

ITEM #: 16
DATE: 06-11-24
DEPT: W&PC

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

**SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS AND
NOTICE TO BIDDERS FOR FY 2022/23 STORY COUNTY EDGE OF FIELD
PROJECT**

BACKGROUND:

The Water Pollution Control (WPC) Facility is being converted to implement nutrient removal treatment technology over a period of 20 years. Separate from the work that will occur at the treatment plant, watershed-based improvements performed by the City can be “banked” as credit toward any future, more stringent nutrient reduction regulations imposed on the WPC Facility. On February 24, 2021, staff executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to allow these off-site nutrient reductions to be banked with the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Exchange.

Over the past several years, staff has been developing a partnership with multiple entities to bundle together several Edge-of-Field (EOF) practices that can be bid as a single bid package. **This year's project will construct EOF practices in Story County, consisting of five saturated buffers and ten bioreactors that will intercept and treat 18 agricultural tile outlets. These practices allow for the natural removal of nitrogen from subsurface drainage before it enters a stream or other surface waters.** Additional information about these practices are shown in the attachment.

In addition to the nutrient reduction benefits provided by these practices, they also provide a small measure of mitigation against both droughts and floods by holding water on the landscape longer.

On March 28, 2023 and August 8, 2023, City Council approved two separate agreements that outlined the funding arrangements and project management duties for the EOF project. The City of Ames is acting as the fiscal agent for the project and the Iowa Department of Agricultural and Land Stewardship (IDALS) and Story County/Story County Conservation are acting as funding agents for the project. **The funding for this project consists of 75% from IDALS and a 25% local match that is split equally between the City and Story County. The City's share of the project cost will come from the \$200,000 budgeted annually in the Watershed Based Nutrient Reduction capital improvements project.**

The final design is complete, and all landowners included with the project have completed the necessary paperwork. Staff is ready to issue a Notice to Bidders for the EOF project. The engineer's estimate of probable construction costs is \$257,711. The estimated cost for the City's share is \$32,215.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the preliminary plans and specifications and issue a Notice to Bidders for the FY 2022/23 Story County Edge of Field Project, and establish July 10, 2024, as the bid due date and July 23, 2024, as the date of public hearing and award.
2. Do not approve the plans and specifications and a Notice to Bidders thereby delaying the completion of this project.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The Ames Water Pollution Control Facility will be converted to a nutrient removal treatment technology over a period of 20 years. To mitigate future investment beyond what is already planned for, watershed-based projects can be performed, and the resulting nutrient reduction credits can be banked. Following project completion, the City will register each of these practices and receive annual nutrient reduction credit for the lifespan of each practice. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, as described above.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[About Saturated Buffers and Nitrifying Bioreactors.pdf](#)