

ITEM #: 11  
DATE: 11-18-25  
DEPT: W&PC

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT:**                    **FY 2023/24 STORY COUNTY EDGE OF FIELD PROJECT**

**BACKGROUND:**

The Water Pollution Control (WPC) Facility is being converted to implement nutrient removal treatment technology over a period of 20 years. **Separate from the work occurring at the treatment plant, watershed-based improvements performed by the City can be “banked” as credit toward any future, more stringent nutrient reduction regulations imposed on the WPC Facility.** On February 24, 2021, staff executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to allow these off-site nutrient reductions to be registered and banked through the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Exchange.

Over the past several years, staff has developed a partnership with multiple entities to bundle several Edge-of-Field (EOF) practices into a single bid package. **The FY 2023/24 project will construct EOF practices across Story County, consisting of seven saturated buffers and twelve bioreactors that will intercept and treat 22 agricultural tile outlets. These practices promote the natural removal of nitrogen from subsurface drainage before it enters streams and other surface waters.** Additional background information about these practices is shown in the attachment.

In addition to the nutrient reduction benefits, these practices also provide a modest degree of resilience to droughts and floods by holding water on the landscape for longer durations.

On March 28, 2023 and July 8, 2025, City Council approved two separate agreements that outlined the funding arrangements and project management duties for the EOF project. The City of Ames is acting as the fiscal agent for the project, and the Iowa Department of Agricultural and Land Stewardship (IDALS) and Story County/Story County Conservation are acting as funding partners. **Project funding consists of 75% from IDALS and a 25% local match that is split equally between the City and Story County. The City’s share will be funded from the \$100,000 budgeted annually in the Watershed Based Nutrient Reduction capital improvements project.**

**The final design is complete, and all participating landowners have submitted the necessary documentation. Staff is now prepared to issue a Notice to Bidders for the EOF project. The engineer’s estimate of probable construction costs is \$354,337, with the City’s estimated contribution being \$44,295.**

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Approve the preliminary plans and specifications and issue a Notice to Bidders for the FY 2023/24 Story County Edge of Field Project, and establish January 7, 2026 as the bid due date and January 13, 2026, as the date of public hearing and award.
2. Do not approve the plans and specifications and Notice to Bidders, thereby delaying the completion of this project.

**CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

**The Ames Water Pollution Control Facility will be converted to a nutrient removal treatment technology over a period of 20 years. To mitigate future investment beyond what is already planned for, watershed-based projects can be performed, and the resulting nutrient reduction credits can be banked. Following project completion, the City will register each of these practices and receive annual nutrient reduction credit for the lifespan of each practice.** Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, as described above.

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

[About\\_Saturated\\_Buffers\\_and\\_Nitrifying\\_Bioreactors.pdf](#)