

CC Regular Session**7. 14.****Meeting Date:** 09/13/2016

Information**Title:**

Discuss Opportunity for Assistance from University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) to Complete Pending Land Use Studies and Strategic Plan Initiatives - **This case was originally slated for the Council Work Session agenda, but due to lack of time it was added to the Regular CC agenda at the meeting.**

Purpose/Background:**Purpose**

The purpose of this case is to inform City Council of an innovative program opportunity through the University of Minnesota's Resilient Communities Project (RCP). This case should not be interpreted as formal consideration of the program at this time; the intent is to simply bring this opportunity to the attention of the City Council. Staff is bringing this forward for discussion with the idea that this program may bring innovative ideas to several policy topics currently under consideration that may not be considered with existing resources and expertise.

Each academic year (July 1 - June 30), one community is selected as the Partner Community and gains access to a broad base of knowledge and expertise from U of MN faculty, graduate students, and upper level undergraduate students. The program attempts to match community identified projects with graduate and upper level undergraduate courses to complete the identified project(s). The application process for this program has been divided into two (2) components with the first step being a Letter of Intent (due by September 15, 2016). Based on the LOI submittals, selected communities will then be invited to apply to the RCP program (application due by February 15, 2017). The selected community's partnership would begin July 1, 2017 and would end June 30, 2018.

Background

This program is based on projects identified by the Partner Community. As Staff discussed this opportunity, our goal was to consider what projects were 'in the hopper' but just haven't progressed yet for one reason or another. Attached is a list of possible projects that were identified by Community Development, Public Works, Engineering and Administration Staff that may be a good fit for this program. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, rather it simply demonstrates that there are a wide range of projects that could get jump started if Ramsey were selected as the Partner Community.

There are multiple benefits to participating in the RCP. Most notably is the access to faculty and graduate/upper level undergraduate students from multiple disciplines, including architecture, planning, engineering, environmental sciences, public health and others. It provides an opportunity to advance projects that may otherwise never get off the ground. Furthermore, assistance is available for all stages of sustainability, which can include analysis, planning, design, implementation, and evaluation. The Partner Community would gain access to hundreds of hours of concentrated student work on projects the City has specifically identified.

Staff has reached out to two (2) former Partner Communities to gauge their level of satisfaction with the program and whether they would do it again if the opportunity arose. Both communities were generally supportive of the program outcomes noting that some of the project results were equal to or exceeded work they had received from consultants. However, both communities identified staff time commitment as a challenge. The RCP program recommends that each project lead should plan for an average of 2-4 hours per week on their project(s) over the course of the twelve (12) month program and the overall program coordinator should plan for an average of 5-7 hours per week over the course of the program. The overall Program Manager would be the Community Development Director, with individual Project Managers including the City Planner and other key Staff based on the individual project.

There is a financial commitment required of the Partner Community, which is based on the number of projects proposed (for base payment) and actual number of projects successfully matched with a course or courses. Communities must proposed between ten (10) and thirty (30) projects; the base fee for ten to twenty (10-20) projects is \$40,000.00 and for twenty-one to thirty (21-30) projects, the base fee is \$80,000.00. In addition to the base fee, for each successfully matched project with a course or courses, there is an additional \$2,000.00 fee. So, for ten to twenty (10-20) projects, the total program cost could be up to \$80,000.00 and for twenty-one to thirty (21-30) projects, the total program cost could be up to \$120,000.00 (Staff would not recommend participation at this commitment level). Payment can be made in two (2) lump sum payments, the first due in fiscal year 2017 and the second due in fiscal year 2018. Staff would plan for a total commitment of \$60,000 to \$80,000 based on the City's potential project list, divided over two (2) fiscal years (\$30,000 to \$40,000 per year). Staff would recommend existing budget requests/forecasts for professional services (no impact to proposed 2017 General Fund Budget Request).

The RCP is an interesting program that may provide an innovative approach to address various initiatives outlined in the Strategic Plan. However, preparation of this case is not meant to indicate that the City is pursuing this opportunity but rather a means to inform City Council of the RCP program. Staff does acknowledge the level of Staff commitment to manage this program. Should the City Council provide direction to submit a LOI, a resolution of support has been placed on the regular agenda for consideration this evening.

Timeframe:

30 minutes

Funding Source:

If selected as the Partner Community, the required financial contribution would be paid through the Community Development Department's professional services budget or, depending on the project focus, potentially from a more appropriate Department's professional services budget.

Responsible Party(ies):

Community Development Director
City Planner

Outcome:

Provide direction to Staff to submit/not submit a Letter of Intent to the Resilient Communities Project for consideration.

Attachments

Resilient Communities Project Program Background

Summaries of Past Community Partner Projects

Potential City Projects

Form Review

Inbox	Reviewed By	Date
Tim Gladhill	Tim Gladhill	09/07/2016 02:49 PM
Kurt Ulrich	Kurt Ulrich	09/08/2016 04:01 PM
Form Started By: Chris Anderson		Started On: 09/06/2016 02:32 PM
Final Approval Date: 09/20/2016		