CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION:

03-503

AGENDA:

OCTOBER 6, 2003

SUBJECT:

ACCEPTING THE DONATION OF THE RACCOON RIVER RAILROAD BRIDGE AND AUTHORIZING ITS REMOVAL

TYPE:

RESOLUTION
ORDINANCE
RECEIVE/FILE

SUBMITTED BY:

JEB E. BREWER, P.E.
CITY ENGINEER

ITEM____

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
CITY OF DES MOINES, IOWA

SYNOPSIS —

An agreement with the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company has been negotiated for the donation of a bridge to the City. This donation will allow the bridge to be removed, thus improving flood protection and saving operation and maintenance costs of the future Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) Parkway and Fleur Drive interchange.

FISCAL IMPACT —

The bridge removal will save future operation and maintenance costs. The current $130 million MLK Parkway budget included funds for channel shaping. These funds, approximately $400,000, will be used for the bridge removal, and the channel shaping will be deleted, resulting in no change to the total budget.

RECOMMENDATION —

Accepting donated bridge for removal.

BACKGROUND —

In order to obtain the Corps of Engineer's permit necessary to construct the MLK Parkway north/south and east/west bridges over the Raccoon River, the City must certify that there will be no rise in the flood elevation resulting from the bridge construction. To meet this requirement, the bridge design included tree removal and channel shaping to increase the river channel capacity, and mitigate any changes to the Raccoon River flows associated with construction of the bridges. This channel shaping would have resulted in a number of trees being removed. During the 2002 MLK Parkway stakeholders' meeting, a number of citizens expressed a desire to preserve these trees.

In 2003, the Union Pacific abandoned the rail line into the Bell Avenue lead yards. This abandonment then rendered the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway bridge across the Raccoon River, near Gray's Lake Park, obsolete, as there was no connecting service. This bridge has been damaged by previous floods and fire, and is unusable for rail traffic. In addition, the railroad bridge sits low over the Raccoon River, causing backwater at certain river flows.

After careful hydraulic analysis, it was determined that the removal of the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway bridge would improve the river

flows to the extent that the proposed MLK-Raccoon River channel shaping will not be necessary. The upfront costs between the channel shaping and bridge demolition would essentially be the same; however, there would be significant long-term operation and maintenance cost savings realized by eliminating the periodic removal of silt and debris to maintain the new river channel shaping and from eliminating the maintenance of an existing levee closure. In addition, numerous riverbank trees will not need to be removed since the channel shaping has been eliminated.