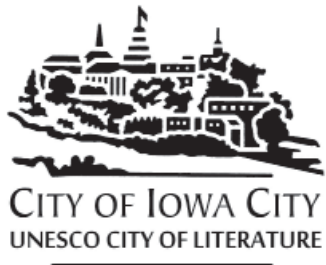


2016-17

Strategic Plan Update

October 2016



City of Iowa City
410 E. Washington St.
Iowa City, IA 52240
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icgov.org





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Introduction and overview



City Council members are, from left:

Terry Dickens, District B

Pauline Taylor, District A

Jim Throgmorton, At-Large, Mayor

John Thomas, District C

Kingsley Botchway II, At-Large, Mayor Pro Tem

Susan Mims, At-Large

Rockne Cole, At-Large

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 70,000 residents. These include utilities (water, sewer, stormwater, and garbage and recycling services), and public services (public safety, building and housing inspections, parks and recreation, street maintenance, engineering, development services, transportation, local cable television programming, and senior services).

City accolades

In 2008, Iowa City was designated as a City of Literature by UNESCO, becoming the third city recognized internationally and the first and only U.S. city to date. Since 2014, the City has been recognized in over 20 "Best Of" publications, including "The Best Small City for Educated Millennials" by Business Insider, "The Best City for College Grads" by the Huffington Post, and "The Best City for Successful Aging" and "Number Five Best Performing Small City" by the Milliken Institute.



Introduction and overview

History and background

The strategic planning goal-setting session focused on the following areas:

- ▶ Issues, concerns, trends, and opportunities
- ▶ Ongoing or committed projects
- ▶ Significant new projects, programs, policies, and initiatives

Council further refined their top priorities and initiatives at subsequent work sessions. Specific programs, policies, and projects were identified to guide staff activities for the next two years and communicate Council's priorities to the public.

The resolution on the March 1, 2016 City Council agenda formally adopted the Council's strategic plan priorities and reflected the language, goals, and intentions that were developed by the City Council in the work sessions and meetings held Nov. 30, 2015, and Jan. 14, Jan. 21, Feb. 2, and Feb. 16, 2016.

Iowa City's 2016-17 Strategic Plan

This strategic plan intends to foster a more inclusive, just and sustainable Iowa City.

- ▶ 1. Promote a strong and resilient local 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 and overview



City Council-identified projects, programs, policies, and initiatives for the Strategic Plan

Promote a strong and resilient local economy

- Identify how the City and local partners can effectively market and grow the local foods economy
- Review and consider amending the City's Tax Increment Finance (TIF) policy
- Promote neighborhood commercial districts and build stronger relations with business owners throughout the community
- Work closely with the University of Iowa and Kirkwood Community College on future facilities and economic development opportunities, especially in the Riverfront Crossings District
- Work closely with the ICCSD, Kirkwood Community College, labor organizations, Iowa Works and others to explore the feasibility of an industrial arts/crafts facility in Iowa City
- Proactively seek opportunities to facilitate development of our interstate entryways in a manner consistent with this strategic plan
- Develop programs aimed to enhance small business development and retention with a focus on diverse communities

Encourage a vibrant and walkable urban core

- Consider creating a new City Council committee with a focus on the sustainable built environment
- Support historic preservation efforts
- Initiate public dialogue about the meaning and importance of a walkable neighborhood and how to achieve it
- Encourage diverse housing types and price points for a variety of income levels



Introduction and overview

Foster healthy neighborhoods throughout the City

- Consider amending the City's Annexation Policy to require the provision of affordable housing in residential/mixed-use areas
- Evaluate the implementation of a Form Based Code in one or two parts of the community
- Develop strategies to diversify the membership of neighborhood associations
- Substantially improve access and use of public spaces through improvements to sidewalks, streetscapes, parks, and schools

Maintain a solid financial foundation

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

Enhance community engagement and intergovernmental relations

- Provide timely and appropriate input on the ICCSD's planned 2017 bond referendum
- Televisе regular City Council work sessions
- Significantly improve the ability of Council and staff to engage with diverse populations on complex or controversial topics

Promote environmental sustainability

- Raise Iowa City's Bicycle-Friendly Community status from silver to gold by 2017 and aspire toward a platinum status in the future
- Evaluate and consider implementation of a plastic bag policy
- Undertake a project in FY 2017 that achieves a significant measurable carbon emission reduction
- Set a substantive and achievable goal for reducing city-wide carbon emissions by 2030, and create an ad-hoc climate change task force, potentially under an umbrella STAR Communities committee, to devise a cost-effective strategy for achieving the goal
- Collaborate with community partners on sustainability efforts



Introduction and overview

Advance social justice and racial equity

- Develop and implement a racial / socioeconomic equity review toolkit
- Support the Housing First initiative and other local homeless efforts, including the temporary winter shelter
- Consider creating a City Council committee with a focus on social justice and racial equity
- Evaluate initiatives to effectively engage the community's youth
- Identify and implement an achievable goal to reduce disproportionality in arrests
- Create a racial equity grant program
- Develop a partnership with the University of Iowa and other key stakeholders that will aid efforts to recruit and retain a greater minority workforce
- Identify a substantive and achievable goal for the provision of affordable housing in Iowa City and implement strategies to achieve this goal

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Promote a strong and resilient local economy



More than 200 people attended the inaugural Iowa City Farm to Street Dinner on Linn Street in late August. Tickets went on sale in advance, and were sold out within a matter of hours.



Strategies to meet this goal:

Identify how the City and local partners can effectively market and grow the local foods economy

► Budgeted \$25,000 for local foods initiatives

► Community meal project

Develop a partnership between the City of Iowa City, Johnson County and Field to Family to hold a community meal to support local food producers, raise awareness of community-based food systems, and raise funds for Field to Family and the Iowa City Parks and Recreation Foundation. The City provided financial support in the amount of \$5,000 for the event, called the “Iowa City Farm to Street Dinner.” City staff helped plan and organize the dinner, working with fellow coordinating partners, and the City also provided operational support for permit applications, road closures, traffic control, recycling and clean-up.

► Double Up Food Bucks

The City created the “Double Up Food Bucks” program at the Iowa City Farmers Markets with \$5,000 in sponsorship funds. Through the program, electronic benefit transfer (EBT) users can double their cash when making purchases at Iowa City Farmers Markets.

► Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Iowa City Farmers Markets began offering a centralized Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) program in 2016.

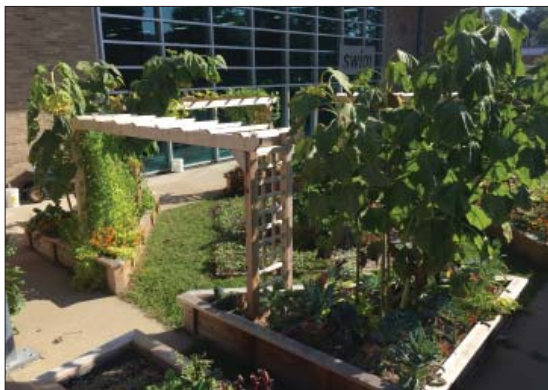
► Backyard Abundance Edible Classroom project

The City partnered on the Backyard Abundance Edible Classroom educational project at the Robert A. Lee Recreation Center. This garden, a community partnership

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Promote a strong and resilient local economy

Building the Backyard Abundance Edible Classroom Project at the Robert A. Lee Recreation Center



with several sponsors and supporters, including the State of Iowa Department of Agriculture, was planted adjacent to the Recreation Center and is utilized in numerous recreational classes. A ribbon-cutting for the garden was held on Sept. 17, 2016.

► Backyard Abundance plant sale and fundraiser

Backyard Abundance, in partnership with the City of Iowa City Parks and Recreation Department, held an edible plant sale and fundraiser at the Robert A. Lee Recreation Center in advance of the growing season. The plants offered for sale to the public were grown as locally as possible, and were carefully chosen for bountiful yields and flavor.

► Farmers Market events: Taste of Market and Local Food Fair

Two special events were held in September 2016 at the Iowa City Farmers Market. For Taste of Market, Farmers Market staff grilled and distributed free samples from local vendors. At the Local Food Fair, hosted by Field to Family, the work being done to support Iowa City's local food system was showcased.

Review and consider amending the City's Tax Increment Finance (TIF) policy

► TIF policy stakeholder meetings

TIF policy stakeholder meetings are underway. Eight focus groups are meeting to solicit feedback on current policies and recommendations for improvement. Focus groups include, but are not limited to: past TIF recipients; affected taxing entities; nonprofit organizations; architects, engineers, and developers; community promotional organizations such as the Iowa City Downtown District, Chamber of Commerce, and the Convention and Visitors Bureau; environmental advocacy groups; and arts and cultural organizations. Council will receive the public input generated through this process as potential policy amendments are considered.

Promote a strong and resilient local economy

► Economic development policy update

The City's economic development policies were amended May 3, 2016 to include a requirement for the provision of affordable housing when residential projects receive public financing, including TIF. Fifteen percent of residential units must be affordable for a minimum of 20 years when a project receives City funding.

Promote neighborhood commercial districts and build stronger relations with business owners throughout the community

► Involvement with business community

City staff serve on the boards of the Chamber of Commerce, Iowa City Area Development Group, and the Iowa City Downtown District. Staff members regularly attend functions offered by these groups, such as the Chamber of Commerce roundtable lunches.

► Small business engagement

Through the "So, you want to start a business?" program and Kirkwood scholarship partnership, staff is working to strengthen relations with Kirkwood Community College and emerging small businesses.

Work closely with the University of Iowa and Kirkwood Community College on future facilities and economic development opportunities, especially in the Riverfront Crossings District

► MERGE co-working space and prototype laboratory

MERGE is a collaboration between the University of Iowa, Iowa City Area Development Group, Inc. (ICAD), and the City of Iowa City for entrepreneurial co-working space and prototype laboratory. The facility is located in the City-owned Iowa City Public Library commercial space and is provided to MERGE at reduced rent. The City also supports ICAD operations annually. The City Council has authorized the City Manager to contribute up to \$100,000 for build-out of the space. MERGE has secured a \$1.5 million Iowa Economic Development Authority grant and \$800,000 in federal funding from the U.S. Commerce Department's Economic Development Administration.

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Promote a strong and resilient local economy



The workshops in the “So, you want to start a business?” series offered topics including how to turn your passion into profit, legal issues, licenses, taxes, tax structures, permits, and financial statements.



Renderings from MERGE co-working space and prototype lab



Work closely with the ICCSD, Kirkwood Community College, labor organizations, Iowa Works, and others to explore the feasibility of an industrial arts / crafts facility in Iowa City

- ▶ No action to date. This topic may require additional Council discussions in the coming months.

Proactively seek opportunities to facilitate development of our interstate entryways in a manner consistent with this Strategic Plan

▶ Private development projects

Staff continues to have dialogue regarding development opportunities along the I-80 corridor.

Develop programs aimed to enhance small business development and retention with a focus on diverse communities

▶ “So, you want to start a business? workshop series

The City of Iowa City entered into discussions with Johnson County, Kirkwood Community College, MidWestOne Bank, and Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County to evaluate strategies to increase the number of businesses in the area that are owned by women and/or persons of color. One of the results of these discussions was development of the “So, you want to start a business?” educational series. Through this series, five educational workshops on business development were held at Kirkwood

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Promote a strong and resilient local economy

Community College's Iowa City campus to provide information and technical assistance to people who want to start their own business. These workshops were specifically marketed to women, immigrants, and persons of color. Approximately 50 unique individuals attended. PowerPoint slides are available on the City's website for those unable to attend.

► **MicroLoan Program**

The City's MicroLoan Program was tweaked to offer better terms (3% interest, \$10,000 maximum loan for a five-year term), leading to renewed interest in the program, especially after the educational workshops at Kirkwood. This program provides low- to moderate-income persons with access to affordable loans to start or expand a business in Iowa City. Our MidWestOne and Kirkwood Community College partners are actively promoting the MicroLoan Program, and City staff is promoting the program at the One Million Cups and Start-up Coffee events.

The following four local entrepreneurs are being assisted:

- **Community Serving Community Daycare:** This minority- and woman-operated non-profit received a \$5,000 loan to double low-income daycare capacity.
- **College Gaming Series:** A \$10,000 loan was awarded to expand business in MERGE Space One.
- **Alfie's Beauty Supply:** This minority- and woman-owned business is requesting \$10,000 to purchase equipment and inventory.
- **ALMVGHTY:** This minority-owned clothing business is requesting \$10,000 to expand operations.

► **Scholarships**

The City provided a grant of \$3,580 to sponsor scholarships for 10 students to participate in an internship program at Kirkwood Community College's Iowa City campus in their deli laboratory. Students will earn college credit, apply for college admission and financial aid, and complete a business plan and a microloan application with the City.

Other initiatives

► **Facade improvements**

Funding was approved for facade improvements for Big Grove Brewery's Iowa City location. This redevelopment is an important first step in revitalizing the southern portion of the Riverfront Crossings District. The planned park development adjacent to the Big Grove site will also help encourage further investment in the area.

Encourage a vibrant and walkable urban core



In May, a piece of local architectural history was saved when the Houser-Metzger House was moved from its original location on Iowa Avenue to its new site on College Street, where it overlooks College Green Park. Restoration continues on the house.



Preservation efforts are also being made for the log cabins in Upper City Park, which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Strategies to meet this goal:

Consider creating a new City Council committee with a focus on the sustainable built environment

- Council considered this action at the April 5, 2016 work session and decided not to move forward with the committee as proposed.

Support historic preservation efforts

► Houser-Metzger House move

The City facilitated the move of the historic Houser-Metzger House from 422 Iowa Avenue to 623 College Street. As a result, approximately 45 tons of what would have been demolition debris were saved from the landfill, and a historically appropriate house was saved and moved to the College Green Historic District. Several departments and divisions, including Public Works - Streets, Parks and Recreation - Forestry, Police, and Neighborhood and Development Services - Inspections and Historic Preservation, devoted staff time and resources to guiding the move of the house across five City blocks.


► Rehabilitation on Upper City Park log cabins

The City secured a \$25,000 Historical Resource Development Program grant for rehabilitation for City Park's Old Settlers' Association of Johnson County Cabins. The cabins are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Cabin restoration will be completed in 2017.

► Historical designation

The historical designation of 716 N. Dubuque Street was approved at the April 19, 2016 City Council meeting.

Encourage a vibrant and walkable urban core



How can a city adapt?


- Demographics are **changing.**
- Transportation choices are **changing.**
- Urban lifestyles are **changing.**
- Housing preferences are **changing.**

Daniel Parolek, nationally recognized architect and urbanist, will offer new ideas on how to build vibrant, diverse, sustainable, walkable urban places that create community while meeting today's housing needs in:

MISSING MIDDLE
Responding to the Demand for Walkable Urban Living

May 24, 2016 7 - 8:30 pm
Iowa City Public Library, Room A
123 S. Linn Street, Iowa City

Public invited. No registration or admission required!
For more info, call 319-356-5230




Dan Parolek

► **National Register of Historic Places**

A home at 715 W. Park Road was nominated for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

► **Historic preservation**

The Council added funding to expand staff hours dedicated to Historic Preservation beginning in FY 2017.

► **Irving B. Weber Days at Iowa City Public Library**

In May, National Historic Preservation Month, the Iowa City Public Library leads the annual Irving B. Weber Days to celebrate local history. Working with several community partners, the series schedules a variety of programs and events to promote the importance of local history and the Library's resources for researching local history.

Initiate public dialogue about the meaning and importance of a walkable neighborhood and how to achieve it

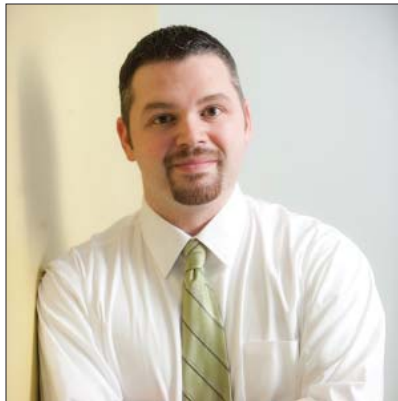
► **“Missing Middle: Responding to the Demand for Walkable Urban Living” public and staff presentations conducted by Dan Parolek**

Daniel Parolek is a nationally recognized architect, urbanist and leader in architecture, design, and urban planning who presented to City staff and the public in May 2016. “Missing Middle Housing” is a term Parolek uses to define the type of housing that falls between single-family homes and large apartment complexes or high-rises — duplexes, fourplexes, bungalow courts, mansion apartments, and live-work units. The Missing Middle provides housing for a range of incomes, ages, and lifestyles, and easily fits in with existing single-family neighborhoods, infill or urban renewal areas, or new construction projects.

Encourage a vibrant and walkable urban core



Zach Benedict



Jay Walljasper



Jeff Speck

► Zach Benedict presentation

Zach Benedict is one of the leading voices in the “Lifetime Community” movement, focusing on the socioeconomic benefits of age-friendly neighborhoods. Mr. Benedict discusses research that indicates successful cities consistently prioritize communal attachment through social offerings, openness, and aesthetics. He is scheduled to speak at the Senior Center in the spring of 2017.

► Jay Walljasper workshops

Two public presentations were conducted in the spring of 2016. The first, “All That We Share: A Discussion of the Commons,” was focused on a discussion of how community resources must be actively protected and managed for the good of all. The second event, a workshop titled, “25 Ways You Can Create a Strong Community,” focused on placemaking and the commons with an emphasis on community development in Iowa City’s Downtown.

► Jeff Speck presentation

Staff is working to coordinate an event in the fall of 2016 with Jeff Speck, a city planner and urban designer who, through writing, lectures, and built work, advocates internationally for smart growth and sustainable design. As Director of Design at the National Endowment for the Arts from 2003 through 2007, he oversaw the Mayors’ Institute on City Design and created the Governors’ Institute on Community Design, a federal program that helps state governors fight suburban sprawl.

► Robin Hambleton visit: “Leading the Inclusive City”

In March 2016, Professor Robin Hambleton, Professor of City Leadership in the Centre for Sustainable Planning and Environments at the University of the West of England in Bristow, presented “Leading the Inclusive City” at the Iowa City Public Library. The program addressed global inequality and how cities can take steps to minimize inequality, advance social justice, promote environmental responsibility, and bolster community empowerment.

Encourage a vibrant and walkable urban core



Washington Street median planting project brought staff together to beautify the boulevard.



Encourage diverse housing types and price points for a variety of income levels

► Inclusionary housing code amendments

Council adopted inclusionary housing code amendments for the Riverfront Crossings District on July 5, 2016.

► Affordable housing requirements for TIF projects

Council adopted affordable housing requirements for projects supported through tax increment financing on May 3, 2016.

► Housing First/FUSE initiative

Council supported the Housing First/FUSE initiative, including financial support of \$275,000 and adopting the necessary zoning code amendments. The project will construct a facility that provides low-barrier housing for chronically homeless individuals. The zoning code amendments were adopted on July 5, 2016.

► Pine Grove subdivision approval

Approved the Pine Grove development, a 12-lot, 9.3-acre residential subdivision located south of Lower West Branch Road between Scott Boulevard and Hummingbird Lane. The subdivision offers diverse housing options, with 10 single family lots, one 36-unit building, and two 4-unit townhouse-style buildings. The development also preserved approximately an acre of pine trees at the corner of Lower West Branch Road and Scott Boulevard.

Other initiatives

► Washington Street median planting project

City staff from various departments volunteered to assist the Parks Division in re-planting the Washington Street medians following the Houser-Metzger House move.

Encourage a vibrant and walkable urban core



Throughout construction on Washington Street, access to businesses is maintained.



► Washington Street Reconstruction Project

The City Council approved the contract for the reconstruction of two blocks of Washington Street in Downtown Iowa City. In addition to upgraded underground utilities the project enhances accessibility and walkability through wider sidewalks, narrower vehicle lanes and crosswalks, evenly distributed parallel parking, enhanced plantings and street trees, improved ADA ramps and slopes, and consistent café locations for predictable walking paths.

... 3

Foster healthy neighborhoods throughout the City



The new playground at Mercer Park is now the City's largest play area — and it's also all-inclusive, for use by families and children of all abilities.



Strategies to meet this goal:

Consider amending the City's Annexation Policy to require the provision of affordable housing in residential / mixed-use areas

► Revised annexation policy

City Council directed staff to prepare a revised annexation policy as part of the Affordable Housing Action Plan.

Evaluate the implementation of a form-based code in one or two parts of the community

► Concept plan

An RFP has been issued for consultant services for the development of concept plans and a report with recommendations for implementation of a form-based code and "missing middle housing" for undeveloped areas of Iowa City's South District and for the established Northside neighborhood. The selected firm will also be required to provide an analysis and recommendations to address parking demand issues in near-Downtown neighborhoods.

► Ordinance amendments and rezonings

The Council adopted the east-side mixed use form-based code on Sept. 20, 2016.

Develop strategies to diversify the membership of neighborhood associations

► No actions have been taken to date.

Foster healthy neighborhoods throughout the City



New amenities at Highland Park include a park shelter and playground equipment



Rendering for a new playground structure at Pheasant Hill Park

Substantially improve access and use of public spaces through improvements to sidewalks, streetscapes, parks, and schools

► Mercer Park playground improvements

The City's largest play area was installed at Mercer Park in the spring of 2016. The play structure is all-inclusive, allowing access for families and children of all abilities.

► Highland Park renovation

This completed project features new playground equipment, shelter, sidewalk accessibility improvements, and a water fountain with a bottle filler and dog dish.

► Pheasant Hill Park playground improvements

The neighborhood weighed in on the playground's design at a well-attended neighborhood meeting. Installation is anticipated in fall 2016.

► Park ADA access and facility master plan

Council approved the contract for services at the September 6 meeting. The master plan is a 10-year planning document that prioritizes providing equitable, accessible, and well-maintained park facilities throughout the City. Park facilities will be evaluated for accessibility and compliance with ADA regulations, assessment of current safety and maintenance needs, and recommendations for future facility needs.

► Other park improvement initiatives

- **Willow Creek Park:** restroom and trails, 2016
- **Happy Hollow Park:** restroom and shelter, 2017
- **Mercer Park:** tennis courts/pickleball courts renovations, 2017
- **Frauenholtz-Miller Park:** shelter, paths and playground, 2017
- **Cardigan Park:** Master plan
- **Creekside Park:** Park renovation, 2017

Foster healthy neighborhoods throughout the City

- **Wetherby Park:** Wellmark grant for sport court, 2017
- **Park planning:** Planning processes are underway or complete for Lower City Park, Eastside Sports Complex, Riverfront Crossings Park, and Hickory Hill Park. Each planning process incorporates a significant amount of public and neighborhood input.

► **Expanded curb ramp projects**

The City Council approved doubling the funds allocated to the dedicated curb ramp project in each of the last three years. In 2016, the program is installing ramps near Grant Wood Elementary School, in the Riverfront Crossings District, and other locations as requested by residents. In 2016, funding for the asphalt overlay was also increased significantly; 10-15% of this project's funding is typically used to install new curb ramps.

► **Other public space initiatives**

COMPLETE STREETS FUNDING

Annual complete streets funding of \$300,000 begins in 2017. This is a new initiative of the City Council. Funds will be used to support road diets on Sycamore Street and Clinton Street.

TREES

An RFP has been issued for a comprehensive tree inventory. This will assist in our Emerald Ash Borer response, and future street tree plantings.

NATURAL AREAS

An RFP has been issued for a natural areas maintenance and master plan.

Other initiatives

► **Housing Exterior Loan Program**

The Housing Exterior Loan Program (HELP) offers financial assistance to help upgrade the safety and appearance of local housing stock, while preserving neighborhood vitality. Zero-interest loans are provided for 50% of the cost of eligible improvements, up to \$10,000.

► **Continued UniverCity Neighborhood Partnership investments**

To date, 55 homes have been renovated and sold for owner-occupied housing. Currently, one home is complete and the purchase offer pending; two homes are under rehabilitation; and one is being prepared for bid. The City will purchase two more homes this year for rehabilitation and sale to income-eligible homebuyers.

... 4

Maintain a solid financial foundation

Strategies to meet this goal:

Continue to monitor the impact of the 2013 property tax reform and evaluate alternative revenue sources as determined necessary

- ▶ Alternative revenue streams are being evaluated in conjunction with affordable housing initiatives. These options will be evaluated more thoroughly during the fiscal year 2017-2018 budgeting process.

Continue to build the City's emergency fund

- ▶ The City has created an emergency fund in order to prepare for the effects of 2013 property tax reform. The emergency fund will give the City financial flexibility, given the uncertainty of future revenue, and maintain service levels in the event of a sharp decline in revenue or the loss of State of Iowa "backfill" payments. From FY13-16, the City has built an emergency reserve totaling \$4,698,779 through annual transfers. The FY17 transfer will be considered during the next budget process.

Monitor potential changes to Moody's rating criteria and maintain the City's Aaa bond rating

- ▶ Moody's reaffirmed the City's Aaa general obligation bond rating with the 2016 bond issue. The rating report noted that, "The City's financial operations are expected to remain healthy, given strong financial management, significant operating fund reserves and sufficient revenue-raising flexibility."

Continue to reduce the City's property tax levy

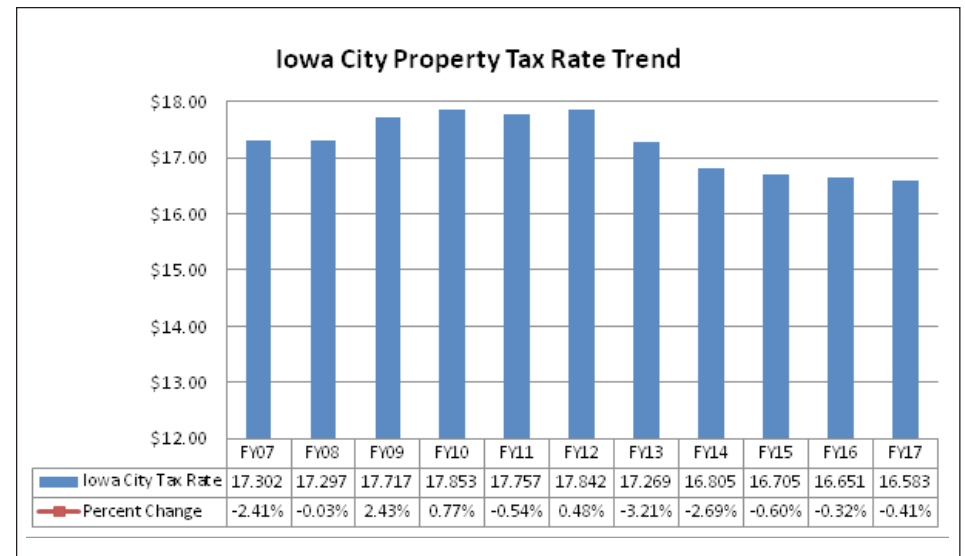
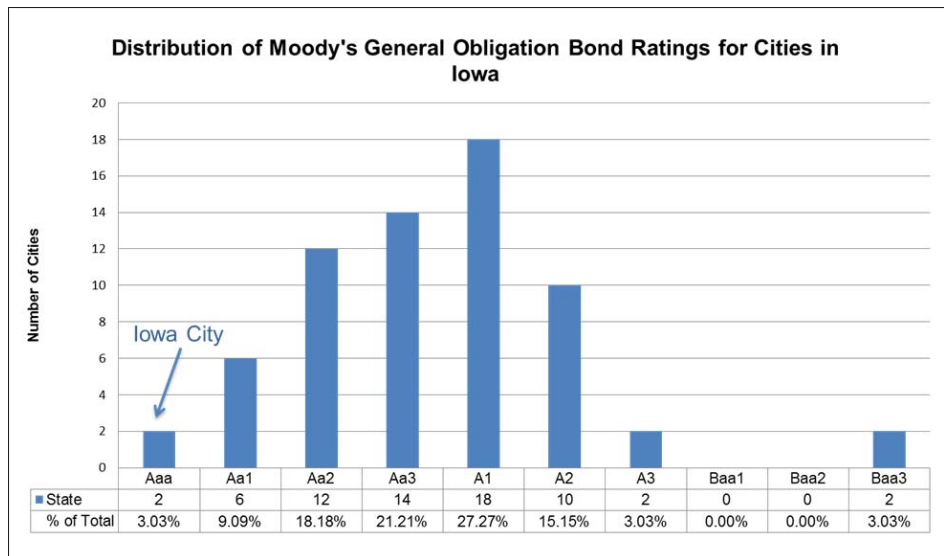
- ▶ The fiscal year 2016-2017 budget reduced the City's property tax levy rate by 0.41%, the fifth consecutive year of levy rate decreases. The fiscal year 2017-2018 levy rate will be determined during the budget process that begins in the fall of 2016.

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Maintain a solid financial foundation

Maintain healthy fund balances throughout the City's diverse operations

- The City's funds currently have healthy fund balances. Utility rates and service charges are evaluated annually to ensure they are sufficient to fund operations and capital improvement needs. Maintaining adequate fund balances is a large component of Moody's bond rating criteria.



Strategies to meet this goal:

Provide timely and appropriate input on the ICCSD's planned 2017 bond referendum

- This item is on Council's pending work session list for further discussion.

Televisе regular City Council work sessions

- This has been completed.

Significantly improve the Council and staff's ability to engage with diverse populations on complex or controversial topics

- This item is scheduled for discussion on Council's pending work session topic list. Council and staff have participated in a number of panel discussions, forums, neighborhood meetings, and listening posts that will help inform the conversation. Some recent examples of public outreach on complex or controversial topics include:
 - City staff attended the "Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Forum: The Impact of Racial Injustices on Youth" held at the Iowa City Public Library and sponsored by the DMC Youth Committee for Johnson County.
 - TIF stakeholder meetings are being held with a broad range of community groups.
 - The Police Department participated in a panel discussion on Police and Public Safety at the "Relax:Talk:Grow" event held at the Iowa City Public Library. It was sponsored by the University of Iowa African American Council and the University of Iowa Public Policy Center.
 - Council listening posts have been held at new locations, engaging a more representative sample of the community.
 - Staff created a budget at-a-glance document to convey key points of the FY17 budget and will further refine that effort for the FY18 budget.
 - The Mayor initiated a new neighborhood walk program to engage residents in varying parts of the community.

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Other initiatives

Several of these include activities related to recommendations from the Ad Hoc Diversity Committee and actions plans from the reports on racial equity.

► Staff roundtables

The City Manager's roundtable conversations have continued to engage community stakeholders on issues of inclusivity and social justice. Community groups that attend roundtables include but are not limited to: Black Voices Project, the Coalition for Racial Justice, the Human Rights Commission, the Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa, and Johnson County. The consultants conducting the Police Chief search met with the roundtable to solicit input when developing the candidate profile.

► Crisis Intervention Team concept

Council and staff have been working with several local agencies to explore the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) concept for assisting individuals experiencing mental illness or substance abuse crises. The working group includes law enforcement agencies, health care providers, community advocacy groups, social service providers, and elected officials. Several Council members and City staff members have traveled to San Antonio, Texas to observe the program's operations first-hand, and officers have received week-long training in the program. Local officer training programs are being developed.

► Shelter House donation drive

The City celebrated National Community Development Week by sponsoring a donation drive for Shelter House to collect cleaning supplies and personal care products.

► City department and division initiatives - Outreach COMMUNITY OUTREACH OFFICER

A full-time Community Outreach Officer position was added in the Police Department.

Enhance community engagement & intergovernmental relations



A bookmark project by the Iowa City Public Library and the Police Department encouraged reading, shared safety messages, and provided information in several languages on how to get a Library card.

COFFEE WITH A COP

The expanded Coffee with a Cop program continues to provide monthly public outreach in geographically dispersed locations throughout the community.

LOST PROGRAM

The Police Department collaborated with several community organizations to launch the “Loved Ones Safe Together” (LOST) program to assist in identifying and locating community members who have been separated from their families or caretakers. ICPD hosted a community presentation to launch the project.

LIBRARY CARDS

The Iowa City Public Library extended outreach on how to get a library card by creating handbills in several languages, including Spanish and Arabic.

SAFETY MESSAGES

The Library teamed up with the Iowa City Police Department to produce cards that provide information on how to get a library card in English, Spanish, Arabic and French, along with a safety tip from the Police Department.

► City department and division initiatives - Participation in events PUBLIC EVENTS

ICPD officers attended many public events, including the Polar Plunge to benefit Special Olympics Iowa; an RVAP open house; Juneteenth activities; a career day at Regina High School; and participation on a domestic /sexual violence panel discussion. Evening watch officers also presented donated items, including a new television, to the Youth Emergency Shelter.

COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS

Iowa City officers participated in numerous community presentations, including a number of ALICE active shooter training sessions; presentations to Cub Scout groups, the Dream Center, a shoplifter diversion program and ICCSD summer programs; and continued their involvement in discussions about a low-barrier shelter for the homeless in Iowa City.



Staff from numerous City departments and divisions participated in this year's Juneteenth celebration at Mercer Park.



UI TRAINING

ICPD officers conducted three one-hour training sessions titled, "Know the Law," to 173 University of Iowa students.

SCHOOL EVENTS

Iowa City Public Library staff attended events at Mark Twain and Grant Wood Elementary Schools. In total, 201 students received new or replacement library cards through the Library's outreach programs to help students get library cards in time for summer and the Summer Library Bus program. The Library also worked with the Iowa City Police Department and Iowa City Fire Department to create bookmarks they use in their outreach initiatives. The bookmarks provide contact information and encourage students to read.

JOB FAIR

The Human Resources and Police Departments participated in the "Center of Influence Tour, Lunch and Job Fair" with the National Guard and Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR). The job fair was an opportunity to network with other area employers and to visit with job seekers.

JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION

Councilmembers and City staff of several different departments including the City Manager's Office, Police, Fire, Library, Neighborhood Services and Human Rights, participated and volunteered in events held as part of the Sixth Annual Juneteenth Celebration in Iowa City. The City was a co-sponsor of the event.

EARTH DAY

Staff participated in Kirkwood Community College's Earth Day Event sponsored by Kirkwood's Ecology and Environmental Club.



Strategies to meet this goal:

Raise Iowa City's "Bicycle-Friendly Community" status from silver to gold by 2017 and aspire toward a platinum status in the future

► Bike master plan

Proposals for consultant services to develop a new Bicycle Master Plan were due August 23, 2016. The proposals have been scored and interviews with firms are being scheduled. The planning process is expected to take approximately 8-10 months. The planning goals identified in the request for proposals are as follows:

- Articulate a clear vision and achievable goals to create a bicycle system and supporting policies and programs that address the needs and safety of all users.
- Engage strong and diverse public participation in the planning process, including input from traditionally under-represented groups (e.g. economically disadvantaged populations, racial/ethnic minorities, youth) at all steps of the process.
- Describe strategies and performance measures to:
 - Guide the planning, funding, implementation and maintenance of projects proposed in the plan;
 - Create a safe and seamless network of on- and off-street bicycle facilities and routes; and
 - Increase number of bicyclists of all ages, genders, income levels, and abilities.
- Scope the highest priority projects to include:
 - An assessment of cultural and environmental constraints for the identified projects;
 - Written documentation of project issues and overall feasibility;
 - A complete preliminary cost estimate for further engineering, project administration, and construction;

Promote environmental sustainability



Temporary construction of the bike boulevard demonstrated another safe-street possibility for Iowa City bicyclists.



— Consider innovative design concepts and best practices, including wayfinding and identification of bikeways (actual design of wayfinding elements is not part of this process).

- Develop a phased action plan to initiate improvements to the bicycle network to achieve gold level status as a Bicycle-Friendly Community in the short-term (in 2017), and build a foundation for a more comprehensive network that will ensure all residents access to a safe, low-stress route to serve their daily bicycling needs.

► Bike boulevard demonstration

Graduate students from the University of Iowa College of Public Health demonstrated a bike boulevard, a low-speed and low-volume street that optimizes bicycling conditions to create safer, more sustainable, and beautiful community streetscapes. A bike boulevard creates more defined bike lanes and controls traffic flow to build a network of comfortable and safe streets for all community members. The City provided financial and logistical support for the 2016 demonstration, and acted as fiscal agent for a grant received by the event's organizers. Approximately 140-160 bicyclists rode the route on College Street from City High to the Saturday morning Farmers Market. Participants also received informational materials and bike checks from World of Bikes and giveaways funded with a grant from People for Bikes.

► Bike share RFP

Proposals for bike share services were submitted in September in response to a request for proposals issued as a collaboration between the University of Iowa and the City of Iowa City. The project also uses Iowa Department of Transportation funding. Proposals are currently being reviewed with a launch expected in the spring of 2017.



Bike parklet



Community bike rides

► Bike parklet

A bike parklet has been fabricated and will be installed near the corner of Dubuque and Washington Streets in 2016. The design was selected through a request for proposals issued as a partnership between the Downtown District and Think Bicycles of Johnson County. The following goals were stated in the RFP:

- Add a unique and imaginative on-street structure that enhances and activates the aesthetic of the street corner.
- Create additional safe and convenient bike parking Downtown.
- Provide an impactful visual cue of the community's ongoing commitment to bicycle usage and alternative modes of transportation.

► Bike amenities

Bike fix-it stations and stackable bicycle storage facilities in parking ramps are under development. Additional bike racks have been budgeted.

► Support of local bike events

Council members and City staff participated in and provided logistical support for several events, including the Family Ride with Mayor Throgmorton and the Old Pi to New Pi Ride. The City provided a \$1,500 sponsorship of the events. Mayor Throgmorton also issued a proclamation supporting Bike Month.

► Bill Nesper presentations

Bill Nesper, Program Director for the Bicycle-Friendly America for the League of American Bicyclists, gave two presentations in spring of 2016: "Becoming a Bicycle-Friendly Business" and "Bicycle-Friendly Communities." The talks were co-sponsored by the cities of Iowa City, Coralville, and North Liberty, Johnson County, University of Iowa Office of Sustainability, Iowa City Area Development Group, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, and other local organizations. The events were held at the MERGE facility in the Iowa City Public Library building.

Promote environmental sustainability

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► Trail, street, and sidewalk improvements

Several upcoming capital improvements that support being a bike-friendly community are planned, including the Highway 1 trail extension, Riverside Drive pedestrian tunnel, and “road diets” on Mormon Trek, First Avenue, and Sycamore Street.

► Downtown traffic model

City Council reviewed and directed staff to pursue road diets on Clinton and Madison Streets in Downtown Iowa City.

Evaluate and consider implementation of a plastic bag policy

An implementation plan will be presented to Council in late 2016 with a proposed timeline. Staff is reaching out to the business community and individual businesses for input as the process is being refined.

Undertake a project in FY2017 that achieves a significant measurable carbon emission reduction

► AmeriCorps partnership

The energy audits of the City’s public housing stock are underway. \$70,000 of the \$100,000 Council budget for FY2017 will be used for conducting the audits and making improvements identified as needs.

► Proposals for partnership

Proposals for the \$30,000 that Council directed to be used in a partnership with a local nonprofit will be considered in the FY2017 Community Development Block Grant process in December of 2016.

Promote environmental sustainability

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Set a substantive and achievable goal for reducing City-wide carbon emissions by 2030, and create an ad-hoc climate change task force, potentially under an umbrella STAR Communities committee, to devise a cost-effective strategy for achieving the goal

- ▶ A request for proposals for facilitation services for the Climate Change Task Force is being prepared. Council members Taylor and Cole will review the RFP and make a recommendation. A subsequent resolution creating the Task Force will be considered by Council.

Collaborate with community partners on sustainability efforts

▶ **STAR Community Rating**

The City of Iowa City was awarded a 4-STAR Community Rating for sustainability excellence on Wednesday, March 9 by being formally certified in the STAR Community Rating System™ (STAR). The City's approved final score is 484.8, the highest-scored city in the state. Iowa City is the fifth community in Iowa and 47th nationwide to achieve certification from STAR, a nonprofit organization that certifies sustainable communities. Other Iowa STAR communities are Charles City, Dubuque, Davenport and Des Moines.

Information and data was gathered for the certification application throughout 2015 with the assistance of dozens of City staff members, community partners, state agencies, local and regional governments, and private sector employers. Thank you to all community partners that assisted the City in this effort, especially the Iowa City Area Development Group, Iowa City Community School District, Johnson County and University of Iowa.

Promote environmental sustainability



STAR WORKSHOP

A full-day STAR workshop was held for staff and facilitated by STAR representatives at the Eastside Recycling Center.

STAR PUBLIC PRESENTATION

A public presentation of the STAR program was held at the Iowa City Public Library for the public to learn about the program and to answer questions about the STAR rating system.

► Electric vehicle charging stations

A request for proposals will be prepared jointly with the University of Iowa. It is anticipated that charging stations will be installed in one or more parking facilities.

► Local food partnerships

Some examples of local food partnerships that have been completed in 2016 to help promote environmental sustainability include:

EDIBLE CLASSROOM

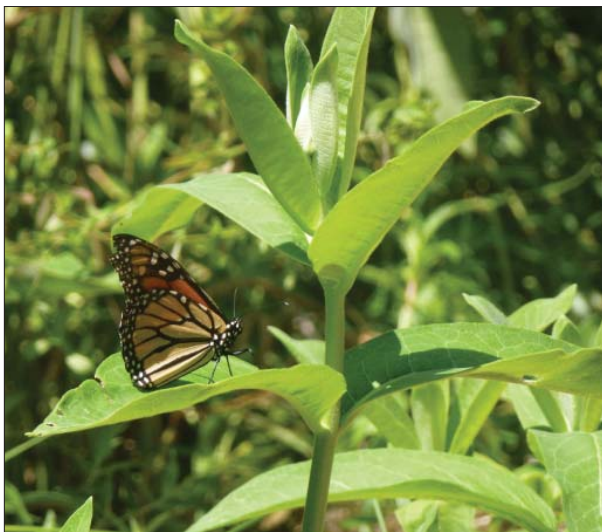
The City partnered with Backyard Abundance, the State of Iowa Department of Agriculture and others on the Edible Classroom project, which provides an educational component for several classes offered by the Recreation Division.

DOUBLE UP FOOD BUCKS

The City, Johnson County, Iowa's Healthiest State Initiative and the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) have partnered to enable low-income families to double the value of their SNAP dollars when purchasing Iowa-grown fruits and vegetables at the Farmers Market.

IOWA CITY FARM TO STREET DINNER

Local food producers, restaurants and members of the community collaborated to celebrate local foods and food initiatives over a community meal.



Other initiatives

► Waste minimization strategies

Processes for multifamily building recycling, curbside composting, and an electronic waste ban will be presented to Council in the fall of 2016.

► Local monarch conservation efforts

The wintering monarch population in Mexico has decreased more than 90%, due to habitat loss, pesticide use and climate change. Municipalities are taking steps to stem the Monarch loss. Iowa City is committed to creating an environment that will allow Monarchs to thrive and rehabilitate during the summer months. City initiatives include:

MILKWEED DISTRIBUTION

A key action in Iowa City is the planting of milkweed to help combat the declining Monarch population. Monarchs lay their eggs in milkweed during the summer months. When the caterpillars hatch, they eat the leaves. The City has planted its own milkweed, while also giving away common milkweed for people to plant in their own yards and gardens to help feed the Monarchs.

MONARCH WAYSTATIONS

The City also supports monarch waystations that provide milkweed for monarchs at Wetherby, Hickory Hill and Hunter's Run Parks as well as the Eastside Recycling Center.

MAYOR'S MONARCH PLEDGE

Iowa City Mayor Jim Throgmorton signed the National Wildlife Federation's Mayors' Monarch Pledge on Tuesday, Aug. 16, 2016 to help raise awareness about declining Monarch populations. This pledge indicates a commitment from the City to help rehabilitate the Monarch population.

LOCAL MONARCH RESEARCH

A team of students from Cornell College in Mount Vernon is conducting research at Waterworks Prairie Park to understand how prairies and Monarch butterflies interact.

Promote environmental sustainability



Monarch and chrysalis



August 2016 | Visit us online at www.icgov.org/sustainability.

Pollinator garden planted at Fire Station 4



In July, nearly 1,000 native plants were placed in the biocell in front of Fire Station 4, located at 2008 Dubuque Road. Milkweed and other native plants that serve as nectar sources for pollinators were planted as a part of the initiative to rehabilitate the North American Monarch butterfly population, which has declined by more than 90% in the past two decades. Milkweed waystations are being planted around Iowa City in an effort to nourish Monarch populations with nectar plants. Check out some of the waystation locations and see what you can do to help [here](#).

STAR sustainability workshop held in Iowa City

A STAR sustainability workshop was held at the East Side Recycling Center on July 21, during which City employees and local partners came together to develop priorities, next steps, and methods for the City and other organizations to build on their current sustainable practices. The current workshop educated attendees on how to understand their relationship with sustainability, as well as present a national context for Iowa City's 4-STAR community rating. Check out the City of Iowa City's full STAR report [here](#).



Dr. Tammy Mildenstein of Cornell has designed a research program to learn about the relationship between prairies and Monarch reproductive success to provide managers and caretakers of parks, prairies and other outdoor spaces with research findings to increase suitability of milkweed populations for Monarch reproduction and survival. With careful observation and thoughtful land stewardship, the team aims to revitalize the iconic Monarch butterfly population.

IOWA CITY MONARCH FESTIVAL

The Iowa City Monarch Festival was held at the Eastside Recycling Center and included several kids' activities, such as a Monarch scavenger hunt, a chrysalis giveaway, and information on how to raise caterpillars. The event was free and open to the public.

More information on the City's Monarch efforts is available at icgov.org/ICMonarchs.

► Sustainability newsletter and social media presence

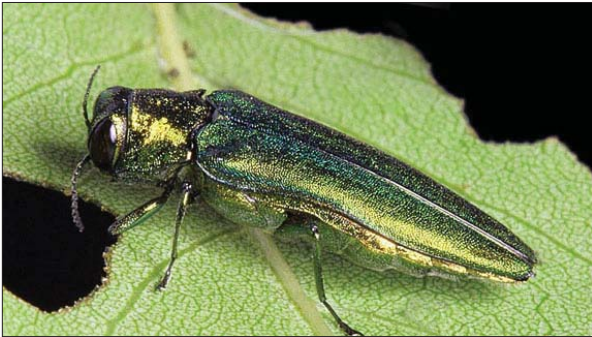
The "Sustainable Iowa City" newsletter was launched, providing information to the public regarding a wide spectrum of sustainability issues from social justice initiatives to energy-related programming. The newsletter is intended to broaden the awareness of the City's initiatives and extend the opportunity for public involvement, questions, and suggestions.

► Covenant of Mayors

Mayor Throgmorton signed on to the Covenant of Mayors (formerly the Compact of Mayors), the world's largest cooperative effort among mayors and city leaders to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The effort was launched at the 2014 United Nations Climate Summit.

GREENHOUSE GAS INVENTORY

A greenhouse gas inventory is being compiled. This is a requirement of the Compact of Mayors and will provide data by which to evaluate progress as emission reduction initiatives are completed.



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Big Bellies, the solar-powered trash and recycling compactors, have been extremely popular in Downtown Iowa City.

► **Emerald Ash Borer public events**

Two public events were held in partnership with the Iowa State University Extension, Iowa Department of Agriculture, and Iowa Department of Natural Resources to educate the public and professionals from the green industry on emerald ash borer identification and responses.

► **Big Bellies**

Additional solar-powered trash and recycling compactors will be installed in Downtown Iowa City. The evaluation of the initial units has been very positive, with low contamination rates of recyclable materials.

► **Craft Your Environment Fair**

The Craft your Environment Fair was held at the Eastside Recycling Center. Dozens of artists showed how recycled goods can be used to create art, home décor, and other projects, keeping it out of the landfill. The fair was held in partnership with Friends of Historic Preservation, Salvage Barn, and Iowa Valley Habitat for Humanity ReStore.

► **Million Gallon Challenge**

Parks and Recreation staff gave themselves a “Million Gallon Challenge” this summer to conserve one million gallons of water. Between April 12 and September 1, the combination of cooperative weather, a three-minute reduction in irrigation cycles, removing some areas from irrigation plans, installing rain sensor irrigation equipment, and efficiently monitoring systems resulted in a savings of 1,425,654 gallons of water — 820,530 treated and 605,124 effluent. Staff expects this total to surpass 1.5 million gallons by the end of the season.

► **Arbor Day partnership**

Willowind School students planted a Skyline Locust tree provided by the Parks and Forestry Division after an educational presentation and reading of the Arbor Day proclamation.

Advance social justice and racial equity

Strategies to meet this goal:

Develop and implement a racial / socioeconomic equity review toolkit

- Staff has initiated review of City procedures, policies, programs, and services using our new equity toolkit review process. Participating departments in the first review are Police, Transit, Human Resources, Human Rights, Finance, and Neighborhood and Development Services. Staff will present the results of the review in 2017.

Support the Housing First initiative and other local homeless efforts, including the temporary winter shelter

- Council supported the Housing First/FUSE initiative, including financial support of \$275,000 and adopting the necessary zoning code amendments. The project will construct a facility that provides low-barrier housing for chronically homeless individuals. The zoning code amendments were adopted on July 5, 2016.

Consider creating a Council committee with a focus on social justice and racial equity

- Council considered this action at the April 5, 2016 work session and decided not to move forward with the committee as proposed. Consideration of creating an ad-hoc committee on social justice and racial equity is on the Council's pending work session topic list.

Evaluate initiatives to effectively engage the community's youth

► Sports programs

Parks and Recreation staff created a program that ran for eight weeks in the spring of 2016 to teach basic American sport skills. It was open to any youth who wished to attend, but was specifically marketed to members of the Sudanese community through community leadership. A total of 77 youth participated. A similar program started in June 2016 that focused on basic swimming skills. The goal of these programs is to help provide comfort levels with sports so that all children feel comfortable participating in existing sport association programs.

Advance social justice and racial equity



Summer Fun Program — play ball!



► Civil rights tour sponsorships

The City provided sponsorships for two youths to participate in the “Civil Rights and Historically Black Colleges and Universities Tour,” conducted by KoNec.

► Summer Fun Program

The “Summer Fun Program” was designed in cooperation with a coalition of non-profits and community leaders to engage youth of color. The program served over 70 participants. A nightly meal was provided by the Iowa City Community School District at no charge. Participants were given discounted bus passes by the City’s Transportation Division. A Recreation Program Coordinator was hired by Parks and Recreation to administer activities for youth between the ages of 12 to 18 for the summer months.

► Not a Box program

The Iowa City Public Library, along with other community organizations, started the “Not a Box” parties for the summer months. These are family events planned for late Saturday afternoons at parks that are located in neighborhoods designated as being low- to moderate-income. The program is focused on children ages 3 to 8. *Not a Box*, a book by Antoinette Portis, is a story about imagination and creativity in which a young rabbit’s imagination frees him from the constraints that he has just a box.

► Any Given Child program

The “Any Given Child” arts program hired a program coordinator. Any Given Child is a program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts which assists communities in providing equitable arts education for all students in grades K-8, regardless of socioeconomic status. Support for the program that assists the Iowa City Community School District is provided by the cities of Iowa City, Coralville, and North Liberty, Hancher Auditorium, US Bank, and M.C. Ginsberg.

Advance social justice and racial equity

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Identify and implement an achievable goal to reduce disproportionality in arrests

► Traffic stop study

Dr. Chris Barnum of St. Ambrose University presented the data from his ongoing traffic stop study in Iowa City to the City Council in April of 2016 and this analysis continues. Staff has engaged in the following events that will help inform the discussion.

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

City staff from Police and Human Rights participated in “Building a Foundation for Criminal Justice Reform in Iowa.” The community discussion focused on criminal justice reform at the local level through individual, organizational, and community action. The discussion and efforts will inform a broader event in 2017.

GARE SUPPORT

The City co-sponsored the “Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) Midwest Convening on Racial Equity.” This was a continuation of the City’s commitment to GARE, including recent staff training programs designed to deepen employees’ understanding of racial equity and to teach participants to apply this learning to their work for the public. This work helps to operationalize the concepts taught in the mandatory, all-staff “Diversity, Privilege, and Unconscious Bias” training taught by Dr. Eddie Moore and Diane Finnerty.

Create a racial equity grant program

Design of the grant program has been completed. The application form will be available on December 1, 2016 online and in hard copy. The Human Rights Commission will review applications and make funding recommendations.

Advance social justice and racial equity

Develop a partnership with the University of Iowa and other key stakeholders that will aid efforts to recruit and retain a greater minority workforce

► Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC)

The City recently verbally committed to joining the Central Midwest Higher Education Recruitment Consortium, which is administered through the University of Iowa. Diane Finnerty, Assistant Provost for Faculty at the University, is the Interim Director for the Central Midwest HERC. Other members include Kirkwood Community College, University of Iowa, Coe College, Mount Mercy, Grinnell, and ICAD. Karen Jennings is the City staff contact for this initiative.

► Workplace Revolution sponsorship

The City co-sponsored “Workplace Revolution,” held at the Double Tree Hotel in downtown Cedar Rapids. The day-long event is designed to assist in retention, recruitment and employee engagement. Topics included investing in workplace culture. Other sponsors were Diversity Focus, the Iowa City Area Development Group and Kirkwood Community College.

► Youth academies

Youth academies for students interested in public service careers were held during the summer as a partnership between the Iowa City Police and Fire Departments and Johnson County Ambulance Service. The academies were free to students and lunch was provided.

Identify a substantive and achievable goal for the provision of affordable housing in Iowa City and implement strategies to achieve this goal

► Affordable Housing Action Plan

- At the June 21, 2016 work session, staff presented a summary of new and existing strategies for the provision of affordable housing, potential funding sources, and recommendations for future action.
- The Housing and Community Development Commission, Affordable Housing Coalition, and the general public provided feedback on the recommendations in the Action Plan.
- A public open house was held at the Iowa City Public Library on August 24, 2016 to solicit feedback from the public and answer questions about the Action Plan.



- Council held a work session on September 20, 2016 to consider public input and give staff direction on the Action Plan recommendations.

► **Diamond Senior Apartments**

The City Council approved City funding of \$600,000 for the \$7.4 million project that will construct 36 affordable units for seniors and four market-rate units. The project was also approved for Iowa Finance Authority funding of over \$560,000. This project meets a strong need of affordable senior housing and is located in a neighborhood with access to services.

► **Affordable Housing Conference**

City staff from Neighborhood and Development Services, the Police Department and the City Manager's Office attended the Affordable Housing Conference sponsored by the Johnson County Affordable Homes Coalition. The event included several sessions with differing topics but the overall takeaway was that affordable housing is an engine of equity and growth.

Other initiatives and events

► **Human Rights Ordinance**

Recipients of Housing Choice Vouchers and similar rent subsidy programs were added as a protected class in the City's Human Rights Ordinance. Discrimination by landlords based on this source of income is prohibited. The Human Rights Commission's Fair Housing Law brochures were updated to inform the public of this change and were produced in multiple languages.

► **Black History Month community events**

A line-up of community events to celebrate and educate during Black History Month was programmed through a collaborative effort of Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County, Black Voices Project, Dream Center, Iowa City Human Rights Commission,

Advance social justice and racial equity

Iowa City Police Department Community Outreach, United Action for Youth, City High - Gworld, New Creations International Church, and Johnson County Social Services.

► **Review of City job requirements**

In an effort to expand the applicant pools for City employment, departments have reviewed minimum education requirements to ensure that they are truly needed for the position or if reasonable skills and work experience can be substituted.

► **Kingdom Center visit**

Councilmembers and staff were invited to a luncheon at the Kingdom Center. Participants toured the facilities, learned about programming and partner organizations including the Dream Center, and had a robust discussion of building bridges to have meaningful conversations on difficult topics, de-escalation training, and the Crisis Intervention Team concept.

► **Invest Health program**

Iowa City was chosen to participate in the “Invest Health” program, a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Reinvestment Fund to support new strategies to improve neighborhoods facing the biggest barriers to better health. Iowa City was chosen from a very competitive field. Safe, decent, affordable housing is a strong focus of the program. Iowa City’s team is a partnership between the City, University of Iowa Colleges of Medicine and Public Health, and the Housing Fellowship.

► **Great Stories Club**

The “Great Stories Club,” a collaboration between Tate High School and the Iowa City Public Library, is sponsored through a grant from the American Library Association. The Great Stories Club gives underserved youth facing significant challenges the opportunity to read, reflect, and share ideas on topics that resonate with them. This year’s theme is, “The Art of Change: Creation, Growth and Transformation.” Seventy-five sites are in this year’s program, including two in Iowa City.

► **Lunch and learn events**

A series of “lunch and learn” events have been held for current City Board and Commission Members. The “Conversations on Diversity” are facilitated by Professor Katrina Sanders of the University of Iowa College of Education.