

ITEM#: 14  
DATE: 01-10-23  
DEPT: P & R

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT: COMMUNITY ATTRACTION AND TOURISM (CAT) GRANT APPLICATION FOR FITCH FAMILY INDOOR AQUATIC CENTER**

**BACKGROUND:**

To help with funding for the Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center, an Enhance Iowa Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) grant can be pursued. Historically, awards have been between 10-20% of total project costs, however, the Enhance Iowa Board has an award cap policy of \$1 million. Staff is working with representatives from the Ames Chamber of Commerce on this application. In November 2022, staff submitted an intent to apply and listed the anticipated request of \$500,000. Staff received confirmation that the intent to apply had been received and was given the materials necessary to submit an application.

**COMMUNITY ATTRACTION AND TOURISM GRANT:**

**Available Funding and Grant Request Awards**

Funding for the CAT Grant Program is made possible through an appropriation by the Iowa Legislature. Grant awards are made by the Enhance Iowa Board (EIB) which is a function of the Iowa Economic Development Authority. As a reference, grant awards range from \$50,000 to over \$1,000,000.

**Match Requirement**

Applicants are required to have a cash match from the City and County governments to be eligible for a grant. The match is to demonstrate investment from the City and County in projects being considered for CAT grant funding. Enhance Iowa Board does not dictate what this match must be in terms of a percentage of the total project or a specific dollar amount. EIB does indicate that at least 65% of the total project cost has been raised prior to applying and must be in the form of cash donations or pledges.

Please note the Story County Board of Supervisors approved \$500,000 at its Tuesday, May 3, 2022 meeting to be given to the City of Ames for the Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center. The Board of Supervisors included the condition that Story County residents pay the same fees as Ames residents in exchange for the funding. Council has yet to accept this funding and accompanying stipulation.

**Application Deadline and Grant Funding Award Date**

The CAT Grant application is due January 15, 2023. The application will undergo an EIB staff review to determine if all eligibility requirements have been met. Applications that clear the staff review will be invited to present to the EIB. A decision on funding awards

will be made sometime after the presentation. A component of the CAT grant application process is having City Council pass a resolution supporting the application submittal.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Resolution approving the submittal of a State of Iowa Community Attraction and Tourism grant application for the Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center in the amount of \$500,000.
2. Do not submit a Community Attraction and Tourism grant application.

**CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Cost estimates for the Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center coupled with the uncertainties in the construction market have raised questions as to whether there is enough funding for this project. Due to these funding concerns, any opportunity to secure additional funding should be pursued. Council is only being asked to approve submitting a CAT grant application at this time and will have an opportunity at a future meeting to accept or deny a grant if the City receives an award. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1.