

CHAPTER 10: DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD ELEMENT

Vision Statement for the Downtown Marina District:

The Marina District – the Downtown, Marina and Beach Park – is the civic and cultural center for Des Moines. A revitalized Downtown with a small-town charm reflecting the City’s rich history invites new businesses, development, shoppers and residents. A quality mix of services in the District encourages residents to shop locally and creates a destination for visitors. Improved pedestrian access to and from the Marina and Beach Park and pedestrian amenities along South 223rd Street and South 227th Street enhance the image of Des Moines as a special Puget Sound waterfront community. Design guidelines encourage private participation and public art to reflect and celebrate the City’s unique location and maritime heritage.

1-01 GOALS

1-01-01 Ensure that Downtown Des Moines will be:

- (1) The civic and cultural center for the City.
- (2) A revitalized Downtown with a small-town charm reflecting the City’s rich history and inviting new businesses, development shoppers and residents.
- (3) Characterized by a quality mix of businesses that encourages residents to shop locally and creates a destination for visitors.
- (4) Aesthetically pleasing with design standards and public art to reflect and celebrate the City’s unique location and maritime heritage.
- (5) Pedestrian-friendly with improved access to and from the Marina and Beach Park and pedestrian amenities along South 223rd Street and South 227th Street.
- (6) A residential as well as commercial neighborhood.
- (7) A downtown that takes advantage of its waterfront location.
- (8) A neighborhood with numerous opportunities for passive outdoor recreation.
- (9) An area with views of Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains.
- (10) A commercial district where redevelopment and the introduction of new businesses is encouraged when such activities compliment and implement adopted goals and policies.

1-01-02 Strengthen community sustainability, pedestrian accessibility, livability and downtown business vitality.

1-01-03 Optimize Des Moines’ prime waterfront location and City views through the enhancement of cultural opportunities and experiences.

10-02 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

10-02-01 Downtown Des Moines is located along the shoreline of Puget Sound. This waterfront location provides a unique geographic setting for the downtown. This area is one of

few low-bank shoreline areas between Seattle and Tacoma. The Des Moines Marina occupies much of the shoreline within the Downtown Neighborhood. The Marina provides limited recreational opportunities for non-boaters.

10-02-02 The Downtown Neighborhood is generally bounded by Puget Sound on the west, the City of Normandy Park and South 216th Street to the north, 8th Avenue South and Kent-Des Moines Road to the east, and South 230th Street to the south (Figure 2-3). Single family residential neighborhoods abut the Downtown Neighborhood to the north, south, and east. As the topography of the area generally slopes down from east to west, many properties within and near the downtown have views of Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains.

10-02-03 The Downtown Neighborhood is developed with a variety of land uses, including commercial, professional office, single family, multifamily, mixed-use, and recreational uses. Some buildings in the Downtown are in a state of disrepair. Several properties are vacant or have minimal physical improvements, such as those properties fenced for boat storage.

10-02-04 The Land Use Element of the City of Des Moines Comprehensive Plan includes a land use map for the Downtown Neighborhood (Figure 2-3). Other policies within the adopted Land Use Element that relate to the Downtown Neighborhood include:

- (1) Multiple family dwellings should also be permitted in conjunction with commercial developments within the Downtown Business District, provided that such dwellings are designed to provide a quality residential environment while enhancing the appearance and commercial function of the business district.
- (2) Promote new development and redevelopment within the Downtown Business District to reflect and enhance its ties to the waterfront, pedestrian orientation, and role in serving local shopping and service requirements.
- (3) Within the Des Moines Marina property, allow commercial uses that are water dependent or related, serve marina users or promote public access to the shoreline.

10-03 **POLICIES**

10-03-01 Enhance the relationship between the Downtown Neighborhood and the shoreline through improved access to the Marina and Puget Sound.

10-03-02 Encourage the development of gateway features and focal points that contribute to the identity of the Downtown Neighborhood of Des Moines.

10-03-03 Promote a pedestrian-friendly sidewalk environment throughout downtown. Within the commercial zones, the sidewalk environment may include storefronts near the sidewalk, minimal interruption by vehicular driveways, awnings for weather protection, public open space, attractive landscaping, and integrated signs and lighting.

10-03-04 Encourage mixed use in the Downtown Commercial zone.

10-03-05 Building height should not adversely impact the adjacent street environment or nearby land uses.

10-03-06 Maintain 8th Avenue South as a local access street. Discourage commercial traffic from using 8th Avenue through project design and roadway improvements.

10-03-07 Prohibit commercial uses that detract from the retail, wholesale, and service uses permitted in the D-C zone. Allow light manufacturing uses in the commercial zones when: 1) products are sold on site at retail; and 2) manufacturing activities will not adversely impact surrounding properties.

10-03-08 Encourage use of alternative modes of transportation, including walking, bicycling, carpooling, and use of mass transit.

10-03-09 Ensure that off-street parking regulations reflect anticipated future demand. Continue to allow shared and off-site parking when no adverse parking impacts will result. Ensure that off-site parking is available at the time new uses are authorized.

10-03-10 Encourage new construction to incorporate design elements that provide view corridors, visual interest, and pedestrian scale. Require the terracing of upper floors of buildings.

10-03-11 Encourage new development to include public benefit features such as water fountains, bicycle racks, public rest rooms, outdoor seating, art, etc.

10-04 **STRATEGIES**

10-04-1 Create an integrated transportation system that includes a comprehensive parking strategy, pedestrian and bicycle network, and streetscape improvements.

10-04-2 Continue to allow uses and facilities that promote transit ridership, such as bus stop shelters, ticket offices, transit information kiosks, etc.

10-04-3 Ensure that street trees are planted throughout downtown.

10-04-4 Encourage use of shared driveways in order to minimize the number of locations where the sidewalk is interrupted by vehicular traffic.

10-04-5 Continue to allow residential uses in the areas west and south of the business district. Ensure that new development at the edge of the D-C Downtown Commercial zone has minimal impact upon nearby residences.

10-04-6 Allow dwellings above street-level commercial uses as a permitted use when specific conditions can be satisfied.

10-04-7 Allow automobile service and maritime uses as well as outdoor storage of product inventory where a pedestrian-friendly environment can be maintained or enhanced.

10-04-8 Allow light manufacturing activities with ancillary on-site retail sales of the manufactured product. Do not allow manufacturing uses that adversely impact surrounding properties. (chapter 18.27 DMMC)

10-04-9 As part of the next review of this Element, investigate the possibility of creating specific subarea plans for the Downtown.