



Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Committee

Johnson County REAP Committee Agenda Thursday, August 3, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

Second Floor Boardroom, 913 S. Dubuque St., Iowa City, Iowa 52240

Participate in person or by joining the Zoom meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83837717695>

Meeting ID: 838 3771 7695

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Agenda

Members of the public are welcome to join in person or electronically by video call, which links into the location at the top of this agenda. For those unable to join, public comments may be emailed to jwenger@johnsoncountyiowa.gov for distribution to Committee members.

Johnson County strives to host inclusive, accessible meetings and events that enable all individuals to engage fully. To request a modification, inquire about accessibility, or request language interpretation, contact the Board of Supervisors Office at (319) 356-6000 or email jwenger@johnsoncountyiowa.gov at least 48 hours in advance.

Thank you for participating in today's meeting.

1. Call to order: 4:00 p.m.
2. Public comment
3. Election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson
4. Approve August 4, 2022 Johnson County REAP Committee meeting minutes
5. Presentation of REAP grant applications for review and comment by the Committee:
 - a. City of Hills application for \$50,000 for a Songbird Sanctuary Park
 - b. City of Iowa City application for \$200,000 for the Ashton House Grounds Ecological Restoration and Recreation Amenities
6. Discuss/review the *2021-2025 Johnson County Resource Enhancement and Protection Plan*
 - a. Per Iowa Code Chapter 455A.20, the Committee is required to submit a five-year plan, including one-year expenditure plan, to the Iowa DNR
7. Next meeting date and time: Thursday, August 1, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.
8. Adjourn

Username: cityhills@sharontc.net

REAP City Parks and Open Spaces Grant: Songbird Sanctuary Park

1. Project Title:
2. Project Summary: (75 words / 500 characters)

The proposed Songbird Sanctuary Park will transform an under-utilized property into space dedicated to birds and relaxation. The project includes the following features: tree and shrub plantings that will attract songbirds, a walking path, a bike rack, benches and a covered shelter. These additions will greatly enhance this downtown space and become a sanctuary for birds and people to enjoy.

Quality of Site:

The proposed project is located on an 8,400 square foot lot on Main Street in the downtown area of Hills, Iowa. The lot sits between the urban setting of Main Street and the residential area to the east and north of the site. There are no known historical, archaeological or architectural features on this site. The single feature on the lot is a walnut tree. Unfortunately, a tree specialist has recommended removal due to significant rot.

In 2015, the city purchased the lot and removed a dilapidated (but not historical) structure. The lot has since sat undeveloped. During its annual capital improvement retreat last fall, the Hills City Council discussed ways in which to best utilize the lot and decided a park would help the city meet several of its goals, including increasing its limited green space; improving the quality of life of both its residents and the many individuals who commute to Hills to work; beautifying the downtown; and, per Iowa's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), serving to further entice business leaders to locate their businesses in Hills. Creating a Songbird Sanctuary will give the city its only wildlife viewing area. The central location is ideal for residents, and the lot is flat, requiring only minimal grading, and therefore having no barriers for those with limited mobility.

The proposed facilities to be constructed are as follows: native tree, shrub, forb, and prairie grass planting area dedicated to attracting native birds; 5' wide walking path; four benches; covered shelter; picnic table; bike rack; dog waste bag stand; garbage and recycle bins; lights; signs; and decorative wrought iron fencing. The selected tree and shrub plantings will include a white pine, two bur oaks, a redbud, and several chokeberries, gray dogwoods, serviceberries,

buttonbushes, blueberry junipers, goldenrods, and prairie grasses. These species are recommended by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to attract songbirds and small wildlife. They are all proven to grow well in urban areas and will provide enjoyable wildlife viewing opportunities for visitors to the park. The proposed improvements, equipment, and plantings are attached.

Relationship to local, regional and state plans:

Between 1970 and 2019, the breeding population of North American birds declined by a stunning 29% – a loss of 2.9 billion birds (Rosenberg *et al.* *Science*, **366**, 120-124 [2019]). The loss includes many common and widespread species, which Rosenberg states may be “disproportionately influential” on ecosystems. Birds perform seed dispersal, pollination, and pest control functions in their ecosystems (Iowa DNR). Seed dispersal is the only opportunity plants have to move into latitudes or elevations where conditions for their survival may be more suitable in the future (U.S. North American Bird Conservation Initiative [NACBI], *State of the Birds*, 2022). Indeed, the capacity of plants to track climate change has been reduced by 60% globally due to declines in bird and mammal populations (Fricke *et al.*, *Science*, **375**, 210-214 [2022]).

Per Rosenberg, “extinction begins with loss in abundance of individuals that can result in compositional and functional changes of ecosystems.” The Iowa Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP) states that state WAPs “outline the steps needed to conserve wildlife and habitat before they become too rare or costly to restore.” The NACBI agrees, stating “[p]roactive conservation is the fastest, most effective strategy. Once bird species are endangered, they are at greatest risk of extinction and require additional funding, protections, and decades of work to bring them back.” Science tells us that small spaces with native plantings can have an outsized positive impact on bird (and butterfly) populations (Burghardt *et al.*, *Conservation Biology*, **23**, 219-224 [2008]). This, coupled with the City of Hills’ Comprehensive Plan prioritization of the establishment of green spaces and parks, and inspired by the Iowa DNR’s suggested planting for its songbird packet, the City of Hills hopes to form a partnership with the Iowa DNR via a REAP grant, to establish a Songbird Sanctuary Park.

The establishment of this park is consistent with, and will realize on a local level, many of the plans, goals, priorities, recommendations, and visions of county and state plans:

The Johnson County REAP (JCREAP) includes the plan to “make available additional accessible usable open space in reasonable proximity to areas of population concentration.” The park will be situated in a central location, across the street from Hills Bank, which employs more than 200 people at its Hills site, and near Eldon C. Stutsman, which employs nearly 250 people. The park will also satisfy the JCREAP plans to “[u]tilize public open space for wildlife habitat protection and creation,” and to “[e]ncourage tree planting in urban and rural

areas." The project will include the enhancements of a shelter and picnic facilities, and educational signage.

The IWAP has three priorities; the proposed park satisfies the second priority to "[d]evelop new habitats for SGCN [Species of Greatest Conservation Need] in areas where these habitats do not exist." According to Bird Friendly Iowa's Interactive Landscaping Guide (<https://birdfriendlyiowa.org>), the native tree, shrub, forb, and prairie grass plantings are attractive to the following bird SGCN, whose breeding ranges include the Hills area: American kestrel, Baltimore oriole, Bell's vireo, broad-winged hawk, brown thrasher, common nighthawk, common yellowthroat, dickcissel, eastern screech owl, eastern kingbird, eastern meadowlark, eastern wood-pewee, field sparrow, horned lark, northern flicker, purple martin, red-headed woodpecker, wood thrush, and yellow-billed cuckoo. The plantings are also attractive to the migratory SGCN Harris's sparrow.

The recommendations detailed in the Iowa SCORP to advance its priorities and goals include using social media for outreach. The city will use Facebook to promote the park, and conservation. The recommendation also notes that, when asked what would encourage respondents to participate more in outdoor recreation, 23% indicated more free time. Given the location of the park, many potential downtown users would not have to have more free time but could instead choose to use existing break or lunch times to spend time in nature.

To meet the goal to "strive to improve accessibility through embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion," the city will be developing a level lot with a wide walking path and the shelter and picnic table will be wheelchair accessible, to meet the needs of those with limited mobility.

Another recommendation is that "parks...providers should develop partnerships, if not already existing, with a community or county's economic development office...and downtown/community/county development groups. Start with participation in a small partner project, something that may be a new grant opportunity or serves multiple agency purposes." The city chose to financially support the formation of a Hometown Pride Committee in August 2022, which includes representatives from the East Central Iowa Council of Governments (a highly recommended partnership), the Iowa Economic Authority, and downtown businesses. This committee aided with the planning of the proposed park, and, going forward, will assist in meeting the recommendation that "plans...are at least reviewed and updated on a consistent basis to keep in touch with changes in climate (natural, political, economic), technology and people's interest and needs."

Finally, the SCORP Appendix B: State Plan Priorities lists the following vision statements for the IWAP, which this project shares and will help manifest: "Common species will continue to be common; populations of species of greatest conservation need will increase to viable (self-sustaining) levels;

protected habitats will be diverse, representative, native plant communities in... small block on publicly...owned land; wildlife...management will be based on science; wildlife-associated recreation will be available to all lowans on public lands near their home."

Environmental Benefits:

Per the Iowa DNR, "increasing the amount and quality of habitat is possible and likely one of the most effective ways to help birds and other wildlife." (DNR News Release, *Creating a Better Home for Birds in Iowa*, 2019) The proposed project will have a positive impact on the local ecosystem by doing both. Food, shelter, and nesting materials needs will be addressed by the plantings chosen for the project. The selected plants are native to this region and will easily adapt to the climate and require little maintenance once established.

Native plantings are crucial. Research has shown that native plantings attract larger numbers and a greater diversity of native insects (and a greater number of SGCN birds). (Burghardt *et al.*, *Conservation Biology*, **23**, 219-224 [2008]) A healthy bird population requires a healthy insect population; 96% of North American terrestrial birds raise their young on insects, particularly caterpillars. (Ebersole, Audubon.org, *How to Create a Bird-Friendly Yard*, 2013) The bur oak is an especially attractive host for butterflies and moths. (The buttonbush, golden fleece goldenrod, and other plantings will serve as nectar sources for these pollinators [as well as hummingbirds]).

The plantings will also produce fruits and seeds for migrating and year-around birds. For example, the serviceberries have edible fruits that are popular with blue jays, cardinals, chickadees, goldfinches, robins, titmice, and thrashers. The trees and some of the shrubs and grasses will be planted in a grouping to provide shelter. The prairie grasses will offer excellent nesting materials.

An additional environmental benefit, is that the park will enhance knowledge of the natural world and highlight the impacts of preserving it. A sign will be located by the park entrance that will explain the purpose of the park and identify potential birds that may be spotted by visitors. The plants in the park will also be labeled so that visitors can learn which plants attract songbirds. The city hopes this project will spark interest in its residents for birding. Research has shown that birdwatchers were 4-5 times more likely to engage in conservation behaviors than non-wildlife recreationists. (Cooper *et al.*, *J Wildlife Management*, **79**, 446-457) Although it is hoped that this project will inspire residents to plant more quality habitat in their yards on its own, the city may further encourage residents to set aside space in their yards for native trees and shrubs that attract songbirds by expanding its Butterfly/Pollinator Garden Grant program to include bird conservation.

Public Benefit: DRAFT

In addition to the environmental benefits that the Songbird Sanctuary Park will help achieve, there are several social and economic benefits that will positively impact those who live, work and visit Hills.

As a city, it is our responsibility to create places where people feel valued and safe. These feelings are created in shared spaces like public parks. By facilitating opportunities to enjoy the outdoors, the City of Hills is promoting healthy lifestyles and enhancing the quality of life for those living in and around Hills. Once installed, the Songbird Sanctuary Park will become a place for visitors to sit and enjoy the fresh air and absorb the sounds of nature. Many find listening to the sound of birdsongs incredibly relaxing. Moments like these can help us process our busy lives.

Providing improvements; even an improvement such as a small park, can enhance the quality of life for those in our community. They can also attract new residents to our community. Public greenspace is in limited supply in Hills. This space is ideal for a park since it is centrally located on Main Street and is across the street from the post office and Hills Bank, which employs over 200 people. In the warmer months, cyclists are frequently seen riding up and down Main Street and passing this site while on rides through the beautiful rural countryside. Many of these cyclists stop in Hills for lunch at the Old 218 Tap or grab a snack at Casey's. Since Hills has become a popular stop among cyclists, community members have discussed ways to better support and promote cycling. This is why the plan for the park also includes a bike rack, which will provide a place for cyclists to stop and rest in the park.

Proposed improvements to the park will also greatly enhance the attractiveness of the site. It will develop a currently under performing lot and transform it into a place where people can relax, enjoy nature and recharge. It will promote mental health by providing a place for people to connect with the outdoors. While there, people may learn something about birds that are native to our region along with the trees and shrubs that attract them.

Once complete, the project will be easily accessible and maneuverable for those with mobility challenges. A handicapped accessible picnic table will be located under the proposed covered shelter.

Local Support:

According to the Hills Comprehensive Plan, which was published in 2013, establishment of green space and parks were identified as future priorities for the town. Parkland expansion was identified as an effective way to retain residents and attract new residents to the community. Since that time, the

council has been looking at ways to expand greenspace throughout the community.

There was not a specific plan for this site when purchased by the city in 2015. It was widely recognized that this under-utilized lot had great potential based on its location. In the fall of 2022, the Hills City Council requested that staff proceed with plans to develop the lot into a park that would attract songbirds.

The Hills City Council is committed to this project and recognizes the positive impact that the proposed park will have on the community. At its June 12, 2023 meeting, the City Council passed a resolution in support of applying for a REAP grant and agreed to use available funds to complete the project. Since the project will be a significant financial commitment from the city's budget, the city is requesting support from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

In addition to the Council, there is tremendous community support for this project. In August 2022, a Hometown Pride Committee was formed. This committee includes a representative from the East Central Iowa Council of Governments and the Iowa Economic Authority. It also includes the City of Hills, and a representative from businesses along or around Main Street: Hills Bank, Sharon Telephone, Old 218 Tap, Stutsman, Bush's Barber Shop, and Hills Elementary School. The goal of this committee is to brainstorm and implement projects that will improve Main Street by attracting additional businesses while supporting the existing businesses and the many employees who work in Hills every day. Projects to date include a flower pot planter project, "Food Truck Fridays", and a bike rack and bike repair station installation. In addition to the Songbird Sanctuary Park, the group plans to move forward on a butterfly garden project and walking trails.

Letters of Support

Hometown Pride Committee

Mayor/Council

Iowa Economic Authority – Sarah Thompson

Audubon Society

Hills Bank

Sharon Telephone

Stutsman

Public Communications Plan DRAFT

The City of Hills will ensure that the public is aware of the proposed additions through various means; the city-wide newsletter, the city website and social media page, and through a grand opening celebration. The city delivers a city-wide newsletter to every residence and business in town every other month. The newsletter will include information on the Songbird Sanctuary Park and who partnered with the city to complete the project. The project will also be presented and promoted on the City of Hills' website and City of Hills' Facebook social media page. Once the park is complete, the city will host a grand opening ceremony to celebrate the new park and invite members of the Hills City Council, the news media, and local residents and businesses. A presentation will be given by Mayor Kemp at the ceremony. The mayor will thank those involved in the project and emphasize how the park will attract songbirds and be a place for residents and visitors to enjoy. He will also highlight the importance of creating and preserving spaces for birds and other local fauna and how the new plantings will assist in that conservation.

Communication and Outreach Uploads

Optional - Upload samples or documentation of the public communications plan.

Budget: Provide information on budget, funding and timeline of the project. (2000 characters)

Hills Songbird Sanctuary Park

Project Component: Trees & Shrubs	Description	Quantity	Cost	Total
Golden Fleece Goldenrod	Perennial with small yellow flowers	14	\$16.99	\$237.86
Buttonbush	Small shrub with small button-like berries. 20 year lifespan	4	\$48.00	\$192.00
Blueberry Delight Juniper	Shrub with pale blue berries. 30 year lifespan	2	\$48.00	\$96.00
Blackhawks Bluestem	Ornamental grass that produces white seed heads	5	\$42.00	\$210.00
Prairie Dropseed	Ornamental grass, foliage turns gold in the fall	12	\$19.99	\$239.88
Serviceberry	White flowers and edible berries	2	\$148.00	\$296.00
Gray Dogwood	White flowers and white berries in the fall. 40 year lifespan	2	\$48.00	\$96.00
Red Chokeberry	White flowers, red berries,scarlet fall color. 20 year lifespan	4	\$48.00	\$192.00
Eastern Redbud	Pink flowers, 50-70 year lifespan	1	\$248.00	\$248.00
Urban Pinnacle Bur Oak	Narrow upright deciduous tree. 300 year lifespan	2	\$278.00	\$556.00
White Pine	Evergreen tree. 100 year lifespan	1	\$198.00	\$198.00
Soil, mulch, amendments	Excavation, dirt, amendments and mulch		\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
				\$7,561.74

Project Component: Hardscape	Description	Quantity	Cost	Total
Concrete	4' sidewalk & concrete pads for benches and swings	1	\$10,761.00	\$10,761.00
Concrete pad for shelter	Concrete pad for covered shelter	1	\$2,268.00	\$2,268.00
				\$13,029.00

Project Component: Features	Description	Quantity	Cost	Total
Fence	Wrought iron fence - 6' and 3' sections	1	\$14,420.00	\$14,420.00
Covered Shelter	Circular covered shelter 18' diameter	1	\$7,600.00	\$7,600.00
Picnic table	46.25" Hex wheelchair accessible table recycled plastic	1	\$1,148.85	\$1,148.85
Bike Rack	Steel bike rack - accommodate 5 bikes	1	\$238.85	\$238.85
Signage	1.5 - 3' Metal sign	1	\$300.00	\$300.00
Park Benches	4' Recycled plastic bench	3	\$578.85	\$1,736.55
Swing	Sway bench	1	\$2,214.00	\$2,214.00
Pet Waste Bag Stand	Pet waste bag dispenser	1	\$178.85	\$178.85
Trash and Recycle Recepticles	Recycled plastic trash and recycle containers (2units)	1	\$1,098.85	\$1,098.85
Light pole		2	\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00
				\$28,935.95

Project Component: Misc	Description	Quantity	Cost	Total
Tree Removal	Remove walnut tree on site. Diseased.	1	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Site Preparation	Minimal grading, prep for grass seed	1	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
				\$7,000.00

Total Project Cost **\$56,526.69**

City of Iowa City application for the Ashton House Grounds Ecological Restoration and Recreation Amenities

2. Quality of the site and/or project (30 points) *

If acquisition, include the number of acres and describe the resources and existing facilities/improvements on and adjacent to the property. Also describe its prospective use and management goals. If rare, unique, or high quality plant and animal species and communities occur on the site, provide a listing. Upload a map and pictures.

If development, describe the facilities to be constructed, existing facilities in the project area and the natural resources in the area. Upload a map and pictures. If this project is part of a larger project, very clearly detail the portion that this application is covering. If this application is for the continuation of a project that previously received a REAP grant, provide a status report of the project elements that were previously funded. Describe the relationship to any other local, state or federal park areas.

Describe any resources of historical nature on the project site, such as buildings, Native American burial mounds, historic trails, architectural features and archaeological elements. Explain impacts on these resources that will be caused by the project.

If applicant does not possess all fee title interest in property, please explain. Additionally, explain contractual or joint agreements with other parties for operation and maintenance of the site and facilities. Enclose copies of any such agreements and other ownership conditions on the property.

Sports complexes, play grounds and dog parks do not qualify for REAP funds. The minimum width of a multi-use or biking trail is 8 feet, while 10 feet is recommended.

Development of Existing Site

Facilities to be constructed:

Native tree and prairie plantings; concrete walkway and bollard lighting from existing east Normandy Drive sidewalk to Ashton House lower level and terrace, benches, drinking fountain, water source for plantings, stone entry column, bird blind, fire ring/grill, bicycle parking and repair station, soft-surface trail along the Iowa River, and plant identification signs.

Existing Facilities:

The City of Iowa City has received two REAP grants for previously completed site improvements at the Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens. The 2013 REAP grant ("Normandy Drive Neighborhood Restoration Project, Phase II") partially funded the following improvements to existing facilities: restoration of the historic Ned Ashton House; the construction of a bicycle trail; ADA compliant parking area; curb ramps, ADA parking space, and signage; ADA accessible way from parking area to front entry; ADA ramp / overlook. The second 2016 REAP grant (Project GREEN Gardens at the Historic Ned Ashton House) fully funded the following completed improvements: restoration of historic terrace; pergola, flood plain tree and shrub plantings, plant material markers; bio-swale; and interpretive signs. Project GREEN a not-for-profit volunteer group in Iowa City partnering with the City of Iowa City Parks and Recreation Department has provided over 2,857 hours of volunteer service maintaining and enhancing the site, \$32,000.00 dollars in funding for the "Fifty Trees for Fifty Years" project celebrating Project GREEN's fifty years of green advocacy in 2018, and \$2,000.00 per year for site maintenance, supplies, and beautification.

Site Natural Resources:

The site is located within the Iowa River floodplain and a portion of it is within the 100 Year floodway. (See Exhibit 3-A). The Iowa River flows along the western boundary of the site, there is a gradual slope down to the river's edge with the existing trail separating the lower river terrace from an upland terrace. Existing and newly planted native floodplain trees are located within the upper terrace with existing remaining larger floodplain species (undamaged by the flood of 2008) and grasses located within the lower terrace. Wildlife habitat occurs in both of these seasonally flooded woodland terrace areas. Park visitors are able to see several types of birds either fly over or live on the site. Predominant birds seen on

site include eagles, pelicans, great horned owls, mallard ducks and various songbirds. The existing soil is a sandy clay loam which provides a good planting medium for flood plain vegetation and mesic prairie.

Site Historic Resource:

The "Ned Ashton House" was built in 1947-1948 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001. Joye Ashton McKusick (Ned Ashton's daughter) writes the following in her application for placement of the house on the National Register of Historic Places:

"The house itself is an example of Ashton's engineering skills; a complex stone house, with a unique internal structure of reinforced concrete designed to float on the sandy soil on its site adjacent to the Iowa River. Overlooking the Iowa River, the house incorporates Ashton's engineering skills combined with his aesthetic sense of setting and use of native materials." Two of the interpretive signs celebrate famous structural engineer, Ned Ashton, his family and his work. No impacts will be caused to existing historic resource by proposed construction of improvements.

In partnership with Project GREEN, the City of Iowa City's goal is to continue Ned Ashton's design sensibility through the use of native materials, restoration of the existing floodplain forest; provision of improvements that are in-keeping with the historic nature of the site and original intention of the Ashton family, and provision of improvements which are in harmony with existing views, vegetation and surroundings.

Relationships between the project and local, state and federal complexes:

Local relationships associated with the "Ashton House/ Project GREEN Gardens" include partnerships between Iowa City Parks and Recreation Division, Iowa City Parks and Forestry Division and Project GREEN. The Ashton House along with other 2008 flood damaged residential properties in the Normandy Drive Neighborhood along the Iowa River were purchased by the city through a 'buy-out' program. Many of the homes were demolished due to the extent of flood damage, however the city chose to preserve and restore the historically significant Ashton House, which was designed by Ned Ashton to flood without causing severe damage to the house. Currently, it is rented out by the City as a venue for events such as receptions and meetings. The REAP applicant - Iowa City and Project GREEN, have a long history of partnering. Since its founding in 1968, Project GREEN has been responsible for the design, construction, maintenance and funding of beautification projects along the city's most prominent parkways, as well as for several city parks and school campuses. Project GREEN has a relationship with the Iowa City Historic Preservation Commission and the State Historic Preservation Office, as these agencies are required to review and approve site improvements proposed for the Ashton site as delineated in the Ashton family's application for National Register of Historic Places status.

A Statewide relationship with the project includes a continued dialogue with the State REAP Committee as we make progress towards the completion of the entire project.

Federally, the historic Ashton House and site will continue to meet all federal historic property requirements, Americans with Disabilities Act, local codes, and Uniform Building Code standards.

3. Attach maps of project *

Please attach a detailed map of the proposed project. Please make sure that the proposed project is clearly indicated on the map. If presenting multiple maps, they must be grouped into one document. See attached Exhibit 3-A through 3-G.

4. Relationship to local, regional and state plans (40 points) *

Describe project justification and need. Make references to the County REAP plan, current Iowa Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), Iowa Wildlife Action Plan and other local plans that help direct conservation and recreation programs. Do not include entire plans in the application.

Continued repair of the floodplain forest damaged during the 2008 flood will help to stabilize soils during flood events and will help to manage storm water on-site. The project area, which is in the Normandy

Drive Neighborhood, was one of the most severely impacted areas of Iowa City during the flood of 2008. The City purchased 48 homes in this neighborhood as part of the City's "buy-out" program. The surrounding remaining residences which now make up the Normandy Drive Neighborhood will gain added and needed stability through the implementation of this third phase of the REAP project. The east site entry which includes a walkway and entry column at Normandy Drive will provide an alternative site entry that is ADA compliant for park and event attendees accessing the lower level of the house and its historic terrace.

The project aligns with County REAP Plan Goals as follows:

- 1) Preserves and protects native flood plain environment, and historic house.
- 2) Provides a safe sustainable place to walk from the east border of the site to the lower level of the Ashton House and its historic terrace.
- 3) Continues to restore flood plain forest through planting of flood zone canopy and understory trees. Improvement of the existing floodplain forest through indigenous tree plantings will attract more wildlife and native birds, which will attract nature lovers and birdwatchers. A bird blind will be located at the far northwest corner of the site at the terminus point of a soft surfaced trail spur. Birdhouses for native species will be added in select locations, in cooperation with the Iowa Songbird Society.
- 4) An improved site with native plantings, plant id markers, soft surface trail spurs, fire pit/grill, bird blind, bicycle amenities (repair station and bicycle parking), will provide park users with more opportunity to discover and enjoy the existing natural environment. Additionally, these improvements translate into increased physical activity, exploration and learning. Currently there is a large number of bicyclists who ride through the park while Project GREEN volunteers are working. The cyclists typically chat with the volunteers to let them know how grateful they are for the improvements made to the park.
- 5) Provides engaging opportunities for park visitors to discover nature and see birds that visit and inhabit this floodplain site.

Johnson County's REAP plan includes a priority of "Protect and preserve remaining woodland and wetland areas within urban boundaries." The restoration efforts proposed in this application restore and strengthen a public forested area in a mature urban neighborhood and close to Iowa City's urban core. Enhancing and restoring the Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens site provides a unique opportunity to teach and promote and grow outdoor recreation opportunities in close proximity to Iowa City neighborhoods, the downtown core and the University of Iowa campus.

The project will contribute to the following goals within 2018 SCORP priorities.

Priority 1: Availability and diversity of natural resources, parks and outdoor recreation opportunities enhance the quality of life of Iowans.

Goal 2: The Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens is located close to the urban core of Iowa City and provides accessible physical activity in a natural setting close to several surrounding neighborhoods and University of Iowa campus. This project will improve the quality of the natural environment which is expected to increase the use of the park for physical activity.

Goal 3: The Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens draws visitors at the local, regional, and out of State levels. The park's close proximity to Iowa City and Coralville urban cores, the University of Iowa, and the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics – West Side Campus Facilities, establishes the Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens as a destination.

Priority 2: Natural Resource, parks and outdoor recreation opportunities are available to all Iowans.

Goal 1: Iowa City is committed to embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion for all citizens. Project GREEN leadership reaches out to many groups in Iowa City inviting them to assist with maintenance of the gardens. Volunteers leave the site with a sense of ownership and pride in what they've accomplished. The planning efforts during the design development phase for this project will prioritize outreach and public input including specific efforts to reach minority and underserved populations.

Priority 3: The right opportunities. In the right place. Done the right way.

Goal 1: Collaboration and partnership between Iowa City Recreation and Parks Department has gone into the planning processes supporting the current proposal and past successful projects at Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens. The projects have increased the quality of life for people utilizing the park and historic home and are in response to local recreational needs. The size, location, and quality of resources in Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens make this the right opportunity, in the right place, and are a continuation of projects done the right way.

Iowa Wildlife Action Plan

The following vision elements and conservation action strategies are supported by the project as it improves the diversity and sustainability of the floodplain forest habitat. Proposed improvements include removal of invasive species, restoration of floodplain forest, installation of a mesic prairie, provision of access to wilderness portions of the site through habitat compatible soft surface trail spurs, provision of a bird blind, and outdoor fire circle accommodating outdoor learning.

Vision Element: The number of Iowans participating in wild-life-associated recreation (wildlife viewing, photography, hiking, outdoor classrooms, hunting, fishing etc.) should increase by 50% by 2030.

Vision Element: Diverse wildlife communities will be developed on public and private lands and waters through the use of adaptive ecological management.

5. Environmental Benefits (20 points) *

Describe the environmental impacts of the proposed project. Identify any features of the project that protect or improve water quality and habitat, reduce energy and water use or are innovative.

Environmental impacts of proposed improvements:

The concrete walkway from Normandy Drive to the lower level of the Ashton House and pergola will increase stormwater surface runoff. However, because the walk's in close proximity to an existing bioswale, the bioswale will help mitigate the impacts of the increased runoff prior to runoff reaching the Iowa River.

Features that will improve water quality and habitat: Native flood plain tree plantings will improve water quality and habitat by capturing rainwater and surface flow and will reduce risks of flooding. Tree root systems will help to filter water and remove pollutants prior to their entering the Iowa River. The tree plantings and mesic prairie installation will also help to enhance the wildlife habitat. Project GREEN's involvement in removing silt and invasive weed growth from the surface of the bioswale will continue to increase its functionality in improving the water quality.

Reduce energy feature: Bollard walkway lighting will include LED lighting which will be on a solar eye as well as a timer.

6. Public Benefit Served (20 points) *

Identify benefits to be derived from the project in terms of populations being served and resource management/protection. This discussion should also include expected impacts caused by users, as well as impacts on economic, cultural, aesthetic and quality of life.

Proposed projects, must meet the requirements described in the Assurance of Compliance with Americans with Disabilities and Civil Rights. Explain how development projects meet these requirements.

Benefits to be derived from the project in terms of populations being served: Local, regional and out of State visitors are served with an improved Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens Park which provides enhanced opportunities for physical activities as well as enhanced opportunities for nature discovery and learning. One example of a population being served are the participants of the Iowa City Parks and Recreation Department's Summer Camping program. Summer campers will have new ways to discover nature through use of the trail spurs which will bring them closer to wilderness areas of the site. Additionally, the campfire ring and fire pit will serve a double function of providing a shaded space with stone seating for an outdoor classroom. The bird blind will provide an opportunity for children and adults alike to enjoy viewing the interesting birds that fly over and inhabit the park. Additionally, the park provides a respite for visitors from the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics.

The high-quality natural setting as well as the historically significant home at the site is a natural draw for visitors and persons seeking to reserve the venue for events.

The proposed project which will continue to strengthen original flood plain forest while educating park users on environmental systems.

The proposed project which includes an accessible walkway to the lower level of the Ashton House, proposed trail spurs, benches, drinking fountain, watering system (for watering new plantings and for use by Project GREEN volunteers) floodplain plantings, bird blind, fire pit area, walkway lighting will comply with Americans with Disabilities and Civil Rights Act.

7. Local Support (20 points) *

Explain the extent of public participation in the formulation of this proposed project. Describe the process and mechanisms used and the findings. Do not include actual public participation reports, board meeting minutes and petitions; rather reference their existence and conclusion in this section.

For this most recent phase, the Iowa City Parks and Recreation Director met with Project GREEN Chairs to discuss needed park improvements at the Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens. Project GREEN Chairs contacted a local landscape architect to provide a conceptual plan, cost estimate and improvement images for their review based upon their program needs. The plan, estimate, and images of improvements were developed and presented to the Iowa City Parks and Recreation Director, the Superintendent of Parks and Forestry and the Chairs of Project GREEN. The schematic design plan, cost estimate and improvements were approved. The Iowa City Parks and Recreation Director then met with the City Council to have them review and approve schematic plan. The City Council reviewed the conceptual level plan and estimate and approved of the plan and requested the team to pursue an Iowa REAP grant. An article about the project and the City's endeavor to pursue the REAP grant was published in the Cedar Rapids Gazette on Monday, June 26, 2023. Follow-up discussions have been conducted with Mid-American Energy and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) of Johnson County.

Meetings for earlier phases of this project included all meetings required with the design and construction process. They included meetings during the Programming Phase, Schematic Design, Design Development, Construction Documentation, Bidding Process, Construction Documents, Construction Administration and Record Documents. Public meetings included attendees from the Normandy Drive Neighborhood, City of Iowa City, planners, traffic control planners, City Council, the Parks and Recreation Department, the Parks and Forestry Department, Mid-American Energy and Project GREEN.

8. Letters of Support

Optional - Upload letters of support or other documentation of local support.

Refer to attached letter of support.

9. Public Communications Plan (10 points)

A description of the public communications plan shall be included in every project. If the grant is approved for funding, this plan must be implemented. The plan must include how the applicant will inform and advise users about the importance of the project and plans to promote the project to expected user groups upon completion of the project and into the future. Be creative!

Iowa City will communicate to the public regarding this project using the following methods:

Posting of project materials and timeline on City website.

Announcement of project and progress updates through City social media-Facebook, Twitter and Next Door. Recognition of REAP funding through social media.

Public Meetings with both Park Commission and City Council to approve grant application and award, project design, contract and acceptance.

Posting of project updates including REAP logo in display case at Robert A. Lee Recreation Center.

Posting of project updates within the Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens.

Permanent posting of REAP signage at the Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens.

Project GREEN will cover Historic Ned Ashton House Site developments and improvements in its semi-annual newsletter, on its website, www.projectgreen.org and on its Project GREEN face book page.

10. Communication and Outreach Uploads

Optional - Upload samples or documentation of the public communications plan.

Optional - Upload samples or documentation of the public communications plan.

Budget
 Itemized Costs - Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens
 REAP GRANT Application 8-15-2023 PG. 1

PROJECT COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	PROJECT COST	REAP REQUEST	TOTAL	GRAND TOTAL
Demolition					
	Remove portion of existing concrete sidewalk - 25 SY@12.00	300	300		
	Clearing and Grubbing (clearing invasives and declining and dead vegetation)	20,000	20,000		20,300
SUBTOTAL-Demolition					20,300
Pavement - Portland Cement Concrete					
	PCC Walk Paving, 6' Wide, 5" @ 55.00 per SY - 184SY	10,120.00	10,120.00		
	Bicycle Parking Pad - 10'x8 9 SY	500.00	500		10,620.00
SUBTOTAL-Pavement PCC					10,620.00
Soft Pavement					
	Soft Surface Trail - Limestone Screenings- 1200 SY = 1,080 LFx10' @ 21.25 per SY	25500	25500		
	Edge 1,784 LF	17840	17840		43340
SUBTOTAL-Soft Pavement					43340
Water					
	Drinking Fountain	5000	5000		
	Watering System (tap,bfprev,meter,1-1/2" main pipe, ball valves,1" polypipe, boxes)	15000	15000		20000
SUBTOTAL-Water					20000
Masonry and cast-in-place concrete					
	Stone and masonry block entry monument	7500	7500		
	Cast-in-place concrete foundation	500	500		8,000.00
SUBTOTAL-Masonry and CIP Concrete					8,000.00
Electrical/Walkway Bollard Lights					
	Bollard Lights, 5 ea @ 2400.00 each	12000	12000		
	Entry Monument Lighting	5000	5000		
	Handhole	400	400		17,400.00
SUBTOTAL-Electrical/Bollard Lights					17,400.00
Native Plantings/Landscaping					
	Floodplain Trees (15) 1-1/2" calp @500.00 each	7500	7500		
	INDIGENOUS FLOOD PLAIN TREES - 1-1/2" CALIPER				
	INCLUDES PROTECTION FROM DEER & MICE				
	& INSTALLATION OF 6" DIA. MULCH RING AT 3" DEPTH				
	Mesic Prairie - .5 acre	5000	5000		
	MARKERS (20)	3000	3000		
	PLANT MARKERS TO INCLUDE COMMON &				
	BOTANICAL NAMES OF SIGNIFICANT PLANTS				
SUBTOTAL-Native Plantings					10,500.00
Metal Fabrications					
	Bird Blind - Lump Sum	20000	20000		20,000.00
SUBTOTAL-Metal Fabrications					20,000.00
Miscellaneous					
	Bike Racks 2 sets of 3 "U" , @575.00 each plus labor	2000	2000		
	Fire Pit with Insert - Segmental Block	1000	1000		

Budget
 Itemized Costs - Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens
 REAP GRANT Application 8-15-2023 PG. 2

PROJECT COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	PROJECT COST	REAP REQUEST	TOTAL	GRAND TOTAL
Benches (2, 6) each at 1200.00 each		2400	2400		
Bicycle Repair Station (1) each at 1100.00 each and labor		1600	1600		
SUBTOTAL-Miscellaneous				7,000.00	
Rock Outcrop Segmental Block Fire Circle Retaining/Seat Wall		10000	10000		
SUBTOTAL-SEGMENTAL Retaining				10,000.00	
Consultant = Engineer, LA, McCullough Creative)					
Consultant Fees		30000	30000		
				30,000.00	
Subtotal				197,160.00	
Grand Total					\$197,160.00

Exhibit 3-A – Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens – Site Location Map
820 Park Road, Iowa City, Iowa 52246

8-15-2023



PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS KEY:

- ① ACCESSIBLE CONCRETE WALKWAY
- ② BOLLARD LIGHTS
- ③ TRAIL SPUR
- ④ BICYCLE REPAIR STATION
- ⑤ DRINKING FOUNTAIN
- ⑥ ENTRY COLUMN
- ⑦ BICYCLE RACKS
- ⑧ IN-GROUND HYDRANT
- ⑨ REMOVAL OF EXISTING INVASIVE VEGETATION
- ⑩ FIRE PIT/GRILL
- ⑪ SEGMENTAL RETAINING WALL
- ⑫ BENCHES
- ⑬ BIRD BLIND
- ⑭ FLOODWAY TREE PLANTINGS
- ⑮ PLANT ID MARKERS
- ⑯ MESIC PRAIRIE

EXISTING IMPROVEMENTS KEY:

- (A) ACCESSIBLE CONCRETE WALKWAY
- (B) HISTORIC TERRACE
- (C) PERGOLA
- (D) INTERPRETIVE SIGN
- (E) BIOSWALE
- (F) FLOODPLAIN TREE PLANTINGS
- (G) ADA ACCESSIBLE RAMP
- (H) IN-GROUND HYDRANTS
- (I) FLOODPLAIN FLOWER BEDS
- (J) PLANT IDENTIFICATION SIGNS
- (K) ADA ACCESSIBLE PARKING AREA

FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS:

GREENHOUSE
LOCATION TO
BE DETERMINED

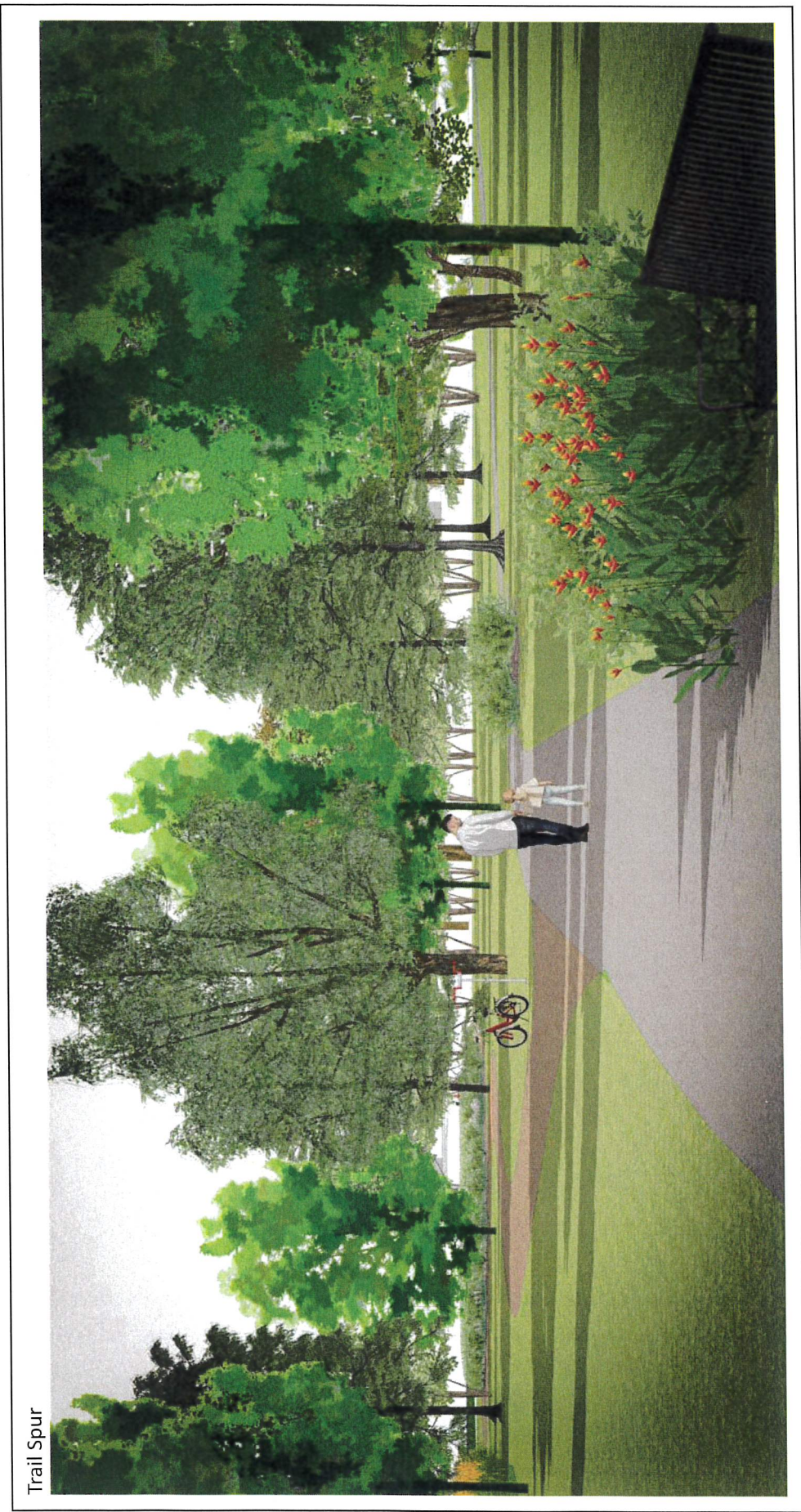


Exhibit 3-B
Proposed Plan - Schematic Design
Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens

August 15, 2023



Exhibit 3-C
3D Sketches
Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens
REAP Grant Application 2023



Trail Spur

Exhibit 3-D
3D Sketches
Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens
REAP Grant Application 2023



East Park Entry off Normandy Drive

Exhibit 3-E
Site Furnishings
Ashton House Project Green Gardens
REAP Grant Application 2023



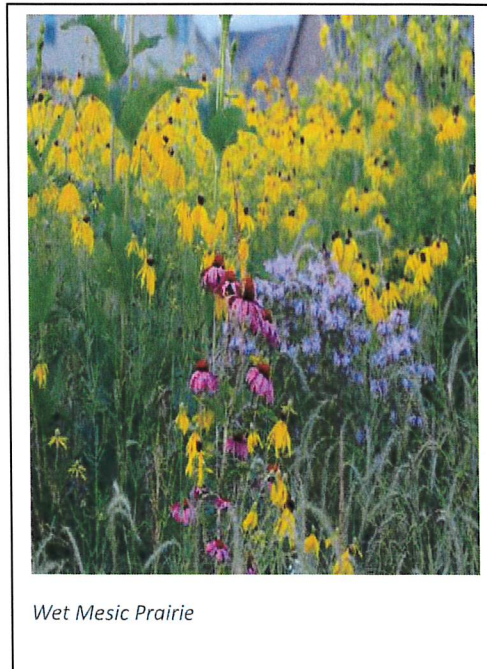
Drinking Fountain



Bicycle Repair Station



Bicycle Parking



Wet Mesic Prairie

Exhibit 3-F Fire Pit Concepts
Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens
REAP Application – 8-15-2023



Fire Pit / Circle Concept



Fire Pit Concept and surrounding soft paving

Exhibit 3-G
Bird Blind Concept
Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens
REAP Application – 8=15=2023



Bird Blind Concept

6.9

Prepared by: Susan Dulek, First Asst. City Att'y, 410 E. Washington St., Iowa City, IA 52240 (319) 356-5030

Resolution No. 23-181

Resolution authorizing the City Manager to submit a Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) grant application for Ashton House and to sign a grant agreement if awarded.

Whereas, the Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources administers Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) grants for acquisition and/or development/enhancement of land for outdoor recreation; and

Whereas, the grant process requires City Council approval of a grant submission; and

Whereas, City staff would like to apply for a \$200,000 grant for ecological restoration of the Ashton House in partnership with Project Green; and

Whereas, there is no local match.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of the City of Iowa City, Iowa that:

1. The City Manager is authorized to apply for the REAP grant for Ashton House.
2. If the REAP grant is awarded, the City Manager is authorized to sign the grant agreement and amendments as needed.

Passed and approved this 20th day of June, 2023.

Gruce Teague
Mayor

Attest: Beelie B. Funderburg
City Clerk

Approved: [Signature]
City Attorney's Office
(Sue Dulek - 06/13/23)

It was moved by Bergus and seconded by Taylor the Resolution be adopted, and upon roll call there were:

Ayes:

Nays:

Absent:

X
X
X
X
X
X
X

Alter
Bergus
Dunn
Harmsen
Taylor
Teague
Thomas