

**CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNICATION:**

03-422

AGENDA:

AUGUST 25, 2003

SUBJECT:

VARIOUS ACTIONS
REGARDING
PHASE I - THE
PRINCIPAL
RIVERWALK AND
THE DES MOINES
RIVERFRONT
MASTER PLAN

TYPE:

RESOLUTION
ORDINANCE
RECEIVE/FILE

SUBMITTED BY:

RICHARD CLARK
DEPUTY CITY
MANAGER

LARRY HULSE
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
DIRECTOR

ITEM _____

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

SYNOPSIS —

City Council is requested to take several actions that will allow the Principal Riverwalk project to move forward with the next phase of design development. These proposed actions relate to possible cost sharing agreements with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, comprehensive plan amendments, zoning amendments, the Des Moines Riverfront Master Plan, an application for Vision Iowa funding, and establishment of a Riverfront Authority. The proposed zoning amendments include a prohibition against gaming facilities within a new Riverfront Zoning District.

FISCAL IMPACT —

The total project cost for the Phase I Riverwalk improvement is estimated at \$26.4 million, which includes \$880,000 of utility enhancements associated with the new Des Moines River Outfall and Overflow Project related to eliminating sewer overflows. Public and private sector investments are as follows: City of Des Moines - \$1.255 million (Riverpoint Trail - \$375,000 and utility enhancements - \$880,000); The Principal Financial Group Foundation, Inc. - \$10 million; Private/Other - \$4.2 million; federal funds - \$5.424 million (of which a total of \$5.067 is projected in Fiscal Year (FY) 2004, FY2005 and FY2006), Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) - \$345,000; Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) - \$150,000; Polk County - \$ to be determined; and Vision Iowa - \$5 million. In addition to the \$10 million previously pledged by The Principal Financial Group Foundation, Principal has committed to raise an additional \$5 million in private/other capital to complete the build-out of Phase I. If this funding effort falls short of the goal, Principal will backstop the gap to insure the project is completed.

Council has previously committed the following funds in the adopted 2003-04/2008-09 Capital Improvements Program – Riverpoint Trail - \$375,000 (CP040/PKS990000/PKS045) and utility enhancements associated with the Des Moines River Outfall and Overflow Project - \$880,000 (EN104/PWK990000/SAE119).

Annual operating and maintenance costs for Phase I Riverwalk improvements have been preliminarily estimated to be about \$320,000 beginning in the first (partial) year, and increasing to about \$450,000 in the fourth year, and about \$500,000 in the sixth year. On March 24, 2003, Council approved guiding principles regarding operation and maintenance of the Riverwalk. Among other things, the guiding principles state that the operation and maintenance cost will be funded from a variety of sources, and that a definitive Operation And Maintenance Plan must be in place before construction begins on any element of the project. Progress has already been made in developing the funding

sources for the Operation and Maintenance Plan. The Operation Downtown Board of Directors has voted unanimously to expand the boundaries of the existing Self Supported Municipal Improvement District (SSMID) to include Gateway West, Gateway East, and the Riverwalk, and to extend the SSMID for another five years. In accordance with the guiding principles, the Operation and Maintenance Plan will be completed before construction begins on the Riverwalk.

RECOMMENDATION —

1. **Approve the letter of assurance to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for cost sharing of riverfront improvements.**
2. **Approve application to secure a \$5 million Vision Iowa grant to assist in funding Phase I improvements and reaffirm the City's financial commitment to the Riverwalk project, which includes \$375,000 for the Riverpoint Trail and approximately \$880,000 in utility enhancements. (The Riverpoint Trail also includes funding obtained by the City from State of Iowa sources.)**
3. **Refer the following to the Park and Recreation Board and the Plan and Zoning Commission for review and recommendation:**
 - a) **Inclusion of the proposed Des Moines Riverfront Master Plan and its text: "Rediscovering the Rivers: The Des Moines Riverfront Master Plan" as a reference in the Des Moines 2020 Community Character Plan. As a reference document the Riverfront Master Plan would not be a formal part of the City's Community Character Plan but would be kept on file and provide a contextual basis for reviewing plans and improvements for the riverfront.**
 - b) **Adoption of amendments to the Des Moines 2020 Community Character Plan for the downtown area to create consistency with anticipated land uses as put forth in the Des Moines Riverfront Master Plan.**
 - c) **Adoption of a proposed Downtown Riverfront Zoning District.**
4. **Authorize the City Manager to work with Principal to develop a proposal for a Riverfront Authority that would help guide improvements and developments along the riverfront.**

BACKGROUND —

On March 24, 2003, the Council approved the Phase I Concept Plan for the Principal Riverwalk. The Phase I Concept Plan is part of the larger "Des Moines Riverfront Master Plan" that was developed by The Principal for the downtown riverfront area from University Avenue to the Scott Street Dam, and west on the Raccoon River to Gray's Lake. This master plan included park

and open space concepts and suggested redevelopment concepts for areas adjacent to the riverfront parkland improvements.

If Council approves the proposed actions, staff will continue to work with Principal and their consultants in refining the parameters of the proposed Downtown Riverfront Zoning District and a set of urban design standards that would apply to new development within the Downtown Riverfront District. The proposed zoning ordinance that has been prepared by staff for review by the Plan and Zoning Commission and the Park and Recreation Board is a basic ordinance that will address several key issues including the prohibition of gaming within the area of the Des Moines Riverfront Master Plan. Staff anticipates the potential need to return to City Council with amendments to the bulk requirements after a longer period of study. Staff also plans to return to City Council with a set of urban design standards that would apply to the new zoning district.

It is our intention, along with Principal, to schedule a public meeting for property owners, as well as interested parties about the adoption of The Principal Riverwalk Master Plan as a reference in the 2020 Community Character Plan, land use amendments and the proposed new zoning district boundaries and regulations.

Other anticipated staff actions include the following:

1. Continue to work with The Principal Financial Group in developing an agreement with the proposed Riverfront Authority.
2. Continue to work with The Principal Financial Group, the Des Moines Recreation and River Greenbelt Committee, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of Natural Resources, the State Historic Preservation Office, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and other interested parties in developing the detailed design for the Phase I improvements.
3. Continue to work with The Principal Financial Group in obtaining federal and state dollars to fund Phase I improvements. The Vision Iowa Board is anticipated to review the City's grant application at its September 10, 2003 meeting.
4. Continue to work with the Army Corps of Engineers, Greenbelt Advisory Committee, and the Congressional delegation to accomplish the many tasks that will be necessary to obtain federal approval of funding for the project.
5. Continue to coordinate the design and construction of the proposed Combined Sewer System (CSS), Des Moines River Outfall and Overflow project with Phase I improvements.
6. Continue to work on the design of the Riverpoint Trail connection from Gray's Lake to the downtown with the goal of expediting this project as quickly as possible.
7. In conjunction with The Principal Financial Group, the downtown business community, the Eastside Alliance, the downtown neighborhood association,

and others, develop a formal plan for operation and maintenance for the Riverwalk before construction of the Phase I improvements. The “Operation and Maintenance Plan” will be consistent with the guiding principles as previously established by Council.

On file with the City Clerk’s Office are the various documents Council is being asked to approve and/or refer on to the appropriate Boards and Commissions.