

DOUGLAS ACRES NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PLAN

DRAFT – FEBRUARY 4, 2010

Please Note: This is a DRAFT copy of the plan and is not in its final format

DRAFT: Douglas Acres Neighborhood Plan

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Special thanks to City staff from the Public Works, Engineering, Parks & Recreation, and Community Development Departments and the Iowa DOT for assisting with the development of this plan.

Thank you to Hy-Vee for use of their conference room throughout the planning process.

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I. 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. To coordinate this program, the City's Community Development Department formed the Neighborhood Development Division.

The Neighborhood Revitalization Program uses a strategy that calls for neighborhood residents, the City of Des Moines, Polk County, and local business leaders to develop a public/private partnership that addresses revitalization issues within the city. In spring 2006, the Douglas Acres Neighborhood Association (DANA) submitted an application to participate in the Neighborhood Revitalization Program and made a presentation to the Neighborhood Revitalization Board (NRB). The Neighborhood Revitalization Board recommended the Douglas Acres Neighborhood become a Designated Neighborhood and begin the planning process. In July 2006, the NRB recommendation was approved by the Des Moines City Council and the Polk County Board of Supervisors.

The neighborhood planning process relies on active stakeholder groups to identify critical neighborhood issues in their area. The staff of the Neighborhood Development Division provides technical assistance and planning coordination. Neighborhood planning staff works with the stakeholder group to develop and implement appropriate goals and a feasible action plan. These neighborhood plans provide a list of activities and identify parties responsible for implementation. The success of the revitalization effort depends on a continued coordination among the neighborhood association, the City, the County, and other public and private organizations.

This document is strategic in nature and is intended to guide development decisions in the neighborhood for the next decade. The plan includes overall goals for the neighborhood as well as strategies, action steps, and timelines for implementation. The Douglas Acres Neighborhood Association is charged with leading the day-to-day implementation of the plan with technical assistance from the City of Des Moines and Polk County.

This plan was prepared through a joint effort of the City of Des Moines Community Development Department's Neighborhood Development Division and the Douglas Acres Neighborhood Association. The approved plan becomes an amendment to the City of Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Plan.

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IIA. ABOUT DOUGLAS ACRES...

Douglas Acres is located in northeastern Des Moines, bounded by the city limits to the north, I-235 to the west, Euclid Avenue to the south, and Four Mile Creek to the east. Part of the beauty of the neighborhood is in its location “off the beaten path”, with large lots and quiet, tree-lined streets. Compared with much of the City of Des Moines, the Douglas Acres Neighborhood has a pastoral character, with very low density development. However, due to close proximity to Interstate 235, Douglas Acres residents can easily access the entire Des Moines metro area.

Douglas Acres is primarily a residential neighborhood, with commercial uses concentrated along E. Euclid Avenue. Neighborhood landmarks include Sargent Park and the multi-use trail along Four Mile Creek, the former John Quincy Adams Elementary School, the Hy-Vee and commercial center along E. Euclid Avenue, and a number of churches, including Staves Methodist Church, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, and Grace Church.

Neighborhood History

The Douglas Acres neighborhood developed slowly throughout the first half of the twentieth century, as farmland was subdivided and individual lots sold. Iowa Loan & Trust Company was the primary property owner in Northeast Des Moines in the early 1900s. Acreages were quite popular at the time, and the Douglas Acres area did have access to City water services. However, much of the subdivision development and lot marketing at this time had to do with profiteering and land speculation rather than home building.

The largest subdivisions in the neighborhood were the Douglas Acres Plats. Douglas Acres Plat 1 was first marketed in September 1913 by the Iowa Loan & Trust Company with 140 lots, each nearly three quarters of an acre. Plat 2 was first marketed in 1915, with 181 lots each an acre in size. The first two plats sold out quickly, marketed as great farm land for gardens or orchards. Plats 3 and 4 were marketed in 1916 and 1918, respectively, adding 75 additional lots of various sizes. By this time, there was a streetcar line on Douglas Avenue (the track was laid in 1902), and Douglas School had opened nearby. However, the successful land sales did not immediately translate into completed houses, and most homes in these plats were built slowly over time. The lack of paved roadways in this area contributed to the slow development of homes. Many of the roads in Douglas Acres were gravel as late as the 1950s, with ditches along the sides for stormwater. E. Aurora Avenue still has these ditches, although the road has been paved. Sewers were installed in the neighborhood in 1958. Between 1968 and 1971, the Eastview Manor Plats were subdivided and developed on the western side of the neighborhood. The plats included 146 homes and an eight-building apartment complex.

Long-time residents of the neighborhood remember Douglas Acres as a home for young, working class families in the 1950s and 60s. Many of the men worked at area manufacturers like John Deere, Firestone, or Armstrong Tire. Others worked at the Swift soybean plant. As more women started to work outside the home, many travelled to downtown Des Moines for office positions.

There have been a variety of neighborhood commercial uses in Douglas Acres over the years. At one time Prugh's, a family owned grocery store, occupied the corner of E. 29th Street and Madison Avenue. HyVee opened a store south of Euclid in 1961, and moved to their current location (formerly a Goodwill distribution center) in 1990. Other commercial uses have included gas stations, an auto shop, a flower shop, several banks, and Tasty Tacos, a favorite Des Moines restaurant. Although a

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number of these have transferred ownership through the years, quite a few of them still remain in the neighborhood.

John Quincy Adams Elementary School was built in 1917, originally located at E. 27th Street and Douglas Avenue. The original three room wooden building was later moved to the present site on E. 29th Street. In 1924, the first brick wing of the present building opened. Later additions were constructed in 1951 and 1961. The school closed in 2007 and remains vacant at this time. Since then, children in Douglas Acres have been bused to schools outside of the neighborhood. As this plan is being published, the school district is planning to dispose of the Adams School site.

Douglas Acres is home to seven of churches of varying denominations. Most of the current church buildings were constructed in the 1950s and 60s, although several of the churches occupied earlier buildings that were torn down and replaced. The most recent addition to the neighborhood is Grace Church, which occupies the northwest corner of the neighborhood and owns 50 additional acres of land to the north of Douglas Acres' boundary.

Looking Ahead

The Douglas Acres Neighborhood entered the Neighborhood Revitalization Program in July 2006 as a Transitional Positive neighborhood based on housing conditions, property values, homeownership rate, and home sales information.

Douglas Acres has consistently been a very stable neighborhood, where residents have put down roots and stayed in their homes for a long period of time. However, residents feel that the neighborhood has begun to decline over the last decade. They worry about properties turning over to investors, rather than new families. Part of the issue is the age of the housing stock. Another problem is lack of awareness about the neighborhood and the many good things it has to offer. In their application for the program, the Douglas Acres Neighborhood Association indicated that they want to "improve the area to, again, be the once sought after place to live".

As the neighborhood transitions to a new generation of homeowners, the challenge will be to make the neighborhood competitive in the housing market and attract new investment. In addition, there is a need to increase resident engagement in the neighborhood, encouraging residents to take pride in their property and maintain a sense of community. The goals of this plan are designed to guide the neighborhood association in improving Douglas Acres, so that it will again become a neighborhood of choice in Des Moines.

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II.B. DEMOGRAPHICS

Note: This data is taken from the 2000 Census Tract Block Groups, and may include some areas outside of the neighborhood boundaries.

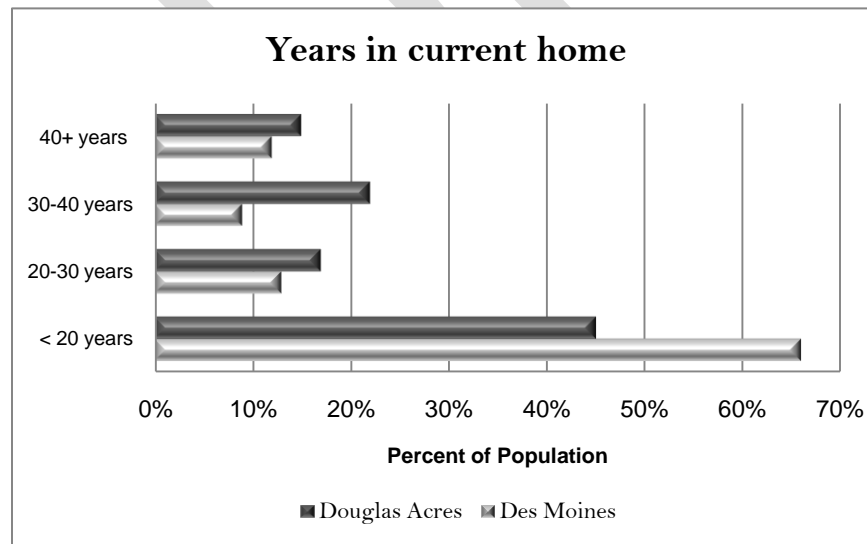
Understanding the demographic make-up of a neighborhood may help identify issues or may explain the reason why certain patterns are occurring. According to the 2000 Census, the Douglas Acres Neighborhood has 2,726 residents. Thirty seven percent of those residents have lived in their home for 30 years or more. Over half of the residents in Douglas Acres have lived in their home for more than 20 years, making it a very well-established and stable neighborhood. Although the Douglas Acres Neighborhood has been losing population over the past three decades, it's percentage of the City population has remained stable.

Population				
	1970	1980	1990	2000
Douglas Acres	3,079	2,935	2,877	2,726
% Change	NA	-5%	-2%	-5%
% of DSM Pop.	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.4%
Des Moines	200,587	191,003	193,187	198,682
% Change	NA	-5%	1%	3%

Data from U.S. Census Bureau

	Date moved into home	
	Douglas Acres	Des Moines
1990 to March 2000	45%	66%
1980 to 1989	17%	13%
1970 to 1979	22%	9%
1969 or earlier	15%	12%

Data from 2000 Census



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The minority population in Douglas Acres has been growing significantly, increasing 86 percent between 1990 and 2000. The largest minority groups in the neighborhood are Asian and Hispanic. Still, the neighborhood is predominantly white, with minorities making up only eight percent of the population. This compares to 18 percent citywide.

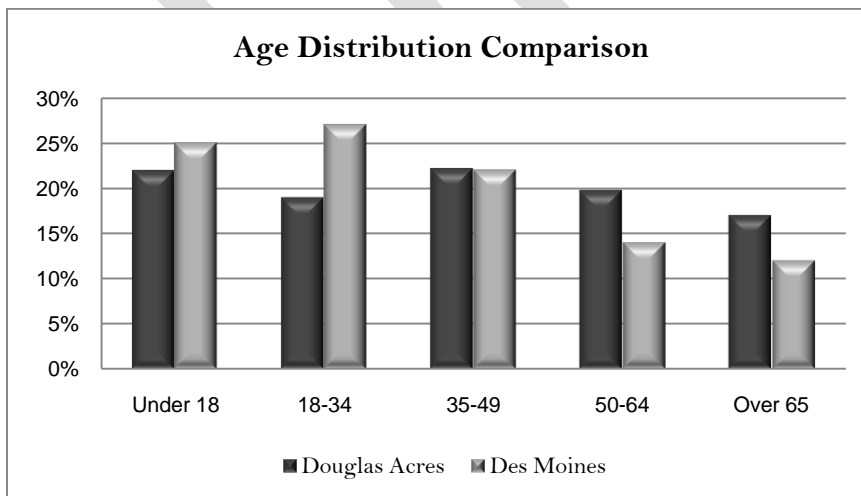
Minority Population			
	1980	1990	2000
Douglas Acres	84	114	212
% Minority	3%	4%	8%
Minority Pop. Change	NA	34%	86%
Des Moines	18,385	20,770	35,188
% Minority	10%	11%	18%
Minority Pop. Change	48%	13%	69%

Data from U.S. Census Bureau

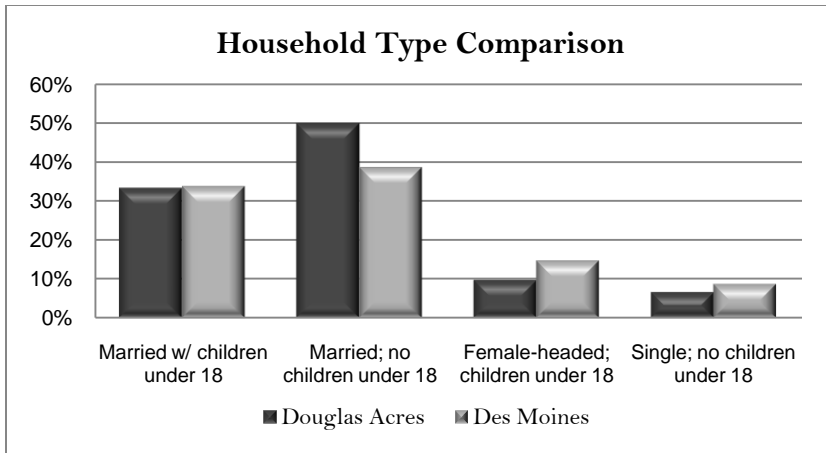
Douglas Acres has an older population when compared with the City as a whole. The typical household in Douglas Acres is a married couple. Compared with the City average, fewer families in the Douglas Acres neighborhood have children under 18 currently living at home. This reflects the age of the population; many neighborhood families have children who have grown up and moved away. The age group that Douglas Acres lacks the most is young adults between ages 18-34. Adults over 50 years of age account for 37 percent of Douglas Acres residents.

Household Composition		
	Douglas Acres	Des Moines
Persons per household	2.3	2.4
Non-family households	33%	39%
Family households	68%	61%
Married	83%	72%

Data from 2000 Census



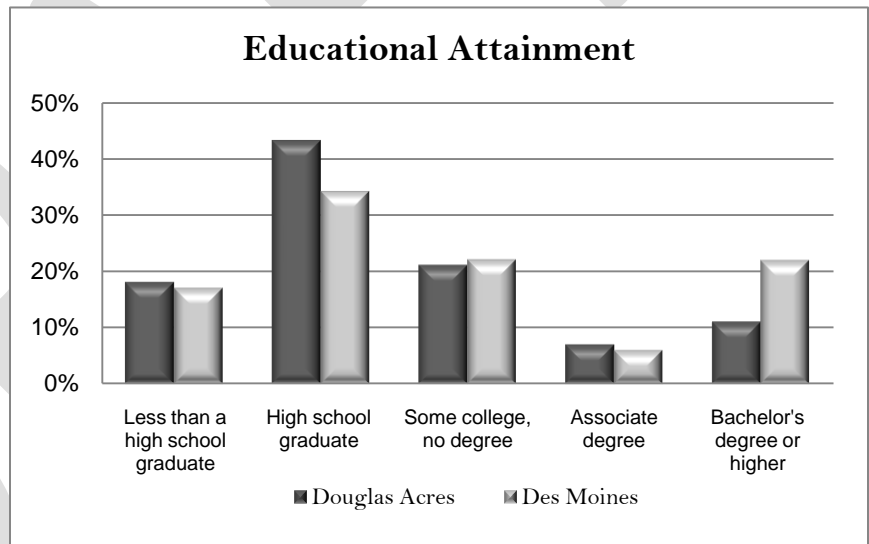
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On average, the median household income in Douglas Acres is approximately ten percent lower than the City-wide average, although it varies from one part of the neighborhood to another. The eastern half of the neighborhood has a lower average income than the western half. Similarly, the education level in the neighborhood is lower than the citywide average, with approximately 11 percent of neighborhood residents attaining a bachelor's degree or higher (compared to 22 percent citywide). Another seven percent of Douglas Acres residents have attained an Associate's degree.

Median Household Income	
Douglas Acres	\$36,771
Des Moines	\$39,104

Data from 2000 Census



Perhaps the most important thing highlighted by the demographic data for Douglas Acres is that the neighborhood is lacking young families. In addition, the neighborhood will likely begin to change over the next ten years, as the older generation ages out of their homes. While the neighborhood may only be at the beginning of this transition, it is important for the Neighborhood Association to think about how to attract new families and investment to the Douglas Acres neighborhood.

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III.A. Priorities & Vision Statement

The planning process began with a neighborhood input meeting on February 16, 2009. At the meeting, residents were given an opportunity to discuss the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the neighborhood. Attendees also participated in a visioning exercise, describing their ideal version of Douglas Acres. This input helped staff and planning committee members create priority areas and set goals and strategies for the plan. Based on this input, the priority areas for the Douglas Acres plan include:

- Neighborhood appearance
- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Resident engagement



Vision Statement

Based on the input from the initial neighborhood meeting and discussions throughout the planning process, the planning committee developed a vision statement, which represents the ideal state of the neighborhood once the plan has been implemented. The goals, strategies, and action steps outlined in this plan will help the neighborhood to achieve this vision.

The Douglas Acres Neighborhood is an attractive and desirable place to live with well-maintained homes, safe streets, and friendly neighbors who invest in their community. We envision a neighborhood where...

- ...Families want to live and raise their children;
- ...Owners take pride in their property;
- ...Neighbors know each other and are helpful to one another;
- ...Children have access to quality educational opportunities;
- ...Residents live in a peaceful setting, but are minutes away from important destinations; and
- ...The neighborhood association provides a forum for social interaction and problem-solving.

III.B. Neighborhood Identity & Perception

The Douglas Acres Neighborhood Association (DANA) formed in 1997 due to concerns about residential development in the neighborhood. Since then, DANA has existed to “preserve the quality of the Douglas Acres Neighborhood, promote the area as desirable for family living, foster neighborhood fellowship and serve as a vehicle by which problems are resolved and neighborhood goals are achieved.”

Due to its location in the northern City limits of Des Moines, Douglas Acres is adjacent to major thoroughfares like Interstate 235 and E. Euclid Avenue, but does not have major traffic routes that cross through the neighborhood. As a largely residential area, there are also few significant “destinations” within the neighborhood. This puts Douglas Acres in a location that is “off the beaten path” for most Des Moines residents. On the one hand, this is a major asset for the neighborhood because it means safe, quiet streets and a place away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. However, the location also presents a challenge because there is little reason for anyone who is not a resident to go into the neighborhood.

During their discussion on neighborhood identity, the planning committee highlighted lack of visibility as an obstacle to overcome in order to bring new families into Douglas Acres. Therefore, another goal of the Neighborhood Association is to raise awareness of the area. To accomplish this, the planning committee proposed sponsoring activities that will draw outsiders into the neighborhood to see what Douglas Acres has to offer.

Another challenge for the Neighborhood Association is finding new members and leadership to sustain the organization and bring in fresh ideas. It is important that DANA continue to ask how it can better serve the neighborhood. The Neighborhood Resident Leadership Certificate Program, offered through a partnership between the Neighborhood Resource Office and Des Moines Area Community College, is a series of classes designed specifically to train neighborhood leaders on how to build a successful neighborhood association and make an impact in the community. Encouraging neighborhood residents to attend these classes is one strategy DANA can use to increase their capacity as an organization.

The Douglas Acres Neighborhood Association has strong ties to regional organizations in the City of Des Moines. Partnership between DANA and other neighborhood organizations may be helpful to implement various plan goals and strengthen the voice for the northeast side of Des Moines.

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Douglas Acres Neighborhood Identity Goals				
Goal/Outcome	Strategy	Implementation	Responsible Party	Priority; Timeline
The Douglas Acres Neighborhood Association will have the capacity to implement the Neighborhood Action Plan.	DANA members will continue to build the skills necessary to implement plan goals.	DANA will send at least three representatives over the next three years to achieve the Neighborhood Resident Leadership Certificate.	DANA	High; Medium Term
		DANA will form at least three subcommittees or work groups to take responsibility for plan implementation.	DANA	High; Short term
	Pursue funding and fundraising opportunities to support DANA activities.	DANA will work with the Neighborhood Resource Office to identify fundraising/grant opportunities that can assist the neighborhood association in achieving their plan goals.	DANA, NRO	Medium; Short Term
		DANA will work to raise adequate funds each year to support their activities.	DANA	High; Ongoing
	Increase awareness of the Douglas Acres Neighborhood Association within the neighborhood.	DANA will organize at least one new event in 2010, such as annual block parties, and one additional new event in 2011 to encourage neighbors to get to know one another and get involved in the neighborhood.	DANA	Medium; Medium Term
		DANA will continue to communicate with all residents of the neighborhood through the newsletter at least quarterly, and on their website as needed.	DANA	High; Ongoing
		DANA will work to recruit at least 50 more active members over the next two years to sustain the organization.	DANA	High; Medium Term
		DANA will work with area businesses to create welcome packets full of local information for new homeowners in the neighborhood.	DANA	Low; Medium Term
Promote Douglas Acres as a neighborhood of choice.	Heighten the visibility of the Douglas Acres neighborhood.	DANA will plan events intended to attract people from outside the neighborhood, such as an annual "Garden Tour", 4 Mile Creek clean-up day, or neighborhood-wide garage sale. At least one such event will be held each year.	DANA	High; Short Term

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Goal/Outcome	Strategy	Implementation	Responsible Party	Priority
		DANA will work with the NRO to develop a one-page brochure to use for promotion, highlighting the assets of the neighborhood and including Neighborhood Association contact information.	DANA; NRO	High; Short Term
	Encourage realtors to positively promote Douglas Acres to prospective buyers.	DANA will put together an email list of realtors and notify them when a property is for sale in the neighborhood, including the neighborhood brochure and NFC lending information.	DANA	Medium; Ongoing

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IV. Housing

Douglas Acres is primarily a residential neighborhood. As such, the primary revitalization issues pertain to housing. The majority of the housing in Douglas Acres consists of single family homes. However, the neighborhood also offers duplexes, apartment units, housing for elderly persons, and a mobile home community. Looking at Douglas Acres from a housing development standpoint, the neighborhood can be divided into two major areas: the Douglas Acres Plats and the Eastview Manor Plats. For the purpose of housing analysis, the neighborhood was divided into these two sub-areas.

{INSERT MAP SHOWING TWO NBHD AREAS}

Douglas Acres Plats

The Douglas Acres neighborhood is named after the Douglas Acres plats, which account for two-thirds of the land in the neighborhood. Although the lots were sold in the early 1900s, most of the actual development occurred over time on a lot-by-lot basis, as individual land owners could afford to build a home. Through the first half of the twentieth century, Douglas Acres developed as a rural neighborhood with limited city amenities. It was not until the late 1950s that the neighborhood saw any clear development patterns, when multiple contiguous parcels were developed at the same time. Still, these first “subdivisions” were made up of less than ten parcels, and sporadic development continued until the late 1960s.

The majority of this development consisted of modest size ranch and bungalow style homes situated on large lots. The average size of these homes is 1,025 square feet, and the average lot size is between three quarters of an acre and a full acre. The average house has two bedrooms and one bathroom. Two-thirds of the homes in this part of the neighborhood are a one-story ranch, many with a gravel driveway and detached garage. The average year built is 1949. This part of the neighborhood still retains much of its rural character today.

Average House in the Douglas Acres Plats	
Size	1,098 Sq Ft
# of Bedrooms	2.6
# of Bathrooms	1.2
Condition	Above Normal
Year Built	1949
House Type	Ranch
Lot Size	0.48 Acres or 78'x212'
Assessed Value	\$110,320
Value per Sq Ft	\$100

Eastview Manor Plats

In 1968, development of the Eastview Manor Plat began in the northwestern corner of what is now the Douglas Acres neighborhood. This area remains the only true subdivision in the neighborhood. The average home in Eastview Manor is a conventional two-story or split level, and sits on a quarter of an acre parcel. It has three bedrooms and two bathrooms. The average year built is 1970. Most of the homes have detached garages and paved driveways. Contrary to the rest of the neighborhood, this planned development has sidewalks along every street and consistent setbacks. In addition to the single family development, the Eastview Circle Apartments were built during the same time period. The complex consists of eight buildings, each with 12 units.

Average House in the Eastview Manor Plats	
Size	1,227 Sq Ft
# of Bedrooms	3.2
# of Bathrooms	2
Condition	Above Normal
Year Built	1970
House Type	Split Level
Lot Size	0.21 Acres or 63'x126'
Assessed Value	\$126,437
Value per Sq Ft	\$103

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By 1979, 93 percent of the homes that exist in the Douglas Acres neighborhood today had been built. This means that even the “newest” homes are at least 30 years old, and the average home in the neighborhood is 58 years old. Despite their age, homes in Douglas Acres continue to be well maintained and in good condition. According to the Polk County Assessor, only five percent of the structures in the neighborhood are in below-normal or worse condition.

Housing Weaknesses:

- Declining Home Sale Prices
 - Functionality of the Housing Stock
- Property Maintenance & Appearance
 - Junk Vehicles & Illegal Parking
 - Absentee Landlords

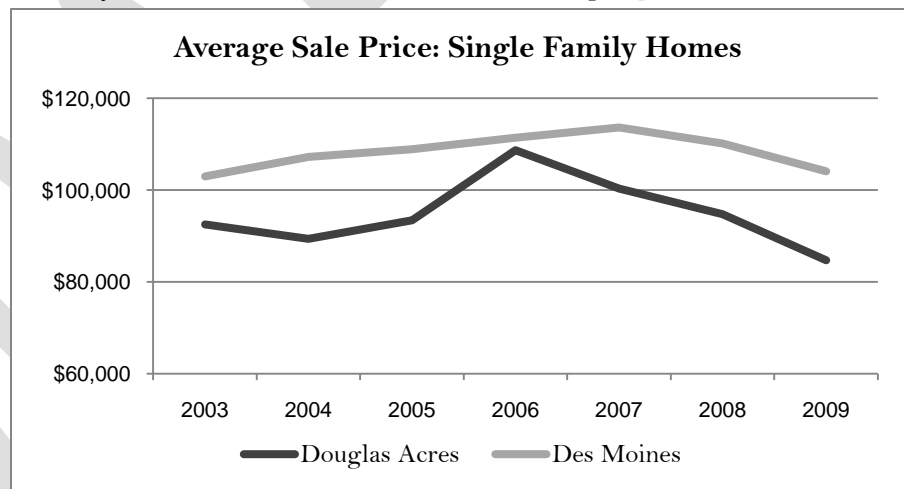
Housing Strengths:

- Affordable
- Well-maintained
- Diverse Home Styles
- Large Lots

Property Values & Home Sales

A review of home sales over the past several years shows the average sale price for a home in Douglas Acres has dropped considerably since 2006. While part of this is a reflection of a Citywide trend, the average sale price for a single family home dropped 22 percent in Douglas Acres between 2006 and 2009, compared with 7 percent in the City of Des Moines over the same time period. The downward trend in sale values is concerning, because it decreases the return on investment Douglas Acres residents may receive from their property.

One factor contributing to this trend is the large percentage of non-traditional transactions such as bank sales, foreclosures or family/estate transfers. Such transactions accounted for 38 percent of single family home sales in the neighborhood during 2009 and 39 percent in 2008. Typically, these homes sold for less than their assessed value; in some cases, significantly less. Given the age of the population in the neighborhood, this trend of low sale values may continue as long-time homeowners' age and the housing stock turns over through non-traditional transactions.



Another explanation for the downward trend is the characteristics of the homes themselves. The main concern with the housing stock in Douglas Acres neighborhood is functionality: the size of the homes and their amenities. Many of the homes in Douglas Acres have been occupied by the same owner for twenty, thirty, or forty years. If the home has not been updated during that time, it may not be attractive to new homebuyers.

As the neighborhood begins to turn over to a new generation of homeowners, it is important to consider what this market is looking for. Many of the homes in Douglas Acres lack the amenities that today's homebuyers want. However, the affordability of the homes in the neighborhood coupled with

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the large lots provides an opportunity for new homeowners to invest in updating or expanding existing homes.

One strategy to improve the functionality and marketability of the housing stock is to utilize the loan products offered by the Neighborhood Finance Corporation (NFC). Renovations such as adding second bathrooms or additional living space, installing air conditioning or energy efficient heating and cooling systems, paving gravel driveways, or building double stall garages are necessary to help the housing stock compete in today's marketplace.

The housing stock in the Douglas Acres neighborhood is on the verge of a transition to a new generation of homeowners. It is important for current residents to continue to maintain and improve their homes and properties so that they are attractive to new homebuyers. The Douglas Acres Neighborhood Association will need to work to promote the tools available from the Neighborhood Finance Corporation, educate homeowners and landlords on good property maintenance techniques, and market the valuable assets that the neighborhood does have to offer.

Rentals

According to the 2000 Census, Douglas Acres has a lower percentage of renter-occupied housing in the neighborhood than the City of Des Moines as a whole, with 23 percent compared to 35 percent. Currently, there are 74 properties with rental certificates in the neighborhood, and 209 total rental units. About 40 percent of these units are in the Eastview Circle Apartment complex, the largest apartment complex in the neighborhood. Other multi-family rentals include duplexes and small apartment buildings or converted homes.

Out of the 74 rental properties, 49 percent are single family homes scattered throughout the neighborhood. One concern the planning committee has is that more homes in the neighborhood will become investor-owned or rental properties. Given the location, affordability and good condition of homes in Douglas Acres, they may be attractive investment opportunities.

Rentals in Douglas Acres				
Type	No. of Properties	% of Rental Properties	No. of Units	% of Rental Units
Single Family	36	49%	36	17%
Mobile Home	2	3%	12	6%
Duplex	33	45%	66	32%
Mult-Family	2	3%	11	5%
Apartment Complex	1	1%	84	40%
TOTAL	74		209	

Data from the City of Des Moines (based on Rental Certificates as of Sept. 2009)

The neighborhood would like to maintain its high level of owner-occupancy, which contributes to the stability of the neighborhood as well as the good condition of properties. One strategy for working with the rental community is to get them involved with the neighborhood association.

Junk & Debris

Some of the most common issues with property maintenance in the Douglas Acres neighborhood are junk vehicles, illegal parking, overgrown weeds, and trash and debris in the yard. According to City code, all vehicles must be licensed and fully operable, or stored in a completely enclosed building. The City can enforce violations on a case by case complaint basis. To improve the appearance of the neighborhood, the Douglas Acres Neighborhood Association will work with the City's Neighborhood Inspection Division to educate residents on good property maintenance practices and organize "neighbors helping neighbors" events to assist individuals who need help with property clean up or minor repair projects.

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Douglas Acres Housing Goals				
Goal/Outcome	Strategy	Implementation	Responsible Party	Priority
Maintain and enhance the neighborhood housing stock.	Promote the Neighborhood Finance Corporation (NFC) home purchase, home repair, and refinance programs.	By the end of July 2010, DANA and the NFC will create a work group to create/focus marketing efforts in the Douglas Acres Neighborhood.	NFC, DANA, NRO	High, Short Term
		The NFC will attend at least one DANA general member meeting per year to promote their programs and answer questions.	NFC, DANA	High, Ongoing
		NFC will assist DANA in the production of newsletter articles and other promotional materials, including testimonials from NFC clients in the neighborhood.	NFC, DANA, NRO	High, Ongoing
		NFC will help sponsor neighborhood events to increase awareness of NFC programs and products.	NFC, DANA, NRO	Medium, Ongoing
		NFC and DANA will work together to develop a simplified brochure explaining NFC's lending programs and neighborhood eligibility.	NFC, DANA	High, Short Term
		DANA will promote the NFC's tool lending library in their newsletter and on their website.	DANA, NFC	Medium, Ongoing
	Encourage home repair that meets City code.	DANA will educate residents on the importance of getting the appropriate building permits when doing home repair through newsletter articles and guest speakers at meetings.	DANA	Medium, Ongoing
Improve the overall appearance of the Douglas Acres Neighborhood.	Ensure that all properties meet the City's junk and debris ordinance.	DANA will provide information on their website about the City's junk & debris ordinance along with the phone numbers to call for reporting violations.	DANA,	High, Short Term
	Encourage "neighborliness" and pride in property.	DANA will continue to sponsor programs like the "yard of the week" that encourage property maintenance, and provide incentives to encourage more participation.	DANA	High, Ongoing
	Help residents who are unable to maintain their property themselves.	DANA will organize "neighbors helping neighbors" events to assist neighbors with projects they are unable to do themselves.	DANA	Medium, Medium Term
	Encourage maintenance of rental properties in a way that is consistent with the neighborhood.	DANA will reach out to landlords and property managers to encourage them to become members of the neighborhood association.	DANA	Medium, Ongoing

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Goal/Outcome	Strategy	Implementation	Responsible Party	Priority
		DANA will send letters notifying rental property owners of issues with their property and encouraging them to mitigate the problem.	DANA	Medium, Ongoing
		DANA will work with the City's rental inspectors to ensure that all rental properties meet rental code and do not violate the city's junk and debris ordinance.	DANA, City of Des Moines NID	Medium, Ongoing
	Encourage residents to participate in the City's SCRUB program.	DANA will work with the Public Works Department to announce scheduled SCRUB days, locations and times.	DANA, City of Des Moines Public Works	Medium, Ongoing
		DANA will utilize communication techniques, such as the newsletter and website, to encourage residents to participate in the SCRUB program.	DANA	High, Ongoing
		DANA will recruit volunteers able to help Public Works with unloading during SCRUB days, at least once per year.	DANA	Medium; Ongoing

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V. LAND USE & ZONING

Land use and zoning are two tools that local governments use to regulate development. A land use plan sets an overall vision for development. The land use plan is not parcel specific and does not give a parcel any legal rights for use. Zoning, on the other hand, is parcel specific and legally binding. Zoning decisions are based on the land use designation. The zoning ordinance has two parts, a written document and a map. The text describes what is allowed in each zoning district, while the map denotes a zoning classification for each parcel.

When the Douglas Acres Neighborhood Plan is approved, it will become an amendment to the City of Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Plan, which is the City's land use plan. The land use changes that are recommended by this plan will immediately become a part of the 2020 Community Character Plan and will serve as a guideline for future development and redevelopment decisions in the neighborhood. Zoning changes included in this plan will need to be initiated by the Douglas Acres neighborhood or individual property owners at a later date.

The 2020 Community Character Plan reflects the current land use of the neighborhood fairly accurately. However, there are minor amendments that the planning committee has proposed so that the 2020 Community Character Plan reflects the existing land use.

One issue that the planning committee discussed was the potential for residential property owners to split their lots. It is possible that some properties in the neighborhood could be legally split to allow additional development. The Douglas Acres Neighborhood Association would like to protect large lots, which provide unique character to the neighborhood.

The planning committee was also concerned about areas with potential for future development in the neighborhood, particularly the re-use of the Adams School site. The school closed in 2007 and remains vacant. As this plan is being published, the school district is preparing to dispose of the site. Adams School sits on 4.6 acres, and is zoned R1-60, or "Low-Density Single Family Residential". The other parcel that has future development potential is an 18.2 acre farm on the east side of the neighborhood, zoned R1-70. Additional uses permitted in these zoning districts are churches, fire stations, publicly owned parks or recreation areas, an agricultural use such as a nursery, group homes, or elderly group homes. Any other uses will require a zoning change. The Douglas Acres Neighborhood Association's preference is for future development on these two sites to consist of single family homes. Any amendments to zoning will require a formal public process, including a public hearing and approval by both the Plan and Zoning Commission and the City Council.

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Douglas Acres Land Use & Zoning Goals				
Goal/Outcome	Strategy	Implementation	Responsible Party	Priority
Enhance the character of the Douglas Acres Neighborhood.	Amend the 2020 Community Character Plan's future land use designation for the northwest corner of E. Euclid Avenue and East 33 rd Street from Low-Density Residential to Medium Density Residential to reflect the existing land use.	Adoption with the approval of the Douglas Acres Neighborhood Plan.	City of Des Moines Community Development Department – Planning & Urban Design	Immediate
Protect the neighborhood commercial retail environment.	Amend the 2020 Community Character Plan's future land use designation for the northwest and southwest corner of E. 29 th Street and Madison Avenue from Low-Density Residential to Neighborhood Node Commercial to reflect the existing land use.	Adoption with the approval of the Douglas Acres Neighborhood Plan.	City of Des Moines Community Development Department – Planning & Urban Design	Immediate
	Support commercial zoning into residential areas along E. Euclid Avenue.	DANA may support compatible commercial land uses along E. Euclid Avenue as development pressure occurs.	DANA, City of Des Moines Community Development Department – Planning & Urban Design	Low; Long-term

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VI. INFRASTRUCTURE

NEIGHBORHOOD INFRASTRUCTURE REHABILITATION PROGRAM

A key component of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program is the Neighborhood Infrastructure Rehabilitation Program (NIRP). This program identified infrastructure rehabilitation needs in the Douglas Acres Neighborhood and provided improvements above and beyond the City's annual street, curb, and sidewalk maintenance programs. Future needs will continue to be considered for inclusion in the City's annual infrastructure maintenance programs as conditions, priorities, and funding permit. The Douglas Acres Neighborhood utilized funds from the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) NIRP budget and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) NIRP budget to make repairs to streets, sidewalks, and curbs.

At the neighborhood input meeting, residents were given an opportunity to discuss specific infrastructure concerns. The Des Moines Public Works Department then surveyed the streets, sidewalks, and curbs in the Douglas Acres Neighborhood to determine the areas of greatest need for repairs. Public Works staff then presented their recommendations to the planning committee for their input. A final work program was agreed upon by both the Douglas Acres Planning Committee and Public Works staff and is detailed in the table on the next page. All of the planned infrastructure improvements were completed during the 2009 construction season.

Overall, the City repaired 11,740 lineal feet of defective sidewalk in the neighborhood. Street improvements included 1,370 lineal feet of concrete restoration, 9,950 square yards of interim paving, and 28,500 feet of asphalt overlay. The total cost of improvements for the Douglas Acres Neighborhood was \$790,460.

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Infrastructure Improvements	
<p>Hot Mix Asphalt (HMA) Street Resurfacing</p> <p>\$342,000 from FY2009 NIRP 28,500 square yards completed</p>	<p>E 26th Street – from Garden Street to Madison Ave</p> <p>E 30th Street – from Madison Ave to E Aurora Ave</p> <p>E 32nd Street – from Douglas Ave to E Aurora Ave</p> <p>Douglas Avenue – from E 29th Street to Lay Street</p> <p>Garden Avenue – from E 26th Street to E 27th Street</p> <p>Lay Street – from Douglas Ave to Madison Ave</p> <p>Madison Avenue – from E 22nd Street to Lay Street</p>
<p>Concrete Pavement Restoration (CPR) Street Resurfacing</p> <p>\$89,050 from FY2009 NIRP 1,370 square yards completed</p>	<p>E 23rd Street – from Madison Ave to E Aurora Ave</p> <p>E 24th Court – from Madison Ave to E Aurora Ave</p> <p>E 29th Street – from E Euclid Ave to Douglas Ave</p> <p>E 31st Street – from E Euclid Ave to Douglas Ave</p> <p>E Aurora Avenue – from E 23rd Street to E 24th Court</p> <p>E Shawnee Avenue – at E 24th Court</p>
<p>Interim Paving</p> <p>\$124,670 from FY2009 NIRP 9,590 square yards completed</p>	<p>Madison Avenue – from E 25th Street to E 29th Street</p> <p>E 27th Street – from Madison Ave to E Aurora Ave</p>
<p>Sidewalk Replacement & Repair</p> <p>\$234,740 from FY2009 NIRP</p>	<p>Approximately 11,740 lineal feet of defective sidewalk has been replaced by the Public Works Department throughout the neighborhood.</p>

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VI. Infrastructure

Traffic & Transportation

In keeping with its pastoral character, the street system in Douglas Acres is almost entirely local roads, with one minor arterial: E. 29th Street. The major traffic routes act as the boundaries of the neighborhood, I-235 on the west and E. Euclid Avenue on the south.

The neighborhood also has access to public transportation. Douglas Acres is currently served by DART route #7, which makes a loop up E. 29th Street to E. Aurora Ave and back down E. 25th Street to E. Euclid Ave. The #71 route also stops along E. Euclid Ave and connects Des Moines to Ankeny. Despite the availability of these routes, members of the planning committee noted that the service is not convenient to utilize for everyday trips.

In addition to the NIRP improvements, the Douglas Acres Planning Committee identified a few other issues related to the system of traffic and transportation in their neighborhood. Among them was the need to reduce speeding through the neighborhood, particularly along E. 25th Street, the need for a stop sign coming out of the Eastview Circle apartment complex, and the need to improve the aesthetics of the medians along E. Euclid Ave. Other projects include a noise wall buffering Douglas Acres residences from I-235, which the Iowa DOT has planned for 2010.

One of the primary issues the Planning Committee wanted to address was the appearance of the medians along E. Euclid Avenue, which is also U.S. Highway 6. A number of the medians are covered with a green ceramic granule surface that is peeling away and in a general state of disrepair. The City will explore options to approve the appearance of the medians.

The planning committee also discussed the need to create a complete network of sidewalks along frequently traveled walking routes. For instance, Lay Street is a route frequently walked by residents of the Eastview Circle Apartments and the Eastview Manor subdivision. However, it does not have continuous sidewalk. There are other streets in the neighborhood, such as E. 27th Street, that have disconnected sidewalks as well.

There are two processes that can initiate the installation of new sidewalk. The first is through a petition process, where the majority of residents on a block sign a petition to have sidewalk installed on that street. Under the second process, DANA could request that City Council pass a resolution to install sidewalk on a given street, without any of the residents signing a petition. In either case, Council must approve the assessment, and property owners will be notified. Subsidy assistance is available for low and moderate income households. At this time there is no support for new sidewalks in the neighborhood.

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Douglas Acres Traffic & Transportation Goals				
Goal/Outcome	Strategy	Implementation	Responsible Party	Priority
Improve safety in the neighborhood.	Reduce speeding in and around Douglas Acres.	DANA will work with the Des Moines Police Department to have speed monitors set up throughout the neighborhood in Spring of 2010, and as needed thereafter.	DANA, Des Moines Police Department Traffic Unit	Medium, Short Term
		The City of Des Moines Traffic and Transportation Division will pursue adding a stop sign on E. 23 rd Street at E. Madison Ave by the end of 2010.	City of Des Moines Traffic & Transportation Division	High, Short Term
	Prevent neighborhood residents from trespassing on DOT right-of-way along I-235.	The Iowa DOT will repair a hole in the chain link fence between the I-235 highway right-of-way and the Eastview Circle Apartment complex by early 2010.	IDOT	High, Short Term
		DANA will create a working relationship with the Iowa DOT to communicate about issues related to the I-235 right-of-way.	DANA, IDOT	High, Ongoing
Enhance the aesthetics along major traffic routes.	Improve the appearance of the median surfaces along E. Euclid Avenue.	DANA, the Iowa DOT, and the City of Des Moines will form a work group to explore possible surface enhancement options for the medians.	DANA, IDOT, City of Des Moines Traffic & Transportation Division, Public Works Department	High, Short Term
		The Iowa DOT and the City of Des Moines Traffic and Transportation Division will define who is responsible for maintaining the medians along E. Euclid Ave going forward within one year.	IDOT, City of Des Moines Traffic & Transportation Division	High, Short Term
		DANA will work with adjacent areas to explore support for aesthetic enhancements along the E. Euclid Ave corridor, such as landscaping in the medians.	DANA, NE Des Moines neighborhoods, City of Des Moines Traffic & Transportation, IDOT	Medium, Long term

VII. Parks, Trails & Recreation

Sargent Park is located on the eastern boundary of the Douglas Acres neighborhood, straddling Four Mile Creek. The eastern side of the park contains playground equipment and an open air shelter. The western side of the park has newly built permanent restrooms and additional improvements planned.

The Parks and Recreation Department is currently moving forward with plans for a playground. As of 2010, Sargent Park will have the first natural playscape in the City of Des Moines, featuring natural play areas designed to give children an unstructured opportunity to play and explore.

Another important feature in Sargent Park is the Gay Lea Wilson Trail, a multi-use, paved trail that crosses through the park and extends south of the neighborhood to Copper Creek Lake and the cities of Pleasant Hill and Altoona. Currently, the Gay Lea Wilson Trail ends at the northern boundary of Sargent Park. However, the Polk County Conservation Board has plans to extend the trail further north to Mally's Weh-Weh-Neh-Kee Park in Berwick and then on to Ankeny, eventually making it a 35 mile arm of the Greater Des Moines trail system.

In an effort to restore some of Iowa's natural prairie ecosystem, the Parks and Recreation Department is creating pockets of natural prairie plants in a number of the City's parks. These plantings help reduce erosion, decrease the run-off of chemicals into area waters, and create a habitat for animals. Several areas of Sargent Park are being returned to their native state, planted with big blue stem and little blue stem grasses as well as wildflowers. Sargent Park also features a rain garden, an effort to improve water quality in the area by capturing runoff from the parking lot on the west side of the park.

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Douglas Acres Parks Goals				
Goal/Outcome	Strategy	Implementation	Responsible Party	Priority
Expand recreation opportunities in the neighborhood.	Improve Sargent Park.	The City of Des Moines Parks Department will work with DANA to finalize plans for the natural playscape in Sargent Park, scheduled for construction in 2010.	City of Des Moines Parks Department, DANA	High, Short Term
		The City of Des Moines Parks Department will work to secure funding to construct an open air shelter on the west side of Sargent Park.	City of Des Moines Parks Department	Medium, Long Term
		DANA will work with the City of Des Moines Parks Department to review the need for athletic facilities in Sargent Park, such as a basketball court or multi-use field.	DANA, City of Des Moines Parks Department	Medium, Long Term
	Encourage use of Sargent Park.	DANA will encourage residents to come to Sargent Park by hosting at least one event per year there.	DANA	High, Ongoing
		DANA will organize a “Grand Opening” event for the natural playscape, once it has been completed and encourage press to attend.	DANA	High, Short Term
	Improve trail connections between Douglas Acres and other regional attractions.	DANA will support the extension of the Gay Lea Wilson Trail north of the neighborhood.	DANA, Polk County Conservation Board	Medium, Long Term

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VIII. Implementation

Implementation of the plan is the most difficult part of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program. As the organization responsible for implementation, it is imperative that the Douglas Acres Neighborhood Association (DANA) has the organizational capacity to achieve the goals of the plan. It will be necessary for the neighborhood association to create subcommittees to tackle the various components of the plan and to build coalitions with other organizations in order to achieve success.

It will also be necessary to categorize and prioritize the goals of the plan. An initial prioritization exercise was completed with the planning committee. At the February 9, 2010 neighborhood meeting, attendees voted on their top implementation priorities. The top three priorities were:

- **{TO BE DISCUSSED ON FEB 9th}**

Leadership development and volunteer recruitment will be vital to the success of the plan. The Douglas Acres Neighborhood Association has laid the necessary groundwork to implement the plan, but it cannot become complacent in its ongoing effort to improve itself. The City of Des Moines' Neighborhood Development Division, the Neighborhood Resource Office, and other City staff will provide the technical assistance necessary to assist with the implementation of the plan. Continued commitment and support will also be required from the Des Moines City Council and the Polk County Board of Supervisors.

The Neighborhood Development Division will conduct periodic assessments of the progress of the Douglas Acres Neighborhood plan and will recommend the neighborhood be moved to Charter status once substantial progress has been made toward completion of the goals identified in the plan. It is possible that certain activities may be investigated and found not to be feasible or to require an unreasonable demand of resources. Once the plan is found to be complete, a report is prepared with input from the Douglas Acres Neighborhood Association and forwarded to the Neighborhood Revitalization Board for a recommendation. Its recommendation will then be forwarded to the Des Moines City Council and the Polk County Board of Supervisors for final approval. At this point the Douglas Acres Neighborhood will become a Charter Neighborhood and be phased out of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program.