

Progress update on "Accelerating Iowa City's Climate Actions" as of 12-30-20

Note: Many actions initiated in 2020 have continuing activities. There is an expectation that the actions will continue to develop over time, as they become integrated throughout City and community operations.

Action	New/ Next Step	Plan Alignment	Month to Initiate	Workplan	Equity Focus	Status	
Buildings							
BPP-1	Solar Partnership with MidAmerican	New	1.5	April	Brought forward one project to City Council in April 2020 and was not approved. Will assess opportunities as locations or chances present themselves. since Oct. report, City and Commission moved ahead with JCED partnership proposal to create a solar feasibility study for Iowa City to plan for potential solar sites and engage community in conceptual conversations. Mapping, technical information gathering, and work plan development has started with a community-led committee of stakeholders.	Elements of the JCED solar feasibility study will require a study of equity measures, engagement efforts, and actionable measures to confidently go forward with concepts for solar infrastructure and placement.	Underway
BE-3	Encourage the Local Realtor Community to Include Energy Performance in the Multiple Listing Services (MLS) Property Inventory	New	1.1 & 1.6	May	Staff met with local realtors from ICAAR about housing trends and potential for education and cooperation on energy efficiency and projects benefitting residential properties. ICAAR and City exploring example programs and will plan to meet again in 2021. In the interim, City staff is finishing a compilation of information about assistance programs, many of which enhance climate action initiatives. ICAAR is supportive of sharing these programs with the community. ICAAR shared that several initiatives supporting sustainability measures are in development. Staff has conceptualized new ideas for partnering with ICAAR but has not	Benefits for informed buying/selling, may need incentive assistance later on, if concentration of activity falls within only a few neighborhoods or stakeholder interest lacking. Education for all residents and renters about housing with energy efficiency and indoor air quality speaks to equity concerns. Commission and Working Group recommendations and feedback needed.	Underway
BI-4	Launch a TIF-funded climate action incentive program aimed at reducing industrial energy consumption	New	1.2 & 5.4	May	In August 2020, Council finalized approved establishing and approving Urban Renewal Areas at Heinz, Sycamore, and Scott Six and approved changes to downtown URA in Sept. 2020. Staff is beginning to engage with businesses in these areas and is encouraging them to take advantage of funding assistance in remaining years of the TIF agreement. Interest from at least one property owner so far with additional meetings planned and an informational handout has been created to supplement the application for assistance, which is in the final stages.		Underway
BCP-1	Advocate for State Adoption of Advanced Energy Codes	New	1.1 – 1.4	May	The spring 2020 meeting was delayed by COVID, with hopes to reconvene later in the year. We do not have confirmation that a meeting was held. City Council legislative priorities included this, noting that although approval is administrative, assistance and support from Iowa policymakers will help.	Could support these efforts with help from education and advocacy from underserved groups that directly benefit from housing improvements. Staff reached out to several aligned groups in September but did not hear back. Discussions may need to take place when equity planning/outreach is further along.	Underway
BCP-2	Advocate for Aggressive Energy Code Development and Adoption *(New)	New	1.1 – 1.4	May	Eligible staff voted for adoption of new IECC codes earlier in 2020. City Council legislative priorities included this, with a request for the State of Iowa to develop an energy plan or update that will address climate actions.	Could support these efforts with help from education and advocacy from underserved groups that directly benefit from housing improvements. Staff reached out to several aligned groups in September but did not hear back. Discussions may need to take place when equity planning/outreach is further along.	Underway

BE-1	Promote Energy Efficiency and Performance Tips to the Public	Next	1.1 – 1.2, 1.6	June	Initiate planning and needs assessment. Identify resources, contacts, and content. Assess web access and source development, method of dissemination. Support eventual actions with strategy from communications plan (Action 5.1 - EDU); Communications RFP proposals received. Selected a consultant and working out contract agreement. Staff discussions with community groups are positive and developing ideas. Promotion of programmable thermostats went out in fall. Additional promotion planning underway.	Imperative. Review of equity report and assistance from EHR staff essential. Commission and Working Group recommendations and feedback needed.	In Development
BE-2	Partner with Stakeholders to Promote Green Building and Rehabilitation	New	1.1-1.4	June	Started introduction to organizations, several more meetings and expansion of contacts necessary. Met with City development staff and Home Builders Association. Plan to engage small group of stakeholders to discuss barriers and interest in pursuing green build strategies to create new alliances/education opportunities. Writing up proposed ideas and will schedule meetings with community stakeholders. Support more actions with strategy from eventual communications plan (Action 5.1 - EDU).	Use equity report to ensure stakeholders from impacted groups are represented, and feedback is shared with development community, landlords, and builders. Staff is continuing work on an equity outreach plan that involves community-based organizations that may provide valuable insights on needs, benefits, and barriers. Commission and Working Group recommendations and feedback needed.	Underway
BI-2	Enhance Energy Standards for City Rehabilitation Projects	Next	1.1	June	Received updated report from NDS on current activity and efforts. Staff currently exploring alternatives for rehab projects and ability for City to support incentives or supplemented energy efficient equipment if homeowners cannot/won't pay the difference to upgrade. Have met with two local HVAC providers to identify key issues and ideal projects. Proposal still in development; will bring to Commission and community stakeholders for feedback and further guidance. Education components also necessary - communications strategy outcomes. GIS equity mapping underway; will bring mapping tool and toolkit info to	Assisted households currently meet federal income requirements. Establish a mapped GIS inventory of energy efficiency assessments and investments. Ensure access to energy efficiency and other sustainable design elements in each project through education and engagement. Adding GreenIowa AmeriCorps energy assessment property addresses to GIS Equity Map, to further gauge possible geographic or demographic gaps in program services and outcomes.	Underway
BR-1	Create a More Robust Energy Code Inspection Program	New	1.1 -1.2	June	Additional inspector budgeted in FY21. Met with NDS staff in September to review items staff will be looking at and addressing through compliance checks, such as pre-drywall conditions, R and U values of walls and windows. Altered inspections program and initial education about necessary inspections planned for initiation shortly after additional inspector hired.	Commission/Working Groups should assist with how they would like to measure equity and what should be reported to show progress.	Underway
BI-5	Develop or Partner with Local Stakeholders on a Comprehensive Climate Action Rehabilitation Program	New	1.1 – 1.4	July	As discussions with community organizations progress, new ideas for how to accomplish this task are being generated. Commission will need to weigh in on neighborhood pilot program/s which are in conceptual development. Explore RFQ for external partner/s to implement a program. Significant interest in supporting youth or young adult skills training program. GIA crew conducted first in-home energy assessments in late October but held off on indoor visits from November through the end of the year. Instead, they have delivered energy saver kits for residents to install themselves for over 160 households. Planning for this item continues into 2021.	Approach to populations served critical. Commission and Working Group recommendations and feedback needed for further development.	In Development

BR-2	Incorporate Stricter Energy Standards into Tax Increment Financing Policies	New	1.3 – 1.4	Aug	Begin review of options, develop revisions to policy, introduce for Council adoption. While codifying these efforts is not fully in motion due to existing project load, staff continues to encourage and require actions informally through the development process. Elements of recent development approvals require energy efficiency measures, including LEED Silver standard build (minimum of 8 points from energy category), rooftop solar, low flow fixtures, and incorporated stormwater improvements. These measures will be administrative components of the process until these measures or enhancements are amended into Code.	Greater equity can be achieved through a geographic distribution of benefits. Education and advocacy could benefit populations impacted and served by policy implementation.	In Development
BI-1	Offer Free Home Energy Assessments through Green Iowa AmeriCorps	Next	1.1	Sept	Energy Assessments with the Green Iowa AmeriCorps team look slightly different this year but still are included in their responsibilities. Supplemental weatherization kits available through GIA, available to IC residents have been shared with many households this fall. Exploring non-AmeriCorps group to perform other weatherization services.	AmeriCorps is focused on certain groups - seniors, low income, veterans. Not sure how they track or report these demographics. Education delivery and equipment installation/provision alternatives probably needed in short term. Development of a mapped GIS inventory of energy efficiency assessments and investments is underway.	Underway
BI-3	Coordinate Neighborhood Energy Blitz Events	New	1.1	Fall	Coordinate efforts with Neighborhood Planner, Recreation, and community organizations; Support actions with strategy from communications plan (Action 5.1 - EDU). Party in the Park efforts cancelled due to COVID-19. Climate Action Grant awarded to Green Iowa AmeriCorps for a lightbulb exchange. Staff and community stakeholder planning in progress, will bring concepts to Commission for feedback and review. Plan to launch first project in spring around Earth Day, hoping to include students and neighborhood residents as volunteers.	Assess equity report to determine any areas of focus. NDS can assist with housing/permit data that can help focus on neighborhoods with less efficient housing stock. Outreach to underserved groups may spur interest in blitz programs or projects. Working Group recommendations and feedback needed. GIS equity mapping in progress.	In Development
Additional Notes				Commission		Working Group	
This row shares more information for Commission members, including probable action steps and questions from staff. For reference, follow up items are started with the Action code (far left of charts) (i.e. "BI3" (Building Incentives, project 3))				BE1 & BE2 discuss plans for educating and engaging residents and business; BI2 - await staff proposal for enhancing Energy standards for City rehabilitation projects; BI3 - direction on neighborhood energy blitz programs, including type, scale, areas of focus for programs		BR1 - define how City should measure equity in housing inspection program; BI5 - Recommendations needed to develop comprehensive energy efficiency building rehab programs, identify best practices, suggest example programs, assist with equity efforts; BR2 - involvement in stakeholder review when proposal shared later in year	
Action	New/ Next Step	Plan Alignment	Month to Initiate	Workplan	Equity Focus		Status
Transportation							
TPP-1	Complete the Transit Study and Implement Recommendations to Bolster Service and Increase Ridership	New	2.1	Ongoing	Completed study in early fall; was somewhat delayed from Covid-19. Presentation of proposed measures went to City Council for initial discussion on October 6. Interest in moving forward with recommended system route changes, more information coming for consideration of service expansions and rate changes. Primary implementation of recommendations to begin in 2021.	Dependent upon study recommendations and selected actions for implementation. Goal is to serve residents most needing transit service. Components of public messaging to be part of upcoming development of Communications Strategy. Commission and Working Group recommendations needed.	Underway
TCP-1	Establish an Electric and Fuel-Efficient Vehicle Purchasing Policy	New	2.2	May	Written policy completed in Sept. New text includes preference for EVs, describes process by which new vehicle purchases are considered and directs purchase when multiple factors determine EV appropriate option and available for needs. Included in Nov 2020 CAC agenda for reference.	Although every vehicle the City purchases cannot be EV at this time, continually increasing the presence of non-emitting vehicles creates a healthier air quality as City vehicles move about and provide services in the community.	Complete

TCP-1	Track Adherence to City Idling Policy	Next	2.7	May	AVL equipment provides idling data. 37 vehicles currently have the technology and another AVL for another 60 will be ordered in FY2021. Reformatted reports to make it easier to read for improved use and analysis. Staff will compile data and CAO will assist with reporting. Transportation Working Group needs to define and clarify their recommendation before staff can pursue		Underway
TE-1	Significant Transportation Education and Outreach Campaigns	New	2.3	August	The Climate Ambassador program included segments about transportation. Must continue to identify how we will engage all residents. A significant portion of this effort will come from a combination of the developing climate action communications strategy and coordination of marketing by the Transportation Services Department. Transportation reporting metrics are defined.	Review equity Report to identify groups and locations to focus attention. Explore language translations. Components of public messaging to be part of upcoming development of Communications Strategy. Commission and Working Group recommendations and feedback needed.	Underway
Additional Notes				Commission:		Working Group:	
This row shares more information for Commission members, including probable action steps and questions from staff. For reference, follow up items are started with the Action code (far left of charts) (i.e. "BI3" (Building Incentives, project 3))				TPP1 - Continued feedback on proposed Transit Study		TPP1 - Continued feedback on proposed Transit Study, TE1 - Working group may want to contribute ideas and suggestions for initiatives, partnerships, and outreach.	
Action	New/ Next Step	Plan Alignment	Month to Initiate	to	Workplan	Equity Focus	Status
Waste							
WP-1	Initiate a Methane Feasibility Study	Next	3.7-3.8	May	Preliminary models discussed by staff in September. Plans and estimated costs are being refined and should be presented to Council by year end. Study is complete and presentation from consultant will be made to Commission at January 4, 2021 meeting.	Consideration will be given after final recommendations, to impacts on fiscal health of Enterprise funds and needs to supplement with rate changes over time.	Underway
WE-1	Engage the Public to Compost Organic Waste	Next	3.2	June	Resource Management and NDS engaged in composting education. Course materials created for educators Determine how to tailor it with equity in mind. Expand opportunities with local businesses. Ties into carbon sequestration project underway. Plans for increased downtown access to composting budgeted in FY2022. An education unit for Climate Ambassadors focused on waste.	Focus is reliant upon meetings with staff, current efforts, working Equity Working Group, equity report, translations services available, and outcomes from Communications strategy.	Underway
WCP-1	Require All Park/Public Space Rentals to Recycle and Use "Green" Event Best Practices.	New	3.5	June	Staff reconnected for this project and finalized simple agreements for sports organizations renting athletic facilities. Community education needed. Testing results with athletics first but the next step to general facility rental requirements will require community and equity input.	Must assess whether new requirements impact populations differently. Working Group recommendations needed.	Underway
WE-2	Education Campaigns for Neighborhoods to Reduce Waste/Consumption at the Source	Next	3.3	July	Met with Resource Management to assess current materials. Staff is coordinating efforts with Neighborhood Planner, local schools, and other City staff to share information. Specific messaging about reduced consumption or minimizing waste at the source forthcoming, ideas welcome. An education unit for Climate Ambassadors	Focus reliant upon meetings with staff, current efforts, working Equity Working Group, equity report, translations services available, and outcomes from Communications strategy.	Underway
Additional Notes				Commission:		Working Group:	
				WP1 - When project is presented to Council, Commission members may consider preparing a response or recommendation		WCP1 - Review new contracts for parks athletics use and provide guidance for general parks rentals, including equity review; WE1 and WE2 - feedback or direction on how these programs are going.	

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Adaptation							
AE-1	Develop Climate Amassador Team	New	4.2	May	First cohort is successfully complete. A new cohort will begin in early 2021. Continued, regular engagement with the Ambassadors is planned.	Development of program includes application process not reliant upon technology to participate. If tech is necessary, funding available to purchase tablets or other device to loan to ambassador participants for training activities. Special attention paid to connection with local groups that can recommend ambassador applicants. Initial cohort varied in background and experience.	Complete
APP-2	Continue Implementation of the Natural Areas Management Plan	New	4.5-4.6	May	Work agreement executed with AES in May. Significant follow up with neighborhoods required during process. Planned concentration on intensive maintenance in neighborhood park prairies. Education needed about purpose, need and care for natural areas; build community partnerships with advocacy groups. About 60 acres of public land areas were prepared for prairie plantings this fall. Discussions held between staff and the University of Iowa about additional opportunities to expand support	Geographic distribution, education variables dependent on groups impacted. Engage natural area advocacy groups that can assist with public education.	Underway
APP-4	Equity Review of Neighborhood and Population Outreach; Develop Outreach Plan for Populations Highly Impacted by Climate Change	Next	4.1-4.2	May	Commission review of project equity review tool for City and other community climate projects. Staff is developing a mapping tool/resource requested by Equity Working Group. Additionally, staff is exploring better documentation for City climate equity efforts. The upcoming development of a Communications Strategy will also incorporate a significant emphasis on equity and true engagement with highly impacted	Emphasis on highly impacted groups, targeted outreach and collaboration for development and implementation of each climate action. Staff and GIA are coordinating an expansion on the USDN Equity report completed last summer. Their efforts include cataloging community based organizations in a way that speaks to equity and climate impacts, connection and communication with the City, and strengthening resources for future engagement and outreach.	Underway
APP-1	Flood Mitigation and Stormwater Management Programs/Projects; Buyouts	Next	4.5	June	Met with Stormwater Team. Collected and reviewed current volunteer lists. Assessed if we need to promote existing program. Streamlined City operations for managing creek clean ups and volunteer processes.	Involving various community groups dependent on makeup of existing volunteer listing and schedules. Review equity report to verify benefits and participation equitable. Recent stormwater management projects are included as a layer in the	Underway
AE-1	Partner with Project Green on a Tree Planting Partnership; Incentives for Private Tree Planting	New	4.6	July	<i>Root for Trees</i> tree planting program began in October with high interest and over 250 vouchers requested. Residents are able to use a voucher for a discount on tree purchase from Iowa City nurseries. Low income residents are permitted greater discount for tree purchase. Parks and Recreation Department is managing program and will conduct targeted interpersonal and neighborhood outreach. Need to connect with Project Green for additional opportunities for education and outreach programs	Commission provided recommendations and feedback on program proposal. Income eligible properties will be permitted a greater discount. City is tracking planting addresses (but no other identifying information) to monitor geographic distribution. Additionally, staff engagement will be focused in areas that have less tree canopy than other parts of town. Engagement will also provide an opportunity to inform about the utility discount program. Program participation is included as a layer in the GIS Equity Map.	Underway
AR-1	Street Tree Ordinance	Next	4.6	August	NDS will draft ordinance. Research has begun but needed a meeting with stakeholders in fall. Drafting beginning in early 2021.	New Ordinance will apply to new developments.	In Development
APP-3	Expand Public Tree Planting	Next	4.6	September	Provided Tree Canopy memo in 9-17-20 Information Packet for Council review and discussion; demonstrates need for incremental tree canopy replacement activities. Possible small group discussion with impacted groups - residents, landlords, City staff, businesses or development groups. Address negative perceptions through modifications or education.	Review inventory maps, locate areas in need, target workplan outreach accordingly. Emphasis on benefits of tree canopy in low-mod neighborhoods. Soon-to-be-hired Climate Action Analyst will lead this analysis.	In Development

AE-2	Educate and Coordinate with Local Agencies on Health Impacts	Next	4.3	October	Staff held preliminary meeting with Invest Health partner to identify current needs and to explore co-benefits of climate action projects centered on public health issues. Stakeholder group would serve as connection for further meetings with Johnson County Public Health, University of Iowa, etc. Meeting date yet to be set but stakeholders agree to reconvene this initiative.	Equity reach will become more clear with agency coordination and partnering. Can use equity scale/report to identify starting agency discussions. If full stakeholder meeting held for Invest Health with focus on climate issues, will seek participation from Commission.	Underway
Additional Notes					Commission:	Working Group:	
			AE2 - attend invitation to public health stakeholder meeting (unscheduled), consider guidance about ideal projects, or other partners			APP4 - guidance on areas of focus or process for equity review; AE1 - could restart discussions with Project Green, Master Gardeners, etc. to plan additional projects	
Action	New/ Next Step	Plan Alignment	Month to Initiate	Workplan		Equity Focus	Status
Sustainable Lifestyle							
SLE-2	Launch a Green Business Program: "Climate Action at Work"	Next	5.5	June	Pilot awards program introduced and received applications in summer 2020. Awarded five businesses. Additional opportunities for business-related programs will be to build a network of businesses with climate interests that can support additional demand and resources for infrastructure and policy upgrades. Program confirmed and content in development with Iowa City Area Business Partnership.	Initial program relies heavily on voluntary participation. Potential for granted funding tied to participation. Will need to make a greater effort to identify and work with businesses with less access to resources. Geographic access and type of business should also be taken into account. Mapped geographic participation. Need assistance from Economic Development staff, Equity & Outreach Working Groups, and other econ dev and small business assistance groups. For Climate Action at Work Awards, contacted over 80 community groups with an emphasis on diversity, inviting their	Complete
SLPP-2	Develop a Climate Action Strategic Communications Plan	Next	5.5	June	Released RFP for consultant to develop marketing plan; drafted in June, reviewed by Commission and received proposals in September. Plan will be focused on Iowa City attributes, alignment with current initiatives, focused attention to branding, models for promotional rollout schedules, template materials for modification by project or program, equity and "language" for how to frame climate activities as broadly appealing content.	Equity principles will integral to the process. Selected consultant (yet to come to an agreement) greatly emphasized equity and integrating stakeholder feedback from a variety of community populations. Commission member participated in consultant interviews.	Underway
SLE-1	Host Sustainability Forum and Events	Next	5.5	September	Climate Festival held week of Sept 19-25. Activities included digital and written storytelling, coordinated individual/community activities, and expanded local partnerships. Outreach began in June/July, finalized steps and promotions in August. Next significant programs in planning.	Intentional outreach with underserved groups to ensure access to awareness, education, and participation. Staff, planning committee, and CAC Working Group to connect with local organizations willing to partner on activities, promotion, or hosting remote event. Efforts underway to include translated festival materials in digital and print formats.	Complete
SLPP-1	Community Garden Expansion/Additions	Next	5.5	September	Working with Parks Department to see if there are plans for additional community garden areas.	Equity mapping for plot rentals exists. New Analyst will identify gaps in geographic coverage and gaps in possible access for certain groups. Need focused outreach to see where needs might be to connect unresourced individuals with plot availability in upcoming years; will assist in identifying needs/potential for pocket gardens in ROW, or working with local organizations that may host new garden plots on private property.	In Development
SLI-1	Expand Community Climate Grants	Next	5.4	November	Consider adding non-profit and business categories and define what the new program will look like next year. Identify how grant program ties into other City funding initiatives. Initial discussions underway, seeking Commission feedback on considerations that will guide staff in finalizing the 2021 grants process.	Follow Equity Report recommendations to identify and connect with preferred applicant agencies from first tier needs. Community organizations geared towards underserved and highly impacted groups could also fall into this expansion, or, the next year's funding could be introduced specifically to certain groups from equity report and an info session can be held by invitation for these groups, like other commissions have done	In Development
Additional Notes					Commission:	Working Group:	
			SLE1 - Feedback on Climate Festival; SLE2 - Feedback on Climate Action at Work program			SLI1 - WG can offer suggestions or thoughts on grants program focus, eligible entities, increments, etc.	