

CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION 97-139  
MARCH 24, 1997 AGENDA

SUBJECT:	TYPE:	SUBMITTED BY:
RECOMMENDATION FOR CHANGES IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD SELECTION PROCESS	◆ RESOLUTION ORDINANCE RECEIVE/FILE	JAMES GRANT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

**SYNOPSIS —**

The Housing Improvement and Neighborhood Revitalization Program, proposed by the consulting firm of Stockard and Engler, Inc., was approved in February 1990 by the Des Moines City Council and the Polk County Board of Supervisors. Since 1990, 12 neighborhoods have been chosen for inclusion in the intensive neighborhood planning and implementation process. Five neighborhoods have moved on to charter status. It is now time to begin a third round of selecting new neighborhoods for participation in the Revitalization Program. Staff presented a proposal to the NAB on March 5 for proceeding with the selection of two stable/transitional positive neighborhoods and forming a task force to address how the Program can be more effective in distressed/transitional negative neighborhoods. The NAB is forwarding their recommendation to the City Council for approval.

**FISCAL IMPACT —**

N/A.

**RECOMMENDATION —**

Approval.

**BACKGROUND —**

The Housing Improvement and Neighborhood Revitalization Program, proposed by the consulting firm of Stockard and Engler, Inc., was approved in February 1990 by the Des Moines City Council and the Polk County Board of Supervisors. As recommended in this revitalization program, the County and the City have combined with Des Moines business leaders to form a public/private partnership that addresses critical housing issues within the metropolitan area.

The Neighborhood Revitalization Program works with nine neighborhoods at any given time. Charter status is awarded to those neighborhoods that have demonstrated distinguished success in achieving revitalization goals and are regarded as having accomplished sufficient stability to no longer require the same large commitment of resources. Since 1990, a total of 12 neighborhoods have been chosen for inclusion in the Revitalization Program. A total of five neighborhoods have moved forward to charter status. The implementation activities for North Park were combined with River Bend. It will be possible to include three new neighborhoods in the Neighborhood Revitalization Program. It is now time to begin the selection process for new neighborhoods.

During the selection process, staff uses set criteria to determine whether a neighborhood is distressed, transitional negative, transitional positive, or stable. A report evaluating the effects of the Revitalization Program on currently designated neighborhoods shows that it is possible to have a

significant impact on the stable/transitional positive neighborhoods within a three-year time frame. Typically, these neighborhoods have infrastructure needs, some land use problems related to development issues, zoning issues, capacity building, and enforcement issues. All of these needs can be addressed by existing programs and can be solved with existing resources such as financing from the NFC, sidewalks and curbs from the CIP budget, Neighborhood Infrastructure Rehabilitation Program (NIRP), etc. As was the case with Union Park, Chautauqua Park, and Beaverdale, the neighborhood can benefit from the development of a strategic action plan, but does not require intensive staff support.

Working in distressed/transitional negative neighborhoods, however, requires additional time. These neighborhoods require more time and resources because typically the residents have lower median incomes, problems with credit, negative public perceptions, higher percentage of deteriorated housing stock, and greater need for development projects that require high levels of subsidy. It is not possible to solve all the problems for these neighborhoods with existing resources. The NAB does not recommend selecting additional distressed/transitional negative neighborhoods for the Revitalization Program until strategies for addressing the needs of these neighborhoods can be developed.

The NAB recommends the creation of a task force to develop strategies so the Neighborhood Revitalization Program can be more effective in distressed/transitional negative neighborhoods. This task force will be organized by city staff using representatives from the NAB, bankers, developers, real estate brokers, non-profits, the City, Polk County, and representatives of distressed/transitional negative neighborhoods. It may include inviting speakers from other cities or field trips to view projects in other cities. The task force will prepare a report for the NAB and recommendations will be forwarded to the City Council.