



Council Communication

Office of the City Manager

Date

April 21, 2008

Agenda Item No. 69
Roll Call No. 08-
Communication No. 08-224
Submitted by: Donald M. Tripp, Park and
Recreation Director

AGENDA HEADING:

Approve the Conceptual SuperBlock Master Plan

SYNOPSIS:

Receive the recommendation for approval from the Park Board and the Plan and Zoning Commission and approve the Conceptual SuperBlock Master Plan, and authorize voluntary acquisition of property by gift or negotiation, and directing the City Manager to begin implementation of the plan, including the development of a financing plan.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: A very preliminary estimate of \$62.5 million for full execution of Blank Park Zoo, City of Des Moines, and Polk County improvements.

Phase I (\$30 million) would acquire school land, move five golf holes, rebuild the existing Zoo, add new exhibits at the existing zoo, build a major zoo expansion connected with a tram to the golf course and Fort Des Moines Park land, make related improvements to Fort Des Moines Park, and build a linear park to separate the Zoo from Somerset neighborhood.

Total cost to date is \$29,000 for consulting services including:

- \$24,040 to Genus Landscape Architects for consulting services and graphics.
- \$1,960 to Genus Landscape Architects for feasibility study for relocating five golf holes for Blank Golf Course.
- \$3,000 to Bassett Associates for a 2-day design meeting for the Blank Park Zoo.

Funding Source: For costs incurred to date: 2007-2008 CIP, G. O. Bonds from Neighborhood Park Improvements, page 13, CP040PKS990000, PKS137.

A comprehensive funding plan, to include the following, will be completed once the Conceptual Plan is approved:

- Significant funding from the Blank Park Zoo Foundation
- City of Des Moines and Polk County Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funds
- State and Federal grant program funds
- Private donations

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Previous City Council action on August 6, 2007, by Roll Call No. 07-1559, established a SuperBlock Technical Committee and Steering Committee. The objective of the SuperBlock Master Plan was to provide for the expansion of the Blank Park Zoo, while considering the needs of other area attractions and facilities including Fort Des Moines Park, A.H. Blank Golf Course, Fort Des Moines Museum and Education Center, South Suburban YMCA, McCombs Middle School, Studebaker Elementary School, Southridge Mall, and other area businesses.

The adopted vision was to develop a plan which has consensus support of the stakeholders and uses the Zoo and other area attractions to stimulate economic and social growth in South Des Moines while developing a signature sustainable green project.

The SuperBlock Steering and Technical Committees have developed a conceptual Master Plan which fulfills the stated objective and vision. A joint Steering and Technical Committee meeting was held on February 27, 2008 in which the Steering Committee voted 14-0 in favor of moving the conceptual SuperBlock Master Plan forward.

The SuperBlock Master Plan has been presented to the School Board, Polk County Conservation Board, Polk County Board of Supervisors, Blank Park Zoo Foundation, the Plan and Zoning Commission, and Park Board for approval. All boards have unanimously approved the plan.

A City Council workshop was held on March 31, 2008 to review and consider the final plan.

The execution of the plan will be divided into two phases. Phase I includes: acquiring school land, relocating five golf holes, renovating and improving existing Zoo, constructing new exhibits in existing Zoo, purchasing parade grounds, connecting Chaffee Road into Fort Des Moines Park, improving Fort Des Moines Park, beginning construction of Somerset Linear Park, and expanding the Zoo as indicated on Master Plan.

Phase II includes: continuing to renovate and improve the existing Zoo, adding exhibits in the Zoo expansion area, finishing construction of Somerset Linear Park, continuing improvements to Fort Des Moines Park, improving Chaffee and Army Post Road Streetscapes, constructing Parade Ground Park, constructing trails, and constructing the proposed aquatic center.

This project will require the voluntary acquisition of approximately 47.29 acres of land north of County Line Road between McCombs Middle School and Studebaker Elementary School to be used for the A.H. Blank Golf Course and Fort Des Moines Park.

This requested action does not obligate the City Council to any other specific actions toward development. There will be numerous additional steps requiring City Council approval to put this plan into action.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: March 10, 2008

Roll Call Number: [08-434](#)

Action: Receive and file SuperBlock Master Plan and refer to various boards and City Manager for review and recommendation. ([Council Communication No. 08-112](#)) Moved by Meyer to adopt. Motion carried 7-0.

Date: January 7, 2008

Roll Call Number: [08-077](#)

Action: [Update](#) from the SuperBlock Master Plan Committee and request for extension of completion date to April 2008. Sponsor: Meyer. ([Council Communication No. 08-023](#)) Moved by Meyer to approve. Motion carried 7-0.

Date: August 6, 2007

Roll Call Number: [07-1559](#)

Action: [Receive](#) and file planning [proposal](#) and authorize City Manager to initiate master planning process and convene the steering committee for the Southside SuperBlock Master Plan. Moved by Meyer to receive, file, and refer to the City Manager for action, as appropriate. Motion Carried 7-0.

Date: April 24, 2007

Roll Call Number: [07-822](#)

Action: [Zoo](#) expansion and new County Park Land Transfer Agreement between the City of Des Moines, Polk County Conservation Board, Polk County, and Blank Park Zoo Foundation, Inc. ([Council Communication No. 07-246](#)) Moved by Meyer to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.

Date: March 12, 2007

Roll Call Number: [07-498](#)

Action: [Principles](#) of an Agreement between the Polk County Conservation Board, the Polk County Board of Supervisors and the Blank Park Zoo Foundation regarding expansion of the Blank Park Zoo, and authorizing City Manager to negotiate the agreement. Moved by Meyer to adopt; refer to the City Manager to review the conservation of the “Parade Grounds” and Fort Des Moines areas. Motion Carried 6-1.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S):

Plan and Zoning Commission

Date: April 3, 2008

Action: Approve the conceptual SuperBlock Master Plan and recommend approval to the City Council.

Park Board

Date: March 25, 2008

Roll Call Number: 08-030

Action: Approve the conceptual SuperBlock Master Plan and recommend approval to the City Council.

Date: February 26, 2008

Roll Call Number: 08-024

Action: Receive and file the SuperBlock Master Plan

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:

City Council approval of the conceptual SuperBlock Master Plan.

Imminent next steps:

- Voluntarily acquire Des Moines School District land by gift or negotiation.
- Amend operating agreement with Ned Chiodo (Golf Enterprise Fund).
- Begin relocation of 5 golf holes onto former School District land.
- Amend agreement with Blank Park Zoo Foundation.
- Commit Zoo Foundation to raising funds
- Review City CIP to allocate funds toward the SuperBlock Plan and work with Polk County to gain support for a like commitment.

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