



ABOUT THE PLAN

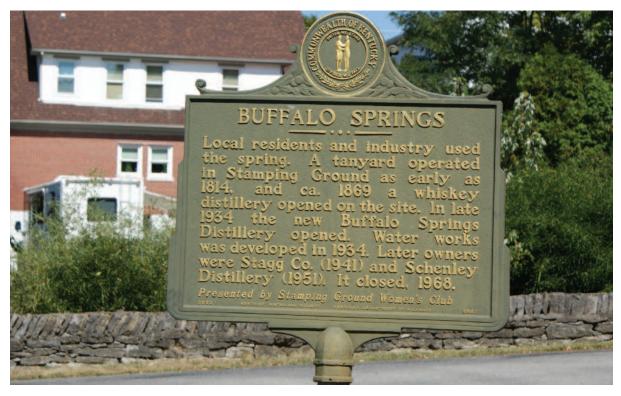
Elected leaders of Stamping Ground were working to make things better for the community, but they really wanted to know what their local residents wanted. They also wanted to be able to prioritize initiatives in order to make their budgeting decisions easier. The City of Stamping Ground contracted with the Kentucky League of Cities Community Consulting Services to facilitate community conversations and develop recommendations and strategies based upon the community's input.

The KLC CCS facilitators led the community through a series of meetings, listening to residents talk about their vision, what they see for the future of the community, and how to draw upon the unique qualities of Stamping Ground in order to move the community forward in a positive way.

The results of these community conversations are reflected in this strategic plan. These goals and recommendations are intended to guide city leaders and community volunteers as they endeavor to improve the City of Stamping Ground over the next three to five years.



Highlights of Stamping Ground History



The early explorers called it "Buffalo Stamping Ground" as it is located on the Alanant-owamiowee Trail or "Buffalo Path." This trail was a migratory route since prehistoric times. Stamping Ground took its name from the fact that in the first settlement of the county the herds of buffalo used to congregate at the salt springs. They tramped or stamped down the soil around the spring as they stood under the shade of the trees waiting to get water. The town grew up around this spring called "Buffalo Springs."

Around 1790, Anthony Lindsay chose a site just outside of the current city limits to establish a station. There is a historical marker noting the original site of Lindsay's Station. Lindsay's greatgrandson was the renowned outlaw, Jesse James.

The first church was established around 1795 and was called McConnell's Church.

The first Post Office was established in 1814 with Alex Bradford as postmaster.

The town of Herndonville was laid out in 1817 on land which had been purchased by Joseph and Scott Herndon. The town was incorporated in 1834, and the name of the town was changed to Stamping Ground. Five trustees were elected by the citizens of the town and they appointed a clerk and a chairman to establish the metes and bounds, lay out streets and alleys and cross streets, and record everything in the Scott County Clerk's Office in Georgetown.

Under the treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, signed in 1825, an academy was established for the education of young Indians. The Choctaw Academy was established in Scott County, Kentucky, and students of several tribes attended the academy. The school closed in 1848, yet the building is still

Highlights of Stamping Ground History



standing today, though in need of repair. See photos by Photography by Wahiya.¹

The parents of famed outlaw, Jesse James, Rev. Robert Sallee James and Zerelda Elizabeth Cole, were married in Stamping Ground on December 28, 1841. The house where they were wed still stands and is in the Stamping Ground area.

The first known distillery in Stamping Ground was in 1868. All distilleries were closed by prohibition in 1918. After the repeal of prohibition construction was begun on October 23, 1933 on the Buffalo Springs Distillery. The last whiskey was barreled at Stamping Ground in February 1960.

Telephones were first installed in Stamping Ground about 1910. Dial telephones were installed in 1939, the first in Scott County.

Electricity was available in town around 1915 by W.D. "Mr. Bill" Adams setting up an electric company of his own.

There was a fire on December 2, 1916, which burned both sides of the street in Stamping Ground and then another fire occurred in the early 1920s with devastating results. The waterworks system was in use in the city limits in 1936.

In April 3, 1974, tornados devastated the area. Stamping Ground was the hardest-hit community in Central Kentucky. This was the greatest tornado outbreak in U.S. history, stretching from the Deep South to the Great Lakes. A weather system that included 148 tornadoes spanned 18 hours and struck 13 states. It killed 315 people and injured 6,100. The total damage reached a half-billion dollars.²

The Buffalo Gals Extension Homemaker Club in Scott County has constructed and installed 142 barn quilts since 2008, a well-promoted tourist draw for the community.

In 2015, Stamping Ground became a Bluegrass Bike Partner. The program was created by the Bluegrass Cycling Club to promote cycling and establish safe, supportive, and welcoming relationships. A Bluegrass Bike Partner is an individual, business, or organization that wants to be identified as a location where cyclists know they are welcomed.

¹ http://thepeopleofthehuntingground.com/PhotoAlbums/album_1231364074/

²² http://www.kentucky.com/2014/04/03/3177892/memories-of-1974-tornadoes-still.html

Much of this information was found on the Stamping Ground website and they made note as follows: This information was taken from 1790 Stamping Ground, Kentucky 1990 Celebrating 200 Years of Pride and Progress, sponsored by the Stamping Ground Ruritan Club.

Small City – Big Opportunities



Why People Love Small Cities

164 cities in Kentucky have fewer than 1,000 residents

- Unique Places
- Inclusion
- Safe
- Pride
- Family
- Cleaner Environment

What We Heard

Strengths

- Name/Heritage
- Growth Potential
- Friendly
- Neighborly
- Natural Springs
- Citizen/Business Involvement
- Safe

What We Saw

Our Town

- Family Activities Focus on Children
- Trails/Parks/Recreation
- Downtown Local Business
- Community Center
- Farmers Market
- Housing
- Entrance Signs
- Wildlife Center
- Events



Core Values



Rural Heritage

Residents of Stamping Ground speak with pride about the local history of the community. Their connection to the native buffalo which resulted in the unique name that now represents the town, is especially important. Locals also appreciate their ties to Buffalo Springs, the bourbon industry, and the town's relationship with the legendary Jesse James.



Community's Children

During the public meetings residents mentioned the need for more activities for the children in the community. From trails and bike paths to more organized sports, there is a desire to focus resources and energy on things for the community's children to do.



Core Values

Neighborly

Several people who attended the public meetings are not residents within the city limits. Yet, in talking about Stamping Ground, these residents clearly feel they are part of the larger community and are eager to work towards improving the community as a whole.

Resilience – Perseverance

The town has had its share of disasters in the past. From the fires in 1916 and 1920, to the tornado in 1974, each took out much of the town. Even with those setbacks, the community pulled through. Residents are resilient, excited about the future and are willing to work towards solutions which will move the community forward.



Active Lifestyle for all Age Groups

Recognizing the varied demographics of the community, there is a desire among residents to focus on ways in which the community can exploit its natural environment to create opportunities for a more active lifestyle. Ideas centered on organized sports, outdoor recreation and business development based on community needs, in order to improve the quality of life for all age groups.

Balanced Local Economy

Many residents commented positively about their small community providing the basic necessities for daily needs. Having small businesses, industry, the elementary school, police, fire and a post office, were recognized as important to the quality of life of local people.

What Are the Opportunities for Stamping Ground?



The City of Stamping Ground is a small rural town with many opportunities to improve the quality of life for its residents and attract visitors to experience the beauty of the region. Stamping Ground can be the beginning and ending point for people who love the outdoors and the rolling countryside of central Kentucky. Stamping Ground is a "connector." Leveraging its unique assets provides the city with the opportunity to grow the local economy and foster the entrepreneurial spirit that already exists.

Keys to Success

The Keys to Success

How does Stamping Ground make the vision of the residents' a reality? During the Listening and Design Session, residents expressed their desire to provide a better quality of life for the people who live there, particularly the children. Every strategy in this plan begins with local first. We recommend identifying a local need, taking steps to address the need and then build on that success to attract other people. Using this foundation, the city improves the local quality of life, provides opportunities for local residents to create businesses and serves as an attractive place for others to visit and spend their money.

Here are the keys to success:

- Appearance Little things matter! Address basic appearance issues first. They are easy to fix and create an inviting visual representation of what living and working in Stamping Ground is all about.
- Housing People can't live in Stamping Ground if the right housing stock isn't available. The plan describes a step-by-step process to identify the housing needs, the available land, the right investors and the target audience.



• Business, Community and Economic Development – Stamping Ground can become a magnet for local entrepreneurs and investors. Building upon the rich history of the community is the logical place to start.



Tourism and Branding – Stamping Ground has many natural connections to Kentucky's historic past. Tourists are flocking to these authentic kinds of places to have "experiences." Buffalo, Bourbon and "Stamping Ground" are synonymous with central Kentucky and all three of these words are directly connected to the city. These are natural branding opportunities for the community.



Strategic Plan 2016

First Impressions



Little Things Matter

- Clean Up
- Fix Up
- Ramp Up
 - Conduct a walk-around assessment
 - Host a town cleanup day twice a year
 - Have a Paint the Town event
 - Block-by-Block Repair Affair
 - Host a windshield tour

- Take before and after photos
- Recognize cleanup efforts
- Enlist volunteers
- Fix broken windows
- Develop a sidewalk renewal plan
- Identify where sidewalks are needed/prioritize/budget
- Conduct a walkability and mobility plan

Visual Improvements



The appearance of the city is of concern to many residents. Small steps can make a big impact on the way the town is perceived. These recommended initial steps are inexpensive and a great way to see a change in the visual aspects of the city.

Appearance – Benches, Lights, New Sidewalks

- Identify a few folks in the community to begin working on a gateway entrance sign as many citizens mentioned this. Locations along rightof-ways will need to be assessed and permissions obtained. Designs for what the sign will look like, and determining what materials will be needed to create it, are some of the things they can be working on.
- Get interested volunteers to take a day and walk from one end of the downtown to the other. Take pictures or at least make notes of the elements that need to be cleaned up, removed or updated. This might include old signs that are no longer readable, or perhaps there is no sign where there should be one.

- Get volunteers (garden group, homemakers, churches, and civic organizations) to work with the city and the planning commission to develop plans for complete sidewalk renewal, installation of lighting and other street amenities.
- 4. Assess opportunities of using K-DOT road funds or CBDG funding for infrastructure improvements.

Gateway Signage

- Identify locations
- Check restrictions/regulations
- Secure permission in writing
- Utilize a local artist/graphics designer
- Determine the "look"
- Estimate cost
- Ongoing maintenance cost
- Identify funding sources

Rollout the Red Carpet



1. Gateway Improvements

This initiative for gateway signage may be seen as the first step towards an overall beautification effort. You may wish to consider the project in a broad perspective, then break it into smaller steps. This project can be accomplished in two ways: attractive and consistent signage, and seasonal landscaping. With the help of volunteers, begin with one location and as possible, continue on to each location, working with the priority entrance first.

Steps to Implementation

- Identify how many main entrances there are into the City of Stamping Ground. Rank them in priority in the event you are only able to work with one or two locations as a starting point.
- Determine if each location is public property and determine if access is permitted. You may need to check with the regional coordinator for highways at the Department of Transportation.

- Make sure to check all zoning regulations to determine if your ideas will work for each location. This is not a deal breaker, but there may be instances where you must seek a zone change enabling actions to be taken.
- If permission is required to access the property or to make improvements, obtain the necessary permissions, in writing.
- Take photographs of each location from several angles to establish "before" and "after" results. These types of pictures enable you to show and tell the residents what you have done and what you want to do in other places around the community.
- Get ideas from other cities who have accomplished this task. Google will provide many samples.
- You may want to locate a local artist to assist in establishing an overall entry sign design template that may be used consistently at each entry way into the city.

Rollout the Red Carpet

- Consider the shape of the sign, what size letters will be easy to see from a distance, whether you want to use color, or black and white. You may also want to use a logo or some type of picture. Consider how the plantings and landscaping will impact the placement of the sign as well as the lettering, particularly over time as plants mature.
- Use the design plan to establish a budget. Follow that budget with a projected budget that extends over the next three to five years, reflecting the addition of other locations over time.
- Are there any gardening groups or clubs within the community that will be interested in this initiative? Invite their participation and encourage their involvement as you plan for future sites. It is possible those groups will have an interest in financially supporting these beautification endeavors.
- Remember to plan how the entrance signs will be maintained over time. At some point, the sign will need to be repaired or refreshed as well.
- If you do install landscaping along with the sign, you'll need to determine who will water, weed and trim, and with what frequency. Remember that plants will certainly grow, some will expand beyond their original boundaries, and some may die out. Develop an ongoing maintenance plan and include a budget in order to keep the entrances well maintained over the long haul.

2. Appearances

Identify volunteers or civic minded groups that are willing to assist with this project. Select and prioritize which streets will be assessed and determine parameters (where to start and where to stop). Detail how they need to document what they see. For example, you want to photograph the "before," so you can go back and photograph the "after." If you will need to return to clean up or change the location, you will want to mark the location on a map, and list it by street name and number.

Taking one block at a time, ask volunteers to look for things like street signs, billboards, hydrants, decorations, fences, and windows, which are broken, out dated, need paint, are no longer unnecessary, or perhaps missing.

When you've had the opportunity to remove a lot of the unsightly things, invite someone from out of town to work with you as a new set of eyes. Pay for their gas and buy their lunch, and in exchange they serve as the tourist and can give you feedback about what may still need attention to make the community more inviting.

3. Sidewalk Renewal

Appoint a working committee to focus on sidewalk renewal efforts. Include someone from the planning commission, public works and volunteer citizens who have an interest in design and/or beautification. Their task is to develop a plan for updating sidewalks, curbs, and street amenities such as lighting, benches, planters and signage.

- Determine which area to recommend for streetscape renewal
- Identify what type of amenities are desired
- Research sample designs
- Develop cost estimates
- Provide a detailed report for city council to review

4. Funding

While the sidewalk renewal committee is working on a streetscape renewal recommendation, begin researching what funding options may be available to assist the city in underwriting the costs of upgrades. Seek engineering firms who will work with the city and the committee to develop renderings of the plan that will visually represent a completed project.

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Housing and Neighborhoods

Housing Stock – Single and Multi-unit

For the City of Stamping Ground to attract new development, a review of existing housing may be in order. Conducting an assessment of what is available, what is needed in the market place, and addressing vacant and blighted property issues, will help the city move forward.

- 1. Meet with local real estate professionals to:
 - a. Determine what is currently available
 - b. Identify what is needed in the market
 - Locate potential sites for single and multi–unit housing
 - c. Establish what the community desires in terms of future development
- 2. Establish relationships with local contractors to educate everyone about the city's intentions regarding single and multi-unit housing.
- 3. Work with code enforcement officials to identify all homes in the community that may be in need of assistance
 - a. Engage local agencies/churches to provide information about potential resources and assistance to homeowners who need assistance
 - b. City may wish to create levels of assistance for homeowners, perhaps establish funding and inducement tools for purchase and/or rehab of existing housing stock
 - c. Identify existing problems with code violations and focus efforts to address them

1. Real Estate Professionals

Invite local real estate professionals to a city council work session. Use a professional facilitator to conduct the meeting. Potential agenda items would include:

 Review of current market situation and potential for future development

- Review of current zoning and any planned or desired changes
- Overview of citizens suggestions for future developments
- Determine what realtors need to better sell the City of Stamping Ground
- Identify ways in which the city can be more effective in attracting development

2. Contractors

Invite local contractors to a city council work session. Potential agenda items would include:

- Update everyone on the city's Strategic Plan and what is desired going forward
- Review existing codes, zoning and any other areas of importance
- Identify ways in which the city can encourage future developments
- Determine if potential incentives are needed, and if so, what kind

3. Code Enforcement

Work with city attorney, planning commission, and local enforcement officials to:

- Review current codes to determine if any need to be updated
- Complete needed revisions of existing codes
- Conduct a complete inventory of all housing properties
- Identify properties that are not in compliance with current code regulations and prioritize

Establish a plan and adopt a process of educating, encouraging, and ultimately enforcing, to begin cleaning up properties that are out of compliance. Seek ideas from the City of Fulton, KY Fire Chief Mike Gunn on this type of process.

Economic Development



Business Development

Small, rural cities (under 1,000 in population) have every opportunity to be successful. Some of the common threads that successful small cities share include:

- Community
- Education
- Opportunity
- Things to Do
- Infrastructure
- Safety/Health
- Visitors

Stamping Ground has some of these things in place. You are a small town, but you have **big** connections. To expand your capacity, we recommend the following:



Community Development is Economic Development

Take care of your citizens first, then tourists will follow. As you work on these ideas, remember that you are improving the quality of life in your city. Your efforts are done in support of your tax-paying citizens. Here are some ideas for improving the local economy and creating jobs – as you create opportunities in town, you are pollinating the community for more business to follow.

- Entrepreneur Marketplace
- Dragon's Den Concept pitch ideas for startup businesses, identify space, provide start-up cash and mentoring, award incentives and watch business grow
- Ramp up Trade School Concept possibly tool & die or other needed trades in support of local industry. There are also potential markets globally.
- Go Back to Stamping Ground's Roots
 - Rural Heritage
 - Buffalo
 - Tool & Die Machining
 - Distillery
- Arboretum reimagine elementary school front lawn as a public space. This idea is illustrated and described later in the plan.

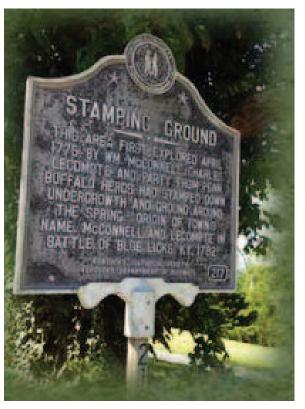
Branding and Marketing

- Seek partners from the business community to co-brand certain community improvements. For instance, a new visitor's center for tourist on the "Buffalo Route." The National Scenic Byway Tour could be developed in partnership with a bourbon company to create the "Bourbon Brand"-name Stamping Ground Visitor Center (or any other suitable name that identifies the Buffalo Route and Stamping Ground as the point of origination, termination and destination).
- Focus on activities as well as businesses.
 People are drawn to where other people are circulating and doing things.
- The number one reason people stop in small towns is to use the restroom. Are yours open 24/7? Do people have something else to do while in town? What could they do?
- OPEN AFTER 6:00 This is the business model for success in more than 70% of successful small towns.

Branding Stamping Ground: Buffalo & Bourbon Crossroads

Stamping Ground should take the lead in developing an application to the Federal Highway Administration to designate the roads that follow the historic migratory paths of buffalo as the Kentucky Buffalo Route (see Kentucky Buffalo Route map – proposed). There are only 150 designated scenic byways in the entire USA.

Stamping Ground should position itself as the hub of this Buffalo Route Scenic Byway system. Tourists will be drawn to the community and related businesses could be developed. Examples would include restaurants featuring local products and recipes; music venues featuring local performers; shops featuring local artists; and lodging options, including bed and breakfasts and Air B&B rentals. This creates a holistic economic ecosystem that can be exploited by local entrepreneurs.



Stamping Ground should develop partnerships with the other Kentucky towns that would lie on this route such as Georgetown, Maysville, Carlisle, Frankfort, Paris, and tie into important state parks such as Big Bone Lick State Historic Site, Blue Licks State Resort Park, and General Butler State Resort Park. Here are some of the ways to get started:

- Immediately begin the development of an application to the Federal Highway Administration to designate the road as a Scenic Byway.
- Trademark the name "Stamping Ground."
- Develop a "brand" around these two major Bluegrass themes – buffalo and bourbon.
- Stamping Ground as the "gathering place" to begin/end the trail connectors across the county, region and state.

Branding and Marketing

- Connect with Sadieville, Georgetown, Maysville, Frankfort – Bourbon Trail and Buffalo Trail.
- Seek national historic designation as a Scenic Byway.
- Leverage this big picture into "local quality of life advantages" by creating a Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Events and activities are used as a local amenity for the community as well as a recreational hub for visitors travelling along the Buffalo Trail.
 - Expand options at the park
 - Movie nights
 - Holiday events 4 seasons
 - Festival of the Buffalo
 - Recreational equipment
 - 5K Run
- Seek major sponsorship through corporate partners such as Toyota, auto support suppliers, and the Ted Turner connection – Ted's Montana Grill.
- Create tourism marketplace.
 - Gift shops
 - Museum
 - Online shop

Developing the Brand of Stamping Ground

- Use the core values established by the community;
- Determine how best to "sell" Stamping Ground's attributes to local residents;
- Identify ways to market the community's assets and attract visitors, business and residents;



- Develop a broad marketing plan including an online identity plan and segment marketing plan;
- Create a specific marketing plan targeting the downtown; and
- Help identify resources to develop and execute the plan on an ongoing basis.

Steps to Implementation

- Include community core values and SWOT information from public listening sessions.
- Conduct an audit of current promotional and marketing materials and endeavors.
- Conduct an audit of stakeholders and resources.
- Develop a marketing/branding plan and implementation strategies.

Think Big!

Other Ideas

During the public meetings, many suggestions were brought forward to make the funeral home a contributing facility in the community.

Using the existing funeral home property, develop a plan for a central gathering place that is both a private and public venue. This allows for the city to offer community amenities and use leased space as a revenue generator to pay for the ongoing maintenance and upkeep.

This facility would provide for public space needed by the community such as a trailhead, public restrooms, tourism information, and possibly a history museum.

It also provides spaces for private businesses to lease. Compatible businesses could be things such as a branch bank, coffee shop, computer repair, gift shop, or art gallery, on the lower level, with office space available in the upper level.

The building should:

- Be an anchor for downtown Stamping Ground
- Provide public meeting space
- Provide public restrooms

WE RECOMMEND

Creating a Hub

- Utilize the former funeral home property (if available) as a central gathering point
- Design and build a true community center with multi-purposes
- Make it the anchor for downtown
- Must be handicap accessible

Offer Amenities

- Tourism information
- Health and wellness
- Gift shop
- Movies
- Community gatherings
- Youth activities
- Business incubator
- Education center
- Public restrooms



Act Local



- Provide tourism information
- Be handicap accessible

Steps to Implement

- Determine appropriate building. Seek funding through USDA Rural Development to purchase and make improvements that are required. Develop a plan to incorporate a trail head, information center/small museum/display center.
- Develop floor plans for a multi-purpose facility that complements the scope and scale of the existing building.

- Other ideas of how to utilize the new building:
 - A large public meeting space with room dividers that can also be used for training, classes or conference meetings.
 - Utilize the second floor as an educational center in partnership with Georgetown College, or state or local government agency branch offices.
 - Focus on healthcare providers such as an urgent treatment, a clinic or physicians/medical complexes. These are potential tenants for this kind of space. Education and healthcare are the growth "industries" for the foreseeable future.

Steps to Success

If you make providing local amenities and a good quality of life for your residents first, then, the world will find you and want to visit!

Three Viewpoints

- Embrace the Past
- Act in the Present
- Build for the Future

Embrace the Past

- Establish the "Buffalo" Brand
- Trademark the name "Stamping Ground"
- Build on two bluegrass themes buffalo and bourbon
- Make Stamping Ground the gathering place to begin/end the trail connectors across the county, region and state

Act in the Present Downtown

- Entrepreneur Marketplace
- Pitch Ideas Award Incentives
- Go Back to Stamping Ground's Roots
- Rural Heritage
- Buffalo
- Tool & Die Machining
- Distillery
- Patient Investment
- Work with the Scott County School Board of Education, the Stamping Ground Elementary School principal and local citizens to create an arboretum and art garden on the front lawn of the elementary school. Plant native trees and include public art from local artists and students. Incorporate a walking path with narrative signage.
- Focus on activities as well as businesses.



Start with One

- Stay open after 6:00 p.m. more than 70% of successful small towns do!
- The #1 reason people stop in small towns? To use the restroom!
- Start with ONE.
- Carefully plan what type of businesses are needed.
- Make it easy for visitors to know your town.
- Need an anchor tenant that showcases "Stamping Ground" brand.





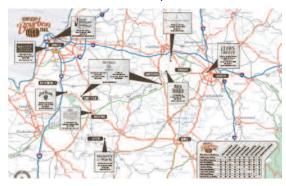
Look Forward

Build for the Future

- Little things you do today will lead to bigger things in the future
- Start small Think big
- Capitalize on what you have
- The BUFFALO is Stamping Ground's brand

How?

Connections to the Kentucky Bourbon Trail



Connections to the Kentucky Ramblin' River Bike Tour Trail

Connections to the Kentucky Ramblin' River Bike Tour Trail



Connections to the Kentucky's Underground

Connections to the Kentucky's Underground Railroad Bike Tour Trail





Connections to the Legacy Trail



Be Creative



Remember the Water Tower Idea?

During the Listening and Design Session, several discussion groups talked about the old water tower. Some good ideas were generated for addressing the appearance of the iconic structure. We took all of the ideas and formulated a three-pronged approach to making it a useful and educational focal point for the city.

Stamping Ground Water Tower

- a power plant
- an educational center
- a work of art

Children can learn about water conservation, energy production, and native species in the landscaping. They could even design a mural for the tower.

Energy could be used to power science labs in school.

Consider all the ways in which this resource can be tapped into.



Next Steps

It's YOUR City

- Find your part of the plan.
- What are you passionate about?
- Join a project team.
- Get to work!!



Acknowledgements

Stamping Ground City Commission

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Planning Commission Members

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