

Staff Report

CIGARETTE BUTT RECEPTACLES

September 25, 2012

In June, Council received a request to consider placing cigarette butt receptacles near 136 Main Street. Smokers have been placing used cigarette butts in the large planters on Main Street or dropping them directly on the sidewalks, particularly near the entrances to nearby bars and in Cynthia Duff Plaza.

There are currently no City-owned cigarette receptacles in Ames commercial areas. With the implementation of the Iowa Smoke Free Air Act of 2008, many establishments began to place temporary containers outside their doors during business hours to allow patrons to smoke outside.

For locations that are not near one of these containers, it might be possible to locate permanent cigarette butt receptacles. However, there are several questions that should be considered:

What kind of receptacle should be used?

There are three basic types of receptacles: wall-mounted, free-standing, and trash can mounted. They range in terms of price, quality, durability, and aesthetics. Upon exploring these options, staff is concerned that wall-mounted receptacles may not be feasible since the City does not own buildings where receptacles could be attached in each of the complaint areas. There are a variety of makes of free-standing containers available; however, locating a container off by itself would take up space in the right-of-way and may be susceptible to damage by passersby. Stand-alone containers also have a tendency to become plugged with trash when they are not located near a trash can. **Staff would suggest that receptacles mounted on trash cans would be the preferred option.**

Who should purchase and own the receptacles?

Staff contacted other communities that have cigarette butt receptacles. In some cities, the local governments have chosen to purchase, own, maintain and empty the receptacles. However, this is not always the case. For example in Lawrence, Kansas, the downtown business association was responsible for purchasing and maintaining the containers.

The City Council should decide which ownership model to pursue. The City could select the design and own the cans outright or choose an approved design and request the businesses to purchase the approved container.

Because the receptacles would be in the public right-of-way, the least complicated option would be for the City to own them. That would help ensure that the

receptacles are located in the correct areas, with proper clearances and as a part of an overall plan. Private ownership of articles in the right-of-way would require more complex approval and record-keeping.

Maintenance of the receptacles can be minimized by choosing an appropriately durable container. If the City owned the containers, the City would likely pay to replace damaged containers. If an outside entity bought a City-approved style of container, the City could require them to maintain it to a certain standard or replace it if needed.

Based on informal pricing from street furniture vendors, most receptacle options cost between \$300-\$450 per unit.

Who should be responsible for ongoing disposal?

The City's contract waste hauler has indicated that receptacles attached to trash cans would cost approximately \$1 for each emptying, and that each receptacle would need to be emptied about once per week. **Therefore, each receptacle would generate disposal costs of \$4-5 per month.** In comparison, maintaining the public garbage cans on a regular basis costs \$17.32 per can per month.

How do community groups view receptacles?

Staff consulted with Main Street Cultural District (MSCD) and Campustown Action Association (CAA) staff. Both organizations expressed support of the idea of installing receptacles to reduce litter. CAA staff indicated that cigarette butts are the most visible form of litter in the area, and noted that experience in other communities had been that the receptacles were successful in reducing litter. **Staff from both organizations each noted two or three locations where cigarette butt receptacles might be ideal.**

Next Steps:

If the Council desires to pursue the installation of cigarette butt receptacles, the next step would be for staff to contact vendors, and select a style that matches the existing street furniture and will be durable in high-traffic environments. Direction would then need to be given as to the number of receptacles that are desired for the Downtown and Campustown Districts as well as who would purchase, own, and maintain them.