

ITEM #: 33

DEPT: POLICE

Staff Report

**AMES ANIMAL SERVICES UPDATE**

May 12, 2026

**BACKGROUND:**

The City's Animal Shelter, located at 325 Billy Sunday Road, is in need of replacement. The existing facility is undersized and experiences challenges related to weatherization, mechanical equipment, and other aging systems. City staff has been working through the planning stages to develop a new animal shelter facility for the past several years.

In November 2024, staff became aware that the property at 2715 Dayton Ave, which recently housed Eagle's Loft daycare, was for sale. The City Council obtained an option to purchase the property following an assessment of the potential to renovate it into a new animal shelter.

On December 26, 2024, the City Council approved an agreement not to exceed \$66,360 with INVISION Architecture LTD (INVISION), Des Moines, Iowa, to analyze the existing conditions and needs and identify future requirements for a modern animal shelter facility. Following that evaluation, INVISION was to provide the City with a conceptual design and a preliminary cost estimate that would be approved as a change order.

After receiving the conceptual design report, on February 18, 2025, City Council approved the purchase of 2715 Dayton Avenue in the amount of \$1.1 million. At that same meeting, staff notified City Council that an anonymous lead donation of \$3 million had been obtained.

On September 2, 2025 City Council approved a change order to the INVISION design contract for the completion of schematic design, design development, and construction documents, bidding phase, and construction administration. The contract incorporates references to best practices outlined by the American Society of Veterinarians (ASV) Guidelines for Sheltering, and the need to meet the requirements for Animal Welfare of the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS). In addition, the contract outlines the City's interest in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

**SERVICES AND FACILITY DESCRIPTION:**

Through discussions with the design team and animal care experts during the design process, staff learned that the terms "control" and "shelter" were outdated and being less frequently used to describe facilities like the one being pursued. Based on the new building and the variety of animal services provided, "Ames Animal Control" will be changing to "Ames Animal Services." The new facility will also reflect this change.

## DESIGN DEVELOPMENT:

INVISION and its sub-consultants have worked with City staff and fundraisers to complete a schematic design and design development of the facility. The design is broken into three spaces: 1) cat spaces, 2) dog spaces, and 3) human spaces. This design features an approximately 1,700 square-foot addition that will be utilized as dog spaces and will have a flat roof to accommodate mechanical equipment. An addition was determined to be the best financial option for dog spaces due to the needed sound attenuation, plumbing, and durability required in dog holding areas. This addition will also connect to the outside dog run areas. The attached presentation shows the schematic design and outside and inside renderings based on the design development phase.

### Sustainability

As part of the design contract, INVISION was to identify options to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These options could include geothermal heating and cooling, ensuring that the building is ready to install future solar panels, LED lighting, variable frequency drives for pumps, and a heat recovery system.

Due to the cost estimate, it does not appear that geothermal heating and cooling is financially feasible. While there is the possibility of a Federal tax incentive for 30% of the costs associated with geothermal, it is estimated that adding geothermal could cost 50% to 100% more than the current estimated HVAC costs. **Therefore, it was determined that air-source heat pumps and heat recovery are the best sustainable options within the current funding available.**

The roof is planned for replacement and will be designed to hold future solar panels. The electrical equipment will also be designed for the addition of future solar. There is also the possibility on this site to use ground-mounted solar panels on the west end of the property.

## FINANCIAL AND DESIGN DEVELOPMENT ESTIMATE:

The following table shows the current funding and estimated costs for the project. The Design Development construction estimate was completed by Stecker-Harmsen, a sub-consultant to INVISION. The design development estimate received based on the information provided exceeded the established construction budget. Therefore, staff and the design team worked to value-engineer to a reduced project cost, including making sure the Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (FF&E) budget was accurate. This process involved removing items deemed not necessary due to cost, refining the FF&E budget number with accurate estimates, and identifying possible alternatives should funding be available. This process resulted in the revised project being within the identified funding.

The table below shows the breakdown of expenses and revenues for the project. It should be noted that the design development estimate includes a 5% design contingency for items that were potentially not in the estimate during the development of construction documents.

EXPENSES		FUNDING SOURCES	
Previous Site Investigation	\$ 4,075		
2715 Dayton Purchase Option	5,000		
Site Acquisition	1,100,000		
Conceptual Design	66,360		
Change Order No. 1 (Detailed Design/Construction Specs)	588,000		
Construction/Renovation	4,870,976		
FF&E/Permits	450,000		
Construction Contingency	250,000		
3rd Party Testing/Geotechnical	40,000		
		Stormwater Quality CIP Funding	\$ 30,000
		FY 2023/24 General Fund Savings	100,000
		Council Priorities Capital Fund	2,855,000
		Lead Donation	3,000,000
		Donation Campaign	1,500,000
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 7,374,411</b>		<b>\$7,485,000</b>

## **Bid Alternates**

Based on the value engineering discussion and decisions, some items were marked as add-alternates for construction if the budget allows, based on favorable bids. The first add-alternate is for a screen wall on the patio area on the south side of the building. This would allow for more shade, visual interest, and the opportunity for signage in front of the patios. The second alternative is for additional parking to the west of the current parking lot. Other items may be designated as alternatives during the construction document phase and will be identified when the project goes to bid.

## **Fundraising**

As of this date, volunteer fundraising has met the goal with a lead donation of \$3,000,000 for this project and another \$1,500,000 through small donations and gifts to specific project items. The design team has worked with the fundraising group to make sure the spaces are appropriate for the donation request.

## **Additional Scope**

Near the end of design development, staff, volunteers, and donors discussed the proposed schematic design of the dog holding areas and determined that the route to take dogs from those areas to the outside yards was not ideal. Instead, the ideal scenario is to allow access from the dog holding areas directly to the yards with a door available in each area. Due to ADA requirements, this would require expanding the proposed addition and changes to the yards and egress from the building.

Since modifying the design at this point would require design rework, it was determined that any changes would require additional design services in addition to the added construction costs from the increased scope. INVISION provided an estimate of the additional design and construction costs to accomplish these changes. Additional design costs are \$24,440, and the additional construction costs are estimated at \$154,416 (including a proportionate increase in contingency) for the expansion of the proposed addition, for a total of \$178,856.

**The City has received a commitment from the fundraising team to cover the total \$178,856 for the improvements to the dog area.** The work related to the redesign will impact the schedule. The schedule shown below reflects the revised timing. The costs are not shown in the table above, but will be reflected in future project budgets presented to the City Council. Staff will prepare and approve the change order for INVISION's contract following this Council meeting. **No further substantial changes to the design are anticipated.**

## **NEXT STEPS**

The next steps are to complete the construction documents and bid the project. The estimated schedule is shown below:

### **Construction Documentation**

Now – June 2026

Cost Estimate by Stecker-Harmsen @ 75% construction documentation

**Bidding**

July 2026 – August 2026

**Construction**

Summer 2026 – Spring 2027

The contract will be awarded to a prime general contractor. The City will hire a third-party testing company and will manage the construction with the assistance of the architect and sub-consultants.

**STAFF COMMENTS:**

Once the City Council can receives this report, work will proceed with preparation of construction documents. The revised dog area will be designed and its costs will be covered by additional donor funding in excess of the \$4,500,000 goal.

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

[Ames Animal Services Project - City Council Presentation Update 2026.05.12.pdf](#)