



TO: Mike Van Milligen, City Manager
FROM: Randy Gehl, Public Information Officer
DATE: Jan. 27, 2014
SUBJECT: Request for Additional Position for Bee Branch Watershed Project

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this memorandum is to request the addition of a full-time Communications Specialist position to the Public Information Office for the planning and implementation of a communications and engagement plan for the Bee Branch Watershed Project.

BACKGROUND

The recent decision of the Iowa Flood Mitigation Board to award \$98.5 million to the City for the Bee Branch Creek Watershed has enabled the City to proceed with implementation of this \$179 million project. Several phases of the project will significantly impact a large portion of the community and many residents and businesses. The timeline on the project has been reduced from over 50 years to about 20 years, with most of the work occurring within the next six years.

DISCUSSION

I am requesting the addition of a full-time Communications Specialist to the Public Information Office to focus on communication and engagement projects related to the Bee Branch Watershed Project.

Working under the direction of the Public Information Officer and departmental staff coordinating the project, this position would develop and implement communication plans to inform and engage residents and stakeholders impacted by the various phases of the project as they are planned, implemented, and completed. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- coordination of outreach to property owners and residents,
- coordination of outreach to neighborhood associations and other groups,
- implementation of a project brand/identity,
- expansion and maintenance of project website,
- development and distribution of project publications,
- development and utilization of social media ,
- coordination of public meetings related to the project,
- coordination of public presentations, and
- development of information distribution plan for project information.

PROJECT COST - BUDGET IMPACT

City staff involved in planning the project have identified funds within the project budget that would cover the costs associated with a full-time staff person and other expenses (printing, postage, advertising, etc.) that may be associated with an ongoing communication campaign related to the Bee Branch Watershed Project. Estimated recurring costs for the position would be \$62,172 (\$41,724 salary plus benefits for GE-29, Step A pay grade) per year with non-recurring costs of \$4,114 (laptop computer and software). Additionally, \$10,000 per year for the first three years of the project has been budgeted

ACTION TO BE TAKEN

I am requesting your approval to immediately begin recruitment for this full-time position. Outreach to property owners related to alley reconstruction scheduled to begin this spring has already begun, as has some initial public information efforts related to the project.

Prepared by:

Randy Gehl, Public Information Officer

cc:

Jennifer Larson, Budget Director

Deron Muehring, Civil Engineer

Alexis Steger, Engineering Accounts Clerk