
CHAPTER 6. NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

SERVICE MISSION

Promote and celebrate the beauty and uniqueness of Des Moines Neighborhoods and their contribution to the vitality of the city. Provide support to preserve and enhance the value of Des Moines Neighborhoods.

There are seven Neighborhood Revitalization goals:

1. Continue to improve housing as a means to promote neighborhood revitalization.
2. Promote neighborhood identity through recognized neighborhood associations so that all citizens are represented.
3. Encourage and assist residents to take ownership and responsibility for their own neighborhoods.
4. Vigorously enforce city ordinances that promote beautification, safety, and appropriate land use.
5. Encourage the establishment and preservation of appropriate neighborhood commercial services.
6. Work closely with residents to develop, approve, and implement neighborhood action plans for each Recognized Neighborhood.
7. Preserve architecturally/historically significant structures, open space, and parks.



RESULTS

The Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) was created in 1990 with the expectation that it would help stabilize and improve Des Moines' neighborhoods. The NRP uses a strategy that involves neighborhood residents, the city, Polk County, local business leaders, and the Neighborhood Finance Corporation to form partnerships on issues related to the neighborhood and the City.

To be eligible for NRP funding and assistance, a neighborhood must formally apply to the city for a neighborhood designation status. Once this designation has been officially recognized, neighborhoods may submit applications to the Neighborhood Revitalization Board. This 23-member citizen board may then designate a neighborhood that can work with the city on developing a neighborhood action plan. To date, Des Moines has 51 neighborhood organizations active in the Revitalization Program (Figure 6-1).

The set of questions for this section targeted the Des Moines Neighborhoods Program and the Des Moines revitalization efforts. The results of the former show that only 50 percent of those responding (n=279) were familiar with their Neighborhoods Program. Of those who were familiar, most were dissatisfied with

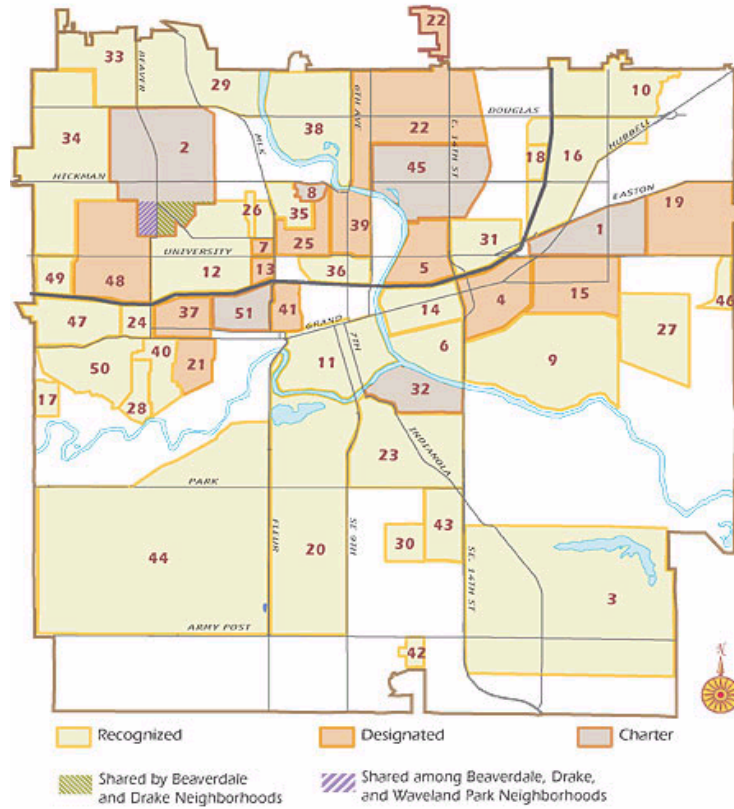
the quality of leadership and the efforts of their local neighborhood association (Table 6-1). (The figures denoting satisfaction with the Neighborhood Program should be used with some caution, as only 279 respondents (or 16% of all respondents) were familiar with the program.) About 83 percent of these respondents noted that their community is highly or somewhat involved in their neighborhood associations.

Table 6-1. Percent Satisfaction with Des Moines Neighborhood Program

	Satisfied or Very Satisfied	Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied
Efforts of your local neighborhood association	13	87
Quality of leadership	18	82

The level of satisfaction for neighborhood revitalization efforts varied (Table 6-2, Figure 6-2). Half of the respondents reported that they were satisfied with the city's work in revitalizing physical infrastructure. Over 40 percent of the respondents were satisfied with the city's efforts in enforcing city ordinances in neighborhoods. Additionally, about one-third of the respondents were satisfied with

Figure 6-1. Des Moines Neighborhoods



- 1. ACCENT
- 2. Beaverdale
- 3. Bloomfield/Allen
- 4. Capitol East
- 5. Capital Park
- 6. Capitol View So.
- 7. Carpenter
- 8. Chautauqua Park
- 9. Chesterfield
- 10. Douglas Acres

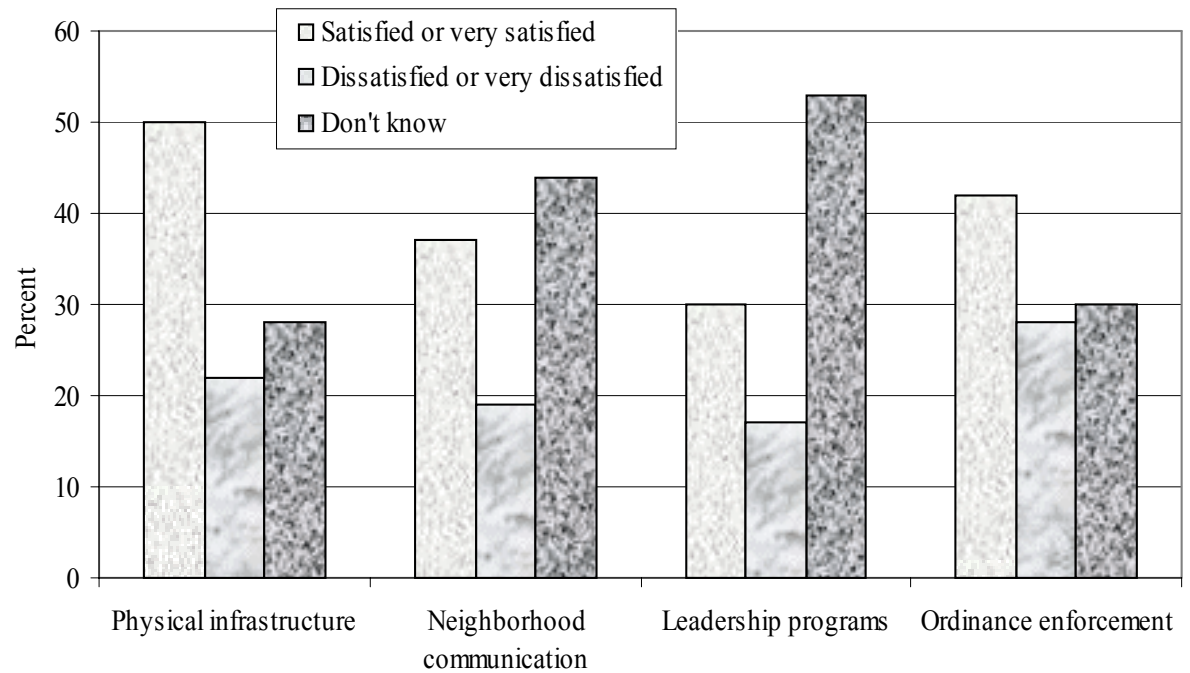
- 11. Downtown
Des Moines
- 12. Drake
- 13. Drake Park
- 14. East Village
- 15. Fairground
- 16. Fairmont Park
- 17. Frisbie Park
- 18. Garton West
- 19. Gray's Woods

- 20. Greater South Side
- 21. Greenwood Historic
- 22. Highland Park
- 23. Indianola Hills
- 24. Ingersoll Park
- 25. King-Irving Park
- 26. Kirkwood Glen
- 27. Laurel Hill
- 28. Linden Heights
- 29. Lower Beaver
- 30. Magnolia Park
- 31. M.L. King Jr. Park
- 32. McKinley School/
Columbus Park
- 33. Meredith
- 34. Merle Hay
- 35. Mondamin
Presidential
- 36. New Vision
- 37. North of Grand
- 38. Oak Park
- 39. River Bend
- 40. Salisbury Oaks
- 41. Sherman Hill
- 42. Somerset
- 43. South Park
- 44. Southwestern Hills
- 45. Union Park
- 46. Valley High Manor
- 47. Waterbury
- 48. Waveland Park
- 49. Waveland Woods
- 50. Westwood
- 51. Woodland Heights

Table 6-2. Percent Satisfaction with Neighborhood Revitalization Efforts

	Satisfied or Very Satisfied	Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
Revitalizing physical infrastructure	50	22	28
Enforcing city ordinances in neighborhoods	42	28	30
Improving neighborhood communication	37	19	44
Providing leadership programs	30	17	53

Figure 6-2. Satisfaction with Revitalization Efforts



Des Moines' effort in providing leadership programs (30%) and improving neighborhood communication (37%). However, there were high percentages of respondents who did not know about neighborhood revitalization efforts. For example, over half did not know about leadership programs.

COMMENTS

There were 96 comments related to neighborhood revitalization. About one in four comments were from respondents who were generally happy with their neighborhood. Most of the comments (67 comments, or 70%) wanted some kind of financial help, i.e., low-interest loans for home improvements. There were other comments asking for the city to support and help neighborhood associations, help to revitalize and restore older neighborhoods, and support and encourage small, neighborhood businesses.