

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: 2010/11 NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT GRANTS

BACKGROUND:

The City Council has appropriated Local Option Sales Tax funds to finance the Neighborhood Improvement Program (NIP). As listed in the approved Capital Improvements Plan, \$50,000 has been approved for neighborhood programs, with \$25,000 earmarked for the NIP and the remaining \$25,000 allocated for a broader array of neighborhood projects to be determined by the City Council.

There are two main goals of the NIP: (1) to strengthen a neighborhood's appearance with the addition of permanent physical improvements, and (2) to promote a greater sense of community through resident participation in a neighborhood project.

Each project application is rated on the following 100-point system. A project must achieve at least 50 points to be considered:

Resident Involvement (30 points maximum):*

...the number of residents donating their time and/or labor to accomplish the project

...the number of residents donating funds to the project

*10 points 1-25 people; 20 points 26-50 people; 30 points over 50 people

Project Impact (30 points maximum):**

...the number of residents who will be positively affected by the improvement

**10 points 1-25 people; 20 points 26-100 people; 30 points over 100 people

Safety (10 points maximum):

...enhancement of safety in the neighborhood

Public Space (10 points maximum):

...promotion of social interaction by utilizing public space

Improved Housing (10 points maximum)

Environment (10 points maximum):

...support for the environment

One grant application for FY 2010/11 has been received to date. It was scored by the Review Panel on February 16, 2011, and received more than enough points to be recommended for approval by the City Council.

The project is as follows:

HISTORIC OLD TOWN NEIGHBORHOOD STREET TREE IN-FILL PROJECT: The Historic Old Town Neighborhood Association is proposing to purchase and plant 50 trees within the street right-of-way portion of Old Town neighborhood, which extends from 6th Street on the south to 13th Street on the north and from Grand Avenue on the west to the east side of Duff Avenue. The initial focus will be on gaps identified as part of a street tree inventory/assessment of selected blocks, which was conducted by the Urban Forestry class at Iowa State University during Fall 2010. Only those who have signed as willing participants in the project will receive a tree. If the resident is unable to care for the tree, another member of the neighborhood will do so.

Tree species to be planted will be consistent with the City's Street Tree Policy. Actual siting of the trees will be done with input from the City's Public Works Department to avoid issues with utility lines. The City will not be responsible to replace trees in the parking due to improper care within five years of planting.

The total cost of the project is \$5,599. Requested City funding is \$1,699. The applicants will be providing in-kind labor and materials in the amount of \$3,900.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. The City Council can approve the expenditure of \$1,699 to fund a NIP grant for the Historic Old Town Neighborhood Street Tree In-Fill Project.
2. The City Council can reject the project for funding at this time.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Supporting projects that strengthen neighborhoods is in keeping with one of the City Council's goals. It is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative #1, thereby approving Neighborhood Improvement Program grants in the amount of \$1,699 to fund a NIP grant for the Historic Old Town Neighborhood Street Tree In-Fill project.