



CITY OF DECATUR ILLINOIS

#1 GARY K. ANDERSON PLAZA

DECATUR, ILLINOIS 62523-1196

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 6, 2023

City Council approves residential roof replacement program, investment plan for old Garfield School site

Decatur, IL – Highlights from the February 6, 2023, Decatur City Council meeting include a new residential roof replacement and accessibility improvement program, an investment plan for redevelopment of the old Garfield School site, a partnership supported by opioid settlement funds, and increased access to public transportation for DPS-61 high school students.

Home Repair & Accessibility Program (HRAP)

On Monday night the Decatur City Council approved the Home Repair & Accessibility Program (HRAP), which will assist residents with roof replacements and/or improve accessibility to their homes. The City received \$400,000 from the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) for this project and the Council agreed to match the grant with American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds for a total of \$800,000 to be used over the next two years.

This program will be eligible for residents in the City's urban core. Currently the City has a list of approximately 220 residents that are requesting a roof replacement, and has a growing list of accessibility improvements as well. HRAP will be managed by the Central Illinois Land Bank Authority (CILBA), which helped secure the IHDA grant. Combined with the ongoing "Abandonment to Rehab" program, CILBA will be managing \$1.3 million in housing assistance and improvement programs for the City.

More information about HRAP will come in the future.

Redevelopment of old Garfield School on W Grand

Another item related to Neighborhood Revitalization was the approval of an investment plan for potential redevelopment of the old Garfield School site on W Grand. The City's Community Development Department has been working with a developer and the Decatur Park District to plan an overall campus-style redevelopment of the old school site. The project would include several phases: repurposing the school building into affordable senior living apartments, adding other mixed-

income housing, reconfiguring Garfield Park into a more attractive neighborhood park, and later on adding new commercial space.

The first phase of the project – the repurposing of the school building – is estimated to be a \$19.6 million investment, creating full-time and part-time jobs, in addition to construction jobs. This phase is contingent upon the developer receiving tax credits from the state, which will be determined by June 2023. To increase this project’s chances of receiving credits, City Council agreed to contribute a total of \$675,000 in ARP and HOME funds as part of the investment plan.

Partnership to help combat opioid epidemic

Council also approved a partnership with Crossing Healthcare and Heritage Behavioral Health for use of opioid settlement funds the City received. Last summer, the State of Illinois announced a \$26 billion settlement with the nation’s three largest pharmaceutical companies. The City of Decatur is expected to receive over \$73,000 to be used for opioid treatment and addiction programs.

Crossing and Heritage submitted a joint proposal to equally use the funds to support individuals with substance abuse disorders. In addition to improving their in-house programs, the entities will use some of the funds to distribute Narcan to first responders in Decatur as requested.

Increasing access to public transportation for DPS high schoolers

DPS-61 high school students could soon have greater access to public transportation after Council approved an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with the school district. The agreement allows all DPS high school students to travel anytime on City of Decatur buses, with no restrictions, for free as long as they have a valid DPS school ID. This opens access to after-school activities, employment, appointments, etc.

Previously, students would receive tickets to ride only during school hours. If approved by the DPS School Board, the district would pay Decatur Public Transit System biannually for bus rides.

More information about these topics can be found in the City Council Agenda packet, downloadable/viewable here: www.decaturlil.gov/mayor-and-council/council-meetings/

###