

 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Council Communication</b> Office of the City Manager</p>	<b>Date</b>	March 22, 2010
	<b>Agenda Item No.</b> <b>45</b> <b>Roll Call No.</b> <b><u>10-</u></b> <b>Communication No.</b> <b><u>10-154</u></b> <b>Submitted by: Larry Hulse, Community Development Director</b>	

**AGENDA HEADING:**

Adoption of the Douglas Acres Neighborhood Strategic Plan.

**SYNOPSIS:**

Recommend approval of this proposal to adopt the Douglas Acres Neighborhood Strategic Plan.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Amount: \$790,460

Funding Source: CIP NIRP – FY 2009

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

Background

The Douglas Acres Neighborhood Association (DANA) was one of five neighborhoods selected by the Des Moines City Council and the Polk County Board of Supervisor’s to participate in the Neighborhood Revitalization Program in July 2006. The other neighborhoods selected were Waterbury, South Park, Merle Hay, and Drake. Douglas Acres was selected as a “Transitional Neighborhood”.

In January 2009, City staff met with the DANA Planning Committee for the first time. On February 16, 2009, the Planning Committee and staff held a neighborhood-wide input meeting at Staves Methodist Church. Input from this meeting and data collected by staff set the Planning Committee agenda for the next twelve months. A second neighborhood-wide meeting was held February 9, 2010 to present the goals and strategies of the plan to residents.

Summary of the Plan

The Planning Committee discussed a wide range of topics, including: housing; neighborhood identity; infrastructure; land use and zoning; traffic and transportation; parks, trails and recreation; and plan implementation. Douglas Acres is primarily a residential neighborhood with commercial uses concentrated along East Euclid Avenue, the southern boundary of the neighborhood. One of the unique characteristics of the neighborhood is the large lot single-family residential development pattern that is mostly concentrated in the eastern portion of the neighborhood.

Improving property maintenance and general neighborhood appearance was one of the main desires expressed at the neighborhood input meeting. To increase compliance with the City’s junk and debris ordinance, the Neighborhood Association has committed to educating residents about the ordinance and enforcement, as well as providing information on SCRUB days. In addition, the neighborhood association will encourage pride in property through various events. DANA will also notify rental property owners if there is a maintenance issue or other concern with their property.

Attracting new homebuyers and young families to the neighborhood was another key priority addressed in the plan. Analysis of home sales shows that sale prices in the neighborhood have decreased over the past several years, partly due to non-traditional transactions such as estate sales or foreclosures. Another related concern is the functionality of the housing stock, which consists of modest-sized, well-maintained homes built pre-1970. Many of these homes lack the amenities today’s homebuyers want, giving Douglas Acres a market disadvantage. The plan recommends actively promoting and utilizing the Neighborhood Finance Corporation (NFC) programs to improve the amenities of the housing stock.

Of particular concern to the Planning Committee was the vacant Adams School site. The 4.6 acre school property is currently for sale by the Des Moines Public School District and is zoned R1-60. At this time, the DANA’s preference is for future development on this site to consist of single family homes, unless the property is re-used as a school. Ultimately, the School Board will decide who purchases the property. If, at that time, the proposal requires a re-zoning, the request will go through the formal public process including a public hearing, review by the Plan & Zoning Commission, and review and approval by City Council.

After a thorough review of existing land use and zoning in the neighborhood, two minor land use changes are recommended as part of this plan. These changes will allow the 2020 Community Character Plan to reflect the existing land use. Upon approval of this plan by the Council, these changes will become amendments to the 2020 Community Character Plan.

The Neighborhood Infrastructure Rehabilitation Program (NIRP) is another key component to becoming a Designated Neighborhood. Planning Committee members worked with City of Des Moines Public Works staff to examine the infrastructure in the neighborhood. Based on this input, staff provided an initial list of proposed improvements, which was amended and approved by the Planning Committee. The use and source of NIRP funds is listed below. NIRP improvements in the neighborhood were all completed during the 2009 construction season.

Street HMA Overlay	\$ 342,000
Concrete Pavement Restoration	\$ 89,050
Interim Paving	\$ 124,670
<u>Sidewalk Repair</u>	<u>\$ 234,740</u>
<b>Total NIRP for Douglas Acres</b>	<b>\$ 790,460</b>

Several potential City projects were discussed during the planning process with the Planning Committee and appropriate City staff, including:

- Add a stop sign at the intersection of East 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and East Madison Avenue
- Explore options for removing and improving the surface of the medians along East Euclid Avenue
- Install a natural playscape in Sargent Park
- Secure funding for an open air shelter on the west side of Sargent Park

Several potential neighborhood enhancement projects were discussed during the planning process, including:

- Develop an informational brochure highlighting the assets of the Douglas Acres Neighborhood
- Educate residents about tools available for home repair / improvement and encourage good property maintenance practices
- Improve NFC promotional efforts
- Host a “Grand Opening” celebration for the new playscape in Sargent Park

#### **PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):**

Date: July 10, 2006

Roll Call Number: 06-1346

Action: Recommend approval of the Douglas Acres, Drake, Merle Hay, South Park and Waterbury Neighborhoods for selection as Designated Neighborhoods in the Neighborhood Revitalization Program. Staff recommends that Waterbury and South Park be the first two neighborhoods to go through the planning process. Upon completion of those two plans, the City Manager will reevaluate resource availability given current budget constraints to determine which of the remaining neighborhoods is most appropriate given available resources. However, all the five neighborhood will be eligible to receive assistance from the Neighborhood Finance Corporation (NFC). Moved by Kiernan to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.

Date: March 13, 2006

Roll Call Number: 06-479

Action: Resolution approving recommendations from the Neighborhood Revitalization Program Evaluation Steering Committee to restart the Neighborhood Revitalization Program and to begin research on the creation of a Comprehensive Affordable Housing Policy. Moved by Coleman to adopt. Motion Carried 5-2.

#### **BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S):**

Date: March 4, 2010

Roll Call Number: N/A

Action: The Plan and Zoning Commission recommended approval to adopt the Douglas Acres Neighborhood Strategic Plan as an element of and amendment to the *Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Plan*

Date: March 3, 2010

Roll Call Number: N/A

Action: The Neighborhood Revitalization Board recommended approval of the Douglas Acres Neighborhood Strategic Plan

Date: June 7, 2006

Roll Call Number: N/A

Action: Neighborhood Revitalization Board recommendation to designate Waterbury, Drake, South Park, Douglas Acres and Merle Hay to participate in the Neighborhood Revitalization Program with the City providing an implementation plan for neighborhood order and Neighborhood Finance Corporation to be approved and effective by September 1, 2006.

**ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS: NONE**

For more information on this and other agenda items, please call the City Clerk's Office at 515-283-4209 or visit the Clerk's Office on the second floor of City Hall, 400 Robert D. Ray Drive. Council agendas are available to the public at the City Clerk's Office on Thursday afternoon preceding Monday's Council meeting. Citizens can also request to receive meeting notices and agendas by email by calling the Clerk's Office or sending their request via email to [cityclerk@dmgov.org](mailto:cityclerk@dmgov.org).