

★ Roll Call Number

Agenda Item Number

45 A

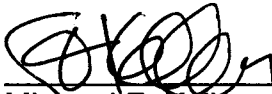
April 11, 2011

Date

COMMUNICATION from the City Plan and Zoning Commission advising that at a public hearing held on March 3, 2011, the members recommended by a vote of 10-2 to find the proposed 10th Amendment to the Urban Renewal Plan for the Metro Center Urban Renewal Area in conformance with the Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Plan.

MOVED by _____ to receive and file.

FORM APPROVED:


 Michael F. Kelley
 Assistant City Attorney

COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT
COWNIE				
COLEMAN				
GRIESS				
HENSLEY				
MAHAFFEY				
MEYER				
MOORE				
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

Date _____

March 08, 2011

Agenda Item 45A

Roll Call # _____

Honorable Mayor and City Council
City of Des Moines, Iowa

Members:

Communication from the City Plan and Zoning Commission advising that at their meeting held March 3, 2011, the following action was taken:

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

After public hearing, the members voted 10-2 as follows:



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

Commission Action:	Yes	Nays	Pass	Absent
JoAnne Corigliano	X			
Shirley Daniels	X			
Jacqueline Easley	X			
Dann Flaherty		X		
John "Jack" Hilmes				X
Joel Huston	X			
Ted Irvine	X			
Greg Jones	X			
Jim Martin				X
Brian Millard		X		
William Page	X			
Mike Simonson	X			
Kent Sovern	X			
CJ Stephens	X			

APPROVAL of the proposed 10th Amendment to the Metro Center Urban Renewal Plan is in conformance with the Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Plan. The amendment proposes adding the River Hills sub-area which is generally bounded on the north by East University Avenue, on the east by East 6th Street, on the south by Des Moines Street, and on the west by the Des Moines River and Illinois Street.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION TO THE P&Z COMMISSION

Staff recommends that the Commission find the 10th Amendment to the Urban Renewal Plan for the Metro Center Urban Renewal Area in conformance with the Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Plan.

STAFF REPORT

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Included is a draft copy of the proposed 10th Amendment to the Urban Renewal Plan for the Metro Center Urban Renewal Area. The proposed 10th Amendment has two major components:

- The addition of an area to be known as “River Hills 2011”, which includes the Botanical Center. The River Hills 2011 area is generally bounded on the north by East University Avenue, on the east by East 6th Street, on the south by Des Moines Street, and on the west by the Des Moines River and Illinois Street; and
- The addition of and expansion to the urban renewal project proposals including the central fire station; the Des Moines and Raccoon River levees and related flood control improvements; recreation area improvements and economic development assistance for improvements to downtown office space.

The Metro Center Urban Renewal Plan and its related tax increment finance districts encompass the downtown and near downtown area. The River Hills 2011 area being added by this amendment includes 125 acres, of which the Des Moines River comprises about 25% (35 acres).

The public activities and projects that may be assisted by this plan amendment and tax increment revenues are:

- a. Economic development financial assistance for:
 - Operation, maintenance, renovation and enhancement of the Botanical Center of Greater Des Moines for an amount up to \$2 million.
 - Financial assistance to property owners for improvements to downtown office space to enable leasing to business tenants for an amount up to \$1 million.
- b. Evaluate, engineer and improve the Raccoon and Des Moines River levees and related river flood prevention/reduction projects for an amount up to \$5 million.
- c. Construct and equip the new central fire station for an amount up to \$8 million.
- d. Construct and equip public recreation area improvements as designated in the urban renewal plan for an amount up to \$1 million.

II. DES MOINES’ 2020 COMMUNITY CHARACTER PLAN

Chapter 1 of Des Moines’ 2020 Community Character Plan is titled “Underlying Principals” and includes the following principles in support of the goal to create a livable community for several generations:

- Protect Natural Resources.
- Promote economic growth and efficiency.
- Enhance and preserve Des Moines’ urban character.
- Transportation facilities should support and guide the balanced growth concept for the metropolitan area.

Chapter 5 of Des Moines’ 2020 Community Character Plan is titled “Existing Character of Commercial Land Use” and includes the following principles:

Commercial Policies for Implementation

- Define policies, development standards and design guidelines to ensure pedestrian scale, appeal, and quality environment are balanced with auto safety and convenience.
- Establish marketing strategies for the various commercial categories to attract investors, businesses and customers to the area and to maintain healthy commercial areas.

No amendments to the City's Future Land Use Map in the Des Moines 2020 Community Character Plan or rezonings are proposed as part of the proposed plan. The Future Land Use Map designations within the added area would remain Downtown: Support Commercial, High Density Residential Commercial and Park/Open Space. The other components of the proposed amendment are also all consistent with existing Future Land Use Map and zoning designations.

Staff believes that the proposed 10th Amendment to the Urban Renewal Plan for the Metro Center Urban Renewal Area would be in conformance with the Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Plan.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Andrea Hauer presented the staff report and recommendation.

Greg Jones asked how the boundary lines were determined. Noted that there are apartments on the west and east sides of East 6th Street that are under common ownership. One side will be in the boundary and the one side will not. He asked what impacts that might have on potential redevelopment.

Andrea Hauer stated that one of the dilemmas in developing the proposed amendment was deciding where to set the east boundary south of the freeway. The existing land uses on the east side of East 6th Street contains both commercial and residential uses where the west side of East 6th Street is all residential and that staff felt this was a logical dividing point. Any property in the urban renewal area would be eligible for tax increment financing to assist with improvements or new development. She noted that there are three different housing complexes on the west side of East 6th Street.

Greg Jones asked why this area was included.

Andrea Hauer stated that there is common infrastructure and pedestrian connections to the north side of I-235 that will need to be improved in concert.

Greg Jones asked if this will help spur investment in the River Hills Business Park.

Andrea Hauer stated she hoped it would. Noted that there are four different property owners in that area and that a majority of them seem interested in redevelopment that would take advantage of their proximity to the Riverwalk.

Will Page noted that in the staff report under item "b" on page 1 it references "up to \$5 million" that could be spent for levee and flood prevention/protection measures and that on page 2 of the draft urban renewal plan "up to \$10 million" is referenced for the same item. He asked for clarification.

Andrea Hauer indicated that \$10 million was the correct figure.

Will Page asked if the approval of the proposed urban renewal plan amendment would also approve any of the designs that have been discussed for the redevelopment of the Botanical Center, particularly the closure of the street.

Andrea Hauer indicated that it would not.

Mike Ludwig stated that East River Drive is technically a park road but that Community Development staff believes that any proposed closure should be considered through the City's normal street vacation process, which would include a public hearing before the Commission.

Andrea Hauer stated that she has not seen any plans for the Botanical Center except for what has been in the newspaper.

Mike Ludwig stated that what he has seen in the paper is that the access would come from University Avenue to the north. Noted that the area encompassing the Botanical Center is zoned "D-R" District, which would require Commission approval of the site plan for redevelopment of the Botanical Center. Clarified that the question before the Commission at this time is, does the long range land uses that are identified in the proposed urban renewal plan amendment match the City's 2020 Community Character Plan Future Land Use Map. Staff believes that it does and is not recommending any amendments to the Future Land Map.

Andrea Hauer noted that the majority of the area that the proposed amendment will add is zoned "D-R" District.

Will Page stated that he raised the question because he believes that a thorough public discussion should be held before East River Drive is closed given the amount of traffic the street carries, which he understands is about 2,000 vehicles a day.

Brian Millard stated that he believes there has been some discussion by the City Council about closing Robert D. Ray Drive in that area, but he does not believe they have taken any formal actions. Noted that he thought the closure of West River Drive was temporary but that it now appears to be permanent.

Mike Ludwig stated that the permanent closure was the southern connection to 2nd Avenue and that the temporary closure for construction was of the remaining portion of the road south of University Avenue. In the plan it calls for the park road to come down and terminate in a turnaround north of the bridge with a parking lot accessed from 2nd Avenue to the south. West River Drive would no longer be accessible from 2nd Avenue.

Brian Millard stated his recollection that there was a temporary closure at the freeway from University Avenue but that the closure of the road to the Event Center was temporary and that the potential of the closure becoming permanent was going to be discussed at a later date.

Mike Ludwig stated that staff could double check the circumstance.

Brian Millard asked if the Botanical Center property would be eligible for TIF funds.

Andrea Hauer replied yes.

Brian Millard asked if there was a plan ready.

Andrea Hauer stated that the Council has been approached by a group of individuals that have indicated they would like to convert the Botanical Center operations to a business setup similar to the zoo with a private non-profit foundation operator. The foundation would be responsible for redevelopment and operation. In return the City would provide some financial support for 10 years.

CJ Stephens asked about the flood plain and if there was any new information pending that may affect the urban renewal district.

Andrea Hauer stated the Army Corps of Engineers has indicated that the Saylorville Reservoir, which provides most of the flood protection for Des Moines, is undersized because it was constructed based on flood plain models that were developed from data for a dryer than normal timeframe. The Corps recently announced that flood plain lines and its maps would be amended to reflect higher elevation levels. The City does not know exactly how this will impact the area but is in contact with the Corps to get information as quickly as possible.

Mike Ludwig stated that addressing the higher elevations is going to be a joint effort. As the numbers are firmed up and new development occurs staff will look for site specific property protection measures such as ground level parking or other non-habitable space.

CHAIRPERSON OPENED THE PUBLIC HEARING

There was no one in the audience to speak in favor or in opposition.

CHAIRPERSON CLOSED THE PUBLIC HEARING

COMMISSION ACTION

Ted Irvine moved staff recommendation to find the 10th Amendment to the Urban Renewal Plan for the Metro Center Urban Renewal Area in conformance with the Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Plan.

Motion passed 10-2 (Dann Flaherty and Brian Millard voted in opposition)

Respectfully submitted,



Jason Van Essen, AICP
Senior City Planner

JV:clw

cc: File