



Roll Call Number

26-0681

Agenda Item Number

34

Date June 8, 2026

**AUTHORIZING RESTORE THE CORE DSM: GROUND FLOOR ACTIVATION PROGRAM**

**WHEREAS**, the Downtown Des Moines Core is generally recognized as an area of Downtown Des Moines bounded by the Des Moines River to the East, Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway to the South, 16<sup>th</sup> Street to the West, and Grand Avenue to the North; and

**WHEREAS**, due to a combination of multiple economic and demographic factors, the Downtown Core has, in recent years, experienced prolonged ground-floor commercial vacancies and decreased foot traffic and street-level activity; and

**WHEREAS**, the Office of Economic Development has developed and is recommending a program branded as "Restore the Core DSM" as a multipronged, Downtown-focused incentive program with an overall brand that can incorporate a variety of specific initiatives intended to support continued investment, activation, and vitality within Downtown Des Moines; and

**WHEREAS**, the City's Office of Economic Development is proposing to support Restore the Core DSM: Ground Floor Activation as the first initiative under this broader program framework with an initial investment of up to \$7,000,000 in Metro Center Urban Renewal Area Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds; and

**WHEREAS**, the City's Office of Economic Development have prepared Program Guidelines in form on file in that Office and available for public inspection. The proposed Program Guidelines generally provide a 1:1 matching reimbursement grants for permanent improvements that help bring vacant, street-level commercial spaces back into productive use. The grants would be capped at \$100,000 for projects already subject to an Urban Renewal Development Agreement and \$200,000 for projects not already subject to an Urban Renewal Development Agreement; and

**WHEREAS**, individual Grant Agreements will be negotiated with each recipient and will be brought to the City Council for individual approval.

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

The City Council hereby makes the following findings in support of the proposed Restore the Core: Ground Floor Activation Program:

- a. The goals of the Program further the objectives of the Metro Center Urban Renewal Plan to encourage and facilitate high quality commercial, mixed use and residential uses and the associated employment opportunities and slum and blight elimination within the



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Plan area; foster economic prosperity and stability by retaining existing businesses; further Des Moines' revitalization efforts to improve the strength, stability, and vitality of the Project Area; protect Des Moines' historic and cultural assets that contribute to neighborhood and community identity; reduce long-term ground-floor commercial vacancies; increase foot traffic, street-level activity, and overall vitality; encourage the adaptive reuse of existing commercial spaces; support new businesses entering Downtown; improve the Downtown experience for residents, employees, and visitors; and support long-term business and tax base growth within the City.

b. The economic development incentives for the Program are provided by the City pursuant to the Urban Renewal Law and Chapter 15A of the Code of Iowa, and the Program will generate the following public gains and benefits: (i) it will encourage and assist with the redevelopment and/or removal of blighted, obsolete, and underutilized properties within the Project Area; (ii) it will facilitate the development and re-development of commercial, mixed use and residential uses for the creation and retention of jobs in the City of Des Moines; (iii) it will increase the overall tax base; and (iv) it will maximize the return on past investment in road and public utility networks.

c. The Program goals are in the vital and best interests of City and the health, safety, morals, and welfare of its residents, and in accord with the public purposes and provisions of the applicable state and local laws and requirements under which the Program has been undertaken, and warrant the provision of the economic assistance set forth in the Agreement.

2. The Program Guidelines as on file in the Office of Economic Development are hereby approved, and the City Manager and/or his designee(s) are hereby authorized to administer the Program on behalf of the City of Des Moines pursuant to the approved guidelines.

3. Upon receipt of an approved application for Grant Agreement, the Office of Economic Development shall present each approved application and proposed Agreement to the City Council for approval.

(Council Communication No. 26-208)

Moved by Gatto to adopt.

Second by Voss.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

/s/ Gary D. Goudelock Jr.

Gary D. Goudelock Jr.

Assistant City Attorney



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COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT
BOESEN	✓			
SIMONSON	✓			
VOSS	✓			
BARRON	✓			
WESTERGAARD	✓			
MANDELBAUM	✓			
GATTO	✓			
TOTAL	7			
MOTION CARRIED			APPROVED	

CERTIFICATE

I, LAURA BAUMGARTNER, 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.

Connie Bosen Mayor

Laura Baumgartner City Clerk