

# The City of Ames: Defining a Compelling Vision

Final Report / Presentation  
June 20, 2011

BRANDENDEAVOR

# Table of Contents

- Objectives and methodology
- Findings and analysis
- Strategic platform and vision
- Implementation Recommendations

# Project objectives & methodology

# Project Objectives

To establish a common vision and promise for Ames that:

- Provides a clear focus for city initiatives, including policy planning
- Distinguishes Ames from its peers or competitors
- Directs future communications and marketing initiatives

# What is a vision?

A vision is a **promise** – which must be delivered upon consistently with every interaction

- **Emotion**

It is driven by how you want stakeholders to **feel** when they interact with you.

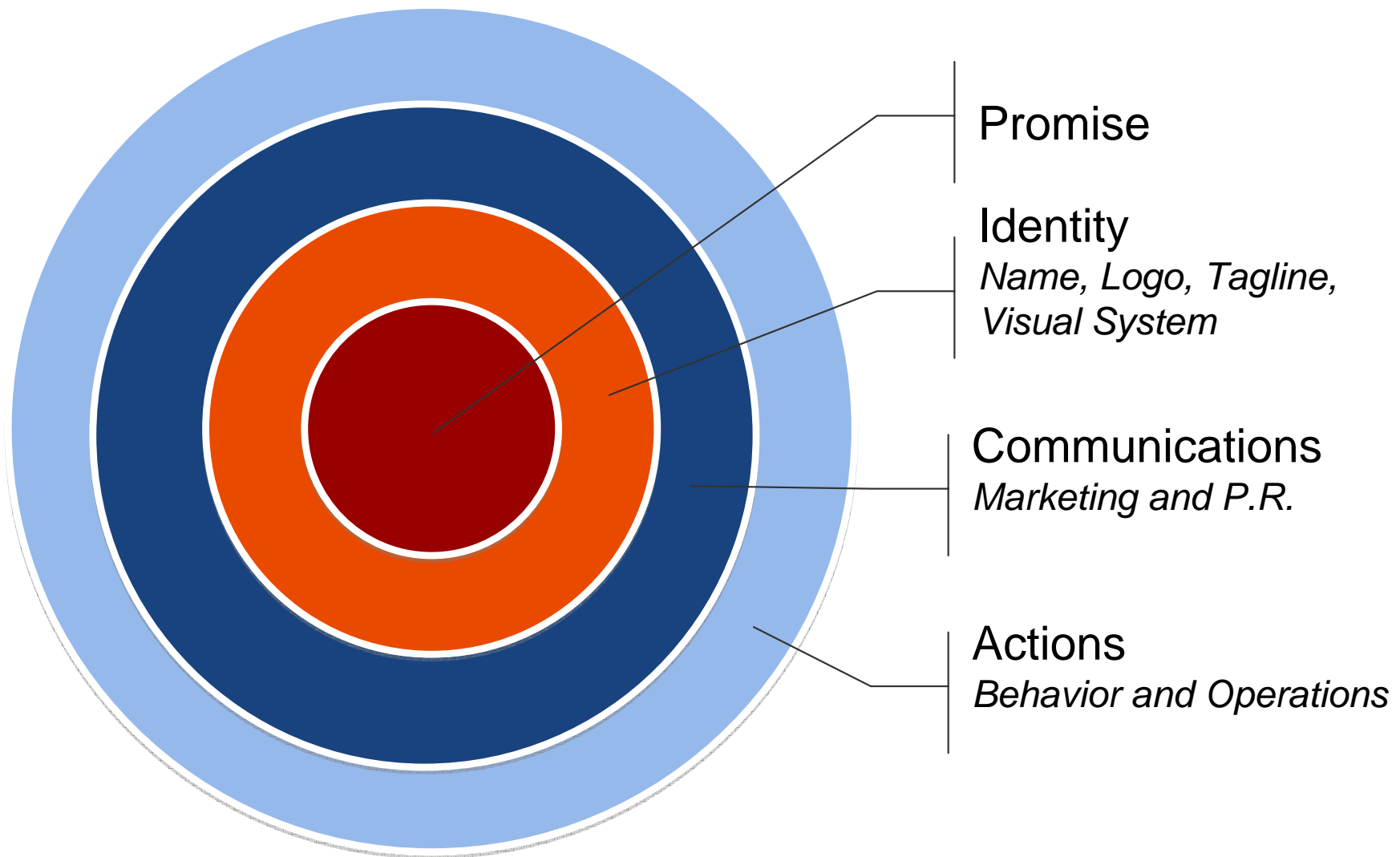
- **Differentiation**

Your promise should be **different** from promises made by competitors, describing a feeling only you give them.

- **Relevance**

It should be **meaningful** to stakeholders, focused on where their greatest needs intersect with your strengths.

# Vision is a filter for identity, communication and action



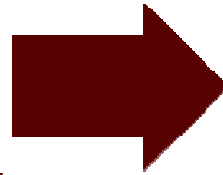
# Vision concepts are expressed in a strategic platform

|                         |                                   |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>WHO</b><br>we're for | Our core stakeholder              |
| <b>WHAT</b><br>we do    | City definition/description       |
| <b>WHY</b><br>we do it  | Value proposition – why we matter |
| <b>HOW</b><br>we do it  | Behaviors – “verbs”               |
| <b>WHO</b><br>we are    | Personality – “adjectives”        |

# Project Scope

## Discovery *Feb - April*

- **Kickoff meeting with Steering Committee**
- **Stakeholder interviews**  
*(15 focus groups, 40 participants from different stakeholder groups)*
- **Materials review**
- **Competitive/peer analysis**  
*(8 competitors)*
- **Online survey**  
*(5,982 interviews)*
- **Survey results presentation to Steering Committee and Council**



## Analysis & Vision Development *April - June*

- **Analysis and development of vision and platform**
- **Steering Committee presentation (+ refinement)**
- **Citizen workshops and vision extension**  
*(2 meetings + refinement)*
- **Implementation recommendations**
- **Final presentations to Steering Committee and Council**
- **Final refinement & electronic document**



# Steering Committee Members

- **Dan Culhane**  
*Ames Chamber of Commerce*
- **Brian Dieter**  
*Mary Greeley Medical Center*
- **Susan Gwiasda**  
*City of Ames*
- **Jeff Johnson**  
*ISU Alumni Association*
- **John Klaus**  
*AMOS*
- **Jean Kresse**  
*United Way*
- **Debbie Lee**  
*Ames Citizen*
- **Steve Malchow**  
*ISU Athletics*
- **Steve Schainker**  
*City of Ames*
- **Catherine Scott**  
*Smart Growth*
- **Tim Taylor**  
*Ames Community School District*
- **Julie Weeks**  
*Ames Convention and Visitor's Bureau*

# Stakeholder Interviews

41 small group interviews with representatives from:

- **At-Large**
- **Business – Large**
- **Business – Small**
- **Education – High School**
- **Education – K-8**
- **Health Care**
- **ISU Students**
- **ISU Athletics**
- **ISU Administration**
- **Neighborhood Associations**
- **Non-Profit/Arts/History**
- **Religious Leaders**
- **Seniors**
- **Social Services**
- **Young Professionals**

*Interview quotes used in this presentation are the most articulate expressions of the majority opinion. A single quote speaks for many voices.*

# Competitors Analyzed & Materials Reviewed

## Competitors Analyzed

- Ankeny, Iowa
- Des Moines, Iowa
- Iowa City, Iowa
- Lawrence, Kansas
- West Lafayette, Indiana
- Champaign, Illinois

## Materials Reviewed

- Inclusive Community Task Force Report, May 13, 2008
- Community Conversations on Diversity, Fall 2008
- Good Neighbor Guide
- Vision Ames, December 2002
- Vision Statements for Ames - February 2007
- Ames SWOT - February 2007

# Online survey methodology

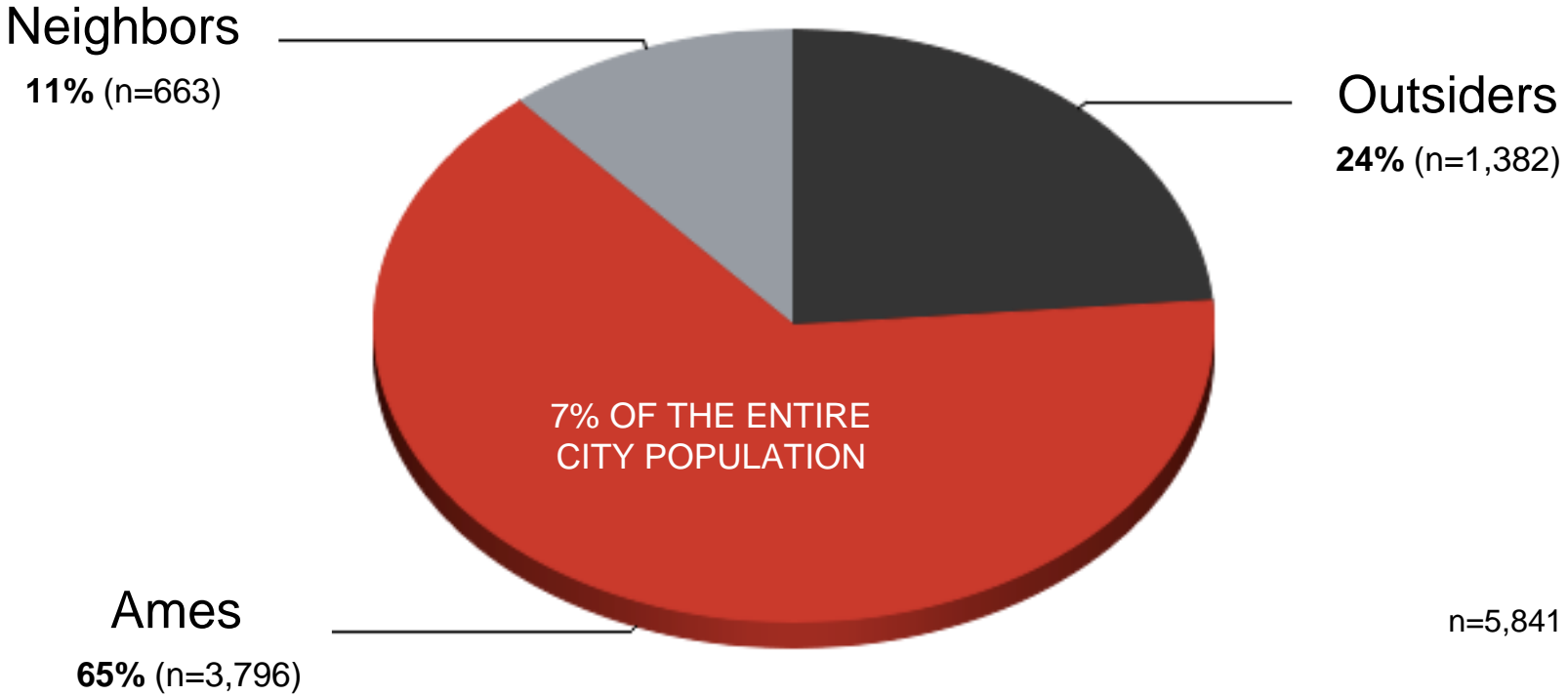
- An online survey was conducted among...
  - Citizens of Ames via website link and supported by PR efforts and email invites
  - Iowa State University students, alumni, faculty and staff via email lists
  - Residents of surrounding Iowa cities via purchased online panel
- The study was fielded March 14 – April 4, 2011 and yielded **a total of 5,982 interviews**, 333 of which were purchased from an online panel. The remainder were generated by the City of Ames.

# Definitions of Segments

- **Ames residents**  
Live within Ames city limits
- **Neighbors**  
Live in rural Ames, Des Moines and West Des Moines, Gilbert and Ankeny
- **Outsiders**  
Live outside 45-minute radius of Ames, almost entirely in Iowa
- **Actives**  
Actively participate in city affairs
- **Passives**  
Do not participate actively in city affairs, more than half are students
- **Non-Student Passives**  
Sub-segment of passives that excludes students

# Ames Residents vs. Neighbors/Outsiders

The majority of respondents were Ames residents living within the Ames city limits. Neighbors included rural Ames, Des Moines and West Des Moines, Gilbert and Ankeny. And outsiders included all others – generally those living 45 minutes or more from Ames, but still within the state of Iowa.



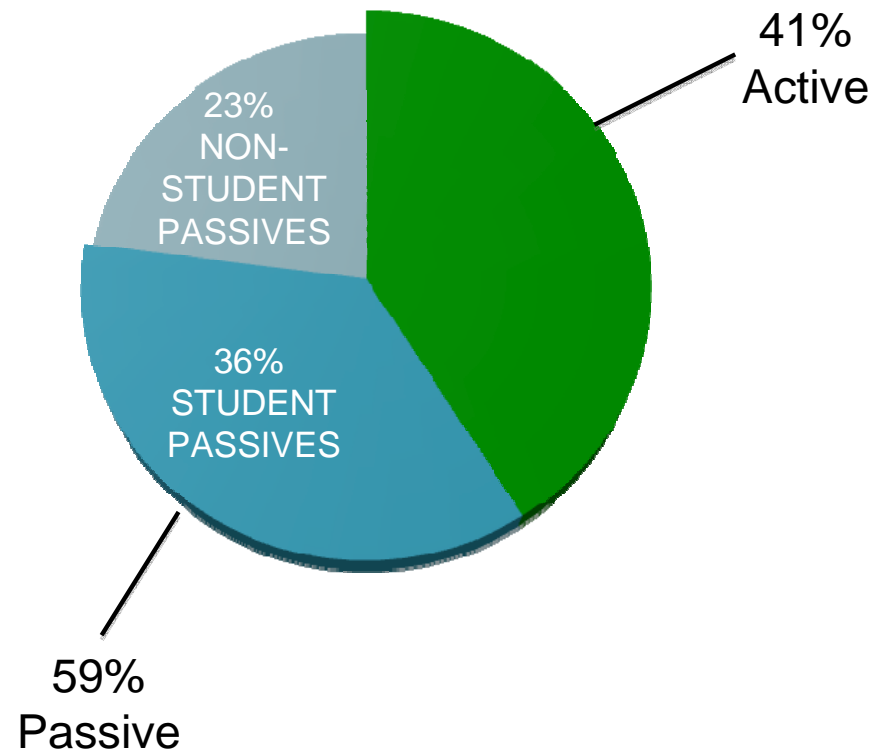
# Participation in City Affairs

Ames residents were classified as either “Active” or “Passive” depending on their level of participation in city affairs.

Respondents participating in any of the following 5 activities were considered “Active”:

1. Attended a city council meeting, city public forum or open house
2. Written / called into the local news media (ex. Ames Tribune, local radio, etc.) about a city issue
3. Volunteered for something relating to city issues (please specify)
4. Been part of a city board / commission / task force
5. Ran for office

“Passives” could not have participated in any of the above activities.



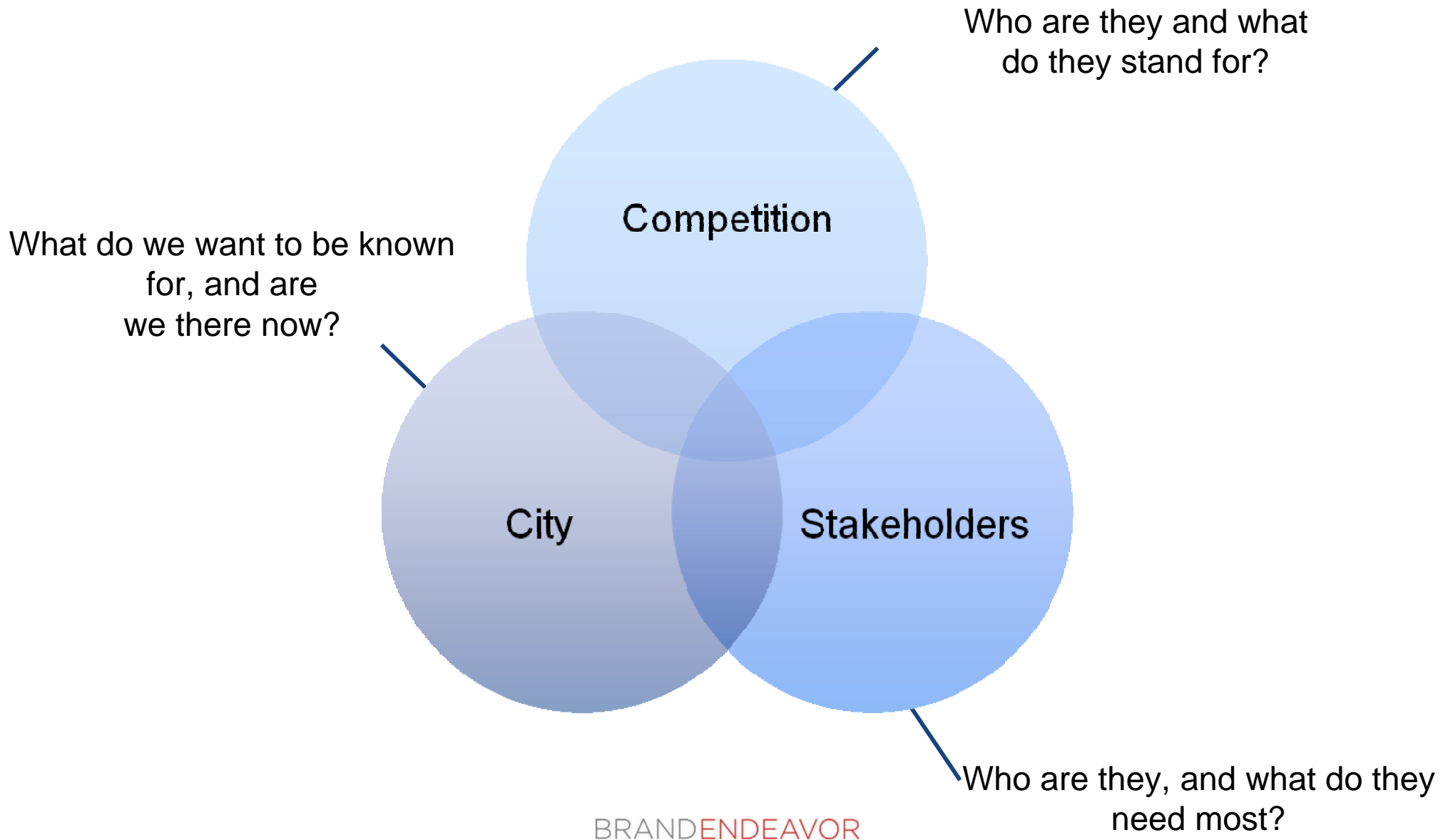
n=3,472

Q. To what extent have you participated in Ames city government and or city affairs in the past?  
Have you... (Select all that apply)

# Findings and analysis

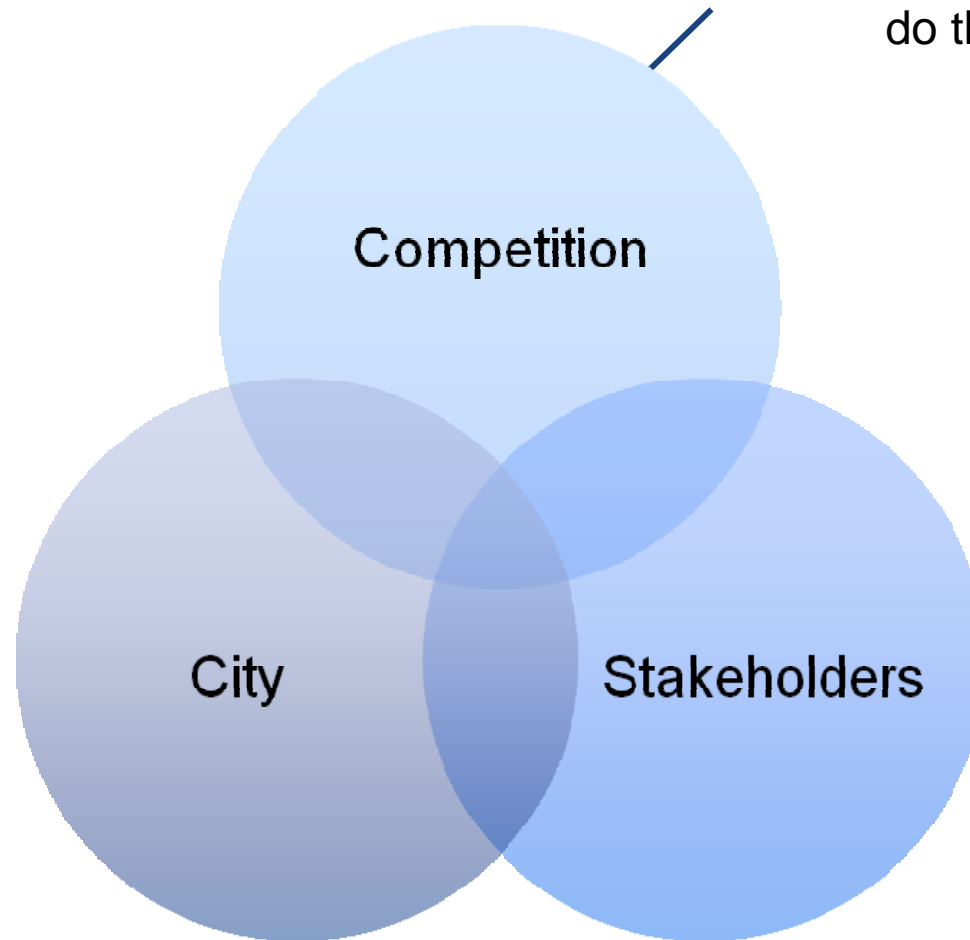


# Vision is informed by three areas of insight

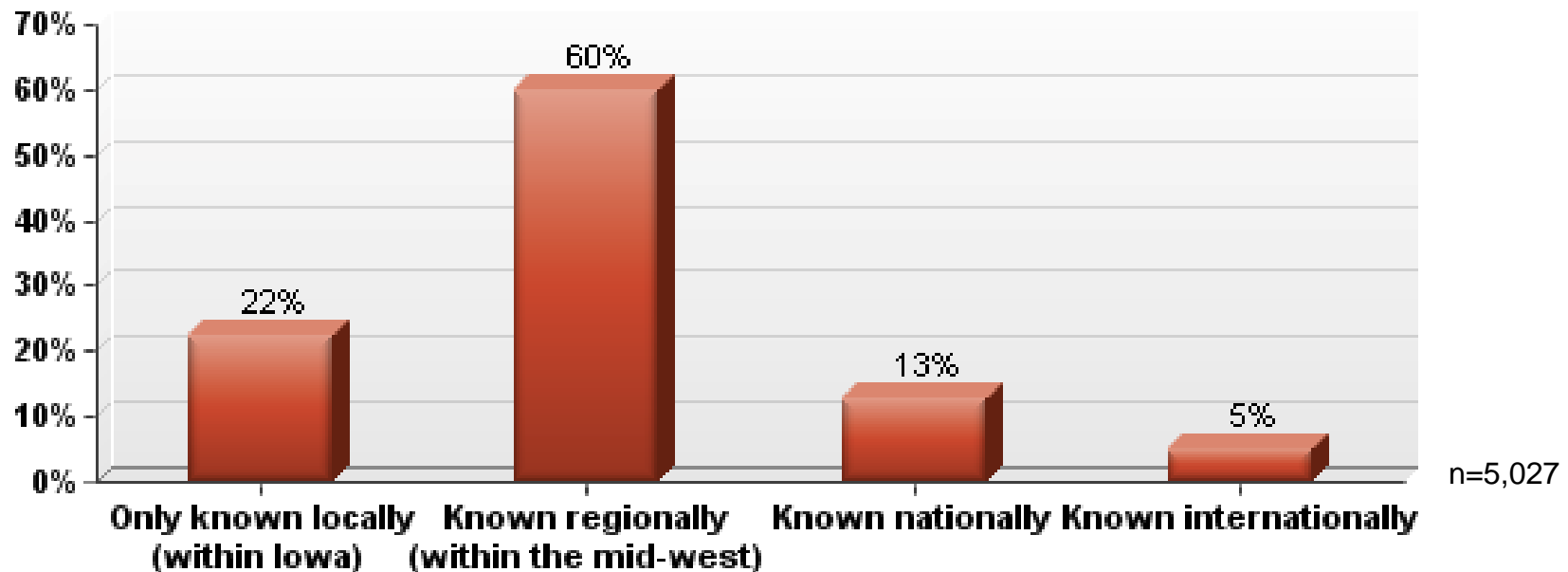


# The Competition

Who are they and what do they stand for?



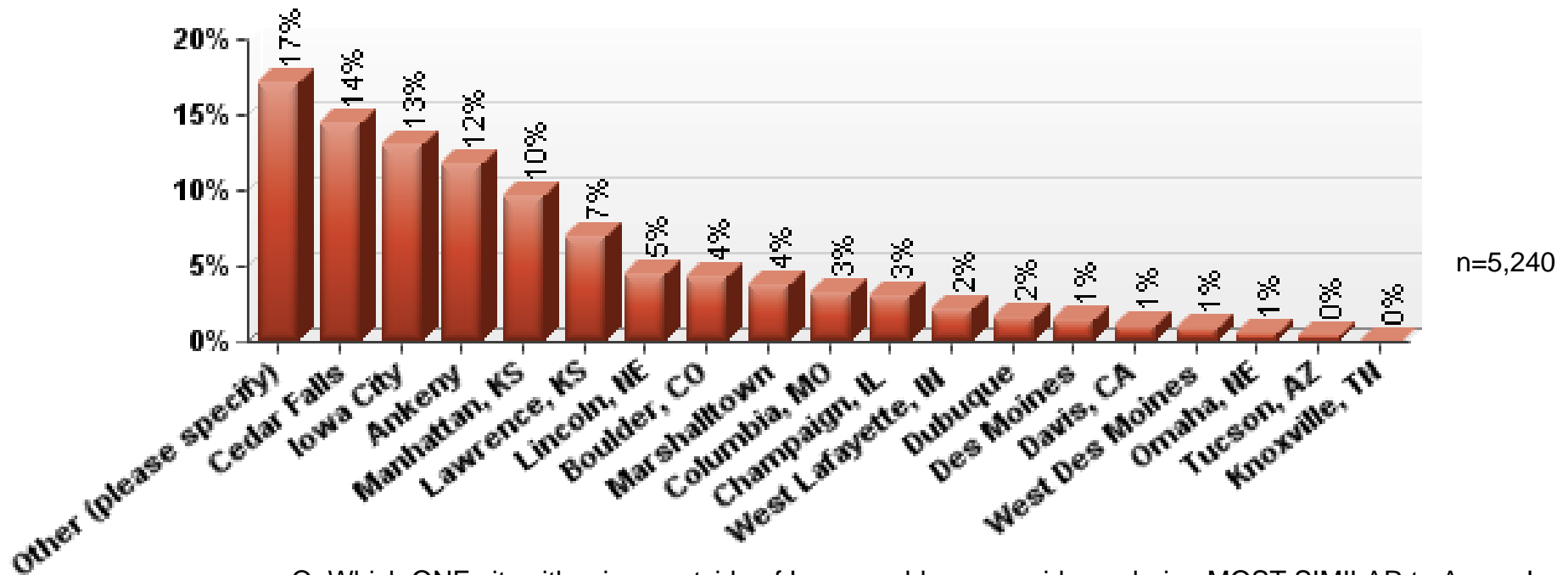
# Ames' strongest footprint is in the midwest



Q. How well KNOWN do you feel Ames is?

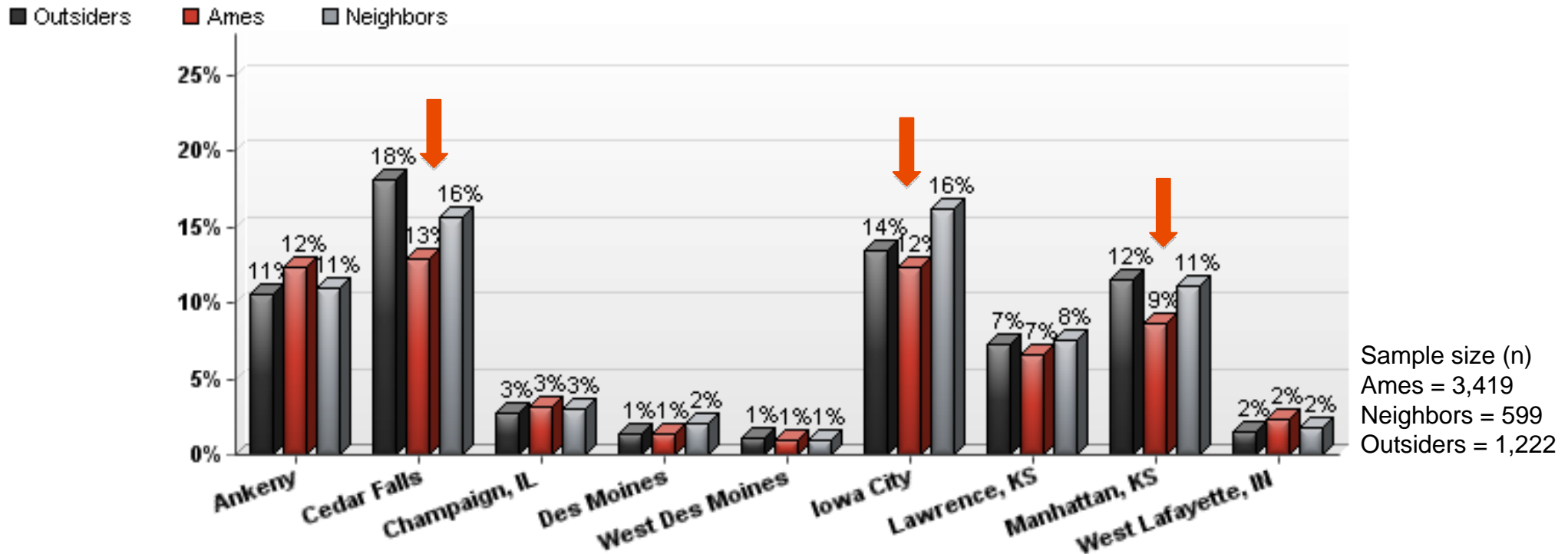
# ... and the City is most frequently compared to other college towns in the region

Students were much more likely to compare Ames to Ankeny, but with that exception, Ames' competitive set is perceived to be college towns in the midwest.



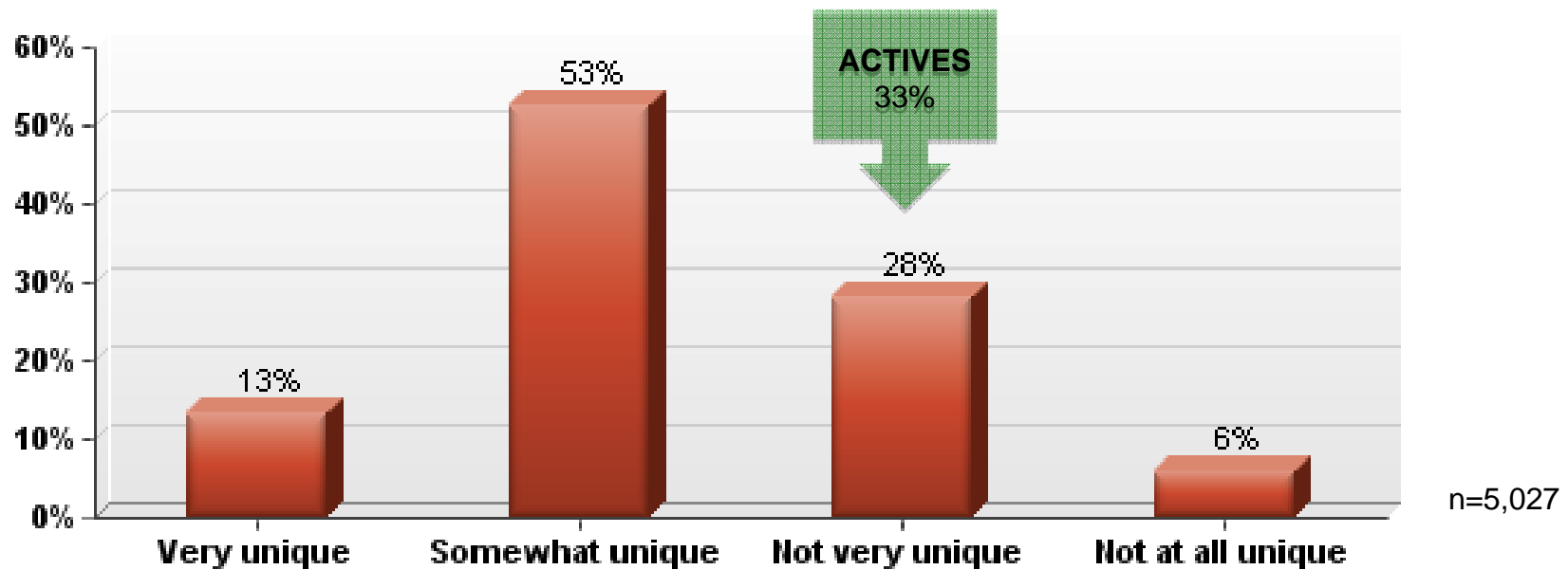
Q. Which ONE city either in or outside of Iowa would you consider as being MOST SIMILAR to Ames, Iowa?  
And WHY? (Select one)

# Neighbors and outsiders are more likely to compare Ames to other college towns



Q. Which ONE city either in or outside of Iowa would you consider as being MOST SIMILAR to Ames, Iowa?  
 And WHY? (Select one)

# But Ames is not considered to be very unique compared to its peers

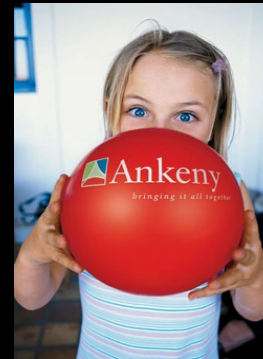


Q. Compared to other college towns in the Midwest, how UNIQUE would you consider Ames to be?

When you look at the promises of college town peers, it's easy to see why nobody stands out...

| Competitor         | Core Promise   |
|--------------------|--|
| Iowa City          | Small town atmosphere, big city choices              |
| Lawrence, KS       | Perfect combination of small-town and big city       |
| Champaign, IL      | "The best of urban life in a friendly, smaller city" |
| West Lafayette, IN | Opportunity that comes from a great university       |

# Ankeny focuses on “opportunity for a fulfilling lifestyle”



## WHAT we do

“**Create and nurture** a community that people are proud to call home... Offering numerous opportunities to achieve a fulfilling lifestyle in Central Iowa.”

## WHY we do it

To offer “more than 44,000 Iowans the opportunity to have the life they want.”

*Note: They refer to their brand in terms of their logo and what it represents - a coming together. This is not reinforced throughout their communications however, and what is “brought together” is not clear.*



# Even Des Moines touts its small town atmosphere



## WHAT we do

“As Iowa's capital city, Des Moines is a hub of government action, business activity and cultural affairs... **Though we have big city bustle, we're extremely proud of our small town atmosphere...** Truly the best of both worlds!”

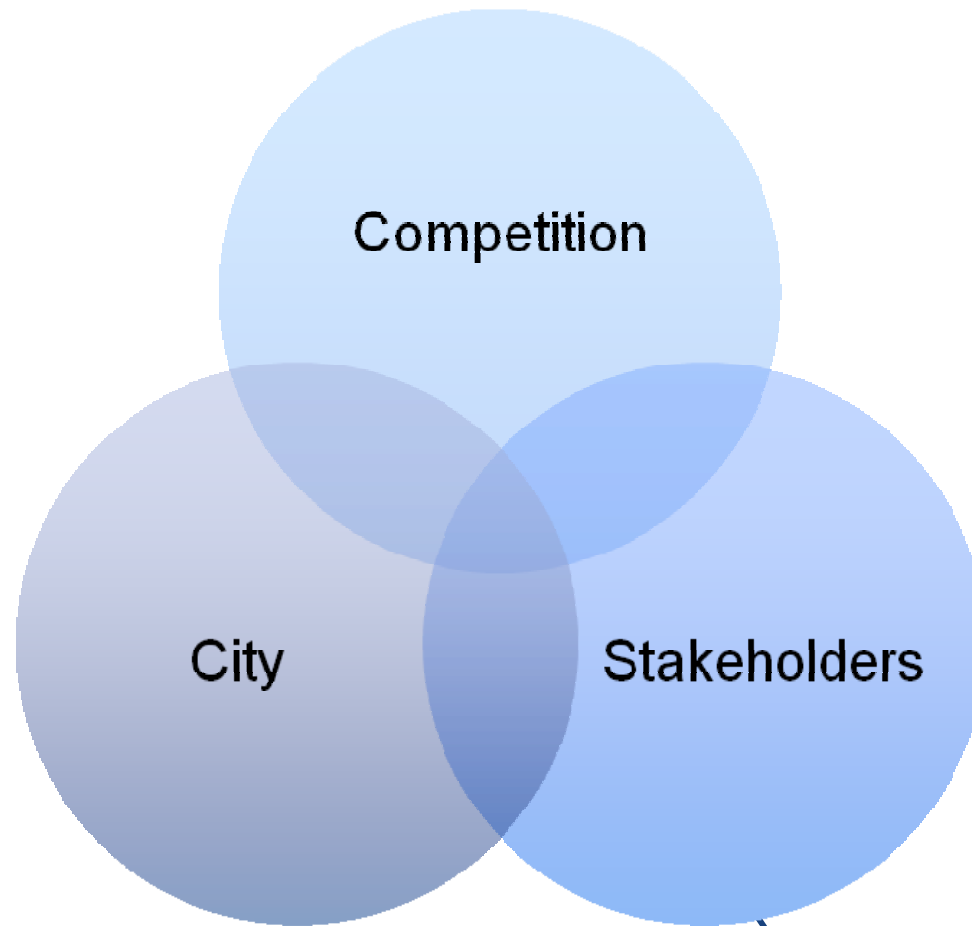
## WHY we do it

To make Des Moines a **“great place to live work and play.”**

# The Competition



# Ames Stakeholders



Who are they, and what do they need most?

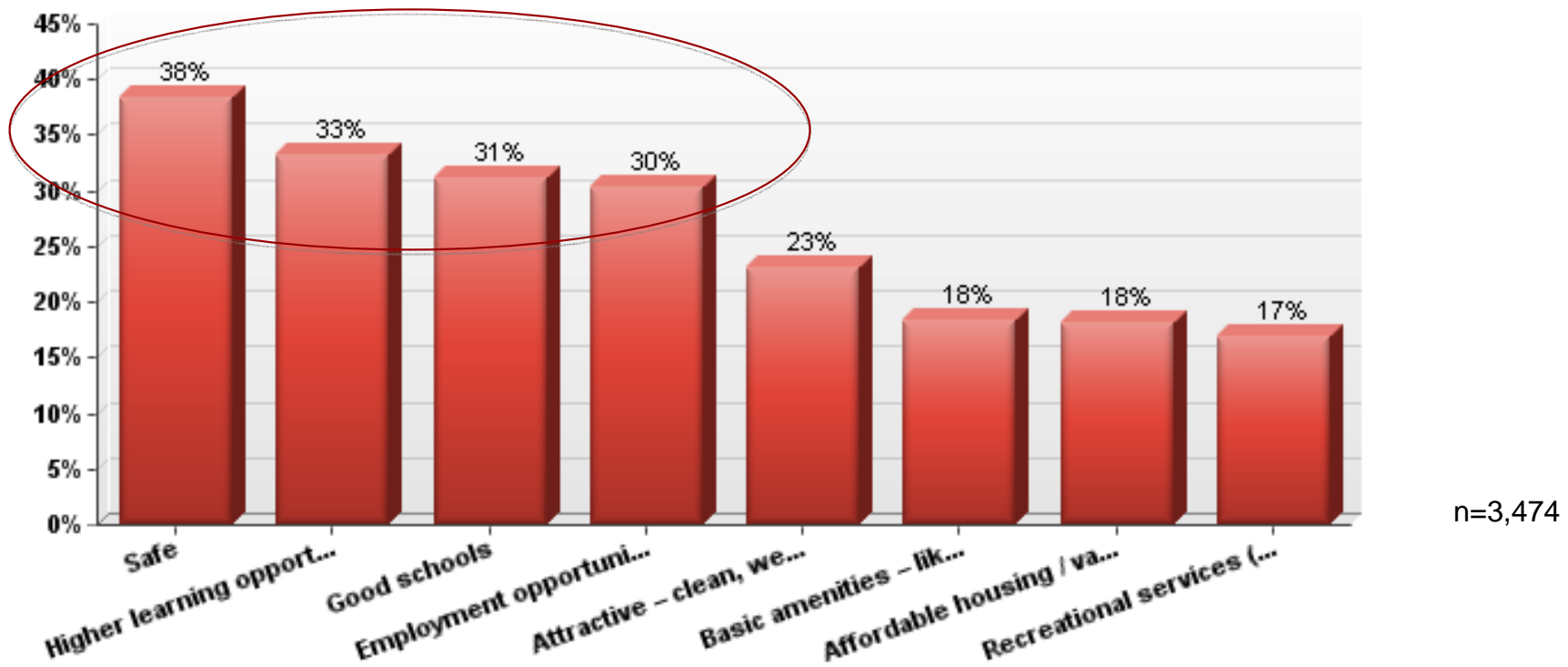
# Ames residents value discovery and new experiences

| Answer  | Outsiders | Ames       | Neighbors |
|---|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Is curious, wanting to explore and learn about new things   | 56%       | <b>64%</b> | 58%       |
| Believes strongly in yourself and your abilities  | 60%       | 60%        | 62%       |
| Thinks quality is more important than price   | 55%       | 51%        | 56%       |
| Is extremely family oriented  | 57%       | <b>49%</b> | 57%       |
| Takes great pride in the community you live in  | 50%       | <b>47%</b> | 52%       |
| Is an independent thinker who challenges what most people think   | 43%       | 43%        | 41%       |
| Enjoys staying at home in the evenings, rather than going out   | 43%       | 42%        | 42%       |
| Is a saver rather than a spender  | 40%       | 41%        | 40%       |
| Makes a point to support smaller providers (like local bookstores and grocery stores) rather than larger, corporate organizations | 37%       | 39%        | 34%       |
| Is an opinion leader in your circle of friends  | 34%       | 34%        | 35%       |
| Feels most comfortable with traditional values  | 44%       | <b>34%</b> | 40%       |
| Wants to live near people like you for shared experiences   | 35%       | 33%        | 30%       |
| Spends most of your free time doing fun stuff with your friends   | 25%       | 28%        | 25%       |
| Is deeply spiritual or religious  | 22%       | 22%        | 22%       |
| Wants to live near people who are not like you for exposure to new experiences  | 13%       | <b>19%</b> | 13%       |

Q. How would your friends describe you? Are you the type of person that... (Select all that apply)

28

# They value the opportunities that come with higher learning and employment



Q. Select your Top-3 reasons for living / working in Ames. If you do NOT live / work in Ames, select the Top-3 reasons why you think someone would. (Select up to 3)

# They love that Ames is a small town with the opportunities of a big city

## The best thing about Ames is...

**“It has small town flavor but a bigger community access and resources.”**

**“It has a lot of opportunity for a town this size – cultural and educational – and yet it has the friendliness of a small town.”**

**“It’s large enough to have all the opportunities, small enough to know a lot of people and feel highly vested.”**

**“I like all the opportunities that my kids have here that maybe they wouldn’t get in a really small town or would get lost in if you lived in a really large city.”**

**“The high school is not small town – it’s a pretty good size. I wanted my kids to swim in a bigger pond. Learning to socialize and finding your niche is a part of life.”**

*Stakeholder Interviews*

There are two kinds of opportunities associated with the “big city”



**Economic Opportunities**

*Jobs, Housing, Shopping*



**Cultural Opportunities**

*Arts, Sports, Recreation*

## Generally, when people refer to “opportunities” in Ames, they’re talking about *cultural* ones

**“My children are exposed to a far greater variety of cultural activities** (than they would be in another town.) They meet interesting people from all over the world.”

**“It’s a great small town with a lot of opportunities – sports, theater, music, learning.** My grandchildren have had opportunities here in Ames they wouldn’t have in a big city.”

**“I always throw out the word ‘cultural’** – sometimes I don’t know what I mean by that. The large city feel of arts and activities, along with a University. And variety. You can be doing different types of things – arts, or soccer, or football games.”

**“The arts opportunities in Ames are very rich through visiting artists and performers but also the opportunities to be expressive and creative.** There are more opportunities than one could take advantage of.”

*Stakeholder Interviews*



# And there's a concern that fewer *economic opportunities* will make the city less relevant

**"The professional opportunities aren't here."**

**"We are not growing from a family perspective. This erodes everything else."**

**"We have an aging population and declining school enrollment... we lack younger families and lack a certain creative energy to move this town forward."**

**"While you may drive elsewhere to shop, so goes the rest of your disposable income in things like eating or gas. The only way Ames can support itself is from property tax and local business. We need that contribution."**

**"It's great if you can afford it. Many people have moved out because they could no longer afford it. I don't want to see it become more and more exclusive."**

*Stakeholder Interviews*

# There's a strong desire from the community to create economic opportunities...

**“Everyone is looking toward a better future. We want an improved way of life for ourselves if not for the city of Ames... Families want the best for their children, and I want to see the families around me be able to improve their lot.”**

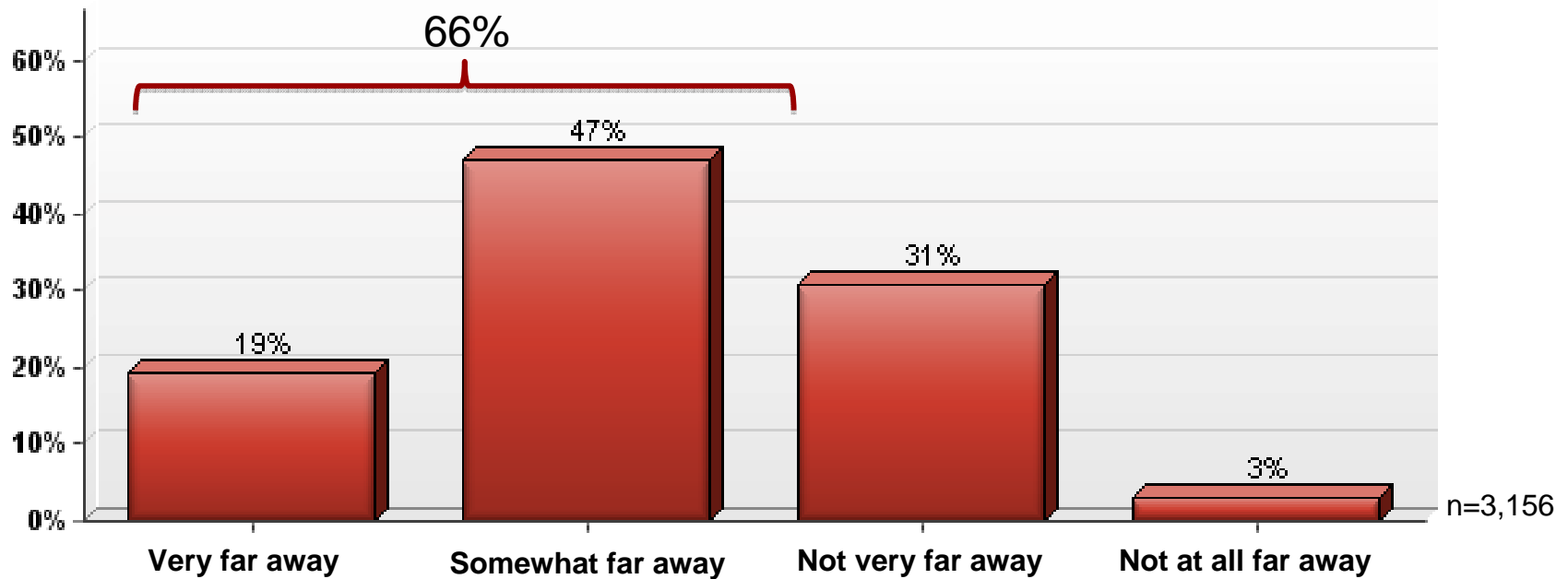
**“We need more business, companies, job opportunities.** Not necessarily tech companies, but more diverse in the business community.”

**“We haven't nailed the economic development piece in Ames.** We haven't figured out what the University can do for our development. Restaurants, the mall situation – those things haven't evolved.”

“I'd like to see a strong downtown. I'd like to see more ethnic, family-owned restaurants... **I want us to be able to maximize the community resources to come around making all families successful...** I'd like to see more business growth out by the mall.”

*Stakeholder Interviews*

... And there is a healthy appetite for change to reach an envisioned future



Q. How FAR is the Ames of today from the ideal Ames you envision for the future?

# But as a community, you have more clarity on what you DON'T want than what you do

“There is a true lack of ability to say what we do well. We don't advertise and promote ourselves. It's all part of, 'If it's not already here, we don't want it.' And so **we don't promote ourselves because we might attract something we don't want. We are afraid of it.**”

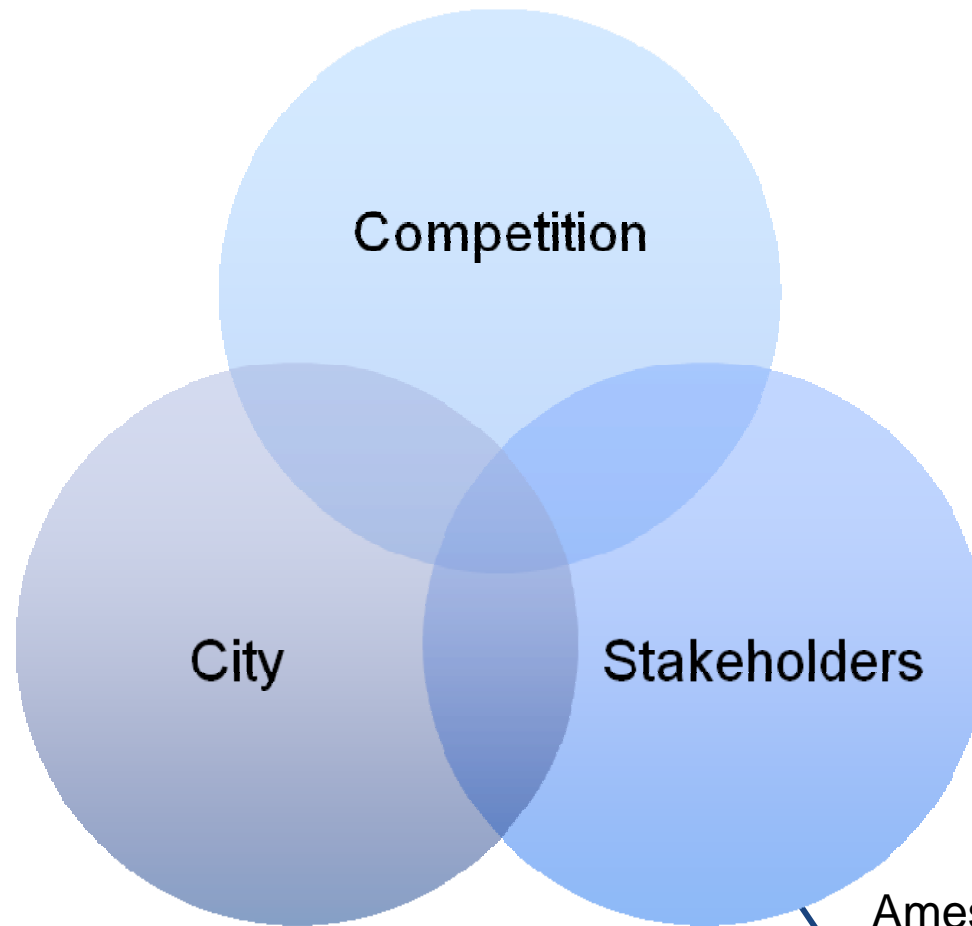
“It's a tough issue. **We lose kids to the big city, but we don't want to be the big city.**”

“**I don't want to become Ankeny, growth without planning. But I also don't want to have to leave my community all the time for dining and shopping for example.**”

“It's easy to raise your hand and say you want to be an innovator, but then there would be the people who would be worried about the cost, both financially and everything else... **They don't want to become Des Moines. The reason we live in Ames is because it's not Des Moines.**”

“Everyone is pretty supportive of things. But **not everybody is on the same page with each other.**”

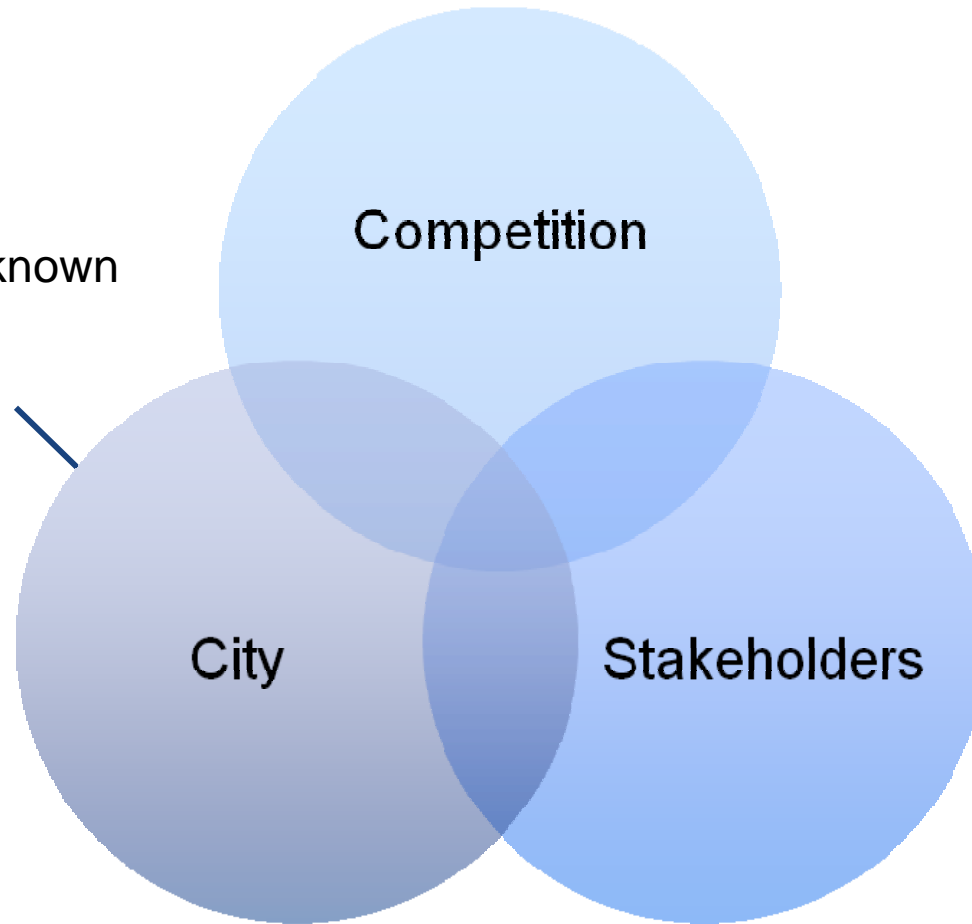
# Ames Stakeholders



Ames stakeholders want both cultural *and* economic opportunity, but haven't agreed on how to get there

# The City

What do we want to be known for, and are we there now?



# Many fear that Ames has resigned itself to be “good enough”

“I have a motto: ‘Good enough never is.’ **Good Enough seems to be the prevailing thought in the community... ‘It’s good enough for me, it was good enough for my grandfather.’”**

“The thing that holds us back is fear of change. We know we have a good thing going here, and those types of communities are a little more cautious. But in doing that, **we fail to capitalize on that foundation and explore our potential instead of hanging on to the known good thing.**”

“**The moniker above City Hall here would be ‘That’s Good Enough.’** I find that attitude everywhere. ‘Isn’t that good enough? Why are we messing with this?’”

“**People don’t know how good they have it here.** Why would we want to do it the way that New York does it?”

“**Everything you *need* is in Ames. If you *want* something, you have to go somewhere else.**”

# And citizens have a hard time articulating Ames' regional significance

Ames is the \_\_\_\_\_ of Iowa

“A geographic center”

“The destination of Iowa?”

“The heart of Iowa, because everything is here.”

“Geographically close to the center of the state.”

“I don't know how we're looked at, except 'send your kids to Iowa State.'”

*Stakeholder Interviews*



# They see tremendous potential and want Ames to tap into that

“Ames is a really good place to live. **Good to Great should be the way we think about it. We need to come up with a common vision and then it could be really outstanding. The potential is there.**”

“Ames has so much potential – the peacefulness, the access to opportunity, the **social network because of the University.** People pick up something here in Ames and take it to wherever they’re going.”

“Ames is in it’s own bubble. **It can be really nice, but it could be a lot nicer. People don’t realize the potential.**”

“Ames is the best kept secret in Iowa. **We really do not tap into our potential.**”

“If you do a national ranking, we pop up as the best for this and that... but what does that mean? **How do we take that and fit it into who we are and who we want to become?** We don’t know, so we just write an article about it and move on.”

*Stakeholder Interviews*

When describing Ames in just one word, stakeholders reflected this sense of current complacency and untapped potential

*Responses sorted by describing Ames Today*

| Today           | 10 Years            |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| Cautious        | More Visionary      |
| Changing        | Inclusive           |
| Comfortable     | Interesting         |
| Comfortable     | Creative            |
| Comfortable     | Welcoming           |
| Community       | Destination         |
| Community       | Intertwined         |
| Complacent      | Opportunity         |
| Diverse         | Diverse             |
| Engaged         | Dynamic             |
| Familiar        | Community           |
| Fragmented      | Unified             |
| Great           | Great               |
| Identity Crisis | Great               |
| Nice            | Awesome             |
| Opportunities   | Aspiring            |
| Opportunity     | Cohesive            |
| Peaceful        | Energetic           |
| Potential       | Exciting            |
| Potential       | Progressive         |
| Promising       | United              |
| Quiet           | Quiet               |
| Safe            | Exciting            |
| Stagnant        | Magnetic            |
| Stagnant        | Progressive         |
| Struggling      | University-centered |
| Struggling      | Community           |
| Stuck           | Progressive         |
| Traditional     | Progressive         |
| Traditional     | Rejuvenated         |
| Traditional     | Refreshed           |
| Vibrant         | More Vibrant        |

*Responses sorted by describing the Ideal Ames 10 years from now*

| Today           | 10 Years            |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| Opportunities   | Aspiring            |
| Nice            | Awesome             |
| Opportunity     | Cohesive            |
| Familiar        | Community           |
| Struggling      | Community           |
| Comfortable     | Creative            |
| Community       | Destination         |
| Diverse         | Diverse             |
| Engaged         | Dynamic             |
| Peaceful        | Energetic           |
| Potential       | Exciting            |
| Safe            | Exciting            |
| Great           | Great               |
| Identity Crisis | Great               |
| Changing        | Inclusive           |
| Comfortable     | Interesting         |
| Community       | Intertwined         |
| Stagnant        | Magnetic            |
| Vibrant         | More Vibrant        |
| Cautious        | More Visionary      |
| Complacent      | Opportunity         |
| Potential       | Progressive         |
| Stagnant        | Progressive         |
| Stuck           | Progressive         |
| Traditional     | Progressive         |
| Quiet           | Quiet               |
| Traditional     | Refreshed           |
| Traditional     | Rejuvenated         |
| Fragmented      | Unified             |
| Promising       | United              |
| Struggling      | University-centered |
| Comfortable     | Welcoming           |

# In addition to small-town feel, Ames' leadership in ag and animal health stood out as a unique point

| Answer  | %   |
|---|-----|
| Small-town feel                                       | 25% |
| Agricultural significance                             | 13% |
| Leadership in animal health                           | 9%  |
| Attractive – clean, well maintained                   | 7%  |
| Other (specify)                                       | 6%  |
| Safety  | 5%  |
| Convenient location – Interstate access and proximity | 5%  |
| Recreational services – parks, trails and open spaces | 4%  |
| Good schools  | 4%  |
| Locally owned and operated shops and restaurants      | 3%  |
| Ethnically diverse                                    | 3%  |
| Technical innovation                                  | 3%  |
| Opportunities offered                                 | 3%  |
| Medical care and facilities                           | 2%  |
| Family / kid-friendly activities                      | 2%  |
| Culturally vibrant                                    | 2%  |

} Agriculture & Animal Health Combined 24%

n=5,011

Q. Fill in the blank in this sentence – “Compared to other college towns in the Midwest, the most UNIQUE thing about Ames is \_\_\_\_\_.”  
(Select one)

# Stakeholders believe this leadership in agriculture and veterinary science gives Ames an edge

Ames is the \_\_\_\_\_ of Iowa

**“Ames is the brain and technical center of Iowa. Strong animal science, engineering, etc.”**

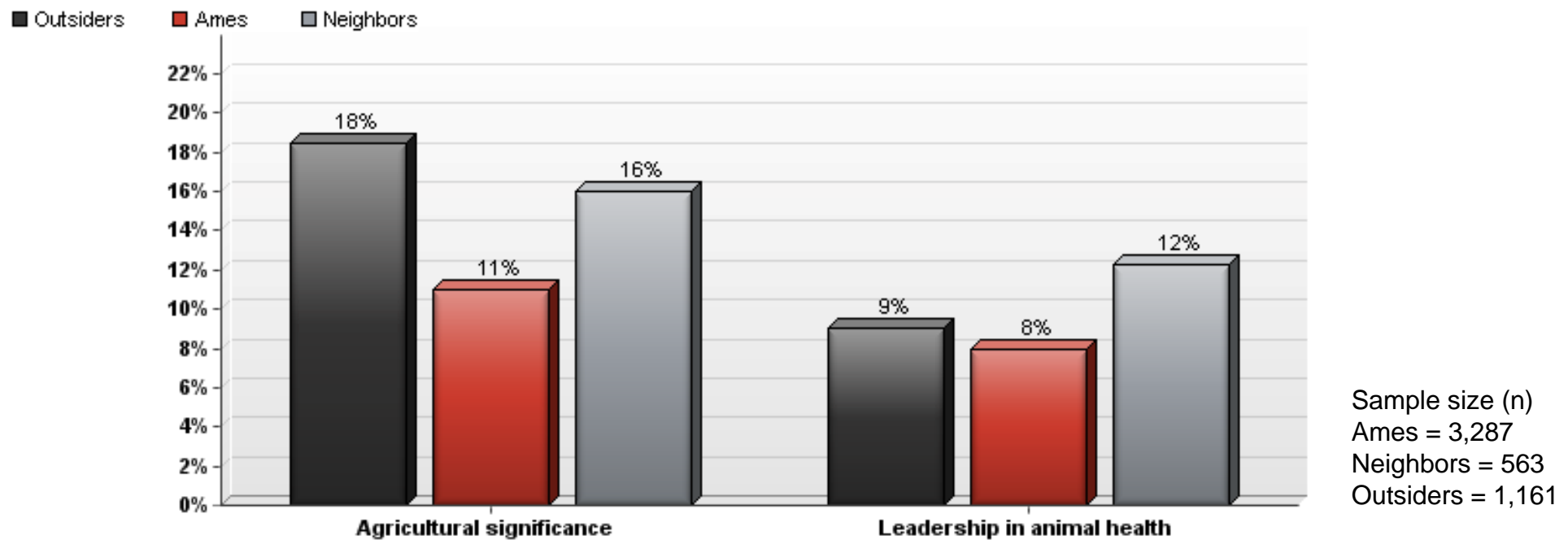
**“It’s clearly an educational center, especially for the agrarian economy of the state.”**

**“Ames’ role would be agriculturally related... Business, engineering, research. Ames has the highest per-capita of veterinarians in the country.”**

**“Iowa City is a human medical center. We have more broad reach – bio fuels, animal health, plans so we are more broadly innovative in that way. Maybe we are more of the left-brained, technical side.”**

**“A lot of people in business around Iowa would say that Ames is a center for technical innovation. Partly because of ISU but also because of the supporting industries like software, vaccine development, etc.”**

# And outsiders saw it as an even more compelling unique aspect of Ames



Q. Fill in the blank in this sentence – “Compared to other college towns in the Midwest, the most UNIQUE thing about Ames is \_\_\_\_\_.” (Select one)

# But that edge extends to other tech business...

## Iowa Company Keeps Power On During Disasters

POSTED: 3:23 pm CDT March 18, 2011

UPDATED: 3:54 pm CDT March 18, 2011

**AMES, Iowa** -- An Iowa company said Friday it has a way to keep the power on when disasters

like the Japanese earthquake and nuclear crisis hit



Solar charger - Powerfilm Solar in Ames sending several solar devices to Japan for disaster efforts

## Disaster Areas Could Soon See Iowa Grain Bin Houses

POSTED: 4:21 pm CDT March 16, 2011

UPDATED: 5:46 pm CDT March 16, 2011

**AMES, Iowa** -- Iowa engineers have been watching disasters around the world from the earthquake in Haiti to the recent one in Japan. And they want to help.

[Photos: Grain Bin Homes](#)

Many of the same design elements that make the grain bins made by Sukup Manufacturing so durable also make the bins ideal for transitional shelters.

"We can get them to the people who need them quickly, easily. Get them erected in a short time and then when they no longer need them we can take them down and use them elsewhere," said Brett Nelson.

Engineers said they built a prototype after making a few modifications to make the bin more suitable as a home. The 254-square-foot home includes a single room and continuous ventilation and a heat shield on the exterior of the roof.

## Related To Story



"We should leverage the heck out of the agricultural core that we have. Promote businesses that took advantage of that technology, and then build around it."

*Stakeholder Interview*

... and to many more areas of the community...

## Retail and Dining

“Ames could be a **much more interesting individualized town – unlike all the others around the U.S. – if it cultivated its locally-owned businesses.**”

“**The Main Street cultural district is unique.**”

“We are this really unique University setting with **unique boutique retail. [If we aligned around that,] this could be a pretty interesting spot.** That is the potential.”

## Intelligent Development / Urban Renewal

“I would like it if the community really owned Campus Town – that’s happening, which is a good thing. **I’d like it to be a place where there are restaurants and businesses that the community liked, not just students... It’s really a win-win.**”

“Ames is going to grow. It’s a matter of how it grows. **I’d like to see it grow in a way that the development makes sense. Some aesthetic qualities. Walkable.** We could grow in size and number of businesses and retain that small town feeling if development was done thoughtfully.”

# ... and to many more areas of the community ...

## Green Living

“The greenbelt is really unique for a city like Ames... **you can bike through most of the town and get around without having to get in your car.**”

“**People are very environmentally conscious here compared to other communities, but we don’t take the ball and run with that as much as we could.**”

“**I would like to see us be the greenest city in Iowa.**”

## Diversity

“We’ve already had some unique opportunities to embrace diversity. For Iowa, Ames is fairly diverse for its size. That’s going to change a bit – largely its been international folks coming in through the University, but still high socioeconomic class. **Now we’re seeing more socioeconomic diversity, and that’s probably going to increase. We need to work on ways to make that a positive – more communication and understanding. Ames could find policies and ways to do that as effectively as possible.**”

*Stakeholder Interviews*



... and to many more areas of the community ...

## Education

“Most residents see our schools as high-achieving... although we may be living off an old reputation with education. But **compared to other schools, we’re far better than others.** When my kids go to college, they’ll already have the equivalent of 2 years community college.”

## Health Care

“We have a high level of health care here. McFarland Clinic has an outstanding range of medical physicians for a community of 50,000 where most of them are young and healthy. **The standards of quality at the medical center are in the top in the nation but we don’t really celebrate it.**”

*Stakeholder Interviews*

# Even the Girl Scouts are innovating



By KI MAE HEUSSNER (@kheussner)

May 4, 2011

Forget [selling cookies](#) to earn badges. [Girl Scouts](#) today build innovative biomedical devices to win patents.

In what the Girl Scouts of the USA said may be its first patent-worthy project, a group of [Girl Scouts from Ames, Iowa](#), developed a [prosthetic hand device](#) to help a 3-year-old toddler without fingers write. The device not only won the group the \$20,000 [FIRST LEGO League Global Innovation Award](#) from the X Prize Foundation last month, it scored the scouts a provisional patent.

Share

Comments

Print

# In fact, though it is a small town, Ames is on the leading edge of the Midwest's most important issues

**“Ames is an innovator of a better way to do things.** Because of our education here and science and technology. We can experiment and find the way that things can really work well – use of resources, decision-making processes... Innovators in problem-solving a lot of things.”

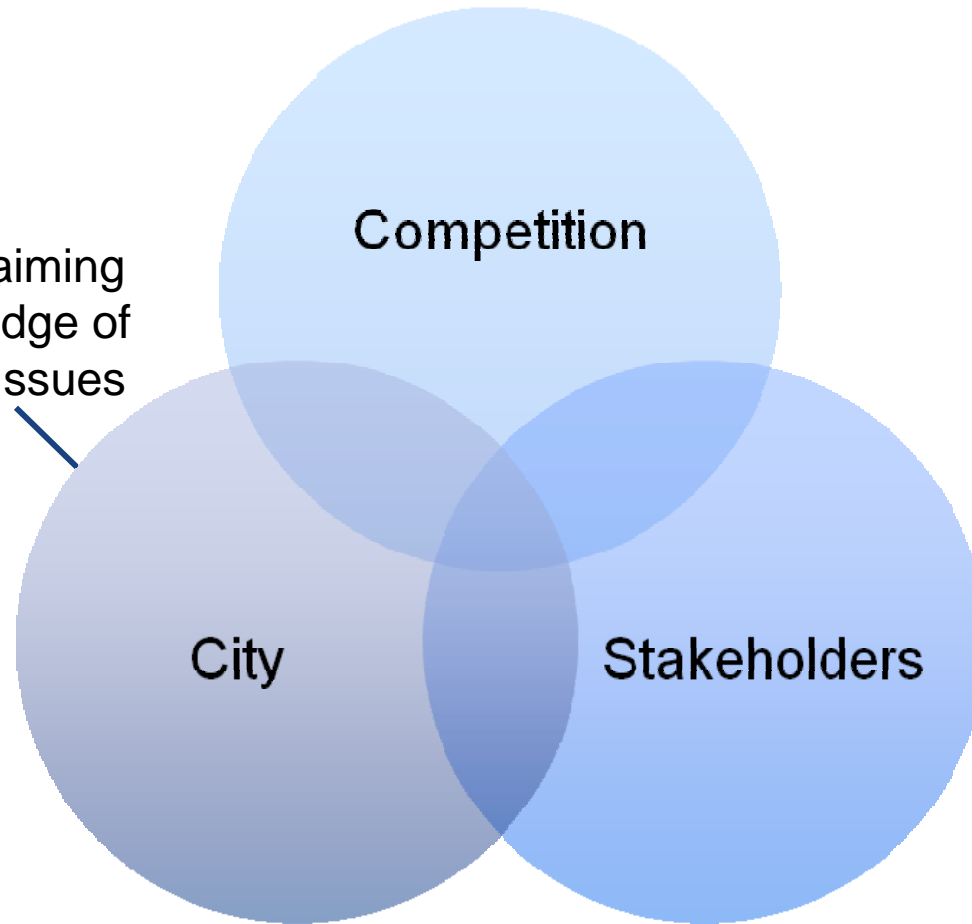
**“Because of ISU, I think outside of Ames, they are looking for solutions to big problems to come out of here. There is some research going on here that could be very important to big things in the world.”**

**“Ames is the Brain Trust of Iowa. At least for certain areas – for some areas, we’d be the Brain Trust of the country. I don’t even think I know of all that goes on here – I’d probably be amazed!”**

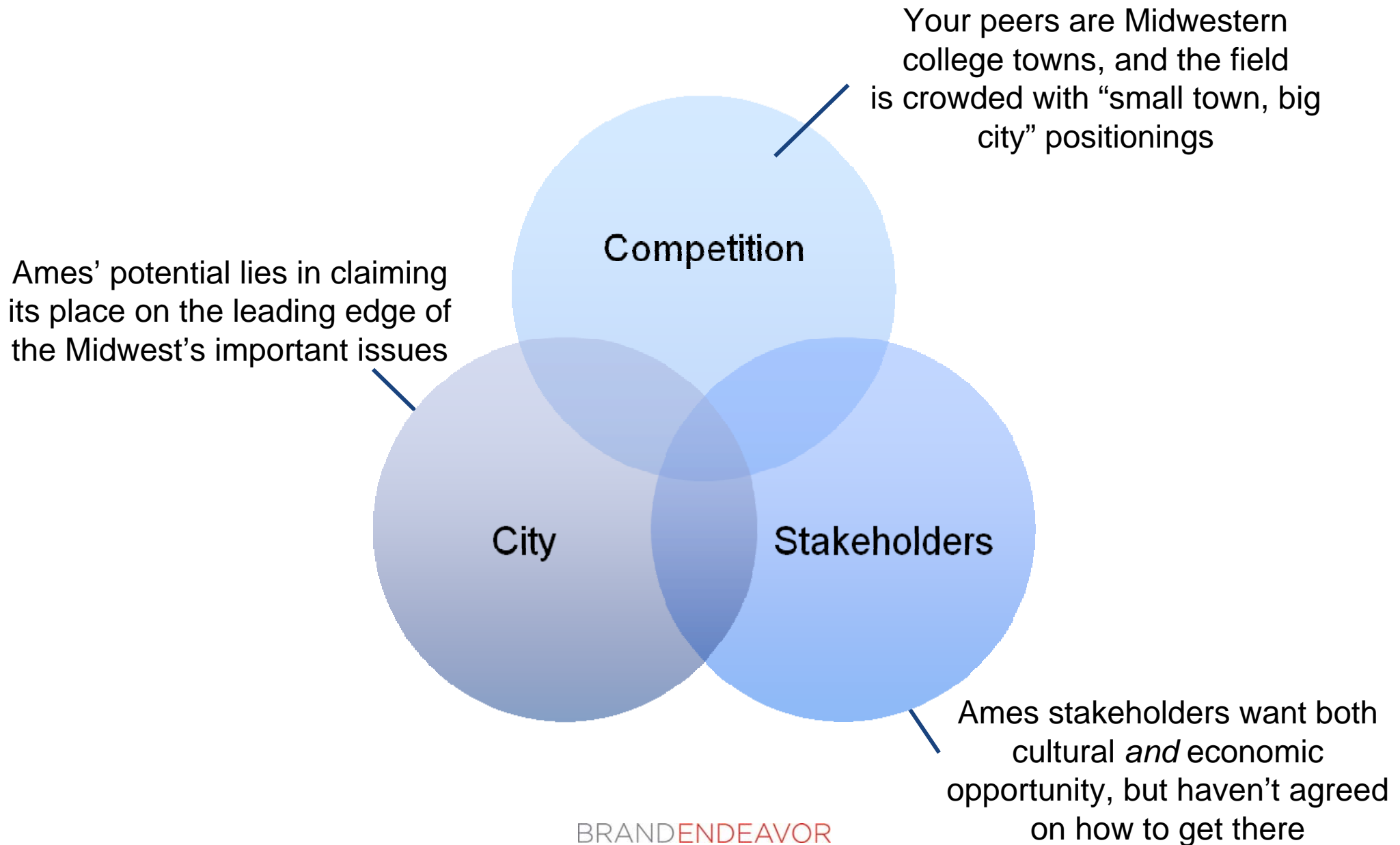
**“I think we have a great opportunity that we often miss. Why can’t we solve issues here and be the model for other people?.. Why not take the knowledge at ISU and make the whole town a big experiment, an incubator... That’s going to make the city money, if people see this place as progressive, innovative and solving the world’s problems.”**

# The City

Ames' potential lies in claiming its place on the leading edge of the Midwest's important issues

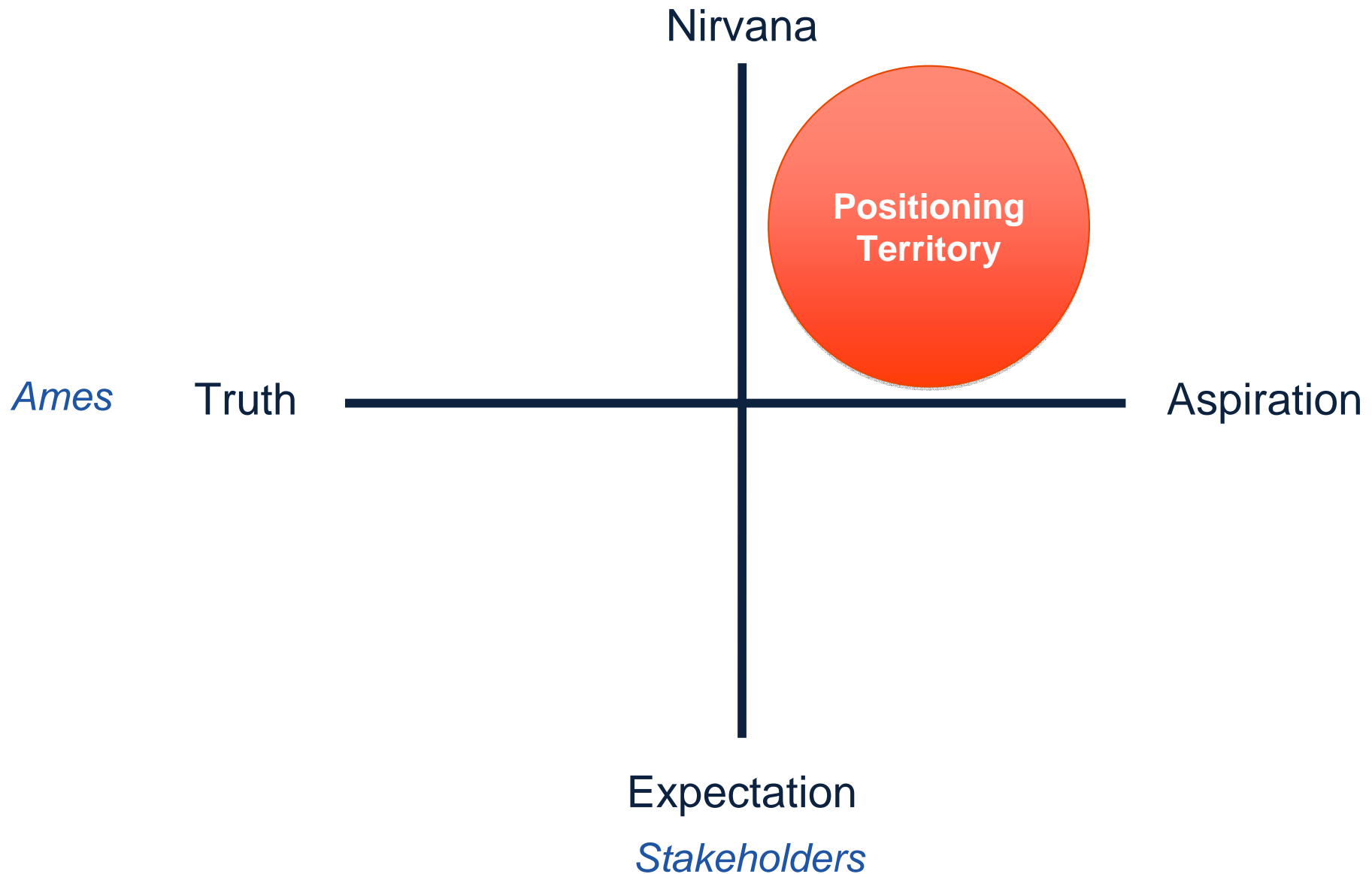


# In Summary

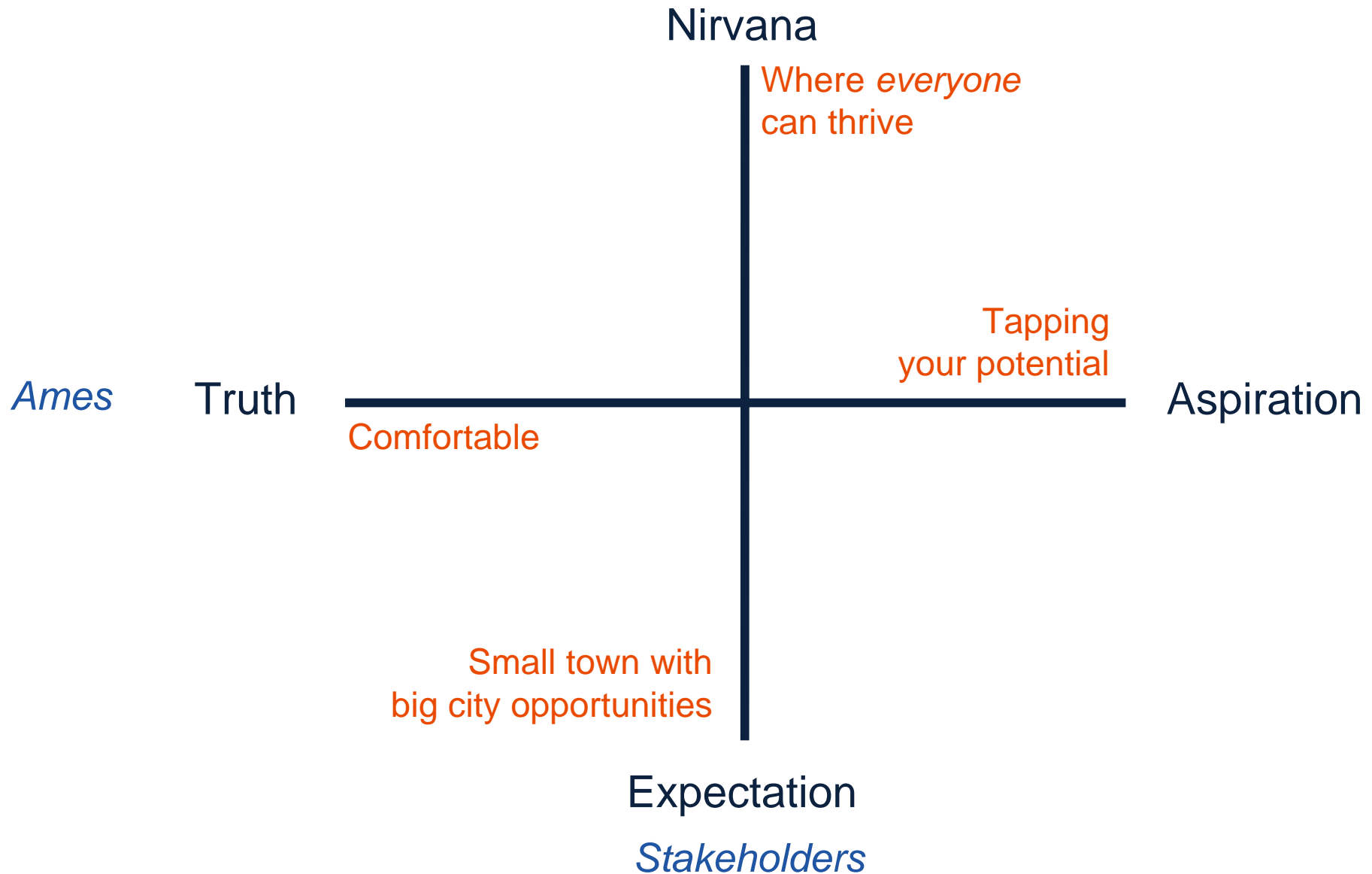


# Strategic Platform and Vision

# Defining the Vision Territory



# Defining the Vision Territory





# The Ames strategic platform

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>WHO<br/>we're for</b> | Those who want the charms and convenience of a small town with the opportunities and amenities that come from a major University  |
| <b>WHAT<br/>we do</b>    | <b>Ames is the Heartland's leading edge</b> , fostering creativity and innovation at the forefront of the world's important issues that the Midwest is uniquely positioned to address |
| <b>WHY<br/>we do it</b>  | To create a community where everyone has opportunities to discover and thrive   |
| <b>HOW<br/>we do it</b>  |   |
| <b>WHO<br/>we are</b>    |   |

# The Ames promise / vision

**Ames, Iowa is the Heartland's leading edge.** As a city, we are committed to fostering creativity and innovation at the forefront of the world's important issues that the Midwest is uniquely positioned to address, including agriculture, veterinary medicine, technology, sustainability, development, diversity, education and health care.

For those who want the charms and convenience of a small town with the opportunities and amenities that come from a major University, Ames' position at the Heartland's leading edge creates a community – and a region – where everyone has opportunities to discover and thrive.

# Commonly accepted definitions of key terms

## **Leading Edge**

The leading position in any field

## **Heartland**

1. The central region of a country or continent
2. The core or most vital area

## **Innovative**

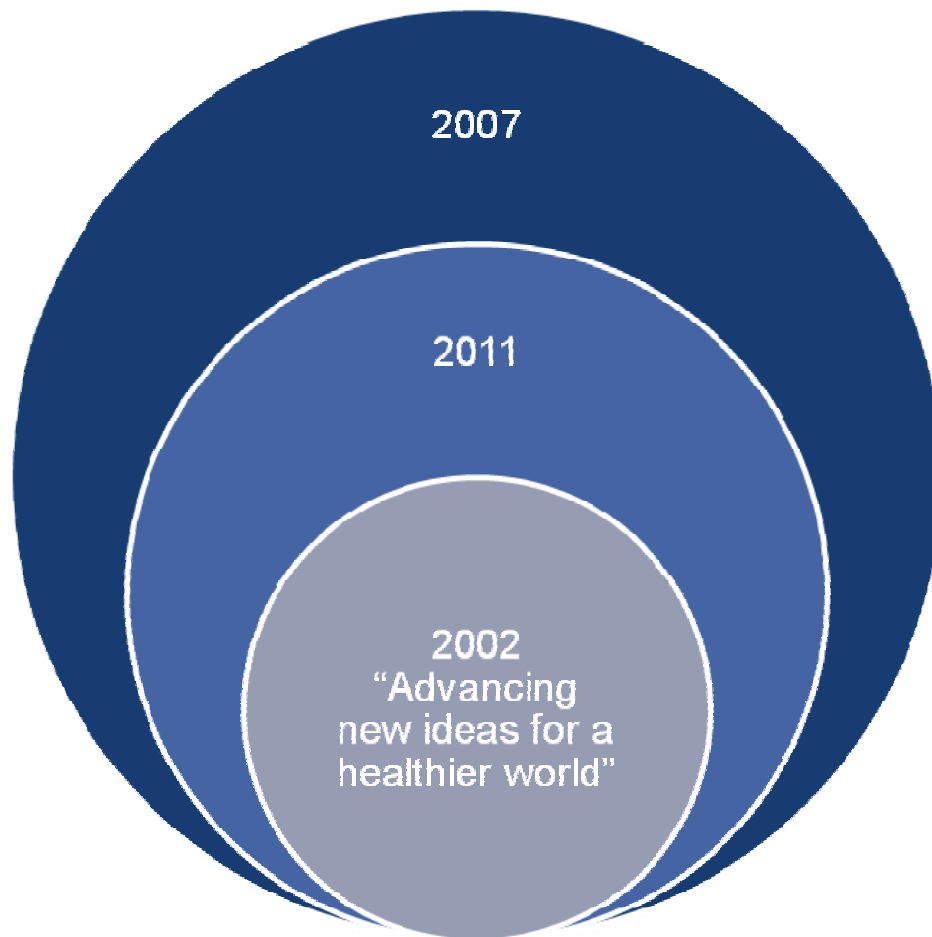
Using or showing new methods or ideas

## **Creative**

1. characterized by originality of thought; having or showing imagination
2. designed to or tending to stimulate the imagination
3. characterized by sophisticated bending of the rules or conventions

*World English Dictionary*

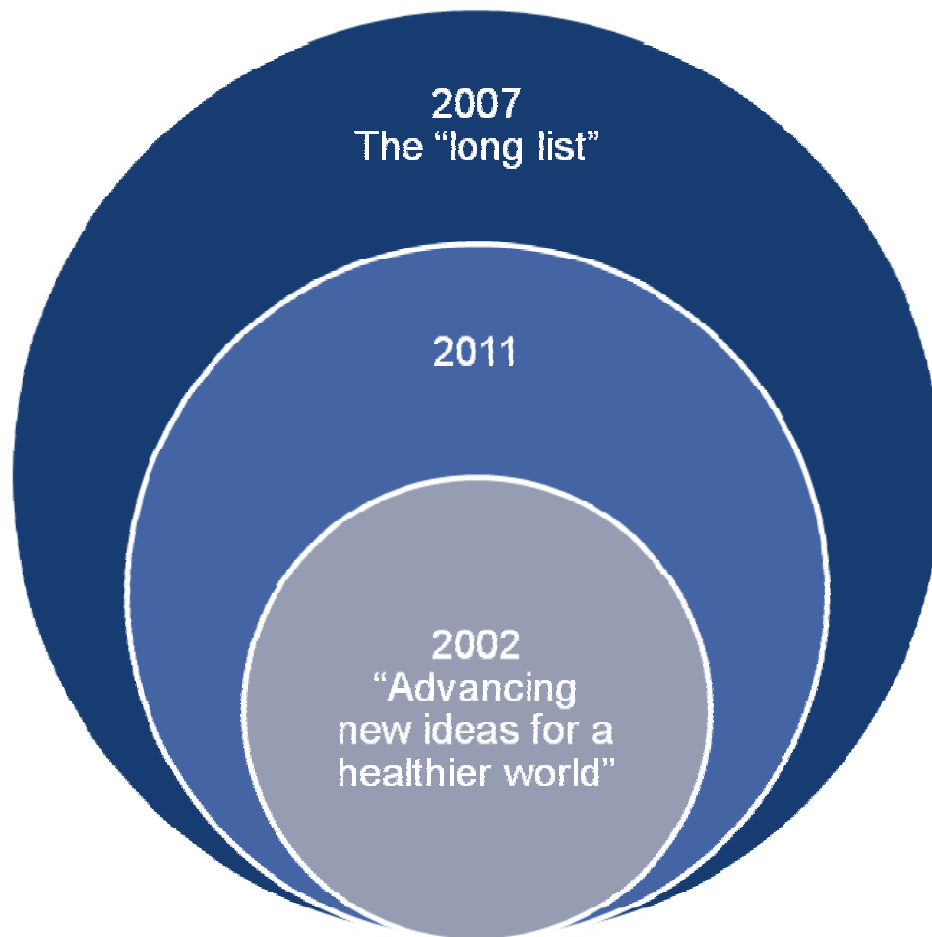
# Relationship to prior visioning exercises



**2002 vision was too narrow to include the entire community, but was on the right track**

“Paying close attention to protecting and enhancing the quality of life cornerstones of our community and impacting economic growth, Ames, Iowa will become the nation’s leading community in developing the world’s bioeconomic future, especially in the areas of food safety and food supply.”

# Relationship to prior visioning exercises

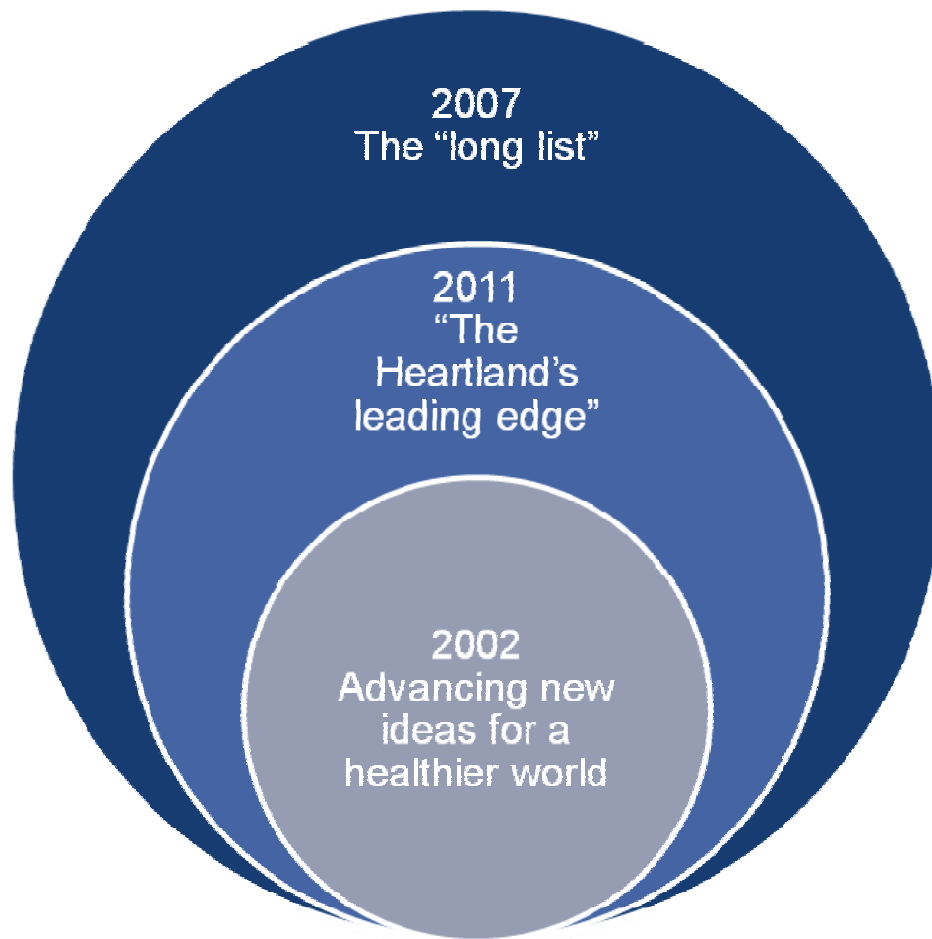


## 2007 vision was too broad to focus efforts

### Vision Statements – Ames

- Everyone. Have wide variety of affordable housing in order to live comfortably and securely; people can afford to live where they work; community extends beyond city limits;
- Everyone. Municipal utility will generate power from bio-mass for continued lower electric rates;
- Everyone. Will be empowered to be actively engaged in the Ames experience by readily available English Language Learning (ELL) and foreign language opportunities so they will be less marginalized and more integrated into the community;
- All children infant – 5 years-old. Will have pre-literacy experience leading to their being ready to start school;
- All children. Will have the background, nourishment and home life to be able to succeed in school;
- Everyone. Community which connects all lifestyles in a sense of true community through lifestyle integration for a unified community;
- Everyone. City, private industry, public schools and university will bring planning and services together to fully integrate members of the community;
- Everyone; especially younger generations. Ames will be focused on the sustainability of environment, history and neighborhoods to ensure a strong foundation for the future; older generations; anticipating and planning for future changes;
- Everyone. Will be safe to flourish; physical security;
- Everyone. Intergenerational services and programs, living arrangements; increased and broadened perspectives and understanding;
- Elderly. Will live in a low risk environment and enjoy a lifestyle that is secure and comfortable; community activities; parking; transportation; outreach programs from library; general community will also benefit; what makes Ames a place to retire?
- Everyone will have a public pool and public recreation facilities;
- ISU gets increased and sustained funding from the State; better experience for students; increased prosperity for community;
- Everyone. Business community provide employment with interesting and challenging jobs that pay a living wage; children will have opportunity to fulfill potential;
- Everyone. All people who have the privilege of voting take the opportunity to do so based on available and unbiased information;
- Everyone. Neutral place for discussing a shared vision for the community;
- Everyone. Environmentally, socially and politically conscious and will have the resources they

# Relationship to prior visioning exercises



## **2011 balances inclusiveness with specificity**

The vision is broad enough to apply to many sectors of the community, but specific enough to prioritize initiatives.

# Truth to aspiration

- Ames can already claim to be the Heartland's leading edge, in more than just agriculture and veterinary science. Some examples citizens have already provided:
  - CyRide
  - Resource Recovery Plant
  - Ice Arena
  - Leadership in biofuels
  - There are many, many more...
- It's also in your history
  - George Washington Carver's innovations
  - Iowa State Center
  - Invention of the Rice Crispy Treat
  - And many, many more...
- But, being on the Leading Edge is an active pursuit. It requires always being on the leading edge. There is much Ames has done, and much that can still be done to live up to the promise.

# Attributes: “How we do it”

*These are our “VERBS” – they define the actions we take every day to deliver on the promise.*

## **Require Innovative Solutions**

When an issue is brought to the table, Ames looks beyond its boundaries to discover innovative approaches. Ames will insist that any key initiative undertaken can be considered among the most innovative in the region, if not the nation.

## **Stand for Collaboration**

In order to create opportunities for everyone to discover and thrive, every voice needs to be heard and respected. In Ames, we seek to find common ground rather than hold our ground.

## **Be Decisive**

While we are thoughtful, a Leading Edge city is not paralyzed by debate. At the outset of an issue, we set a limit for discussion, determining what information we need by when in order to make a decision and move on to other important concerns.



# The Ames strategic platform

|                                 |   |                                    |                        |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <p><b>WHO<br/>we're for</b></p> | <p>Those who want the charms and convenience of a small town with the opportunities and amenities that come from a major University</p>   |                                    |                        |
| <p><b>WHAT<br/>we do</b></p>    | <p><b>Ames is the Heartland's leading edge</b>, fostering creativity and innovation at the forefront of the world's important issues that the Midwest is uniquely positioned to address</p> |                                    |                        |
| <p><b>WHY<br/>we do it</b></p>  | <p>To create a community where everyone has opportunities to discover and thrive</p>  |                                    |                        |
| <p><b>HOW<br/>we do it</b></p>  | <p>REQUIRE<br/>innovative solutions</p>   | <p>Stand for<br/>COLLABORATION</p> | <p>Be<br/>DECISIVE</p> |
| <p><b>WHO<br/>we are</b></p>    |   |                                    |                        |

# Personality: “Who we are”

*These are our “ADJECTIVES” – they define how we would like people to describe us 5 years from now. We will not generally use these words in communication, but they will set the tone for our communication and actions.*

## **Smart**

*Forward-thinking, Intellectual, Contemporary*

We apply the brightest and latest thinking to our initiatives, remaining always mindful of choosing a sound and prudent approach.

## **Open-Minded**

*Respectful, Flexible, Understanding*

We remain open-minded about issues and approaches, believing that our fellow citizens also have the best interests of Ames at heart.

## **Confident**

*Assured, Positive, Bold*

We are confident in our assets as a city and our abilities as a citizenry. We proudly tell our story and assert our role in the region.

# The Ames strategic platform

|                             |   |                                |                    |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| <p><b>WHO we're for</b></p> | <p>Those who want the charms and convenience of a small town with the opportunities and amenities that come from a major University</p>   |                                |                    |
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| <p><b>WHY we do it</b></p>  | <p>To create a community where everyone has opportunities to discover and thrive</p>  |                                |                    |
| <p><b>HOW we do it</b></p>  | <p>REQUIRE innovative solutions</p>   | <p>Stand for COLLABORATION</p> | <p>Be DECISIVE</p> |
| <p><b>WHO we are</b></p>    | <p>Smart</p>  | <p>Open-minded</p>             | <p>Confident</p>   |

# Evaluating the vision: what makes a great promise

Is “the Heartland’s leading edge”...

| <b>Emotional?</b>  | <b>Differentiating?</b>   | <b>Relevant?</b>   |
|--|---|--|
| Driven by how you want stakeholders to feel when they interact with you. | Different from promises made by competitors, describing a feeling only you give them. | Meaningful to stakeholders, focused on where their greatest needs intersect with your strengths. |
| <i>Smart<br/>Open-Minded<br/>Confident</i>                               | <i>Not only a “small town with big city opportunities”</i>                            | <i>Taps Ames’ potential to be a place where everyone can thrive</i>                              |

# Evaluating the vision: the Council's objectives

Does “the Heartland’s leading edge”...

| <b>Provide focus?</b>  | <b>Distinguish Ames?</b>                 | <b>Direct communications?</b>                           |
|--|--|---|
| Provide a clear focus for city initiatives, including policy planning. | Distinguish Ames from peers/competitors. | Direct future communications and marketing initiatives. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>                                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>                     |

*At their meeting on 6/14, the Council members indicated that the proposed vision did meet their objectives.*

# Feedback from community meetings

## Most were very supportive

“This will give us opportunities to define what is leading edge. The good news is this isn’t just a nice sounding statement that doesn’t lead us anywhere”

“It’s a great vision, and I’ve appreciated the inclusiveness of the process.”

“This helps us realize that the world needs Ames to step up and help solve the problems in the world.”

“This makes me think Ames thinks more about its future than I thought it did.”

## Some were more skeptical about the language and effectiveness

“I see leading edge as confident and practical. We’re not like California. It’s not wacky coastal leading edge.”

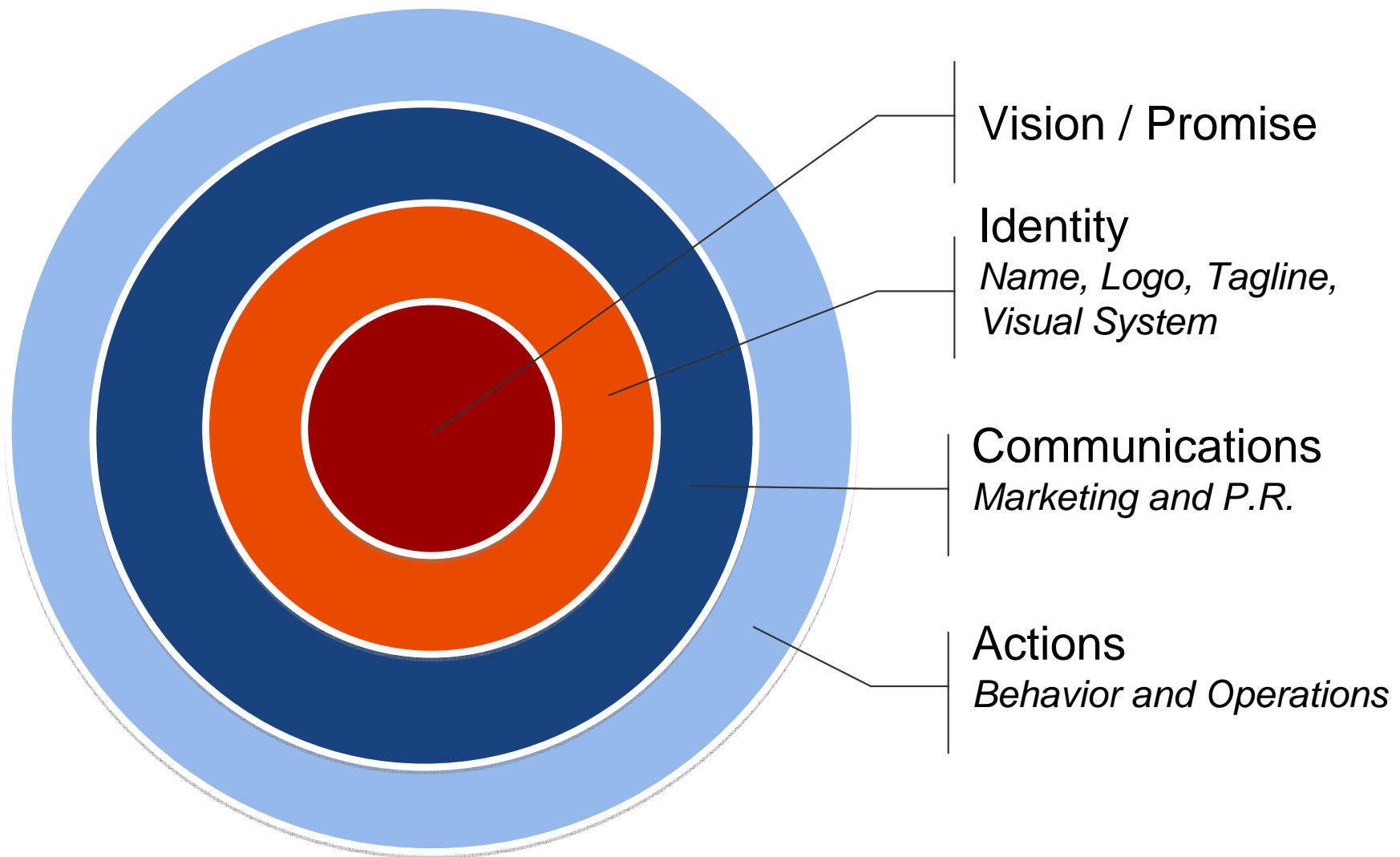
“There’s a certain amount of brainwashing feel to it. Translating this into public policy would be a promise, but there is a gap between this promise and public policy.”

“It appears that Ames has a new vision every 5 years. Ames has no long-term goals ever.”

“This is far too abstract and vague for me, unless we have ways to specifically join in and implement this... We need ways to engage in this.”

# Implementation recommendations

# The vision informs identity, communication and action





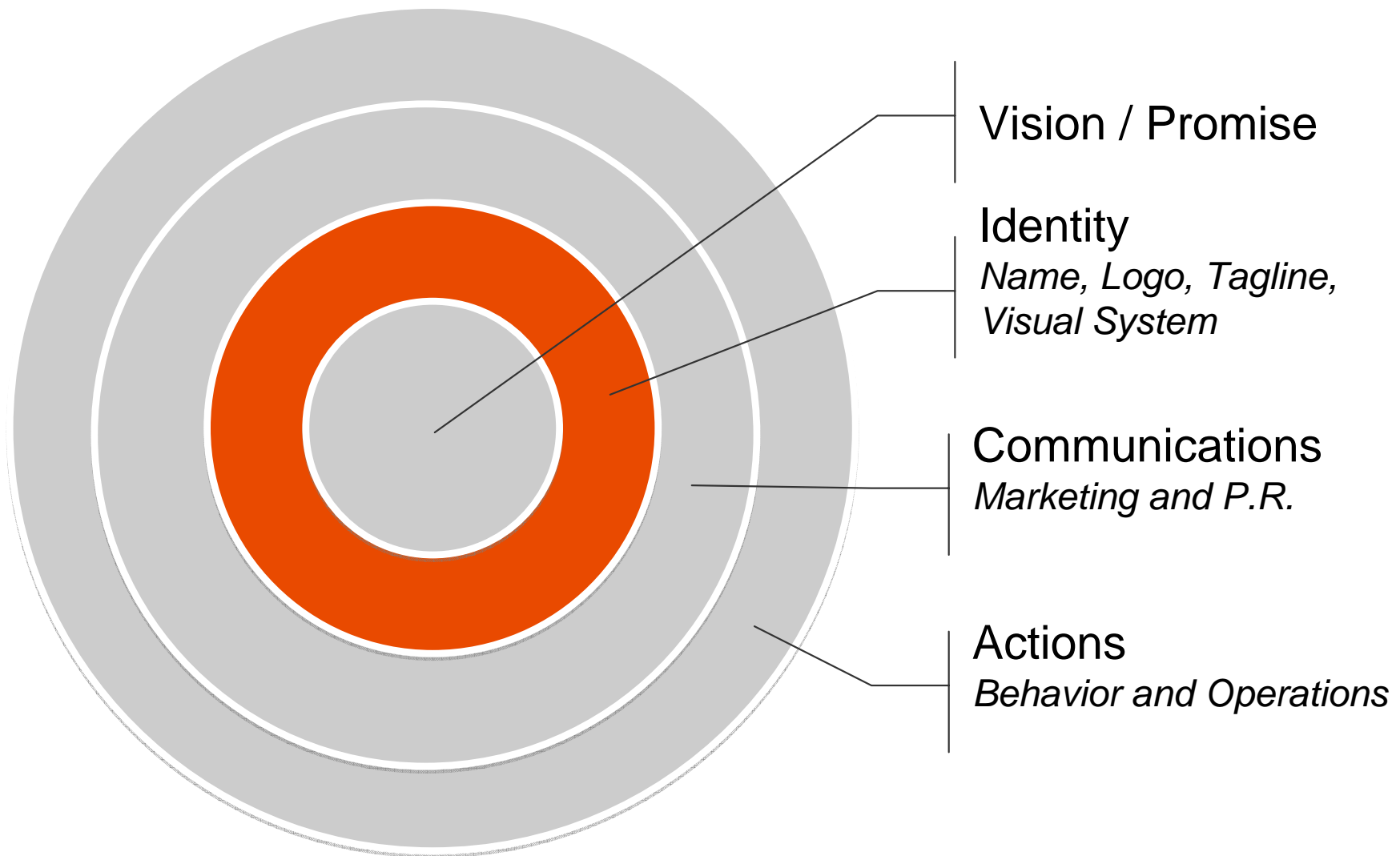
# Our assignment

**Recommend which initiatives should be the focus for implementation in your marketing/communication strategy** – not a marketing plan or communications strategy, but key areas of focus as you embark on important next steps.

*Note:*

*Our recommendations in the areas of Identity and Communication apply our experience and proven best-practices to needs uncovered during this project. The recommendations in the Actions area are our pragmatic (but not necessarily expert) suggestions to address needs expressed by the community.*

# Identity recommendations



“I would like Ames to have a unifying logo – something every letterhead or website could tout.”

“The City of Ames' colors are Blue and Green... why?”

*- Online survey respondents*

# Identity recommendations: tagline

## What is a tagline?

- **Taglines are a creative expression of the promise.** They should be short, memorable and emotional.
- They should help signal to inside and outside audiences what Ames is trying to be, and they empower both audiences to hold you to that promise.
- Taglines should be expected to last approximately 10 years.

# Identity recommendations: tagline

## Recommendation

Ames, Iowa

*The Heartland's Leading Edge*

The proposed tagline should be used in most or all materials produced by the City, the Chamber, the ACVB and the AEDC. The city should also request that other entities (such as ISU, the hospital, and the school district, among others) use the tagline where appropriate when communicating about the city.

## Alternative taglines explored:

The leading edge of the Heartland  
On the Heartland's leading edge  
Innovating for the Heartland  
Innovation from the Heartland  
Innovating the Heartland  
Creating the Future of the Heartland  
Creating the Future from the Heartland  
Advancing the Heartland  
Advancing from the Heartland  
Leading the Heartland  
Leading from the Heartland  
For an Emerging Heartland  
The Promise of the Heartland  
Cultivating innovation

# Identity recommendations: logo

## Logo Fundamentals

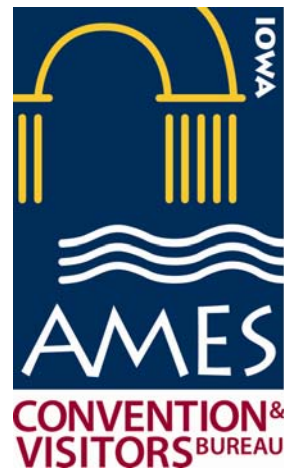
- **Strong logos communicate the promise visually**, whether directly (through a symbol), or indirectly, through use of typeface, color and layout to create a tone.
- A well-designed logo is:
  - Simple
  - Memorable
  - Timeless
  - Versatile
  - Appropriate (to the promise)
- Logos can help communicate the promise, be neutral, or can hurt (compromising the organization's ability to communicate the promise.)
- We see Ames' current logo as neutral at best. While it is memorable and versatile, it is weaker in the areas of simplicity, timelessness and appropriateness to the new promise.



# Identity recommendations: logo

## Ames Logopalooza

Further, Ames identity is fragmented by the use of different logos by the four entities representing the city to internal and external stakeholders. It has become a best-practice for cities to unify under one logo, with the occasional exception of a tourism-driven identity that is more consumer focused.



# Identity recommendations: logo

## Recommendation

**Consider developing a new logo that more strongly communicates the promise.**

The logo will signal a new direction for Ames and will serve as a visual reminder to keep stakeholders aligned with the vision.

A new logo should be used collectively by the City, the Chamber, the ACVB and the AEDC in order to create a unified external identity for Ames. The city should also request that other entities in Ames utilize the logo in communications that reference the city.



# Identity recommendations: visual system

## What is a visual system?

- A visual system is the strategic and systematic use of color palette, typography, photography and graphics to create a consistent image that reflects the promise.
- Visual systems are designed once, often (but not always) in conjunction with a new logo. Then guidelines are developed, and all future materials are designed in accordance with the guidelines.
- The visual system is applied to all communications materials, including collateral, web, ads, and stationery.
- Good visual systems provide:
  - Visual impact
  - Brand recall / recognition
  - Cost efficiencies (not reinventing the wheel with each design)

# Identity recommendations: visual system



 CENTER CITY PROJECT  
City of Calgary

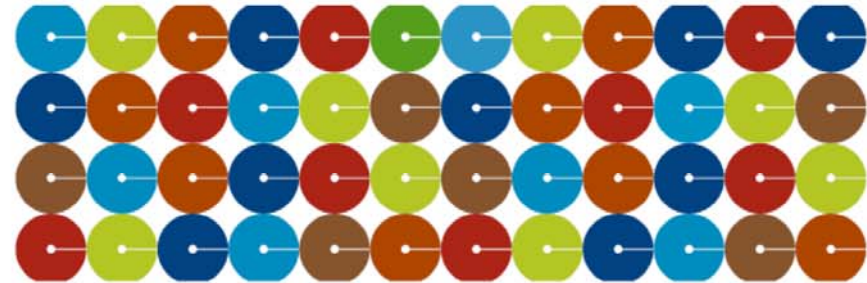
 CALGARY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU  
City of Calgary

 CALGARY ARTS DEVELOPMENT ASSOC.  
City of Calgary

 TOURISM CALGARY  
City of Calgary

 CALGARY TECHNOLOGIES INCORPORATED  
City of Calgary

 CALGARY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
City of Calgary



City Organizations

Symbol Pattern



Signatures Lock Up



Symbol

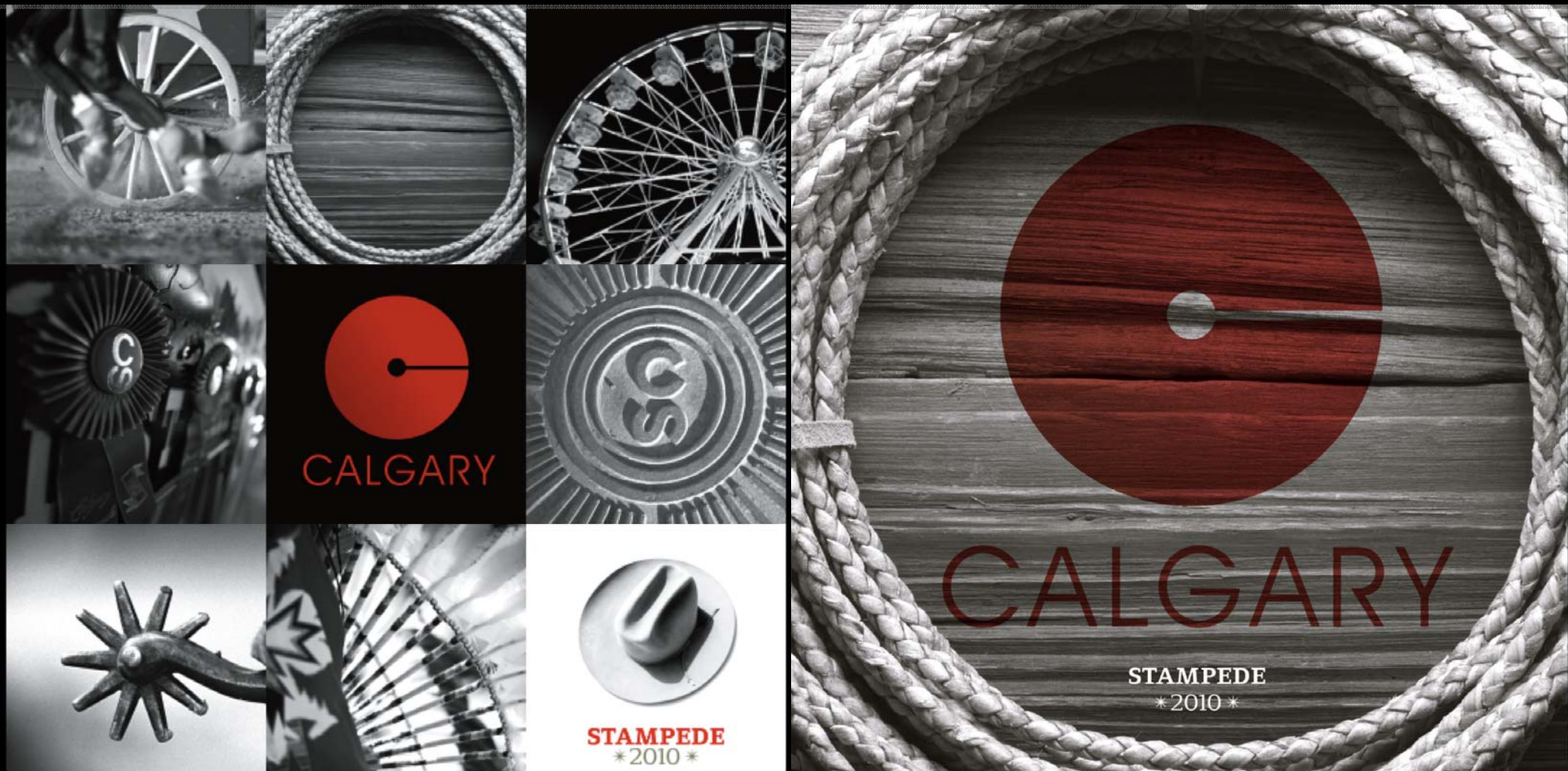
# CALGARY

FFCalm Sans Serif, BT

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
0123456789 ~!@#\$%^&\*+

FFCalm Sans Serif, BT

# Identity recommendations: visual system



# Identity recommendations: visual system

## Recommendation

**Consider developing a new visual system that strongly communicates the promise.** A new visual system should be considered whether or not you pursue developing a new logo.

The visual system should be used collectively by the City, the Chamber, the ACVB and the AEDC in order to create a unified external identity for Ames.

# Identity recommendations summary

In priority order

## High Priority

- **Tagline**

Utilize “The Heartland’s Leading Edge” tagline in most or all materials

## Moderate Priority

- **Visual System**

Develop a new visual system that strongly communicates the promise with color palette, typography, photography style and graphics

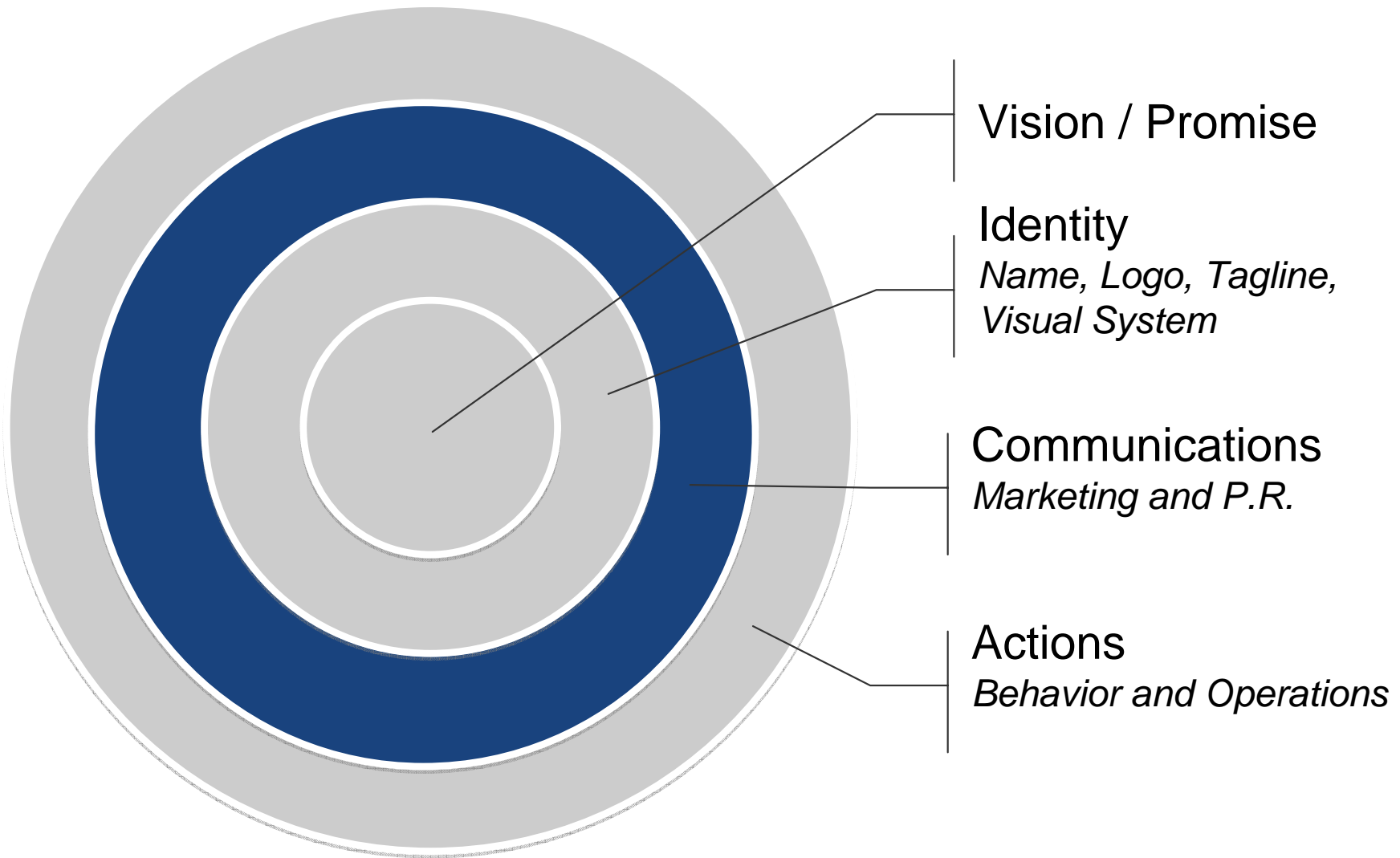
- **New Logo**

Develop a stronger logo that more effectively communicates the promise

All elements of the Ames identity should be used collectively by the City, the Chamber, the ACVB and the AEDC in order to create a unified external presence for Ames.

If a new logo and visual system are undertaken, consider rolling out the new identity in a unified launch, reserving use of the tagline until the logo and visual system are rolled out. A dramatic launch will create maximum impact and attention for the new promise.

# Communications recommendations



“A pooling of resources and one ‘brand’ presented to the public seems to be necessary so [city and ISU initiatives] are not competing against one another.

*- Online survey respondent*

# Communications recommendations: Brag Team

## Create and Empower a “Brag Team”

- Activate and formalize the partnership of Ames communicators, including representatives from the City, Chamber of Commerce, ACVB, AEDC, ISU, School District, Hospital and other groups.
- The Brag Team should be led by the City’s PIO and should meet regularly (at least monthly) to direct communications initiatives and ensure consistency of message and identity from all sectors of the community.
- Provide a “Train-the-Trainers” (T3) workshop for all Brag Team members, teaching them the vision findings and concepts from the inside-out so that they can in turn train other community members about the vision and help guide implementation.
  - This will ensure that the communication is aligned in perpetuity. When one Brag Team member moves on, they are responsible for training their replacement.



# Communications recommendations: roll out

## **Roll out the vision to community sectors in a series of meetings**

- Following their T3 session, the Brag Team should conduct vision roll-out meetings with the governing bodies and key community groups in the relevant sectors.
- In each session, the leader should facilitate discussion of how the vision will be applied within that sector, and should obtain commitments for next steps.
- The session leader should also collect proof points of the Leading Edge concept from that sector.

# Communications recommendations: proof points

## Inventory and communicate “leading edge” proof points

- During their community meetings and as a collective group, the Brag Team should create an inventory of “leading edge” proof points – examples of how Ames is currently delivering on the vision (both now and historically.)
- Once a substantial list has been developed, the Brag Team should institute a process for keeping the list current and communicating it within the city, regionally, and nationally when appropriate.
  - Consider a moderated “wiki” website where community members could add their own examples to the list.
- One Brag Team member (probably from the Chamber or the AEDC) should be responsible for communicating significant new proof points externally, expanding Ames’ PR footprint outside the city to both the region and the nation.
- The Brag Team can also leverage the powerful presence of ISU Alumni and communicate advancements in Ames through that audience channel

# Communications recommendations: thought leadership

## **Establish Ames' thought leadership in the region**

- Create an Ames Speaker's Bureau, encouraging Brag Team members and sector leaders to present their leading edge ideas and strategies at conferences or other public forums, both regionally and nationally.
- Pursue a convention and visitors' strategy that recruits conferences and other meetings that would align with Ames' leading edge promise. Create a perception of Ames as being a "natural" venue for such meetings, perhaps including a tour or overview of Ames' leading edge accomplishments.
- Likewise, the AEDC should continue to pursue a business recruitment strategy that aligns with the vision, pursuing leading edge businesses as natural prospects for Ames.

# Communications recommendations: message consistency

## Ensure that the vision idea and language is infused into city communications

- City should ensure that all communications materials from the city are reflecting the promise:
  - Update “About Ames” section on the website and infuse the vision into other web articles and copy elements
  - Re-cast print materials as they come up for re-printing and incorporate messaging into any new materials
  - Focus on the “adjectives” to inform the tone: Smart, Open-Minded, Confident
- Develop new boilerplate language for press releases.
- Provide boilerplate language to all partners to use when they describe Ames.
- Consider creating a communication tools site that can be accessed by all city stakeholders to provide language, logos and visual elements so everyone is using the correct materials.

# Communications recommendations: visual reminders

## **Create visual reminders of the vision to encourage adoption and accountability**

- Posters in City Hall, Council Chambers, Chamber of Commerce, AEDC, ACVB, the Library, and through the community as appropriate.
- Distribute wallet cards with the vision in the community roll-out meetings.
- Include the tagline on gateway signage as people enter the town.
- Create a “wall-of-fame” recognizing leading edge accomplishments in the community.

# Communications recommendations summary

In priority order

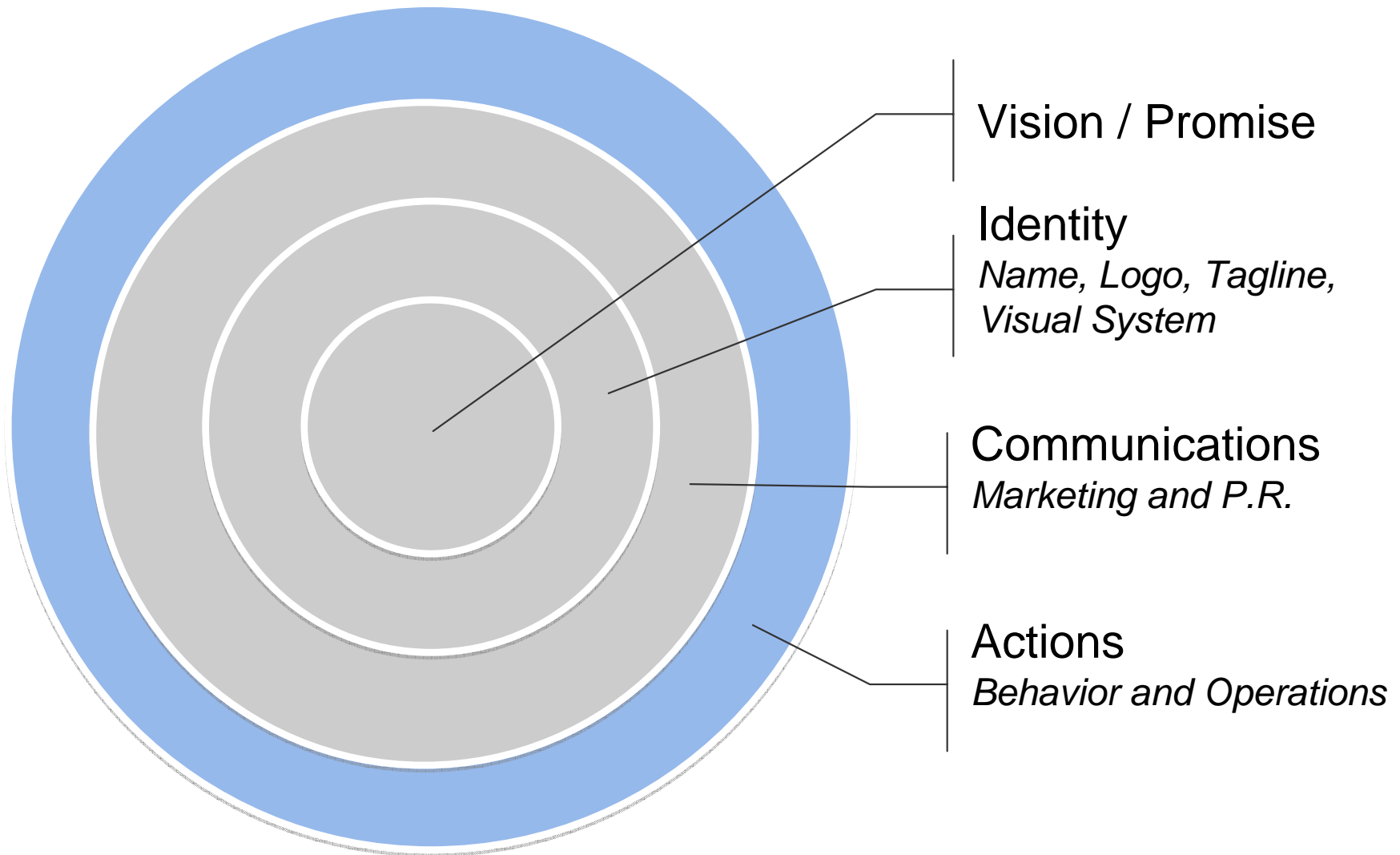
## High Priorities

- Create and Empower a “Brag Team”
- Roll out the vision to community sectors in a series of meetings
- Ensure that the vision idea and language is infused into city communications
- Inventory and communicate “leading edge” proof points

## Moderate Priority

- Establish Ames’ thought leadership
- Create visual reminders of the vision to encourage adoption and accountability

# Action recommendations



“We have situations where goals are conflicted. But now [with this vision] we can raise to a higher level and use this as a filter to balance the issues... It’s a higher order way of evaluating the issues and dealing with conflict.”

“Who is responsible for delivering on the promise?”

*Comments in Citizen Workshops*



# Actions recommendations: gap analysis

## **Assess and close the gaps between promise and delivery**

- Use the inventory of proof points developed by the brag team to create a gap analysis – in what sectors are we strongly delivering on the “leading edge” and in what sectors are we having more challenges?
- Consider development of a strategic plan or consultation with a relevant expert to help determine how to close the gaps.

# Actions recommendations: evaluation of proposals

## **Determine a process for evaluating whether key initiatives align with the vision**

- When evaluating key initiatives, it may be helpful to develop evaluation criteria to help measure the proposal's alignment with the vision.
- For instance, consider developing a decision tree with such questions as:
  - What is the problem/issue this proposal is attempting to solve?
  - Looking regionally and nationally, what are some leading edge ways that other communities are addressing this issue?
  - Which of these solutions might work in Ames?
  - Why is the proposed solution better than the alternatives?

# Actions recommendations: responsibility and recognition

## Encourage personal responsibility and recognize those who embody the vision

- Every citizen in Ames is accountable for delivering on the promise behaviors:
  - Require innovative solutions
  - Stand for collaboration
  - Be decisive
- The only way for the vision to be realized is if everyone takes personal responsibility for behaving in a way that aligns with the brand, and if we hold one another accountable for doing so.
- Develop an annual awards program to recognize those in the community who are living the vision every day.
  - Awards for “leading edge” citizen, civic organization and company
  - Create a “Wall of Fame” celebrating the winners and reminding the community of its commitment to – and ability to deliver on – the vision

# Actions recommendations summary

In priority order

- Assess and close the gaps between promise and delivery
- Determine a process for evaluating whether key initiatives align with the vision
- Encourage personal responsibility and recognize those who embody the vision

# Thank You.

We have enjoyed working with you and getting to know Ames. We wish you success as you begin implementing your vision. Please reach out if you have any questions or need any further support along this journey that has just begun.

Christie Harper

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