

The Commons at Highland Park

This ambitious project aims to expand the footprint of the Highland Park Historic Business District and further solidify the long-term vitality of the Highland Park and Oak Park neighborhoods.

Project Overview

Built in 1915, 3524 Sixth Avenue is a tudor-style apartment building with commercial space on the first floor. Originally designed by local architects Wetherell & Gage, and built by local contractor Oliver "Pink" Herrick, the building was once home to Smith's Highland Park Pharmacy, dentist offices, and twelve apartments. The historic building has since rotated through many businesses, eventually becoming uninhabitable due to a leaking roof. Since 2017, multiple non-profits and local developers have shown interest in breathing new life into the building. However, after initial research was conducted, each group continued to discover that the financial requirements to rehabilitate were unobtainable; enter Invest DSM.

Created in 2019 by the City of Des Moines and Polk County, the now standalone 501(c)3 specializes in strengthening neighborhoods and business districts throughout the city. To date, they have played a critical role in revitalizing the area by investing over \$2 million into buildings in the Highland Park business district.

With 3524 Sixth Avenue past the point of being saved, Invest DSM's creative land-use proposal for this site will transform the Highland Park business district. Imagine a larger, building with a mix of housing, restaurants, and retail commercial space that is pulled away from the street, creating wider sidewalks and allowing for increased foot traffic and safer transportation for everyone. Invest DSM's goal is to find a developer that can bring all of this to the site, and still honor the context and historic feel of the neighborhood.

*Invest DSM will be seeking a qualified developer at a later date. If interested, email info@investdsm.org.



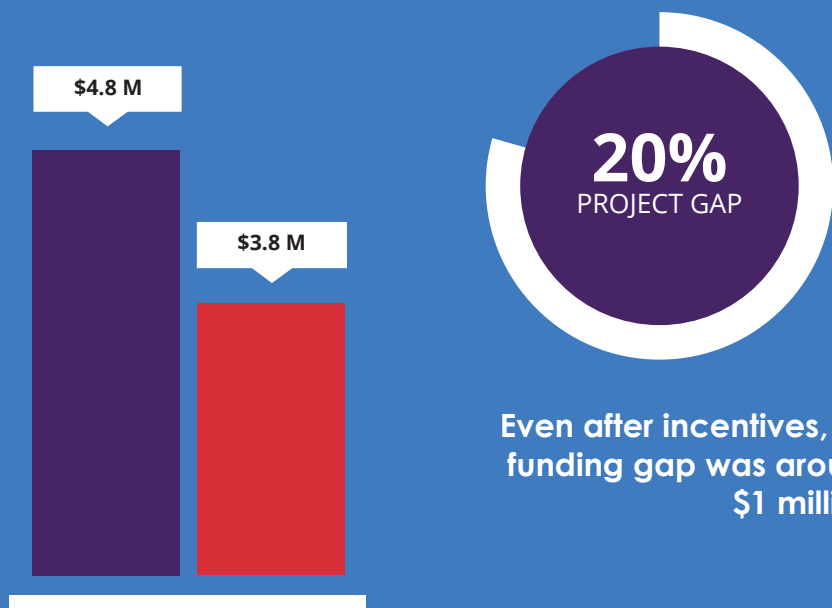
Pictured: 3524 Sixth Avenue from 1915 and 2020. This building sits at the corner of Sixth Street and Euclid Avenue

Multiple non-profit groups and developers have attempted to find the financing needed for this property without success. The latest attempt resulted in roughly a 20 percent gap which ended the redevelopment efforts.

\$2.25 M+

in incentives were secured from the State of Iowa, City of Des Moines, and Invest DSM.

PROJECT COSTS



Even after incentives, the funding gap was around \$1 million.

PRESERVING HISTORY

Invest DSM intends to salvage items of historic character and value to the building to the extent possible, and has already begun working with local salvage companies. They hope items such as stonework, stair posts, door hardware, murphy bed cabinets, bookcases, and various trim can be incorporated into future developments.

