



CAPITOL EAST NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN 2014



IOWA STATE
UNIVERSITY

Capitol East Neighborhood Charter Plan Update

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Des Moines' Neighborhood Revitalization Program was established in the early 1990s, to help enhance, stabilize, and revitalize neighborhoods throughout Des Moines. The Neighborhood Revitalization Program uses a strategy of coalition building that brings together neighborhood residents, City and County staff, local business leaders, and area non-profits. The program encourages the development of public/private partnerships aimed at addressing revitalization efforts within various neighborhoods throughout the city. City staff provides the technical assistance and planning coordination, but active resident engagement is an essential element of the process.

The Capitol East neighborhood was one of the earliest neighborhoods to take part in the revitalization process. The first Capitol East Neighborhood Action Plan, completed in December of 1990, was successful in achieving its goals. Neighborhood accomplishments borne of the first plan include the following: the construction of a new elementary school (Capitol View); housing redevelopment on Walnut Street between East 15th and East 16th Streets; improvements to Stewart Square Park;

designing attractive green spaces in highly visible areas; establishing an organized an "alley clean up" process in one alley each month during the SCRUB season; and the Neighborhood Development Corporation's commercial development along East Grand Avenue. This second neighborhood revitalization process is a pilot program designed to review and update the plans of charter neighborhoods whose plans are more than 10 years old.

The following plan was prepared through a joint effort of the City of Des Moines' Neighborhood Development Division, the Capitol East Neighborhood Association, and graduate students from Iowa State University's Community and Regional Planning department. The approved plan becomes an amendment to the City of Des Moines Comprehensive Plan that supersedes the original neighborhood plan and serves as an ongoing guide affecting future policy decisions for the Capitol East neighborhood.



East Grand Corridor Businesses

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process began in 2011 when the Capitol East Neighborhood Association applied for the opportunity to update their plan. Data collection for the current plan began in the early fall of 2013. The data collection process was twofold; first, a large outreach effort was launched in order to engage Capitol East neighborhood residents and to gather public input via surveys (both English and Spanish) and face-to-face interviews, focus groups, and poster sessions. In all, more than 300 individuals participated in the planning process. See Figure 1 for a more detailed breakdown of participation. Next, a steering committee was formed that brought together various stakeholders to prioritize issues based on the resident outreach efforts and to identify strategies, action steps, resources, and partners. The result of the process was the draft plan, which was ultimately submitted to the Capitol East Neighborhood Association for approval.

Preliminary Resident Survey

Over the course of two weeks, Iowa State students went door-to-door administering surveys to neighborhood residents. The survey instrument captured residents' opinions about a variety of neighborhood issues, including services that are most important to them, neighborhood activities

of interest, the biggest problems facing the neighborhood, the neighborhood's strengths and weaknesses, and the changes that they would like to see in the neighborhood. A total of 76 surveys were collected through in-person interviews and mail-in paper responses. Survey results are symbolized in the word cloud below. The more often a word appeared in survey results, the larger it appears in the word cloud. Generally, residents were most interested in adding neighborhood services that addressed crime prevention, youth programming, and home maintenance. They thought the biggest problems in the neighborhood were vacant properties, infrastructure-related issues, and a lack of activities for youth. More detailed survey results are included in Appendix A.

Key words that came up frequently in survey responses included: activities, youth, safety, strength, diversity, parks, store, Latino, Latina, family, community, and neighborhood. After the survey outreach, the planning team presented this feedback to the Neighborhood Association and the Neighborhood Plan Steering Committee.



Figure 1. Survey keywords

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT



80 Surveys collected

30 **Business** Conversations
Interviews
Focus Groups

60+ On-the-street interview
short topic-oriented

70+ **Youth-related** Students
Parents
Staff

55 Potential partners
contacted

300 **Total engagements**

Figure 2. Outreach and engagement by the numbers



Steering Committee Meeting 2013

Steering Committee

Steering committee meetings brought together neighborhood residents, local leaders, representatives from area non-profits and city/county departments, and various professionals. The steering committee's role was to brainstorm ideas, strategies, action steps, resources, and partners for inclusion in the new neighborhood plan. The initial steering committee meeting focused on resident concerns expressed in the surveys. Available resources were identified and planning topics were set at this meeting. Subsequent steering committee meetings focused on the four priority areas that were established at this first meeting. These included the following four priority areas: housing, infrastructure, youth, and community building. Later in the process, supporting and growing the East Grand Business Corridor became a fifth priority area.



Steering Committee Meeting 2013

Additional Neighborhood Outreach and Engagement

Neighborhood outreach was an ongoing process that extended far beyond the preliminary resident survey. Students held focus groups with local business leaders, as well as with youth at East High School. "Office Hours" were held weekly in highly traveled areas, in order to gain resident feedback via face-to-face interviews and conversations with passers-by. Students participated in a radio interview on a local Latino radio station, placed poster feedback devices and flyers in central public areas, and held on-the-street poster sessions.



Neighborhood Visual Preference Survey 2013

GATEWAY CAPITOL EAST

Capitol East is a historic neighborhood located in Des Moines' urban core. Because of the neighborhood's central location along State Highway 69, it serves as a gateway to the city, the Capitol building, and the surrounding Capitol Complex. Residents recognize the importance of their location and would like to create a physical gateway that welcomes people to the Capitol East neighborhood. This physical gateway could take many forms, including the use of unique landscaping, signage, an archway, or another similar physical identifier that will welcome metro travelers to the neighborhood while also creating a sense of place.

Extending the gateway theme further, Capitol East has been identified as a "gateway" community where many immigrants, and in particular for Latino immigrants, locate when they first move to Iowa. These new residents add to the vibrant diversity of the neighborhood. Capitol East would like to continue to welcome these new residents and make them feel at home by providing a strong sense of place where social relationships can grow and families can thrive.

Finally, the East Grand Commercial Corridor in Capitol East serves as a gateway to the neighborhood with its concentration of small businesses, many of which are Latino-owned, that draw people from all over the metro area. The Commercial Corridor along East Grand contains over 25 small businesses

that offer unique goods and services for both Latinos who live in the neighborhood and for people from outside of the neighborhood seeking a unique cultural experience. Promoting this area as a gateway to the neighborhood will be essential to the neighborhood's future growth and prosperity.

In an attempt to reflect the many ways that Capitol East serves as a "gateway," the overall theme of this plan is "Gateway Capitol East." The neighborhood should be welcoming in both a physical and non-physical sense to the many groups of people that the neighborhood will rely on in the future for its growth and vibrancy.



Capitol East pocket park; Gateway inspiration

CURRENT CONDITION

Demographics

Capitol East is on the whole a young and diverse community; however, it is faced with a number of challenges related to population loss, income, and educational attainment. This section contains a brief overview of the existing demographic conditions of the Capitol East neighborhood.

The Capitol East neighborhood is a compact neighborhood with a population of 2,605 as of the 2010 Census (see Table 1). Capitol East comprises just over 1% of the city of Des Moines' total population. While the city grew at a rate of approximately 5.5% from 2000 to 2010, the Capitol East population shrank by 9.4%. Despite this reduction in population, the Capitol East neighborhood is more densely populated than the city as a whole (4,370 persons per square mile versus 2,515 persons per square mile).

Capitol East is a primarily low income community. The median household income in Capitol East is \$20,803, which is less than half that of the city of Des Moines; and, the median household size in Capitol East is slightly larger than that of the city overall. The Capitol East neighborhood has a higher percentage of renters than the city and almost twice the rate of single-parent households (see Table 2). The rate of residents receiving public assistance in Capitol East is more than five times the rate of the City (see Table 2).

Table 1: Population

Census Year	2000	2010
Capitol East Population*	2,876	2,605
Percentage Change	N/A	-9.4%
Percent of DSM Population	1.4%	1.2%
Des Moines Population	198,682	209,665
Percentage Change	2.8%	5.5%

Table 1. *Data is estimated based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Block boundaries may not match the neighborhood boundaries and may include data from areas not within the neighborhood.

Table 2: Family and Household Characteristics

	Capitol East**	Des Moines
Median Household Income	\$20,803	\$47,096
Persons per Housing Unit	2.5	2.4
Housing Tenure		
Percent Owner-Occupied	56.1%	66.0%
Percent Renter-Occupied	43.9%	34.0%
Households		
Total Households	1,165	89,477
Family households	55.5%	58.9%
Married	23.0%	41.6%
Single Male	8.6%	4.7%
Single Female	23.9%	12.2%
Non-family households	44.5%	41.1%
Public Assistance		
Percent on Public Assistance	16.80%	3%
Percent Not on Public Assistance	83.2%	96.6%
Language Spoken at Home		
English	76.0%	86.6%
Spanish	22.5%	7.9%

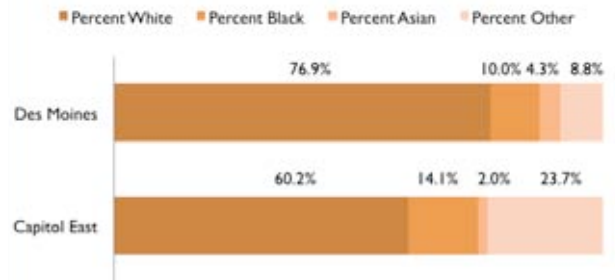
Table 2. **Data is estimated based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau. The American Community Survey uses statistical methods to estimate data. Additionally, Census boundaries may not match the neighborhood boundaries and may include data from areas not within the neighborhood.

One of the Capitol East neighborhood's greatest assets is its diversity. As of the 2010 Census, 32.5% of the population identified as Latino and 14% as African American (See Figure 3). That's more than twice the percentage of Latinos in the city as a whole, and one and a half times the rate of African Americans compared to the city as a whole. The Capitol East neighborhood has more than twice the rate of Spanish speaking households than the city of Des Moines and almost a quarter of the neighborhood speaks a language other than English in the home.

The Capitol East neighborhood is a young and vibrant community. More than half of the population is under the age of 30, and approximately one third of the population is under the age of 18. The Capitol East neighborhood far exceeds the citywide average in the 'under 5', '5 to 17', and '18 to 21' age categories, as shown in Figure 5.

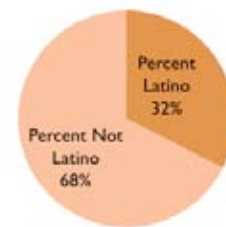
Educational achievement in the Capitol East neighborhood is lower than the city of Des Moines as a whole. The Capitol East neighborhood has a higher percentage of residents with less than a high school diploma and fewer residents with degrees beyond a high school diploma compared to the city of Des Moines as a whole (see Figure 6).

Figure 3: Race and Ethnicity



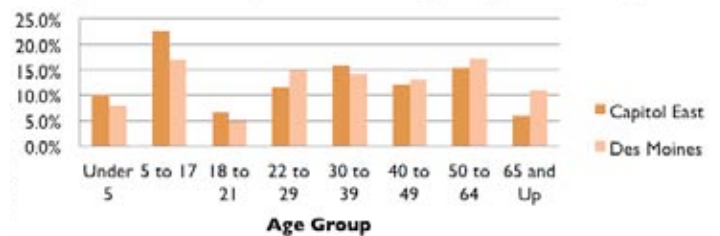
Data source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 4: Capitol East Population Latino/Not Latino



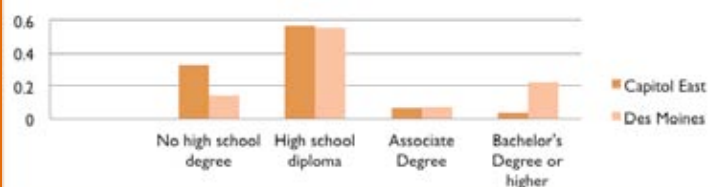
Data source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 5: Population by Age Group



Data source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 6: Educational Attainment (Age 18 and older)



Data source: U.S. Census Bureau

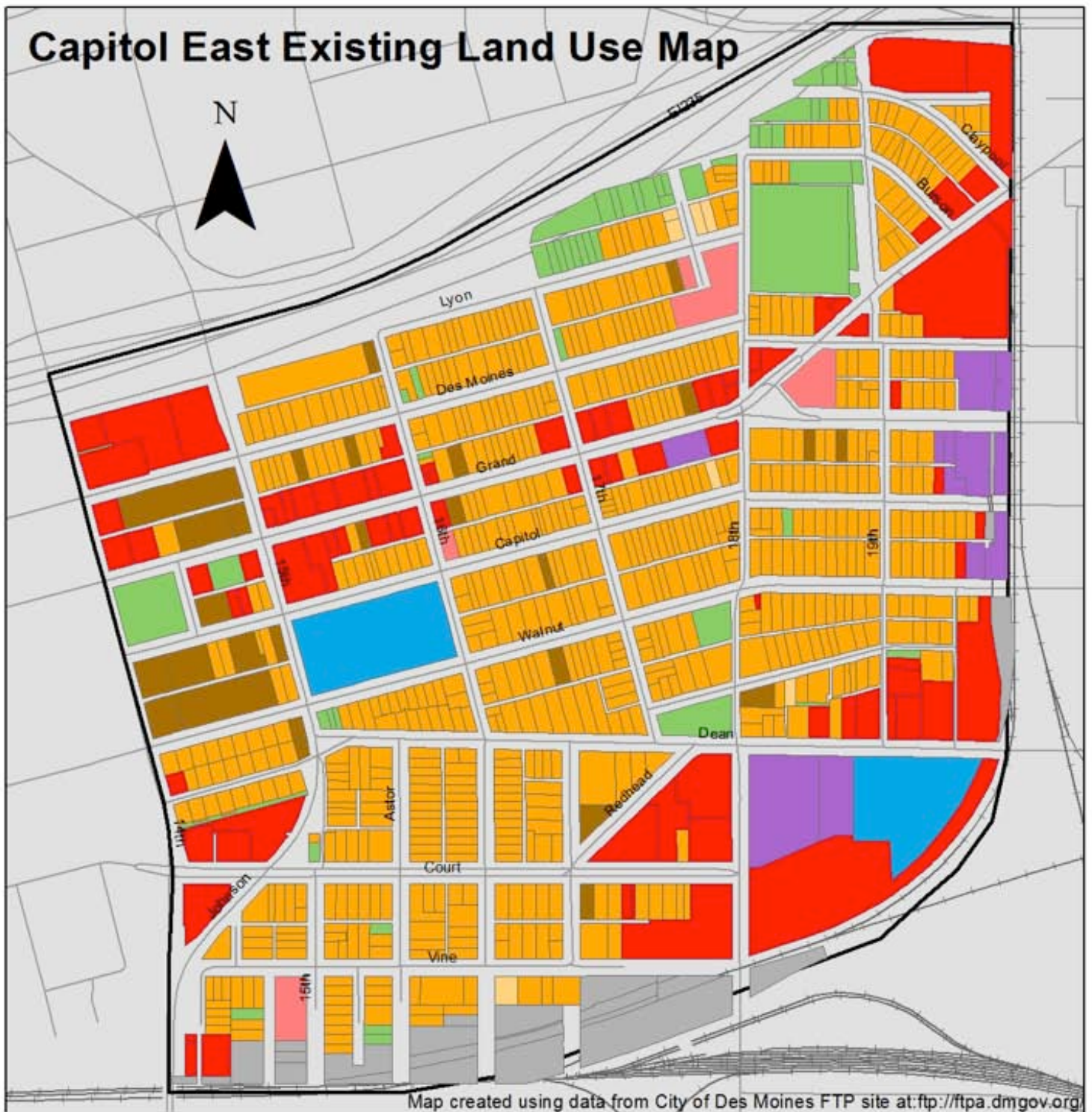
There are several key conclusions to be drawn from this demographic analysis. First, the total population of the Capitol East neighborhood has decreased over the past decade. Secondly, the population has become increasingly racially diverse in recent years; although the neighborhood is much more homogeneous in terms of income level and educational attainment. The neighborhood is also home to many families with young children.

The Capitol East neighborhood's compact nature and diverse populace—along with its proximity to downtown Des Moines—makes it an extremely desirable place to live. The characteristics listed here include challenges, but also strengths and opportunities for the neighborhood. Capitol East is a dynamic, vibrant environment that is wholly unique from other parts of the city. By working together to overcome existing cultural and social barriers, the residents of Capitol East have the opportunity to build from their diverse backgrounds and create an atmosphere that is both welcoming and inclusive.

Land Use and Zoning

The primary land use in the Capitol East neighborhood is residential lots for single-family houses. Commercially zoned parcels are clustered along the central East Grand business corridor, as well as along the west, south, and east peripheries of the neighborhood. Industrial land uses are primarily located near the northeast boundary of the neighborhood along the I-235 corridor, with some additional areas located along the east and southeast boundaries of the neighborhood (see Figure 7).

The Capitol East neighborhood is facing several land use-related challenges and opportunities. If the community wishes to expand upon the success of the East Grand business district, it will need strategic long-term visioning and possible zoning amendments to facilitate new development. Although the Capitol East neighborhood is already a dense neighborhood by Des Moines standards, opportunities for redevelopment and infill are abundant. However, vacant lots that do not meet current minimum lot size requirements pose barriers to redevelopment in the neighborhood.



Legend

Zoning Class

Commercial

Exempt Commercial

Exempt Residential

Government

Industrial

Multi-Family

Residential

School

Utility

Railroad

Street Center Line

0 0.05 0.1 0.2 Miles

Figure 7. Existing conditions map

Neighborhood Commercial and Industrial Uses

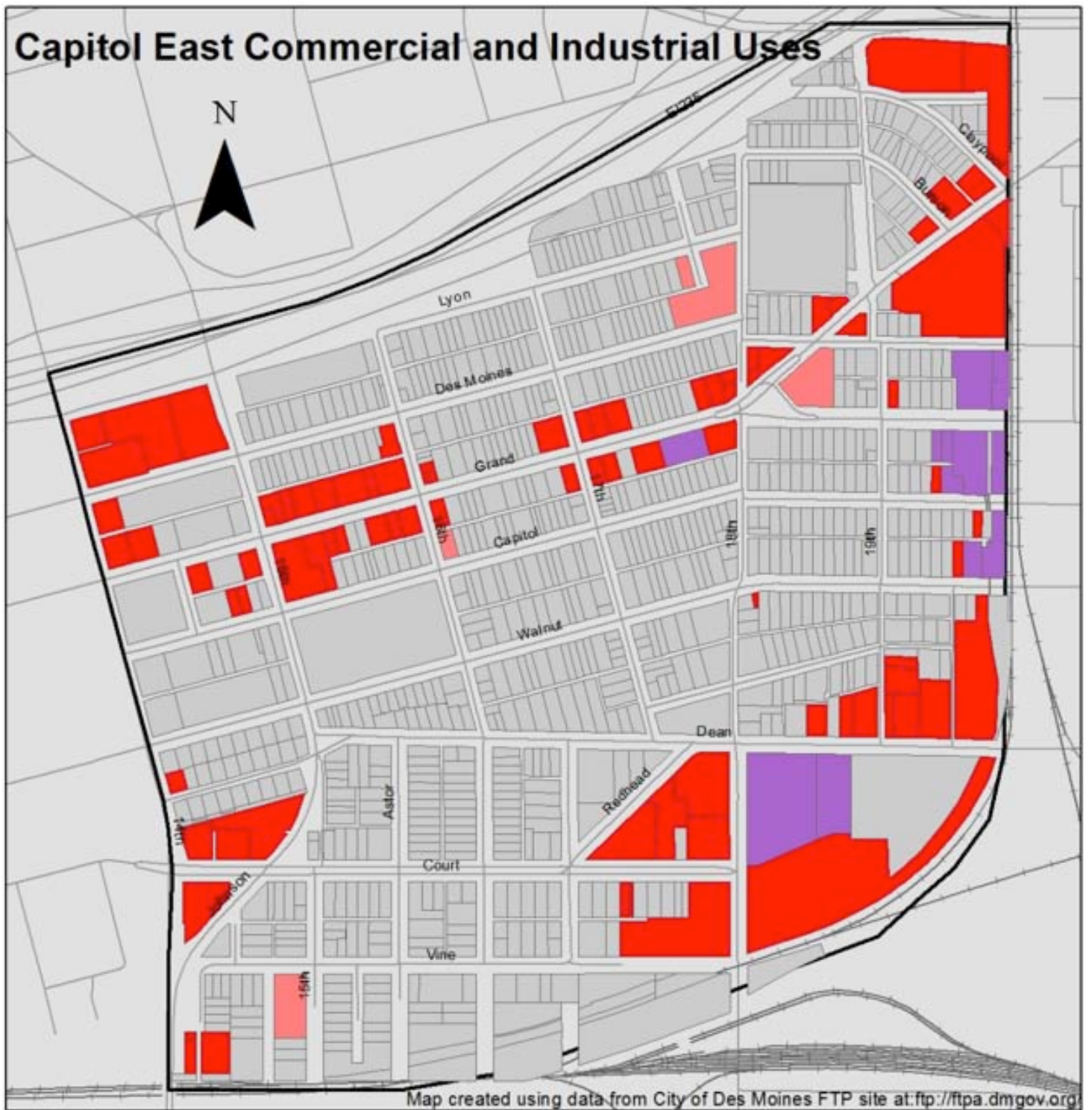
The commercial areas within Capitol East are scattered throughout the neighborhood, however the highest concentration is along East 14th Street, East 15th Street, and along East Grand Avenue. Most of these properties are locally-owned, small businesses. The commercial area has become a niche for multicultural entrepreneurship, which serves the needs of neighborhood residents and also attracts many visitors from all over the Central Iowa region. As a result, these commercial businesses have the potential to become a catalyst for revitalization, drawing both visitors and economic activity into the neighborhood.

A number of industrial and auto-related businesses are concentrated near the railroad tracks which make up the eastern and southern boundaries of the neighborhood. As you can see from Figure 8, there is cluster of such uses on Hubbell Avenue and another along 18th Street below East Grand Avenue. These businesses are an important economic engine for the Capitol East neighborhood.

When asked about improvement they would like to see in the neighborhood, a number of business

owners mentioned existing conditions of the streets and neighborhood appearance (particularly housing). It is worth noting that a few local businesses had not heard of the Capitol East Neighborhood Association, and some were not even aware that their business was located in Capitol East.

Two of the industrial businesses, Darling international and Roll-offs of Des Moines, already have strong ties to the Capitol East Neighborhood Association. These companies frequently send representatives to meetings and sponsor neighborhood events. As the capacity of the neighborhood association continues to grow it is hoped that new alliances and partnerships may be formed with more of the local businesses.



Legend



Figure 8. Existing conditions map

PRIORITY AREA ONE: HOUSING

Capitol East is primarily a residential neighborhood. As such, an important component of this neighborhood plan is revitalization of the housing stock. The first Capitol East neighborhood plan identified key goals such as rehabilitating existing housing stock, encouraging affordable housing, and preventing the problem of abandoned houses and vacant lots. These goals remain important to residents today.

The housing stock of Capitol East is much older than the housing stock of the City of Des Moines as a whole (see Table 3). Based on data provided by the Polk County Assessor, the average build date of housing in Capitol East is 1908 versus 1945 for the City of Des Moines. The condition of housing stock is far below that of the City of Des Moines. Capitol East has almost three times the city's rate of homes in below normal, poor, and very poor conditions, indicating a potential need for housing improvements and maintenance (see Table 4).

Table 5 provides an overview of the housing stock in the Capitol East Neighborhood. The average assessed home value in Capitol East is about 45% lower than that of Des Moines. The average home size is slightly smaller than the rest of the city. The rate of homestead exemptions (a measure of homeownership) is considerably lower than that of the City of Des Moines, and the rate of nuisance properties is five times higher in Capitol East than the rate of Des Moines. All of these things are considered indicators of the stability of neighborhood housing stock.

Table 3: Year Built in Capitol East and Des Moines

Year Built	Capitol East	Des Moines
Before 1900	215	2,278
1900s	210	3,520
1910s	110	7,849
1920s	48	7,776
1930s	12	2,835
1940s	9	6,438
1950s	10	12,128
1960s	2	5,870
1970s	1	4,686
1980s	2	2,378
1990s	6	2,641
After 2000	19	4,255

Data source: Polk County Assessor

Table 4: 2012 Residential Property Characteristics

Property Condition	Capitol East	Des Moines
Excellent, Very Good, Above Normal, Normal	494	55,111
Percent E, VG, AN, N	76.8%	92.8%
Below Normal, Poor, Very Poor	149	4,296
Percent BN, P, VP	23.2%	7.2%

Data source: Polk County Assessor

Table 5: Neighborhood Information 2011

	Capitol East	Des Moines
Total Residential Structures*	643	59,407
Average Assessed Property Value	\$64,256	\$118,690
Average Total Living Area (Sq Ft)	1171	1236
Average Assessed Value per Sq Ft	\$57	\$97
Homestead Exemptions	347	44,988
Percent Structures with Exemptions	51.40%	71.80%
Total Nuisance Properties	10	159
Percent Total Nuisance Properties	1.5%	0.3%

Data source: Polk County Assessor *Polk County Assessor defines a residence as a structure containing 1 or 2 living units and not being a townhouse, condominium, or mobile home.

***“There is a need to increase property value
through maintenance.”***



Table 6 shows the housing units in the Capitol East Neighborhood by type and classification. It is worth noting that Capitol East has a high percentage of single family structures.

Table 7 summarizes home sales information and compares Capitol East to the City of Des Moines as a whole. Noticeably, the average sale price in 2010 was less than half the city's average. The rate of contract sales is twice that of the City of Des Moines. The foreclosure rate is also twice the city's overall rate.

Table 6: Housing Units by Type

	Capitol East	Capitol East	Des Moines
Built-as MF	11	1.6%	18.5%
2 or More Units (Conversion, Bi-Attached)	54	8.1%	7.4%
Duplex	7	1.0%	2.6%
Single Family	594	89.2%	71.5%

Data source: Polk County Assessor

Table 7: 2009-2010 Home Sales Information

	Capitol East	Des Moines
Average Sale Price	\$46,407	\$100,408
Total Number of Sales	81	6403
Percent of Residences Sold	12.6%	10.2%
Number of Contract Sales	22	858
Percent of Sales on Contract	27.25%	13.30%
Number of Foreclosures (2006-2010)	76	3469
Percent Foreclosures (2006-2010)	11.2%	5.5%

Data source: Polk County Assessor

Vacant Properties

Over 75 vacant residential properties are scattered throughout the Capitol East neighborhood. There are no concentrated areas of vacant residential properties in the neighborhood; rather, vacancy affects almost every block. Some lots have been vacant for decades. Often these properties have assessments and other expenses associated with purchase, at times exceeding the value of the lot. The mismatch between assessed value and the costs to purchase certain vacant properties contributes to the continued vacancy of these properties.

This problem of vacant and abandoned properties was identified in the first Capitol East neighborhood revitalization plan and continues today, indicating that the current system does not effectively facilitate the recirculation of this land. Identifying and addressing barriers to redevelopment may help alleviate the problem of vacant properties. According to the data collected, current zoning regulations create a barrier to the redevelopment of vacant lots in the neighborhood. The system for identifying lots of record (which would be exempt from many zoning restrictions) or gaining exemptions is too time consuming and therefore too expensive to make development worthwhile. However, bringing developers together to see available parcels in the neighborhood and discuss the barriers and opportunities for redevelopment could help. Capitol East will work with the city to create fixes to these problems, including: identifying and cataloging areas that are in need of redevelopment; examining the process of rezoning a parcel, or gaining an exemption, and performing outreach about that process to developers, and; getting developers interested in redevelopment opportunities in the area by making the process easier.

Low land values impact the future development potential of Capitol East. For revitalization to occur, the neighborhood's land values must be seen as providing value as well as potential for gain. Stagnant land values may significantly affect Capitol East's ability to improve itself or to attract new development in the future.

Affordable Housing

Capitol East has a high proportion of renter-occupied housing. According to the 2009 American Community Survey, 43.9% of households in Capitol East were renter-occupied. This is higher than the city's rate of only 35% rental-occupied households. Despite the lower home prices in Capitol East, and the sense elsewhere in the city that it is an affordable neighborhood for people who cannot afford a lot of rent, many households in the neighborhood are paying more for housing than they can afford. An analysis of

housing affordability in the neighborhood revealed that many of the households in Capitol East are paying more than 50% of their household income in rent. This qualifies the neighborhood as severely rent burdened. The neighborhood association in Capitol East places high importance on increasing the supply of high quality affordable housing to residents in the neighborhood. See Appendix C for a detailed description of the study.

OBJECTIVE 1: IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF HOUSING IN THE CAPITOL EAST NEIGHBORHOOD

An important priority of the Capitol East neighborhood is the revitalization of the housing stock. Residents would like to see quality affordable housing developed in the neighborhood, redevelopment of dilapidated structures and empty lots, and help maintaining the homes they own. Improving the quality of housing in Capitol East would beautify neighborhood appearance, enhance the neighborhood identity, and encourage more families to stay in the neighborhood. This plan includes three strategies to help achieve these objectives.

	ACTION STEPS	PARTNERS	TIMELINE
STRATEGY Improve the quality of the housing stock for homeowners and renters	Communicate the opportunity for weatherization assistance to eligible residents through neighborhood association meetings, targeted mailings, and other outreach strategies	• Polk County* • City of Des Moines • Community Action Agency* • Habitat for Humanity	Short
	Service at least 20 renter and owner-occupied houses with this funding every year	• Polk County Health Department* • City of Des Moines Neighborhood Development Division • Habitat for Humanity	Ongoing
	Promote lead removal program through an outreach plan that combines resources and networks of city and existing organizations	• Habitat for Humanity • Polk County Health Department*	Short
	Plan a yearly Rock the Block event in Capitol East with the goal of servicing 14 houses in the neighborhood per event	• Capitol East Neighborhood Association • Habitat for Humanity	Ongoing
	Communicate with code inspectors about other specific nuisance properties and properties in need of maintenance	• City of Des Moines Neighborhood Inspection Division • Capitol East Neighborhood Association	Short

STRATEGY

Provide neighborhood opportunities for home repair

ACTION STEPS	PARTNERS	TIMELINE
Compile resource directory or library of resources for homeowners in need of home repair assistance, and distribute the resource directory through mailings, during service projects, and during neighborhood events	- City of Des Moines Neighborhood Development Division - Habitat for Humanity - Capitol East Neighborhood Association	Short
Provide home repair education classes (See Appendix F for case study)	- Habitat for Humanity ReStore - Local Businesses* - Capitol East Neighborhood Association	Medium
Sponsor an annual home repair day in the neighborhood (perhaps with corporate sponsorship that would include a neighborhood discount on materials for that week)	- Habitat for Humanity - Rebuilding Together	Short - Medium
During home repair day, host classes in houses in need of repair (on-site learning labs)	Habitat for Humanity	Short
Expand their already-existing tool lending library program to include a mobile tool lending program (See Appendix F for case study)	Habitat for Humanity	Medium

STRATEGY

Promote
redevelopment
and the creation of
new housing in the
neighborhood

ACTION STEPS	PARTNERS	TIMELINE
Identify lots of record that qualify for exemptions to current residential zoning standards	City of Des Moines Community Development Department	Short
Explore zoning code changes that will expedite redevelopment in the neighborhood and prevent the need for lot by lot variance procedures	- City of Des Moines Community Development Department - Capitol East Neighborhood Association - Local Developers*	Short
Organize a developer tour to highlight development successes and opportunities	- City of Des Moines Community Development Department - Local Developers* - Community Housing Initiatives	Short
Work with City of Des Moines to create an internship position with ISU to continue exploring opportunities for redevelopment	- City of Des Moines Community Development Department - Iowa State University Department of Community and Regional Planning	Medium

PRIORITY AREA TWO : INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure emerged from the initial neighborhood survey as an important theme, with 50% of respondents indicating concerns related to infrastructure and neighborhood appearance. Traffic and vehicle speeding accounted for 58% of those comments.

Crash Locations

Total Crashes

Using data from the Iowa Department of Transportation, we identified every accident that occurred in the neighborhood between 2003 and first quarter of 2013. Figures 9 and 10 show the number of all crash accidents in the neighborhood during this time period. East 14th and East 15th Streets stand out as primary concerns for traffic safety, with parts of East Grand following close behind. Figure 10 shows the total number of accidents for the corresponding colored area in Figure 9. In both the map and the chart, red indicates the highest number of crashes while green indicates the lowest number of crashes.

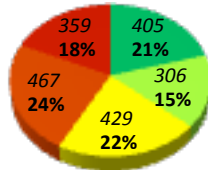


Figure 10: Total Crashes 2003- Q1 2013



Figure 9: All crashes

Pedestrian Crashes

Figures 11 and 12 focus on crashes that involved pedestrians and bicyclists. The data reveals hotspots at the intersection of East Grand and Hubbell and the area one block south of the Capitol View Elementary School. A vast majority of such accidents (83%) occurred in the red, orange, and yellow. Many of these accidents involved youth, and the close proximity of many of the crash locations to either Capitol View Elementary or major walking routes to the neighborhood's middle school and high school suggest a need to assess the safety of the routes that young people in the neighborhood take to school.

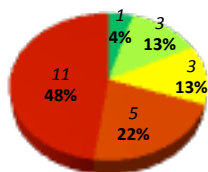


Figure 11: Pedestrian Crashes 2003- Q1 2013



Figure 12: Pedestrian crashes (hotspots)

Conditions of Sidewalks and Streets

As a neighborhood with a high number of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users, the condition of the streets and sidewalks in Capitol East is important to residents. Issues of pot holes and sidewalk walkability were mentioned as were traffic and street crossings. Figures 13-16 illustrate a variety of problems with street and sidewalk conditions in the Capitol East neighborhood.

Sidewalks in the central core and western edge of the neighborhood are generally in good condition. These areas encompass Capitol View Elementary School, the East Grand Business Corridor, and the high-density residential areas between the streets of East 14th and East 15th. However, the southern (south of Dean Ave), northeastern (in vicinity of Ashfield park), and the eastern (east of 18th Street) areas of the neighborhood do not have adequate sidewalks at this time. These parts of the neighborhood have other infrastructure concerns as well including pot holes and overhanging trees. See Figures 17 and 18 for a map of infrastructure issues in the neighborhood.

Pedestrian safety is a bigger issue, especially in the higher traffic areas of the East Grand and East 14th/15th Street Corridors. High automobile and pedestrian traffic from the school, businesses and multi-family residences along these corridors indicate that greater pedestrian-oriented infrastructure may be needed. While formal pedestrian crossings (crosswalk paint, crossing count-down timers, signage, etc.) exist at every other block from Interstate 235 to the southern intersection where East 14th and East 15th Street merge, the crash map indicates that further evaluation should be conducted to determine the adequacy of this existing pedestrian infrastructure.



Figure 13. Cracked sidewalk



Figure 14. Overgrown sidewalk



Figure 15. No curb cut



Figure 16. No sidewalk infrastructure

Neighborhood Appearance

To gather resident input regarding neighborhood appearance, a visual preference survey was administered. The results suggested that residents had concerns related to the physical appearance of the neighborhood. Residents indicated a desire to see more trees and native plants, the current condition of alleys addressed, and vacant lots in the neighborhood maintained. For more detailed information, see Appendix D.



Figure 17: Sidewalk conditions map 1



Figure 18: Sidewalk conditions map 2

OBJECTIVE 2: MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE THE PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN CAPITOL EAST

The term ‘infrastructure’ is often used to refer to the facilities, capital equipment, and community networks that support city functions. As one of the earliest settled areas of Des Moines, it is essential that the Capitol East neighborhood address the issues of maintaining and improving its existing infrastructure. Throughout the planning process, residents expressed concern over the current conditions of things like alleys, sidewalks, vacant lots, and pedestrian safety. Additionally, many residents spoke of a need for organized neighborhood beautification efforts, particularly among the ‘gateway’ areas. This set of strategies is intended to address existing infrastructure challenges faced by the Capitol East neighborhood, and to maximize the impact of available resources.

STRATEGY

Increase pedestrian safety

ACTION STEPS	PARTNERS	TIMELINE
Partner with ISU Extension to implement I-WALK (safe routes to school program)	- ISU Extension* - Capital View Elementary School* - Des Moines Public Schools	Short
Evaluate crosswalk infrastructure (See Appendix G for funding opportunities)	- City of Des Moines Traffic and Transportation Division - Iowa Department of Transportation - Capitol East Neighborhood Association - Des Moines Public Schools	Medium
Request traffic analysis along E. 14th/E. 15th Street gateway corridor and on East Grand from E. 14th Street to E. 18th Street	- City of Des Moines Traffic and Transportation Division - Iowa Department of Transportation	Short
Work with the city to implement streetscaping for traffic-calming purposes (See Appendix G for funding opportunities)	- City of Des Moines Community Development Department - City of Des Moines Traffic and Transportation Division - City of Des Moines Municipal Arborist - Iowa Department of Transportation	Short - Medium

STRATEGY

Create a neighborhood gateway corridor along E. 14th/E. 15th Street from I-235 to Stewart Square and the south edge of Dean Avenue

ACTION STEPS	PARTNERS	TIMELINE
Partner with a studio class from the College of Design at Iowa State University to design a sign, archway, or other gateway element to signify an entrance in to the neighborhood	• ISU College of Design* • Iowa Arts Council* • Capitol Complex* • Capitol East Neighborhood Association	Short
Incorporate landscape elements into the design of the gateway corridor, especially on public rights of way	• Iowa Department of Transportation • City of Des Moines Traffic and Transportation • City of Des Moines Park and Recreation	Short
Explore funding opportunities to assist with corridor improvements (See Appendix G for funding opportunities)	• City of Des Moines Community Development Department	Short
Create an incentive program (such as matching funds or tax abatements) to encourage business and residential property owners within the gateway corridor to invest in exterior improvements	• Neighborhood Finance Corporation* • Rebuilding Together • Capitol Complex* • Iowa Department of Transportation	Medium
Partner with religious institutions and non-profits to establish annual one day volunteer effort to clear away overgrown brush before the Asian Heritage Festival on May 31 that expects 40,000 – 70,000 people	• Local WW* • Capitol East Neighborhood Association • Rebuilding Together	Ongoing

STRATEGY

Maintain and
improve existing
parks

ACTION STEPS

Obtain permanent soccer goals at Ashfield Park

PARTNERS

- Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department

TIMELINE

Short

Work with city to identify additional opportunities for recreational activities while making sure existing facilities are maintained

- Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department
- Capitol East Neighborhood Association
- Friends of Des Moines Parks*

Medium

STRATEGY

Enhance overall
community
appearance

ACTION STEPS

Encourage property owners (business and residential) to invest in exterior improvements through incentives like matching funds and tax abatement (See Appendix G for funding opportunities)

PARTNERS

- City of Des Moines Neighborhood Development Department
- Local Businesses*
- Iowa State Fair Board*
- Habitat for Humanity
- Rebuilding Together

TIMELINE

Short

Explore the possibility of a voluntary “adopt-a-lot” program to clean up and maintain vacant lots (See Appendix for F case study)

- City of Des Moines Legal Department
- City of Des Moines Real Estate Division
- City of Des Moines Engineering Department
- City of Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department (for city-owned parcels)
- REO banks (holding title to vacant lots)*
- Capitol East Neighborhood Association, Resident Volunteers

Short

STRATEGY**Address specific infrastructure repairs identified by residents**

ACTION STEPS	PARTNERS	TIMELINE
Explore opportunities for upgrading neighborhood infrastructure to contemporary urban standards (e.g. storm sewers south of Court Avenue)	City of Des Moines Public Works Department	Short
Consider partnering with ISU design studio/engineering to design bioswales to alleviate water drainage issues	- City of Des Moines Public Works Department - Iowa State University*	Short
Identify open, used alleys that are in poorest condition and notify Public Works of their location	- Capitol East Neighborhood Association - City of Des Moines Public Works - Darling International* - City of Des Moines Finance Department	Short
Prioritize the removal of hazardous remains of burned down church at E. 16th and Capitol Ave	- City of Des Moines Neighborhood Inspections Division - City of Des Moines Neighborhood Development Division	Medium
Continue to prioritize demolition and removal of nuisance properties in the neighborhood, with the goal of removing one a year.	- City of Des Moines Neighborhood Inspections Division - City of Des Moines Neighborhood Development Division	Long

PRIORITY AREA THREE : YOUTH

Capitol East is a youthful neighborhood—30% of the neighborhood is under the age of 18. Neighborhood residents are aware of the need to engage and retain youth, and caregivers as well as non-caregiver adult residents agree that the neighborhood’s young people need something to do to build skills, “to stay out of trouble,” and to have access to opportunities that better their lives. A number of youth resources and activities are already available in the neighborhood. In addition to its primary purpose as an institution of education, CapitolView Elementary School also serves as the de facto community center in the Capitol East Neighborhood. The school is used for neighborhood meetings, high school activity practices, and services for the youngest members of the neighborhood, including child food programs and curriculum-based after school programs.

Although Hispanic Educational Resources (HER) provides preschools to youth in Capitol East, the majority of the programs available to young people in Capitol East are for school-aged youth. Of these, most are educational or academic activities such as language clubs, speech competitions, band, orchestra, and choir. Other activities fall under the definition of mentoring, skill-building, or tutoring. Also available are the typical selection of high school sports activities such as boys’ football, girls’ volleyball, cross country, and track. See Appendix E for a full list of available programming affiliated with East High School and CapitolView Elementary School.

When evaluating which programs are already available in the neighborhood for young people, it quickly becomes apparent that there are a few key issues and barriers to existing activities, as well as the need to offer additional targeted activities. Young people and their caregivers often face circumstances in their lives that reduce or restrict their ability to participate in available activities. For teenagers, barriers can take the form of watching younger siblings after school, working a part-time job to help support their family, or lacking a personal vehicle to help get to and from

activities. For caregivers and parents, barriers include working multiple jobs to support the family, being a single parent, or having several children. Any of these circumstances can make it difficult for adults to encourage young people to participate in activities. Financial issues can also be a significant barrier to participation, as several of the existing activities have associated costs. There are programs that attempt to lessen the burden of participation fees by partially subsidizing participation, but sometimes even this reduction in cost does not make the activity affordable for low-income families in Capitol East.

Some of the activities that residents would like to see for youth in the neighborhood include: opportunities for youth to volunteer in their neighborhood with the goal of giving back to their community; more mentoring opportunities, including programs that have older youth mentor younger children or program that have adults mentor teens and children, and; more tutoring with an expanded selection of subjects on which students can be tutored.



“We need support and programs for youth.”

OBJECTIVE 3: INCREASE ACTIVITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

The Capitol East Neighborhood has a large youth population. While a significant number of programs and activities already exist for neighborhood youth, many young people encounter barriers to participation. Beyond these barriers, gaps in programming have been identified based on youth interests and needs. Youth would benefit from increased opportunities in volunteerism, mentorship, and additional family and caregiver involvement. The following strategies aim to increase activities and opportunities for youth in Capitol East.

STRATEGY	ACTION STEPS	PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Work with East High School to determine which programs, organizations, and relationships already exist that could be built upon	• East High School* • Des Moines Public Schools	Short
	Work with East High School to offer class credit or a service learning opportunity for participation in youth volunteer corps	• East High School*	Short
	Build a database of non-profits and projects that the youth volunteer corps could work on – VNS resource directory is a helpful start. Include in database opportunities for leadership, job skills training, and neighborhood beautification through partnerships	• East High School* • Visiting Nurse Services (VNS)* • Evelyn K. Davis Center* • Rebuilding Together • Habitat for Humanity • Boys and Girls Club* • Latina Leadership Initiative of Des Moines* • Trees for Kids / Trees for Teens*	Short
	Create an outreach plan to reach youth using social media and existing youth organizations	• East High School* • United Way*	Short

STRATEGY**Promote
mentorship
opportunities**

ACTION STEPS	PARTNERS	TIMELINE
Organize annual East High School alumni event to mentor current students	• East High School Alumni Association* • East High School*	Short
Establish mentorship program (arts, music, athletics) with local universities and high school students	• Drake University* • DMACC* • Iowa State University* • Grandview University* • East High School*	Medium
Create initiative to have high school students help coach sports for younger students (See Appendix G for funding opportunities)	• Des Moines Public Schools • East High School* • Capitol View Elementary School*	Short
Develop tutoring program where high school students assist elementary students with homework	• Des Moines Public Schools • East High School* • Capitol View Elementary School* • Everybody WINS! Iowa*	Short

STRATEGY

Encourage
parent and family
involvement in
youth events

ACTION STEPS	PARTNERS	TIMELINE
Increase participation in existing family-centered programming (ie. Parent University, Mommy and Me, Everybody WINS! Iowa lunch program, etc.)	- Capitol View Elementary School* - YMCA* - Everybody WINS! Iowa* - Community Youth Concepts*	Short
Create outreach plan to inform parents and families about opportunities, new and existing events	- Capitol View Elementary School* - United Way*	Short
Form elementary PTO (Parent Teacher Organization)	Capitol View Elementary School*	Medium
Host parent days at elementary schools (ie: donuts for dads, muffins for moms, “special person day”)	Capitol View Elementary School*	Short
Increase parent involvement by expanding existing events (ie. family-fun events at parent teacher conferences)	Capitol View Elementary School*	Medium
Develop a program that allows multilingual youth to teach English to ELL adults for High School credit	- Hispanic Educational Resources (HER)* - DMACC* - East High School (ELL instructors)* - Des Moines Public Schools	Medium

STRATEGY**Expand opportunities for extracurricular activities and youth programming**

ACTION STEPS	PARTNERS	TIMELINE
Create comprehensive list of available youth activities and distribute widely	- City of Des Moines Neighborhood Development Division - United Way* - Community Housing Initiatives - Des Moines Public Schools	Short
Identify organizations responsible for creating committee that would create and maintain an updated list of youth programs	- City of Des Moines Neighborhood Development Division - Des Moines Public Schools	Short
Utilize existing athletic subsidy programs (ie. GRASP - Greater Des Moines Recreational Activity Scholarship Program - cards, etc.) to increase access to extracurricular activities such as soccer, basketball, and volleyball	- Capitol View Elementary School* - Hiatt Middle School* - East High School*	Short
Provide outreach about GRASP cards to families in Capitol East through the schools and existing youth organizations	- Capitol View Elementary School* - Hiatt Middle School* - East High School*	Short
Establish summer programming at neighborhood parks if funding can be obtained	- City of Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department - Friends of Des Moines Parks*	Medium
Extend season for Scouts and Soccer (ie. begin in November or January)	- Soccer West Soccer Club* - YMCA* - Hiatt Middle School* - Capitol View Elementary School* - Scouts and Soccer* - Iowa Soccer Association*	Short

PRIORITY AREA FOURTH : COMMUNITY BUILDING

As one of the oldest neighborhoods in Des Moines, Capitol East is an important and historic part of the city. Rightfully, stakeholders including residents and local businesses feel proud to be a part of Capitol East. Today, the diversity of the Capitol East Neighborhood enhances the community by providing a social, cultural, and economic boost. It is this vibrancy that makes Capitol East ideal for living, for leisure, and for business. Therefore, it is important to build on the social and cultural capital of the neighborhood by embracing its diversity.

The Capitol East Neighborhood Association, with the help of various stakeholders, has the opportunity to reach out, identify untapped resources, and build partnerships within and outside of the neighborhood. Fostering a greater sense of community between residents and creating a sense of place in the neighborhood will result in a stronger, more vibrant Capitol East.

The Capitol East Neighborhood Association has proven that it can get things done in the neighborhood. It is now vital to further strengthen the capacity of the Neighborhood Association So this good work can continue. This will involve increasing membership, diversity, and participation to a broad group of stakeholders. The neighborhood association must also expand its membership to help provide a voice to culturally diverse groups in Capitol East. Overcoming the challenge of participation will create a stronger sense of community for years to come.

A PLAZA FOR CAPITOL EAST

The public plaza is a key element of Latin American culture and it is often considered the heart of Latin American communities*. Throughout the planning process the need for a public community center was brought up by residents time and time again. The proposed creation of a public plaza on East Grand Avenue across from the existing NDC development is rooted in the desire to cultivate neighborhood identity, build a sense of place in the neighborhood, and create an environment that is welcoming to newcomers.

The plaza would be a public gathering space to be enjoyed by residents of all ages as well as visitors to the neighborhood, and would likely be a boon to local businesses. The plaza would function as both a catalyst for drawing in visitors from outside the neighborhood and as a local community space for hosting neighborhood celebrations and other events (such as farmer's markets and outdoor art fairs).

*Herzog, L.A. (2006). *Return to the Center: Culture. Public Space and City Building in a Global Era*, University of Texas Press, Texas, United States.

***“There is a passion
to assist among
neighbors.”***



OBJECTIVE 4:

IMPROVE THE NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY IN CAPITOL EAST

The diversity of Capitol East provides a social, cultural, and economic boost to the area. This diversity brings vibrancy to the neighborhood and provides it with a unique cultural identity. Creating a feeling of ownership and pride by all stakeholders in Capitol East is important to its vitality and future growth. These strategies aim to build a stronger sense of place in Capitol East through increased social relationships, collaboration, and multicultural appreciation.

STRATEGY

Increase capacity of Neighborhood Association

ACTION STEPS	PARTNERS	TIMELINE
Increase communication between the neighborhood association and neighborhood business owners	- City of Des Moines Police Department - Capitol East business owners* - Capitol East Neighborhood Association	Short
Develop a neighborhood association website	Capitol East Neighborhood Association	Short
Advertise monthly neighborhood meetings by distributing flyers in areas with high traffic (near East Grand businesses, school newsletter, La Plaza Tapatia shopping center, QuickTrip) and through Capitol View Elementary school	Capitol East Neighborhood Association	Short
Engage in outreach to bilingual neighbor(s) to attend meetings	- Capitol East Neighborhood Association - Hispanic Educational Resources (HER)*	Short

“We need to engage diversity, old residents and new residents - other cultures.”

STRATEGY

Strengthen the partnership with the police liaison program in the neighborhood

ACTION STEPS

Increase opportunities for resident/business owner and police to communicate, especially cross-culturally

PARTNERS

- City of Des Moines Police Department
- Capitol East business owners*
- Capitol East Neighborhood Association

TIMELINE

Short

Create additional outreach opportunities for trust building activities with Latino businesses

- City of Des Moines Police Department
- Capitol East business owners*
- Capitol East Neighborhood Association

Medium

STRATEGY

Promote multicultural appreciation

ACTION STEPS

Create a Neighborhood Diversity Committee to promote awareness of the diverse cultures within the neighborhood and to facilitate communication among groups

PARTNERS

- Capitol East Neighborhood Association
- Hispanic Educational Resources (HER)*

TIMELINE

Short

STRATEGY

Expand community gathering spaces

ACTION STEPS

Investigate support for the development of a community center in the vicinity

PARTNERS

- City of Des Moines Neighborhood Development Division
- Capitol East Neighborhood Association

TIMELINE

Short -
Medium

Investigate support for the development of a plaza in the East Grand Business Corridor as a placemaking strategy for the neighborhood

- City of Des Moines Neighborhood Development Division
- Capitol East Neighborhood Association
- East Grand Businesses*

Short -
Medium

PRIORITY AREA FIVE : EAST GRAND COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

The Commercial Corridor on East Grand Avenue is a clear example of how successful commercial spaces contribute to the overall vibrancy and diversity in a neighborhood. Neighborhood Development Corporation continues to support local economic development along the northern side of East Grand Avenue. Yet, potential remains untapped for continued growth in this area, especially on the southern side of East Grand Avenue. There are several vacant lots and storefronts on both sides of the corridor that could be prime locations for new businesses.

Local business owners identified several potential barriers to further economic development in the Corridor including: insufficient street lighting along the East Grand Avenue; concerns regarding crime and safety, and; a desire for ongoing business support. Addressing these concerns would make the area more appealing to new businesses. The corridor would also

benefit from a distinct urban design that captures the ethnic identity of the businesses on the corridor and creates a unique experience for potential patrons and visitors. The people of Capitol East acknowledge and embrace the positive impacts that existing developments bring to the neighborhood. Residents and business owners alike expressed a desire to see the local business community continue to grow.



OBJECTIVE 5: PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE EAST GRAND CORRIDOR

In order to build on the economic success of the area, improving the current conditions is vital. The existing vacant lots provide plenty of opportunity for potential development. The corridor is a regional draw for the neighborhood. It can continue to grow if the area becomes more appealing and suitable for further business development. These strategies have been developed from the data collected through interactions and feedback from current business owners in the corridor.

STRATEGY

Explore support for a plaza on the East Grand corridor

ACTION STEPS	PARTNERS	TIMELINE
Conduct a feasibility study for a permanent plaza in the East Grand corridor as a placemaking strategy to promote the economic vitality of the corridor	City of Des Moines Neighborhood Development Department	Short
Engage a studio class in the College of Design at ISU to propose a design	- ISU College of Design* - DLR Group*	Short
Create a temporary public plaza on current vacant lots in the corridor to assess the likely use of such an amenity	- Neighborhood Development Corporation - DLR Group* - Local Businesses* - Capitol East Neighborhood Association - East Grand Businesses*	Short



“I chose to locate my business here because of the clientele.”

STRATEGY	ACTION STEPS		PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Promote the market niche of multicultural businesses on the corridor		- ISED Ventures* - Neighborhood Development Corporation - Chamber of Commerce* - Latino Forum* - Iowa State University Extension*	Ongoing
	Facilitate and expand commercial investment in the corridor	Promote entrepreneurialism and provide support to new businesses	- ISED Ventures* - Neighborhood Development Corporation - Chamber of Commerce* - Iowa State University Extension*	Medium
		Organize a neighborhood workshop for residents interested in starting a new business	- Landowners* - ISED Ventures* - Neighborhood Development Corporation - Chamber of Commerce*	Short
STRATEGY	ACTION STEPS		PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Identify local business leaders willing to organize an East Grand Business Association		- ISED Ventures* - Neighborhood Development Corporation - Chamber of Commerce* - Iowa State University*	Short
	Create a business association	Hold monthly or bi-monthly meetings	- East Grand Businesses* - Capitol East Neighborhood Association	Short
		Send representatives of the Business Association to the Neighborhood Association meetings in order to increase communication between neighborhood association and business owners	- East Grand Businesses* - Capitol East Neighborhood Association	Short

STRATEGY Create a distinct urban identity for the corridor	ACTION STEPS	PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Conduct additional land use analysis to determine appropriate redevelopment options	- City of Des Moines - East Bank Partners Coalition	Short - Medium
	Raise awareness of the existing East Grand Avenue Design Guidelines	- City of Des Moines Neighborhood Development Division - City of Des Moines Office of Economic Development - Neighborhood Development Corporation - East Grand Businesses*	Short
	Follow the design guidelines for East Grand Avenue Business Corridor (i.e. signage, trash cans, landscaping)	- City of Des Moines Neighborhood Development Division - City of Des Moines Office of Economic Development - Neighborhood Development Corporation - East Grand Businesses*	Medium
	Increase street lighting on East Grand Avenue Business Corridor using uniform design standards	City of Des Moines Department of Engineering, Traffic and Safety	Medium
	Partner with DART to pursue possibility of increased public lighting connected to transit stops on the corridor	DART	Short
	Consider improving conditions of existing gathering spots (seating, beautification, landscaping) in the corridor on East Grand	- Neighborhood Development Corporation - City of Des Moines Community Development Department	Short - Medium
	Consider piloting first mobile food vendor court in Capitol East and changing policy on food ordinance	City of Des Moines Community Development Department	Short

IMPLEMENTATION

This plan captures the hopes and aspirations of the people of Capitol East. The successful implementation of the plan over the next ten years is imperative to the well-being of the neighborhood. Currently, implementation of neighborhood revitalization plans depends to a large degree on the strength and capacity of the neighborhood association. The Capitol East Neighborhood Association has the good fortune of strong leadership with a proven track record in plan implementation; however, they cannot accomplish this work alone. They will need support to increase capacity and recruit a new generation of leaders that can continue to work for neighborhood improvement. The planning process engaged a variety of partners, built relationships, and identified resources that can help the Neighborhood Association implement its vision for its future. The Neighborhood Association is ultimately responsible for the success of this plan, but they will only be able to accomplish this work if the City of Des Moines' Neighborhood Development Division and the organizations engaged in this planning process continue to work together on behalf of the neighborhood.



Capitol East Neighborhood Association Meeting

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Initial Neighborhood Survey

In order to gather resident input, students went door-to-door administering a survey on two occasions on the afternoons of Saturday September 7, 2013 and Thursday September 12, 2013. Additionally, the attendees of the September 11, 2013 Capitol East Neighborhood Association meeting were surveyed. A total of 76 surveys were collected.

Surveys were available in both English and Spanish. Respondents who were not available to participate in the survey on September 7 or September 12 were left a survey with a postage-paid envelope with which to return it. The survey included a total of eight questions. Residents were asked about the following topics: (1) services that are most important to them; (2) biggest problems of the neighborhood; (3) neighborhood activities in which they would participate; (4) strengths of the neighborhood; (5) weaknesses of the neighborhood; (6) changes that they would like to see in the neighborhood; (7) whether they were aware of a neighborhood association, and; (8) how long they had lived in the neighborhood. The survey results from these specific questions are included in graph form at the end of this appendix section; however, there were several key themes that emerged out of the survey results, including the following.

Housing

The most common issues cited in the general area of housing was the concern about a lack of maintenance and upkeep of the housing stock and the large number of abandoned homes (25 comments).

“There is a need to increase property value through maintenance.”

“Old buildings should be cleaned up.”

Infrastructure

Respondents had the following concerns about infrastructure-related issues:

- Traffic (22 comments), including the presence of speeding, and traffic in specific locations such as East Grand Ave. and Dean Ave.
- Appearance of streets and streetscapes (14 comments), including concerns over the condition of sidewalks and a lack of street lighting.
- Trash (11 comments), including trash in streets, alleys, and larger items such as old cars being parked in different places.
- Trains and train crossings (8 comments), including the noise of passing trains and the traffic backups that train intersections cause.
- Issues with storm sewers (3 comments) and flooding on the south side of the neighborhood.
- Parks (4 comments), including a desire for a large basketball court and concern over children reaching the parks safely, and two comments listing parks as an asset.

“I wish that the sidewalks would always be clean to be able to walk.”

“Cars speed and don’t stop at stop signs.”

“The city doesn’t keep everything up (storm sewers).”

“Not maintaining a clean community.”

“There needs to be more respect for pedestrians.”

“You can’t ride bikes on the sidewalks, therefore [I ride on the] street.”

Youth

Respondents had the following concerns about youth-related issues:

- Need for more youth activities (13 comments).
- Youth and perceived crime (4 comments).

“Young adults, teens, and kids are congregating in yards and streets (possible gang activity).”

“We need support and programs for youth.”

“I wish that the park had more games for the kids.”

“Need more activities for children.”

Community Building

Survey participants expressed a wide range of feelings about their neighbors, both positive and negative. Positive comments mentioned a sense of community and neighborhood cooperation.

Other survey respondents described feelings of disconnection. Several participants expressed a desire to see more organization and outreach

from the Neighborhood Association and other similar groups. While the majority of the negative comments described feelings of isolation and disorganization, others mentioned direct interpersonal conflicts among neighbors.

Diversity was a frequently occurring theme with seven respondents mentioning it as a strength. Two respondents said that the language barrier (presumably between English speaking and Spanish speaking residents) was a problem.

Another issue was activities (11 comments). Many respondents wanted more activities in the neighborhood, including more free family events and more activities for adults.

“People watch out for each other.”

“There is a passion to assist among neighbors.”

“Sense of community.”

“People who don’t care.”

“We need more door-to-door communication among neighbors.”

“Need for organization.”

“We need to engage diversity (Young and Old), old residents and new residents - other cultures.”

“People watch out, but they don’t socialize.”

“People don’t want to get involved but they are either afraid or don’t have time.”

Assets

Respondents praised the schools (5 comments), location of the neighborhood (14 comments), and the neighborhood's proximity to stores, shops, and services, and the downtown area (10 comments) as assets that make Capitol East a desirable place to live. Other residents enjoyed the quiet nature of the neighborhood, the Latino-owned small businesses in the East Grand Commercial Corridor, and the parks.

"People here are invested in the neighborhood, their houses, and their family life."

"Homeowners are mindful and kind."

"Great location. Close to everything."

"Easy walk to QuickTrip."

"Good schools."

General survey results found in Figures 19-23.

Renter Survey

A separate survey of renters was conducted on the afternoon of Thursday September 26, 2013. The survey was administered to ten residents living in multi-family buildings on the western side of the Capitol East neighborhood. This survey was short and more informal. The overall goal of this second survey was to find out how connected renters felt to the neighborhood. Survey participants were asked only four questions, but they were encouraged to talk about their experience in the neighborhood.

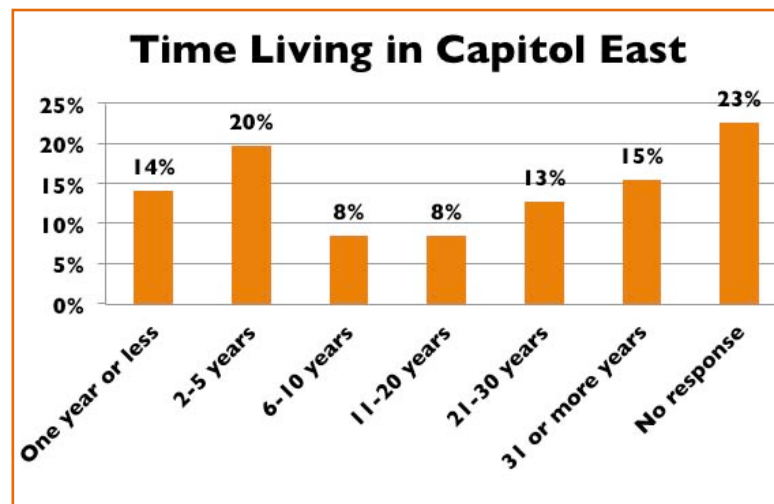


Figure 19: Survey results

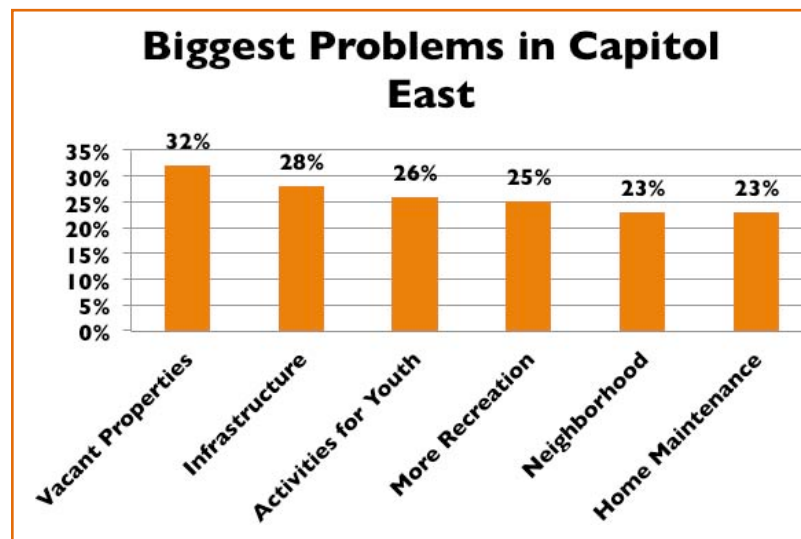


Figure 20: Survey results

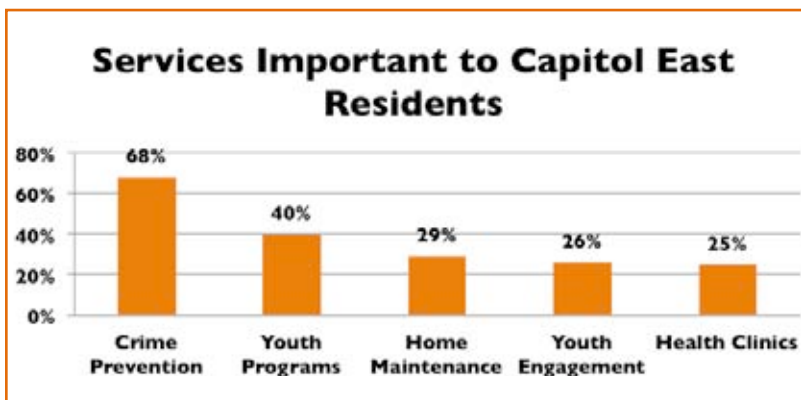


Figure 21: Survey results

Top Neighborhood Activities of Interest to Capitol East Residents

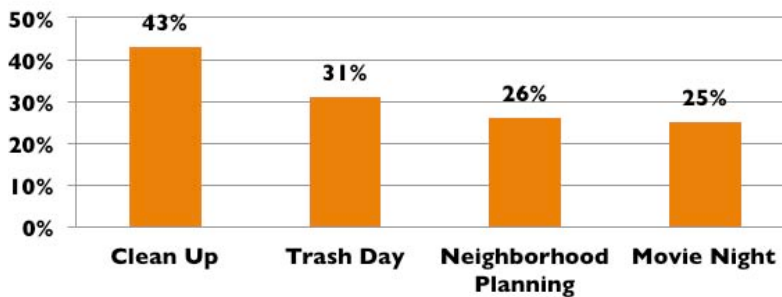


Figure 22 Survey results

The following four questions were included in the renter survey:

Why did you choose to live here?
 How long have you lived here?
 How long do you plan to stay?
 How do you feel about the neighborhood?

Survey participants indicated a variety of reasons for moving to the Capitol East neighborhood, including: location—proximity to jobs, schools, and stores; affordability; diversity; and connectivity via bus routes.

Awareness of Capitol East Neighborhood Association

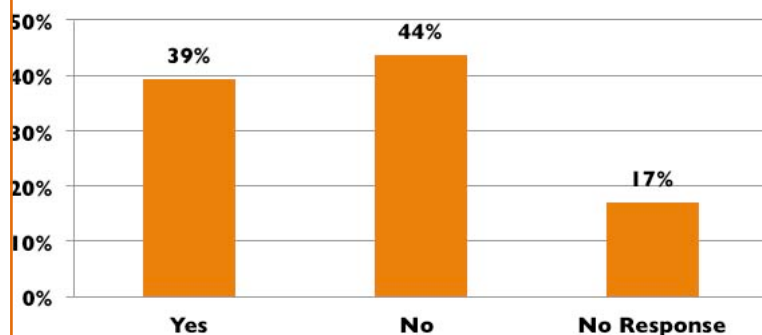


Figure 23: Survey results

Survey participants indicated that they had lived in Capitol East for a period of time between one month and 12 years. One respondent was in the process of moving out when we spoke to him. Others mentioned that they had plans to move out soon, but most did not have plans to move.

Several respondents discussed having directly experienced neighborhood crime, while other respondents said they felt safe or have not experienced any problems. Several respondents expressed a desire to keep to themselves, so as not to get involved in perceived problems in the neighborhood. Respondents had mixed feelings about living the Capitol East with some stating that they liked it, while others stating that they disliked the neighborhood because they felt unsafe.

“I like the cultural diversity and being close to little Mexico.”

“It’s fun and cool.”

“Affordability.”

APPENDIX B

Research and Outreach Efforts

More than 300 individuals participated in the Capitol East planning process. This section details the research and outreach processes that were used throughout the neighborhood planning process.

Initial Neighborhood Survey

In order to gather resident input, students went door-to-door administering a survey on two occasions on the afternoons of Saturday September 7, 2013 and Thursday September 12, 2013. Additionally, the attendees of the September 11, 2013 Capitol East Neighborhood Association meeting were surveyed. A total of 76 surveys were collected. A more detailed description of this survey, including results, is included in Appendix A.

Office Hours and Poster Sessions

Office hours were designed to engage Capitol East residents and “bring the neighborhood meeting to the residents” rather than the residents to the meeting. For six weeks, ISU students conducted weekly “office hours” at various heavily-transited locations throughout the community, including: La Tienda Grocery Store; Capitol View Elementary, and outside Los Lorales Restaurant. Each office hour session lasted a minimum of three hours. Poster sessions were held two times in and around the La Plaza shopping center. Office hours engaged residents in many ways, including with the visual preference survey. More information about this survey is included in Appendix D.

Outreach to Business Owners

Over 25 small businesses exist in the East Grand Commercial Corridor which runs from East 15th Street to East 16th along East Grand Avenue. These business owners are important stakeholders in the Capitol East neighborhood, and therefore an effort was made to include their feedback in the neighborhood



Neighborhood Visual Preference Survey

planning process. One-on-one interviews were held with 12 small business owners in the corridor. Business owners were asked their opinion about neighborhood issues, infrastructure issues, why they chose to locate their business in the East Grand Commercial Corridor, and whether they had an interest in creating a business association for the corridor area. One focus group with two business owners was held to gather more information on the opinion of business owners as well as improve communication between these business owners. In total, 13 business owners participated in the planning process. Results are on the right.

Youth Outreach and Engagement

Five focus groups were held with youth, parents, teachers, and school administrators. Discussion topics included available youth activities and opportunities, gaps in youth programming, and the existing conditions of the Capitol East neighborhood. Conversations also covered who is eligible to participate in available programs and the number of active participants. At one focus group event, youth were given cameras

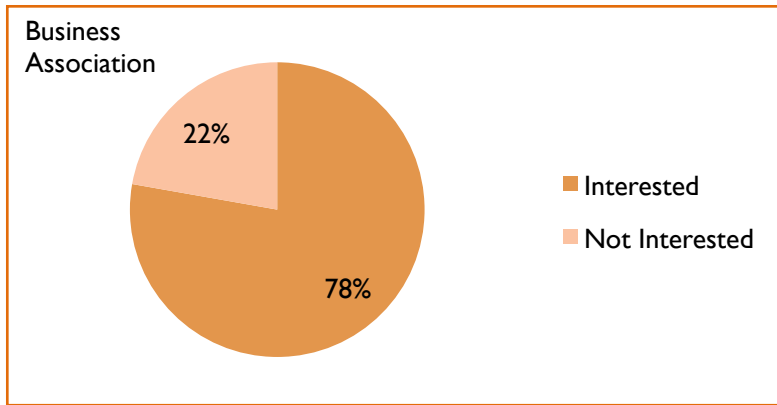


Figure 24: Outreach results

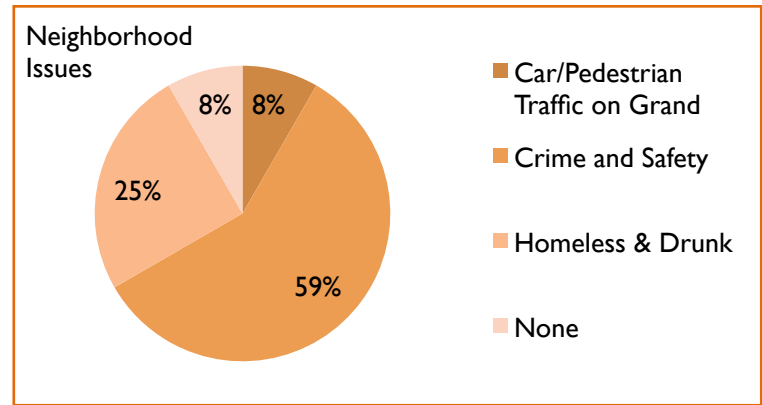


Figure 26: Outreach results

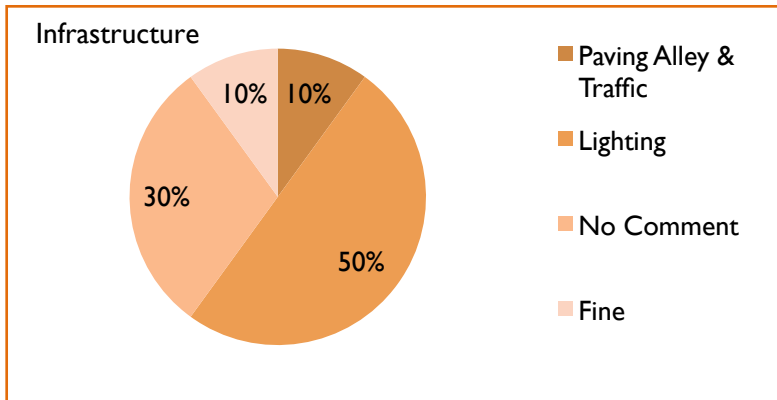


Figure 25: Outreach results

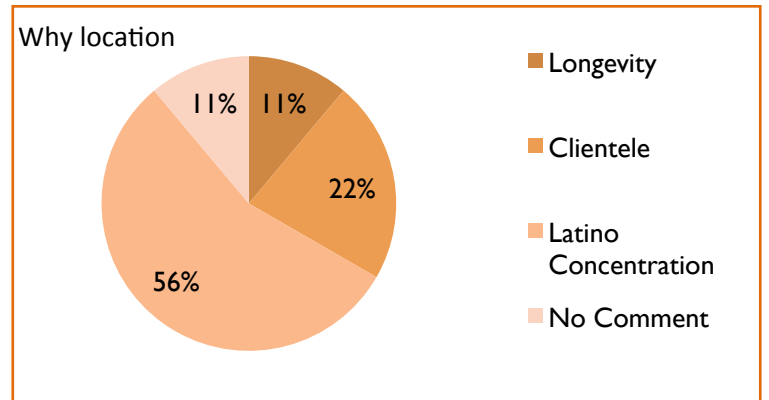


Figure 27: Outreach results

and instructed to take photographs of their neighborhood, recording both strengths and challenges faced by the community. During a subsequent event, youth created a series of poster boards describing neighborhood conditions using the photographs that they had taken. Additionally, 60 face-to-face interviews with youth, parents, and school administrators were conducted. All of the information gathered from interactions with youth, parents and others concerned with youth was used in the Capitol East planning process to better understand the current state of activities and resources available to youth, as well as the youth's perspectives on current conditions in Capitol East.

Steering Committee

Steering committee meetings brought together neighborhood residents, local leaders, representatives from area non-profits and city/county departments, and various professionals. The steering committee's role was to brainstorm ideas, strategies, action steps, resources, and partners for inclusion in the new neighborhood plan. In all, 55 organizations participated in 4 steering committee meetings. As a result of these meetings, many of these organizations were secured as plan partners during implementation.

APPENDIX C

Rental Supply Study

Capitol East has a high proportion of renter-occupied housing. According to the 2009 American Community Survey, 43.9% of households in Capitol East were renter-occupied. This is higher than the city's rate of only 35% rental-occupied households (see Table 8). A number of single-family and multi-family buildings scattered throughout the neighborhood provide rental housing options for low and moderate income residents. Neighborhood stakeholders are concerned with the quality of these housing units and their affordability to tenants. Thus, a general rental supply model is borrowed from the Polk County Housing Trust Fund Affordable Housing Study to estimate the supply of and demand for affordable rental housing in Capitol East.

Traditional Method

Housing is generally considered affordable if a household spends 30% or less of their income on rent. Households spending more than 30% of their income on housing are considered "rent burdened," and those spending over 50% are considered "severely rent burdened." Table 9 shows the age of income that a median income renter family in Capitol East would spend for the median gross rent for the tract. The median income of renters in Capitol East is significant lower than the median income in Polk County (\$31,457). The yearly rent in Capitol East is making median income renter households "severely rent burdened".

Residual Method

One limitation of the traditional method is that it does not take other common household expenses into account. Those expenses could include food, gas, medical care, or taxes. To address this issue, a "residual income" method is applied. In this method, a housing unit would be considered affordable if a household making median income could pay its rent after paying common household expenses. The calculated

Table 8: Family and Household Characteristics

	Capitol East	Percent	Des Moines	Percent
Total Households	1165	100	89477	100
Owner-occupied units	654	56.1%	59055	66.0%
Renter-Occupied units	511	43.9%	30422	34.0%

Data Source: American Community Survey

Table 9: Median Renter Income for Rent

	Capitol East	Polk County
Median income (renters)	14951	31457
Median rent	943	735
Yearly rent	11316	8820
Rent burden %	75.70%	28.04%

Data Source: American Community Survey

Table 10: Unit Affordability Information

	Capitol East	Polk County
Average renter residual income (renters)	-\$26,782	-\$10,276
Affordable rent	-\$2,231.83	-\$856.3
Units affordable	0	0
% affordable	0	0

Data Source: American Community Survey

common household expense in Polk County is \$13,911 per person. According to the American Community Survey, renter households in Capitol East tend to be slightly larger than households overall with a mean of 2.5 individuals per household (rounded mean size of 3) in Capitol East compared to 2.06 overall in Polk County. Table 10 shows the average renter residual income in Capitol East is -\$26,782. That means there is no money left after one household has paid for common household expenses. Based on this calculation model, there are no affordable rental units in Capitol East.

Mortgage Option

Based on the data from the Polk County Housing Trust Fund Affordable Housing Study, estimates regarding the affordability of mortgage payments for homeowners in Capitol East can be calculated. A 30 year mortgage at 4.45% yields an estimated \$498 a month for a house equivalent to the median value of homes in Capitol East (\$67,400). This is \$447 less per month than the average gross rent paid by households in Capitol East, which makes it more affordable to buy than to rent in Capitol East.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis presented in this section, the rental supply in Capitol East is “severely rent burdened”. However, the mortgage burden is significantly less than the existing rent burden.

APPENDIX D

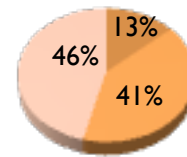
Visual Preference Survey

A visual preference survey was designed to gain resident input on neighborhood appearance. The survey was administered to more than 20 residents during the month of October, 2013. The survey measured resident preference for various approaches to the following items: streetscaping, alleys, vacant lots, and public spaces. In terms of streetscaping, residents indicated a clear preference for native perennials and trees along medians and rights of ways. For alleys, residents wanted to see the current conditions changed. They saw the potential for alleys to become green spaces in the community, and indicated a preference for “living alleys”; landscaped pedestrian pathways. Residents were a little more evenly split about what they wanted to see happen with vacant lots. When given a choice between community gardens, landscaping, and keeping the lots in their existing condition (but with maintenance), the majority chose community gardens, followed

by unchanged but maintained lots. Landscaping had the least resident support. In terms of public spaces, residents overwhelmingly preferred the option of a plaza with a permanent pavilion-type structure.

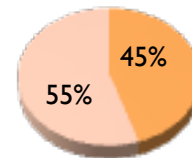
Alleys and vacant lots remain controversial issues in the neighborhood. While many residents would in fact prefer things like cleaned up and paved alleys, they often tempered their views with realistic assessments of the current situations. For example, there are definitely utilitarian uses of alleys and heavy vehicles result in significant wear and tear on the alleys. Paving the alley ways may look nice, but appropriate measures would need to be followed in order to have a cost effective, yet usable solution. Residents want to see their neighborhood appearance improved, but are open to new ideas that address the often competing needs of their community’s physical infrastructure.

Streetscaping



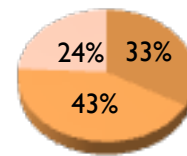
- Option A
- Option B
- Option C

Alleys



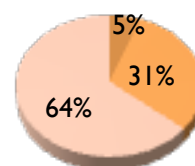
- Option A
- Option B
- Option C

Vacant Lots



- Option A
- Option B
- Option C

Public Plaza



- Option A
- Option B
- Option C

APPENDIX E

Existing Youth Activities

The following tables display existing of youth resources and activities available to residents in the neighborhood.

EAST HIGH SCHOOL

Education	Leadership
- Academic Decathlon - ACE Mentoring (Tech Ed) - Debate Team - Educational Talent Search (ETS) - French Club - Iowa High School Speech Association (Group and Individual) - Japanese Culture Club - Mock Trial - Science Bound - Spanish Club - Upward Bound - DMACC, Central College and Simpson College	- Humanitarian Cord for Service - National Honor Society - Scarlet Mentors - Student Government - Senior Board
Art	Special Interest
- Art Club - Photography Club - Scarlet Studio	"The Journey" 4-H Club - Anime Club - Book Club - Chess Club - Fashion Show - Fellowship of Christian Athletes - Gay Straight Alliance - IJAG - Job Skills and Money Management Training - League of Legends (Gamers) - Movement 515 - Project Sewing Machine
Co-curricular Classes and Performances	Athletics
- Band - Color Guard - Concert Choir - Drama Club - Handbells - Jazz Band - Marching Band - Concert Band - Drumline - Mixed Choir - Orchestra - QUILL - Scarlet Singers - Theater Arts	- Cheerleading - Steppers - Boys'/Girls' Basketball - Boys'/Girls' Track - Boys'/Girls' Golf - Girls' Volleyball - Boys' Football - Boys'/Girls' Cross Country - Boys' Wrestling - Boys'/Girls' Rugby - Boys'/Girls' Bowling - Special Olympics - Girls' Softball - Boys' Baseball - Boys'/Girls' Soccer - Boys'/Girls' Swimming - Boys'/Girls' Tennis
Support Services and Communities	
- Voice to be Heard - Parent University - Mentoring/transitioning program for 8th Grade students - Mental health and counseling services through Unity Point Health - Childcare program for student parents - Central Academy at Central Campus	

CAPITOL VIEW ELEMENTARY PROGRAMS

After School	Mentoring
• 21st Century (curriculum-based) • Metro Kids (non-curriculum-based)	• Everybody Wins, Iowa! (2nd, 4th, 5th grades) • Scouts and Soccer (2nd-5th grade boys) • Chrysalis (5th grade girls)
Nutrition	Special Education
• Provision 2 (free breakfast/lunch, ALL students) • Pick a better snack	• Deaf Education Elementary program for Des Moines

APPENDIX F

Case Studies Referenced in Plan

Home Repair Assistance: Fix-it School

A non-profit organization providing residents of Kent County, Michigan with home maintenance and renovation education and assistance.

More information is available at: <http://www.homerepairservices.org/fix-itschool>

Greater Lansing Tool Mobile

A project of the Greater Lansing Housing Coalition located in Lansing, MI that offers Tool Trucks carrying tool rentals for neighborhood clean-up and fix-up events.

More information is available at: <http://www.glhc.org/index.php/how-we-can-help/toolmobile>

West Seattle Mobile Tool Library

A mobile tool lending library administered by a non-profit, Sustainable West Seattle located in West Seattle, WA

More information is available at: <http://wstoollibrary.org/tag/mobile/>

Genesee County's Adopt-a-Lot Program

A project of the Genesee County Land Bank, located in Genesee county, MI that facilitates the adoption and maintenance of vacant lots by local residents.

More information is available at: <http://thelandbank.org/downloads/adopt-a-lot.pdf>

APPENDIX G

Potential Funding for Plan Implementation

A variety of funding sources are available to assist the Capitol East neighborhood with plan implementation. This section contains a short list of available resources that have already been identified; it is not an exhaustive list. Many of these items have been compiled by Trees Forever, and can be accessed online via following address:

<http://www.treesforever.org/Content/Learn/Resources/Downloadable-Publications-and-Guides/Community-Project-Funding-Guide.aspx>

HUD's Neighborhood Stabilization Program Grants

Funding for the purchase and redevelopment of foreclosed and abandoned homes and residential properties

More information is available at: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment/programs/neighborhoodspg

Iowa DOT's Statewide Transportation Alternatives Program

Funding for transportation-related projects, including Safe Routes to School, pedestrian safety projects, and vegetation management in public rights of way.

More information is available at: www.iowadot.gov/systems_planning/trans_enhance.htm

Iowa DOT/Iowa DNR Roadside Beautification Funds

Funding for and assistance with design, letting, and administration of roadside beautification of primary system corridors with plant materials.

More information is available at: www.iowadot.gov/index.html#/services

Keep Iowa Beautiful Community Beautification Grant

Funding for community beautification/enhancement projects and derelict building renovation/removal.

More information is available at: www.KeepIowaBeautiful.com

State Farm Youth Advisory Board

Funding for youth service-learning projects.

More information is available at: <http://www.statefarmyab.com/apply/national-grants/>

Vision Iowa's Community Attraction and Tourism Program

Funding for the creation of recreational, cultural, entertainment and educational attractions for public use .

More information is available at: <http://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/CommunityDevelopment/VisionIowa>

Greater Des Moines Recreational Activity Scholarship Program (GRASP)

Discounts on Parks and Recreational programs throughout the city (income-based assistance).

More information is available at: <http://www.dmgov.org/Departments/Parks/PDF/2013GRASPBrochure.pdf>

APPENDIX H

Participating Organizations

The following organizations participated in the planning process of the Capitol East Neighborhood:

After School Arts Program (ASAP)	Evelyn K. Davis Center
AMOS	Friends of Des Moines Parks
Anawin Housing	Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity
Capitol East Neighborhood Association	Hiatt Middle School
Capitol Park Neighborhood Association	Hiatt Middle School PTO
Capitol View Elementary	Hispanic Education Resources (HER)
Community Housing Initiatives	HOME, Inc.
Dar Pro Solutions (Darling International)	Iowa Department of Administrative Services
DART	Iowa State University
Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department	La Reina 1260 AM
Des Moines Police Department	Manpower
Des Moines Public School District	MLK Jr. Park Neighborhood Association
DLR Group	Neighborhood Finance Corporation
Drake University	Polk County Health Department
East High Boosters	Polk County Housing Trust Fund
East High School	Rebuilding Together Greater Des Moines
East High School Alumni Foundation	Trees Forever
Eat Greater Des Moines	United Way
Employee Family Resources (EFR)	Village Credit Union

Confirmed Plan Partners

The following list contains organizations that have been identified in the plan that have verbally agreed to partner with the Capitol East Neighborhood Association for the plan's implementation:

Community Housing Initiatives	Neighborhood Development Corporation
DART	Rebuilding Together
Habitat for Humanity Greater Des Moines	

*Potential Partners

The following organizations have been identified in the planning process as potential partners that could help implement the Capitol East neighborhood plan. These partners have not yet formally agreed to assist Capitol East in plan implementation, but relationships have been built through the planning process that show that most of these organizations feel passionately about assisting Capitol East as it moves forward with plan implementation.

Housing

Community Action Agency
Iowa State University Department of Community
and Regional Planning

Polk County
Polk County Health Department

Infrastructure

Capitol Complex
Capitol View Elementary School
Darling International
Friends of Des Moines Parks
Iowa Arts Council
Iowa Department of Transportation

Iowa State Fair Board
ISU College of Design
ISU Extension
Neighborhood Finance Corporation
REO Banks

Youth

Boys and Girls Club
Community Youth Concepts
Des Moines Public Schools
DMACC
Drake University
East High School
East High School Alumni Association
Everybody Wins! Iowa
Friends of Des Moines Parks
Grandview University

Hiatt Middle School
Hispanic Educational Resources (HER)
Iowa Soccer Association
Latina Leadership Initiative of Des Moines
Scouts and Soccer
Soccer West Soccer Club
Trees for Teens / Trees for Kids
United Way
Visiting Nurse Services
YMCA

Community Building and East Grand Commercial Corridor

Chamber of Commerce
DLR Group
East Grand Businesses
Hispanic Educational Resources (HERS)

Iowa State University Extension
ISED Ventures
Latino Forum