

ITEM #: 19
DATE: 02/26/08

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: FINAL REVIEW OF PROPOSED LAND USES FOR GOVERNMENT LAND AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LAND

BACKGROUND:

On December 5, 2007, the Planning & Zoning Commission held a public hearing on proposed amendments to the City's Land Use Policy Plan that would identify land uses on lands owned by government agencies currently under the broad titles "Government/Airport" and "University/Affiliated." At that time, staff informed the Planning and Zoning Commission that Iowa State University (ISU) representative Cathy Brown may wish to suggest changes to some of the proposed underlying land uses for ISU property. Staff informed Ms. Brown that the hearing had been advertised and would therefore be held. She was nonetheless assured that the City was anxious to have ISU's full input on this issue, and that there would be additional opportunity for comment at the hearing before the City Council. The Commission then requested, as part of its recommendation on the proposed amendments, that they have opportunity to review any substantive changes recommended by ISU prior to the City Council's final action. Subsequent to that, Ms. Brown submitted comments in a letter dated December 18, 2007 (attached) with requested changes to the proposed amendments. Her letter was discussed with the City Council during the regularly scheduled meeting of December 18, 2007; at which time the Council directed staff to refer ISU's proposed changes back to the Commission for its final review and recommendation.

The following four proposed changes were included in Ms. Brown's letter. Staff comments follow each proposal:

1. Change the proposed Medium Density Residential in the areas commonly known as University Village and Schilleter Village, to a High Density Residential designation to reflect current densities in these villages.
 - While densities in these areas appear to be high, they are actually lower than the allowable densities under the Medium Density designation. The total square footage of both villages is 3,500,000 and includes 760 units. Allowable units on these sites under the Medium Density designation would be approximately 1,944 units. Allowable units under High Density designation would be approximately 3,500 units.

After further discussion of these findings with Ms. Brown, she concurred with the Medium Density designation, and provided a statement to that effect in a letter dated February 6, 2008 (attached).

2. Change the area near University Boulevard and South 16th Street (commonly known as College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) to University/Affiliated rather than Low Density residential to reflect ISU's intent to substantially develop the land for CVM programs.
 - This would be a logical change given the University's intended use of the property.
3. Extend the Village/Suburban Residential designation to the area near State Avenue, known as the Curtiss Farm.
 - This would be a logical extension of the existing Village/Suburban Residential designation into this area. It is otherwise surrounded by agricultural uses, so there is no other residential designation that might otherwise be extended into this parcel.
4. Change the designation in the portion of Veenker Golf Course that is elevated above the flood plain from the proposed Parks and Open Space land use designation to Low Density Residential designation.
 - This would be a logical extension of the Low Density Residential designation to the north of the golf course.

In addition to requesting the Commission's input in ISU's proposed changes, the Council also requested additional review of the proposed land use for the Ames School District property located on the south side of West Lincoln Way off South Wilmoth Avenue (the Middle School Athletic Field). Specifically, the Council questioned whether the proposed commercial designation was appropriate in that location given surrounding land uses and the propensity for strip commercialization of Lincoln Way. The Council then directed staff to solicit additional input from the School District on the proposed land use designation and to explore various land use options for the School District, Planning & Zoning Commission, and City Council's consideration.

Accordingly, On January 17, 2008, Steve Osguthorpe met with Dr. Linda Beyea, Ames School District Superintendent, to discuss the following land use options:

1. Highway Oriented Commercial (HOC) along Lincoln Way frontage; Low Density Residential (RL) along remaining south portion of site (accessed off of Wilmoth Avenue).
 - An HOC designation along the Lincoln Way frontage would be an extension of the existing HOC to the northwest of the site (on both sides of Lincoln Way).
2. Residential High Density (RH) along Lincoln Way frontage; Low Density Residential along remaining south portion of site.
 - An RH designation along the Lincoln Way frontage would be an extension of the RH zone directly east of the site.

3. Low Density Residential (RL) on entire site.

Dr. Beyea verbally acknowledged that a commercial designation would increase the property's market value, but also expressed the School District's desire to encourage and facilitate single-family housing within the Ames School District. In that respect, a Low Density Residential designation would have value in terms of that broader goal, provided that the property could be developed in a manner that would provide a stable residential environment. Dr. Beyea indicated at that time that she did not have an opinion on the three options, but may wish to comment on them at the public hearing after she had opportunity for further deliberation.

Recommendation of the Planning & Zoning Commission. At its meeting of February 6, 2008, with a vote of 5-0, the Planning and Zoning Commission recommended approval of the LUPP map amendments with changes as proposed by ISU, except to retain the Medium Density Residential designation on the University and Schilleter Villages, and approval of the LUPP map amendments with the Middle School Athletic Site designated as Low Density Residential on the entire site.

Subsequent discovery of mapping error. After the meeting with the Planning & Zoning Commission, staff discovered that the property on the southwest corner of Lincoln Way and Wilmoth Avenue is currently designated as "Government/Airport," apparently due to an assumption that these parcels were part of the adjacent School District's site. They are actually under private ownership. It therefore makes sense to eliminate the government land designation during this update. Staff is therefore recommending that they be designated low-density residential, consistent with the designation recommended for the abutting School District site.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. The City Council can approve the LUPP map amendments with changes as proposed by ISU, except to retain the Medium Density Residential designation on the University and Schilleter Villages.
2. The City Council can approve the LUPP map amendments with entire Middle School Athletic Site, and the abutting privately owned sites on the southwest corner, all designated as Low Density Residential.
3. The City Council can approve the LUPP map amendments with the Lincoln Way frontage of the Middle School Athletic Site, and the abutting privately owned sites on the southwest corner, designated as Medium Density Residential, with the balance of the Middle School Site being designated Low Density Residential.
4. The City Council can approve the LUPP map amendments with the Lincoln Way frontage of the Middle School Athletic Site, and the abutting privately owned sites on the southwest corner, designated as Highway Oriented Commercial, with the balance of the Middle School Site being designated Low Density Residential.
5. The City Council can make modifications to the proposed amendments.

6. The City Council can deny the proposed amendments.
7. Action on this request can be postponed and referred back to City staff for additional information.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Regarding ISU's proposed amendments, staff finds that all changes proposed reflect logical extensions of land uses from surrounding land uses, with the exception of the originally proposed High Density Residential designation for the University and Schilleter Villages. While these may appear to have high densities because of the scale and close proximity of the residential structures, the sites are larger than they appear and therefore results in lower densities than might otherwise be apparent. As evidenced by Ms. Brown's letter of February 6, 2008, ISU concurs with the Medium Density designation, so that is no longer an issue.

Regarding the alternative land uses along West Lincoln Way, staff believes that each of the proposed uses reflect logical extensions of surrounding land uses and each have merit. However, a Commercial designation along Lincoln Way perpetuates the strip of commercialization of this corridor and may lead to further degradation of the abutting residential neighborhoods because of the abrupt transition from Commercial to Low Density Residential. On the other hand, traffic and nearby commercial land uses make property abutting Lincoln Way less conducive to residential development. This could be overcome by the way the property is accessed and oriented. Residential development could be adequately buffered from commercial development if it were accessed off of Wilmoth Avenue with buffered backyards facing Lincoln Way. Staff believes that a Residential designation would provide greater assurance to surrounding homeowners that the area will not be further encroached upon by commercial development. Conditions could be imposed at the rezoning stage to ensure adequate buffering and orientation. If the property is later found to be unmarketable under the Residential designation, a more intense designation could then be considered.

It is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council act in accordance with Alternatives #1 and #2. This is a recommendation that the City Council approve the LUPP map amendments with (a) changes as proposed by ISU, except to retain the Medium Density Residential designation on the University and Schilleter Villages properties; and (b) designate the entire Middle School Athletic Site, and the properties on the southwest corner of the intersection of Lincoln Way and Wilmoth Avenue that abut the School District site, as Low Density Residential.

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February 6, 2008

Steve Osguthorpe, Planning and Housing Director
City of Ames
515 Clark Avenue
Ames, IA 50010

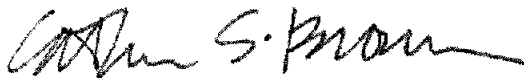
Dear Steve:

Re: Government Land Study

During the past few days our offices have had the opportunity to clarify the existing density of the University Village and Schilleter Village (SUV) housing areas. Based on the review I concur with your January 30, 2008 recommendation to the Planning and Zoning Commission to retain the Medium Density Residential designation for the SUV area.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the final review of the Land Uses for Government Lands and Environmentally Sensitive Lands.

Sincerely,



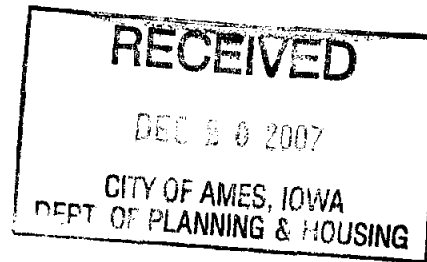
Catherine S. Brown
Planner

csb.f:projects/city/planning/government lands study 2.doc

c: Warren Madden, Vice President for Business and Finance, Iowa State University

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
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December 18, 2007

Steve Osguthorpe, Planning and Housing Director
City of Ames
515 Clark Avenue
Ames, IA 50010

Dear Steve:

Re: Government Land Study

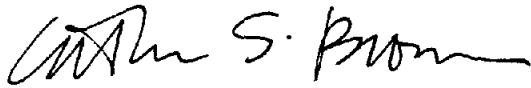
Thank you for the opportunity to review the proposed Land Uses for Government Lands and Environmentally Sensitive Lands. The proposed land uses for land areas owned by the Board of Regents, State of Iowa, for Iowa State University is generally acceptable. I would suggest a few comments for further consideration.

1. The areas near 24th St. and Stange Rd., commonly known as University Village and Schilleter Village, reflect a High-Density Residential land use rather than the proposed Medium-Density Residential. The appropriate proposed land use would be consistent with High-Density Residential.
2. The area near University Blvd and So. 16th St., commonly known as College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM), will be substantially developed for the CVM programs. The appropriate land use for the entire area should reflect a University/Affiliated land use, rather than Low-Density Residential.
3. The plan for the area near State Ave. known as the Curtiss Farm, does not clearly indicate a land use. It would be acceptable and appropriate to extend the Village/Suburban Residential to this parcel.
4. The southwest corner of the intersection of Stange Rd. and Blankenburg, commonly known as Veenker Golf Course is indicated as Parks and Open Space land use. This area is adjacent to other Low-Density Residential land uses and is similar to the south western portion of the golf course, which is also designated as Low-Density Residential. A Low-Density Residential land use would be desirable for the portion of this land tract that is elevated above the flood plain.

I have enclosed a copy of the Proposed Land Uses for Government Lands with notations for your reference. There are some tracts of land that have been identified as University Affiliated Land, that are held by others. Likewise, some tracts that have not been identified as University

Affiliated are held by the Board of Regents, State of Iowa. I am available to review these further with you or your staff at your convenience.

Sincerely,

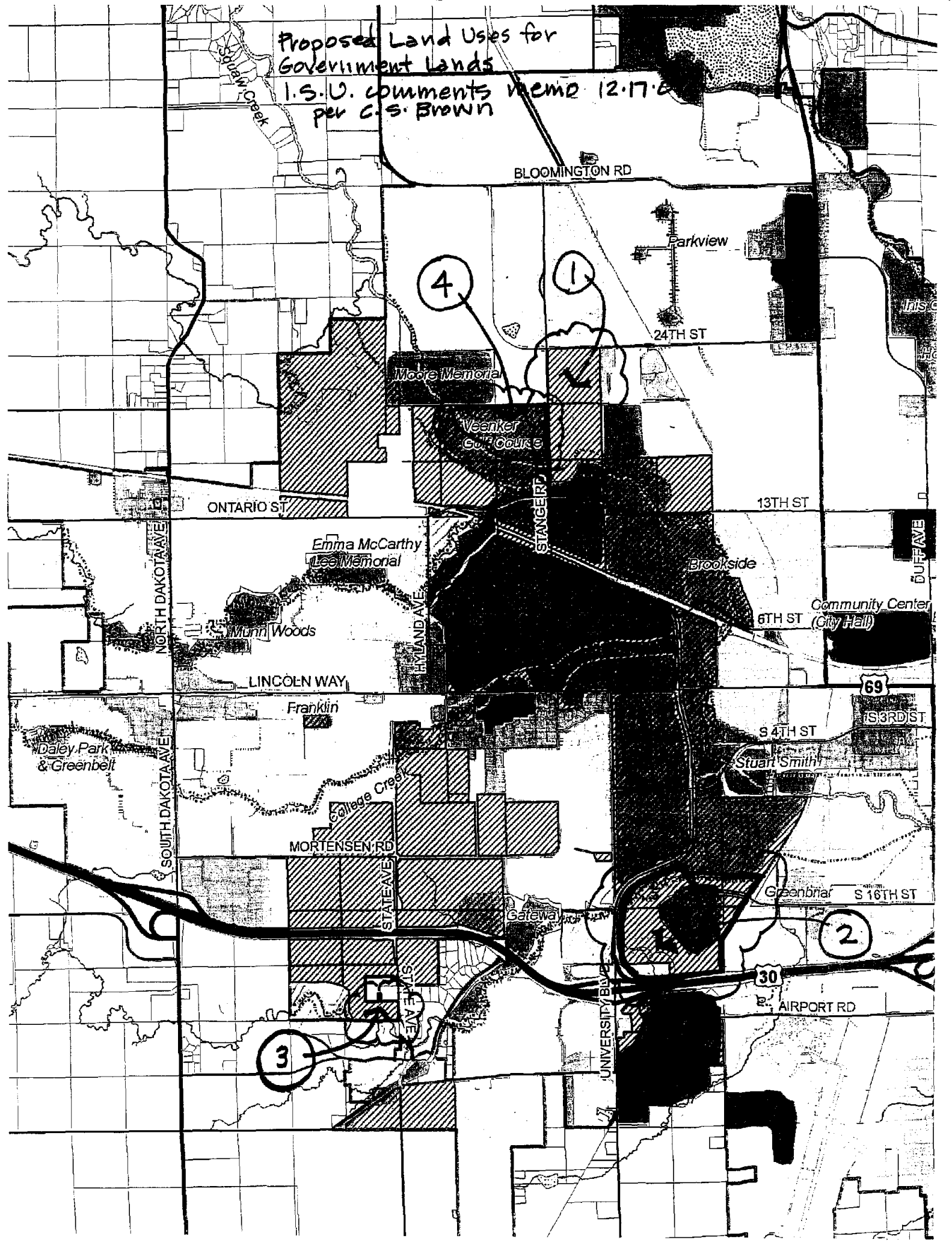
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Catherine S. Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Catherine S. Brown
Planner

c: Warren Madden, Vice President for Business and Finance, Iowa State University

Proposed Land Uses for
Government Lands

I.S.U. COMMENTS MEMO 12.17.6
per C.S. BROWN



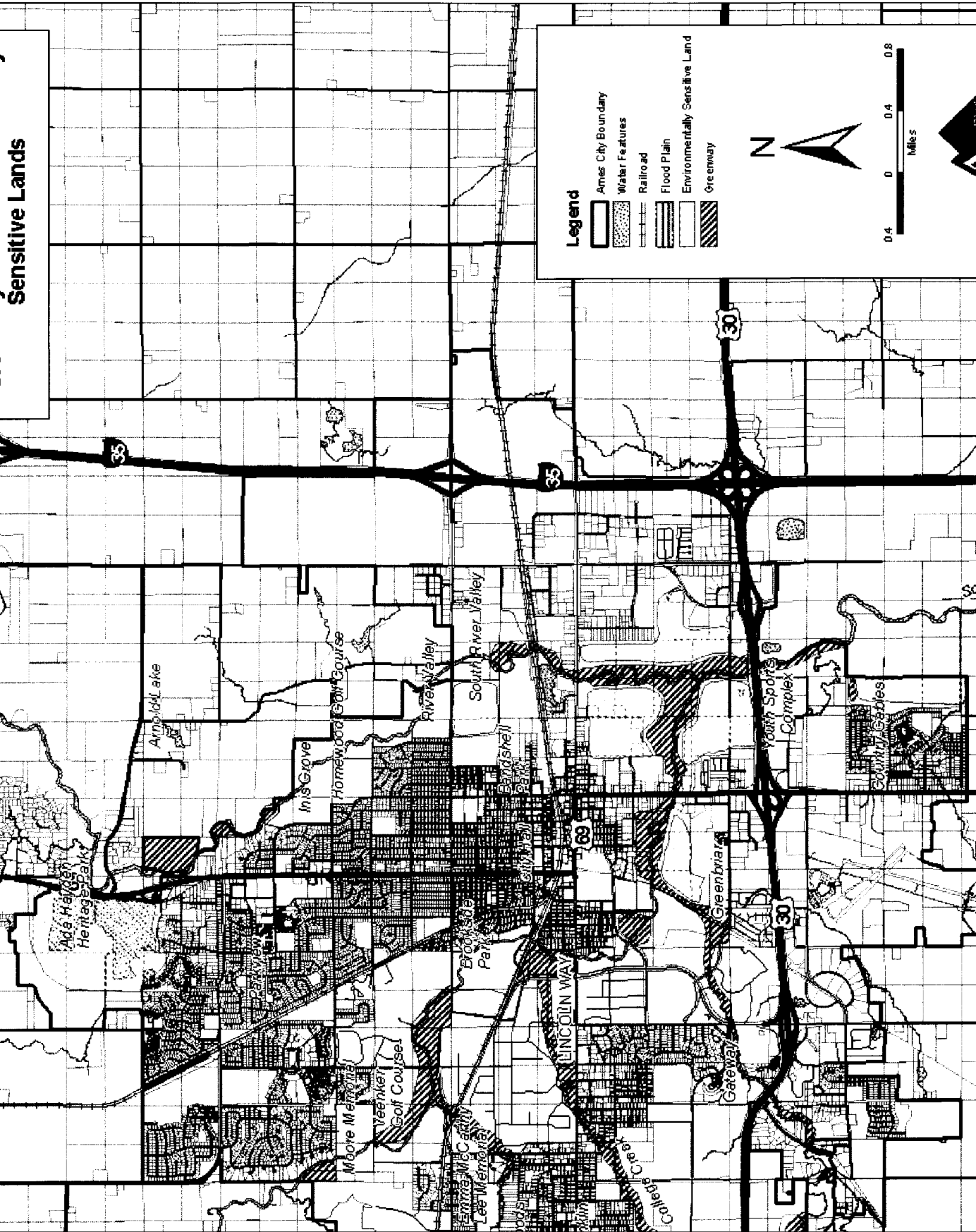
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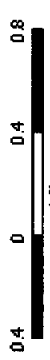
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Sensitive Lands

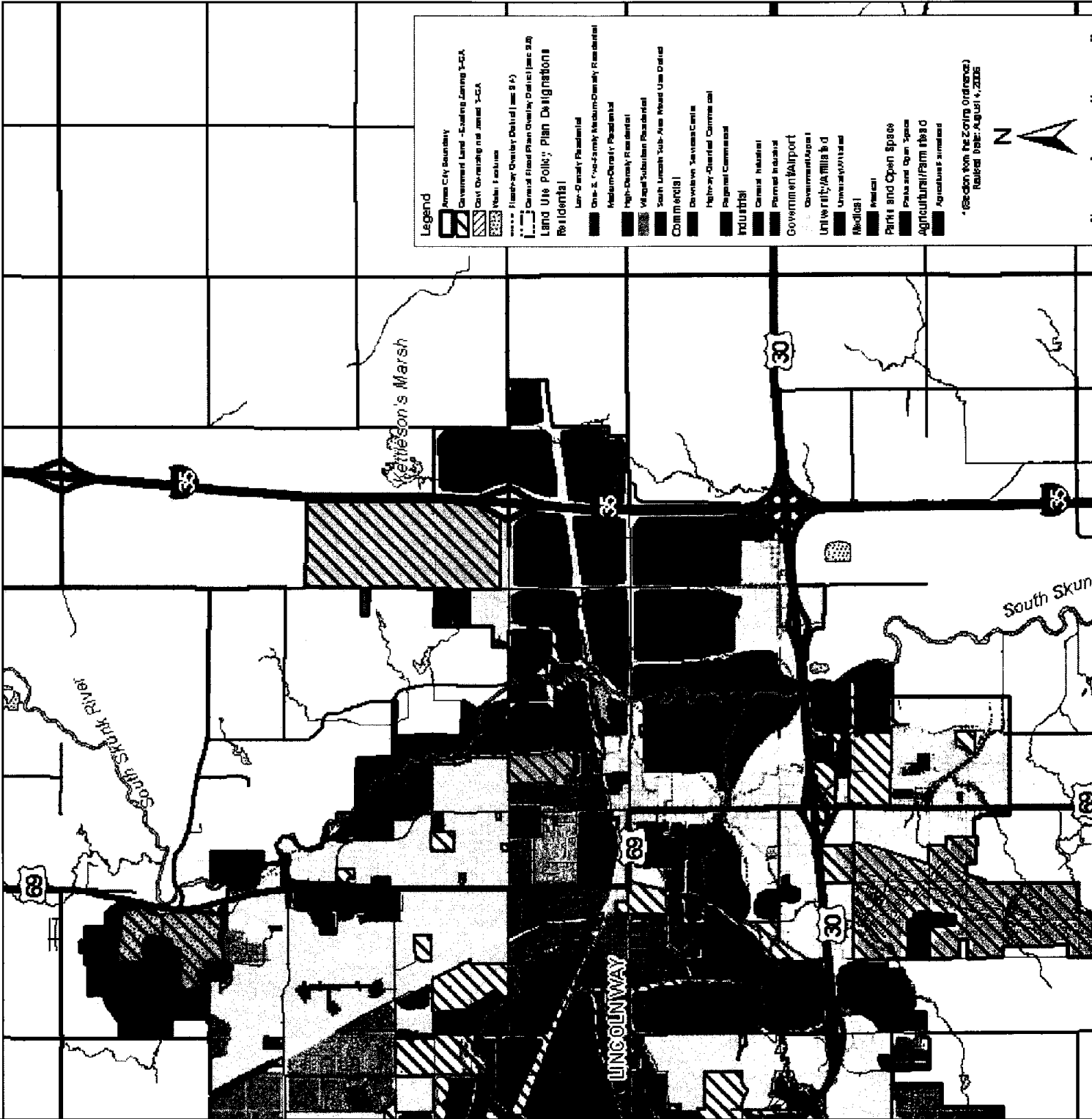


Legend

- Ames City Boundary
- Water Features
- Railroad
- Flood Plain
- Environmentally Sensitive Land
- Greenway



Miles



Legend

- Area City Boundary
- Government Land - Existing zoning 3-CX
- Govt. Governing and zoned 3-CX
- Water Features
- Kettleson Overlay District (see 8.1)
- Central Flood Plain Overlay District (see 8.2)

Land Use Policy: Plan Designations

Residential

- Low-Density Residential
- One- to Two-Family Medium-Density Residential
- Medium-Density Residential
- High-Density Residential
- Village Suburban Residential
- South Lincoln Sub-Area Mixed Use District
- Community (C1)
- Downtown Services Center
- Highway-Related Commercial
- Regional Commercial

Industrial

- General Industrial
- Planned Industrial

Government/Airport

- Government/Airport
- University/College
- Medical
- Parks and Open Space
- Public and Open Space
- Agricultural/Farm (B1 & C)
- Agriculture's successor

*Excerpt from the Zoning Ordinance
 Replaced Date: August 4, 2005



CAF APPROVAL

SS JS BK _____ SL _____

DM _____ JP _____

To be sent to:

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