

1. Introduction

Background

Late in 1996, the Des Moines City Council adopted the *Marina Facility Master Plan*. The purpose of this plan was to determine what major repairs and capital replacements would be needed to keep the facility operating in its current configuration. Although the plan identified some long-term needs, its intent was to focus on what would be needed between 1996 and 2008, when the original bonds would be retired. At the same time, the Council also adopted a new rate plan that included a capital component to help fund the improvements. The major projects completed under that plan included replacement of the underground fuel tanks and delivery system, the repair of several hundred feet of the seawall, and the purchase of the quartermaster property.

In 1998, the Council directed the Marina staff to begin looking at longer-term capital needs. Since the recreational boating industry had changed significantly since the Marina began operation in 1970, the staff was directed to analyze the services and facilities offered to see if they matched both current and future boater needs. The result of the analysis was the *2001 Comprehensive Marina Master Plan*, which included elements of a long-term business plan for the Marina as well as a plan for replacing major capital assets. A significant element of the Plan included expanding the in-water guest moorage facilities at the Marina's north end and reconfiguration of the permanent moorage to accommodate larger boats.

In June 2004 a *Draft Preliminary Design Report* was prepared for the expanded guest moorage. Later that summer a *Commercial Development Feasibility Study* completed for the City of Des Moines illustrated the potential for commercial development immediately adjacent to the proposed guest moorage expansion. Based on the study's findings that some commercial development would be viable, it was decided to hold on the guest moorage expansion until upland development alternatives had been more fully evaluated.

This document represents an update to the *2001 Comprehensive Marina Master Plan*. It includes a preferred commercial development option based on changing conditions within the boating community and newly emerging opportunities to improve upland facilities and increase revenue streams, as well as further refinement of the permanent moorage reconfiguration options.

Marina Vision: When the Marina began operations in 1970 it primarily served the local boating public. However, as the community of Des Moines developed around the Marina, it has become a significant public asset for the downtown area and a place where the entire community can enjoy the unique qualities and character of Des Moines.

Goals

From the outset, the primary goal in this planning process was to focus on the Marina's core business activities and develop a plan to keep the facilities and services in high demand with recreational boaters. In keeping with the new Marina vision as a place for the general public, a second goal was to develop long-range plans for improving facilities used by non-boating visitors. Four tasks were identified to accomplish these goals.

- Develop a strategic investment plan for the Marina.
- Determine when and how each of the Marina's major assets will be managed, replaced, upgraded, or demolished.
- Develop a plan for the Marina uplands that slows vehicle traffic, provides adequate parking, creates safe and inviting pedestrian areas, and identifies facilities and amenities that serve the general public.
- Identify the highest and best use for Marina uplands so that the facility will be well positioned as community conditions evolve and new opportunities emerge.

Planning and Analysis Process

This update draws heavily on the work completed under the original 2001 Master Plan, including public outreach efforts, regular meetings with the City Council's Municipal Facilities Committee, interviews with Marina staff, and a variety of special studies. All background reports and information are available at the Marina office.

Several new studies have also been completed since 2001 and have been incorporated with this update. New studies and reports include the following.

- *Des Moines Marina Guest Moorage & Bulkhead Replacement Preliminary Design Report Draft.* The Design Report provides a detailed plan for the in-water expansion of guest moorage facilities and replacement of the timber bulkhead. The draft report was completed in June 2004 by Moffatt & Nichol.
- *Des Moines Marina: Commercial Development Feasibility Study.* The Feasibility Study evaluates the potential for commercial development on the Marina floor. The study was completed in August 2004 by Ravenhurst Development, Inc.
- *Des Moines Marina Master Plan Update Demand Assessment.* The Demand Assessment includes an analysis of market conditions and trends, as well as demand forecasts for in-water and upland facilities. The study was completed in September 2006 by BST Associates.
- *Public and Dry Storage Launch Evaluation.* The report evaluated the condition of two Marina boat launches. It was completed in August 2006 by Moffatt & Nichol.
- *City of Des Moines Electrical Upgrade Study.* This report evaluated the condition of the Marina's electrical distribution system. It was completed in June of 2003 by Wood/Harbinger Inc.