



CITY COUNCIL MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA - City Manager

DATE OF MEETING: October 23, 2023

ITEM TITLE: Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa Host Town Application

BACKGROUND:

The City and the Chamber of Commerce both received packets from the Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa (RAGBRAI) to complete and return to be considered as a Host Town for the 2024 RAGBRAI event. The event is scheduled for July 20 – 27, 2024, and based on the hotel reservations sheet would be in Independence overnight on Thursday, July 25th, or Friday, July 26th. On October 10th, Staff from the City met with Staff from the Chamber of Commerce, the Buchanan County Economic Development Corporation, Buchanan County Tourism, and the Mayor to discuss the event. The application packet received is attached for reference and information.

DISCUSSION:

While the RAGBRAI event does provide an economic impact to the communities that it visits, especially those that are host towns, Staff has concerns about financial outlays that will be required by the City as well as staffing that will be required to support the event. To be clear, the Staff is not against the event, but before agreeing to apply, we feel it should be brought to the Council for discussion. Staff from local partners for an event of this size such as the Chamber of Commerce, BCEDC, and Tourism may be present to discuss their points of view. City Staff recommends that these members of the community be called upon to share their insights about RAGBRAI as we work to make a decision on moving forward or not with the application.

RESULTS:

The City has established priorities during strategic planning sessions. This item supports the Vision from that session of Engaging and Catalyzing Community. This item helps achieve that vision by bringing new visitors to the City and filling local shops and restaurants during the event.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION:

There are no budgeted funds for this at this point in time. Should the Council decide to move forward with the Host Town Application, Staff will need to determine specific budgetary impacts and where funds can be moved from to provide the requisite funding for this event.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends discussion and a motion to approve the submittal of a Host Town Application to RAGBRAI for the 2024 event indicating either Yes Independence would like to be a Host Town, or No Independence would not like to be a Host Town.