

# Zach Simonson

PUBLIC-SECTOR LEADERSHIP AND  
BUILDING WITH EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

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641.680.7300 

zachsimonson.com 

Ottumwa, Iowa 

## SUMMARY

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Former municipal department director who led major housing, redevelopment, and economic development initiatives through cross-sector partnerships and strategic planning. Known for translating complex policy and operational challenges into practical systems and technology solutions.

Now working at the intersection of community engagement and technology—supporting communications and place-based initiatives with a nonprofit organization while building AI-enabled software platforms that help organizations streamline operations and make better data-driven decisions.

## TECHNICAL AND STRATEGIC SKILLS

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### Strategy & Operations

- Strategic planning and long-range policy development
- Housing and economic development strategy
- Cross-sector partnerships and public-private collaboration
- Program design and implementation
- Budgeting and multi-department operational management
- Data-driven decision making

### Community Development & Public Policy

- Economic development and downtown revitalization initiatives
- Housing policy and development incentives
- Grant writing, administration and compliance (state, federal, foundation)
- Community engagement and stakeholder management
- Land use planning, redevelopment strategy and regulatory systems
- Code enforcement and development process reform

### Technology & AI Systems

- AI-assisted software development and workflow automation
- SaaS product design and platform architecture
- Generative AI integration (chatbots, RAG systems, automation agents)
- Data analysis and decision-support tools
- GIS and spatial data systems (ArcGIS, ArcMap, MapBox)
- Digital media production and content systems (Adobe Creative Suite, video editing, social media)

### Product & Innovation

- Product strategy and feature roadmap development
- Rapid prototyping using AI-assisted development tools
- Building operational tools for small teams and mission-driven organizations
- Translating complex operational challenges into scalable software solutions
- Human-centered system design and workflow optimization

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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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### CITY OF OTTUMWA, IOWA

*Director of Community Development | City Planner | Building Inspector*

**Ottumwa, Iowa**

*2017-2025*

Led strategy and operations across planning, housing development, code enforcement, and redevelopment initiatives for a regional city of 25,000.

Key impact:

- Directed a multi-department division overseeing planning, inspections and solid waste operations with 18 staff members
- Led development of the Ottumwa Housing Plan, launching the Mission 500 initiative to develop 500 housing units by 2030
- Structured public-private partnerships supporting major housing and commercial developments including a 108-unit workforce housing project
- Managed redevelopment initiatives converting abandoned properties into productive housing and commercial assets
- Administered state and federal grants supporting housing, downtown revitalization and redevelopment

### MAIN STREET OTTUMWA

*Marketing Specialist and Volunteer Coordinator*

**Ottumwa, Iowa**

*2025-Present*

Leading communications, technology initiatives, and digital engagement strategies for a nonprofit focused on downtown revitalization and economic development.

- Developing digital tools and AI-enabled systems to support organizational operations and community engagement
- Managing communications strategy including social media, content production and event promotion
- Supporting economic development initiatives through data analysis, storytelling and stakeholder coordination

## SELECTED PROJECTS

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### MainSuite - Operations Support for Place-Based Nonprofits

Founder/Developer

Designed and built a SaaS platform to help community development organizations manage operations including CRM, GIS canvassing, volunteer coordination, event management and AI-powered assistants.

- Built using AI-assisted development workflows
- Integrated GIS data, CRM systems, and workflow automation tools
- Designed to scale across Main Street organizations and similar nonprofits

### Pees & Queues - Virtual Queue for Group Trips

Pre-revenue web app that leverages SMS alerts to manage a virtual restroom queue for group trips and reduce social friction.

### Tiki X Bar & Lounge - Immersive Hospitality Experience

Co-founder of a themed hospitality concept in downtown Ottumwa set for opening in Spring 2026, including brand design, operations planning and venue buildout.

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## EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION

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### UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

*Masters Degree in Public Policy, 2021*

*Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies, 2017*

### INDIAN HILLS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

*Certificate in GIS for Government, 2020*

### INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL

*Certified Combination Building (Building, Plumbing, Electrical and HVAC)*