

Sustainability Spotlight:

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What does sustainability mean to you, and why do you believe it's important?

Personally, sustainability means the pragmatic planning use and reuse of current resources, so we can fulfill our current needs, while minimizing any negative impacts on future generations. Basically, it means trying to leave things better. I think sustainability is important so we have the ability to set up future generations to succeed in whatever challenges they may face. Our sustainable actions should allow them to be better equipped to address those issues.



What actions have you taken to improve sustainability within your position?

- We've analyzed our mowing operations and determined how to decrease our mowing frequency so we are using less fuel, while still maintaining an acceptable standard. We've also been analyzing the non-park land areas we maintain, such as medians, right-of-ways, and highways to determine best management practices. Our goals are to increase the biodiversity, stormwater management and aesthetics of those areas while maintaining efficiency.
- We are actively working on designated prairie areas, specifically at Terry Trueblood Recreation Area, Kiwanis Park, Kickers Soccer Complex, Rohret Road Prairie, Wetherby Park, Hunters Run Park, and Ryerson Woods. We have been managing these prairie areas by mowing and over-seeding, and eventually will incorporate burning.
- We've recently collaborated with the University of Iowa's Sustainability Offices and their power plant to explore the potential to use wood waste collected from Iowa City's forestry operations.
- Since I started, we have increased our recycling program by better understanding the behind-the-scenes of recycling, such as the market for recycling and economics of it.

In your opinion, what efforts can be made to improve sustainability within our community?

I think the first step would be increasing education and outreach to help minimize any stigmas and reservations people may have about sustainability. The research is finally far enough along to show that sustainability can be cost-effective, and in fact can often be more beneficial from a cost standpoint than doing what we used to do.

For more information about the City of Iowa City's sustainability efforts, visit www.icgov.org/sustainability, subscribe to our Sustainable Iowa City newsletter at www.icgov.org/e-subscriptions, or follow #SustainableIC on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.

