

CITY OF WEST DES MOINES STAFF REPORT COMMUNICATION

Meeting Date: February 14, 2022

ITEM: Historic West Des Moines Design Guidelines, generally located between 4th Street to 6th Street and Railroad Avenue to Locust Street – Approval and Acceptance of Pages 1-40 of the Historic West Des Moines Design Guidelines pertaining to the Valley Junction-Mixed Use District (VJ-MU) – City of West Des Moines – MI-005498-2022

Resolution: Approval and Acceptance of the pages 1-40 of the Historic West Des Moines Design Guidelines pertaining to the Valley Junction-Mixed Use District (VJ-MU)

Background: On October 19, 2015, the City selected Teska Associates, Inc. to prepare a Master Plan for the Historic West Des Moines neighborhood, generally from Grand Avenue to Railroad Avenue and 1st Street to Grand Avenue. On September 19, 2016, the City Council accepted the Historic West Des Moines Master Plan. Because of concerns that have arose with development that has occurred since the adoption of that plan, the Council determined that it would be appropriate to update the Master Plan.

On June 1, 2021, a public meeting was held with the community to review the current master plan and create a list of topics that would need to be addressed if the master plan was updated. A 19-member Steering Committee was created shortly after, from existing 501c3 non-profit organizations that equally represent the residential and business communities. Each individual organization appointed members they believe best represent the community. The break-down of the memberships are as follows:

| Organization | Number of Representatives |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Historic WDM Valley Junction Neighborhood Association | 3 |
| Valley Junction Resident Association | 3 |
| Residents appointed by the Mayor | 2 |
| Historic Valley Junction Foundation | 7 |
| West Des Moines Chamber | 1 |
| City of West Des Moines, City Council (ex-officio, non-voting members) | 2 |

The Steering Committee worked with staff to create the scope of work for updating the Historic West Des Moines Master Plan based on input from their organizations and comments from the June 1st community meeting. The City Council then approved that scope of work and directed staff to proceed with development of the Update to the Master Plan. There are 23 items included in the scope of work for the master plan. Most of the items revolve around, the creation of design guidelines and new zoning regulations to guide future development and redevelopment of the area, an analysis of parking, residential styles and densities, and potential historical preservation recommendations.

To address the community's concerns as quickly as possible, the City Council again selected the prior master plan consultant, Teska Associates Inc., to update the plan. Teska was selected because of their previous experience in working in the neighborhood and their track record of quality public engagement.

Staff Review & Comment:

History:

Because of the community's concerns, on April 19th, 2021, the City Council imposed a moratorium on exterior renovations, modifications, and demolition for the area within the boundary of Railroad Avenue to Vine Street and 4th Street to 6th Street. With the work being done on the design guidelines as a part of the Historic West Des Moines Master Plan Update, the City Council decided to extend to the moratorium to March 1 2022.

The action being considered today is a resolution to adopt pages 1-40 of the design guidelines. The reason for the staggered adoption is because the first 40 pages provides guidance for future development and redevelopment in the area that is currently under the moratorium. The Steering Committee came to a unanimous consensus on the Guidelines for this area but believes that more time is needed to adequately address the goals and vision of the other areas in the plan.

Outreach:

Community outreach is something that is critically important when creating a master plan. An extensive outreach and transparency plan was formulated to ensure that citizens were notified of what was going on, provided them with complete resources to make them aware of what had already occurred, supplied them with a timeline of what will be happening in the future and most importantly, how they could be heard and involved throughout the process.

The outreach and transparency plan not only included basic notification methods such as three rounds of mailed invitations to the 1,511 property owners within the Historic West Des Moines boundary, email notifications and social media postings. But also, more enhanced outreach that incorporated virtual participation option for all meetings, two websites (one used as a clerical account of the proceedings and the other as a public outreach hub to obtain citizen input), and all meetings were video recorded and posted to The City's YouTube channel in a convenient playlist so that they can be viewed at any time chronologically. Additional outreach highlights include:

- *A November 17, 2021, commercial merchants breakfast meeting between business owners and the consultant team.*
- *12 Steering Committee meetings (Over 20 hours to date) that were noticed, open to the public and offered with a virtual participation option.*
- *18 one-on-one interviews with the property owners in the area.*
- *Individual meetings with each of the 4 established commercial and residential organizations*

Community Character Poll and Visual Preference Survey

The master planning team (The Steering Committee, staff, and Teska Associates) wanted to ensure the future of Historic West Des Moines aligns with and finds a balance between the complex interests of residents, local entrepreneurs, organizations, and interested stakeholders. We understand that with busy schedules, family obligations, personal health concerns etc. it has become increasingly challenging for citizens to come to a meeting at a specific time to provide input. In an effort to obtain public input from everyone regardless of their situation, hybrid face-to-face and online public participation methods were used during our polls and surveys.

At the September 15, 2021, Steering Committee meeting, Teska conducted an in-person mind mapping exercise. From October 12th to November 19th, 2021, the consultant team used the same questions and conducted a 4-week online Community Character Poll to gain insight from those that could not attend on September 15th. The mind mapping exercise and the online Community Character Poll's objectives were to gauge and identify how people feel about the community. 132 responses were submitted and revolved around the topics of; celebrating our history, culture, and diversity, architectural exterior materials and building scale, parking, inconsistent building maintenance, upper story residential (Pro and Con), office uses on the first floor, residential area feeling left out of the revitalization discussion, fostering the area as a quality starter home neighborhood and, striking a balance between preserving older buildings and welcoming new development.

Teska and their partnering consultant, Edward Torrez with Bauer Latoza Studio planned on holding a community-wide virtual design workshop at Stilwell Junior High on December 15th, 2021. Edward is an architect, an architectural historian and serves on the Board of Advisors of the National Trust of Historic Preservation. The workshop was intended to be the kick-off to an online visual preference survey that would be made available the next day. The workshop and online survey were intended to gauge how people feel about the visual appearance of the community and inform the consultant of the preferences of the overall community. Unfortunately, the in-person workshop had to be cancelled due to inclement weather. The consultant team and staff shifted the in-person workshop and created a series of instructional and educational videos that citizens could watch prior to taking the visual preference survey. The survey was live from December 16th, 2021- January 2, 2022. 420 citizens participated in the virtual design workshop, 478 citizens took the community character poll and visual preference survey and over 600 visual preference survey comments were submitted.

Design Guideline Composition

The data and comments given through the Community Character Poll and Visual Preference Survey are the foundational cornerstones of the design guidelines. Over four public meetings held on January 5th, 6th, 26th and February 2nd, 2022, the Steering Committee worked with the consultant team to draft the design guidelines for Historic Valley Junction. The committee took into consideration the public input that was given through:

- *Individual meetings with the organizations they represent*
- *Discussions they had with members of the community*
- *Testimony provided by the public during the citizens form at each Steering Committee meeting*
- *Testimony provided at the June 1st community meeting*
- *Advice from the Teska Associates, the project consultant*

- *Advice from the Edward Torrez, the architectural historian consultant*
- *The October 12th–November 19th online community character poll*
- *The November 17, 2021, commercial merchant’s breakfast*
- *The December 16th– January 2, 2022, visual preference survey*

Considering the vast amount of work that goes into creating design guidelines and balancing it with the March 1st moratorium expiration date, the committee decided to prioritize their efforts on the commercial areas along 5th Street, the Valley Junction Mixed-Use area and continue their review of the balance of the guidelines in order to allow a more through discussion of those areas..

On February 2nd, 2022, the Historic West Des Moines Master Plan Update Steering Committee unanimously approved pages 1-40 of the proposed Historic West Des Moines Design Guidelines pertaining to the Valley Junction-Mixed Use District (VJ-MU) and recommended forwarding them to the Plan and Zoning Commission and City Council for adoption.

Authority of the Guidelines:

The Steering Committee will continue their work and will be bring forward specific zoning ordinance changes that will incorporate the Guidelines as part of the zoning code. Once fully adopted, The Historic West Des Moines Design Guidelines will work in unison with the authority granted in The Comprehensive Plan and The Municipal Code. Specifically, the existing requirements in the City’s zoning ordinance, building code, and other policies.


Outstanding Issues: There are no outstanding issues.

Plan and Zoning Commission Action:

Date:
Vote:
Recommendation:

Plan and Zoning Commission Meeting Discussion:

Recommendation: The Historic West Des Moines Master Plan Update Steering Committee recommends that the Plan and Zoning Commission adopt a resolution recommending the City Council approve and accept the Valley Junction-Mixed Use District (VJ-MU) pages 1-40 of the Historic West Des Moines Design Guidelines

Lead Staff Member: J. Bradley Munford, Business Development Coordinator 

Approval Meeting Dates:

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Plan and Zoning Commission | 2/14/2022 |
| City Council | February 21, 2022 |

Staff Report Reviews:

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Plan & Zoning Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> Director | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Department |
| City Council | <input type="checkbox"/> Director | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Department |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriations/Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> Agenda Acceptance |

Publications (if applicable)

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Published In: | Des Moines Register Community Section |
| Date(s) Published | n/a |
| Date(s) of Mailed Notices | n/a |

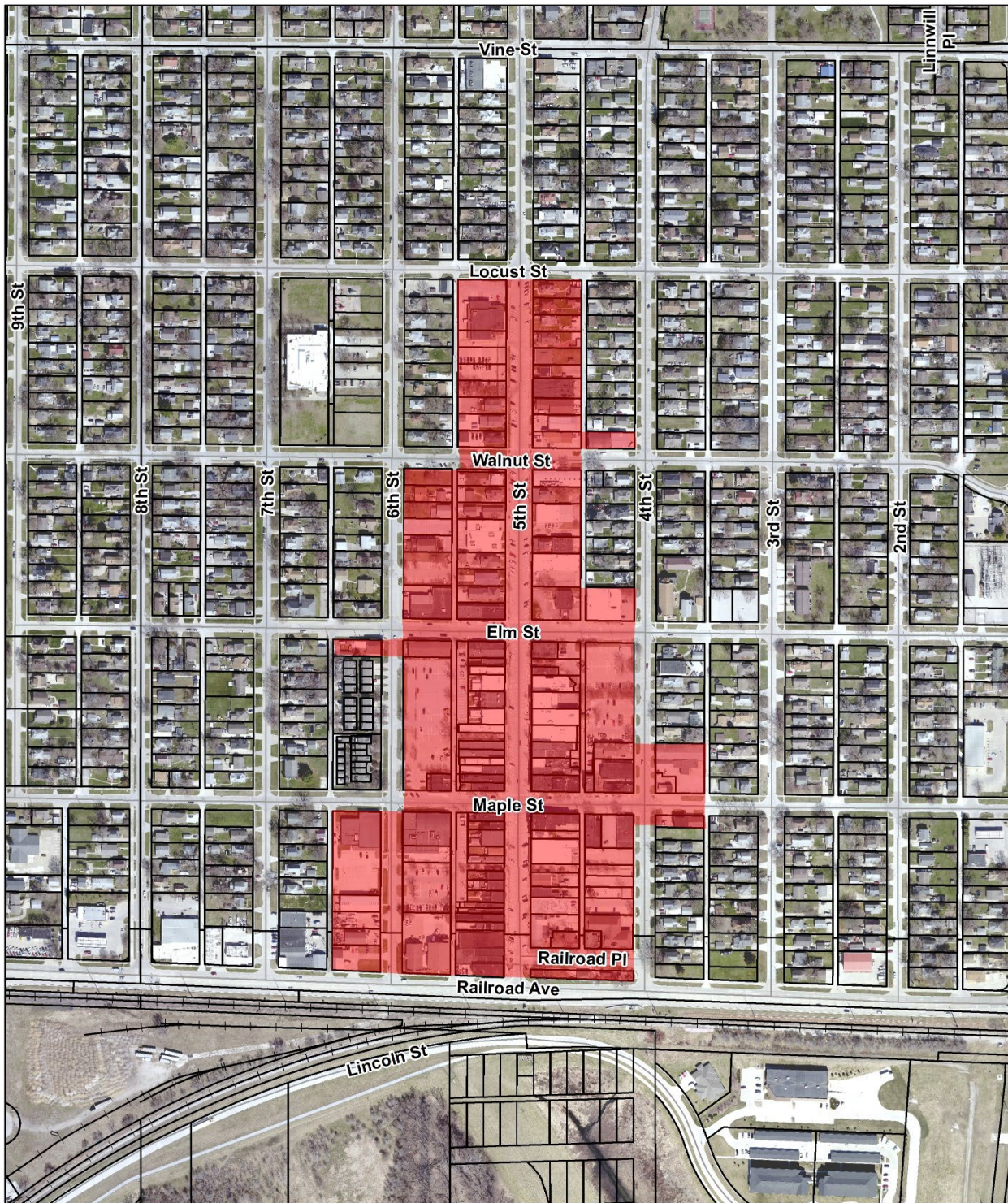
Council Subcommittee Review (if applicable)

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Committee | Development & Planning |
| Date Reviewed | n/a |
| Recommendation | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Split |

ATTACHMENTS:

- Exhibit I – Vicinity Map
- Exhibit II – Plan & Zoning Commission Resolution
- Exhibit III – Results of the Visual Preference Survey
- Exhibit IV –Pages 1-40 of the Historic West Des Moines Design Guidelines

Location Map



Historic West Des Moines
Design Guidelines

Valley Junction Mixed Use District



RESOLUTION NO. PZC

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLAN AND ZONING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST DES MOINES, APPROVING PAGES 1-40 OF THE DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE HISTORIC WEST DES MOINES MASTER PLAN AREA

WHEREAS, the applicant, the City of West Des Moines, has requested approval of Design Guidelines for that property located within the area generally between 4th Street and 6th Street, and between Railroad Avenue and Locust Street;

WHEREAS, the City Council created a Steering Committee made up of merchants, property owners, and residents to develop Guidelines for future development and redevelopment of the Historic Master Plan area;

WHEREAS, the Steering Committee for the update of the Historic West Des Moines Master Plan did on February 2, 2022, unanimously approved pages 1-40 of the Design Guidelines regulating development and redevelopment of property within the Historic Valley Junction Business District;

WHEREAS, studies and investigations were made, and staff reports, and recommendations were submitted which are made a part of this record and herein incorporated by reference;

WHEREAS, on February 14, 2022, this Commission held a duly noticed public meeting to consider the application for the approval of Design Guidelines for the Historic West Des Moines Master Plan area;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Plan and Zoning Commission of the City of West Des Moines recommends that City Council approve and accept the Valley Junction-Mixed Use District (VJ-MU) pages 1-40 of the Historic West Des Moines Design Guidelines (MI-005498-2022) subject to compliance with all the conditions of approval as stated in the staff report, including conditions added at the meeting, and attached hereto as Exhibit "A", if applicable.

PASSED AND ADOPTED on February 14, 2022

Erica Andersen, Chairperson
Plan and Zoning Commission

ATTEST:

Recording Secretary

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the Plan and Zoning Commission of the City of West Des Moines, Iowa, at a regular meeting held on February 14, 2022, by the following vote:

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSTENTIONS:

ABSENT:

ATTEST:

Recording Secretary