Northwest Neighborhood Action Plan

Project Initiation | January 2016

1st Public Meeting | March 29, 2016
Collected feedback on neighborhood strengths, needs, and opportunities.

2nd Public Meeting | June 20, 2016
Shared feedback gathered at 1st public meeting, presented initial draft action steps, and asked attendees to identify their priorities under each element.

3rd Public Meeting | February 1, 2017
Review proposed goals and action steps for the Neighborhood Action Plan.

Plan Adoption | March 2017
Once adopted, the Northwest Neighborhood Action Plan steps will be implemented to make improvements to achieve the neighborhood’s vision for the area.
Neighborhood Character & Placemaking

Neighborhood Character and Placemaking refer 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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Step</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Identify gaps in neighborhood activities and create additional programs</td>
<td>Within 1 year</td>
<td>NWNNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to fill gaps.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Evaluate and explore ways to enhance the implementation of SAFE CR to</td>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td>Police Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>address code violations and nuisances within the neighborhood.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of Neighborhood Character and Placemaking
## Neighborhood Character & Placemaking

### GOAL 2: PRESERVE & ENHANCE THE CHARACTER OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD TO CREATE AN ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITY.

<table>
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<tr>
<td>1 Review locations identified in the Visual Arts Commission Gap Analysis as possible locations for future public art. Encourage artwork from local artists.</td>
<td>Within 1 year</td>
<td>Community Development Visual Arts Commission NWNNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Promote home repair and other housing related classes for homeowners, landlords, and renters.</td>
<td>Within 1 year</td>
<td>NWNNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Install a memorial to recognize the impact of the 2008 flood on the Time Check neighborhood.</td>
<td>Within 1 year</td>
<td>NWNNA Private Sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Create a historic walking tour of the neighborhood with kiosks highlighting points of interest.</td>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td>Community Development IT Department, NWNNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Work on a branding effort for the neighborhood to be used for gateways, signage, and marketing.</td>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td>Community Development NWNNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Design and install wayfinding signage at strategic locations throughout the neighborhood, including streets and trails as part of communitywide efforts.</td>
<td>4-5 years</td>
<td>Community Development Public Works NWNNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Identify options for gateways at select points along the neighborhood boundary.</td>
<td>4-5 years</td>
<td>Public Works Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Use Flood Control System gates as signature entrances into the neighborhood.</td>
<td>Beyond 5 years</td>
<td>Public Works Community Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Streetscape, land use and character share in an important relationship, summed up as the built environment. Streetscape, land use, and character are dependent upon one another to create neighborhood corridors which are lively and inviting. Streetscape can help drive character and land use, leaving a lasting impression of place in addition to the first impression of an area.

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

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<tr>
<td>1 Update standards for sidewalks and streetscapes to encourage pedestrian activity.</td>
<td>Within 1 year</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>2-3 years</td>
<td>Community Development, Public Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Identify key corridors and complete a streetscape plan to:</td>
<td>4-5 years</td>
<td>Community Development, Public Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create opportunities for social interaction.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Increase pedestrian activity/connectivity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Create space for outdoor cafes and other uses.</td>
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</table>

Examples of Streetscapes

PHOTOS DEPICT ELEMENTS WHICH CAN HELP MAKE THE STREET MORE ACTIVE AND ATTRACTIVE.

THE FEATURES AND WHERE THEY ARE LOCATED HELPS TO CREATE A VIBRANT STREETSCAPE.
The Land Use element describes what is allowed within the neighborhood. This includes the types of buildings allowed and what type of activities (uses) are allowed in them. The action steps from the plan will be used as guidance for the City’s new Zoning Ordinance currently under development.

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<tr>
<td>1 Identify barriers to and strategies for development along the Ellis Viable Business Corridor with the local development community.</td>
<td>Within 1 year</td>
<td>Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Increase awareness of City-Owned properties currently available for disposition.</td>
<td>Within 1 year</td>
<td>Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Implement projects identified through the Stormwater Master Plan process that will address stormwater management issues in the 2-3 years</td>
<td>Public Works</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Evaluate progress of infill development and the construction of housing options for residents of all incomes and ages.</td>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td>Community Development</td>
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Managing Transitions:
With a variety of structure types allowed in the Northwest Neighborhood, it is important that new buildings fit in with existing neighbors. This can be managed with transition requirements, such as requiring that upper floors of taller buildings are further away from existing structures.

Managing the transition between structures is a key priority in the City’s rewrite of our zoning code, **Rezone Cedar Rapids**
## Land Use

**GOAL 2: THROUGH THE REZONE CEDAR RAPIDS PROCESS, ALLOW FOR A MIX OF DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS IN THE NORTHWEST NEIGHBORHOOD.**

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<th>Responsible Party</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Maintain the primarily single-family residential character of the neighborhood west of Ellis Boulevard NW.</td>
<td>Within 1 year</td>
<td>Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Incorporate existing overlay district standards which ensure high quality infill development into ReZone Cedar Rapids.</td>
<td>Within 1 year</td>
<td>Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Consider implementing a Form Based Code to ensure appropriate construction in redevelopment areas of the neighborhood, such as the area around the future 6th and Ellis Connection.</td>
<td>Within 1 year</td>
<td>Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Encourage the development of diverse housing options to provide opportunities for residents of all incomes and ages.</td>
<td>Within 1 year</td>
<td>Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Encourage a mix of higher density housing, retail, and commercial uses along and east of Ellis Blvd at identified Activity Nodes and near downtown.</td>
<td>Within 1 year</td>
<td>Community Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

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

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<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>2-3 years</td>
<td>Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Complete the Ellis Boulevard NW connection to 6th Street SW.</td>
<td>4-5 years</td>
<td>Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity through the neighborhood.</td>
<td>4-5 years</td>
<td>Public Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bicycle facility on Ellis Boulevard NW.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bike lane on 1st Street NW to connect to the Ellis Trail.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Paint bike lane on F Avenue NW to connect to the Cherokee Trail.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Paint bike sharrow/bike lane on O Avenue NW to create connections to the Stoney Point and Cedar River Trails.</td>
<td></td>
<td></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>Beyond 5 years</td>
<td>Community Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Connectivity

The Northwest Neighborhood currently benefits from a strong and connected street network. The map to the left identifies key future projects. The 6th Street to Ellis Boulevard connection is a key planned project that will improve access to Ellis Boulevard from the rest of the community.

Planned bicycle facilities include Ellis Blvd, O Avenue and the Cherokee Trail which will stretch from the River to Morgan Creek Park near Highway 100. Other on-street planned bicycle connections are shown on the map.

As development of the Flood Control System is completed study of street alignment near I-380 and pedestrian connections to the Greenway will be needed.

For information on planned street repair projects, go to: http://www.cityofcr.com/pavingforprogress
Preserve, Enhance, Transform

LAND USE: PART 1

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.

PRESERVE—Here the Zoning Ordinance 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 should respect existing structures and provide a 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.

PRESERVE
ENHANCE
TRANSFORM
FLOOD CONTROL
CITY-OWNED

Land Owned by the City of Cedar Rapids which may be considered for future development.
Character Areas

The map to the left shows the proposed Character Areas for the Northwest Neighborhood.

The Character Areas are described on the boards on either side of this map and 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 three “Activity Nodes” on Ellis Avenue at O Avenue, K Avenue, and E & F Avenues NW. These three intersections were identified in post-2008 Flood planning efforts and in the 2013 Ellis Blvd Study as intersections for neighborhood commercial activity.
ReZone Cedar Rapids goals:
- Flood Plain
  - Existing Zoning
    - Single-Family—89%
    - Multi-Family—4%
    - Public—7%
    - Two-Family—3%
  - Overview
    - Goal
      - TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD
        - Character Area Descriptions
          - Overview
            - Goal
              - Preserve
            - Area
              - 176.3 acres
            - Existing Zoning
              - Single-Family—89%
              - Multi-Family—4%
              - Public—7%
              - Two-Family—3%
            - In 100-year floodplain
              - 7% of land
          - TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD—Moderate Density
            - Vision:
              - The primary single-family character of the Northwest Neighborhood west of Ellis Blvd will be preserved by zoning code updates which require future development to be consistent with existing homes.
            - What’s Here today:
              - Primarily detached homes on smaller parcels.
              - Homes lost as a result of the 2008 flood have been replaced by new construction due to the ROOFs program.
              - This character area represents 40% of the Northwest Neighborhood and is largely built-out with few vacant lots.
            - Proposed Uses
              - Residential
                - Single Unit Homes
                - Two-Unit Homes
              - Commercial
                - Retail Commercial
                - Office
              - Civic & Institutional
                - Civic
                - Educational
            - 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.
            - Proposed Structures
              - 100% of land
              - 9.9 acres
              - 30% of land
              - 67% of land
              - 33% of land
            - What’s Here today:
              - Over 70% of the land in this area is vacant land owned by the City and cannot be developed until completion of the Flood Control System.
              - Remaining land is privately owned and is comprised of homes or is vacant.
              - The amount of land available for future development may change after construction of the Flood Control System.
            - Proposed Structures
              - 100% of land
              - 9.9 acres
            - What’s Here today:
              - Over 70% of the land in this area is vacant land owned by the City and cannot be developed until completion of the Flood Control System.
              - Remaining land is privately owned and is comprised of homes or is vacant.
              - The amount of land available for future development may change after construction of the Flood Control System.

URBAN MIXED USE
- Overview
  - Goal
    - Transform
  - Area
    - 44.2 acres
  - Existing Zoning
    - Multi-Family—93%
    - Single-Family—7%
  - In 100-year floodplain
    - 14% of land
  - Urban Mixed Use
    - Character Area Descriptions
      - Overview
        - Goal
          - Preserve
        - Area
          - 24.8 acres
        - Existing Zoning
          - Industrial—57%
          - Multi-Family—19%
          - Commercial—15%
          - Public—8%
        - In 100-year floodplain
          - 30% of land
      - TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD—Mixed Density
        - 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.
        - What’s Here today:
          - Primarily detached homes on smaller parcels.
          - New development includes several single-family homes constructed through the ROOFs program.
          - This character area represents approximately 10% of the Northwest Neighborhood and is largely built-out with few vacant lots.
        - Proposed Uses
          - Residential
            - Single Unit Homes
            - Two-Unit Homes
          - Commercial
            - Retail Commercial
            - Office
          - Civic & Institutional
            - Civic
            - Educational
        - Proposed Structures
          - 100% of land
          - 9.9 acres
          - 30% of land
          - 67% of land
          - 33% 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.
      - Proposed Structures
        - 100% of land
        - 9.9 acres
      - What’s Here today:
        - Over 70% of the land in this area is vacant land owned by the City and cannot be developed until completion of the Flood Control System.
        - Remaining land is privately owned and is comprised of homes or is vacant.
        - The amount of land available for future development may change after construction of the Flood Control System.
      - Proposed Structures
        - 100% of land
        - 9.9 acres
      - What’s Here today:
        - Over 70% of the land in this area is vacant land owned by the City and cannot be developed until completion of the Flood Control System.
        - Remaining land is privately owned and is comprised of homes or is vacant.
        - The amount of land available for future development may change after construction of the Flood Control System.

NORTHWEST NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN
- Cedar Rapids City of Five Seasons
- What's Here today:
  - Neighborhood west of Ellis Blvd will be
    - The primarily single
    - Homes lost as a result of the 2008 flood have been replaced
    - This historic urban industrial area will continue to allow the
    - Significant development in this character area will not occur
    - Over 70% of the land in this area is vacant land owned by the
  - New development includes several single-family homes
    - Over 70% of the land in this area is vacant land owned by the
  - Primarily detached homes on smaller parcels.
  - New development includes several single-family homes
  - Significant development in this character area will not occur
  - Over 70% of the land in this area is vacant land owned by the
  - 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.
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  - Structures vary from historic urban factories to commercial buildings to detached homes.
ReZone Cedar Rapids goals:

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

URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD — Corridor

Overview

Area: 27.3 acres
Existing Zoning: Single-Family—85%
Multifamily—7%
Commercial—8%

In 100-year floodplain: 87% 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.

Vision:
- A mix of housing types will be allowed along Ellis and enhance the corridor between the Activity Nodes.
- New structures should respect existing adjacent structures.
- Provide a transition to adjacent neighborhood.

Maximun Height: 100 years floodplain

Proposed Structures

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

Proposed Uses

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

● = Permitted
○ = Subject to additional standards

FLOOD CONTROL SYSTEM

Overview

Area: 35.0 acres

Existing Zoning: Single-Family—35%
Commercial—22%
Industrial—18%
Multifamily—10%

In 100-year floodplain: 66% of land

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.