

# AGENDA ITEM

## BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL City of Des Moines, WA

SUBJECT: Planning Agency Update on the  
Marina District Design Guidelines Review

FOR AGENDA OF: May 6, 2010

DEPT. OF ORIGIN: Planning, Building & Public  
Works

ATTACHMENTS:

DATE SUBMITTED: April 14, 2010

1. Draft Resolution 10-065
2. Draft Marina District Design Guidelines  
(March 8, 2010 draft)
3. March 22<sup>nd</sup> Open House Graphics
4. Overview of Design Guideline Elements

CLEARANCES:

- Planning, Building & Public Works \_\_\_\_  
 Legal \_\_\_\_

APPROVED BY CITY MANAGER  
FOR SUBMITTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

### Purpose and Recommendation

The purpose of this agenda item is for Des Moines Planning Agency to update City Council on the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of the Marina District Design Guidelines (MDDGs) that reflects the Agency's review and input (Attachment 1). The Planning Agency and staff recommended that City Council move forward with the review and adoption of the MDDGs by passing the following motion.

### **Suggested Motions:**

Motion 1: "I move to approve Draft Resolution No. 10-065 setting the public hearing date for the Zoning Code Reorganization on Thursday, June 24, 2009 at 7:30 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard."

Motion 2: "I move to direct staff to finalize the *Marina District Design Guidelines* as recommended by the Planning Agency, prepare a draft ordinance for Council consideration at a public hearing date on June 24, 2010."

Alternative Motion 2-1: "I move to direct staff to finalize the *Marina District Design Guidelines* as recommended by the Planning Agency with the following changes:  
\_\_\_\_\_ and prepare a  
draft ordinance for Council consideration at a public hearing on June 24, 2010."

Alternative Motion 2-2: “I move to direct Planning Agency to consider changes to the *Marina District Design Guidelines* as follows:

\_\_\_\_\_. Then staff is directed to prepare a draft ordinance for Council consideration and set a public hearing at a date to be established by the Mayor.”

## **Background**

In January 2009, Council adopted a vision and mission statement for the Marina District that captures the work program elements associated with Council goals and priorities, and provides the context and framework for the Downtown planning process, plan content and more specific projects that Council wants to emphasize. These were subsequently adopted into the Comprehensive Plan in November 2009 as the vision and goals for the Downtown Element and are embodied in the MDDGs.

In May 2009, staff completed draft design guidelines and a software-assisted height and view analysis for the Marina District. Council discussed the view analysis and design guidelines at their June 4, 2009 study session and June 27, 2009 retreat. In October 2009, Council remanded review of the Design Guidelines to the Planning Agency.

**Planning Agency Progress:** Over the past 6 months, the Planning Agency has met 10 times to discuss the draft MDDGs. Councilmember Dave Kaplan, liaison to the Planning Agency, attended the Agency’s November 16, 2009 meeting and provided the Council’s perspective regarding Downtown planning. Topics discussed included housing, job capacity, building heights, zoning issues such as sign code, and business development and attraction.

Planning Agency members expressed a need to figure out where Downtown is. Staff referenced previous Council discussions identifying S 223<sup>rd</sup> as the “heart” of the Downtown with access to the Marina and Beach Park and a desire to identify a smaller geographic area/s for focused planning.

Staff discussed the ability to create change incrementally through targeted public investments in a smaller geographic area, implementing design guidelines, enforcement of sign regulations, and getting property owners to clean up their sites. Planning Agency members expressed a desire to identify some things the City can begin to implement to foster change in the Downtown such as improving sidewalks, installing pedestrian scale lighting, and working with property owners to clean up their properties, buildings and signage.

**January 28, 2010 Council Briefing:** The Planning Agency discussed how review of the MDDGs has raised a number of questions that are directly related to Downtown planning. Topics that require further discussion and clarification with Council and staff include:

- Understanding what the community wants the Downtown to be in the future
- Understanding the developer issues and the make or break point for investing in Downtown Des Moines – look at feedback from Leadership Summit and developer forums; tools such as tax incentives for good design; use of developer agreements
- How to attract people to the Downtown – increased residential densities are needed in the Downtown for critical mass; we need places people want to come to

- How to control traffic through Downtown – declassifying SR 509 to a local street, reducing speed limits, and adding parallel or angle parking along MVD

**Public Outreach:** To date, three articles related to the development and review of the MDDGs have been published in the City Currents newsletter. Project information is posted on the City website and a Planning Agency e-mail address was established to provide additional opportunities for the community to provide input on the MDDGs.

Notice of the March 22, 2010 open house was published in the Des Moines/Highline Times and the Waterland Blog. Given a moderate turnout at the open house, a follow-up flyer was mailed out to residents and businesses in and around the Downtown Neighborhood to solicit additional input on the MDDGs as well as the Downtown planning work. The flyer was also distributed at the April 8<sup>th</sup> North Hill Community Council meeting. Staff is scheduled to give a presentation to the Des Moines Rotary on May 19<sup>th</sup>. All Planning Agency and City Council meetings are open for the public to attend and comment on the items as well.

**March 22, 2010 Open House:** The Planning Agency hosted an open house to provide an opportunity for the community to comment on the draft MDDGs. A number of display boards were developed to illustrate the major components of the MDDGs that address: Site Planning, Height, Bulk and Scale, Architectural Elements and Materials, Pedestrian Environment, Landscape Design, and Signs (Attachment 2). Several other boards provided examples of Mixed Use Design and Housing Design – attendees were asked to comment on what they liked or did not like about these images. Attendees were also asked to indicate how they use the Downtown, what would need to change for them to use the Downtown and what is missing. Comments received on boards are summarized below:

*Where do you live?* Twenty-two (22) people attended the open house including Planning Agency members and staff. People were asked to put a dot on the map by where they live; of those that responded nine were from the North Hill neighborhood, five from the Downtown, two from Central Des Moines and one from Zenith.

*How do you use Downtown? Put a dot by businesses, services and activities you use.* Responses are grouped by the number of dots each received: banking (10 dots); restaurant and dry cleaners (8 dots each); grocery/market (7 dots), gas station and marina (6 dots each); recreation and hair stylist/barber/spa (5 dots each); auto repair/parts and tavern (4 dots each); printer/shipping and fast food (3 dots each); entertainment, retail shopping, specialty shops, marine supply, car wash, insurance, pharmacy computer store and investments (2 dots each); medical/dental (1 dot), book store (1 dot), and other (1 dot). Responses to the following questions are recorded verbatim from each of the post-it notes.

*What would have to change for you to use the area?*

- more shopping, more restaurants
- coffee place “Starbucks” and shopping
- small boat launch
- sling type small boat launch

*What’s missing?*

- quality grocery – PCC Market, Trader Joe’s, Metropolitan Market
- art gallery, more restaurants and
- update theater, need entertainment outside of bars
- ice cream shop, hobby store

- boutiques (not Dushan's kind)
- restaurants on the water and close by
- services, shopping, fun, housing, public transportation, good restaurants
- meeting facilities at marina
- amenities (example: laundry) for marina guests and moorage

**Mixed Use Design: What do you think?** Photos were numbered 1-11 (see Attachment 2). Image #5 (pedestrian plaza) – this is good; I like. Image #6 (5-story with pedestrian stair climb) – too much; this is too crowded. Image #7 (pedestrian streetscape) – this is good.

**Housing: What do you think?** Photos were numbered 12-22. Image #12 (4-story mixed use with pedestrian connection) – typical building style, not innovative. Image #13 (5-story building) – tall buildings block out views; don't like. Image # 15 (pedestrian corridor with lots of trees) – I like. Image #18 (3 story brick building with ivy) – don't like. Image 19 (4-story building with courtyard and amenities) – I like (2). Image 21 (large green open space) – I like (2), great; general comment – Don't like too much like Bellevue.

**Landscape Design:** Good landscaping is critical – lots of green.

**Signs:** Images of poor signage design and cluttered signage – these kinds of signs need to go; tacky signs distracting. Images of sign examples the MDDGs are intended to foster – like fascia, yes.

**General Comments (both written and verbal):**

- Do more, add art shows, festivals, and things for community connecting.
- Des Moines is a nice place to pass through. No reason to shop here. Love, Burién.
- Height, Bulk and Scale -- I live near the Field House and have some views during the winter. Like the use of building modulation to reduce the overall size of buildings. Could see some taller buildings but wouldn't want them to block all views or to be too big. Maybe some areas are better for this than others. Varying roof heights would allow partial views to be maintained.
- Consider building a parking garage to meet parking needs.
- Leave the marina area for water-oriented activities versus other events such as car shows, runs, basketball tournaments and dog shows. In the past the Marina has closed on the key boating weekends to accommodate such activities thereby limiting access to the water by boaters and other recreational users.
- Comment Form: *Short-term* - I would like to see more amenities down at the Marina – maybe a coffee cart and a place to sit and see the water.  
*Long-term* – permanent fix for the landslide area - I think it distracts people and makes the area look unsafe and run down; Improve 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue with curb, gutter and sidewalks and appropriate on-street parking; Regarding building aesthetics the only “look” I don't care for is the brownstone – it looks great in NYC, but seems out of date for new construction on the West Coast; I don't like street trees for 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue – would rather see grass and shrubbery that needs little or no maintenance. I think the landscaping on 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue S looks unmaintained and brown – don't want this look at the Marina District.

## **Discussion**

Design Guidelines will help shape the form of new development by paying particular attention to site design, building form, architecture and public spaces. They provide a framework for creating diverse and high quality commercial and multi-family projects in a way that is consistent with the vision for the Marina District. Each section of these design guidelines includes graphic examples to assist project developers and their architects by illustrating the general intent of the City's guidelines and regulations. The graphic images are meant to be examples, and are not the only acceptable means of accomplishing the intent of the design standards. See Attachment 3 for an overview of each section of the MDDGs.

The MDDGs complement the development requirements established in the Des Moines Municipal Code (DMMC). The DMMC coupled with the Street Development Standards provide clear requirements for public rights-of-way and site and building requirements such as setbacks, lot coverage, landscape buffers, signage, and allowable land uses.

The Planning Agency has completed their review of the draft MDDGs. A primary goal of the Agency was to fashion a document that blends a sense of public vision with concrete and easily understood guidelines for designers and developers as they evaluate, plan, and implement redevelopment projects in the Downtown waterfront core. There was a desire to avoid being too prescriptive and rely on development regulations for specified limitations. Specific direction provided by the Agency included:

- Changing the use of the word “shall” (equates to less flexibility) to “should”
- Changing focus on what the City wants to see versus what we do not want
- Clarifying the intent of each guideline so it is easily understood by the user
- Adding relevant photos to provide more examples and emphasize what the City wants to see

Next steps in completing the MDDGs are:

- Obtain Council input and set public hearing date
- Complete SEPA review
- Draft Ordinance for Council consideration
- Hold public hearing

## **Financial Impact**

Design guidelines can establish a climate for investment for businesses, residents and property owners because the associated review process provides assurance that alterations and new construction by others will reinforce the design goals and vision for the neighborhood. Revitalization of the Downtown/Marina District will stimulate economic development in the business core. This in turn will help create jobs, new housing, a stronger tax base and tax revenues for the City of Des Moines.

## **Recommendation**

The Planning Agency and staff recommend that Council move forward with their review and adoption of the MDDGs for the Downtown Neighborhood. Staff recommends Council provide policy direction related to the Council's review of the MDDGs by passing Motion 1. Two alternative motions are also offered for Council consideration.