

 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Council Communication</b> Office of the City Manager</p>	<b>Date:</b>	May 5, 2014
	<b>Agenda Item No.</b>	<b>48</b>
	<b>Roll Call No.</b>	<b><u>14-0734</u></b>
	<b>Communication No.</b>	<b><u>14-212</u></b>
	<b>Submitted by:</b>	<b>Phillip Delafield, Community Development Director</b>

**AGENDA HEADING:**

Approving the Capital Crossroads Neighborhood Improvement Implementation Plan and initiating a committee to develop a funding strategy.

**SYNOPSIS:**

Recommend approval of the Capital Crossroads Neighborhood Improvement Implementation Plan and initiation of a committee to explore the community's capacity to fund implementation. In 2011, the Capital Crossroads Strategic Plan established a new vision for economic growth in Greater Des Moines. Under the Capital Core segment of that plan, regional leaders recommended additional investment be directed towards improving the health and vitality of Des Moines' neighborhoods. The Neighborhood Improvement Implementation Plan was developed by a subcommittee of public, private, and non-profit community members and recommends five (5) strategic initiatives with related tactics and actions for accelerating change in neighborhoods. Critical to its implementation is finding new types of funding and other community resources.

**FISCAL IMPACT: NONE**

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

Capital Crossroads is the latest in a series of strategic plans developed in Greater Des Moines. Completed in 2011, the Capital Crossroads Strategic Plan laid out a five (5) year strategy for the Central Iowa region encompassing a 50-mile radius around Des Moines. The Plan provides a vision for sustainable economic growth and development in the region, through 10 areas of focus or, "strategic capitals". Each "strategic capital" has rallied volunteers from across the region and is executing its own implementation plan.

The "Capital Core" acknowledges the importance of the health and vitality of the central City – Des Moines – to the region's overall prosperity and well-being. The Plan recognizes that the City of Des Moines is different from the rest of the region in terms of demographic and socioeconomic trends and has a unique set of opportunities. The "Capital Core" focused on two (2) areas: continuing the transformation downtown and investing in neighborhoods.

The "Capital Core" committee, co-chaired by City Manager Rick Clark and Mary O'Keefe from Principal Financial, began by crafting an implementation plan to accelerate the momentum in downtown. In July of 2012 a separate subcommittee, chaired by Russ Cross from Wells Fargo, began work on an implementation plan intended to complement and strengthen existing efforts to improve

Des Moines' neighborhoods. The Neighborhood Improvement Implementation Plan is the result of over 15 months of work by that subcommittee.

The process included learning sessions to understand the current landscape of neighborhood revitalization and related issues, development of guiding principles and goals, a series of town hall meetings to gather public input, and paring a long list of ideas down to five (5) strategic initiatives. City staff supported the development of the plan, which included discussions with various departments to understand unmet needs and the resources required to support visible progress.

First presented to City Council at a workshop on October 7, 2013, the initiatives each recommend a series of tactics and actions to take for making meaningful, visible change possible. Neighborhood revitalization will occur best when multiple initiatives are employed together. Each of the strategic initiatives is briefly described here, in no order of priority. Also included is the estimated funding required to implement the initiative over a five (5) year time period.

*Advance efforts to address blighted residential properties* (funding included with Initiative 2) - This initiative is about making Des Moines' neighborhoods more attractive by improving the curb appeal of homes. It recommends developing a larger pipeline of properties for rehabilitation or redevelopment, creating a land bank entity to strategically acquire and hold properties in that pipeline, and enforcing a higher standard of property maintenance, while expanding resources available for making needed improvements.

*Build new value-added housing in existing neighborhoods* (\$3.25 million/year, total \$16 million) - Closely related to the first initiative, this is another strategy for dealing with blighted conditions and taking advantage of opportunities presented by vacant lots. The second initiative recommends ways to encourage more infill new construction to occur in existing neighborhoods, with an emphasis on high quality design and construction, and diversifying the range of housing choices within and among neighborhoods to meet the needs of today's market.

*Revitalize neighborhood commercial areas* (\$2.25 million/year, total \$10.5 million) - Shopping, dining, retail services, and offices provide destinations for residents and visitors and contribute greatly to the overall vibrancy of a neighborhood. They also provide jobs. Des Moines has a different set of challenges and opportunities related to neighborhood commercial areas than is found in communities that have newer development. There is a need to understand and respond to current market conditions in order to reposition these areas as desirable destinations throughout the City. The initiative also recommends aligning investment in neighborhood commercial areas with other projects.

*Upgrade infrastructure* (\$12.6-\$17 million/year, total \$63-85 million) - Infrastructure is the basic, often publicly owned, building blocks of a neighborhood. Streets and sidewalks allow people and goods to get from place to place, streetscapes can set a tone of vitality or neglect, sewer and stormwater systems protect the health and well-being of residents and properties, and community facilities like parks, trails, libraries, and community centers offer amenities that are critical to attracting people to live in an area. This initiative recommends bringing all neighborhoods up to a new minimum standard of infrastructure; however, significant dollars are needed for implementation.

*Improve perceptions of and connections among Des Moines' neighborhoods and schools* (\$100,000/year, total \$500,000) - Physical revitalization of neighborhoods is very important, however, attention must also be paid to the people who live in them. This initiative acknowledges the important role that educational attainment plays in the health and vitality of neighborhoods. It proposes ways to enhance connections among educational institutions and neighborhoods so that they may help each

other. It also recommends ways to improve perceptions of Des Moines' neighborhoods and schools, so that the Capitol Core is seen as equally desirable as any of the other communities in the region.

Identifying new sources of funding will be critical to the implementation of this plan. The City is already a significant contributor to neighborhood revitalization, yet needs continue to outpace resource levels. The Greater Des Moines community has demonstrated capacity to raise considerable funds when called upon. This plan creates an opportunity for the City to bring new partners and resources to the table to support work in neighborhoods.

Staff recommends approving the Capital Crossroads Neighborhood Improvement Implementation Plan and initiating a committee to explore the community's capacity to fund implementation.

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S): NONE**

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

Board: Neighborhood Revitalization Board

Date: December 4, 2013

Resolution Number: N/A

Action: None. Overview presentation.

**ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:**

The City will need to determine appropriate commitment of staff and other resources for the various initiatives as part of plan implementation. Staff will update the City Council periodically.

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