

Staff Report

FY 2023-24 SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR'S MID-YEAR REPORT

December 19, 2023

BACKGROUND:

This report provides a mid-year update of the FY2023-24 activities and accomplishments related to the Sustainability Advisory Services contract between the City of Ames and Iowa State University.

On July 1, 2010, the City entered into a contract with Iowa State University to utilize the services of its fulltime 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 2023-24, in keeping with the Council's direction, the Scope of Services targets the following priority areas related to energy consumption reduction, as well as adding waste reduction and diversion:

1. Continue to assist with public education, outreach, speaking engagements, research on potential funding sources, and implementation of a City Council-approved Climate Action Plan.
2. Continue to represent the City at events that educate residents about ongoing City sustainability efforts, rebates, and waste opportunities.
3. Coordinate 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.
4. 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.

PROGRESS ON SCOPE OF SERVICES:

1 . Continue to assist with public education, outreach, speaking engagements, research on potential funding sources, and implementation of a City Council-approved Climate Action Plan.

Mid-Year FY2023-24 accomplishments include the following for Priority Area #1:

- Collaborated with City staff to support milestone components of the Climate Action Plan (CAP) including:
 - Assisted with community engagement, outreach, and awareness-building opportunities. Presentations provided at events and for civic and community groups and radio have included Iowa State University (Colleges of Design, Agriculture and Life Sciences classes, and Campus Sustainability Month Celebration), KASI 1430AM and KHOI 89.1FM radio

programs, and CitySide, and Live Green! Monthly newsletter publications.

- Coordinated with CAP core project team and technical assistance team members related to strategizing, planning, and researching opportunities toward implementing “next steps” related to the City Seven priority areas identified within the City of Ames Climate Action Plan.
 - Increased wind and solar generation as part of electric services renewable energy portfolio
 - Waste-to-Energy improvements/reducing waste emissions
 - Net Zero and Net Zero-Ready new construction
 - Retrofitting Existing Buildings
 - Retrofit Municipal Buildings
 - Electrify the Municipal Fleet (non-CyRide)
 - Create a Mayor’s Climate Action Plan Leadership Task Force

Collaboration partners: Electric Services – Donald Kom and Joel Zook; City Manager’s Office – Susan Gwiasda; City staff serving on the CAP Technical Assistance Team

2. Continue to represent the City at events that educate residents about ongoing City sustainability efforts, rebates, and waste reduction opportunities.

Mid-Year FY2023-24 accomplishments include the following for Priority Area #2:

- Participated in the Iowa State University WelcomeFest.
- Continue a monthly radio program on KHOI 89.1FM focused on community sustainability accomplishments, initiatives, and opportunities.
- Continue to represent the City in sustainability update segments on KASI 1430AM.
- Continue sharing of City of Ames sustainability efforts as part of campus and community speaking engagements.
- Continue sharing of City of Ames and Ames community volunteer opportunities and sustainability events and updates via the Live Green! Monthly newsletter, Live Green! social media platforms and targeted emails.
- Engaged City of Ames department participation in Iowa State University environmental events. Public Works (Storm Water and Resource Recovery), City Manager’s Office and Electric Services tabled at the Campus Sustainability Month Celebration (October 23).

3. Coordinate 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 FY2023-24 accomplishments include the following for Priority Area #3:

- Completed the seventh annual Rummage RAMPage, held July 28 to Aug 5, 2023. The event diverted more than 77 tons of furniture and housewares from being landfilled and raised more than \$62,000 for local non-profit organizations – an increase of over 6 tons and more than \$10,000.
- Through a partnership with the United Way, shoppers used Venmo for cashless payments. Venmo accounted for 35% of sales.

- As with the 2022 event, tremendous support was received from ISU Parking, several City departments, and more than 2,000 hours provided by volunteers representing 47 community non-profit organizations and ISU student organizations.
- In addition to donated merchandise for resale, clothing, shoes, linens, books, DVDs, CDs, school supplies, cleaning supplies and non-perishable, unexpired food were once again collected and donated to community non-profit organizations for beneficial and value-added distribution.
- ROAR (Rehoming Our Animals/Aquariums Responsibly) initiative continued, which ensures an opportunity for drop-off of pets that are not able to be moved with residents or residents are no longer able to care for – rather than releasing them – once again partnered with the event.
- Partnered with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources’ Iowa Waste Exchange Program in an effort to offer additional diversion opportunities and outreach for leftover sales items, beyond already saturated community donation outlets, to community needs, programs, and families outside Story County.
- Kick-off planning – beginning in January for the 2024 Rummage RAMPage event, July 26 – August 3, 2024.

Collaboration partners: Iowa State University Parking Services, Iowa Department of Natural Resources’ Iowa Waste Exchange Program, Resource Recovery Plant, Ames Police, Ames Electric Services, Ames Animal Shelter, Ames Parks & Recreation, Ames Water & Pollution Control, Ames Public Works, Public Relations Office, and community non-profit organizations and volunteers

4. 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 FY2023-24 accomplishments include the following for Priority Area #4:

- Collaborated with Electric Services in the oversight and management of two Smart Energy (sharing Smart Business Challenge and Electric Services responsibilities) Interns for 2023-2024, Shelby Nechkash and Grant Buresh – returning for a second year.
- Continue recruitment of additional businesses to the Smart Business Challenge and three-year recertification of current certified business members. Thirty-three businesses are currently participating in the Challenge (with an additional five businesses choosing to not recertify and becoming inactive members). Current certifications in the Challenge include one bronze, seven silver, five gold and 14 platinum. Since last year’s year-end report, one new business has joined the challenge, Jon Wilson Photography, and three businesses have completed three-year certification: 3M, Mary Greeley Medical Center, and Morning Bell Coffee Roasters – all recertifying at the platinum level.
- Coordinated the annual Smart Business Challenge Recognition Event, scheduled for Thursday, January 18, 2024 from 11 am to 1 pm, at Reiman Gardens. This year’s keynote speaker will be Shelene Codner, Iowa Waste Exchange Coordinator and Area Resource Specialist, speaking on, “Keeping Waste Out of Landfills and Into Our Economy.”
- This year celebrates the 10th anniversary of the City of Ames Smart Business Challenge.

Collaboration partners: Iowa Department of Natural Resources’ Iowa Waste Exchange Program – Shelene Codner; Electric Services – Donald Kom and Joel Zook; Public Works – Bill Schmitt, Liz Calhoun, Mark Peebler, and Lorrie Hanson; Water & Pollution Control – John Dunn; and City Manager’s Office – Susan Gwiasda