



January 17, 2020

To: Mayor and Ames City Council Members:

This is the time every four years when candidates vying to become the next President of the United States flock to Ames trying to convince our citizens how they are going to make the lives of each of us much better. They inundate us with specifics from numerous policy plans in their attempt to win the Iowa Caucuses. While there is no doubt that our federal and state governments provide important services, we must not forget that the level of government most responsible for assuring an excellent quality of life is local government. This distinction is because we interact with our citizens every day through the services we deliver to those who reside in, or visit, the City of Ames. In keeping with this responsibility, I am attaching for your review and approval the Recommended Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) for FY 2020/21 through FY 2024/25. It is my hope that the accomplishment of the numerous projects incorporated into the CIP will lead to an improved quality of life for all of our citizens!

As you know, the CIP highlights the major improvement projects that we hope to accomplish over the next five years, along with a financing strategy to assure the Plan's viability. As was the case in past years, we have attempted to respond to the feedback received from our most recent Citizen Satisfaction Survey. Therefore, as you read through the Plan, you will note projects that will reduce overland/river flooding, assure more efficient traffic flow throughout our community, upgrade our park restrooms, decrease sewer back-ups, and improve the condition of our residential streets. All of these issues were identified by our citizens in the annual survey as needing greater attention.

To assist you in reviewing this document, I have summarized below some of the more significant projects incorporated in this CIP.

PUBLIC SAFETY - \$2,122,000

The previous CIP focused on the creation of a new county-wide radio system operated out of our Police Dispatch Center to improve reliability and interoperability among our emergency responders. This five year plan directs resources towards the **Fire Apparatus Replacement** project (page 9). Our only aerial ladder truck, purchased in 2002, and a pumper truck, purchased in 2005, have outlived their useful lives. In addition, it is becoming more difficult to purchase replacement parts for these vehicles. Therefore, the CIP reflects the replacement of these two vehicles over the next three years. We also intend to refurbish our current ladder truck and retain it as a reserve unit to provide redundancy for this much needed capability.

UTILITIES - \$116,518,550

Electric Utility: \$23,315,000

Over the next five years, the CIP calls for the investment of \$3,650,000 in our transmission system which connects our utility to outside systems, \$3,420,000 in our distribution system which transports electricity to our customers throughout the city, and \$16,245,000 in improvements and replacements in our Power Plant which creates the electricity upon which our customers have come to rely.

The most significant change in the projects associated with Electric Services is related to the **Ash Pond Modifications** project (page 33). Finalization of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's new regulations for ash handling has increased this project from an estimated cost of \$1,500,000 in previous CIPs to \$7,500,000 in this new Plan. As a result of this cost increase, you will note a number of other projects have been delayed so as not to impact our electric rates during the next five years.

Since 1977, the City has been an innovative leader in reducing the amount of solid waste that is deposited in a landfill and recapturing a portion of our waste for burning in our power plant as an alternative fuel source to coal, and now natural gas. Over time, mechanical processes have improved and the economics related to burning our waste in our main electric boilers have changed. Therefore, a **Waste to Energy Study** (page 26) is being introduced into this CIP. While we still intend to

continue to provide a reliable waste disposal facility for all of Story County, we want to determine if there is a more efficient and cost effective means to accomplish this goal than our current process.

In keeping with the City Council's commitment to improving our sustainability efforts, the **Street Light LED Retrofit** project (page 18) will invest a final \$300,000 to switch from High Pressure Sodium and Mercury Vapor lights to LED street light fixtures. This conversion extends the life expectancy of the lights, decreases our maintenance costs, and reduces our carbon footprint.

Water Utility - \$27,518,000

With the opening of the new state of the art Water Treatment Plant, significant expenditures will not be needed in the near future for our water production/treatment systems. However, as our older wells begin to fail and consumption continues to increase in conjunction with our growing population, it is imperative that we add new wells to our system. This responsibility is accomplished in the **Water Supply Expansion** project (page 48) where \$6,078,000 will be spent to construct three new wells, providing us with an additional water supply of 4.5 million gallons per day.

The continued operation of these wells is critical to assuring a reliable water supply to our customers. Therefore, included in this CIP is the expenditure of \$968,000 in the **Well Field Standby Power** project (page 54) to assure continued operation during an extended electric outages for some of our highest capacity wells.

The water distribution system will continue to receive attention in the \$8,800,000 devoted towards **Water System Improvements** (page 67). These improvements will lead to the replacement of our older 4" lines with larger pipes to improve fire-fighting capabilities and reduce rusty water.

We are continuously looking to improvements in technology to help us become more efficient, as exemplified by the commitment to the **Advanced Metering Infrastructure** project (page 50). In FY 2014/15 we began converting our obsolete water meters to new units that allowed for automatic readings. During the first four years of this CIP we will commit the final \$794,000 to complete the major portion of the conversation project.

The **Ada Hayden Water Quality Study** (page 57) is new to the CIP. Since Ada Hayden Lake is a valuable water source that can be used to recharge our aquifer during draught conditions, it is important that the City periodically monitors the lake water to determine if the existing land use practices adopted by the City Council have been effective in preserving the water quality in the lake.

Sewer Utility - \$52,963,000

One of the largest projects in this utility involves **Nutrient Reduction Modifications** (page 62) which is necessitated by new requirements issued by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. It is estimated that approximately \$41,000,000 will need to be spent on mechanical modifications to our Water Pollution Control Plant over the next twenty years to meet this mandate. Over the five years of this Plan, we hope to accomplish Phase 1 of the project which includes constructing back-up capacity for the trickling filters.

In addition to the mechanical modifications that will be made to the WPC Plant, we are committed to **Watershed-Based Nutrient Reduction** (page 61) by providing \$1,000,000 over the next five years to this initiative. An example of this type of effort is a partnership that is being explored with the Iowa Soy Bean Association whereby they would take the lead to work with property owners in the watershed to construct land use practices for nutrient reduction and arrange for the sale of the land to the City.

The **Cogeneration System Maintenance** project (page 63) designates \$4,590,000 to replace outdated equipment which allows us to use the bio-gas by-product from our anaerobic digestion treatment process as a fuel source to produce electricity to operate our plant. Currently, approximately 20% of our energy needs for the plant comes from this renewable resource.

The **Sanitary Sewer System Improvements** project (page 69) calls for \$22,013,000 to be spent on structural repairs to the pipes and manholes throughout the collection system. These repairs are meant to eliminate infiltration of clean water into the sanitary sewer pipes to decrease the frequency of capacity problems and corresponding sewer backups.

A project new to the CIP involves the **East 13th Street Sanitary Sewer Extension** (page 70). This \$2,500,000 project is being recommended in order to assure that sanitary sewer service is available to an area that the City Council has designated in its Land Use Policy Plan for regional commercial growth. The project will extend the sewer main from Dayton Road east under Interstate 35.

Neither property taxes nor sewer revenue are being planned to finance this project. Rather, in accordance with my recommendation, it will be built after a developer enters into an agreement that will allow the project to be financed with General Obligation bond funds to be repaid with incremental taxes generated by the development.

Storm Water Utility - \$11,302,000

Unfortunately, the City of Ames has experienced a number of “100 year floods” since 1993. Since that time we have secured federal funding to buy out properties in the flood-prone areas east of University Boulevard and south of Lincoln Way, as well as provide grants to flood-proof buildings in the impacted areas. The next priority of the City Council is to proceed with a Squaw Creek channel conveyance improvement project along 2,000 feet on either side of the South Duff Bridge. The \$4,280,000 included in the **River Flooding Mitigation** project (page 73) is estimated to reduce flooding by two feet along the major flood damage center in the South Duff commercial corridor.

Because of a backlog of projects approved in prior years that have yet to be completed, we are using the first year of the CIP for catchup. Therefore, you will note we reduced the number of storm water projects in FY 2020/21.

One important project that will continue in FY 2020/21 is the **Storm Water System Analysis** (page 74). The investment of \$180,000 represents the fourth installment for this project which is designed to identify deficient storm water capacity at specific locations of the system and instruct us as to needed future improvements to be included in the CIP.

Resource Recovery - \$1,420,550

The Resource Recovery Plant is almost forty-three years old. It is important that we continue to allocate funds for preventive maintenance. Towards this end, \$1,420,550 has been earmarked over the next five years in the **Resource Recovery System Improvements** project (page 81) to replace various worn out rollers, chains, conveyors, pipes, chutes, electric breakers, motors, belts, pumps, and rotors.

TRANSPORTATION - \$104,626,922

Street/Shared Use Path Improvements - \$83,372,700

One concern that has repeatedly been raised in the annual Citizen Satisfaction Survey is the desire for us to improve traffic flow on our major arterial streets. To address this concern we have earmarked \$9,517,400 for the **Intelligent Transportation System Program** (page 109). This new technology will allow us to accomplish real-time optimization of traffic and pedestrian flow along our major roadways.

The review of the CIP will reveal that we remain committed to improving the condition of the existing street system with our intent to commit \$52,660,000 over the next five years on arterial, collector, and residential streets. Of particular note, is the \$6,750,000 that is being directed to the **Seal Coat Street Pavement Improvements** project (page 93), which is \$3,750,000 more than the previous CIP, as well as the \$12,000,000 identified for the **Asphalt Street Pavement Improvements** (page 91). These two projects are significant because they will allow us to address the feedback we received in the Citizen Satisfaction Survey for improvement to our residential streets, which are predominantly asphalt.

Not all the projects included in this CIP are directed towards the rehabilitation of existing streets. Frequently, we are involved in the construction of new roadway sections. For example, in this CIP you will see the addition of the **Cherry Avenue Extension** (page 87) which will connect Lincoln Way south in the east side of the South Duff commercial area, thus relieving traffic along the busy South Duff traffic corridor. The **US Highway 69 Improvements** (page 104) are designed to eliminate traffic delays at the eastbound off-ramp at US Highway 30 and South Duff Avenue with the construction of the realignment of Billy Sunday Road and South Duff. Finally, the **South Dayton Improvements** (page 105) is the third project that is scheduled in the first year of the CIP to address traffic congestion problems. This project will involve the widening of the intersection of S.E. 16th Street and Dayton Avenue and signaling the ramps at South Dayton Avenue and US Highway 30.

One new project that deserves special attention from the City Council is the **South 16th Street Roadway Widening** project (page 97). This project will result in the widening of South 16th Street from University Boulevard east to Apple Place. With the completion of the Grand Avenue Extension expected in a few years, additional traffic will be channeled south to South 16th Street, resulting in more congestion at both the South Duff Avenue and South 16th Street and University Boulevard and South 16th Street intersections. As you know, South 16th Street transitions from a four-lane to a two-lane street at the intersection with University Boulevard.

What makes this project so unusual is the fact that the two-lane section is surrounded on both sides by University property, therefore, it is designated as an Institutional Road. As such, the legal responsibility to improve an Institutional Road rests with the University, not the City of Ames. Discussions with ISU administrators indicate that with decreases in enrollment and lack of sufficient funding from the State Legislature, other higher priority street improvements will not allow them to complete this important widening in the near future. Realizing the importance of the widening project to the overall success of the Grand Avenue Extension project and the fact that it is the City's project that is making the improvement to this Institutional Road section even more important, I am recommending for the first time that the City pay for this type of improvement. Since it is highly unlikely that in the future the City will be constructing a new arterial street intersecting with an Institutional Road segment, I don't believe we would be establishing a new precedent by funding this project.

A few years ago, the City Council demonstrated its commitment to multi-modal transportation by establishing a goal to expend an average of \$1,200,000 per year on improvements to our bike path system. Adherence to this goal is exhibited in the **Shared Use Path System Expansion** project (page 99), the **Multi-modal Roadway Improvements** (page 100), **Shared Use Path Maintenance** program (page 101), and its incorporation into various other street construction projects. The five year plan that is before you reflects a total of \$6,566,300, or an annual average of \$1,313,260 towards this City Council's priority.

The City Council has established as one of its other priorities to make our community more diverse and inclusive. The CIP helps this objective come alive in the **Accessibility Enhancement** program (page 107). It is expected that \$1,000,000 will be spent to upgrade our sidewalk intersection crosswalk panels, retrofit our signalized traffic control devices with audible and vibrotactile push-buttons, and renovate our public parking stalls to comply with current Americans with Disabilities (ADA) standards.

CyRide - \$18,712,647

Maintaining the vehicle fleet is imperative to the continued success of our public transportation system. Therefore, over the next four years 18 new buses and 10 mini-buses are planned to be purchased in the **CyRide Vehicle Replacement & Rehabilitation** program (page 117). It is anticipated that the \$13,587,274 needed to replace these vehicles will be bolstered by 80% funding from state and federal grant programs.

The **CyRide Building Improvements & Expansion** project (page 118) calls for us to expend \$4,131,373 for HVAC, concrete replacement, water main, and fueling system improvements to rehabilitate the existing building as well as plan for additional funds to accommodate the building expansion needs for the system when they become needed.

As ridership continues to decrease with the drop in ISU enrollment and the future of federal funding remains in doubt, we can rely more on technology to make the transit system as efficient as possible. The **CyRide Technology Improvements** program (page 119) designates \$370,000 to install Wi-Fi and network capabilities in our buses so that we can obtain passenger counts by vehicle, time of day, and location. This information will allow for quicker responses to changes in ridership patterns resulting in fewer buses and drivers needed during certain times of the day.

Airport - \$2,541,575

The projects reflected in the **Airport Improvements** program (page 123) are influenced by the Master Plan that was approved in 2007. The projects planned at this facility include the relocation of the electrical equipment housed in the old

terminal building, replacement of the runway/taxiway lighting, apron pavement rehabilitation, and drainage improvements. It should be noted that the City is currently engaged in updating the Master Plan and, therefore, the projects designated for the Airport may be modified in the next CIP.

COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT - \$6,707,750

While most of the projects highlighted in the above sections are focused on meeting the basic health and safety needs of our residents, the Community Enrichment projects tend to offer experiences that add to the overall quality of life of our citizens. These are important factors that are considered by those who choose whether or not to come to our community, and by those who make a choice of whether or not to remain in Ames. While no major new facilities are being planned for in this CIP, a great deal of attention is being given to upgrading and renovating our existing facilities.

The Park System/Facility Improvements program (page 128) directs \$2,270,000 to be spent resurfacing our tennis courts, renovating the Bandshell changing rooms, installing irrigation in our sports fields, adding restrooms to various locations within the park system, replacing basketball courts, building additional park shelters, and converting two tennis courts into six pickle ball courts.

Over the life of this CIP we are planning to replace playground equipment in 14 parks throughout our system with your approval of the **Playground Equipment Improvements** program (page 129). This investment will be in keeping with our goal of replacing this equipment on a 20 year cycle.

Homewood Golf Course (page 131) receives attention in the CIP with \$320,000 being expended on a new shared use path from the proposed new clubhouse to South Duff Avenue and the replacement of the pedestrian/golf cart bridge on Hole #9.

The **Ames/ISU Arena** (page 130) will benefit from a reconstruction of the parking lot, renovations to the office/concession area, replacement of the lobby flooring, and the installation of new water heaters.

The **Municipal Pool** (page 133) is scheduled to be demolished in the spring of 2022 to make room for the new Ames High School. While no decision has been made regarding if, or when, we will pursue a new indoor aquatics center, the CIP calls for the City and the Ames School District to contribute \$100,000 in anticipation of the needed short-term repairs to keep the current facility operating until it is removed.

Ada Hayden Heritage Park (page 134) reflects \$655,000 being spent on the reconstruction of the path around the south lake as well as two new features: an accessible canoe/kayak launch and a wetland overlook.

The **Furman Aquatic Center** (page 135) will receive \$385,000 of improvements over the next five years with the refurbishing of the play structure in the Splash Pool, the replacing of the light fixtures on the pool deck, the repainting of the pool basins, and the installing of a new shelter in the parking lot.

Finally, we are proposing **Cemetery Improvements** (page 139) as well, with \$150,000 designated to construct a new funeral pavilion to allow ceremonies to be conducted during inclement weather conditions, to renovate the deteriorating retaining wall at the 13th Street site, and to plant additional landscaping at the Ontario site to reduce maintenance costs and avoid erosion.

STRENGTHENING OUR NEIGHBORHOODS - \$1,650,000

The City Council has a long-standing commitment to strengthening our neighborhoods, both residential and commercial. This commitment is being supported in the CIP with \$250,000 for the **Neighborhood Improvement Program** (page 143), \$250,000 for the **Downtown Façade Improvement Program** (page 141), \$250,000 for the **Campustown Façade Improvement Program** (page 142), and \$900,000 for the **Neighborhood Curb Replacement Program** (page 115), which is included in the **Transportation Program**.

ADDITIONAL PROJECTS NOT YET INCLUDED IN THE CIP

Each year the City Council asks if there are other major projects that we are contemplating, but have not yet included in the recommended CIP, especially as they relate to future G.O. Bond elections. As we look out into the next five to ten years, the following four projects are currently under consideration by the staff.

- With the demolition of the Municipal Pool, a Council decision will have to be made whether or not to pursue an **Indoor Aquatics Center** for the community.

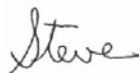
- Because of the increased densities in Campustown, which make it more dangerous for pedestrians when fire trucks exit and enter the station, the **relocation of Fire Station #2** needs to be considered by the City Council.
- Because of the inadequate space to provide a healthy environment for the animals housed in the facility, to allow the staff to accomplish their work, and to accommodate the customers who wish to adopt an animal; a decision by the City Council to renovate the existing building or construct **a new Animal Control Facility** will be required.
- Depending on which growth scenario is adopted in the Ames 2040 Plan, the City Council might have to consider the need for **a new Fire Station #4** sometime in the future as the selected growth area develops.

In the coming year, the staff hopes to analyze these projects in greater detail so that the City Council will have better information to make decisions regarding the future of these projects.

A plan of this magnitude requires an understanding of the long-term needs of our residents, the ability to develop a strategic implementation strategy, and knowledge of how to finance this array of expensive projects. Fortunately, our Department Heads and their staff members are up to this challenge each year. As you will see after reviewing this document, they have once again provided invaluable input into the recommendations contained in this CIP.

Coordinating the formulation of this complex document is a difficult undertaking. Therefore, I want to thank Duane Pitcher, Finance Director, Nancy Masteller, Budget Manager, Amy Crabbs, Budget Analyst, Shannon Andersen, Finance Secretary, Deb Schildroth, Assistant City Manager, and Brian Phillips, Assistant City Manager, for their leadership in developing this document.

Respectfully submitted,



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City Manager