

Lower Beaver Neighborhood Plan

May 2013



Plan Development and Oversight

Lower Beaver Neighborhood Association

City of Des Moines Neighborhood Revitalization Board

City of Des Moines Plan & Zoning Commission

City of Des Moines City Council

Polk County Board of Supervisors

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Special thanks to City staff from the Office of Economic Development, Public Works, and Parks & Recreation for assisting with the development of this plan.

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Thank you to everyone who participated regularly in the planning committee meetings...

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...and to the many other neighborhood residents, business representatives, and area stakeholders who also contributed their input to the plan.

Approval Process and Dates:





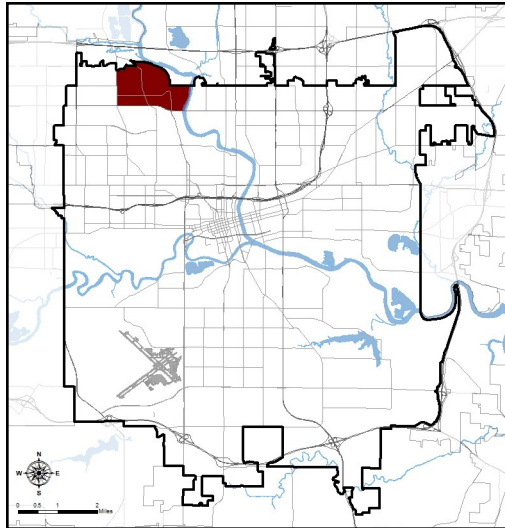
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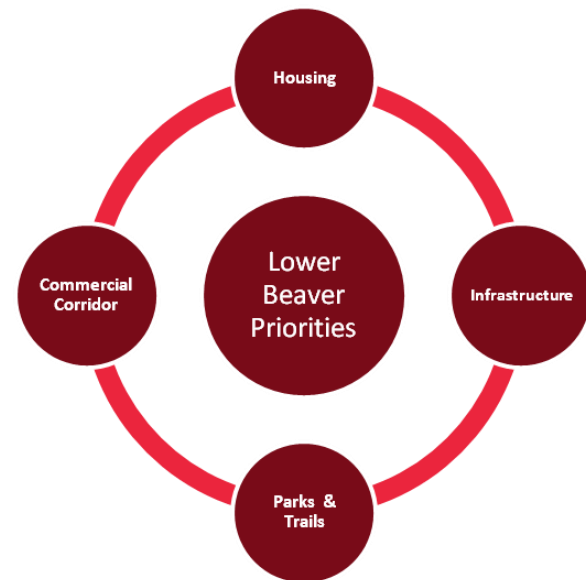
Map 1: Vicinity Map

Background on the Neighborhood Revitalization Program

The City of Des Moines and the Polk County Board of Supervisors established the Neighborhood Revitalization Program in the early 1990s to help stabilize and improve Des Moines' neighborhoods. To coordinate this program, the City's Community Development Department formed the Neighborhood Development Division.

The Neighborhood Revitalization Program uses a strategy that calls for neighborhood residents, the City of Des Moines, Polk County, and local business leaders to develop a public/private partnership to address revitalization issues within the city. To participate, recognized neighborhoods must submit an application and make a presentation to the Neighborhood Revitalization Board. The neighborhood planning process relies on active resident groups to identify critical neighborhood issues in their area. The staff of the Neighborhood Development Division provides technical assistance and planning coordination. Neighborhood planning staff works with the neighborhood group to develop appropriate goals and implement a feasible action plan. The neighborhood plan provides a list of activities and identifies parties responsible for implementation. The success of the revitalization effort depends on a continued coordination of efforts among the neighborhood organization, the City, the County, and other public and private organizations.

This plan was prepared through a joint effort of the City of Des Moines Community Development Department's Neighborhood Development Division and the Lower Beaver Neighborhood Association. The approved plan becomes an amendment to the City of Des Moines Comprehensive Plan and an ongoing guide affecting future policy decisions for the Lower Beaver neighborhood.



Planning Process

A planning committee of neighborhood residents, business owners, and other stakeholders worked with a Planner from the Neighborhood Development Division to develop the plan. The planning process officially started with a neighborhood kick-off meeting in February 2012. At this meeting attendees laid the groundwork for the planning process by identifying five priority subject areas to focus on. The subject areas that Lower Beaver chose to focus on were: Housing, Commercial Corridor, Infrastructure, as well as Parks and Trails. A Land Use and Zoning analysis was also incorporated as part of the planning process.

The planning committee met once a month throughout the process to identify key issues within each of the subject areas and then to create goals and strategies to address those issues. The planning committee meetings were facilitated by neighborhood planning staff, with staff members from various City departments participating periodically. Once the draft goals and strategies were identified a second neighborhood meeting was held to share these ideas and get additional feedback from residents. Once the goals and strategies were finalized, they were reviewed, prioritized, and approved by the planning committee. The plan was then approved by the Lower Beaver Neighborhood Association Board, the Neighborhood Revitalization Board, the Des Moines City Council, and the Polk County Board of Supervisors.

Vision Statement

The planning committee utilized the input from the first neighborhood meeting to establish a vision statement for the neighborhood plan. A vision statement provides overall direction and serves as a source of inspiration for the planning process and the basis for the neighborhood plan. Below is the vision statement for Lower Beaver.

The Lower Beaver Neighborhood strives to be a welcoming neighborhood that people want to call home by fostering an environment which...

- ◆ supports vibrant, viable businesses, new and old;
- ◆ provides quality housing stock for a diversifying population;
- ◆ offers enriching opportunities for community relationships and participation, education, and cultural exposure;
- ◆ features attractive parks, trails, trees, and year-round recreational opportunities;
- ◆ is environmentally responsible, preserving our natural resources, ecology, wildlife, and habitats; and
- ◆ maintains an infrastructure effective for the safety and service of all residents, young and old.



Neighborhood History



1902 Polk County Map

The Lower Beaver Neighborhood Association was recognized by the Des Moines City Council on July 24, 2000. The neighborhood is a residential neighborhood that is known for its well-kept homes and tree lined streets.

Historically, the area was divided into two segments. On the flat ground near the river, there were brick and tile plants, coal mines that undermined much of the adjoining land, and the Inter-Urban Railway Line that ran along the river through Des Moines and northward to the town of Granger. On the higher ground there were early agricultural uses.

The earliest landowners in the 1850's included both farmers and land speculators. Agricultural statistics indicate that the farmers operated general purpose farms with a variety of crops and animals. In this period, much of the land was still unimproved, a few farms were scattered among the native Iowa woodlands.

The most prominent historic feature of this area that still remains today is Beaver Avenue. Beaver Avenue was originally built as a connection to Camp Dodge and is the oldest road in Polk County. Lower Beaver Road was an Indian food path later referred to as the Old Ridge Road. Old county maps show the locations of farm houses, none of which have survived today.

By 1900, there was a cluster of working-class houses near the end of what is now Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway

that were related to the brick industry. Also, there was a series of cabins on the South bank of the Des Moines River that constituted "Camp Douglas", which was a recreation steamboat stop.

The only community buildings at that time were two branches of Woodlawn School, one at 30th Street and Euclid Avenue and a branch at Beaver Avenue and Douglas Avenue. An 1872 map shows a church on the north side of Douglas Avenue near 40th Street. The area remained secluded until the opening of the Inter-Urban Railway bridge in 1908 and the Euclid Avenue wagon bridge a few years later. Beaver Avenue became the major north-south artery with its connection to Camp Dodge during the first World War. Plans were made to pave it all the way to the military base before it was decided to pave 58th Street, which became Merle Hay Road in 1918.

One year after WWI, the Lower Beaver area saw its first housing development. This development appeared at the northwest corner of Beaver Avenue and Douglas Avenue. Perspective homeowners were directed to take the Urbandale trolley to Urbandale (now Beaverville) and walk the remaining mile to the new neighborhood. The new lot purchasers built their own homes, which resulted in a collection of small frame houses of individual character scattered about. Today, these houses are identifiable by having a larger setback or sitting further back from the street than what you see in more modern residential developments.

The Great Depression and the war years stalled new housing development until the early 1950's. These new neighborhoods were built by developers who built houses for purchase. The first streets laid out in the 1950's continued the north-south grid system of the 1920's, but by the 1960's the streets became increasingly curvilinear in design. As development headed north, the builders encountered more prominent topography and ravines, which delayed development until City utilities, water and sewer service, could catch up.

Each decade produced distinct enclaves of domestic architecture of each succeeding generation. Woodlawn School was built in 1952 and Samuelson was built in 1958. Aside from Douglas Avenue, commercial development within the region was minimal. Today there are four churches built along Lower Beaver Road.

Commercial development in the northwest portion of Des Moines remained slow until the announcement of Merle Hay Plaza in 1957. This large, regional shopping center propelled commercial and office development along Douglas Avenue. Housing demand was also at a high level at this point in time.

Events in September of 1957 show just how in-demand this area was. That year, the Lower Beaver area was part of the 8th Annual National Home Week that attracted 65,000 visitors to walk through 85 new homes scattered throughout Des Moines. Of these, 15 open houses were featured from the newly platted areas in

Lower Beaver. The houses on display were three bedroom ranch and split level homes that sold for \$15,000 to \$25,000. Records show that 275 new homes were built in the neighborhood that year.

Plaza Lanes also opened in 1957 after a rapid five-month construction. Then in 1958, Douglas Avenue was widened to four lanes. This solidified the corridor as a major East-West thoroughfare in Des Moines. By 1960, 54 businesses and 146 residences existed on Douglas Avenue between the Des Moines River and Merle Hay Road. The completion of Interstate 235 to Interstate 80/35 slowly took business interest away from Douglas Avenue. In 1975, the opening of Valley West Mall further impacted the Douglas Avenue corridor, as well as other commercial corridors in northwestern Des Moines.

One of the most unique land uses in the neighborhood was Beaver Airfield. This small airfield was located in the general vicinity of Lower Beaver Road between Twana Drive and Valdez Drive. Parts of the hangars were built for businesses that originally serviced the airplanes. Following the closure of the airfield, the eastern extension of one of the runways was turned over to the City to establish what is today Woodlawn Park.



1946 Waterloo Daily Courier Ad

John Zeller and Bill Sherman contributed to this section on the history of the Lower Beaver Neighborhood.



Understanding the demographic composition of a neighborhood may help identify issues or may explain the reason why certain patterns are occurring. The Lower Beaver Neighborhood has a population of 6,192 according to the 2010 Census.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

	Des Moines	Lower Beaver
Total Population	209,665	6,192
Race and Ethnicity		
Percent White	76.9%	80.5%
Percent Non-White	23.1%	19.5%
Percent Black	10.0%	9.5%
Percent Asian	4.3%	5.1%
Percent Hispanic	11.7%	5.6%
Gender		
Percent Male	48.9%	48.4%
Percent Female	51.1%	51.6%
Age Distribution		
Under 18	24.7%	23.2%
Between 18-24	10.8%	7.8%
Between 25-44	29.1%	29.5%
Between 45-64	24.2%	24.5%
Over 65	11.1%	15.0%

Data from US Census Bureau, 2010 Census

As shown in Table 1, the demographics of the Lower Beaver Neighborhood are similar to the City as a whole. Lower Beaver has a slightly lower percentage of minority residents than the City. In addition, the neighborhood has slightly fewer youth and young adults than the City, particularly in the under 18 and 18 to 24 age ranges. However, the neighborhood has a higher population in the over 65 age range than Des Moines.

Table 2 illustrates the household characteristics for the neighborhood. Lower Beaver has a slightly higher percentage of family households than the City. While a number of factors can be attributed to the higher

Figure 1: Population by Age Group

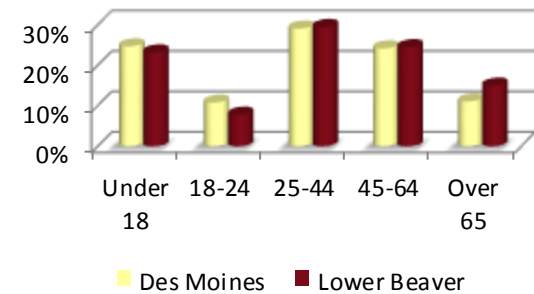


Table 2: Household Characteristics

	Des Moines	Lower Beaver
Total Households	89,477	2,628
Family Households	58.9%	62.8%
Non-family Households	41.1%	37.2%
Persons per Household	2.3	2.18
Median Household Income	\$47,096	\$56,004
Housing Tenure: % Owner-Occupied	66.0%	80.6%
Housing Tenure: % Renter-Occupied	34.0%	19.4%

Data from US Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Table 3: Education & Language

	Des Moines	Lower Beaver
Less than a high school graduate	14.1%	5.8%
High School Graduate or Some College	55.9%	53.9%
Associate Degree	7.5%	10.1%
Bachelor's Degree or higher	22.4%	30.1%
Language Spoken At Home		
English	84.4%	86.6%
Spanish	7.9%	6.9%
Other European	2.5%	3.2%
Asian	2.3%	2.2%
Other	0.7%	3.2%

Data from US Census Bureau, American Community Survey

percentage of family households, one key factor is the amenities that are present in the housing stock. In Lower Beaver, 81% of the homes have 3 or more bedrooms, which is a major draw for families. Close proximity to schools is likely another key factor. Lower Beaver is home to Woodlawn Education Center and Samuelsen Elementary School. The neighborhood also has a higher percentage of owner-occupied homes than the City as a whole. 80.6% of the houses in Lower Beaver are owner-occupied with 19.4% of the homes being renter occupied.

The median household income in Lower Beaver is higher than the City of Des Moines at \$56,004, compared to \$47,096. Along with this, Table 3 shows that residents of the neighborhood have a higher level of educational attainment than the rest of Des Moines. 40.2% of Lower Beaver residents have college degrees, compared to 29.9% of Des Moines residents having attained a college degree.

Some key observations can be taken from the demographics and neighborhood profile. First, the neighborhood is predominantly made up of family households that reside in owner-occupied housing. Second, the neighborhood has an aging population with many residents at or near retirement age. The recommendations in this plan aim to meet the broad range of needs of the residents of Lower Beaver.



Housing



The Lower Beaver Neighborhood entered the Neighborhood Revitalization Program in 2011 as a "Stable" neighborhood. This assessment as a stable neighborhood was based on a number of factors such as home values, home sales, housing conditions, the ratio of homeowners to renters, etc. This is further supported by visiting the neighborhood where you will find block after block of well maintained homes.

The housing stock in Lower Beaver is diverse in terms of the range of architectural styles, as well as the age and values of the homes. The average year built for homes in Lower Beaver is 1959 and the average value of a home is \$152,158. Of the approximately 2,300 homes located within the neighborhood, 99% of them are considered to be in normal, above normal, very good, or excellent condition, as identified by the Polk County Assessor's Office.

Although the housing stock in Lower Beaver is well kept, the majority of the homes in the neighborhood are nearing 50 years old. As homes age, the maintenance needs typically increase as systems near the end of their useful life. Keeping homes updated not only improves the value of the home but also the efficiency of the homes. One strategy to improve the housing stock is to encourage homeowners and homebuyers to utilize the programs made available through the Neighborhood Finance Corporation (NFC). These programs allow

Table 4A: Residential Property Characteristics		
	Lower Beaver	Des Moines
Total Residential Structures	2,279	59,407
Avg. Assessed Value	\$138,761	\$117,245
Avg. Total Living Area (Sq Ft)	1,248	1,233
Avg. Assessed Value per Sq Ft	\$113	\$95
Homestead Exemptions	1,885	44,988
% of Homestead Exemptions	82.7%	71.8%
Avg. Year Built	1959	1945

Data from Polk County Assessor

homeowners and homebuyers to renovate their homes by updating the major systems, building an addition or garage, or making kitchen and bathroom improvements that ultimately improve the function and value of the home. The neighborhood will work with staff from the NFC to promote the availability of this program.

The planning committee also discussed the importance of well maintained and well managed rental properties with the neighborhood. During the planning process, it was determined that a strong relationship is lacking between the LBNA and the rental community (including investor-owners, property managers, and rental tenants). It is suggested that the LBNA take a more active role in engaging these neighbors because having good quality tenants and well-kept property can

Table 4B: Residential Property Characteristics

Bedrooms		
None Listed	27	1%
1	22	1%
2	383	17%
3	1535	67%
4+	312	14%
Bathrooms		
One Full Bath Only	842	37%
1+ Baths	750	33%
2+ Baths	598	26%
3+ Baths	89	4%
Total Living Area (Sq Ft)		
Less than 850	161	7%
850-1,100	699	31%
1,100-1,500	987	43%
1,500-2,000	335	15%
2,000 or more	97	4%

Data from Polk County Assessor

increase the return on investment for the property owner/manager, resulting in a win-win situation for the owner, tenant, and neighborhood. The LBNA can also help match investor owners with resources such as the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program offered by the Des Moines Police Department, which trains property managers on how to screen tenants, prevent crime, make security improvements to the property, and engage tenants in safe living practices.

Another area of discussion for the planning committee was the lack of diverse housing options in the neighborhood. The pre-dominant housing type in the Lower Beaver Neighborhood is single-family homes with some multi-family apartment dwellings scattered throughout the neighborhood. There is a lack of alternative housing types such as townhomes, condos, and senior housing options. As long time residents age, there are few alternative housing choices available to keep them in the neighborhood. Developing a broader range of housing options is a goal of the neighborhood going forward.

Table 5: Residential Sales Summary

	Lower Beaver	Des Moines
Total Number of Sales (2009-2010)	217	6,403
% of Res Structures Sold	9.6%	10.2%
Avg. Sale Price	\$136,910	\$100,408
Number of Contract Sales	6	858
% of Sales on Contract	2.8%	13.3%
Number of Foreclosures (2006-2010)	65	3,469
% of Foreclosures	2.9%	5.5%

Data from Polk County Assessor



Housing

Goal / Outcome	Strategy	Action Steps	Responsible Party / Timeline
Ensure that Lower Beaver's housing stock remains stable and well maintained.	Promote the Neighborhood Finance Corporation's (NFC) home purchase, home refinance and home repair/remodeling programs.	The NFC and LBNA will work together to promote NFC's programs to Lower Beaver residents, realtors and prospective home buyers.	NFC, LBNA / Immediately
		Highlight NFC success stories told by individual Lower Beaver homeowners.	LBNA, NFC / Ongoing
	Make Lower Beaver homes more competitive in the greater Des Moines real estate market.	The NFC and LBNA will target homeowners and home buyers for specific improvements to enhance the functionality of the housing stock (such as adding a second bathroom, third bedroom, finished basement, etc.).	NFC, LBNA / High
	Limit the negative impact of foreclosed and/or abandoned homes.	LBNA and the Community Development Department Neighborhood Development and Neighborhood Inspection Divisions will work together to ensure that foreclosed and abandoned properties do not become a nuisance.	LBNA, CDD NDD & NID / Ongoing
		Upon request from the LBNA, the Community Development Department will provide an annual analysis of the foreclosed / vacant homes in the neighborhood.	LBNA, CDD NDD / Ongoing

Goal / Outcome	Strategy	Action Steps	Responsible Party / Timeline
Provide a range of quality housing options and opportunities for a diversifying population.	Encourage the development of townhouses, condos, and other diverse housing options that allow residents of all ages and incomes to remain in the neighborhood.	The LBNA and Community Development Department will work with prospective developers to examine ways to increase the diversity of housing choices.	LBNA, CDD NDD & PUD / Low
Enhance the multi-family buildings and rental units in the Lower Beaver Neighborhood.	Encourage owners / managers of rental properties to maintain and manage them in a manner that is consistent with the neighborhood.	LBNA will work with the Community Development Department Neighborhood Inspection Division to ensure that all rental properties are in compliance with the City's rental code and junk and debris ordinance.	LBNA, CDD NID / Ongoing
		Acknowledge property owners / managers that complete the Crime Free Multi Housing Program with the Des Moines Police Department through various LBNA outlets (such as Facebook, E-news, etc.).	LBNA / High



The Douglas Avenue and Euclid Avenue corridor is a major east-west corridor on the north side of Des Moines. The corridor consists of a mix of retail, entertainment, restaurant, automotive, and service oriented businesses. The 2020 Community Character Plan identifies the Euclid/Douglas corridor as a gateway corridor. Gateway Corridors are defined as, "...approaches and connections to distinct residential, institutional, and commercial districts. Gateway corridors include those streets that lead to the downtown or run through a large expanse of the city connecting important landmarks and districts...". These corridors are important areas for not only the neighborhoods that surround them but the City and metro as well.

The health and viability of the Euclid/Douglas corridor is important to the Lower Beaver Neighborhood. The Euclid/Douglas corridor has seen some turnover in the commercial district in recent years. Some buildings have been reoccupied while others have been challenged to sustain a viable business or tenant. Updating this area to keep pace with other commercial districts and remain competitive within the Des Moines and metro economic arena is a priority for the neighborhood.

Business and property owners should focus on making property and site improvements to update their establishments to attract more customers and retain businesses. Additionally, the neighborhood is supportive

of minimal extension of commercially zoned areas along Douglas/Euclid to accommodate reuse and redevelopment of neighborhood retail and commercial uses. To do this successfully there must be a balance to strengthen and grow the commercial corridor but also to be sensitive to the adjoining residential areas that are adjacent to commercially zoned properties.

Making improvements to the commercial corridor will require business leaders, neighborhood leaders, property owners, and City officials to come together and collectively develop strategies and resources. Many of the businesses along Douglas Avenue are members of the Urbandale Chamber of Commerce. The Urbandale Chamber may also play an important role in promoting the area.

For this section of the plan it is difficult to identify implementation timelines, as some projects are dependent on market conditions and private investment. Because of this the planning committee chose to identify and rank those initiatives that at the time of the planning process were considered to be catalysts to improve the commercial areas.

Goal / Outcome	Strategy	Action Steps	Responsible Party / Timeline
Maintain and enhance the viability of neighborhood commercial areas in and around the Lower Beaver Neighborhood.	Support neighborhood businesses.	The LBNA will work together with residents and business owners to promote neighborhood businesses and encourage residents to shop locally.	LBNA / Ongoing
		Organize a neighborhood social event to showcase local businesses (such as a restaurant crawl to area eateries).	LBNA / Low
		Continue the partnership with the Urbandale Chamber of Commerce and other like-minded organizations to strengthen the business community.	Douglas Avenue Businesses / Ongoing
	Encourage property owners to invest in exterior property improvements.	Promote the City's Façade Program and other economic development programs.	LBNA, City OED / High
	Enhance the aesthetics and pedestrian amenities along Douglas Avenue.	Look at opportunities to make the Douglas Avenue corridor more attractive through unified design elements, safety enhancements, and the incorporation of pedestrian amenities where necessary.	LBNA, CDD NDD / Medium
		Encourage beautification projects by governmental entities, private businesses, and the neighborhood association including median island plantings and streetscape enhancements.	LBNA / Medium
	Ensure that properties are in compliance with applicable City codes and ordinances.	Seek compliance with current zoning and site plan regulations to the extent reasonable, while still accommodating reuse and redevelopment for neighborhood retail and commercial uses.	LBNA, CDD / Ongoing
	Encourage future growth of neighborhood commercial areas.	Support minimal extension of commercially zoned areas along Douglas Avenue to accommodate reuse and redevelopment of neighborhood retail and commercial uses, while minimizing the impact to adjoining residential property.	LBNA, CDD / Ongoing

Infrastructure



A key component of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program is the Neighborhood Infrastructure Rehabilitation Program (NIRP). This program targets infrastructure rehabilitation in Designated neighborhoods and provides improvements above and beyond the City's annual street and curb maintenance program. The funding for this program is provided for in the City of Des Moines' Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

In most cases the available NIRP funding is not able to meet all the infrastructure needs within a neighborhood. Consequently, City staff relies on the neighborhood

planning committee to assist in the allocation of these limited resources. Public Works staff provides a list of existing infrastructure needs in the neighborhood to the committee for consideration.

The Lower Beaver Neighborhood was allocated \$665,000 in NIRP funds in 2012 to make infrastructure repairs. The Planning Committee favored street repairs as their top priority. Unmet infrastructure needs remaining after NIRP will be considered for inclusion in future City-wide maintenance programs as conditions, priorities, and funding allow.



Map 2: Infrastructure Improvements Map

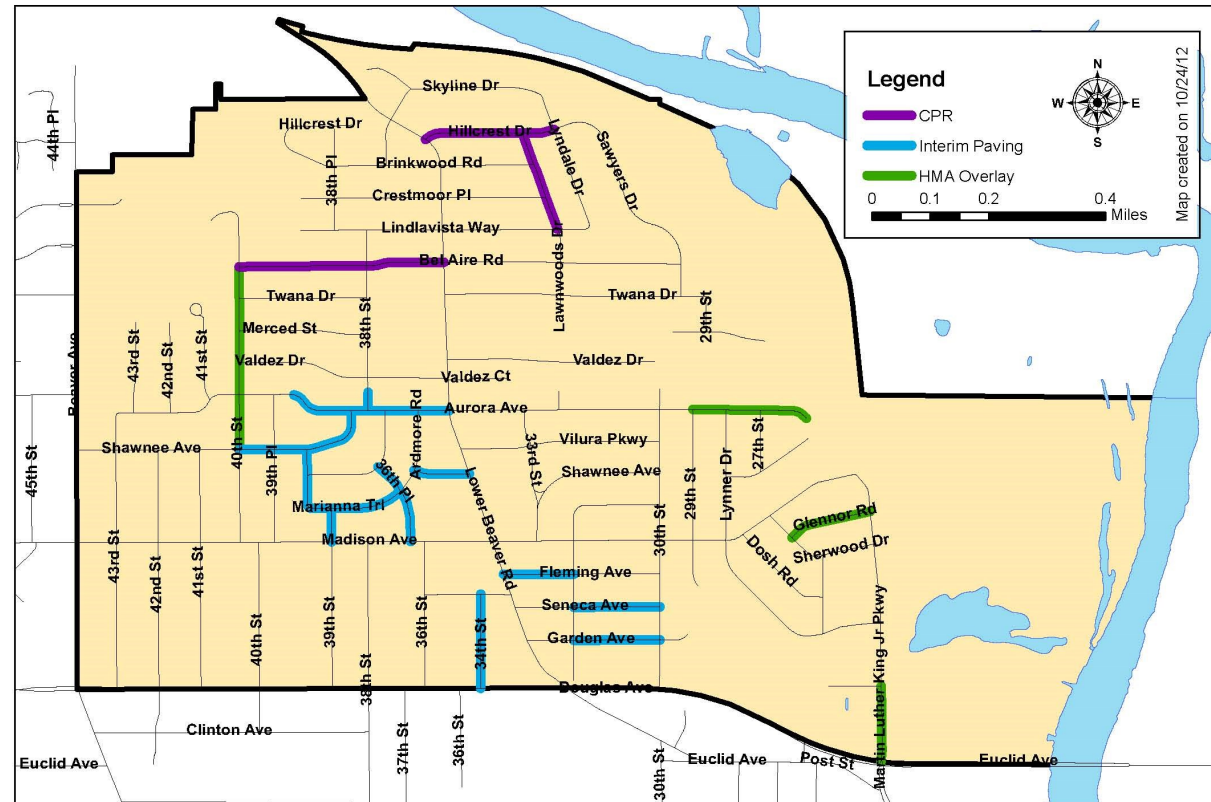


Table 6: NIRP Improvements in the Lower Beaver Neighborhood

Streets Receiving Improvements	
Interim Paving \$339,860 from FY2013 CIP NIRP	34th Street – Douglas Avenue to Seneca Avenue 36th Place – Madison Avenue to Marianna Trail 38th Street – Aurora Avenue to 100' North of Aurora Avenue 39th Street – Madison Avenue to Marianna Trail Aurora Avenue – 3921 Aurora Avenue to Lower Beaver Road Fleming Avenue – Lawnwoods Drive to Lower Beaver Road Garden Avenue – 30 th Street to Lawnwoods Drive Manor Lane – Marianna Trail to Shawnee Avenue Marianna Trail – 36 th Place to Manor Lane Seneca Avenue – 30 th Street to Lawnwoods Drive Shawnee Avenue – Aurora Avenue to 100' East of 40 th Street Shawnee Place – Lower Beaver Road to Ardmore Road
Hot Mix Asphalt Overlay (HMA) \$191,240 from FY2013 CIP NIRP	40th Street – Shawnee Avenue to Aurora Avenue 40th Street – Aurora Avenue to Merced Street 40th Street – Merced Street to Bel Aire Road Aurora Avenue – Dead End of 27 th Street to 29 th Street Glennor Road – M.L. King Jr. Parkway to Sherwood Drive M.L. King Jr. Parkway – Sherwood Drive to Madison Avenue M.L. King Jr. Parkway – Douglas Avenue to Clarkson Avenue
Concrete Pavement Restoration (CPR) \$133,900 from FY2013 CIP NIRP	Bel Aire Road – 38 th Street to 40 th Street Bel Aire Road – 38 th Street to Lower Beaver Road Hillcrest Drive – Skyline Drive to Lower Beaver Road Lawnwood Drive – Hillcrest Drive to Lindlavista Way



Parks & Trails



Access to recreation, including Parks and Trails, is important to the quality of life of residents. Park and Open Space add economic and social value to the surrounding area. Parklands also provide aesthetic enhancement and environmental benefits while contributing to the composition and urban fabric of the neighborhood and City.

The Lower Beaver Neighborhood is fortunate to have Woodlawn Park located in the heart of the neighborhood. This Park is located just south of the intersection of Twana Drive and Lawnwoods Drive. Woodlawn Park is approximately 6.8 acres in size and includes the following amenities:

- ◆ Half Basketball Court
- ◆ Two Tennis Courts
- ◆ Community Garden
- ◆ Open-Air Shelter
- ◆ Playground Equipment
- ◆ Water Spray Feature
- ◆ Picnic Tables
- ◆ Charcoal Grills
- ◆ Portable Restrooms
- ◆ Off-Street Parking



While the park provides open space and recreational opportunities for neighborhood residents there are some features that are dated and in need of updating. The tennis courts for example are due for resurfacing and the half basketball court would be better utilized if it were expanded to a full court layout. The open space in the southwestern portion of the park is heavily used for youth soccer practice and games. This open area should be retained and maintained to allow for continued soccer use, and if the opportunity presents itself, should be expanded for additional soccer usage.

Woodlawn Park, like many City Parks, does not have a master plan prepared to guide future development of the Park. If improvements are proposed for Woodlawn in the future, it is recommended that a site plan for the park be put together with additional neighborhood input. The parcel immediately west of Woodlawn Park is currently under utilized and for sale. The future of this site is currently unknown and will need to be monitored closely going forward.

The need to strategically plan for and implement improvements at Woodlawn is a priority for both the City's Parks Department and Neighborhood Association. It may be necessary to pursue both public and private funding to implement the goals set forth in this section of the plan.

The Lower Beaver Neighborhood is connected to the Greater Des Moines and Central Iowa Trail System via the Trestle to Trestle Trail. This trail runs

primarily along the Des Moines River basin and connects to other trails in northwest Des Moines such as the Inter-Urban and Neil Smith Trails. Access to the Trestle to Trestle Trail within the Lower Beaver Neighborhood is limited to points near Euclid Avenue and Lower Beaver Road.

The neighborhood would like to add another access point to the trail going east from the Sawyer's Landing Subdivision. This would allow for

better access to the trail but would also provide a direct link to and from Woodlawn Park. In order to accomplish this, there will need to be coordination between area property owners, the Tai Dam Village organization, the LBNA, and City staff from the Parks and Community Development Departments.

Map 3: Woodlawn Park Aerial Map

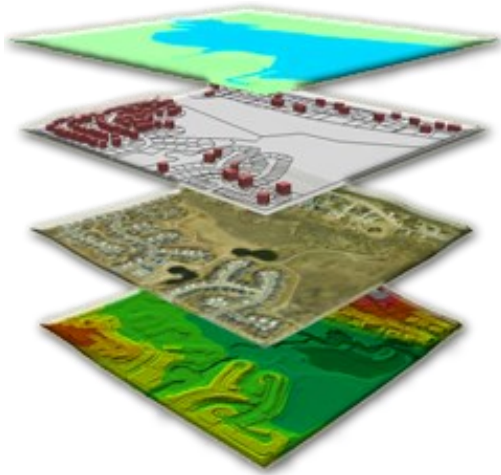


Aerial photo courtesy of Google Maps

Park & Trails

Goal / Outcome	Strategy	Action Steps	Responsible Party / Timeline
PARK IMPROVEMENTS			
Improve the family friendliness and functionality of Woodlawn Park.	Identify and address the smaller, short-term needs of Woodlawn Park.	Make needed repairs to the tennis court and paint lines for Pickleball use.	Parks / High
		Create a pedestrian walkway to connect the park to the Sawyer's Landing subdivision.	LBNA, Parks / Medium
		The LBNA will partner with the Parks Department to do minor landscape improvements to incorporate native species and prairie grasses.	LBNA, Parks / Low
		Consider security lighting in the park, including in/around the shelter (dark sky compliant).	Parks, LBNA / Low
		The LBNA will work with the Parks Department to create unique signage and other design elements for Woodlawn Park to pay homage to the former Beaver Airfield.	LBNA, Parks / Low
	Develop a plan to address larger, long-term improvements to Woodlawn Park.	Develop a site plan for future improvements in Woodlawn Park.	Parks, LBNA / High
		Upgrade the existing half-court basketball court to a regulation full-court basketball court.	Parks, LBNA / Low
		If necessary, pursue private funding or grants to implement desired park improvements.	LBNA / Ongoing
		Consider opportunities to expand Woodlawn Park to the west into the existing underutilized parcel at 4209 Lower Beaver Road.	LBNA, Parks & CDD NDD / High

Goal / Outcome	Strategy	Action Steps	Responsible Party / Timeline
TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS			
Increase active recreational opportunities in the Lower Beaver Neighborhood.	Encourage biking, running, and walking throughout the neighborhood and beyond.	Establish/expand recreational bike routes within Lower Beaver and the surrounding neighborhoods that link to the larger City and Metro trail systems.	Parks, LBNA / Ongoing
		Install standardized distance marker signage along the Trestle to Trestle Trail.	Parks / Medium
		Install welcome / educational signage along the Trestle to Trestle Trail to raise awareness of the Lower Beaver Neighborhood.	LBNA / Medium
		The LBNA will work with the City and the Tai Village to develop a pedestrian connection from Woodlawn Park to the Trestle to Trestle Trail	LBNA, Parks, & CDD / High
		Develop a link between the Trestle to Trestle Trail and the Des Moines River Water Trail.	LBNA, Parks / Low



Land use and zoning are two tools that local governments use to guide development. The City of Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Land Use Plan sets an overall vision for development and may be used to define the character of an area. The Future Land Use Plan is not parcel specific and does not give a parcel any legal rights for use. Zoning, on the other hand, is parcel specific and legally binding. By State law, changes to the zoning designations must be based on the Future Land Use Plan.

The planning committee worked with City of Des Moines planning staff to analyze the land use and zoning designations for Lower Beaver. The neighborhood is predominately residential with low-density residential future land use designations and R1-60 or R1-80 zoning, which allows single-family residential dwellings. There are also public/semi-public and parks/open space future land use designations for the school and park facilities. The commercial areas along Douglas Avenue are comprised of Commercial Corridor or Small Scale Strip Development future land use designations and C-0, C-1, or C-2 zoning. While no immediate changes to the future land use designations or zoning districts were identified, the emphasis was placed on preserving the residential areas and strengthening the commercial district along Douglas Avenue.

In order to strengthen the commercial districts, the City of Des Moines and the Lower Beaver Neighborhood Association will seek compliance with current zoning and site plan regulations along Douglas Avenue to the extent reasonable, while still accommodating and encouraging reuse and redevelopment for neighborhood retail and commercial uses. Additionally, the Lower Beaver Neighborhood supports minimal extension of commercially zoned areas along Douglas Avenue to accommodate adaptive reuse and redevelopment of neighborhood and retail uses. Any expansion of commercial areas would need to be

sensitive to adjoining residential areas and provide an adequate buffer between commercial and residential uses.

Since the Lower Beaver Neighborhood is built-out, with little opportunity for new development to occur, the former airfield site at 4209 Lower Beaver Road is one of the few parcels available for redevelopment in the neighborhood. Because of its location in the heart of the neighborhood and its redevelopment potential, the planning committee discussed possible future uses of the property. The site adjoins Woodlawn Park. So, there is an opportunity for better connection to the park from the neighborhood; or it is possible to expand the park in conjunction with a redevelopment proposal.

Whether the former airfield site is redeveloped or remains open space is yet to be seen. Although the neighborhood's preference is to expand Woodlawn Park to the west, the neighborhood association is eager to work with any potential developer to ensure that the land use would be compatible and complimentary to the Lower Beaver Neighborhood. In order that this may occur, it is recommended that a Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning classification be established prior to development. A PUD will allow the neighborhood association to provide their input on the conceptual plan prior to development, which will ensure that it is in harmony with the existing neighborhood character and preserves open space while providing desired neighborhood linkages to Woodlawn Park.

This section of the neighborhood plan is intended to be a policy guide for future land use and zoning discussions. It should be considered a guideline for development and not a strict determinant so that it can be flexible enough to allow for changing environments, contemporary development practices and other needs that cannot be foreseen.

2020 Community Character Plan Land Use Designations

Low Density Residential – Areas developed with single-family homes and duplexes legal as of December 31, 1996, with up to 6 units per acre.

Medium Density Residential – Areas developed with multi-family units including those over 8 units, up to 17 units per acre.

Commercial Corridor – Small-to-moderate scale commercial in a linear pattern that serves the adjacent neighborhood and passing motorists. Building sizes range from 2,000 to 35,000 square feet.

Community Commercial – Large-scale commercial development located on a major transportation corridor. Parcel size may be up to 20-25 acres with 150,000 to 250,000 square feet of building coverage.

Park/Open Space – Uses include parks, golf courses, trails, zoos, and cemeteries.

Public/Semi-Public – Uses such as government facilities, schools, and hospitals.

Zoning District Classifications

A-1 : Agricultural – Intended and designed to preserve or encourage the continuation of agricultural uses, to ensure urban development occurs contiguously to existing urbanized or urbanizing areas and to prevent premature urban development in areas which are not adequately served by public facilities and/or services.

C-0 : Commercial-Residential – Intended and designed to provide for the development of professional and low-intensity business offices in areas where residential dwellings predominate.

C-1 : Neighborhood Retail Commercial – Intended to provide for the convenience shopping of persons living in residential areas and for general uses and activities of a retail and personal service character. In addition, low-intensity business and professional offices are permitted.

C-2 : General Retail and Highway-Oriented Commercial – Intended to provide for major retail shopping areas, other than shopping centers in C-4 districts, outside the downtown area. The district includes, as well, much of the strip commercial property existing along the major city streets and highways. The uses permitted are intended to accommodate both the general retail consumer and the needs and services of the automobile traveling consumer.

C-4 : Shopping Center Commercial – Intended to provide for the development of shopping centers.

PUD : Planned Unit Development – Intended and designed to encourage large-scale and quality development of vacant or underutilized tracts of land throughout the city pursuant to a unified building and site development plan incorporating a comprehensive design based on a thorough application of professional standards of excellence.

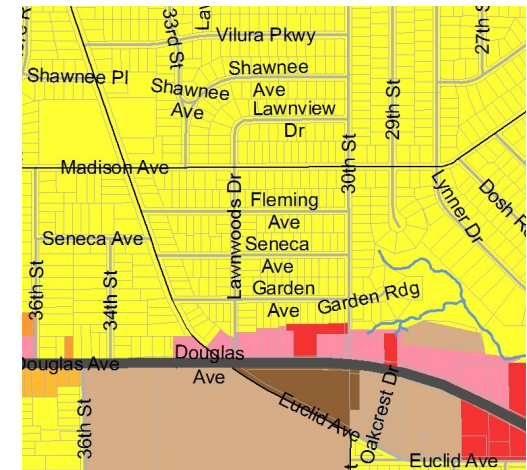
R1-60 & R1-80 : One-Family Low-Density Residential – Intended and designed to provide for certain areas developed primarily with one-family detached dwellings and areas where similar residential development seems likely to occur.

R-2 : One and two-family residential district is intended and designed to provide for certain low density residential areas of the city developed with single-family and two-family dwellings, and areas where similar residential development seems likely to occur.

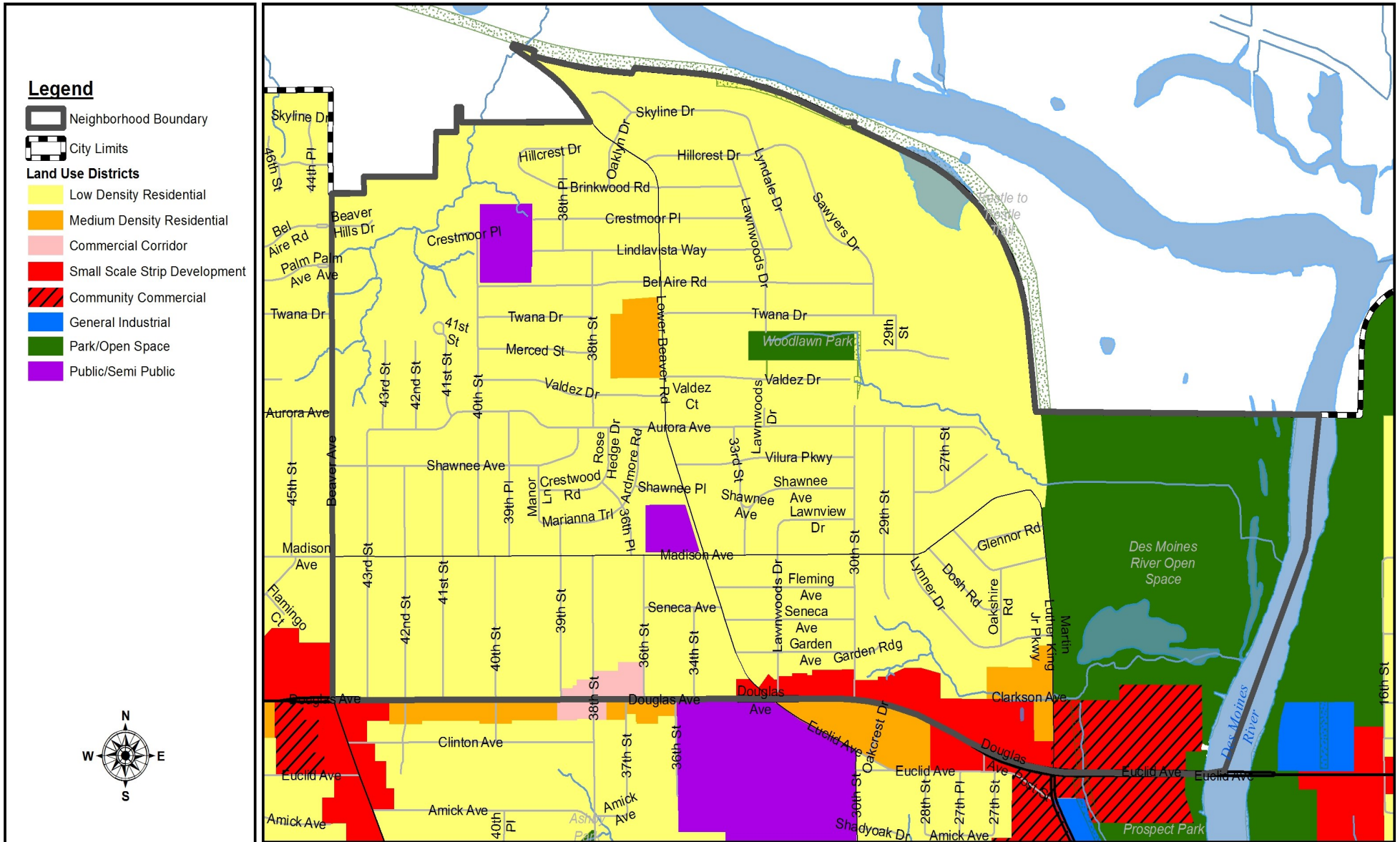
R-3 & R-4 : Medium and high-density residential areas developed with single-family, two-family, and multiple-family dwellings and areas where similar residential development seems likely to occur.

FW : Intended to apply special regulations to the use of land in areas of the city that are subject to a predictable flow of floodwaters.

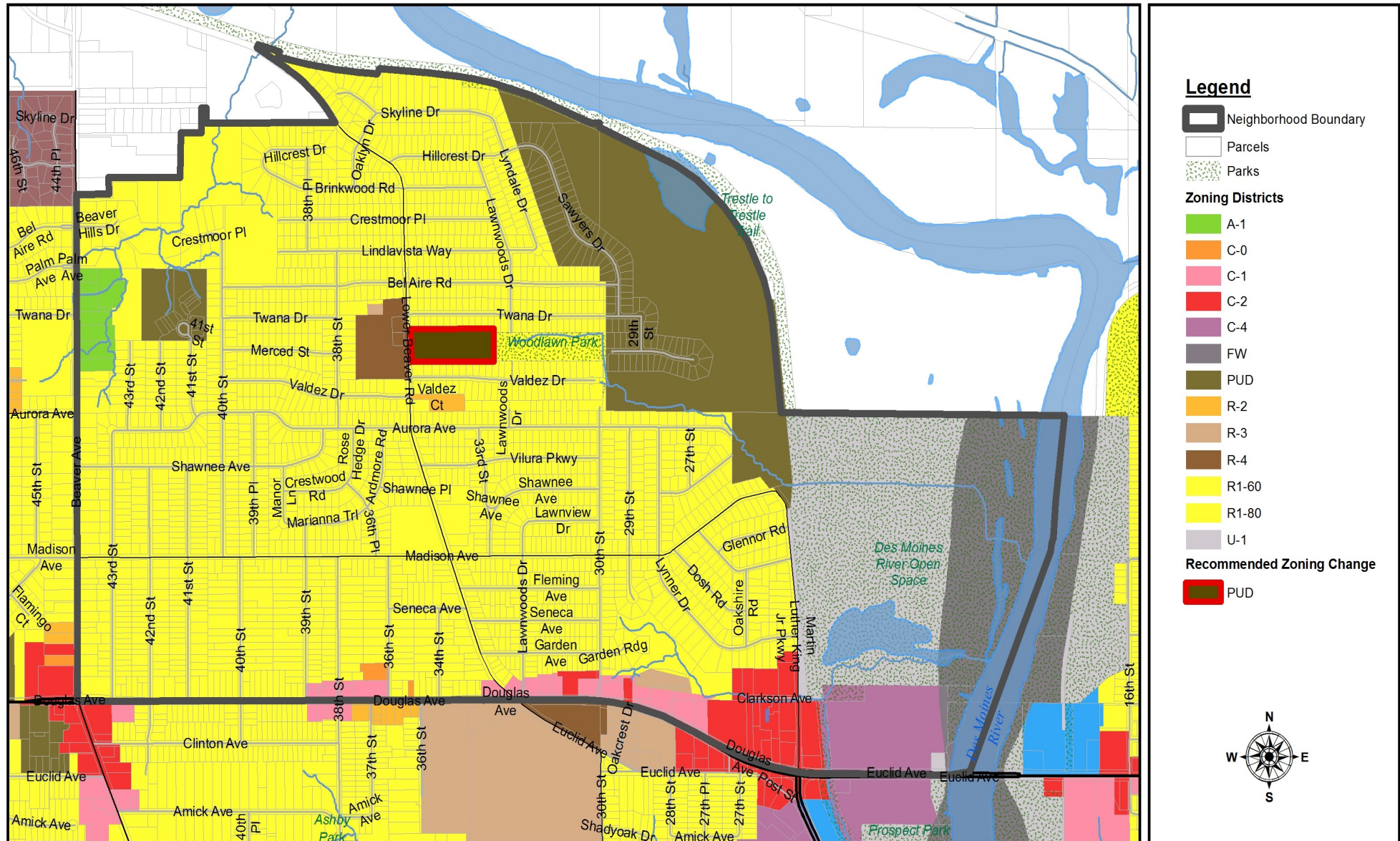
U-1 : Intended to encompass certain areas of the city which are subject to flood hazard.



Map 4: 2020 Community Character Plan Land Use Map



Map 5: Zoning Map showing Proposed Zoning Change





The implementation phase of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program requires a substantial commitment of time and resources. In order to be successful, it is essential that the Lower Beaver Neighborhood Association continue to collaborate with the City of Des Moines and other community stakeholders. It will also require the following:

- ◆ Strong and active leadership from the Lower Beaver Neighborhood Association (LBNA).
- ◆ Continued commitment and support from the Des Moines City Council and the Polk County Board of Supervisors.
- ◆ Technical assistance from Neighborhood Planning staff and other City staff when appropriate.
- ◆ Engagement and support from neighborhood residents, area businesses and property owners, and other neighborhood stakeholders.
- ◆ Financial support and availability of resources.

At this stage, the leadership baton is passed from the City to the Neighborhood Association. For plan implementation, the Lower Beaver Neighborhood Association must take ownership of the plan and advocate for the goals and projects identified in the various sections of this plan to be completed. It will be necessary to create the political will to support revitalization efforts and also to solicit the help of other partners.

In addition to leading the charge, the LBNA has agreed to be an educator and disseminator of information, a resource and advocate for residents and stakeholders, and an advisor to City of Des Moines staff for neighborhood issues and projects. The LBNA has committees in place that will also lead some of the implementation duties and work toward accomplishing the goals identified in this plan. Those committees will be charged with overseeing their appropriate section of the plan, prioritizing activities, recruiting volunteers when necessary, and measuring success. It is imperative that the LBNA communicates regularly with the

neighborhood about upcoming activities and that they celebrate accomplishments.

In addition to the neighborhood association, the City and County will continue to engage other partners from the public, non-profit and private sectors in plan implementation when appropriate. This may include identifying financing mechanisms above and beyond traditional resources. The Neighborhood Finance Corporation will be an important resource to improve the housing stock but the neighborhood association will play a role in driving the NFC's lending activities through promoting those services to residents. The Neighborhood Development Corporation and the City's Office of Economic Development may also be viable partners when it comes to the revitalization of the Euclid and Douglas Avenue Corridor.

The Neighborhood Development Division will check in periodically with the Lower Beaver Neighborhood Association to assess progress on plan goals. Once the neighborhood plan has been substantially completed, Neighborhood Planning staff will recommend that the program be ended and the Lower Beaver neighborhood graduated to Charter status. Completion of the plan does not necessarily mean that all items have been accomplished. It is possible that certain activities may be investigated and found not to be feasible or to require an unreasonable demand of resources. In addition, conditions and opportunities change over time, requiring that priorities be periodically reevaluated.

Once the plan has been found to be substantially completed, a report will be prepared with input from the neighborhood association and forwarded to the Neighborhood Revitalization Board. Pending its approval, the recommendation will be forwarded to the Des Moines City Council and the Polk County Board of Supervisors for final approval. At this point the neighborhood becomes a Charter Neighborhood and is phased out of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program.

General Acronyms and Abbreviations Referenced in the Plan

CD : City of Des Moines Community Development Department – The City Department that is responsible for planning, promoting, developing, and maintaining Des Moines social, physical, and business environments.

CIP : City of Des Moines Capital Improvement Program – A short range plan that identifies capital projects and equipment purchases, provides a planning schedule, and identifies options for financing.

DART : Des Moines Area Regional Transit – The public transit agency that serves Des Moines and other communities in Polk County and the surrounding Metro Area.

DMPD : Des Moines Police Department – The Police Department for the City of Des Moines.

HMA : Hot Mixed Asphalt – An engineered product composed of 95% stone, sand, and gravel along with 5% asphalt cement (a petroleum product) that is used to pave streets.

LBNA : Lower Beaver Neighborhood Association – The neighborhood organization recognized by the City of Des Moines that serves the area bound by Douglas/ Euclid Avenue on the south, I-80/35 on the north, the Des Moines River on the east, and Beaver Avenue on the west.

NDD : Neighborhood Development Division – A division of the City of Des Moines Community Development Department that is responsible for coordinating the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP).

NDC : Neighborhood Development Corporation – A non-profit, community-focused organization that revitalizes distressed neighborhoods and encourages neighborhood sustainability. NDC fulfills its mission by

offering commercial and residential options through building rehabilitation, new construction, and in-fill development. For more information, visit: www.ndcdesmoines.org

NFC : Neighborhood Finance Corporation – The NFC provides unique lending programs and related services to help revitalize targeted neighborhoods in Polk County through partnerships with residents, government entities, community-based organizations, and the business community. For more information, visit: www.neighborhoodfinance.org

NIRP : Neighborhood Infrastructure Rehabilitation Program – The program targets infrastructure rehabilitation in Designated Neighborhoods, and provides improvements above and beyond the City's annual street, curb, and sidewalk maintenance programs.

NRB : Neighborhood Revitalization Board – An appointed citizen board that advises the Des Moines City Council and Polk County Board of Supervisors on housing improvements and neighborhood revitalization efforts.

NRP : Neighborhood Revitalization Program – The City of Des Moines and Polk County created the NRP in 1990 to help stabilize and improve neighborhoods in Des Moines. The NRP uses a strategy that calls for neighborhood residents, City, County, local business leaders, and the Neighborhood Finance Corporation (NFC) to develop a public/private partnership that addresses revitalization issues. The NRP also gives citizens the opportunity to organize and create neighborhood groups that can be officially recognized by the City Council and County Supervisors.

OED : Office of Economic Development – The City of Des Moines Department that is responsible for assisting businesses to locate and expand in Des Moines.