

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: PRESENTATION OF AMES COMMUNITY GREENHOUSE GAS INVENTORY AND SUPPLEMENTAL REPORTS

BACKGROUND:

One of the priorities of the City Council is to expand sustainability efforts by evaluating the community's greenhouse gas impact and looking for ways to reduce it. In November 2019, the City Council approved a contract with PaleBLUEdot of Maplewood, MN for a Community Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory, Forecasting, and Recommendations Report.

Establishing a community GHG Inventory is an effective first step in addressing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing the community for the next step – a Climate Action Plan. In addition to the GHG Inventory, PaleBLUEdot also agreed to provide a Renewable Energy Potentials Study (renamed the Solar PV Energy Potentials Study to better reflect its focus) and a Climate Vulnerability Assessment. All three documents are attached.

The GHG Inventory required a cross-departmental team of staff members representing Sustainability, Water & Pollution Control, Electric Services, Planning & Housing, Resource Recovery Plant, Public Works, Fleet Services, Parks & Recreation, and the City Manager's Office. Data gathering required assistance from outside utilities including Alliant Energy, Midland Power Cooperative, Central Iowa Power Cooperative, and Consumers Energy. Additionally, Iowa State University was tremendously helpful in providing campus data to ensure the inventory represented the entire community.

The Community GHG Inventory is divided into distinct parts:

- Sections 1-5 are the narrative report and provide background, community comparisons, forecasting, and example reduction strategies.
- The Appendices include the technical report, calculations summary, infographics, and a glossary of terms.
- The two other reports, the Solar PV Energy Potentials Study and a Climate Vulnerability Assessment, provide insight and information into specific sustainability issues.

The Greenhouse Gas Inventory provides a foundational piece for a future Climate Action Plan in establishing a carbon production community baseline and identifying the sources of carbon. The inventory itself does not provide a strategy for reducing carbon production

or a goal for reduction. Based on the future carbon projections for Ames included in the report, a business as usual (BAU) approach would likely create significant challenges for future generations. Some identified areas of concern include an increase in extreme heat, increased severe weather events, loss of species, lower crop yields, and damage to ecosystems. Lowering carbon production and reversing these trends continues to be an important goal for many citizens both in Ames and across the nation.

In preparing this report, many City departments were able to review the carbon numbers specific to their departments. For example, the new Water Plant is much more energy-efficient than the former facility. However, because it is so much larger and has moved some processing inside, the energy costs did not decrease. The conversion of the Ames Power Plant from coal to cleaning burning natural gas resulted in a significant decrease in carbon production. The City continues to provide incentives for high efficiency appliances, electric vehicle charging stations, rain barrels, native landscaping, food composters, and more. Each of these programs can help reduce carbon emissions.

With the completion of the Community GHG Inventory, the City is prepared to move forward on the City Council's goal to develop and adopt a Climate Action Plan.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. A. Accept the reports.
 - B. Direct staff to proceed with the RFP process for selection of a consultant to develop a Climate Action Plan.
2. A. Accept the reports but direct staff to consider clarifications prior to issuing final versions for print and permanent placement on the City's website.
 - B. Direct staff to proceed with the RFP process for selection of a consultant to develop a Climate Action Plan.
3. Do not accept the reports and delay the RFP process for selection of a consultant to develop a Climate Action Plan.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

A Community Greenhouse Gas Inventory is an important step in assessing the current greenhouse gas emissions and understanding the overall impact. With the completion of the inventory, the City is positioned to pursue an RFP and select a consultant to begin the climate action planning process.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, as described above.