

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: **RESOURCE RECOVERY AND RECYCLING CAMPUS**

BACKGROUND:

The City is pursuing a new approach for the disposal of solid waste. This approach involves establishing a facility, a transfer station, to receive solid waste, recyclables, and yard waste. Under this new approach, the solid waste would be consolidated and transported to a landfill for disposal; recyclable materials would be forwarded to recyclers; yard waste material would be either composted on site or hauled off-site for disposal. Staff is exploring the inclusion of equipment that would allow for solid waste to be minimally processed in a way that would allow for recyclable metals to be removed before the remainder is landfilled.

To assist the City Council in visualizing what a modern facility, such as the one proposed might look like, staff has attached a document containing photos, descriptions, and articles related to similar facilities.

As presented at the December 2024 City Council meetings, staff is continuing to work with Carroll County Solid Waste Management to draft a long-term partnership agreement to address the largest portion of these activities, which is landfilling. A Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling (SWIFR) grant application has been submitted to EPA to assist with the development expenses for the new Resource Recovery and Recycling Campus operation.

The next key step is to identify a preferred site to operate the Resource Recovery and Recycling Campus (transfer station). Selecting an effective location to construct the transfer station will be key in the success of the new solid waste management and recycling operations. A number of key characteristics must be considered for any potential site:

1. **Adequate space/topography** – The site will need to accommodate a building, scale, outdoor storage areas for equipment and yard waste, and maneuvering areas for large trucks. Between eight and fifteen acres of relatively flat property would be needed to accommodate these uses.
2. **Convenience for haulers and individual customers** - It will be important for the site to provide convenient access for the waste haulers and individual customers, including those coming from rural Story County and neighboring communities.
3. **Compatibility with surrounding area** – The transfer station operation will result in approximately 2-3 dozen truck trips per day, including hauler trucks depositing materials and tractor-trailers taking consolidated loads to the landfill or recycling facilities. Although the solid waste must be contained within a building, the operation is industrial in nature and may produce some noise and odor.
4. **Access to US 30** – Minimizing the distance that semi trucks would need to travel to transport the solid waste to the landfill will be a key aspect of the financial feasibility of the operation. Therefore, a location close to US 30 and near western Story County is preferred.

5. **Access to utilities** - Water and sewer service are necessary for site development. Additionally, a location within the Ames Electric service territory will result in the lowest cost electric service for the operation. Locating outside the Ames Electric service territory would result in increased costs which would need to be accounted for in fees and charges.
6. **Land/development costs and timing** – The property will need to be acquired at a reasonable cost to avoid an excessive cost from being passed on to users. Additionally, it will be important to be able to proceed without lengthy delays.

Over the past several months, staff has evaluated a number of potential sites. These have included sites already owned by the City, along with several other sites owned privately.

The two City-owned sites are the Power Plant Coal Yard (308 East Avenue) and the Public Works West Yard (309 Carnegie Avenue). Aerial photos of the sites are attached. A discussion of these sites is provided below:

Power Plant Coal Yard:

The Coal Yard contains approximately 3.5 acres on a site that is relatively flat. As a City-owned property, it would not require acquisition costs, but remediation of the remnant coal and removal of obsolete buildings and structures has not yet taken place and is expected to cost in excess of \$1.2 million. It is adjacent the existing Resource Recovery Plant, resulting in no change in convenience from the current facility's location. Access to US 30 involves some travel on local streets and approximately 6.1 miles of driving to the Story/Boone County line. The area is adjacent other industrial type uses and has good available utilities.

The challenge with this potential site relates to the anticipated need for development of future electric utility infrastructure at this location. The site is appropriately positioned for installation of future critical electric generating resources and integration into existing electric infrastructure. Therefore, staff does not believe this site should be considered as a future transfer station location.

Public Works West Yard:

The West Yard contains approximately 12 acres. The site is relatively flat, but contains stockpiles of materials including soil, asphalt and concrete rubble, sweeper truck tailings, and electric distribution supplies. Many of these materials would need to be relocated or disposed of, and Public Works and Electric may incur costs to develop new future sites for these materials if they cannot remain. As a City-owned property, it would not require acquisition costs, but relocation of the materials may result in costs of up to approximately \$75,000. The site is within one block of Lincoln Way and two blocks of Dayton Avenue, making it reasonably convenient for vehicle and truck access. Access to US 30 is relatively direct along Dayton Avenue and there is approximately 7.6 miles of driving to the Story/Boone County line. The area is adjacent other industrial type uses and has good available utilities.

This site contains two primary challenges: 1) the adjacent streets (Pullman and Edison) are not fully paved. Additional costs would need to be incurred to pave these roads to accommodate the truck and vehicle traffic that would occur. 2) The property is located over a dump that was in operation approximately 50 years ago. It is likely that considerable construction expense would be incurred to create a stable foundation for the transfer station building (including significant

excavation and special footings).

Based upon the challenges that have been identified above, staff has identified privately owned properties that it wishes to explore. Staff will be requesting that the City Council discuss the potential acquisition of this property in closed session, as allowed by law.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve a motion to enter into Closed Session pursuant to Section 21.5(1)(j), Code of Iowa, to discuss purchase of particular real estate.
2. Direct staff to discuss a proposed Transfer Station facility site in open session.
3. Direct staff to pursue development of a Transfer Station facility on City-owned property.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The City Attorney has determined there is justification to enter into closed session. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No.1, as noted above.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[City-Owned Sites Aerials.docx](#)

[CS - Transfer Station and Recycling Facility Pictures.pdf](#)