

Date March 25, 2013

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

WHEREAS, the City Plan and Zoning Commission has advised in the attached letter that at a public hearing held March 7, 2013, the members voted 14-0 to recommend **APPROVAL** of a City initiated request to amend the Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Plan to incorporate the Woodland Heights Neighborhood Plan Update as an element.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Des Moines, Iowa, that the proposed amendment to the Des Moines 2020 Community Character Land Use Plan described above, is hereby approved.

MOVED by \_\_\_\_\_ to approve the proposed amendment.

FORM APPROVED:



Michael F. Kelley  
Assistant City Attorney

(21-2013-4.07)

COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT
COWNIE				
COLEMAN				
GRIESS				
HENSLEY				
MAHAFFEY				
MEYER				
MOORE				
TOTAL				
MOTION CARRIED			APPROVED	

**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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

March 13, 2013

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Agenda Item 54B-1

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 7, 2013, the following action was taken regarding a City initiated request to amend the Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Plan.

**COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:**

After public hearing, the members voted 14-0 as follows:

Commission Action:	Yes	Nays	Pass	Absent
Dory Briles	X			
JoAnne Corigliano	X			
Shirley Daniels	X			
Jacqueline Easley	X			
Tim Fitzgerald	X			
Dann Flaherty	X			
John "Jack" Hilmes	X			
Ted Irvine	X			
Greg Jones	X			
William Page	X			
Christine Pardee	X			
Mike Simonson				X
CJ Stephens	X			
Vicki Stogdill	X			
Greg Wattier	X			

**APPROVAL** of a request to amend the Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Plan to incorporate the updated and amended Woodland Heights Neighborhood Plan as an element. (21-2013-4.07)

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION TO THE P&Z COMMISSION**

Staff recommends that the Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Plan be amended to incorporate the updated and amended Woodland Heights Neighborhood Plan as an element.

**STAFF REPORT**

**I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

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 10 years old



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

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 year pilot program with Beaverdale Neighborhood Association and Woodland Heights Organization participating in 2012. Capitol East Neighborhood Association and Capitol Park Neighborhood Association will be participating in the pilot program in 2013.

## II. GENERAL PLAN SUMMARY

A new public input process was utilized for the pilot program to coincide with the Fall semester class schedule at 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 total surveys during this process. This was followed by a series of three 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 to ten 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.

This plan does not include any recommended land use or zoning changes. Development opportunities were briefly discussed during the planning process and the neighborhood emphasized preserving the residential areas and strengthening the commercial districts along Ingersoll Avenue.

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION**

Jason Van Essen stated because there was already a 5:30 presentation on this item he believed that it would be better to allow the person who is in opposition to speak and then staff could address any questions or concerns.

### **CHAIRPERSON OPENED THE PUBLIC HEARING**

*The following spoke in opposition of the applicant's request:*

Wendy Lacina 4155 53<sup>rd</sup> Street stated she was not against passing the plan. However, she has a concern with one element in the plan. Her concern is the reference to the Bicycle and Trail Master Plan.

- She believes that more than half of the design committee that wrote the plan does not live in the City of Des Moines.
- Alleged notices and reply cards were not mailed to residents adjoining improvements identified in the plan.
- Expressed concern with the process of how the committee was selected
- Alleged neglect in the committee's process by not going through the Plan and Zoning Commission, the Access Advisory Board which ensures the disabled people have equal opportunity to use public right-of-way space safely.
- Alleged the Park and Recreation board has never approved this plan as an action item just a file and receive.
- Alleged the City Council has never approved this plan as an action item just a receive and file.

Dann Flaherty asked for clarification of concern. He asked if the concern is the Bike and Trail Master Plan or the Neighborhood Plan.

Wendy Lacina stated that Woodland Heights did a great job with the neighborhood plan.

Dann Flaherty stated that the Bike and Trail Master Plan is a guideline it is not approving or disapproving any trails.

Wendy Lacina stated she understood that but when the Woodland Heights Neighborhood leaves this meeting they are going to begin implementing both plan.

Dann Flaherty stated they will not begin implementing that plan. They will work with the City to try and implement those plans.

Wendy Lacina stated that what has been happening is when that plan is being implemented policies are not being abided by. She does not believe that anyone in the City is intentionally ignoring this, she does not want the neighborhood to be under the impression that this plan is going to be passed so they can run and implement more bike and trails via this master plan.

Dann Flaherty explained that the neighborhood's proposal is not implementation. It is a guideline to move forward with implementation. The implementation process has not started yet.

Wendy Lacina stressed she would like for the Commission to pass this proposal tonight. She is on the Neighborhood Revitalization Board (NRB) and they passed it last night. When she brought her concerns to the NRB they suggested tabling it. She believed that it is not in the NRB realm but she believes it is really a Plan and Zoning issue. If the Plan and Zoning Commission is comfortable with passing this proposal she suggest putting a caveat that maybe the City staff can be asked as to how these oversights occurred.

Mike Ludwig presented information from the Planning File for the Bike and Trail Master Plan. Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan are advertised in the Des Moines Register before the Commission holds a hearing on those amendments. Such a notice was published per code. Individual mail notifications go out on zoning items per code, not a Comprehensive Plan Amendment for a plan. The Planning Commission held their hearing on June 2, 2011 on the Bike and Trail Master Plan in accordance with the notice. The Commission voted 11-0 to recommend approval of the Master Plan as a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to the 2020 Community Character Plan. On June 13, 2011 the City Council approved the plan as an element of the 2020 Community Character Plan. The Council resolution states that the trails and greenways advisory committee unanimously recommended approval of the plan as an element on May 9, 2011. On May 10, 2011 the Traffic Safety Committee unanimously recommended approval of the plan as an element of the 2020 Community Character Plan. Based on this information, the Bike and Trail Master Plan did follow all of the required processes. It is an element of the 2020 Community Character Plan and has been approved by Council and is appropriate to have it referenced in the neighborhood's plan.

Ted Irvine stated there is no problem in discussing how the bike lanes get connected to the trails. However, it has nothing to do with what is being discussed today. If it came back as an item that required some sort of approval from the Plan and Zoning Commission he would be happy to look at it. He believes that this proposal by Woodland Heights Neighborhood Association should be passed.

**CHAIRPERSON CLOSED THE PUBLIC HEARING**

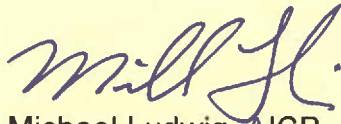
*There was no one to speak in favor or in opposition of the applicant's request.*

**COMMISSION ACTION:**

Greg Jones moved staff recommendation that the Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Plan be amended to incorporate the updated and amended Woodland Heights Neighborhood Plan as an element.

Motion passed 14-0.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Ludwig".

Michael Ludwig, AICP  
Planning Administrator

MGL:clw

Attachment

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The original neighborhood plan for Woodland Heights was approved in 1991, and the neighborhood had reached many of their goals since that time. In 2011, the neighborhood applied for the opportunity to update their plan. The new Woodland Heights plan complements the progress already made in the neighborhood and attends to new priority issues.

### THE PLANNING PROCESS

The neighborhood planning process began with a survey of the residents of Woodland Heights in the fall of 2012. The survey was carried out by members of the Woodland Heights Organization (WHO). WHO collected a total of 119 surveys, which were then analyzed by the ISU Planning Team. The survey set the foundation for the neighborhood planning process to efficiently move forward as it guided the ISU Planning Team to prepare and plan for three information-seeking workshops. The workshops were designed and facilitated by the ISU Planning Team. Each workshop was three full hours, and allowed neighborhood residents to be intimately involved in the planning process. 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.

### PRIORITY AREAS AND VISION STATEMENT

Through the planning process, the neighborhood articulated a guiding vision 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.*

They also identified five priority areas that were used to organize the goals and strategies in the plan: community identity and enhancement, trees, recreation and open spaces, housing, and infrastructure. The following table lists the goals and strategies associated with each priority area.

PRIORITY AREA 1: COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND ENHANCEMENT	
<b>Goal #1</b> Enhance the visibility and marketability of Woodland Heights	<b>Strategies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop signage for neighborhood points of entry</li><li>• Initiate a neighborhood branding effort</li></ul>
<b>Goal #2</b> Increase communication and outreach within the neighborhood	<b>Strategies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide outreach to new neighbors</li><li>• Strengthen the Woodland Heights Organization</li></ul>
<b>Goal # 3</b> Improve connections between the neighborhood and businesses along Ingersoll Avenue	<b>Strategies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase neighborhood resident awareness of Ingersoll businesses</li></ul>

## **Implementation**

The successful implementation of this plan is critical to the realization of the neighborhood's vision statement and its ongoing stability and revitalization. Reaching this vision requires a commitment from neighborhood residents, as well as a strong and active neighborhood leadership. The Woodland Heights Organization is responsible for the overall implementation of the plan. Therefore, the plan identifies the need for WHO to develop a strong organizational capacity that effectively communicates with residents and stakeholders, and collaborates with the partners identified in this plan. It is important that WHO regularly recruits and trains volunteers and develops leadership capacity to facilitate the execution of the plan.

For the plan to be successfully implemented, the plan also indicated the need for WHO to create a sustained partnership with the City of Des Moines. Furthermore, the neighborhood must engage and seek resource support from local organizations, neighborhood businesses and neighborhood schools. This will include identifying financing mechanisms above and beyond the traditional resources.



# WOODLAND HEIGHTS



February 2013

Neighborhood Plan



IOWA STATE  
UNIVERSITY

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In cooperation with:  
Woodland Heights Organization  
and  
City of Des Moines

February 18, 2013

