



# Cedar Rapids Workforce Retention Project

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*The Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities (IISC) is a program that was created in 2009 through the School of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Iowa. The program helps create more sustainable communities by partnering with Iowa's local communities to identify projects that may enhance various quality of life issues and build towards a more sustainable future. The purpose of IISC is to "apply the talent and knowledge of the students and faculty of the University of Iowa to develop plans and initiatives that will enable Iowa's small towns and cities to enhance the sustainability of their communities". We would like to thank the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities for enabling us to gain valuable professional experience by facilitating our work with the City of Cedar Rapids.*



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# Executive Summary

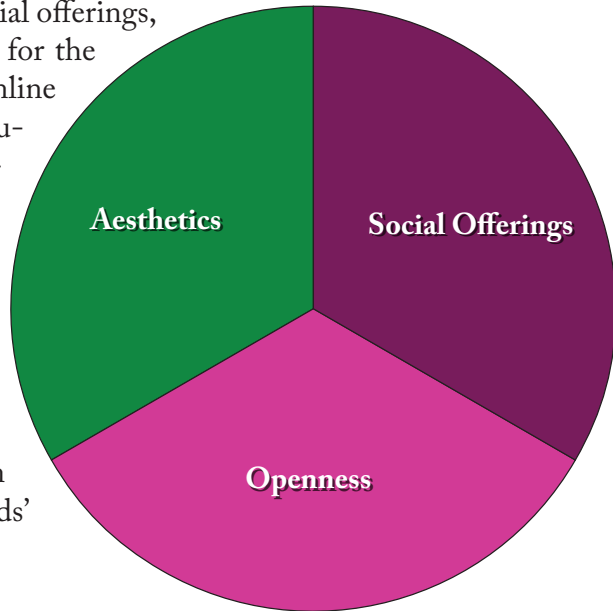
City leaders and large employers of the City of Cedar Rapids are facing difficulties in attracting and retaining a 25 – 40 year old workforce. A strong 25 – 40 year old workforce ensures economic sustainability, contributes to city leadership in later years, and is key to population growth for Midwestern cities. National population changes of 25 – 40 year old workers show that the South and West regions of the country are experiencing a steady growth in the population of this workforce group while the Midwest and Northeast regions of the country have had dramatic decreases in this population, especially in rural areas. Leaders in Cedar Rapids believe that these population trends are affected by quality of life factors such as a lack of a vibrant nightlife, lack of quality housing, shopping centers that appeal to the 25 – 40 year old demographic, and other amenities that influence where 25 – 40 year olds choose to live. The purpose of this project is to identify the key causes for outward migration of 25 – 40 year olds by collecting data from Cedar Rapids citizens and workers. This project focused on the 25 – 40 year old age group, but did not exclude anybody. Through a data analysis of over 400 surveys, over 250 community activity sheets, and the input of a focus group, this project affirmed that the city of Cedar Rapids has significant problems with its' residents' perceptions of quality of life amenities that Cedar Rapids should provide.<sup>1</sup>

Before we conducted this research we needed to clarify and put into context how the local population trends in Cedar Rapids related to regional and national population trends. Otherwise it could be argued that Cedar Rapid's 25 – 40 year old population decline could be explained entirely by the factors affecting these broader population trends. The census data for Cedar Rapids shows that from 2000 to 2010, Cedar Rapids experienced a 3.2% loss in the population of 25 – 44 year olds, which is less than the national average of 3.6%. We also analyzed the industry size and composition of Cedar Rapids by age group to see if the population decline only affected certain industries. The industry analysis showed that, from 2002 to 2011, most industries in Cedar Rapids saw a decline in the proportion of workers in the 25 – 40 year old age group. Furthermore, the industrial analysis revealed that the decline in workers aged 25 – 40 was matched by an increase in the proportion of older workers. We also analyzed mobility data of workers aged 25 – 40 living or commuting to Cedar Rapids. From 2002 to 2011, data from US Census OnTheMap showed that Cedar Rapids experienced the greatest increase in young workers living outside the City when compared to other similarly sized cities in Iowa, suggesting that Cedar Rapids has a higher proportion of 25 – 40 year old workers commuting to work from outside the city than other similarly sized cities. Therefore we could conclude that the local trends in Cedar Rapids matched national population trends.

The foundation for the surveys we used comes from the “Soul of the Community” study conducted by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and Gallup. The Knight Foundation found that across 26 U.S. cities and over 45,000 United States residents, perceptions of ones' surroundings greatly influence decision-making about how attached a worker/resident is to their community. Strong perceptions related to key attachment drivers contribute to increased local gross domestic product (GDP) growth, and longevity of residency. The implication for Cedar Rapids is that if Cedar Rapids can improve perceptions related to community attachment, then improvements can be made to increase local GDP growth and workforce retention. To develop the survey, the

<sup>1</sup> John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Gallup. (2010). Why People Love Where They Live and Why It Matters: A National Perspective.

top three key community attachment drivers (social offerings, openness, and aesthetics) were used as the basis for the questions. The community survey was available online in English and in Spanish. Additionally, community-based data was collected by using a community activity sheet where people responded to open-ended questions about their willingness to live and work in Cedar Rapids. The third method of data collection used was two public focus groups. After understanding leading concerns presented by residents, we then conducted a short case study on three Midwestern cities similar in size and economy to Cedar Rapids in order to explore ideas for improving Cedar Rapids' quality of life for workers.



## Survey Results

The survey asked respondents to identify 3 priorities for the City of Cedar Rapids and to rate 16 statements related to Cedar Rapids. More than 10 % of respondents chose “better jobs”, “downtown growth & development”, and/or “shopping” as their priority investment for the City. The three statements receiving the highest ratings, or the best perceptions are: “Cedar Rapids is a good place for families with young children”, “There are many available parks, playgrounds, and trails in Cedar Rapids”, and “Cedar Rapids is a good place for older people”. The three statements receiving the lowest ratings, or the poorest perceptions are: “Cedar Rapids is a good place for gays and lesbians”, “Cedar Rapids is a good place to meet people”, and “Cedar Rapids has a vibrant nightlife.” The data was also analyzed by age groups and by education. Groups outside of the 25 – 40 year old age group have similar results to the overall analysis, the top three priorities remained the same along with highest and lowest ratings of perceptions.

## Focus Groups

Two public focus groups were conducted. Though we encouraged attendance by 25 – 40 year olds, the focus groups remained open to the public. Through a variety of methods, we were able to better understand survey results by asking focus group participants to explain their perceptions and reasoning for choosing certain priorities for Cedar Rapids, and confirming that survey results represented their own preferences. Some of the issues identified were: lack of unique housing especially in the downtown area, need for more diverse transportation modes, desire for more unique shops & neighborhoods, more entertainment aimed at 25 year olds and older during the week and open later. The findings from focus groups identified solutions to improving perceptions regarding nightlife and diversity, such as providing incentives for more local restaurants in the downtown area, encouraging more cultural and arts events in the downtown, improving the advertisement of social events, improving the starting wages in professional industries, and continuing to increase walkability in the downtown area.



# Comparison Cities

In order to put together a set of policy recommendations for Cedar Rapids, we looked at other cities in the Midwest of similar population size and geography to Cedar Rapids that statistically have had more success at retaining 25 – 40 year old workers than Cedar Rapids. After a careful analysis of several cities in the Midwest we choose three cities to use for comparison: Des Moines, Iowa, Fargo, North Dakota, and Grand Rapids, Michigan. Listed below are some highlights from the findings of these comparison cities:

## Des Moines, IA

- **Downtown housing 10-year abatement program**  
From 2002 – 2007 number of people living downtown increased from 3,000 to 6,000.
- **High density mixed use development & living downtown**  
2.8 billion spent on downtown projects since 2000.
- **Increase synergy & connections between cultural amenities in downtown**
- **Conscious development of unique downtown neighborhoods**

## Fargo, ND

- **Downtown Renaissance Zone**  
Fargo created a Renaissance Zone in the downtown area, offering property and income tax incentives to owners of commercial and residential property. The program created \$100 million investment in downtown housing and business development.
- **Blight rehabilitation program**  
Fargo adopted a blight rehabilitation for downtown properties. The program offered 50% matching grants of up to \$15,000 available to business owners. Fargo also offered micro-loans to small businesses such as restaurants and shops.
- **Grant funding for community development corporations to improve aesthetics of downtown**  
Projects included a comprehensive food, shopping, and arts website for the downtown area and a Business Improvement District. The Business Improvement District allowed businesses within the defined district to use the city's assessment power to raise funds for projects such as streetscape improvements.

## Grand Rapids, MI

- **Tax Abatements for businesses**  
Tax abatements are offered for new personal property taxes on businesses that create at least 25 jobs. It is available for up to 12 years for each business.
- **Designated “Smart Zone” in Michigan**  
Smart Zones are regions where technology-based firms cluster together to collaborate their resources and benefit from government and local institutions.
- **Small Business Resource Center**  
The center provides information on how to start up a new businesses including free consultation.
- **Let's Go. Out. program**  
This program encourage events in downtown Grand Rapids by providing assistance in

marketing, staff assistance, financial support, the Mini Grant Program, and larger grants up to \$25,000.

## Key Findings

The main finding of this study is that Cedar Rapids residents have poor perceptions of community attachment drivers. To improve these drivers people want more downtown growth and development which includes more unique housing, diverse transportation modes, unique shops and neighborhoods, more entertainment aimed at 25 year olds and older. The New Bo Market area is a good model for increasing perceptions of openness and is making a difference in peoples' perceptions of key attachment drivers. Priorities for Cedar Rapids' future investments should be better jobs, downtown growth & development, and shopping opportunities. Conclusions show that there is a perception of low pay in Cedar Rapids for highly skilled positions, e.g., engineers, when comparing to the national average wage. Most respondents to the survey agreed that the city is best at providing a place for families (e.g. the city has good schools, plenty of parks, and the city is a safe place). The perception of nightlife in Cedar Rapids was the lowest rated statement and investments in the downtown region were one of the highest rated priority. Respondents gave low scores to the perceptions of how the city provides for racial and ethnic minorities, gays and lesbians, places to meet people, and opportunities for young people.

## Implications for Cedar Rapids

The City has made significant changes since the devastating flood in 2008. People like the changes the city has made, and findings from this project suggest that the City's plans for the future align with what residents want for the future of Cedar Rapids. The City should continue its plans for the following: increased riverfront development, increased walkability, more mixed-use zoning and infill development in downtown & surrounding areas, connecting the west side of the river to downtown, provide incentives for a mix of downtown housing and the restoring of neighborhoods close to downtown. Below is a list of suggestions for improving economic development and community attachment drivers:

### Economic Development

- **Tie business incentives to higher wages**
- **Tax incentives for businesses committing to paying above median-area income**
- **Public-private partnerships to support entrepreneurs, e.g., creation of small business resource center**
- **Create more incentive programs and partnerships for small downtown businesses & entrepreneurs to create more unique social offerings (shops, restaurants, etc.)**
- **Develop unique neighborhoods using street-scape improvements and creating public-private partnerships for façade rehabilitation**
- **Set design standards to ensure uniqueness across city neighborhoods**
- **City-sponsored community micro-grants for public social offerings in Downtown area**

## Improving Community Attachment Drivers in Cedar Rapids

- Use new public library and New Bo areas as model for renovation, infill development, & designs for new buildings in the downtown and surrounding areas
- Build with more roof-top gardens, modern architecture, and open green spaces
- Expand programs welcoming new residents
- Construct public-private partnerships with existing multi-lingual and cultural networks to create programs that help people discover Cedar Rapids
- Expand express buses to Downtown and New Bo from fringes Thursday, Friday, and Saturday
- Consider weekly express routes for workers to downtown area
- Improve marketing of social events & amenities
- Create free Smart-phone app with current social events
- Update & modernize food, events, and shopping website and adapt to social media
- Increase investments in arts, music, and cultural opportunities open later and on week-days
- Attract diverse set of performers and support local artists
- Attract year-round recreation & entertainment options, e.g., science center, theme park, etc.



# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### Problem Statement

Cedar Rapids city leaders determined that there are difficulties in retaining workers aged 25 – 40 working and living in Cedar Rapids. By collecting raw data explaining quality of life issues for young workers, the City of Cedar Rapids believes that it can improve retention of young workers who live and work in Cedar Rapids by improving city amenities and quality of life. The main focus of this project is to identify ways in which Cedar Rapids can attract and retain a workforce of “young professionals”, individuals within the ages of 25 – 40. The project aims to help the City evaluate the current workforce and identify various quality of life factors that may be causing the problems for attracting and retaining the desired workforce. The mission of the Cedar Rapids Workforce Retention Project is to enable the City of Cedar Rapids to improve retention of the 25 – 40 year old workforce by gathering, interpreting, and synthesizing community-based research on worker preferences. The project gathered information from community members on factors relating to their choices of residence, perceptions young workers have of quality of life in Cedar Rapids, the impact of the Flood of 2008, and resident goals for the future. The results yield important insights on ways to increase worker retention.

### Rationale

Strong economies in developed countries are increasingly tied to a skilled workforce (Harper-Anderson, 2008). To maintain economic growth, a city finds it necessary to attract and retain a talented workforce with diverse skills and ages. People who are young, single, and college educated tend to move to other places in search of job opportunities. Often, these people have completed their education, and are less attached to their community, and therefore, willing to leave in search of work. Because of these factors, young individuals have a higher tendency to move to a new community. Individuals without spouses or children generally are more flexible when it comes to relocation. People who are college educated are more likely to find their skills to be in demand in a new region that can offer unique opportunities (Luis, 2009). Therefore, retaining a workforce of 25 – 40 year olds is one way that the City of Cedar Rapids can maintain economic sustainability. Furthermore, 25 – 40 year olds are often the sole significant contributors to population growth and become future city leaders (Luis, 2009). Mobility trends of 25 – 40 year olds offer an opportunity to places like Cedar Rapids who desire to attract and keep a diverse workforce. At the same time, Cedar Rapids, like other cities, now competes in a global economy, and therefore must do a better job of competing for the most mobile segment of the workforce—young professionals. Globalization of the economy is therefore an important cause of the situation Cedar Rapids finds itself in. This is particularly so if Cedar Rapids wants to compete in industries, like electronics and computing, not directly connected to food production, for which Cedar Rapids already has a comparative advantage. Therefore, Cedar Rapids must provide quality amenities and a high quality of life for

its workers if it wishes to attract and keep young professionals interested in joining its' workforce.

## Research Questions

Based on anecdotal data, city leaders determined that 25 – 40 year old young professionals leave Cedar Rapids after a few years of employment. City leaders believe this is due to a lack of quality of life amenities targeted towards that demographic including affordable housing, a vibrant nightlife, and shopping venues. The following research questions guided this project:

- **Is retaining a quality 25 to 40 year old workforce a problem in Cedar Rapids?**

We analyzed the following current trends in the Cedar Rapids area: demographics, workforce and industrial composition, and worker mobility.

- **If retention is an issue, what are the reasons?**

We created tools to gather information and identify issues in the community that are causing workforce retention problems in Cedar Rapids including the measuring the perceptions of social offerings, openness, and aesthetics.

- **How can workforce retention be enhanced?**

This report makes suggestions from the community-based research on how to improve the quality of key attachment drivers in Cedar Rapids. Solutions identified and implemented in similar communities for resolving issues of workforce retention and community attachment are included.

## Definitions and Demographic Information

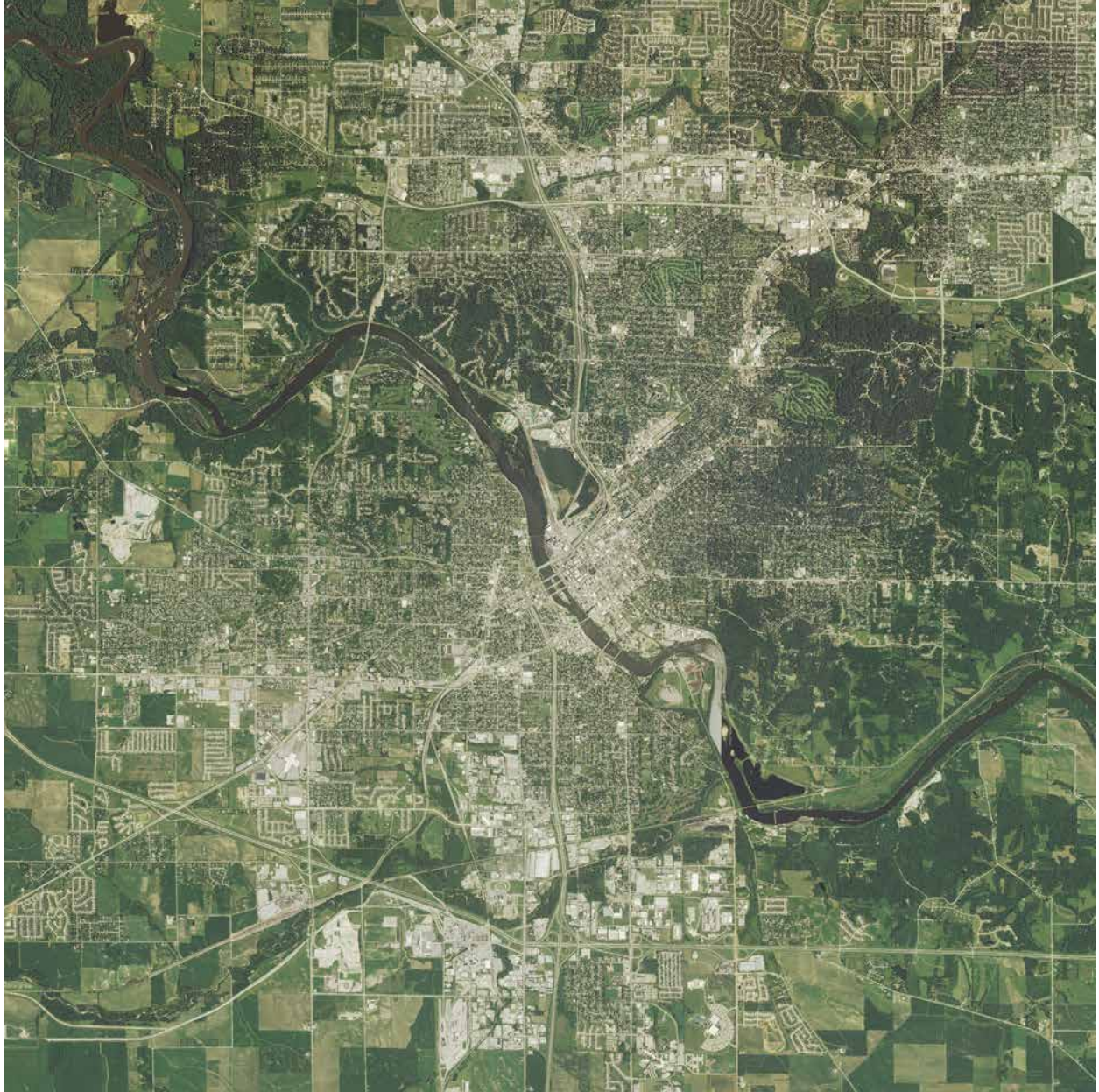
It is important to clarify how the project determines the “young professional” demographic. The project defines “young professional” as an age range. Any respondent who answered that they are between the ages of 25 – 40 is included in the “young professional” analysis. This serves to capture all people in this working age group who have varying degrees of skill and educational attainment. In addition, some of the report analysis will consider a group called “skilled young professionals”. These are people who self-identified as 25 – 40 years old, and who had an Associates degree or higher. The purpose of adding this additional analysis is to help employers and the City of Cedar Rapids to understand the variations (or lack thereof) in worker preferences. In most of the analysis the reader will note, despite differences in educational attainment and age, most survey respondents rated their perceptions of Cedar Rapids the same and chose the same priorities for Cedar Rapids. As the reader will find, when comparing the “young professionals” to the “skilled young professionals”, only slight, and seemingly less important dissimilarities are found.

While the main focus of the project is analyzing data from the 25 – 40 age range, this is sometimes not possible with United States Census Bureau or American Community Survey (ACS) data because the age groups are organized differently based on the analysis. Data for the age groups of 25 – 29, 30 – 34, and 35 – 39 sometimes are shown, and sometimes age groups of 25 – 44 are shown. Our analyses attempt to group the data as closely to the 25 – 40 age range as possible. Furthermore, some of the data on educational attainment collected from the United States Census Bureau and ACS only categorizes bachelor's degrees and higher. These exceptions to our demographic profile will be noted as they occur in the report.

# Report Overview

The rest of the report is divided into seven chapters followed by an appendix. In Chapter 2, we describe the methodology for our report. We address in further detail the previous research studies used as the foundation for our surveys and go over how we collected the data. Chapter 3 provides an analysis of the local, regional, and national population trends for 25 – 44 year olds in order to give perspective to the problem facing Cedar Rapids. The chapter also highlights background information on the 2008 flood that impacted Cedar Rapids and further information on what community attachment drivers are. Chapters 4 – 6 discuss the results of each of our data collection methods (community activity sheet, community survey, and focus groups) while Chapter 7 goes over the findings from each of the comparison cities. Finally, Chapter 8 discusses the implications of our report for Cedar Rapids going forward.





*Figure 1.1 – Cedar Rapids Aerial Map*

*Source: The Natural Resources Geographic Information Systems (NRGIS) Library*

# Chapter 2

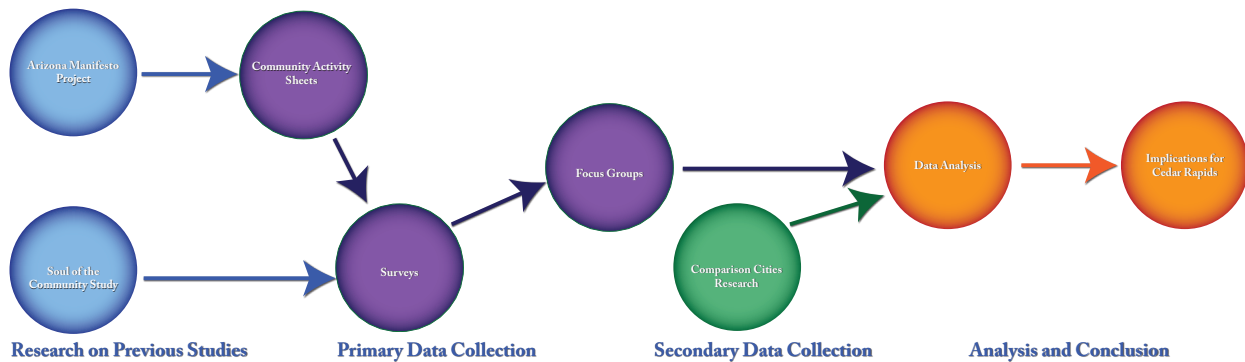
## Methodology

### Research Overview

This study uses five main methods for developing implications for Cedar Rapids:

- **National and Local Trends**
- **Community Activity Sheets**
- **Community Survey**
- **Focus Groups**
- **Midwest Comparison Cities Case Studies**

Before collecting any primary data, the project first needed to clarify and put into context the 25 – 40 year old workforce retention issue in Cedar Rapids and address whether the issue could be explained entirely by general population changes. The research group did this by first examining national and local data on the change in population of 25 – 44 year olds using US Census and American Community Survey data. The project then examines US Census OnTheMap data to confirm a loss of 25 – 40 year old workforce in Cedar Rapids. After confirming the workforce retention issue, the group reviewed two research projects as case studies for developing the project’s data collection methods. The first of these research projects was the Arizona Manifesto Project, a



*Figure 2.1 – Methodology flow chart*

successful study involving community input. The project developed a set of community activity sheets based on the work done in Arizona, which allowed Cedar Rapidsians to respond to four open-ended questions. The other research project that was examined was the Knight Soul of the Community Study. This study found that there was a strong, positive correlation between community attachment and GDP growth, which became crucial in developing the project’s implications for Cedar Rapids. Some of the questions used in the Knight Soul of the Community Study were



borrowed for this project’s survey. The community activity sheets mentioned above were also used for developing some of the survey questions. Once the project had collected and analyzed several hundred of the community surveys, focus groups were used to confirm trending results in the surveys and to expand on the results shown in the survey. The focus group agendas were based on popular education models, and included many engaging activities that allowed participants to share their biggest gripes and biggest ideas for Cedar Rapids. Finally, the project conducted brief case studies of three additional mid-sized cities in the Midwest in order to explore how other cities are dealing with the loss of 25 – 40 year olds. These three cities have similar economies to Cedar Rapids. The results from the background research, community surveys, focus groups, and the three brief case study cities were then used to develop implications for Cedar Rapids.

## Developing the Community Activity Sheets

### About the Arizona Manifesto Project

The Manifesto Project was created by Courtney Klein-Johnson. The project focuses on empowering youth leaders in communities across Arizona. Community brainstorming sessions provide a venue where participants answer open-ended questions such as “I would live in Phoenix forever if...”, “Our generation is...”, and “I will lead the change I want to see by...” Activities such as these allow direct participation in community development efforts by facilitating communication between policy-makers and the public (Booher, 2007).

### THE MANIFESTO PROJECT | MIDTOWN PHOENIX

On April 9, young leaders in Midtown Phoenix hosted their Manifesto event as part of a statewide initiative to gather the voice of a generation. Here is what the Manifesto said:

**Our generation is ...**

READY FOR CHANGE & innovative & entrepreneurial  
Thankful for the leaders who came before us.  
 BUT READY TO LEAP FROM THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS TO MAKE THE STATE STRONGER  
 LOOKING FOR SMARTER WAYS TO SOLVE WORLD PROBLEMS  
 REDEFINING WHAT IT MEANS TO BUILD A PURPOSE-DRIVEN BUSINESS

**We would stay in Arizona forever if ...**

We didn't have to leave our neighborhood  
 TO GET GROCERIES  
 EDUCATION WAS SEEN AS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING FOR THE STATE TO INVEST IN  
 WE HAD MORE CULTURE, arts, AND DIVERSITY  
our economic growth embraced innovation  
 There was a culture of COMMUNITY BUILDING

**We will lead the change we want to see by ...**

embracing the power of entrepreneurship  
 PROMOTING THE THINGS THAT CREATE CULTURE  
Surrounding ourselves with people and leaders THAT DRIVE PROGRESS AND CREATE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES AT ALL HOURS OF THE DAY  
 KEEPING BUSINESS & relationships & PARTNERSHIPS LOCAL  
PROVIDING GREAT SCHOOLS FOR OUR CHILDREN TO RECEIVE HIGH-CALIBER EDUCATION

### Influence on the Community Activity Sheets

Four of the Arizona Manifesto Project’s open-ended questions were adapted for the community activity sheets used in the Cedar Rapids Workforce Retention Project in order to gain a better picture of what is important to young Cedar Rapids workers and what they want to see in their city. The activity was designed to be quick, to collect detailed responses, and to generate ideas for the project’s research. The open-ended format invited respondents to write detailed responses about the positives and negatives of their experience in Cedar Rapids and a total of 231 unique responses were provided. While each of the responses were unique, common topics and themes emerged that would be used in developing the priorities section for the community survey.

Figure 2.2 – Poster of meeting results from AZ Manifesto



## Conducting the Community Activity

Group members collected the community activity sheets from three sites. The first survey site was the NextGen summit, consisting of young professionals recruited by the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance, ImpactCR, and the EPIC young Entrepreneurs group. About 275 to 300 people attended the event and the project surveyed 53 respondents. The NextGen Summit was selected for surveying because a Cedar Rapids-based organization coordinated it and recruited a large number of young professional in the 25 – 40 age group from Cedar Rapids.

The second site surveyed was the New-Bo Farmers Market in Cedar Rapids. This venue was selected because of its rising popularity as a public meeting place. From two visits to the farmer's market 105 responses were collected.

The last site visited was Kirkwood Community College. A total of 74 community college students were surveyed. Kirkwood was selected as a survey site in order to obtain the opinions of those within the 25 – 40 age range who might be students living or working in Cedar Rapids. Additionally, the project was interested in the opinions of younger students, since many of them face the decision of whether to stay in Cedar Rapids or not after they graduate



## Developing the Community Survey

### About the Knight Soul of the Community Study

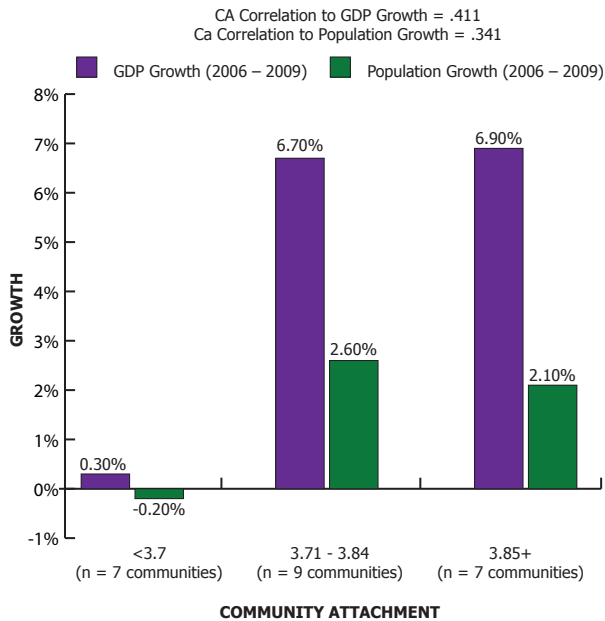
In a study conducted from 2008 – 2010 by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and Gallup, “Soul of the Community”, researchers embarked on a 26-city study to find out why people choose to plant their roots in a community. The study was designed to find out what “emotionally attaches people to a community—what makes them want to put down roots and build a life there” (John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, 2010 pg. 4). These are questions that Cedar Rapids is facing when trying to understand how to retain young workers in the area.

The 26 cities varied by size and region, but ultimately respondents rated their experiences, perceptions, and reasoning for staying in their respective community the same across quality of life factors. The Soul of the Community research was conducted by 15- minute phone calls with at least 400 people aged 18 and older from each respective community. The study conducted 15,200 interviews, and then included 200 interviews with people aged 18 to 34 in order to collect more information about this age group (John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Gallup, 2010)

Year after year, the same drivers for community attachment rose to the top. It is tempting

to expect attachment drivers to be different according to each place, but the 26 cities are generally the same. The top three driving factors for attaching to a community are: 1) social offerings- having places for people to meet one another and the overall sentiment that people care about one another, 2) openness- how open the community is to diversity across family type, minorities, and college graduates, 3) aesthetics- availability of green spaces, outdoor recreational opportunities, and the physical beauty of the place. Time after time, positive perceptions on social offerings, openness, and aesthetics are what will most likely influence the likelihood of resident attachment, even across age. However, not surprisingly attachment rises with age, where the highest level of community attachment is reported to be individuals of 65 and older.

### Local GDP Growth by Levels of Community Attachment



GDP and population growth figures available for 23 of the 26 communities.

Figure 2.3 – Results from Soul of Community Study

In conclusion, the study offers many implications for city leaders to better understand their residents and how to leverage their strengths. In addition, there is the opportunity to set priorities to change perceptions of attachment drivers with poorly rated perceptions.

## Influence on the Survey’s Development

The ‘Soul of the Community’ study influenced the Cedar Rapids Workforce Retention Project’s methodology and survey due to its findings about community attachment. The implications for understanding Cedar Rapidians’ perceptions of Cedar Rapids are exceptionally valuable for the City as economic development decisions are made about the growth and development of the City. The project decided to use the top three attachment drivers (social offerings, openness, and aesthetics) found in the Soul of the Community study in creating the project’s community survey. Most of the questions on the community survey inquire about the individual’s personal experiences and perceptions regarding their social networking and connectedness in Cedar Rapids, their perceptions of diversity in the community, and quality of Cedar Rapids aesthetics.

The survey was developed with 17 questions asking the respondent to rate the statement based on their own experiences. One is a poor rating and five is a high rating. All of the questions were strategically presented as a positive statement. For example, rather than asking “Does Cedar Rapids have a vibrant nightlife?” The survey states “Cedar Rapids has a vibrant nightlife”. This allows the respondent to work from their personal perceptions on whether they agree or disagree with the statement.

Next, the survey asks the respondent to set their top three priorities for Cedar Rapids. There are several options to choose from after the following statement: “The following topics should be

a priority for Cedar Rapids in improving our city, and would help make me stay working and/or living here...” The options given to choose as priorities were determined from the Community Activity sheets collected by the Cedar Rapids Workforce Retention Project. After collecting about 100 community activity sheets the responses were placed into 14 categories. The researchers then provided these 14 categories as options for selecting top 3 priorities for Cedar Rapids. The 14 categories were as follows: downtown growth & development, affordable housing, nightlife, diversity, parks & trails, educational opportunities, social events, bars & restaurants, career development, better jobs, safety, public transportation, recreation opportunities, and shopping.

Finally the survey ended with questions about the respondent’s demographics and work status and perceptions about their wages. The survey collects information about age and level of education. Then it asks the respondent to answer ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to four questions about their place of work. It also, asks how long the person has worked in Cedar Rapids. The survey ends with a fill-in question about the respondent’s race/ethnicity.

## Conducting the Community Survey

The community survey was available in Spanish and English. It was hosted on the Cedar Rapids Workforce Retention Project website. The website was shared through media outlets, including the researchers’ Facebook accounts and the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities Facebook page. The website was also shared with the Cedar Rapids Economic Development Li-



*Figure 2.4 – Increasing social offerings increases GDP*

aison who shared it with many of her networks with employers from Cedar Rapids. The young professional group, Diversity Focus, also posted the link to the community survey. In addition, the project gained media attention from the Gazette (a local newspaper), and was shared through their website, and on Twitter.

Beyond posting the survey online, researchers actively sought out participation by attending different public events in the Cedar Rapids area. On November 6th, 2013, two researchers set up a table in the Kirkwood Community College cafeteria over the lunch hour from 11:00am-1:30pm, and were able to collect 82 surveys. During this two and half hours, researchers would simply approach people eating their lunch and ask them if they would be interested in filling out a survey to help improve Cedar Rapids. Only two people declined to do the survey during the allotted survey time. During this event, all ages of people found in the cafeteria were surveyed, and the results will be presented later in this report. Researchers chose Kirkwood because of the availability of many people varying in age and ethnic backgrounds.

In addition, researchers attended other professional networking events to collect surveys. Specifically, researchers attended the following places/events to collect surveys: Employee Resource Group Consortium in October, 2013; Impact CR young professionals event in November

2013; the Cedar Rapids Public Library in February, 2014; the Vault Coworking & Collaboration office space; and the Kirkwood Training & Outreach Services Center in April 2014. Researchers also went to the NewBo Market located in Cedar Rapids, and approached randomly selected people and asked them to fill out both the activity sheets and the community survey. These personal interactions with the public were helpful in gathering surveys, and also, in asking people to sign up to participate in the project's future focus groups. Researchers chose to conduct surveys at all of the above places because of the ability to reach large groups of people at one time, and to reach a diverse set of people.



## Focus Groups

### About the Focus Groups

There were two focus groups conducted as part of the project's research. The first focus group was held on Thursday, November 21st 2013 at the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance & Innovation Center from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM. The focus group consisted of 10 residents from the Cedar Rapids metro area. The second focus group was held at the Vault Coworking and Col-



laboration space on February 26, 2014 over their entrepreneurial lunch hour. Twelve people attended the Vault Lunch focus group. The objective of the focus groups was to clarify the results from the community survey. To do this, the focus group participants engaged in a number of brainstorming activities. These activities included group discussions, putting ideas into a hat and reading them out loud, filling out surveys, stating their favorite city and why, and imagining what they wanted Cedar Rapids to look like in ten years. The responses from the focus group participants were recorded in audio and written form.

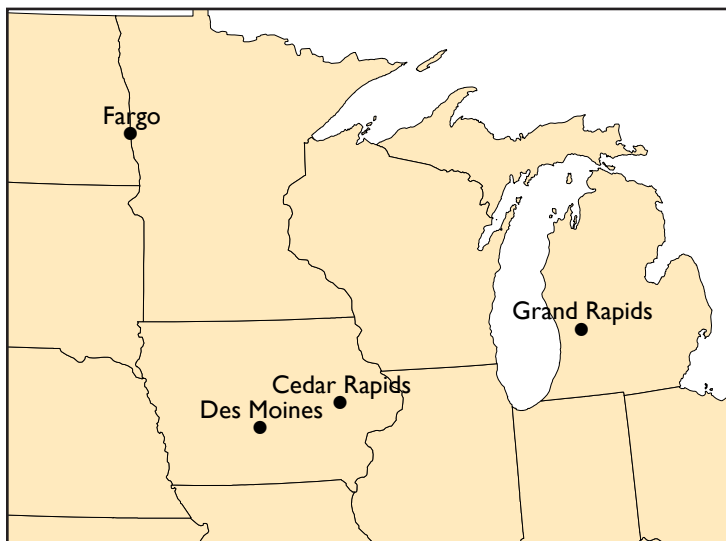
## Focus Group Techniques

The techniques used in conducting and facilitating the focus groups came from general research about focus groups, class lectures from the capstone course seminars, and the previous public engagement experience that some of the project members brought to the group. While conducting the focus groups was not particularly difficult, recruiting participants for the events was troublesome. In order to advertise the focus groups, the project had the City of Cedar Rapids Economic Development Department contact large employers to share the fliers with their employees. In addition, the We Create Here section by The Gazette (the Cedar Rapids newspaper) advertised the focus groups on Twitter and posted articles about the upcoming focus groups.

## Midwest Comparison Cities

### About the Comparison Cities

In order to better understand how Cedar Rapids can improve perceptions of social offerings and openness, the project conducted brief case studies on three Midwest cities for ideas and examples. The three cities are Fargo, North Dakota, Des Moines, Iowa, and Grand Rapids, Michigan. They offered insight for addressing many of the outcomes produced by this project's original research. These three cities are also battling the loss of the 25 – 40 year old workforce, and were



included in an economic development study for the City of Cedar Rapids during the same time as this research project. Additionally, these three cities are similar in size and geography to Cedar Rapids and have similar economies. The goal of these case studies is not to find a perfect match to Cedar Rapids, but to explore how other cities with similarities to Cedar Rapids are managing their downtown growth & development, retention of 25 – 40 year old workers, and what kind of programs have assisted in advancing social offerings and openness in the city.

Figure 2.5 – Map of comparison cities.

# Chapter 3

## Population and Workforce Trends and Background Information

### Census/American Community Survey Data

#### Local Trends

Local US Census and American Community Survey data helps to verify the concerns from Cedar Rapids officials of a perceived loss of 25 – 40 year old workers. The US Census data shows that Cedar Rapids has had a decline in the population of 25 – 44 year olds over the last decade.

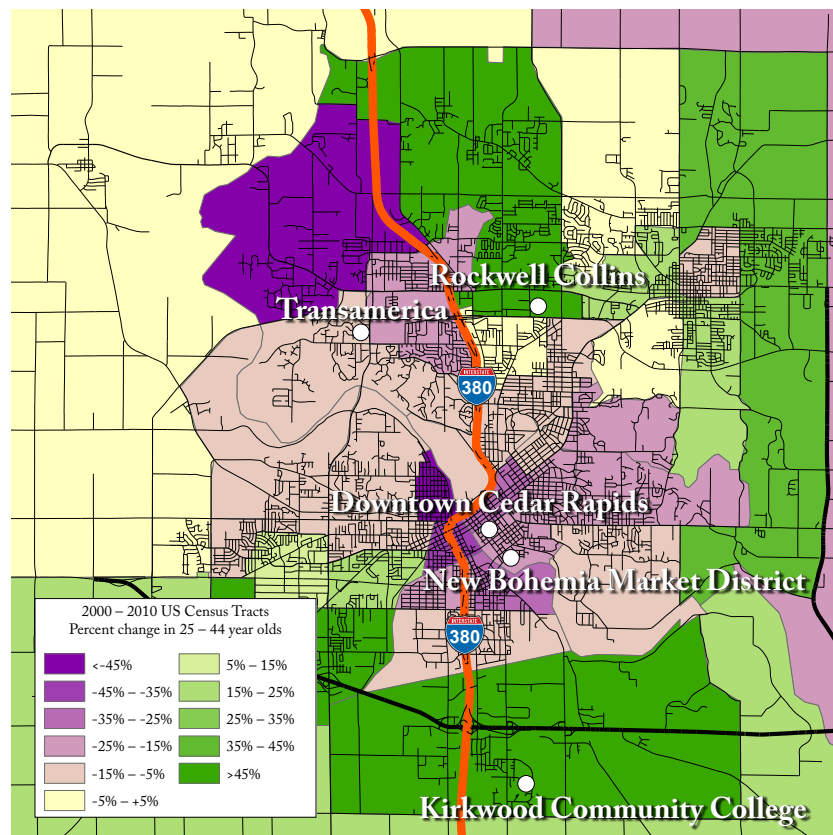


Figure 3.1 – Cedar Rapids change in population of 25 – 44 year olds



<b>Cedar Rapids</b>	<b>25 – 44 Year Olds</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Proportion of Population</b>
2000 Census Population	37,046	120,758	<b>30.68%</b>
2010 Census Population	34,655	126,326	<b>27.43%</b>
Change	-2,391	5,568	<b>-3.25%</b>

The table above shows the percentage of 25 – 44 year olds living in Cedar Rapids as reported in the 2000 and 2010 census. The population of 25 – 44 year olds decreased by around 6.9%. The decrease in the proportion of 25 – 44 year olds living in Cedar Rapids from years 2000 – 2010 was about 3.25%.

Figure 3.1 shows a spatial analysis of where the decrease of 25 – 44 year olds is occurring in Cedar Rapids. For reference purposes, Downtown Cedar Rapids, the New Bohemian Market District, Rockwell Collins, Transamerica, and Kirkwood Community College have been marked on the map. The map shows percentage change in 25 – 44 year olds between 2000 and 2010 in the Cedar Rapids Metropolitan area. Census tracts located near the downtown region had significant decreases in the population of 25 – 44 year olds while census tracts located in the suburbs on the edge of Cedar Rapids have had a significant increase in the population of 25 – 44 year olds, in particular the suburbs surrounding Rockwell Collins. Also, it is interesting to point out that the neighborhoods along the west side of the Cedar River have experienced the greatest decrease in the number of 25 – 44 year olds. This is most likely related to the Flood of 2008 causing severe damage to those neighborhoods.

## Population Trends – A National Perspective

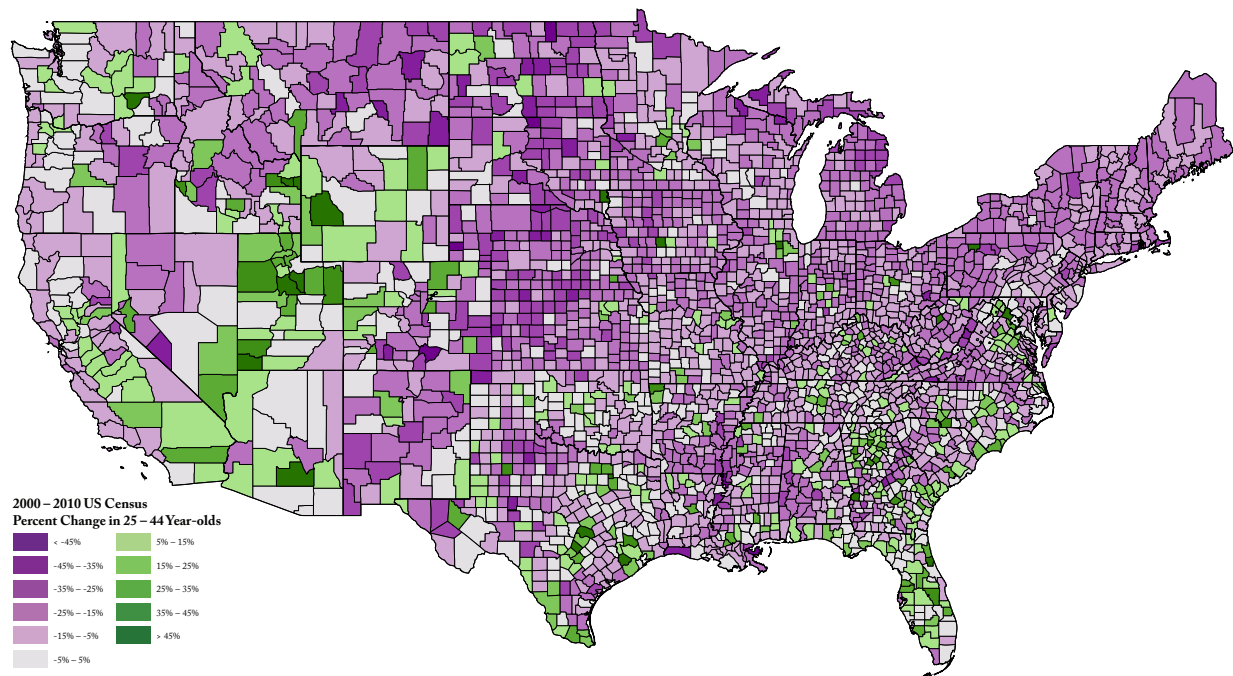
The census tract information illustrates that Cedar Rapids has experienced a decline in its 25 – 44 year old population, but it is important to look at the data in the context of what is happening regionally and nationally to find out if these trends are a unique circumstance in Cedar Rapids or if they are a reflection of a larger story.

Figure 3.2 shows the percent change in the population of 25 – 44 year olds from 2000 – 2010 at the county level. National trends appear to show that the Midwest and Northeast regions of the country have had the largest decline in 25 – 44 year olds while the South and West regions have seen an increase.

	<b>2000 Census Population</b>	<b>2010 Census Population</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
<b>Midwest</b>	19,024,298	17,171,884	<b>-9.7%</b>
<b>Northeast</b>	16,225,731	14,432,798	<b>-11.0%</b>
<b>South</b>	30,266,644	30,655,359	<b>1.3%</b>
<b>West</b>	19,523,578	19,874,513	<b>1.8%</b>
<b>United States</b>	85,040,251	82,134,554	<b>-3.4%</b>

This table shows the population change in 25 – 44 year olds by region. The numbers echo the general impressions from the national map—the Midwest and Northeast regions experienced large declines in their population of 25 – 44 year olds while the South and West regions saw marginal increases. Nationwide, the United States experienced a decrease of 3.4% in its population of 25 – 44 year olds.

Zooming in on the changes in the Midwest region (Figure 3.3), it appears that counties



**Figure 3.2 – United States change in population of 25 – 44 year olds**

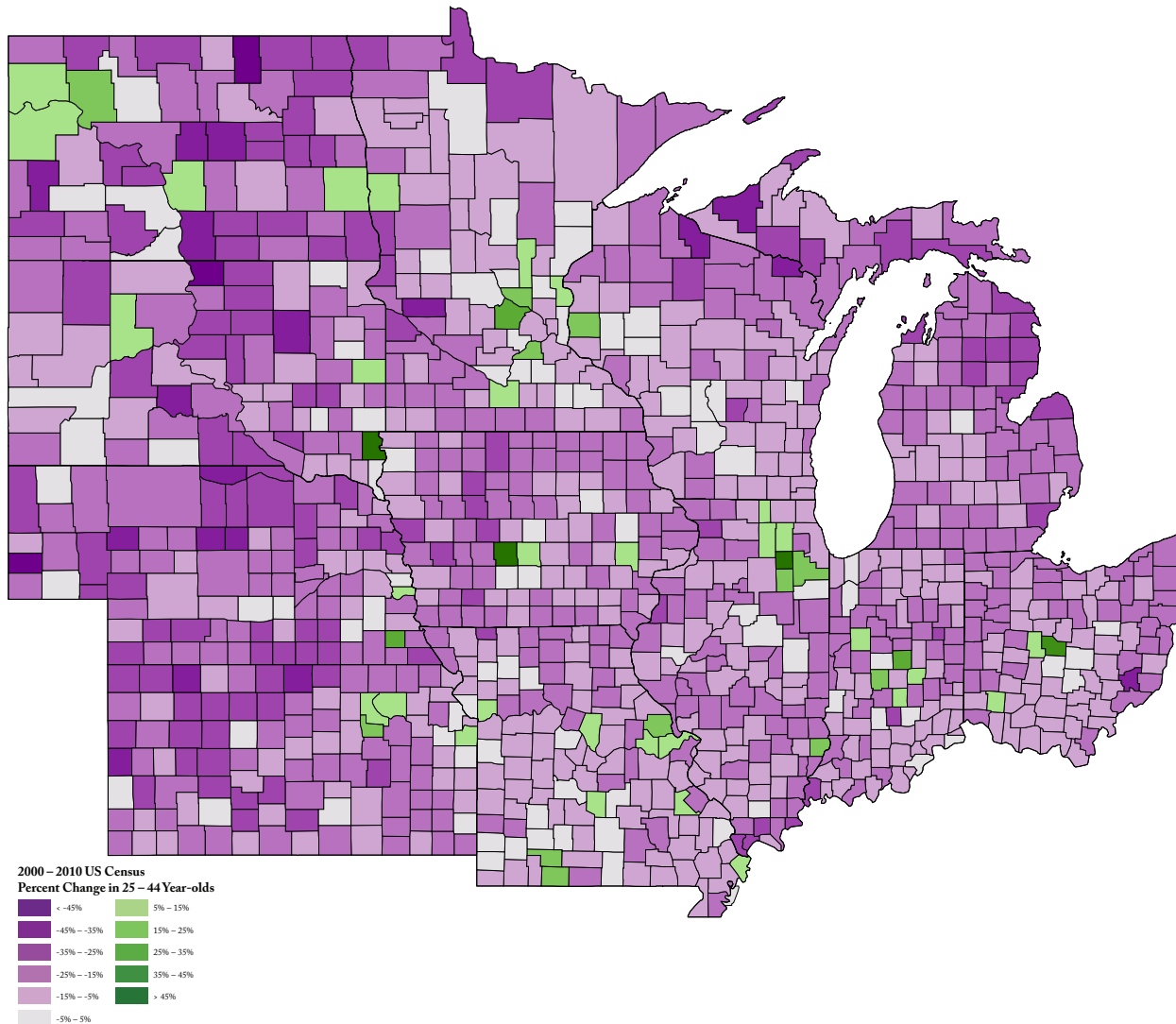
with largely rural populations have experienced the greatest decline in 25 – 44 year olds with some counties losing over half their population of 25 – 44 year olds. Counties with large urban centers have not experienced as dramatic a decline in 25 – 44 year olds or have actually seen their population of this age group increase. Viewing this data only at the county level, however, makes it unclear where the change in population of 25 – 44 year olds is actually occurring. An analysis at the township level helps to answer this question.

Figure 3.4 examines the population change for urban areas in the Midwest. The urban centers that have experienced the greatest decline in 25 – 44 year olds are the very small towns and very large metropolises such as Chicago, Detroit, and Cleveland. On the other hand, other large urban centers such as like Indianapolis, Kansas City, and Columbus have managed to retain and grow their population of 25 – 44 year olds. The implications for Cedar Rapids is that there may not be one size of a city that is better at retaining young workers than another, but nevertheless cities with a similar population size and economy to Cedar Rapids are probably the best examples to use for developing recommendations for workforce retainment. Case studies of such cities are discussed in Chapter 5.

## Cedar Rapids Industry and Workforce Mobility Data

### Industry Data

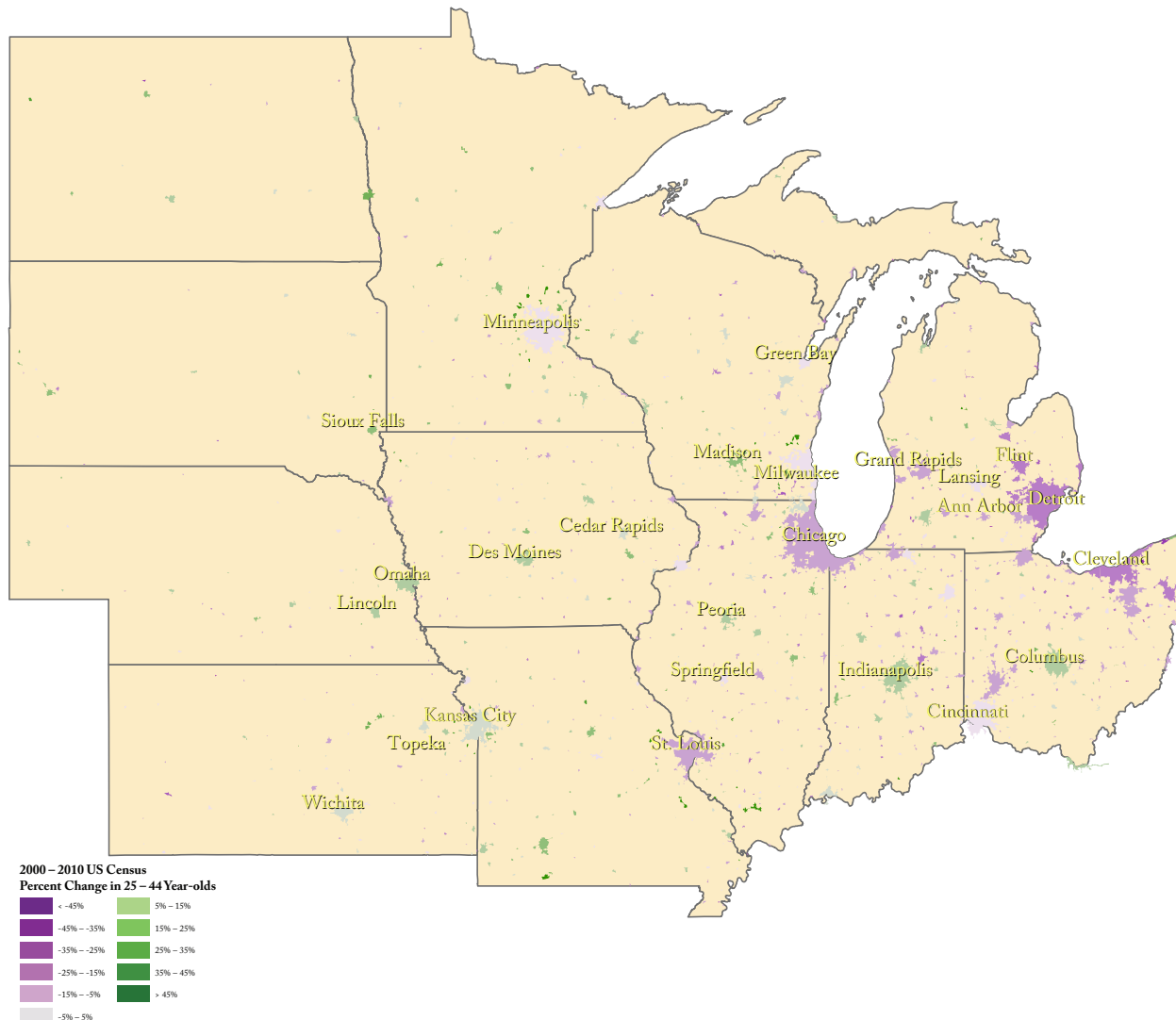
Responding to concerns voiced by Cedar Rapids companies about a shortage of young skilled workers, this project investigated whether retention of workers in this age group is a problem in Cedar Rapids using industry and workforce data from the U.S. Census. For the purpose of



*Figure 3.3 – Midwest change in population of 25 – 44 year olds at county level*

this study, skilled jobs are defined as those needing at least an Associates Degree or higher. Twenty-five to forty year old workers who are qualified for skilled occupations are a valuable resource for any city. Because they have capabilities that companies need that other workers do not, a city's success at retaining young skilled workers helps to support business investment in a community, which in turn contributes to the local economy (Teresa Galluzzo, 2011). More importantly, young skilled workers are needed to replace older experienced workers as they retire. When a company is already established in a city, shortages of skilled workers can be a difficult problem that can lead to closures and disinvestment. Thus, the sizes of local industries are intimately connected to a city's, and, in turn, a worker's economic well-being when large industries fail to find sufficient qualified applicants.

In order to learn more about retention of skilled workers in Cedar Rapids, the project examined US Census data on industry size and age composition over the last decade. Despite the 2008 flood and the national economic downturn, Cedar Rapids saw 22% overall growth in employment in skilled industries from 2002 to 2011. However, when looking at the percentage of 25 – 40



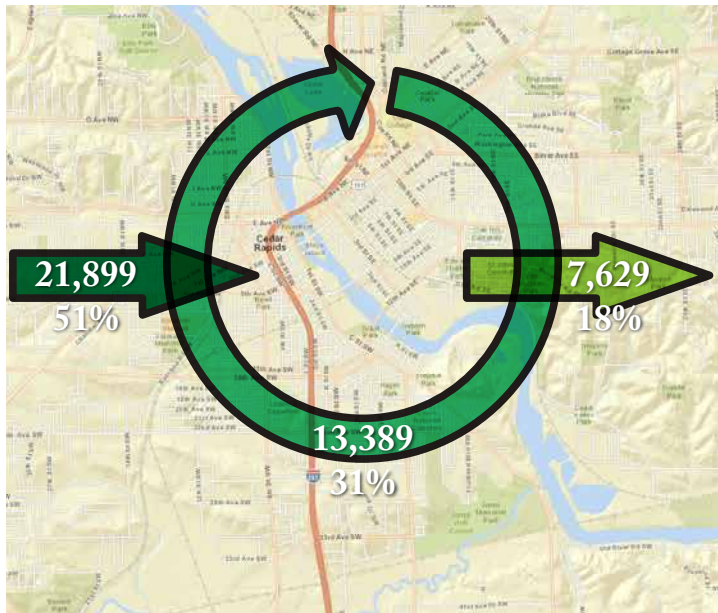
*Figure 3.4 – Midwest change in population of 25 – 44 year olds at urban centers*

year old workers in these skilled industries, a different story emerges.

In contrast to the 22% growth of the over-all job market, 25 – 40 year old workers in skilled industries only grew by 14% (see table on page 18). In addition, when evaluating each industry, job loss was greater for 25 – 40 year olds in industries in which employment declined, and, where an industry gained workers, it gained 25 – 40 year olds at a lower rate. For example, the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services sector grew 21% overall, adding 688 jobs, but only 121 of these new employees were 25 – 40 year olds. Thus, the slower rate of growth for 25 to 40 year old skilled workers in Cedar Rapids supports the idea that workforce retention of this segment of the workforce is a concern for Cedar Rapids.

## Workforce Mobility

With opportunities available across the country, 25 – 40 year old workers of all skill levels have many choices as to where they can work. Because municipalities desire to increase local economic growth and productivity, they seek to both retain a young workforce at their jobs and keep



**Figure 3.5 – Inflow/Outflow diagram of 25 – 40 year old Cedar Rapids workers in 2011.**  
 Source: US Census OnTheMap

### Change in Percentage of Commuters by Age Group from 2002 to 2011



**Figure 3.6 – Change in percentage of commuters by age.**  
 Source: US Census OnTheMap

them living within the city limits. One measure of a city’s vibrancy and success at keeping young workers living in the city is the proportion of 25 to 40 year old workers living within the city versus commuting in. To gain insight on whether workforce retention is a problem in Cedar Rapids, we analyzed what percentage of all 25 – 40 year old workers live in the city versus commuted from outside from 2002 to 2011 and compared these numbers to the other cities we studied. In addition, the study looked at how far Cedar Rapids workers were commuting to reach work and where they lived.

When comparing the percentage of 25 – 40 year olds living in Cedar Rapids or commuting, U.S. Census OnTheMap data revealed, overall 31% of 25 – 40 year old workers both live and work in Cedar Rapids, while 51% commute in. Further, 18% of 25 – 40 year olds commute outside the of the City for work elsewhere.

When considering commuting trends over time from 2002 to 2011, a comparison with the other cities studied shows that Cedar Rapids experienced the greatest increase in young workers living outside the city (Figure 3.6). From 2002 to 2011, the percentage of 25 – 40 year old commuting into the city increased by 7 percentage points in Cedar Rapids, compared to 5 and 6 percentage point increases in Grand Rapids and Des Moines and a 2 percentage point decrease in Fargo. Though some new 25 – 40 year old Cedar Rapids workers may have never lived inside the city, as opposed to having moved in and then out, this increase in commuters is still a challenge for Cedar Rapids because these workers are not, for whatever reason, willing



Skilled Industry	Total 2002	Total 2011	25 – 40 2000	25 – 40 2010	Percent Change Total	Percent Change in 25 – 40
Information	5289	3844	1970	1413	-27%	-28%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	7792	6469	2675	2099	-17%	-22%
Construction	4429	3757	1656	1345	-15%	-19%
Public Administration	4062	3667	1475	1213	-10%	-18%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2098	2100	726	745	0%	3%
Educational Services	6782	8170	2259	2433	20%	8%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	3216	3904	1177	1298	21%	10%
Finance and Insurance	5826	6981	2156	2506	20%	16%
Health Care and Social Assistance	9919	12920	3525	4208	30%	19%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1009	1532	349	512	52%	47%
Manufacturing	8910	18515	3159	6105	108%	93%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	327	785	128	268	140%	110%
<b>Total</b>	59659	72644	21255	24145	22%	14%

or able to reside in the City.

Next, Figure 3.7 shows how far young Cedar Rapids workers were traveling to work from home. Over half traveled less than 10 miles to work. However, compared to Fargo and Des Moines, Cedar Rapids had a lower percentage of 25 to 40 year old workers living within 10 miles. Cedar Rapids also had the highest percentage of workers living greater than 50 miles away. Overall, On-TheMap commuting data shows that Cedar Rapids workers commute further from work than the other cities studied.

Lastly, data from OnTheMap showed that in 2011, 38% of 25 – 40 year old Cedar Rapids workers lived in the city while over 40% lived in unincorporated towns.

Taken together, these data indicate that from 2002 to 2011, compared to the other cities we studied, Cedar Rapids saw an increase in commuters, who were traveling farther than those in other cities we studied. In addition, the majority of 25 – 40 year old workers who lived outside Cedar Rapids lived in unincorporated towns. These findings support the idea that retention of 25 – 40 year olds, if understood as whether workers both work and live in Cedar Rapids, is indeed a challenge for Cedar Rapids.

## Background Information

### Community Attachment

In preliminary conversations about the Cedar Rapids Workforce Retention Project with City officials and other City leaders, there was concern mentioned that young people in Cedar



### Distance to Work for 25 to 40 Year-olds in 2011

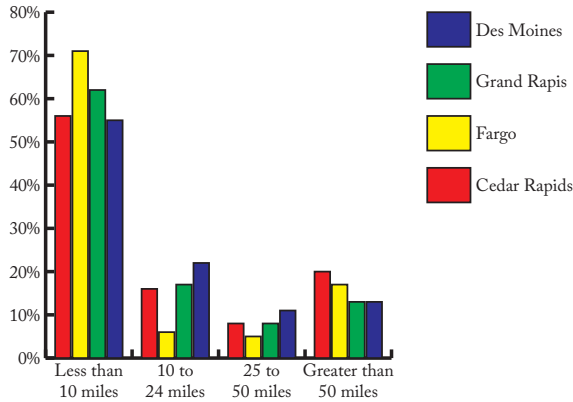


Figure 3.7 – Distance to work for 25 – 40 year olds in 2011.  
Source: US Census OnTheMap

The concept of resident attachment gives community leaders an incredible opportunity to understand why their residents attach to their particular community, and building on these attributes can contribute to overall economic growth.

More recently, social scientists are learning that the perception an individual has about their environment, whether true or not, ultimately heavily weights in the decision-making process as to how individual makes choices about where to live. Richard Florida’s book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, talks about what motivates young people to locate to an urban area, and many times it is

Rapids have a hard time ‘anchoring’ to the Community. That is, that young people do not easily find ways in which they can plant their roots in Cedar Rapids. According to city leaders, workers find it difficult to integrate into the community. This problem does not only exist in Cedar Rapids, but appears to be a phenomenon that many social scientists have studied. Municipalities reap many benefits from a longer-term residency. Studies show that communities whose residents are attached to their community experience greater local GDP growth (John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Gallup, 2010). When residents feel more attached to their community they are more likely to contribute to the socio-economic growth of the community.

the perception of, “a creative life packed full of intense, high-quality, multi-dimensional experiences” (Florida, 2002). Again, many of the qualities that determine where a young person will relocate are based on that young person’s perception of their final destination. In conclusion, city leaders must understand the general perceptions of the City before they can accurately assess where economic and social development activities should be expanded.

### Residence Locations of 25 to 40 Year-old Cedar Rapids workers

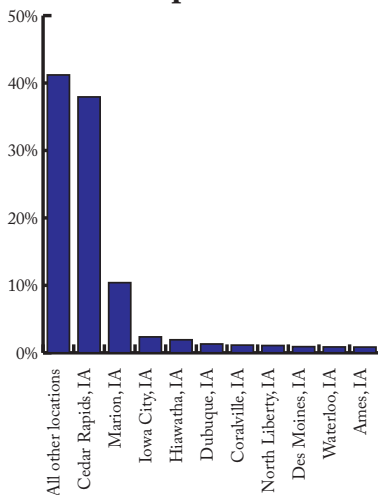


Figure 3.8 – Residence locations of 25 to 40 year-old Cedar Rapids workers.  
Source: US Census OnTheMap

### Flood of 2008

In June 2008, Cedar Rapids experienced its most destructive flood in history. The Cedar Rapids River crested to 31.12 feet. Before this historical flooding event the record height of the



*Figure 3.9 – Downtown Cedar Rapids is located right along the Cedar River. The New Bohemia (“New Bo”) District is close by. These areas were greatly impacted by the 2008 flood.*

river had reached only 20 feet. About 14% of the City felt the impacts of flood damage. Miles of destruction to the City, public buildings, and homes resulted in the need for a recovery plan. The City created a flood management system that plans to build permanent flood walls on both sides of the river to protect citizens from future floods, and repair and rebuild the 300 City facilities impacted by the flood (CR Progress, 2013). The City determined to use the catastrophe as an opportunity to move the City towards its vision of a “vibrant urban hometown – a beacon for people and businesses invested in building a greater community for the next generation” (Flood Recovery Planning, 2013).

The Flood of 2008 spurred redevelopment of the downtown area and reinvestment to neighborhoods. By November 2008, a four-month Neighborhood Planning Process (NPP) took place; it developed plans for the areas impacted by the floods and subsequent action plans by grouping the neighborhoods into three

sections: North, Central, and South. The objective of delineating areas was to maintain “the river as the heart of the community” (JLG Architects, Stanley Consultants, JMS Communications & Research, et al., 2009, p. 3). As a result of the NPP, 11 community goals were created and organized into five categories: transportation and connectivity, open space and recreation, arts and culture, neighborhood reinvestment, and business reinvestment. These five plan elements are coupled with action plans. For example, in the transportation and connectivity sections, the plan specifically indicates that circulation challenges will be relieved by improved street connections, which includes converting some downtown streets to two-ways. At the time of this paper, street-scape improvements and the conversion of one-way streets have already taken place in the downtown area.

Ultimately, the Flood of 2008 was a catalyst for initiating reinvestments in the downtown area and recovery plans included community input for the changing needs of Cedar Rapids residents. Notable projects initiated since the flood, include the redevelopment of the New Bohemian Neighborhood and the construction of the new Public Library, which features modern architecture and a rooftop garden. Additionally, the City worked with downtown businesses to encourage the construction of outdoor seating, an amenity previously not available to downtown customers. Finally, the construction of an Amphitheater on the Westside of the river is yet another move in the right direction according to focus group data. Later in this report, the reader will see that many people who participated in this project have noticed the recent developments and changes in the downtown area, and wish to see more.





and lack of arts and culture. Those that had already left did so to seek educational opportunities elsewhere, to avoid crime, to avoid long commute times, to seek better recreational opportunities, and to attend to family concerns.

## Conclusions

Most participants for the community activity sheets had similar responses. While respondents said they liked the personal connections and community feel of Cedar Rapids and liked the new downtown development, especially NewBo Marketplace, they also identified several opportunities for improvement. Cedar Rapids' residents said they wanted to see more downtown development, cultural, recreational, and social opportunities, more shops and restaurants, better transportation, and more nightlife. Of those respondents who were considering leaving Cedar Rapids or had already left, most sought career and educational opportunities outside the area. These findings are consistent with those of the Soul of the Community study, which emphasizes the key role of social offerings, community openness, and aesthetics in the formation of community attachment. These findings will also provide the basis for the community survey, which will explore the subjects here in greater depth.

## Key Findings from the Community Activity Sheets

- **The things respondents liked the most about Cedar Rapids were their personal connections, the family-friendly community feeling, and the new downtown growth.**
- **Respondents said that they would live in Cedar Rapids forever if there were more recreational activities, more downtown growth, more arts, recreational, and cultural opportunities, more restaurants, bars, and nightlife, better transportation, and more shopping.**
- **Respondents that had already left, or were considering leaving, Cedar Rapids left to seek career and educational opportunities, or because they sought the feeling of larger or smaller cities.**



# Chapter 5

## Community Survey Results

### Overview

The results of the community survey show the ratings of perceptions regarding the quality of life in Cedar Rapids as well as respondents' priorities for the City of Cedar Rapids. A total of 416 surveys were received by the project. Community survey respondents were divided into four groups to show any differences in priorities or ratings based on by age, education, or minority status. The four groups include: an aggregate group including all responses, 25 – 40 year olds with an Associates degrees or higher, all 25 – 40 year olds, and all minorities. In terms of race and ethnicity, the community survey obtained a representative sample of Hispanics and Blacks; though Asians were not represented as well as the other groups compared to US Census estimates. In terms of age and education, 25 – 40 year olds and those with Bachelor's degrees were best represented and made up the majority of respondents. Demographic tables for the community survey can be found in Appendix B.

### Perceptions

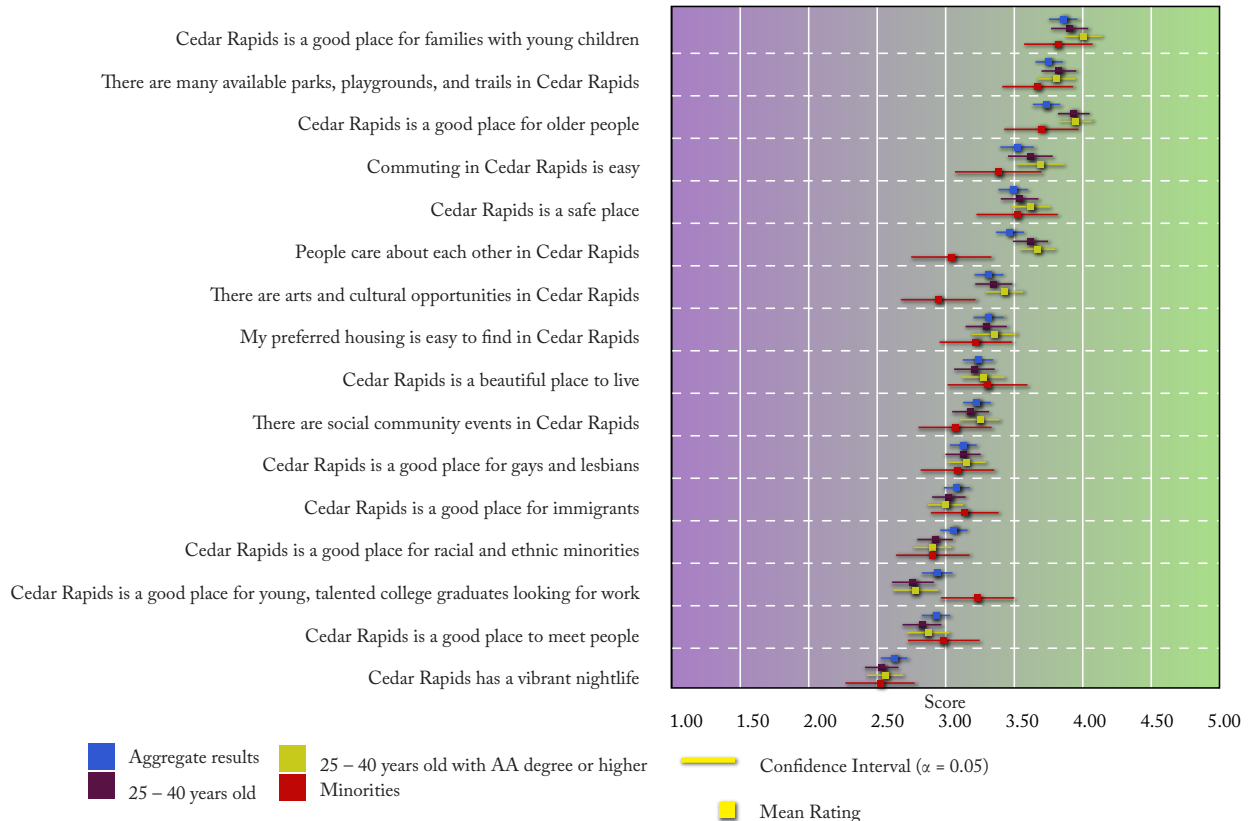


Figure 5.1 – Perceptions of Cedar Rapids



## Perceptions

The survey asked participants to rate a series of statements on a scale of 1 to 5 based on how much they agreed with that statement. Both 25 – 40 year olds (regardless of education level) and minority residents rated the same statements about Cedar Rapids the highest on a scale of 0 to 5, with five being the most favorable rating. Statements rated highest were “Cedar Rapids is a good place for families with young children”, “There are many available parks, playgrounds, and trails”, and “Cedar Rapids is a good place for older people”. Statements rated the lowest by 25 – 40 year olds and overall were “Cedar Rapids is a good place for racial and ethnic minorities”, “Cedar Rapids is a good place for young, talented, college graduate”, “Cedar Rapids is a good place to meet people”, and “Cedar Rapids has a vibrant nightlife”. In contrast, minority respondents rated the statements “People care about each other in Cedar Rapids” and “There are arts and cultural opportunities in Cedar Rapids” lower than others. However, minorities rated the statements “Cedar Rapids is a good place for young people” and “Cedar Rapids is a good place to meet people” more favorably than the other groups.

## Priorities

The second part of the survey asked participants to select three priorities for the City of Cedar Rapids. Analysis of community priorities reveals that 25 – 40 year olds have similar priorities as respondents in general. In addition, while minorities share similar priorities as 25 – 40 year olds and respondents in general, downtown development was less of a priority for minorities. Figure 5.2 shows the averaged priorities by the four groups on a 0 to 1 scale, with 1 being the highest. Both groups of 25 – 40 year olds chose better jobs, downtown growth and development, shopping, and career development as their highest priorities, while affordable housing, bars and restaurants, and educational opportunities were their lowest priorities. This result is misleading, however because, though nightlife, housing, and bars and restaurants were rated lowest priority by 25 – 40 year olds, later research in focus groups shows them to be components of downtown growth and development. In contrast, to 25 – 40 year olds and overall aggregate results, minorities chose diversity, shopping, nightlife, and career development as top priorities, while downtown growth and development, recreational opportunities, and parks and trails were their lowest priorities.

## Conclusion

Overall, the results of the community survey showed that 25 – 40 year olds, and respondents in general, felt that employment, downtown growth and development, shopping, and career development should be the city’s top priorities. Minority respondents add diversity and nightlife to this top priority list. Community ratings indicated that 25 – 40 year olds and respondents in general thought that Cedar Rapids lacked a vibrant nightlife, meeting people was difficult, and that Cedar Rapids was not welcoming to gays and lesbians, immigrants, or racial and ethnic minorities. Minority residents perceived Cedar Rapids as a good place for young college graduates and a good place to meet people but felt that the city lacked arts and cultural opportunities and was not welcoming. Thus, Cedar Rapids has many opportunities for improving community attachment by improving openness, creating new venues for arts and cultural activities, and developing a vibrant nightlife and other social offerings that will facilitate residents to meet one another.

## Priorities

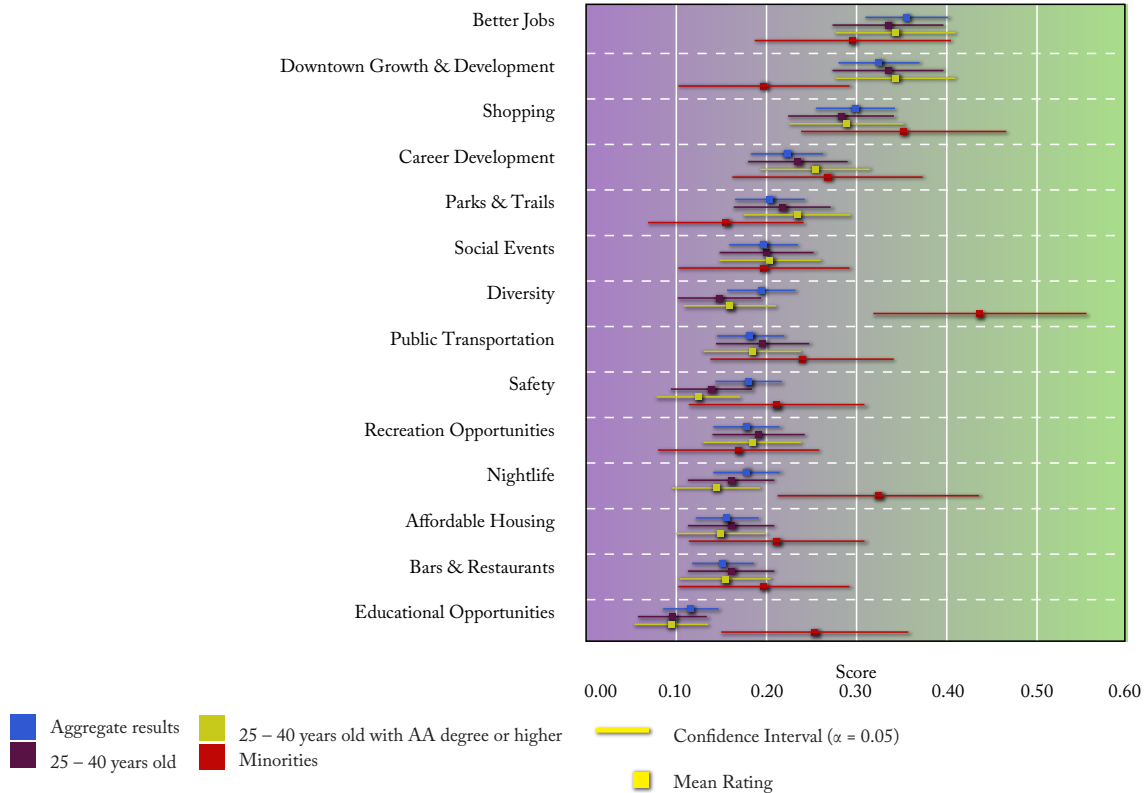


Figure 5.2 – Priorities for Cedar Rapids

## Key Findings of the Community Survey

- More than 10 % of respondents chose “better jobs”, “downtown growth & development”, and/or “shopping” as their priority investment for the City.
- The three statements receiving the highest ratings, or the best perceptions are: “Cedar Rapids is a good place for families with young children”, “There are many available parks, playgrounds, and trails in Cedar Rapids”, and “Cedar Rapids is a good place for older people”.
- The three statements receiving the lowest ratings, or the poorest perceptions are: “Cedar Rapids is a good place for gays and lesbians”, “Cedar Rapids is a good place to meet people”, and “Cedar Rapids has a vibrant nightlife.”
- Groups outside of the 25 – 40 year old age group have similar results to the overall analysis, the top three priorities remained the same along with highest and lowest ratings of perceptions.
- Survey results confidently conclude that Cedar Rapids residents have poor perceptions of social offerings & openness attachment drivers, two key drivers behind community attachment.

# Chapter 6

## Focus Group Analysis

### Focus Group Overview

#### Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance & Innovation Center



After a brief introduction about the workforce retention project, the focus group was asked to fill out the community survey. The surveys were immediately turned in so that the results could be compiled and feedback provided on how the results compared to the rest of the surveys that were collected. In the meantime, the group was asked about their initial reaction to the survey's questions and their general opinion of life in Cedar Rapids. After this, the results of the survey and how their results compared to the other surveys were presented to the group.

The group then started a discussion about the top three positive perceptions of Cedar Rapids and the top three negative perceptions of Cedar Rapids. This discussion was followed by a wall activity where the group members were given flash cards and asked to write down what they thought of when given a specific topic about Cedar Rapids (e.g. "diversity").

Each group member pinned their response to the wall. The cards on the wall were sorted two ways: by perception (positive or negative) and by category (diversity, downtown growth, etc.). The group then discussed their answers to the wall activity. This discussion was followed by the final activity. The group was asked to imagine Cedar Rapids in the year 2025 and if they could change one thing about the city what would it be. The group members put their response to this question on a small strip of paper, which was then placed into a hat. This was done to protect the anonymous creativity of the exercise. The answers were then randomly drawn out of the hat and a small discussion ensued on each answer as it was drawn. Group members were then officially thanked for their participation and dismissed.

## Vault Coworking and Collaboration Lunch Focus Group

As in the first focus group, participants were introduced to the project and asked to fill out the community survey. After turning in the surveys, the groups were asked to divide themselves into two groups, and together begin to answer questions presented to the group on paper. The two groups had two sets of different questions. The purpose of this format was to utilize the time allotted to be able to answer many questions about the survey results, and also, to enable each group to learn from one another. The two groups worked separately for about twenty minutes with project facilitators helping each group stay on task. The questions for each group were all based on furthering the understanding of survey results. After using butcher paper to record their results, each group elected a person to present the results to each group. This presentation allowed the other group to react by agreeing or disagreeing with the information presented. Healthy debates emerged where individuals would challenge each other, allowing researchers more insight on differing opinions.

However, many times consensus was made about the things they disliked or liked about Cedar Rapids. Finally, after each group presented, the group was asked to think about where they would move if they could take their business with them, pick up and move anywhere in the U.S. Then the group went around the room and individually each person said their dream city, and why they chose it. Many of the same places were mentioned. The purpose of this last activity was to inquire about places in the U.S. with positive perceptions for workers who were entrepreneurs. At the time the project was looking at other cities in the Midwest to research, and so hearing the responses from the focus group gave the project some ideas on how to move forward. Group members were then officially thanked for their participation and dismissed.



## Results

The following is a collective summary of the focus groups' opinions and perceptions of Cedar Rapids. The section is split up into the main topics that were discussed during the focus groups. Those topics are: Downtown growth and development, nightlife, diversity, young people and college graduates, and marketing.

### Downtown Growth and Development

The focus groups were asked about Cedar Rapids' investments in downtown growth and development. Members have noted a lot of improvements to the downtown region after the Flood of 2008, observing that more buildings were being renovated and that there was generally a lot more to do downtown. One member even suggested that the flood was the "best thing to happen





to Cedar Rapids”. Members also looked forward to the economic impact that the proposed new casino could bring to the region. While Cedar Rapids was perceived as doing a good job of promoting downtown growth and development, it was not perceived as promoting “urban growth” (i.e. growth aimed at increasing vibrancy and not just promoting businesses). Group members felt that hardly anybody lived downtown and nobody would want to raise their children downtown either. Group members asked, “Where are all the people? There are 120,000 people living in Cedar Rapids and you wouldn’t even know it.” The streets of downtown Cedar Rapids were usually deserted. No one wanted to go out and see what was going on. Members observed a lack of housing options in the downtown region. Some other suggestions the group made

to address these issues were to connect the downtown area and the NewBo City Market via a shuttle bus, hold more community events at Greensquare Park (the park across from the downtown library), and expand performance spaces. Members wished to see more storefronts in the downtown, desired more walkability, and more unique shopping opportunities.

## Nightlife

Focus group participants were in consensus about feeling that Cedar Rapids offered very little for the mid-20s – early 40s crowd. Instead it seems that entertainment is targeted toward the young 20s group. The focus group members wanted more places with live music venues and karaoke bars; they felt downtown is too bar centric. For example, a once popular martini place that hosted live music events closed down and switched over into a standard bar. The focus group members expressed sincere concern for avoiding more situations like the martini bar closing from happening downtown. They want to a higher concentration of entrainment venues and less “corporate” options in the downtown area. They wish to see the area have more unique restaurants and local bars with entertainment downtown. Finally, there is a prevailing interest in having more things to do during the week and later in the evening, in particular that the downtown venues be open past 8:00pm on the weeknights.

## Diversity

A central theme in the focus group discussion was this notion of insiders versus outsiders. Focus group participants regarded Cedar Rapids as very “cliquey” — people who were born and raised in Cedar Rapids are a clique, and people tend to stick close to their communities and personal social networks, making it hard to meet new people. They noted that Cedar Rapids is very “WASP” (White Angelo-Saxton Protestant) and exclusive. One member asked “can you fit in if



you're not Christian and don't play golf?" The issues of being "cliquey" highlight the problems of diversity and racial perceptions in Cedar Rapids. The group members questioned whether Cedar Rapids was investing enough in promoting diversity. They felt that there were a lack of opportunities for minorities to grow in their professions. They felt that people are friendly in the city but show subtle signs of prejudice to minorities. There is a particular negative attitude towards black people from Chicago who are perceived as coming to Cedar Rapids and "taking" benefits/resources from "deserving" locals. One focus group members did not feel accepted by the community when eating out or going out with their interracial family.

Focus group members were asked about the low survey scores regarding whether Cedar Rapids was a good place for the LGBT community. They see people in Cedar Rapids as not welcoming to homosexuals. Homosexuals are looked at as being weird. For example, members who self-identified as part of the LGBT community said that Cedar Rapids lacks an authentic gay community, which makes the city look worse being so close to Iowa City, a community perceived to be very opening and welcoming to the LGBT community.

Overall, members noted harsher treatment towards racial and ethnic minorities, and perceived being treated different due to their physical appearance. Members who were not originally from Cedar Rapids especially noted that they experienced more racism and prejudice in Cedar Rapids than they had in other places. In addition, minority and non-minority group members noted the poor public perceptions regarding the people migrating from Chicago, and that in Cedar Rapids there tends to be very harsh judgment to people with strong urban cultural values who come from bigger cities; it was assumed by the groups that this was due to racial prejudices.

## Young People and College Graduates

When asked about the perception of Cedar Rapids by young people and recent college graduates, the focus groups responded that even young people that grew up in Cedar Rapids do not want to live in Cedar Rapids. The groups said Cedar Rapids is perceived as being a factory town and not a "cool, hip place" like Iowa City is or other communities that are more open to entrepreneurship and diversity. The group thought that recent college graduates would have a difficult time finding opportunities in Cedar Rapids, claiming that young people feel that finding a full-time, well-paying job is impossible without any work experience. The focus group members felt that there are jobs available in Cedar Rapids but they are not the jobs that young people want. Many of the jobs available in Cedar Rapids are perceived as manufacturing or minimum wage jobs, which are not desirable by college graduates. In addition, starting salaries at the highly skilled professional jobs, i.e., engineers were perceived as low when workers compare the starting wages to the industry standards. Some of the larger employers in Cedar Rapids are perceived as having 'draconian' employee policies which participants said are very undesirable for younger people searching to start a career. They said that the community should desire to "harvest the imaginations" of young people instead focusing on the differences among the younger generation



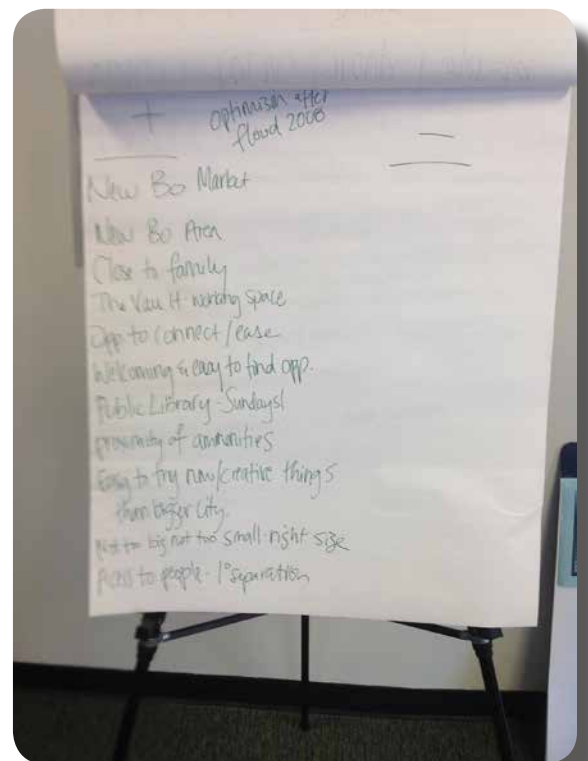
compared to the baby-boomer generation. Group members desired more businesses that offered creative jobs to young people and promotions from within the company.

## Marketing and Advertising

All focus groups came to consensus that Cedar Rapids has a marketing problem. Marketing to its own residents and to outside communities is of poor quality. Participants claimed it is hard to find out which events are occurring around the city. Members believed that Cedar Rapids lacked a “central hub” for information on community events and activities. They did note that the Cedar Rapids Area Convention & Visitors Bureau has a website (cedar-rapids.com) that does highlight events, activities, restaurants, and shops in the metropolitan area, but that it is too expensive for businesses to submit advertisements to the site. Members said that local events listing services, such as Hoopla, are difficult to gain access and have low user rates. They also noted that the marketing issue is related to the diversity issues previously identified. Minorities from low-income neighborhoods may not have had the same access to the Internet and these events websites and/or have the time to look for these events. Consequently, there is very little awareness for cultural events that go on in the area. Over and over again, focus groups identified the need for better advertising to help individuals living in Cedar Rapids discover their own city, and also, hoped this would indirectly improve the outward perceptions of the City.

## Conclusions

- **The downtown region should be an urban center and not just a business center. The area needs more housing options, unique bars and restaurants, and more community events. The downtown region should expand entertainment options to target the mid/late 20s – early 40s age group.**
- **Not enough effort or effective effort is conducted to retain young people originally from the area from leaving Cedar Rapids. Recent college graduates are perceive low starting wages or they perceive little career development opportunities.**
- **Cedar Rapids is perceived as boring and not a “cool, hip” place to live, even by natives.**
- **Current marketing and advertising efforts are unsatisfactory. There is a desire to improve resident awareness about events and things to do in Cedar Rapids.**



# Chapter 7

## Comparison Cities

### Case Studies Overview

In order to better understand how Cedar Rapids can improve perceptions of social offerings and openness, the project conducted brief case studies on three Midwest cities for ideas and examples. The three cities are Fargo, North Dakota, Des Moines, Iowa, and Grand Rapids, Michigan. They offered insight for addressing many of the outcomes produced by this project's original research. These three cities are also battling the loss of the 25 – 40 year old workforce, and were included in an economic development study for the City of Cedar Rapids during the same time as this research project. Additionally, these three cities are similar in size and geography to Cedar Rapids and have similar economies. The goal of these case studies is not to find a perfect match to Cedar Rapids, but to explore how other cities with similarities to Cedar Rapids are managing their downtown growth & development, retention of 25 – 40 year old workers, and what kind of programs have assisted in advancing social offerings and openness in the city.

### Fargo, North Dakota

#### Demographics and Economy

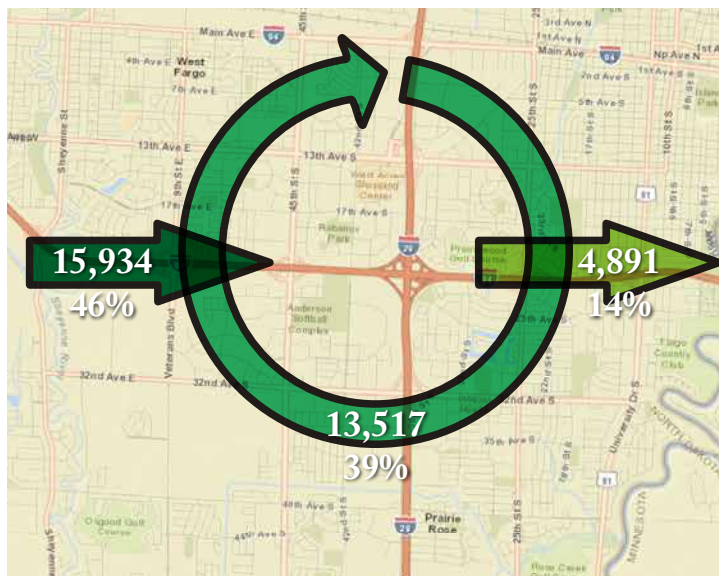


Figure 7.1 – Inflow/Outflow Diagram of 25 – 40 Year old Fargo Workers in 2011.

Source: US Census OnTheMap

Fargo, North Dakota, located on the northern Red River on the border of Minnesota is the largest city in North Dakota, with a population 106,005 in 2010. Fargo stands out from the other comparison cities as the only one to increase its population of 25 – 44 year olds from 2000 to 2010. Fargo's 25 – 44 year olds increased by 9%, growing from 28,195 in 2000, to 30,608 in 2010, at the same time as its total population rose 17% from 90,599 in 2000, to 105,549 in 2010. Much of the population growth in Fargo was due to the recent boom in the fracking industry in South Dakota, stimulating job growth in multiple sectors.

In 2011, Fargo's largest industries are health care (16%), retail trade (12%), and Accommodations and Food

Services (10%). Overall, total employment in Fargo grew by 21% from 2002 to 2011, which was the largest growth of the cities studied. Healthcare, education, management, and administrative services saw the most growth. The arts and entertainment, retail trade, and accommodations and food services sectors also saw gains. Despite employment growth in Fargo, median income was lower than Cedar Rapids, at \$41,558 and \$49,298 respectively in 2010.

## Workforce Mobility

Twenty-five to forty year olds made up a third of all Fargo's workers in 2011, comprising 34,342 of 102,863 total workers. Of 25 – 40 year olds, 39% percent lived and worked within the city limits of Fargo, while 46% commuted in and 14% lived in Fargo, but commuted to jobs outside the city.

Of 25 – 40 year olds who commuted into the city, Fargo had the shortest commute distance of the three comparison cities, including Cedar Rapids, with the largest percentages of young workers in the “less than 10 miles” category, and smaller percentages in the “10 to 24 miles” and “25 to 50” miles categories. This difference in commute time could be due to Fargo's higher density urban environment, with 2,162 inhabitants per square mile, compared to 1,784 in Cedar Rapids in 2010 (U.S. Census).

Of Fargo's young workers that lived in the city, only 3% lived downtown in 2011. This percentage was similar to the other cities studied, including Cedar Rapids. However, unlike the other cities studied (with the exception of Des Moines), Fargo saw an 8% increase in 25 – 40 year old workers living downtown between 2002 and 2011, while other cities lost 25 – 40 year olds living downtown. Cedar Rapids was the worst hit, losing 35% of its 25 – 40 year old downtown workers between 2002 and 2011, in part due to flood damage in 2008.

## Fargo Recreation, Culture, Food, Shopping, and Nightlife

Fargo has done much to distinguish itself from the sleepy town portrayed in the popular movie Fargo. Livability.com describes Fargo as “teaming with young people,” saying, “multiple condo apartments offer downtown housing while a diversity of art galleries, restaurants, theaters, shopping, and music venues provide options for those out and about.” Forbes magazine also praises the city, saying, “It couldn't get much better in Fargo!”

Downtown Fargo has many attractions, featuring 31 retail stores, 12 restaurants, and nine arts and music venues. The city also hosts several music festivals throughout the year. Food offerings in Fargo are diverse and range from inexpensive to upscale. Non-chain restaurant offerings include Indian, African, French, Greek, European, Vietnamese, and Vegetarian restaurants. Popular Fargo spots also include coffee shops and nightlife such as bars and pubs, which appeal to a college crowd, and upscale wine bars and cocktail lounges that offer live music and appeal to an older age group.

## Housing

With 3,452 residents and 2,679 housing units in Fargo's downtown in 2010, the downtown area offers a vibrant environment for 25 – 40 year olds, close to restaurants, nightlife, and arts and music venues. Fargo saw an 8% increase in 25 – 40 year old workers living downtown from 2002 to 2011. Downtown housing options have expanded greatly in Fargo since a Renaissance Zone was established in 1999, offering property tax abatement and income tax credits to owners. Since then, over \$132 million has been invested in housing and commercial property development downtown,



leading to the addition of over 150 condominium units since 2004. The majority of the new condominium units have been high-priced, from \$200,000 to \$300,000, though the city has also been renovating market-rate units. According to Fargo's 2012-2014 Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan, the Fargo Housing Authority has been working to eliminate blighted housing conditions downtown and in the central neighborhoods. The Authority maintains four, market-rate downtown multi-family housing developments totaling approximately 80 units. The apartments range from studios to two bedrooms and are predominantly rentals, though one offers lease to own.

Median gross rent in Fargo was \$647 in 2012- the lowest of the cities we studied and lower than Cedar Rapids and the US in general. When considering gross rent as a percentage of household income, Fargo had the lowest percentage of renters paying more than 35% of their income to rent of the cities studied, the Midwest, and the US in general. In contrast to Cedar Rapids, Fargo had the highest median owners costs of the cities studied, higher than the Midwest region, and closer to US median costs. In addition, Fargo's proportion of homeowners spending more than 35% of their income to housing costs that was higher than that in Cedar Rapids. This leads to the conclusion that, under current conditions, it is less costly per month to rent housing in Fargo, while in Cedar Rapids it is less costly per month to own. If current trends reported by real estate professionals (9) are true and young workers, in the short term, are more likely to rent housing than buy, this may signal that young workers have better housing options in Fargo than Cedar Rapids.

## City Policies and Programs

The City of Fargo has used a variety of policies and programs to enrich the quality of life in the city and to encourage economic development. For example, Fargo enhanced walkability in its downtown through its Broadway Bike and Pedestrian Only Zone program. The program closed off a popular downtown street to cars and installed lockers for cyclists. To enhance economic development, another city policy enabled businesses to rehabilitate storefronts in the downtown area (Fargo Storefront/Downtown Rehab Grant Program, 2014). The program made 50% matching grants of up to \$15,000 available to business owners, paid for with CDBG funds. To aid startups and small businesses, the city also offers fixed-rate micro-loans of up to \$50,000 for working capital, inventory, and equipment and 5-year property tax exemptions for new business or those wishing to expand.

Community organizations have also been active in enhancing Fargo's vibrancy. The Fargo Downtown Community Partnership, a non-profit community development corporation funded in part through grants from the City of Fargo, was instrumental in making downtown Fargo more accessible by marketing downtown events, shops, restaurants, and arts and music venues through a downtown website (<http://www.downtownfargo.com>). The Partnership also organized various downtown projects such as a Business Improvement District, and a railway quiet zone, which ensured trains would refrain from sounding horns while passing through downtown. The Business Improvement District then organized to allow businesses to raise funds for downtown improvements such as streetscaping and snow removal (Downtown Fargo Business Improvement District, 2014).

Lastly, the establishment of a Renaissance Zone spurred much of the new development in downtown Fargo. In 1998, a study found blighted conditions in the downtown area, leading to the delineation of the state-enabled zone (City of Fargo Renaissance Zone, 2014). The Renaissance Zone offered state and local income tax credits and property tax abatement available to owners of



commercial and residential property a period of 5 years. The Renaissance Zone encompassed much of downtown and led to intensified housing and commercial development.

## Professional, Private and Non-profit Development Organizations

According to staff of the investor-funded Greater Fargo/Moorhead Economic Development Corporation (GFMEDC), which focuses on workforce retention, while students do leave in order to explore, the Alliance's aim has been to provide a welcoming environment for them when they move back seeking employment. The GFMEDC "works with area employers to supplement their recruitment efforts, share resources with local colleges and universities so they can attract more students and encourage alumni to return, and support training programs so the workers we have can improve their career prospects" (Smart Move Fargo Moorhead, et al., 2014). Staff also said that the community has been instrumental in revitalizing downtown by creating a walkable access to arts, entertainment, bars, restaurants, and housing.

Another major asset to the Fargo community is The Cultural Diversity Center. The Center was founded in 1993 and is funded by grants from the regional city governments and by charity groups. The goal of the Center is to "embrace increasing ethnic diversity in the city and assist diverse populations in overcoming barriers to community participation" (Cultural Diversity Resources, 2014). "Leaders wanted to ameliorate intolerance of all kinds, increase understanding of the value of diversity, and develop a permanent system-wide framework aimed at celebrating the ever increasing cultures of the community." Among the programs that the Center offers are the Metro Interpretive Resource Center, which offers translation services in 10 languages, a multi-ethnic community development center, offering job-training and career services, youth development classes, self-sufficiency assistance, social activities, and cultural festivals.

## Conclusion

Fargo, ND and Cedar Rapids, IA are both mid-sized Midwestern cities that share a similar climate and mix of industries. Over the last decade, growth in the fracking industry in the region stimulated population and job growth in Fargo, including increasing its population of 25 – 40 year olds. The city has adopted several policies to increase the vibrancy of its downtown, making it a more esthetically pleasing, socially vibrant, and culturally open place for 25 – 40 year olds. To promote a healthy economy, the City of Fargo adopted policies enabling small business micro-loans, facade rehabilitation, and property and income tax incentives that revived downtown commercial property and housing markets. To enhance the social offerings in the city, Fargo supported community development corporations with grant funding to market the downtown events and nightlife. City-funded community organizations also promoted arts, music venues, and coordinate special projects, such as streetscaping, to enhance the city's aesthetics. Lastly, Fargo invested in community openness by funding the Cultural Diversity Center, which offers translation, employment, social, and cultural programs to help multi-ethnic residents adjust to the living in the community.

# Grand Rapids, Michigan

## Demographics and Economy

Grand Rapids Michigan sits on the bank of the Grand River, located 25 miles east of Lake Michigan. Grand Rapids is the second largest city in Michigan with a metropolitan statistical area population of over one million people. As of 2010, Grand Rapids had a population of 188,040. In 2013, Grand Rapids was named the 4th best city in the U.S. to find jobs by Forbes Magazine. From 2000 to 2012 Grand Rapids Michigan experienced a total population decrease of 5%, going from 197,800 to 188,040. Grand Rapids also experienced a 14% decrease of 25 – 44 year olds 62,315 to 53,864. However, the proportion of this age group in comparison to the total population showed a decrease of 2.9%, which is lower than the national average of 3.6%.

Like Cedar Rapids, Grand Rapids also has a large manufacturing industry which makes up 13% of all industries in the city. Grand Rapids is nicknamed “Furniture City” for having multiple furniture factory headquarters located in the area. Other major industry sectors in Grand Rapids include healthcare (37.6%), administration & support, waste management and remediation (9%), and educational services (8.8%). In 2010, Grand Rapids had a median income of \$38,344.

## Workforce Mobility

In 2011, 25 – 40 year olds made up 33% of all Grand Rapids’ workers. Of those 25 – 40 year olds, 16% percent lived and worked within the city limits of Grand Rapids, while 57% commuted in and 27% lived in Grand Rapids, but commuted to jobs outside the city. Grand Rapids had 55% of 25 – 40 year olds commuting to the city from less than 10 miles while only 13% commuted in from 50 miles or more.

From 2002 to 2011 the overall total employment dropped 11% in Grand Rapids. De-

spite the decrease in total employment, certain industry sectors, such as educational services, experienced a vast growth of 52% in total jobs. Grand Rapids’ total employment grew in the following industry sectors: educational services, health care and social assistance, real estate and rental and leasing, and administration & support, waste management and remediation. However, Grand Rapids experienced many jobs losses in all the other industry sectors between 2002-2011. The industry sectors which experienced the greatest job loss were management of companies and enterprises, construction, manufacturing and information. Because Grand Rapids experienced an overall total employment decrease, the median income of \$38,344 in 2010,

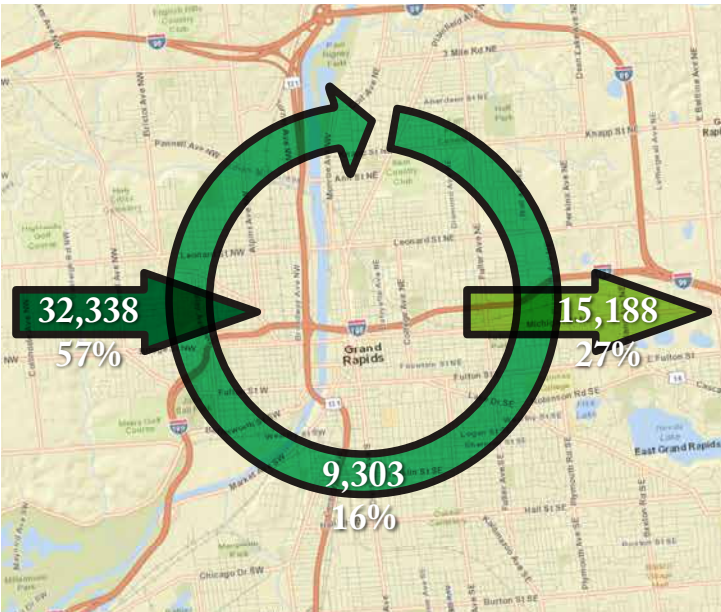


Figure 7.2 – Inflow/Outflow Diagram of 25 – 40 Year old Grand Rapids Workers in 2011.  
Source: US Census OnTheMap

was much lower than other comparison cities.

Of Grand Rapids' young workers that lived in the city or commuted in, 5% lived in the downtown area in 2011. Grand Rapids saw an 7% decrease in 25 – 40 year old workers living downtown between 2002 and 2011. When compared to Cedar Rapids, Grand Rapids has a much higher population density with 4,235 inhabitants per square mile, compared to 1,784 in Cedar Rapids in 2010 (U.S. Census).

## Recreational Activities, Culture, Food, Shopping, and Nightlife in Grand Rapids

Grand Rapids worked hard to establish a live, work and play culture in their downtown area. Downtown Grand Rapids is home to 36,000 employees, 31,000 higher education students and thousands of visitors annually. Grand Rapids city officials invested in rebuilding the City's core. The 11 LEED projects, new construction and building renovations downtown created over \$2.5 billion in investments to the vibrant downtown. Grand Rapids is 4th City in the U.S. for the number of registered LEED certified buildings and has the world's first LEED-certified art museum and YMCA.

Residents and visitors of Grand Rapids have many opportunities to engage in unique shopping and dining experiences. In the downtown area alone, Grand Rapids has over 120 restaurants, cafes, bars and lounges that range from a casual pub to fine dining experience to an upscale nightclub. There are many popular non-chain food restaurants that serve diverse cuisine from all over the world including Morocco, Mexico, Japan, Thailand, the Mediterranean, and Spain. According to Yelp, nine out of the ten highest rated restaurants in Grand Rapids are non-chain ethnic restaurants.

In the downtown districts of Grand Rapids, there are over 185 retail businesses; 44% are restaurants, 31% traditional retail, and 25% are businesses providing services. People in Grand Rapids like to shop. Consumers in the city spend over \$667 million in apparel and accessories alone, and within a ten mile radius, the 2009 consumer expenditure profile reported a total expenditure of over \$13.9 billion. There are many stores in the downtown area including grocery, clothing, accessory, arts, books, music, shoes and flower stores. In addition, there are amenities like fitness centers, salons, spas and health clinics.

Grand Rapids also offers many arts and cultural opportunities for its patrons. In the downtown, there are 11 art galleries, five museums, 13 performance theaters, two libraries and one gaming center. In 2009, Grand Rapids estimated over 2.6 million people went to visit the downtown for culture and entertainment.

## Housing

Grand Rapids provides many diverse housing options in the downtown area. Downtown housing in Grand Rapids has more than doubled since 2000. There is an estimated 17,372 downtown residents within the one mile radius and 2,938 housing units in downtown Grand Rapids. Developers are renewing historic buildings to provide modern, unique housing units through exclusive designs and accessibility to many city amenities. The new developments appeal to a diverse set of clients by providing luxury condos to affordable apartments. There are many one and two bedroom apartments, two to three bedroom town-homes, live work artists apartments, contemporary student living, and 25 residential tax-free condominiums. In 2009, the average monthly rental rates in the downtown were \$836.75. From 2000 to 2010, Grand Rapids added more than 1,700

housing units to the downtown market. However, only 5% of 25 – 40 year old workers were living in downtown Grand Rapids. In 2009, the median age of downtown residents was 30.4 compared to the rest of the city at 31.8. In 2009, downtown households reported less income (\$32,681) than the rest of the household in the city (\$37,625). However, per capita income in the downtown area (\$20,543) was higher than the rest of the city residents (\$18,913) in 2009.

## City Policies and Programs

There are many city policies and programs that encourage pedestrian traffic and produce a vibrant downtown, as well as support start up business and entrepreneurs. Grand Rapids offers tax abatements to “all new personal property taxes on new businesses that create at least 25 jobs for up to 12 years. Eligible businesses include manufacturing, mining, research and development, wholesale and trade, and office operations”. Other tax abatement policies include industrial, high tech and obsolete property tax abatements for economic development. The City of Grand Rapids Downtown Development Authority offers various incentive programs to improve the design and development for downtown. Such programs include: Building Reuse Incentives Program, Street-scape Incentives Program, and the Areaway Fill Incentives Program.

Grand Rapids is one out of eleven designated “Smart Zones” in Michigan. Smart Zones are “technology parks” created to spur the growth of technology or research related businesses and employment opportunities. The SmartZone in Grand Rapids is the Van Andel Research Institute. These smart zones are created to attract similar business and high skilled young professionals to the area.

Downtown Grand Rapids has a Small Business Resource Center. This center is open to the public and located in the lower level of the main public library. The Small Business Resource Center provides business information and resources to anyone who wants to start, manage, and grow their business. In addition, they offer marketing and businesses-plan classes to the public. One of the services provided in this center includes the Training and Mentoring Program of Service Corporation of Retired Executives (SCORE). SCORE offers free face-to-face, telephone and e-mail business counseling with retired business executives to discuss the development any business plan or any aspects of your business. This program is open to anyone and is ideal for start-up and small businesses.

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. (DGRI) is an organization that combines the efforts, staff, and resources, of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Downtown Alliance (DA), Office of Special Events (OSE), and Downtown Improvement Authority (DID) into one unified organization that actively works on improving a sense of community and creating a prosperous downtown by encouraging economic vitality to improve urban life. DGRI offers many opportunities to keep downtown bustling. Programs sponsored by DGRI include:

Let’s Go. Out. Program – In place to encourage events in Downtown Grand Rapids. Supports events by providing assistance in marketing, staff assistance, financial support, Mini Grant Program and Larger grants up to 25,000.

Safety Ambassadors Program – A team of friendly and welcoming individuals that patrol the Downtown areas. The Safety ambassadors are there to share their knowledge of Grand Rapids as well as offer a helping hand to residents, visitors and workers to improve their overall experience of downtown Grand Rapids.



## Professional, Private and Non-profit Development Organizations

Grand Rapids has many partnerships with public and private organizations. Grand Rapids is home to West Michigan TEAM, an employer resource network aimed at retaining engaged and skilled workforce in West Michigan. The West Michigan TEAM uses retention specialist and similar tools to improve the efforts of workforce retention for small, mid-size, and large employers in the area. Grand Rapids is also home to the SOURCE, a nonprofit employee support organization. The SOURCE helps employee retention by providing job training to employees to enhance their skills and help them move up to higher positions. The Right Place is another organization located in Grand Rapids that serves West Michigan companies by providing assistance for location, innovation and growth. The Right Place offers services such as: incentive and financial assistance discovery, Federal, state and local government access and service coordination, workforce training and certification, business-to-business learning programs, leadership development and site selection assistance.

## Conclusion

Grand Rapids, Michigan is a mid-sized, Midwestern city that shares a similar climate and industrial make up as Cedar Rapids. Grand Rapids city leaders have invested in revitalizing their downtown area to attract and retain a strong workforce. Grand Rapids has adopted several policies to create an environment which supports entrepreneurship, small business development, and encourage investment in downtown. Its policies improve overall quality of life for the people of Grand Rapids. Grand Rapids has adopted tax abatement policies to increase a business climate that will attract young workers and has invested over \$1.86 billion in the downtown area to provide various housing options, mixed-use development, and the rehabilitation of historic buildings as well as green and LEED building projects. Grand Rapids efforts to improve quality of life have earned it numerous national rankings such as #1 Hottest Region for Fastest-Growing Companies in 2008 by Inc., #1 America's Greenest City in 2008 by Fast Company, and #6 Top Metros in 2008 by Site Selection and #3 in the U.S. for Best Places to Have Fun by Places Rated Almanac. Consistent with research on perceptions, Grand Rapids demonstrates the importance of perception. With high national ratings, the City is increasingly associated with these ratings, which most likely are improving perceptions of Grand Rapids. Grand Rapids' vibrant nightlife, diverse dining, walkable neighborhoods, and growing economy has made the city a target model for attracting and retaining a young workforce.



# Des Moines

## Demographics and Economy

Of the four case study cities included in this report, Des Moines was the second largest in population after Grand Rapids. Des Moines' total population rose 2% from 198,682 in 2000 to 203,433 in 2010. Des Moines' population 25 – 44 year olds decreased by -6%, from 63,210 in 2000, to 59,635 in 2010, similar to Cedar Rapids and less than the Midwest rate of -10%. The proportion of 25 – 40 workers as a percentage of all workers declined by -2.5% in Des Moines between 2000 and 2010, though this was less than the -3.6% decline in young workers in Nation.

Overall, total employment numbers were static in Des Moines from 2002 to 2011. Des Moines' largest employment sectors were finance and health care, retail trade, and public administration. Des Moines saw employment growth in the arts and entertainment, healthcare, and education sectors, however, real estate, construction, and information lost jobs. Median income in Des Moines was lower than Cedar Rapids, at \$44,178 and \$49,298 respectively in 2010.

## Workforce Mobility

Twenty-five to forty year olds made up 33% of all Des Moines' workers in 2011, comprising 61,843 of 186,140 total workers. Of 25 – 40 year olds, 25% percent lived and worked within the city limits of Des Moines, while 50% commuted in and 25% lived in Des Moines, but commuted to jobs outside the city. Of 25 – 40 year olds who commuted into the city, Des Moines had a slightly shorter commute distance than Cedar Rapids, with a larger percentages of young workers in the "less than 10 miles" category and a smaller percentage traveling over 50 miles. However, the City had a similar percentage of 25 – 40 year olds commuting between 10 and 50 miles to work. This difference in commute time is due to Des Moines' close proximity to heavily populated suburbs and

a higher density urban environment, with 2,515 inhabitants per square mile, compared to 1,784 in Cedar Rapids in 2010 (U.S. Census).

Of young workers that lived in Des Moines or commuted in, 4% lived downtown in 2011. This percentage was similar in the other cities studied, including Cedar Rapids. However, unlike the other cities studied (with the exception of Fargo), Des Moines saw a 5% increase in 25 – 40 year old workers living downtown between 2002 and 2011, while other cities lost 25 – 40 year olds downtown. Cedar Rapids lost 35% of its 25 – 40 year old downtown population between 2002 and 2011.

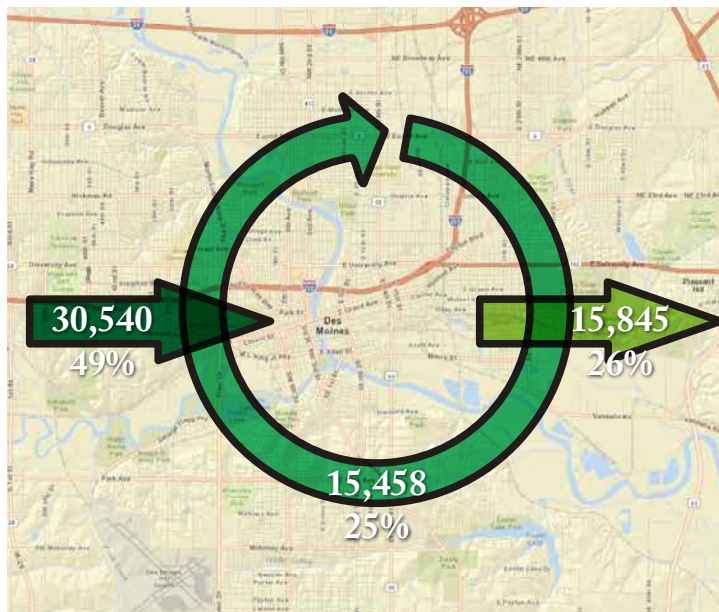


Figure 7.3 – Inflow/Outflow Diagram of 25 – 40 Year old Des Moines Workers in 2011.

Source: US Census OnTheMap

## Recreational Activities, Culture, Food, Shopping, and Nightlife

Des Moines has put significant effort into creating downtown with unique neighborhoods, unique shops, a variety of downtown housing options, eclectic restaurants, and a wide-range of entertainment. Since 2000, more than \$3 billion has been allocated to redevelop Des Moines' downtown area (Forbes 2013). Investments in the downtown area include a 40 million dollar sculpture park, a 'green' bicycle sharing program, a free downtown trolley that provides access to the State Capitol, plenty of walking bridges to cross the river, downtown sky walks connecting many buildings, sports & arts entertainment venues, and many parks and open green spaces (Great Des Moines Convention & Visitors Bureau 2014). The downtown offers an array walking possibilities including the 1.9-mile promenade along the Des Moines River featuring nighttime lighting, world-class public art, and multiple pedestrian bridges connecting the downtown neighborhoods (National Recreation & Park Association 2011).

The downtown features many shopping opportunities, including its Historic East Village neighborhood which includes more than 50 storefronts, of which are mostly original small businesses. East Village is a neighborhood which features downtown housing, restaurants, shopping, and access to near-side neighborhoods. East Village housing includes lofts, upscale apartments, luxury condominiums, and studio block apartments, providing a variety of housing options all located within short walking distances of necessary amenities. Some of area's attractions include an ice-skating rink, an amphitheater, a historical museum, and the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden (Historic East Village 2014).

The website Des Moines Downtown provides a place to find everything in the downtown area. It showcases over 100 places to eat and drink, a list of more than 40 entertainment venues, and 28 locations for downtown living. Additionally, the website provides an entire page dedicated to businesses explaining the dozens business incentives set-up through partnerships to encourage new and small businesses owners. The downtown Des Moines area includes five distinct neighborhoods which all offer a variety of housing, dining, and entertaining. Des Moines has successfully initiated a live, work, and play culture that is accessible for many people with varying incomes and backgrounds. Due to the recent influx in downtown residents, the Hy-Vee grocery store has decided to open a store in the downtown. The store serves as yet another catalyst for more people to enjoy living in the downtown area and also, is a reflection of the prior downtown livability investments the City has made in recent years.

## Housing

In 1998, Des Moines began to offer a policy that offered a 10-year tax abatement for residential development in the downtown. The number of people living in the downtown doubled, from 3,000 people to over 6,000 people in the years 2002 to 2007, respectively (City of Des Moines 2008). From 2001-2011 more than 4,500 residential units were constructed in the downtown area. This construction pushed the downtown residency to over 8,000 people residing in the downtown area, of which the largest demographic is 25-34 year olds, making up 16% of downtown residents (Forbes 2013). There are many one and two bedroom apartments, two to three bedroom town-homes, live work artists apartments, studio apartments, and small homes available in the downtown area.

According to recent news articles, the demand for housing in the downtown area continues to be strong in 2014. Just recently three apartment complexes opened, totally more than 1,300 additional apartments and town-homes. In these new developments there are some with income

restrictions to allow young professionals to have an opportunity to live in the downtown area. For example, half of the apartments in one of the new, larger apartment complexes reserves its units for residents who make less than 80 percent of the median income, which is around \$42,000 (Aschbrenner 2014). This helps appeal to younger professionals just starting their careers. As it currently stands, rental occupancy rates in the downtown area are at 98 percent (Aschbrenner 2014).

## City Policies and Programs

According to the City's website there is a host of policies and programs aimed at downtown growth and development. Further in this section, there is a brief discussion of public-private partnerships which is a large part of the Des Moines culture. Their emphasis on working with small businesses, local revenue opportunities with banking institutions, and their five educational institutions helps to drive Des Moines' local economy and workforce retention. The City provides many financial incentives for business, including the following: grants, loans, revolving loans, site development (private land for redevelopment), loan guarantees, loan pooling, and equity financing. The tax policies in place to assist economic development and downtown growth include: Self Supporting Municipal Improvement District (SSIMID), Urban Revitalization allowing 5 year/100% or 10 year/declining abatements for most locations, property tax exemptions, tax increment financing (TIF), and tax credits for investing in an Enterprise Zone.

The Office of Economic Development of the City of Des Moines offers help to small, medium, and large companies to start-up or expand their business through a variety of programs. Some of their programs include: Des Moines Action Loan Fund (DMALF) providing long-term financing for industrial and commercial expansion, Micro-loan Program creates and simulates sustainability by job creation for low- and moderate-income residents, Loan Injection Program (LIP) assisting programs in target areas, Enterprise Zone Incentive's for Business Expansion that attract private investments to economically distressed areas, the SBA 504 Loan Program that assists small business formation, and the Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Program (NCR) that assists revitalization of older commercial buildings (Downtown Community Alliance 2013).

## Professional, Private and Non-profit Development Organizations

The Des Moines area thrives with a variety of private-public partnerships to ensure its success. The Co-Op Advertising Program markets the Greater Des Moines and local tourism to attract more residents, business, and tourists. According the website, Catch Des Moines, due to its collaborative advertising efforts, Des Moines has seen several improvements including the following in 2013: hotel occupancy reached a three-year high during peak summer travel, more than 90,000 additional hotel inquiries were gained from April-September 2013, website visits were up 55.1%, and in-kind media secured through promotions during the fiscal year 2012-2013 exceeded \$435,000 (Great Des Moines Convention & Visitors Bureau 2014).

The Greater Des Moines Partnership is an economic and community development organization that has been serving Des Moines for over 125 years (Greater Des Moines Partnership 2014). The partnership has over 21 affiliate Chambers of Commerce and over 5,000 business members. It has helped with the investments in the Business Innovation Zone, and created downtown development events, like the World Food & Music Festival, the Des Moines Art Festival, and WOW! Wonder of Words, among many. The Partnership focuses mostly on economic and community development by assisting new businesses and ensuring that there is a talented and educated workforce. It states, that embedded within each of the economic development areas is the emphasis

of building and sustaining a vibrant downtown core through development, events, environment, and promotion (Greater Des Moines Partnership 2014).

The StartupCity Des Moines is a coworking community located in the downtown area. It is a technology start up that provides mentoring, educational curriculum, services, and a workspace conducive for resident startups. The StartupCity Des Moines is a member of the Iowa Startup Alliance which is an incubator organization targeted at entrepreneurs, and provides statewide resources including networking events, and spaces for meetings in various locations. The space provides a place for young entrepreneurs to find the support they need to make their business dreams a reality.

## Conclusion

Des Moines has doubled its number of residents living in the downtown area in less than 10 years by using a variety of tax incentive programs to encourage the development of downtown housing. It has completely revitalized its' east side neighborhood, which now has over 50 storefronts and a vibrant nightlife. Its 3 billion dollars of investments created a massive public art sculpture park, a bicycle-share program, miles of walking bridges and near-side neighborhood walking paths, and dozens of recreational opportunities. Des Moines' intense focus on working with new small and medium-sized businesses have helped to create a unique downtown offering exclusive shopping and dining experiences. It works with several community partners to ensure great advertising of its amenities and has a number of websites dedicated to showing off Des Moines and helping people discover its' unique offerings. With its rating as the #8 place for young people to live in the Nation, it has done a great job promoting itself. The advertising, entrepreneurial-business focus, investments in downtown, and continuous stream of City programs dedicated to improving the downtown prove to be working to increase downtown vitality and sustainability.

## Case Studies Conclusion

The purpose of the city case studies was to look at how other Midwestern, mid-size cities with similar economies to Cedar Rapids, are combating the loss of young workers. The underlying theme in all of the case studies is a culture of live, work and play in the downtown. Additionally, vital programs and policies found in all case studies are: high density development, entrepreneurial-business focus, diverse downtown housing options, unique shopping and dining options, and community funding options to create more social events. Using the information from these case studies, survey results and focus groups this study found implications for Cedar Rapids.



# Chapter 8

## Implications for Cedar Rapids

The data presented in this study helped identify quality of life factors that residents in Cedar Rapids would like to see improved. In addition, the research can confidently confirm that Cedar Rapids is on the right track; since the flood in 2008, the City's investments and improvements align with what 25 – 40 year olds desire in their communities. Moreover, preferences of 25 – 40 year olds are shown to not be mutually exclusive in Cedar Rapids, meaning that improvements in areas identified by the community activity sheets, the community survey, and the focus groups collectively enhance quality of life for all people in Cedar Rapids. This report will conclude with a summary of the study's findings, implications for Cedar Rapids based on what it is already doing, and finally, ideas for how to improve social offerings and openness perceptions in Cedar Rapids.

### Five Principals of Overall Findings:

1. Cedar Rapids residents have poor perceptions of social offerings & openness attachment drivers
2. More downtown growth & development can improve perceptions of social offerings
3. The New Bo Market area is a good model for increasing the perception of openness
4. The top three priorities identified for increased investments in Cedar Rapids are:
  - Better Jobs
  - Downtown Growth and Development
  - Shopping
5. Responses reveal that there is a perception of low pay in Cedar Rapids for highly skilled positions

### On the Right Track...

Respondents and focus group participants consistently praised the progress in downtown development and growth since the flood of 2008. For this reason, it is important to acknowledge the positive direction for which Cedar Rapids is moving, and it is important that the City capitalize on these positive perceptions by increasing the number of people who are aware of the planned changes. Additionally, it is important that the City follow through with its recently developed comprehensive plan, as residents look forward to the proposed progress. Specifically, Cedar Rapids should continue to implement improvements and changes in the following areas:

- Increase riverfront development and increase the access to recreational use of the river
- Increase walkability and multi-modal options for transportation in the Downtown
- Use mixed-use zoning and infill development in Downtown to create vibrancy
- Connect the West side of the River to Downtown
- Provide incentives to induce the development of a variety of Downtown housing options
- Restore near-side neighborhoods, ensuring unique characterization of each neighborhood



Based on this study's original research and brief case studies of cities, there are some additional options that Cedar Rapids can consider as it moves forward in attempting to improve workforce retention of 25 – 40 year olds. These options are merely a suggestion based on input from this study and review of other Cities; they should be fully investigated before implementation to completely acknowledge feasibility and appropriateness for Cedar Rapids. It is the hope of the researchers that the City will consider the following proposals as it undoubtedly continues to make positive progress for its' residents.

## **Suggestions for Economic Development Activities**

- **Tie tax incentives should be for businesses committing to paying above median-area income**
- **Strengthen public-private partnerships to support entrepreneurs, e.g., creation of small business resource center**
- **Create more incentive programs for small and/or new downtown businesses & entrepreneurs to create more unique social offerings (shops, restaurants, etc.)**
- **Develop unique neighborhoods using streetscape improvements and creating public-private partnerships for façade rehabilitation**
- **Set design standards to ensure uniqueness across city neighborhoods**
- **Provide City-sponsored community micro-grants for public social offerings in Downtown area**

## **Suggestions for Improving Perceptions of Openness and Social Offerings**

- **Use new public library and New Bo areas as model for renovation, infill development, & designs for new buildings in the downtown and surrounding areas**
- **Build with more roof-top gardens, modern architecture, and open green spaces**
- **Expand programs welcoming new residents**
- **Construct public-private partnerships with existing multi-lingual and cultural networks to create programs that help people discover Cedar Rapids**
- **Expand express buses to Downtown and New Bo from fringes Thursday, Friday, and Saturday**
- **Consider weekly express routes for workers to downtown area**
- **Improve marketing of social events & amenities**
- **Create free Smart-phone app with current social events**
- **Update & modernize food, events, and shopping website and adapt to social media**
- **Increase investments in arts, music, and cultural opportunities open later and on week-days**
- **Attract diverse set of performers and support local artists**
- **Attract year-round recreation & entertainment options, e.g., science center, theme park, etc.**

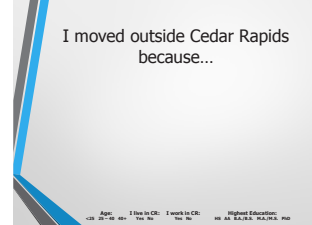
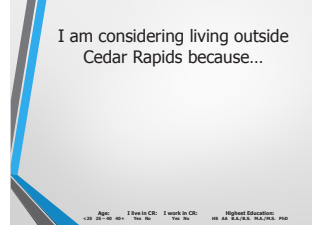
## Conclusion

The City of Cedar Rapids has made incredible progress since the devastating Flood of 2008. The City rebounded, and their positive changes have not gone unnoticed. Workers and residents of Cedar Rapids are excited about the new developments in downtown and in the nearside neighborhoods. Despite poor perceptions of openness and social offerings, there are many opportunities for Cedar Rapids to improve these perceptions by continuing planned changes, improving comprehensive marketing of the City, and continuing to create the culture that people want to live in as shown in the above suggestions. The researchers feel this study accomplishes two important steps toward progress: 1) it provides the City of Cedar Rapids with concrete evidence that its future plans and recent progress are what people want, and 2) it provides the City of Cedar Rapids with additional research regarding its residents' perceptions and preference to be able to do even better planning and investing in the future. The researchers are excited to continue to follow Cedar Rapids as it flourishes in the future. The researchers thank the City of Cedar Rapids for graciously allowing the team the opportunity to engage with residents and learn so much about this changing community.

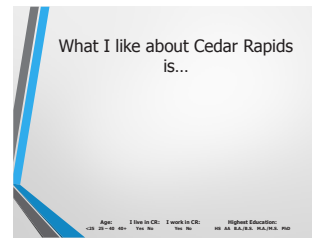
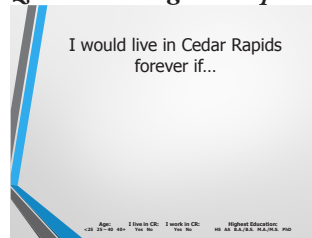
# Appendix A

## Community Activity Sheet Examples and Demographics

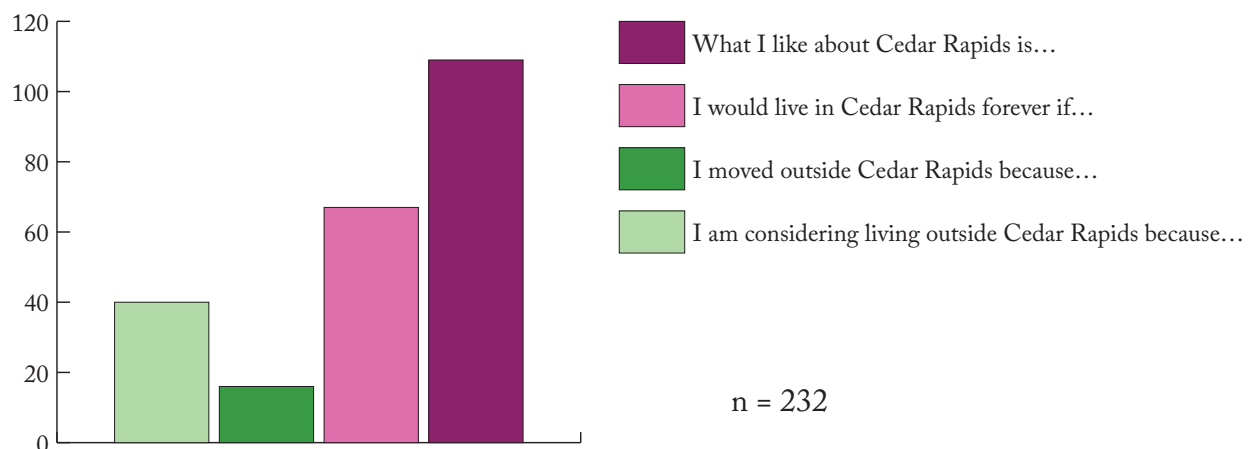
### Questions that identify factors detracting from quality of life



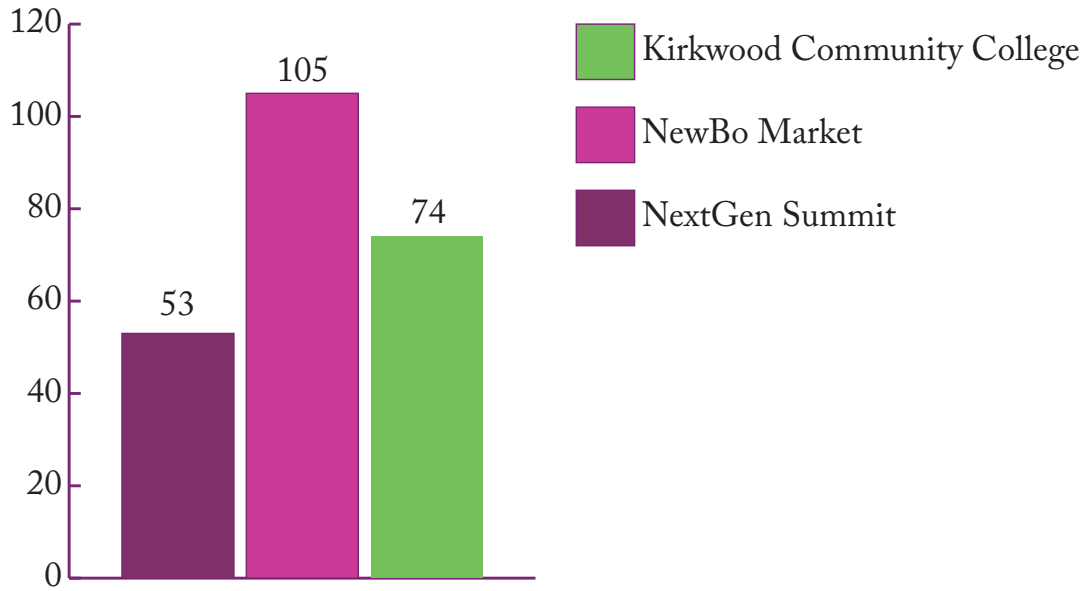
### Questions that generate positive comments or ideas



## Respondents by Question

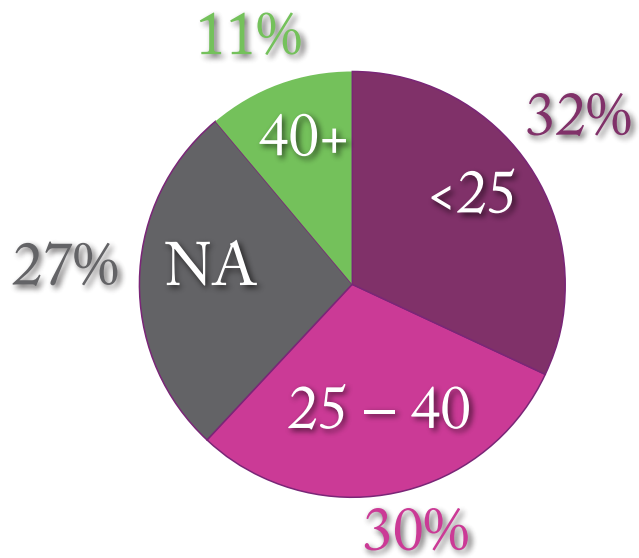


## Respondents by Site



n = 232

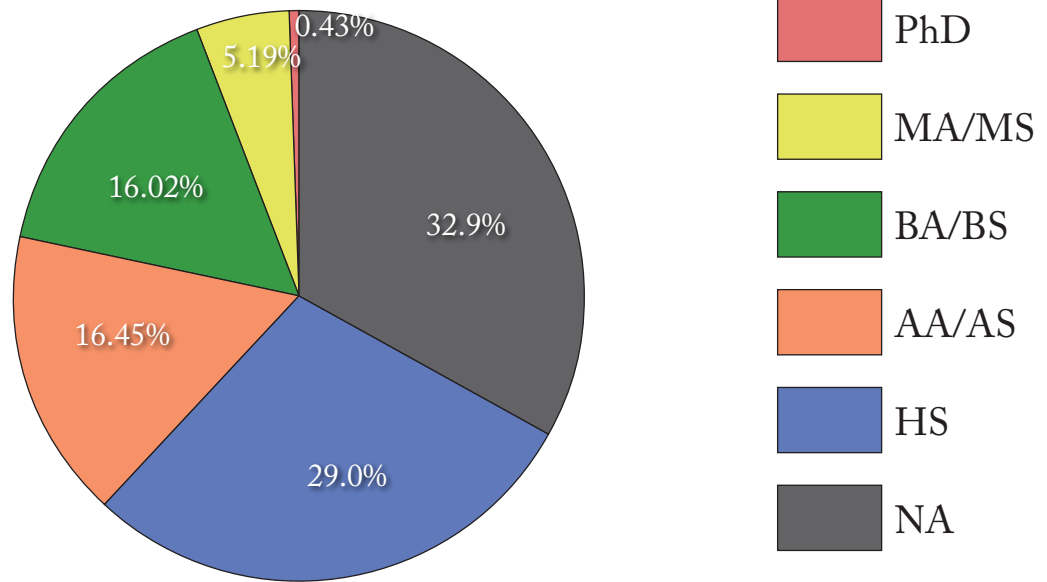
## Respondents by Age



n = 232

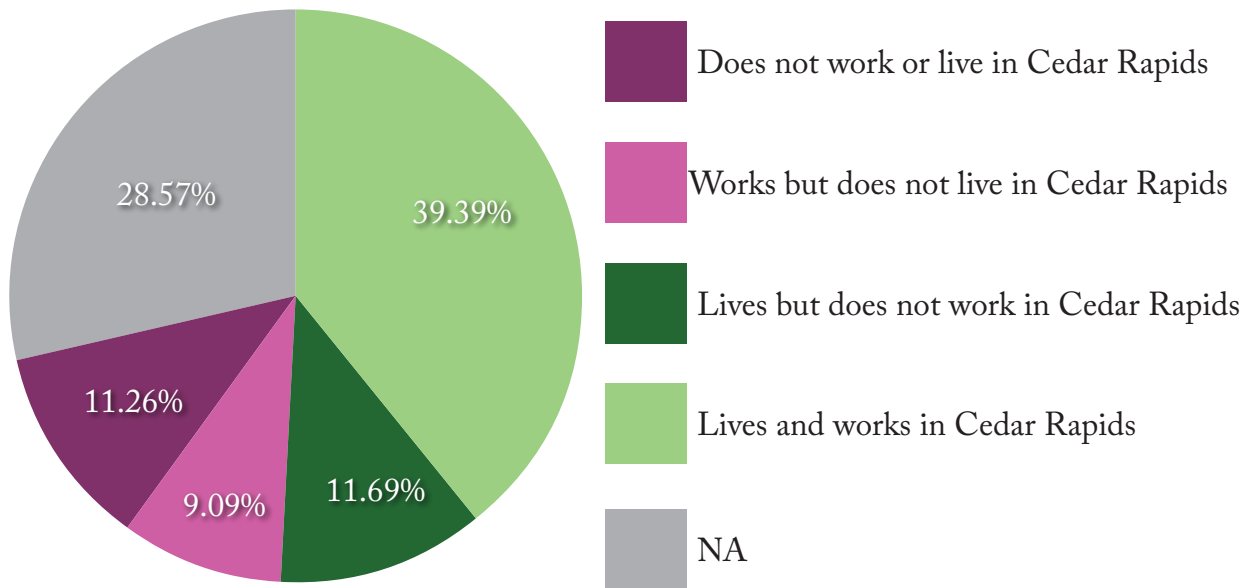


## Respondents by Education



n = 232

## Respondents by Residency



n = 232

# Appendix B

## Community Survey Examples and Demographics

### Front

**We value your opinion!** This survey was created to assist the City of Cedar Rapids in attracting and retaining workers to live and work in our city. We need your help! Please answer the following questions using your most honest assessments from your experiences. No answer is wrong!

Thank you! – Cedar Rapids Workforce Retention Group, University of Iowa School of Urban & Regional Planning and Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities

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*Your opinions matter. Please read each statement and rate on a scale from 1-5 based on your experiences. 1 is the worst rating and 5 is the best rating.*

<b>Cedar Rapids has a vibrant nightlife.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Cedar Rapids is a good place to meet people.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>People care about each other in Cedar Rapids.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>There are arts and cultural opportunities in Cedar Rapids.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>There are social community events in Cedar Rapids.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Cedar Rapids is a good place for families with young children.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Cedar Rapids is a good place for racial and ethnic minorities.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Cedar Rapids is a good place for older people.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Cedar Rapids is a good place for gays and lesbians.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Cedar Rapids is a good place for young, talented college graduates looking for work.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Cedar Rapids is a good place for immigrants.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>There are many parks, playgrounds, and trails in Cedar Rapids.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Cedar Rapids is a beautiful place to live.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Cedar Rapids is a safe place.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Commuting in Cedar Rapids is easy.</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>My preferred housing is easy to find in Cedar Rapids.</b>	1	2	3	4	5

PLEASE TURN OVER TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY

### Back

*Priorities. Pick your top 3 preferences.*

**The following topics should be a priority for Cedar Rapids in improving our city, and would help make me stay working and/or living here...**

DOWNTOWN GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT	AFFORDABLE HOUSING
NIGHTLIFE	DIVERSITY
PARKS & TRAILS	EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES
SOCIAL EVENTS	BARS & RESTAURANTS
CAREER DEVELOPMENT	BETTER JOBS
SAFETY	PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES	SHOPPING

---

*One last step. Tell us a little bit about you.*

**1. I am...**      younger than 25      between 25 – 40 years old      40+

**2. My highest level of education is...**

High school/GED	Associates Degree	B.A. /B.S.	M.A. /M.S.	PhD	N/A
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**3. I am currently living in Cedar Rapids.**      YES      NO

**4. I am currently working in Cedar Rapids.**      YES      NO

**5. I am fairly compensated for the work I do.**      YES      NO

**6. I have opportunities for growth in my workplace.**      YES      NO

**7. I have held employment in Cedar Rapids for...**

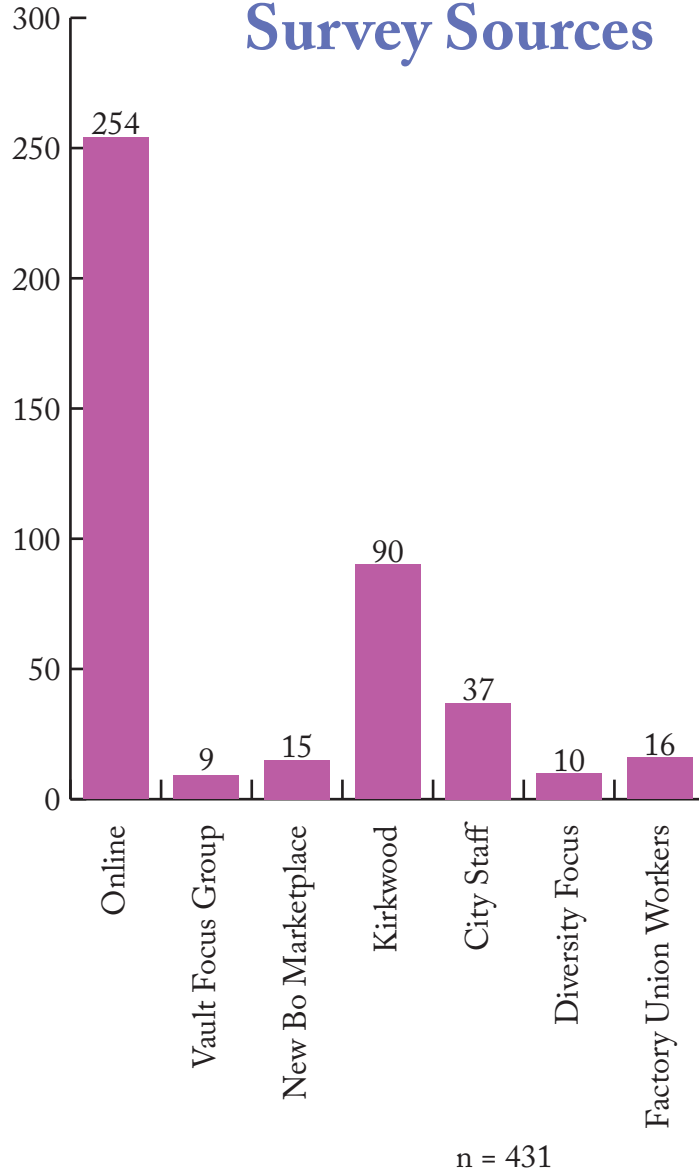
0 – 1 Years	1 – 3 Years	3 – 6 Years	6+ Years
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**Please fill in using your own words:**

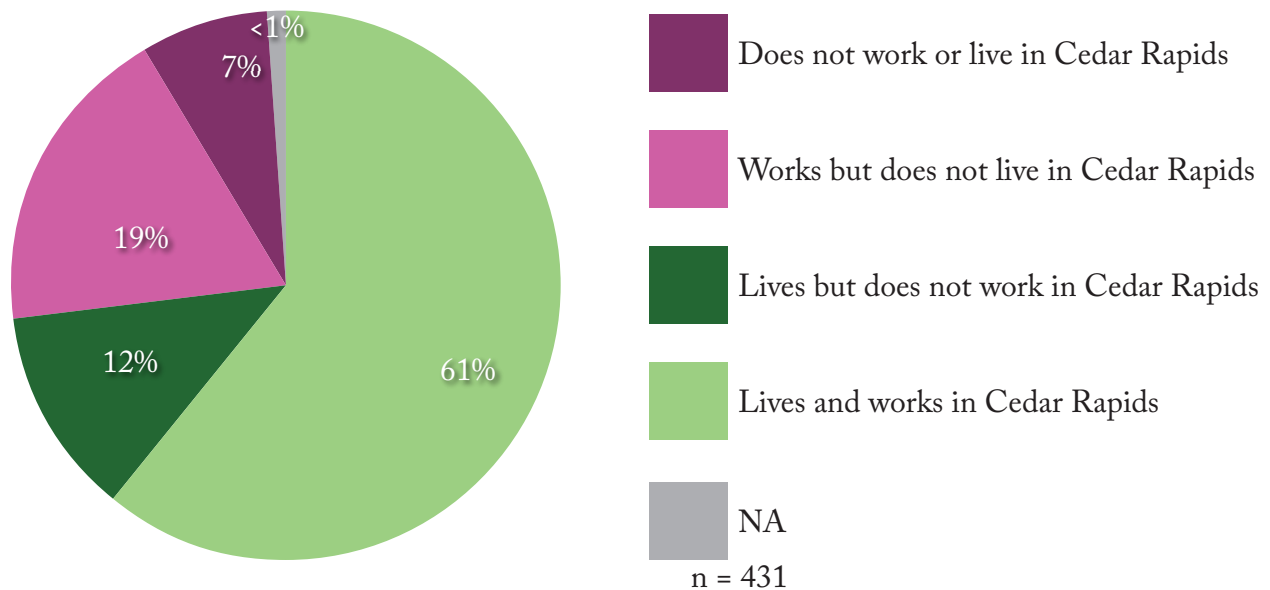
**My race/ethnicity is:** \_\_\_\_\_

DONE! Thank you for your participation!

# Survey Sources



## Survey Responses by Residency



## Survey Responses by Education

	Community Survey	Cedar Rapids
	n=431	N=126,921
AA/AS	16%	10%
BA/BS	52%	21%
HS	23%	27%
Graduate or Professional Degree	7%	9%

## By Race/Ethnicity

	Community Survey	Cedar Rapids
	n = 431	N = 126,921
Asian	1%	3%
Black	8%	8%
White	79%	90%
Hispanic	7%	4%
Other	2%	2%
NA	10%	-



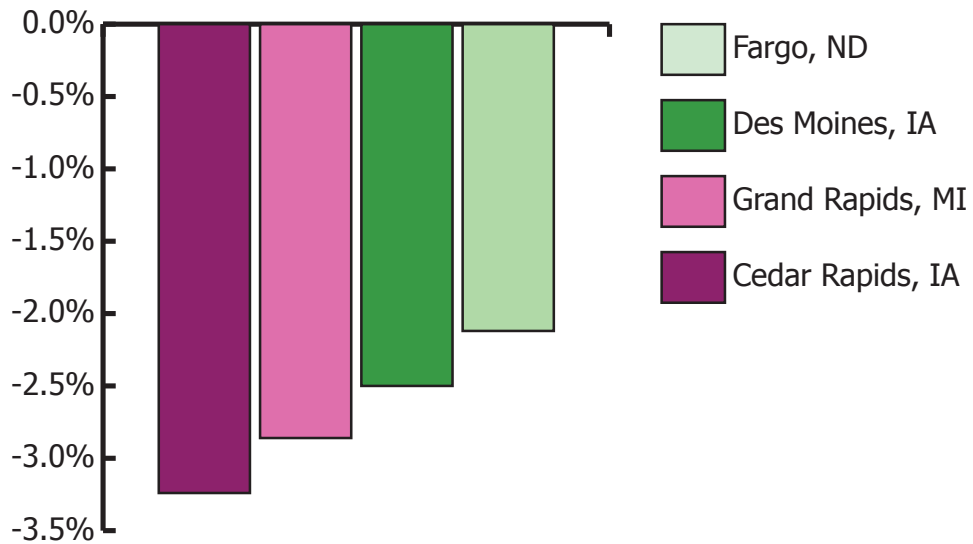
# Appendix C

## Comparison City Tables and Charts

### Population Change of 25 – 44 Year Olds

	Cedar Rapids	Des Moines	Grand Rapids	Fargo
2000	37,046	63,210	62,315	28,195
2010	34,655	59,635	53,864	30,608
% Change	-6%	-6%	-14%	9%

### Change in Proportion of 25 – 44 year olds 2000 to 2010



## Population Change of 25 – 44 Year-olds by Region

Region	Total Population	25 – 44 Population	% 25 – 44
<b>2000</b>			
USA	281421906	85040251	30.2%
Midwest	64392779	19024298	29.5%
Cedar Rapids, IA	120758	37046	30.7%
Grand Rapids, MI	197800	62315	31.5%
Des Moines, IA	198682	63210	31.8%
Fargo, ND	90599	28195	31.1%
<b>2010</b>			
USA	308745538	82134544	26.6%
Midwest	66927001	17171884	25.7%
Cedar Rapids, IA	126326	34655	27.4%
Grand Rapids, MI	188040	53864	28.6%
Des Moines, IA	203433	59635	29.3%
Fargo, ND	105549	30608	29.0%
<b>% Change 2000 - 2010</b>			
USA	9.7%	-3.4%	
Midwest	3.9%	-9.7%	
Cedar Rapids, IA	4.6%	-6.5%	
Grand Rapids, MI	-4.9%	-13.6%	
Des Moines, IA	2.4%	-5.7%	
Fargo, ND	16.5%	8.6%	

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