

Staff Report
FY 2019-20 Year End Sustainability Report

June 9, 2020

This report provides a year end update of the FY2019-20 activities and accomplishments related to the Sustainability Advisory Services contract between the City of Ames and Iowa State University.

BACKGROUND:

On July 1, 2010, the City entered into a contract with Iowa State University to utilize the services of its full-time Director of Sustainability. The contract covers a maximum of 480 hours annually (or no more than 25 percent of the Director of Sustainability's time). The Initial Scope of Services focused on the reduction of electric consumption. As additional opportunities and needs have been identified related to sustainability, the Scope of Services has expanded and diversified. During FY 2019-20, in keeping with the Council's direction, the Scope of Services targets priority areas related to energy consumption reduction, as well as adding waste reduction and diversion:

- 1) Continue to work with Public Works Department and Water and Pollution Control Department on reuse and diversion programs related to the waste stream, including – but not limited to – the exploration of a composting and food waste program.

- 2) Continue to support and strengthen the Smart Business Challenge through outreach and recruitment of participants, oversight of Challenge interns, and marketing of outcomes and accomplishments of Challenge participants.

- 3) Continue to represent the City at events that educate residents about ongoing City sustainability efforts, rebates, and waste reduction opportunities including – but not limited to – the EcoFair and WelcomeFest.

- 4) Coordinate Rummage RAMPage at the Ames Intermodal Facility in partnership with the Resource Recovery Plant, Public Relations, CyRide, and Iowa State University, to

address concerns that usable housewares and furniture are being needlessly discarded and hard-to-process materials are being sent to the Resource Recovery Plant.

5) Work with various City of Ames departments to select a consultant to create a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory for Ames. Once a consultant is selected, serve as the City's point of contact with the consultant to facilitate the completion and presentation of the GHG inventory to the City Council.

PROGRESS ON SCOPE OF SERVICES:

1. ***Continue to work with Public Works Department and Water and Pollution Control Department on reuse and diversion programs related to the waste stream, including – but not limited to – the exploration of a composting and food waste program.***

Year End FY2020 accomplishments include the following for Priority Area #1:

- Monitored progress of the City of Ames FWD (Food Waste Diversion) pilot program. To date more than 150 compost starter kits have been sold, with many participants choosing to use their own buckets and not purchasing a starter kit. More than five tons of food waste has been collected to date – averaging more than 800 pounds per month.
- Assisted in efforts to facilitate awareness and monitor program impact related to piloting a no-charge FWD program. To gauge interest and participation related to cost being a deterrent, for the last three months of the pilot program (April-June) food waste drop-off was offered at no cost. While the number of participating individuals is not able to be estimated (due to City facilities being closed in relation to COVID-19), a drop-off food bin at Resource Recovery significantly boosted the pounds of collected food waste (in the midst of a pandemic).
- Collected feedback from participants and community members related to effectiveness of and opportunities for the FWD program beyond the pilot program. In collaboration with an Iowa State University graduate level journalism class from the Greenlee School of Journalism and Mass Communication, students completed a two-fold project that focused on program assessment and gathering community opinion and creating campaign materials to increase program awareness and participation.

Collaboration partners: Iowa State University Greenlee School of Journalism and Mass Communication - Professor Laura Whitzling and graduate students; Public

Works – Bill Schmitt, Mark Peebler and Lorrie Hanson and Public Relations Officer – Susan Gwiasda; also Parks & Recreation has assisted by selling kits at the Community Center Gym.

2. Continue to support and strengthen the Smart Business Challenge through outreach and recruitment of participants, oversight of Challenge interns, and marketing of outcomes and accomplishments of Challenge participants.

Year End FY2020 accomplishments include the following for Priority Area #2:

- Continued recruitment of additional businesses, as well as work toward achieving enhancements (put into place August 2019) related to ensuring a value-added experience for Challenge members. To that end, alongside recruitment, interns also focused on connecting with businesses not yet certified toward determining business goals and best fit opportunities as related to the Challenge. At the end of this FY, a total of 32 community businesses are members of the Challenge. This includes two business closures, one business leaving the challenge, the addition of one new business, and the completion of six new business certifications, resulting in three bronze, seven silver, four gold and 11 platinum-certified businesses.
- Hosted the annual Smart Business Challenge Recognition Event, facilitated by Mayor John Haila, on January 23, at Reiman Gardens. Adam Hammes, Executive Director of The Iowa Sustainable Business Forum, served as keynote speaker and included Ames Forum members, Barilla and McFarland Clinic, in a panel discussion and question/answer session focusing on incorporating sustainability into the business model. Newly certified platinum businesses, 3M and REG, were recognized.

Collaboration partners: Electric Services – Curtis Spence and Kayley Lain; Public Works – Bill Schmitt, Lorrie Hanson, Tracy Warner and Jake Moore; Water & Pollution Control – John Dunn and Neil Weiss; Public Relations Officer – Susan Gwiasda; The Energy Group; Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Iowa Waste Exchange Program; and Volunteer Center of Story County

3. Continue to represent the City at events that educate residents about ongoing City sustainability efforts, rebates, and waste reduction opportunities including – but not limited to – the Eco Fair and WelcomeFest.

Year End FY2020 accomplishments include the following for Priority Area #3:

- Assisted in the development and facilitation of a day-long virtual EcoFair event, Fresh Air EcoFair, in collaboration with KHOI on April 25, in response to the planned 10-Year EcoFair celebration being cancelled due to COVID-19.
 - As part of the virtual EcoFair event, collaborated with Electric Services in the development and completion of a virtual EcoFair Scavenger Hunt that took place April 18-25. This is planned to be offered as an annual event, including more non-virtual components as can effectively and safely be accommodated.
- Continued a monthly radio program on KHOI focused on community sustainability accomplishments, initiatives, and opportunities.
- Continued sharing of City of Ames sustainability efforts as part of speaking engagements.
- Continued sharing of City of Ames and Ames community volunteer opportunities and sustainability events via Live Green! Monthly newsletter, Live Green! social media platforms and targeted emails.
- Encouraged City of Ames department participation in Iowa State University environmental events. Public Works (Storm Water and Resource Recovery) and Electric employees had tables at the annual Sustainapalooza.
- Continued work with Ames Electric Services in supporting the community solar project, through marketing, outreach, and public education assistance.

4. *Coordinate the Rummage RAMPage at the Ames Intermodal Facility in partnership with the Resource Recovery Plant, Public Relations, CyRide, and Iowa State University, to address concerns that usable housewares and furniture are being needlessly discarded and hard-to-process materials are being sent to the Resource Recovery Plant.*

Year End FY2020 accomplishments include the following for Priority Area #4:

- Collaborated with Public Works in developing an on-line reuse and recycling resource toward encouraging diversion of unwanted household items, slated to be donated to Rummage RAMPage, to beneficial use, rather than being landfilled, in consideration of the cancelling of the 2020 Rummage RAMPage

event, due to COVID-19.

- Participated in several meetings to determine safe ways to hold Rummage RAMPage as well as improvements to the overall event identified in previous years. The decision to cancel was made in May, just days before the first public volunteer meeting was to be held.
- Planning will kick-off in January for the 2021 Rummage RAMPage event scheduled for July 23 – August 2.

Collaboration partners: Public Works – Bill Schmitt, Mark Peebler, Lisa Mondt and Lorrie Hanson; Parks and Recreation – Joshua Thompson; ISU – Mark Miller; and Public Relations Officer – Susan Gwiasda

- 5. *Work with various City of Ames departments to select a consultant to create a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory for Ames. Once a consultant is selected, serve as the City's point of contact with the consultant to facilitate the completion and presentation of the GHG inventory to the City Council. Continue to assist departments in enhancing and updating the EcoSmart program web pages and all material on the City of Ames website related to sustainability and conservation. Continue to provide student feedback on improving our sustainability marketing and education materials.***

Year End FY2020 accomplishments include the following for Priority Area #5:

- Collaborated with City staff to develop and distribute an RFP for the completion of a community GHG inventory and selected consultant, paleBluedot.
- Assisted in the coordination GHG emission data collection and biweekly consultant check-in meetings.
- Reviewed draft report documents, provided comments and participated in staff discussions to offer collective feedback to consultants toward the completion of finalized report documents (Ames Greenhouse Gas Inventory, Ames Renewable Energy Potentials Study, Climate Vulnerability Study), expected to be presented to Council this summer.
- Continue to provide feedback on consolidating City of Ames sustainability pages under one section on the City website and creating a more user-friendly experience.

Collaboration partners: Collaboration partners: Electric Services – Kayley Lain; Public Works – Bill Schmitt, Justin Clausen; Planning & Housing Department –

Kelly Diekmann; Water & Pollution Control – Dustin Albrecht; City Manager’s Office – Deb Schildroth and Susan Gwiasda; Fleet & Facilities – Corey Mellies; Parks & Recreation – Joshua Thompson; and Purchasing – Karen Server