

Climate Action and Adaptation Plan Progress Highlights

Implementation of the Iowa City Climate Action and Adaptation Plan is underway. Here are progress highlights from the first eight months after adoption:

General Updates

- ▶ The City will update the community annually on the progress of the Climate Action Plan, beginning this fall, a year after the Plan's adoption. The update will include an annual community-wide greenhouse gas inventory, progress on all thirty-five actions in the Plan, and annual materials will be generated for public awareness.
- ▶ The City awarded ten new Community Climate Action Grants in spring 2019. Organizations will be provided up to \$5,000 for projects addressing a spectrum of Climate Plan objectives. This program, started in 2018, has been a positive way to engage the community, support climate work, and fund worthwhile projects in Iowa City that will reduce our emissions. Details about projects supporting specific Climate Action Plan objectives are included below.
- ▶ A group of 22 City staff representing all departments meets every other month to capture ideas and improve daily operations to reduce municipal emissions. In April, the group prioritized actions into a workable plan for the upcoming year and this plan will be shared in summer 2019.
- ▶ Staff has been in contact with event planning faculty at the University of Iowa and other stakeholders to assist in planning for a Climate Festival planned for September 2020.

Plan Progress



Buildings

Action 1.1

As of February 1, 2019, participants in the City's owner-occupied housing rehabilitation program receive an energy audit by the City's affiliated Green Iowa AmeriCorps (GIA). Participant homes also receive weatherization to improve energy efficiency and lower energy. The City's partnership with Green Iowa AmeriCorps performed 52 energy audits since January 2018 (over 228 total, since 2016).

The newly formed Johnson County Clean Energy District organization was awarded a 2019 City Climate Action Grant for launching the planning phase of an initiative to increase residential energy efficiency audits and retrofits in Iowa City over the next five years.

1.2

A Climate Action Grant was awarded to non-profit Old Brick for installation of digital, programmable thermostats and installing solar lighting in the parking lot. The projects are expected to yield a 20% energy savings and be an example for commercial spaces.

1.3

A Climate Action Grant was awarded to Iowa Valley Habitat for Humanity for providing high efficiency, low emissions air source heat pumps for three newly constructed homes. One house will also receive solar panels. This effort is a pilot to reduce emissions while improving energy efficiency affordability for low-income homeowners.

1.5

Resulting from the solar feasibility study and direction from Council, staff is pursuing two solar array projects. The Public Works facility under construction will have a rooftop solar installation and the Terry Trueblood Recreation Area will also see a smaller solar installation project later this year.

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On a related note, the City Manager's Office and Sustainability staff have met with both MidAmerican Energy and Eastern Iowa Light and Power, to talk about partnering on potential opportunities for solar or other energy saving projects. Discussions are still underway.

- 1.7** Improvements implemented in City facilities include a Building Automation System (BAS) at Robert A. Lee and Mercer Recreation Centers along with a new boiler system and HVAC work. A BAS, now in ten of our facilities, allows staff to monitor and optimally operate the building HVAC systems with the intent of lowering energy use and costs. A comprehensive BAS and efficiency boiler at City Hall is the next planned installation.

Over 2,300 bulbs at City facilities have been converted to LED lights since September 2018. These projects include parking ramp stairwells and office areas, Transit building, household hazardous waste room at the Landfill, Cable TV offices, an IT server room, the MPO offices and exterior lighting at City Hall, Equipment shop, Parks shop, Napoleon baseball fields, and the Refuse building. Outdoor lighting conversion is planned at Mercer Recreation Center.

City staff have been tracking municipal natural gas and electricity utility data for the past 10 years, but a more effective software program was purchased in 2018 to analyze facility data with the intent of prioritizing energy efficiency improvements. The City will be bringing on an Assistant Facility Manager in the new fiscal year to more actively monitor and manage our utility usage also more quickly implementing energy efficiency projects at City facilities.



- Action 2.1** An agreement for a community-wide Transportation study is in negotiation with the selected consultant. The study will incorporate community engagement in determining routes, services, and other factors that can lead to greater use of the City's transit services.

Transportation

- 2.2** The City vehicle fleet now has four electric cars, three electric utility vehicles, and three hybrid vehicles. Two additional hybrid SUVs are budgeted. Public charging stations for electric vehicles were recently added in the Capitol St, Dubuque St. and Chauncey Swan parking ramps. These are in addition to the public charging station at Harrison St. ramp and fleet charging station in Chauncey Swan ramp.

Staff is cooperating with other communities and planning agencies in Eastern Iowa to secure funds from The Iowa Economic Development Authority to create a local readiness plan for electric vehicles. The project includes the recommendation of practices cities can undertake to promote the integration of electric vehicles in our community, including policy and code changes and incentives.

- 2.3** One bike lane on 1st Ave. (Bradford to Hwy 6) was added in 2018, but more lanes have been or will be striped. Dodge and Governor Streets (Burlington to Summit), Mormon Trek Blvd. (Hwy 6 to Melrose), and Clinton (Benton to Church) were completed in spring 2019. Lanes on Dodge (Governor to Kirkwood) and Foster Rd. (Dubuque to Prairie Du Chien) will be complete later this year. McCollister Rd. (Gilbert to Sycamore) will be finished in 2020, and due to significant University of Iowa construction, Madison St. (Burlington to Market) is likely to be added in 2021.

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- 2.7** Refuse and Engineering staff used GIS to revise routing of recycling, solid waste, and organics trucks in early 2019. Standard routes have been in place for years, adding streets as neighborhoods were built throughout Iowa City. All routes rebalanced the number of stops while keeping resident pickups on the same day of the week and sharply reducing excess vehicle miles traveled. Impacts of this recent change are still being monitored. Additionally, an idling reduction policy for non-emergency City fleet cars has been drafted and should be in effect soon.



Waste

- Action 3.2** Most of the City's 16,000 curbside customers now have 65-gallon recycling carts. About 1% of households declined the larger carts and continue to use 18-gallon bins. Participation rates were tracked this spring to determine increases in participation from 2018. Set-out rates are steady at about 59% but the tons of recyclables collected has consistently increased each month by 40-50 tons more than 2018. Approximately 7,000 organics carts have been delivered. More 95 gallon carts will be ordered early in FY20 to fulfill a current wait list of about 800 households. A continued high demand for these carts is anticipated and staff will purchase as budget permits. Weekly setout rates for organics collecting is currently about 32%.
- 3.3** A City Climate Action Grant was awarded to Houses into Homes for diversion of community-donated household items from the landfill to furnish homes of families and individuals in need and/or transitioning out of homelessness in Iowa City and nearby communities.
- 3.4** Work on an education campaign for diversion of construction materials is in progress. Recycling and reuse workshops headed by the Resource Management Division were held in early in 2019.
- 3.5** Staff rolled out compost programs at five City facilities and the program is popular. More facilities will be added later this year.
- 3.6** Staff is examining needed compost pad improvements and preparing for a methane-capture study for the Landfill and Waste Water Treatment Facility. An RFP for consultant study on the Landfill and Waste Water Facility is anticipated in summer 2019 with a completion goal by the end of the year.
- 3.7**



Adaptation

- Action 4.1** The Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) awarded grant funding to hire a full-time fellow over the summer to further equity and sustainability work and Iowa City was one of seven communities nationally chosen to host an Equity and Diversity Fellow. The scope of work in Iowa City will focus on outreach and getting a better sense of the needs of underserved and under-represented communities who may be disproportionately impacted by climate change.
- 4.2**
- 4.4** The City approved the adoption of the Johnson County Emergency Management Agency Hazard Mitigation Plan in May 2019. Staff worked with the County and their consultant as the Plan was developed to ensure inclusion of climate-sensitive issues. The City will continue

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to cooperate with other agencies and communicate this through the planned climate communications plan.

- 4.5** The FY2020 budget includes a new Stormwater Technician position for hire as early as summer 2019. This person will assist the Stormwater Engineer facilitate neighborhood stormwater projects and residential stormwater management assistant programs. Additionally, the City added an Assistant Parks Superintendent to support management of natural areas maintenance. City-owned natural areas, like Riverfront Crossings Park, sequester carbon, reduce runoff, and help control flooding. We have made and will continue to make progress in maintaining these areas with help from the position changes.
- 4.6** In addition to the 1,500 trees that have been planted in the past three years, approximately 75 trees will be planted this year to buffer the railroad along 420th St. By expanding our tree canopy, these trees will assist in eliminating CO2 from the air, reducing stormwater runoff, removing air pollutants and providing shade for years to come.



Sustainable Lifestyle

- Action 5.1** Backyard Abundance was awarded a Climate Action Grant to fund “garden gurus” at the Edible Classroom, Wetherby Park Edible Forest, and Chadek Green Community Garden. Gardening experts will be available at regularly scheduled hours to will assist gardeners and answer any gardening questions while educating about the benefits on climate-friendly gardens.
- 5.2** In 2019, the City rented 221 community garden plots in varying sizes. Next year, Creekside Park will add a community orchard of approximately 26 fruit-bearing plantings (6 trees; 20 bushes), Walden Pond will add 10-15 plots, and Chadek Green will be reconfigured to include varying garden sizes and additional pathways. In addition to increasing community gardens and gardening programs, the City issued a \$45,000 grant to Field to Family in support of starting a local food hub.

The City awarded Climate Action Grants to the Women, Food & Agriculture Network to match aspiring women farmers with seasoned farm mentors in the Iowa City area and to Iowa Valley Resource Conservation and Development for a “Community Food Sovereignty Initiative”. The projects support local farmers in the Iowa City area and identify food preferences of immigrant and low-income community members finding it challenging to access familiar and affordable produce.
- 5.5** Willowwind School has been awarded a Climate Action Grant for their “Children-to-Children Climate Actions: Composting, Gardening, Infiltrating, and Growing Healthy” project. The year-long program will further integrate environmental education. Kids at the school will have learning experiences in the classroom and also create materials, productions, and presentations to be shared with the public – primarily other children - in community spaces.
- 5.6** The City will be introducing its first “Green Recognition Program” for businesses and organizations in Iowa City. More information will be released by fall 2019.