

**CITY COUNCIL  
COMMUNICATION:**

**ITEM \_\_\_\_\_**

**02-158**

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

**AGENDA:**

MARCH 18, 2002

**SYNOPSIS -**

**SUBJECT:**

CONCEPTUAL  
LANDSCAPE PLANS  
FOR FLEUR DRIVE  
MEDIAN AND  
DOWNTOWN  
GREENWAY

With input from the Mayor's Landscape Taskforce, Douglas Hoerr Landscape Architecture (Douglas Hoerr, President, 1330 Sherman Avenue, Evanston, Illinois, 60201) has developed a concept for the medians along Fleur Drive located between the north and south entrances of Gray's Lake. In addition, plans have been developed for streetscape improvements around the Ruan Center, including widening sidewalks on Locust and Grand Avenues. It is staff's understanding that the Ruan Corporation is willing to fund the out-of-pocket expenses related to these improvements. Council approval of the concepts is needed for the implementation of these projects to continue.

**TYPE:**

**RESOLUTION  
ORDINANCE  
RECEIVE/FILE**

**FISCAL IMPACT -**

It is staff's understanding that the out-of-pocket expenses for both the Fleur Drive medians and the Ruan Center streetscape will be funded by the Ruan Corporation. A letter from John Ruan III has been added to this item.

**SUBMITTED BY:**

DONALD M. TRIPP  
PARK AND  
RECREATION  
DIRECTOR

**RECOMMENDATION -**

**Authorize the City Manager to work with the Mayor's Landscape Taskforce and the Ruan interests to prepare implementation plans for the Fleur Drive improvements and the streetscape improvements around the Ruan Center and Marriott Hotel within this construction year. With respect to the extended sidewalks, or "bumpouts" on Grand and Locust around the Ruan Center, it is recommended that plans be prepared and that the project improvements be reviewed by the appropriate boards and commissions prior to final plan approval by Council.**

**BACKGROUND -**

In February 2001, Janis Ruan brought noted Chicago landscape architect Douglas Hoerr to Des Moines for lectures on urban landscape design, and the positive impact that increasing the green component of the streetscape can have on a city. Mayor Daniels attended these sessions and was so impressed with the leadership role that Mayor Daley had played in supporting the "greening of Chicago" that he formed the Mayor's Streetscape Taskforce.

The City, along with Des Moines Water Works and the Ruan Center Corporation joined together to bring Doug Hoerr to Des Moines to review existing plans and to see if there was some way to link together the numerous projects in various stages beginning at the Des Moines Airport and ending at the State Capitol. Initially Mr. Hoerr's contract called for review of Fleur Drive Master Plan, the streetscape around the Ruan properties and the 7th Avenue Parking Garage, and the landscape around City Hall including the parking lot. In addition, Mr. Hoerr prepared recommendations on the type of material that should be included in a landscape ordinance.

Beginning in July, the Taskforce met regularly and reviewed a variety of projects including the Fleur Drive Master Plan, Gateway East, Gateway West and Interstate 235.

Mr. Hoerr fulfilled the terms of this initial contract in January, 2002. The approvals requested in this document are necessary in order to move forward on two of the projects that were specifically named in Mr. Hoerr's initial contract, namely:

1. The streetscape work around the Ruan Corporation and the 7th Avenue Parking Garage.
2. The first median on Fleur Drive. The median between the north and south entrances of Gray's Lake was selected because its proximity to Water Works Park, relationship to Gray's Lake, and its large size that will result in the most positive visible impact.

Conceptual landscape plans for each of the aforementioned projects are attached to the roll call.

Timing is critical. The approvals requested direct staff of the various City Departments to work with Mr. Hoerr and his associates in order to develop final plans and construction documents that will enable construction on these projects to occur during the 2002 landscape construction season. Final plans will be brought back before the City Council for approval as required.

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