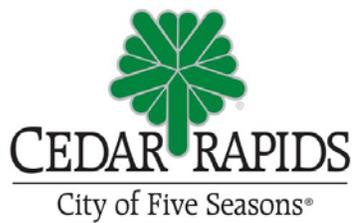




**City Council  
Development Committee  
Meeting Agenda Packet  
June 30, 2014  
4:00 p.m.**



## Development Committee Meeting Agenda

City Hall Training Room

Monday, June 30, 2014

4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

### Purpose of Development Committee:

To enable the City Council to discuss and evaluate in greater detail these specific issues that directly impact the physical, social, and economic vibrancy of the City of Cedar Rapids.

### City Council Committee Members:

Council member Monica Vernon, Chair

Council member Pat Shey

Council member Susie Weinacht

- Mayor Ron Corbett is an ex-officio member of all Council Committees per City Charter Section 2.06.

### Agenda:

- Approval of Minutes – May 21, 2014
- Recommendation Items:
  1. Low Income Housing Tax Credit Policy      Paula Mitchell      10 Minutes  
*Community Development*
  2. 400 – 500 1<sup>st</sup> Street SW      Jennifer Pratt      10 Minutes  
*Community Development*
  3. Knutson Request for Proposals      Jennifer Pratt      10 Minutes  
*Community Development*
  4. Window Vinyl Signs      Seth Gunnerson      10 Minutes  
*Community Development*
  5. Sandwich Boards      Seth Gunnerson      10 Minutes  
*Community Development*
  6. Annexation of Camelback Hills      Joe Mailander      10 Minutes  
*Community Development*
- Informational Items:
  1. Alley and Right of Way Vacation      Jeff Hintz      10 Minutes  
*Community Development*
  2. Zoning Code Update      Jeff Hintz      10 Minutes  
*Community Development*

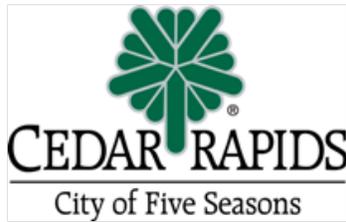
Any discussion, feedback or recommendation by Committee member(s) should not be construed or understood to be an action or decision by or for the Cedar Rapids City Council. Further, any recommendation(s) the Committee may make to the City Council is based on information possessed by the Committee at that point in time.

- Updates:
  1. July Meeting Date

**Future Meetings:**

1. Items for **July** Agenda –
  - a) Bee Keeping Ordinance
  - b) Historic Preservation Ordinance Update – Partial Demolition
  - c) Outdoor Service Area
  - d) ROOTs
  - e) Housing Market Analysis

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**City of Cedar Rapids  
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES  
City Hall Council Chambers  
Wednesday, May 21, 2014  
4:00 p.m.**

The meeting was brought to order at 4:04 p.m.

Present: Council members Vernon (Chair), Shey and Weinacht. Staff members present: Jennifer Pratt, Interim Community Development Director; Thomas Smith, Community Development Planner; Caleb Mason, Housing Redevelopment Analyst; Rob Davis, Engineering Manager; Seth Gunnerson, Community Development Planner; and Alicia Abernathy, Community Development Administrative Assistant.

Council member Vernon stated the Development Committee meets monthly and the purpose of the committee is to review development and economic issues that involve the community. Items are brought forward to the agenda from City staff, Council members and sometimes citizens.

Council member Vernon called for a motion to approve the minutes from April 16, 2014. Council member Shey made a motion to approve the minutes from April 16, 2014. Council member Weinacht seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with none opposed.

**1. Request for City-Owned Properties**

- a) **1919 Ellis Boulevard NW**
- b) **1915 Ellis Boulevard NW**
- c) **1895 Ellis Boulevard NW**
- d) **1871 Ellis Boulevard NW**

Thomas Smith, Community Development Planner, stated a letter of interest was received for City-owned properties at 1919, 1915, 1895, and 1871 Ellis Boulevard NW. The standard process in the past has been to bring these requests to Development Committee to evaluate the requests and proposed criteria to make a recommendation on opening a competitive proposal process to the City Council. Mr. Smith stated the properties were acquired by the City following the 2008 flood. The properties are currently vacant and are bordered by the Cedar River, Ellis Park and single family residential. The properties are part of the Viable Business Corridor and the Ellis Area Plan study area. The Ellis Plan indicates development on the properties would be contingent on integrating flood protection infrastructure into the development plan. The project selected for the parcels would have to be consistent with Army Corps standards and will become part of the City's future flood management system. The properties are located within the Ellis Area Overlay District so it would need to meet the design guidelines established for the overlay district. Mr. Smith identified the proposed criteria for use in inviting competitive proposals.

Council member Vernon asked if the pedestrian orientation identified in the criteria addressed public access to the riverfront. Mr. Smith stated the pedestrian orientation criteria addresses the orientation of the building to the street and ensuring it is part of a walkable neighborhood but access to the riverfront can be included in the criteria.

Council member Shey stated there is a trail that follows the river and cuts east at some point. Council member Shey stated the picture presented shows homes on some parcels and asked if the parcels would eventually be vacant and used for greenspace. Jennifer Pratt, Interim Community Development Director, stated there are still homes located on some of the parcels and there has always been a trail in the plans so having a trail as part of the criteria is reasonable.

Council member Shey made a motion to move the request for Ellis Boulevard City-owned properties forward to the full City Council. Council member Weinacht seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with none opposed.

## **2. Request for a City-Owned Property**

### **a) Chipping Green (Corner of 18<sup>th</sup> Street and Zika Avenue NW)**

Caleb Mason, Housing Redevelopment Analyst, stated the Chipping Green site was previewed at the April Development Committee meeting. The purpose was to get the idea of disposition out to the public in order to receive feedback from the public. This item was not an action item at the last meeting as time was needed to go through the Greenway Planning process to determine if outcomes would have any impact on development of this site. Staff wanted to determine if this property would be replaceable as the property has potential park development and potential for recreational uses. Through the Greenway Planning process it was determined there will be opportunity for use of other land for recreational uses and park development. Mr. Mason identified the proposed criteria and timeline for use in inviting competitive proposals.

Council member Vernon expressed concerns that too much time was given to submit proposals. Mr. Mason stated a putting together a proposal takes time as people need to work with a bank for funding options and also with an engineer to determine what will work on the site. This is the typical amount of time given for this type of project as rezoning will need to take place as well.

Council member Weinacht asked if there will be surface water management. Mr. Mason stated it will be included in the criteria and developers will be expected to provide a plan that shows sustainability features in the building and site design. Council member Weinacht asked if the entire 6.4 acres will be open for disposition or if some will be protected for public use. Mr. Mason stated staff is working with the Parks and Recreation Department to determine a minimum threshold of what should be retained for the park. Council member Weinacht asked if the sale of this land will go back to the Parks and Recreation Department. Mr. Mason stated he is unsure of the answer. Council member Vernon requested staff find out where the money will go.

Council member Vernon stated she does not see the need for some of the land to be retained for the park as there is a need for replacement of homes in this area. The location is located next to Ellis Park and there will also be greenway so there is no need to retain some of the land. Council member Shey agreed that land does not need to be retained from this property for park use.

Council member Shey made a motion to move the request for the City-owned Chipping Green property forward to the full City Council. Council member Weinacht seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with none opposed.

### **3. Request for a City-Owned Property**

#### **a) Iowa Iron Site**

Mr. Mason stated staff has received interest from several parties on the site. The City acquired the property pre-flood in 2001 and received funding to assess the site as it was formally an industrial site. Contaminants were removed and a Letter of No Further Action was issued by the DNR in 2011. Some of the site has been used in the short term for parking for the NewBo Market and there was a project for sand volleyball that never went through. Staff recommends initiating the process of inviting redevelopment proposals with an emphasis on master planning the entire site. This provides an opportunity for a developer to work with NewBo Market in regards to parking. Mr. Mason identified the proposed criteria and timeline for use in inviting competitive proposals.

Council member Shey asked if there are any requirements to give back any money to government authorities. Mr. Mason stated federal funds were not used to acquire this property so the City is able to keep all of the funds received for disposition.

Council member Weinacht made a motion to move the request for the City-owned Iowa Iron property forward to the full City Council. Council member Shey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with none opposed.

### **4. Update on Street Guidelines**

Rob Davis, Engineering Manager, stated several policies and plans have been created over the years including a Complete Streets policy that was followed by Jeff Speck doing a Trees Forever presentation. Staff was also working on the Sidewalk Master Plan and the Blue Zones initiative began. It is time to wrap all of policies into one and present them to City Council in July. Jeff Speck has been working on the Complete Streets Code for street typology, which is more of a design philosophy document, and will also be incorporated.

### **5. Renaming 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE**

Seth Gunnerson, Community Development Planner, stated staff is recommending renaming 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, from the Bridge of Lions to St. Wenceslaus Church, to 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE. South of 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue the street grids on each side of the river don't line up and what is currently 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE lines up with 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW. When the current 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE is extended it will line up with 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE. With potential development in the area in the future now is the time to rename the street to avoid more work in the future.

Council member Shey made a motion to move the request to rename 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE forward to the full City Council. Council member Weinacht seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with none opposed.

### **Informational Items and Updates**

#### **o NewBo Station Update**

Jennifer Pratt, Interim Community Development Director, stated a memo was provided in the packet giving an update on the amended deed restriction.

Ms. Pratt stated an issue processing chart has been included in the packet and staff will review the chart to ensure it is updated and accurate. Ms. Pratt stated the City Hall Training Room is now available again and asked if the Development Committee would like to meet in the Training Room or continue to meet in Council Chambers. Council member Vernon stated switching back to the Training Room would be acceptable.

Council member Vernon called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Council member Shey made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Council member Weinacht seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with none opposed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia Abernathey, Administrative Assistant II  
Community Development

DRAFT



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101 First Street SE  
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Telephone: (319) 286-5041

**To:** City Council Development Committee  
**From:** Paula Mitchell through Jennifer Pratt, Interim Community Development and Planning Director  
**Subject:** City Participation in Low Income Housing Tax Credit Projects  
**Date:** June 30, 2014

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**Background:**

In May 2013, the City Council adopted a policy regarding City participation in Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) projects. The purpose of the policy was to ensure a fair and consistent process for developers, as well as to provide staff with adequate time to review proposals and perform financial analysis in order to identify the best mechanisms to support high quality projects. In the last LIHTC allocation round, staff worked with 9 different development teams considering projects in Cedar Rapids, which resulted in 6 LIHTC applications being submitted to the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) with City support. IFA awarded a total of 15 projects statewide, including 2 projects in Cedar Rapids.

The Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program, administered by the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA), provides a mechanism for developers to attract equity investment through the sale of tax credits in order to finance development of affordable multi-family housing. Each year, the Iowa Finance Authority issues a Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) that becomes the guide for how tax credits will be awarded to projects. In recent years, the QAP has awarded up to 50 points to projects that have local community financial participation. In order to be competitive, projects must score well in this category. As a result, the City expects to continue receiving requests for financial assistance from developers who are applying for tax credits.

During the most recent allocation round, staff identified several ways in which the current policy could be improved, and is proposing to amend the existing policy to implement those improvements.

**Recommendations:**

In order to create a more managed and consistent process, staff recommends the following amendments to the policy on City participation in LIHTC projects:

- Change submittal deadline from 60 days prior to IFA's deadline to the following tiered structure:
  - 90 days for projects seeking financial support without City-owned property
  - 120 days for projects seeking contributions of City-owned property

This additional time ensures not only that staff has an opportunity to review proposals thoroughly, but also allows time for financial problem-solving to identify the best mechanism(s) for providing City support. In addition, if City-owned property is requested, this provides time for the City to initiate its standard property disposition process in order to meet State and Federal requirements.

- Incorporate the use of a standard application and standard set of financial worksheets.

- Implement design guidelines similar to those used for Multi-family New Construction Program.
- Align City underwriting guidelines with IFA's underwriting standards.

Elements that are part of the existing policy that will continue to be evaluated under the proposed policy include:

- Project financial feasibility;
- Market feasibility;
- Capacity and experience of the developer;
- Project design and compatibility with neighborhood;
- Management track record and ongoing management plan;
- Neighborhood/community support.

**Timeline and Next Steps:**

- July 8, 2014 – City Council adoption of LIHTC participation policy.
- Summer 2014 – Outreach to interested parties and stakeholders.
- Late summer/Early fall 2014 – Release of IFA 2015 QAP.
- Fall 2014 – Deadline for requests for City support.
- October 2014 – Tentative consideration of requests by Development Committee.
- November 2014 – Tentative consideration of requests by full City Council.



## LOW INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDIT (LIHTC) CITY PARTICIPATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

The City of Cedar Rapids values high-quality development that provides investment in the community and a public benefit. The City recognizes that workforce housing is key to meeting the needs of current and future residents. The City works closely with developers and the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) to provide exhibits that are necessary for the applications to the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program. Cedar Rapids does require that the City Council act to support or not support a LIHTC project before releasing any IFA-required exhibits. This must occur at a formal meeting of the Cedar Rapids City Council after proposals are reviewed by the Development Committee. In order to prepare for the meetings, staff must receive a formal request (completed application and items on the checklist below) by the specified deadlines below in order to facilitate the approval process.

- Projects requesting City resolution of support and/or financial assistance *only* must be received **at least 90 days prior** to the deadline established by IFA for submittal of LIHTC projects.
- Projects requesting City-owned property must be received **at least 120 days prior** to the deadline established by IFA for the submittal for LIHTC projects. This is to ensure the City can fulfill all State Code requirements necessary for the disposal of excess property, in order to provide the level of commitment that will be accepted by IFA.

Therefore, developers considering a LIHTC project are encouraged to contact the City as early as possible, at the conceptual stage, to provide the greatest lead time for success.

### SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

- Pre-application meeting scheduled.
- Application document with all supporting documents, including:
  - Detailed description of the project, including address and legal description.
  - Type of project as defined by IFA, including any set-aside category or targeted population.
  - Number of units in the project and number of affordable units.
  - Income groups served, proposed rent structure, and bedroom sizes of units to be developed.
  - Length of time project will be committed to affordable housing.
  - Site plan, building elevations, floor plans, and description of exterior materials.
  - Detailed construction budget showing all sources and uses.
  - Minimum 15-year operating pro forma using accepted industry standards and good faith estimates of income and expenses. The City will evaluate financials, so financial assumptions should be fact-based and conform to the underwriting criteria in IFA's annual Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP).
  - Firm financial commitment letters (on agency letterhead) from all other funding sources, including construction financing and permanent financing, outlining the terms.

- Description of any City financial assistance needed to make the project financially feasible (must pass “but for” test). Include dollar amount needed to make project financially feasible as well as amount needed to maximize scoring based on the QAP.
- Information regarding reserve funds and annual dollar commitment to maintenance.
- Identification of the members of the development team, including listing of past projects, experience with projects of similar size and scope, and references.
- Identification of Management Company, including ownership and management of other projects.
- Detailed management plan, including tenant selection criteria, policy for addressing nuisance complaints, and identification of any special services to be provided to tenants.
- Construction schedule.
- Information regarding any LEED, HERS, Iowa GreenStreets, or other green building/energy efficiency techniques that will be used in the Building/Site.
- Letter from Neighborhood Association (if applicable) impacted by proposed project. The City’s policy requires that the developer meet with the Neighborhood Association if the project is within the boundaries of a recognized neighborhood. The City also strongly encourages the developer to meet with adjacent property owners. The developer should request a letter of support for the project. The neighborhood support letter can be received after all other information is received to meet the City submittal deadline, but should be received prior to the City Council meeting. City staff will provide neighborhood leadership contact information upon request.
- Completed current year “Section 42 Form” provided by the City Assessor’s office for computing property valuation on Net Operating Income (NOI) basis (available on City web site).

#### TYPES OF CITY PARTICIPATION AVAILABLE

- Excess City-owned property.
- Urban Revitalization Tax Exemption
- Workforce Housing Tax Credits.
- Below-market interest rate loans.

The type of assistance available is dependent upon the project location. Early communication with City staff will facilitate the greatest opportunity for successful outcomes.

City HOME funds are not a recommended source for LIHTC projects as the City may only make conditional commitments due to the City’s required citizen participation process, in which a review committee makes funding recommendations in January/February each year, with final City Council approval in April or May. Developers interested in this funding source should plan to attend a mandatory pre-application workshop in October and submit a separate HOME program application, due in December.

#### UNDERWRITING STANDARDS FOR CITY PARTICIPATION

The City of Cedar Rapids adopts financial underwriting standards to ensure that public participation in a project meets a reasonableness, or “but for” test; in other words, the City’s financial participation is limited to the amount necessary to make a project feasible. Developers are asked to demonstrate that they have made reasonable and good faith efforts to leverage other sources of funding. The City of Cedar Rapids will apply the minimum underwriting standards adopted by IFA for the current year’s QAP.



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City Hall  
101 First Street SE  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401  
Telephone: (319) 286-5041

**To:** City Council Development Committee  
**From:** Seth Gunnerson through Jennifer Pratt, Interim Community Development Director  
**Subject:** 400 Block of 1<sup>st</sup> Street SW  
**Date:** June 30, 2014

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### ***Background***

The City has received requests from several interested developers to initiate the property disposition process and invite redevelopment proposals for City owned land on the 400 Block of 1<sup>st</sup> Street SW. This would include the western half of the block bounded by 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets and 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenues Southwest.

### ***Site History***

The proposed disposition area includes ten vacant parcels which have been acquired by the City of Cedar Rapids through the Voluntary Acquisition Program.

In 2013 the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) determined that the parcel is part of the Kingston Village Viable Commercial Corridor. This allows for redevelopment of the property, which is located within the 100 year flood plain.

The site is located adjacent to the McGrath Amphitheater and the Kingston Commons/Louis Sullivan Bank Renovation project.

### ***Site Uses***

The 2013 Kingston Village Plan identifies the site for potential Mixed Use Development, which includes multifamily housing and possible commercial development. The plan identifies the potential for 3-5+ story development along 1<sup>st</sup> Street SW.

To the west of the proposed disposition area is a parking lot developed by GRR-DTE, LLC as part of the Kingston Commons and Louis Sullivan Bank renovation project. As part of the agreement for the disposition of City owned land, the developer has committed to consider the potential redevelopment of the entire block.

### ***Recommendation***

Staff is recommending inviting redevelopment proposals for the site. This site is seen as a critical piece for future growth of the Kingston Village neighborhood. As such, it is paramount that the entire site be developed comprehensively with a master plan as opposed to subdividing the site to sell portions of the site for piecemeal development. The criteria will emphasize the desire for master planning the site and requesting proposers outline a plan for use of the entire site identifying development phases as necessary.

Additionally, prospective developers will need to indicate any arrangement they make with GRR-DTE, LLC for the potential redevelopment of the entire block as part of the proposal.

Staff recommends inviting proposals using the following criteria to evaluate proposals:

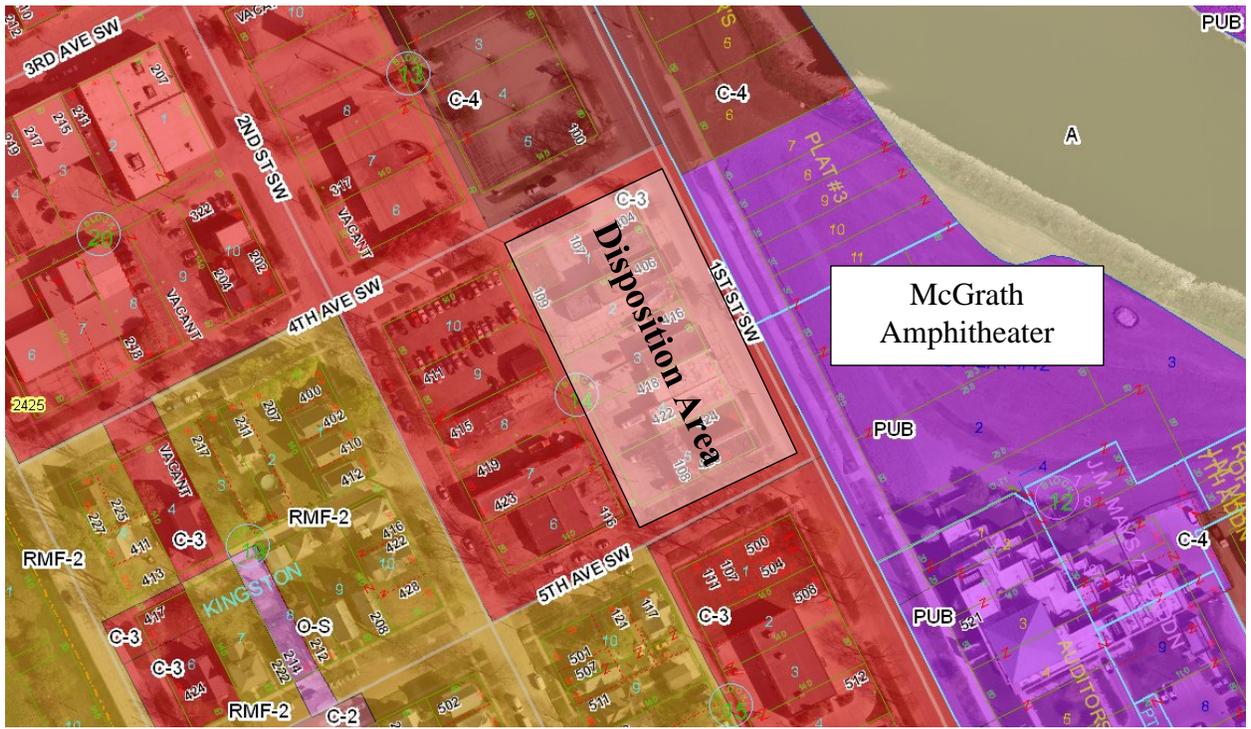
1. Demonstrated capacity and experience of the development team;
2. Master plan development which identifies use of the entire site;
3. Marketing Feasibility
  - a. Marketing plan citing current market conditions;
  - b. Identified tenants (as applicable)
4. Financial feasibility
  - a. Financial capacity of the developer/owner;
  - b. documentation from a lending institution of their understanding of the project and partnership in the project;
  - c. Sources and uses of funds and pro forma for on-going leasing of residential/commercial space
5. Economic impact
  - a. Estimated jobs created/retained
  - b. Total estimated project investment
  - c. Post-Development property valuation
6. Community Benefits including amenities or services provided in the project
7. Projects shall be consistent with City Council objectives and Kingston Village Overlay District guidelines including:
  - a. Quality exterior materials and architectural design that enhances the historic character of the neighborhood
  - b. Building setbacks that address street frontages, with parking to the rear of the site or buildings
  - c. Sustainable site and building design features
  - d. Plan to address on-site parking, as well as shared parking arrangements
  - e. Provides a mix of uses, including market rate housing options
  - f. Encourages walkability with connections within the development and to the neighborhood
  - g. Promotes social interaction with green space and public gathering areas
8. Timeline for development, including any phasing of development built-out
9. Offer Price

***Timeline and next steps***

Staff is recommending the following timeline for the call for redevelopment proposals:

<b>July 8</b>	<b>Motion Setting a Public Hearing</b>
<b>July 22</b>	<b>Public Hearing</b>
June 25	Informational Meeting (tentative)
October 3	Proposal Deadline
October 7	Stakeholder panel review of proposals
<b>October 14</b>	<b>City Council consideration of preferred Developer (Resolution to pursue a Development Agreement)</b>

*\*Bold denotes City Council action*





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Telephone: (319) 286-5041

**To:** City Council Development Committee  
**From:** Thomas Smith through Jennifer Pratt, Interim Community Development and Planning Director  
**Subject:** Requests for Proposals for 525 Valor Way SW (Knutson Building)  
**Date:** June 30, 2014

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**Background and Request:**

The structure at 525 Valor Way SW, commonly called the Knutson Building, is one of the oldest remaining commercial structures on Cedar Rapids' west side, dating to 1885. In February 2013, staff previewed the disposition process with the Development Committee indicating options related to flood mitigation and historic preservation needed to be explored.

On April 10, 2014, City staff reviewed options for the disposition of the structure with the City's Historic Preservation Commission, including raising the structure up to 14 feet in order to integrate it into the City's flood protection system. Also, the relocation of the structure up to 100 yards may be completed in a way that retains the historic character of the building, as well as eligibility for historic tax credits. The Historic Preservation Commission indicated that any option which saved the structure was a viable alternative worth seeking.

The standard process has been for the Development Committee to review requests and make a recommendation to City Council on a possible competitive disposition process.

**Site Details:**

The property was purchased by the City with non-federal funds which means there are no federal/state deed restrictions and repayment of the sale proceeds is not necessary. This structure and the parcel on which it sits are located immediately adjacent to the Cedar River and bordered by the City's new amphitheater, the Police Station, the County-owned Mott Building and the City's festival grounds event space. As previously stated, due to the property's proximity to the Cedar River, maintaining the existing structure will be contingent on integrating the building with flood protection infrastructure or relocating it to a different site.

In addition, the property is located within the Kingston Village Overlay District. Any architectural modifications or additions to the structure would require a review by the Kingston Village Design Review Technical Advisory Committee.



**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends inviting redevelopment proposals for the site. The location provides an opportunity to integrate the City’s new park and event spaces with one of its oldest structures in a thoughtful and striking way.

Based on the characteristics of the site, staff is recommending emphasis on the need for any proposal to demonstrate integration with the City’s future flood management system, or a relocation plan to remove it from the path of the proposed flood protection alignment. Staff is recommending the following additional criteria to evaluate proposals:

1. Demonstrated capacity and experience of the development team
2. Marketing plan for proposed project
3. Financial feasibility
  - a. Financial capacity of the developer/owner
  - b. Documentation from a lending institution of their understanding of the project and partnership in the project
4. Proposed integration with the City’s flood management system, or relocation of the structure outside of the flood management system construction area
5. Consistency with the Kingston Village Overlay District requirements
6. Community benefits offered by the development
7. Master plan for the site:
  - a. Preservation of the structure’s historic integrity
  - b. Sustainable building and development practices
  - c. Site design that promotes pedestrian activity and minimizes auto-orientation
8. Timeline for development and build-out
9. Offer price

**Timeline and Next Steps:**

If the Development Committee recommends moving forward with seeking competitive proposals, staff proposes the following timeline:

- July 8, 2014                      **Motion setting a public hearing**
- July 22, 2014                   **Public hearing on disposition and inviting proposals**
- July 25, 2014                   Informational meeting
- September 30, 2014           Proposal deadline
- October 3, 2014               Stakeholder panel review
- October 14, 2014              **City Council consideration of proposals**  
**(Resolution to pursue a Development Agreement)**

*\***Bold** denotes City Council action*



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Telephone: (319) 286-5041

**To:** City Council Development Committee  
**From:** Seth Gunnerson through Jennifer Pratt, Interim Community Development and Planning Director  
**Subject:** Window Vinyl Signs  
**Date:** June 30, 2014

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### **Window Graphic Signs**

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A growing number of businesses in Cedar Rapids are installing window vinyl graphic signs. These signs are typically perforated to allow some light to pass through and can function as screens against direct sunlight while also displaying a message to those outside. The design of these graphics varies, with some acting as decorative graphics and others as large format advertising visible from the street.

Per City Code, all advertising in windows visible from the public right of way is considered wall signage and subject to the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. Staff believes that many businesses place these signs erroneously believing that signs placed on the inside of windows are exempt from permitting requirements.

The City has typically not enforced smaller window signage such as posters, neon signs or other window displays that are temporary in nature or not easily read from the street. Staff believes that the somewhat permanent nature of these signs, which are professionally installed and intended to last for 3 or more years, makes them different from other types of window signage that businesses may utilize.

**Options:**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
<b>Exempt Window Signage from permitting requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Easiest to enforce</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Businesses could use the opportunity to completely cover windows, greatly increasing their allowed signage.</li></ul>
<b>Enforce all window signs as wall signage under current regulations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Difficult to enforce</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Would require stricter enforcement of existing businesses</li></ul>
<b>Develop standards specifically for larger format window graphics.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Opportunity to clarify code</li><li>• Staff would develop standards for smaller temporary signage in windows</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clear criteria would need to be developed to define difference between signage and non-signage elements of window vinyls</li></ul>

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends developing standards for larger format window signage. Staff also recommends exempting patterns or non-advertising portions of vinyl graphics from sign calculations.

***Timeline and next steps***

Staff will work with sign companies and business interests to develop a standard for window signage that clarifies what signage requires a permit. Staff will incorporate updated standards for window signage into a comprehensive re-write of the sign code which is anticipated for this fall.



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**To:** City Council Development Committee  
**From:** Seth Gunnerson through Jennifer Pratt, Interim Community Development and Planning Director  
**Subject:** Sandwich Boards  
**Date:** June 30, 2014

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### **Sandwich Board (or A-Frame) Signs**

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#### ***Background***

The Sign Code within the Zoning Ordinance permits small portable A-frame signs, commonly called sandwich board signs, within the Downtown SSMID district. Staff has been made aware that several businesses in other core area neighborhoods, such as New Bohemia and Czech Village, have been placing these signs in front of their businesses.

Staff believes that these signs are appropriate in other core neighborhoods which are pedestrian in nature. When researching current permitting practices, staff has discovered that many signs located within the Downtown SSMID have not been issued a permit. Businesses are generally not aware of the requirements and place the signs outside their businesses believing it is permitted.

Staff is concerned that the current standards are difficult to enforce and that enforcing the current standards may discourage businesses from placing these signs outside. Staff also wants to develop a set of standards to educate businesses about appropriate placement.

#### **Recommendations:**

Staff is recommending an ordinance to update Chapter 32 to reflect the current standards:

- **Eliminate permit requirement for Sandwich Board signs.** The City would no longer require an application and encroachment permit process for the placement of sandwich board.
- **Develop Placement Criteria.** The ordinance would be amended to establish criteria for the placement of sandwich board signs. Criteria would include maintaining clear space in the public sidewalk and not creating a traffic hazard. The City will work to educate businesses about where permissible locations are and notify the business if a violation is found.
- **Expand area where allowed.** Staff recommends expanding the area where sandwich boards are allowed to the identified “core” of the community. Sandwich board signs would be allowed where they are located near the entrance to a store.

#### ***Timeline and next steps***

Based on Development Committee feedback, Staff will take an Ordinance to City Planning Commission for recommendation with a public hearing at City Council anticipated in July.



Community Development and Planning Department  
City Hall  
101 First Street SE  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401  
Telephone: (319) 286-5041

To: City Council Development Committee  
From: Development Services  
Subject: Camelback Hills Annexation Request  
Date: June 30, 2014

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**Background:**

In October 2013 the City received an annexation application for an area located south of Highway 30 on Ivanhoe Road SW. The proposed development includes approximately 125 homes on 67 acres of property. The Applicant is proposing homes in the \$350,000 range which would be an investment of over \$40 million dollars. The annexation would include the half width of Ivanhoe Road from Highway 30 to the proposed development, about ½ mile in length.

Utility extensions will be needed to provide City services to the site. The Applicant has proposed to extend water main from north of Highway 30. Due to topography, this project will not experience the low water pressure issues experienced in the College Farms development. Sanitary sewer will be provided by installing a lift station and force main. The Applicant has proposed to extend force main approximately ¾ mile to the west to connect to existing City sewer. Public Works staff is working to develop a plan for a regional sanitary lift station in this area which would allow for gravity sewer service throughout this area.

The Applicant is aware of safety concerns along Highway 30 near the Ivanhoe Road connection and is working with Iowa DOT to determine what improvements are needed. Both the Fire and Police Departments have expressed concerns regarding response times to this area. Fire estimates a response time greater than 6 minutes which is above the 5 minute recommendation of the National Fire Prevention Association.

Solid Waste and Street Maintenance currently provide service to the College Farms development north of Highway 30 and will be able to provide service to this development as well. Snow removal for this area is difficult and the City has received negative feedback from the College Farms development.

Concerns about the development stem largely from the location of the proposed annexation. The proposed development would be the only portion of the City located on Ivanhoe Road with no connection to other portions of the community without utilizing Highway 30 or leaving the City Limits. Excluding public right of way the proposed development is at least ½ mile from the nearest incorporated portion of Cedar Rapids. By incorporating land, the City is obligated to provide certain basic services to all property along with accommodating the reasonable growth of the land in line with zoning requirements. The City strives to provide a high level of service to all areas of the community regardless of location. The cost to do this increases for development which is not contiguous with existing neighborhoods.

There continues to be strong demand for homes in the College Community School District and Development Services staff believes this area south of Highway 30 to 76th Avenue and east of Ely Road to Jappa Road is a future growth area for the City.

**Recommendations:**

The Applicant has taken steps to address Staff concerns regarding sewer and water service. The Applicant will continue to work with Iowa DOT to address safety concerns at the Highway 30 connection. Staff recommends that the City Council take no action on or deny the annexation request at this time.

Several planned or proposed initiatives would provide guidance for future consideration. These include:

- Council action on a lift station policy, along with a potential regional lift station
- The City is working with the Iowa DOT to get a clear picture of future road network improvements that will be needed along Highway 30.
- Adoption of EnvisionCR in the fall will provide an update to the City's Future Land Use Map along with recommendations on future community growth.
- Staff has identified the future growth area along Highway 30 and east of C Street SW as a candidate for a future area plan similar to the Highway 100 Plan being undertaken in partnership with the Corridor MPO. Such a plan would provide specific recommendations for the staging of growth in this area.

**Timeline and Next Steps:**

The annexation request is scheduled for a Public Hearing on July 8, 2014. Should City Council approve the annexation, a request will be sent to the State of Iowa City Development Board.

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Proposed Corporate Limits

PROJECT NO: SD-1309

DRAWN BY: BGA  
 APPROVED BY: GMH  
 DATE: 09/27/2013

NO.	REVISION DESCRIPTION	APPROVED	DATE



**ALLTRANS, INC.**  
 1930 St. Andrews Ct. N.E.  
 Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402  
 Phone: (319) 393-8726

Camelback Development

Concept Plan

SHEET NO.  
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 OF  
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101 First Street SE  
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Telephone: (319) 286-5041

**To:** City Council Development Committee  
**From:** Jeff Hintz through Jennifer Pratt, Interim Community Development and Planning Director  
**Subject:** Alleyway & right-of-way vacations  
**Date:** June 30, 2014

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**Background:** Recently there have been a few projects that requested right-of-way vacation so a street or alleyway could be integrated into the site design. The question arose regarding these rights-of-ways regarding their purpose and some considerations that are evaluated.

**Historically alleyways have provided the following functions:**

1. Secondary access points where waste can be stored until collected.
2. Service access for utilities.
3. Narrower, usually safer path for pedestrians.
4. Prior to the 1950's and 1960's when garages were commonly located at the rear of properties, the alleyway was the only way to access where the automobiles were stored.
5. Many buildings were designed with service access to the rear to hide the less than desirable appearance of drop-offs and pickups from the public eye.
6. The rear access is also useful for first responders in some occasions.

**Purpose today:** Alleyways still serve the same historical purposes today, but generally, alleyways have been provided less regularly in new developments. Some underutilized alleyways have been turned into bike only routes or pedestrian thoroughfares with more elaborate landscaping and private gardens in urban communities.

**Issues considered in the current evaluation process:**

- Do all parcels retain access for the following?
  - Owners
  - Services (emergency, trash collections)
- Is there agreement/consensus of property owners adjacent to right-of-way?
- Will there be access to exiting utilities? Will existing utilities need to be relocated, or an easement obtained?
- Is there an alternative location for waste containers and debris?
- What is the impact on current and future connectivity?

The process for vacation of an alleyway or street are very similar, staff considers these factors already in the process. Vacations in which these considerations have not been resolved are not presented to the City Council for action at this time.



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**To:** City Council Development Committee  
**From:** Jeff Hintz & Seth Gunnerson through Jennifer Pratt, Interim Community Development and Planning Director  
**Subject:** Types of Zoning Codes  
**Date:** June 30, 2014

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**Background:** As a part of the street interface discussion, staff has presented various approaches to the Development Committee related to the development of property. As a continuation of that series of presentations, culminating in a likely zoning ordinance re-write, staff has been researching commonly found practices.

#### **Commonly Implemented Zoning Codes:**

- Euclidian Zoning
- Conditional Zoning
- Form Based Zoning
- Performance Zoning

Cedar Rapids currently uses a Conditional Zoning model where Conditional Uses, Planned Unit Developments (PUD) and other approvals are sought to the land use map in open meetings and approved by the City Planning Commission and City Council. Conditional Zoning is an advanced model of Euclidian Zoning where there are zoning districts and allowed uses through a table or chart. Lot, dimension and setback minimums usually apply with a maximum coverage and height set. In a pure Euclidian Model, the process for Conditional Use, PUD and other approvals does not exist. In Conditional Zoning, master plans, site improvements and limited design requirements can be gained through the public meeting and process.

Form Based Zoning is primarily focused on appearance. These types of regulations focus on the interaction the property has with its surroundings. Fewer minimums and maximums will appear in the document, but rather architectural and site design standards. There is commonly a transect map with different design standards each transect must adhere to depending upon the use of the individual property. Some municipalities have gone as far as implementing codes which dictate uniform fencing and porch requirements. Form based codes have flexibility in land use, but are often less flexible when it comes to deviations from the design standards within them.

Performance Zoning is somewhat of a takeoff on Form Based Zoning, with more of an emphasis on the natural environment. While a district map is included (similar to Euclidian Zoning), it is very basic as is the accompanying use table or chart. This code is ratio driven and will not generally dictate minimums, but ratios that must be met; common regulations include buffer

yards, density, open space and impervious surface. This type of zoning code allows for greater flexibility when developing property due to the more strict design standards and buffer yard requirements. Many uses are allowed by right and as a result, the design standards change depending upon where in the community the project is being proposed (similar to that of the transect Form Based Zoning).

**Why do we need a change? :** In discussions at the Development Committee level, staff hears the desire to have higher quality developments in this community. Discussions about site design, with parking in the rear, pedestrian oriented entrances and facades that engage the street have been commonplace. The current Conditional Zoning that is in place does not readily allow those desired outcomes to occur; there is a lot of unpredictability regarding site design. It is not readily known to the public, at this time where a building will go on a vacant site and how it will address the street or surrounding properties. Only when the final building plans are submitted, does the public and staff gain that knowledge. The only sure thing is that the building will have a front setback of at least 15-25 feet (generally speaking) and some other required yards. What those yards or open spaces on property look like, is unknown because the code doesn't address it in most circumstances. Conditional Zoning is based upon land uses and districts, not the design or function of a site with surroundings. To a further extent, the design of the building is unknown because Conditional Zoning does not address how a building looks, just where it sits on the property. The zoning controls currently in place do not give the community an end result that is consistent with higher quality site design that is coveted. Throughout the public engagement process as part of EnvisionCR, staff hears this desire for higher quality development from the community on a regular basis.

#### **Next Steps:**

Staff views a comprehensive review and update of the Zoning Ordinance as one of the first and most important implementation steps associated with Envision CR. The adoption of the plan will sets a clear vision for future growth in Cedar Rapids which staff can use to develop goals for the ultimate update of the Zoning Ordinance. At this time staff does not have a timeline for how long this process will take. It is anticipated that a consulting firm will need to be brought on to help write the final ordinance, and staff will work with the Development Committee in coming months to develop a plan for public engagement.

- **Summer, 2014 –**
  - Feedback from the public on EnvisionCR
  - Adoption of Complete Streets policy and guidelines
  - Continued research into best practices and current trends with Zoning Ordinances
- **Fall, 2014 –**
  - Completion and Adoption of EnvisionCR
  - Develop goals and a timeline for a comprehensive Zoning Ordinance update in line with EnvisionCR
- **Winter 2014-15**
  - Begin zoning code update process