



Agenda Item:

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COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

City Manager's Office

GENERAL INFORMATION

Agenda Date: 8/8/05
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Communication No.: 05-434
Roll Call No.:

Submitted by: Richard Clark, Acting City Manager

SUBJECT—

Approving Employment of the Ferguson Group to Consult and Perform Services That Will Facilitate Transportation, Economic Development, Community Revitalization, Homeland Security and Related Projects in the City of Des Moines.

SYNOPSIS—

Council is requested to employ the Ferguson Group (1130 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036, Ken Brown, Principal) a Washington, DC lobbying firm, to assist in securing of federal funding, provide governmental affairs services and strategic advice, and foster alliances between the City and Federal Administration leaders to facilitate community revitalization and related projects throughout Des Moines. Community revitalization projects include redevelopment of Riverpoint West, the Agrimergent Technology Park, and various sites especially in industrialized areas of the community as well as the Riverwalk. Related projects include the SE Connector, I-235, GIS, emergency service interoperability and other homeland security work. The Ferguson Group's specialized expertise will be used primarily to assist the City in accessing extensive capital and technical resources to effect successful projects.

FISCAL IMPACT—

Professional services are estimated not to exceed \$30,000 (\$5,000/month), plus less than \$5,000 for expenses for a six-month contract period of July 1, 2005 through December 31, 2005. Funding is being provided from the City Manager's Office budget.

RECOMMENDATION—

Approval.

BACKGROUND—

The City has worked successfully with Ken Brown, formerly of the law firm of Spiegel & McDiarmid and now with the Ferguson Group, during the last five years. Since 2000, Mr. Brown has assisted the City in securing approximately \$35 million in federal funding for the City's high priority projects, in being designated a "Brownfields Showcase Community" and in enhancing the City's national reputation as a leader in brownfields and other community revitalization objectives. In late July, the firm assisted the City in obtaining nearly \$35 million for highway and related projects in the Transportation Reauthorization Bill.

Funding opportunities await the City for a variety of projects that will assist in enabling economic development, improving transportation and other infrastructure, supporting homeland security and advancing the community's quality of life. By working with the Ferguson Group, the City will enhance its ability to attract the capital and technical assistance needed. Local resources can be used to leverage additional investment more effectively.

The professional services to be provided by the Ferguson Group include the following:

- Identifying sources and assisting in defining priorities for federal assistance. The firm will continue to identify specific Federal agency grant and Congressional appropriations opportunities to support the City's high priority projects.
- Developing and implementing a strategy to obtain Congressional appropriations during FY 2006. The strategy will involve identifying Congressional funding opportunities, drafting appropriations request letters, working closely with Des Moines' Congressional offices, facilitating meetings and following up with key decision makers. This process is well under way. In addition, the firm will work with the City this fall to develop its priorities for the FY 2007 appropriations process, which will begin in early 2006.
- Developing and implementing a strategy to secure funding in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) reauthorization bill. The firm will continue to seek authorization in the WRDA bill or in the FY 2006 Energy and Water Appropriations Bill for construction related to the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers Flood Prevention Project.
- Supporting funding applications to Federal agencies. As needed, the firm will identify grant opportunities, review applications as necessary and help the City to secure the support of senior Administration and key Congressional officials for funding.
- Creating opportunities to enhance Des Moines' reputation as a national leader in community revitalization in order to promote the City's objectives. In particular, the firm will work to secure opportunities for the Mayor and other senior City officials to testify before Congress and attend key meetings where the City can receive national attention and promote its objectives.
- Monitoring national legislation of interest to the City and provide timely updates, especially related to new brownfields-related, Homeland Security and water and sewer infrastructure funding proposals.

- Providing Federal regulatory and legal assistance as needed to ensure successful project implementation.
- Providing regular updates of government affairs activities. The firm will send regular written updates describing the status of the City's various federal relations priorities to the City Manager.

The firm has specialized expertise. It has developed extensive relationships with federal agencies. Its knowledge of federal officials and programs will be very beneficial in advancing the City's community revitalization goals.

City staff will lead the effort to pursue federal funding opportunities and to develop new strategic alliances. The Ferguson Group will provide the support needed to enhance the City's capabilities in leveraging resources.