

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

June 02, 2014

MEMO TO: Ruffin Hall
City Manager

FROM: Catherine Clark, Grants Manager

SUBJECT: Budget Note 04 – Blue Ridge Stakeholders Advisory Group Request

At the May 20, 2014 meeting, City Council received a request from the Blue Ridge Stakeholders Advisory Group for one-time funding of \$50,000 (\$25,000 per year for two years.) The funds will be pooled with \$50,000 in donations from other sources and used to hire a consultant to work on implementation of the Blue Ridge Corridor plan. The request was referred to budget work session; a copy of the statement from the meeting is attached.

Funding Options

Economic Development Fund balance is available should Council wish to fund this request. The Economic Development Fund provides support for economic development activities that benefit Raleigh such as the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce and the Triangle J Council of Governments and for partner agencies in downtown Raleigh, the Hillsborough Street business district, and southeast Raleigh. Fund balance is available due to the repayment of a grocery store loan made in late 2007.

If funded, a contractual agreement with the Blue Ridge Stakeholders Advisory Group will stipulate that the funding will be in the form of reimbursement for expenses incurred and as a match to the overall project budget. These controls ensure the city's funds are being used for the agreed upon purposes and that Raleigh taxpayers and residents are benefitting from the city's investment.

Staff Recommendation

James Sauls, Raleigh's Economic Development Director, recommends the implementation of the corridor plans as it will further the City's economic development goals. He and I recommend Council consider requiring a match ratio of 1:3, so that for every dollar the City contributes, the Blue Ridge Stakeholders will contribute three from other sources.

Dear Mayor and Councilors-

My name is Stuart Levin, and I live at 3101 Doe Hill Court.

I am here today in my role as chair of the Blue Ridge Corridor Stakeholders Advisory Group. The Corridor group was initiated in 2008 as an effort among the executive teams at Rex Healthcare and the NC Museum of Art to partner on infrastructure changes to support future development. Over time, the membership of this voluntary and informal group broadened to encompass other major institutional stakeholders within the Corridor as well as the City of Raleigh. Some 72% of the land in the Corridor (1486 acres) is state-owned and hosts a number of state agency facilities as well as major destinations of regional and statewide significance. These include the NCSU Centennial Biomedical Campus, Carter-Finley Stadium, the NC State Fairgrounds, PNC Arena, Prairie Ridge Ecostation and the JC Raulston Arboretum.

Thru hundreds of meetings with stakeholders, the Blue Ridge Corridor group worked to generate consensus for optimizing opportunities to create a 24/7 urban place stretching from Edwards Mill to Western Boulevard. With the support of the stakeholders and the city of Raleigh, the Blue Ridge Road District plan was produced in 2012. Building on the NC Department of Administration's 2007 State of NC Government Facilities Master Plan as a template, this study established a range of next steps and actions involving land use planning, transportation, housing, public and private open space, public health and economic development. This Blue Ridge Road District plan was unanimously adopted by this Council in September 2012. The plan aligns closely with Raleigh's planning objectives including urban infill and transit-oriented development, and the Corridor area is in one of the growth centers incorporated into the city's comprehensive plan.

Over the past 2 years, the stakeholders have focused on identifying next steps that will create an environment to move forward on developing the Blue Ridge Road District. Our vision is to embrace and implement the 2007 state master plan and extend it to encompass the larger Corridor. This would include the complementary public realm investments that will achieve the full potential for both public and private investment.

We are now in the midst of transforming our Blue Ridge Corridor Stakeholders Advisory Group into a 501(c)3 organization, the Blue Ridge Corridor Alliance. Our plans are to incorporate the Alliance within the next 6 weeks, and we expect that our stakeholders will commit \$25K over each of the next 2 years. The Alliance is now requesting a match from the City of Raleigh for up to \$25K for each of the next 2 years. This will allow us to retain a consultant who would provide professional urban planning services for the Blue Ridge Corridor Alliance to work on implementation. Rather than forming a separate infrastructure, in order to reduce costs and leverage mutual resources we plan to enter into a contract for services with the Hillsborough St. Community Services Corporation.

Thank you for your work with and support of the Blue Ridge Corridor group to date, and we appreciate your consideration of our request.