

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: January 21, 2009
Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: Waterfront Visioning Process - Update by Fern Tiger Associates regarding Next Steps

REPORT BY: Ann Chaney, Community Development Director

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Council receive an update from Fern Tiger Associates.

BACKGROUND

In April 2008, the City Council authorized entering into a contract with Fern Tiger Associates (FTA), to carry out a visioning program for the Albany waterfront. This program is to be a proactive, community-driven planning process intended to develop a common vision for the future of the waterfront. FTA's Scope outlines a five-phase process, of which Phase One is virtually complete. This phase involved information gathering, conducting interviews, and taking initial steps toward designing an outreach and engagement process. In October FTA made a presentation to the Waterfront Committee and City Council outlining their recommended approach for a community-based, interactive process. The recommended approach involves two stand-alone, sequential opportunities for participation. The first is a Block-by-Block model that would take place between March/April and May/June 2009, whereby factual information would be distributed, after which numerous facilitated sessions would be held and information gathered. During the summer, the information received from the sessions would be synthesized and analyzed. In early Fall, a second set of sessions would take place as the basis for developing a vision for the waterfront, which is expected to be presented to the Council and community in November.

FTA is currently working toward completion of Phase Two, which involves designing graphically interesting and informative materials that support the participatory engagement process (e.g., press/media strategies, plans for public education). Implementation of the community based, interactive process occurs during Phase Three. FTA is in the process of compiling informational materials for public education and workshop purposes.

ANALYSIS

The Waterfront Committee, with Council's authorization, assumed the lead in conducting an interview process that sought a qualified consultant who could best engage the

community in a waterfront visioning process. Fern Tiger Associates was ultimately selected. Based on feedback from various sectors of the community, FTA has exhibited creativity, impartiality, and a keen interest in engaging the entire community in this process. To help to ensure that this direction is maintained, it is recommended that decision-making bodies, City staff, and the community at large, provide support when called upon by the consultant, but recognize the importance of non-interference in the process and relying on the expertise of FTA.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

This process promotes social equity and does not contribute to carbon emissions or other aspects of climate change. Sensitivity will be given to printed materials and distribution.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Funding for this work was previously authorized as part of Contract #C08-10.