

2016-17

Strategic Plan Update

March 2017



CITY OF IOWA CITY
UNESCO CITY OF LITERATURE

City of Iowa City
410 E. Washington St.
Iowa City, IA 52240
319-356-5010
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**

Developed 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 with several sponsors and supporters, including the State of Iowa Department of

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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



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. During 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 complete. Nine focus groups were held to solicit feedback on current policies and recommendations for improvement. Focus groups included past TIF recipients; affected taxing entities; nonprofit organizations, including representatives from labor 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 remain 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. Due to the success of the initial class, City staff is working on development of a one-day program held in 2017 for potential entrepreneurs.

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 with the Iowa City Area Development Group, Inc. (ICAD), University of Iowa 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 Council has authorized the City Manager to contribute up to \$100,000 for build-out of the space. Other improvements are being funded by the University of Iowa and ICAD. MERGE is expected to open in spring 2017.

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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.



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 will 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 “So you want to start a business?” educational series was developed through discussions with Kirkwood Community College, Community CPA, and Sankofa Outreach Connection. Sponsors included Hills Bank & Trust Company, MidWest One Bank, and University of Iowa Community Credit Union.

Five business development educational workshops were held at Kirkwood Community College’s Iowa City campus during May and June of 2016 that were specifically

Promote a strong and resilient local economy



Connor Alne, National College Gaming Association.
A \$10,000 loan was awarded to expand business in MERGE Space One.



marketed to women, immigrants, and persons of color. Approximately 50 unique individuals attended the workshops providing information and technical assistance to those wanting to start their own business. PowerPoint slides are available on the City's website and the series was recorded and aired on City Channel 4.

► MicroLoan Program

The City's MicroLoan Program was adjusted 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 One Million Cups, and other entrepreneurial 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 received a \$2,500 loan to purchase equipment and inventory.
- **ALMVGHTY:** This minority-owned clothing business received a \$10,000 loan to expand operations.

Promote a strong and resilient local economy



The Big Grove project will encourage further investment in the Riverfront Crossings District.



Funding was approved for Iowa City's non-profit organizations that provide arts and entertainment.

Other initiatives

► Facade improvements

Funding was approved for façade 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. The City Council approved several amendments to the Riverfront Crossings Form Based Code for Big Grove and surrounding properties.

► Community support

Funding was approved for the Engler Theatre, FilmScene and Riverside Theatre, three of Iowa City's invaluable non-profit organizations that provide arts entertainment. Funding was also approved for Entrefest, a conference for entrepreneurs and other business people held in downtown Iowa City.

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 kept out of 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 of City Park’s Old Settlers’ Association of Johnson County Cabins. The cabins are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Cabin restoration bids are anticipated in spring of 2017 and work completed in summer of 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



In order to address the need for African American housing, the Tate Arms building, located at 914 S. Dubuque Street, was established around 1940 and served as a private rooming house for male African American students until the mid-1960s. It was named after its owners, Junious (“Bud”) and Elizabeth (“Betty”) Crawford Tate.



In 1920, The Iowa Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs opened the Federation Home, located at 942 Iowa Avenue, to serve as a dormitory for African American women studying at the University. This dormitory operated until 1950.

► **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 FY17, then budgeted to convert the Historic Preservation Planner position from a temporary, part time position to a permanent ½ time position beginning in FY18.

The Council funded a historic survey of Downtown Iowa City to begin spring of 2017.

The Historic Preservation Commission was awarded a \$16,000 Civil Rights Grant from the National Park Service. The grant will be used to fund the nomination of Iowa City’s Tate Arms rooming house and the Iowa Federation Home Dormitory to the National Register of Historic Places. The two buildings serve as landmarks associated with the struggle for housing equality for Black students at the University of Iowa.

The FY18 Budget approved \$40,000 for a new Historic Preservation Fund program. The program will financially help owners of historic properties rehabilitate and preserve exterior architectural features of their home.

► **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.

Encourage a vibrant and walkable urban core



Zach Benedict



Jay Walljasper



Dan Parolek

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.

► Zach Benedict presentation

Zach Benedict is one of the leading voices in the “Lifetime Community” movement, focusing on the socio-economic benefits of age-friendly neighborhoods. Mr. Benedict discussed research that indicates successful cities consistently prioritize communal attachment through social offerings, openness, and aesthetics.

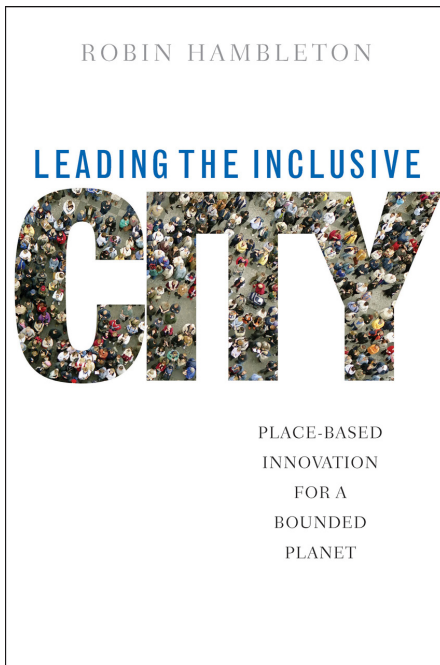
► Jay Walljasper workshops

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.

Encourage a vibrant and walkable urban core



• • •
Jeff Speck



▶ **Jeff Speck presentation**

Jeff Speck visited Iowa City in October 2016 and held numerous events including interviews with staff, a staff tour of town, made a presentation to elected officials of Johnson County and a presentation open to the public at the Iowa City Public Library. Jeff Speck is 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. Mr. Speck is the author of Walkable City – How Downtown Can Save America One Step at a Time.

▶ **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 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.

Encourage a vibrant and walkable urban core



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



▶ **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.

Other initiatives

▶ **Urban Core Sign Code Amendments**

Amendments to the Sign Code were adopted in November 2016. The code amendments were based on a study completed by the firm Kiku Obata, and was sponsored by the City of Iowa City and the Iowa City Downtown District. The amendments are intended to foster more pedestrian-oriented signs and variety of signage.

▶ **Washington Street median planting project**

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

▶ **Washington Street Reconstruction Project**

The City Council approved the contract for the reconstruction of the two blocks of Washington Street between Clinton and Linn Street. In addition to upgraded underground utilities, the project enhances the accessibility and walkability through wider sidewalks, narrower vehicle lanes and crosswalks. The project will also evenly distribute parallel parking, enhance plantings and street trees, improve ADA ramps and slopes, and provide consistent café locations for predictable pedestrian paths.

The construction work will be completed in the spring of 2017. To increase the pedestrian friendly nature of the project, Council has directed the traffic signals planned for the Dubuque and Linn Street intersections be replaced with stop signs.

Encourage a vibrant and walkable urban core



► Improved parking payment options

A mobile app for parking payment options is currently being finalized. This is a University-led, cooperative project.

► Notable walkability projects outside the core

- The First Avenue grade separation project is substantially complete and the remainder of the First Avenue road-diet, spanning from Mall Drive to Route 6 should also be completed by summer 2017.
- Public open houses were held in preparation for the Mormon Trek and First Avenue road diets. Engineering is now working on design of the road diets for both Mormon Trek Boulevard (completion in 2018) and Clinton Street through downtown (completed in 2017 construction season).
- Council also gave direction to staff (and preliminary budget authority) to hire a consultant to study the feasibility of a road-diet on Gilbert Street from Market to McCollister.



First Avenue grade separation and road diets will improve walkability.

Foster healthy neighborhoods throughout the City

SOUTH DISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD VISIONING WORKSHOP



Kick-off meeting
 Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2017
 6-8 p.m.
 Alexander Elementary School
 Media Center
 3571 Sycamore Street
 (park in the rear parking lot & enter through the west entrance)



What's your vision?
 Come be part of the conversation to help determine the future of your neighborhood.

As part of a 6-month study, this workshop will build upon the general goals of the South District Plan for walkable neighborhoods with a balanced mix of housing for people of all ages, which will help to establish zoning tools to guide future development.

Join us and help put your vision into focus. Enjoy light refreshments on us. Questions? Call 319-356-5251. More details @ icgov.org/visionsingworkshops



NORTHSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD VISIONING WORKSHOP

Kick-off meeting
 Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2017
 5:30-7:30 p.m.
 @ Iowa City Public Library
 123 S. Linn Street



What's your vision?
 Come be part of the conversation to help determine the future of your neighborhood.

Join City planning staff and consultants from Opticos Design to kick-off a 6-month study to determine the best ways to preserve and build on the success of this walkable central city neighborhood. What should be preserved? How much change should be allowed?

Join us and help put your vision into focus. Enjoy light refreshments on us. Questions? Call 319-356-5251. More details @ icgov.org/visionsingworkshops



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“What’s Your Vision?” workshops kicked off neighborhood visioning projects for the Northside Neighborhood and South District in February of 2017.

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**

Dan Parolek’s firm, Opticos, has been hired to conduct an analysis of the Northside Neighborhood and the South District to assess the viability of a form-based code and ‘missing middle’ housing for both areas. Missing middle housing is defined as duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes and even small apartment buildings that are designed to fit into a neighborhood. Opticos is also providing an analysis of and recommendations to address parking demand issues in near-downtown neighborhoods. Opticos made their first visit in February 2017 and met with staff, residents, developers and other stakeholders, and held two public presentations/workshops.

► **Ordinance amendments and rezonings**

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

Foster healthy neighborhoods throughout the City



Mercer Park improvements included an all-inclusive play structure.



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



Rendering for a new playground structure at Pheasant Hill Park

Develop strategies to diversify the membership of neighborhood associations

- ▶ The approved FY18 Budget expanded PIN Grants with the hope of broadening appeal to more neighborhoods and increasing neighbor engagement.

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. Playground installation is expected in spring 2017.

▶ 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, summer/fall 2017

Foster healthy neighborhoods throughout the City

- **Mercer Park** – Tennis courts/Pickleball courts renovations, summer 2017
- **Frauenholtz-Miller Park** – Shelter, paths, playground, water fountain, summer 2017
- **Hickory Hill Park** – Trail bridge replacement, summer 2017
- **Cardigan Park** – Master plan complete. Playground, fall 2017; paths, landscaping, shelter, fire pit, 2018
- **Creekside Park** – Park Master Plan being created to guide park renovation in FY18. Public meetings slated for late spring 2017.
- **Wetherby Park** – Sport Court for basketball and futsal, summer/fall 2017
- **Park Planning** – Planning processes are complete for Lower City Park and Eastside Sports Complex. Riverfront Crossings Park phase I design by Confluence is nearly complete and Hickory Hill Park design is underway with RDG. Each planning process incorporates a significant amount of public and neighborhood input.

► **Expanded curb ramp projects in 2016**

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 installed ramps near Grant Wood Elementary School, an area near the County administration offices, and other locations in the community as requested by residents. A significant portion of this work was funded by the City’s CDBG allocation for infrastructure improvements. Also in 2016, pavement rehabilitation funding for asphalt overlay was increased significantly; for the next several years, the Capital Improvement Budget proposes continuing the annual increase for pavement rehabilitation by \$100,000 per year. The 2017 curb ramp project will be completed this spring/summer.

► **Other public space initiatives**

■ **COMPLETE STREETS FUNDING**

Annual complete streets funding of \$300,000 begins in 2017. An allocation of \$150,000 has been included in the FY18 budget.

■ **TREES**

A contract was awarded to Plan-It GEO for Tree Inventory/Emerald Ash Borer Response and associated street tree plantings. The project is underway and to-date, approximately 13,000 trees have been inventoried.

The Sycamore Street and Lower Muscatine Road Landscaping Improvements will be complete spring 2017. This project adds street trees along both streets and installs landscaping in the roundabouts in the Sycamore Street corridor. Over 300 trees have been installed in the corridor and another 170 shrubs will be planted in spring 2017.

■ **NATURAL AREAS**

The City’s Natural Areas Maintenance and Master Plan RFP has been awarded to AES (Applied Environmental Services).

Foster healthy neighborhoods throughout the City

■ BIKE LANES

A pavement marking project was completed in fall 2016 which restriped the traffic lanes on Sycamore Street from Langenberg Avenue to Highway 6. This project also included installation of bicycle lanes.



This UniverCity program home is one of 56 homes renovated by the City for owner-occupied housing .

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.

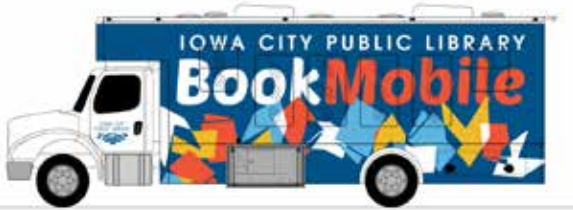
▶ Prairie Hill Cohousing

The City has been supportive of efforts to establish a cohousing neighborhood. The Iowa City Cohousing community has purchased 7.8 acres south of Benton Hill Park, west of the Iowa River, on the 900-block of Miller Avenue. The Prairie Hill development will consist of 33 owner-occupied, LEED certified homes, provide a common house to gardens and create a diverse, sustainable community. This state tax credited project hopes to reduce carbon emissions and support income qualified households. The Prairie Hill housing community will have no rental restrictions or income limitations, but the average dwelling unit cost for the assisted units may not exceed \$200,000 per unit. The City has shared information about Prairie Hill meetings and efforts, as well as offered space to the groups, at public events.

▶ Continued UniverCity Neighborhood Partnership investments

To date, 61 homes have been purchased. Fifty-six homes have been renovated and sold for owner-occupied housing. Currently, two homes are completed with accepted purchase offers and pending closings; three houses are to be bid this spring.

Foster healthy neighborhoods throughout the City



The Iowa City Public Library's new bookmobile will provide service to neighborhoods in all quadrants of Iowa City.

▶ Park ADA Access and Facility Master Plan

Council approved the contract for services to RDG Planning and Design at the September 6, 2016 Council meeting. The Master Plan is intended to be a ten 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 the Americans with Disabilities Act, assessment of current safety and maintenance needs, and recommendations for future facility needs.

▶ Library Bookmobile

The new bookmobile arrived spring 2017 with a full schedule of stops beginning in June that will cover all quadrants of the City, including more than twenty parks, schools, shopping centers, retirement residences and mobile home parks.

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

- ▶ Refuse Collection and Recycling Fees to account for increases in current and new services; Yard waste/food waste fee added provides a steadier and more reliable funding stream for new and current services; Landfill Fee increases for miscellaneous charges to cover actual costs;
- ▶ 2017 Park Fee adjustments completed;
- ▶ Water Rate adjustment planned for FY2019 budget proposal

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.
- ▶ The City will transfer \$500,000 for excess ending General Fund fund balance for FY16.

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."
- ▶ A Moody's scorecard analysis was conducted by Speer Financial this spring. Additionally, the City plans to call 2009C GO Bond on June 1, 2017.

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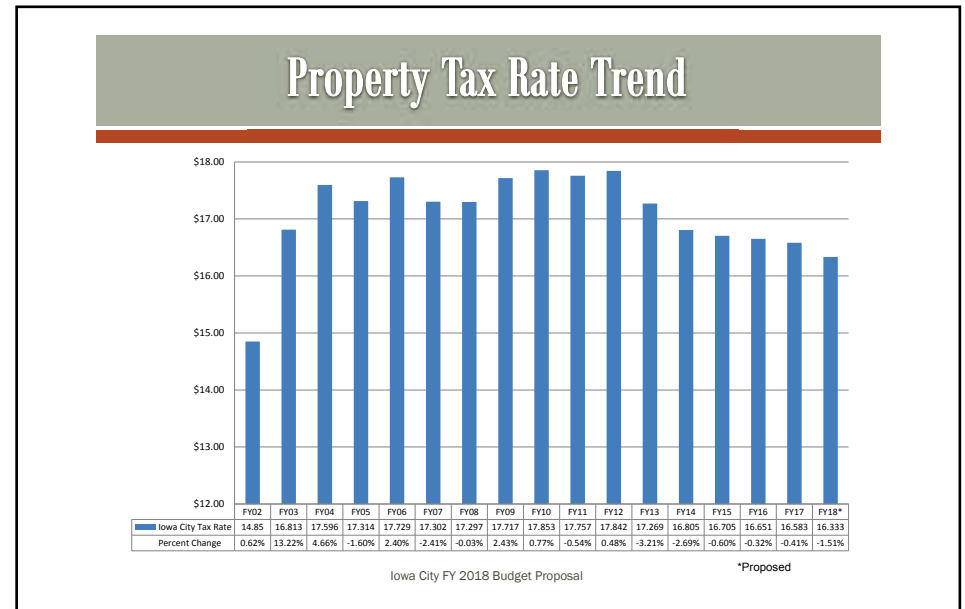
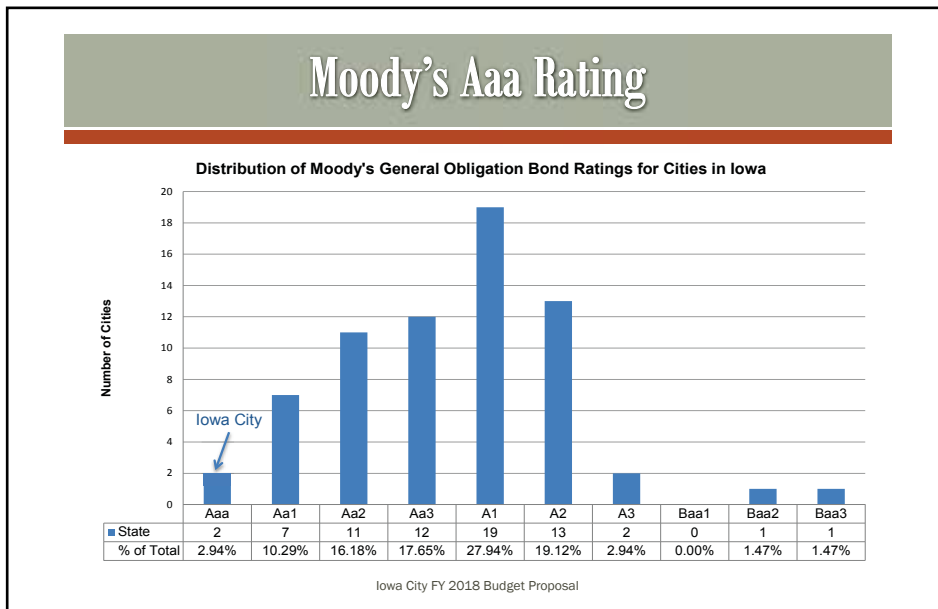
Maintain a solid financial foundation

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 property tax levy rate will decrease again, this time by \$0.25 as of July 1, 2017.

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.



Enhance community engagement & intergovernmental relations

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 request has been implemented.

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 were 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.
 - Police officers participated in a community forum at a local church which highlighted a recent high profile stop of a minority youth. The interaction had generated thousands of YouTube hits and was seen as a positive example of how police officers should interact with minority community members during high stress events.
 - All sworn members of the department completed online training titled, "Fair and Impartial Policing." This was part of an online training series that officers complete every month and is beneficial for officers when engaging with the public

Enhance community engagement & intergovernmental relations



- 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.
- The City’s Communication Office has increased focus upon Strategic Plan items, incorporating use of video productions and social media to promote, engage, and provide education on City initiatives, issues and programming.

Other initiatives

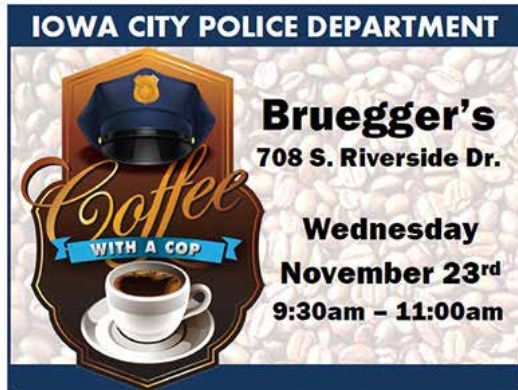
Several of these include activities related to recommendations from the Ad Hoc Diversity Committee and actions plans from the reports on racial equity.

► 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 also 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. A curriculum has been set for local training, and each sworn



Coffee with a Cop promotes dialogue between residents and police throughout the City.

officer on the Police Department will attend a 40 hour training session in CIT during 2017. This training will begin in April. On March 7, 2017, Johnson County presented information at a Council Work Session regarding a potential regional CIT concept.

► **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.

■ **RECREATION PROGRAM SUPERVISOR - SPECIAL POPULATIONS**

The Recreation Program Supervisor position was amended to include outreach to underserved populations.

■ **COFFEE WITH A COP**

The Police Department continues to use the expanded “Coffee with a Cop” to promote dialogue with diverse populations in geographically dispersed locations throughout the community. A recent event held at the Neighborhood Center on Bartelt Road brought members of the minority community out to ask questions about immigration and policing of their neighborhood.

■ **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.

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.

■ AUTISM SPECIAL ACCESS HOUR

The Iowa City Police Department (ICPD) took part in the Iowa City Public Library's Autism Special Access Hour and officers were available to help members of our community who have Autism to become more familiar with the police

■ SAFETY MESSAGES

The Library teamed up with the ICPD 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. The Library also worked with the ICPD and Iowa City Fire Department (ICFD) to create bookmarks they use in their outreach initiatives. The bookmarks feature contact information for each department, encourages students to read, and shares "How to get a Library Card" and safety messages in English, Spanish, Arabic and French.

► 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; participation on a domestic /sexual violence panel discussion; participation in a dodge ball tournament to benefit Special Olympics of Iowa; construction work on a Habitat for Humanity house; City Manager's Roundtable; and attendance at various school sporting events. 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; a police K-9 presentation to elementary age children; presentations to Cub Scout groups, the Dream Center, a shoplifter diversion program and ICCSD summer programs; a lab tour and presentation to Kirkwood students on crime scene evidence collection and processing; ICPD Youth Academy and Citizen's Police Academy presentations; "What Police Do"



Community Involvement



The ICPD participated in the 2nd annual dodgeball tournament in North Liberty to raise money for Special Olympics, Iowa.



Officer Faulkcon of the ICPD and K9 Rakker give demonstrations to South East Junior High students.



sessions with preschoolers; a presentation on domestic violence to the Department of Corrections Women’s Iowa Domestic Abuse Program; and information provided at a Project Homeless Connect at the Iowa City Recreation Center.

■ UI TRAINING

ICPD officers conducted five, one hour training sessions entitled, “Know the Law,” to 459 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 ICPD and ICFD 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

Council members 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.



Twenty children were chosen to be a part of the annual “Shop With A Cop” day on Sunday, December 11, 2016.

■ SHOP WITH A COP

The ICPD took local youth shopping for the holidays at the Iowa City Wal-Mart as part of the Iowa City Police Association’s Shop with a Cop Program. Durham School Services provided transportation for the event.

▶ Other Initiatives

■ WET SHELTER

The ICPD worked with the Local Homeless Coordinating Board to preventing homelessness in Johnson County. The WET Shelter subcommittee has successfully implemented a second annual temporary shelter to provide an alternate housing option for the winter months. This alternate housing provides shelter for individuals who are intoxicated or are otherwise ineligible to receive housing at Shelter House.

■ DATA-DRIVEN JUSTICE INITIATIVE

The Downtown Liaison was invited to represent the ICPD and participate in the White House’s Data-Driven Justice Initiative. This is a coalition of city, county, and state governments who have committed to using data-driven strategies to divert low-level offenders with mental illness out of the criminal justice system and change approaches to pre-trial incarceration.

■ FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Following a yearlong collaborative effort between internal and external stakeholders, the ICFD finalized its 2017-2021 Strategic Plan. The plan incorporates and supports the initiatives of the Council’s Strategic Plan throughout its seven goal areas. Immediate priorities include enhancing overall health and wellness of personnel and fostering community outreach and agency partnership efforts.

■ COUNTY COOPERATION

Staff removed parking meters adjacent to the Johnson County courthouse and reserved parking for courthouse business at the request of the Board of Supervisors to help alleviate courthouse space issues.

Enhance community engagement & intergovernmental relations



The City of Iowa City and City of University Heights agreed to terms for the ICFD to provide fire protection services to University Heights, effective July 1, 2016. An open house was held at Fire Station #2 to commemorate the long sought after agreement.

In February 2016, ICFD entered into an agreement with Johnson County Ambulance Service (JCAS) to share space during the construction of a new ambulance headquarters. The repositioning of an ambulance and crew to Fire Station #4 has been of mutual benefit to both entities, as the location affords prompt response to emergencies in the adjacent fire districts.

■ CITY STAFF WELLNESS COMMITTEE INITIATIVES

Staff representing various departments throughout the City take part in various fundraising events throughout the year, raising funds and awareness for various local non-profits including the United Way of Johnson and Washington Counties, the Crisis Center, and the Miracle Burn Camp of Iowa, as well as other social service initiatives.

■ COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE INITIATIVES

The City's Communication Office has increased focus upon Strategic Plan items, incorporating heavy use of video productions and social media to promote and provide education on City initiatives, issues and programming.

Promote environmental sustainability



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. Alta Planning & Design was hired to complete the Plan. The planning process is expected to take approximately 8-10 months. The planning goals identified 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;

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• • •
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.
- Alta has formed both a Technical Advisory Committee and a Bicycle Advisory Committee to lead the process. Both groups have met once and are expected to meet 6-8 times over the course of the project. A public workshop was held January 26 and had an attendance of over 120 residents. The consultant is now working diligently on developing the Plan. The Consultant recently presented an update to Council.

► 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 received informational materials and bike checks from World of Bikes and giveaways funded with a grant from People for Bikes.

Promote environmental sustainability



Community bike rides



► 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 have been reviewed and are awaiting IDOT approval, with a launch expected in the spring of 2017.

► Bike parklet

A bike parklet was fabricated and 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 will be installed by in spring 2017. Locations include the Iowa City Public Library, bicycle parking on Linn and College, at Clinton and College, and at Capital St. ramp. Additional bike racks are also 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 for the events. Mayor Throgmorton also issued a proclamation supporting Bike Month.

Promote environmental sustainability



In 2016, Iowa City hosted Jingle Cross, a Telenet Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) Cyclo-Cross World Cup at Johnson County Fairgrounds. While Jingle Cross has been a well-known biking race for years, the World Cup event put Iowa City again on the international stage. The City contributed \$20,000 to support the event last year and in early 2017, Jingle Cross was selected again to kick off the Cyclo-Cross World Cup tournament in September 2017.

▶ **Jingle Cross**

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▶ **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.

▶ **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.

Promote environmental sustainability



- The Riverside Drive Pedestrian Tunnel is currently being designed. This project will include a multi-use path along the west side of Riverside Drive from Benton Street to Myrtle Avenue, a tunnel through the Iowa Interstate Railroad embankment and a traffic signal at Myrtle Avenue. The project will also install some street trees. The project is planned to be bid in the fall of 2017 with construction in fall 2017 and spring 2018.
- The First Avenue four-lane to three-lane conversion project will be bid in spring 2017 with construction in summer 2017. The project will construct the conversion from Highway 6 to Mall Drive and ties into the First Avenue Grade Separation Project. This project was bid in the Fall of 2016, but due to the time of the year, no bids were received.
- The Mormon Trek Four-Lane to Three-Lane conversion is currently in the design phase. The project is planned to be bid in the fall of 2017 with construction in fall 2017 and spring 2018.
- There are two sidewalk/trail extensions at City facilities, including a sidewalk/trail extension planned at the Parks Maintenance Facility on South Gilbert Street and a sidewalk/trail extension planned at the Iowa City Water Treatment Facility on Steve Atkins Drive.

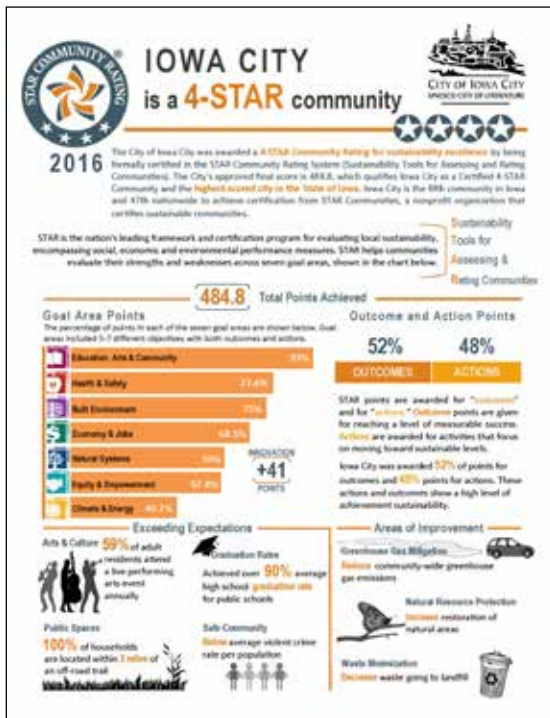
► **Downtown traffic model**

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

Recent State legislation removed the City’s ability to regulate most plastic bag use; however, the City is still moving forward with regulation when permitted. For example, the Iowa City Farmers Market has banned vendors from providing plastic bags at this year’s market.

Promote environmental sustainability



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. Approximately 75 percent of program audits were complete as of March 2017.

► Proposals for partnership

Proposals for the \$30,000 that Council directed to be used in a partnership with a local nonprofit for energy efficiency retrofits will be considered in March for spring/early summer implementation. Applications are due in spring 2017.

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

► Council approved a resolution creating the Climate Action Steering Committee in January 2017. At-Large Committee participants will be selected by Council and applications for these positions are due mid-March. The Climate Action Steering Committee is tasked with assisting the consultant selected for development of the City's first Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP). The CAAP will address emissions reduction and STAR community sustainability goals.

Promote environmental sustainability



Farm to Street Dinner 2016

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 were gathered for the application throughout 2015 with the assistance of dozens of City staff members, community partners, state agencies, local and regional governments, and private sector employers.

■ 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:

Promote environmental sustainability



Monarch and chrysalis



■ 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, food waste processing, and an electronic waste ban were presented to Council in the fall of 2016.

- Recycling services are now required for new multifamily developments. Existing multifamily units will be required to be in compliance at the point of the next rental permit renewal, which is in roughly two years.
- Curbside food waste collection began in March 2017. These materials are collected with yard waste collection.
- Electronic waste consisting of TVs and computer monitors was banned from being landfilled in the fall of 2016. These materials are still accepted for processing, but can not be disposed of in the landfill.
- Processes for single stream recycling and a corrugated cardboard ban will be presented to Council in spring of 2017. Proposed fees for these services have been included in the FY2018 budget.



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Sustainable Iowa City
News about sustainability from the City of Iowa City
Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)

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 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](#).

- The process for hauling services in downtown Iowa City has been adjusted by selecting one vendor to provide these services in dumpsters contained within the City right-of-way. This will include the enhancement of services to include additional recycling services, daily pick-ups and composting options.

▶ **Online forms for improved customer service**

The City is working to increase efficiency and ease for community members completing applications and permit forms. The Clerk's Office and Communications are identifying and updating forms to be submitted conveniently online.

▶ **Local monarch conservation efforts**

The wintering monarch population in Mexico has decreased more than 90%, which is thought to be due to habitat loss, pesticide use and climate change. 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, monarch waystations in several parks, local education and research activities, as well as signing the National Wildlife Federation's Mayors' Monarch Pledge.

■ **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 raising 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 on a wide spectrum of sustainability topics from social justice initiatives to energy-related programming. The newsletter is intended to broaden awareness of the City's initiatives and extend the opportunity for public involvement, questions, and suggestions.

Promote environmental sustainability



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

▶ **Covenant of Mayors**

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

■ **GREENHOUSE GAS INVENTORY**

A greenhouse gas inventory is complete and was required by the Compact of Mayors to provide data to evaluate progress as emission reduction initiatives are completed.

■ **ECOCITY FOOTPRINT TOOL**

Iowa City is the first U.S. municipality to participate in the EcoCity pilot program. The EcoCity Footprint Tool is designed to analyze community-wide emissions and consumption data. The City received a grant of \$26,000 to be able to participate. Information will assist in the development of the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.

▶ **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. Evaluation of the initial units has been 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.

Promote environmental sustainability



Willowwind students partner with the City of Iowa City to recognize Arbor Day by planting a tree provided by Parks and Recreation.



▶ Million Gallon Challenge

Parks and Recreation staff held a “Million Gallon Challenge” this summer to conserve 1 million gallons of water. Between April 12 and Sept. 1, the mix 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 the total to surpass 1.5 million gallons by end of the season.

▶ Arbor Day partnership

Willowwind School students planted a Skyline Locust tree provided by Parks and Forestry staff after a presentation and reading of the Arbor Day proclamation.

▶ Green Business recognition

A recognition program for sustainable and green Iowa City businesses is currently being developed by City staff.

▶ Facilities improvements

■ HVAC STUDY

A consultant has been selected for an HVAC study and Building Automation Systems (BAS) Design Project for three City facilities, including City Hall, Robert A. Lee Recreation Center and Mercer Aquatic Center (RALRC). The project involves cataloging all HVAC equipment in the three facilities and recommendations for systematic replacement and repair, in regard to building and energy efficiencies. The contract allows for design and bid out of the Building Automation Systems for all three facilities, allowing for enhanced control and monitoring of the HVAC systems. The project work will be bid this summer and installed in phases through summer of 2018.

■ BOILER AND HVAC REPLACEMENT AT MERCER AQUATIC CENTER

Council approved funding in February for replacement of boiler and HVAC systems at Mercer Aquatic Center. These systems are original to the facility and have been

Promote environmental sustainability

operating since their 1988 installation. Four proposals have been received and boiler replacement will take place summer 2017. Greater efficiencies in water and energy use will be gained by a replacement of these systems. Due to significant potential energy savings, a rebate incentive may help fund this replacement.

■ ENERGY IMPROVEMENTS AT TERRY TRUEBLOOD RECREATION AREA

In November 2016, the City removed the propane gas tank at the H2O Building at Terry Trueblood Recreation Area and installed a natural gas line. This is a safer, more cost effective and efficient energy supply for the facility.

■ DIGITAL CONTROL INSTALLATION AT RECREATION CENTER AND MERCER

Digital regulating valves and an improved sensor were installed for the Robert A. Lee Recreation Center and Mercer Aquatic Center Pools. Digital controls will more efficiently release and regulate heat for the pool water. This project was completed at RALRC in October 2016 and in January 2017 at Mercer Aquatic Center.

■ BOILER REPLACEMENT AT ROBERT A. LEE RECREATION CENTER

The Robert A. Lee Recreation Center boiler replacement project involved replacing the heating system with high efficiency boilers and installing high efficiency water heaters. Annual cost savings projected is \$6,293. A \$30,396 rebate from MidAmerican was received, along with a bonus incentive of \$6,293 from the Commercial Energy Solution program.

Strategies to meet this goal:

Develop and implement a racial/socioeconomic equity impact review toolkit

- ▶ Staff has initiated review of City procedures, policies, programs, and services using a pilot racial/socioeconomic review toolkit. Participating departments in the first review are Police, Transit, Human Resources, Equity and Human Rights, Finance, and Neighborhood and Development Services. Staff will report out on 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.

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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 youth. 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 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. This 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.

▶ **G! World program**

The Iowa City Police Department visited with members of G! World at South East Junior High. Officers were invited to answer questions and provide feedback to the

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group of 7th and 8th grade female students. G! World is an award winning mentoring program aimed at empowering girls of color ages 12-18.

▶ **Holiday Storytime**

The Iowa City Public Library presented a Holiday Storytime ahead of Santa’s arrival at a local homeless shelter and collected books to donate to the Iowa City Homeless Children’s Trust Fund.

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. This topic is on Council’s pending work session topic list. Staff has engaged in the following events that will help inform the discussion.

■ **COMMUNITY DISCUSSION ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM**

City staff from Police and Equity 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 was a lead sponsor in a conference held in April, *Advancing Racial Equity: The Role of Government – Iowa*. The Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) presented the daylong conference which was open to City employees and the public. The conference was designed to deepen the understanding of racial equity and to teach participants to apply this learning to their work and lives.

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■ RACIAL EQUITY REPORT

The 2016 racial equity report was published in November. It is a way for the City to measure its progress as it relates to improvements for communities of color. The report published since 2014, provides the yearly racial demographics for police charges against youth and adults, the racial demographics of City staff, and the racial demographics of persons serving on City Boards and Commissions.

Create a social justice and racial equity grant program

The Social Justice and Racial Equity Grant (SJRE) is administered by the Human Rights Commission. It lists six priority service areas: Education, Building Community, Housing, Criminal Justice, Health, and Employment. Organizations whose programs, services or activities address one or more of these priorities are considered first for funding. Eight submissions were received during the application process. The Human Rights Commission has recommended to City Council that 5 of the eight submissions be funded for fiscal year 2017. As proposed, the five recipients would be:

Organization	FY 17 Requests	HRC RECOMMENDATION
Inside Out Reentry, Inc.	\$3000.00	\$3000.00
Iowa Legal Aid	\$2200.00	\$2200.00
Johnson County Affordable Housing Coalition	\$2500.00	\$2500.00
City of Iowa City, World of Bikes, and Iowa City Bike Library	\$3250.00	\$3250.00
Sankofa Outreach Connection	\$13,500.00	\$13,500.00
Total Request:	\$24,450.00	\$24,450.00

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 joined 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, Coe College, Mount Mercy, Grinnell, and ICAD. Karen Jennings is the City staff contact for this initiative.

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▶ 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.

▶ Community meeting

City staff attended a meeting to discuss next steps for diversity and inclusion in the corridor in light of Diversity Focus ceasing operations after 11 years. The meeting was organized by Mayor Ron Corbett of Cedar Rapids. Other participants included General Mills, ACT, University of Iowa, Rockwell Collins and the City of Cedar Rapids. The event was held at the Kirkwood Center for Lifelong Learning in Cedar Rapids.

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.

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- 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 funding City funding of \$600,000 for the \$7.4 million Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) project that will construct 36 affordable units for seniors and 4 market rate units. The City also supported their application for IEDA Workforce Housing Tax Credits. This project meets a strong need of affordable senior housing and is located in a neighborhood with access to services. The existing building has been demolished and construction commenced this winter.

▶ **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**

Housing Choice Voucher subsidies and similar rent subsidy programs were added to the definition of Public Assistance Source of Income under the City’s fair housing laws. Discrimination by landlords based on source of income is unlawful. 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**

In 2016, 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, Iowa City Police Department Community Outreach, United Action for Youth, City High - Gworld, New Creations International Church, and Johnson County Social Services. The Library also programmed Black History Month programs and displays in 2016 and 2017.

▶ **Leading the Inclusive City**

Leading the Inclusive City program featuring Professor Robin Hambleton of the University of the West of England was held at the Iowa City Public Library. The event was sponsored by the cities of Iowa City, Coralville, and North Liberty, Johnson County, the University of Iowa School of Urban and Regional Planning, and the University of Iowa Public Policy Center.

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INVEST HEALTH *Strategies for Healthier Cities*



The Iowa City Public Library offers many opportunities for outreach and engagement.

► 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

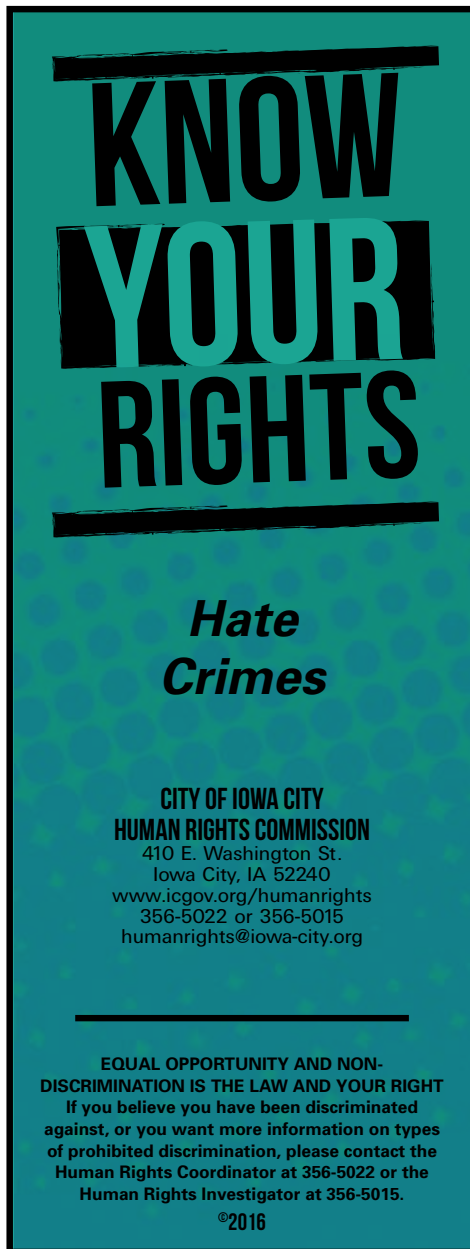
Iowa City was chosen to participate in the “Invest Health” program, a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Reinvestment Fund to support new strategies to improve neighborhoods facing the biggest barriers to better health. Iowa City was chosen from a very competitive field. Safe, 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” were facilitated by Professor Katrina Sanders of the University of Iowa College of Education.



▶ **Mobile hotspots**

The Iowa City Public Library began lending mobile hotspots in February. The devices allow users without internet access to connect to the Internet anywhere on any wireless-enabled device such as a laptop, tablet, or smartphone.

▶ **Resume assistance**

In December the Library held four sessions with Iowa Workforce Development to assist displaced International Automotive Components (IAC) workers to create a resume to use in upcoming job searches.

▶ **Diversity awareness**

In November, the Library offered a display that raised awareness during Transgender Awareness Month featuring materials informing the public on What does it mean to be transgender?, and one featuring Native America authors and characters to raise awareness during Native American Heritage Month.

▶ **Eliminating Racial Bias Conference**

The City is a co-sponsor of a March 24, 2017 conference, Accomplices in Eliminating Racial Bias, presented by the Johnson County Disproportionate Minority Contact Committee. The conference will host former Iowa educator and renowned anti-racism activist Jane Elliott.

▶ **Law Enforcement Re-Affirmation and Rights Brochures**

Responding to bias and hate crimes the Office of Equity and Human Rights issued a, "Know Your Rights Hate Crimes brochure and a PowerPoint "Not In Our Town: Responding to Hate: The Role of Human and Civil Rights Commissions in Hate Crime Response." The brochures, as well as the recently passed resolution reaffirming the public safety function of local law enforcement are available in English, French, Arabic, Spanish and Chinese.