

YOUR CITY

CEDAR RAPIDS

NEWSLETTER



January 2009

All Cedar Rapids Residents Invited to Join January 10 Neighborhood Planning Process Kick-off Event

No matter which neighborhood you call home, your chance to influence future neighborhood reinvestment begins Saturday, January 10, 2009, at the Community Kick-off of the Neighborhood Planning Process.

All residents are invited to attend this citywide Neighborhood Planning Process Kick-off event that will begin a five-month process to plan for Cedar Rapids neighborhoods damaged by the flood.

The Community Kick-off event will be held at the Crowne Plaza Five Seasons Hotel, 350 First Avenue Southeast, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Lunch will be provided. The City hopes to host at least 1,000 residents at this kick-off event. Please register by calling 1-866-999-1224 or online at www.ica-usa.org.

“To rebuild our city, I think all Cedar Rapids residents need to work together,” said City Council member Jerry McGrane. “This Neighborhood Planning Process will give everyone a chance to share their ideas and create plans for rebuilding our neighborhoods.”

The Neighborhood Planning Process is Phase Two of the River Corridor Redevelopment Plan process. During Phase One, a Framework for Reinvestment and Redevelopment in the Cedar River Corridor, including a system of floodwalls and levees, was created with input from the community at three sets of open houses.

During the second phase of the River Corridor Redevelopment Plan process, residents will be directly involved in planning for reinvestment in the seven flood-damaged neighborhoods of

Cedar Rapids. They will participate in a series of three workshops and numerous area meetings to move from the development of ideas to action plans for implementation.

The Neighborhood Planning Process will encompass three areas of Cedar Rapids, which includes the seven neighborhoods:

- **North River Area** – Time Check & Ellis Park (Northwest) and Taylor Area;
- **Central Area** – Downtown and Medical District (Near Downtown); and,
- **South River Area** – Czech Village, Oak Hill Jackson (New Bohemia) and Cedar Valley (Rompot).

At the end of the five-month process, an action plan will be created for each of the three areas. The process will also include identification of

(NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING PROCESS KICK-OFF EVENT
continued on page 2)

Put on your thinking caps, roll up your sleeves and get ready to recreate the neighborhoods that you, your children and grandchildren will enjoy for generations to come.



INSIDE:

- Improving Service Qualityp 2
- High Performance Rating for Housing Services Officep 3
- City & Contractor Receive Engineering Excellence Award. ...p 3
- Give Us Your Input ..p 3
- Property Acquisition Strategyp 4
- Get Involvedp 4

REGISTER for the Neighborhood Planning Process Kick-off event by calling 1-866-999-1224 or online at www.ica-usa.org

Neighborhood Planning Process Kick-off Event

(continued from page 1)

resource needs for immediate and future plan implementation.

“If you’re concerned about the future of your neighborhood, then get involved in the Neighborhood Planning Process,” said City Council Member Chuck Wieneke. This citywide initiative will be led by the Cedar Rapids City Council, the City’s Community Development Department, an appointed Steering Committee and hundreds of neighborhood residents. The tentative timeline is listed below.

Saturday, January 10, 2009

Communitywide Kick-off Meeting

TOPICS: Purpose, goals, outcomes and sustainability

Saturday, January 31, 2009

WORKSHOP 1

TOPICS: Flood management, connectivity, neighborhoods and housing

February 2009

Several individual area meetings

Saturday, March 21, 2009

WORKSHOP 2

TOPICS: Evaluation of area alternatives and process goals

March 2009

Several individual area meetings

Saturday, April 25, 2009

WORKSHOP 3

TOPICS: Presentation of final plans & prioritize action items

April 2009

Several individual area meetings

Wednesday, May 13, 2009

Each area presents plans to City Council for adoption

As more details on workshop times and locations are available, they will be posted on the City’s Web site, provided to the news media and provided in future issues of *Your City*.

Everyone is encouraged to put on their thinking caps, roll up their sleeves and get ready to recreate the neighborhoods that they, their children, and grandchildren will enjoy for generations to come. Come to the Community Kick-off Event on January 10, 2009. Be sure to register as soon as possible.

City to Adopt Performance Measures to Improve Service Quality

The City of Cedar Rapids is working with the Iowa Quality Center to identify and adopt performance measures to ensure continuous improvement in the services residents receive from the City.

Performance measures are methods of measuring how work is being completed and how services are being delivered in all the various areas of City government.

The City’s performance measures are being developed by City staff and directors using an Iowa Quality Center process. Data is being collected for the initial measures in each City department and will be reported to the City Council and the community in the coming months.

The Iowa Quality Center, headquartered in Marion, is a non-profit organization dedicated to performance excellence through continuous improvement in Iowa’s businesses, communities and individuals.

Performance measures are part of continuous quality improvement, an ongoing process for an organization, according to Gary Nестеby, Executive Director, Iowa Quality Center. “We take for granted that everyone works as hard as they can to accomplish their assigned task and to work toward the City vision,” Nестеby said. “But how do we know if we are there? What does it take to work to a higher level of effectiveness and efficiency in accomplishing the work?”

“I would suggest that without measurement we lack knowledge of how good we really are. Without performance results we have no idea when we have been successful and without performance measures we don’t know if improvement is taking place,” Nестеby said.

City employees first identified more than 500 potential performance measures and pared that list down based on the four key objectives aligned with the City’s vision:

- quality of life;
- building a greater community for future generations;
- efficient and effective services; and,
- a safe and healthy community.

With these four objectives in place, the City and Iowa Quality Center assigned strategies, tactics and performance measures to monitor the City’s success as well as identify opportunities for improvement. “One of the driving factors behind this effort has been the fact that all leaders need to be accountable,” said Nестеby. “Jim Prosser has kept reminding us that ‘when we measure our results, and performance, our levels of accountability are exposed,’” he said.

(PERFORMANCE MEASURES continued on page 4)

WHY MEASURE PERFORMANCE?

If you don’t measure results, you can’t tell success from failure.

If you can’t see success, you can’t reward it.

If you can’t reward success, you’re probably rewarding failure.

If you can’t see success, you can’t learn from it.

If you can’t recognize failure, you can’t correct it.

If you can demonstrate results, you can win public support.

DEPARTMENT NEWS



City's Housing Services Office Receives High Performance Rating

Cedar Rapids' Housing Services Office has been awarded an overall "High" performance rating by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the City's administration of the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program.

This is the second year in a row that the City Housing Services office has received the HUD high performer designation for outstanding service to the residents of Linn and Benton Counties.

"This HUD designation highlights a group of hardworking and dedicated City employees who provide excellent customer service to our community," said Community Development Director Christine Butterfield. "This high performer status puts us in a position to receive additional consideration should additional funding become available in the future."

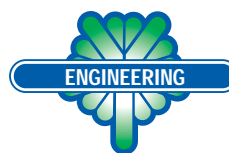
The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program is a federally-funded housing program that assists very low-income families to lease safe, decent, and affordable privately-owned rental housing.

The Cedar Rapids Housing Services Office helps low-income families find housing locally and obtain employment that will lead to their economic independence and self-sufficiency through a program called Family Self-Sufficiency.

Kristina Calderon participates in Family Self-Sufficiency. "They truly care about me and my children," said Ms. Calderon. "This program helped me when I needed it most. Now I'm making plans to own my own home someday."

Cedar Rapids' Housing Services Office received the "High" performance rating by reaching the 15 benchmarks of the Section 8 Management Assessment Program. These indicators include expanding housing opportunities, documenting reasonable rent charges, adjusting utility allowance schedules, inspecting rental units annually, maintaining quality control and encouraging participation in the Family Self-Sufficiency program.

To learn more about HUD's Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, visit www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/about/fact_sheet.cfm. To ask about participating in the program, contact the City's Housing Services Office at (319) 286-5872.



City & Contractor Receive Engineering Excellence Award

The City of Cedar Rapids Engineering Department and Anderson-Bogert Engineers & Surveyors, Inc., of Cedar Rapids have received a 2008 Engineering Excellence Award for an auxiliary and turning lane construction project.

The National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) awarded the third place Engineering Achievement Award to the City and Anderson-Bogert for the project at 1st Avenue East from 19th Street to Cottage Grove Road. The project improved traffic flow and operations.

Anderson-Bogert was the engineering company hired by the City to provide a context-sensitive design process and develop the construction documents for this project. The additional lane on northbound 1st Avenue improved traffic safety and a new sidewalk provided a safe route for pedestrians. The limestone facing on the wall, the line of trees and the careful replacement of the Brucemore fence were critical to keeping the design consistent with the context of the corridor.

Anderson-Bogert used a soil nail type of retaining wall design to minimize the impacts to the adjacent properties. This new wall technology allows the retaining wall to be built from the top down, as earth is removed for the sidewalk, and keeps the soil around the building and parking foundations in place. The City of Cedar Rapids worked with the Iowa Department of Transportation to jointly fund this \$1.2 million project.

The NSPE Engineering Excellence Awards are designed to recognize outstanding engineering achievement by engineering firms. The projects entered in the competition exhibit innovation, technical advancement to the engineering profession, complexity, social and economic considerations, and the ability to meet or exceed the needs of the client. To learn more about the awards competition, visit www.iaengr.org or www.nspe.org

GIVE US YOUR INPUT...

PLEASE RESPOND TO A FLOOD RESPONSE SURVEY.

The City of Cedar Rapids needs your feedback in order to improve the quality of services to both flood-affected individuals and businesses and those who were not directly

impacted. Log on to the City's Web site at www.cedar-rapids.org to take the survey, or call 2-1-1 to answer five to seven questions over the telephone. Your input is very valuable!



City Council Adopts Preferred Property Acquisition Strategy

The Cedar Rapids City Council has adopted a Preferred Voluntary Acquisition Strategy for the flood-impacted neighborhoods of Cedar Rapids.

This strategy was developed by a team of experts that included the US Army Corps of Engineers, State Homeland Security and Emergency Management, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the River Corridor Redevelopment Plan consultant group.

The Preferred Property Acquisition Strategy divides the flood-damaged properties into three specific areas, based on location, land purpose and availability of funding. These areas include:

- 1. Greenway Acquisition Area** (green area on map at www.corridorrecovery.org) – This is the unprotected area between the Cedar River and the structural flood management system. The 192 properties in this area are eligible for voluntary property acquisition through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. The City will be consulting with each property owner in this area about program options.
- 2. Construction Area** (yellow area on map at www.corridorrecovery.org) – This area is identified for the potential construction of structural flood management measures, such as floodwalls and levees, including the slope of the levee, safety zone for construction and potential utilities and infrastructure relocations. There are 554 properties in the Construction Area. These properties cannot be acquired with FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program due to restrictions on the reuse of the land. Plans for this area will not be finalized until the US Army

Corps of Engineers completes its feasibility study in 12 to 24 months and construction begins in five to 15 years. There is no funding available to acquire these properties at this time but the City is searching for resources to assist these property owners.

- 3. Neighborhood Revitalization Area** (all flood-damaged neighborhoods) – All residents of the flood-damaged neighborhoods will be invited to participate in Phase Two of the River Corridor Redevelopment Plan, the Neighborhood Planning Process. The first kick-off meeting will be January 10, 2009.

Some scattered properties in this area have been determined to be beyond reasonable repair. That means that these houses are significantly damaged and it is not financially feasible to rebuild them. There is no funding available to acquire these properties at this time but the City is searching for resources to assist these property owners.

The City Council review of the Preferred Voluntary Acquisition Strategy during its December 10, 2008 meeting included discussion of the use of Jumpstart funds for properties in the Construction Area. The Council decided not to allow the use of Jumpstart funds for housing rehabilitation in the Construction Area.

The Greenway Acquisition Area parcel list, Construction Area parcel list and the map of these areas are posted on www.corridorrecovery.org and www.cedar-rapids.org. For more information about this strategy, contact the City's Community Development department at (319) 286-5041.

Performance Measures

(continued from page 2)

According to Nesteby, it is critical for communities, like businesses, to develop performance measures if they want to continuously ensure the quality of their organization. "Cedar Rapids is taking an important step in developing performance measures and instituting continuous quality improvement," Nesteby said. "The private sector has been doing this for decades and realizing successes in efficiency, effectiveness, affordability and quality of services."

"Wise communities are beginning to follow that private sector lead and establishing their own systems of continuous quality improvement," Nesteby said. City Manager Jim Prosser agrees. "As we continue to expand our knowledge of performance measures and our ability to improve the processes in which we work, we will build a culture of accountability and performance excellence. That result will keep us focused on building a better community for future generations," he said.

GET INVOLVED!

In a continued effort to gather feedback from community members, the City has formed the "Citizen's Feedback Network."

If you are interested in participating in the Network, please contact Deb Stalkfleet in the City Manager's Office at (319) 286-5053 or d.stalkfleet@cedar-rapids.org



City of Five Seasons

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