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DATE: March 9, 2017

TO: Members of the Housing & Redevelopment Authority

FROM: Chris Heineman, Community Development Director
Janine Atchison, Housing Coordinator

City Council Strategic Planning

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED:

A City Council strategic planning process facilitated by consultant Craig Rapp will be taking place in April and May of 2017. The strategic planning process will provide an opportunity for input from all boards and commissions. No action is requested at this time.

BACKGROUND:

A multi-step strategic planning process has been approved to assist the City Council in setting priorities for the next three years. The following is an outline of the steps for community outreach and engagement. HRA Board members are invited to participate in this process at a Community Forum scheduled for Thursday, April 6th (Time & Location TBD).

Environmental Scanning

The first step in the strategic planning process is a review of the operating environment. This will be accomplished in two ways - (1) through an "environmental scan" - a systematic review of major environmental factors that affect the City's operating environment - including, but not limited to: financial & economic conditions (internal and external), community demographics, workforce capacity and capabilities, infrastructure condition, intergovernmental relations, citizen/stakeholder issues, and the regulatory environment; (2) A SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) will be accomplished via a questionnaire. Both the environmental scan and the SWOT analysis will be reviewed at the first strategy session.

Activity #1 - Conduct Environmental Scan

Staff will develop a summary of issues, conditions and trends that affect the organization and the community. This will be presented to the Council at the first strategy session. The consultant will provide a format and examples to staff and provide review and editorial assistance if desired.

Activity #2 - Administer SWOT questionnaire

A SWOT questionnaire will be administered to all strategic planning participants, including question(s) regarding community priorities. This will provide information regarding the current operating environment. The results will be aggregated to ensure anonymity and maximize candor. The data generated will be reviewed and processed at the strategic planning retreat.

Conduct Outreach and Engagement

Depending upon the decision of the City, concurrent with the environmental scanning effort, the consultant will conduct an engagement process with community leaders and the public. This will ensure that the City Council and leadership team receives input on critical issues and priorities from members of key boards and commissions along with the community. The format for this effort includes facilitated sessions or online interactions as listed below:

- Focus groups - with the EDA and Planning Commission - These are facilitated discussions with each group to elicit their opinions on challenges and issues facing the community- including their views on priorities and key projects. Sessions will run between 1 ½ - 2 hours.
- Community Forum - This is a facilitated large group discussion regarding community issues and strategic priorities. This is a meeting with members of Northfield Boards and Commissions. If interested, the session could be facilitated using audience participation technology - a format that allows for real-time “voting” on issues-presented.
- Online Survey - This is a community survey, open to the public at large. Deployment to be determined by the City - but could be Facebook site, City webpage, or similar. Administration will be coordinated between City staff and the consultant. This offers citizens an opportunity to contribute their opinions and ideas.

A summary report will be prepared at the conclusion of this process which will include a draft action plan for City Council adoption. It is anticipated that the action plan will be completed and submitted to the City Council for review in June.

RECOMMENDATION:

Please save the date for a Community Forum on Thursday, April 7th. There are no further staff recommendations at this time.