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Neighborhood Revitalization Announced

The Muscatine County Housing Council is working to strengthen a central neighborhood in Muscatine, Iowa through an innovative multifaceted revitalization pilot program. The program aims to maximize quality housing, create neighborhood identity, support commercial infrastructure, and provide family stabilization opportunities within the identified area.

Following the Muscatine Housing Summit in 2021, officials at the Iowa Economic Development Authority reached out to Muscatine County Supervisor Santos Saucedo to see if the Muscatine County Housing Council would lead a neighborhood revitalization pilot project with a caveat that it be connected to the Downtown Corridor. A 2020 Neighborhood Study commissioned by Muscatine County, the City of Muscatine, and the Community Foundation of Greater Muscatine further supports revitalization in the area from Mulberry to Spring and 5th to 11th streets. The neighborhood identified for the pilot project is two blocks from downtown and five blocks from the Mississippi riverfront. It includes 170+ homes, various commercial properties, and Jefferson Elementary School.

Anticipated components of the project include:

Infrastructure and placemaking advancement to enhance pedestrian activity in the neighborhood, connectivity to downtown, and overall community vibrancy.

Commercial updates will include a limited number of façade improvements on dated commercial storefronts. Further encouragement of micro-enterprise development will spark additional economic growth in this neighborhood and branding as a destination area for community members.

Housing in portions of this neighborhood average over 120+ years in age. Of these, 79% are landlord owned making it difficult for residents to become invested through homeownership. Proposed improvements include limited new development and rehab, as well as targeted rehabilitation of façades.

With rising housing development costs and constrained construction schedules due to seasonal and competitive pressures, Muscatine Center for Social Action and partner agencies will incorporate innovative 3D House printing technology to the project.

Family stability opportunities including education, health, and communication programs will be employed. The neighborhood boasts a high density of children and greater diversity than the surrounding community. The identified neighborhood is in the area of Muscatine that has the greatest amount of school children per capita, and 78% of school age children are on subsidized lunch.

“We are very excited about the next steps with our neighborhood revitalization project in 2023. How we have been able to utilize our resources creatively to add 3D house printing is an example of the great teamwork from our Housing Council working collaboratively to help achieve diverse, quality local housing and amplify this revitalization pilot project,” said Santos Saucedo.

It is the goal of the Housing Council is to promote a healthy living environment by addressing the range of housing needs, quality of life, and economic sustainability throughout Muscatine County. Representatives include the City of Muscatine, Muscatine County, Community Foundation of Greater Muscatine, Greater Muscatine Chamber of Commerce, Muscatine Center for Social Action, and local industry. Other collaborators in this effort include Muscatine Community College, Muscatine Power and Water, Muscatine Community School District, Muscatine Police Department, Iowa Economic Development Authority, and Iowa Finance Authority.

Funders investing in the neighborhood revitalization project include: Iowa Finance Authority, Iowa Economic Development Authority, Muscatine County, City of Muscatine, Muscatine Center for Social Action, Community Foundation of Greater Muscatine, and Muscatine County Habitat for Humanity.

To learn more, visit www.givinggreater.org/housing or call the Community Foundation at 563-264-3863; or visit www.mcsaiowa.org or call Muscatine Center for Social Action at 563-264-3278.

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