



Agenda Item:

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COUNCIL COMMUNICATION City Manager's Office

GENERAL INFORMATION

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Communication

Roll Call

Submitted by: Richard A. Clark, Deputy City Manager

SUBJECT—

Resolution Authorizing Request for Proposals for Phase I Environmental Assessments in Select Areas of the City Related to the Des Moines Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative

SYNOPSIS—

Council is requested to approve the form of Request for Proposals (RFP) to conduct Phase I environmental assessments in select areas of the City and to authorize staff to disseminate the RFP, evaluate responses and recommend firms to conduct the necessary work.

FISCAL IMPACT—

EPA grant funds will be used to conduct the Phase I environmental assessments. The City has approximately \$315,000 available to cover this work and to complete Phase II environmental testing in the Agrimergent Technology Park and in Riverpoint West. If there is insufficient EPA funding to perform all of the proposed work, based on responses to the RFP, the City will complete the assessments in categorical priority order.

RECOMMENDATION—

Approval

BACKGROUND—

It is the City's intent to diminish environmental uncertainty involved in real estate transactions in order to attract investment and improve the community's quality of life. The City plans to conduct extensive Phase I environmental assessments in select areas. The purpose of this work is to remove barriers to investment related to perceived environmental contamination and to ascertain whether or not Phase II environmental assessment work is needed.

Phase I work is proposed for:

- ***Priority 1: Ongoing Projects*** – Update the Des Moines Agrimergent Technology Park and Riverpoint West work, examine the Guthrie Avenue Business Park.
- ***Priority 2: Downtown and Environs*** – Study the eastern and western portions of the area.
- ***Priority 3: Industrial Redevelopment Opportunities*** – Evaluate the Agribusiness Enterprise Zone, Central Place Industrial Park and Valley Gardens area.
- ***Priority 4: Targeted Commercial Development*** – Investigate portions of the 6th Avenue, University Avenue and SE 30th Street corridors and along Euclid Avenue from MLK, Jr. Parkway to the Des Moines River.

Work is to be completed within a four-month timeframe in order to satisfy EPA contractual requirements. As a result, the City envisions hiring several environmental consulting firms to meet the deadline. Consultants will be requested to submit a proposal by March 26, 2004 and staff will present its recommendation to Council by April 19, 2004.

Through this project, the City will encourage the protection of the environment and the public health on brownfields as well as create new opportunities for redevelopment and reinvestment. In doing so, it achieves the goals of the Des Moines Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative.

The project also benefits many parties. The City of Des Moines will yield additional tax base from new investment in properties previously not considered for reinvestment. Property owners interested in selling their holdings will learn valuable information to assist in completing real estate transactions. Real estate professionals will facilitate property sales more efficiently because the Phase I environmental assessments that lenders often require on commercial and industrial properties will be completed, thereby minimizing delays and uncertainty.

Environmental assessment results will be available to the public. This information will be placed on the City's web site in fall/winter 2004. Developers and others may access it confidentially when researching development opportunities. By working with potential investors, the City anticipates creating relationships that will yield economic and environmental benefits.