

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
DES MOINES, IOWA

ITEM 102

CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION 97-035
JANUARY 20, 1997 AGENDA

SUBJECT:	TYPE:	SUBMITTED BY:
EPA GRANT— IOWA AGRIBUSINESS PARK	◆ RESOLUTION ORDINANCE RECEIVE/FILE	SCOTT STRICKER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATOR

SYNOPSIS —

On the January 20, 1997, Council agenda is a resolution to secure a \$200,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative Program for site assessment work and related planning for the development of the proposed Iowa Agribusiness Park.

FISCAL IMPACT —

N/A. No matching funds are required.

RECOMMENDATION —

Approval for the Economic Development Division to provide the necessary follow-up assistance to obtain funding from the EPA Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative Program for the development of the proposed Iowa Agribusiness Park.

BACKGROUND —

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will award 25 pilot project grants nationwide of up to \$200,000 each in March 1997 in order to facilitate the redevelopment of contaminated sites under its Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative Program. To date, EPA has funded 76 Brownfields Assessment Pilots throughout the U.S.

Economic Development Division staff consulted with Iowa's Regional EPA Coordinator about specific details regarding eligibility, use of program funds and competitiveness criteria in order to determine whether an application should be submitted. EPA did not respond to staff's inquiries until January 7, 1997. The deadline for sending applications was January 13, 1997. Economic Development Division staff responded quickly to the EPA and submitted a grant request for \$200,000 including letters of support. If staff did not respond immediately, the City would have foregone an opportunity to obtain project funding until 1998. The grant submittal deadline did not allow for Council review until January 20, 1997.

Funding is proposed to be used to conduct Phase I and II environmental assessments on approximately 10 sites that appear to pose the greatest threat of contamination in the proposed Iowa Agribusiness Park and develop related land use, remediation and marketing plans. EPA funds cannot be used for environmental assessments strictly on petroleum contaminated sites, clean-up, Federal lobbying efforts, job training or matching other Federal grants. No matching funds are required to obtain this EPA grant.

The development of the proposed Iowa Agribusiness Park will result in revitalizing approximately 600 acres of blighted, underutilized land in southeast Des Moines that will be dedicated to attracting and expanding value-added agricultural enterprises and providing quality, livable wage jobs. It will create a national progressive identity for the City of Des Moines and the State of Iowa as an agribusiness leader. This project will enhance Iowa's urban and rural economies.