

Staff Report

**FY 2017-18 Mid-Year Sustainability Report**

December 19, 2017

This report provides a mid-year update of the FY2017-18 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 2017-18, 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 Eco Fair and WelcomeFest.
  
- 4) Coordinate the new 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) 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.

### **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.***

Mid-year FY2018 accomplishments include the following for Priority Area #1:

- Continue to complete milestones related to the \$20,000 forgivable loan from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources exploring beneficial opportunities and options to improve the Resource Recovery Plant's (RRP) process and improve the quality of refuse derived fuel (RDF):
  - Included survey questions in the 2016 Resident Satisfaction Survey regarding attitudes on composting as a form of organic waste reduction. Followed up with a similar Story County-wide survey.
  - Released a Request for Proposal for the development of a Waste Diversion Enhancement & Recommendation Report through contracted services. "The Consultant is to develop and implement a two part study leading to enhanced waste diversion, increased efficiency of the Resource Recovery Plant (RRP) and increased awareness and understanding of citizen value and interest in additional waste management related services, including organic waste programs."
  - Contracted with SCS Engineers as consultant.
  - Strategized goals for increased efficiency of operations and quality of product at RRP to inform consultant research and identification of waste diversion opportunities for materials determined unsuitable for RRP use.
  - Surveyed business within RRP's service area regarding current waste management practices and interest/need for additional services.

Collaboration partners: Public Works – Bill Schmitt, Mark Peebler and Lorrie Hanson; Purchasing – Karen Server; SCS Engineers and Public Relations Officer – Susan Gwiasda

**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.**

Mid-year FY2018 accomplishments include the following for Priority Area #2:

- Hired and trained two new Smart Business Challenge interns for the 2017-2018 academic year: Scott Nemece and Taylor Silvestrini.
- Completed survey of all current participants related to Smart Business Challenge benefits and opportunities and began strategizing and implementation.
- Continued recruitment of additional businesses for a total of 24 Smart Business Challenge participants, including seven platinum certified businesses.
- Strategized and facilitated opportunities related to marketing SunSmart Ames to Smart Business Challenge participants and recruiting participation.
- Organizing a Smart Business Challenge Recognition event tentatively set for Jan. 25, 2018, to spotlight businesses showing sustainability leadership and get others involved.

Collaboration partners: Electric Services – Don Kom and Steve Wilson; The Energy Group, and Public Relations Officer – Susan Gwiasda

**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.**

Mid-year FY2018 accomplishments include the following for Priority Area #3:

- Participated in the Ames Fourth of July Parade.
- Participated in WelcomeFest in August as part of the City of Ames efforts in explaining Ames sustainability initiatives to students.
- Continuing a monthly radio program on KHOI focused on community sustainability accomplishments, initiatives and opportunities, and often featuring City of Ames subject matter experts on conservation topics.
- Continuing to share the City of Ames sustainability efforts as part of speaking engagements.

**4. Coordinate the new 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.**

Mid-year FY2018 accomplishments include the following for Priority Area #4:

- The second annual Rummage RAMPage was held July 28 to Aug 3, 2017. The event surpassed last year's impact, both in tonnage diverted and support provided to community non-profits through sales, with less than 2% of overall items donated being landfilled (~\$1500 lbs.) Thirty-nine tons of furniture and housewares was diverted from being landfilled (an increase of 72%) and \$14,000 was raised for the local non-profit agencies (nearly tripling 2016 proceeds). As with the 2016 event, tremendous support was received from ISU Parking, several City departments, the Volunteer Center of Story County, and more than 50 volunteers representing 13 community non-profit organizations.
- In addition to collecting items to sell, this year's event also included the collection of additional hard-to-process items for the Resource Recovery Plant that were, in turn, donated to community organizations and causes to support their work. These items included more than 1,500 pounds of clothing and shoes donated to Goodwill; approximately 1,000 pounds of linens donated to the Ames Animal Shelter; over 500 pounds of books, DVDs and CDs donated to the Ames Public Library and approximately 100 pounds of food donated to the Mid-Iowa Community Action Food Bank.
- Planning will kick-off in January for 2018 Rummage Rampage event, which is scheduled for July 27-Aug 2 (one day longer than 2017).

Collaboration partners: Iowa State University Parking Services, Volunteer Center of Story County, Resource Recovery Plant, City of Ames Police Department, Ames Electric Services, Public Relations Office, and community non-profit organizations and volunteers

**5. 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.**

Mid-year FY2018 accomplishments include the following for Priority Area #5:

- Ongoing input and feedback regarding City of Ames Smart Energy, Smart Water, Smart Watersheds and other EcoSmart programs.

Collaboration partners: Electric Services, Public Works, Water and Pollution Control and Public Relations Office

**NEXT STEPS**

The past six months have been varied, busy, and productive. Sustainability work for the City of Ames covers many aspects of carbon footprint reduction and focuses on many audiences such as permanent residents, ISU students, Resource Recovery Plant customers, businesses, and non-profit organizations. Although not in the Scope of Services, looking for unique ways to market the SunSmart Ames community solar project continues to be a priority.

Additionally, the City Council recently requested that the Sustainability Coordinator come back to Council with ideas on how the Council can partner with ISU to address carbon reduction. Those partnership opportunities will continue to be a focus into the new year, and some suggestions will be forwarded in the spring.