



To: Mayor and Ames City Council

From: Steven L. Schainker, City Manager

Date: July 18, 2023

Subject: Mid-Iowa Planning Alliance (MIPA) Annual Membership

Last fiscal year for the first time, the City became a member of the Mid-Iowa Planning Alliance. This new organization offers the following services to its members:

- Grant writing
- Regional planning projects
- Local planning projects such as comprehensive plans and zoning updates
- Staffing for regional initiatives such as Story County Housing Trust
- Other member support, e.g., technical assistance and map-making

Of all of the services offered, we were particularly interested in the assistance that could be offered in terms of identifying available grant opportunities and assisting with the preparation of grant applications. Because of the limitations on increasing property tax revenues imposed by the State Legislature, the pursuit of grant revenues is becoming more important.

An evaluation of the first year of this membership indicates that the City did receive benefit from MIPA membership in regards to grant opportunities where valuable assistance was received from MIPA staff. Therefore, I am recommending we renew our MIPA membership for another year. The annual cost was \$12,455 for FY 2022/23. With

an increase in the number of members, the dues for FY 20223/24 will be reduced to \$9,965. Funding for the dues will come from the balance of unused FY 2022/23 Council Contingency Account funds.

One concern I do have with the MIPA involves the future funding of the organization. Currently, MIPA contracts with the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization to provide the staffing, office space, etc. to provide the services offered by MIPA to its members. The direct and indirect costs are charged to MIPA, along with a 5% administrative fee. This arrangement provides a win/win situation for both organizations. MIPA avoids the extreme costs associated with hiring full-time staff, owning or leasing office space, and securing all the other support functions, while the Des Moines Area MPO is able to share some of its overhead costs with another organization. In this way, both organizations save money.

Unfortunately, the Des Moines Area MPO has informed MIPA that FY 2023/24 will be the final year of the partnership. As a result of this information, the MIPA board is now seeking proposals from other entities who might be interested in providing the same administrative services. It is my fear the if another third party is not interested in assuming these functions, MIPA will have to hire its own full-time staff, lease office staff, obtain its own accounting, legal, human resources functions, etc. **This new independent arrangement could lead to a significant increase in the annual dues thereby calling into question the cost/benefit of membership beyond FY 2023/24.**



Mid-Iowa Planning Alliance for Community Development
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June 14, 2023

City Clerk
City of Ames
PO Box 811
Ames, IA 50010

RE: FY24 MIPA Membership

Dear City Clerk,

The Mid-Iowa Planning Alliance for Community Development (MIPA) is dedicated to supporting communities in Boone, Dallas, Jasper, Marion, Polk, Story, and Warren Counties. MIPA has had a meaningful impact on the Mid-Iowa region since it became operational in April of 2022. Please see the enclosed summary of the activities performed over the last year. Member jurisdictions receive the following services:

- Grant writing
- Regional planning via the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- Option to contract with MIPA for local planning, such as plans or zoning updates
- Staffing for regional initiatives, specifically the Central Iowa Housing Trust Fund and Story County Housing Trust
- Other member support, e.g., technical assistance, map-making, and local planning

MIPA membership dues are calculated at \$0.15 per capita using 2020 census figures. Enclosed is an invoice for fiscal year 2024 MIPA membership. Collected dues are used to match federal funds that MIPA receives to support the economic and community development activities performed by MIPA for its members.

If you have any questions concerning the invoice or services provided by MIPA, please contact me at cknutson@midiowaplanning.org

Sincerely,

Caleb Knutson
Senior Planner

Enclosures



Supporting Economic Development in
Boone, Dallas, Jasper, Marion, Polk,
Story, and Warren Counties.