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Memo

Department of Planning & Housing

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TO: City Council / Planning & Zoning Commission

FROM: Steve Osguthorpe, Planning & Housing Director

DATE: June 12, 2009

SUBJECT: June 16th Joint Work Session – Broad Overview of LUPP Goals, Objectives & Implementation

The City Council and Planning & Zoning Commission met jointly on February 17, 2009 to review the Planning & Zoning Commission's proposed planning initiatives. The discussion focused primarily on the Commission's recommendation to do a holistic review of the LUPP. The Commission expressed concern that the LUPP is not keeping up with realities that are happening, including City Council goals and development. It was clear at the meeting that more discussion was needed and that the issues could not be resolved that night. It was therefore suggested that the Commission review each goal of the LUPP apart from specific projects to determine their relevance, and more specifically determine their concerns. It was further suggested that this type of review would make it easier to discuss the vision of the LUPP, and determine if it would be necessary to form any new strategies. The two bodies therefore agreed to meet again to review the assumptions, goals, and implementing strategies of the LUPP.

Since that time, the Commission has met on three different occasions to review the broader goals and objectives of the LUPP. Staff condensed these down into a two-page summary and presented them in a PowerPoint presentation/discussion. This helped the Commission more fully understand the broader purposes of the Plan, resulting in a better appreciation of the general planning principles that are the basis of the Plan. Staff has since taken this two-page summary and expanded it to include the regulations that implement said goals, which is included as Attachment 1.

The summary helped the Commission more readily identify areas that might need to be reviewed or tweaked, or issues that might need to be better defined. Accordingly, the Commission has prepared observations and comments for the Council's consideration, which are included as Attachment 2.

The format for the work session will include a staff presentation of the LUPP summary, a brief review of the Commission's recommendations, and general discussion between the two bodies. You are each invited to bring your copy of the LUPP for reference during the discussion.

Attachment 1

Broad Overview of LUPP

Projections

Pg. 7 – Population projections

Growth in Story County – by 2030 94,000 – 96,000.

Growth in City of Ames – by 2030 65,000 – 67,000

Growth rate of 0.7 to 0.8 percent (rate between 1980 & 1990 in Story County)

Pg. 8 – Employment projections

City of Ames and its fringe – by 2030 33,700 – 35,050

Annual growth rate of 0.8 percent

Pg. 10 – Housing projections

Units in City of Ames – by 2030, 25,000 - 25,800 units

Annual growth rate of 0.8 percent

Goals & Objectives

Pg. 12 - A New Vision

Precepts

1. Targeting Growth.
 - Based on provision of public infrastructure in coordination with release of land and support by development community
2. Seeking more expansion areas while limiting intensification of existing areas
 - Anticipates provision of additional areas for development to lessen reliance on intensification of existing developed areas
3. Addressing existing and new development areas differently
 - Anticipates different planning objectives and implementation techniques in different areas including urban core, university-impacted area, and new lands
4. Providing connections for people, places, and activities
 - Provide provisions for public spaces designed to encourage social interaction
 - Encourage mixing of uses in new development to create “village” concept and to create an integrated community and sense of place

Pg. 14 – Goals for a New Vision

Goal 1 - Planning and management of growth (pg. 14)

Implementation:

- i. Population and employment targets serve as base data for
 1. Ames Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Long Range Transportation Plan
 2. Industrial Lands Studies

- 3. Commercial Land Needs Assessment
- 4. LUPP Evaluation
- 5. Ames Urban Fringe Plan
- 6. Other long range plans for infrastructure systems
- ii. Coordination with Ames Economic Development Commission

Goal 2 - Developable area provisions (pg. 15)

Objectives

- a. 3,000 – 3,500 acres of additional developable land by 2030
- b. Limited intensification and also annexation
- c. Greater compatibility among new and existing development
- d. Greater conservation of natural resources and compatibility between development and environment
- e. Integrate planning with Story and surrounding Counties

Implementation:

- i. Industrial Lands Study (2002) leading to Planned Industrial designations on LUPP and AUF map and to currently evolving Sunrise Business park plan
- ii. Convenience/Neighborhood Commercial land use designation, zoning district and design standards
- iii. Zoning standards that differentiate between previously developed areas and newly developed areas
- iv. Ames Urban Fringe Plan
- v. Flood Plain Regulations.

Goal 3 - Environmental-friendliness (pg. 16)

Objectives:

- a. Conservation management, protection, replacement, etc.
- b. Maintain value of street corridors for drainage, flood management, habitat, recreation, scenery, and pathways
- c. Protect and conserve water resources
- d. Energy conservation
- e. Protect air quality and sky access/visibility

Implementation:

- i. Flood Plain Regulations
- ii. Ada Hayden Heritage Park and watershed protection area
- iii. College Creek watershed management and research with ISU
- iv. Environmentally Sensitive Areas LUPP map, conservation easements at the Reserve, Estates of Nature's Crossing and Southfork Subdivision
- v. City of Ames ECOSmart Program
- vi. Outdoor Lighting Code

Goal 4 - Sense of place and connectivity (pg. 17)

Objectives:

- a. Integrated living and pedestrian amenities
- b. Link areas neighborhoods through intermodal transportation
- c. Psychologically connect areas through
 - i. Proximity
 - ii. Common design elements
 - iii. Inclusion of community amenities (e.g., parks)

Implementation:

- i. Village/Suburban land use designation and zoning provisions
- ii. Landscaping standards
- iii. Sign code regulations
- iv. Somerset development
- v. Convenience/Neighborhood Commercial land use designation, zoning district, design standards and development at Stange & Bloomington
- vi. Development of residential areas of various densities and commercial node west of south Dakota Ave.
- vii. South Lincoln Sub-Area Plan
- viii. University Impacted Sub-Area Plan
- ix. Overlay zones
 - a. Historic Preservation Overlay
 - b. South Lincoln Fringe Overlay
 - c. Southeast & Southwest Entryway Gateway Overlays
 - d. Northeast Gateway Overlay
 - e. East & West University Impact Overlays

Goal 5 - Cost-effectiveness and efficient growth pattern (pg. 18)

Objectives:

- a. Establish priority growth areas
- b. Implement concurrency in priority areas
- c. Continue development in areas with existing infrastructure and capacity
- d. Have real costs borne by developer if outside of priority areas or areas of existing infrastructure

Implementation:

- i. Near Term Lands land use designations
- ii. Concurrency provisions in LUPP
- iii. Minimum density standards in specified zones
- iv. Infrastructure supporting development of Southwest Priority Growth Area, U.S. Highway 30 interchange at south Dakota, including water towers and mains, arterial street
- vi. Sanitary Sewer routing studies for Worle Creek and Onion Creek
- vii. Infill development projects
- viii. Incentives for redevelopment of slum, blighted and underutilized properties (16 projects)

Goal 6 - Housing opportunities expansion (pg. 19)

Objectives:

- a. Increase supply of low and moderate-income housing
- b. Establish net densities of 5.6 units per acre to maximize housing units in new areas.
- c. Establish higher densities in designated areas, with an emphasis on appearance compatibility among existing and new development

Implementation:

- i. Affordable housing programs, including current programs for child care, homebuyers, deposit, minor repair, transportation and rental assistance
- ii. Net density ranges for various residential zoning districts.
- iii. High density infill development in Campustown and South Lincoln

Goal 7 - Mobility and alternative transportation (pg. 20)

Objectives:

- a. Establish comprehensive and integrated transportation system- multi-modal
- b. Link transportation system with desired development pattern
- c. Plan new transportation corridors to minimize impacts on significant natural resources
- d. Reduce air pollutants by increasing traffic movement efficiency
- e. Ensure development patterns protect airport and flight approach zones

Implementation:

- i. Long Range Transportation Plans
- ii. Capital Improvements, including streets, Cy Ride equipment and routes, multi-use paths
- iii. Establishing high residential densities in southwest for mass transit service
- iv. Intensification of walkable centers (University Impacted Area, Urban Core, Somerset and Village Residential development type)

Goal 8 - Downtown as a central place – community focal point (pg. 21)

Objectives:

- a. Intensification for visitor attractions, residential, offices and business support services
- b. Apply design standards and preserve historic structures
- c. Expand parking in downtown

Implementation:

- i. Zoning that allows 7 story buildings, no setbacks and no required parking for commercial uses
- ii. Downtown Façade Improvement Grants and Tax Abatement
- iii. Support of community events, Main Street Cultural District and public art
- iv. Parking structure study

Goal 9 - Economic expansion and diversification (pg. 22)

Objectives:

- a. Diversify regional employment opportunities
- b. Attract small/medium business that utilize local workforce
- c. Expand research and technology – public/private/university coordination

Implementation:

- i. Ames Seed Capital Fund, Revolving Loan Fund, Industrial Property Tax Exemption
- ii. Economic Development program with Ames Economic Development Corporation
- iii. Sunrise Business Park feasibility study
- iii. Regional Commercial and Planned Industrial use designations

Goal 10 - Cultural heritage preservation (pg. 23)

Objectives:

- a. Provide record of earlier development through preservation
- b. Ensure historic structures are integrated with new in a compatible way
- c. Protect archaeologically resources

Implementation:

- i. Historic Preservation Plan, West Ames Historic Resources Study
- ii. Old Town Historic Preservation District, Local Historic Landmarks (2), College Heights Intensive Historic Survey
- iv. Historic criteria for tax abatement in three Urban Revitalization Areas
- v. Ames Historical Society funding.

Attachment 2

Planning & Zoning Commission LUPP Recommendations

Verify and Update Trends

The Plan relies on data about a variety of trends, including population, ISU enrollment, employment, housing (across a range of values), commercial land, industrial land, and area within the city limits. These data needs to be updated and then the community can adjust expectations, targets, and policies as appropriate. This could lead to revisions to Goals 1 and 2 and the objectives under each of these goals, as they are based largely on such trends, and should have more specifics.

Changing Energy Sources

The LUPP does not recognize or address the growing interest and use of “alternative” forms of energy. Goals and/or objectives on “environmental-friendliness” and mobility and alternative transportation should be revised to specifically address where and how to accommodate renewable wind and solar energy production and electricity used for transportation, as well as recognizing that other energy sources may emerge. The Plan should also guide how to balance these needs with other community values such as land use conflicts and aesthetics.

Linkages

More priority should be given to adequate bicycle trails to link the entire community and its surroundings. Other alternative forms of transportation should also be considered. This is important to the goal on connectivity, to the goal on transportation, and to the goal on the downtown as it should address integrating the expansion of parking with improving access by autos, bicycles, pedestrians, and mass transit.

Housing and Residential Development

In addition to updating the objectives for building residences based on updated trends, other objectives of the Plan should be reconsidered. Integrating residential areas with employment locations and commercial services *may* be more important than compactness and minimum densities. We should consider whether aesthetic values and appearance compatibility between these uses may be more important to the community now than higher densities. Policies and programs are needed to accomplish more effectively the current objective on supply of housing for families with low or moderate incomes. Goals 2, 4, and 6 relate to these issues.

Downtown/Campustown

In addition to the above four issues, the importance of Downtown and Campustown may need better definition in the plan. Specifically, intensification, vertical development, parking, pedestrian access, and the amount of open space should be considered. These issues pertain to specific aspects of the development of these areas, and are more specifically addressed in the “Policy Options” portion of the LUPP. A review of these Policy Options may therefore be in order. Policy options for Downtown address access, parking, circulation, uses, intensity of development, and public space. Policy options for the University Impacted Area mention the intensification of the Campustown area. Policy options for the South Lincoln Sub-Area address several aspects of intensification for this area. Specific area plans have also been developed for each of these areas. Rather than addressing the needs for Downtown and Campustown at the general policy level of the LUPP, it may be more productive for the Commission and Council to consider more detailed planning and/or implementation steps needed for each of these sub-areas.

Overall Vision

Although Commission members agreed that the Plan is based upon solid planning principles and generally support the goals and objectives stated therein, but the Commission believes that the Plan lacks an overarching vision of what the City wants to be. The Vision should state a distinct desired outcome of the plan, e.g.,

- a. The City of Ames is...
- b. The City of Ames will be “X” in 2030, 2050...

What is the vision for the future of Ames? If a preferred future is not stated then any future is a success for the plan. A clearly defined vision statement would help to better understand how the separate goals and objectives dovetail with and reinforce each other, and would provide better guidance when reviewing proposals to either implement the Plan, or to amend the Plan.