

ITEM #: 2
 DATE: 02-18-25
 DEPT: POLICE

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: PURCHASE OF PROPERTY AT 2715 DAYTON AVENUE FOR FUTURE ANIMAL SHELTER AND CONTROL FACILITY

BACKGROUND:

The City's Animal Shelter, located at 325 Billy Sunday Road, is in need of replacement. The existing facility is undersized and experiences challenges related to weatherization, mechanical equipment, and other aging systems. City staff has been working through the planning stages to develop a new animal shelter facility for the past several years.

In November 2024, staff became aware that the property that until recently housed Eagle’s Loft day care (2715 Dayton Avenue) was for sale. Staff's impression was that this property presented a viable opportunity to purchase an existing building and remodel it for an animal shelter facility at a lower cost compared to constructing an entirely new building. Additionally, this approach would allow a new space to be occupied sooner compared to constructing a new purpose-built facility.

The asking price for the 2715 Dayton property is \$1.1 million. It is assessed at \$1,159,200. The property consists of a single-story building containing 10,880 square feet, plus a 1,851 square foot basement, and a 26-stall parking lot on a 5.59 acre site. The building appears to be in good condition and well-kept.

On November 12, 2024, the City Council authorized staff to pursue an option to purchase the property. Staff secured a \$5,000 option to purchase the property on or before February 24 for the asking price of \$1,100,000.

On December 26, 2024, the City Council approved an agreement with INVISION Architecture LTD, Des Moines, Iowa, to analyze the existing conditions and needs and identify future requirements for a modern animal shelter facility. Following that evaluation, the INVISION was to provide the City a conceptual design and a preliminary cost estimate.

Following the selection of the design firm, and following feedback from the Council at its December 10 Budget Guidelines Session, staff presented the City Council with a proposed project budget totaling \$4,455,000 on January 14, 2025, as shown below:

EXPENSES		FUNDING SOURCES	
Previous Site Investigation	\$ 4,075		
2715 Dayton Purchase Option	5,000		
Land Acquisition	1,100,000		
Conceptual Design	66,360		
<i>Detailed Design/Construction Specs</i>	<i>250,000</i>		
<i>Design Contingency</i>	<i>30,000</i>		
<i>Construction/Renovation</i>	<i>2,500,000</i>		

<i>Contingency (10%)</i>	<i>250,000</i>		
<i>Fixtures/Furnishings/Equipment</i>	<i>250,000</i>		
		FY 2024/25 Adjusted Budget	\$ 100,000
		Council Priorities Capital Fund	2,855,435
		Donations	1,500,000
TOTAL	\$ 4,455,435	TOTAL	\$ 4,455,435

note: italicized expenses are estimated

Since the Council discussion on January 14, staff has learned that the fundraising effort has verbally secured a lead commitment for \$3,000,000, exceeding the initial expectations. A signed pledge is anticipated to be secured this week. It is planned that after this lead gift commitment is secured, the fundraising effort would continue, in an effort to secure sufficient funding to complete all the desired components of the project. The goal now is to raise an additional \$1,500,000, which would support a total project cost up to approximately \$7,500,000.

The additional fundraising would allow for two significant enhancements to the project. The first would be a separate addition to the existing structure, dedicated to housing dogs. The consultants expressed concerns about attempting the modifications to house the dog population within in the existing structure, since this would require cutting out the floor for drains and significant work and expense for soundproofing. A dog addition would alleviate those concerns while also providing more adequate space inside the facility for cats housing and volunteer space. Volunteers provide over 7,000 hours per year towards the shelter operation and some space for them was a concern.

The second addition to the project would be the creation of a space for advanced animal care and procedures. Currently, significant operating budget and donation funds are utilized for spays, neuters, and other medical needs. An animal care/procedure space area would allow these procedures to be performed in the shelter by qualified veterinarians. Several local veterinarians have committed to provide such services at no cost if the space exists for it. It becomes feasible to dedicate a portion of the existing Dayton building to this use if the dogs are located in a new addition.

CONSULTANT EVALUATION:

INVISION has toured the Dayton site and reviewed the facility's original construction drawings to determine whether and how various components might fit into a renovated facility. **It is important to note that this effort was focused on developing rough cost estimates to determine if advancing the project in this facility is feasible, as opposed to preparing detailed designs of specific spaces. If the site is pursued, more work will occur to collect feedback from various stakeholders, review different configurations, and make decisions regarding features such as finishes and amenities. INVISION has stated the following:**

"On behalf of the City of Ames, INVISION / DLI has completed an evaluation of the proposed site and building at 2715 Dayton Avenue. Constructed in 1995, both the site and building appear to be in good working condition. Site paving including drive lanes, parking stalls, and sidewalks appears to be in good conditions along with site grading. Building utility information was provided through utility drawings. Water service (domestic and fire protection), sewer, and electrical service appear to be in good condition. Sprinkler service size will need to be confirmed if the final building design includes

additions that need to be sprinklered. The building exterior and roof appears to be watertight with no initial signs of water infiltration within the building. Based on the 1995 construction date of the building it is anticipated that the exterior building wall insulation may not meet current energy code requirements and will need to be addressed as part of this project. It is anticipated that most interior walls within the building will be removed as the current interior configuration is not conducive for the proposed program and will be revised as part of the project.

Overall, the building and site appear to be in good condition and will work well for the city's Animal Shelter Facility."

The consultant's initial evaluation suggests a total project cost (including design and construction, but excluding property acquisition), ranging between \$6,290,000 and \$7,812,000, with an average of \$7,051,000. These figures represent renovation of the existing interior space at an average cost of \$327/sq. ft., new construction of a 5,000 sq. ft. dog addition at an average cost of \$475/sq. ft., equipment costs of approximately \$848,500, outside yard work of approximately \$120,000, and design and engineering work of approximately \$502,200. The attachment provides further detail regarding this cost opinion.

It is important for the Council to note that the consultant has been asked to produce these estimates quickly, in order to allow for this information to be presented before the property purchase option must be exercised. Therefore, these figures represent conservative estimates. If the Council approves proceeding with the project, the project features will be refined during design development to fit within the project budget. Adjustments will need to be made to reflect equipment and supplies that will be reused from the existing facility rather than being purchased new, plus design choices that may be made to reduce project costs or divide components into add-alternates that can be bid and awarded only if available funding is adequate.

FEBRUARY 18 ACTION:

INVISION will provide the Council with a presentation at the Council workshop on February 18. At that time, the Council will be asked whether to exercise the option to purchase the property. If the Council chooses to do so, the \$1,100,000 purchase price will be financed from the Council Priorities Capital Improvements Fund, in which the Council has allocated \$2,855,435.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Accept the report and approve the purchase of the property located at 2715 Dayton Avenue in the amount of \$1,100,000.
2. Accept the report, but decline to purchase the property and instead direct staff to prepare a conceptual design for a new Animal Control facility adjacent the Water Treatment Plant.
3. Refer this item back to staff for further information. **The Council should note that the purchase option expires on February 24 and Council action would be necessary before that date to continue pursuing the Dayton property.**

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The site at 2715 Dayton presents an opportunity to redevelop an existing building into a larger and better quality animal shelter and control facility, in a manner that has a variety of advantages for the

City.

First, as indicated to staff by the consultant, the redevelopment is anticipated to be less costly than new construction of the same square footage at a purpose-built facility.

Second, this Alternative #1 allows the City to proceed without having to rely on a bond referendum to finance.

Third, since a bond referendum would not be required, this approach would allow the operations to be moved into the new facility much sooner than a project that requires a referendum.

Fourth and finally, the proposed site contains a substantial amount of area for building expansion or other City activities. The topography of this area would make it difficult to develop in the future if the site remained a private development.

The Council should note that once the existing Animal Shelter at Billy Sunday Road is vacated, the property along Billy Sunday will be able to be sold for commercial development, with the proceeds replenishing the Council Priorities Capital Improvement Fund or being dedicated to any other purpose the Council may desire.

The evaluation of the Dayton site by the consultant indicates that both the building and the site appear to be in good working condition. The parking area, drive lanes and sidewalks are all in good condition. Water, sewer, and electric are all in good condition and there is already a fire suppression system (sprinklers) on site. The roof and structure are in good condition with no leaks or water issues. The consultants believe that overall, the building and site appear to work well for a new Animal Shelter facility. The anticipated fundraising will allow for additions to the structure that will provide much needed space to meet the needs of the community for years to come. If directed to proceed, staff would work to finalize contract details for design development. Thereafter, the design team would work to refine the design based on feedback from stakeholders and the available project budget. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, as described above.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[2025.02.13 AMES.IA Costing.pdf](#)