NORTHWEST NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

ADOPTED AS PART OF ENVISIONCR

Adopted June 13, 2017
ABOVE: Homes and Businesses in the 700 block of Ellis Blvd NW

COVER: New rowhomes in the 1300 block of Ellis Blvd NW
Acknowledgements

APPROVAL AND RECOMMENDING BODIES

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- Angie Cole

ADOPTION

This document was prepared by the Community Development & Planning Department of the City of Cedar Rapids.

The Northwest Neighborhood Action Plan was recommended for approval by the City Planning Commission in May of 2017 and adopted by City Council Resolution No. 0694-06-17 on June 13, 2017.
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How to Use this Plan

WHAT IS A NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN?

The Northwest Neighborhood Action Plan is a component of the City's comprehensive plan, EnvisionCR and is intended to be a guide for future decision making. The plan is not regulatory, meaning that it does not specifically require or prohibit any action by the City or residents, but instead provides guiding policy direction for the neighborhood.

EnvisionCR was adopted by the Cedar Rapids City Council on January 31, 2015. That plan is intended to be a living document with initiatives updated annually and the entire document refreshed over a 3 year period. The most recent update was approved by the City Council on March 28, 2017.

The StrengthenCR element of EnvisionCR specifically establishes a framework for future community planning through the development of Neighborhood Action Plans. These plans are intended to be partnerships with Certified Neighborhood Associations in Cedar Rapids. Certified Neighborhood Associations are resident-led Neighborhood Associations which have been approved for formal recognition by the City and have completed a Certification process that includes City-designated training sessions, conducting neighborhood outreach, holding regular meetings, and submitting an annual work plan to the City. This designation makes the neighborhood eligible for annual City funding and a candidate for Neighborhood Action Plans completed by the City.

The Northwest Neighborhood is the first Neighborhood Action Plan completed by the City of Cedar Rapids since the adoption of EnvisionCR. The City anticipates completing similar studies for other neighborhoods in the coming years.

HOW WAS THIS PLAN DEVELOPED?

This plan was developed by City Staff based on public input obtained from the neighborhood and was developed in accordance with existing adopted plans including EnvisionCR. Three open houses were held in the neighborhood. Each open house was advertised by sending postcards to all properties within the neighborhood, along with press releases and social media engagement. Further outreach was gathered through regular attendance at Northwest Neighborhood meetings, and by stakeholder focus group meetings.

At the first open house, on March 29, 2016, attendees were asked to participate in a visioning session for the neighborhood. Presented were questions about the future of the neighborhood and a summary of existing conditions.

At the second open house, draft goals for the neighborhood based on feedback from the first Open House were presented and attendees were asked to vote on specific action steps to meet these goals.

At the final open house, held on February 1, 2017, the final Goals and Action Steps were presented along with an overview of the Land Use Plan for the neighborhood.

Summaries of materials presented at open houses and of input received is available from the City's Website or the Community Development & Planning Department.
HOW IS THE DOCUMENT ORGANIZED?

On the following pages begins an Introduction section that describes the history of the Northwest Neighborhood and the existing conditions as of 2016. The Introduction provides context and background for the rest of the plan document.

After the introduction the plan is organized into four Elements. Each Element describes a particular aspect of the Northwest Neighborhood. The Elements for this plan include:

- Element I: Neighborhood Character & Placemaking
- Element II: Land Use
- Element III: Connectivity
- Element IV: Streetscape

Each Element has one or more Goals, which describe achievable outcomes for the neighborhood. Each Goal is a vision statement confirmed by public input through the development of the plan.

Within each Goal is a number of Action Steps, which are individual projects or policies that can be completed to help achieve the goal. Each Action Step has a responsible party and a timeline associated with it, which are described in detail below.

HOW ARE THE GOALS OF THE PLAN ACHIEVED?

The plan is implemented by the completion of the Action Steps described in this document. Being a Neighborhood Action Plan, several Action Steps are assigned to the Northwest Neighbors Neighborhood Association. The association is responsible for seeing that these action steps are placed on their annual work plan and work is begun in the timeframe indicated.

Most Action Steps are assigned to individual Departments within the City of Cedar Rapids. Each Department is responsible for evaluating and prioritizing the projects listed in this plan as part of their annual budgeting and work plan processes. These individual actions will still be considered alongside other necessary projects elsewhere in the City, and progress on their completion will be monitored as part of the annual review of EnvisionCR Initiatives. Resources and funding for projects identified in this and other plans will still be subject to City policy and the annual budget process, which is at the discretion of the City Council.

Some Action Steps relate to Capital Improvements necessary within the neighborhood, an example being the connection of 6th Street and Ellis Boulevard NW. Others are additional studies which will help plan for future development. Some Action Steps describe specific policies or ordinances that could be adopted by the City. In particular, the Land Use Element of this plan has specific recommendations for the ongoing update to the City’s Zoning Ordinance, called ReZone Cedar Rapids.

The Northwest Neighborhood Action Plan also has a role in Land Development processes, which are actions taken by the City to review and permit new development in the community. These include creation of new subdivisions, rezonings to allow for different development patterns, and approval of site plans and building plans for new construction. As is highlighted in the Land Use Element of this plan, the existing zoning does not match the vision for some areas of the neighborhood, and in many cases prevents replacement of buildings lost to the flood. Prior to the adoption of the new Zoning Ordinance, this plan should be used to evaluate and provide justification for projects that meet the spirit of this plan but which require a zone change or exceptions (variances) from the zoning ordinance. More guidance on this is found in the Land Use Element. After the adoption of the new Zoning Ordinance, justification for discretionary Land Development approvals should be subject to the approval standards in the Zoning Ordinance, although this document shall continue to be used as a reference for the intended character of the neighborhood as it redevelops.

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN
As a policy document for the City of Cedar Rapids under the City’s Comprehensive Plan, EnvisionCR, this plan is adopted by City Council Resolution. From time to time it may be necessary to update this document to reflect changing conditions, such as:

- to identify Action Steps which have been completed,
- to adjust timelines for Action Steps based on changing priorities,
- to update information in the document as conditions in the neighborhood change, or
- to add new Action Steps as they are identified.

As the neighborhood grows and changes, the City may elect in the future to undergo a new comprehensive planning process for the Northwest Neighborhood, and adopt a new plan document to replace this one.

The process for amending or updating this plan shall be the same as the initial adoption of this document, which is approval of a City Council Resolution after review and recommendation by the City’s Planning Commission.

A neighborhood business and homes at the corner of Ellis Boulevard and K Avenue NW
INTRODUCTION
IN THIS SECTION:

NORTHWEST NEIGHBORHOOD OVERVIEW
  • Neighborhood History
  • Resiliency after the 2008 Flood

NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE
  • Demographics
  • Housing
  • Schools
  • Amenities and Public Safety
  • Current Land Use:
Northwest Neighborhood Overview

NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY

The area represented by the Northwest Neighbors Neighborhood Association is centered along along Ellis Boulevard. The general boundaries are 1st Avenue to the south, 13th Street NW to the west, Ellis Park to the North, and the Cedar River to the east. The neighborhood area includes the historic Time Check area. After land developer Orville N. Hull subdivided portions of the west bank of the Cedar River in 1875, the area expanded rapidly. Subdivisions were composed of smaller lot sizes and priced competitively, making the area affordable to working class families seeking to locate near employment. A mix of flourmills, foundries, warehouses, and factories all flourished due to the railroad network, requiring a large workforce. At the turn of the century the neighborhood was densely settled by employees of the cereal mills, the starch factory and different railroad shops.

As the City of Cedar Rapids grew into a railroad hub, both passenger and freight service attracted railroad workers to the western bank. Figure 1 shows an early plat map with railroad lines framing emerging neighborhoods. Railroad employees built and lived in small homes, rooming houses, and apartments. They often received post-dated paychecks from railroad companies unable to fully finance their payroll. Local banks allowed workers to deposit the checks under creative credit arrangements with the railroads. The unorthodox checks became known as “time checks.” As it flourished in tandem with the railroads, the neighborhood itself took on the name.

The G Avenue area was an especially popular area for railroad workers and was located near a former streetcar route depicted in Figure 2(1882). The former Cedar Rapids Pump Company warehouse and office building remains a landmark of the area. The Cedar Rapids Pump Company, established in 1881 and incorporated in 1885, manufactured and distributed pumps until 1929. The warehouse was constructed on the plant grounds in 1900. The building was converted to dwelling units and is currently known as the Ellis Urban Lofts.

Another element of the neighborhood’s rich cultural history is the “Al-Nadi Al-Islami Moslem Temple”, or Mother Mosque which opened on February 15th, 1934. The Mosque was completed by members of the Syrian and Lebanese immigrant community who settled in Cedar Rapids in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s. The structure is listed on the National Register of
Historic Places and was the first building designed and constructed specifically as a house of worship for Muslims in the United States and is also the oldest surviving place of worship for Muslims in America.

The neighborhood is also adjacent to one of the City’s first and largest parks, Ellis Park, established in 1901. It brought tennis courts, gardens, and a golf course to the area and took advantage of the riverfront.

Residential development reflected the neighborhood’s working-class roots: lots were narrow with little yard space between modestly sized homes. Many were 1 ½ story homes with front porches and gables. Decorative shingle work was inexpensive but allowed for creativity of the homebuilder. Homes sprang up in tandem with business and industry opportunities. As railroads declined, the presence of companies like Quaker Oats continued to offer employment to those in the area, maintaining the blue-collar character established in the 19th century. Orville Hull’s vision to profit from workforce residential development continues to live on in the distinctive mixed-use character of the neighborhood today.

RESILIENCY AFTER THE 2008 FLOOD

On June 13, 2008, the Cedar River crested at 31.12 feet, more than 11 feet higher than the previous record flood in Cedar Rapids.

The flood impacted over 18,000 residents in over 10 square miles of the City, including nearly all of the Northwest Neighborhood study area.

The Northwest Neighborhood's riverfront location rivals the legacy of the railroad in shaping its past and future. The area has experienced significant floods over the course of its history and was one of the neighborhoods hit hardest by the 31-foot flood of 2008. The damage incurred from flood waters and debris has had lasting ramifications for the neighborhood’s housing stock, commercial and industrial activity, and plans for future development. Many residents and business owners participated in the Neighborhood Planning Process immediately following the flood and have continued to give input in subsequent planning efforts for a finalized flood control strategy, parks and recreation master plan, and business corridor analysis for the neighborhood.

Al Pierson, 2016 president of the Northwest Neighbors Neighborhood Association, was part of the original Steering Committee in 2009. He is one of several business owners to have reopened
businesses, restaurants, and other local commercial ventures in the neighborhood. Some local businesses, like the Boys & Girls Club, A&W, and Chirp’s, were not re-established after the flood. Employment opportunities have also changed with the exit of employers like Swiss Valley and Souvenir.

After the flood of 2008 the City of Cedar Rapids established several efforts to assist distressed property owners move on after the event. These efforts ranged from acquisition, demolition, rehabilitation, and new construction. The programs had to work in tandem with the flood control system and greenway plan in order to plan for the future protection of the area. This has made room for resiliency and transition in the Northwest Neighborhood Area. An example is illustrated by the turn-of-the-century homes leading up to an urban farm on E Avenue which grows produce next to the Urban Lofts housing project. Over one hundred new homes have been constructed, and many more renovated since 2008. A new recreation center, and plans for a future gateway to the river memorial to those who lost homes in the flood, captures the coexistence of loss and revitalization in the neighborhood. New goals, programs, and policies affecting the neighborhood must be considered not only in relation to the rest of the City’s recovery but in a wider context of state and federal regulations and funding cycles due to the various funding sources used to recover.

As a community, the neighborhood represents a mix of income levels and racial and cultural backgrounds as shown in Table 1. In terms of population Black and Hispanic (the second and third largest population in the neighborhood) make up 12% of the neighborhood compared to 10% city-wide. Neighborhood residents take pride in their diverse heritage. Many residents and families have grown up in the area, some for generations, creating a neighborhood strongly committed to its residents and progress as a community. With a legacy of civic engagement and proactive leadership, the community possesses a wealth of expertise regarding its needs, hopes, and assets.

The boundaries of the neighborhood are depicted on the map included in Figure 4. Ellis Boulevard runs through the heart of the community. Its mix of different housing types and retail opportunities give it the potential to emerge as a vibrant backbone in an area that has undergone immense change. The proximity to the downtown core gives this area the potential to develop into the next desirable mixed use hub. The area’s colorful history and proven resilience set the stage for the city’s first Neighborhood Action Plan following the adoption of the comprehensive plan EnvisionCR in 2015. The goals laid out in EnvisionCR will be brought to the neighborhood level, shaping a dynamic future for residents of this area.

Neighborhood Profile

DEMOGRAPHICS

Current neighborhood demographics and other existing conditions can highlight potential concerns and strengths to build on. Data from a variety of public sources has been compiled with resident input to present a concise overview of the Northwest Neighborhood and situate it within the wider context of Cedar Rapids. Unless cited otherwise, demographic and housing data comes from 2014 American Community Survey data for the seven census block groups partially contained by the Northwest Neighbors Neighborhood Association boundary (Figure 4). Each block group contains between 500-1,700 residents.

As of 2014, the neighborhood had nearly 7,000 residents, about 5% of the total population for Cedar Rapids. The neighborhood has lost nearly 2,000 residents since the year 2000; in contrast, the city’s population grew by 6% in the same time period. Much of the neighborhood’s population...
loss can be attributed to the 2008 flood. Yet even with the decrease, in 2014 the neighborhood had a higher population density than the rest of Cedar Rapids, with about 1,400 more people per square mile.

The neighborhood has a slightly higher proportion of black and Hispanic residents than Cedar Rapids as a whole. For two block groups within the neighborhood, black residents comprise 10-20% of the population; the same is true for Hispanic and Latino residents. These percentages are well above citywide levels. The neighborhood is slightly younger than the city with a higher proportion of residents 18 to 34 years of age and lower proportion of residents between 55 and 64. The median age is 31, compared to 36 for the city.

Of the neighborhood’s almost 3,000 households, 56% are family households, compared to 59% in Cedar Rapids. 41% of all households contain married couples, while 15% are led by one householder (Table 2). The neighborhood has a higher proportion of larger non-family households than the rest of the city, while the average household size for both is 2.3 persons (Table 3).

Median household income levels range widely across the seven block groups contained within the neighborhood boundary. Table 4 shows median income levels twice as high in some block groups as in others. The median household income for the neighborhood as a whole is $39,679, nearly $15,000 below the citywide median household income. Similarly, the proportion of the population living in poverty varies within the neighborhood, from as little as 3% to as high as 39%, depending on the block group. Poverty is measured by the U.S. Census Bureau by comparing pre-tax income to a set food diet amount that is subject to inflation.

Overall, the neighborhood has a higher poverty rate than the city: 16% compared to 12%, respectively. Unemployment rates range from 0% to 14%, but the overall rate for the neighborhood is similar to the city’s: 5% compared to 6%, respectively. In 2012, an outside consulting firm projected low future employment opportunities within the neighborhood boundary. Residents have expressed a desire to attract more businesses to the area and participated in a business corridor study for Ellis Boulevard in 2013. Despite low unemployment overall, there may indeed be a present need to bring in new work opportunities like the ones that supported settlements on the west bank of the Cedar River and gave rise to the neighborhood.

The Northwest Neighborhood has experienced a decrease in population since 2000 which can be attributed to the 2008 flood. Factors like job opportunities and access to amenities should be considered as contributing factors of growth and decline. While unemployment is low in

### Table 1: Basic Demographics

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<th>Race</th>
<th>Northwest Neighborhood</th>
<th>Cedar Rapids</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Alone</td>
<td>5,979</td>
<td>111,558</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black or African Alone</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>8,164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Alone</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>2,605</td>
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<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>3,791</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino (any race)</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>4,541</td>
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<table>
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<th>Sex</th>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3,566</td>
<td>62,363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3,365</td>
<td>65,646</td>
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<table>
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<th>Age Distribution</th>
<th>Northwest Neighborhood</th>
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<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>1,490</td>
<td>29,388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 to 34</td>
<td>2,080</td>
<td>33,684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 to 44</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>15,922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 to 54</td>
<td>892</td>
<td>16,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 to 64</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>15,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and over</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>17,068</td>
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| Median Age                  | 31                     | 36           |

### Table 1: Household Type

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<th>Northwest Neighborhood</th>
<th>Cedar Rapids</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total Households</td>
<td>2,923</td>
<td>53,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Households</td>
<td>1,626</td>
<td>31,436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1,193</td>
<td>23,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Householder</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>2,337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Householder</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>5,821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Family</td>
<td>1,297</td>
<td>21,689</td>
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</table>
the neighborhood overall, a high proportion in some areas, combined with a relatively high proportion of young adults, signals an ongoing need for business opportunities to draw upon the neighborhood’s workforce. Attention to education and professional development should accompany business growth; Housing development, explored below, must balance a diversity of types and owner and renter opportunities to keep neighborhoods stable and inclusive.

**HOUSING**

The Northwest Neighborhood (as defined by census block groups) had just over 3,000 housing units in 2014. Of these, 13% were vacant, compared to 8% at the city level. To date nearly 400 homes have been demolished due to flood damage and/or due to projected flood prevention projects. The largest concentration of demolitions occurred between the Cedar River on the east and Ellis Boulevard on the west, although a significant number have also been cleared from the neighborhood’s core (Figure 5). Residents’ comments reveal concern over potential future flooding and abandoned and blighted properties.

Demolitions due to flooding have left an abundance of green space which has been incorporated into the flood control system and gateway plan. Although the majority of units are single-family detached homes, other housing types blend into the neighborhood fabric due to its compact development pattern (Table 5). Townhomes along Ellis Boulevard, a number of multifamily projects along 1st Avenue SW, and additional new housing developments—such as the urban lofts—bring housing diversity to the area. Of all occupied units, 69% are owner-occupied and 31% are home to renter households, identical to Cedar Rapids’ overall figures.

In addition to analysis at the block group level, data from the Cedar Rapids Assessor was compiled for 1,554 residential structures within NWNNA borders exclusively. The average assessed value of these homes falls just under $82,000, and the average size is 1,134 square feet (sf). Over 80% of dwellings are categorized as small to medium (less than 1,500 sf in size). The neighborhood’s housing stock is substantially more aged than the rest of Cedar Rapids: the median year for home construction was 1916, over one century ago. In contrast, 1970 is the median year for all homes built citywide.
Flood recovery has brought many new homes to the area, however. Investment facilitated by the city’s Rebuilding Ownership Opportunities Together (ROOTS) program has induced construction of 1,178 single family homes, in addition to 233 multifamily units to date. Many ROOTS homes have surpassed and even doubled pre-flood assessment values. Despite significant recovery through the ROOTs program, Multi-family New Construction, and Rehabilitation programs, neighborhood median housing values still fall below city levels. Values may be threatened in the future by delayed implementation of the flood control system. The majority of homes are assessed between $50,000 and $100,000 (Figure 7). The median value for the City of Cedar Rapids is $134,000, more than $50,000 above neighborhood median values.

The affordability of the Northwest Neighborhood was cited by residents as one of its strengths, part of its workforce-friendly legacy. Yet census data from 2014 shows the neighborhood may not be affordable to all who call it home. Over 25% of neighborhood homeowners are considered cost-burdened, paying more than 30% of their income on housing and potentially compromising other necessities as a result (Table 7). In three of the neighborhood’s seven block groups, more than 40% of homeowners are spending too much for housing. Overall, 35% of renters were paying unaffordable rents in 2014. Households paying more than half their income on housing are considered extremely cost burdened and

**TABLE 5: HOUSING UNITS BY STRUCTURE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NORTHWEST NEIGHBORHOOD</th>
<th>CEDAR RAPIDS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Units</strong></td>
<td>3,342 (100%)</td>
<td>57,819 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 unit, detached</td>
<td>2,190 (66%)</td>
<td>36,825 (64%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 unit, attached</td>
<td>82 (2%)</td>
<td>2,317 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 units</td>
<td>193 (6%)</td>
<td>1,256 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 or 4 units</td>
<td>110 (3%)</td>
<td>2,617 (5%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 to 9 units</td>
<td>241 (7%)</td>
<td>3,534 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 or more units</td>
<td>509 (15%)</td>
<td>9,324 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile</td>
<td>17 (1%)</td>
<td>1,946 (3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Together (ROOTS) program has induced construction of 1,178 single family homes, in addition to 233 multifamily units to date. Many ROOTS homes have surpassed and even doubled pre-flood assessment values. Despite significant recovery through the ROOTs program, Multi-family New Construction, and Rehabilitation programs, neighborhood median housing values still fall below city levels. Values may be threatened in the future by delayed implementation of the flood control system. The majority of homes are assessed between $50,000 and $100,000 (Figure 7). The median value for the City of Cedar Rapids is $134,000, more than $50,000 above neighborhood median values.

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and 42% of renters are paying 30% or more for housing. While rental housing is more affordable compared with the rest of the city, affordability will remain an important consideration and asset to preserve as development continues.

### TABLE 6: HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

<table>
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<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total Residential Structures</td>
<td>1,554</td>
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<tr>
<td>Median Assessed Value</td>
<td>$80,950</td>
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<tr>
<td>Median Total Living Area (sf)</td>
<td>1,120</td>
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<tr>
<td>Median Lot Size (sf)</td>
<td>5,600</td>
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<td>Median Year Built</td>
<td>1916</td>
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### TABLE 7: AFFORDABILITY

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<tr>
<th>Threshold</th>
<th>Owner Occupied</th>
<th>Renter Occupied</th>
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<tr>
<td>&gt;30%</td>
<td>&gt;50%</td>
<td>&gt;30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW Neighborhood</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cedar Rapids</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>6%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### SCHOOLS

The Northwest Neighborhood is served by the Cedar Rapids Community School District. District-wide demographics are more diverse than neighborhood-level data, shown by Table 8. The percentage of students across the district receiving free- or reduced-lunch is 44%, and 3% of students are English Language Learners.

Harrison Elementary and Roosevelt Middle School are located within the neighborhood itself. High school students in the Northwest Neighborhood are split between Kennedy High School in the northeast quadrant and Thomas Jefferson High School to the south. While test scores for the 2014-15 school year indicate proficiency below state levels for most grade levels, residents express pride in their schools and teachers, and the principal of Roosevelt Middle School was recognized by the School Administrators of Iowa as the Middle Level Principal of the Year for 2016.

The Linn County Childhood Development Center is located near Roosevelt Middle School and provides early childhood education services for low-income households. Full-day programming for children three to five years of age gives parents the opportunity to pursue educational and professional goals.

According to the 2010 US Census, from 2000 to 2010 a total of 6,329 residents citywide were lost in census blocks affected by the 2008 Flood while 11,900 residents were added elsewhere in the community.
AMENITIES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

The neighborhood has many amenities that add to its character and residents’ quality of life. A multiuse, riverfront trail runs along 1st Street NW connecting Riverfront Park to the north end of the neighborhood, providing access to nearby Ellis Park. At 93 acres, Ellis Park is one of the largest in the city. A boat ramp, ski show, and Shakespeare Garden are among its iconic elements. It is a significant amenity, providing the neighborhood access to a public pool, golf course, and softball fields. According to the Parks and Recreation Department, 82% of residents in the Northwest Quadrant utilize the park. Time Check Park to the east of Ellis Boulevard provides additional greenspace and playground equipment. Under the city’s flood control strategy, a new Greenway will absorb the riverfront trail and Time Check Park while adding 70 acres of open space to the neighborhood. A vacant parcel at the corner of O Ave and 6th Street will be the future site of the Gateway Memorial to neighborhood history and the impact of the 2008 flood.

The newest addition to the neighborhood also comes in the wake of the 2008 flood. In 2016, a $4.9 million Northwest Recreation Center opened on the site of Harrison Elementary School. The center replaces the flood-damaged Time Check Recreation Center and incorporates architectural elements from the Harrison school building. The 16,000-square-foot facility includes a multi-purpose community room, game room, computer facilities, classroom space, and a gymnasium. The city and school district have come up with a partnership agreement for sharing facilities to maximize residents’ access to recreational amenities. Residents hope to see a comprehensive mix of programming, taking both youth and senior needs into consideration.

St. James United Methodist Church, St. Patrick’s Church, and Olivet Presbyterian Church, and the Salvation Army have all been cited as neighborhood landmarks or assets by residents; several other churches also serve the area. The iconic Mother Mosque of North America functions as a cultural center in the neighborhood.

Proximity of the Northwest Neighborhood to the downtown gives residents access to medical and financial services that are not available within the neighborhood boundaries. First Federal Credit Union is located near 1st Avenue SW, while many banks are located south in Kingston Village and the downtown. The Northwest Neighborhood has direct access to a few small convenience stores and local shops such as Casey’s, Flamingo Restaurant and Pierson’s Flower Shop. Dining opportunities and groceries are relatively scarce, something residents hope will change. Some services missing from the neighborhood can be found downtown or in surrounding neighborhoods; a Hy-Vee is located 0.5 miles outside the neighborhood’s westernmost edge.

The area has been well-served by Cedar Rapids transit services, as the entire neighborhood is within half mile of a transit stop. Two routes currently service the area. Route 1 runs north-south and provides access to the west side of Cedar Rapids and the downtown area. Route 8 runs east-west through the southern end of the neighborhood along B Avenue NW. This route also provides access to the west side of Cedar Rapids and downtown. Other transit routes are made available to residents of the neighborhood given the proximity to the Ground Transportation Center that is located approximately a mile and half from the neighborhood. Other transportation benefits include the neighborhoods proximity and access to Interstate 380 as a connector to other communities.

Safety of the neighborhood, as measured by number of crimes, has fluctuated minimally in the past seven years. The number of crimes reported every year since 2009 has been between 308 and 421. The crimes with the highest average frequency in the past seven years have been theft, miscellaneous crime, and burglary with annual averages of 58, 52 and 44 occurrences. Crime data recorded reflects a sharp decline after 2009 due to the population drain caused from the 2008 flood.
INTRODUCTION

COMMUNITY BUILDING

Residents’ long-standing commitment to the neighborhood and partnerships between community organizations have sustained tightknit relationships over time and helped the neighborhood in the midst of great change. Saint James United Methodist Church became a significant hub in the aftermath of the 2008 flood, pooling basic resources and temporarily hosting volunteers and staff from other organizations. Matthew 25, a faith-based non-profit, was one of those organizations. It initiated a neighborhood revitalization program called Block By Block for flood-impacted areas outside the proposed levee system. At least 60% of a block’s homeowners had to commit to the program for the block to participate. Targeted home renovations under the program transformed blocks near Ellis Boulevard early on after the flood. In addition, Habitat for Humanity and other developers have constructed over 100 homes in the neighborhood since 2011. Coupled with the city’s ROOTS program, these programs have improved access to home ownership to low- to moderate-income households (80% or lower of the Area Median Income level) and contributed to re-establishing a population diminished by the flood.

Beyond housing, several vacant lots adjacent to the railroad tracks between F and G Avenues NW have been transformed into an urban farm, part of an eco-initiative by Matthew 25. Harrison Elementary and Roosevelt Middle School are two of four schools receiving hands-on gardening and food education programming, cultivating a new food culture that celebrates healthy, sustainable choices.

In 2015, the Northwest Neighbors Neighborhood Association (NWNNA) achieved the designation of a Certified Neighborhood Association through the city’s Neighborhood Services Delivery program, giving the NWNNA access to $10,000 annually for eligible activities. Ongoing communication with city staff and attendance at city meetings keeps neighborhood leaders informed about upcoming events, best practices for neighborhood involvement, and development throughout Cedar Rapids. The NWNNA holds monthly meetings at the Flamingo Restaurant, located on Ellis Boulevard, a local favorite that has made a full comeback after being severely damaged in the flood. Down the street, the NWNNA Resource Center is open twice a week and by appointment. It provides information on events and community resources, a youth reading program, and computer access as an Iowa Workforce Development “Virtual Access Point.” The NWNNA donates to Olivet Mission and local schools, and it provides bus tickets to help residents with transit. Events like the annual Block Party and Ellis Rockin’ Reunion have drawn as many as 800 community members together since 2014.
LAND USE

The current zoning ordinance designates 69.9% of land in the Northwest for single-family housing. Zones R-2, R-3, and RTN require minimum lot sizes of 7,200 sf; 6,000 sf; and 4,200 sf, respectively. Many lots in the neighborhood, including vacant parcels, are smaller than 4,000 sf and are thus difficult to develop and/or non-conforming. Attached single-family and two-family dwellings are permissible in the neighborhood’s core towards the southern end of Ellis Boulevard. Zones for multi-family housing, commercial, and industrial uses are largely restricted to south of G Avenue; however a few commercial zones along Ellis Boulevard allow for neighborhood-level services, dining, and retail.

A number of other interconnected factors affect the future land use and development of the Northwest Neighborhood. Since the flood of 2008 a large amount of open space exists on the east side of the neighborhood along the Cedar River. These and other parcels were acquired by the City after the flood of 2008 in order to implement a series of levees for the flood control system. Some now contain ROOTS homes or other developments, while many are still vacant. The future of these parcels and other infill construction depends on the completion of the flood control system, which will extend from Ellis Park in the north to the raised I-380 deck in the south. Gates will be located near Ellis Park, Union Pacific Railroad Tracks, and at O and F Avenues. Between L and K Avenues, the levee will have a 400-foot wall that can be removed for connectivity.

As part of the Greenway Parks Planning Process many of the acquired parcels will be incorporated into a 70-acre "Time Check Greenway" along with the existing Ellis Trail and Time Check Park. The new park will incorporate many of the city-owned parcels, the existing Ellis Trail, and Time Check Park. Designs show playgrounds, soccer and rugby fields, community gardens, a dog park, and several locations for public art. Flood control projects will not be completed for 15-20 years.

Land extending approximately one block to the east and west of Ellis Boulevard was approved as a Viable Business Corridor, creating opportunities for restricted development prior to the completion of the levee system. The intersections of Ellis Boulevard at O, K, and E Avenues were identified in a 2013 Viable Business Corridor study as future hubs of higher-intensity development and activity. Short-to mid-term development will be focused on these areas and must comply with city ordinances regarding development in the flood plain.

The ReZone initiative is another influencing factor. Zoning for the Northwest neighborhood will change as the City of Cedar Rapids undertakes a comprehensive zoning code update emphasizing the form and context of place rather than separation of uses. The update will align the City's regulatory framework with the goals and objectives outlined in EnvisionCR and the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). Under EnvisionCR, nearly half of the Northwest neighborhood is designated for Urban Medium-Intensity development, which allows residential densities between 4 and 24 dwelling units per acre (DU/A). Urban Medium-Intensity development also allows non-residential or mixed use densities at 1.0 FAR. At present,

### TABLE 9: CURRENT ZONING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZONING CATEGORY</th>
<th>% OF LAND</th>
<th>ACRES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential - Single Unit</td>
<td>59.9%</td>
<td>248.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential - Two Unit</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential - Multi-Unit</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>62.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office-Service</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 10: FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAND USE TYPOLOGY AREA</th>
<th>% OF LAND</th>
<th>ACRES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flood Study Area and Open Space</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>105.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban - Low Intensity</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban - Medium Intensity</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>200.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban - High Intensity</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the neighborhood averages 3-4 DU/A, based on assessor data for residential structures and approximated land area not slated for flood control projects. However, measured individually, some blocks may have densities closer to 5-6 DU/A.

Residents have expressed the need for expanded grocery shopping, dining, and business opportunities in the neighborhood. Some residents desire to preserve single-family character in the neighborhood—especially west of Ellis—while others are enthusiastic about mixing single-family, condos, townhomes and businesses east of Ellis Blvd. Urban Medium-Intensity development will give residents the opportunity to see a wide range of goals realized. Future development can incorporate a mix of residential, commercial, office, service, and community spaces according to the needs of the neighborhood.

A portion of land extending south from Time Check Park contains service, retail, dining, industrial warehouses, and a scattering of large vacant lots. It is designated for High-Intensity Urban use, including high-density residential and mixed-use development and industrial uses. A small portion of land in the southeast corner is designated “Downtown,” which allows intensive and mixed-use development and emphasizes the link between the neighborhood’s future development and ongoing revitalization of the city’s core and neighboring Kingston Village. In contrast, development in the northwest corner—where topography restricts development—is designated for Urban Low-Intensity and will be focused on neighborhood-level needs.
INTRODUCTION

Figure 11: The historic Mother Mosque in the 1300 block of 9th Street NW

Figure 12: Business and vacant land at the intersection of Ellis Boulevard and O Avenue NW, a site with infill potential and future gateway through the Flood Control System to the Greenway
ELEMENT I: NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AND PLACEMAKING
IN THIS ELEMENT:

GOAL 1: PROVIDE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT AND INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SOCIAL OFFERINGS

- **Action Step 1**: Identify gaps in neighborhood activities and create additional programs to fill gaps.
- **Action Step 2**: Evaluate and explore ways to enhance the implementation of SAFE-CR to address code violations and nuisances within the neighborhood.

GOAL 2: PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE CHARACTER OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD TO CREATE AN ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITY

- **Action Step 1**: Review locations identified in the Visual Arts Commission Gap Analysis as possible locations for future public art. Encourage artwork from local artists.
- **Action Step 2**: Promote home repair and other housing related classes for homeowners, landlords, and renters.
- **Action Step 3**: Install a memorial to recognize the impact of the 2008 flood on the Time Check neighborhood.
- **Action Step 4**: Create a historic walking tour of the neighborhood with kiosks highlighting points of interest.
- **Action Step 5**: Work on a branding effort for the neighborhood to be used for gateways, signage, and marketing.
- **Action Step 6**: Design and install wayfinding signage at strategic locations throughout the neighborhood, including streets and trails as part of communitywide efforts.
- **Action Step 7**: Identify options for gateways at select points along the neighborhood boundary.
- **Action Step 8**: Use Flood Control System gates as signature entrances into the neighborhood.
The Northwest Neighborhood is a traditional core neighborhood with small homes, businesses, and civic uses arranged on a grid system of streets and alleyways. **Neighborhood Character and Placemaking** refers to the built environment and unique identity of the neighborhood. Elements that contribute to Neighborhood Character and Placemaking include: gateways, parks and open space, public art, the future Flood Control System and building placement and style.

Large trees line most streets, creating a sense of enclosure and providing ample greenery to dense rows of homes. In addition to serving as landscaping, the trees provide shade and reduce winds which can help to reduce energy costs and prove an added benefit to both homeowners and pedestrians. Between 16 and 20 homes may occupy a single 400-ft block, with nearly 30 homes occupying longer blocks. While composed predominantly of early 20th century single-family homes, the density and sense of enclosure within the neighborhood achieves a distinctly urban character where mixed-use structures and multi-family housing blend into the neighborhood fabric and meet a variety of neighborhood needs.

Ellis Boulevard runs north-south through the heart of the neighborhood, where a few commercial and dining opportunities add to a primarily residential core. Several blocks of industrial uses pick up abruptly where Ellis Boulevard ends at E Avenue. Further south there is a mix of businesses and restaurants along 1st Avenue SW. Large surface parking lots and inconsistent setbacks put this area at odds with the compact development pattern of the rest of the neighborhood, which otherwise incorporates a number of institutional and civic buildings within a traditional grid. Several churches add to the mix of commercial and residential development on Ellis Boulevard, and the Mother...
Mosque lies two blocks west of Ellis amongst single-family homes. Harrison Elementary and new recreation center are further west.

The area east of Ellis Boulevard cannot be characterized apart from the impacts of the 2008 flood. Vacant lots, many of them now city-owned, interrupt what would otherwise be seamless street-facing homes. Blocks in this area are composed of isolated houses disconnected from one another, in stark contrast with the connected grid system characterizing the rest of the neighborhood. Flood prevention measures restrict development in this part of the neighborhood, most of which lies in the 100-year flood plain.

**GOAL 1:**

**PROVIDE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT AND INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SOCIAL OFFERINGS**

The Action Steps under this goal relate to how the neighborhood can help build a sense of place and community. Neighborhood activities help create a sense of place and community that brings neighbors together and makes the neighborhood more appealing to potential residents. Evaluation of the effectiveness of code enforcement measures will help ensure that the neighborhood remains physically attractive and safe for all.

**Action Step 1:**

**IDENTIFY GAPS IN NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVITIES AND CREATE ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS TO FILL GAPS**

Through monthly meetings and holding several neighborhood events throughout the year, the Northwest Neighbors Neighborhood Association has helped to create connections and strengthen the sense of community in the Northwest Neighborhood.

Annual neighborhood events include the Ellis Rockin’ Reunion, National Night Out, and neighborhood picnics. In an effort to continue building connections, the Northwest Neighbors Neighborhood Association will work to identify any gaps that may exist in neighborhood activities and create a plan to fill those gaps with additional neighborhood programs.

**Timeline – Within 1 year of plan adoption**

You can find out more about the Northwest Neighbors Neighborhood Association at their website: [www.nwnna.net](http://www.nwnna.net)
Action Step 2:

EVALUATE AND EXPLORE WAYS TO ENHANCE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SAFE-CR TO ADDRESS CODE VIOLATIONS AND NUISANCES WITHIN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The City adopted Secure And Friendly Environments in Cedar Rapids (SAFE-CR) to help address nuisance conditions on properties which are detrimental to the enjoyment of neighborhoods. SAFE-CR partners with residents by attending neighborhood meetings regularly in an effort to create a safe environment where residents can share concerns and to provide updates on previously reported nuisance properties. Evaluation of SAFE-CR will be conducted to identify possible areas for improvement to ensure program effectiveness.

Timeline – 2 to 3 years from plan adoption

GOAL 2:

PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE CHARACTER OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD TO CREATE AN ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITY

This goal describes various steps that the neighborhood, the City, and other stakeholders can take to continue to enhance the character of the neighborhood. Physical improvements to the neighborhood include a proposed flood memorial, future public art, wayfinding signage, streetscape improvements, and others. Other actions including promoting education about home repair and maintenance.

Action Step 1:

REVIEW LOCATIONS IDENTIFIED IN THE VISUAL ARTS COMMISSION GAP ANALYSIS AS POSSIBLE LOCATIONS FOR FUTURE PUBLIC ART. ENCOURAGE ARTWORK FROM LOCAL ARTISTS

Public art can play a major role in helping to create sense of place. A Gap Analysis was conducted in 2016 to identify specific locations throughout the city that are strong candidates for public art. With the help of the Visual Arts Commission and the Northwest Neighbors Neighborhood Association, city staff will review the locations identified within the Northwest Neighborhood boundary and consider the locations as artwork becomes available. (Get map from Seth).

Timeline – Within 1 year of plan adoption
Action Step 2:

**PROMOTE HOME REPAIR AND OTHER HOUSING RELATED CLASSES FOR HOMEOWNERS, LANDLORDS, AND RENTERS**

One priority that became apparent during the input gathering process is maintenance of existing properties. The Northwest Neighborhood contains just under three thousand homes. In an effort to encourage and facilitate the maintenance of these properties, the Northwest Neighbors Neighborhood Association will gather information on home repair and rehabilitation classes and share the information at neighborhood meetings, newsletters, and the neighborhood website.

**Timeline – Within 1 year of plan adoption**

Action Step 3:

**INSTALL A MEMORIAL TO RECOGNIZE THE IMPACT OF THE 2008 FLOOD ON THE TIME CHECK NEIGHBORHOOD**

The Flood of 2008 resulted in the demolition of nearly four hundred homes in the Northwest Neighborhood. The Northwest Neighbors Neighborhood Association is working with various partners to raise funds to install a memorial to be placed in Time Check to recognize the impact the flood had on the neighborhood. The memorial is anticipated to be installed the summer of 2018 to mark the ten year anniversary of the flood.

**Timeline – Within 1 year of plan adoption**

Action Step 4:

**CREATE A HISTORIC WALKING TOUR OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD WITH KIOSKS HIGHLIGHTING POINTS OF INTEREST**

In partnership with the History Center, Coe College, and the African American Museum of Iowa, the City of Cedar Rapids is working on a city-wide historic sites project that highlights key points of interest throughout the city. Around 175 locations have been identified to be included in the project, several of which are located within the Northwest Neighborhood boundary. As funding becomes available, kiosks, plaques, or other historical markers will be installed to share information on how each specific location contributes to the history of Cedar Rapids.

**Timeline – 2 to 3 years from plan adoption**
Action Step 5:

**WORK ON A BRANDING EFFORT FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD TO BE USED FOR GATEWAYS, SIGNAGE, AND MARKETING.**

Establishing a neighborhood brand can help to strengthen sense of place and pride for the Northwest Neighborhood. The City of Cedar Rapids will work with the neighborhood to create a brand that captures the unique character of the Northwest Neighborhood. This brand can then be used on signage, gateways, and marketing materials.

**Timeline – 2 to 3 years from plan adoption**

Action Step 6:

**DESIGN AND INSTALL WAYFINDING SIGNAGE AT STRATEGIC LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD, INCLUDING STREETS AND TRAILS AS PART OF COMMUNITYWIDE EFFORTS**

The Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance is currently leading an effort to create a wayfinding strategy for the city. Once finalized, the guidelines established through the plan will be used to design wayfinding signage that incorporates the Northwest Neighborhood’s unique brand while remaining consistent with other signage throughout the city.

**Timeline – 4 to 5 years from plan adoption**
Action Step 7:
IDENTIFY OPTIONS FOR GATEWAYS AT SELECT POINTS ALONG THE NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARY
Several possible locations for future gateways have been identified through the development of the Neighborhood Action Plans. As funding becomes available, city staff will gather input from residents on design preferences as well as identify other possible locations for gateways.
Timeline – 4 to 5 years from plan adoption

Action Step 8:
USE FLOOD CONTROL SYSTEM GATES AS SIGNATURE ENTRANCES INTO THE NEIGHBORHOOD
The Flood Control System plan includes several floodgates into the Northwest Neighborhood. This creates a unique opportunity for the neighborhood to use its brand, signage and streetscaping so that the gates serve as signature entrances while also strengthening character and sense of place.
Timeline – Beyond 5 years from plan adoption
ELEMENT II: LAND USE
IN THIS ELEMENT:

GOAL 1: THROUGH THE REZONE CEDAR RAPIDS PROCESS, ALLOW FOR A MIX OF DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS IN THE NORTHWEST NEIGHBORHOOD.

• **Action Step 1:** Maintain the primarily single-family residential character of the neighborhood west of Ellis Boulevard NW.
• **Action Step 2:** Incorporate existing overlay district standards which ensure high quality infill development into ReZone Cedar Rapids.
• **Action Step 3:** Consider implementing a Form Based Code to ensure appropriate construction in redevelopment areas of the neighborhood.
• **Action Step 4:** Encourage the development of diverse housing options to provide opportunities for residents of all incomes and ages.
• **Action Step 5:** Encourage a mix of higher density housing, retail, and commercial uses along and east of Ellis Boulevard NW at identified Activity Nodes and near downtown.

GOAL 2: ENCOURAGE QUALITY INFILL DEVELOPMENT

• **Action Step 1:** Increase awareness of City-owned properties currently available for disposition.
• **Action Step 2:** Identify barriers to and strategies for development along the Ellis Viable Business Corridor with the local development community.
• **Action Step 3:** Implement projects identified through the Stormwater Master Plan process that will address stormwater management issues in the O Avenue NW and E Avenue NW catchment basins.
• **Action Step 4:** Evaluate progress of infill development and the construction of housing options for residents of all incomes and ages.
The Land Use element describes the type of buildings and activities allowed within the neighborhood. The City uses its zoning ordinance to allow for the creation of strong neighborhoods. It is a tool that the community can use to ensure that new structures visually fit in the neighborhood. Zoning also describes what activities, or uses, can occur in each zone. The action steps in the Land Use Element of the plan will be used as guidance for the City's new Zoning Ordinance currently under development.

The Land Use element of the Northwest Neighborhood Action Plan will be implemented with the comprehensive update to the City's zoning ordinance that is underway: ReZone Cedar Rapids. As new zone districts for the City are created, the zoning map will be updated to reflect the recommendations of this plan.

The Land Use Plan for the neighborhood is described through eight Character Areas, each of which describes the types of structures (buildings) and uses (activities, such as household living or commercial businesses) that are anticipated for both. The Character Area analysis concept is being used as part of ReZone Cedar Rapids to describe areas of the community with unique design characteristics. The intent of this plan is to describe the ideal character of future development in the neighborhood so that future zoning districts can be placed accordingly once the ReZone process is completed. The Character Areas proposed in this document are also intended to conform to the underlying Land Use Typology Areas (LUTAs) found in EnvisionCR. They give additional guidance on the specific types of uses and structures which are appropriate in that area.

This plan should be reviewed for any projects proposed in the neighborhood. Proposed projects should align with the recommendations of this plan.
GOAL 1:
THROUGH THE REZONE CEDAR RAPIDS PROCESS, ALLOW FOR A MIX OF DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS IN THE NORTHWEST NEIGHBORHOOD.

The action steps within this goal specifically relate to changes that can be made to the City’s Zoning Code and Zoning Map. With the ReZone Cedar Rapids process ongoing there is a unique opportunity to implement this goal as part of the comprehensive update to the zoning ordinance. This plan specifically calls for these action steps listed below to be considered as part of the zoning code. While each of the items below can be implemented through the new zoning ordinance, in the interest of developing a zoning ordinance which works for the entire community, it may not be feasible to fully implement some of the action steps under this goal. While there may be some items for future consideration after the completion of ReZone Cedar Rapids this goal should be considered generally completed upon adoption of the new zoning ordinance.

Action Step 1:
MAINTAIN THE PRIMARILY SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD WEST OF ELLIS BOULEVARD NW

The Northwest Neighborhood west of Ellis Boulevard to the planning boundary is comprised primarily of detached single-family houses. In general, where homes in this area were lost to the 2008 Flood, new single-family homes have been built as part of the ROOTs program.

In many cases, parcels which have had homes for many years were rendered unbuildable, or “non-conforming” by the City’s current zoning ordinance. In most cases, many of the parcels, zoned R-3, were under the 6,000 square foot minimum lot size required by that district. The City has had to rezone ROOTs properties to a new zone designation, R-TN, in order to allow for new home construction. The update to the zoning code will provide an opportunity to zone all residential parcels in the Northwest Neighborhood in a new and conforming zone district to allow for redevelopment.

This action step will be accomplished by adopting a new zoning code and map which eliminates non-conformities and emphasizes the preservation of the character of development west of Ellis Boulevard NW.

TIMELINE – WITHIN 1 YEAR OF PLAN ADOPTION
Action Step 2:
INCORPORATE EXISTING OVERLAY DISTRICT STANDARDS WHICH ENSURE HIGH QUALITY INFILL DEVELOPMENT INTO REZONE CEDAR RAPIDS

In 2013 the City established what is known locally as a Design Review Overlay District along Ellis Boulevard NW. This zoning designation creates uniform design standards for development along the Ellis Boulevard Corridor. Examples include a requirement that new buildings be placed close to the street, with parking in the rear, and that higher quality materials are used.

Through the Ellis Boulevard Design Review Overlay District and others, the City has approximately 5 years of experience implementing urban design standards. Through this time the City has learned lessons about what works and does not work, particularly with respect to the expansion of existing development.

This action step will be implemented by the adoption of a new ordinance which carries forward the existing design guidelines of the Ellis Boulevard Design Review Overlay District and enhances them with new zoning that eliminates the need for a separate overlay within the code.

TIMELINE – WITHIN 1 YEAR OF PLAN ADOPTION

Action Step 3:
CONSIDER IMPLEMENTING A FORM BASED CODE TO ENSURE APPROPRIATE CONSTRUCTION IN REDEVELOPMENT AREAS OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Traditional zoning codes establish unique districts for each type of land use, such as residential, commercial, and industrial. The code then sets up unique standards for each use, such as where buildings can be placed on the parcel. Form based codes focus on allowed structure types and less on the use. They are particularly beneficial in neighborhood nodes where a mix of uses including residential and commercial is desired.

This action step will be implemented by considering the use of a form based code in key areas of the neighborhood, specifically those identified as “Enhance” and “Transform” in the following Land Use Plan section of this document.

TIMELINE – WITHIN 1 YEAR OF PLAN ADOPTION

The City’s 2016 Annual Housing Analysis (Conducted by Maxfield Research) shows that community wide there will be demand for approximately 630 owner occupied multi-unit homes (such as condos or townhomes) and 1,767 rental units in the next 10 years.
Action Step 4:
ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF DIVERSE HOUSING OPTIONS TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS OF ALL INCOMES AND AGES

The growth and reinvestment of other core neighborhoods, such as New Bohemia, Kingston Village, and the Czech Village, has been made in part with new investment filling the demand for more diverse housing options.

The City’s 2016 Annual Housing Analysis showed that community wide there will be demand for approximately 630 for-sale multi-unit homes (such as condos or townhomes) and 1,767 rental units in the next 10 years. The Northwest Neighborhood is in a position to capture a portion of this growth by providing a unique mix of residential housing at a different scale than more urban areas such as downtown.

Diversity in housing should be achieved by providing a range of housing type and price range. New multi-unit housing built since the 2008 flood have ranged from high end condos to workforce affordable apartments.

This Action Step specifically calls for the zoning code to ensure that there is land zoned to address a range of housing options that meets the need of the community as a whole, and fits the unique opportunities of the Northwest Neighborhood.

TIMELINE – WITHIN 1 YEAR OF PLAN ADOPTION

Action Step 5:
ENCOURAGE A MIX OF HIGHER DENSITY HOUSING, RETAIL, AND COMMERCIAL USES ALONG AND EAST OF ELLIS BOULEVARD NW AT IDENTIFIED ACTIVITY NODES AND NEAR DOWNTOWN

Through the planning process the neighborhood expressed an interest in seeing additional neighborhood-scale businesses and services to replace and expand on those lost in the 2008 Flood. At the same time, the Northwest Neighborhood lost approximately 2,000 residents as a result of the flood. To mitigate and protect from future flooding events significant portions of the neighborhood are planned to become part of the Flood Control System.

The viability of expanding neighborhood services is dependent on replacing many of the lost housing units by allowing for higher density development in the neighborhood. This also fits a market need for the City as a whole as there is increasing demand for a wider mix of housing types near the growing urban core. The close proximity to downtown, its access to the river, along with the strength of the neighborhood, makes it a great place for a development character that is between downtown urban living and lower density suburban neighborhoods.

Specifically, land fronting Ellis Boulevard and land to the east of Ellis makes the most sense for higher density development. Existing single family streets to the west should be preserved. Care should be given to the transition between single family homes and newer development. Development along Ellis should be limited to approximately 3 stories, with possible exceptions at identified nodes, to provide a graduate transition from the 1-2 story homes nearby. More specific rules for how taller buildings should “step down” to transition to adjacent homes should be provided. Higher intensity development should be permitted further to the east and south where the Northwest Neighborhood transitions into Kingston Village and Downtown.

TIMELINE – WITHIN 1 YEAR OF PLAN ADOPTION
GOAL 2: ENCOURAGE QUALITY INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Beyond the adoption of a new Zoning Code, there are a number of actions that can be taken to promote growth and development in the Northwest Neighborhood. Land Use Element Goal 2 is for the City to actively promote high quality development in the neighborhood as a means to bring back households lost due to the 2008 Flood and to help provide additional neighborhood services.

As the largest owner of developable property in the neighborhood, the City has a unique opportunity to be directly engaged in the development of the neighborhood.

Action Step 1: INCREASE AWARENESS OF CITY-OWNED PROPERTIES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE FOR DISPOSITION.

The City has obtained from the State of Iowa a “Viable Business Corridor” designation for property within one block of Ellis Boulevard NW between E Avenue NW and Ellis Park. This designation allows for redevelopment of land acquired by the City within the 100-year flood plain. The City’s goal is for this property to be developed for the benefit of the neighborhood and the City as a whole.

Other City-owned property within the 100-year flood plain that is not part of the planned Greenway or Flood Control System is not currently available for development. This land cannot be developed until completion of the Flood Control System or incorporation into a Viable Business Corridor.

To date, development interest in the Northwest Neighborhood has lagged behind other Viable Business Corridors such as Kingston Village and NewBo. In 2016 the City Council asked for more information about the development potential of this land.

Completion of this Action Step will be made by the City taking steps to promote the availability of land in the Northwest Neighborhood and what building types and uses would be allowed by this Neighborhood Action Plan.

TIMELINE – WITHIN 1 YEAR OF PLAN ADOPTION

Action Step 2: IDENTIFY BARRIERS TO AND STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPMENT ALONG THE ELLIS VIABLE BUSINESS CORRIDOR WITH THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

Land Use Goal 1 described a number of barriers to development due to the existing Zoning Code and described various Action Steps that the City can undertake to remove those barriers in redevelopment-focused areas of the neighborhood and help protect the character of preservation-focused areas of the neighborhood.

Beyond zoning regulations other barriers might exist that may make development within the neighborhood more difficult than other areas of town.
In particular, there are a number of smaller public and privately owned parcels, some 4,200 sq ft or less, that can be developed. Developing individual homes or “missing middle” housing such as small apartments on these parcels can be difficult even if allowed by zoning.

Other barriers to reinvestment could include the added cost of development within the 100-year flood plain or issues with existing infrastructure.

For this Action Step, the City will work with the local development community to identify ways to reduce barriers and encourage investment in the neighborhood.

**TIMELINE – WITHIN 1 YEAR OF PLAN ADOPTION**

### Action Step 3:

**IMPLEMENT PROJECTS IDENTIFIED THROUGH THE STORMWATER MASTER PLAN PROCESS THAT WILL ADDRESS STORMWATER MANAGEMENT ISSUES IN THE O AVENUE NW AND E AVENUE NW CATCHMENT BASINS**

The City's Stormwater Master Plan has gone through a process to evaluate the various drainage basins within the community and identify projects to improve the drainage of stormwater and prevent property damage.

Two major catchment basins exist in the Northwest Neighborhood, known as the E Avenue NW and the O Avenue NW basins.

**TIMELINE – WITHIN 1 YEAR OF PLAN ADOPTION**

### Action Step 4:

**EVALUATE PROGRESS OF INFILL DEVELOPMENT AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF HOUSING OPTIONS FOR RESIDENTS OF ALL INCOMES AND AGES**

As development occurs in the Northwest Neighborhood in the coming years the City should continue to evaluate how the neighborhood changes and how to improve upon this plan.

This Action Step calls for the City to provide a report on the progress made in this land use plan and evaluating next steps for the redevelopment and growth of the neighborhood.

**TIMELINE – WITHIN 1 YEAR OF PLAN ADOPTION**
PRESERVE

ENHANCE

TRANSFORM

The concept of “Preserve, Enhance, and Transform” is used to categorize land within the Northwest Neighborhood based on the level of redevelopment that would be permitted. This concept is being used as part of ReZone Cedar Rapids to help identify areas which need zone districts to protect the existing integrity of development, and other areas which have an opportunity for change.

PRESERVE— Here the land use should focus on maintaining existing structures and new construction that is of similar scale and use.

ENHANCE—The zoning code should allow for development of a variety of compatible building types, including townhomes, moderate sized multi-unit, and mixed-use buildings. New development may be different from existing or historical development but should respect existing structures and provide a gradual transition to “Preserve” areas of the neighborhood.

TRANSFORM—Substantial redevelopment into higher intensity urban buildings is encouraged. Much of this area will not be developed until after construction of the Flood Control System.

Figure 16: Preserve, Enhance and Transform areas of the Northwest Neighborhood
Character Areas

The map on this page shows the proposed Character Areas for the Northwest Neighborhood.

The Character Areas are described in further detail in the following pages and are based on the concepts of Preserve, Enhance, and Transform.

What is a node?

Nodes are intersections where neighborhood activity is centered. The map to the left identifies 3 “Activity Nodes” on Ellis Boulevard NW at O Avenue NW, K Avenue NW, and E & F Avenues NW. These three intersections were identified in post-2008 Flood planning efforts and in the 2013 Ellis Boulevard Study as nodes for neighborhood commercial activity.

Figure 17: Northwest Neighborhood Land Use Strategy
### Overview of Character Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROPOSED USES</th>
<th>TN-MD</th>
<th>TN-Mix</th>
<th>UMU</th>
<th>UN-COR</th>
<th>UN-AN</th>
<th>UN-HI</th>
<th>FDA</th>
<th>FCS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
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<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail/Commercial</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
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<td>Workshop/Industrial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civic &amp; Institutional</td>
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<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROPOSED USES</th>
<th>TN-MD</th>
<th>TN-Mix</th>
<th>UMU</th>
<th>UN-COR</th>
<th>UN-AN</th>
<th>UN-HI</th>
<th>FDA</th>
<th>FCS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Building Height (in floors)</td>
<td>3 floors</td>
<td>3 floors</td>
<td>4 floors</td>
<td>3 floors</td>
<td>3-5 floors</td>
<td>5+ floors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single-Unit Homes</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Two-Unit Homes</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townhomes (or Row Houses)</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle Housing (or Small Multi-Unit)</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Multi-Unit Housing</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopfront Buildings (Commercial or Mixed-Use)</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warehouse/Flex Buildings</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic &amp; Institutional</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = Generally Permitted  ♦ = Subject to Additional Standards
Uses and Structures

PROPOSED USES

RESIDENTIAL - The primary land use in the Northwest Neighborhood, residences are places where people live, and can range from single-unit homes to multi-unit buildings and include group living such as retirement homes.

RETAIL/COMMERCIAL - Includes shops, restaurants, cafes and other businesses. Retail and commercial uses are best places at “activity nodes”, areas of the neighborhood where

OFFICE - Office uses are typically less active than retail or commercial uses. These can include work spaces or personal services businesses that don't typically draw high volumes of visitors.

WORKSHOP/INDUSTRIAL - Historic industrial businesses exist in the northwest neighborhood including factories and warehouses. Newer businesses with a focus on

CIVIC & INSTITUTIONAL - This includes public uses such as parks, schools and rec centers, along with private institutions such as religious facilities or non-profits. It also may include uses necessary for utilities, such as substations.

PROPOSED STRUCTURES

SINGLE-UNIT HOMES - The most common structure in the Northwest Neighborhood is a single-unit home. These structures provide a single residence on a parcel.

TWO-UNIT HOMES - Two-Unit homes are structures which provide two separate residences on a single parcel. These can be side-by-side like traditional duplexes, or in alternative configurations.

TOWNHOMES - Also known as “row houses”, townhomes are attached residences built in a row with a front-door facing the street. Townhomes may have several units (owned or ented) on a single parcel, or they may be on individual lots as narrow as 15 feet.

MIDDLE HOUSING - Middle housing refers to housing between single-unit homes and larger multi-unit apartment buildings. These can include small apartment or condominium buildings or bungalow courts. Because the structures are smaller they are often more appropriate in a traditional neighborhood setting. In general this refers to developments of between two and seven housing units but ultimately the permitted scale of development will be dependent

LARGE MULTI-UNIT - Larger apartment or condominium buildings are appropriate in higher intensity urban areas. Generally with 8 or more units, these buildings are less appropriate in areas where the goal is to preserve the character of single-unit detached housing. Large Multi-Unit buildings can occupy large building footprints and may be several stories in height in more intense character areas.

SHOPFRONT - Shopfront buildings have commercial or other non-residential uses on the first floor facing the street. These can be stand-alone commercial buildings, or mixed use buildings with one or more floors of residential space above the first floor. The size and scale of these buildings should be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, ranging from small storefronts near single-unit homes to taller mixed use buildings which occupy over 100 feet of street frontage closer to downtown.

WAREHOUSE/FLEX - Includes industrial and warehouse buildings in the neighborhood with a variety of styles. For new construction higher design standards should be put in place to require quality building materials and promote visual interest. In general, these buildings will allow a wide variety of activities and thus will allow a more flexible design than other urban buildings.

CIVIC & INSTITUTIONAL - Structures which house Civic & Institutional uses. The design of these buildings will be be flexible dependant on the use but should enhance the character of the neighborhood.

COMPATIBILITY

GENERALLY PERMITTED - The use or structure should generally be permitted in this Character Area.

SUBJECT TO ADDITIONAL STANDARDS - The use or structure may be permitted in this Character Area but should be subject to review which may include public processes such as rezoning or needing to obtain a Conditional Use Permit. The new zoning code may place additional standards on the structure or use to ensure compatibility or limit its occurrence in that particular character area. Examples could include building height or bulk limits, or limits on certain commercial uses in less intensive areas.
Traditional Neighborhood - Moderate Density

**VISION**

The primarily single-family character of the Northwest Neighborhood west of Ellis Boulevard will be preserved by zoning code updates which require future development to be consistent with existing homes.

**WHAT’S HERE TODAY**

The vast majority of this area is zoned for, and consists of, single-unit dwellings on individual lots.

**REZONE CEDAR RAPIDS GOALS**

- Ensure all existing parcels are conforming.
- Preserve primarily single-family character of neighborhood.
- Allow new structures of similar size and scale.
- Discourage combining of lots to create larger structures.
- Civic and institutional buildings allowed subject to additional review.
- Minimize new driveways to the street to preserve on-street parking.

---

**OVERVIEW**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Preserve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>176.3 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing Zoning</td>
<td>Single-Family—89% Multi-Family—4% Public—4% Two-Family—3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the 100 Year Flood Plain</td>
<td>7% of land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City-Owned Land</td>
<td>1.3% of land</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**PROPOSED USES**

- Residential •
- Retail/Commercial
- Office
- Workshop/Industrial
- Civic & Institutional •

**PROPOSED STRUCTURES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum Height</th>
<th>3 floors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single-Unit Homes</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Unit Homes</td>
<td>◊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townhomes (Row Homes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Housing (Small Multi-Unit)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Multi-Unit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopfront (Commercial or Mixed-Use)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warehouse/Flex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic &amp; Institutional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*= Generally Permitted
◊ = Subject to additional standards
VISION

Most of this character area is currently zoned for Multi-Family development. The existing development character will be preserved by a new zoning code which emphasizes the need for new structures to be of similar size and scale as existing homes.

OVERVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Preserve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>44.2 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing Zoning</td>
<td>Multi-Family—93% Single-Family—7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the 100 Year Flood Plain</td>
<td>14% of land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City-Owned Land</td>
<td>3.5% of land</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WHAT’S HERE TODAY

- Primarily detached homes on smaller parcels.
- New development includes several single family homes constructed through the ROOTs program.
- This character area represents approximately 10% of the Northwest Neighborhood and is largely built-out with few vacant lots.

REZONE CEDAR RAPIDS GOALS

- Ensure all existing parcels are conforming.
- Replace existing Multi-Family zoning with new zoning district that allows new structures of similar size and scale to existing development.
- Limit combining of lots to create larger structures.
- Civic and institutional buildings allowed subject to additional review.
- Preserve existing on-street parking by minimizing new driveways onto streets.

PROPOSED USES

| Residential | • |
| Retail/Commercial | |
| Office | |
| Workshop/Industrial | • |
| Civic & Institutional | • |

PROPOSED STRUCTURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum Height</th>
<th>3 floors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single-Unit Homes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two-Unit Homes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Townhomes (Row Homes)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Warehouse/Flex</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civic &amp; Institutional</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*= Generally Permitted
◊ = Subject to additional standards
This historic urban industrial area will continue to allow the existing mix of uses and will be enhanced in the future as commercial and residential uses will be allowed to replace industrial uses.

**OVERVIEW**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Enhance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>24.8 acres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Existing Zoning    | Industrial—57%  
|                    | Multi-Family—19%  
|                    | Commercial—15%  
|                    | Public—8%  |
| In the 100 Year Flood Plain | 30.1% of land |
| City-Owned Land    | 12.8% of land |

**WHAT’S HERE TODAY**

- Mix of uses including heavy and light industrial activities, commercial, warehouses and residential.
- Structures vary from historic urban factories to commercial buildings to detached homes.

**REZONE CEDAR RAPIDS GOALS**

- Permit existing industrial uses to continue or be replaced by similar uses.
- Allow industrial structures to transform into other uses such as commercial or residential.
- New construction should be compatible with an urban mixed-use neighborhood and provide a transition to adjacent neighborhoods.

**PROPOSED USES**

- Residential: •
- Retail/Commercial: •
- Office: •
- Workshop/Industrial: •
- Civic & Institutional: •

**PROPOSED STRUCTURES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum Height</th>
<th>4 floors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single-Unit Homes</td>
<td>◊</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two-Unit Homes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Warehouse/Flex</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civic &amp; Institutional</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

◊ = Generally Permitted  
= Subject to additional standards
**UN-COR**

**Urban Neighborhood - Corridor**

**VISION**

With approximately 40% of the land owned by the City and in the Ellis Viable Business Corridor, redevelopment of this character area can happen now. A mix of housing types will be allowed to develop along Ellis and enhance the corridor between the Activity Nodes. Non-residential uses may be permitted but it is anticipated that these stretches of Ellis will remain primarily residential with development maintaining the three story height limit of the existing Ellis Boulevard Overlay District.

### OVERVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Enhance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>27.3 acres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Existing Zoning | Single-Family—85%  
                      Multi-Family—7%  
                      Two-Family—5%  
                      Commercial—3% |
| In the 100 Year Flood Plain | 87% of land |
| City-Owned Land | 41.2% of land |

### WHAT'S HERE TODAY

- Approximately 40% of the land is owned by the City and is currently vacant and available for future redevelopment.
- Existing development is mostly single family homes and more recently constructed row houses.

### REZONE CEDAR RAPIDS GOALS

- Allow for a walkable urban residential neighborhood with a mix of housing types.
- New structures should respect existing adjacent structures.
- Development should provide a transition to adjacent neighborhood.

### PROPOSED USES

| Residential | • |
| Retail/Commercial | ◊ |
| Office | ◊ |
| Workshop/Industrial | • |
| Civic & Institutional | • |

### PROPOSED STRUCTURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum Height</th>
<th>3 floors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single-Unit Homes</td>
<td>◊</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two-Unit Homes</td>
<td>◊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townhomes (Row Homes)</td>
<td>•</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle Housing (Small Multi-Unit)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large Multi-Unit</td>
<td>◊</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shopfront (Commercial or Mixed-Use)</td>
<td>◊</td>
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<tr>
<td>Warehouse/Flex</td>
<td>•</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civic &amp; Institutional</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*= Generally Permitted  
◊ = Subject to additional standards
VISION

With one third of the property owned by the City and located in the Ellis Viable Commercial Corridor, this character area is able to developed now. Existing commercial corners which will be enhanced with infill development. Portions of buildings may be allowed to exceed 3 stories at identified intersections. New structures will need to respect existing development through height limitations and other design requirements.

OVERVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Enhance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>26.3 acres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Existing Zoning | Single-Family—35%  
                 | Commercial—22%  
                 | Industrial—18%  
                 | Two-Family—15%  
                 | Multi-Family—10% |
| In the 100 Year Flood Plain | 66% of land |
| City-Owned Land | 33.3% of land |

WHAT’S HERE TODAY

• Existing uses include gas stations and other retail, apartments, industrial, and some single family homes.
• Approximately half of the land in this corridor is owned by the City and is available for redevelopment.
• Development of these nodes is a priority for the Northwest Neighborhood.

REZONE CEDAR RAPIDS GOALS

• Allow for a walkable urban neighborhood with a mix of housing types.
• Allow mixed-use, particularly at identified Nodes.
• New structures should respect existing adjacent structures, especially single family homes. Height limits should be used to “step” taller buildings down to match nearby single-family residential.
• Provide a transition to adjacent neighborhood.

PROPOSED USES

| Residential | • |
| Retail/Commercial | • |
| Office | • |
| Workshop/Industrial | • |
| Civic & Institutional | • |

PROPOSED STRUCTURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum Height</th>
<th>Residential Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-5 floors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single-Unit Homes</td>
<td>•</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two-Unit Homes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townhomes (Row Homes)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shopfront (Commercial or Mixed-Use)</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warehouse/Flex</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic &amp; Institutional</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

◊ = Generally Permitted
◊ = Subject to additional standards
UN-HI
Urban Neighborhood - High Intensity

VISION

After construction of the Flood Control System this area will be transformed with development of an urban neighborhood center which will provide a transition to downtown and the greenway. High density residential similar to Kingston Village and New Bo will be allowed with commercial uses on the ground floor.

OVERVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Transform</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>17.6 acres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Existing Zoning | Multi-Family—28%  
|               | Single-Family—22%  
|               | Industrial—21%  
|               | Commercial—15%  
|               | Public—13% |
| In the 100 Year Flood Plain | 89.7% of land |
| City-Owned Land | 69.0% of land |

WHAT’S HERE TODAY

- This area is largely vacant with nearly 70% of the land owned by the City and not available for redevelopment until after construction of the Flood Control System.
- Prior to the 2008 flood this area had a mix of commercial and industrial uses

REZONE CEDAR RAPIDS GOALS

- Allow for walkable urban in-fill development.
- Multi-story development encouraged.
- Provide a transition between downtown and Ellis Blvd.

PROPOSED USES

| Residential | • |
| Retail/Commercial | • |
| Office | • |
| Workshop/Industrial | ◊ |
| Civic & Institutional | • |

PROPOSED STRUCTURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum Height</th>
<th>5+ floors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single-Unit Homes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Unit Homes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townhomes (Row Homes)</td>
<td>◊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Housing (Small Multi-Unit)</td>
<td>◊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Multi-Unit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopfront (Commercial or Mixed-Use)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warehouse/Flex</td>
<td>◊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic &amp; Institutional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*= Generally Permitted
◊= Subject to additional standards
VISION

Significant development in this character area will not occur until after the Flood Control System is constructed and the land is removed from the 100-year flood plain. In the future, this area will be transformed as development adjacent to the Greenway and Ellis Boulevard will be permitted. It is anticipated that this area will be primarily residential, although the scale and nature of development will need to be determined at a future date.

OVERVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Transform</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>9.9 acres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Existing Zoning | Single-Family—67%  
               | Two-Family—33%   |
| In the 100 Year Flood Plain | 100% of land |
| City-Owned Land | 71.0% of land |

WHAT’S HERE TODAY

- Over 70% of the land in this area is owned by the City and currently vacant.
- The amount of land available for future development may change after construction of the Flood Control System.

REZONE CEDAR RAPIDS GOALS

- Allow for walkable urban in-fill development, potentially at a higher scale than the Activity Nodes identified on Ellis Blvd.
- Multi-story development encouraged.
- Provide for a transition to Ellis Boulevard and the rest of the Northwest neighborhood.

PROPOSED USES

- Residential •
- Retail/Commercial ◊
- Office ◊
- Workshop/Industrial •
- Civic & Institutional •

PROPOSED STRUCTURES

- Maximum Height TBD
- Single-Unit Homes ◊
- Two-Unit Homes ◊
- Townhomes (Row Homes) •
- Middle Housing (Small Multi-Unit) •
- Large Multi-Unit •
- Shopfront (Commercial or Mixed-Use) ◊
- Warehouse/Flex
- Civic & Institutional •

*= Generally Permitted  ◊= Subject to additional standards
VISION

This character area includes land which is identified as necessary for the Flood Control System or the Cedar River Greenway. All of this land is either owned by or planned for acquisition by the City of Cedar Rapids.

OVERVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Flood Control System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>85.0 acres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The development of this land is covered by the Greenway Master Plan and the Flood Control System Master Plan. As the plans for flood protection evolve into final design and construction more or less land may be made available for development and should be developed in accordance with the adjacent land use in this plan.

The City may entertain proposals for private development which incorporates the Flood Control System into its design. These projects are not explicitly covered by this plan and should be evaluated on an individual basis. The design and scale of any such development should be compatible with adjacent plans for the development of the Northwest Neighborhood.

PROPOSED USES

- Residential
- Retail/Commercial
- Office
- Workshop/Industrial
- Civic & Institutional

PROPOSED STRUCTURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum Height</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single-Unit Homes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Unit Homes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townhomes (Row Homes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle Housing (Small Multi-Unit)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Warehouse/Flex</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civic &amp; Institutional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*= Generally Permitted
◊ = Subject to additional standards
ELEMENT III: CONNECTIVITY
IN THIS ELEMENT:

GOAL 1: DEVELOP A SYSTEM OF COMPLETE STREETS WHICH ARE SAFE FOR PEDESTRIANS, BICYCLISTS, AND DRIVERS.

Action Step 1: Study street alignment options to maximize connections to the Downtown and I-380 to encourage future development and improve connectivity.

Action Step 2: Complete the Ellis Boulevard NW connection to 6th Street NW.

Action Step 3: Improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity through the neighborhood.

Action Step 4: Ensure that connections are made to existing pedestrian networks as the Flood Control System and Greenway are constructed.
Connectivity describes the transportation network in the Northwest Neighborhood. The network of streets provides access to pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers. The Neighborhood Action Plan looks at what steps can be taken to improve the network and improve the access and safety of all residents.

**ROAD NETWORK**

Overall the Northwest neighborhood benefits from a mostly complete network of streets. Like most core neighborhoods in Cedar Rapids, the streets are aligned in a grid pattern of blocks that allows for maximum connectivity. The grid street pattern helps avoid concentrating traffic on individual streets and allows for multiple alternative routes in the event of temporary or emergency road closures. The development of the Greenway and Flood Control System along the river east of Ellis Boulevard NW will remove much of the existing street network. Some street removals in anticipation of future construction have been completed in the last few years. When the flood control system is completed, vehicular access to 1st Street NW along the river will be limited to gateways at O Avenue NW and F Avenue NW. Existing through-streets to 1st Street NW that will be cut off include E, I, K, L, and Penn Avenues NW, in addition to N and M Avenues NW which have already been severed.

As a result of the construction of the Flood Control System, 1st Street NW will be rebuilt and will connect to the Northwest Neighborhood at F and O Avenues NW.
These passages through the Flood Control System, into the Greenway, will become major gateways into the Northwest Neighborhood. Overall the neighborhood benefits from a mostly complete network of streets. Like most core neighborhoods in Cedar Rapids, the streets are aligned in a grid pattern of blocks that allows for maximum connectivity. The grid street pattern helps avoid concentrating traffic on individual streets and allows for multiple alternative routes in the event of temporary or emergency road closures.

**BICYCLE NETWORK**

Along the river to the east and north of the Northwest Neighborhood Action Plan study area is the Ellis Trail, which extends from the I-380 bridge downtown along the river to Edgewood Road NW. Within the study area for this plan, from Ellis Lane NW to Penn Ave NW, there is no separated trail. This gap in a dedicated trail is filled with sidewalks (used by pedestrians and inexperienced bicyclists) or is completed on the street, which does not have bike lanes or share the road symbols.

A continuous pedestrian path along the river is planned and will be constructed as part of the Flood Control System and Greenway. The eventual removal of the existing berm at the river’s edge will require the trail to be relocated. This future project is not considered part of the Northwest Neighborhood Action Plan as the development of the Greenway is not considered as part of this plan. As the greenway is developed, maintaining connections for all users will be a priority.

There are currently no marked on-street bike facilities in the neighborhood although the City’s trails plan proposes future bike lanes or share-the-road symbols on several streets including O Avenue NW, Ellis Boulevard NW and F Avenue NW.

Overall, the Northwest Neighborhood is generally very accessible by bicycle. The majority of neighborhood streets have low traffic volume and are low speed, which makes them naturally safe for bicyclists without a dedicated bicycle facility. Future improvements to the 6th Street/Ellis Avenue, O Avenue, and F Avenue corridors will fill in high priority gaps in the system.

**PEDESTRIAN NETWORK**

The pedestrian transportation network in the Northwest Neighborhood primarily consists of sidewalks.

The sidewalk network in the Northwest Neighborhood is largely complete with a few limited exceptions, most notably sections of 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th Streets NW north of M Avenue NW up to Ellis Park. While the City’s goal is to provide sidewalks in all situations where feasible, the streets in the Northwest Neighborhood that currently lack sidewalks are low volume neighborhood streets and are not the highest priority for new sidewalks.

The City’s program invest in road repair and maintenance, called Paving for Progress, is in its 4th year in 2017.

To find out about upcoming projects in the Northwest Neighborhood and elsewhere in the City, go to: http://www.cityofcr.com/pavingforprogress
Connectivity Improvements

The map to the right shows planned connectivity improvements in the Northwest Neighborhood, including the future connection of 6th Street and Ellis Boulevard.

Not shown are street repair and maintenance projects planned as part of Paving For Progress, the City’s road maintenance program. For information on planned improvements through that program go to www.CityofCR.com/PavingforProgress
GOAL 1:

DEVELOP A SYSTEM OF COMPLETE STREETS WHICH ARE SAFE FOR PEDESTRIANS, BICYCLISTS, AND DRIVERS.

As a traditional urban neighborhood in the core of Cedar Rapids, the transportation network in the Northwest Neighborhood should emphasize comprehensive connectivity for all modes of transportation.

The City’s Complete Streets Policy states that as road improvements are made the City will fill in gaps in pedestrian and bicycle networks, where feasible.

The Action Steps in this goal refer to transportation improvements that can be made to improve the connectivity to and throughout the Northwest Neighborhood.

Action Step 1:

STUDY STREET ALIGNMENT OPTIONS TO MAXIMIZE CONNECTIONS TO THE DOWNTOWN AND I-380 TO ENCOURAGE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY

The Flood Control System will force the realignment of streets near I-380 as it is constructed. The current adopted plan calls for F Avenue NW to become a two-way street and the gateway into the Northwest Neighborhood from the 5-in-1 Bridge, with E Avenue NW between 1st Street NW and 3rd Street NW being eliminated.

In addition, there are currently issues with restrictive intersections where on and off ramps for I-380 converge. In particular, the intersection of 3rd Street/L Street with 1st Avenue West, and the intersection of E & F Avenue with 1st Street NW. At each of these intersections certain turning movements are restricted and can lead to confusion for those unfamiliar with the area. This issue was identified with recent plans to build a major regional attraction at 1st Avenue and 1st Street West.

The issue will be partially helped by the extension of 6th Street to Ellis Boulevard NW (described below) which will create a direct link between the Ellis Corridor and 1st Avenue.

The purpose of this action step is to develop a long range plan for the street network in this area that will:

- Reduce or eliminate prohibited turns and confusing intersections. This will make navigating Cedar Rapids easier for visitors and residents.

- Create attractive gateways into the Northwest Neighborhood from I-380 and Downtown. The area to the immediate west of the Flood Control System will not be significantly developed for several years but has the potential to be a new urban district adjacent to downtown that can build off the future growth of Kingston Village and the Ellis Corridor. Future road network changes should take into account the potential for future development of this area and the opportunity to create a signature entrance into the northwest neighborhood.

This action step will be completed by conducting a study of street alignment options and selecting...
a preferred scenario for future improvements. Actual construction of improvements are not anticipated to happen within the next 5 years, and likely be completed as part of the Flood Control System construction in the Northwest Neighborhood, which will require the realignment of several streets.

TIMELINE – 2 TO 3 YEARS FROM PLAN ADOPTION

**Action Step 2:**

**COMPLETE THE ELLIS BOULEVARD NW CONNECTION TO 6TH STREET SW**

The connection of Ellis Blvd to 6th St has been identified in several city plans completed after the 2008 Flood, including the post-flood Neighborhood Planning Process, the 2013 Ellis Boulevard Corridor Study, and is included as a future road connection in EnvisionCR. The project to complete the connection is also identified as one of two new road construction projects eligible for funding through the City’s Paving for Progress program.

The connection will create a continuous street from Ellis Blvd north of the city limits to the southern city limits on 6th Street SW. Benefits of the connection include:

- A direct link into Ellis Boulevard NW from 1st Avenue. This will better connect the activity nodes along Ellis Boulevard NW, the Greenway, and Ellis Park with the rest of the community.
- Opportunity to develop a new neighborhood center around the intersection of E Avenue NW and 6th Street NW

Completion of the road connection requires acquisition of land currently used by a local utility as a maintenance yard and office, along with negotiations for a new railroad crossing. Construction of the connection is a priority project for the City but is not currently budgeted. Construction is estimated in 4-5 years from plan adoption.

TIMELINE – 4 TO 5 YEARS FROM PLAN ADOPTION

**Action Step 3:**

**IMPROVE BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY THROUGH THE NEIGHBORHOOD**

A number of proposed bicycle facilities for the Northwest Neighborhood are proposed through the City’s Comprehensive Trails Plan. A map is shown below. In particular the following projects are considered a priority for the neighborhood:

- Bicycle facility on Ellis Boulevard NW.
- Bike lane on 1st Street NW to connect to the Ellis Trail.
- Paint bike lane on F Avenue NW to connect to the Cherokee Trail.
- Paint sharrow/bike lane on O Avenue NW to create connections to the Stoney Point and Cedar Valley Nature Trails.

Completion of the action step will occur with the construction or implementation of the bicycle improvements listed above, which is anticipated to occur in the next 5 years.

TIMELINE – 4 TO 5 YEARS FROM PLAN ADOPTION
Action Step 4:
ENSURE THAT CONNECTIONS ARE MADE TO EXISTING PEDESTRIAN NETWORKS AS THE FLOOD CONTROL SYSTEM AND GREENWAY ARE CONSTRUCTED

This action step will be accomplished by ensuring that as the Flood Control System is completed that pedestrian connections are maintained to the river from the west.

As streets that currently cross through the proposed flood control system are removed, existing vehicular and pedestrian connections will be severed. Where possible dead-ends should be avoided and pedestrian access through or over the Flood Control System should be provided at points between the gates at Ellis Boulevard NW, O Avenue NW, and F Avenue NW.

This action step will be completed by ensuring that, as the Flood Control System is built, that pedestrian access from the adjoining neighborhood into the greenway is considered.

In many cases the land immediately adjacent to the Flood Control System will not be developed, but will be developable upon completion of flood protection. Ensuring these connections will help with the future redevelopment and vitality of the neighborhood.

TIMELINE – BEYOND 5 YEARS FROM PLAN ADOPTION
ELEMENT IV: STREETSCAPES
IN THIS ELEMENT:

GOAL 1: PROVIDE STREETSCAPING, LIGHTING, AND LANDSCAPING IMPROVEMENTS THROUGHOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

- **Action Step 1**: Update standards for streetscapes and public spaces to encourage pedestrian activity.
- **Action Step 2**: Develop a plan to make Ellis Boulevard NW a signature street with signage and landscaping. Include cost estimates and a funding source.
- **Action Step 3**: Identify key corridors and complete a streetscape plan.
Introduction

Streetscapes include the road, sidewalks, street furniture, and natural spaces adjacent to the roadway and how they relate to adjoining buildings. Activity is often the lifeblood of cities, in particular for neighborhoods. Social interactions, or environments which make interaction more likely, provide places with identity and character. The Northwest Neighborhood is no different and has a spirit and vibrancy which is unique to Cedar Rapids. Prior to the flood of 2008, this area was more densely populated than now, with a mix of housing styles and types. Running like a backbone through the neighborhood was a thriving business corridor along Ellis Boulevard NW. The Ellis corridor was home to neighborhood oriented business which offered services catering to the neighborhood and the built environment was developed in a manner in which walking was practical and commonplace. While much of the buildings were lost as a result of the flood, the existing trees, well connected street network and buildings are essential building blocks for a lively neighborhood for current and future residents. As buildings are constructed or rehabilitated, improvements to the streetscape will occur with the development.
GOAL 1: PROVIDE STREETSCAPING, LIGHTING, AND LANDSCAPING IMPROVEMENTS THROUGHOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD

WALKABLE ENVIRONMENT

Walking is more likely when development is designed in a way which promotes and enhances the pedestrian experience. The streetscape is essential in creating areas in which people will want to walk. The Northwest neighborhood has a wonderful tree canopy which shades many of the streets and sidewalks providing shade from summer sun, and thus cooler temperatures. The streetscape plan will identify gaps in the tree canopy and make suggestions for which species of trees and other vegetation would be a good fit to fill existing gaps, and where those plantings should occur. Recommended planting suggestions will be mindful of the location adjacent to a roadway and likely foot traffic as both of these factors influence the growth and life of the tree. Complimentary landscaping and vegetation to go with the trees also can add character to a neighborhood. Appropriate plantings will be able to thrive in the shade of the tree canopy and be more resistant to road debris and occasional foot traffic. The combination of filling the gaps in the tree canopy and adding complimentary vegetation will provide a greater variety to the street than grass alone can bring. The neighborhood is generally well connected for pedestrians to reach walkable destinations; however, there are gaps in the sidewalk network which may discourage pedestrian activity. The City Sidewalk Master Plan was updated in July of 2014 and includes a map of where gaps in sidewalk connectivity are. The Northwest Neighborhood is actually one of the most well connected areas of the City as a whole. There are fewer than ten gaps identified in this neighborhood where a gap exists. The Sidewalk Master Plan also assigns a score and rank to the gaps; while the area does not have any which are high priority, the gaps in this neighborhood generally scored as low priority. As development and people traveling along the sidewalks in the neighborhood increases, it is probable that the segments in this neighborhood will score higher for priority. As lots adjacent to these gaps develop and redevelop, segments of the sidewalk will be constructed and these gaps will begin to disappear. Additionally, as the City works on infrastructure projects in the area adjacent to these gaps in sidewalks, the City will work to close the gaps by installing sidewalks.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

One important component of streetscape is the built environment. Pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists alike benefit from buildings which should be designed for the streets on which they are built. Motorists benefit through more pleasant visual scenery and in turn, naturally slow down. Cyclists benefit from the slower speeds of automobiles, while pedestrians benefit from cars travelling at speeds that make street crossings safer. The speed of traffic should be relatively low throughout this neighborhood, even throughout key corridors which are home to businesses. The highest speed limit in this neighborhood is 30 miles per hour currently. The posted speed limit on Ellis Boulevard is 30 miles per hour. This speed is slow enough that drivers can safely stop and yield to pedestrians, and notice businesses. At the same time, the speed is fast enough that people can still pass through the corridor in a timely manner. The streetscape plan will explore options and treatments to pavement which will ensure that pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists can all interact safely and benefit equally from roadway improvements.

On more utilized corridors, amenities in front of businesses and in the public right-of-way can be appreciated by all users of the space. Outdoor seating areas, benches, landscaping, light fixtures, signage and pavement treatments are essential in creating an inviting environment for residents and visitors alike. Areas which are aesthetically pleasing include a lively, unique streetscape and are more memorable. In turn, these same areas
are more likely to be traversed through than areas which have blank walls, no landscaping and little activity aside from people walking to and from automobiles. These streetscape features which help to create a sense of place, give the place an identity unique to the Northwest Neighborhood; neighborhoods and corridors with their own unique identity and sense of place usually see more repeat visits and attract new visitors than places which are created by importing a design and feel from another place. One benefit of creating an attractive place where people want to be is that of enhanced safety through design. Areas where there are a multiple sets of eyes on the street often see less crime in comparison to areas where there is limited activity from those passing by or living in the area.

PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITY

As places become more inviting through appropriately scaled development and enhanced streetscapes, pedestrian activity is likely to increase as well as opportunities which increase pedestrian presence. Motorists will likely notice the foot traffic generated and naturally slow down and notice the surroundings. Opportunities for social interaction and pedestrian activity can naturally enhance the safety of the neighborhood while providing health benefits to residents at the same time. Neighborhoods which offer services within a 5 minute walk will generally see more pedestrian activity. While trips to these destinations will sometimes be made with a vehicle, more often than not, walking will be more prevalent. When people are out and about walking and not passing by in a car, they are freed from the responsibility of operating the vehicle and are travelling as a slower pace; this often can lead to observing things one would not notice while operating an automobile. This slower pace and being outside creates the opportunity for interaction that simply would not occur within a vehicle passing by. As more and more people find themselves outside walking, the opportunity to notice nefarious activity increases. An added bonus is that through walking to meet many daily needs, one can be more active.

A signature street in the Northwest Neighborhood is Ellis Boulevard NW. This street is an important corridor for visitors and residents alike who make trips to the Northwest side. Ellis Boulevard is the main street of this neighborhood and as such, should be signature and memorable. Unique and distinct streetscaping, signage, and pavement treatments should be planned, designed and located within this corridor. As the neighborhood's main street, opportunities for pedestrians should abound along it. Infill development complimenting the established character of the area will help create and encourage a walkable environment. This neighborhood developed when many walked to meet all of their daily needs; it was possible to walk to their job as well as walk to establishments for entertainment. The layout of this neighborhood with the connectedness of the streets and sidewalks makes walking to meet many daily needs a realistic possibility, if the development is oriented to the neighborhood. As sites are redeveloped, they need to be mindful of historical patterns of development, which were typically oriented to pedestrians; the buildings and development which remained after the 2008 flood is very much geared for pedestrians. Any new development needs to respect the existing development patterns of the neighborhood and help facilitate the future growth of the area by designing buildings so people can walk to them.

DESIGNING FOR VIBRANCY

The design and interaction of development with the public realm is of the utmost importance, new development, especially along Ellis Boulevard needs to provide opportunities for social interaction. A street can have the most beautiful buildings, but if the uses are not right and the design of the building is not right, people will not walk to it, nor will they spend time around it. Having the right design and the
A proper streetscape can encourage people to utilize a space, making the space into a place. This can occur through the design of buildings as well as the uses within the buildings; a combination of uses and design techniques to promote interaction is optimal. Examples of how this would specifically be done can be found in the land use elements of this plan. Along key activity nodes of Ellis Boulevard, neighborhoods should expect to find services, businesses, eating establishments and neighborhood oriented amenities which meet their daily needs. Being able to access these key nodes while walking quickly from home is seen as highly desirable to residents of the neighborhood. The land use section of the plan indicates where these nodes are located, but generally speaking, these nodes will occur at intersections and have the most pedestrian activity.

The land use can help drive some of the character of the neighborhood. Land uses where people are outside or walking regularly, such as restaurants or retail services need to have an appropriate streetscape to encourage people to walk to them. Blank walls, standardized building design, no landscaping, lack of sidewalks and poor lighting are all detriments to active and inviting streets. Making Ellis Boulevard the signature street of the neighborhood and the creation of a streetscape plan will help ensure the realm pedestrians experience is pleasant. Through the update to the Zoning Code, design of buildings will be considered and strategies to ensure buildings fit within this neighborhood will be included. The initiatives related to the streetscape are included with this section, while the zoning code initiatives are included in the land use section of the plan.

Land use, character and streetscape share in an important relationship, summed up generally as the built environment. Land use, character and streetscape form a unique tripod where each is dependent upon the other two elements equally for a neighborhood to be lively and inviting. Some land uses like a warehouse, used solely for storing goods for example, do not generate social activity by their very nature. Other land uses, such as a restaurant can generate social activity, but through poor site design, may not be inviting to those passing by. In either instance, an enhanced streetscape is not likely to make a large difference to activity, as other elements are not in place for success. That being said, the other elements of this plan are also dependent upon the streetscape. Restaurants designed to accommodate outdoor seating or retail stores in walking distance of consumers can also fail if the public realm is uninviting or not well planned. To be successful, streetscape, land use and character all must work together to create the neighborhood residents have indicated they would like to live in. Unique and vibrant corridors set the tone and expectations for the aesthetics of the entire neighborhood. These key corridors can often be the first impression visitors have of the neighborhood.

**Action Step 1:**

**UPDATE STANDARDS FOR STREETSCAPES AND PUBLIC SPACES TO ENCOURAGE PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITY**

This will ensure all new development installs infrastructure in accordance with the most recent requirements. As new development is constructed the pedestrian experience will be enhanced and the streetscape will take shape. The relationship between pedestrians and the built environment will be examined as these standards are developed.

**TIMELINE – 2 TO 3 YEARS FROM PLAN ADOPTION**
Action Step 2:

DEVELOP A PLAN TO MAKE ELLIS BOULEVARD NW A SIGNATURE STREET WITH SIGNAGE AND LANDSCAPING. INCLUDE COST ESTIMATES AND A FUNDING SOURCE

Signature streets include many elements which need to be coordinated. Street or district signage, trees, lighting, plantings, and pavement treatments are several elements which help create the environment necessary for the creation of a signature street.

TIMELINE – 2 TO 3 YEARS FROM PLAN ADOPTION

Action Step 3:

IDENTIFY KEY CORRIDORS AND COMPLETE A STREETSCAPE PLAN

Completed Streetscape Plans should:

• Create opportunities for social interaction
• Increase pedestrian activity/connectivity
• Create space for outdoor cafes and other uses

This initiative will help to create a walkable environment for residents, business owners and visitors to the neighborhood. The streetscape plan will help guide investments both public and private, along the street to create a walkable environment which is unique to the neighborhood.

TIMELINE – 2 TO 3 YEARS FROM PLAN ADOPTION

Figure 17: A completed streetscape plan will suggest ways to improve the attractiveness of key corridors in the Northwest Neighborhood
Streetscape improvements in the NewBo District in Southeast Cedar Rapids
APPENDIX: ACTION STEP TABLES
Action Steps

The tables on the following pages summarize the Action Steps identified in each of the four plan elements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AND PLACEMAKING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action Step</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GOAL 1: PROVIDE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT AND INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SOCIAL OFFERINGS**

1. Identify gaps in neighborhood activities and create additional programs to fill gaps  
   Within 1 year  
   NWNNA

2. Evaluate and explore ways to enhance the implementation of SAFE-CR to address code violations and nuisances within the neighborhood  
   2-3 years  
   Police

**GOAL 2: PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE CHARACTER OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD TO CREATE AN ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITY**

1. Review locations identified in the Visual Arts Commission Gap Analysis as possible locations for future public art. Encourage artwork from local artists.  
   Within 1 year  
   Community Development

2. Promote home repair and other housing related classes for homeowners, landlords, and renters  
   Within 1 year  
   NWNNA

3. Install a memorial to recognize the impact of the 2008 Flood on the Time Check Neighborhood  
   Within 1 year  
   NWNNA  
   Private Sources

4. Create a historic walking tour of the neighborhood with kiosks highlighting points of interest  
   2-3 years  
   Community Development  
   Information Technology  
   NWNNA

5. Work on a branding effort for the neighborhood to be used for gateways, signage, and marking.  
   2-3 years  
   Community Development  
   Public Works

6. Design and install wayfinding signage at strategic locations throughout the neighborhood, including streets and trails as part of communitywide efforts  
   4-5 years  
   Community Development  
   Public Works  
   NWNNA

7. Identify options for Gateways at select points along the neighborhood boundary  
   4-5 years  
   Public Works

8. Use Flood Control System gates as signature entrances into the neighborhood  
   More than 5 years  
   Public Works
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Step</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 1: THROUGH THE REZONE CEDAR RAPIDS PROCESS, ALLOW FOR A MIX OF DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS IN THE NORTHWEST NEIGHBORHOOD</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Maintain the primarily single-family residential character of the neighborhood west of Ellis Boulevard NW.</td>
<td>Within 1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Incorporate existing overlay district standards which ensure high quality infill development into ReZone Cedar Rapids.</td>
<td>Within 1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Consider implementing a Form Based Code to ensure appropriate construction in redevelopment areas of the neighborhood.</td>
<td>Within 1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Encourage the development of diverse housing options to provide opportunities for residents of all incomes and ages</td>
<td>Within 1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Encourage a mix of higher density housing, retail, and commercial uses along and east of Ellis Boulevard NW at identified Activity Nodes and near downtown.</td>
<td>Within 1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 2: ENCOURAGE QUALITY INFILL DEVELOPMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Increase awareness of City-owned properties currently available for disposition.</td>
<td>Within 1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Identify barriers to and strategies for development along the Ellis Viable Business Corridor with the local development community.</td>
<td>Within 1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Implement projects identified through the Stormwater Master Plan process that will address stormwater management issues in the O Avenue NW and E Avenue NW catchment basins.</td>
<td>2 to 3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Evaluate progress of infill development and the construction of housing options for residents of all incomes and ages.</td>
<td>2 to 3 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CONNECTIVITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Step</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 1: DEVELOP A SYSTEM OF COMPLETE STREETS WHICH ARE SAFE FOR PEDESTRIANS, BICYCLISTS, AND DRIVERS.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Study street alignment options to maximize connections to the Downtown and I-380 to encourage future development and improve connectivity.</td>
<td>2 to 3 years</td>
<td>Public Works Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Complete the Ellis Boulevard NW connection to 6th Street SW.</td>
<td>4 to 5 years</td>
<td>Public Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity through the neighborhood.</td>
<td>4 to 5 years</td>
<td>Public Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ensure that connections are made to existing pedestrian networks as the Flood Control System and Greenway are constructed.</td>
<td>More than 5 years</td>
<td>Public Works Community Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## STREETSCLAPES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Step</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 1: PROVIDE STREETSCLAPING, LIGHTING, AND LANDSCAPING IMPROVEMENTS THROUGHOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Update standards for streetscapes and public spaces to encourage pedestrian activity.</td>
<td>2 to 3 years</td>
<td>Community Development Public Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Develop a plan to make Ellis Boulevard NW a signature street with signage and landscaping. Include cost estimates and a funding source.</td>
<td>2 to 3 years</td>
<td>Community Development Public Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Identify key corridors and complete a streetscape plan.</td>
<td>2 to 3 years</td>
<td>Community Development Public Works</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>