

**CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNICATION:**

03-401

AGENDA:

AUGUST 25, 2003

SUBJECT:

WEED AND SEED
CATEGORICAL
ASSISTANCE
PROGRESS
REPORT

TYPE:

RESOLUTION
ORDINANCE
RECEIVE/FILE

SUBMITTED BY:

MIKE MATTHES
ACTING HOUSING
SERVICES
DIRECTOR

ITEM _____

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

SYNOPSIS —

Approval of Categorical Assistance Progress Report for the period of January 1, 2003 to June 30, 2003 to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice/Executive Office for Weed and Seed.

FISCAL IMPACT —

None.

RECOMMENDATION—

Approval.

BACKGROUND —

On August 23, 1999, by Roll Call No. 99-2648, the City Council accepted a \$175,000 grant award from the Executive Office for Weed and Seed. On March 26, 2001, by Roll Call No. 01-853, the City Council accepted an additional \$175,000 grant award from the Executive Office for Weed and Seed. On June 9, 2003, by Roll Call No. 03-1321, the City Council accepted an additional \$175,000 grant award from the Executive Office for Weed and Seed.

The Department of Justice and other federal agencies are implementing Operation Weed and Seed, a comprehensive and integrated multi-agency approach to addressing violent crime, drug abuse, and deteriorating social and economic opportunities in low-income neighborhoods.

The Des Moines Weed and Seed site continues to move forward to implement the strategic plan that was developed by the community. The Des Moines Weed and Seed Steering Committee (WSSC) serves as the advisory committee for Weed and Seed. Citizen involvement in the Weed and Seed strategy has been, and will continue to be extensive.

The following report documents Weed and Seed activities during reporting period January 1, 2003 – June 30, 2003. The categorical assistance progress report highlights the following Weed and Seed accomplishments: (1) Law Enforcement, (2) Community Policing, (3) Neighborhood Restoration, and (4) Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment.

Law Enforcement

The Police Department operates four - six officers per watch in marked vehicles answering calls for service.

The Narcotics Section continues to work with state and federal agencies on drug complaints in the area. During January through June of 2003, the Police Department issued 120 drug-related search warrants, received 473 Vice and Narcotics complaints, and had 543 narcotics arrests. The street value of the drugs seized totaled \$1,328,840.96.

Community Policing

The Police Department also continued the part-time Bicycle Mounted Patrol program that was initiated in 1997. The bicycle-mounted patrol operates during the warm weather months and is a valuable asset to the community.

Prevention, Early Intervention, and Treatment Element

John R. Grubb YMCA provided an after school program for the youth in the Weed and Seed area. A total of 105 youth were enrolled in the program. The after school curriculum focused on a reading program entitled "kids lit." The program was designed to increase the child's reading ability and desire to read. The youth also participated in various craft projects and physical activity designed to reinforce positive character values.

The Weed and Seed Committee initiated another graffiti removal program with the Park and Recreation Department. The Weed and Seed area has seen an increase in Latino and Asian gang activity in the area. One way of designating their territories is the use of graffiti painting on bridges, underpasses, businesses, and vacant buildings. Graffiti removal can be costly to perform. The service is being offered to residents within the Weed and Seed area. This program continues to be a needed service and helps to improve the appearance of the community. It also is one way to help deter repeated vandalism and destruction to property in the community.

The Weed and Seed Committee's five-year strategy is a health initiative. The goal is to improve the health of youth and young adults living within the Weed and Seed area. Currently, the Weed and Seed Committee is working with area health care clinics and agencies cataloging the health care services that are being provided in the area to determine where gaps exist in health care. Several area churches and non-profit organizations sponsor clinics and health fairs for school physicals and blood pressure screening, but the programs are not well publicized nor do they address other health issues such as dental care, preventative health, smoking cessation courses, and drug prevention. Once the Weed and Seed Committee has determined where the gaps exist, they will partner with local organizations and agencies to address those needs.

Neighborhood Restoration Element

Two agencies that are diligent in restoring the Weed and Seed area are Community Housing Development Corporation (CHDC) and Home Ownership Made Easy (Home Inc.). These two non-profit agencies have rehabilitated and

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constructed several new homes throughout the Weed and Seed area. In the spring of 2003, CHDC completed a senior assisted living housing complex along the 6th Avenue corridor. CHDC is currently restoring the West-side Boxing Club at the corner of 6th and Forest Avenue. The first floor of the facility will provide office space and the second floor will be one- and two-bedroom apartments.

Currently, Drake Park, Carpenter, King-Irving, and Kirkwood Glen neighborhoods are collaborating with the City of Des Moines and Neighborhood Development Corporation to redevelop the historic Forest Avenue Commercial Corridor. The proposed project will consist of a 10,000 square foot commercial structure that will consist of an office, retail, and/or restaurant.

Camp Drug Education For Youth (DEFY)

Phase I of the Camp DEFY program occurred the week of June 23-27 at the Camp Dodge Army National Guard base in Johnston, Iowa. This summer, the program had a total of 36 youth participate and it was a huge success. The youth participated in a number of programs and activities designed to reinforce team and character building skills and conflict resolution. The youth toured numerous sites such as the Jordan House, a stop on the Underground Railroad, Iowa Visitor Center, Saylorville Tour Center, and the Gorge at Saylorville Lake. Phase II of the program is currently under way with John R. Grubb YMCA.

Staff recommends the City, in its capacity as a recipient of Weed and Seed funding, approve the required Categorical Assistance Progress Report for submittal to the U.S. Department of Justice.

