

City of Ames

- December Project Highlights - 2020

Animal Shelter: The Ames Animal Shelter implemented a life-saving pet identification program on January 1, 2019. Every dog, cat and rabbit adopted from the Shelter previously had or is implanted with a microchip before going to their new home. Over 550 microchips have been implanted since the program's inception.



Shelter staff simply inject a microchip for pets, about the size of a grain of rice (12mm), beneath the surface of the pet's skin between the shoulder blades. The process is similar to an injection and takes only a few seconds.

The microchip is a permanent pet ID. The microchip itself has no internal energy source, so it will last the life of the pet. It is read by passing a microchip scanner over the pet's shoulder blades. The scanner emits a low radio frequency that provides the power necessary where the chip is located to transmit the microchip's unique ID code to positively identify the pet. With this unique identification number, Shelter staff can quickly reunite the pet with their owners.

Climate Action Plan: The Climate Action Plan Request for Proposal (RFP) was recently completed and presented to City Council. Now staff is moving forward on issuing the RFP and selecting a consultant to assist with the creation of a Climate Action Plan for Ames. The same cross-departmental team that facilitated the Greenhouse Gas Inventory has developed the RFP and will be involved in the selection a consultation. We are requiring the development of a Climate Action Plan to include a goal-setting component as well as a robust public input process to ensure Ames residents are involved and invested in plan development.

Fire Department: Training; The Fire Department was the first department in the state of Iowa to utilize the brand new Pump Panel Simulators from the Fire Service Training Bureau. Every member of the Department had the opportunity to “pump” at an incident to refresh and gain further knowledge related to pumping a fire apparatus. The simulator allowed members to practice in a controlled environment without using any water, pulling hoses, or causing costly damage to equipment or apparatus if an error occurred.



Inspections: Ames High School; The High School is progressing on schedule. Covid-19 forced some areas of the job to fall behind, but also allowed other areas to jump ahead of the schedule. They are still on track to finish the new building the summer of 2022 and complete demolition of the old building early spring of 2023. Currently there are 100 to 150 workers on the site on any given day. Work is happening in all areas of the school. They are doing concrete placement, steel erection, welding, masonry work, electrical, plumbing mechanical rough in, wall framing, drywall, drywall finishing, spraying fire retardant material on structural members, fire alarm work, sprinkler piping, dirtwork, telecom and security piping; the list of trade work could go on and on. There is also lots of management and supervision to coordinate and schedule materials and labor.



Ames Miracle Playground and Field; Located next to Inis Grove Park at 2500 Duff, the Ames Miracle Playground and Field is now open to the public.



Duff Plaza; Duff Plaza has opened the 600 self storage unit area of the building. This makes the 3rd of the 6 businesses to open in the repurposed abandoned Kmart building.



Dollar General; Dollar General has opened for business in Ames. It is located in what was previously the Doctors Now/Family Video store on Lincoln Way on the West side of Ames.



Kum and Go; The New Kum and Go located on East 13th Street has reopened. They demolished the old run down Kum and Go and built new from the ground up.



Parks and Recreation: Homewood Golf Course Clubhouse; Construction continues with the new clubhouse and updates are shown below:

- Contractor completed installation of the (8) geo-thermal wells and the associated plumbing into the building
- Construction of the exterior walls, roof trusses, and structural insulated panels (SIPS) have been completed (see photos below)
- The roof shingles have been installed
- Next steps include completing interior framing, window and door frame installation, and installation of wall insulation



Emma McCarthy Lee Park Bridge; City Council awarded a contract to Henkel Construction, Ames, Iowa to install a 70' pedestrian bridge across Clear Creek in Emma McCarthy Lee Park. Henkel was expected to start construction in early October; however, the project has been delayed due to FEMA requiring additional approvals including a Phase 1 Environmental Study prior to the start of construction. These approvals could result in the City receiving an additional \$30,000 reimbursement. EOR Inc., completed the study November 23 and a report has been submitted to FEMA for approval. Unfortunately, this project is delayed until spring of 2021.

Auditorium; Beginning January 14, the Ames City Auditorium will begin presenting the "Virtually Anywhere" concert series live from the Auditorium Stage. This series will feature local artists and will

run every Thursday for the remainder of January, February, and March for a total of eleven concerts. January concerts will feature performances from Vanessa Ellsbury (folk/indie music), Matt Woods (roots blues music), and Danny Grause (country music).

Two goals for this series are 1) To promote the Ames City Auditorium to people who may not know much if anything about the Auditorium; and 2) Generate some revenue for the artists and the Auditorium.

The participating artists are volunteering to do these concerts with no guarantee of pay. It has been agreed to do these concerts in a “pay what you can” ticket model. Optional virtual tickets will be sold, and revenue will be split between the artists and the Auditorium. Our hope is to help local musicians who are seeking a venue to play, and to promote our operations at the same time. If it is successful, additional types of entertainment can be explored to be done virtually in the future. This will also help develop and promote our live streaming service, which is another service that can be offered to our customers at a reasonable cost.

Fitness Programming; A new session of Virtual Classes and Recorded classes began Monday, November 30 with 127 registrations. There is still one outdoor workout class that is meeting with 14 registrations. The winter schedule was revamped to include even more combination virtual and in-person classes. These classes will begin January 4. Both in-person and zoom classes will run in four-week sessions to allow our participants the flexibility to meet either in-person or Zoom depending on their comfort level. A fitness brochure was developed and sent via Constant Contact to help promote classes. To help promote the January schedule, some free classes will be offered between Christmas and New Years that participants can do virtually or in-person.

Aquatics Programming; As the pandemic continues, aquatics programming has included swim lessons (parent with child for most levels), lap swimming (one to two swimmers per lane), open swim (pre-registration required and maximum of 30 people per session), and some rentals. Shown below are figures for November & December (month-to-date):

	November	December (month-to-date)
Lap Swimming:		
Daily Paid Admissions	98	90
Swim Pass Visits	939	821
Open Swim Registrations	26 (Nov 7 & 14 only)	NOT OFFERED
Total Swimmers	1063	911
Private Rental Hours	2	9

Winter Programming; In accordance with the Governor’s Emergency Proclamations signed December 9 and 16, 2020, a few updates to Parks and Recreation programs and facility offerings are below:

- The Ames/ISU Ice Arena returned to offering all programming including Open Skate, Figure Freestyle, Stick & Helmet Sessions, and user group rentals (Ames Minor Hockey Association, Ames Figure Skating Club, Adult Hockey).
- Municipal Pool is still offering adult lap swim by pre-registration and only one swimmer per lane unless members of the same household.
- Adult Open Pickleball and Badminton at the Community Center will resume in January.
- After almost four weeks off, the 3rd-6th grade basketball players are once again practicing! Games will resume January 9 at the Ames Community Center with a limited number of fans.



Reminders to social distance, keep masks on until class starts and immediately after it ends, stay home if ill, and wash hands often are communicated regularly to program participants and facility users.

FORESTRY ACTIVITIES Zone Pruning; The City Forester has the City broken into 29 zones with each zone getting pruned every five years. Zone pruning is done to remove hangers, broken branches, and dead limbs, as well as, lifting branches above street and pedestrian traffic.



Invasive Species; Invasive species (Siberian elm & bush honeysuckle) at Ada Hayden are removed to keep them from destroying native plant communities. Removing these species also removes the future seed source of these invasive plants.



Tree Inspections and Observations; Staff routinely looks for risk/hazardous trees like the one shown below which was found at 609 Northwestern during zone pruning inspections and operations.



This hackberry had significant decay in a major branch and significant crack in the main stem. These defects made it potentially hazardous to the public and it was removed on 12/21/2020 by a contractor.

Prairie Burns; A prairie burn was done at Ada Hayden to improve prairie growth and eliminate encroaching woody vegetation.



Public Library: Ames Public Library is joining hundreds of public libraries across the country (Including several in Iowa) that no longer charge overdue fines for items that are returned late.

- Overdue fines create unequal access to Library materials and services. Overdue fines pose little burden to people with higher incomes, but they pose a barrier—sometimes insurmountable—to people with lower incomes.
- Studies and the experiences of other fine-free libraries tell us that people don't bring their materials back earlier when they know they will be charged an overdue fine.
- Fines and fees make up less than 2% of the Library's operating budget, and only a portion of that is overdue fines. The Library's budget has been adjusted to accommodate the change.

This action aligns with the Library's Strategic Plan and is one step in our commitment to providing equitable access to Library materials and services.

More information is available at <https://www.amespubliclibrary.org/FineFree>

Public Works Engineering: Flood Mitigation – River Flooding project. The federal land acquisition process has commenced in working with both WHKS & Co. and CGA consultants. Certified letters were mailed to all land owners and tenants notifying them of the project, FEMA funding, laws for negotiating land acquisition, and the scheduled public hearing to be held on January 26, 2021.

Following the public meeting, the City Council may consider a resolution or other declaration of intent to acquire or condemn, if necessary, all or a portion of affected properties for the purpose of public improvement. A council action form will be before City Council for the January 12th meeting, setting the required date of public hearing on January 26th. This is part of the process necessary with having federal FEMA funding. The next steps are having the Appraiser meet with land owners to prepare the appraisals for each land acquisition.

Overall, the final grading plan is being created and permits will be filed for in mid-January. Staff has been meeting or offering to meet with land owners to discuss the project more. Some have taken us up on this meeting offer and others have said there is no need to meet. We will continue to offer to meet with them toward voluntary settlements once appraisals are completed and offers sent to the land owners and tenants. This is expected to occur during the first 3 months of 2021. The intent is to go out for bids mid-year 2021 for fall/winter construction. Tree dropping /hauling out may be contracted this spring for removal prior to April 1st habitat requirements (public outreach would occur prior to tree dropping).

All of this work is being closely coordinated with Iowa Homeland Security which administers the FEMA funding, in accordance with our FEMA application submitted in 2018. This project has an overall completion requirement of June 19, 2022.

Water & Pollution Control: Only a few small punch list items remain for the contractor to address, then the **Low Head Dam Improvements Project** will be complete. A ribbon-cutting ceremony is anticipated sometime in the spring of 2021.



Low Head Dam Nearing Completion

Preliminary planning activities continue for the **North River Valley Wellfield Project**. A Phase 1A archaeological assessment of the project area was completed by the Office of the State Archaeologist. While that assessment discovered no artifacts, the State still determined that a full Phase 1 assessment needed to be performed. Staff has contracted with a local archaeologist to complete the required study.



Planned Well and Pipeline Locations

Design work is nearing completion for two maintenance projects included in the current year CIP. The **Lime Pond Underdrain Improvements Project** will rebuild the trench drains in the bottoms of the three oldest cells. Over time, the old underdrains have plugged, resulting in wetter lime residuals being hauled by a contractor and a higher disposal cost to the City. The **WPC Sludge Pumping Building Improvements Project** will replace three original sludge pumps. Staff will recommend using savings from other projects to allow for the replacement of some piping and valves in the Sludge Pumping Building at the same time. Both projects are expected to be ready for a Notice to Bidders in January.

Design of the **Old Water Plant Demolition** is approximately 50% complete. A public meeting will be held when the plans are a little further along, at a point where there is enough detail for neighbors to have a sense of what is planned, but early enough that public input can be effectively incorporated into the plans.

In partnership with Story County Conservation, staff is evaluating a possible constructed wetland project to the northwest of Ames, adjacent to the planned Dotson subdivision. This project could be funded in part through the **Watershed-based Nutrient Reduction Project** included in the CIP.

It was announced in December that **Joe Krebs has been promoted to WPC Superintendent**. Joe has previously served as a Maintenance Worker, Operator, and most recently as Assistant Superintendent. A recruitment will begin for a new Assistant Superintendent after the first of the year.

The new **WPC Student Operator** program kicked off in December when the first of our new temporary student operators began work. These students will be trained to operate the plant on weekend evening and night shifts and will also take some maintenance shifts during the week. Two of the new operators

are ISU students, and two are a part of the DMACC Water Environmental Technology program in Ankeny.

Also, after the first of the year, the Water Plant will say goodbye to **Marc Empson, Water Plant Operator**. Marc has worked with the City of Ames for more than 32 years. We wish Marc the best!



Marc Empson in his last few shifts operating the Water Plant