

ITEM #: 11
DATE: 02-10-26
DEPT: PW

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: RESOURCE RECOVERY SYSTEM 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

BACKGROUND:

At the beginning of each calendar year, the City distributes to partner agencies in the Resource Recovery System an annual report, which is attached for your review. The following is a summary of some of the information that is contained in this report.

The Resource Recovery System (RRS) is entering a significant transition in how the City handles solid waste. Efforts are underway to shift away from the current waste-to-energy model to a transfer station model, which is anticipated to be operational before July 1, 2027.

Staff is developing the Resource Recovery and Recycling Campus (R3C) as a modern transfer station and waste processing facility. The R3C will receive solid waste and recyclable materials separately. Solid waste will be minimally processed to recover recyclable metals before being transported in consolidated loads to the Carroll County Landfill. Recyclable materials collected through the facility and across the community will be marketed to end users based on the best available market conditions.

As the move away from waste-to-energy begins, diverting materials from the waste stream is now more important than ever. City staff is working toward implementing single-stream curbside recycling for eligible households throughout the city in the coming months. As part of this rollout in Ames, optional recycling pricing for the RRS member agencies has also been requested and will be shared with each agency once a contract has been approved by the Ames City Council.

The recycling drop-off center at the current Resource Recovery facility has now been operational for over two years, providing residents with a “one-stop shop” for recycling. Accepted materials include cardboard, mixed paper, plastic bottles with twist-off lids, metals, clothing and shoes, glass, and organics at no charge. Drop off of separated recyclable materials will continue to be offered at the new R3C for member agencies and their residents.

New 28E agreements have been prepared and presented to each member agency. These agreements extend the partnership an additional 20 years, which will cover the time period of the debt service the City of Ames is undertaking to finance the R3C project. The 28E agreements also indicate that member agencies will be required to implement efforts as required by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to meet waste diversion goals and limit the amount of waste being landfilled.

PUBLIC OUTREACH:

The City of Ames held several open houses and presented at meetings providing information regarding the R3C project, new 28E agreements, and waste diversion efforts in October and November of 2025. An electronic newsletter, The R3Cycled Report, has been developed and published several times per month to all member agencies and haulers with updates on the

R3C project and other topics of interest as the transition away from waste-to-energy continues.

2025 STATISTICS:

The partner communities and agencies generated 53,076 tons of municipal solid waste (MSW) during 2025, with approximately 41,202 tons received at the plant and processed to create 24,736 tons of refuse derived fuel (RDF). An estimated 1,338 tons of metal and 236 tons of glass were recovered for recycling.

Additional items diverted from the landfill included 14 tons of Household Hazardous Materials, 63 tons of organics, 573 appliances, and 632 tires. Rummage RAMPage was held once again in 2025, finding new uses and homes for approximately 66 tons of household items that would have otherwise been destined for the landfill.

RATES AND FEES FOR FY 2026/27:

The **per capita rate charged to member agencies will remain at \$10.50** and will be billed according to the results of the 2020 census. **There will be a tipping fee increase to \$85.00/ton on July 1, 2026.**

RATES AND FEES AT THE NEW R3C:

City of Ames staff has recommended to City Council that the **per capita rate charged to member agencies remain at \$10.50 once the R3C facility opens.** As reported to each member agency in October 2025, **the tipping fee is expected to increase to \$95.11/ton once the R3C is operational.** The effective date is currently unknown due to construction timing. However, it is anticipated to be effective as early as spring 2027, but in no case would it be implemented later than July 1, 2027. **It is possible that this tipping fee may change depending upon the results of the construction bids which will be due in early March 2026.**

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Accept the attached Resource Recovery System 2025 Annual Report and authorize distribution to the member agencies.
2. Request further information from staff.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Activities in 2025 marked several major milestones for the transition away from waste-to-energy in the RRS. New landfill partnerships, the development of the R3C, and planning for further waste diversion efforts through residential curbside recycling all will help shape the future of solid waste and recyclable materials in Story County. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, as noted above.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[2026_Annual_Report__CY_2025_.pdf](#)