



STATUS & INFORMATION REPORT

WEEK OF MAY 19, 2008

Cedar Rapids is a vibrant urban hometown - a beacon for people and businesses that are invested in building a greater community for the next generation.

CITY MANAGER

- ✓ The City's Vision is presented in a new brochure developed for the City Council to share as they meet with community groups to discuss what the Vision means for the community. The piece describes City efforts to meet the Vision and how individuals and groups can join the effort to ensure that our community is investing for the next generation. City employees and citizens are encouraged to view a PDF of the Vision brochure at http://www.cedar-rapids.org/citymanager/documents/publications/CR_Vision_Brochure.pdf. It is also available by clicking on the Vision statement on the City's Web site homepage. Copies of the brochure are available from the City Manager's office.
- ✓ In observance of Memorial Day, all City offices will be closed Monday, May 26th. The S & I will be distributed Tuesday, May 27th.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- ✓ The Historic Preservation Awards ceremony was held May 12th at Bruce more. Staff provided a brief overview of the history and scope of the Historic Preservation Commission, followed by presentation of the awards. Mark Hunter, the Historic Preservation Commission Chair, provided an in-depth history of the six award winning properties and presented certificates of appreciation to the award winners. Signs will be placed in the winner's yards for two weeks. Awards were presented to:

➤ Brittany Toms	1712 Grande Avenue SE	Rehabilitation
➤ Scott Block	1721 Blake Avenue SE	Paint Scheme
➤ Barbara Furman	211 Park Court SE	Rehabilitation
➤ Steve Emerson	Paramount	Citywide Commercial Rehab
➤ David Anderson & Kara Dirkson	1846 3 rd Avenue SE	Paint Scheme
➤ Ronald Mussman	1138 1 st Avenue NW	Citywide Residential Rehab
- ✓ Corridor MPO launched its new website on May 12th. New website improvements include more citizen friendly components such as meeting agendas and minutes. The website address is www.corridormpo.com.
- ✓ Corridor MPO held its second FY09 – FY12 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Open House May 15th from 5:30 to 7:00pm in Council Chambers.
- ✓ City Council selected Sasaki Associates as the firm to develop the Riverfront Park Master Plan. Sasaki Associates are based in Watertown, MA and have partnered with Anderson-Bogert and OPN Architects of Cedar Rapids. The next step is to finalize a contract so development of the plan can begin as soon as possible.
- ✓ City staff presented recent market analysis findings to the First Avenue Uptown College District for the commercial corridor along 1st Avenue between 10th and 20th Street NE. Attendees included local business and property owners, representatives from Coe College and Mt. Mercy College, members of the City Council, and other interested citizens. The study identifies opportunities to improve the mix of retail options within the study area, specifically targeting currently underserved markets such as students, single-person households, and married households without children. Staff will continue to provide updates.

- ✓ Members of the City Council raised questions about the implementation of the Smart Growth Score Card at a recent City Council meeting. Staff will review the performance of this new educational tool with City Council at a Work Session in July. In addition, the discussion will include a review of the data collected to date. Staff will seek direction from City Council on Smart Growth Score Card next steps.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- ✓ Russ Camp received his Certified Geographic Information Systems Professional (GISP) certification from the GIS Certification Institute. The GISP certification is based on a portfolio of experience, education and professional contributions.
- ✓ The IT Division installed an e-mail spam device on May 7th to reduce the number of nuisance e-mails. Please contact the IT Service Desk at extension 5500 with any questions.

PARKS & RECREATION

- ✓ Jones golf course now has 18 holes open for play. Flood conditions have subsided and playing conditions are improving.
- ✓ A total of 716 season passes have been sold to date, a reduction of 25% over the 2007 golf season. Season pass revenues are down by only 15% over 2007 revenues.
- ✓ Due to the unseasonable spring weather, the season golf passes will not expire this year on October 31st but will be honored through the calendar year until the golf courses are closed for the winter. This extension will allow golfers who have had limited opportunities to play this spring to receive the full value of the golf pass.
- ✓ The Golf Operations have responded to citizens' interest in the four City golf courses by developing a *Friends of the Golf Course* group at Ellis, Jones, Twin Pines and Gardner golf courses. The purpose is for interested citizens to volunteer and assist the golf course staff with projects associated with the golf courses, including but not limited to, flower plantings, storm damages or flood damages. The first projects will be with the *Friends of Twin Pines* and *Friends of Jones* groups...planting spring flowers at the respective golf courses. The *Friends of Twin Pines* project will take place on May 20th at 9:00am and the *Friends of Jones* project will take place on May 21st at 8:00am.

POLICE

- ✓ Last week was National Peace Officer's Week. On Thursday, May 15th a Peace Officer's Memorial Service was held at Cedar Memorial Park. Honor Guard presented as well as a dove release. This Memorial Service was in honor of those officers killed in the line of duty.
- ✓ Greg Graham from Ocala, FL Police Department was named as Chief of Police. He will begin June 1, 2008.
- ✓ Basic Skills classes for Officers was completed this year. The training covered CPR, Infectious Diseases and an afternoon at the shooting range for qualification.
- ✓ An awards banquet was held May 15th at Usher's Ferry with awards given to numerous sworn and non-sworn personnel for the outstanding job they did in 2007. There were many lifesaving awards as well as the yearly awards.
- ✓ Officer Glenn Kieler taught a self defense class to the US Bankruptcy Court employees. It was a basic self defense class on what to do should someone become hostile while in court or office area.

PUBLIC WORKS

- ✓ Due to heavy snow over the winter and an unusually wet spring, the City's sanitary sewer system has been hit hard with extra water. In some cases this spring, the extra water has resulted in sewer backups into basements. To help property owner's avoid this unpleasant problem, the City offers a financial assistance program for properties in areas where sewer flooding has occurred to reimburse up to \$500 towards installation of a backwater protection valve. Letters were recently sent to known affected property owners advising them of this program.
- ✓ A city-wide telephone survey will be conducted the week of May 19th to obtain citizen feedback on City improvement projects. This six minute survey will cover public opinion questions on the benefits and concerns resulting from roadway improvement projects, and the thoughts on funding strategies, including special assessments. The survey is being conducted by HDR Inc.

- ✓ As a follow-up to a report on the AMTRAK feasibility study results announced previously on April 18th, 2008, Iowa DOT staff explained the study limits were primarily determined based on the Iowa Interstate Railroad's interest and their existing rail operations already linking Iowa City and the Quad Cities. While the specific link between Cedar Rapids and Iowa City was not included in the study, the study did take into account the passenger contributions anticipated from Cedar Rapids. A separate request to study the Cedar Rapids to Iowa City link could be submitted to the Iowa DOT, but consideration likely would be deferred until AMTRAK initiated implementation of some portion of the Illinois or Iowa segments already studied.
- ✓ Thomas Tharp, Civil Engineering Construction Inspector, applied for and passed the American Public Works Association Certified Public Infrastructure Inspector examination. This comprehensive exam tests the candidate's public works inspection, safety, and documentation knowledge. Tom is the first City of Cedar Rapids employee to be submitted as a candidate and take the exam for this new program.
- ✓ Major maintenance work:
 - Kent and Boyson Road NE – Sanitary box out and street panel repair
 - Surry and Boyson Road NE – Complete a sanitary box out and street panel repair
 - Forrest Valley Court NE - Sanitary box out and street panel repair
 - Millbrook Court NE - Sanitary box out and street panel repair
 - Rockwell Road NE – Complete a railroad track removal
- ✓ Forestry has started stump removals. This will continue for approximately a month.
- ✓ Forestry and Parks personnel are working jointly on the planting of 160 trees in the City parks. This is part of the Tree Please program.
- ✓ Japanese beetles will be changing from the pupa to adult stages in approximately June and remain until July. In the adult form, traps or root treatment chemicals for trees or bushes are available in most garden departments. For a more environmental friendly and longer term solution, milky spore (a fungus) powder or nematodes can be used. For more in depth information, you can read a press release by the city arborist on the City's web site.

PURCHASING

- ✓ The City of Cedar Rapids has switched to an environmental brand of hand towels and bathroom tissue. These products are made with 100% recycled fiber and contain up to 100% of post-consumer fiber and carry the Green Seal™ and EcoLogo certifications. The estimated annual environmental impact of this change, compared to using a non-recycled product, is as follows:
 - Saves 542 trees each year
 - Saves landfill space equal to the volume of 1,558 one liter milk cartons
 - Energy savings equivalent to running a 100 W light bulb for 298 years
 - Reduced atmospheric pollutants with an equivalent weight of 176 rolls of bathroom tissue
 - Reduced greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to running a car for 21 days
 - Saves 231,000 gallons of water per year

TREASURY / FINANCE

- ✓ The new spring Hotel-Motel application is available to applicants on the city's web site. http://www.cedar-rapids.org/audit/hot_mot.asp This application is intended for organizations that have off-cycle needs that could not be anticipated and addressed during the regular fall application process. The deadline for the spring application is June 30, 2008 with consideration by the hotel-motel allocation committee in July. The funds to be allocated, approximately \$300,000, are the carry-over funds from FY2007.
- ✓ Downtown Riverfront Project - On May 7th discussions were held between Alaina Santizo, a representative from the Vision Iowa staff and city staff regarding the city's intent to apply for RE-CAT (River Enhancement – Community Attraction and Tourism) funds to enhance the downtown. Christine Butterfield will be coordinating the city's RE-CAT grant application. Doug Neumann, President of the Cedar Rapids Downtown District, will work with businesses to secure the private funding and establish partnerships. Joi Bergman, Linn County Grants and Communications Manager, will assist in the grant preparation and serve as the County's liaison. The first step in the process is for the city to submit a 'Notice of Intent to Apply' form to Vision Iowa. This form provides the project name, project description, estimates of project costs and estimated application date. A more in-depth application will be prepared once Phase One components and costs are ascertained. City Council has directed staff to develop a scope of services with the recently selected firm of Sasaki Associates.

They will develop a riverfront master plan, with design work to follow. In the May 7th conference call, the Vision Iowa staff emphasized that “bringing in a fantastically prepared application will serve (the City of Cedar Rapids) well.” Funding for the RE-CAT program will be available commencing July 1, 2008.

TRANSIT

- ✓ The Transit Division will be offering half fare rides to students again this summer. Students (ages 5-18) can ride the bus for 50 cents per ride from June 7th to August 25th. The discounted student fares apply to cash fares only and do not apply to passes or ticket sales. This is the second year that this promotion has been offered by the Transit Division. During the summer of 2007, 6,661 student rides were provided, which was a 151.3% increase from the previous summer’s student ridership of 2,651 rides.
- ✓ The Transit Division, in cooperation with the Purchasing Services Division and Fleet Services Division, is moving forward with the purchase and installation of bike racks on 21 city buses. The bike racks are currently out for bid. Plans are to have the bike racks purchased, and hopefully installed, before the end of this fiscal year. The bike racks will hold two bikes per bus and will be installed on all 16 of Thomas low-floor buses and on 5 of the 1990 RTS buses. Bike racks will be standard equipment on our future bus purchases.

UPDATES

Cemar Trail - The City has received partial grants for the designing and constructing segments from the Cedar Lake Loop Trail to 29th Street NE, near C Avenue. This spring a consultant was selected to design the segment from Cedar Lake Loop trail to near 16th Street NE. Design should begin by year’s end after federal approvals are secured on a consultant contract. This initial phase is a very challenging route, because of the dense neighborhood development. One of the earlier tasks will be to do a context sensitive design study with the neighborhood to develop a specific alignment. After 16th Street, the alignment will follow the abandoned railroad right-of-way.

COUNCIL MEMBERS’ CALENDAR

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

Monday, May 19	5:00pm 7:00pm 7:00pm	Linn Co. Mayor’s Meeting, (<i>Pizza Ranch, Hiawatha</i>) Lincolnway Village Neighborhood Association meeting, (<i>Green Acres Storage, 5315 J Street SW</i>) Cedar Valley Neighborhood Association meeting, (<i>Cedar Valley Park (summer) or 2300 Rompot Street SE</i>)
Tuesday, May 20	8:30am	Governors' Institute on Community Design, (<i>Mayor’s Office</i>)
Wednesday, May 21	4:00pm 5:00pm 6:00pm	Board and Commission Interviews, (<i>Council Chambers</i>) City / Linn Co Solid Waste Agency Joint Meeting, (<i>Council Chambers</i>) Council Work Session, (<i>Council Chambers</i>)
Thursday, May 22	Noon 5:00pm 5:00pm 6:30pm 7:00pm	Brown Bag - Sustainable Design, (<i>OPN, 200-5th Ave SE Suite 201</i>) Johnson/Linn County Public Leadership Group, (<i>Gerdin Conference Center in North Liberty</i>) Cedar Hills Neighborhood Association meeting, (<i>St. Mark’s United Methodist Church, 4700 Johnson Avenue NW</i>) Citizen’s Feedback Network gathering, (<i>Canney Conf. Room</i>) Northwest Neighbors meeting, (<i>Time Check Recreation Center, 1131- 5th Street NW</i>)