

**OR1 - The Proposed New Plan – Move Hotel to Middle of North Parking Area (1-15-23)**  
***Observations and Recommendations for Consideration***

On September 27, 2022, the City advised the public the “Parcel A” plan approved in November 2021, was not achievable. At this meeting, a new plan for placement of a hotel in the Marina’s north parking lot with an adjacent parking garage constructed in the nearby “Parcel A” location was addressed. It also identified other new structures and features proposed within the development area.

Plan at: [https://www.desmoineswa.gov/news/whatsnew/community\\_meeting\\_-\\_september\\_27\\_2022](https://www.desmoineswa.gov/news/whatsnew/community_meeting_-_september_27_2022))



Figure 1 – September 27, 2022 Presentation Chart

The City’s new plan was presented by Mayor Matt Mahoney and The City’s architectural consultant from Sky Lab. Key features included:

- Construction of a ~90 room hotel with a 35 foot height in the north parking lot
- Substantial reduction of surface parking and open space to the north lot
- Construction of a new hillside parking garage (+150 vehicles) to support hotel parking requirements
- Construction of additional retail space adjacent to the new hillside parking garage
- Construction of the Marina Steps cascading down from 223<sup>rd</sup> Street and Outlook Park 1
- Placement of a recreational reflection pond fed with the City’s hillside surface water runoff
- Removal of the current harbor house and replacement with a pavilion structure

There was also mention of the planned Adaptive Purpose Building, south of the Marina steps that would provide Marina Staff offices, small boat stacks, and the Farmers Market accommodations. The possible relocation of the SR3 marine animal rescue and recovery facility to the Adaptive Purpose Building was also mentioned as a possibility.

**Observations:**

The north parking lot - *At the water's edge* - should be developed and preserved for our residents. This is premium City owned property, actively used by our residents for their enjoyment – There can be no better use than that.

*Public Open Space* is a feature in high demand with scarce availability. Today, the City is addressing its future growth plans and taking actions to preserve, enhance and acquire public open space for its residents. Placement of a privately owned hotel with its parking garage removes significant public open space and is counter to what the City needs in the future. Such action would cause:

- Permanent removal of public open space at the water's edge
- Loss of an area for community gatherings and events
- Reduction in parking capacity for the Beach Park and Marina, and
- Increased congestion and noise with traffic and commercial activities

Implications would include far less space available at the Marina for enjoyment of the waterfront, the views, the fishing pier, the Farmers Market, concerts and other events. Valuable parking spaces that complement these public events, hosted at the Marina and the Beach Park, will be lost and will not be fully replaced by the proposed parking garage.

This proposed plan is inconsistent with the City's own programs and plans guiding its growth and development. Placement of a hotel in the Marina at the water's edge conflicts with the City's Shoreline Master Program which has a clear guideline calling for commercial development to take place upland from the Marina. In addition, this development would impact the City's emergency management operations and capability. This north parking area is the area that ensures access to the City by water, with significant open space for delivery and staging of equipment and materials supporting regional emergency management efforts.

The City communication process to keep the public informed should be examined. The meeting on September 27 was both surprising and significant. There had been no public communication on progress or problems. Also, no information on other options evaluated and what led the City to the new plan with placement of the hotel in the middle of the north parking lot area.

**Recommendations:**

- The north parking lot should be developed and preserved for the benefit of our residents. It should not be made available for the benefit of a privately owned hotel catering to their visiting guests.
- There are several locations in the Marina District's downtown corridor that would be better suited for a hotel. All would have stunning views, *as well as* close proximity to a variety of restaurants, the new theater, the future "Post Alley," and of course the Marina's boardwalk and Beach Park.
- The City needs to develop a better plan for development of the Marina uplands.
- There should be a Master Plan created to include the downtown corridor and its linkage to the Marina. The development of that plan should have various options and involve community input. The City should take the time to update, reset and communicate their plans.