

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF FUNDING FOR 2009/10 COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

BACKGROUND:

As Council may recall, in October of 2004 the City Council allocated \$3,000 to assist with the costs for a community needs assessment. This assessment was a telephone survey of randomly selected individuals in Ames and Story County. Results of the survey were available in 2005, and were incorporated into the ASSET priorities by the funders as well as the agencies.

A group calling itself the Story County Community Coalition is again preparing for an update to this assessment. Initial work has already begun. Representatives of United Way, Mary Greeley Medical Center, Story County, and other local groups are involved in this process and have asked the City (and a staff representative) to again be involved. A minimum of \$50,000 needs to be raised for this survey, and \$48,000 has been raised to date from the organizations listed on Attachment A. Staff and students at Iowa State will be conducting and analyzing the results of the survey.

While \$50,000 is the minimum for this survey, additional funds are being raised in order to provide a higher level of analysis. By working with the University, significant cost savings will be realized over the 2004 survey (which cost approximately \$70,000), and will allow for more effective means of reaching the student population.

Staff is supportive of this request to assist in the funding of a needs assessment. It is anticipated that by working with Iowa State on this survey, the past concerns of inadequate sampling of the ISU student population should be resolved.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. The City Council can approve \$3,000 from the Local Option Sales Tax Fund balance for the purpose of conducting a Community Needs Assessment.
2. The City Council can approve \$3,000 from City Council Contingency Funds to pay for the assessment.
3. The City Council can deny this request.

MANAGER’S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is extremely helpful to the ASSET process to periodically assess the quality of life needs of our community. By working in cooperation with Mary Greeley Medical Center and other community organizations, the ASSET funders are able to gather this information from the public in a cost-effective manner. However, it is also important for the City of Ames that the student body at Iowa State University not be inadvertently excluded due to the choice of survey mechanism. Working with University staff in conducting the 2009 survey should address that concern and also save money.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, approving \$3,000 from the Local Option Sales Tax Fund balance for the purpose of conducting a Community Needs Assessment.