



Frequently Asked Questions
The West Capitol Terrace Project
February 2009

Q1: What is the West Capitol Terrace Project?

A1: The West Capitol Terrace Project is an initiative to redesign the space west of the Capitol Building from parking lots into a People's Park in which people can picnic, walk, contemplate, gather and meet.

Q2: Where is the location?

A2: The project site is the space bordered by Grand Avenue on the North, Walnut Street on the South, Pennsylvania Avenue and East 7th Street on the West, and Finkbine Drive on the East. This area comprises approximately 10.0 acres of land.

Q3: What are the project goals of the West Capitol Terrace Project?

A3: The goals are:

- Use the established Capitol Complex Master Plan as the guide for the site design;
- Protect the views from the Capitol to the City of Des Moines, and views from the City to the Capitol;
- Recognize this project in the context of the City's overall Gateway East planning efforts;
- Provide space for public events;
- Provide space for public art; and
- Create a clear and integrated transition from the red brick construction of the East Village to the Capitol Complex.

Q4: What are the guidelines for this project?

A4: The guidelines are:

- Consider sustainable design guidelines on this project;
- The space was designed so that it does not invite activities that would damage the site improvements;
- The Records & Property Building (renovation has been completed and the Department of Public Safety has moved in) will remain in its current location (corner of East 7th Street and Court Avenue);
- Pedestrian access from Pennsylvania Avenue to Finkbine Drive will conform to the "Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines"; and
- Dedicated trees have been identified on the West Capitol Terrace.

Q5: What is the initial design concept and who was hired to design this project?

A5: The design team of Brian Clark and Associates, in association with Jeffrey Morgan Architecture Studio, Bishop Engineering and Seneca Environmental Services, were chosen. The West Capitol Terrace was designed to reflect the goals and ideas identified in the Capitol Complex Master Plan.

The West Capitol Terrace consists of Entrance and Central Plazas that begin at Locust Street with a large map of Iowa oriented true north, tying in the county information in the sidewalks of East Locust Street leading to the Capitol. In the plaza leading up to the Capitol there are benches, and room for public events. Outside of the paved central path will be a series of terraced gardens. Plants in the gardens frame the views from the Capitol and the city, and educate visitors about the native plants of Iowa and plants that are traditionally used to decorate our homes.

Q6: How is the project being funded?

A6: The legislature passed and the Governor signed a bill for an FY2007 appropriation of \$2.3 million to complete Phase I of the West Capitol Terrace Project. (Phase I primarily constituted removal of the existing parking lots and construction of the Central Plaza and the Entrance Plaza, located at East 7th Street and East Locust Avenue, while Phases II and III are the development of the outlying gardens and park areas.) \$1.6 million was appropriated for Phase II and future funds of \$1.3 million are needed for Phase III. In addition organizations and private citizens were given the opportunity to sponsor a tree or bench, or help fund flowers, planters and the fountain, through a special fund-raising project.

Q7: What is the current status of this project?

A7: Phase I of construction – removal of the parking lots and construction of the Central Plaza – began in July 2006 and was completed just in time for the Hy-Vee Triathlon June 16-17, 2007. Below are pictures of the West Capitol Terrace before and after Phase I of the park was completed. Phase II was completed in July 2008 just in time for the Yankee Doodle Pops concert. Phase II included all the outlying gardens and sidewalks along with improvements to Finkbine Drive. When funding becomes available, Phase III will include amphitheater seating near the west end of the plaza around the granite state map along with vertical structures on either side of the plaza that will provide a grand entrance to the site from the east village corridor along with improvements to the intersection of Locust Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. Additional phases may include and fountain and memorial gardens within the main plaza areas.



Q8: Why is this project important for the Capitol Complex, the City of Des Moines, and the State?

A8: The Capitol Building is one of the most recognizable landmarks in the State of Iowa. Every year approximately 100,000 people visit this “Great Place” in our capital city. The City of Des Moines formally recognized the importance of the Capitol Building to the make-up of the cityscape in a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the City and the Department of General Services (now the Department of Administrative Services) in October 2001. Among other provisions, the MOU includes an agreement to improve the appearance of the west lawn of the Capitol Building by removing or modifying the surface parking lots west of Finkbine Drive. The West Capitol Terrace Project is the fulfillment of this agreement in a way that can be appreciated by all visitors to the Capitol Building, as well as the businesses of and visitors to the East Village and the entire City of Des Moines.

Visually, the West Capitol Terrace provides a beautiful entrance from the west to our State’s grandest building, as well as a link between the East Village and the Capitol Complex. For pedestrians, this renovation will provide, for the first time, a clear walkway from downtown Des Moines to the seat of our state’s government. For citizens, this is a public space open to all – expanding on and encouraging the idea of bringing people closer to the legislative process by bringing them closer to the building where that process takes place.

A9: How do I hold an event on the West Capitol Terrace?

A9: Please visit the Department of Administrative Services website at <http://das.iowa.gov> for an event form and fax it or email it to Nancy Williams at nancy.williams@iowa.gov, fax number 515-242-5974. You may also contact Nancy directly at 515-281-7259.

Q10: What electrical outlets are available and where are they located?

A10: There is a panel of electrical outlets at the west end of the West Capitol Terrace near the state map. Each light pole also has an electrical outlet mounted on it so anyone can use them. There are outlets at either end of the banister in the staging area on the east end of the plaza.

Q11: Are there drinking fountains available and where are they located?

A11: There are two water fountains available, one at the east end of the plaza on the north side near Finkbine Drive. The second drinking fountain is at the midpoint of the plaza, on the north side.

Q12: Are there bike racks available and where are they located?

A12: There are bike racks available at the east end of the plaza near Finkbine Drive on the south side of the Plaza.

Q13: Is there a charge for using this area?

A13: There is no charge for using the West Capitol Terrace. Please leave the area in the condition which you found it. We ask that you take everything you bring into the park with you when you leave.

Q14: What locations are available in the park to hold event?

A14: There are three locations on the West Capitol Terrace you can hold events. The People's Plaza which is the area by the granite County map. The Central Plaza which is located by the flag poles in the center of the park and The Stage which is located at the east end of the plaza.



Q15: Where can state employees and visitors park when coming to the West Capitol Terrace?

A15: In February 2003 a seven-level parking facility was opened on the northwest corner of East Grand and Pennsylvania Avenues, just off the northwest corner of the park. The parking facility has over 800 parking stalls. Phase II also included additional parking along Finkbine Drive and designated parking areas for bus and media. A complete map of all parking options on the Capitol Complex can be found online at http://das.iowa.gov/images/pdf/capitol_parking.pdf.