

ITEM #:	10
DATE:	09-09-25
DEPT:	P&R

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: **REQUEST TO USE MOTORIZED GOLF CARTS ON PATHS AT ADA
HAYDEN HERITAGE PARK FOR 2026 AMES TRIATHLON**

BACKGROUND:

Iowa Multisport (IM) is requesting to use Ada Hayden Heritage Park (AHHP) to host its Ames Triathlon on June 28, 2026. The event consists of a 500 M swim in the north lake, a 12-mile bike ride that starts in the park and travels through north Ames, northwestern portions of Story County and finishes in the park, and a 5k run that uses the hard surface path in the park. The north parking lot is used for staging bikes and safety vehicles for the event. The shelter area is used for registration and the finish line for the event. Over 350 individuals participated in the 2025 Ames Triathlon that was held this past June.

Staff met with representatives from IM in July to review the 2025 event. Overall, the 2025 event was very successful. IM presented staff with some changes they would like to implement for the 2026 event. These changes were presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission at its August 21, 2025, meeting. **The requests are summarized below. Only requests #3 and #6, to allow motorized golf carts to be used on the paths at Ada Hayden, require City Council approval. The remaining requests are either under the jurisdiction of the Parks and Recreation Commission or staff or require no further action.**

IM requested the following for its 2026 event:

1. Event Setup

For many years IM was given permission to set up bike racks and fencing on the evening prior to the triathlon. For 2026, they requested to set up in the morning, the day prior to the event.

Staff approved this change administratively.

2. No Swimming Waiver

IM requested a waiver of the enforcement of the "No Swimming" rule at AHHP for the 2026 event. Swimming would occur between 7:00 - 10:00 AM on June 28.

Since this is a park rule, the Parks and Recreation Commission approved the waiver at its August 21, 2025 meeting.

3. Motorized Vehicles on Paths - City Council Action Requested

IM requested the use of two motorized golf carts or similar type vehicles to use for the duration of the 2026 event to set up water stations as well as assist volunteers in the event of an emergency.

Since the operation of motorized vehicles on trails is prohibited by City ordinance, the Parks and Recreation Commission recommends City Council waive enforcement of Section 19.9 of Municipal Code for this event.

4. Early Park Entry

IM is requesting to enter the park on Sunday, June 28, 2026, for set up as early as 2:30 AM, which is prior to regular park hours (6:00 AM- 10:30 PM). In previous years, the Commission approved entry into the park as early as 5:00 AM, however, IM is requesting approval for early park entry as early as 2:30 AM to set up in the event of unexpected weather conditions (wind, rain, etc.)

City Ordinance delegates this authority to the Parks and Recreation Commission. Staff took no issue with the request but recommended allowing IM entry into the park beginning at 3:30 AM. Commission approved allowing IM into the park beginning at 3:30 AM.

5. Personal Watercraft

IM requested the approval to have a qualified and experience lifeguard with a personal watercraft (jet ski) in the water during the swimming portion of the event to respond efficiently in the event of a swimming participant emergency.

The City's Risk Manager reviewed this request and did not recommend approving the use of a private individual's gas-powered personal watercraft based on the additional risk to the City. IM will continue to utilize the Story County Dive Team, Ames Fire Department, Gilbert Fire Department, certified lifeguards, and local paddlers to assist with the swimming portion of the event. The Commission denied this request.

6. Youth Triathlon - City Council Action Requested

IM is requesting the option to host a youth triathlon at the park on the evening of Saturday, June 27, 2026, to introduce youth to the sport.

Staff is in favor of this request as long as IM provides the same level of organization and have in place the safety protocol as it would for the Sunday Triathlon. A no swimming waiver for June 27, 4:00 - 8:00 pm, was approved by the Commission at its August 21 meeting. Additionally, the Commission recommends Council approve waiving enforcement of no motorized vehicles on the paths for this event.

7. Youth Triathlon Clinic

IM would like to start a youth triathlon course/clinic that would be hosted by the City of Ames and taught by IM. The course would provide teaching and training for youth interested in participating in a triathlon.

Staff is in favor of this request and will work with IM to develop, advertise, and implement the course. No Commission or Council action was needed for this matter.

8. Swimming Practice

IM requested approval for participants of the Sunday event the ability to practice swimming in the lake on the Saturday evening prior to acclimate themselves to the lake.

Since this is a park rule, the Commission can grant this waiver. However, staff doesn't feel this is necessary as the opportunity is given for individuals to acclimate themselves to the lake prior to the start of the event on June 28, 2026. The Commission denied this request.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Waive enforcement of Section 19.9 of Ames *Municipal Code* to allow Iowa Multisport to utilize two motorized golf carts or similar type vehicles on the trails at Ada Hayden Heritage Park on the following dates:
 - a. From 4:00 - 8:00 p.m. on Saturday, June 27, 2026, for the Youth Triathlon
 - b. From 3:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 28, 2026, for the Ames Triathlon
2. Do not approve a waiver of enforcement of Section 19.9 of *Municipal Code* for these events.
3. Refer this item back to staff for further information.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Iowa Multisport has done an excellent job in organizing and implementing a plan to ensure a safe and high-quality event that showcases Ames and Ada Hayden Heritage Park. Also, with the addition of the youth event, the weekend will only get better as it provides an opportunity for the younger generation to participate in triathlons. Having the ability to use golf carts or other like vehicles on the paths at the park allow efficient response in many situations that may arise during the event. IM is in agreement with the actions taken and/or recommended. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council approve Alternative #1.