

CITY COUNCIL  
COMMUNICATION:

03-385

AGENDA:

AUGUST 11, 2003

SUBJECT:

BEAVERDALE  
VILLAGE PLAN

TYPE:

RESOLUTION  
ORDINANCE  
RECEIVE/FILE

SUBMITTED BY:

LARRY HULSE  
COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
DIRECTOR

RICHARD CLARK  
DEPUTY CITY  
MANAGER

ITEM \_\_\_\_\_

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

**SYNOPSIS —**

The Beaverdale Village Plan was referred to the City Manger's Office for review. On July 28, 2003, the City Council approved supporting the expansion of the area included in the study and added undertaking an historic study element. City staff shall continue to provide technical assistance to the Beaverdale Business Coalition in addressing traffic and parking issues; however, recommendations regarding streetscape and economic development cannot be made until additional information is available.

**FISCAL IMPACT —**

Other than the \$5,000 allocated by Council on July 28, 2003, no funding is included in the City's adopted Capital Improvement Program (CIP) or Operating Budget for implementation of the Beaverdale Village Plan. Any decision to fund specific improvements using City dollars must be approved by Council.

**RECOMMENDATION —**

**Staff from the Office and Economic Development and Community Development Department will continue to work with the Beaverdale Business Coalition to identify affordable strategies to begin implementation of the Plan. This effort will include examination of low cost strategies combined with non-traditional funding methods.**

**BACKGROUND —**

In the fall of 2002, the Beaverdale Neighborhood Association (BNA) became concerned about the vacant commercial space at the Beaverdale shopping area, specifically the building vacated by Walgreen's. The BNA created a task force to study the issue, which included business owners and other interested community members. In November 2002, the BNA met with the community to seek input on the commercial needs of the neighborhood and the current vacancy issue. At this time, representatives from Brooks, Borg Skiles Architecture Engineering LLP and RDG Crose Gardner Shukert Inc. volunteered their professional planning and design services. The task force organized a planning and design charrette which was held February 18-19, 2003 in Beaverdale Neighborhood. City staff representatives from Economic Development and Community Development provided technical assistance to the task force.

The study area was Beaver Avenue from Fagan Drive on the north, Beavercrest

on the south, and a half-block east and west of Beaver Avenue. The plan submitted to the City Council on June 23, 2003, provides a great deal of detailed information regarding the concerns of the businesses in the area and availability of parking. The plan also reaffirms both the BNA Task Force's and the Beaverdale Business Coalition's mission, which is "to work cooperatively and inclusively to create a viable pedestrian friendly commercial village that welcomes specialty shops, regional and national tenants."

The plan identifies 13 goals, sets priorities, and makes seven primary recommendations. The recommendations all have value, but do not all require City involvement or assistance. Staff strongly support and would encourage the BNA and the Business Coalition to move forward on the recommendations that do not involve City resources.

In regard to the following recommendations that do impact City resources, staff has the following recommendations.

**Consultant Recommendation One**

*Initial environmental enhancements that involve community participation, high visibility, and relatively low cost.*

Staff supports this recommendation. The Park and Recreation Department has provided technical assistance and plant materials to the BNA in the past and will continue to work with them. The private business owners and the Business Coalition should work together to provide the physical display products. This is similar to the arrangement the City has with the Downtown Community Alliance for beautification.

**Consultant Recommendation Two**

*A streetscape improvement program, focused initially on Beaver Avenue from Beavercrest Drive to Urbandale Avenue. This initiative would establish Beaver and Sheridan as the central intersection for the pedestrian district.*

Streetscape projects have multiple components, various levels of sophistication, and different finishes. In regard to the recommendation on proposed streetscape improvements, it is not possible to determine a definite fiscal impact because the plan has not been developed to the level of detail needed to determine costs; regardless, there are no current Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funds identified for this project. If the City Council would approve funding in the future, a revenue source would need to be identified for operation and maintenance costs. Staff would recommend that a Self-Supporting Municipal Improvement District (SSMID) be established for those expenses.

Establishing Sheridan and Beaver as the primary intersection needs to be referred to the City Engineer's office and Community Development to determine the feasibility of narrowing the intersection to become pedestrian-friendly and the impact of the loss of parking.

**Consultant Recommendation Three**

*Commercial redevelopment on the east side of Beaver Avenue.*

The plan proposes many interesting ideas for how this space can be more marketable and function more efficiently as a neighborhood shopping center. Staff would recommend that because this property is privately owned by VISTA Development Corporation that the property owner and RDG work together to determine which recommendations they are interested in implementing. The City can assist individual business owners through the existing economic development programs. At the July 14, 2003 meeting, by Roll Call No. 03-1610, the Council approved assistance for Grounds for Celebration to purchase equipment to expand and move to a different space within the shopping center. If VISTA Development Corporation cannot make the desired improvements without acquiring additional land, or is interested in financial assistance, they should submit a proposal to the City's Office of Economic Development for their review and determination of the appropriate type of assistance to be provided.

**Consultant Recommendation Four**

*Parking - a perception of a parking problem is a problem in itself. Redevelopment and reconfiguration of the east side of the street would increase the apparent parking supply and improve local circulation.*

Like the streetscape recommendation, there are many variables and solutions to the parking problem, but they all require leadership from the Beavertown Business Coalition and a willingness on the part of the business owners on both the east and west sides of Beaver to develop a solution to the problem. The City's Community Development and Engineering staff can provide technical assistance to solve the problem.

**Consultant Recommendation**

*A strategic implementation plan...there is a need for additional detailed study.*

The City Council, at its July 28, 2003 meeting, approved a \$5,000 economic development grant as a contribution for this expanded study. This will provide for the hiring of a consultant to complete more detailed plans and expanding the historic district, which could allow the establishment of a SSMID.

