

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: IOWA GREAT PLACES GRANT APPLICATION

BACKGROUND:

The Ames Main Street Cultural District (MSCD) recently received designation as an Iowa Great Place. This designation recognizes communities that take action to enhance their local places while staying true to the qualities that make them unique. A benefit of this designation is the ability to apply for Iowa Great Places grants which are administered through the Iowa Arts Council. Cindy Hicks, MSCD Executive Director, approached Parks and Recreation staff regarding applying for this grant opportunity to make improvements to Bandshell Park. Staff was in favor of this idea and thus Ms. Hicks submitted a Letter of Intent for grant funding in August. The Iowa Arts Council reviewed the letter and invited MSCD to submit a grant application which is due November 1, 2017.

IOWA GREAT PLACES GRANT:

Available Funding and Grant Request Amounts

Funding for the Iowa Great Places Program is made possible through an appropriation by the Iowa Legislature from the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund. Grant awards are made on a case-by-case basis by the Iowa Great Places Citizen Advisory Board. As a reference, from fiscal years 2012-2017, grant awards ranged from \$41,500 - \$475,000, with an average grant award of \$185,331.

Match Requirement

Applicants are required to demonstrate investment in projects by providing a cash match that is a minimum of 50% of the total grant amount requested. The cash match must be secured, dedicated to eligible vertical infrastructure expenses, a legitimate part of the proposed project, and must be expended within the eligible funding period.

Funding Period

All project activities and incurred expenses must occur within the eligible contracted funding period of January 1, 2018 – December 31, 2020. Funding is

awarded to grant recipients on a reimbursement basis after expenses have been incurred for approved project activities within the eligible funding period.

Project and Budget Requirements

Iowa Great Places funding supports eligible vertical infrastructure expenses that are essential to the completion of proposed projects. Eligible projects must involve the creation or renovation of vertical infrastructure for the benefit of the public. Examples of eligible projects include but are not limited to development of cultural facilities and amenities, public art, building rehabilitation, way-finding signage, mixed use developments, streetscape enhancements, and development of trails and parks.

THE PROJECT:

Bandshell Park is the City’s oldest park and is home to the Durham Bandshell which was constructed in 1935 and renovated in 2005-06. There are additional improvements needed to preserve the building as well as making upgrades to meet the needs of today’s performers. **Below is a summary of proposed improvements and whether the funding is provided through the City’s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) or the Iowa Great Places Grant (IGPG).**

PROJECT	CIP		IGPG AMOUNT	TOTAL AMOUNT
	FY	AMOUNT		
Master Plan Development		\$ 0	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
Electrical Upgrades	17/18	\$ 110,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 160,000
LED Archway Lighting	15/16	\$ 50,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 70,000
Painting the Shell	15/16	\$ 30,000	\$ 0	\$ 30,000
Changing Room Renovation	19/20 & 20/21	\$ 55,000	\$ 0	\$ 55,000
Additional Lighting along Sidewalks		\$ 0	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Sidewalk along East Side of Park		\$ 0	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
Widen Sidewalk in Front of Stage		\$ 0	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Basement Renovation (Address water issues, painting, etc.)		\$ 0	\$ 125,000	\$ 125,000
Irrigation Upgrades		\$ 0	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Install Period Appropriate Fencing Around Park Perimeter		\$ 0	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000

Hallway and Restroom Upgrades		\$ 0	\$ 55,000	\$ 55,000
TOTALS		\$ 245,000	\$ 455,000	\$ 700,000

To date, \$190,000 has been carried forward and available for the renovations identified above. Since the funding period ends December 31, 2020, the changing room renovation would need to be completed by this date. Not knowing what the construction climate will be in 2020 or delays that may be incurred, it is possible this project would not be finished in time to meet the matching requirements. Options include moving this CIP project to FY 19/20 or not including this project in the match and thus reduce the grant request.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve a motion directing staff to work with Main Street Cultural District Executive Director for submittal of an Iowa Great Places Grant application for improvements to Bandshell Park as shown above.
2. Approve a motion directing staff to work with Main Street Cultural District Executive Director for submittal of an Iowa Great Places Grant application for improvements to Bandshell Park with changes to the above projects as directed by City Council.
3. Refer back to staff for more information as directed by City Council.
4. Decide not to submit an application for the Great Places grant program at this time.

CITY MANAGER’S RECOMMENDATION:

Bandshell Park is the City’s first and oldest park and the Durham Bandshell is over 80 years old. The 2005/06 renovation to the Bandshell addressed some issues, but not all of them. **City Council recognized the need to make improvements by already allocating \$190,000 for this purpose with another \$55,000 in the CIP. By collaborating with MSCD, the City can leverage these funds to secure additional funds through this grant opportunity for Bandshell Park improvements.**

The proposed improvements will afford the City an updated venue that better meets the needs of potential performers. It also makes the Bandshell a more marketable venue as we look to secure additional shows in the years to come.

Therefore, it is the City Manager’s recommendation to approve Alternative #1 as stated above.