
Iowa City 2018-2019

Strategic Plan Report

June 2019



View of Washington Street in full bloom.

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SEVEN GOALS

for a more **Inclusive, Just and Sustainable** Iowa City:

1



Promote a **Strong and Resilient Economy**

2



Encourage a **Vibrant and Walkable Urban Core**

3



Foster **Healthy Neighborhoods** throughout the City

4



Maintain a **Solid Financial Foundation**

5



Enhance **Community Engagement and Intergovernmental Relations**

6



Promote **Environmental Sustainability**

7



Advance **Social Justice and Racial Equity**

Introduction & Overview

City of Iowa City Organizational Profile

City Council

Iowa City is governed by an elected City Council of seven members: four Council members at-large and three District members. The Council is responsible for appointing the City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk.

City Manager

The City Manager serves as the chief administrative officer for the organization. The City Manager implements the policy decisions of the City Council, enforces City ordinances, and appoints City officials, as well as supervises the directors of the City's operating departments.

City Staff

Iowa City employs approximately 600 full-time staff members to execute the City Council's policies and provide public services to over 75,000 residents. These include water, sewer, stormwater, garbage and recycling utilities, as well as public services like police, fire, building and housing inspections, parks and recreation, street maintenance, engineering, development services, transportation, communication, and senior services.



City Council members are, from left:

Mazahir Salih, At-Large
Bruce Teague, At-Large
Pauline Taylor, District A, Mayor Pro Tem
Jim Throgmorton, At-Large, Mayor
Susan Mims, District B
Rockne Cole, At-Large
John Thomas, District C

Executive Summary

Beginning in January 2018, City Council engaged in a strategic planning process to define the City's top priorities, address significant new projects and initiatives, and establish a broad vision for the City's future. City staff will be responsible for coordinating implementation and execution of these Council goals over the two year period. A resolution to formally adopt the 2018-2019 Strategic Plan priorities was approved on March 20, 2018 and an update report was released in November 2018.

LOCAL FOODS

212

Community garden plots

Leased in spring 2019



2018 Farmers Market:

\$ 3,790

Double Up Food Bucks

\$ 5,283

SNAP Benefits

88 Senior vouchers



HISTORIC PRESERVATION

54

Local landmarks

14

Matching grants

Issued for exterior home preservation in **historic neighborhoods**

\$ 1,000,000

For historic building upkeep

Contribution to Englert Theatre and Film Scene capital campaign

HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS

\$ 2,000,000

dedicated to affordable housing efforts in FY2019 and FY2020

22

Park and bicycle projects completed and under construction (Between 2018 and 2019)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



LIVE

816

City Council Meetings

Hours viewed From July 1, 2018 to June 4, 2019

FINANCIAL FACTS

City Emergency Fund returned to

\$ 5,000,000

Aaa

Moody's Bond Rating retained

\$ 15.833

Tax levy

Economic Protocol Agreement reached

by Iowa City, Coralville, and North Liberty to establish positive regional business recruitment tactics

SUSTAINABILITY

4 Electric vehicles

3 Electric hybrids

1 Electric utility vehicle/truck

+2 more ordered

5 Charging stations

1500

Trees planted since 2016



\$ 75,000

in Climate Action Grants

Awarded over three fiscal years

45 attendees at 3 Household Hazardous Materials collection events (fall 2018 & spring 2019)

SOCIAL JUSTICE / RACIAL EQUITY

\$ 644,000

Aid to Agencies

Awarded in FY2020 as one-time funds

\$ 11.50/hr

New starting minimum wage

Effective July 1, 2019 for all City of Iowa City hourly positions

Children's and Teen Library material **late fines waved**

(As of June 1, 2019)



In 2018, Iowa City introduced 11 new buses, replacing part of its fleet for the first time in 20 years.

1

Promote a Strong and Resilient Local Economy

- a. Undertake a comprehensive assessment of the current public transit system and implement changes to assure that the service best meets the needs of the entire community
- b. Effectively market and grow the local food economy
- c. Through cooperation with the Iowa City School District, Iowa Workforce Development, Kirkwood Community College, Iowa Works, and others, increase opportunities for marginalized populations and low-income individuals to obtain access to skills training and good jobs
- d. Work with Procter & Gamble and impacted supply chain companies, local economic development organizations, and labor unions to respond effectively to the company's decision to terminate its local production of beauty care products

Accomplishment Updates

1a After determining that Coralville and the University of Iowa were interested in pursuing a coordinated study, the City issued a Request for Qualifications for an experienced transit consultant. Responses were reviewed and two firms selected for interviews. A contract for services is in negotiation. The City Council has budgeted \$200,000 for conducting this analysis.

1b Approximately 202 garden plots were leased for the 2018 growing season throughout four community gardens.

In spring 2019, all 212 plots were rented for the growing season.

A series of public meetings were held with Backyard Abundance in summer 2018 to gather input on a new configuration for garden plots at Chadek Green. Final designs are complete for improvements in fall 2019, including additional paths, a gathering space, and varied garden plot sizes.

In early 2019, the Senior Center introduced a small food pantry for food-insecure participants and community members. The pantry is steadily used and replenished by the public and has quickly become a small investment with clear benefits.

1c Economic Development staff has generated an inventory of local and regional efforts to identify gaps in services and potential collaborations. Staff has continued to work with private businesses to

What's Next

- ▶ Expected 12-18 month period for public engagement and study before final recommendations are ready.
- ▶ Staff analysis to determine possible revenue streams that can enhance transit access and service after the completion of the study.
- ▶ Prior to the study completion, staff has been investigating solutions for existing transportation gaps on evenings and weekends. Staff has met with private and non-profit transportation providers and are working through options.

- ▶ City Council has budgeted \$50,000 towards expanding the local food economy.
- ▶ Walden Green will have 20 new plots added in 2020. In late 2019 and spring 2020, an orchard with at least 6 fruit trees and approximately 20 fruit and nut bearing shrubs is planned at Creekside Park.
- ▶ Sustainability staff sought project requests from organizations promoting and serving the regional local foods system. Of the four proposals received, the City chose to fund \$45,000 in start up costs for a local food hub run by Field to Family. The food hub is expected to start operations in mid-June 2019. Council approved funding at the June 4, 2019 meeting.
- ▶ In early June, Council provided direction for the Senior Center to explore community use of the commercial-grade kitchen. Some equipment and the kitchen condition needs to be repaired prior to use, rental and use policies need review, and potential programming and community partners will be explored. The local foods budget has approximately \$34,000 reserved for this project.

- ▶ A staff report summarizing findings will be presented to Council in summer 2019.
- ▶ Over the last few years, the City has offered the "So You Want to Start a Business?" program in

identify workforce needs and barriers to employment. ICAD and Kirkwood Community College are involved in this effort to better connect minority and immigrant populations with small business and general employment resources.

affiliation with Kirkwood Community College. Staff is reviewing program format for the next course.

- ▶ Economic Development staff is exploring a partnership with Kirkwood to expand ESL courses and connect participants to local businesses with employment needs.

1d Staff has engaged with Procter & Gamble officials and connected them with local and state resources to assist with any employees that may be displaced. Staff has worked with ICAD to express strong support for growing Procter & Gamble's remaining operations and to position the community for attracting new lines of business within the company. Collectively, these groups are also working to aid supply chain companies, which includes helping to determine if new business partnerships can be established to help overcome the anticipated loss in Procter & Gamble business.

Staff nominated and the State and Federal government approved two Opportunity Zone designations, which provide federal tax advantages for property investments, were approved by the State and Federal government. These Census tracts encompass most of the physical locations of Procter and Gamble, their suppliers, and the Towncrest area. The Chamber of Commerce, ICAD, and ICR have assembled promotional information about these areas to spur investment interest.

- ▶ Continue to offer support to employees by engaging with Procter & Gamble to better understand employee needs
- ▶ Continually work with Procter & Gamble and supply chain companies to determine how best the City can assist in growing their operations here in Iowa City.





The UniverCity property at 522 N. Dodge St was recently sold. Renovation of 520 N. Dodge St continues nextdoor.

2

Encourage a Vibrant and Walkable Urban Core

- a. Collaborate with the University of Iowa on its redevelopment of University-owned property located in the Riverfront Crossings District, and on improving the quality, accessibility, and use of the Iowa River Corridor
- b. Preserve important parts of Iowa City's history by considering the designation of additional buildings as historic landmarks, and, by considering the creation of an historic preservation district for part of the downtown after consulting with stakeholders
- c. Evaluate existing strategies and consider additional actions to address the need for reinvestment in the city's existing private housing stock

Accomplishment Updates

2a Staff meets regularly with University of Iowa personnel to discuss planning topics, including the RFC campus and the river corridor. Staff from Iowa City and Coralville are working with the University of Iowa to align current master plans along the rivers and identify ways to strengthen existing plans or fill in missing gaps between the three entities. City staff is also heavily involved in the planning of the Big Splash event along the Iowa River in 2020 that will serve as pivotal point in time for the community to come together to celebrate and care for the river.

2b Iowa City currently has 54 individual local landmarks including seven that were designated since January 2018.

In FY2018 and FY2019, the Historic Preservation Fund grant program has awarded 15 matching grants and no-interest loans up to \$5,000. Of the 15, the City has given 13 grants and 2 loans. The continuation of this popular new program is included in the FY2020 budget.

The Downtown Historic Survey was completed and made available to the public in October 2018. The Historic Preservation Commission invited public comment on the survey that October, and presented its recommendations to Council on October 23, 2018. Council decided to pursue a landmark designation of the downtown. The City retained AKAY Consulting, a historic preservation consultant, to apply for National Register designation for a historic downtown district. The application submission is expected in fall 2019.

The Historic Preservation Commission designated the City Park Cabins and the Senior Center (28 S. Linn St.) as local landmarks. Overlay zoning requests were brought to City Council and approved in spring 2019.

Council approved a \$1 million contribution to the Englert Theater and Film Scene capital campaign that will in large part enable the historic renovation of the Englert building and also make key investments in the Packing and Provisions Building that currently houses Film Scene.

What's Next

- ▶ Staff will continue to engage with numerous community partners including the University on the Big Splash planning, which will include education, outreach and programs in 2019-20. The University's upcoming Theme Semester connects to this river concept and City staff has been invited to participate on the planning committee.
- ▶ Staff will work with the University and Coralville to further align river planning efforts after the master plan compilation is completed this summer.
- ▶ City Park cabin restorations were completed in 2018. Historic Preservation and Parks and Recreation will work together to showcase the restored cabins.
- ▶ Historic Preservation is preparing to consider landmark designation for 225 and 229 N. Gilbert. The City plans to sell these two properties to Public Space One, providing down payment assistance.
- ▶ Staff will continue to work with the University of Iowa to understand their timeline for the proposed demolition of the Sanxay-Gilmore House. Council will need to determine if it wants to pay for its relocation in upcoming budget deliberations.
- ▶ Economic Development staff reviewed five and approved three applications (total of \$121,000) for the Building Change Loan Program. Building Change is a cooperative effort between the City and local banks to allow commercial building owners to update facades and improve underutilized interior space to allow for residential or office use. The awarded properties (111-115 E. Washington, 119-123 E. Washington, and 16 S. Clinton) are considered 'contributing' properties to the downtown historic district, therefore requiring historic preservation review. The buildings were examined and ultimately due to the condition of the original historic facade, designs for the buildings on E. Washington were altered to preserve historic elements. Planning staff is waiting for plans to review.

2c Staff made changes to the UniverCity program to allow for the purchase of duplex properties. 522 N. Dodge St, the City's 69th UniverCity project, was recently sold. 520 N. Dodge St remains under renovation, expected to list for sale by the end of summer.

Council directed staff to identify rented duplexes on Taylor and Davis Streets and approach property owners and current tenants who may have interest in homeownership. Neighborhood and Development Services staff have approached all possible properties in this specific geographic area but no one demonstrated interest. Council supports finding a project or program to encourage homeownership by current District residents and requested that the Housing and Community Development Commission generate recommendations to support this effort without involuntary displacement of renting tenants.

▶ Considering the success of the UniverCity program and market pressures, it is becoming increasingly more difficult to purchase suitable homes for renovation through the UniverCity program. Staff completed an initial comprehensive assessment of all housing programs and presented to Council on May 21.





Redevelopment of Creekside Park is underway and expected to be completed in 2019.

3

Foster Healthy Neighborhoods Throughout the City

- a. Modify the existing Affordable Housing Action Plan to include new strategies to improve the availability and affordability of housing in Iowa City
- b. Embed the “Missing Middle” concept into the City’s land development practices by adopting a Form Based Code for at least one (preferably two) of our neighborhoods
- c. Ensure the next two budgets contain sufficient funds to make meaningful progress toward achieving the goals of the Bicycle Master Plan and Parks Master Plan
- d. Complete an analysis of traffic accident data and identify actions to improve the safety of our roadways for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians

Accomplishment Updates

- 3a** Council increased the affordable housing commitment from \$750,000 to \$1,000,000 in FY2019, and from \$650,000 to \$1,000,000 in FY2020.

Council adopted an Affordable Housing component to the City's annexation policy in July 2018. Also in July, Council approved a development agreement for the Foster Road extension and development area that leverages an estimated \$2-3 million dollars in affordable housing funds over the next ten years. Construction on part of this project and Foster Road has begun.

Staff has begun preliminary research on new approaches to expand affordable housing efforts in the coming years.

- 3b** A form-based code for the South District is under development with Opticos. The project is estimated for completion in spring 2020.

- 3c** Numerous projects contained in the Bicycle Master Plan and Parks Master Plan are being addressed with each construction season. In 2018, Cardigan Park was outfitted with a new playground, shelter, and the first fire ring in a City park. Phases 1 and 2 of Riverfront Crossings Park are complete and Phase 3 of the project, which includes a restroom installation, is underway but coming to a close. Accessibility improvements are finished at Highland, Pheasant Hill, Tower Court, and Mercer Parks. Villa Park's new playground is nearing completion. A full redevelopment of Creekside Park began in fall 2018 and is expected to be complete in 2019.

The 2018 construction season initiated projects that include several new bicycle facilities, including Governor and Dodge, Clinton, Mormon Trek, Myrtle and Greenwood, and Camp Cardinal.

What's Next

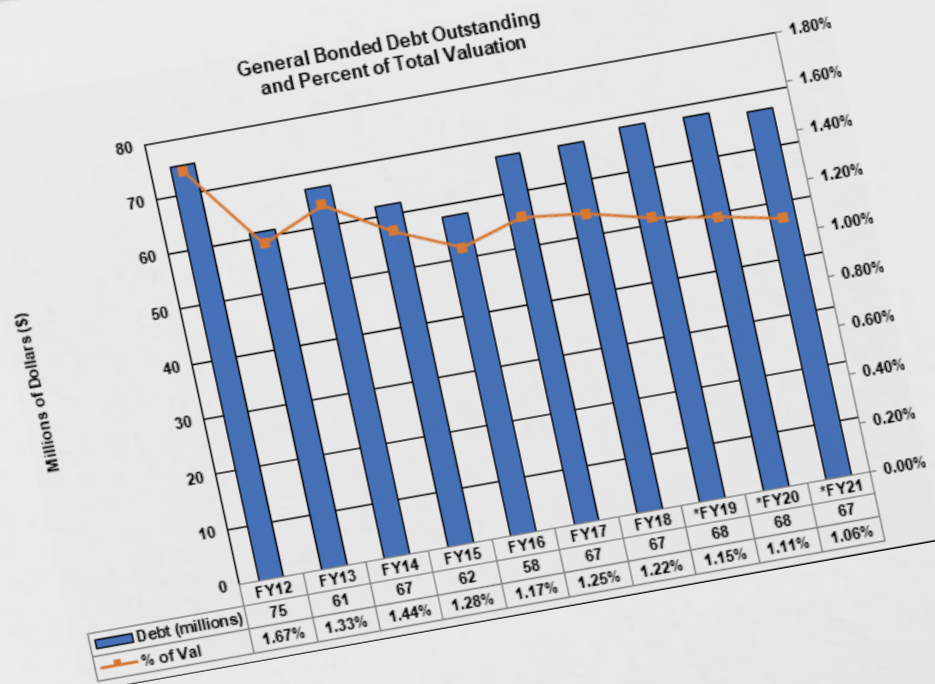
- ▶ Council should let staff know if there are any specific proposals or policies that they want to consider as part of this effort.
- ▶ Staff will offer Council recommendations in summer 2019.
- ▶ An update on the City's affordable housing action plan was provided to Council in the November 15, 2018 Information Packet. The final remaining item, an examination of Code changes to support affordable housing, is in progress.
- ▶ Council directed staff to pursue as part of an agreement with Opticos for the development of a South District form-based code, to conduct a "visioning" for the Northside Marketplace, along with a parking study for the Northside neighborhood. The agreement is still in negotiation but work is anticipated to begin later this year.
- ▶ Accessibility improvements are planned at College Green and Brooklyn Parks in 2019.
- ▶ Construction on Lower City Park adventure playground and Willow Creek Park is scheduled for later this year.
- ▶ This spring, on-street bicycle facilities began striping on Mormon Trek and Dodge. The Mormon Trek project includes a lane conversion from four to three lanes and buffered bicycle lanes. Bike lanes will also be included on the Foster Rd extension (under construction) and the McCollister extension (to be bid in 2019).

Camp Cardinal Blvd lanes were completed in 2018. Clinton transitioned from four vehicle lanes to three lanes with bicycle lanes in spring 2019. Bike lanes on Governor and Dodge are being installed.

3d Staff presented traffic accident data analysis findings and preliminary recommendations at the April 23, 2019 Work Session. At this session, Professor Jodi Plummert, of the University of Iowa also gave a presentation on traffic and child pedestrians.

► Staff will follow up with further analysis and work plans for problem areas.





Despite relatively steady levels of debt issued over the last decade, the City's total valuation has risen and tax dollars going towards repaying debt have decreased considerably.

4

Maintain a Solid Financial Foundation

- a. Continue to monitor the impact of the 2013 property tax reform and evaluate alternative revenue sources as determined necessary
- b. Continue to build the City's Emergency Fund
- c. Monitor potential changes to Moody's rating criteria and maintain the City's Aaa bond rating
- d. Continue to reduce the City's property tax levy
- e. Maintain healthy fund balances throughout the City's diverse operations

Accomplishment Updates

4a Property tax reform is consistently monitored as the 2013 changes impact the City tax base.

4b Since January 2018, the expenditures from the Emergency Fund total approximately \$511,000 for the purchase of three properties in the flood plain adjacent to Lower City Park.

4c The City experienced a third-party bond rating call in spring 2018 and 2019 with Moody's rating service. From that call, Moody's maintained the City's Aaa rating. A new element of the Moody's review includes how communities are addressing climate adaptation. Therefore, Iowa City's climate mitigation and adaptation strategies were included in the ratings presentation for the first time this year. The City also increased its capital contributions, resulting in a positive recommendation from Moody's.

4d The City reduced the property tax levy in FY2019 and again in FY2020 by decreasing the City's debt service levy. Responsible borrowing and early repayment of debt, along with strong taxable growth, has permitted decreases in the debt levy. This is the eighth consecutive year of City debt service levy reduction, resulting in a \$0.15 decrease in FY2019 and \$0.35 decrease in the FY2020 property tax levy.

4e FY2018 and FY2019 year-end fund balances were fairly positive and FY2020 outlook also looks healthy for most funds. In FY2019, the City implemented a 5% increase in water rates to preserve a balance that will allow for capital infrastructure maintenance. In FY2020, another 5% increase in water rates was approved, along with a \$0.50 monthly storm water increase.

What's Next

▶ Staff continues to pursue potential revenue streams. The Iowa state legislative property tax bill in the 2019 session may increasingly reduce the City's options to absorb 2013 and present-day reforms. Council has added a pending Work Session to discuss a Local Option Sales Tax.

▶ The City will replace funds spent on property purchases with the FY2020 budget, returning the total Emergency Fund balance to \$5 million. The City will continue to monitor use of the Emergency Fund.

▶ The City will continue to practice sound debt-reduction strategies.

▶ A spike in property assessments and further debt service adjustments will allow for possible debt service levy reductions again in the upcoming budget year.

▶ The City continues to monitor fund balances and will determine if a change in user fees is warranted.



Communications staff and local transportation experts record the third "Iowa City Matters" podcast episode, "Traveling with Transit."

5

Enhance Community Engagement and Intergovernmental Relations

- a. Experiment with innovative ways of engaging with diverse populations in person and on social media
- b. Improve collaborative problem-solving with governmental entities in the region on topics of shared interest
- c. Improve relationships with the executive branch and legislature by reaching out to legislators and other elected officials and working with City lobbyists

Accomplishment Updates

5a In early 2018, Communications introduced the use of Facebook Live for streaming City Council meetings and a variety of other programs. This effort provides an additional way for folks to stay informed of the topics they are interested in, even if they can't make it to City Hall.

Beginning in early 2019, City Communications developed a new podcast series called "Iowa City Matters." The new medium is available 24/7 on major podcast platforms. In its first three episodes, Iowa City Matters has featured local experts in focused discussions on issues specific to the Council's Strategic Plan, including historic preservation, crisis intervention, and transportation.

Since January 2018, staff elevated transparency in City budget planning and education by holding events called, "Breakfast on a Budget," "Budget 101" (a Facebook Livestream Q&A), and "Chip In." The three new engagement concepts encouraged residents to learn about the budget process, engage actively in question and answer with staff, and share their priorities, ideas, and suggestions for community improvements and spending.

Several City grants have been made to foster coordinated community wellness and connections. Neighborhood PIN Grants have been issued for programs like Friendsgiving in fall 2018, where neighborhoods in the South District gathered for a potluck meal and Invest Health grants allowed for a small cultural music festival at the Southgate Mall in April 2018.

The addition of a Sustainability Communications intern is helping to provide Climate Action promotional content and educational pieces.

5b In 2018, a Council-initiated regional discussion on I-380 planning, leading to a meeting held on August 2. Iowa City and Coralville elected officials and leadership agreed at the meeting to cooperate further on future corridor public transportation efforts.

Council continues to be active participants in the

What's Next

▶ As projects and programs are promoted to the public, an increased concentration on the development of marketing plans has elevated City communications. Use of polling, prize giveaways, and other incentives have been received positively. The division will continue to work with City departments to create effective marketing and engagement opportunities.

▶ The Parks and Recreation and Senior Center Departments are developing relationships and new partnerships with less-engaged community members and groups. Parks and Recreation has introduced new programming opportunities and as of May 2019, is facilitating a location and set time for Sudanese soccer play. The Center, while expanding on an already robust program guide, is working to coordinate activities specific to the LatinX community and women from Iowa City's immigrant populations.

▶ Due to the success of last year's "Chip In" event, staff is coordinating activities that will build on last year's event and community survey, and ask residents to again prioritize current Council Strategic Plan initiatives. Community responses will be presented to Council in early fall during a preliminary budget Work Session.

▶ Human Rights is hiring a Communications intern to help promote equity issues and provide educational information to the public.

▶ The City's Revenue Division will begin billing for University Heights residential refuse service July 1, 2019. Iowa City already provides University Heights utility billing for water and sewer, and due to a change in services provided by their refuse hauler, it was agreed that Iowa City could facilitate

quarterly joint government meetings. Council held a joint meeting with the Johnson County Board of Supervisors in late 2018.

A regional economic development protocol agreement was approved by City Council in late 2018. The Cities of Iowa City, Coralville, and North Liberty agreed to communicate with each other and avoid incentives encouraging developers and businesses to relocate from one of the three cities to another.

the addition of refuse billing to approximately 360 existing customer accounts.

- ▶ Council plans to hold a joint meeting with the University of Iowa Student Government in fall 2019.
- ▶ Although a 28E fire mutual aid agreement has been in-place and exercised regularly for decades, a new automatic aid agreement was approved early in 2019 and implemented April 1 between Iowa City, Coralville, and North Liberty. The automatic aid agreement between the three communities allows the Joint Emergency Communications Center (JECC) to automatically and simultaneously dispatch partnered agencies to building fire incidents. It was acknowledged by the leadership of all three agencies that the departments could reinforce one another in challenging response areas, resulting ultimately in improved safety for responding firefighters and more effective service to those requiring emergency aid.
- ▶ Council should identify any additional topic areas that they wish to address.

5c During the 2018 and 2019 state legislative sessions, Iowa City worked with lobbying firm Carney and Associates to monitor and advocate the Council's legislative priorities in Des Moines. At the end of the 2018 session, most major concerns, such as preserving the backfill had positive or neutral outcomes for the City. By the end of the 2019 session, the legislature had taken away the City's ability to use rental permit caps and modified property tax laws which will impact the way Iowa municipalities budget. Staff is working to find potential solutions to navigate these new challenges.

Relationships with local legislators remain productive and several contacts were made with current legislators as well as with district candidates during the 2018 campaigns. In 2018 and 2019, staff participated in Iowa League of Cities and Corridor Chamber Day events at the Capitol. The City continues to build relationships with newly elected legislators at state and federal levels, visiting with them in town, Des Moines, and Washington DC.

- ▶ In response to the 2019 approved rental cap legislation, Council approved a moratorium on new rental permits in certain areas of the community while staff identifies new approaches to maintaining the balance and character of impacted neighborhoods. Proposed changes to City Code are anticipated for presentation to City Council by early 2020.
- ▶ The City's lobbyists continue to attend meetings and events with legislators from across the state prior to the next legislative session. Staff has maintained communication with Carney and Associates, as well as the Iowa League of Cities to ensure proper preparation for the 2020 session.
- ▶ The City is preparing an RFP to consider hiring a lobbyist to work at the federal level on behalf of the City to help secure funds for a new transit facility. RFP release is expected in summer 2019. Property tax reform legislation passed at the State in 2019 will impact preparation for the FY2020 budget. Legislation limits annual property tax

On Sept. 7, 2018, staff conducted an Iowa City tour with area legislators and Council members. The tour shared the latest improvements to parks, facilities, and notable development projects, related to State financial support and local needs.

growth to 2%. Any proposed levy higher than 2% is required to give extra notice, hold an additional public hearing and achieve a super-majority Council approval.





Three of the City's four electric cars are shown in the Chauncey Swan Parking Ramp.

6

Promote Environmental Sustainability

- a. Adopt an effective Climate Action and Adaptation Plan and ensure the next two budgets contain sufficient funds to facilitate achieving its goal
- b. Support efforts to increase the reach of the Parks and Recreation Foundation



Accomplishment Updates

- 6a** The City Council adopted the Iowa City Climate Action and Adaptation Plan in September 2018 which includes 35 actions for the community and municipality to undertake to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These high impact actions were identified and quantified so when implemented, Iowa City can achieve the 2025 and 2050 greenhouse gas reduction targets set by City Council.
- 6b** Staff has been meeting with local foundations, attending training, and consulting with the City Attorney's Office to ensure all aspects of the existing Parks Foundation are in place prior to a large public campaign. An initial "brand" concept has been developed in preparation for communicating Foundation goals.

What's Next

- ▶ The City's climate action accomplishments and upcoming projects are found in the Highlight below.
- ▶ The City staff climate action committee of City staff meets regularly and in April established an internal plan to further Action Plan objectives. This group is focused on reducing waste, encouraging transportation alternatives, and improving the efficiency of city facility operations and use. The group's plan and progress will be shared in summer 2019.
- ▶ Parks and Recreation staff will be consulting with the Parks and Recreation Commission, following confirmation that the Foundation is close to re-introduction to the community.



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.

Climate Action and Adaptation Plan Progress Highlights *(continued)*

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.

Climate Action and Adaptation Plan Progress Highlights *(continued)*

- 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

Climate Action and Adaptation Plan Progress Highlights *(continued)*

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.



This summer, the Iowa City Public Library got rid of late fines from books in their children and young adult collections. That means young readers like those shown above can checkout books without fear of incurring a late fee.

7

Advance Social Justice and Racial Equity

- a. Support organizations and efforts that provide services to people experiencing and recovering from trauma and crisis related to mental health and substance abuse
- b. Consider a policy to limit city business to vendors that pay all employees a wage of \$10.10 or higher
- c. Explore expanded use of a racial equity toolkit within City government, embedding it within city department and Council levels
- d. Consider elevating hourly staff wages to \$15/hour or more within two years

Accomplishment Updates

- 7a** The Council has budgeted sufficient funds to be active partners in the Countywide Behavioral Access Center planning. The County has purchased land for the project. A joint agreement is still being finalized.

Cross Park Place, the FUSE housing first initiative opened its doors to 24 low-barrier apartments in early 2019. The project, backed with data from the Police Department's Data Driven Justice Initiative has provided stable housing for a population with challenges often addressed through emergency services or detention. Continued use of the Police Department's crisis intervention training paired with health, counseling, and housing services at Cross Park Place have led to a significant decrease in related calls for service.

City Council responded to a request from the Housing and Community Development Commission to increase the FY2020 budget allocation to the Aid to Agencies grant program. Council approved for a single year, \$625,000, to fully fund requests made by Legacy local service agencies.

- 7b** Staff provided an introductory memo to Council in May 2019, regarding options for a vendor wage policy. Council concluded at the May 21 Work Session that the City should develop a wage preference policy that gives additional credit to local vendors paying an hourly wage of \$10.10 or more.

- 7c** The current implementation phase for the equity toolkit kicked off in early summer 2018. A summary of currently participating department accomplishments and takeaways will be provided later in 2019. The Equity Office notes that many departments have been integrating practices into daily operations and decision-making. Examples of this are Revenue's implemented utility discount program and Neighborhood and Development Services' toolkit use to assess housing program options for the South District. Interest in using the toolkit is even shared by outside groups, namely

What's Next

- ▶ Council directed staff to fully fund all Legacy applications in the Aid to Agencies process for a one year commitment. Staff will have to coordinate another application round next year and this summer, the City Manager's Office will be reaching out to Legacy agencies to have a discussion on the Aid to Agencies budget levels for FY2021. Council requested a review of the Legacy and Emerging Aid to Agencies funding process be added to their pending Work Session list.

- ▶ Finance is drafting a wage preference policy and will return to Council later this year with an update.

- ▶ Parks and Recreation, Fire, the Housing Authority, and the Iowa City Public Library are finishing their evaluation of current and potential procedures, policies, programs or services using the racial and socioeconomic equity review toolkit. A report to Council will be submitted later this year.
- ▶ The five departments that initiated use of the toolkit in 2016 (Finance, Neighborhood and Development Services, Police, Human Resources, and Human Rights) will continue to use procedure and policy reviews aligned with toolkit standards and outcomes.

the Climate Action Advisory Board, as they prepare to address and evaluate equity in community climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. The Iowa City Fire Department conducted three implicit bias trainings led and for ICFD employees. Staff has been encouraged by open dialogue on how they're managing issues specific to the Iowa City community and emergency services.

▶ Interest in using the equity toolkit is even shared by outside groups, namely the Climate Action Advisory Board, as they prepare to address and evaluate equity in community climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. Additional uses for the toolkit may include towing fee review and grant awards.

7d A cost analysis was provided to Council for a Work Session discussion on Sept. 18, 2018. Council gave direction to increase minimum starting wage for hourly and temporary employees to \$11.50 per hour, beginning July 1, 2019. The FY2020 budget reflecting this change was approved in March 2019.

▶ The FY2020 budget proposal will reflect this adjustment and further annual increases will be reviewed each year, with an end goal of reaching \$15/hr by July 1, 2021. A study identifying any wage compression issues is in progress.

Accomplishment Highlight

New Hate Crime Ordinance proposed

In April 2019, the City Attorney's Office was contacted by University of Iowa law students under the supervision of Law Professor Daria Fisher Page. The students had been retained by the Johnson County Interfaith Coalition (JCIC) "to work with its Safe Communities Task Force to create ordinance proposals that could address the increased frequency of hate crimes and hate incidents in Iowa City." Since April, the City Attorney and Chief of Police met with the students and JCIC to discuss proposals and identify a solution that is supported legally and by law enforcement. The ordinance, which received its first reading on June 4, 2019, is crafted using the State of Iowa harassment statute and state hate crimes ordinance. If passed, the ordinance makes a hate crime of harassment or trespass with intent to harass because of a person's protected characteristic. Hate crime under this definition will be an enforceable offense which includes a fine and jail time for each incident.



Iowa City Police Chief Jody Matherly is shown discussing the proposed hate crime ordinance for the City at the June 4, 2019 City Council meeting.

