



CAPITOL PARK

2014 NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

**Capitol Park Neighborhood
Charter Plan Update**

Acknowledgements

Capitol Park's Neighborhood Plan was prepared in cooperation with the City of Des Moines, the Capitol Park Neighborhood Association, and Iowa State University's Department of Community and Regional Planning. Under the direction of Professor Jane Rongerude, a planning team of graduate students designed and managed the planning process and plan writing. The Iowa State University Planning Team consisted of Anna Bruen, Melissa Goodwin, Shuo Liu, Eric Christianson, Marie Louise Ryan, Xin Tong, and Jon Wolseth.



CAPITOL PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION ... A Voice for Our Community



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Department of Community and Regional Planning

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Introduction

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. The City of Des Moines Neighborhood Development Division, within the Community Development Department, coordinates the program.

The Neighborhood Revitalization Program uses a strategy that calls for neighborhood residents, the City of Des Moines, and local business leaders to develop a public-private partnership to address revitalization issues within the city. The neighborhood planning process relies on active resident groups to identify critical 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.

The Capitol Park neighborhood was one of the earliest neighborhoods to take part in the revitalization program. The first Capitol Park Neighborhood Association Plan was completed in 1995. Over the last twenty years, major goals in the original Capitol Park Neighborhood Plan have been accomplished. However, the neighborhood has changed in regards to demographics, housing stock, and zoning. In order to maintain the vitality of the neighborhood and address its changes, a series of planning efforts was initiated to provide guidance to the Capitol Park Neighborhood for the next 5 to 10 years.

On September 13, 2011, the Capitol Park Neighborhood Association submitted a letter of interest to the Neighborhood Division of the City of Des Moines Community Development Department indicating their interest to update their original plan. The Des Moines City Council approved the selection of Capitol Park as one of the neighborhoods in the Charter Pilot Program. Capitol Park worked with City staff and graduate students from Iowa State University's Department of Community and Regional Planning (ISU Planning Team) to update their neighborhood plan.



Planning Process

The development of this plan was a partnership between the Capitol Park Neighborhood Association, the City of Des Moines, and Iowa State University's Department of Community and Regional Planning. The planning process included meetings with neighborhood residents, as well as, businesses and non-profits that work in the area. In total approximately 300 individuals participated in the creation of this plan in one or more of 150 planning events. Planning events included 5 stakeholder meetings, 4 neighborhood association meetings, 30 interviews, surveys, focus groups, phone calls, and outreach at local events.

The public input process for the Capitol Park Neighborhood Plan began with a survey, available in both English and Spanish, which was administered door-to-door. Surveys were collected from face-to-face interviews and through paper mailings. In total 100 surveys were collected. The questions asked about opinions and perceptions of Capitol Park's current strengths and weaknesses, as well as, about input on priorities for the future (see Appendix A. Survey Results). After this initial outreach, the Capitol Park neighborhood planning process included steering committee meetings and neighborhood outreach and engagement.

Steering Committee

The purpose of the Steering Committee was two-part: 1) to bring together different stakeholders in Capitol Park; and 2) to devise and identify strategies, action steps and partners for the implementation phase of the planning process. The Steering Committee consisted of neighborhood residents, community organizations, social service organizations, non-profits, businesses, schools, and City departments. The committee met four times for one and half to two hours. Over 95 individuals representing more

than 40 different organizations participated in these meetings, with an average participation of 20-30 individuals per meeting. By bringing different groups together, the Steering Committee provided an opportunity to incorporate diverse perspectives into the planning process.

During the first meeting, using information from the initial public outreach survey, the Steering Committee selected three main topic areas: crime and safety, housing, and youth programming. Each of the subsequent three meetings focused on one of these topic areas. In the meetings, steering committee members were presented with topic-related data and information gathered from public outreach, as well as, possible strategies to address the concerns and desires of Capitol Park. Next, Steering Committee members worked in groups to devise action steps and identify institutional partners for the strategies. Finally, Steering Committee members identified those strategies that they would best be able to support. The meeting on youth programming differed from the other two meetings in that it was a collaborative effort of stakeholders from the Capitol Park, Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, and Capitol East neighborhoods.

Before being included in the plan, the results from the meetings – the strategies, action steps and partners – were assessed for feasibility and agreed upon by the neighborhood association.

Neighborhood Engagement

The purpose of neighborhood engagement was to ensure that the plan was formed on a strong foundation of participation by the residents of Capitol Park. The strategies for neighborhood engagement were intensively qualitative and sought to reach as many people as possible across a diverse population of residents. The ISU Planning Team sought out interactions with long-time residents, recent arrivals to the neighborhood, members of the neighborhood

association, renters, first generation and recent immigrants, minority business owners, and youth. In total, over 200 residents engaged in the planning process through interactions lasting anywhere from fifteen minutes to an hour. These interactions took a variety of formats, including canvassing the neighborhood with survey instruments, targeted focus groups with businesses and youth, attending neighborhood association meetings, outreach at neighborhood events, ride-alongs with the Neighborhood Based Service Delivery Officer and code inspector, and outreach at events and locations in the neighborhood, such as, a laundromat, gas station, and football game. In total, the ISU Planning team spent an average of twenty collective hours over a period of twelve weeks engaging with neighborhood residents, the equivalent to 120 hours in Capitol Park.

Comments from Capitol Park residents informed the priority areas and strategies that the Steering Committee worked with. The results from the Steering Committee meetings were then taken back to Capitol

Park residents for further comment. This feedback loop was crucial in determining the ultimate course of action that is laid out in this plan.



**“People underestimate
Capitol Park, but there’s
a lot of value here.”**

-- Comments made by residents during
survey collection

Current Conditions

The Capitol Park Neighborhood was one of the earliest neighborhoods developed in Des Moines. It is centrally located and defined as the area between

the Des Moines River, E. 14th St., E. Washington Ave. and I-235 (See Figure 1. Capitol Park Building and Footprint Map). Its central location within the city, easy access to schools and parks, and affordability of housing make it an attractive place to live for people of all ages from a wide range of backgrounds.

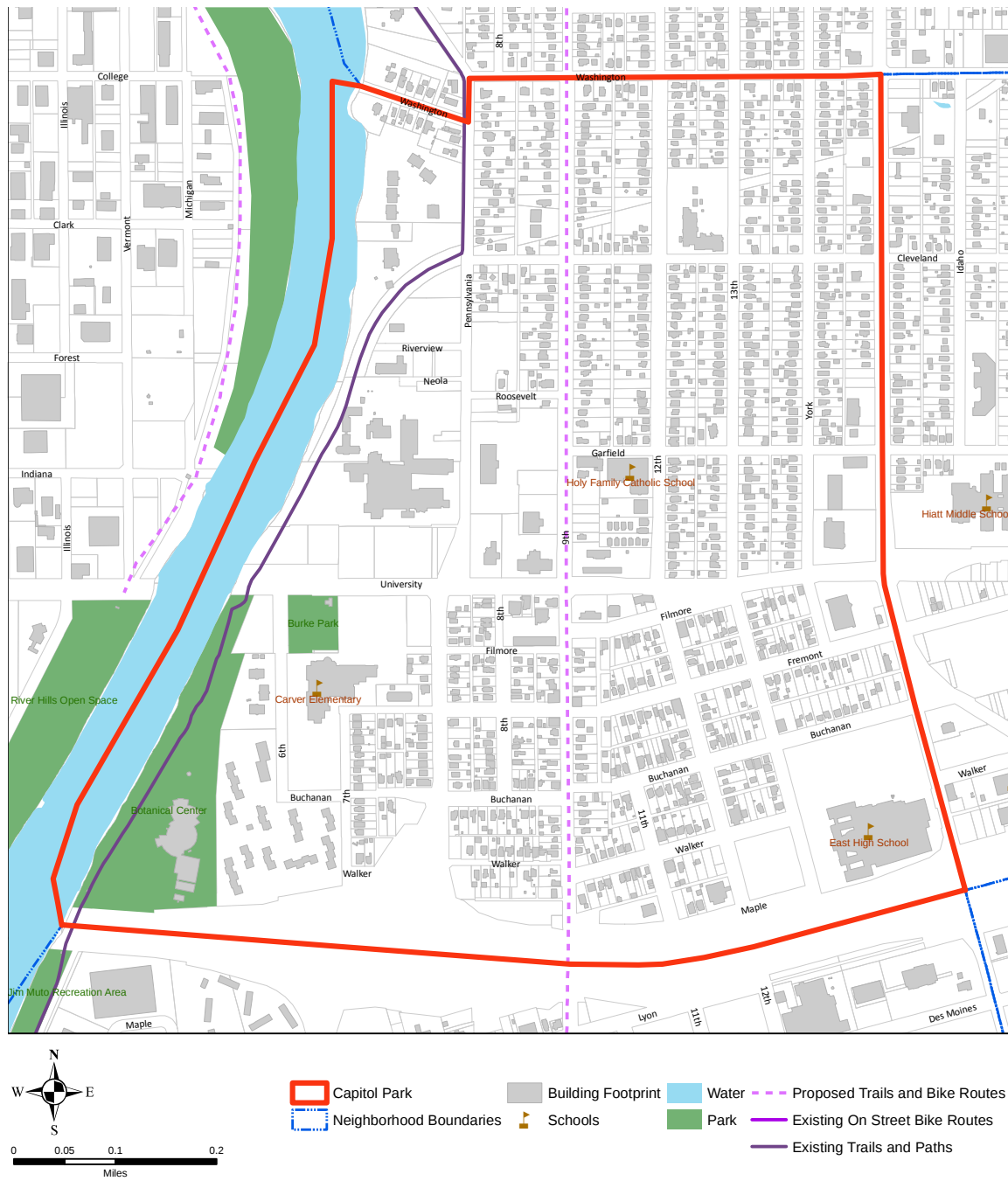


Figure 1. Capitol Park Building and Footprint Map (source: City of Des Moines)

History

Originally its own town, Capitol Park became part of the City of Des Moines in 1890. At that time, Capitol Park was only a fraction of its current size. Between 1880 and 1920, over 500 houses were built in Capitol Park. The wooded landscape along the Des Moines River attracted the development of large houses. The close walking distance to Union Park – one of the city’s first and best-maintained parks – established the neighborhood as a desirable destination for the development of more modest cottages and apartments.

The Capitol Park Neighborhood Association was founded in 1992 with a goal to “shape a positive and comfortable community.” In early 1994, the current neighborhood boundaries were established, which also symbolized the Capitol Park neighborhood becoming a part of the “Des Moines’ Recognized Neighborhood Map.” This gave the neighborhood the official status required to participate in the City’s Neighborhood Revitalization Program.



challenges, as well as provide insight into recurring patterns. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Capitol Park has 3,187 residents, which is equal to 1.5% of Des Moines’ total population. Capitol Park is a community with a large portion of youth, minority and working class residents. It contains one of the youngest and most racially diverse populations in Des Moines.

Demographics

Understanding demographic composition of a neighborhood may help identify strengths and

Approximately 34% of Capitol Park’s population is under 18 years old, 40.2% is between 18-44 years old, and 25% is 45 years and older. Capitol Park has a larger percentage of youth than Des Moines does a whole (See Figure 2. Age Comparison, Capitol Park v. Des Moines).

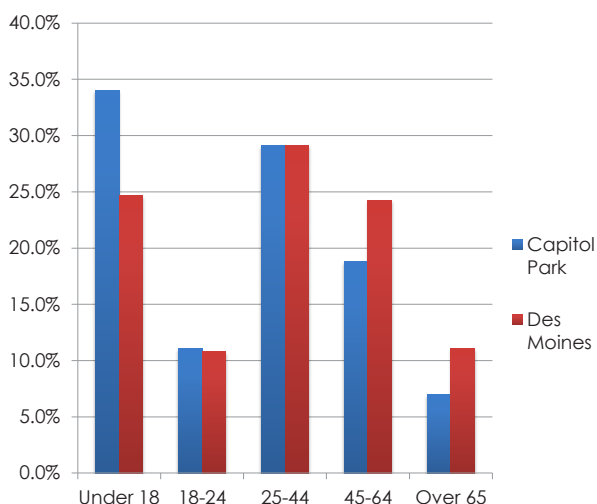


Figure 2. Age Comparison, Capitol Park v. Des Moines (data source: 2010 U.S. Census)

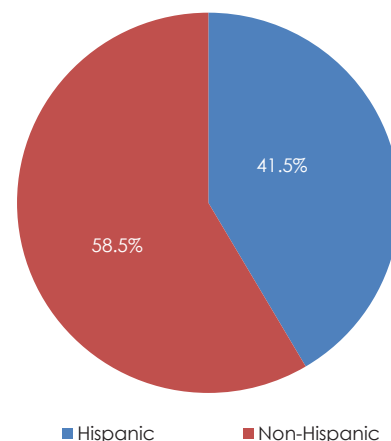


Figure 3. Capitol Park Hispanic Population (data source: 2010 U.S. Census)

In the last twenty years, Capitol Park's overall population has been slowly declining. However, Capitol Park has become increasingly diverse, with a major rise in the Hispanic population. As of 2010, 41.5% of the population was Hispanic and the total minority population percentage was 45.9%, nearly double what it was in 1990 (See Figure 3. Capitol Park Hispanic Population). When compared to Des Moines, Capitol Park has a higher density of minority residents than the city as a whole (See Figure 4. Race and Ethnicity, Capitol Park v. Des Moines).

According to the American Community Survey, the 2009 median household income in Capitol Park was \$24,300, which is less than half of Des Moines' \$47,096 median income. This number, combined with the age demographics, suggests that a large portion of Capitol Park's population consists of working class families.

Land Use and Zoning

Land use and zoning are two tools that local governments use to regulate development. Land use in Capitol Park is relatively homogenous with primarily single- and multi-family residencies, with some light commercial. (See Figure 5. Zoning Map)

Residential

Presently, single-family residences make up the bulk of the neighborhood with a zoning classification of R1-60. There are two large areas zoned R-3, multiple family residential, along the western edge of the neighborhood, bordering the river; one small pocket of R-3 zoned land, Droukas Court, just north of University; and one PUD apartment complex, Del Ray Heights, just south of University Avenue on E. 6th Street.

Historically almost the entirety of Capitol Park south of Cleveland was zoned R-3 Multi-Family Residential. In the mid-1990s, in an effort to retain the character of the neighborhoods and maintain a lower density of housing, the City of Des Moines Planning Department rezoned much of the urban

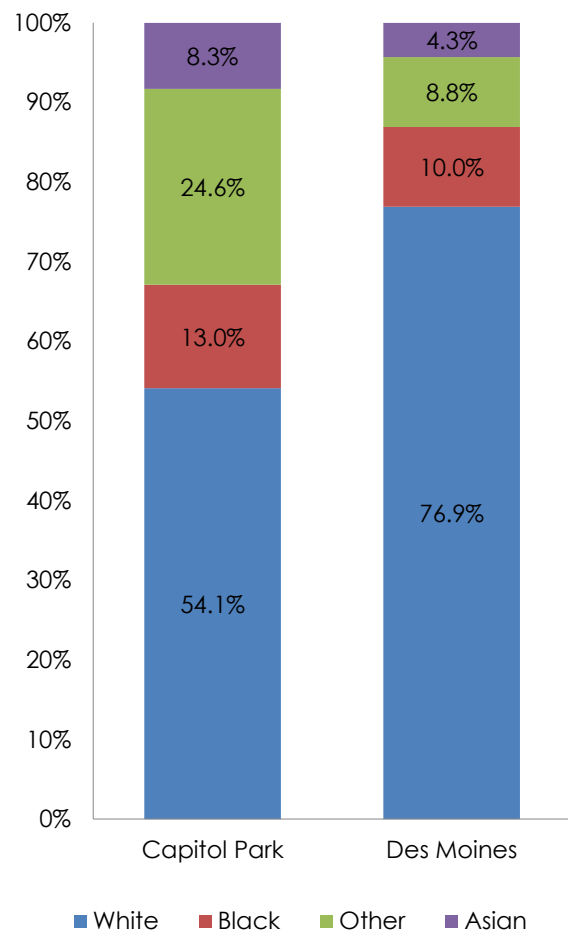


Figure 4. Race and Ethnicity, Capitol Park v. Des Moines (data source: 2010 U.S. Census)

core, including a large part of Capitol Park, to R1-60 single-family zoning. The R1-60 zoning classification establishes minimum lot size requirements for development to occur. These minimum standards are 60 feet of lot width and 7,500 square feet of lot area. Currently, a majority of the residential lots in Capitol Park do not meet these requirements (See Appendix B, Map of Lot Widths). While many of the lots in Capitol Park are legal lots of record, which allows lots that do not meet the lot area or lot width requirements of R1-60 to be developed, they can be challenged to meet the building setback requirements. These issues can limit the development potential of the neighborhood. Strategies to address these concerns are listed in the housing section of this plan.

Commercial

Capitol Park contains three large institutions that dominate the makeup of the neighborhood, adding both amenities and character. Lutheran Hospital lies on the western edge of the neighborhood, north of University Avenue, taking up a large portion of the northwestern quadrant. Carver Elementary School, directly south of the hospital, also occupies a significant portion of the land in this area. East High School sits on the far southeast corner of the neighborhood, off of E. 14th Street and Interstate 235. Like the hospital, East High occupies a large portion of the land in this quadrant of the neighborhood. These three institutions create a visible distinction from the residential character of the neighborhood.

There are two commercial retail areas along the major thoroughfares that run through Capitol Park. Along the eastern edge of the neighborhood, on E. 14th Street, there is a retail area primarily zoned as C-1, neighborhood retail commercial. This includes two strip malls, which include a variety of businesses including large retail, locally-owned restaurants, dental and veterinary services, payday loan, and pawnshops. The retail area along University Avenue is primarily zoned C-2, general retail and highway-oriented commercial. This area includes several restaurants and small groceries, two laundromats, and a gas station/convenience store. Currently, there are multiple vacant storefronts in this area. Strategies in the neighborhood appearance section of this plan address these vacancies.

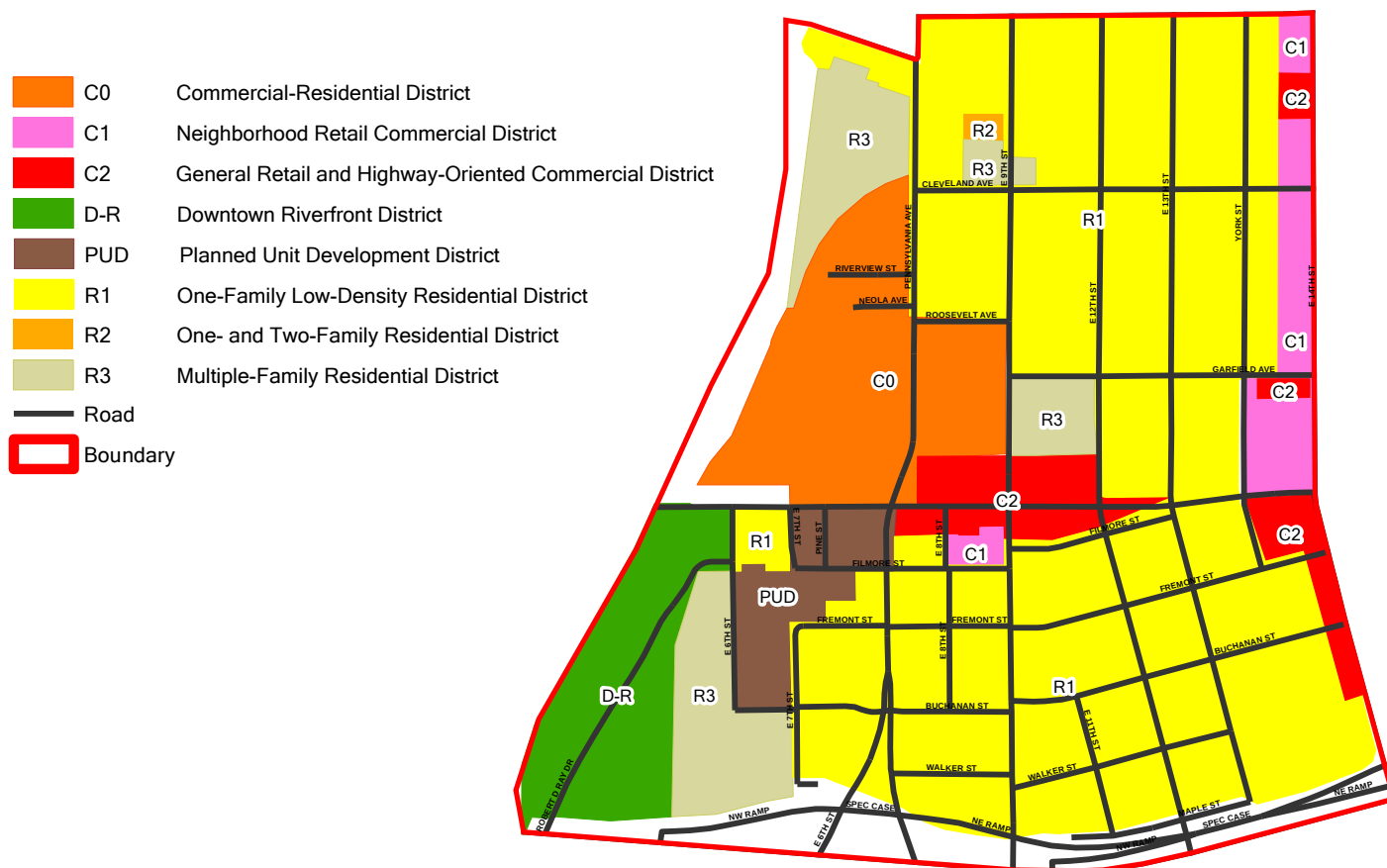


Figure 5. Zoning Map (data source: City of Des Moines)

Connectivity

Capitol Park is located close to vibrant businesses, commercial districts, transportation networks, and natural amenities. Building connections with the surrounding community helps form the vision of this plan and will help Capitol Park take advantage of these assets.

The heart of Capitol Park is located in the blocks around the intersection of E. 9th Street and University Avenue. This is an area with a large number of underutilized and vacant commercial properties. Still, over the past two years this area has seen at least five new businesses open. These businesses serve Capitol Park's growing Hispanic population while also drawing clients from the East Village. Continuing to build the connections between these undervalued storefronts with the growing retail sector in the East Village would be beneficial for business owners and the Capitol Park neighborhood.

Capitol Park's boundaries provide both major assets, as well as, perceived and tangible barriers to accessing the neighborhood. The Des Moines River and Interstate 235 form the most significant boundaries to Capitol Park, and University Avenue is the only place in the neighborhood where traffic can cross over the river (See Figure 1. Capitol Park Buildings and Footprints Map). Interstate 235 creates an important physical and psychological barrier between East Village and Capitol Complex to the South (See Figure 6. Neighborhood Map). The Neal Smith Trail along the river offers recreational opportunities and access to the extensive trail system in Des Moines, and Interstate 235 is a boon for commuters.

Traditionally Capitol Park has been considered, along with the Capitol East and MLK Jr. neighborhoods, as one of the East Bank Communities. These communities share common challenges and opportunities and thanks to East High School and other shared services their connections are strong. Strengthening these



Figure 6. Neighborhood Map
(map source: Google Maps)

connections can help these neighborhoods combine resources to address common issues more effectively.

The connections that exist with neighborhoods to the north and south are less developed, but the paths to allow for these connections already exist. The Neal Smith Trail goes north to the Union Park neighborhood and south to the East Village. Pennsylvania Avenue and E. 9th Street pass through Capitol Park, and E. 14th Street on the eastern edge of the neighborhood is a commercial corridor of citywide importance (See Figure 6. Neighborhood Map). This plan identifies existing and potential ways and reasons for people passing through on these corridors to stop in Capitol Park and experience what this vibrant neighborhood has to offer.

Capitol Park's Neighborhood Priority Areas

The planning process identified five priority areas that the neighborhood wanted to tackle over the next five to ten years. The strategies and action steps identified in this plan address challenges and build upon opportunities present in Capitol Park. From the planning process, it became clear that one of the neighborhood's greatest assets is the interest and willingness of residents to be involved in their neighborhood.

On the initial outreach survey, residents identified the neighborhood's greatest strengths and biggest challenges. The word clouds in figures 7 and 8 show the results from that survey. The larger the word, the more often people said it.

Capitol Park residents see the neighborhood's top strengths as:

- Multi-cultural diversity
- Affordability of housing
- Accessibility of amenities such as parks, schools, and downtown

Capitol Park residents see the neighborhood's top challenges as:

- Few opportunities to get to know one's neighbors
- The overall appearance and perception of the neighborhood
- Age and quality of housing

Each of the topic areas and strategies in this plan address challenges and seize upon opportunities identified by residents.



Figure 7. Capitol Park Strengths
(Identified in Survey)



Figure 8. Capitol Park Challenges
(Identified in Survey)

Priority Area One: Community Building

Capitol Park is home to people from a wide range of backgrounds. In addition to people who have lived in Des Moines for many years there are people who recently moved from South and Central America, Burma, Vietnam, and Sudan among other places. During the planning process, residents indicated that this diversity is one of the communities' greatest strengths. It provides opportunities to experience other cultures and traditions and it helps to make the neighborhood distinct. They would like to create a

community that celebrates the multi-cultural aspect of their neighborhood. They would also like to see more opportunities to get to know their neighbors. Neighborhood Association members are aware that engaging with a broader cross-section of the neighborhood will require approaches that actively build bridges with the multiple diverse groups living in Capitol Park. The following strategies focus on increasing a sense of community within Capitol Park by building the capacity of the neighborhood association and providing opportunities for people to get to know each other.

Strategy	Action Steps	Partners	Timeline
Build Capitol Park Neighborhood Association Capacity	i. Establish quadrant ambassador program to report to neighborhood association, such as in Philadelphia or Linden Wood Park (See Appendix E. Case Studies)	i. Neighborhood Association	i. Short
	ii. Utilize quadrant ambassadors to host block parties in different quadrants of the neighborhood throughout the year (at least two per year)	ii. Neighborhood Association, Community Housing Initiative	ii. Medium
	iii. Participate in annual cultural sensitivity and inter-cultural communication training for Capitol Park Neighborhood Association	iii. Neighborhood Association, Employee Family Resources	iii. Short
	iv. Participate in Rebuilding Together's Community Leadership Development Program, and graduate two Neighborhood Association members within five years	iv. Neighborhood Association, Rebuilding Together	iv. Medium
	v. Host annual roundtable discussion and potluck with diverse cultural groups in Capitol Park	v. Neighborhood Association, Community Housing Initiative, HER*, NBSD, Urban Dreams*, Latina Forum	v. Short
	vi. Create a youth advocate position as a standing member to the Capitol Park Neighborhood Association	vi. Neighborhood Association, East High*, Boys and Girls Club*	vi. Medium
Strengthen Relationship with Lutheran Hospital	i. Host a neighborhood celebration for the hospital's 100th anniversary, focused on health/wellness, in 2014	i. Lutheran Hospital, Neighborhood Association	i. Short

Strategy	Action Steps	Partners	Timeline
Strengthen Relationship with Lutheran Hospital (continued)	ii. Invite the Center for Advocacy and Outreach at Blank Children's Hospital to co-host a "Bike Rodeo"	ii. Lutheran Hospital, Neighborhood Association	ii. Short
	iii. Work with the Grounds Department to maintain nearby sections of the bike path and war memorial	iii. Lutheran Hospital, Neighborhood Association	iii. Ongoing
	iv. Increase communication between the Neighborhood Association and Lutheran Hospital by having a hospital representative regularly attend Neighborhood Association meetings and promote neighborhood events to employees	iv. Lutheran Hospital, Neighborhood Association	iv. Short
	v. Utilize Lutheran Hospital's Employee Volunteer Program for activities at Carver Elementary	v. Lutheran Hospital, Neighborhood Association, Carver Elementary*	v. Short

Priority Area Two: Crime and Safety

Capitol Park has an excellent relationship with the Des Moines Police Department's Neighborhood Based Service Delivery (NBSD) program. The partnership between the Neighborhood Association and NBSD provides a sense of security to many residents. This was reflected in the neighborhood survey where 67% of the respondents listed crime prevention as an important service to the neighborhood. While Capitol Park's overall reported crime rate is comparable to other neighborhoods within the urban core of Des Moines, over 40% of survey respondents still identified security as an issue in their community. During conversations with residents and focus groups with businesses, when participants spoke of

crime, the responses fell into two broad categories. In one category was the sense of unease caused by crime issues such as robberies and assaults. This anxiety was magnified by a second category, the perception of a need for more police activity in the neighborhood.

The following strategies specifically target these two main concerns. By improving lighting throughout the neighborhood, the perception of insecurity generated by darkness on the street could be addressed. Additionally, in strengthening the partnership with the Des Moines Police Department (DMPD) and expanding resident participation in crime prevention efforts, residents in Capitol Park will have more awareness of crime prevention efforts in their neighborhood and more visible patrol presence.

Strategy	Action Steps	Partners	Timeline
Improve lighting throughout Capitol Park	i. Promote the use of motion-sensor lights on private property via mailings to residents, inserts in church bulletins and school events, and neighborhood flyers	i. NBSD, Neighborhood Association	i. Medium
	ii. Explore establishing a program to subsidize purchase and organize installation assistance of motion-sensor lights for low to moderate income households, such as provided by the City of Pittsburgh (See Appendix E. Case Studies)	ii. DMPD, Habitat for Humanity, Rebuilding Together, Polk County Housing Trust Fund*	ii. Medium
	iii. Conduct a neighborhood lighting assessment, specifically targeting vacant lots, alleyways, sidewalks, and Triangle "Founders" Park	iii. City of Des Moines Department of Traffic and Transportation, Neighborhood Association, Mid American Energy	iii. Medium
	iv. Use appropriate public lighting strategies for the location – motion sensors, solar, two-level lighting	iv. City of Des Moines Department of Traffic and Transportation, DART, Mid American Energy	iv. Medium
Strengthen partnership with the Des Moines Police Department	i. Create and distribute information on how to best address crime issues on residents' blocks	i. DMPD, NBSD	i. Short
	ii. Offer citizen outreach classes in Capitol Park on addressing crime	ii. NBSD, Neighborhood Association	ii. Medium

Strategy	Action Steps	Partners	Timeline
Strengthen partnership with the Des Moines Police Department (continued)	iii. Graduate ten Capitol Park residents from the Citizen Police Academy within five years	iii. DMPD, Neighborhood Association	iii. Medium-Long
	iv. Increase visible presence of patrols throughout Capitol Park by rotating locations where patrols rest between calls, including business and church parking lots, public spaces (i.e. parks), along residential blocks	iv. DMPD	iv. Short
	v. Invite and encourage landlords, especially of River Hills and River View complexes, to participate in and complete the crime-free multi-family housing program	v. DMPD, NBSD, Neighborhood Association	v. Medium

Priority Area Three: Housing

Housing in Capitol Park is significantly more affordable than housing in Des Moines, and is a reason why many residents choose to live in the neighborhood. The average cost of a home in Capitol Park is \$76,319, 35% less than in Des Moines as a whole. Similarly, the average rent is \$477/month, which is 32% less than Des Moines as a whole (See Table 1. Housing Data). Capitol Park residents would like to ensure that quality affordable housing stock is available in the neighborhood now and for years to come. Results of the initial outreach survey showed that housing is an important concern in the neighborhood: three of the top four problems identified by residents relate to the quality, age, and maintenance of housing. Residents also expressed a desire for technical help with home repair projects, assistance financing home repairs, and greater access to the kinds of emergency repair programs provided by the City and County.

Table 1. Housing Data
(data source: City of Des Moines)

	Capitol Park	Des Moines
Average Assessed Property Value (2011)	\$76,319	\$117,245
Average Rent	\$477	\$700

Both the age and quality of the housing in Capitol Park contributes to home-maintenance challenges. More than half of the housing stock was built before 1905 (See Figure 9. Age of Housing). A significant portion of these older homes maintain their original purpose as single-family dwellings, a few were converted to multi-family homes. Over 50% of households live in single-family homes, making them the most prominent type of dwelling unit in the neighborhood. These types of residences are also

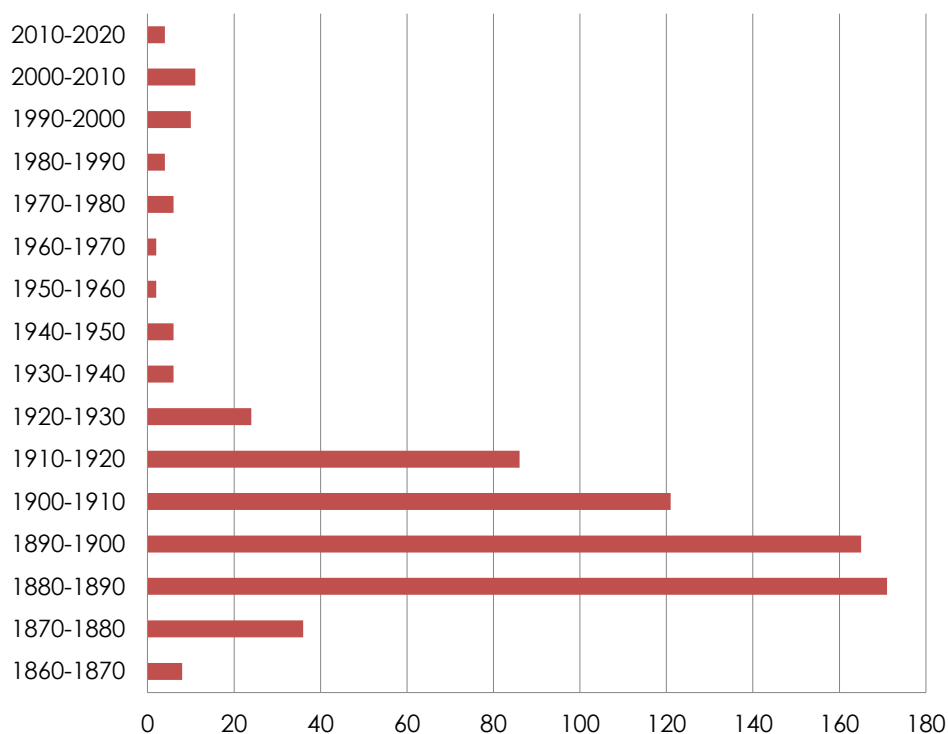


Figure 9. Age of Housing (data source: Polk County Assessor)

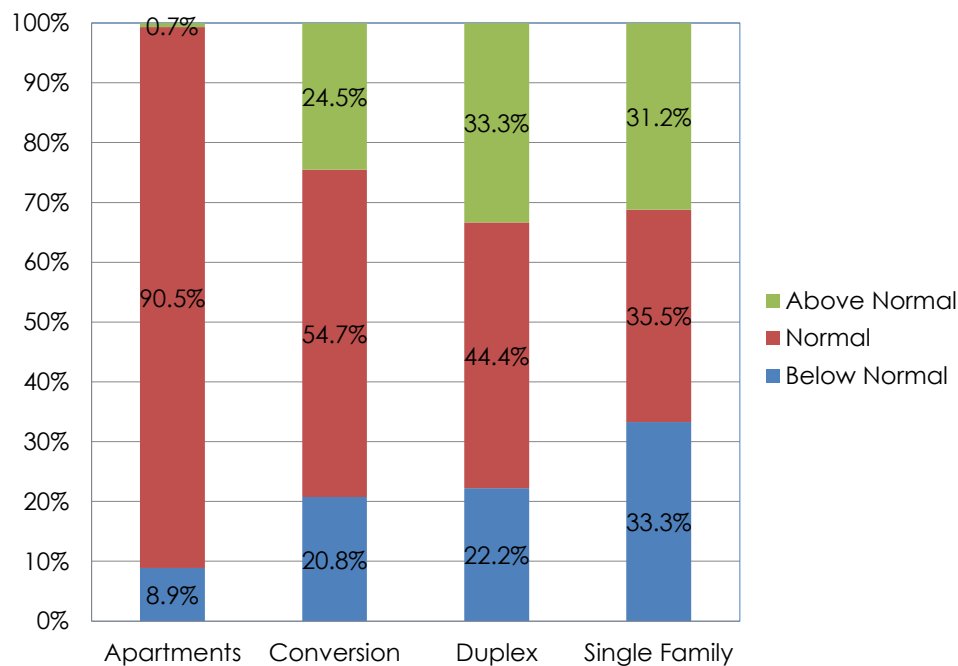


Figure 10. Condition of Housing (data source: Polk County Assessor)

most likely to be in below normal condition (See Figure 10. Condition of Housing).

Residents also identified vacant property as a problem for the neighborhood. Within Capitol Park there are 13 vacant lots and 14 abandoned houses. Many of these properties represent an opportunity for in-fill development and redevelopment, but barriers such as small lot sizes and an accumulation of liens applied to the lot's title hinder redevelopment opportunities. Demolition of some of the more significantly blighted of these properties represents a more immediate solution for improving neighborhood appearance.

Despite its prime location and ample amenities, the housing stock in Capitol Park is consistently undervalued in comparison with adjoining neighborhoods. By helping to spread the word of the value of the housing stock in the neighborhood and the available amenities, residents can expect higher

values for their homes and the redevelopment of properties will become more financially feasible.

The following strategies identify ways to address Capitol Park's housing-related challenges. By physically improving the existing housing in the neighborhood, the quality and the image of the housing stock in Capitol Park will be improved. Promoting educational opportunities for homeowners, landlords and renters and connecting them with affordable and no-charge resources will also assist in homeowners' and occupants' abilities to manage their properties. Marketing available housing in Capitol Park will mainly focus on exposing the public to the neighborhood's assets as well as the opportunities that exist with its existing housing stock. This approach will increase occupancy but also to improve the image of Capitol Park within the Greater Des Moines Metro area.

Strategy	Action Steps	Partners	Timeline
Promote home repair and other housing related classes for homeowners, landlords, and renters	i. Distribute the existing directory of classes, programming, and services produced by the United Way ii. Promote and partner with local organizations to offer classes on energy efficiency, tenant law, and financing in Capitol Park. East High School, Carver Elementary and area churches may make good host sites iii. Educate renters about their rights under tenant and fair housing laws	i. United Way, Neighborhood Association ii. Home Inc., DMACC*, Drake, Rebuilding Together, COSC, Carver Elementary*, East High*, Evelyn K. Davis Center for Working Families* iii. City of Des Moines Human Rights Commission, Legal Aid, Evelyn K. Davis Center for Working Families*, Home Inc.	i. Short ii. Medium iii. Medium
Promote livability of Capitol Park	i. Create and distribute a pamphlet about the history of the neighborhood, available amenities and the quality of housing available to large employers in Des Moines ii. Partner with news agencies to tell the story of Capitol Park. Use this revitalization plan, its implementation and its outcomes as a springboard to push local media to cover Capitol Park iii. Reach out to infill housing developers with locations of available property (ie. CHI Inc., Hubbell, and Jack Hatch) iv. Develop relationship with real estate agents to market homes in Capitol Park. When homes come on to the market in Capitol Park, provide agents with a copy of the marketing pamphlet (also an action step in this plan)	i. Neighborhood Association, Capitol Crossroads, Community Housing Initiative ii. Neighborhood Association iii. City of Des Moines Community Development, Neighborhood Association, Community Housing Initiative iv. Neighborhood Association, Neighborhood Finance Corporation*	i. Medium ii. Long iii. Long iv. Medium
Improve the quality of housing in Capitol Park	i. Continue to partner with Habitat for Humanity, Rebuilding Together, and Home, Inc. for owner-occupied repair ii. Identify a target area for a Rock the Block, in participation with Habitat for Humanity or a Wells Fargo National Rebuilding Day in participation with Rebuilding Together	i. Habitat for Humanity, Rebuilding Together, Home, Inc. ii. Habitat for Humanity, Rebuilding Together	i. Ongoing ii. Medium

Strategy	Action Steps	Partners	Timeline
Improve the quality of housing in Capitol Park (continued)	iii. Prioritize demolition and assess deconstruction opportunity of the house located at 1334 E 13th Street and at least one other nuisance house in the next three years	iii. City of Des Moines Community Development, COSC	iii. Medium
	iv. Encourage a flexible approach to zoning, including variances for setbacks and lot sizes, and rezoning, to allow for high quality infill development	iv. City of Des Moines Community Development, Neighborhood Association	iv. Long
	v. Explore options to encourage the rehabilitation of 1532 E. 9th Street	v. City of Des Moines Community Development; Neighborhood Association	v. Long
	vi. Explore the possibility of creating a historical neighborhood zoning overlay or a redevelopment zone that will expedite redevelopment in the neighborhood and prevent the need for lot by lot variance reviews	vi. City of Des Moines Planning Department, City of Des Moines Community Development	vi. Long

Priority Area Four: Youth

Capitol Park has a high population of youth under the age of 18 who attend schools in an nearby the neighborhood (see Figure 11. Capitol Park, Residents Under 21). Carver Elementary and East High School are located within Capitol Park, and Hiatt Middle School is located in an adjacent neighborhood. The presence of these schools is a major draw for people moving to and staying in Capitol Park. Both students and parents associated with Capitol Park schools emphasized diversity as one of the schools' greatest strengths. They also indicated that there is a lack of activities available to youth in the area. Investing in arts, athletic, language, and career development programs will help ensure that the youth in Capitol Park receive the support they need to lead healthy and successful lives and that Capitol Park continues to be a desirable place for families to live.

The presence of two schools and a Boys and Girls Club provides an opportunity for promoting and expanding successful programming to neighborhood youth. Carver Elementary serves pre-kindergarten through grade 5 and also includes an early education center and Boys & Girls Club facility. East High School, the third largest high school in the state of

Iowa, has an enrollment consistently surpassing 2,000 students who represent over 50 countries. The school's diversity has increased 24% over the past five years (See Table 2. School Enrollment). While not all of the students attending these schools and clubs live in the neighborhood, they are a part of the neighborhood community.

Table 2. School Enrollment
(data source: City of Des Moines)

School	Enrollment	Minority Student	Free & Reduced Lunch
Carver Elementary	533	74%	93%
East High	2288	59%	67%

The following strategies reflect the neighborhood's desire to provide activities and engage youth in the neighborhood's community. Encouraging programs that incorporate family-centered activities will help ensure that youth have stand-up mentors and consistent access to the programs they require. The proposed intergenerational approach to youth programming will increase the likelihood of engaging the diverse population of Capitol Park and will contribute to a more inclusive neighborhood. In promoting career development, the youth population will gain important skills and be prepared for successful futures. Focusing on athletics and arts programs will fill the gaps in programming identified by residents and contribute to a healthy and beautiful neighborhood.

“My kids have said that the thing they like most about East High is its diversity.”

-- Comment made during interviews with parents and youth during East High activities

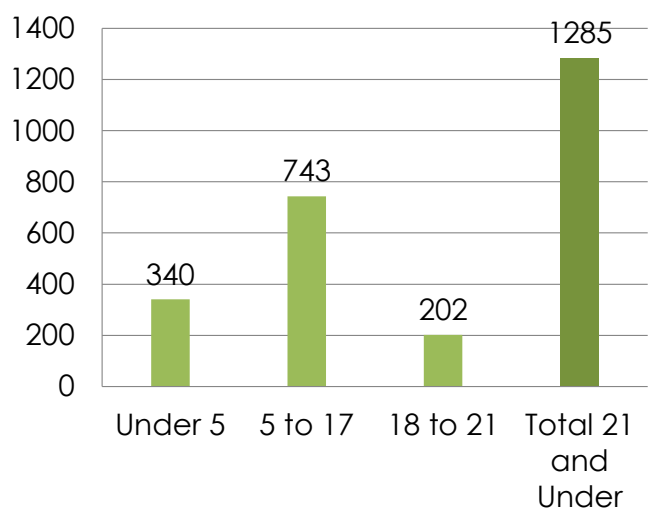


Figure 11. Capitol Park, Residents Under 21
(data source: City of Des Moines)

Strategy	Action Steps	Partners	Timeline
Collaborate with East Bank neighborhood associations to increase offerings of and participation in family-centered classes and activities	i. Explore partnerships with DMACC, Drake, neighborhood schools, and local churches to create and promote reciprocal language learning opportunities for all ages	i. Carver Elementary*, East High*, Employee Family Resources*, Drake*, DMACC*, Wesley United Methodist Church	i. Medium
	ii. Promote existing classes and activities occurring at churches and in schools in the neighborhood association's newsletter, school newsletters, radio, and word of mouth	ii. Neighborhood Association, Boys and Girls Club*	ii. Short
	iii. Seek assistance through public and private funding for school-sponsored programs aimed to give students and their families access to technology and Wi-Fi in their homes. Possible funding sources include the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, American Honda Foundation, School Improvement Grants, NSF's Discovery Research K-12	iii. East High*, Carver Elementary*, Boys and Girls Club*, Evelyn K. Davis Center*, Des Moines Public School District*	iii. Long
Build citywide alliances to enhance athletic programming for youth	i. Improve awareness of existing athletic programs to neighborhood youth by outreaching to minority populations through targeted information sessions, 2 per year	i. East High*, Carver Elementary*, Hiatt Middle School*, Neighborhood Association, Boys and Girls Clubs*	i. Short
	ii. Pursue funding to offer athletic activities in existing outdoor spaces, such as, yoga in the park, volleyball tournaments, etc.	ii. City of Des Moines Park and Rec, City of Des Moines Community Development, East High*	ii. Medium
Promote Career Development	i. Explore creation of a formal mentor program and solicit mentors from local businesses and professional community, partner them with at-risk students (i.e. 826 National)	i. Drake*, East High*, AMOS*, Neighborhood Association	i. Long
	ii. Partner with East High woodshop class to have classes work on selected homes in Capitol Park	ii. East High*, Neighborhood Association, Habitat for Humanity, Rebuilding Together	iii. Medium
	iii. Promote DMACC Vo-Tech project in the Neighborhood Association newsletter, church flyers, and East High	iii. Neighborhood Association, East High*, DMACC*	iii. Short

Strategy	Action Steps	Partners	Timeline
Cooperate with citywide partners to increase offerings of youth arts programming	i. i. Expand relationship with the Art Center and ASAP, promote scholarships and explore the possibility of bringing art programming into Carver and East High	i. Neighborhood Association, ASAP, Carver Elementary*, East High*, Metro Art Alliance	i. Long
	ii. Explore a partnership between school art programs and the City of Des Moines to establish art on boards of boarded up houses, and on city-owned trash cans	ii. City of Des Moines Community Development, City of Des Moines Neighborhood Inspection, City of Des Moines Park and Rec, East High*, Hiatt Middle School*, ASAP, Carver Elementary*	ii. Medium
	iii. Explore a partnership between business owners and school art programs to establish art in empty store fronts	iii. East High*, Hiatt Middle School*, ASAP, Carver Elementary*, Metro Art Alliance	iii. Medium

Priority Area Five: Neighborhood Appearance

Capitol Park includes Burke and Triangle parks, the Neal Smith Trail, a business corridor, and hundreds of households. These amenities attract new residents and are reasons why people stay living in the neighborhood. The initial outreach survey revealed that Capitol Park residents are keenly interested in activities like cultural events and community clean-up days, both of which positively affect the neighborhood's appearance and perceived image. The survey also showed a wide range of concerns about the physical appearance of Capitol Park, as well as the neighborhood's reputation. In order to maintain and enhance its attraction and livability, it is vital for Capitol Park to enhance and maintain its physical appearance.

In order to build upon the strengths in Capitol Park, the following strategies address the physical appearance and perception of Capitol Park by focusing on three major areas: connectivity to the City of Des Moines, the Capitol Park business corridor, and recreational opportunities. Addressing the physical conditions in the residential areas and business corridor, as well as, enhancing the bike trail will allow Capitol Park to put its best face forward. Media coverage, as well as, organizing and participating in cultural events will help raise the profile and image of Capitol Park.

Connectivity

Capitol Park is situated in a prime location within Des Moines and has opportunities to partner with nearby neighborhood associations. It has historic bonds and shares many services and resources with Martin Luther King Jr., Park and Capitol East, together creating the East Bank neighborhoods. Additionally, some connections exist with neighborhoods to the north and south. For example, the Neal Smith Trail goes north to the Union Park neighborhood and south to the East Village, near the urban core of Des Moines. Furthermore, Pennsylvania Avenue, E.

9th Street and E. 14th Street pass through Capitol Park and have the potential to further establish this north-south connection. These connections provide opportunities for partnerships with Union Park and the East Village, as well as avenues through which to tell the story of Capitol Park.

Business Corridor

The business corridor in Capitol Park is the center of improvement for neighborhood appearance. Most of the businesses in Capitol Park are located along University Avenue and E. 14th Street. There is an area near University and E. 9th Street that currently has many vacant storefronts. Outreaching to entrepreneurs and developers and improving the physical conditions to enhance neighborhood identity and reputation will draw in businesses to the heart of Capitol Park and serve as a mechanism for revitalization.

Recreational Opportunities

Bicycle facility improvements are another focus of conversation with the residents of Capitol Park. Capitol Park currently has two bike areas: the Neal Smith Trail along the Des Moines River and a bike-friendly route along Washington Avenue. The 2011 Bicycle and Trail Master Plan for Des Moines recommends a shared bike lane on E. 9th Street. The proposed bike lane intersects the business corridor on University and emphasizes the north-south connectivity within the neighborhood. Implementing this bicycle route will encourage biking and pedestrian activity and enhance the vitality of the business corridor.

"I love the bike trail!"

-- Comments made by residents
during survey collection

Strategy	Action Steps	Partners	Timeline
Increase business occupancy rates	i. Partner with news agencies, such as Des Moines Register and KCCI to tell the stories of successful local businesses and attract entrepreneurs	i. Neighborhood Association	i. Short
	ii. Work with NDC for façade improvements, market study and marketing empty spaces	ii. Neighborhood Development Corporation, Neighborhood Association	ii. Medium
	iii. Partner with ISED and NDC for City a business development day and target economic development initiatives to women and minority business owners and entrepreneurs through the Targeted Small Business (TSB) Program of Iowa	iii. City of Des Moines Office of Economic Development, Mainstreet Iowa, Neighborhood Development Corporation, ISED*	iii. Medium
Boost the bikeability of Capitol Park	i. Add sharrows on E. 9th Street and complete planned sharrows in the Des Moines Bicycle and Trails Master Plan	i. City of Des Moines Traffic and Transportation	i. Medium
	ii. Create a “trails and biking committee within the Neighborhood Association to advocate for bicycle and pedestrian enhancements, and to ensure ongoing maintenance and use of the bike trails by supporting the work of the Park Board sub-committee for Trails and Greenways	ii. Neighborhood Association	ii. Short
	iii. Add wayfinding signs at strategic locations throughout the neighborhood that indicate distances and biking times to East Village, Union Park, and Capitol Park commercial districts (i.e. along the E. 9th Street corridor and at the nearby access point to the Neal Smith trail)	iii. City of Des Moines Park and Rec, City of Des Moines Traffic and Transportation, Polk County Health Department	iii. Medium
	iv. Place “Welcome to Capitol Park” sign at entry points from Union Park and downtown, and the entry point from the south on E. 9th Street	iv. City of Des Moines Traffic and Transportation, Neighborhood Association	iv. Short
	v. Complete an assessment focusing on how to make the trail South of Cleveland that goes to the Botanical Center a gateway to Capitol Park, the assessment should address barriers and opportunities	v. City of Des Moines Traffic and Transportation, Parks and Rec., Des Moines Bicycle Collective*	v. Long

Strategy	Action Steps	Partners	Timeline
Raise the profile and improve the image of Capitol Park	i. Create and maintain a website for Capitol Park, in addition to the existing interactive pages. This website will be managed by the Capitol Park Neighborhood Association	i. City of Des Moines Community Development, Neighborhood Association	i. Medium
	ii. Work with other neighborhood associations (such MLK Jr. and Capitol East) to hold common events or programming with East Village/Downtown and Union Park once a year	ii. Neighborhood Association	ii. Medium
	iii. Partner with MLK Jr. and Capitol East neighborhoods to host a festival once a year	iii. Neighborhood Association	iii. Medium
	iv. Promote Capitol Park as a desirable place to live in the City's "Welcome to Des Moines" information packet, introduce the unique characters and stand-out businesses in the neighborhood	iv. Neighborhood Association	iv. Short
Address vacancy, including Wallace School and other private properties	i. Host a round table discussion between the City, neighborhood association and the owner of Wallace School, as soon as possible	i. City of Des Moines Community Development, Neighborhood Association	i. Short
	ii. Explore a public and private partnership to address property redevelopment with the owner of Wallace School	ii. City of Des Moines Community Development, Wesley United Methodist Church, Neighborhood Association	ii. Medium
Improve conditions of infrastructure	i. Add a crosswalk on the intersections of University and E. 12th St., University and E. 9th St., and University near Burke Park	i. City of Des Moines Department of Traffic and Transportation	i. Medium
	ii. Identify ownership and explore repair options for retaining walls in the neighborhood with particular focus on E. 9th Street between Fremont and University and between 1210 and 1230 Fremont	ii. Neighborhood Association, Rebuilding Together, Habitat for Humanity	ii. Medium

Strategy	Action Steps	Partners	Timeline
Improve the appearance of Neal Smith Trail from Cleveland to South to University Avenue overpass	i. Design and implement low-maintenance landscaping and amenity enhancements such as benches and exercise stations along the Neal Smith Trail	i. City of Des Moines Park and Rec	i. Medium
	ii. Create a rest stop to display trail map and bike lanes through the neighborhood	ii. City of Des Moines Park and Rec	ii. Medium
	iii. Assess the need for lighting and safety mechanisms along the Neal Smith Trail	iii. City of Des Moines Park and Rec, City of Des Moines Traffic and Transportation, DMPD, ISU College of Design Landscape Architecture studio	iii. Medium
Beautify and enhance existing public space	i. Establish easy-maintenance landscaping on the triangle park	i. Neighborhood Association	i. Short

Implementation

The City and the Neighborhood Association are the primary entities responsible for the implementation of this plan, which will require the involvement of many residents and stakeholders. It will also require:

- Capacity building within the neighborhood association
- Continued leadership development among neighborhood association members
- Enhanced cultural, ethnic, and racial sensitivity and diversity within the neighborhood association
- Technical assistance from the Neighborhood Development Division and other City Staff
- Active support from area businesses and non-profits
- Financial support from both public and private sources

The implementation of the plan is crucial to the success of the neighborhood revitalization program. It is also the most challenging phase of the planning process. In order to be successful, it is vital that the present partnership with the City of Des Moines and the East Bank neighborhoods – MLK Jr. and Capitol East – continue and grow. Implementation will also require the formation of new partnerships with other neighborhood associations, Union Park and East Village, as well as partnerships with businesses, non-profits, and city departments.

Appendices

A. Survey Results

A door-to-door survey completed in early September provided insight into residents' opinions and perceptions of Capitol Park and served as the first neighborhood outreach and feedback activity. Surveys were available in both English and Spanish and there were a total of 100 respondents. The data obtained from these surveys formed the basis of the planning process and influenced the focus topics emphasized in the plan.

In addition to questions concerning opinions and perceptions of Capitol Park, the survey how long residents lived in the neighborhood and their awareness of the neighborhood association. The remaining six questions were split between three "check the box" questions and three "fill-in-the-blank" questions. Each of these six questions asked respondents to either check three options or write in three ideas. The specific questions and results are detailed below.

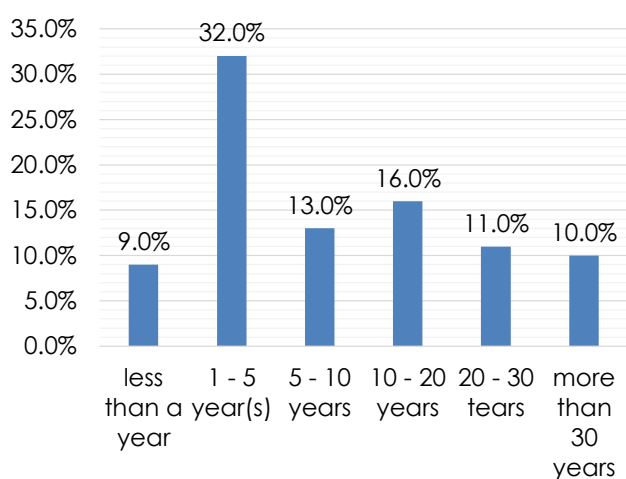


Figure 12. Time Living in Capitol Park

The first question of the survey asked how long respondents have lived in Capitol Park. Over 90% of respondents answered this question. The main take away from this question is that one third of the

respondents are new residents, and fewer respondents indicated they lived in Capitol Park more than 20 years. The results indicated 32% of respondents have lived in the neighborhood for 1-5 years. There were also significant portions of respondents who have lived in Capitol Park for 10-20 years (16%), 20-30 years (11%), and more than 30 years (10%).

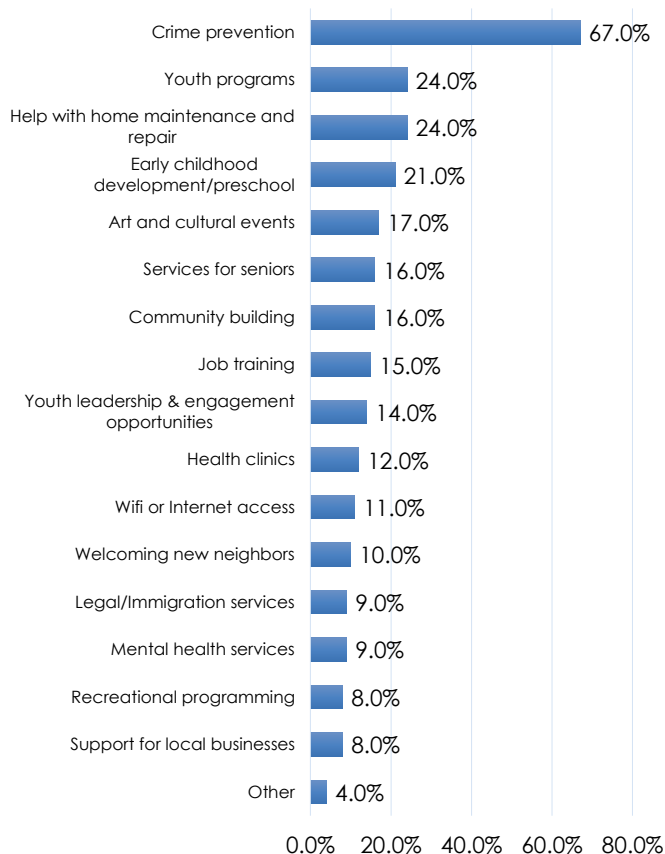


Figure 13. Services Important to Capitol Park Residents

The second question asked residents to select three of sixteen options to indicate which services are most important to them. There were also two blank "other" options in which respondents could write in services not already listed. The service selected by the highest percentage of respondents was crime prevention (67%), followed by youth programs (24%), help with home maintenance and repair (24%), and early childhood development/preschool (21%).

The third question asked about the biggest problems in Capitol Park and again asked residents to choose



Figure 14. Problems in Capitol Park

three of the 21 available options. One blank “other” option was provided for write-in suggestions. Crime and safety was the top problem identified by 40% of respondents. Other problems include vacant and abandoned properties (30%), how the neighborhood looks (29%), housing and properties in need of maintenance (23%), and alley upkeep (23%).

The fourth question asked residents what neighborhood activities they would participate in or attend. This question offered 12 options plus two blank “other” options, and asked residents to select all that apply. Activities such as cultural events (38%), neighborhood clean-up (35%), movies in the park (33%), national night out (29%), and trash pick-up days (28%) were selected as the top activities for Capitol Park residents.

The next three questions asked respondents to write three strengths, weaknesses, and things they would

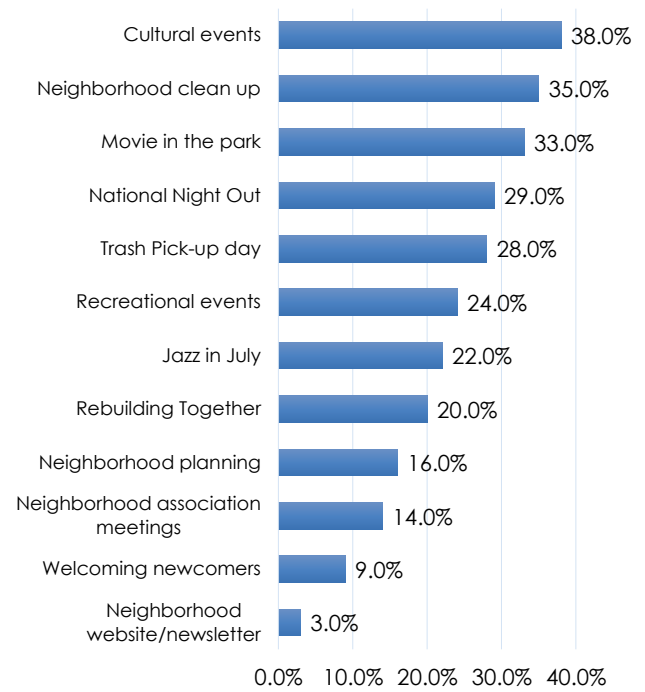


Figure 15. Activities Valued by Capitol Park Residents

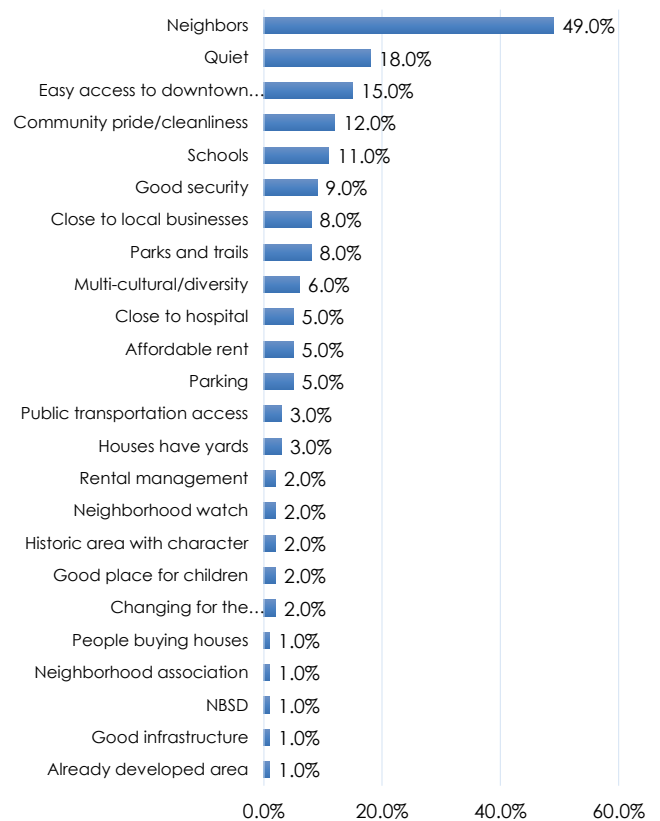


Figure 16. Strengths of Capitol Park

like to see changed in Capitol Park. Overall, 49% of respondents identified their neighbors as a strength of Capitol Park. Others mentioned that the neighborhood is quiet (18%) and that it is easily accessible to downtown and the surrounding area (15%).

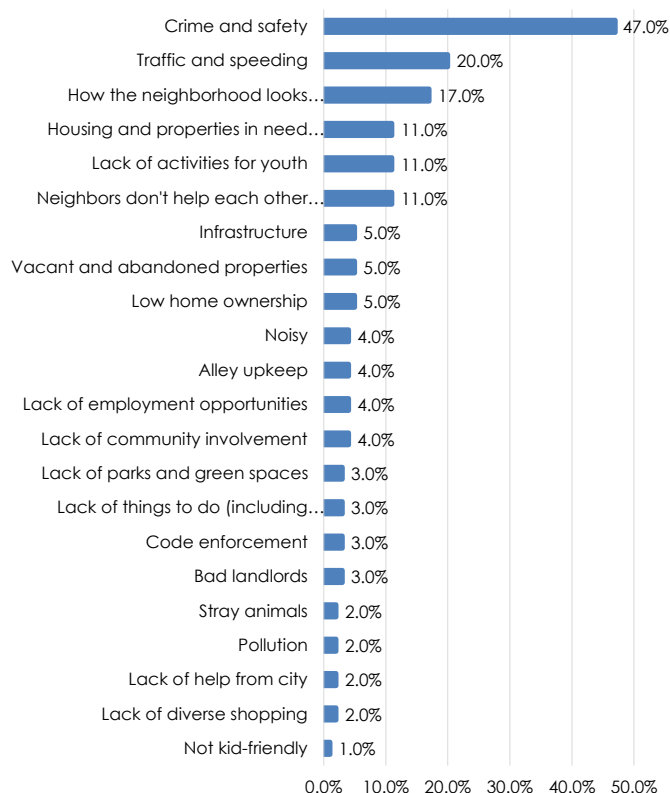


Figure 17. Weaknesses of Capitol Park

Weaknesses identified by respondents included crime and safety (47%), traffic and speeding (20%), and how the neighborhood looks (17%).

The top three changes residents would like to see in Capitol Park include improving security/lowering the crime rate (31%), a greater sense of community (17%), and activities for children and youth (15%).

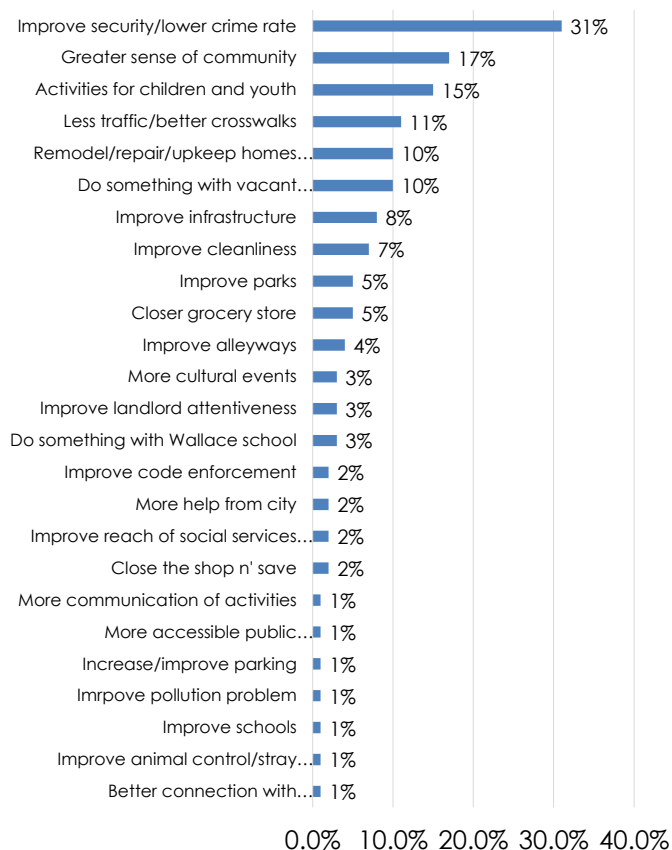


Figure 18. Top Changes in Capitol Park

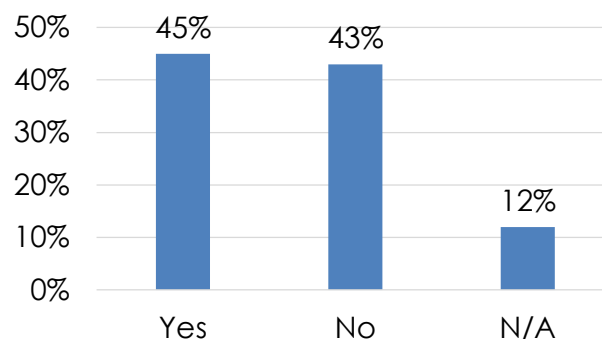
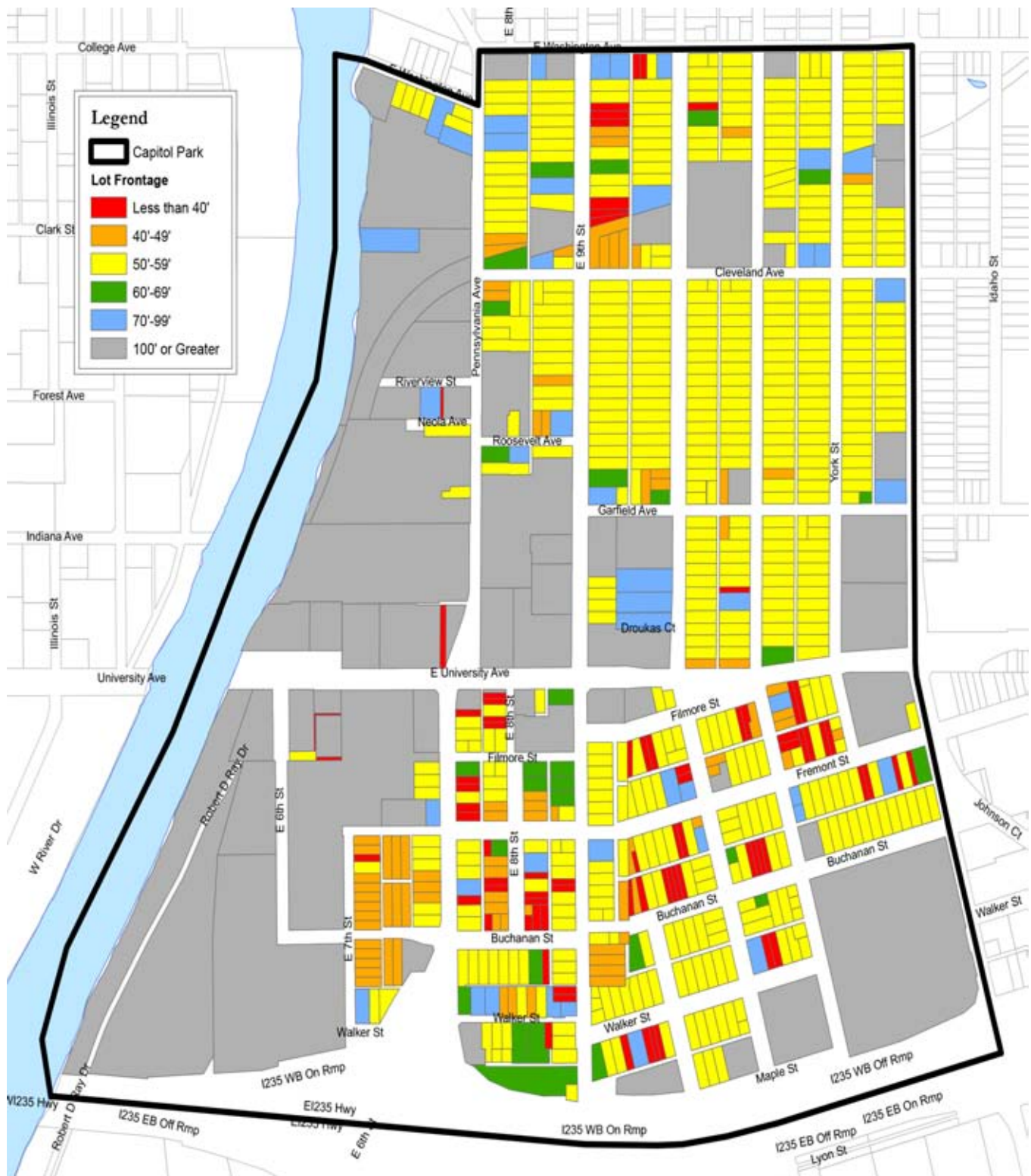


Figure 19. Awareness of the Capitol Park Neighborhood Association

The final question asked residents' awareness of the neighborhood association in Capitol Park. Though 12% of respondents did not answer this question, 45% indicated they were aware of the Capitol Park Neighborhood Association and 43% said that they were not aware.



C. Partners

Confirmed Partners

The following list consists of the organizations identified in the plan that have agreed verbally or in writing to partner with the Capitol Park Neighborhood Association for the plan's implementation:

Boys and Girls Club	Lutheran Hospital
City of Des Moines (all departments listed)	Mainstreet Iowa
COSC	Metro Art Alliance
Community Housing Initiative	Mid-American
DART	Neighborhood Development Corporation
Habitat for Humanity	Polk County Health Department
Home, Inc.	Rebuilding Together
Legal Aid	

*Pending Partners

The following organizations have expressed interest in partnering with the Plan. However, further communication is needed in order to fully define the partnership:

After School Art Program (ASAP)	Employee Family Resources (EFR)
AMOS	Evelyn K. Davis Center for Working Families
Boys and Girls Club	Hiatt Middle School
Carver Elementary	Hispanic Education Resources (HER)
Des Moines Bicycle Collective	ISED Venture
DMACC	Neighborhood Finance Corporation
Drake	Polk County Housing Trust Fund
East High/Des Moines Public School District	Urban Dreams

D. Participating Organizations

The following is a list of organizations that actively participated in the Capitol Park neighborhood planning process:

After School Art Program (ASAP)	Evelyn K. Davis Center
AMOS	Friends of Des Moines Parks
Anawim Housing	Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity
Boys and Girls Club	Green Iowa AmeriCorps
Capitol East Neighborhood Association	Hiatt Middle School
Capitol Park Neighborhood Association	Hiatt Middle School – Parent Teacher Organization
Capitol View Elementary	Hispanic Education Resources (HER)
Carver Elementary	Iowa Lutheran Hospital
City of Des Moines	Iowa State University
Community Housing Initiative	Manpower
Center on Sustainable Communities (COSC)	MLK Jr. Park Neighborhood Association
DART	Neighborhood Finance Corporation
Des Moines Park and Rec	Polk County Health Department
Des Moines Police Department	Polk County Housing Trust Fund
Des Moines Public School District	Rebuilding Together
Drake University	State of Iowa
East High Alumni Foundation	United Way
East High Boosters	Urban Core/AMDS
Eat Greater Des Moines	Wesley United Methodist Church
Employee Family Resources (EFR)	

E. Case Studies

Philadelphia – <http://www.philadelphiastreet.com/pmbc-become-a-block-captain.aspx>

Philadelphia More Beautiful Committee (PMBC), part of the Streets Department's Sanitation Division, is an urban environmental partnership. The program promotes civic pride, public safety and neighborhood empowerment among Block Captains, community group leaders and their units. Various community beautification activities and contests were conducted based on block unit, resulting in success toward enhancing the capacity of the neighborhood association.

Linden Wood Park – <http://www.lindenwoodpark.org/index.php?page=block-captains>

The Lindenwood Park Neighborhood Association (LPNA) recruits block captains to serve as a vital communication link with neighbors on their own block and with the Neighborhood Association. Block captains keep an up-to-date list of block residents, welcome new residents to their block, and advise on neighborhood improvements and nuisances.

City of Pittsburgh – <http://pghcsi.org/nsp>

The neighborhood safety program in the city of Pittsburgh focuses on assisting low and moderate income residents with building safer homes and on crime and disaster prevention. These objectives are achieved with the "free" installation of home safety and security hardware.

826 National – <http://www.826national.org/>

The 826 National program engages under-resourced youth, enabling them to rise to their full potential through: after-school tutoring, field trips, in-schools projects, young author's book project, and workshops. They work closely with both youth and teachers to improve the quality of the school education, especially writing skills.

