

**CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNICATION:**

ITEM _____

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

99-012

SYNOPSIS -

AGENDA:

At the October 26, 1998 City Council meeting, the draft of the Court Avenue Neighborhood Urban Design Plan (Plan) was forwarded to various boards and commissions for their review and recommendations. The Council had previously received the draft Plan at its October 19, 1998 meeting.

JANUARY 4, 1999

SUBJECT:

COURT AVENUE
NEIGHBORHOOD URBAN
DESIGN PLAN

The Plan will function as a framework to help guide public and private investments. It contains specific recommendations on phasing public and private funding and other assistance for commercial, housing, and public open space development needed to revitalize the Court Avenue area into a mixed-use neighborhood.

TYPE:

**RESOLUTION
ORDINANCE
RECEIVE/FILE**

The Plan represents a collaborative effort with many different groups providing insight and direction to the Downtown Housing Development Team and City staff, including representatives of the Court Avenue Business Association, various property owners, the Des Moines' Art District, the Downtown Partnership, and Des Moines Development Corporation (DMDC). Their participation in interviews, meetings, and workshops was a key component in generating the Plan's recommendations.

SUBMITTED BY:

RICHARD CLARK
DEPUTY CITY MANAGER

Preparation of the Plan was initiated at the request of the Downtown Coordinating Council. Out-of-pocket expenses were shared on a 50/50 basis between DMDC and the City.

JAMES GRANT
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
DIRECTOR

FISCAL IMPACT -

The Plan provides general recommendations on priorities for various projects in the Court Avenue neighborhood area, but does not commit the City to funding any specific project. As projects develop, the specific costs

and sources of financing will be brought to the Council for approval.

RECOMMENDATION -

Approval of the draft Court Avenue Neighborhood Urban Design Plan as a guide for future improvements and developments in the area, subject to revisions to the text and graphics to increase its clarity, internal organization, and ease of use.

As follow-up to the Plan, it is recommended that Council authorize the City Manager to prepare an implementation plan, including specifically the formulation of a recommended downtown Housing Investment Fund. This fund will encourage market-rate housing with the use of financial incentives in conjunction with significant assistance from the private sector and other governmental entities. The fund will 'prime the pump' to encourage initial projects with the goal of decreasing the level of incentives needed in the future as the housing market grows stronger in the Court Avenue area.

BACKGROUND -

The draft Plan was reviewed by the following boards and commissions which made the following recommendations:

Architectural Advisory Committee

Approval and support of the general Plan concepts, especially housing; revision of the text and graphics needed to make Plan easier to use.

Historic District Commission

Approval of the Plan.

Neighborhood Revitalization Board (NRB)

While recognizing that downtown housing is a desirable goal, the NRB believed more "affordable" housing units are needed. The NRB also stated the Plan requires a large capital investment that may not be recouped by the new development and would therefore draw limited

resources away from other areas of the City in need of the same kinds of improvements.

Park and Recreation Board

Approval of the Plan with the requests that the Park and Recreation Department be included in the design of public improvements and special events in the area. In addition, construction and operating costs of the public improvements should not detract from the department's budget.

Plan & Zoning Commission

Approval of the draft Plan with additional detail on implementation steps and schedules needed as specific projects develop.

Urban Renewal Board

Approval of the general concepts contained in the Plan; revision of the text and graphics are needed to make Plan easier to use. Market-rate housing is needed in the downtown, which is encouraged by this Plan. The private sector has to commit financially at the same time the public sector makes its financial contribution; otherwise the Plan will not succeed.

Attachment