

.....
Date..... October 13, 2008

**RESOLUTION APPROVING THE MERLE HAY NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN
AND ADOPTING THE PLAN AS AN AMENDMENT TO THE
DES MOINES 2020 COMMUNITY CHARACTER PLAN**

WHEREAS, on August 7, 2000, by Roll Call No. 00-3381, the City Council adopted the Des Moines 2020 Community Character Plan; and,

WHEREAS, on July 10, 2006 by Roll Call No. 06-1346, the City Council selected the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association to participate in the Neighborhood Revitalization Program; and,

WHEREAS, the Community Development Department staff has worked with the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association to develop and prepare the Merle Hay Neighborhood Plan as attached in Exhibit "A"; and,

WHEREAS, a meeting open to the general citizenship of the Merle Hay Neighborhood was held on August 14, 2008, and said Merle Hay Neighborhood Plan was approved by the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association Board of Directors on August 14, 2008; and,

WHEREAS, the Neighborhood Revitalization Board has advised in the accompanying communication (Exhibit "B") that at their meeting on September 3, 2008, the Board voted to recommend approval of said Merle Hay Neighborhood Plan; and,

WHEREAS, notice was published in the Des Moines Register on September 10, 2008, of a hearing before the City Plan and Zoning Commission to consider the said Merle Hay Neighborhood Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City Plan and Zoning Commission has advised in the accompanying communication (Exhibit "C") that after a public hearing held on September 18, 2008, the Commission voted 10-0 to recommend approval of the future land use plan of the Merle Hay Neighborhood Plan as an amendment to the Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Land Use Plan, and adoption of the text of the Merle Hay Neighborhood Plan as an element of the Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Des Moines, Iowa:

(continued)

October 13, 2008


Date

1. The future land use plan of the Merle Hay Neighborhood Plan is hereby approved and adopted as an amendment to the Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Land Use Plan. The text of the Merle Hay Neighborhood Plan is hereby approved and adopted as an element of the Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Plan.
2. All other parts of the Des Moines 2020 Community Character Plan shall remain in full force and effect and all subsequent amendments thereto including the amendment herein shall constitute the official comprehensive plan known as the Des Moines 2020 Community Character Plan.

(Council Communication Number 08 -609)

MOVED by _____ to adopt.

FORM APPROVED


 Michael Kelley
 Assistant City Attorney

COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT
COWNIE				
COLEMAN				
HENSLEY				
KIERNAN				
MAHAFFEY				
MEYER				
VLASSIS				
TOTAL				

MOTION CARRIED APPROVED

.....
 Mayor

CERTIFICATE

I, DIANE RAUH, City Clerk of said City hereby certify that at a meeting of the City Council of said City of Des Moines, held on the above date, among other proceedings the above was adopted.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the day and year first above written.

 City Clerk

September 29, 2008

Date _____

Agenda Item 65

Honorable Mayor and City Council
City of Des Moines, Iowa

Roll Call # _____

Members:

Communication from the City Plan and Zoning Commission advising that at their meeting held September 18, 2008, the following action was taken:

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

After public hearing, the members voted 10-0 as follows:

Commission Action:	Yes	Nays	Pass	Absent
Leisha Barcus	X			
JoAnne Corigliano	X			
Shirley Daniels				X
Jacqueline Easley	X			
Dann Flaherty				X
Bruce Heilman	X			
Ted Irvine				X
Jeffrey Johannsen	X			
Greg Jones	X			
Frances Koontz	X			
Jim Martin	X			
Brian Millard	X			
Mike Simonson				X
Kent Sovern	X			



CITY PLAN AND ZONING COMMISSION
ARMORY BUILDING
602 ROBERT D. RAY DRIVE
DES MOINES, IOWA 50309 -1881
(515) 283-4182

ALL-AMERICA CITY
1949, 1976, 1981
2003

APPROVAL of a request from the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association to amend the Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Plan to incorporate the Merle Hay Neighborhood Plan as an element, including the following revisions to the future land use designations: (21-2008-4.19)

- A) From Low Density Residential to Commercial: Pedestrian-Oriented, Neighborhood Node for property located at 5739 University Avenue (commercial center), 4844 Urbandale Avenue (commercial center), 4900 Urbandale Avenue (convenience store), and 4910 Urbandale Avenue (office building).
- B) Low Density Residential to Park/Open Space for property located at 5300 Urbandale Avenue. (Riley Park)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION AND BASIS FOR APPROVAL

Staff recommends that the Commission amend the Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Plan to incorporate the Merle Hay Neighborhood Plan as an element, including the following revisions to the future land use designations:

- A) From Low Density Residential to Commercial: Pedestrian-Oriented, Neighborhood Node for property located at 5739 University Avenue (commercial center), 4844 Urbandale Avenue (commercial center), 4900 Urbandale Avenue (convenience store), and 4910 Urbandale Avenue (office building).

- B) Low Density Residential to Park/Open Space for property located at 5300 Urbandale Avenue. (Riley Park)

STAFF REPORT

I. APPLICABLE INFORMATION

Background

The Merle Hay Neighborhood Association (MHNA) was selected to participate in the Neighborhood Revitalization Program in July 2006 as a "Transitional Neighborhood". Following their selection, the MHNA formed a planning committee to work with City staff to create a neighborhood action plan. On March 28, 2007, the planning committee and staff held a neighborhood-wide input meeting at the Northwest Community Center. Input from this meeting set the Planning Committee's agenda for the next eighteen months. A second neighborhood-wide meeting was held on August 14, 2008, to present the goals and strategies of the plan to neighborhood residents.

Much of the Merle Hay Neighborhood was developed after World War II between 1945 and 1960. This is the first neighborhood developed during this time period that has entered the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP). This type of neighborhood requires planning strategies that are slightly different from other Distressed, Transitional, and Stable Neighborhoods.

Land Use and Zoning Analysis

A land use and zoning analysis was completed as a part of the planning process. There were three areas where the current use does not match the 2020 Community Character Plan's land use designation. One area was the location of Riley Park. The plan calls for changing the land use designation of Riley Park from Low-Density Residential to Park/Open Space. The other changes in the land use designations are at the commercial nodes at 49th Street and at Urbandale Avenue, and Merle Hay Road and University Avenue. The plan calls for changing the land use designation of these areas from Low-Density Residential to Commercial, Neighborhood Node.

The plan calls for two parcel specific rezonings at 6220 Hickman Road, where the recommendation was to rezone the parcel from "C-0" Commercial Residential District to "R1-60" Low-Density Single-Family Residential District and to rezone the parcel at 5739 University Avenue from "R1-60" Low-Density Single-Family Residential District to "C-1" Neighborhood Retail Commercial District. It will be the responsibility of the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association to initiate these zoning changes in the future.

One land use issue the planning committee discussed was the expansion of commercial uses and zoning extending into residential areas. Currently, one of the major drawbacks to redeveloping the commercial corridors is the lack of available space. Merle Hay Road and Douglas Avenue were platted as residential areas. Therefore, the lots are only typically 60 feet wide by 120 feet deep. These smaller parcels make it difficult to provide adequate commercial space that meets current parking and open space requirements.

Because of this, the planning committee believes the neighborhood could consider supporting the expansion of commercial uses and structures onto the "back sides" of commercial areas surrounding Merle Hay Road, Douglas Avenue, and Hickman Road so long as the proposals are neighborhood-friendly and provide a sufficient buffer between the commercial buildings and the residential neighborhood. This would allow sufficient space for commercial redevelopment while minimizing negative impact to the neighborhood.

Summary of the Plan

The Merle Hay Planning Committee has met monthly since March 2007 to develop the neighborhood plan. The planning committee discussed a wide array of topics including infrastructure, housing, neighborhood identity, commercial development, land use and zoning, traffic and transportation, parks and recreation, and plan implementation.

Maintaining and improving the housing stock was the biggest concern of neighborhood residents at the input meeting. Currently, the neighborhood features modest, well-maintained homes built between 1940 and 1960. However, many of these homes lack the amenities that today's homebuyer's desire. The market disadvantage of the housing stock is a major concern for the long-term health of the neighborhood as it cycles to a new generation of residents.

The plan recommends actively promoting and utilizing the NFC to improve the amenities of the housing stock. The neighborhood has been successfully promoting and utilizing the NFC. As of July 31, 2008, the NFC has closed 58 loans in the Merle Hay Neighborhood totaling almost \$2.1 million.

Enhancing the reputation of the Merle Hay Neighborhood is another opportunity to promote the neighborhood. By building a strong neighborhood association, promoting the area to real estate agents, and creating annual events to highlight the neighborhood, the image of the neighborhood can be enhanced.

The Merle Hay Neighborhood has a strong commercial corridor along with several neighborhood commercial nodes. The proximity to shopping, dining, and jobs is a huge neighborhood asset. However, in recent years, competition from the suburbs has diminished the appeal of the area. It is important to the health of the neighborhood that commercial corridors and neighborhood nodes remain vibrant. The plan proposes working with property owners, businesses, neighborhood residents, and political leaders to examine ways to enhance the commercial corridors. These enhancements many include streetscape improvements, façade improvements, and entrance signs to the neighborhood.

The neighborhood features a diverse network of local, collector, and arterial streets along with multiple state highways. Several improvements are planned for the area. The intersection of Merle Hay Road and Urbandale Avenue will be rebuilt in 2010. The City of Windsor Heights is planning to improve the intersection of 63rd Street and Hickman Road as a part of a larger redevelopment project, which will include a stoplight at Westover Boulevard.

The Merle Hay Neighborhood features two major parks and a future connection to the Central Iowa Trail System. A complete renovation of Riley Park was completed in 2007 and a master plan and renovation for Tower Park is scheduled to begin in 2009. The completion of the Waveland Trail will connect the edge of the neighborhood to the Central Iowa Trail System. Future bike lanes and expanded sidewalks will help connect the rest of the neighborhood to the new trail.

Neighborhood Infrastructure Rehabilitation Program (NIRP) Summary

Planning Committee members along with City of Des Moines Public Works staff examined 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 funded improvements in the neighborhood should be completed by the end of the 2008 construction season. Along with these improvements, Public Works staff has been working on storm water mitigation issues in the neighborhood.

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NIRP Improvements

Street HMA Overlay	\$ 397,100 – CIP NIRP
Curb Repair	\$ 150,000 – CIP NIRP
Concrete Pavement Restoration	\$ 143,000 – CIP NIRP
Sidewalk Repair	\$ 320,000 – CIP NIRP
Slurry Seal Coat	\$ 19,670 – CIP NIRP
<u>Median Island Repair</u>	<u>\$ 8,300 – CIP NIRP</u>

Total NIRP for Merle Hay \$ 1,038,070 –CIP NIRP

Potential City Projects

- Approval of an Urban Renewal Plan and a TIF District for the area surrounding Merle Hay Mall (approved in Summer 2008).
- Creation and implementation of a master plan for Tower Park.
- Streetscape enhancements near Merle Hay Mall along Merle Hay Road and Douglas Avenue.
- Creation of enhanced entrance signs for the Merle Hay Neighborhood.
- Rebuild the intersection of Merle Hay Road and Urbandale Avenue.

Neighborhood Enhancements Projects

- Build a coalition of business owners, property owners, neighborhood residents, and political leaders to advocate for improvements to the Merle Hay commercial corridor.
- Work with property owners to improve the intersection of Merle Hay Road, Hickman Road and Merklin Way.
- Enhance the annual Riley Park celebration to create a showcase event for the neighborhood.

Anticipated Approval Timeline

August 14, 2008 – Merle Hay Neighborhood Association Board of Directors
 September 3, 2008 – Neighborhood Revitalization Board
 September 18, 2008 – Plan and Zoning Commission
 October 13, 2008 – Des Moines City Council
 October 14, 2008 – Polk County Board of Supervisors

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

CHAIRPERSON OPENED THE PUBLIC HEARING

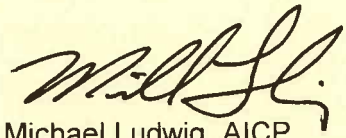
There was no one in the audience to speak on this item.

CHAIRPERSON CLOSED THE PUBLIC HEARING

Bruce Heilman: Moved staff recommendation.

Motion passed 10-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael Ludwig, AICP
Planning Administrator

MGL:clw

Attachment

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION BOARD

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October 8, 2008

The Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council

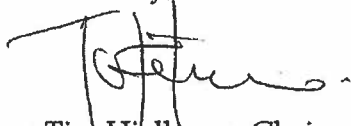
RE: Merle Hay Neighborhood Plan

The Neighborhood Revitalization Board (NRB) is pleased to forward the Merle Hay Neighborhood Plan for your consideration. Members of the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association, along with City staff, have worked very hard to develop this plan over the last two years.

The NRB considered the proposed Merle Hay Neighborhood Plan, at the September 3, 2008 meeting and unanimously approved a motion to recommend its adoption by the City Council.

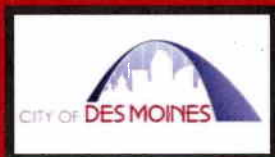
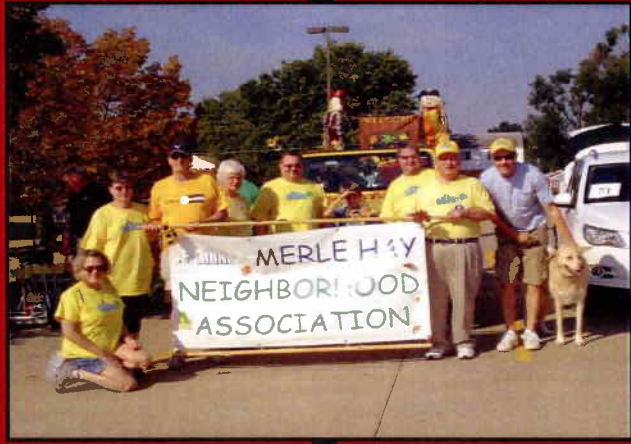
Please advise the NRB of the need for any additional information or clarification.

Sincerely,



Tim Hielkema, Chair
Neighborhood Revitalization Board

Merle Hay



Merle Hay Neighborhood Plan

October 2008

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Parks and Recreation	#
Traffic and Transportation	#
Implementation	#

Merle Hay Planning Committee:

Jo Ann Hanover	Steve Berry	Pat Meiners
Al Hopp	Ed Pagliai	Laura Peters
Linda Johnson	Stephanie Petersen	Lela Behn
Scotney Fenton	Mark Richards	Saundra Miller
Bruce Glauberg	Jane Linthicum	

City of Des Moines Neighborhood Revitalization Board

City of Des Moines Planning and Zoning Commission

City of Des Moines Community Development Staff:

Larry Hulse, AICP, Director

Kathy Kahoun, Neighborhood Development Administrator
Overall Plan Development

Dave Dunn, Assistant Planner
Project Lead and Plan Development

Susan Minks, AICP, Senior City Planner
Project Assistance

Special thanks to City staff from the Public Works, Engineering, Parks & Recreation, and Community Development, for their assistance.

Merle Hay Neighborhood Plan

