

Staff Report

FY 2014-15 Mid-Year Sustainability Report

December 9, 2014

This report provides a mid-year update of the FY 2014/15 activities and accomplishments related to the Sustainability Advisory Services contract between the City of Ames and Iowa State University.

Background

During FY 2014/015, the Scope of Services targets five Priority Areas related to energy consumption reduction as well as waste reduction and diversion:

1. Continue to support and strengthen the Smart Business Challenge through outreach and recruitment of participants, oversight of a Challenge intern, and marketing of outcomes and accomplishments of Challenge participants.
2. Continue work with Iowa State University professors and students to develop a residential energy consumption comparison tool.
3. Remain in a consulting role with City departments in updating EcoSmart Program websites toward providing a more consistent customer experience.
4. Work with Public Works and Water and Pollution Control on reuse and diversion programs related to the waste stream, including the exploration of a composting and food waste program.
5. Provide a staff report to the City Council regarding best practices that other communities are doing to consider "environmental impacts" when considering policies and or decisions.

The City Council also requested a Mid-Year progress report from the Sustainability Coordinator. The following is an update on progress from July 2014 to date.

- 1. Continue to support and strengthen the Smart Business Challenge through outreach and recruitment of participants, oversight of a Challenge intern, and marketing of outcomes and accomplishments of Challenge participants.***

Mid-year accomplishments and planned work for the remainder of the contract year include the following for Priority Area #2:

Completed and Ongoing:

- Recruited 12 businesses to participate in the Smart Business Challenge.
- Outreach to 25 businesses providing information and offering support to join as

new participants.

- Completion of three presentations to major civic organizations to share the Smart Business Challenge opportunity and encourage business owners to participate.
- Creation of a Smart Business Challenge "leave behind" marketing brochure, offering an additional means of increasing awareness and visibility of the program as well as another option for enrollment.
- Ongoing evaluation and enhancement of marketing materials including the Smart Business Challenge website and other informational publications.
- Oversight of two quarter-time Smart Business Challenge Interns.

Collaboration partners: Electric Services – Steve Wilson; Public Relations Officer – Susan Gwasda; Purchasing – Derek Zarn; Chamber of Commerce; and Assistant City Manager Melissa Mundt.

2. Continue work with Iowa State University professors and students to develop a residential energy consumption comparison tool.

Mid-year accomplishments and planned work for the remainder of the contract year include the following for Priority Area #3:

This priority area specifically focuses on a targeted action item identified by the Residential Sector of the Sustainability Task Force and discussed in the City of Ames Sustainability Plan for Electrical Consumption Reduction: Creating an On-line, Self-guided Data System to Track Personal Electrical Usage and Compare Usage to Similar Households. <http://www.cityofames.org/index.aspx?page=1144>

Completed and Planned:

- Iowa State students completed an interactive online, self-guided data system to track personal electrical usage and compare usage to similar households <http://thecityofames.org/php/login.php> - (user - demo, password - demo).
- Iowa State students completed user feedback survey for prototype (<http://goo.gl/forms/WRz8ID0mNg>) that was distributed to Ames residents via City social media accounts.
- Iowa State students are working to finalize web interface for finished product to ensure accessibility for Ames Electric Utility customers.
- The Sustainability Coordinator is continuing to seek additional opportunities for collaboration with Iowa State College of Engineering during the 2014-2015 academic year, related to online tools and interactive initiatives to assist the City with its other EcoSmart Programs.

Collaboration partners: Electric Services – Steve Wilson and Mike Wheelock; IT Services – Stan Davis and Miriam Carlson; The Energy Group; Iowa State University Colleges of Engineering and Liberal Arts and Sciences; and

Assistant City Manager Melissa Mundt.

3. Remain in a consulting role with City departments in updating EcoSmart Program websites toward providing a more consistent customer experience.

Mid-year accomplishments and planned work for the remainder of the contract year include the following for Priority Area #4:

Planned:

- Meetings will be with department heads to review feedback from Iowa State business management students related to EcoSmart programs. The Sustainability Coordinator strategize action items for enhancement of the City's EcoSmart websites and other communication materials starting in January 2015.

4. Work with Public Works and Water and Pollution Control on reuse and diversion programs related to the waste stream, including the exploration of a composting and food waste program.

Mid-year accomplishments and planned work for the remainder of the contract year include the following for Priority Area #5:

Completed:

- The Sustainability Coordinator collaborated with Iowa State College of Business to offer “live” case study projects to Management 370 (students during fall semester 2014) related to reducing materials entering the waste stream, including food waste. Research included meeting with community businesses and residents, investigating technical and financial considerations, completing research related to successful programs implemented at Iowa State University and by other communities and providing recommendations focused on increasing education, engagement, and empowerment of residents regarding waste diversion. Materials will be presented to the appropriate department directors starting in January 2015 for inclusion on the City's website and EcoSmart distribution materials.

Planned:

- The Sustainability Coordinator will work with the ISU Honors Program and mentoring a freshman honors student (spring 2015) who will be researching and producing a database of waste diversion opportunities and outlets (reuse, donation, etc.) available to Ames businesses and residents. This will be provided to Resource Recovery in May 2015.
- The Iowa Department of Natural Resources' is conducting a statewide study to

investigate food waste generation targeting industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) sector generators. The DNR's study will provide the Department with critical information necessary to strategically allocate efforts and funding to develop projects and programs that facilitate development of the food waste management infrastructure; including collection, transportation and other resources necessary to divert this waste from Iowa's landfills. The Department's study is motivated by data showing organic waste comprises the highest percentage of residential waste and the second highest of industrial waste in Iowa.

- The Sustainability Coordinate will work with Public Works and Water Pollution Control Departments to pursue grant funding to build upon the Iowa DNR's study and seek to gather specific and detailed information to the organic waste stream in Ames. This study will also investigate current infrastructure as well as policies needed to assist City leadership in creating effective strategies and collaborations to reduce organic waste going to Resource Recovery (and ultimately to the Boone County Landfill) as well as identifying beneficial reuse applications.

Collaboration partners: Electric Services – Steve Wilson; Public Relations Officer – Susan Gwiasda; Public Works - Lorrie Hanson; Iowa State University College of Business; Iowa State University Honors Program, and Assistant City Manager Melissa Mundt.

5. Provide a staff report to the City Council regarding best practices that other communities are doing to consider "environmental impacts" when considering policies and or decisions.

After considerable research, it was difficult to identify other cities who have established a comprehensive vetting process for considering "environmental impacts" before making policy decisions. Staff would benefit from further clarification from the Council pertaining to this objective from the January 2014 goal setting session.