

**CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNICATION:**

ITEM _____

**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
CITY OF DES MOINES, IOWA**

98-467

AGENDA:

SYNOPSIS —

OCTOBER 19, 1998

A Court Avenue Neighborhood Urban Design Plan has been developed by City staff, under the auspices of a project steering committee made up of members of the Downtown Housing Development Team. The plan addresses needed redevelopment of the Court Avenue area with recommendations for housing, commercial and public open space.

SUBJECT:

**THE COURT AVENUE
NEIGHBORHOOD
URBAN DESIGN PLAN**

FISCAL IMPACT —

TYPE:

If Council should subsequently adopt the plan, the project costs and fiscal impact will need to be evaluated at that time.

**RESOLUTION
ORDINANCE
*RECEIVE/FILE***

RECOMMENDATION —

SUBMITTED BY:

Receive, file, and refer the document as presented to the City Manager, the Architectural Advisory Committee, Urban Renewal Board, Historic District Commission, Park and Recreation Board, and Plan and Zoning Commission, and direct staff to submit the document for approval at a future City Council meeting.

**JIM GRANT
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
DIRECTOR**

**RICK CLARK
DEPUTY CITY
MANAGER**

BACKGROUND —

A major goal of the Downtown Coordinating Council, as well as the destination Downtown action plan adopted in 1995, is the development of market-rate housing in central Des Moines. To achieve this goal, the Downtown Coordinating Council established the Downtown Housing Development Team comprised of individuals

representing Des Moines Development Corporation, Downtown Partnership, private sector housing experts, and City staff.

Last year the Downtown Housing Development Team, charged with preparing a coordinated public/private implementation strategy for developing market-rate housing, identified the creation of an urban design plan for Court Avenue and the warehousing district to its south, as a critical component of this initiative. A project steering committee was assembled to provide insight, direction, and endorsement of plan proposals as brought forward by the City staff project planning team.

The Court Avenue Neighborhood Urban Design Plan has been in the process of development during the past year. The planning process involved interviews and meetings with district stakeholders including representatives of Polk County, Des Moines' Arts District, The Court Avenue Business Association, and the Downtown Partnership, to gain information about the district and its operations, and to receive feedback on project proposals put forth by the planning team. The primary goal of the plan is to chart a course for revitalization of the district into a mixed-use neighborhood with a strong entertainment component.

The document puts forth a set of recommendations for the district that focus on: housing development including both new construction and the rehabilitation of existing historic buildings, new retail and entertainment development, and public infrastructure improvements including streetscape design recommendations and a proposed riverfront park. It also puts forth a set of design guidelines to guide new construction and rehabilitation projects to be compatible with their historic surroundings, and to promote a pedestrian-oriented environment.

The document will be reviewed by the City's relevant boards and commissions to include: the Architectural Advisory Committee, Park and Recreation Board, Urban Renewal Board, Historic District Commission, and the Plan and Zoning Commission, and then return to City Council for action.

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