



Story County Planning and Development

Administration Building
900 6th Street, Nevada, Iowa 50201
Ph. 515-382-7245 www.storycountyiaowa.gov

MEMORANDUM

TO: Story County Board of Supervisors
FROM: Jerry L. Moore & Amelia Schoeneman, Planning and Development Department
RE: Private Property Vegetative Debris Processing Plan Due to August 10, 2020 Severe Weather
MEETING DATE: August 18, 2020

Planning and Development Department staff would like to thank Darren Moon, County Engineer, Mike Cox, County Conservation Director, Keith Morgan, Emergency Management Coordinator, the prospective property owners offering their sites for processing vegetative material, tree service company representatives that responded to our inquires, and others who provided input to assist in drafting this private property vegetative debris processing action plan.

Background

Finding a site(s) to collect and process debris for the County has been on the Planning and Development Department Work Program for the last several years. Our work to date included verbal agreements with the City of Maxwell and City of Nevada to share space in their cities for processing debris. After the August 10, 2020, storm event, Planning and Development staff reached out to Nevada and Maxwell about using these spaces for vegetative debris processing (e.g. burning and chipping). Planning and Development staff approximate that 18 acres of downed vegetative debris, piled in ten-foot high piles, may have been generated from the storm event based on Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) multipliers for vegetative debris generated based on the size of dwellings in unincorporated areas. As of August 13, 2020, Maxwell's site is full and their City staff believe this represents only 20% of the downed vegetative material in the City. Nevada's site near W 18th Street is currently owned by the Nevada Economic Development Commission and is no longer an option. Jordan Cook, Nevada City Administrator, said the City's wastewater treatment plant located at S 6th Street and HWY 30 is available and their staff would burn the vegetative material along with the City's vegetative material. The capacity of this site may be limited and would require separate staging locations outside of the City for the vegetative debris before it was transported to the site.

Additional constraints are Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) rules for processing vegetative material ([567 IAC 23.2](#)). Local government entities are allowed to burn tree and tree timings originating from other locations. The burn sites are required to be over ¼ mile from dwellings. Currently, landowners may burn disaster rubbish on the property it originated from during the disaster proclamation period (until September 9, 2020).

A final constraint is FEMA Public Assistance Program requirements for reimbursement of response and recovery efforts related to a presidentially declared disaster. At present, a presidential disaster proclamation has not occurred. If FEMA reimbursement is pursued, debris cannot be collected from private property or non-public road right-of-way including private accesses, drives, and subdivision roads. It also cannot be collected from undeveloped properties or commercial properties. Collection from Story County's public road right-of-ways would likely present safety issues for motorists and many of these right-of-ways and roadways are still being cleared of debris. Also, the County's



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Secondary Roads Department is encouraging the drainage ditches to remain unobstructed to accommodate future rain events. **A vegetative debris drop-off site(s) where the public would bring their own vegetative debris may be preferable.**

Goal

Find land in Story County that the Board of Supervisors can use or lease for property owners to bring their vegetative debris to for processing.

Alternatives

1. Brian Sampson, the tenant farmer of a 57.21 acre property, which was previously a DuPont stover storage site, located on the corner of 600th Avenue and 160th Street (60016 600th Ave.) in Milford Township, is interested in working with the County. Staff has also contacted the property owner, Charlie Strom, and he supports having a debris management site on his property. Other property owners of former stover sites were contacted, however, they were not interested in working with the County. Mr. Sampson requests \$900/acre as this is the amount DuPont previously paid for the 20-acre stover site. Ten acres of the northwest corner of the site would be available for the County to process and burn vegetative material. This area of the property meets the IDNR's separation requirement from dwellings. This is illustrated in Figure 1, where the ten-acres are approximated in a yellow outline. Mr. Sampson indicated he had remnants of stover he would like to have burned/disposed of



Figure 1: Sampson Stover Site, 66016 600th.





from this western area and for the County to remove the gravel base at the end of its use of the site. Mr. Sampson would plant alfalfa or grass on the area and would be interested in an on-going contract with the County to permit the area's use in the future Mr. Sampson also supports chipping the vegetative material on the northwest 10-acre area of the site and supports spreading the ash on the farm fields. The east 10 acres of the site contains a stover pile Mr. Sampson is breaking down to use for bedding his animals. The site has two accesses and a cable is located across the access for security. Fencing around the debris piles and burn site would be required.

2. Pastor Dwayne Stewart, Christ Community Church (The Plex), 5501 George Washington Carver in Ames is interested in working with the County to use their property to stage and process vegetative material. It would likely only be used for chipping as there are dwellings near the church property. Planning and Development staff contacted the pastor to arrange a site visit to work out details of the use of the property and the plan going forward. It is currently not known if there will be a cost to the County for using the property. Figure 2 is an aerial image of the property. The property is 32.10 acres.



Figure 2: Christ Community Church, 5501 George W Carver





Figure 3: Cornerstone Church, 56829 Highway 30

3. Randy Brekke, Cornerstone Church, 56829 HWY 30, is interested in working with the County on allowing staging and chipping of vegetative material only, no burning. Compensation was not requested unless the church's equipment is used. The site identified by Brekke is shown in Figure 3, outlined in yellow. It is less than one acre.
4. Jordan Cook, Nevada City Administrator, said the City is using their dump site located at the City's wastewater treatment plant at South 6th Street and HWY 30, however, he offered to allow County vegetative debris to be trucked in to the site and their staff would burn the vegetative material along with the City's vegetative material. The current capacity of the Nevada site is unknown. Cook said the County would need to find our own temporary storage locations for the vegetative material outside the City and trucking source. He gave us his Public Works Director's phone number to contact to make arrangements. The property is shown in Figure 4 and is 7.5 acres. The site is located in a FEMA designated flood zone.





Figure 4: City of Nevada Site, S 6th and Highway 30

Assessment of Alternatives

Site Management

The sites would need to be monitored by Planning and Development staff including oversight of third-party haulers and/or tree service companies processing and/or burning of vegetative debris. Also, monitoring the sites daily would assure that the loads are being checked for debris volume estimation (for FEMA reimbursement) and other management needs (additional signage, illegal dumping issues, etc.) and we may wish to ask for ID or mail to show that the vegetative debris originated from unincorporated Story County.

Planning and Development Department staff reached out to Darren Moon, Story County Engineer and Mike Cox, Story County Conservation to inquire about the possibility of obtaining their department's assistance in staff and resources to process and manage any of the above sites. Moon was supportive of the Milford Township property and the Christ Community Church site for the general public to use and he is also interested in using the Milford Township site to process and burn vegetative material from the County's right-of-ways. He is concerned about the Cornerstone Church site as HWY 30 would likely be littered with pieces of vegetative matter from the general





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public hauling vegetative debris and he stated the IDOT would likely be concerned as well. He raised concerns about how these sites would be managed as their department is short-staffed now due to the storm. He said if they used their staff and equipment for private benefit, they would need to be reimbursed, as this is required by state law.

Cox said they support the use of the Milford Township and the City of Nevada’s sites. Planning and Development Department staff think they would also like to use these sites to process vegetative debris from County parks. Cox stated their staff are also busy with vegetative material removal from County parks and would not have staff available to manage a site.

Last week, Planning and Development Department staff contacted eight tree service companies to check on their availability and interest in working with the County to process vegetative debris. Planning and Development Department staff received verbal interest from two tree service companies located in Story County and are awaiting quotes for their service.

Cost Comparison of Sites

Table 1 compares the potential monetary costs of the sites. In addition to County staff monitoring, all sites would need signage to direct the public and fencing to separate piles. The Nevada site requires the use of the church sites as staging sites—the potential costs of the church sites must be added to the Nevada site costs. The church sites could also be used prior to vegetative debris being taken to the Milford Township site—the church site costs would then need to be added to the Milford Township site costs. The cost estimates for equipment and labor are based on DeCarlo Demolition Company 2016 rates. See below for their rates. At the time of writing this memo, **cost estimates from tree services were not available** and verbal interest from DeCarlo has not been obtained.

Table 1: Monetary Costs of Sites Compared

| <i>Costs</i> | <i>Nevada Site</i> | <i>Church Sites</i> | <i>Sampson Site</i> |
|--|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Fee for property use | N.A./Unknown | N.A./Unknown | \$900/acre |
| County Monitoring Staff | N.A. | Needed | Needed |
| Equipment | Nevada would provide | Loader/other needed*. Cornerstone Church may have equipment for fee or from tree service | Loader/other needed*. May be able to rent from Sampson for fee or from tree service |
| Signage and Fencing | Nevada would provide | Needed | Needed |
| Hauling to Site | Story County responsibility † | Public responsibility | Public responsibility |
| Hauling from Site | N.A. | Story County responsibility † | N.A. unless disposing of mulch/ash elsewhere |
| Labor for managing and processing debris | N.A. | Story County Responsibility ‡ | Story County Responsibility ‡ |





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ASSUME USE OF EACH EQUIPMENT AT 3 SITES, FOUR HOURS A DAY, 5 DAYS A WEEK FOR 4 WEEKS

*CAT 325 EXCAVATOR WITH GRAPPLE: \$265.00/HOUR = \$63,600;

*JOHN DEERE 644 WHEEL LOADER: \$225.00/HOUR = \$54,000;

*SKIDLOADER WITH GRAPPLE: \$135.00/HOUR = \$32,400

†SEMI TRACTOR WITH 33' END DUMP (6FT SIDES) \$125.00/HOUR = TWO SITES \$20,000

‡ LABORER WITH HAND TOOLS \$ 55.00/HOUR. ASSUME TWO LABORERS PER SITE, FOUR HOURS A DAY, FOUR WEEKS = THREE SITES \$26,000

Estimated Overall Costs

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Third Party (DeCarlo) | \$196,000 |
| Tree Service Company | Unknown |
| Milford Township (10 acres) | \$9,000 |
| Signs - three (4'x8' on posts, paint) | \$200/\$1000 |
| <u>Fencing (orange construction fencing/posts)</u> | <u>\$1,450</u> |
| Estimated Total \$207,450 | |

Site advantages

- Three sites are located in areas where a large percentage of the unincorporated population is located.
- Milford Township site is northeast of Ames, in a rural area off of a 600th Avenue, a paved road, and can be used to burn vegetative material.
- The other two sites (Cornerstone Church and Christ Community Church) can provide alternate dumping locations for the general public. Only chipping of vegetative material is allowed. Both churches are located on paved roads.
- The Milford Township and church sites would be controlled by the County.
- Story County Engineering/Secondary Roads and Conservation are interested in using the Milford Township site to process vegetative debris from the County road right-of-way and County parks.
- The sites would have set hours of operation when they would be staffed.
- Milford Township site may potentially be used by the County for future disaster debris.

Site disadvantages

- If Cornerstone Church, Christ Community Church, and Nevada sites are used, the County would incur processing and hauling costs. It may be more efficient to have only one site that can accommodate staging, processing, including burning (Milford Township site).
- There is a concern about vegetative debris falling off loads onto HWY 30 road right-of-way if Cornerstone Church site is used.
- The vegetative debris processing will be messy, potentially noisy, and unsightly and will be noticed by church members and their neighboring property owners.



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FEMA Reimbursement

This event may not become a federally declared disaster. If it does, FEMA reimbursement takes time. Most of the FEMA guidance on the Public Assistance Program for debris management is geared toward removal activities from public right-of-ways. Cities typically undertake this activity and have a public drop-off site. A public-drop off or collection site, in the unincorporated area, without removal activities being conducted by the jurisdiction (Story County), may be a new model for FEMA to consider with regard to reimbursement. Planning and Development staff is continuing to look for guidance from FEMA on public collection sites. The County should be prepared to cover all costs associated with this vegetative debris processing project, pending possible FEMA reimbursement.

Recommendation

Planning and Development Department staff recommend the Story County Board of Supervisors support the use of the Milford Township site. The City of Nevada was impacted significantly from last Monday's storm and capacity at the City's site may be limited. The hauling costs to this site or from the church sites (Cornerstone Church and Christ Community Church) to the Milford Township site would be significant. If the Milford Township site reaches capacity, the Board could consider the church sites as staging or chipping sites. **Costs for a third-party tree service would also need to be considered.**

Staff also recommend the Board act to direct staff to follow the action steps identified below.

Next Steps

1. Planning and Development staff submitted debris management forms for all three sites to the IDNR in case the Board of Supervisors directs Planning and Development staff to proceed. It takes one week for IDNR to review applications. If the severe storm event becomes a presidentially-declared disaster, the IDNR will communicate with FEMA that the sites meet state requirements, which is required for reimbursement.
2. A right-entry-document, contract, and other document indemnifying the County will need to be prepared by the Story County Attorney's office and entered into with the site property owner(s).
3. Story County will need to procure a contractor following Story County and FEMA procurement procedures for exigent or emergency circumstances for vegetative debris services and hauling. If the Board decides to only use the Milford Township site, the County will not incur any foreseeable hauling fees as property owners will bring their vegetative material directly to the Milford Township property. The residual vegetative material from burning can be land applied by Mr. Sampson on his fields.
4. Planning and Development staff will need to develop a site plan for how sites will be used.
5. Due to lack of provisions in the Story County Land Development Regulations addressing processing of vegetative material during natural disasters, the Board of Adjustment may need to hold a special meeting to act on a Conditional Use Permit for the site(s) for yard waste composting.
6. County staff will need to install signage and fencing at each site. Mowing may also be required. Planning and Development staff can inquire with Facilities Management about constructing possible signs or contact a sign company.



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7. County staff will need to communicate with the general public what type of debris is permitted, any size restrictions, when and where it can be dropped off on the County's website, radio, and social media.



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