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TO: Michael C Van Milligen, City Manager

FROM: Teri Goodman, Assistant City Manager  
Alvin Nash, Director Housing and Community Development  
Gus Psihoyos, City Engineer

DATE: November 2, 2016

RE: HUD - National Disaster Resilience Competition grant  
Status Update: Assisting the Bee Branch Watershed

## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this memo is to provide a status update for the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) National Disaster Resiliency Competition grant.

## **BACKGROUND**

In March 2015, the City was part of an Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) Phase I application to the National Disaster Resilience Competition. IEDA was invited on to Phase II, the final round of the competition. The City worked with state partners and the Iowa Flood Center throughout the summer and fall to prepare the Phase II application.

The competition defined a resilient community as one that is able to resist and rapidly recover from disasters or other shocks with minimal outside assistance. Reducing current and future risk is essential to the long-term vitality, economic well-being, and security of all communities. By identifying future risk and vulnerabilities, resilient recovery planning can maximize preparedness, save lives, and bring benefits to a community long after recovery projects are complete. The work of the HUD – National Disaster Resiliency Competition grant fit well with the City Council goals to create a Viable, Livable and Equitable community.

In January 2016, the HUD National Disaster Resiliency Competition grant awarded the State of Iowa \$95.7 million. The City of Dubuque received \$31.5 million of this award in disaster resiliency funds for the Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program and storm water infrastructure improvements. The City partnered with the State of Iowa to apply for the federal funds through the National Disaster Resilience Competition

(NDRC), which invited communities that experienced natural disasters in 2011, 2012, or 2013 to compete for funds to help them rebuild and increase their resilience to future disasters. Nationally, only thirteen recipients out of forty-eight applicants successfully competed for this award.

## **DISCUSSION**

The HUD – National Disaster Resiliency Competition application highlights the need for flood disaster resiliency models in Midwestern states. The grant lays out a state-wide Iowa Watershed Approach to flood disaster through planning and implementation of watershed management plans in twelve Iowa watersheds. Goals include building resiliency into Iowa's rural and urban landscapes through the reintroduction of floodplains, wetlands, riparian zones, bottomland forests and other resilient green infrastructure amenities. The actual construction of the Bee Branch Flood Mitigation project infrastructure provided the required leverage for the HUD – National Disaster Resiliency Competition award to the State of Iowa; it leveraged the HUD funds which enabled the State of Iowa to establish, staff, create masterplans and initiate implementation of twelve watershed management authorities from the Nishnabotna River in Southwest Iowa to the Upper Iowa in Northeast Iowa

Iowa's application highlights the need to address urban watershed management and selects Dubuque, Iowa as the model for urban flood disaster resiliency. Dubuque's urban Bee Branch watershed has experienced six Presidential Disaster Declarations since 1999. The HUD National Disaster Resiliency Competition grant presents a plan to tackle the unaddressed impacts from the flooding experienced in downtown Dubuque, tracing these impacts to the flooding in 2011. The application cites property owners with limited resources, which hinders their ability to perform home maintenance and renovations to decrease environmental health and safety issues from flooding such as dampness and mold growth, electrical hazards, and structural issues. A comprehensive "Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program" (BBHHRP) is outlined to help residents meet unmet structural needs and engagement to empower individuals to be part of the creation of more resilient housing through onsite storm water management principles and sustainable, healthy homes disciplines.

While the City of Dubuque has received \$160 million in grants to assist in the \$219 million Bee Branch Watershed management project, this is the first grant that provides direct assistance to homeowners.

State partners for the HUD – National Disaster Resiliency Competition award include:

- University of Iowa Flood Center
- University of Iowa Center for Evaluative Studies
- Nutrient Research Center Iowa State University
- Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management
- Iowa Economic Development Authority
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship

The resiliency grant awarded to the State of Iowa with specific details related to the City of Dubuque will include the following projects:

### **HOUSING PROJECTS**

Performing repairs to homes located in a limited number of census tracts in the Bee Branch Watershed includes but will not be limited to: Remediation of mold and mildew; replacement of equipment such as hot water heaters, furnaces and electrical panels; basic basement waterproofing; and making a home resilient to run off water and future flooding. The City plans to make resilient 320 housing units, which will affect approximately 1,120 individuals. The City GIS Department has developed an interactive map to be used for this grant whereby anyone can type in their address and will immediately know if their property is located in the eligible area.

- 188 single-family units
- 30 duplexes (60 family units)
- 28 single-family rental units
- 5 Quad-plexes (20 family units)
- 4 triplexes (12 family units)
- 1-12-unit apartment complex (12 family units)

A special feature of the Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program will be the services of a Home Advocate, whose job is to assist family members with information services and options to help them become resilient with regard to health issues, employment, education, and prevention. The Home Advocate will be referring homeowners and tenants to services provided by over two dozen community organizations and programs.

### **INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS**

#### **Bee Branch Railroad Culvert Infrastructure Improvements**

The proposed improvements involve the installation of six 8-foot diameter culverts utilizing tunneling methods from the Lower Bee Branch Creek, approximately 165 feet through Canadian Pacific railroad right-of-way, to a proposed junction box. It also includes the construction of five 12-foot wide by 10-foot high box storm sewers from the proposed junction box two hundred feet north towards Garfield Avenue and the Upper Bee Branch Creek.

#### **22<sup>nd</sup> Street/Kaufmann Ave Storm Sewer Improvements**

The storm sewer would be a 10-foot by 6-foot reinforced concrete box culvert (RCBC). In addition, 80 standard single grate inlets would be provided with local storm sewer and connections to the new box culvert.

#### **17<sup>th</sup> & Locust St Storm Sewer Improvements**

The proposed West Locust Street Corridor storm sewer is to be a 10-foot by 5-foot RCBC from 17th Street to approximately 280 feet west of Angella Street, 10-foot by 4-foot RCBC from 280 feet west of Angella Street to 400 feet west of

Kirkwood Street, and 8-foot by 4-foot RCBC from 400 feet west of Kirkwood Street to Rosedale Avenue.

### **UPDATE - HUD NDRC GRANT IMPLEMENTATION**

The implementation and operational structure of the Resiliency grant will come under the Engineering Department and the Department of Housing and Community Development. The Engineering Department, under the direction of City Engineer Gus Psihoyos, will manage and coordinate the three infrastructure pieces of the resiliency grant consisting of the installation of the Bee Branch culvert under the railroad, and the two storm water improvements on 22nd St./ Kaufmann Avenue and also on 17th Street and West Locust. These improvements will be completed in conjunction with the Bee Branch Watershed Flood Mitigation Project.

The Department of Housing and Community Development, under the supervision of Housing Director Alvin Nash, will manage the housing pieces of the resiliency grant that will address the resiliency needs of 320 housing units in the Bee Branch Watershed; which includes addressing the housing issues that resulted from the July 2011 flood and assisting residents with any means available to increase their resiliency to natural and other disasters

Since the last update on the HUD – National Disaster Resiliency Competition (NDRC) grant the City has retained the services of the East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA) to assist with the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) requirements that are inherent in this HUD grant and relate specifically to funding and project delivery. The East Central Intergovernmental Association is a state designated Council of Governments. The Iowa Economic Development Authority staff recommended the City engage the services of ECIA to assist with various administrative components of the Resiliency grant contracts. Mark Schneider, ECIA Community Development Director has been assisting the City in with the development of the Administrative Plan that details the entire process by which the housing grant will be administered, including the many forms required for the process. In addition, Mark and his staff have assisted the City with the Environmental Review process that is required for all federally funded projects. This includes the upfront review process and the individual house reviews required once the properties have been identified and the individual project specifications determined by property. In addition, ECIA will assist the City with the Davis-Bacon compliance required where applicable in the resiliency contracts. ECIA will continue to provide valuable input with the overall overseeing the grant compliance requirements associated with these contracts. Gail Kuhle, ECIA project manager, will fill the role of Intake Specialist; receiving applications, verifying incomes, property documentation, potential duplication of benefits, scheduling inspectors and Home Advocate appointments for the Bee Branch Healthy Homes resiliency work. She will also submit the financial draw requests and various reports to the IEDA for the infrastructure and housing contracts to document progress and compliance.

The City of Dubuque will staff the project by hiring two full-time limited term employees. The first full-time employee, the Bee Branch Healthy Homes Project Coordinator has

been hired. Sharon Gaul will fill this role overseeing the resiliency work on the 320 housing units. The second full-time limited term employee will be the Grant Administrator who will process and track the financial requirements of the contract, manage drawdowns, pay subcontractors, manage the budget, assist with A-133 audits and coordinate with ECIA regarding administrative procedures related to our contract with the Iowa Economic Development Authority. John Tharp has been hired as the Grant Administrator and he will report directly to Budget Director Jenny Larson and coordinate with both the Engineering and Housing and Community Development programs.

To complete the work related to Bee Branch Healthy Homes resiliency rehab management, including work write-ups and actual repairs to the homes, the city has published an RFP for resiliency housing rehab services which includes inspections, work write-ups and bidding individual jobs with responses due November 10th. Should the bids the City receives for these services be significantly more than the cost the City would incur by hiring additional full time limited term city employees, the City may hire full time limited term employees to perform rehab services.

The Housing Department previously solicited responses to an RFP for the Home Advocate work that will be associated with the Resiliency - Housing contract. The Home Advocate will meet individually with home owners and tenants of rental properties to be assisted with the Resiliency construction work. The intent is to offer assistance to owners and tenants that will assist them with additional work that may be required and is not eligible for the Resiliency program and assist them with their social resilience. Social resilience is a newer concept that will attempt to address any needs that are identified to make the residents more resilient to not only a natural disaster, such as flood events, but also to life disasters. These might be anything from a job loss to major illness to dealing with the everyday issues that any one of us could face. The Home Advocate will network with the many services providers that exist within our community and work with the residents to direct them in appropriate directions for the assistance that will make them more resilient persons and families. The Home Advocate will continue to follow up with the residents in order to assist and encourage them as they move forward.

ECIA will perform technical duties for both Engineering and the Housing departments and report to the designated personnel in each department. The Home Advocate services and the inspections and rehab contracts will be coordinated by the Resiliency Project Coordinator, Sharon Gaul.

The City of Dubuque has made a decision that instead of hiring at least five additional full-time staff it is more prudent to hire two critical staff persons and subcontract for the other positions. The subcontracting will do three things: First, reduce the number of full-time additional employees the City has to hire; second, is a cost-effective measure in which to manage the funds; and third, to hire the expertise is critical to the project so that all categories of the program can hit the ground running and not have to spend enormous amounts of time trying to hire and train specific people with expertise in infrastructure and housing resiliency.

The cost of these full time limited positions and contracted services will be covered by the grant for a period of five years.

Finally, meetings have been held with partners from the State universities and various state agencies and departments. Work continues with community and State partners as City staff enter their third year of biweekly meetings, collaborating in the creation of resiliency performance models that can be replicated throughout the Midwest.

Additional meetings are planned as we ramp up to begin the next phase of work.

### **Update - Related, Supporting Activities in Bee Branch Watershed**

The work of the HUD – National Disaster Resiliency Competition is supported by related activities in the Bee Branch Watershed and throughout the community. The efforts to improve the flood disaster resiliency of Dubuque's oldest neighborhoods is not taking place in a vacuum but is only one piece of the City Council's intentional efforts to reclaim vital urban neighborhoods. Other activities impacting and supporting the work of HUD National Disaster Resiliency Competition grant include:

*Neighborhood recreational opportunities* in the Bee Branch Watershed will be enhanced through the creation of a linear park extending one mile into Dubuque's historic neighborhoods. The linear park will include play areas, hike and bike trails, fishing opportunities and a community orchard in addition to quality of life improvements. The proposed expansion and improvements slated for Comiskey Park will also provide more green space and recreational options for families and residents of the Bee Branch Watershed.

*Performance/educational space* like the Bee Branch Amphitheater and attendant programming allows students and teachers to be outdoors and will provide space to host educational enrichment activities like the IDNR's IOWAWATER program, art performance and more.

*Transfer of Jurisdiction for the completion of the Southwest Arterial/Hwy 52* will have a significant positive impact on the Bee Branch neighborhoods. The collaborative partnership and funding of the Iowa DOT not only allows for the completion of this essential regional connector, but the transfer of jurisdiction will also result in dropping the Highway 52 designation from Central Avenue thereby removing hundreds of commercial vehicles per day through the City's urban core. This in turn will create a more pedestrian friendly environment which will also be more conducive to business development and economic growth.

*Iowa State University Central Avenue Corridor Project* represents a collaborative relationship with Iowa State University Extension and outreach which will work to revitalize the Central Avenue Corridor. Central Avenue is not only a gateway to Dubuque; it is the main artery of the City's downtown core. The project will focus on business engagement, educational outreach, storefront and streetscape design, micro-lending program, commercial redevelopment, entrepreneurial mentoring and job

creation, retention and attraction of business entities. These activities will provide economic and job opportunities for residents in adjacent neighborhoods.

*The Comprehensive Housing Activities for Neighborhood Growth & Enrichment (C.H.A.N.G.E.) program* is the overarching campaign for neighborhood revitalization in the City of Dubuque and it includes the HUD National Disaster Resiliency Competition Bee Branch Healthy Homes program as well as other programs, partnerships and services. The goal of C.H.A.N.G.E. is to rehabilitate 739 housing units in Dubuque's most at-risk neighborhoods and to promote home ownership. The C.H.A.N.G.E. program has identified \$19 million dollars (including the \$8.4 million from the HUD – NDRC grant) to invest in this program.

### **REQUESTED ACTION**

No action is requested at this time.

Cc: Resiliency Development Team:  
Deron Muehring, Civil Engineer  
Erica Haugen, Community Development Specialist  
Alexis Steger, Senior Budget Analyst  
Cori Burbach, Sustainability Coordinator  
Sharon Gaul, Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Coordinator  
John Tharp, Grant Administrator  
Randy Gehl, Public Information Officer  
Kristin Hill, Bee Branch Communications Specialist  
Jerelyn O'Connor, Neighborhood Specialist  
Mary Rose Corrigan, Public Health Specialist  
Jenny Larson, Budget Director  
Wally Wernimont, Assistant Planner  
Laura Carstens, Planning Services Manager  
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Anita Gonyier, Confidential Account Clerk  
Denise Ihrig, Water Plant Manager  
Jon Dienst, Civil Engineer