

## FY 2015-16 Mid-Year Sustainability Report

December 22, 2015

This report provides a mid-year update of the FY2015-16 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 fulltime Director of Sustainability. Initial Scope of Services focused on the reduction of electric consumption. As additional opportunities and needs have been identified related to sustainability, Scope of Services has expanded and diversified. During FY 2015-16, in keeping with the Council's direction, the Scope of Services targets five priority areas related to energy consumption reduction, as well as adding waste reduction and diversion:

- 1) 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 the Eco Fair and WelcomeFest.
- 4) Continue work with Iowa State University professors and students to develop a residential energy consumption comparison tool with the possibility of expanding to other City utilities.
- 5) Continue to assist departments in enhancing and updating the EcoSmart program websites as the City converts to a new website redesign. Continue to provide student feedback on developing useful, easy-to-navigate web pages that provide helpful information on sustainability.

*Progress on Scope of Services:*

***1. 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.***

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Mid-year FY16 accomplishments include the following for Priority Area #1:

- Awarded a \$20,000 forgivable loan from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources toward completion of a project: Increasing and Enhancing Waste Diversion for Story County. Funding will be used to utilize the services of a consultant. The project is scheduled to begin work in January 2016.

The project focuses on four primary goals related to the Resource Recovery System:

- increasing "front-end" diversion of materials prior to processing,
- increasing "back-end" diversion of landfilled materials,
- achieving the highest BTU value RDF feedstock, and
- ensuring the highest beneficial end use for solid waste not used as RDF.

Project deliverables will include the following:

- Completion of a waste audit of materials brought to RRS for processing. Areas of focus for this audit would include a separation of suitable versus unsuitable materials for RDF processing and categorization and measurement (weight and volume) of materials deemed unsuitable.
- Determination of available outlets for unsuitable materials within Story County with priority given to targeted waste.
- Determination of perceived value and interest of Story County residents in additional services (community drop-off location, pick-up service, etc.) for unsuitable RRS materials including organic waste.
- Audit of programs offered in other communities of similar size and demographics to Ames/Story County related to waste management and diversion options for unsuitable RRS materials including organic waste.
- Completion of a comprehensive Story County Solid Waste Analysis and Beneficial Use report for staff to utilize for education and awareness, benchmarking, goalsetting and strategic planning. Information from this report would not only inform and guide decision making at a City and County level, but also is intended to offer transferable and beneficial information to other state and national communities as well as assist research, consideration and decision making related to the Department of Natural Resources' vision of a statewide "hub and spoke" network for organic waste.

- Attended RDF Flow Improvement Meetings.
- Researched opportunities related to move-out waste reduction including university “swap” opportunities and city events, similar to the City of Iowa City’s Rummage in the Ramp event.
- Collaboration partners: Electric Services – Steve Wilson; Public Works – Bill Schmitt, Mark Peebler and Lorrie Hanson; Water and Pollution Control – John Dunn and Christina Murphy and Public Relations Officer – Susan Gwasda.

Planned work for the remainder of FY16 –

- Completion of “Increasing and Enhancing Waste Diversion for Story County” project.
- Continued work with department teams to strategize and finalize content for revised EcoSmart program webpages.

***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.***

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Mid-year FY16 accomplishments include the following for Priority Area #2:

- Recruitment, hiring and oversight of two new quarter-time Smart Business Challenge Interns for FY16.
- Certified an additional platinum business, Wild Water Car Wash. Four businesses have achieved certification levels, three platinum and one silver. Fourteen businesses are participating.
- Outreach to businesses through marketing components completed through: Ames Tribune article, Chamber Monthly article and KHOI radio program (<http://archive.khoifm.org/> 10/16 7am Local Talk starting at 38:04).
- Completion of participating business survey and completion of post-certification check-in meetings.
- Updated, enhanced and created additional awareness and recruitment pieces related to the Challenge checklist, website, resource tools, and recruitment materials.

- Collaboration partners: Electric Services – Steve Wilson; The Energy Group, Ames Tribune, Ames Chamber of Commerce, KHOI Radio, and Public Relations Officer – Susan Gwiasda

Planned work for the remainder of FY16 –

- Continue recruitment of businesses as well as offering assistance to currently enrolled businesses related to checklist completion, goal setting, and connection to resources and contacts.
- Continue enhancement of marketing efforts related to Challenge recruitment as well as highlighting current success and future 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 the Eco Fair and WelcomeFest.***

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Mid-year FY16 accomplishments include the following for Priority Area #3:

- Participated in WelcomeFest at Iowa State University.
- Joined the City of Ames in the Fourth of July parade driving an ISU electric truck alongside the City of Ames electric car.
- Completed four monthly radio programs related to sustainability in the Ames community on KHOI. Program discussions included: an overview of areas of sustainability focus for FY16, introduction of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Iowa Waste Exchange free resource for Iowa businesses, update on the Smart Business Challenge, and a discussion of the City's Fats, Oils and Grease initiative.
- Collaboration partners: Water and Pollution Control - Christina Murphy, KHOI, Iowa Department of Natural Resources and Public Relations Officer – Susan Gwiasda

Planned work for remainder of FY16 –

- Participation in the City of Ames EcoFair set for Saturday, April 2, 2016.
- Completion of five additional monthly radio programs on KHOI.

***4. Continue to assist departments in enhancing and updating the EcoSmart program websites as the City converts to a new website redesign. Continue to provide student feedback on developing useful, easy-to-navigate web pages that provide helpful information on sustainability.***

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Mid-year FY16 accomplishments include the following for Priority Area #4:

- Continued work on developing website content template and increasing awareness and reach of EcoSmart web pages including training new interns to update pages and work with new City website content management system.
- Worked with Iowa State University computer science students to create an online interactive resource, “Ames Pay-It Forward database,” offering waste diversion opportunities (reuse and donation) available to Ames business and residents. This information provides an alternative to putting items in the trash. Database was completed spring semester 2015 in collaboration with an ISU Honors Program student.
- Collaboration partner: Public Relations Office

Planned work for the remainder of FY16 –

- Continue work to revise EcoSmart web pages.
- Finish and post Ames Pay-It Forward database to new website.

***5. Continue work with Iowa State University professors and students to develop a residential energy consumption comparison tool with the possibility of expanding to other City utilities.***

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Mid-year FY16 accomplishments include the following for Priority Area #5:

- Continued work on finalizing web interface for interactive online, self-guided data system to track personal electrical usage and compare usage to similar households called the “Energy Yardstick.”
- Collaboration partners: IT Services – Stan Davis and Miriam Carlson; Iowa State University Colleges of Engineering and Liberal Arts and Sciences; Winning Solutions and Public Relations Officer – Susan Gwiasda.

Planned work for remainder of FY16 –

- Continued collaboration toward getting “Energy Yardstick” added to the City of Ames website.