

**CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNICATION:**

99-384

AGENDA:

AUGUST 23, 1999

SUBJECT:

DOWNTOWN
TRAFFIC PATTERNS
STUDY

TYPE:

RESOLUTION
ORDINANCE
RECEIVE/FILE

SUBMITTED BY:

ERIC A. ANDERSON
CITY MANAGER

ITEM _____

**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
CITY OF DES MOINES, IOWA**

SYNOPSIS -

There is a great deal of activity, both proposed and underway, in the downtown area stretching from Meredith Corporation to the Capitol and from I-235 to the Raccoon River. The construction of Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway (MLK) and reconstruction of I-235 is also imminent. In addition, the Plan Commission has recommended the Des Moines' 20/20 Community Character Plan, which has recommendations that affect this downtown area and the entire City. In order to continue our efforts to create and maintain a vital and vibrant downtown, we need to review our downtown traffic patterns in light of all these developments. This work should be done as a team in which all of the stakeholders are represented and in which both architectural and engineering expertise is available

FISCAL IMPACT -

\$50,000 from existing CIP funds is available to assure that we have engineering expertise available. The funds will be drawn from street improvements, corridor studies and acquisitions. Architectural expertise will be provided by the private sector. Long-term financial implications include the allocation and reallocation of CIP funds to implement the long-term recommendations of the City. Funds to support both architectural and engineer expertise will also be requested from the State of Iowa and Polk County.

RECOMMENDATION -

Approval of concept of stakeholder planning team and authorization of the use of funds.

BACKGROUND -

Some time ago, representatives of the City and the private sector in the downtown began discussions about a need for a study of the downtown traffic patterns. The immediate concern was the impact of the construction of MLK and the reconstruction of I-235. Longer-term concerns included the impact of development of Gateway East and West upon the existing traffic infrastructure. Throughout our conversations all the members of the group have expressed concerns about balancing the efficiency of traffic to and from downtown business and surrounding neighborhoods and the impact of that traffic upon the downtown neighborhoods including the residential neighborhoods adjacent to downtown. The idea of a study evolved from these discussions. The form of the study will be modeled upon the MLK redesign effort in which all the stakeholders involved in the results of the study are at the table during the study. We understand the stakeholders to include (but not necessarily limited to): Downtown Parking Committee, Gateway Steering Committee, Plan and Zoning Commission, Traffic Safety Committee, Des Moines Development, Downtown Partnership, individual downtown businesses and developers, not-for-profit organizations, City of Des Moines, Polk County, State of Iowa, Sherman Hill Association, Inc., and East Village Neighborhood and Merchants Association. The boundary of the study area runs from the proposed MLK to the west, I-235 extended on the north, East 14th Street on the east and the river on the south.

We will need architectural and engineering expertise in order to proceed. I have suggested, and it has been tentatively agreed, that the private sector will provide the architectural expertise and the City the engineering expertise. Because I do not believe that we have adequate staff time available (although we do have adequate expertise), we will need to engage a consultant for this effort. I am recommending that Council allocate \$50,000 of existing CIP funds for this purpose. We will develop and issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) consistent with the goals of the study and return to Council for final approval of the consultant contract. We will also make a request to the State and County governments for financial participation.

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