

ITEM #: 28
DATE: 03-24-26
DEPT: ELEC

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

**SUBJECT: ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR 161KV TRANSMISSION LINE
RELOCATION**

BACKGROUND:

The Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) is preparing to widen Interstate 35 in Polk County south of the Skunk River. Among other work, IDOT will be replacing the bridge at 290th Street. The City of Ames owns a 161kV electric transmission line that extends from Ames to Ankeny east of I-35. This line is directly adjacent the interstate at this bridge crossing, and therefore the line must be relocated to accommodate the roadway improvements. Ames' 161kV line is located in a private easement, so a new easement will also be needed for this relocation, which IDOT is acquiring on behalf of Ames as part of its overall widening and right-of-way acquisition effort.

IDOT has an aggressive schedule due to requirements of its funding sources and has requested a fast-tracked engineering and construction effort to accommodate their schedule, with a requested move-by date of April 31, 2027. **City staff is requesting to engage Dewilt Grant Reckert to perform the design work and prepare the plans and specification for the construction portion of this project.** DGR was involved in the original design of the 161 kV line in the 2010s and has handled other IDOT relocation work for this line. **The City Council is now being asked to approve two simultaneous actions:**

1. **Waive the City's Purchasing Policies requirement for competitive proposals and award a sole-source contract to DGR to complete the detailed design and develop plans and specification for the construction phase of this project.** DGR is proposed as the sole-source for the engineering effort due to its extensive experience in the design of the existing 161kV line and prior IDOT relocation work associated with the 161kV project as well as DGR's familiarity with the structures and design elements of this line. Therefore, the request before Council is to approve a Professional Services Agreement with DGR in the amount of \$239,000.
2. **Approve the Reimbursement Agreement with IDOT.** Staff is also requesting Council to approve the associated IDOT Reimbursement Agreement for reimbursement of these expenses. **The estimated expenses total \$1,562,245.** A majority of funds for this project will be provided by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the reimbursement agreement is a requirement of the FHWA.

Construction is estimated to cost \$1,323,245. **The total estimated cost for this project, including engineering and construction, is \$1,562,245.** The 2026-2031 Capital Improvements Plan includes a total of \$1,500,000 in FY 2026/27 for this project, which is expected to be reimbursed by IDOT. The initial phase of work will be completed in the 2026/27 fiscal year at a cost not-to-exceed \$1,500,000, at which time reimbursement from IDOT may be requested for up to 90% of the project's total estimated cost, or \$1,406,020. The balance of work to remove the temporary structures and return the line to its final alignment is

expected to be completed in Fiscal Year 2027/28, after the initial reimbursement. Therefore, no additional funds are being requested for this project at this time because it is anticipated funding will never need to be higher than the CIP amount of \$1,500,000.

It is important for the Council to note that the City is at some risk in undertaking this project; the City is required to incur certain engineering expenses first, before IDOT approves a reimbursement agreement. In the unlikely event that the IDOT project is canceled before the final reimbursement agreement is signed, or if easement acquisition costs substantially exceed the budgeted amount, the City may be unable to obtain reimbursement for all of the expenses it has incurred. However, the City has no alternative but to proceed with engineering, prior to agreement approval, since at the moment the DOT intends to proceed with construction.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Waive the City's purchasing policy requirement for competitive proposals and award a contract to Dewild Grant Reckert & Associates Company, Rock Rapids, Iowa, on a time and material (T & M) basis for an estimated total cost of \$239,000 for professional services and approve the Reimbursement Agreement with IDOT.
2. Approve the Reimbursement Agreement with IDOT, but direct staff to issue a Request for Proposals and competitively award a professional services agreement for the engineering and right-of-way acquisition work.
3. Do not approve the Reimbursement Agreement with IDOT or the engineering agreement with DGR.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The relocation of this transmission line is necessary to allow IDOT to make improvements to Interstate 35 on an advanced schedule. All City costs will be reimbursed by IDOT through the reimbursement agreement. Approval of the recommended actions will allow the City to move forward with the engineering and finalize the Reimbursement Agreement concurrently. Delaying this relocation project would also delay IDOT's highway improvement project. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, as described above.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[E500-2020 - Contract Power Pole Relocation FINAL-signed.pdf](#)

[Story Co - U-2026-85-001 - City of Ames - IMN-035-4\(286\)104--0E-85\(ROW\)_unsigned.pdf](#)