

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

	Number:	19-315	Meeting:	July 15, 2019
	Agenda Item:	60	Roll Call:	19-1141-4
	Submitted by:	Chris Johansen, Community Development Director		

AGENDA HEADING:

Amend the PlanDSM Creating Our Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan to adopt revitalization plans for the Columbus Park, Drake, Franklin Area, and Oak Park/Highland Park Special Investment Districts (SID).

SYNOPSIS:

The four (4) revitalization plans were developed between November 2018 and May 2019 by czb LLC and City staff, in partnership with a planning committee comprised of residents, business owners, and other stakeholders. The plans are intended to provide a framework for revitalization efforts over a 10-year planning horizon. These plan documents are also intended to provide a model for future planning efforts in “middle” neighborhoods of Des Moines. Staff recommends that the Plan DSM Creating Our Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan be amended to incorporate the neighborhood revitalization plans for the Columbus Park, Drake, Franklin Area, and Oak Park/Highland Park Special Investment Districts as an element.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: \$5 million in fiscal year (FY) 2020

Funding Source: \$2.5 million from Local Option Sales and Service Tax (LOSST), and \$2.5 million from Polk County

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

In September 2018, Council approved four (4) pilot target areas for planning work to develop and implement new revitalization tools including: 1) Columbus Park, 2) Drake, 3) Franklin Area, and 4) Oak Park/Highland Park. Each area is a subset of a larger neighborhood – or neighborhoods – and was selected based on existing assets and momentum to build upon. To complete the four (4) neighborhood revitalization plans, with support from City staff, the City retained czbLLC.

Each of the four (4) planning committees focused on specific challenges and opportunities for their neighborhood. While each of the four (4) pilot areas are unique, common themes addressed in each area generally included: housing, commercial areas and corridors, parks, infrastructure, walkability, neighborhood identity and branding, resident leadership and capacity-building, and neighborhood pride. The following is a brief overview summary of the issues and potential solutions discussed and incorporated into each of the four (4) plans.

1. Columbus Park SID: The Columbus Park SID includes the central portion of the McKinley School/Columbus Park Neighborhood. The SID is bound by the Des Moines River on the north, Hartford Avenue on the south, SW 1st Street and Indianola Avenue on the west, and SE 6th Street on the east.

Key issues identified through market analysis and observations from residents and stakeholders include:

- A. Housing conditions are poor and values are lagging, but there are opportunities to build a healthier housing stock.
- B. Resident engagement and leadership have been difficult to build and sustain, making it difficult for neighbors to effectively organize around important issues.
- C. An expanded commercial district has promise and constraints.

Seven (7) over-arching goals and outcomes developed by the planning committee include:

1. Strong identity that preserves and capitalizes on heritage, but embraces everyone
2. Streets and infrastructure in outstanding condition
3. Parks and other amenities attract visitors and support the brand
4. New and existing homes and properties show pride
5. Commercial district grows, thrives and is pedestrian friendly
6. Housing market features new options, greater homeownership, and stronger values
7. Neighbors celebrate positives and engage to improve the neighborhood

The strategies and activities identified in the action plan reflect the overall goals and outcomes desired by the planning committee, as well as wider aims of Plan DSM and the Neighborhood Revitalization Program. Major activities recommended in the action plan include:

- Create new financing tools to stimulate housing improvements that enhance marketability and property values.
 - Targeted housing activities will include single-family infill housing, row house development, single-family rehab by homeowner, single-family rehab by developer, and small beautification projects.
- Establish the area around E. Jackson and SE 1st Street as the center of an emerging commercial district.
 - Commercial property renovation and redevelopment activities that would include adding mixed-use developments with ground floor commercial space and upper floor living space will be encouraged.
- Create new financing tools to support improvements to commercial properties within the SID.
- Establish a neighborhood business district resource team.
- Make blighted nuisance properties a priority for “Blitz on Blight” (demolition) resources.
- Synchronize infrastructure upgrades with residential and commercial redevelopment.
- Removal of deteriorated fencing from private properties.

2. Drake SID: The Drake SID consists of an area within the southwest quadrant of the Drake neighborhood, bounded by Drake Park and 24th Street to the east, University Avenue to the north, 35th Street to the west, and I-235 to the south. A portion of the SID overlaps with the federally-designated Opportunity Zone.

Key issues identified through market analysis and observations from residents and stakeholders include:

- A. The housing market is performing well, but high levels of disinvestment are visible and remain a vulnerability.
- B. Resident leadership has been strong for years, but broadening the base of engaged and involved residents has been a struggle.
- C. The Dogtown Business District has a surprisingly weak identity and presence for a college neighborhood's Main Street.
- D. A negative image of the neighborhood persists in the region's mind.

Six (6) over-arching goals and outcomes developed by the planning committee include:

1. Housing stock exhibits pride
2. Dogtown Business District is a destination
3. Brand is clear and consistent: Historic, Diverse, Safe
4. Real estate market is thriving and diverse
5. People walk and bike on beautiful streets
6. There is social cohesion to tap into

The strategies and activities identified in the action plan reflect the overall goals and outcomes desired by the planning committee, as well as wider aims of Plan DSM and the Neighborhood Revitalization Program. Major activities recommended in the action plan include:

- Create new financing tools to stimulate improvement to owner-occupied and rental housing that enhance condition, marketability, and property values.
 - Targeted housing activities will include single-family rehab by homeowner or developer, small exterior beautification projects, conversion downsizing, conversion and small multi-family rehab, and apartment building rehab (structures with eight {8} plus units).
 - Make blighted nuisance properties a priority for rehabilitation (or demolition when necessary).
 - Perform strategic code enforcement activities.
 - Activate Drake Park more routinely to promote sense of neighborhood safety, walkability, and vibrancy.
 - Organize a one-time "Mini-SCRUB" pilot event.
 - Finalize and implement Cottage Grove Triangle Beautification Program.
 - Establish a neighborhood dog park.
 - Tie existing or new neighborhood pride activities to core brand attributes.
 - Expand awareness of and appreciation for area's historic architecture.
 - Establish a neighborhood business district resource team.
 - Develop and implement a stronger identity for Dogtown Business District.
3. Oak Park/Highland Park SID: The Oak Park/Highland Park SID is generally bound by Seneca Avenue on the north, Oak Park Avenue on the south, 6th Avenue on the east, and 12th Street on the west. Recently, the Oak Park and Highland Park Neighborhood Associations have joined together as one (1) association to work collectively on improving their north side neighborhoods.

Key issues identified through market analysis and observations from residents and stakeholders include:

- A. High levels of deferred maintenance and lagging property values are a sign that the housing market has been soft for decades.
- B. Although the market is soft, it is strong enough to reward homeowners who improve their properties with greater equity and wealth-building potential. But many homes will cost more to fix than they will be worth when fully renovated - a gap that needs to be addressed for widespread reinvestment to occur.
- C. The neighborhood is relatively young and shows signs of socioeconomic stability and improvement, which bodes well for boosting levels of engagement and cultivating resident leadership capacity.
- D. The neighborhood is well suited for active lifestyles around walking and biking, but this is diminished by notable shortcomings to pedestrian and bicycle safety.
- E. The business district has historic charm but is underperforming. A more vibrant district is likely to be one with less retail than has historically been the case.

Six (6) over-arching goals and outcomes developed by the planning committee includes:

1. Healthy business district
2. Strong connections and collaborations
3. Homes and shared spaces exhibit pride
4. Property values support neighborhood-friendly investment
5. Strong positive identity
6. Pedestrian and bike friendly

The strategies and activities identified in the action plan reflect the overall goals and outcomes desired by the planning committee, as well as wider aims of Plan DSM and the Neighborhood Revitalization Program. Major activities recommended in the action plan include:

- Create new financing tools to stimulate housing improvements that enhance marketability and property values.
 - Targeted housing activities will include single-family rehab by homeowner, single-family rehab by developer, and small beautification projects.
 - Create new financing tools to support commercial space improvements and business development in the Euclid/6th Avenue business district.
 - Establish a neighborhood business district resource team.
 - Support the emergence of a “third place” in the Euclid/6th Avenue business district.
 - Make blighted nuisance properties a priority for “Blitz on Blight” (demolition) resources.
 - Perform strategic code enforcement activities.
 - Improve sidewalk network for walkability and pedestrian safety.
 - Organize a one-time “Mini-SCRUB” pilot event.
4. Franklin Area SID: The Franklin Area SID is bounded by 48th Street to the west, Hickman Road to the north, Beaver Avenue and 41st Street to the east, and University to the south. The pilot area encompasses a portion of the Waveland Park neighborhood (south of Franklin) and Beaverdale

neighborhood (north of Franklin), as well as an area in the middle that has been traditionally shared by both neighborhoods within their boundaries. For purposes of the SID, the planning committee elected to re-brand the area as the Franklin Area, building on the existing assets and potential redevelopment along the Franklin Corridor as defining sense of place.

Key issues identified through market analysis and observations from residents and stakeholders include:

- A. The prevailing stability of the neighborhood and its housing market is threatened, with many homes and blocks vulnerable to disinvestment in coming years.
- B. The neighborhood's commercial nodes are important to the quality of life and residential marketability, but they are aging and increasingly incompatible with other neighborhood attributes and goals.
- C. Walkability is a true asset, but much can be done to make the neighborhood more conducive to pedestrians and bicycles.
- D. Residents in the Franklin Area are more engaged on neighborhood issues than is the norm in Des Moines, but it remains a challenge to maintain an active base of leaders and volunteers.

Seven (7) over-arching goals and outcomes identified by the planning committee include:

1. The business districts are thriving, diverse, and contribute to residential desirability
2. The neighborhood is inviting, safe, and fun for walkers and cyclists
3. Neighborhood's image is well-known and celebrates unique characteristics
4. Public and private spaces have curb appeal and celebrate community character
5. Neighbors are involved and work together to keep the neighborhood great
6. Homes are desirable and maintain their value against inflation
7. Neighborhood invites and includes diverse populations

The strategies and activities identified in the action plan reflect the overall goals and outcomes desired by the planning committee, as well as wider aims of Plan DSM and the Neighborhood Revitalization Program. Major activities recommended in the action plan include:

- Create new financing tools to stimulate improvement to owner-occupied and rental housing that enhance condition, marketability, and property values.
 - Targeted housing activities will include single-family rehab by homeowner or developer, small exterior beautification projects, and new single-family infill housing.
- Establish a Franklin Area brand that aligns with core brand attributes and target markets.
- Designate SID as target area for affordable homeownership and rehab activities.
- Make blighted nuisance properties a priority for rehabilitation (or demolition when necessary).
- Perform strategic code enforcement activities.
- Improve sidewalk network for walkability and pedestrian safety.
- Organize a one-time "Mini-SCRUB" pilot event.
- Apply complete street principles and traffic-calming measures, especially to upcoming street reconstruction and improvement projects.
- Tie existing or new neighborhood pride activities to core brand attributes.
- Expand awareness and appreciation for area's period architecture.

- Create new financing tools to support improvements to commercial properties within and adjacent to the Franklin Area.
- Establish a neighborhood business district resource team.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: June 25, 2018

Roll Call Number: [18-1099](#)

Action: [Receive](#) and file [report](#) entitled Neighborhood Revitalization Planning Program Review prepared by czbLLC; and approving referral of findings to Working Group to develop recommendation on next steps. ([Council Communication No. 18-322](#)) Moved by Gatto to adopt. Motion Carried 6-1. Nays: Westergaard.

Date: September 24, 2018

Roll Call Number: [18-1617](#)

Action: [Authorizing](#) the redesign of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program, selecting four pilot areas for planning and revitalization work, and approving Professional Services Agreement with czbLLC. ([Council Communication No. 18-490](#)) Moved by Boesen to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S):

Board: Plan & Zoning Commission

Date: June 20, 2019

Resolution Number: N/A

Action: Amend Plan DSM Creating Our Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan to incorporate the Neighborhood Revitalization Plans for the Columbus Park, Drake, Franklin Area, and Oak Park/Highland Park Special Investment Districts as an element.

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:

Future City Council approval for Capital Improvement Projects related to these revitalization plans.

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