A constituency for preservation can be achieved by increasing public awareness of Des Moines’ history, architecture and built environment.

Constituency-building for preservation is one of the most important functions that the implementation of this plan can accomplish. An increase in community support will lead to policies which encourage preservation and investment in historic resources and neighborhoods. Incorporating preservation into all aspects of government must start with making information available to public officials, private sector leaders and the general public.

The following strategies and implementation steps emphasize preservation and educational activities for young people and the general public as well as community and government leaders. The strategies also include recommendations on proper rehabilitation techniques and on the awareness of the economics of preservation. Broad community awareness should ensure commitment for future and existing historic preservation projects.

No educational effort can be accomplished by a city government alone. The italicized listing after each implementation step identifies groups that could help in this effort. Preservationists and city officials will have to continually build coalitions with other groups in order to accomplish these goals and strategies.
Building a Constituency for Preservation

CITY MUSEUM
To further public awareness consider developing a repository for city archives and historical artifacts that can be open to the public.

FUTURE MILESTONES
A. Determine the feasibility for a City of Des Moines or Polk County Historical Museum.
Implementers: service organizations, city staff, consultant

B. Consider a facility to house the city archives (i.e. Old Fire Station, City Hall, Clarkson School, Salisbury House) in order to store and display items.
Implementers: city staff, consultant

C. Consider approaching non-profit service organizations or starting a foundation concerned with fund raising activities for a "City Museum."
Implementer: Polk County Historical Society

D. Develop educational displays for young persons and the public at large about Des Moines' history as it relates to extant buildings and the layout of the city.
Implementers: advertising agencies, Convention and Visitor's Bureau, commercial arts classes, local architects

E. Develop communication tools to increase public awareness of the value of archival material relating to Des Moines' history and create the location and process for donations of that material.
Implementers: city staff, neighborhood groups, local media

F. Consider establishing a non-profit preservation organization that could offer grant funds, purchase and own property, and take an active role in preservation issues. The organization should impact the political system but not be controlled by it. Explore the following organizational structures:
1) City-Wide/Metro-Wide 501(c)3 non-profit corporation possibly as part of the establishment of a repository;
2) Chapter of State-Wide Preservation Alliance;
3) Branch of Polk Co. Historical Society.
Implementers: consultant with input from preservation groups and city policy makers

Enjoying the river around the turn of the century
**ECONOMIC BENEFITS**

Build a constituency by marketing the economic benefits of community preservation and the National Register of Historic Places.

**FUTURE MILESTONES**

A. Market the city and its neighborhoods, as well as historic preservation, with the purpose of illustrating the value of "traditional" neighborhoods and historic homes to lenders, real estate agents, and appraisers.

**Implementers:** city policy makers and elected officials, neighborhood groups

B. Determine how to market older homes and commercial buildings by working with real estate agents.

**Implementers:** Neighborhood Advisory Board Marketing Committee and neighborhood groups, Des Moines Area Association of Realtors

C. Prepare a presentation on the economic value, economic incentives, and market potential of older homes and urban neighborhoods that can be given to realtors at their monthly meetings.

**Implementers:** city staff, neighborhood groups, Des Moines Area Association of Realtors

D. Develop a continuing education class on preservation for real estate agents and others active in home sales.

**Implementers:** Neighborhood Advisory Board Marketing Committee and neighborhood groups, Des Moines Area Association of Realtors

E. Communicate to appraisers the value of mature neighborhoods and preservation by working with those active in home sales.

**Implementers:** Neighborhood Advisory Board Marketing Committee and neighborhood groups

F. Work with neighborhood groups and real estate agents to encourage a concentration of resources. Several houses on a block need renovation in order to realize the full cost of rehabilitation in house value.

**Implementers:** Neighborhood Advisory Board Marketing Committee and neighborhood groups

G. Hold a forum, jointly sponsored with the Chamber of Commerce and the City of Des Moines, with the purpose of identifying business leaders who would join neighborhood leaders to begin the work of promoting the strategies in this plan. Identify needed skills from all professions to promote preservation.

**Implementers:** city staff, developers and Advisory Committee for Preservation Plan

**MEDIA TOOLS**

Develop specific tools for the media that give the public broad information about community preservation.

**FUTURE MILESTONES**

A. Develop a video that explains the concept of community character and the origins and success of the preservation movement in Des Moines.

**Implementers:** city staff, preservation activists, video director/producer

B. Provide the media with a list of the "Ten Most Endangered Properties in Des Moines" on an annual basis to increase the community's awareness of the problems.

**Implementers:** Historic District Commission

C. Prepare a series of videos on proper renovation techniques for viewing on city cablevision.

**Implementers:** city staff working with neighborhood groups and non-profit housing organizations

D. Provide articles from existing historic studies to weekly and daily newspapers.

**Implementers:** preservation activists, Polk County Historic Society, city staff

E. Support the Des Moines Register in its "Des Moines Remembered" column or a similar series and meet with Des Moines Register Advisory Board to encourage community and historic preservation articles.

**Implementers:** Advisory Committee for Preservation Plan

F. Develop an annual tour of the "Civic Center Historic District" and its buildings as part of Preservation Week and other community events such as Two Rivers Festival.

**Implementers:** city staff and Convention and Visitors Bureau

**CORRECT REHABILITATION**

Encourage building and infrastructure improvements that preserve community character and maintain the building stock by providing information on rehabilitation techniques for property types common in Des Moines.

**FUTURE MILESTONES**

A. Develop a neighborhood conservation manual illustrating how individual houses contribute to a neighborhood and its overall architectural character.

**Implementers:** city staff working with neighborhood groups

B. Develop a rehabilitation manual for commercial buildings and distribute the National Trust's or National Park Service's documents on rehabilitation of commercial properties.

**Implementers:** city staff, State Historical Society of Iowa

C. Provide resources to the Des Moines Register for articles that publish information about house types, styles and rehabilitation in Des Moines as is mentioned in the Media Tools strategy.

**Implementers:** City and neighborhood groups

D. Consult with the American Institute of Architects on specific projects concerning the importance of individual buildings to a client, a neighborhood and the city as a whole.

**Implementers:** Advisory Committee for Preservation Plan

E. Prepare a series of videos on proper renovation techniques for viewing and training.

**Implementers:** city staff working with neighborhood groups and non-profit housing organizations

F. Promote neighborhood and non-profit organization workshops that teach historic preservation and conservation techniques.

**Implementers:** city staff and neighborhood groups
Building a Constituency for Preservation

NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS

Build alliances with those groups promoting community preservation and historic preservation techniques. Support neighborhood groups in their preservation work.

FUTURE MILESTONES

A. Identify officers of organizations involved in preservation activities in the city and keep them informed of preservation issues in Des Moines by mailing agendas and policy development information.

Implementers: city staff

B. Approach preservation groups for ideas and financial support when developing an implementation plan for a preservation project.

Implementers: preservation foundation

C. Continue to support the Historic Preservation Awards sponsored by the Historic District Commission through media coverage and related events.

Implementers: Historic District Commission and staff

D. Provide neighborhood organizations with any information the city might have concerning their neighborhood’s history and continue to compile this information.

Implementers: city staff

E. Provide capacity building, training and resources for existing groups.

Implementers: National Trust, State Historical Society of Iowa, city government

Restored Victorian style home in Sherman Hill Historic District
PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

Increase the communication efforts with public officials regarding the quality of sites and structures in the public ownership and their importance to the city as a whole.

FUTURE MILESTONES

A. Hold a City Council work session on community history and the story of Des Moines' development to provide the council with information about historic resources. Illustrate the relationship between extant buildings and the economic and visual contribution they make to a city. 
Implementers: city staff and neighborhood groups

B. Develop a working manual for council boards, commissions and staff to use to describe general relationships of history to existing buildings and structures.
Implementers: city staff and State Historical Society of Iowa

C. Provide the necessary tools and information to public employees involved in policy making and building and infrastructure maintenance concerning the importance of historic buildings and proper maintenance techniques that preserve the building's historic qualities.
Implementers: city staff and State Historical Society of Iowa

D. Write articles for the Frontline and City Manager's Newsletter to build an understanding and appreciation for historic structures among City employees.
Implementers: city staff

E. Do the necessary survey work on existing historic buildings and structures to develop a more complete inventory of government-owned properties that contribute to the community character.
Implementers: city staff and consultants, Iowa Arts Council and State Historical Society of Iowa for funding

F. Do additional survey work of existing artwork, WPA murals and public sites that relate to the historic development of Des Moines.
Implementers: city staff and consultants, Iowa Arts Council and State Historical Society of Iowa for funding

G. Sponsor the development of a complete history of the City Parks System to build an understanding and appreciation of its role in the development of our city.
Implementers: Park Foundation and consultant

H. Conduct a survey of park structures to identify those that are significant in history, architecture or park development.
Implementers: Park Foundation and consultant

SURVEYS

Continue to survey/identify properties that are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or contribute to local character. Disseminate that information to the community.

FUTURE MILESTONES

A. Work with the State Historical Society of Iowa to continue to inventory and survey according to the priorities in the Historic Context Chapter of this Preservation Plan as indicated by the community needs.
Implementers: city staff and consultants

B. Work with the public library to ensure all studies and inventories done by the City of Des Moines are included in the card catalog and on the library shelves and made easily accessible to library users.
Implementers: Library Board, library users, library and planning staff

C. Work with neighborhood organizations and school Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) to develop a "neighborhood audit" that lists buildings important to that organization and the features and structures that constitute a "sense of place" for the neighborhood.
Implementers: city staff, Advisory Committee for Preservation Plan

D. Inventory businesses, through a short survey, to determine what information, photos or memorabilia the business might have which would provide information on the city's history and development for use in displays around the city.
Implementers: Chamber of Commerce, Polk County Historical Society, local historians

E. Develop a bibliography of related materials available at historic libraries and other locations around the City.
Implementers: consultant working with library staffs

SCHOOL SYSTEM

Work with the Des Moines public and private school systems to provide assistance in educating young people about the history of Des Moines, its settlement and development, the value of its extant buildings and its unique community character.

FUTURE MILESTONES

A. Work with local American Institute of Architects (AIA) chapter to incorporate more community preservation and city development activities into the Architect-in-the-Schools Program.
Implementers: neighborhood groups, city staff Iowa AIA Chapter, Des Moines teachers

B. Work with the school board and school administrators to develop a unit and/or expand programs for schools that relate Des Moines' history to existing buildings and the physical layout of the city.
Implementers: Polk County Historical Society, Des Moines Independent School Board and Administrators, Des Moines teachers

C. Develop a brochure for each elementary and secondary school that relates Des Moines' history to existing buildings and the physical layout of the city.
Implementers: Polk County Historical Society, Des Moines Independent School Board and Administrators, Des Moines teachers

D. Structure a school program that invites persons with a long history in Des Moines to schools to share ideas with students about early Des Moines and its neighborhoods.
Implementers: volunteers from each neighborhood, TAG programs

E. Develop a walking tour in the neighborhoods around each school to enhance children's understanding of what makes up a distinct neighborhood character.
Implementers: neighborhood groups, teachers

System of Survey and Inventory

The City of Des Moines Community Development Department, working with the Historic District Commission and neighborhood organizations, will continue to develop historic contexts and conduct surveys of districts potentially eligible for the National Register. The City generally seeks funding through the National Trust or State Historical Society of Iowa to help fund the work. Copies of all studies and Iowa Site Inventory sheets are maintained by the City's Planning and Urban Design Division as well as the State Historical Society of Iowa.
SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Work with the Des Moines public and private school systems to ensure that school building renovations, additions and site improvements are done in such a manner that the projects enhance the building's character and complement the character of the neighborhood.

FUTURE MILESTONES

A. Ensure that preservation is incorporated into the Des Moines Independent School District's Vision 2005 program by working with the school's site based council committee and the consulting architect.
   Implementers: PTA, neighborhood groups, Des Moines School Board

B. Illustrate the cost savings achieved by renovation and the benefit of retaining the character of the community's schools.
   Implementers: PTA, neighborhood groups, Des Moines School Board, Iowa AIA, State Historical Society of Iowa

C. Work with the high school booster organizations to raise money for preservation of special elements of the school's building and site.
   Implementers: PTA, neighborhood groups, alumni organizations

D. Determine how preservation advocates can volunteer advice to the School Board and architects in renovating schools and preserving distinctive features of the schools.
   Implementers: preservation activists

E. Consider pursuing National Register of Historic Places designation for those schools such as McKinley and Greenwood that have been determined eligible.
   Implementers: PTA and TAG Program

F. Provide information and encouragement and available tools to school administrators on the development and maintenance of a school building archive.
   Implementers: Polk County Historical Society

Drake University's Old Main, built in 1882, architect C.B. Lakin
Restoration, 1993, Baldwin Clause architects
Preserve our community's character by developing and improving policies and ordinances that help government protect historic buildings, structures, districts and neighborhoods.

Ordinances and regulations are traditional means of implementing public policy at the local government level. Ordinances specifically related to preservation should provide incentives as well as regulation in order to be effective. Mechanisms to guide decision-making, such as design guidelines and the work of the Historic District Commission, advance the goals of community preservation.

Policies not directly related to preservation, such as zoning regulations and subdivision ordinances, need to be evaluated to ensure they have a positive impact on community character and historic preservation goals. New tools are needed that actually provide mechanisms to complement the historic character of residential and commercial areas.

The budgetary impacts of preservation policy must be considered and programs must have adequate funding to ensure success. In this regard public incentives for preservation may be more effective than regulations. Preservation monies can often be leveraged with affordable housing initiatives or economic development efforts to increase their effectiveness.
Tools and Resources for Preservation

**Enhance Existing Effort**

Improve the effectiveness of the city’s existing ordinances and policies that promote historic preservation.

**Future Milestones**

A. Continue to use the Historic District Commission as an advisory board on matters relating to historic preservation under the existing ordinance language:

The commission shall further the efforts of historic preservation in the city by making recommendations to the city council and city commissions and boards on preservation issues when appropriate, by encouraging the protection and enhancement of structures with historical, architectural or cultural value, and by encouraging persons and organizations involved in preservation activities.

B. Establish a standing committee of the Historic District Commission and preservationists to evaluate and recommend potential landmarks to City Council in consultation with the property owner.

C. Provide greater flexibility of building code provisions through use of Section 104(f) of the Uniform Building Code in order to conserve historic building fabric and reduce rehabilitation costs.

D. Encourage and broaden the use of the Uniform Code for Building Conservation (UCBC) recently adopted by City Council in order to conserve existing house stock.

E. Comply with the City Owned Historic Buildings Policy and provide information on the significance of government buildings and the necessity of coordinating various space and equipment needs with proper rehabilitation techniques.

Italian Americans doing street work – Jacamo Cataldo at wheelbarrow, Giuseppe Civitate in foreground
BUILDING STOCK

Develop and improve ordinances and policies that ensure the continued life of a neighborhood's housing stock and the city’s commercial buildings.

FUTURE MILESTONES

A. Amend the City's existing abandoned housing ordinance to allow purchase and renovation of buildings up to 150% of the after rehabilitation value. This amendment was approved by the City Council at its June 21, 1993 meeting.

B. Develop an internal assessment process to evaluate the impact of demolition for properties that are or may be declared a public nuisance. The assessment should consider such criteria as health and safety issues, environmental context of the street or location, historic significance, cost of rehabilitation and reuse of the site and involve residential and commercial properties.

C. The evaluation, prepared by the Community Development Department, should follow the property through the system and be presented to City Council with other relevant information for a final action.

D. In cases with special historic significance, tie the assessment to a funding source that will provide monies to board up or warehouse a building for a specific period of time so the building will not continue to decay.

E. Develop a funding source that could provide funds for rehabilitation assistance to private individuals or organizations renovating a structure that has been declared a public nuisance and is in danger of being demolished.

F. Develop a policy to guide city involvement in moving structures in situations where the structure cannot be preserved on site.

G. Work with Midwest Resources, the cable company and the telephone company to lower costs for house-moving projects as raising power lines is a large cost in moving houses.

H. Work with the legislature and the utility commission to have house moving considered a part of local utility companies overall energy conservation efforts. Apply for a demonstration grant to show energy saving of house moving.

I. Ensure that salvage occurs when traditional houses or site features are purchased for demolition. Give the neighborhood or non-profit the first right for salvage.

J. Promote salvage as a broad environmental and resource conservation measure.

K. Monitor skywalk policies currently being developed by the Architectural Advisory Committee and the Skywalk Commission. Develop criteria for evaluating the extension of a skywalk bridge to an historic or architecturally significant building and districts.

L. Work for the protection and preservation of mature trees in new development and throughout the community.

M. Encourage the preservation of significant views and vistas throughout the community.

Proposed Demolition Assessment of Public Nuisances

Demolition of structures is often viewed as a positive step because it accomplishes a short-term objective for action. However, demolition can negate the desired long-term goal of preservation and revitalization of a district. There are many examples of structures with architectural or neighborhood value capable of being rehabilitated which were demolished after being designated "public nuisances." The lack of long-term planning is most apparent when looking at neighborhoods, such as Sherman Hill and River Bend, that have experienced extensive demolition enforced through the City of Des Moines public nuisance procedures.

This plan proposes the development of an internal assessment to guide decisions about demolition of only those structures which may be or are in danger of being declared a public nuisance. A system of criteria for evaluation should be developed by staff and adopted by council. The assessment should help make the distinction between buildings that are a threat to the public safety and those that have deficiencies, such as inadequate plumbing or heating, which are not a threat if property boarded. This plan also recognizes that a source of money is needed to provide the board up and short-term preservation costs.

The purpose of this demolition assessment is not to save every building. There will be situations when economics, the condition of a building, or incompatible land uses will lead to a decision that a building be demolished. However the assessment should ensure that a long-range view is taken about the future of the building, the neighborhood and Des Moines' overall character and identity.
Proposed Skywalk Policy — Historic Buildings

A skywalk bridge connecting to a historic or architecturally significant building or district may have an adverse impact on a building's character or the character of the building's immediate environment. The Architectural Advisory Committee and Skywalk Commission are in the process of developing criteria that will address the issues. The resulting policy will be recommended for adoption as part of the City’s Skywalk Ordinance.

Proposed House Moving Policy

As land use patterns change, traditional houses are sometimes in the path of commercial expansion or transportation corridors. Moving the structure can save a housing structure and keep good material out of the landfill. Housemoving is labor intensive on the part of city staff and usually needs some infusion of funds to make the project happen. The city should develop a policy and possible source of funds to encourage the moving of houses that would otherwise be demolished. Moreover, the city needs to work with utility companies to lower the cost of moving lines. Possible reductions might involve linking the housemoving to energy conservation programs offered by the utility.
ZONING

Develop zoning classifications that support the renovation of neighborhoods, preservation of the original street pattern and character of the neighborhood.

FUTURE MILESTONES

A. Develop a conservation zoning classification for the city zoning ordinance that would require review for new construction, demolition, major additions to buildings and structures and surface parking lots in specifically designated traditional neighborhoods.

B. Develop a mechanism and procedure to review projects within conservation zoning districts.

C. Identify neighborhoods that would benefit from an overlay zoning designation such as a conservation district.

D. As a part of neighborhood planning, review a neighborhood’s bulk zoning requirements unrelated to safety issues that restrict replacement of historic structures such as outbuildings, commercial establishments or homes in their original size and footprint.

E. Work with Corporation Council to review the city’s ordinances, regulations and policies to ensure they are compatible with the needs of the city’s traditional neighborhoods and commercial districts.

F. Develop a new zoning classification for older commercial areas of the city to ensure that infill development is compatible with other significant buildings in the area in massing, setback, and parking arrangements.

G. In limited situations, use an emergency moratorium to ensure the protection of areas with historic value. Support staff review of demolitions, new construction, and alterations with City Council appeal.

Proposed Conservation Zoning

A conservation overlay zone allows for the protection of traditional neighborhoods that are not eligible to be officially designated local historic districts. Reasons for designating a conservation zone may include bordering a historic district, loss of historic district integrity due to deterioration or a scattered pattern of structures that are eligible for landmark status or National Register status that need protection. Conservation zone designation requires acceptance by the neighborhood residents to be effective. It could be administered by city staff with appeal to a city board.

Conservation zoning encourages restoration and is a recognition of the importance of a neighborhood’s character. Neighborhood property owners and city staff should identify the factors that contribute to a neighborhood’s uniqueness (i.e., front porches, brick sidewalks and alleys, foundation height, etc.) to determine the level of review. The review should include, as a minimum, new construction, demolition, additions and surface parking lots.
FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Provide financial support for community and historic preservation.

FUTURE MILESTONES

A. Lobby state and federal elected officials for:
   1) Continued state programs such as Certified Local Government Grants and Historic Resource Development Program monies and
   2) Changes in federal programs and federal tax credits that make historic preservation programs easier to use.

B. Make on-going applications to various grant programs to provide funding for historic surveys and the preservation of structures.

C. Establish a local version of successful state preservation programs with Community Development Block Grant monies. The monies could be used for bricks and mortar or survey and National Register Nominations.

D. Work with a neighborhood development corporation or the Neighborhood Finance Corporation to identify and provide financing for historic properties.

E. Work to coordinate preservation of historic and traditional neighborhoods in any program that provides money for affordable housing and neighborhood and commercial revitalization.

F. Develop a policy that could utilize appropriate funds to provide rehabilitation assistance to private persons or organizations renovating a structure that has been declared a public nuisance and is in danger of being demolished.

G. Restore historically significant infrastructure and public properties using public dollars.

H. Develop a list of historic elements that could be restored and submit them for inclusion in the CIP. Ensure that the Historic District Commission prioritizes and presents the needs at public meetings.

Proposed Use of “City Funds” for Community Preservation

Preservationists need to work with the city to develop guidelines for incentive funding for rehabilitation. These funds could be from city operating funds, bond funds, Community Development Block Grant dollars, or the Capital Improvements Budget. Funds are needed for both private and public renovation depending on the source. Any guidelines for funding should be coordinated with the proposed demolition assessment that is also part of this plan and the Abandoned Housing Ordinance.

In some instances the council may want to consider some non traditional uses of funds. For example under current policy only demolition of public nuisance structures is declared an “essential purpose” in general obligation bond offerings. Therefore, demolition is the only purpose for which these bonds may be used. Determining the rehabilitation and acquisition of properties declared a “public nuisance” an “essential city purpose” would allow the policy option of using general obligation bonds for rehab and acquisition in some situations.
City government can preserve Des Moines' character by incorporating the preservation of historic and traditional neighborhoods into community goals and community decision making, and all aspects of planning.

Incorporating preservation into all aspects of city government is a challenge that the City of Des Moines will meet. Preservation can be a basis for economic development in commercial areas, a basis for neighborhood revitalization and stabilization, and a part of the comprehensive planning process. Preservation of the man-made and natural environments should be a part of every project from the beginning. Currently, preservation is considered in almost every project the city undertakes but is not always an equal partner to other concerns.

Preservation is an asset in almost every area of city government. Preservation of traditional and historic neighborhoods is one of the strongest tools in neighborhood planning. Preservation and affordable housing are natural partners because of the cost savings realized through renovation and repair rather than new construction and replacement. Historic Districts provide tourist attractions and a unique neighborhood in which to live. The existing park system has landmarks and open spaces that are an attraction for the metro area. The history and preservation of the riverfront identifies our city and is an additional attraction.
COMMUNITY VALUES

Send the message to the whole community that rehabilitation and conservation of historic and traditional homes and businesses are important to the city government.

FUTURE MILESTONES

A. Develop rehabilitation guidelines for use in federally-assisted projects administered by the city that impact properties that contribute to community character but are not eligible for the National Register.

B. Provide training for the Neighborhood Planning Division about traditional house styles, street layouts and infrastructure.

C. Develop rehabilitation and new construction standards for use in neighborhood planning for traditional neighborhoods.

D. Reword the clause "repair or demolish" included in housing code violation notices to emphasize restoration over demolition. Property owners, however, cannot be denied the right to demolish their property outside a local historic district.

E. When issuing general obligation bonds to fund property demolition, consider including acquisition and rehabilitation of properties declared public nuisances as "essential city purposes".

F. Designate a coordinator for Historic and Community Preservation issues on City staff as funds permit.
CITY COORDINATION

Improve preservation activities by promoting coordination between city departments.

FUTURE MILESTONES

A. Meet with each city department and determine what each department needs when working with activities that impact the preservation of the natural and built environment.

B. Educate city staff and the corporation counsel about preservation to ensure ordinances are administered with the intent and goal of the ordinance in mind. Encourage department heads and city staff to attend conferences sponsored by the National Trust and State Historical Society of Iowa.

C. Identify preservation issues at the beginning of every city project by reviewing the city's historic survey data.

D. Continue to review CIP items as well as other road, sidewalk, or curb replacement programs for impact on historic or traditional neighborhoods and historic infrastructure.

E. When city brick streets, alleys or sidewalks require repair of brick streets, alleys or sidewalks, repair the existing brickwork instead of replacing with concrete or asphalt.

(City Specifications included in Chapter 6)

INVENTORY/DATA BASE

Improve the Planning and Urban Design Division's inventory of preservation and survey information.

FUTURE MILESTONES

A. Maintain a computerized list of survey materials to cross reference with other planning projects.

B. Ensure historic materials are user friendly to other departments and community decision makers by their physical placement in the division and by making several planners aware of the division's resources.

C. Establish a reference library where historic maps, plans, and materials can be kept.

D. Find a source of funds to preserve graphics and maps from early atlases as well as city planning documents.

E. Maintain an archive of city documents and include all recent and future planning documents.

F. Work with the Des Moines Public Library and State Historical Society Library and Archives Bureau to understand current resources and their availability to the public so that city staff can refer researchers to the correct reference institution.

G. Prepare and maintain a comprehensive bibliography of historic reference materials throughout the community.

H. Develop and maintain information sheets about how to conduct historic research on a home, building, or neighborhood in general and in Des Moines in particular.

Landmarks Ordinance Synopsis

The City’s Landmark Ordinance has been in effect since 1976 with thirteen landmarks approved. The ordinance’s purpose is to provide protection and recognition to properties that are locally significant. The ordinance requires design review before the Historic District Commission on all exterior alterations. A property can be designated a local landmark over the owner’s objection, although this has not been done. The landmark designation can be tied to a zoning change to ensure the preservation of the exterior of a building.

Historic Districts Ordinance Synopsis

The City of Des Moines established a Historic District Commission in 1982 to review exterior alterations to properties located in designated local historic districts and local landmarks as well as give advise to the City Council on historic preservation. The design review component is based on guidelines for reviewing rehabilitation, demolition and new construction. This ensures that the neighborhood will retain its historic integrity.

Section 104(f) of the Uniform Building Code Synopsis

This section of the building code allows the chief building official to grant exceptions from some sections of the Uniform Building Code because of the historic nature of the building. Any hazardous conditions must be corrected.
Integrating Preservation into Planning

Residential Historic Districts (R-HD) Zoning Regulations Synopsis

The Residential Historic District, established in 1986, provides for the enhancement of local and National Register districts. Because many of the historic districts were platted and built prior to zoning or subdivision regulations, zoning requirements often hinder preservation and conservation measures; R-HD was developed to encourage rehabilitation and new construction that would contribute to the overall historic character.

The R-HD designation was developed for areas with mixed housing stock, including single-family, two family and multi-family housing. It allows for density up to 31 units per acre. However, historic zoning classifications for lower densities or commercial properties could be developed. The R-HD differs from other zoning classifications in allowing for reduced parking requirements, for owner-occupied businesses in certain circumstances, two story accessory buildings and variation in setbacks and sideyards to match those of the neighborhood.

Abandoned Housing Ordinance Synopsis

The abandoned housing ordinance is a tool for conservation of the housing stock in traditional neighborhoods and historic districts. It allows the city to use its powers of eminent domain to purchase property at fair market value when the property has been determined by the court to be in violation of the city’s housing maintenance and occupancy code for over six months. Funds are necessary for the implementation of this existing ordinance. Community Development Block Grant Dollars and general obligation bonds are possible funding sources.

Capital improvements Program (CIP) Synopsis

The Capital Improvements Program is the multiyear scheduling of public physical improvements. Capital items include new, renovated or expanded physical facilities that are relatively large in size, expensive and permanent. An example is the renovation of the Downtown Public Library.

The CIP is based on studies and recommendations of community needs and fiscal resources available in the next five or six years. Costs of the proposed improvements are generally financed through bonds or other forms of borrowing monitored by state and federal law. The CIP in Des Moines is developed by City staff with input at public hearings from residents. It is adopted by City Council on a yearly basis.

Historic Street Light Policy Synopsis

This policy encourages the use of historic street lights in national or local historic districts. It allows the city to work with the neighborhood to develop a special assessment district and assess property owners the capital costs and all additional operation and maintenance costs over and above the city’s normal costs.

City-Owned Historic Building Policy Synopsis

This policy ensures that even small remodeling projects to historic publicly owned buildings are in keeping with the character of building. Past surveys were used to compile a list of buildings that are eligible for the National Register. Current surveys also identify which interior spaces are significant.

A staff committee composed of representatives of the City Manager’s Office, Engineering Department, and Community Development Department has been established to review proposed changes to the building. This group considers historic preservation issues as well as cost and efficiency.