

**CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNICATION:**

03-197

AGENDA:

MAY 5, 2003

SUBJECT:

SELECTION OF
CONSULTANT TO
DEVELOP SMART
GROWTH
COMPUTER MODEL
TO REVITALIZE
DES MOINES
BROWNFIELDS

TYPE:

RESOLUTION
ORDINANCE
RECEIVE/FILE

SUBMITTED BY:

ERIC A. ANDERSON
CITY MANAGER

ITEM _____

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

SYNOPSIS —

On the May 5, 2003 Council agenda is a roll call to (1) select the Conservation Research Institute's (CRI) team to develop a smart growth computer model for revitalizing Des Moines' brownfields, and (2) authorize the Office of Economic Development and the Legal Department to negotiate a contract for professional services with CRI. The team includes the CRI as project lead and Community Viz (Orton Family Foundation), the Rocky Mountain Institute, and the Conservation Design Forum, Inc. John Haugland is the Principal of CRI, headquartered in Elmhurst, Illinois. The model is intended to effect higher quality development in site and building design, specifically on brownfields for industrial reuse. By applying this decision-making model, businesses will be able to build smarter, conserve resources, reduce operating expenditures, and enhance worker productivity. The City will potentially yield a higher tax base from more compact development, lessen public infrastructure costs, improve water quality, and enhance its quality of life. This model will be the first of its kind in the U.S. and have broad national and international applicability. Ellen Walkowiak with the City's Office of Economic Development is coordinating the City activities relative to this project.

FISCAL IMPACT —

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded a \$45,000 grant to the City under the Smart Growth: Saving Open Space, Revitalizing Brownfields Program. No matching funds are required. The entire grant will be expended for contractual services.

RECOMMENDATION —

Approval.

BACKGROUND —

On October 11, 2000, EPA designated the City of Des Moines a Brownfields Showcase Community. On July 24, 2002, the EPA awarded a \$45,000 smart growth grant to the City of Des Moines. The City is compelled to perform exceptionally because the award is among the first ones in the nation to be provided under a new EPA initiative. Des Moines is one of only nine communities throughout the country to receive this funding. The award also recognizes Des Moines as an innovator and a leader in brownfields redevelopment.

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03-197

MAY 5, 2003

PAGE TWO

On February 24, 2003, the City sent a Request for Qualifications to 31 firms throughout the U.S. that requested them to describe their ability to develop a smart growth computer model. Five firms submitted Statements of Qualifications. The model will be designed to demonstrate the costs, cost savings, and other benefits of implementing smart growth and environmental stewardship strategies in site and building design on brownfields for industrial reuse. The Des Moines Agrimergent Technology Park will be the demonstration site.

The Smart Growth Advisory Committee evaluated the submittals and recommended that the City interview the top two firms. The Committee consists of representatives from the EPA, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Energy Center, agribusiness, architecture, and the City Office of Economic Development. On April 24, 2003, members of the Committee interviewed the top two firms via telephone.

The Committee recommends that Council select the CRI's team. The team has outstanding qualifications. The CRI will be the project lead and will be responsible for task force coordination and economic analysis. Community Viz will conduct smart growth computer modeling. The Rocky Mountain Institute and the Conservation Design Forum, Inc. will contribute smart growth, sustainable design, eco-industrial and brownfields revitalization recommendations.

The model will be an adaptation of the Community Viz model—a Graphic Information System (GIS) based tool that performs impact analysis in a 3-D visualization. The City intends to brand the new model. Collectively, the Smart Growth Advisory Committee and industry will assist in defining and prioritizing the most important variables to measure. Businesses will see the impacts visually in real time and also receive a summary report. Consultants will also provide web-based links so users can learn more. The City will be trained to adjust the model easily. The model will create output that makes sense in a developer's economic terms. Site-specific and larger community impacts may also be addressed.

Upon Council approval, the Office of Economic Development and the Legal Department will negotiate the contract with CRI. It is anticipated that Council will be requested to enter into the contract at its May 19, 2003 meeting.

Development of the smart growth computer model will assist in encouraging new business investment and protecting the environment. The City of Des Moines will be at the forefront of this significant endeavor.

