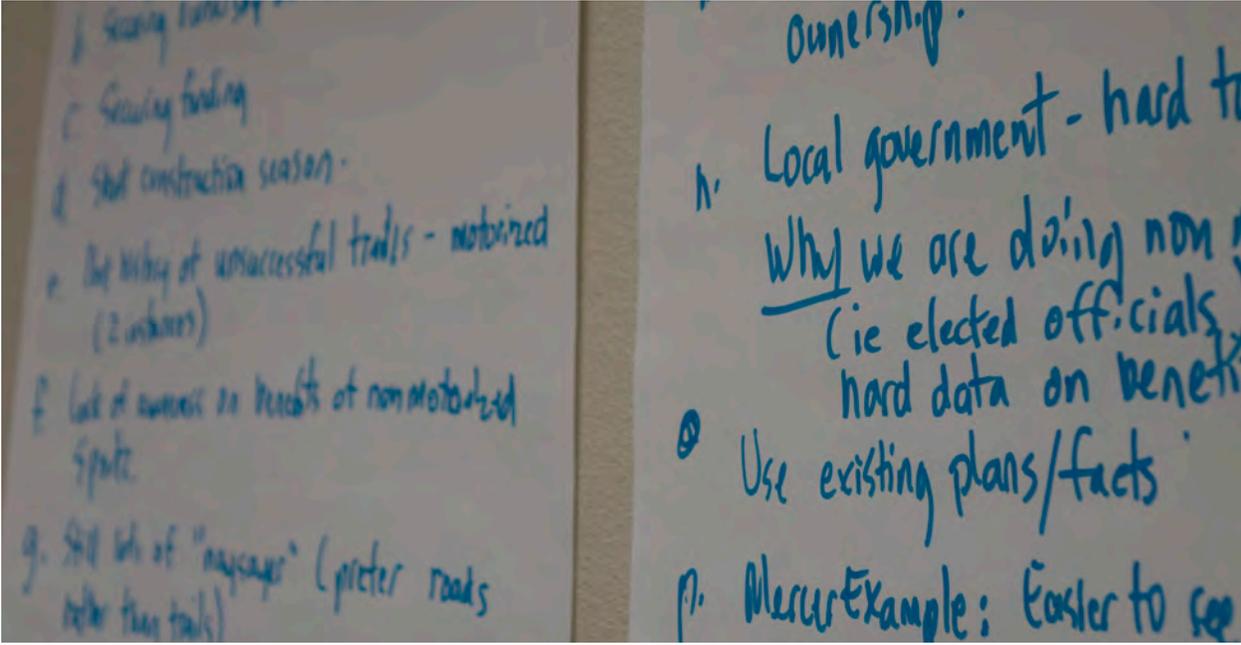




### Our Process

This slide illustrates the specific activities that led up to the presentation as well as the mobilization that needs to occur in order to realize the shared vision. The activities included a visioning session in which community stakeholders shared their hopes for the trailheads. Next, the Team developed those hopes for the future into a series of illustrations to present to the community.

Soon after the presentation, the Iron County Regional Committee met to prepare trail route options. The Committee is currently contacting the necessary partners of the grant's ad-hoc committee that will outline title search bids. The ad-hoc committee includes representation from Iron County Forestry, Trail Committee, White Thunder Riders (snowmobiles), ATVs, and Hurley/Montreal elected leaders.



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### Building Bridges ...

- ... To hidden natural features
- ... To more options for active lifestyles
- ... To new visitors and residents
- ... To safe places for youth and family recreation
- ... To economic vitality
- ... Between the present and the past
- ... Between generations
- ... Between motorized and non-motorized recreation
- ... Between trail users and information
- ... Between states

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## Building Bridges

There are numerous reasons why the Iron County Regional Trail is a significant asset to the region.





### Site Tour



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## Site Tour

The Team toured several potential trailhead sites in hopes of identifying prioritizing design opportunities.



- Trestle Bridge Park: This site is strategically located near the center of town and features excellent multi-modal access to the trail and the water. Existing automotive traffic limits the potential for the space beneath the bridge. The Team suggests revisiting the traffic patterns to explore the potential development of a riverside park. Some suggestions would include:
  - Closing the underpass to automotive traffic to create a park space along the river.
  - Acquiring flooded property adjacent to site to mitigate flooding of private property and expand park space near the downtown.
  - Developing a boardwalk or observation deck beneath the trestle to provide wheelchair access near the water.
- Cary Park: Although this site is a logical trail connection featuring existing park amenities, the Team felt that this site did not require a lot of attention at this time.
- Gile Park: The Team recognized the spectacular vistas provided by this location but believed its use to be primarily serving boaters, not trail users. Additional amenities for such users could be added, but motorized traffic in and around the landing may limit the site's potential as a trailhead.
- Montreal Ski Trailhead: Although this site had many of the physical and cultural amenities in place to be a significant trailhead, the Team believed that it did not warrant additional development at this time.
- Montreal City Hall Park: This site is strategically located as a westward anchor of the regional trail with access to a variety of existing amenities and enough land to be developed as a significant regional park.



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## Visioning

A "vision is defined as a description of a desired end-state. When developed by the community, vision statements are a powerful guide for what the community would like to have in place some day. In a two-hour workshop, an assembly of community representatives described their desires for the future for the community, the corridor and the trailheads.

The participants developed a rich Vision Sketch which was organized around several themes and categories. The Community Vitality and Placemaking (CVP) Team facilitated this workshop, and has compiled the input by the community. An attempt was made to use the actual words of the participants in order to capture the values and meaning behind the ideas. Please refer to the Vision Sketch section of this document for more detail.





## Designing



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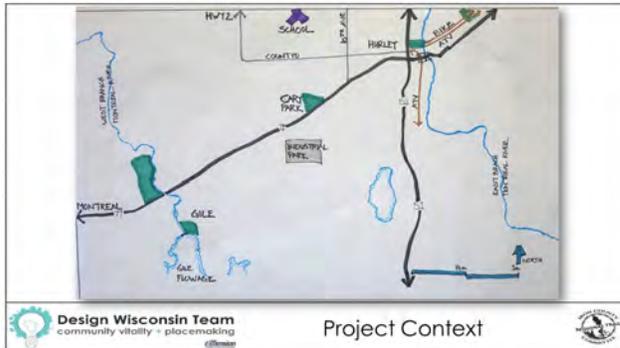
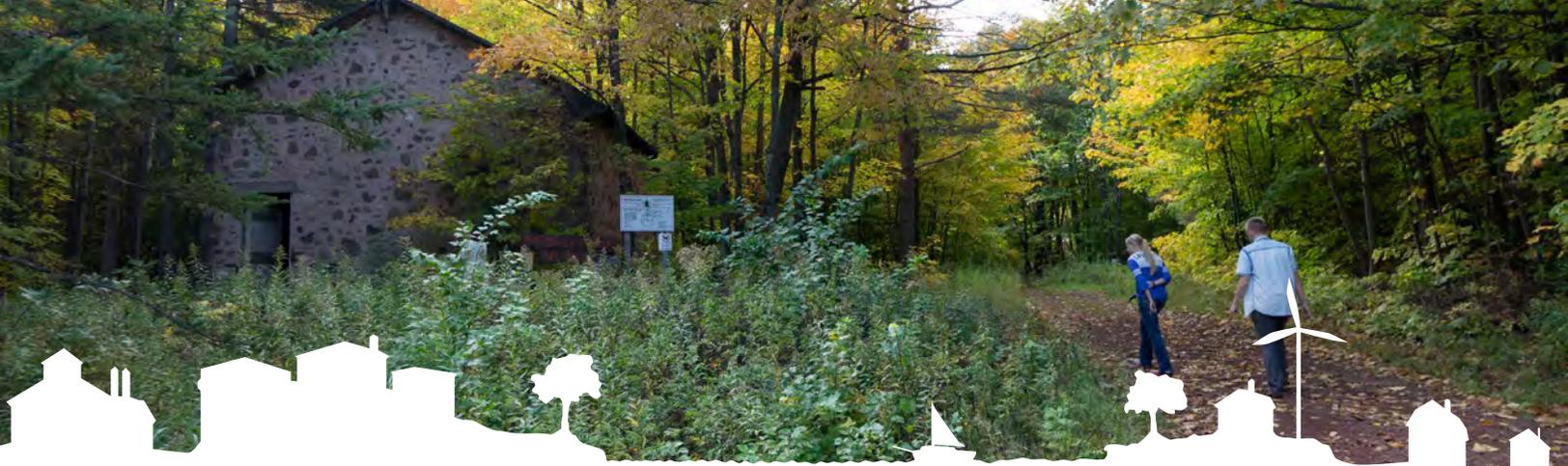
## Designing

The Team took the outcomes from the Vision Sketch and developed design alternatives that emphasized the region's history, culture, and ecology. Students worked side-by-side with professionals to develop 2 new trailhead parks along with design details for way-finding and playgrounds.



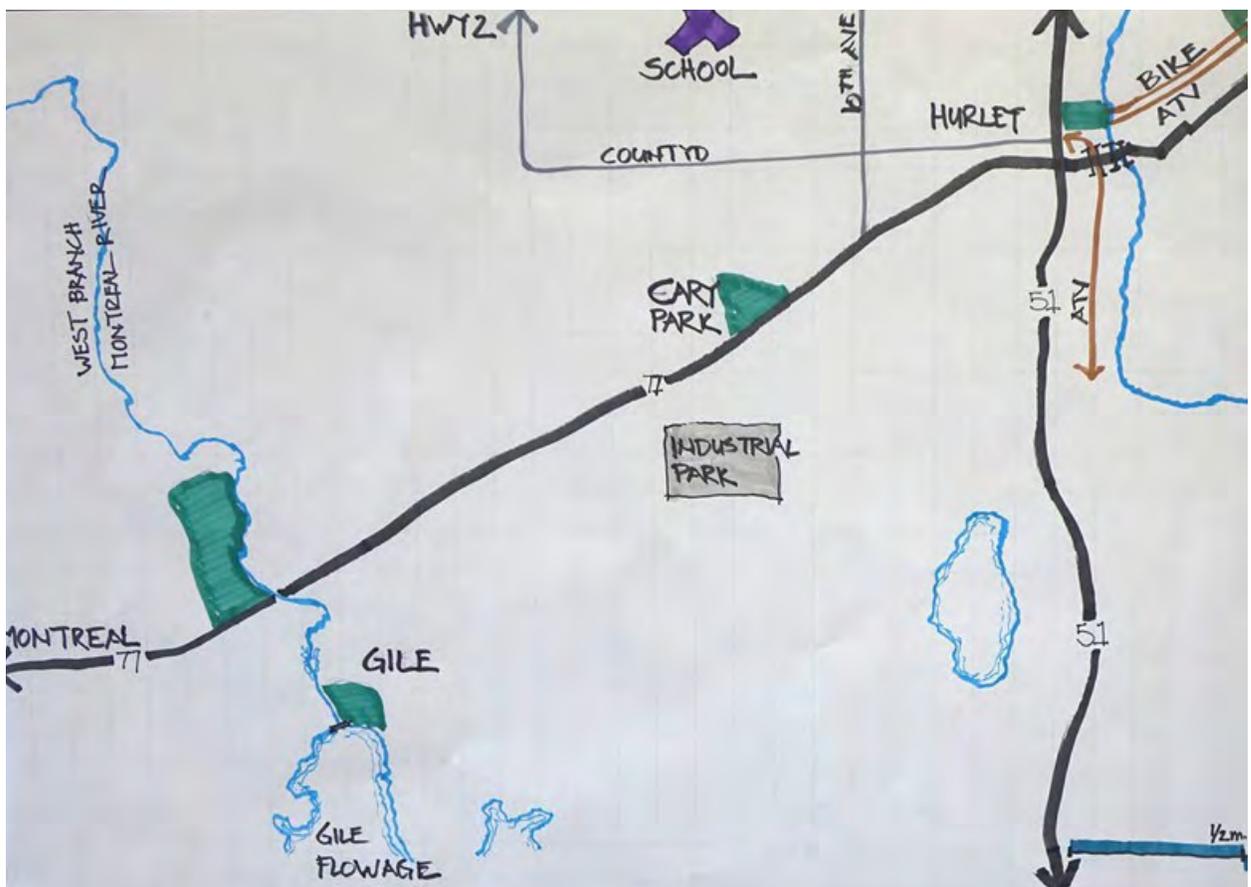
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## Project Context

Community stakeholders were uncertain as to which sites would serve as ideal trailheads. After touring all of the potential locations, the Team was able to arrive at consensus and focus their attention on the Trestle Park as the "Hurley Trailhead" and Montreal City Hall Park as the "Montreal Trailhead".





## Hurley Trailhead Site Concept

This site was chosen for its strategic location near the downtown as well as its multi-modal access. The design concept features a new parking area to service both trails as well as a new pavilion, fire-pit area, and playground.

In order to provide for safe on-grade street crossings to the site, consider tall built

features (reminiscent of the mine head structure) to catch drivers' eyes and identify the entry end of the site (see slide 11).

Because motorized traffic currently passes beneath the bridge, the site is limited as a non-motorized connection to the water and trail from the downtown. If the community were to consider closing off the road to motorized traffic below and acquiring flooded property the south, a new city park space could be developed.



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## Montreal Trailhead Site Concept

This site serves as the western anchor of the trail. Existing amenities already provide basic outdoor recreation. The design concept would transform the site into a regional park in which many different activities would occur (i.e. dog park, ball diamonds, walking trails, sand volleyball, skate park, playground, picnic pavilions, and expanded parking).

New trail access from the northeastern corner of the site would make use of an existing bridge and bring the users south along the river into the site. Some adaptations to existing vehicular patterns in and around the water treatment area would probably be necessary as well as some landscaping.

Significant to the design is a large enclosed multi-purpose pavilion located at the southwest corner of the site. This pavilion would serve as a year-round location for people of all ages (especially the youth) to gather. Consider a heavy timber structure with lots of windows to provide visibility from the street as well as generating passive solar energy in the winter. Masonry features (perhaps a stone hearth at the center) could serve as a heat sink during the winter months. Operable vents and removable doors/walls could open up the structure during the summer.



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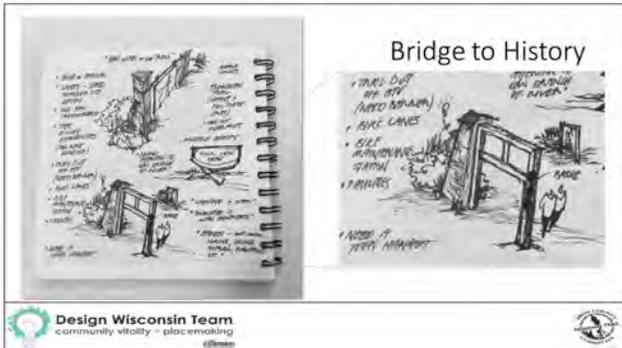
Iron County Regional Trail



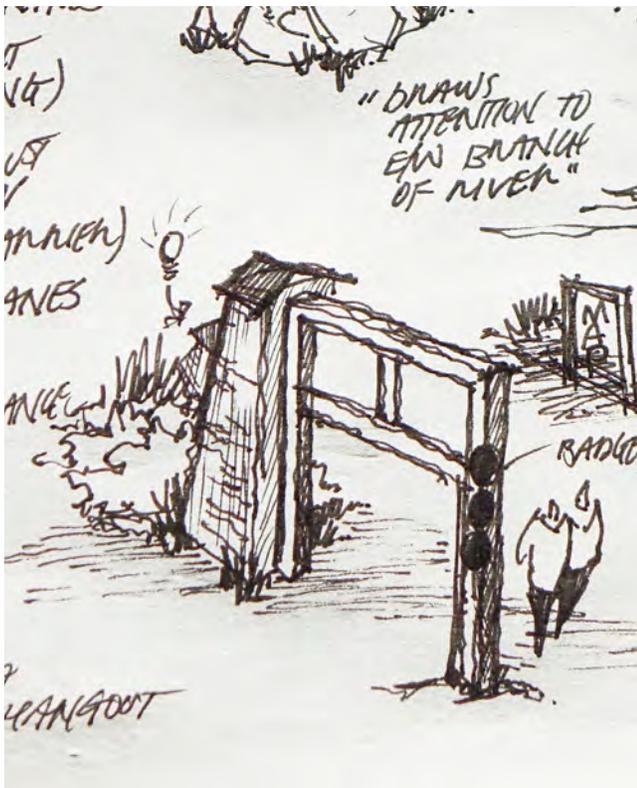


## Bridge to History

Design details at strategic locations can serve as way-finding elements as well as public art. When locating the entry into a site, consider tall built objects that can draw users in or provide direction. These way-finding elements could be built out of existing architectural relics or be built to reflect the architectural and cultural history of the area. These objects could offer users information about the trail, the community, and the ecology.



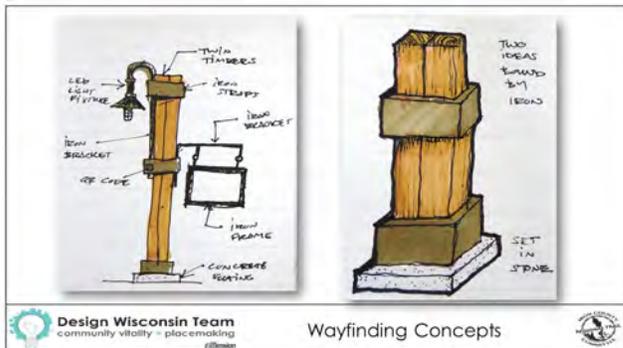
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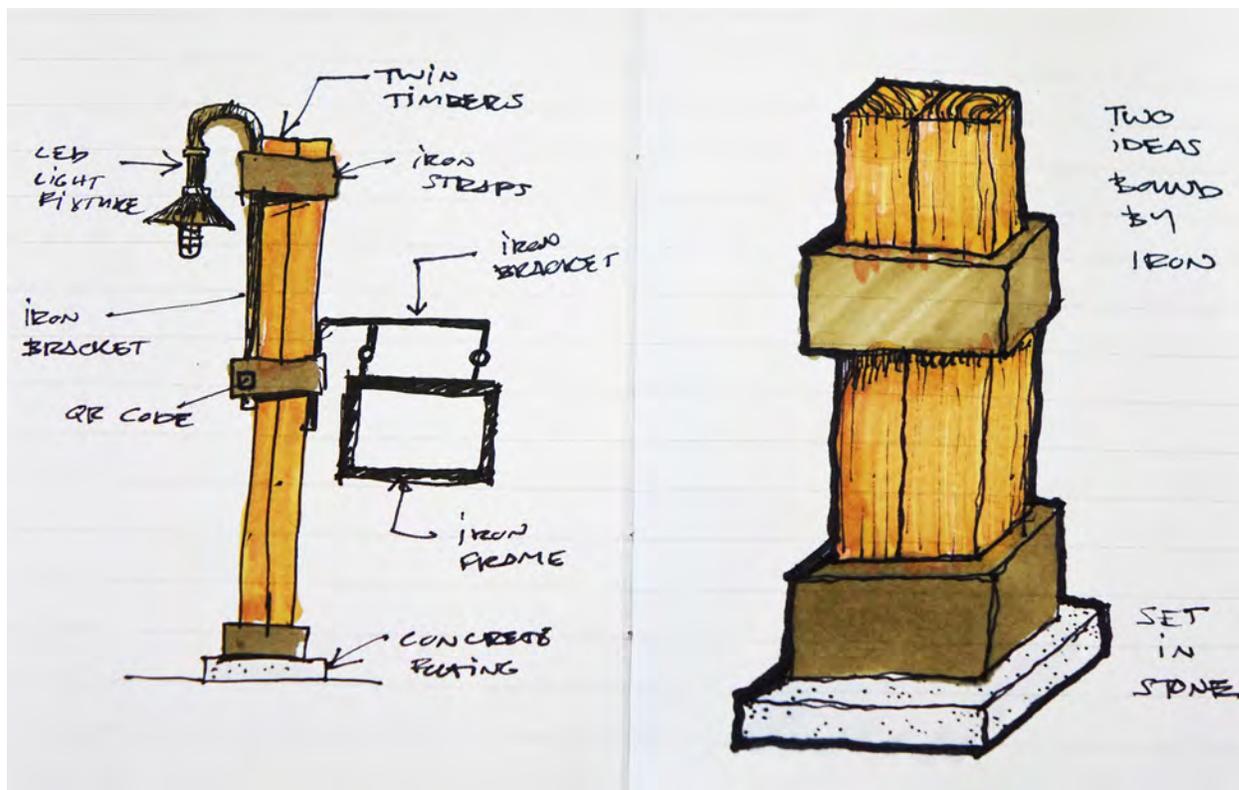


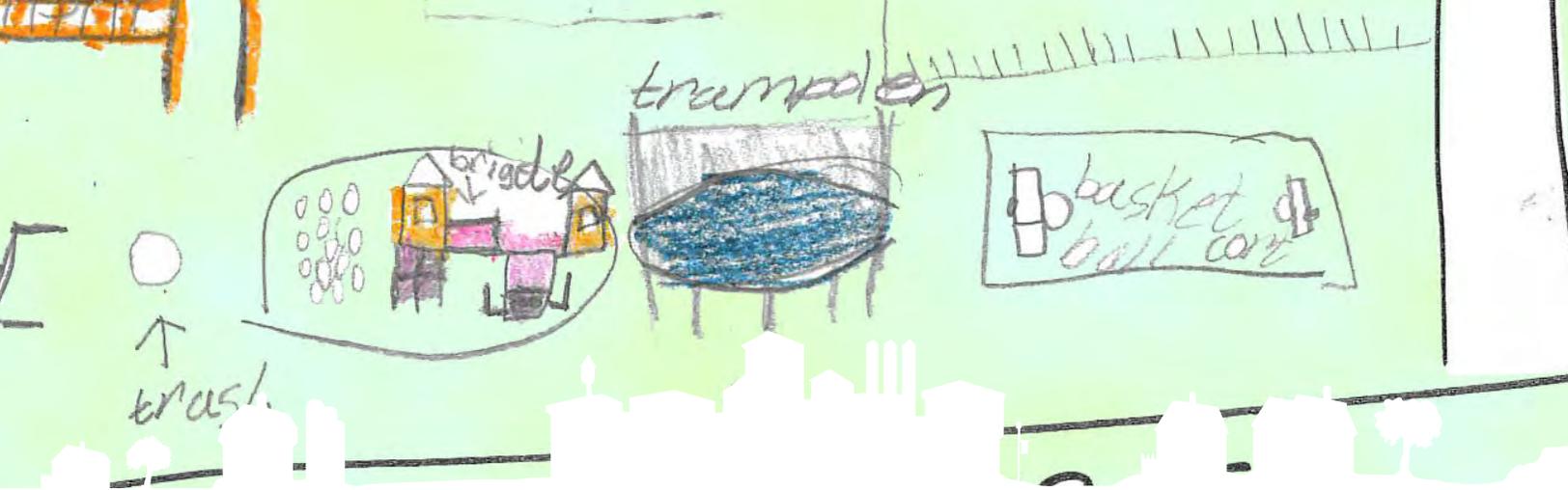
## Way-finding Concepts

This slide provides further illustrations on how one might incorporate local materials and local history into a design. Heavy timbers bound together by iron straps convey not only the aesthetic of the region, but the history as well. Timber and iron shaped the landscape and the communities who within.



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Wayfinding Concepts





## Youth-Designed Playground Concept

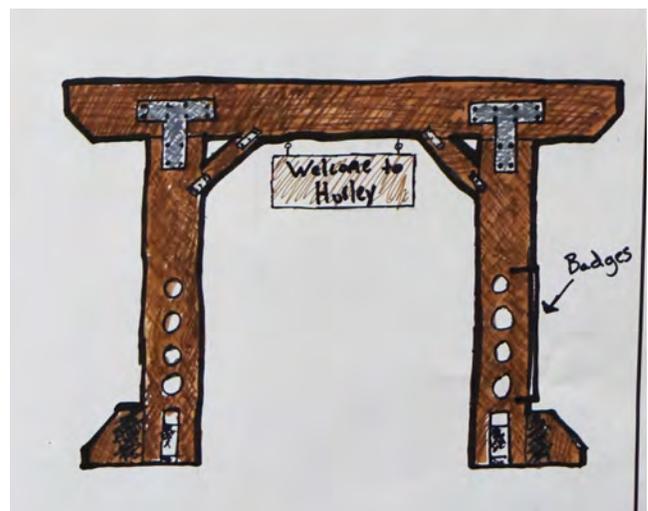
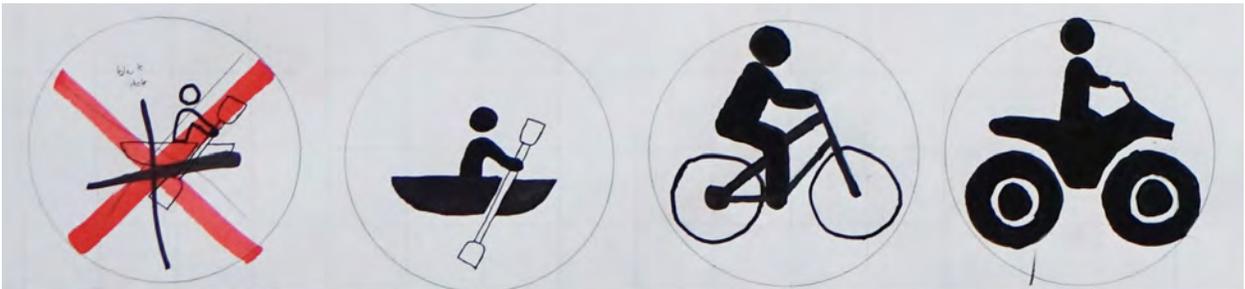
Prior to the charrette, University of Wisconsin-Extension Youth Development Educator, Neil Klemme, worked with elementary school students to generate ideas for the trailheads. Those students provided the Team with illustrations of young people's values. The student Team members developed playground equipment based on those illustrations.





## Youth-Designed Trailhead Details

The student Team members developed a trailhead entry "gate" along with informational "badges". The trailhead gates would be located at strategic locations in which users would be entering the trail or transitioning into a different area of the trail. Informational badges at each gate would signify the specific activities that occur along that branch of the trail.





## Sign Up Sheet

The final slide of the presentation was a call for volunteerism. Following the presentation, 12 new volunteers signed up to help realize the community's shared vision.





## Vision Sketch

A "Vision" is defined as a description of a desired end-state. When developed by the community, vision statements are a powerful guide for what the community would like to have in place some day. The vision component in planning is the community's description of their desires for the future.

In order to begin the visioning process for the Iron County Regional Trailhead, an assembly of community members participated in a two-hour workshop setting. They were first asked to describe both the assets and the challenges associated with this initiative. This discussion was important to help frame and inform the visioning exercise. These assets are community strengths can be built on for the future. The challenges represent realistic concerns that should be considered or addressed in future planning. The assets and challenges are listed in Sections 2 and 3, respectively.

The primary output from the visioning exercise are the vision ideas that were prompted by four questions to the participants, including:

- What are your hopes for features, facilities, character and/or activities at the trailhead sites?
- What do you want to see in place some day along this corridor or at the trailhead?
- What would a successful project look like from your perspective?
- What is your vision or your description of your desires for this corridor and trailhead?

The Community Vitality and Placemaking (CVP) Team facilitated this workshop, and has compiled the input by the community. An attempt was made to use the actual words of the participants in order to capture the values and meaning behind the ideas. The participants helped organize the individual vision ideas into themes and categories to make the "Vision Sketch" more understandable and usable. There was general consensus that these categories do represent the key functions of Hurley's community vision for the trailhead, corridor and related items. However, the extent of agreement on each of the ideas was not tested. A potential follow-up activity is to further gauge the extent of agreement on each idea in this vision sketch and to further refine this vision.





## Section 1: Hopes and Vision Ideas

*"The Hurley area will have in place some day..."*

- **Celebration of our cultural and natural heritage and our assets**
  - A showcase for our waterfalls, snow, small town atmosphere, etc.
  - Results that build on our long asset list (See Section 2)
  - Results that build on our lifestyle
  - A developed "Regional Connections Theme", such as :
    - 4 trestles
    - Ironwood Depot Museum - connections to the railroad
  - A developed, unique architectural theme that is consistent with Ironwood's Iron Belle)
  - A reflection of our history of "ironwood," historical museum, mining and logging
  - Vegetation restoration along our trails
- **Connections and accessibility**
  - A trail system that everybody feels they own and can easily access.
  - Trail access or a spur to the K-12 Hurley School.
  - Trail access to school, rivers, etc.
  - Trail access so kids can ride bikes to school
  - Connections to "all the green" on the Iron County map
  - Connections to "green areas"
  - Accentuated access to our rivers, our waterways, connecting the two branches of the Montreal River
  - A "main spine trail" including Hurley/Montreal E-W and Mercer S
  - Spurs off "Main Spine"
  - Identified kayak launches and potential along rivers
  - Links between kayaking and other trail uses.





- **Safe places for families**
  - A safe, family-friendly trail system (e.g., safe crossing, safe access, wide, etc.)
  - A system where little kids feel safe (e.g., good lighting, nothing hidden, open, etc.)
  - Separation from motorists

- **Trailhead features**

*(This section contains multiple perspectives, with some overlap, on desired trailhead features)*

- These Trailhead Features- One Perspective:
  - Parking for 8-10 cars
  - Historical signs (graphics/history)
  - Public art
  - Bike tuning station
  - Restrooms
  - Drinking water
  - Trash cans
  - Kiosk (with maps/brochures)
- These Trailhead Features-One Perspective
  - Pavilion
  - Open shelter
  - Electricity
  - Kitchen
- These Trailhead Characteristics and Features as Identified by the Youth Perspective:
  - Place to hang out
  - Place to study
  - Very public place and open
  - A welcoming gathering place





- Definitely WIFI
- Park benches and picnic tables
- These Specific Features for Seniors:
  - Senior playgrounds (ideas from Europe).
  - Seniors to be active while watching kids.
  - Specific senior playground equipment (see Bluff Valley Park in Bessemer) Like "Hurley's Depot" - could see this downtown and Montreal City Hall.
- Other Suggestions for Designers to Consider:
  - Very visible path
  - Information center
  - Play area
  - Brown stone
  - Picnic area
  - Covered facility (pavilion)
  - Two developed trailheads at an East and West location with a pavilion, parking and facilities at each.
  - A mix of paved and non-paved trails
  - New "bike lanes"
  - A vegetative area between motor and non-motorized trails.
  - A trailhead that has WIFI service
  - Trailhead parking that is trailer friendly
  - Similar trailhead character as the Iron Belle trailhead (i.e., should complement the Iron Belle)
  - Suggested Feature: An overlook deck on East Branch/Trestle Park (with an accentuated view with cleared branches)
  - Wooded hiking trails off the main trail (i.e. with loops, foot trails, interpretive signs)





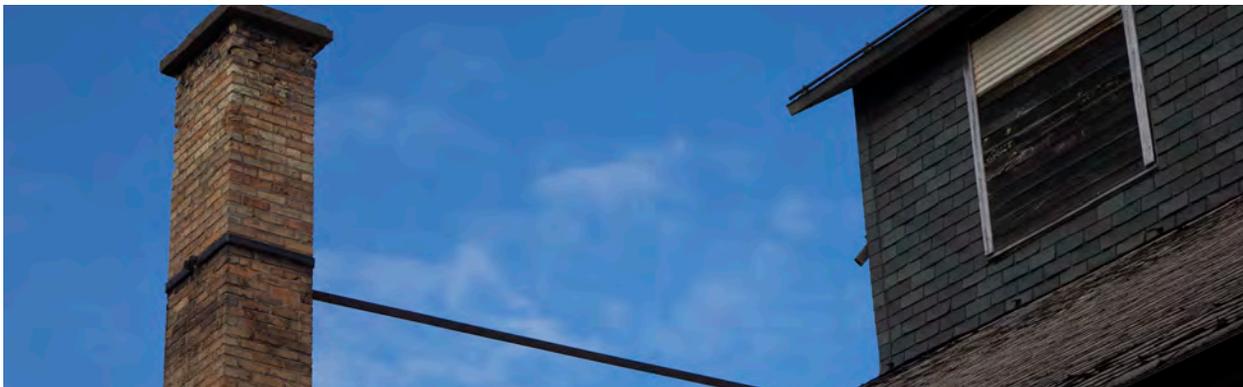
- Appropriate places for people of all ages
  - Activity areas that go “beyond bars”
  - Additional recreation ideas for trailhead – so that many will want to hang out there (e.g. tables, basketball, dog park, etc.)
  - A “community center” or community pool
  - Additional attractions to help the younger generation staying in Hurley area (i.e., no more population decline)
- Economic development and growth
  - Created new revenue for Hurley
  - Attractions for new businesses and retaining of people living here now.
  - More people working from home
  - Lessons learned from Houghton/Marquette – we will have lifted up our community college
  - New jobs here and celebration of our low housing costs
  - Attractions for the kind of worker to help build our economy (e.g., professionals)
  - A new brand as a “location neutral” community with opportunities for new entrepreneurs (e.g., Wakefield Kayak)
- Attractions for and promotion of a healthy active lifestyle
  - A system that helps “health promotion”
  - Healthy amenities for our local people which showcases our community as a great place to live.
  - More active lifestyle (like trails)
- Promotion, marketing, guides and maps
  - Good directions to trails and maps of trails
  - A system that enhances and draws attention to both E and W branches of the Montreal River
  - Advertising - to draw people to our area
  - Promotion for kayaking, hunting, trails, other.
  - Self-guided trails (nature and otherwise), signage and way-finding
  - Drivers that see the trailhead along 51 as a real asset
  - An Iron County Regional map for non-motorized trail use
- Co-existence between the motorized and non-motorized public
  - A redeveloped railroad bridge near City of Montreal Hall honoring cooperation between the motorized and non-motorized public.



## Section 2: Assets

Prior to the visioning exercise, participants identified community assets and strengths that are associated with the trailhead initiative. These have been organized into themes and categories. The extent of agreement was not tested. These ideas provide prompts and clues for the development of a vision sketch.

- **Partnerships/People/Engagement/Readiness**
  - Strong regional collaboration
  - Having a grant as a framework and as a tool (helps for future grants)
  - Institutionalized process with grant, local government buy-in, with grant administration.
  - Project has good cooperation with the motorized trail groups (maintain!) (this is exceptional)
  - Local citizens - potential support (see "Bridge the Gap" where \$50,000 was raised)
  - Youth involvement - very exciting!
  - All ages excited for trail, enthusiastic, buying bikes, older folks engaged
- **Heritage/Culture**
  - We have local historical markers
  - Established mining history
  - Proximity to Flambeau Trail (historical fur trade trail)
  - Site of the oldest marathon in Wisconsin - Paavo Nurmi
  - County is State Heritage Area - existing signage in place; also a framework form a "development zone"
  - Several places on National Historic Register





- **Natural Resources/Land/Beauty**
  - Montreal River - East and West Branches
  - Lots of public land
  - Gile Flowage
  - Intangibles: pristine beauty
  - Proximity to the "greatest" Great Lake
  - Waterfalls, natural beauty, safe
- **Trails/Corridors/Existing**
  - Have an abandoned RR ROW (Canadian National)
  - Have a motorized trail network
  - Pre-existing trail half way to Montreal (to Curry Park)
  - Trestles, bridge, RR depot (RR here b/c mining and logging); each trail has special/similar character
  - Ricelli Park
- **Seasons/Snow**
  - 4 seasons with lots of activity
  - Snow is a big asset
- **Economic Development/Growth**
  - Established population base, established infrastructure
  - Low housing costs
- **Connections**
  - Connecting on to the Michigan Trail





## Section 3: Challenges

Prior to the visioning exercise, participants identified challenges or concerns associated with the trailhead initiative. These have been organized into themes and categories. The extent of agreement was not tested. These ideas provide prompts and clues for the development of a vision sketch.

- **Partnerships/People/Engagement**
  - Still lots of “naysayers” (prefer roads rather than trails)
  - Lack of manpower
  - Perhaps lack of interest from younger generation
  - Potential conflicts with private land ownership
  - Local government - hard to convince them why we are doing non-motorized trails (e.g., elected officials) Hard to produce hard data on benefits
  - Keeping/maintain cooperation of motorized public **Economic Development/Growth/Socioeconomics**
    - Lower socio-economic demographic
    - Aging population
    - Lack of jobs and lack of workers in some areas (training needs)
- **Financing/Funding**
  - Securing ownership of the trail corridor
  - Securing funding
  - Funding for maintenance after trail is built
- **Safe Places for Families**
  - Safety - close proximity to motorized at trailhead; dust; noise
  - Kids can't ride bikes to school (road is too narrow)
- **Promotion/Marketing/Awareness**
  - Lack of awareness of benefits of non-motorized sports
  - Using existing plans/facts
  - Mercer example: easier to see motorized
- **Seasons/Snow**
  - Short construction season
- **Trails/Existing/Corridors**
  - Past history of unsuccessful trails (2 motorized instances)





## Final Comments

The Design Wisconsin Team process provides a “glimpse” of a community’s shared vision for the future. The drawings represent a handful of ideas the Team Members believe could help the community realize their vision. Because of the fast-paced nature of the process, many ideas never made it to the drawings or were not developed enough to be included in this report. What the community chooses to do with the drawings and ideas is up to those who have the time, talent, and passion to create positive change in their community.

## Team Members

Myles Alexander, UW-Extension Onieda County CRD Educator  
Will Andresen, UW-Extension Interim Regional Director  
Will Cronin, UW-Extension Crawford County CRD Educator  
Steve Grabow, UW-Extension Professor Emeritus  
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Catherine Techtmann, UW-Extension Environmental Outdoor Specialist



## Contact

For more information about the University of Wisconsin-Extension Community Vitality + Placemaking Team and the Wisconsin Design Team program, please contact:

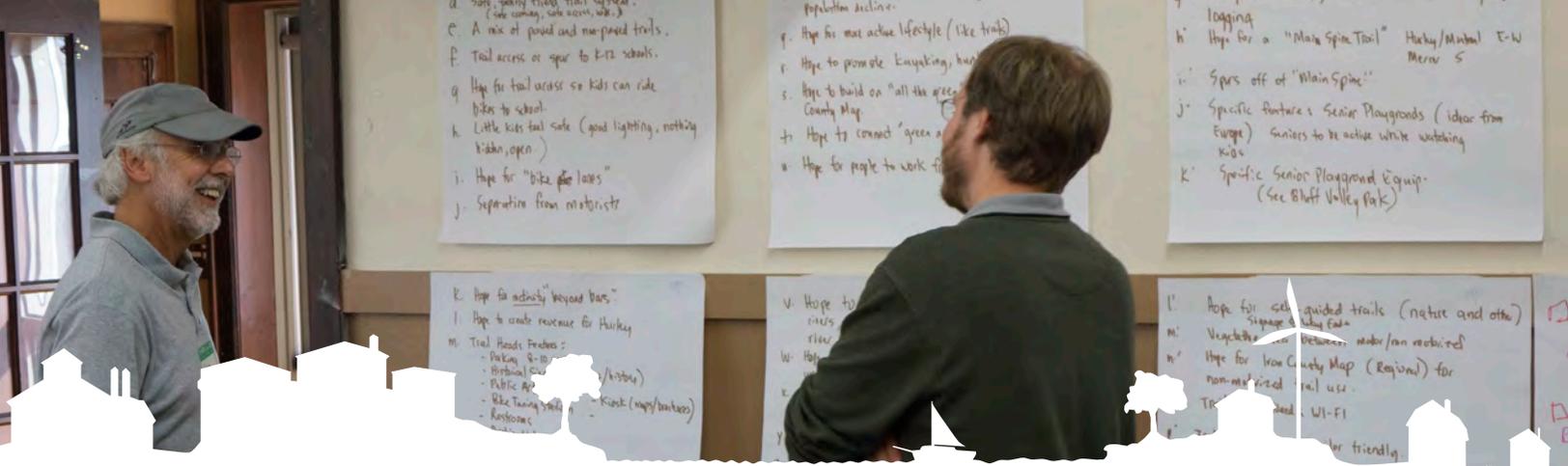
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Or go to our website at:  
<http://blogs.ces.uwex.edu/community/principles-of-community-vitality/>

Or find us on Facebook at "Design Wisconsin Team"





## The University of Wisconsin-Extension

University of Wisconsin-Extension provides statewide access to university resources and research so the people of Wisconsin can learn, grow and succeed at all stages of life. UW-Extension carries out this tradition of the Wisconsin Idea – extending the boundaries of the university to the boundaries of the state – through its four divisions of continuing education, cooperative extension, business and entrepreneurship, and broadcast and media innovations.

### Cooperative Extension

#### Who We Are

With an office in each Wisconsin county, Cooperative Extension develops practical educational programs tailored to local needs and based on university knowledge and research. We deliver our expertise to the public, addressing a wide range of needs to people, plants and animals, in both urban and rural areas of the states.

#### What We Do

We teach, learn, lead and serve, connecting people with the University of Wisconsin, and engaging with them in transforming lives and communities.



### The Wisconsin Idea

*"The University of Wisconsin's direct contributions to the state: to the government in the forms of serving in office, offering advice about public policy, providing information and exercising technical skill, and to the citizens in the forms of doing research directed at solving problems that are important to the state and conducting outreach activities."*

– Jack Stark,

*"The Wisconsin Idea: The University's Service to the State"*, p.1