



THIS IS THE NORTH END

A Health Communications Campaign in Mason City's North End Neighborhood

This document is a synthesized version of a campaign project produced by students in the Masters of Public Health program at The University of Iowa, completed as part of a partnership between the City of Mason City, Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health, and the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities. The project authors are Samantha Kloft, Katherine McCullough, Zoe Ribar, and Grace Ryan. Please find the full version of the project as well as all other final deliverables at <https://iisc.uiowa.edu/aging-place-public-health-campaign>.





STUDY METHODS & KEY FINDINGS

Building on literature reviews and secondary data sets, a number of interviews, focus groups, and community surveys were conducted in Mason City in order to understand and meet the needs of the North End community. We found that along with a general sense of pride in the historic nature of the neighborhood, there is an interest in revitalization and increased economic investment in the area. However, there is also a widespread perception that this neighborhood faces many obstacles in accomplishing this.

Stigma theory: Negative perceptions of a neighborhood can have detrimental effects on the health of those living in that community, including higher depression and lower self-rated health.

Neighborhood Social Cohesion: Influencing the level of social cohesion and collective efficacy in a neighborhood can be an important part of improving health outcomes.

“Crime” is frequently noted as a perception of the North End. However, there are fewer reported incidents of crime in the North End than Mason City as a whole - at 44 out of 1000 and 53 out of 1000 individuals respectively.

GOAL

The goal of this communication campaign centers on the revitalization of the North End neighborhood. It is through a carefully planned promotional campaign, with messaging about the historical and personal significance and beauty of the people and places in the North End that we can renew interest in the area in hopes it will stimulate more investment in time, resources, and efforts into making the neighborhood a vibrant and lively place to live and do business. For Northside residents, it is our hope that they get a renewed sense of pride and feeling of neighborhood cohesion through these messages.



This project targets the entirety of Mason City, not just the North End. To achieve the goal, the city must come together to recognize the strength and opportunity that exists in the North End.

Neighborhood perception is not only vital to driving change and development, but is impactful to self-rated health and social cohesion.





It's time to
meet the
North End.
Again.



PROPOSED MARKETING STRATEGY

The core of the North End campaign is the “This is the North End” and “We are the North End” signage. These taglines show that the North End of Mason City has much greater value than what current perceptions, and often misperceptions, might suggest.

These messages, along with simple black and white photos that are simplistic in composition and intended to provoke a sense of nostalgia, could be effectively communicated through the following strategies:

- Flyers placed throughout Mason City
- Tote Bags distributed to customers at North End businesses
- Light post banners hung throughout the North End
- Message posted on social media
- Postcards mailed to residents of Mason City, offering discounts to participating North End businesses