



AGENDA ITEM NO.

COUNCIL MEETING

APPROVED BY _____

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR _____

CITY MANAGER

April 10, 2007

FROM: SCOTT JOHNSON, Director
Economic Development Department

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SUBJECT: AUTHORIZE CITY MANAGER TO NEGOTIATE AND ENTER INTO A \$170,552 CONTRACT WITH QUAD-KNOPF FOR ENGINEERING AND DESIGN PROJECTIONS FOR THE DOWNTOWN RIVERWALK FEASIBILITY STUDY.

KEY RESULTS AREA

Economic Development

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the City Council authorize the City Manager to negotiate and enter into a \$170,552 contract with Quad-Knopf to perform the engineering and design projections for the Downtown Riverwalk Feasibility Study. The \$170,552 would come from the \$1.5 million of Park Impact Fees allocated to the Downtown Riverwalk.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Per the Council Tray Memo of March 28, 2007, on December 5, 2006, the Council approved the anticipated expenditure \$1.5 million for a Downtown Riverwalk, bordered by Van Ness, Inyo, "H", and Ventura, using Park Impact Fees. (See attached project map). Anticipated items included a conceptual design. Quad-Knopf was hired under an existing contract in the Planning Department to begin the conceptual design, and \$31,976 was billed for initial engineering and design projections for the feasibility of building a Downtown Riverwalk. Additional expenses of \$88,576 were incurred for an on-site visit to Oklahoma City, numerous planning meetings with the City, RDA, Forest City and others, and more detailed historical infrastructure and utility research within the designated project area. An additional \$50,000 is needed to complete a comprehensive feasibility study and return to Council with a river project proposal. It is being recommended that a new contract be initiated and that all of the \$170,552 of fees related to the riverwalk be billed under one contract and funded by the \$1.5 million in Park Impact Fees.

KEY OBJECTIVE BALANCE

Citizens will benefit from being able to have a downtown revitalization and beautification project that creates a “sense of place” within their City core, jobs will ultimately be created as businesses expand or move into a revitalized area, and financially the City will benefit from the increased sales tax, property tax, business license fees, and building permit/development entitlement fee revenues.

BACKGROUND

A downtown Fresno lake or river has been a topic of discussion for well over a decade. Each time this exciting concept has surfaced it has not progressed beyond the “dream stage.” What consistently has been lacking is a careful, well-prepared Feasibility Study that weighs in on the major issues of design, function, and economic value and addresses those elements that create a “sense of place.”

On December 5, 2006, as part of the Parks Impact Fee agenda item, the City Council approved \$1.5 million for a “Downtown Riverwalk”, bordered by Van Ness, Inyo, “H”, and Ventura. Per the staff report, “The funds would be used for a) environmental assessment, b) conceptual design, c) utility relocation/move plan, and, d) economic impact evaluation.”

Prior to this item being passed staff initiated a feasibility study for the Riverwalk. Meetings have taken place among a Downtown River Study Team consisting of the City, the RDA, Forest City (holders of an Exclusive Development Agreement with the RDA), Quad-Knopf (Engineering/Design) and Kosmont (Economic Feasibility). Quad-Knopf was brought on under an existing consultant contract in the Planning Department, and a contract with Kosmont was set in place within the Economic Development Department. The focus: A downtown river project that included park amenities, good design and function, and a strong economic stimulus to revitalize a redevelopment area much in need of attention.

During subsequent meetings attended periodically by Forest City and a few Council members, Council Member Jerry Duncan suggested that a visit to Oklahoma City’s Bricktown might prove beneficial. Due to severe winter storms throughout the mid-west, this trip was not scheduled until January 24/25. A group of 13 people, made up of representatives of the above noted Study Team and expanded to include Council Members Sterling and Westerlund, viewed the canal area and participated in a full day of meetings with the previous Oklahoma City Mayor, their current staff, engineers and developers of this project.

A Bricktown debriefing meeting was held in early February, along with Forest City representatives, in order to explore mutually beneficial downtown plans within the Forest City Master Plan area. Forest City is currently in the midst of doing major revisions to their original master plan. A downtown tour of possible river sites was also completed in early March by the Study Group and included the Transportation Plan consultant and staff, and the Kern Street architects working on streetscape ideas for Sportstown. The intent is to ensure a “big-picture” integration of the Downtown Transportation Plan, Fulton Mall, Kern Street/Sportstown and the River.

A “60-Day” Plan is now underway to take what we have learned so far in the feasibility study and increase public input prior to a return to Council with a Downtown River agenda item in May, 2007. The 60-day plan will include: (1) a more focused river location discussion with the RDA, Forest City, City staff and consultants; (2) a more in depth integrated design charette with the Study Group, Sportstown and Transportation Plan consultants, and Council/RDA representatives; (3) focus group meetings; (4) financial feasibility; (5) economic benefit and, (6) a Council Workshop prior to a final agenda presentation in May.

To date, \$31,976 has been billed to the Planning Department’s contract for Quad-Knopf’s initial engineering and design projections. When an urban planner was needed as part of this analysis, staff decided to sub-contract this work through Quad-Knopf rather than enter into a separate contract. Quad-Knopf sub-contracted with Rossetti/Jorgensen (urban architect) for an estimated \$20,000. Including their participation in the Oklahoma Bricktown trip and a drill down of data on the river target area itself, as well as estimated construction and filtration costs, coordination with City staff and Forest City; etc., total costs not yet billed represent \$88,576.

Over time the initial feasibility of this project has moved into a much more thorough and comprehensive analysis that includes information and linkages on the Downtown Transportation Study, Sportstown, the Convention Center, the Fulton Mall, and Eaton Plaza. In order to complete the Feasibility Study and the related "60-Day" Plan, an additional \$50,000 is being proposed for final renderings, specific build-out costs, economic impact; etc. This would bring the total costs to be billed to the Park Impact Fees, under the Riverwalk expenditure, at \$170,552. This includes the original billing of \$31,976, the current fees of \$88,576, and the remaining \$50,000.

FISCAL IMPACT

The new contract would be for a total of \$170,552 and would be billed to Park Impact Fees under the Riverwalk allocation of \$1.5 million.

Attachment: Map of proposed project area

