



October 19, 2022

The League of Women Voters Ames & Story County is asking the Ames City Council to establish and fund a Climate Action Office. This Office could assist Council, City Manager and staff in prioritizing issues, implementing measures and seeking funding from state, federal and private sources. This office can be established while waiting for reports from consultants.

We appreciate that the City Council has set an aggressive goal for reducing emissions of greenhouse gases (83% less by 2030). The attached list includes just a few of the ideas for addressing this goal that have been brought to the council. We recognize these are not simple issues to resolve, so starting action now is imperative. A Climate Action Office can assist in prioritizing these issues

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1. Recycle plastic to reduce the volume of RDF burned in the power plant.

- Eliminating the need to burn waste in the larger of the plants two boilers would save several million dollars per year by allowing the purchase of lower-cost and greener energy from the grid. It would also significantly reduce emissions from burning natural gas and waste.
- Plastic recycling can be accomplished by implementing cost-effective changes at the Resource Recovery Plant, by requiring all waste-haulers to offer curbside, single-stream recycling, and/or by starting a voluntary plastic recycling program modeled after the one for recycling glass.
- Iowa has markets for recycled plastic and the state DNR has grants and loans to facilitate municipal recycling programs.

2. Improving the energy efficiency of buildings is critical to meeting emission goals.

3. Explore opportunities for the electric utility to offer on-bill financing of energy efficiency and renewable energy measures.

- Improving building efficiency results in energy cost savings that more than pay for the measures over time. The obstacle is the up-front cost. One possible solution is for the electric utility to finance efficiency measures that are attached to the property, such as insulation, windows, doors, furnaces, central air conditioners, and possibly, renewable energy facilities. The loan becomes an obligation of the property owner that can be paid from the energy cost savings through on-bill financing.

4. Make a decision on whether to compost or anaerobically digest organic waste.

- Composting facilities like those operated by ISU, Iowa City, and other cities and counties are effective and have low operating costs. They typically pay for themselves. The city also has been considering the option of converting waste to useable methane gas in anaerobic digestors – technology already in use at the Waste Water Treatment Plant. Either option is better than trucking organic waste a hundred miles or more to a commercial facility.

5. Begin conversion to an organized waste collection system.

- As many as 9 waste haulers drive 25-to-30-ton loads of waste over the same routes – most at about 2 to 3 miles per gallon of diesel fuel. This system destroys our streets, creates avoidable emissions, and adds cost.