

## **Market Study to Explore Future for Downtown Ames**

What does the future hold for downtown Ames? Community residents and local business people will have a chance to chime in as part of a Market Study project being orchestrated by Ames Main Street Cultural District (MSCD) in partnership with Community and Regional Planning at Iowa State University and Main Street Iowa.

Cindy Hicks, MSCD Executive Director, said a special project team initiated work on the study this week. The nationally accredited MSCD, whose objectives include downtown Ames revitalization efforts, is performing the study to fine-tune and enhance downtown business development and marketing strategies. Hicks said the study will include an in-depth analysis of input collected from local business and consumer surveys to be conducted in September.

ISU Community and Regional Planning professor, Dr. Susan Bradbury, will lead the project team members, who are in the midst of the project's initial discovery phase.

"We have started the collection and review of background information and an assessment of the downtown business climate," Bradbury said. "The team is also reviewing current demographic and economic data to assess conditions and to identify possible opportunities for business retention, expansion and recruitment."

Bradbury says ultimately, the information and input will be used to create strategies aimed at retaining and developing a quality mix of businesses and uses that, based on solid market data, show the best potential to succeed in downtown Ames.

"The raw data and numbers that we're reviewing now is good, important information, but we'll be digging deeper to explore opportunities for downtown Ames," Hicks said. "We're excited to gather the perspectives and ideas of area residents, visitors and business persons who will be participating in surveys."

As a result, Hicks also said, the MSCD will gain a better sense of what downtown Ames can be in the future, and how the community can focus its efforts to make positive things happen in the downtown.

Special components of the study, scheduled for completion this fall, include business and consumer surveys designed to identify and assess opportunities for business expansion and recruitment in the downtown business district, and recommendations for the implementation

of related projects and activities.

“Throughout all phases of the project, we’ll actively seek input from all sectors of the community,” Bradbury said. “We’ll be asking lots of questions and exploring a broad range of scenarios in an attempt to determine a direction that’s right for downtown Ames.”

The MSCD is receiving technical assistance and support from Main Street Iowa in 2017 to complete a local market study.

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***The Main Street Cultural District** was established on January 1, 2004. Its mission is to advance and promote downtown as the destination district in the heart of our community. To keep updated on MSCD happenings, become a fan of the Main Street Cultural District on Facebook, bookmark [www.AmesDowntown.org](http://www.AmesDowntown.org), or contact our office at 515-233-3472. MSCD is an affiliate organization of the Ames Chamber of Commerce.*