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Invest DSM Announces Major Development Site for Highland Park Historic Business District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DES MOINES, IOWA — Monday, April 10, 2023 — Invest DSM, a collaboration between the City of Des Moines and Polk County committed to neighborhood revitalization, announced today a major development opportunity for the Highland Park and Oak Park Neighborhoods.

In the heart of the two north side Des Moines neighborhoods, *The Commons at Highland Park*, will provide a mixed-use development site on the southwest corner of Euclid Avenue and 6th Avenue and deliver dozens of affordable housing units and street-level commercial space for future retail opportunities.

“Invest DSM has been heavily involved in the revitalization of this neighborhood and business district,” Invest DSM Executive Director Amber Lynch said. “We have seen the results with new businesses opening up and the increased demand for housing in this area, the momentum is starting to build.”

Invest DSM purchased the building in early March after plans with a previous developer proved to be financially infeasible. Benchmark Real Estate Group had hoped to rehabilitate the building to develop the three-story structure into 14 studio apartments with two commercial spaces. Additional developers had also determined renovating the structure was not economically viable.

The building is identified as a public nuisance. Based on the deteriorating and dilapidated conditions, Invest DSM plans to demolish the structure. Combining the building’s site with three adjacent properties that Invest DSM owns to the west, a mixed-used four-story facility with 40-50 housing units and ground-floor commercial space could be possible.

“Change can be hard, and it is a loss to have a historic building that’s been part of the fabric of the neighborhood for decades go away,” Lynch said. “That said, this structure is beyond affordable, practical repair and it should be replaced so that the vibrancy of these two neighborhoods can continue to flourish.”

Because this building is a contributing structure in the historic district, its demolition will need to be reviewed by the City’s Landmark Review Board and then sent to the City Council for consideration.

“We can make way for a development that is going to have a long-lasting impact on the Oak Park and Highland Park neighborhoods,” Lynch said. “It creates an opportunity to bring more housing units to support the district and add commercial spaces. The future is bright for this area – it’s a place people want to be.”

For additional information about *The Commons at Highland Park* and to view a video detailing the development, visit <https://investdsm.org/news/>.

About Invest DSM

Invest DSM is a collaborative non-profit organization that leverages innovative and comprehensive solutions to strengthen neighborhoods. Created in 2019 by the City of Des Moines and Polk County, Invest DSM is working to reverse the disinvestment and decline that have been undermining Des Moines neighborhoods for decades. The organization currently serves four pilot neighborhoods known as Special Investment Districts (SIDs). For more information, visit www.InvestDSM.org.

