

General Background and Chronology of Marina Development Activities (MAR 2023)

The City of Des Moines has, for some time, been engaged with planning for development in the Marina. Beginning in 2012, a group of citizens and City staff began the process of Marina redevelopment. It included responses to a City Request for Proposal (RFP). The responses did not meet expectations as they each required a significant investment of capital by the City. The financial condition of the City could not accommodate such an investment and nothing came of this Marina redevelopment effort.

In late 2016, the City began again and arranged a meeting with developers, City staff and interested parties to discuss the potential of Marina redevelopment. Following that meeting, the City sought out and received a series of annual grants from the Port of Seattle to further efforts in this regard. The grants and City matching funds resulted in design analysis, conceptual renderings of Marina Steps (modeled after Harbor Steps in Seattle) and building options, financial analysis and a market demand study supporting the Marina redevelopment efforts. At this point, the redevelopment with Marina uplands area become aligned with the Marina waterside redevelopment, where dock and sea wall replacements were required on the 50+ year old structures. These projects, while separate projects, have commonality in shared space and operational concepts.

The City also reached out for expertise and acquired the consulting services of The Holmes Group (THG), who had been responsible for development of the Harbor Steps. Over the course of these past years, the City has conducted numerous tours of development projects that could have application in the upland side of the Marina. In addition, the City sought expertise on the waterside dock replacement project from the Waggoner Marine Group to understand the future of PNW recreational boating, its associated market and the expected requirements sought from the PNW marinas that support them

The First Public Meeting was held on October 17, 2017, when the boating community and Des Moines residents were invited to gather on an Argosy Boat brought to the Marina guest moorage. There, they were able to provide their opinions, recommendations and suggestions regarding specific features being considered for the Marina Upland development. The **Second Public Meeting** was held several months later at the Des Moines Yacht Club. At this session, the City provided an overview of their redevelopment planning and held a question and answer (Q&A) period for better understanding and clarification.

The goal of this overall process was to produce a Request for Qualification (RFQ) that solicited prospective developers, which would lead to a selection. There were several other collateral activities to be addressed. One of great importance was the project to replace the sea wall around the north parking area which was at risk of failing. This project was to include the replacement of the public restroom (with a concession area), widening the boardwalk with a connection to the Beach Park entrance, and adding landscaping aesthetics. Other areas to be evaluated included the feasibility of a passenger ferry service, and creation of a reflection pond feature at the base of the Marina Steps to be fed by surface water runoff from the nearby hillside.

As calendar year 2020 began, the Covid pandemic emerged and caused most all of the Marina Development efforts to be suspended. After a nearly 2-year delay, the City released its Request for Qualification (RFQ) for development of "Parcel A." While there was a great deal of interest expressed from developers and investors, there were only 3 proposals submitted. One was looking to expand the available footprint and include residential. After a discussion with the principal, they decided to withdraw. The City review panel conducted a quantitative review of the two remaining submittals. At the November 18, 2021, City Council meeting, the review panel recommended the selection of the Embarcadero Hospitality Group to move forward on Marina redevelopment for Parcel A.

City Council approved the selection and authorized the City Manager to enter into an exclusive negotiating agreement with that team.

The City held its **Third Public Meeting** on September 27, 2022. This was four years since the last public meeting update and nearly a year since the Council approved proceeding with the "Parcel A" development RFQ. At this meeting, the Des Moines City Council announced the Parcel A development plan was not achievable and a new plan for placement of a hotel in the Marina's north parking lot was presented.

During October and November 2022, there were numerous public comments submitted to the City Council. At the City Council meeting on November 17, 2022, the City Manager announced plans for the City Council to hold a Study Session on the Marina Development planning in January. At the following City Council Meeting on December 2, the City Manager confirmed that the Study Session has been scheduled for January 26 at the standard Council time of 6pm. He also reminded everyone that there would not be any plans that would require changes or removal of the new public restrooms in the north parking lot. In addition, he emphasized, that at this point, there have been no decisions made on any new plans. Discussions and public comment is welcome and appreciated in arriving at a Marina development plan.

On January 26, 2023, the City Council held a **Study Session** devoted to potential Marina Redevelopment. At the meeting, staff and consultants made presentations, the Council asked questions and discussed the matter, and the public was given an opportunity to comment. Additional comments were received via email before the January 26 meeting as well as after.

During this Study Session, the City Manager provided a recommended strategy for future Marina Redevelopment. This recommendation is to continue to pursue capital and infrastructure projects (*that which is funded by the City's general fund*) and not seek a private partner (*for other development projects*) at this time. This recommendation would stop the current planning for a hotel place in the Marina, but certainly leave the door open to revisit that topic in the future.

City Council Motion: This recommendation was presented as a motion at the February 2 regular Council meeting and was approved by the Council. Through public comments to the Council, the community has asked to be kept better informed by the City regarding the progress with all Marina Development projects and specifically any change which proposes or invites private investment or public/private partnerships for any Marina development projects.