

 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Council Communication</b> Office of the City Manager</p>	<b>Date:</b> December 6, 2010
	<b>Agenda Item No.</b> 14 <b>Roll Call No.</b> <u>10-1991</u> <b>Communication No.</b> <u>10-714</u> <b>Submitted by:</b> Phil Delafield Community Development Director

**AGENDA HEADING:**

Resolution approving the Neighborhood Revitalization Board’s recommendation of Charter Status for the King Irving Neighborhood effective January 1, 2012.

**SYNOPSIS:**

The King Irving Neighborhood has experienced substantial investment and redevelopment since it became a Designated Neighborhood in 2001. The Neighborhood Revitalization Board and staff recommend that the King Irving Neighborhood be graduated to Charter Neighborhood status effective January 1, 2012.

**FISCAL IMPACT: NONE**

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

The King Irving Neighborhood was selected to participate in the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) in November 2001 as a “distressed” neighborhood. The King Irving Neighborhood Plan was approved by the Neighborhood Revitalization Board on December 3, 2003, the Plan & Zoning Commission on December 4, 2003, the City Council on December 22, 2003, and the Polk County Board of Supervisors on February 10, 2004.

The purpose of the plan evaluation was to review progress on achieving plan goals and determine whether or not to move the King Irving Neighborhood to Charter status. The evaluation consisted of a comparison of the housing data contained in the plan (“then”) to the current housing conditions (“now”) as well as a review of the progress made on all plan goals. The City’s Geographic Information System (GIS) was utilized to map data comparisons and show investment in the neighborhood. Staff met with the King Irving Neighborhood Association (KINA) several times to review the evaluation report and get comments.

**Executive Summary**

From a physical standpoint, the King Irving neighborhood has experienced significant improvement. Since 2004, the City has invested over \$8.7 million in housing, park and infrastructure improvements, including renovations to the Forest Avenue Library. Other partners, including Habitat for Humanity, CHDC, HOME Inc, and the Polk County Housing Trust Fund have invested over \$6 million in the rehabilitation and new construction of homes in the neighborhood. The Neighborhood Finance Corporation (NFC) has generated over \$3.4 million in loans, including nearly \$270,000 in forgivable

subsidies. In addition, neighborhood institutions, King Academy and the Grubb YMCA, have invested in improvements to their own facilities.

In addition to the physical investments and technical assistance from City staff, the King Irving Neighborhood has also benefitted from the Thrivent Builds Neighborhoods (TBN) planning initiative. The TBN initiative has helped to implement the King Irving Neighborhood Plan and has expanded upon the original, traditional goals of revitalization to include quality of life initiatives, such as youth engagement, crime and safety, neighborhood pride and perception, and employment. The grant funding received from Thrivent allowed for the hiring of a full time project manager for three years, from September 2008 – September 2011, and funds to support quality of life initiatives such as the Youth Achievers program at Grubb YMCA, neighborhood events, and neighborhood beautification activities like Rock the Block. The TBN project goal is to leverage \$10 million of investment in the King Irving and Mondamin Presidential Neighborhoods. As of June 30, 2010, the project has leveraged over \$6.24 million.

The success of neighborhood revitalization plans depends not only on physical improvements, but on the organizational capacity of the neighborhood association to sustain itself and be a champion for continuing efforts. The KINA has identified capacity and leadership development as a priority for several years, yet as in many neighborhoods, struggles to engage new members and new leadership in the organization despite high attendance at special events and volunteer projects. With the TBN and City resources about to exit, the neighborhood needs a strong coalition of residents to be the champion going forward. While the KINA has a dedicated core group of volunteers, staff is concerned that burnout may occur with only a few people taking responsibility for all of the KINA organizational functions.

In 2005, the Stockard & Engler evaluation report suggested that the NRP is weak in addressing quality of life and organizational development. Building capacity and leadership in a distressed neighborhood continues to be a challenge. Distressed neighborhoods require all stakeholders partnering to improve the overall quality of life. The Thrivent project goal is to bring these stakeholders together. While there has been success in bringing awareness to KINA, the ability to formalize those partnerships has not happened. It may be too early in the process for this to occur.

## Evaluation Report Summary

### Housing Data Comparison

The King Irving Neighborhood Plan identified improvements to the housing stock as a primary priority. As shown in the table below, the condition of homes in King Irving has improved significantly since the neighborhood was selected into the NRP.

	King Irving			Des Moines		
	2001	2010	% Change	2001	2010	% Change
Homes in Below Normal or Worse Condition	45%	24%	-47%	12%	7%	-41%
Homes in Above Normal, Very Good or Excellent Condition	12%	28%	132%	49%	58%	18%
Avg. Single Family Home (SFH) Assessed Value	\$ 34,404	\$64,958	89%	\$84,022	\$122,052	45%
Contract Sales (as a % of all sales)	47%	21%	-54%	12%	9%	-28%
Avg. SFH Sale Price	\$41,540	\$64,753	56%	\$87,983	\$112,928	28%
Avg. Sales Price per Sq. Foot	\$30.32	\$48.22	59%	\$73.08	\$94.42	29%

The significant amount of investment in King Irving over the past nine years has created positive change in housing conditions and values, showing the success of the Revitalization Program. With improved conditions, assessed values have also increased resulting in a stronger tax base. The percent of home sales occurring on real estate contract has decreased. King Irving has also experienced an increase in the number of home sales, the average sale value, and the average price per square foot, showing that the neighborhood is becoming a more desirable place to live. Existing home owners are building equity in their home and increasing its value as an asset. However, the challenge, particularly in a distressed neighborhood, will be to sustain the positive transition of the neighborhood going forward without City support. This may be especially difficult in the current economic climate, with access to capital and to credit much more limited.

### **Progress on Plan Goals**

Priority areas for the King Irving Neighborhood Plan included: Neighborhood Character: Land Use, Zoning, Housing; Commercial; Community Enhancements; and Physical Environment. The following summarizes the progress made on plan goals for each section and highlights items yet to be accomplished. For further details, see the implementation status report enclosed.

#### ***Neighborhood Character: Land Use & Zoning – Goals/Action Items not complete***

- All land use amendments were completed at the time of plan adoption. Only a few of the re-zonings identified are complete, either through the Urban Renewal Plan or because of a specific redevelopment project. It is the responsibility of the neighborhood to request that Council initiate a rezoning. The KINA Board did not understand that they were responsible for initiating rezoning requests. Staff has asked the KINA Board to review the items listed and determine whether any are still a priority and if there is still adequate support. If the KINA would like to pursue rezoning, they must write a letter to City Council.

#### ***Neighborhood Character: Housing – Goals/Action Items complete or ongoing***

Significant improvements have been made to the housing stock in the neighborhood through a multi-year and multi-faceted investment strategy. Overall, the investment made in King Irving's housing stock is more than \$8.5 million. Some of the improvement is captured in the housing data comparison section above.

- **Homeownership** in the King Irving neighborhood has increased due to the efforts of the NFC, Habitat for Humanity, HOME Inc, CHDC, and other implementation partners. The NFC has experienced somewhat limited penetration, due to denial of applicants with poor credit or other disqualifications. Still, the NFC has loaned over \$3.4 million, including nearly \$270,000 in subsidy. Habitat for Humanity has had the greatest success in achieving this goal, bringing 32 new homeowners into King Irving.
- **Vacant land** was a critical issue identified in the King Irving Neighborhood Plan. The number of vacant lots in King Irving has been reduced by 52%, due to the construction of 61 new homes. The majority of the vacant parcels that remain in the neighborhood are privately owned and will require a willing seller and buyer for development to occur. The few that are publicly owned are part of current work programs and will be developed with additional housing units.
- **Public nuisance properties** continue to be a concern. There are currently 11 public nuisance properties in the neighborhood, 6% of all PN's citywide. King Irving had 10% of all PN's in 2001

when they were selected into the NRP. 17 single family homes have been demolished in King Irving since 2003, removing blight in the area. Many other homes have been rehabilitated.

- **Rehabilitation of Existing Homes** has occurred through acquisition/rehab projects and owner-occupied repair programs. 15 homes have been rehabilitated since 2003 through non-profit agency acq/rehab programs. In addition, the Thrivent plan has emphasized owner-occupied repair, resulting in over 100 properties receiving rehab work through NCS programs, Polk County Housing Trust Fund, and Polk County Emergency Repair programs. In addition, 270 homes have been cleaned up or had minor repair work done through Rock the Block events and Rebuilding Together days. Weatherization events organized through the Thrivent plan have helped dozens of households with energy efficiency improvements.
- **Code enforcement** is ongoing. Junk and debris continues to be the number one enforcement complaint in the neighborhood. However, King Irving has seen a significant reduction in the number of abandoned vehicles in the neighborhood. The KINA continues to be concerned about rental property maintenance and illegal rentals. A study of property conditions found no significant difference in the conditions of rental vs. owner-occupied properties. Staff recommends that KINA provide more specific information to NBSD in order to address these issues. The KINA has a good working relationship with their NBSD officers.

***Urban Renewal / Commercial – Goals/Action Items complete or found to be not feasible***

- Completed items include the Forest Avenue Corridor Strategy Plan adopted in 2005 and construction of “The Rose of Des Moines” in 2006, a 52-unit senior living facility located at 19<sup>th</sup> Street and Forest Avenue. The Rose received tax credits through the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, as well as \$800,000 in funding from the City and State HOME programs.
- The Forest Avenue Corridor Strategy Plan has been implemented through the adoption of the Forest Avenue Urban Renewal Plan. This plan identifies vacant lot and severely deteriorated properties within a project area that extends from 19<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> along Forest Avenue then north up 13<sup>th</sup> Street. To date, almost \$900,000 has been invested in 24 properties within the project area. Additional revitalization work will continue along 13<sup>th</sup> Street, north of Clark.
- The development of pedestrian-oriented commercial uses at Forest Avenue and 13<sup>th</sup> Street was determined to be infeasible and is no longer a priority. However, the neighborhood remains concerned with the appearance of the Creative Visions building and the traffic/parking congestion in the area. The KINA should work with Creative Visions to address their concerns.
- Just over \$1 million in City of Des Moines Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds has been directly awarded to the King Irving Housing Consortium for housing development in the King Irving Neighborhood. To date almost \$600,000 has been expended resulting in 15 new construction homes, 2 completely rehabilitated homes and the acquisition of an additional 5 properties that are in various stages of redevelopment. The remaining funds will be used as identified in the recommendations section of this report and the amended CDBG Work Plan.

***Community Enhancements – Goals/Action Items complete; See exception below***

- King Irving will be connected to the City’s trail system through various bicycle-friendly routes and trail extensions developed under the Bicycle and Trails Master Plan. The Forest Avenue library underwent a \$1.5 million renovation in 2006-2007. All improvements to Evelyn Davis Park listed in the plan have been completed, including a sidewalk around the perimeter of the park, construction of a new open air shelter, a new half basketball court, and new space net playground equipment. Total

cost of the park improvements was \$350,000. The Park has summer staff and programmed activities. Despite the investment made to the Evelyn Davis Park, the greatest challenge to the KINA and the City is the time when the Park has no structured programming. Teens and young adults gather in the open space and violent activity occurs. This is creating a negative image for the whole neighborhood.

- The capacity of the King Irving Neighborhood Association (KINA) is an area of concern. The TBN initiative has attempted to overcome this challenge by offering a dedicated staff person to oversee plan implementation, bringing in a consultant to work on volunteer recruitment and organizational development, and assisting the KINA with event planning. In addition, King Irving board members have taken the Neighborhood Resident Leadership courses at DMACC. Although dozens of volunteers from the neighborhood come out for TBN projects and there is high attendance at neighborhood events, the KINA struggles to recruit new members and leadership for the organization itself. There seems to be a disconnect between participation in specific programs/projects and participation in the Neighborhood Association. This is a challenge for many neighborhood groups, and is particularly difficult in a distressed neighborhood where individuals have limited time and resources. The KINA has a core group of volunteers that are committed to the KINA and dedicate thousands of hours to neighborhood improvement. However, staff is concerned that these volunteers will experience burn out unless they can continue to add new organizational leadership to the KINA, putting the significant investments in the neighborhood at risk.

The TBN project coalition is aware of the issue and has retained an outreach worker and marketing consultant to focus on recruiting new volunteer leadership and implementing a communication strategy over the next year. They have already developed a database with over 400 resident contacts. The KINA board should work closely with these two workers on capacity development.

### *Physical Environment – Goals/Action Items substantially complete*

- All of the NIRP work mentioned in the plan was completed in 2002 and 2003. Additional work was completed in the neighborhood in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007, resulting in a total investment of over \$1.56 million. Nearly every street in the neighborhood has been resurfaced and defective curbs and sidewalks repaired. The KINA board would like to see sidewalk improvements along Keosauqua Way.
- The City completed three sewer separation projects in King Irving worth over \$2.2 million, funded through the Sewer Enterprise Fund. Public Works provided assistance with reforestation efforts and tree trimming.
- King Irving continues to work with the City's Traffic and Transportation Division through the Thrivent Builds Neighborhoods plan to improve traffic flow and increase safety in the neighborhood.

At their meeting on November 3, 2010, the NRB approved the evaluation and recommendation to graduate the King Irving Neighborhood to Charter status. In addition, the NRB will discuss and advise upon a new process for selecting distressed neighborhoods into the Neighborhood Revitalization Program prior to the next round of designated neighborhood selection.

Staff recommends graduating the King Irving Neighborhood to Charter status as of **January 1, 2012**.

Upon approval of this action by the City Council, it will be forwarded to the Polk County Board of Supervisors for their consideration, as required by the Neighborhood Revitalization Program.

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):**

Date: November 8, 2010

Roll Call Number: 10-1853

Action: [Extension](#) of King Irving Affordable Housing Consortium CDBG Contract to December 31, 2011, allowing development projects to continue. ([Council Communication No. 10-674](#)) **Moved by Hensley to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.**

Date: December 22, 2003

Roll Call Number: 03-2900

Action: Approving the King Irving Neighborhood Plan and adopting the plan as an amendment to the Des Moines 2020 Community Character Plan. ([Council Communication No. 03-612](#)) **Moved by Vlassis to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.**

Date: November 5, 2001

Roll Call Number: 01-3372

Action: Approving designation of Greenwood Historic, Waveland Park and King-Irving Park as neighborhoods to be included in the City's Neighborhood Revitalization Program. ([Council Communication No. 01-559](#)). **Moved by Vlassis to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.**

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

Board: Neighborhood Revitalization Board

Date: November 3, 2010

Resolution Number: N/A

Action: Recommended approval of the King Irving plan evaluation and graduating King Irving to Charter Status as of January 1, 2012.

Board: Plan & Zoning Commission

Date: December 4, 2003

Resolution Number: N/A

Action: Approved a request from the King Irving Neighborhood Association to amend the Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Plan to incorporate the text and future land use map for the proposed King Irving Neighborhood Action Plan.

Board: Neighborhood Revitalization Board

Date: December 3, 2003

Resolution Number: N/A

Action: Approved a request to approve the King Irving Neighborhood Plan.

**ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS: NONE**

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