

ITEM #: 27  
DATE: 06-11-24  
DEPT: ADMIN

### COUNCIL ACTION FORM

**SUBJECT: FY2023-24 YEAR-END SUSTAINABILITY REPORT AND NEW TWO-MONTH CONTRACT**

#### **BACKGROUND:**

Since July 1, 2010, the City of Ames has entered annually into a contract to utilize the services of Iowa State University's full-time 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.

#### **NEW TWO-MONTH CONTRACT FOR SERVICES:**

One year ago, the City Council accepted the community's first Climate Action Plan, which includes proposed actions to reduce greenhouse gases. To help implement the priority actions for carbon reduction, the City is in the process of hiring its own full-time Sustainability Coordinator. During the contract renewal last year, the Council was alerted to the City's ability to terminate the contract if a Sustainability Coordinator was hired before June 30, 2024. **Because it is now anticipated that the new position will be filled this summer, staff is recommending approval of a two-month contract to retain sustainability services from ISU from July 1, 2024 - Aug. 31, 2024 for a cost of \$6,172. The scope of services includes two items: continue researching funding sources and implementing Climate Action Plan priorities and coordinating the annual community Rummage RAMPage sale.**

Even though our contractual relationship with ISU for sustainability services will end in August, it is hoped that the City's new Sustainability Coordinator will continue to collaborate with the ISU Director of Sustainability since the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP) is community-based and ISU remains a partner in carbon reduction. Each organization supporting a full-time position dedicated to carbon reduction will go a long way in helping to create a more sustainable future for residents.

#### **YEAR-REPORT:**

**The information provided below represents the final report highlighting the FY2023-24 activities and accomplishments related to the Sustainability Advisory Services contract between the City of Ames and Iowa State University. It also includes highlights of the 14-year sustainability partnership.**

During FY 2023-24, in keeping with the Council's direction, the Scope of Services targeted 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 REGARDING THE SCOPE OF SERVICES:**

#### **1. Continue to assist with public education, outreach, speaking engagements, research on potential funding sources, and implementation of the community Climate Action Plan.**

Collaborated with City staff to support 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, WelcomeFest, Campus Sustainability Month Celebration, Sustainapalooza, and Earth Day Celebration), Ames Golden K Kiwanis, United Women in Faith, KASI 1430AM and KHOI 89.1FM radio programs (including Earth Day on the Airwaves broadcast), 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
- Participated in funding opportunities and strategizing discussions involving CAP core project team, internal staff, Iowa State University, and the Mid-Iowa Planning Alliance.

Collaboration partners: Electric Services – Donald Kom and Joel Zook; City Manager’s Office – Pa Vang Goldbeck, Susan Gwiasda; City staff serving on the CAP Technical Assistance Team; Wendy Kisch and Brandi Latterell – Iowa State University and MIPA staff and partners.

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

- Participated in the Iowa State University WelcomeFest.
- Continued a monthly radio program on KHOI 89.1FM focused on community sustainability accomplishments, initiatives, and opportunities.

- Continued to represent the City in sustainability update segments on KASI 1430AM.
- Continued sharing about City of Ames sustainability efforts as part of campus and community speaking engagements.
- Continued sharing about 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), Sustainapalooza (February 27), and Earth Day Celebration (April 22).
- Participated in the Ames Walk Bike Roll pedestrian and bicycle master planning process.
- Assisted in the development and facilitation of the six-hour “Earth Day on the Airwaves” event in collaboration with KHOI Community Radio on April 20, featuring live updates from the Ames Repair Café and City of Ames Annual Stream Cleanup, call-ins from City staff, and community voices sharing initiatives, activities, and stories related to celebrating Earth Day.
- Coordinated with City and University staff in the planning and implementation of Stash the Trash, April 20-21.
- Promoted and increased awareness and education related to the City of Ames FWD (Food Waste Diversion) program and recently established drop-off multi-commodity recycling program. Collaboration partners: Electric Services – Donald Kom and Joel Zook; Public Works – Bill Schmitt, Liz Calhoun, Mark Peebler, and Lorrie Hanson; and Public Relations Officer – Susan Gwiasda

**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.**

- Completed six planning meetings for the 2024 Rummage RAMPage event. This year’s event will be held from Friday, July 26 to Saturday, August 3. The 2024 event will require over 2,000 hours split up among nearly 600 different volunteer shifts to benefit community non-profit organizations. This includes overnight as well as day-time opportunities.
- Confirmed additional City department collaboration this year in support of Rummage RAMPage through designated “department days” – in which department representatives assume event leadership and oversight roles for a day. Departments signed on include Electric Services, Public Works/Resource Recovery, City Manager’s Office, and Water & Pollution Control.
- Completed an informational meeting for non-profit organizations on May 2.
- Implemented a new volunteer registration process and timeline this year – which included an extended sign-up over a three-day and limiting maximum volunteer shifts to five/day for Day 1 and 2 of sign-up. Currently fifty organizations have met the required ten hours of volunteer

commitment in order to be an official participating organization for this year's event and share in the event proceeds.

- Completed community presentations and awareness building related to event achievements as well as opportunities for involvement and collaboration, including venues of organization meetings Office of Sustainability Live Green! Monthly Newsletter, and Iowa State University's Orientation Resource Fair.
- Additional event information, as well as additional instructions for what and how to donate, can be found on the Rummage RAMPAGE website.
- Partnering with ROAR (Rehoming Our Aquariums and Animals Responsibly) will take place again this year. Due to very busy schedules for our ROAR partners, assistance will be available on an as-needed basis throughout the event, rather than on-site.

Collaboration partners: Iowa State University Parking Services, Iowa Department of Natural Resources (Wildlife Diversity Program and Iowa Waste Exchange Program), Story County Conservation, Iowa Wildlife Center, 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.**

- Continued recruitment of additional businesses to the Smart Business Challenge and three-year recertification of current certified business members. Thirty-five businesses are currently participating in the Challenge (with a total of seven businesses choosing to not recertify and become inactive members during this past year). Current certifications in the Challenge include one bronze, eight silver, five gold, and fourteen platinum. Two new businesses joined the Challenge since mid-year, Clayton Farms and Photosynthesis – for a total of three new businesses joining the Challenge this past year.
- Completed one new certification, since mid-year (and for this past year), Jon Wilson Photography – certified at the silver level.
- Completed additional recertifications for businesses being certified for at least three years. Two businesses completed recertification since the mid-year report, Duck Worth Wearing and The Loft – recertified at the platinum level. In total, five businesses achieved recertification (all platinum) this past year.
- Hosted the annual Smart Business Challenge Recognition Event at Reiman Gardens. Seven businesses were recognized for achieving platinum certification and recertification status since last year's recognition event – Nelson Electric (certification), 3M, Barilla, Mary Greeley Medical Center, and Worldly Goods (second recertification), and McFarland Clinic and Morning Bell Coffee Roasters (third recertification).
- Completed a blog post (by this year's intern team), "Celebrating 10 Years of the City of Ames Smart Business Challenge" highlighting the events of the past year and "what's to come in 2024-2025". Interns also joined one of the KHOI monthly sustainability programs to discuss and

highlight the Smart Business Challenge.

- Finalized and implemented an updated Smart Business Checklist with improvements and enhancements including:  
Revised scoring system to more effectively represent non-applicable sustainability performance areas in overall certification scoring, as well as additional opportunities to specifically highlight platinum performance, as well as commitment correlating with Climate Action Plan goals and priorities.
- Streamlined checklist response fields.
- Partnered with City of Ames Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coordinator, Cassandra Eames, to ensure representation of supporting a community culture of belonging within the revised Challenge checklist.

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 14-YEAR SUSTAINABILITY PARTNERSHIP:**

- **Establishment of the Smart Business Challenge Program. The impact of ten years of implementation including:**
  - Recruitment of fifty-three community businesses for sustainability commitment and performance and completion of thirty-six certifications – including two bronze, twelve silver, seven gold, fifteen platinum and seventeen participating.
  - Recertification of fifteen community businesses for continued sustainability commitment and performance three years and beyond.
  - Completion of four Smart Business Challenge Recognition Luncheon events.
  - Supported annual professional development opportunities for two Iowa State University students through Smart Energy/Smart Business Challenge internships.
  - Highlighting best sustainability practices of Challenge members through social media postings and blogs, videos, newsletter features, press releases and radio interviews.
  - Increased awareness related to environmental, economic, and social sustainability opportunities and impacts, through operations, products, services, and philanthropy of the City of Ames business community.
- **Establishment of annual Rummage RAMPage event. The impact of seven years of implementation including:**
  - Over 366 tons of non-beneficial RDF materials diverted from landfilling with a collective landfilling percentage of unsold items of less than 5%.
  - Over \$215,000 raised to support the collective work of over 50 community non-profit organizations and ISU student organizations in pursuing their missions and achieving their goals.
  - Recognition as the 2022 Iowa Society of Solid Waste Operations Outstanding Waste Diversion Program.
- **Establishment of the City of Ames Food Waste Diversion Program. The impact of five years of implementation including:**
  - Over 127 tons of food and organic materials waste diverted from landfilling, since 2019, including 16 tons from January-May 2024.
  - With additional diversion from the Great Pumpkin Disposal Program (47 tons through 2023) – achieving a total organic waste diversion of over 174 tons.
  - Expansion of beneficial waste disposal diversion options with the establishment of the City of Ames drop-off recycling program in 2024 – targeting additional commodities of metal,

- plastic, paper and cardboard, and clothing, to augment glass recycling.
  - A total diversion of added commodities of plastic, paper and cardboard equaling nearly 47 tons - achieved in the first six months.
- **Completion of a City of Ames Climate Action Plan, establishing Ames as a leader in addressing considerations of a changing climate, through a framework for commitment and impact including:**
  - Emission reduction goals (70% reduction in greenhouse emissions from 2018 levels by 2030, and 94% reduction in emissions by 2050)
  - Six Big Moves for goal performance and accomplishment (renewable energy generation, building retrofits, net-zero new construction, reducing vehicle emissions, increasing active transportation and transit use, and reducing waste emissions)
  - Seven Action Steps as priority items of focus (increasing wind and solar generation as part of Electric Services renewable energy portfolio; waste-to-energy improvements/reducing waste emissions; net zero and new zero-ready new construction; retrofitting existing buildings; retrofitting municipal buildings; electrifying the (non-CyRide) municipal fleet; and creating a Mayor's climate action plan leadership task force)
- **Increased and Enhanced Education, Outreach, and Engagement of Sustainability Commitment, Achievement and Opportunities through:**
  - Completion of the 2011 City of Ames Sustainability Plan for Electrical Consumption Reduction.
  - Completion of 2011 City of Ames Sustainability Education and Awareness Initiatives and Activities Report.
  - Presentations, tabling, programming, resource development and distribution, events, media partnerships, social media presence, surveys, focus groups, classroom collaborations, volunteer connections, and networking.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Accept the Year-End Report as is provided above and approve the two-month contract (July & August 2024) with ISU for Sustainability Advisory Services for a total of \$6,172.
2. Accept the Year-End Report as is provided above, but do NOT approve the two-month contract as proposed with ISU for Sustainable Advisory Services.
3. Do not accept the Year-End Report Nor approve the two-month contract as proposed with ISU for Sustainable Advisory Services.

**CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Both the City of Ames and ISU remain committed to the concept of sustainability as both organizations are seeking to reduce carbon emissions. Sharing a Sustainability Coordinator to promote sustainability efforts and look for opportunities to collaborate has worked well for the past 10 years. However, the workload is such that the City now is pursuing its own full-time coordinator. Because a new person will be hired, the City staff is recommending that a new two-month contract with ISU for Sustainability Services be approved to provide continuity of services until the new employee is adequately oriented to the new job responsibilities. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1.

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

[Sustainability\\_Contract\\_Two\\_Months.pdf](#)