

**CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNICATION:**

03-612

AGENDA:

DECEMBER 22, 2003

SUBJECT:

ADOPTION OF THE
KING IRVING
NEIGHBORHOOD
PLAN

TYPE:

RESOLUTION
ORDINANCE
RECEIVE/FILE

SUBMITTED BY:

LARRY HULSE
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
DIRECTOR

ITEM _____

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

SYNOPSIS —

On the December 22, 2003, City Council agenda is a roll call resolution for the adoption of the proposed King Irving Neighborhood Plan. This proposed plan was developed out of a two year planning process of the King Irving Neighborhood Association and Neighborhood Development Division staff.

The main elements of the plan include goal statements for neighborhood character (land use and housing), commercial, community enhancements, and physical environment. The plan also includes amendments to the City's future land use plan. The approval of this plan will constitute an amendment to the Des Moines 2020 Community Character Plan.

FISCAL IMPACT —

Approval of the King Irving Neighborhood Plan implies no commitment of resources, but as the implementation of the plan progresses, future Council action regarding commitment of funds is anticipated.

RECOMMENDATION —

Staff recommends adoption of the proposed King Irving Neighborhood Plan.

BACKGROUND —

The King Irving Neighborhood Association was selected to participate in the Neighborhood Revitalization Program in November 2001 as a "Distressed Neighborhood." Since that time, staff has met with the King Irving Neighborhood Planning Committee and other stakeholders over 30 times to develop a comprehensive plan for the neighborhood that addresses its weaknesses and builds on its strengths.

On April 2, 2002, the Planning Committee and staff held a neighborhood-wide input meeting at King Academy, which was attended by approximately 75 neighborhood residents and stakeholders. This meeting was designed to give all stakeholders the opportunity to provide their thoughts on the weaknesses and strengths of the neighborhood. The input from this meeting and data collected by staff directed the subsequent efforts of the Planning Committee.

The Committee evaluated the neighborhood character, including land use, zoning, and housing issues. This resulted in recommendations regarding future land use and zoning changes, as well as strategies that focus on developing infill housing opportunities and rehabilitating existing homes that

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are in poor condition. The Committee also examined the neighborhood's infrastructure and made recommendations on the best way to spend the infrastructure dollars that were allocated to the neighborhood. The Committee also reviewed the commercial districts that serve the neighborhood and set a series of goals that will help support and enhance those districts.

Another area of focus for the Committee was community enhancements. The community enhancement goals are all aimed at making King Irving a more livable neighborhood by enhancing existing community assets and bringing new assets to the neighborhood. Implementation of some of these initiatives may require some capital investment by the City over the next ten years. The Planning Committee acknowledges that King Irving is home to a number of major community assets, such as Evelyn K. Davis Park, the Forest Avenue Library, and the Variety Club and City of Des Moines John R. Grubb YMCA, and will continue to support these and other assets in the neighborhood.

Many public and private improvements have already been made in this neighborhood. The City of Des Moines, Polk County, and Des Moines Public Schools have all made major investments totaling millions of dollars in the area over the last decade, and both the City of Des Moines and the Des Moines Public Schools have additional projects planned for the neighborhood.

Public Investments

City of Des Moines

- *Neighborhood Infrastructure Rehabilitation Program (NIRP) - \$1 million (2002 – 2003)*
Sidewalks, curbs, and streets throughout the neighborhood have been repaired or replaced.
- *Forest Avenue Library (1992)*
With a lead donation of \$850,000 from David Kruidenier, the City built a new library branch in the King Irving neighborhood to replace the cramped Mid-City Library that had been located at 13th and University.
- *Evelyn K. Davis Park (1993)*
Upon completion of the Forest Avenue Library, the adjacent Irving Park was improved to encourage positive and family-friendly activities. The park was also renamed in honor of the many contributions of Evelyn K. Davis.
- *The Variety Club and City of Des Moines John R. Grubb Community YMCA - \$2.4 million (1994)*
This facility, built through a public/private partnership, is a comprehensive multi-use facility that serves neighborhood residents of all ages.
- *Forest Avenue Library Improvements - \$1.1 million (2008)*
Upgrades are planned for the Forest Avenue Library as part of the City's improvement program at all branch libraries.

Polk County

- *Polk County Central Senior Center - \$1.1 million (2001)*
A new senior center was built at the intersection of Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway and Forest Avenue.

Des Moines Public Schools

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- *Moulton School - \$6.9 million (2002)*
Moulton School was remodeled and expanded to include K-8 as part of Des Moines Public Schools' Schools First program. Moulton School is located in the River Bend neighborhood, but also serves the King Irving neighborhood.
- *King Academy - \$2.8 million (2008)*
Improvements are planned at King Academy as part of the Des Moines Public Schools' Schools First Program. Current discussions include additional fund raising to allow the school to expand to K-8.

Housing

Although significant investments and upgrades have been made in the neighborhood's infrastructure and community facilities, the housing values and conditions still lag far behind the rest of the City. According to data collected for the 2001 Neighborhood Selection process, the average assessed value per square foot in King Irving (\$26/square foot) is less than half of what it is for the entire City (\$69.66). That same study also showed that the average housing condition in King Irving, as determined by the Polk County Assessor, ranked it 48th out of 50 neighborhoods. Over 45 percent of the homes in King Irving are in below normal, poor, or very poor condition, compared to just 12 percent of the homes citywide. Additionally, while King Irving has only 1 percent of the City's housing stock, it has 10 percent of the City's homes in very poor condition.

Contract sales have also been a major issue for the neighborhood. From 1998 to 2000, over 46 percent of the home sales in King Irving were made using a contract instead of a deed sale. Over this same period, only about 12 percent of the sales citywide were made on contract.

Another major issue facing the neighborhood is that of vacant lots and vacant housing. According to an analysis of the vacant parcels in King Irving completed by the Community Development Department earlier this year, there are 261 vacant lots in the neighborhood. Half of these lots are currently buildable for single-family homes. A small amount of the remaining lots could be built upon if they were combined with an adjacent vacant lot. This same study also showed that 20 percent of the neighborhood's land area was vacant. In addition to the prevalence of vacant parcels in the neighborhood, the 2000 Census also shows that King Irving has a much higher percentage (15.8 percent) of vacant housing units compared to the rest of the City (5.3 percent).

Because significant public investments have already been made in the King Irving neighborhood for infrastructure and community facilities, the focus of the King Irving plan and its implementation will be on improving the neighborhood's housing stock and creating infill housing opportunities.

During the planning process it was clear that housing would be a major issue, so the Community Development Department brought together the non-profit

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housing community to determine ways in which the City and the non-profits could collaborate to improve the housing conditions in King Irving. This has resulted in the creation of the King Irving Affordable Housing Consortium.

The intent of King Irving Affordable Housing Consortium is to be a long-term sustained effort to reverse decades of disinvestment in King Irving's housing stock. Members of the Consortium include the City of Des Moines Community Development Department; Community Housing Development Corporation; HOME, Inc.; Habitat for Humanity; Neighborhood Finance Corporation; Neighborhood Development Corporation; and Des Moines Citizens for Community Involvement. \$613,682 in 2003 and 2004 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds have been allocated to housing efforts in King Irving, and these funds have already been leveraged for an additional \$50,000 from the Polk County Housing Trust Fund and additional funding opportunities are being explored. Additionally, members of the Consortium have committed their own resources to helping meet the housing needs in the King Irving neighborhood.

At the December 8, 2003 City Council meeting, \$125,000 from the Neighborhood Conservation Services New Construction Program was designated for four new infill houses on Harrison Street beginning in Spring 2004. The four homes will require an average of \$25,000 to subsidize the gap between the cost to construct the single-family homes and the anticipated sale price. The total appraised value of the four homes is expected to be approximately \$440,000.

Implementation

Because of King Irving's status as a distressed neighborhood, it is acknowledged that in order to see results, the City of Des Moines and the King Irving Neighborhood Association must commit to a long-term strategy for revitalization. This strategy, which is outlined in this plan, will be further refined in the coming months and years to address the unique conditions that exist in the neighborhood, and as problems and opportunities arise. An aggressive strategy will be pursued during the initial phase of implementation, but a sustained long-term effort will be required before an exit strategy is developed and implemented for this neighborhood.

Upon approval of the plan, the first priority will be to create an Urban Renewal Plan that will allow the City of Des Moines to address problem properties throughout the neighborhood through acquisition, rehabilitation, and demolition. Additionally, the City of Des Moines will work with the King Irving Affordable Housing Consortium to implement the housing strategies outlined in this plan. The City of Des Moines will also work with the King Irving Neighborhood Association to begin the rezoning that is recommended in this plan. Simultaneously, the neighborhood association will work to increase its organizational capacity to address the many issues that are to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood.

In addition, the implementation of this plan will require the continued allocation

	<p>of available redevelopment funds from the CDBG and HOME programs, as well as the continued support of the Neighborhood Finance Corporation, the Community Development Department's Neighborhood Development Division, and the Neighborhood Based Service Delivery (NBSD) Program.</p>
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