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|  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Council<br/>Communication</b><br/>Office of the City Manager</p> | <b>Date:</b> March 25, 2013  |
|  | <b>Agenda Item No.</b> 54B<br><b>Roll Call No.</b> <u>13-0519</u><br><b>Communication No.</b> <u>13-149</u><br><b>Submitted by:</b> Phillip Delafield,<br>Community Development Director |

**AGENDA HEADING:**

Adoption of the Woodland Heights Neighborhood Plan Update.

**SYNOPSIS:**

Recommend approval of the Woodland Heights Neighborhood Plan Update. In November 2011, the City of Des Moines selected several neighborhoods to participate in the Neighborhood Revitalization Program. For the first time, Charter neighborhoods with an existing plan that is more than ten (10) years old were allowed to apply for a pilot program to update their plan. The pilot program was conducted in partnership with graduate students in Planning at Iowa State University (ISU). This is a two (2) year pilot program with Beaverdale and Woodland Heights participating in 2012. Capitol East and Capitol Park will be participating in the pilot program in 2013.

**FISCAL IMPACT: NONE**

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

A new public input process was utilized for the pilot program to coincide with the fall semester class schedule at Iowa State University (ISU). The process began with the Woodland Heights Organization (WHO) circulating a survey in the summer of 2012 to all residents asking them about their neighborhood. WHO collected 119 surveys during this process. This was followed by a series of three (3) planning workshops in the fall of 2012 that were facilitated by the ISU planning team. The first workshop, held on September 22nd, focused upon identifying resident goals, identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges facing the neighborhood, as well as the creation of a neighborhood vision statement. Participants in the following two workshops, held on October 6th and 20th, respectively, identified goals and strategies that would help the neighborhood address the concerns of each of the priority areas.

The neighborhood also worked with the ISU planning team to draft a vision statement for the development of their neighborhood:

*The residents of Woodland Heights envision a cohesive, aesthetically pleasing, and peaceful neighborhood where families can thrive in a socially diverse, historically significant community that remains connected to its natural setting and surrounding urban environment.*

Based on the results of the neighborhood survey and the input received at the workshops, Woodland Heights' residents identified priority goals for the neighborhood to address over the next five (5) to ten (10) years. The following goal areas were identified:

### *1) Community Identity and Enhancement*

Woodland Heights is a diverse neighborhood with an active neighborhood organization. The survey found residents to be very invested in the aesthetic quality and historic significance of the neighborhood. Participants want to build from this foundation and continue to strengthen the sense of community and improve the level of engagement among residents.

### *2) Trees*

The mature tree canopy is an important identifying feature for the Woodland Heights neighborhood. Educating residents and finding resources to help preserve and maintain the trees are a high priority.

### *3) Housing*

Woodland Heights' residents take pride in the historic architectural character of homes in the neighborhood. Maintaining this integrity and continuing the many improvements that have been made to homes since the last neighborhood plan are critical. In addition, residents want to address vacant properties, promote infill development on vacant lots, and address properties with maintenance concerns.

### *4) Parks and Open Space*

The neighborhood is fortunate to have several parks and open spaces for recreation with Chamberlain Park, Woodland Cemetery, and the school properties. Residents envision upgrades to Chamberlain Park, expanded public access to the Cemetery, and connections to recreation opportunities outside the neighborhood.

### *5) Infrastructure*

The condition of infrastructure continues to be of significant importance to the Woodland Heights Neighborhood. Suggested improvements include repairing sections of the fence around Woodland Cemetery, installing new sidewalk along walk routes to the schools, adding traffic and parking signage, and additional tree plantings.

## **Potential City Projects and Initiatives**

- Promote awareness of the architectural guidelines as home development projects occur.
- Coordinate with the neighborhood to replant trees in the public right-of-way (ROW).
- Consider improvements to Chamberlain Park.
- Expand public access to Woodland Cemetery; repair sections of the fence.
- Maintain neighborhood infrastructure, parks, and trails at a high level for neighborhood use and recreation; address specific infrastructure concerns.

## **Neighborhood Led Projects and Initiatives**

- Promote Woodland Heights' historic architecture and distribute the character plan.
- Educate residents about tools available for home repair and improvement, as well as the availability of Neighborhood Finance Corporation (NFC) lending.
- Increase communication and outreach within the neighborhood.
- Enhance the visibility and marketability of the Woodland Heights Neighborhood.
- Work with the City to explore improvements to infrastructure and public facilities like the park and cemetery.
- Preserve and expand the neighborhood tree population on both public and private land.
- Work with the Ingersoll Business District to enhance this vital commercial corridor.

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):**

Date: November 21, 2011

Roll Call Number: [11-1965](#)

Action: [Approving](#) the selection of five Charter Neighborhoods into the Neighborhood Revitalization Program's Charter Pilot Project: Beaverdale, Woodland Heights, Capitol East, Capitol Park, and River Bend. ([Council Communication No. 11-702](#)). Moved by Hensley to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.

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

Board: Neighborhood Revitalization Board

Date: November 2, 2011

Resolution Number: N/A

Action: Approved staff recommendation to select Beaverdale, Woodland Heights, Capitol East and Capitol Park for the Pilot Charter Neighborhood Program, as well as River Bend for a trial neighborhood-led planning effort.

Board: Neighborhood Revitalization Board

Date: March 6, 2013

Resolution Number: N/A

Action: Approved the Updated and Amended Beaverdale Neighborhood Action Plan and to forward a recommendation to City Council to approve this plan.

Board: Plan and Zoning Commission

Date: March 7, 2013

Resolution Number: 21-2013-4.06

Action: Amend the Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Plan to incorporate the updated and amended Beaverdale Neighborhood Plan as an element.

**ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:**

Future City Council action to support implementation activities may be necessary.

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