# MEMO

**To:**       Mayor and City Council

**From:**    Nolan Sagan, Sustainability Coordinator

**Date:**     April 8, 2025

**Subject:**  Climate Smart Communities Initiative Grant Submission

**Staff became aware of the recent Climate Smart Communities Initiative (CSCI) grant opportunity to advance community-based climate resilience efforts. Since this aligns with the City's Climate Action Plan, and given the short timeframe to apply, staff proceeded with submitting a proposal believed to be feasible to accomplish.**

**This memo is meant to apprise the City Council of the staff's submittal of this grant opportunity. More information about the opportunity is provided below.**

- CSCI grant funds can be used for a range of activities depending on the needs of the community, including climate vulnerability and risk analyses, planning processes, community engagement, project prioritization, and/or the implementation of projects.

- Applications needed to be submitted by an "Applicant Team," composed of a climate adaptation professional, a community-based organization or university, and a government partner. Each grant can be used over a 12–month period and includes approximately $100,000 in funding as well as access to training opportunities, technical experts, and cohort support.

- In the application submitted, the team is composed of the City of Ames, Iowa State University, and BSC Group, a climate resilience consulting firm based in Boston, MA. The City and ISU were matched up with BSC Group through a practitioner registry process administered by CSCI, considering our needs and their capabilities. If selected, grant funds would be awarded directly to BSC Group to perform the work outlined in the grant application:

1.  Confirm Understanding of Vulnerability, Top Assets, and Focus Areas with Ames Community (Months 1-3): Conduct stakeholder engagement to refine and document updated climate resilience concerns priorities, ensuring alignment with community-identified risks and assets.

2.  Desktop Review (Months 1-4): Conduct a focused review to validate past climate readiness assessments (e.g., 2020 Climate Vulnerability Assessment) with current

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data on priority climate hazards, vulnerabilities, and essential community assets, providing an accurate foundation for adaptation planning.

3. Community Engagement (Months 2-10): Design and execute a community engagement plan featuring community crowdsource maps to gather information from community members on both their first-hand experiences of climate impacts and their ideas for climate solutions - ensuring comprehensive community input and widespread support for resilience strategies.

4. Adaptation Action Generation and Prioritization (Months 5-7): Collaboratively develop an initial list of approximately 30 adaptation actions that address community vulnerabilities across the key focus areas, establish clear prioritization criteria (e.g., equity impacts, cost-effectiveness, implementation feasibility), and prioritize the action list through feedback and expert analysis.

5. Implementation Guides Development (Months 8-10): Develop detailed and practical implementation guides for approximately six adaptation actions, clearly outlining actionable steps, timelines, essential partnerships, anticipated costs (order of magnitude), and possible funding opportunities to ensure readiness for implementation.

**CSCI plans to notify awardees this summer, with projects beginning in the fall.**

**Climate resilience is crucial for municipalities to protect residents, infrastructure, and the economy from a changing climate. Increasingly frequent and severe extreme weather events like floods, heatwaves, and storms threaten public health, property, and livelihoods. It is important to adapt to climate change and incorporate climate resilience strategies into the City's sustainability strategy.**

**No Council action is required at this time. Should the City and its partners be selected to receive a grant, staff will bring this issue before Council to make a final decision on whether or not to proceed with this funding opportunity.**

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