



## STATUS & INFORMATION REPORT

### WEEK OF DECEMBER 3, 2007

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#### **CITY MANAGER**

- ✓ The City Council and Jim Prosser continue to seek feedback from city employees as well as citizens. Employees are being randomly selected to attend monthly small group employee meetings.

#### **DEVELOPMENT**

- ✓ The Linn County Regional Planning Commission (LCRPC) will participate in the 2008 National Household Travel Survey (NHTS) "add-on" Program conducted by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). The survey will provide LCRPC with data on household travel characteristics in Cedar Rapids metropolitan area (including Marion, Robins and Hiawatha) and surrounding rural areas. This data will be used to examine existing transportation systems and forecast the future demands in the area. For planning purposes, LCRPC will purchase 1,200 household samples of 2008 NHTS for a total cost of \$210,000. The entire cost of this survey is being paid for by LCRPC with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Pooled Fund. The pretest for the survey is expected to be conducted in late December and January and full data collection will begin on March 1, 2008. Questions and comments related to this information can be directed to Sushil Nepal, 286-5075.
- ✓ The Linn County Regional Planning Commission will hold a public meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> in the Linn Mar High School Upper Commons area from 6:30-8:15pm to discuss the future of the Tower Terrace Road Corridor and to establish a corridor management plan to guide the five jurisdictions of Cedar Rapids, Hiawatha, Linn County, Marion, and Robins in the development of Tower Terrace Road.
- ✓ The Visual Arts Commission recently reviewed and accepted a piece of art donated by Julianne Smith and Thomas Anderson. The piece is a 5 ft. tall bronze statue of a frog leaping off of its lily pad. Leaping Frog, as it is named, was successfully installed through the coordination of Community Development, Parks & Recreation, and a local artist. The Parks & Recreation Department will also be installing two benches by the statue in the near future. Leaping Frog is located in a highly visible area of Sun Valley Park next to the Indian Creek Nature Trail by the intersection of East Post Road and Cottage Grove Pkwy. Public art pieces like this help enhance Cedar Rapids' community character.
- ✓ MAHP/Four Oaks notified Housing Services that MAHP/Four Oaks will convey 208-11th Ave SE to whomever the City directs. If MAPH/Four Oaks does not receive a response from the City, the property will be deeded to the City of Cedar Rapids in late December in advance of the liquidation and dissolution of MAHP. This is a single-family new construction home that has been funded through the HOME program which is 75% complete. If the property is not completed, the city will be required to reimburse HUD \$89,543 that was originally awarded MAHP to construct the home. A Resolution to enter into a conditional Purchase Agreement with MAHP to acquire the property will be presented at the December 12<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. Once the property has been acquired the construction will be completed and the property will be sold to a low income family.

#### **FINANCE**

- ✓ The budgets for those departments reporting to the City Manager will reflect changes as a result of the City's reorganization plan that was implemented this past summer. Even though the reorganization plan is being implemented to deliver services effectively, efficiently, and at less cost, the City still faces challenges due to past deferrals of capital improvements and capital equipment, as well as normal cost of living increases. To address these issues departments are required to submit budget options. The City Manager will then review department budgets and budget options and will then submit a balanced budget to the City Council. Council

will review the balanced budget to determine if they want to implement the City Manager's recommendations or review other budget options.

### **FIRE / PUBLIC SAFETY CODE ENFORCEMENT DIVISION**

- ✓ A presentation was made to City Council last week regarding the Code Enforcement Division's involvement with the Enhance Our Neighborhoods initiative. Part of the presentation involved vacant, boarded and dilapidated properties. Since April, there have been 213 complaints about poorly maintained houses. Forty three percent have been successfully resolved by owner-initiated compliance, citations or rehabilitation of the property. Staff has identified 25 properties that will likely need demolition and a peer review group is being established to address these properties.
- ✓ Another part of the presentation talked about rental properties, housing issues and code enforcement. Changes to the current housing code were recommended including the addition of a crime free addendum. Other recommendations included providing education and sharing information with landlords and tenants, creation of a housing/code enforcement leadership position, cross-training of code enforcement personnel, targeted code enforcement, and fee changes to reflect the cost of services for rental housing inspections, owner-occupied housing inspections, and zoning complaint inspections.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES**

- ✓ Community Circle of Care, Inc. is once again collecting new blankets for distribution to area homeless shelters and assistance programs throughout the holiday season. Cash donations are also welcome and will be fairly distributed among the homeless programs. The City collected 388 new blankets, and 540 used blankets last year. All of the blankets were distributed to 23 area homeless shelters and assistance programs that gave blankets to their residents and clients. There are 2 donation boxes in City Hall; one in Council Chambers, and one outside the Human Resources office.

### **LIBRARY**

- ✓ The new heat pumps have arrived and the replacement project will begin this week and likely continue into April of 2008. The contractors will be working in assigned zones so that all areas of the library are not under construction at the same time. The contractor will also be installing the new air conditioning unit for the computer room during this time. The plan is to complete the upper floor first. The library will remain open throughout the process.
- ✓ Library Planner George Lawson has been working with library staff for the past two years to plan for the future. He completed the Needs Assessment, thanks to funding from the Friends, last year and has recently completed the building program documents for both locations. This process has been communicated by ways of open houses, public tours, and direct communications with the Mayor and City Manager.
- ✓ A revised Strategic Plan will soon be approved by the Board of Trustees. This document will guide the plans for future services.
- ✓ The Library First team is nearing completion of the Claims Returned project. The revised flow chart for the process has been sent to the Management Team and should be in place by the beginning of the year.
- ✓ St. Paul's Hand Bell Choirs will perform a holiday concert in Beems Auditorium December 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **POLICE**

- ✓ To date, 608 CRPD applications have been requested. Applications must be completed and returned by December 14, 2007.
- ✓ Detective John Matias conducted the investigation that eventually led to the arrest and charges of embezzlement involving a former bookkeeper at Master Plumbing Company.
- ✓ Officer Troy Nogelmeier was off duty and fueling his vehicle when he observed a man adjacent to his gas pump, fill his tank and drive off without paying. Officer Nogelmeier followed and called dispatch for assistance. Lt. Potter was nearby and was able to assist in apprehending the thief.
- ✓ Mike Wilsey has been cleaning the Police Department for 34+ years. We extend a grateful farewell and wish him all the best.
- ✓ Sgt. Phil Hansen, and Officers Jared Hicks and Randy Jernigan attended a presentation on "Street Officer's Perspective on the War on Terrorism and Lessons Learned from the Beslan, Russia School Takeover" November 29<sup>th</sup> at Tipton HS.

## **PUBLIC WORKS**

- ✓ The contractor for the new Edgewood Road SW Bridge over Prairie Creek and the Union Pacific RR is expected to mobilize on-site the week of December 3<sup>rd</sup> and begin site preparation for the new viaduct. Upon construction completion, this will be the city's longest bridge at 902'-6".
- ✓ The recertification application for Tree City USA designation by the National Arbor Day Foundation was submitted last week. April 2008 will mark the 30<sup>th</sup> award year as an organization for its tree management plan and program. An application to the Alliant Trees Please program has been submitted requesting \$14,000 for trees to be planted in city right-of-way and park areas.
- ✓ As the first major snow and ice event of the season arrived over the weekend, motorists and residents are reminded of the following:
  - Snow routes are the primary arteries of the city. Do not park or attempt to park on these streets during snow, sleet, or freezing rain conditions.
  - In residential areas, use alternating parking during substantial snowfalls. This assists the snow plows to operate in the most efficient and effective manner. On even days, park on the even side and on odd days, park on the odd side of the road.
  - It is a violation of the Municipal Code to place snow and ice on streets, alleys, and public right-of-way.
  - The city has over 600 miles of roads. The snow plows are over 50,000 pounds and spread salt and sand. Maintain a safe distance from snow plows by at least 50 feet. As road speeds increase, the distance should also increase. Drivers need to give room to the plows for safe operations.

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## **UPDATES**

**Chief Information Officer in the IT department** - Bill Carr has accepted the position and will begin working for the City on January 21, 2008.

**HAND Program Update** - With the first development agreement ready for City Council action, the new home construction portion of the Oak Hill Housing and Neighborhood Development (HAND) Program is moving forward. City staff will work with the Oak Hill Action Team (OHAT) in the next two months to prepare for the full roll-out of the new construction program. OHAT will be completing the following tasks:

- Assemble the new construction program guidebook, incorporating the design guidelines, design portfolio, and additional program requirements.
- Begin collecting list of builders and developers interested in participating.
- Finalize a comprehensive marketing plan for the program, including employer outreach activities and the role of realtors.

City Council will see the marketing plan for discussion to meet the 2008 building season.

### **Westdale Mall**

- A repeat of the first Open House will be held Thursday, December 6 from 5:00 to 7:00pm in the armory of the Veterans Memorial Building. Poster boards may be viewed at Development department web page.
- RDG Planning & Design presented redevelopment and design principles to the Planning Commission on Tuesday, November 27. This information will be used along with public feedback to prepare redevelopment and evaluation criteria.

### **Sinclair Meatpacking**

- Notification has been received that the IDNR has awarded a \$24,999 brownfields redevelopment grant to the City for continuation of clean-up activities.
- The demolition debris removal is moving ahead of schedule and should be completed in December. Upon completion of the removal, HR Green will complete soil and groundwater sampling for the Phase II Environmental Site Assessment.

- The status of the smokestack is still under review with an experienced chimney company doing a visual inspection last week. Potential for National Register historic designation, which could open up additional funding, is being reviewed.

**Downtown Housing RFQ**

- Developer qualification presentations by Hatch Development (Des Moines), Sherman Associates (Minneapolis and Des Moines), and MetroPlains (St. Paul) to City Council are scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 18.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS' CALENDAR**

*(Not all meetings are noted. The calendar is **not** an official posting.)*

<b>Monday, December 3</b>	3:30pm	Churches United Poverty Awareness, ( <i>Crossroads Mission, 526-3rd Ave SW</i> )
<b>Tuesday, December 4</b>	12:00 4:30pm 6:00pm 6:30pm	Brown Bag with Legislators, ( <i>Council Chambers</i> ) Key Financial Strategies, ( <i>Council Chambers</i> ) CR Neighborhood Board meeting, ( <i>Wilson Middle School cafeteria, 2301 J St SW</i> ) South West Area Neighbors meeting, ( <i>Wilson Middle School cafeteria, 2301 J St SW</i> )
<b>Wednesday, December 5</b>	6:00pm	Council Meeting, ( <i>Council Chambers</i> )
<b>Thursday, December 6</b>	5:00pm	Westdale Mall Open House, ( <i>Vet's Memorial Armory</i> )
<b>Friday, December 7</b>	6:00pm	Holiday Parade, ( <i>Downtown Cedar Rapids</i> )
<b>Saturday, December 8</b>	10:00am	Mound View Neighborhood Association meeting, ( <i>Central Park Presbyterian Church, 1700 B Ave NE</i> )

A follow up neighborhood meeting was held November 29<sup>th</sup> regarding the proposed development of Garman Homes, Inc./Somnolent Grove Addition development located south of Zika Avenue and east of Edgewood Road. This meeting was scheduled so the developer could provide additional information on issues and concerns voiced by the neighborhood at the initial meeting held November 1<sup>st</sup>. The following is a list of the issues and concerns identified at the initial November 1<sup>st</sup> neighborhood meeting that the developer provided detailed information on:

- R-2/PUD-O rezoning request and the density of the proposed development.
- Detailed information on how on-site storm water management will be designed.
- Detailed design information on the reconstruction of Zika Ave. NW adjoining the proposed site.
- Detailed information related to the maintenance of the drainage way and storm sewer down stream on the north side of Zika Ave. NW.
- Information on what steps would need to be taken to relocate the drainage way easterly onto the Ellis Golf Course property.
- Traffic impacts the development will have on the surrounding neighborhood.
- Details on how the wetlands found on the site would be mitigated.

The rezoning and plat discussion is tentatively scheduled for December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007 with possible action on the second and third readings.