



City of Five Seasons®

City of Cedar Rapids

Development Committee Meeting Agenda

City Hall Training Room

Wednesday, May 20, 2015

4:00 pm – 5:00 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

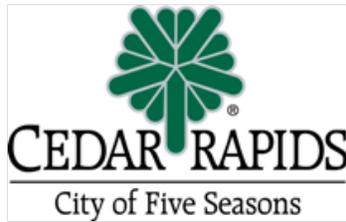
Council member Pat Shey

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 – April 15, 2014
- Presentations
 1. Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge Project
(Cedar River Trail) Steve Sovern
 2. CR Youth Kirsty Sanchez
Community Development
- Recommendation Items:
 1. Remaining Lots Available Paula Mitchell
Community Development
- Informational Items:
 1. Zoning Code Update Anne Russett
Community Development
- Public Comment



**City of Cedar Rapids
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
City Hall Training Room
Wednesday, April 15, 2015
4:00 p.m.**

The meeting was brought to order at 4:03 p.m.

Present: Council members Vernon (Chair) and Weinacht. Staff members present: Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director; Seth Gunnerson, Community Development Planner; Paula Mitchell, Housing and Redevelopment Manager; Caleb Mason, Redevelopment Analyst; Jeff Hintz, Community Development Planner; and Anne Kroll, Community Development Administrative Assistant.

Council members Weinacht and Vernon approved the minutes from February 18, 2015 with unanimous consent.

Recommendation Items:

1. MedQuarter Overlay Design

Seth Gunnerson, Community Development Planner, stated that this is an ordinance which would create an overlay district for the MedQuarter SSMID. A draft ordinance was reviewed by the City Planning Commission on Thursday April 9, 2015 and unanimously recommended to the City Council for approval. The ordinance would do four things:

1. Establish boundaries for the new Overlay District, which would match the MedQuarter SSMID.
2. Amend the Czech Bohemia Overlay District to move one square block that is within the MedQuarter SSMID. This change has been previewed with the Czech Bohemia DRTAC.
3. Adopt design standards for the new district
4. Adopt a design manual which will include the design standards and additional recommendations.

As part of the draft standards there are design recommendations added to this. Mr. Gunnerson displayed the boundaries of the proposed district. The Overlay Districts modify the underlying zoning to allow for uniform building design and higher standards of development. The existing Design Review Overlay Districts are Czech Bohemia, Kingston Village, and Ellis Boulevard Area. This applies to all development except single or two-family homes. The requirements for site and building design in the ordinance have five sections:

- Building Massing, Orientation and Site Design
- Building Design
- Site Furnishings and Landscaping
- Signage
- Greenway Design Standards.

Design recommendations would include recommended elements that should be considered and not to incorporate into ordinance language, but to include in the Design Manual to provide additional information to developers. Some highlights for the recommendation are transition zones which lower maximum building height with an emphasis on retaining neighborhood character, Greenway Streets which are defined build-to line for buildings with requirements for pedestrian amenities between building and sidewalk, and façade-specific design requirements. Mr. Gunnerson discussed actions to date and next steps.

Council member Weinacht asked how large this district is compared to the other three and if there was a policy of how large they can be or if it is on an individual basis. Mr. Gunnerson stated that they have been handled individually. This one is roughly the same size as Czech Bohemia and Kingston Village.

Council member Weinacht asked if there have been conversations with the adjacent neighborhoods. Mr. Gunnerson stated that the Neighborhood Associations were informed of the open house and he has not heard any feedback from them or negative comments. Council member Weinacht would like there to be discussion and follow-up with those neighborhoods.

Council member Vernon asked why there is a limit of two stories. Mr. Gunnerson stated that the infill will match the existing and the height would be what the zoning district states. When Jeff Speck spoke last month he stated that developers often hold out for the 20 story buildings instead of the lower level buildings. In a lot of areas infill is encouraged to be in a 3-5 story range.

Council member Vernon asked about design. Mr. Gunnerson stated that there are plans to look at streetscaping from the sidewalk to the street. Property owners would be encouraged to coordinate that from the property line into the building face.

Council member Vernon asked if there was concern about the two-way street conversions. Mr. Gunnerson stated that in discussions with the MedQuarter, they are very eager to see that happen especially on 4th Avenue.

Council members Vernon and Weinacht agreed to move this forward with unanimous consent as long as there is follow up with the adjacent neighborhoods.

2. 629 12th Avenue SE

Mr. Gunnerson stated that the City received a letter requesting disposal of property located adjacent to 629 12th Avenue SE. The request is to develop the property for parking for the restaurants at 624 and 629 12th Avenue SE. They are not technically required to provide parking. The amount of parking provided in their proposed site plan falls below the maximum parking for the area. That would be one of the criteria moving forward. The standard process is that the Development Committee review requests and evaluation criteria and then a recommendation on competitive proposal process to City Council. The requested parcel was acquired by the City after the flood and is currently vacant. Any other interest has not been received. The developer has reached out to the Oakhill Jackson Neighborhood Association and did receive positive feedback.

Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director, stated the developer presented at an Oakhill Jackson Neighborhood Association meeting and was very well received. The neighborhood feels that it would really help both of the restaurants to have parking and would alleviate parking in

the neighborhood. This developer has also met with the principal of Metro High School and received good feedback. The neighborhood did note that there needs to be lighting. The lighting should improve the safety in the area. There are no residential structures next to it.

Council member Vernon agrees with the lighting and it should be in keeping with the neighborhood. When there is a slab of parking, what is the best practice for that? There should be a way to edge it and make it look nice without being dangerous. This property borders Poet's Park. Mr. Gunnerson stated that part of the criteria will be the standard criteria of the City and they would have to meet the zoning requirements. As part of the proposal they will have to show that they meet all the requirements. Mr. Gunnerson displayed a timeline for moving forward.

Council members Vernon and Weinacht agreed to move this forward with unanimous consent.

3. 1216 2nd Street SE Disposition

Caleb Mason, Redevelopment Analyst, stated that 1216 2nd Street SE is a property that was brought to the Development Committee for consideration to move through a disposition process. The Development Committee declined moving forward with the disposition process based on the property's location in a key district, and ensuring that development is the highest and best use of the property. Discussions have continued with the property owner and tenants and their interest is for short term use of the property through ground lease for storage of their trash receptacle and urban gardening as part of their restaurant venture. Mr. Mason displayed a map of the property and surrounding area. Staff recommends the City consider a short term lease of the property where the owner, or its tenant, would be given use of the site for a defined period of time and be allowed to make improvements at their expense. In similar cases the City has provided a three year lease term with optional extensions. This arrangement preserves the long term use of the property if a developer would propose a master plan with adjacent property, but also provides a temporary use of the site to meet the needs of the business owner. If the Development Committee is in favor of moving forward then a resolution directing staff to pursue a lease would be on the City Council agenda as early as April 28, 2015.

Council member Vernon asked if the lease states that this is a short term situation because the vision of City Council is that the highest and best use would be to develop it. Mr. Mason stated that the lease provides a preamble which, similar to a City Council resolution, provides the basis for the terms outlined in the lease.

Council member Weinacht asked if there was an opportunity for people who own a home and have property adjacent to vacant City-owned property, to lease the property for uses such as an urban garden. Ms. Pratt stated that, until the ROOTs program is done, City staff's priority to vacant buildable lots which are outside the 100-year floodplain have been targeted for the program. For the lot in question, it is located in the 100-year flood plain, so it is not available for the ROOTs program. In cases where the lot does not meet minimum requirement to be a buildable lot, staff has initiated a process to request offers from adjacent property owners. In key development areas such as NewBo, the lot could be leveraged as part of a bigger development and we want to be able to partner in with developers when those opportunities arise.

Council members Vernon and Weinacht agreed to move this forward with unanimous consent and agreed that these commercial properties will be considered one at a time and will be specified to the situation.

4. Alliant Substation

Paula Mitchell, Housing and Redevelopment Manager, stated that this is a request for City owned property that was received in September 2014 by Alliant Energy. The properties requested are located on the northwest side. The request is for land to support the development of a substation that is needed for existing needs and projected future growth. These properties were acquired with CDBG through the Voluntary Acquisition Program. They are located primarily in the 100-year flood plain, so they would carry deed restrictions for CDBG use as well as the 100-year flood plain. Ms. Mitchell displayed a map of the property requested which are on 4th Street SW and H Avenue. There are considerations in evaluating the request. First, there is close proximity to a transmission line tap source. There is a need to satisfy the CDGB deed restrictions and that can be done through a proposed land swap. Alliant controls the property off of Glass Road that the City has been contemplating for a water tower project and as long as the land meets a public purpose in both instances and is of equal or greater value to the City, then those deed restrictions could transfer. In order to satisfy the restrictions for the 100-year flood plain, Alliant indicates that they can elevate the substation above the 100-year flood plain level. They would have to have a flood mitigation risk plan. Alliant could temporarily suspend service there in an event of a flood and could temporarily transfer the service to other facilities. The last consideration is the aesthetics and design. Staff is recommending that any Development Agreement address neighborhood aesthetics and consultation with the neighborhood stakeholders. Ms. Mitchell displayed the timeline and next steps.

Council member Weinacht asked when Alliant proposes to build the substation. Ms. Mitchell stated that there still is a lot of work to be done, so probably not before 2020.

Council member Vernon asked about the height of the substation. Ms. Mitchell stated that this substation will be similar in size to the new Buffalo substation recently developed on the northeast side on Edgewood Road. Council member Vernon asked why they needed so much land. Ms. Mitchell stated that Alliant plans to do some buffering, but also to have the ability to add capacity in the future.

Council member Vernon asked about the flood protection. Ms. Pratt stated that whole area is at least part of either the rise of the levee or potentially some of the infrastructure.

Council members Vernon and Weinacht agree to move this forward with unanimous consent.

Informational Items:

1. ROOTs Update

Ms. Mitchell stated that on March 11, 2015 there was a Builder Orientation to solicit applications which were due April 1, 2015. The applications were recently evaluated by staff and a member of the neighborhood association near where these homes are being built. Based on that allocation, an additional 54 units have been added and that brings the total to 198 for Round 4. Of those, 108 units are in Tier 1, 1 unit in Tier 2, and 89 units are in Tier 3. There are 70 that are currently under Development Agreement and those are units that were allocated before this last round. There are 62 that are presold. Staff keeps track of the value that is being added by the program. The first 182 properties that were built and sold through the program have been assessed. In 2008, before the flood, those properties were collectively valued at over \$13 million. After the flood, the values decreased significantly, but with the new homes constructed and sold the value is over \$24 million today. This trend is projected to carry through the program. The deadline has been extended to the end of the year from September 30, 2015.

2. Update on the Historic Preservation Plan

Jeff Hintz, Community Development Planner, stated that in August 2011, the City entered the MOA with various parties due to demolition of historic properties from the 2008 flood. The MOA includes 8 mitigation measures including preparation of the City's first Historic Preservation Plan. Not many places have a standalone Preservation Plan so this is very unique to the community. Outreach has been done via focus groups, a public workshop, and a task force including representatives from City Council, City Planning Commission, and Historic Preservation Commission. The draft plan framework is laid out in three parts: Preservation in Cedar Rapids, Preservation Background, and The City's Cultural Resources. Mr. Hintz displayed some examples from the Plan.

Jeff Hintz stated that there are five different components: Administration, Identification, Management Tools, Incentives & Benefits, and Education. Overarching Initiatives do not fit into a specific component, but are important. One is to incorporate historic preservation into Neighborhood Action Plans and Corridor Action Plans, planning study areas, and other City planning projects. The other is to explore creating a program that coordinates Public Works and Community Development staff on infrastructure projects within historic districts. Another component is Management Tools and some of those initiatives are to update Chapter 18 Historic Preservation of the Municipal Code, update the Guidelines for Cedar Rapids Historic Districts, and update Chapter 32 Zoning of the Municipal Code to better support preservation and consideration of neighborhood character. More initiatives are to consider developing a Neighborhood Conservation District program for neighborhood that may not be eligible for historic district designation, develop an endangered property WATCH list, and explore the development of an emergency preservation fund. One Incentives & Benefits initiative is to explore the establishment of grant and loan programs for owners of historic resources. One initiative for Education is to develop a formal Heritage Tourism Program. Mr. Hintz displayed the timeline.

Council member Weinacht asked what an endangered property WATCH list is and how it works. Ms. Pratt stated that this list is just identifying properties that are at risk. Maybe there is deferred maintenance and there is some concern. This is one role that HPC as well as Save CR can do is doing outreach and being proactive to make sure that the owner is aware of historic tax credits or other funding mechanisms.

Council member Weinacht asked about grants and if the City would consider that. Ms. Pratt stated that it has been done in different ways in different communities. The City already has used historic preservation as criteria for the standard Economic Development Program. It has been done for the commercial mixed use large project to make sure incentives are provided. In some communities the smaller residential properties have received some funding and have worked with banks to get loan guarantees.

Council member Weinacht asked about funding. Ms. Pratt stated that there is no money attached to this. Council member Vernon stated that once this goes through the process and is approved by Council the City is shovel ready with this plan. It is not in the funding step, but the framework will be done.

Informational Items:

Craig McCormick would like to be added to the agenda as soon as possible to acquire City lots on 2nd Street. Council member Vernon asked Mr. McCormick to submit his request in writing to Ms. Pratt.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Kroll, Administrative Assistant II
Community Development

DRAFT



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: Kirsty Sanchez through Jennifer Pratt, Community Development and Planning Director
Subject: CR Youth recommendations for vacant parcels
Date: May 20, 2015

Background:

Interest in the creation of Youth Program has been expressed to provide high school students in Cedar Rapids with the opportunity to learn about local government and provide input on how the City can better serve youth. In January 2015, staff recommended establishing a working student group with students from the Iowa Big Program to assist with the development of a Youth Program.

Staff has been working with the Iowa Big students on a framework for the youth program, called CR Youth. Staff is in the process of finalizing details for CR Youth will take the program to City Council for approval in the summer. Program kick-off is anticipated in August at the beginning of the school year.

In addition to creating a framework for the CR Youth program, the Iowa Big students toured vacant city-owned parcels and have provided recommendations for possible uses for two vacant lots, one in NewBo and one in Kingston Village.

Next Steps:

- Staff will continue to work with the Iowa Big Program on finalizing the framework for CR Youth
- City Council consideration in Summer 2015



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: Paula Mitchell through Jennifer Pratt, Community Development and Planning Director
Subject: Disposition Strategy for Remaining Non-Conforming/Non-Buildable Lots
Date: May 20, 2015

Background:

The City of Cedar Rapids acquired approximately 1,300 properties through the Voluntary Acquisition Program. Since 2010, the City Council has directed staff regarding the disposition of approximately 650 properties based on priorities for redevelopment. The priorities included:

- Housing redevelopment;
- Business and commercial redevelopment;
- Projects that provide other significant community benefits;
- Disposition to adjacent property owners.

Property disposition to date has been conducted primarily through a programmatic approach, or in response to a specific and detailed request, including:

- Approximately 265 parcels through the ROOTs program for new home construction;
- Approximately 33 properties disposed of through the Residential Property Disposition (RPD) program for rehabilitation;
- Over 50 parcels (with or without structures) disposed of through competitive proposal for commercial or mixed use redevelopment projects;
- Approximately 25 non-buildable parcels disposed to adjacent property owners.

In fall of 2014, the Development Committee asked staff to return with an update on remaining non-buildable lots in the City's inventory with identifications of challenges and recommendations for redevelopment.

Update:

Currently, there are an estimated 35 non-conforming/non-buildable lots remaining in the City's inventory that are located within the neighborhood revitalization area and not in the 100-year flood plain. Lots deemed non-conforming/non-buildable are lots that have an area of less than 4,200 square feet, the minimum required for R-TN zoning, the least restrictive residential zoning classification. As such, they are not suitable for redevelopment unless they are able to be combined with other parcels to meet current zoning and building requirements.

In addition there are 13 lots remaining in the City's inventory that have the potential to support construction of up to 11 ROOTs homes, if some parcels are combined to meet minimum square footage requirements. These lots are buildable but some face other challenges, such as narrow lot widths or lot lines close to the adjacent structure, which make it difficult to access the lots with construction equipment. Currently, these lots are still being offered to builders who wish to build infill homes through the program and are listed on the ROOTs page of the City's web site.

Non-conforming lots can be categorized as follows:

1. **“Standalone Non-conforming Lots”** – Lots that do not meet square footage requirements on their own, and are not located near other City-owned properties that could be combined in order to support development.

Example 1: 705 2nd Avenue SW



- Lot size is 2,960 square feet (minimum for R-TN is 4,200)
- Shallow lot difficult to access for off-street parking.
- No adjacent or nearby City-owned parcels.

Example 2: 202 4th Avenue SW



- Lot size is 1,800 square feet (minimum for R-TN is 4,200).
- Narrow lot line close to adjacent property.
- No adjacent or nearby City-owned parcels.

2. **Non-conforming Lots Suitable for Site Assembly** – Lots that do not meet square footage requirements on their own, but are located near one or more City-owned properties. Such lots may not be directly adjacent, but could be combined with private land assembly to create a site suitable for redevelopment.

Example: 625 3rd Street SW



- Lot size is 3,000 square feet (minimum for R-TN is 4,200)
- City owns adjacent parcels at 617 & 623 3rd Street SW
- Parcels could be assembled with City-owned and privately held lots to support redevelopment.

Recommendations:

Staff recommends that standalone non-conforming lots be routed for potential disposition through sealed bid to adjacent property owners. Due to the size and lot configuration constraints, it is unlikely that they will be redeveloped in the near future, and are currently being maintained at the City's expense.

Staff recommends that non-conforming lots suitable for site assembly be retained by the City at this time pending investigation of further interest or opportunities for redevelopment. Parcel status can be made available on the City's web site for interested parties. Staff will continue to bring forward proposals for redevelopment based on market interest.



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: Anne Russett through Jennifer Pratt, Community Development and Planning Director
Subject: Zoning Code Update
Date: May 20, 2015

Background

With the adoption of EnvisionCR in January 2015 the Community Development staff is moving forward with a comprehensive update to the City's zoning code. At this point in the process, the staff is working on identifying the scope of services and coordinating with the City's Purchasing Services Division, as consultant services will need to be secured for this project.

Currently, the staff envisions the project to incorporate the following three main components:

1. *New Zoning Code:* A complete re-write of the Zoning Code that ensures consistency with EnvisionCR, balances the City's diverse needs and goals, and focuses on the design, form, and physical character of development.

The new Zoning Code should consider community context, the relationships between the built environment and a multimodal transportation system, and appropriately apply regulations based on the unique character of a diversity of communities. Furthermore, as part of the Zoning Code Update process, the City wishes to evaluate a variety of issues, such as use standards, parking requirements, landscaping regulations, and options for promoting connectivity and accessibility. Other issues that may be explored include green site design standards, density bonuses, second units, and joint live/work units.

2. *New Zoning Map:* A new Zoning Map that applies the new code. The new Zoning Map should appropriately assign the newly created zoning districts based on the defining characteristics of the neighborhood (e.g. urban core, historic neighborhood, suburban).
3. *Zoning Handbook:* An easy to read handbook that helps laypersons navigate zoning regulations and processes.

Timeline for Consultant Selection

The following table outlines the anticipated timeline for consultant selection:

Date	Activity
July 2015	Release Request for Proposals
August 2015	Proposal Deadline
August 2015	Review of Proposals
September 2015	Interviews
October 2015	Consultant Selection
November 2015	City Council
November 2015	Contract Execution

Due to the large scope, which requires extensive technical analysis and a transparent and inclusive stakeholder outreach process, the staff anticipates a 2-year process for this project. As part of the consultant selection process a more detailed timeline and work program will be developed.