



Council Communication

Office of the City Manager

Date September 22, 2008

Agenda Item No. 50
Roll Call No. 08-
Communication No. 08-564
Submitted by: Larry Hulse,
Director, Community Development

AGENDA HEADING:

Resolution approving the designation of the Western Gateway Cultural and Entertainment District.

SYNOPSIS:

The proposed Western Gateway Cultural and Entertainment District is generally located in the Western Gateway Area between 8th and 18th Streets and between Grand Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway. Orchestrate Hospitality plans to submit an application to the State Historic Society for certification of the Western Gateway Area as a Cultural and Entertainment District. The application requires that the City Council hold a public hearing regarding the proposed district, and approve a resolution: 1) designating the district as a Cultural and Entertainment District, subject to certification by the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs; 2) endorsing the application to the Department for certification of the district; and 3) declaring the City Council's intention to participate in the development and financial support of the district for a period of at least ten years.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: NONE

The administrative rules promulgated by the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs for designation of Cultural and Entertainment Districts require that the city adopt a resolution that endorses the submission of the application and agrees to participate in the development and financial support of said Cultural and Entertainment District for ten years. City Staff believes the existing city incentives for development and financial contributions to the areas satisfy the criteria of financial support for the Cultural and Entertainment District.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

What is a certified Cultural District?

A cultural district is a well-recognized, walkable, mixed-use, compact area of a city or county in which a high concentration of cultural facilities serves as the anchor. A **certified** cultural district is a district that has been reviewed and approved by the state. Iowa's program was established by Iowa Code 303.3B and is administered through the Department of Cultural Affairs, pursuant to the authority of Iowa Administrative Code Section 221, Chapter 9. The program is managed by the Department's historical division, the State Historical Society of Iowa.

By Roll Calls 05-2092, 2093, and 2094 on August 22, 2005 the City Council approved resolutions of support for three cultural districts: the Court Avenue Cultural and Entertainment District, the Historic

East Village Cultural and Entertainment District, and the Roosevelt Historic District which were duly certified by the Department of Cultural Affairs. The Gateway West Cultural District abuts the Court Avenue District and will complete the Cultural and Entertainment Districts in the downtown area.

Benefits of Cultural and Entertainment District Designation

The state of Iowa provides a substantial benefit to owners who rehabilitate historic properties within certified cultural districts. In Fiscal Year 2009, the Legislature appropriated \$15 million to the state tax credit program. Each year, forty percent of the tax credit amount is reserved for use within certified cultural districts and Iowa Great Places projects. This tax credit provides a strong incentive for the sensitive rehabilitation of historic buildings. It ensures that character-defining features and spaces of buildings are retained and helps revitalize surrounding neighborhoods.

Once a district is certified, the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, State Historical Society, works with the community to schedule an announcement ceremony for the district. Four large metal signs are provided to the community, to be placed in highly visible locations and marking the boundaries of the cultural district.

City's Role in Cultural and Entertainment District

The government body must agree to participate in the development and financial support of the Cultural and Entertainment District for a period of at least ten years. The financial support can take many forms including financial incentives for businesses, tax abatement, public improvements such as bike paths, landscaping, transit, or zoning changes.

Western Gateway Cultural and Entertainment District

Significant investments in cultural amenities and mixed use development that define cultural districts have been made and will likely continue in the Gateway area. The new Central Library and Gateway Park were completed in 2006, the Pappajohn Higher Education Center was built in 2004, The Temple For Performing Arts was completed in 2002. A number of independent art galleries are springing up along Walnut Street. The Pappajohn Sculpture Garden should be complete next year in the Western Gateway Park. With Nationwide, Wells Fargo Financial, Meredith, ING, Wellmark's new offices, the Davis Brown tower, the Hotel Fort Des Moines and new and renovated housing in this area, the district exemplifies the compact mixed use definition of a certified cultural district.

The Western Gateway Area Redevelopment Goals and Guiding Principles and the downtown plan (*What's Next, Downtown?*) call for further mixed use development, a combination of new and renovated building stock, pedestrian-oriented development, and new downtown transit. *What's Next, Downtown?* recommends establishing the Gateway area as a Cultural and Entertainment District.

The combination of public and private efforts has produced a high concentration of cultural facilities and supporting mixed uses; the Gateway area is worthy of the recognition and preferred financial standing that goes with the certified Cultural District status.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: August 22, 2005

Roll Call Action: 05-2092, 2093, and 2094

Action: On Resolutions of Support for Designation of the following as Cultural and Entertainment Districts:

- (A) Court Avenue
- (B) Historic East Village
- (C) Roosevelt

(Council Communication No. 05-442

of 8/8/05)

Date: December 19, 2005

Roll Call Action: 05-713

Action: Communication from the Urban Design Review Board regarding review and recommendation of the Western Gateway Area Redevelopment Goals and Guiding Principles. (Council Communication No. 05-713)

Date: March 10, 2008

Roll Call Action: 08-432

Action: Receive and adopt the downtown plan titled “What’s Next Downtown”. (Council Communication No. 08-110)

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS: NONE

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