

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: REVISIONS TO U.S. HWY 30 AND BANDSHELL LIGHT SHOW POLICY

BACKGROUND:

At its April 12, 2022, meeting, the City Council directed staff to bring potential changes to consider other events the City Council may wish to change the U.S. Highway 30 light towers for, and to consider including the Bandshell lighting within the same policy.

The Council adopted the policy for the use of the U.S. Highway 30 light towers effective July 2020. This policy allows City staff to review requests for light displays against established criteria to ensure the light displays are being used for acceptable purposes. Acceptable uses include commemorating observances recognized by local, state, or national proclamation, supporting local sports, or honoring individuals who have had a profound community impact. Unacceptable uses include commercial or personal promotion, or recognition of private events or messages not pertinent to the community at large.

The Bandshell lighting project completed in 2021 allows for programmable displays of a variety of colors, similar to the U.S. Highway 30 light towers. City staff has drafted modifications to the existing Highway 30 Light Display policy to include Bandshell light displays, so requests for either will be considered using the same criteria. The proposed changes are attached.

Additionally, staff is recommending the inclusion of a provision to allow for recognition “of any other event of significance as determined by the Ames City Council.” This provision would provide the City Council with the discretion to determine what events, activities, or milestones are worthy of recognition, outside of the specific observances listed in the policy.

If approved, City staff will work to coordinate light displays between the two locations when possible. The use of the Bandshell for events and the different staff and technologies involved may result in the light displays not being coordinated between Highway 30 and the Bandshell at all times.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the attached U.S. Highway 30 and Durham Bandshell Light Display Policy, as presented.
2. Approve the attached policy with modifications.
3. Do not approve the attached policy.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The City Council has requested modifications to the light show policy to incorporate the lighting at the Bandshell, and has also requested potential changes to consider other events the Council may wish to change the lights for. The attached policy, with revisions suggested by City staff, allows the Council to direct the lights to be changed in recognition of events the Council believes are significant.

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

U.S. Highway 30 Light Tower and Durham Bandshell Light Display Policy

Background:

The light towers along U.S. Highway 30 near Dayton Avenue and the lighting at the Durham Bandshell can be programmed to display various solid and transitioning colors. The displays are coordinated by the Public Works Traffic Supervisor and the Auditorium, Bandshell, and Community Center Manager, respectively. Routine displays may be shown on an ongoing basis. Any special light displays requested by outside organizations will be evaluated according to this policy, and will be programmed to take the place of the routine displays.

Organizations Eligible to Request a Special Light Display:

For-profit organizations may not place requests for special light displays. Special light displays may be requested by:

1. The Ames City Council or other governmental agencies
2. Non-profit organizations
3. Organizations that have an established partnership with the City of Ames, which promote the economic welfare, tourism, or industry of the City.

Requesting a Special Light Display:

Requests for a special light display may be placed up to one year in advance of the proposed display start date. Requests for displays must be placed at least two weeks in advance of the proposed display start date if the display requires new light programming, and at least one week in advance if it is a previously used display. Displays will be scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. Displays may be up to seven consecutive nights in length, except where the City Council directs that a display remain in place for a longer period of time. In a situation where a Bandshell event falls within the seven-day period, the requested light display will not be shown during the event.

Requests should include the name and contact information of the organization placing the request, proposed dates of the display, a statement outlining what the display is intended to recognize, and requested colors and patterns. City staff may modify displays to ensure compatibility with the display technology, viewability, and motorist safety from adjacent roadways.

Requests may be placed directly with the Public Works Traffic Supervisor for the U.S. Highway 30 lights, and with the Auditorium, Bandshell, and Community Center Manager for the Durham Bandshell lights. Applicants should place their requests well in advance to ensure enough time to receive approval for the display and program it if necessary.

Acceptable Light Display Uses:

Light displays may be used to:

- Acknowledge commemorative observances recognized by local, state, or federal proclamation (e.g., Earth Day, Public Works Week, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, etc.)
- Celebrate local achievements (completion of a non-profit fundraising campaign or construction project)
- Support local sports and school activities (Ames High School, Iowa State University athletics events)
- Honor or memorialize individuals who have had a profound impact on the Ames community
- Recognize any other event of significance as determined by the Ames City Council.

Light displays may not be used to:

- Promote commercial products, services, or interests; or promote political candidates, campaigns, or parties.
- Recognize personal milestones, such as birthdays, anniversaries, congratulations, or retirements.
- Promote messages inconsistent with local, state, or federal law (such as non-discrimination laws).
- Promote messages that are pertinent only to selected individuals rather than the community at large.
- Promote private events not open to the public.

If a request is denied by City staff, the applicant may appeal to the City Council. The City Council's decision regarding the request is final.