

Staff Report

RESIDENTIAL HIGH DENSITY EVALUATION TOOL

January 13, 2015

BACKGROUND:

City Council conducted a workshop on November 18, 2014 to discuss general trends of residential development with a focus on Residential High Density development. (See November 18th Presentation Attachment A). This discussion was spurred on due to multiple active requests for Council to consider rezoning of property or for Land Use Policy Plan (LUPP) amendments to designate land for high density.

Active requests for additional rezoning or LUPP amendments to allow High Density Residential include the following:

- Rezoning S. 17th Street Commercial to RH – 12 acres – 250 units
- LUPP change Eastgate Commercial to RH – 10 acres – 200 units
- LUPP S. Duff Commercial to RH for 15 to 40 acres – 250 to 700 units
- Rezoning Rose Prairie to PRD for apartments on 9 acres – 180 units
- Rezoning Hunziker GW Carver to PRD for condos on 4 acres – 25 units

The estimated development potential of all five combined requests ranges from 850 to 1,400 units. This number of new units would correlate roughly to 1,600 to 4,200 bedrooms. Development of all these multiple-family units would be a 10- 15% increase in multi-family housing units for the City. The above requests are in addition to previously approved or pending development projects that are described in the table on Slide 7 of Attachment A.

At the November 18th meeting, Council reviewed the relevant LUPP goals and discussed their applicability to the review of RH requests. Discussion included statements regarding need for housing options for non-students, conversion of commercial land to residential, CyRide access and capacity, architectural design, affordable housing, location in the community, and access to services.

Council then directed staff to return to Council with a “tool” to evaluate the suitability of individual requests for RH development. The basis of the tool would be the language of the LUPP that guides interests for new residential development.

In response to Council’s direction, staff has created a summary of the pertinent LUPP Objectives that expand upon the LUPP Goals. These are included as background in Attachment B. The relevant Objectives are summarized as Developable Land; Cost Effective and Efficient Growth; Community Character and Place; Range of Housing Choice; Environmental Sustainability; Mobility/Transportation; and Manage Growth and support economic development. This list is broad with detailed sub-elements. Although useful, on its own this list does not help refine the assessment of individual projects as directed by Council.

To help focus the discussion on site specific issues, staff has drafted a condensed evaluation tool based upon the LUPP Objectives that are relevant to rezoning and LUPP amendments. **The evaluation tool highlights six primary subjects with explanatory sub-elements (See Attachment C).**

The draft evaluation tool is set up to act as a quick assessment tool for sorting a proposal into relative tiers of LUPP consistency. A first tier would have attributes of a high number of LUPP objectives; a second tier would have an average or neutral position with some positive attributes but not readily distinguishable from many sites across the City; and a third tier position would be where a project lacks attributes of most LUPP objectives or has some substantial negative attributes. **Staff has not weighted or prioritized any one topic over another with the tool. If a decision is made to use this tool, Council may want to discuss weighting and/or prioritizing components and how to use the tool. The tool could be used to “score” projects or simply to highlight positives or negatives of a proposed project.**

The six subject topics of the evaluation tool include:

1. Location and Surroundings
2. Site Features
3. Housing Types and Design
4. Transportation
5. Public Utilities and Services
6. Investment/Catalyst

Location and Surroundings

Objectives for Developable Land, Community Character and Place, and Range of Housing Choices are the basis for the details of this category. This category supports inclusiveness of a development and access to community services versus isolation of a site within the community. The sub-bullets focus on whether a site is part of a larger neighborhood, could be part new neighborhood, has convenient access to schools or parks, has convenient access to a variety of commercial services, and has direct access to employment centers.

Site Features

Objectives for Developable Land and Environmental Sustainability provide the basis for the on-site features of a subject site. This topic identifies if a site is flood prone, has natural or sensitive areas, has a compatible living environment for noise or air quality, and if a project can incorporate protection of sensitive areas.

Housing Type and Design

Objectives for Wide Range of Housing Choices and Community Character and Place relate to this category. Issues of housing type and variety, architectural design and quality, design integration with neighboring uses, and affordability of housing fit this topic. The LUPP supports new development that provides for needed housing variety and attention to the design and character of a project that fits within its neighborhood context and city-wide needs. Notably, the RH base zone does not include enhanced design parameters, since this has only occurred in Overlay Districts or as part of the Floating Zones with a PRD.

Transportation

Objectives for Environmental Sustainability and Mobility relate to the desirability of the location of a particular site within the overall city. Issues of transit access and capacity, walk ability, bike ability, connectivity, and roadway capacity are the fundamental concerns for this category. Different areas of the City will be better suited to absorbing an intensified use or will already have the support facilities needed for a high quality living environment. In some instances, development may spur new transportation improvements that increase services to an area and neighborhood. Costs of increased services and facilities would be reviewed based on location for incentivized growth and for individual project impacts.

Public Utilities and Services

Objectives for Cost Effective and Efficient Growth along with Developable Land lead this topic. Basic infrastructure adequacy related to sanitary sewers, water, stormwater, parks, and emergency response are topics within this category. These issues range from individual lines or facilities near a site to the off-site needs of pump stations, towers, treatment plants, etc. The City strives to time major improvements along with development and to manage infrastructure in its design to minimize operational/maintenance costs to the City over the long term. New infrastructure needed by a development is typically a developer's cost. Costs of increased services and facilities would be reviewed based on location for incentivized growth and for individual project impacts.

Investment/Catalyst

This topic embodies the general sense of the LUPP Vision and Goals to support the overall city with investment in neighborhood or district character. Objectives for Community Character and Place, Economic Diversification, and Wide Range of Housing Choice are supportive of these concepts. Development fits this concept in both areas of new growth or select development in existing areas. The catalyst component reaches the issue of trying to create a sense of place or transition an area that often has market barriers or hurdles to achieve the goals of the LUPP.

The sub-components of this topic are not well developed within the LUPP. Staff recommends that relevant issues are Mixed-Use commercial development, creating positive community character, identity and sense of place through new development, or support of prior planning efforts and city investments. Staff believes this topic would align best with clear vision and direction of the LUPP to specific areas or development types, such as support of Downtown, mixed use, or allowable growth areas. It is unlikely that this category would apply to all requests for RH intensifications across the City.

Land Conversion

While the proposed evaluation tool addresses attributes of RH uses for a proposed LUPP amendment or zone change, **it does not address the conversion of land from one desirable land use to another.** Changes of commercial or industrial land will still need a case-by-case assessment of overall need and locational value of the land to the City's long term economic interests. The forthcoming LUPP Update will provide more clarity on the City's commercial and industrial land needs that are not part of this effort of reviewing RH development types.

NEXT STEPS:

Council requested the discussion of RH development concerns in response to pending requests for LUPP amendments and upcoming zone change requests. The Planning and Zoning Commission is scheduled to receive the RH development tool staff report at its next meeting on January 21st. At this time staff believes there are four primary considerations for the RH discussion:

1) Determine the usefulness of the RH evaluation tool and how Council is interested in applying the assessment to a proposal. This would also include issues of weighting or prioritization within the evaluation tool. Council could identify additional information it requires to complete the evaluation tool or change the topics or sub-components.

2) If the City Council would like to take action beyond the use of this evaluation, Council might identify specific development policies or standards to revise to ensure that new RH development meets the City's interests. Council could include direction to create a high density zoning district different than traditional RH with different design requirements, to create a mixed-use zoning district or overlay, to make changes to RH base zone development standards, to establish basic design guidelines for high density development, or to make other specific development standard changes. **This option could be pursued if the Council is not satisfied with the types of RH developments that are been developed.**

In lieu of changes to standards or in combination with changes to zoning standards, Council may indicate their interest for Development Agreements or Zoning Agreements to allow for project-by-project evaluation of issues related to the evaluation tool. This is similar to the approach recommended by staff with the S. 17th Street LUPP amendment and upcoming zone change application that highlighted concerns with the change of use, site access, and timing of its development that are to be addressed by the applicant prior to zoning approval.

3) Two out of the five possible RH developments highlighted above have formally requested a LUPP amendment. The Council may choose to place these two pending requests (Eastgate and S. Duff) on a future agenda to give direction on whether or not to proceed with either project, and if so in what manner.

4) The Council might ask staff to consider how to apply the evaluation tool proactively within the community. Using the categories of the evaluation tool, staff could identify highly rated potential sites that may be desirable for allowing RH development. Council would need to indicate some parameters for studying the city in terms of the minimum size of sites, new or redevelopment opportunities, etc.

STAFF COMMENTS

The LUPP embodies the City's expectations that multi-family building needs would be met through medium density development types rather than high density development. A noted exception is the pre-planning for intensification of Campustown. Therefore, RH development has a history of case-by-case assessment of need and appropriateness for proposed LUPP amendments and zone changes. At this time it appears housing

interests are somewhat different than the assumptions of the LUPP with preferences for wider housing choices, including multi-family living options that are not based on student housing needs. The value of RH land is quite high and there is a significant economic benefit to property owners and developers to be approved for RH development due to the current demand.

Per Council's direction, the proposed evaluation tool includes examples of site specific concerns that may influence policy decisions on the appropriateness of a RH development on sites throughout the City. **The tool is appropriate for reviewing developer initiated amendments. The tool could also be used to proactively identify highly rated potential sites across the City for allowing RH development.**

Limits of the evaluation tool are that, in and of itself, it does not shape or help promote well designed individual projects, nor does it help balance market interests with long term planning priorities. Current RH base zoning does not fit many site design related objectives of the LUPP. Only in overlay districts, and to some degree in FS-RM, has the City established modest design expectations. **This means that with a site that appears to be highly consistent with the categories in the evaluation tool, the project is not ensured of becoming a quality project within RH zoning due to its limited range of standards and no architectural design review.**

For concerns of long term planning balanced with market demand, there will likely always be a challenge of meeting immediate interests compared to what are the City's desired sites for meeting the community's long term interests. This occurs because often times availability or cost of a property does not correspond to the timing of the market, but available sites should not always be the determining factor on whether or not a given project is desirable. **In staff's opinion, over responsiveness to immediate market interests will not always serve the City's long term vision if saturation of the market makes it uneconomical to develop desired sites due to low demand. Developer initiated proposals for changes will always need a case-by-case assessment of timing and need, even with the proposed evaluation tool that helps to highlight the features of a proposed site.**

Attachment A
November 18th Council Work Shop Presentation

**CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
NOVEMBER 18, 2014**

**HOUSING DEVELOPMENT
BEGINNING THE DISCUSSION**

Housing Development Overview

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- **Purpose of Workshop**
 - Begin discussion of citywide housing topic prior to Council dealing with individual high density residential requests
 - Review land use policy plan goals relationship to residential development
 - Provide overview of 2014-15 multi-family development and requests
 - Summarize single family development information
 - Obtain direction regarding Council priorities for development requests and City Council Goals

Land Use Policy Plan Vision

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- “A New Vision” Basis of Plan (pg. 16) (Vision Statements pg. 124)
 - Allowable Growth Areas (formerly Targeting Growth)
 - Seeking more expansion areas while limiting intensification of existing areas
 - Addressing existing and new development areas differently
 - Providing connections for people, places, and activities
- Principles for guiding Goals:

#1 Planning and Management

#6 Housing Opportunities

#2 Developable Area Provisions

#7 Mobility and alternative transportation

#3 Environmental-friendliness

#8 Downtown as a central place

#4 Sense of Place and connectivity

#9 Economic expansion and diversification

#5 Cost-effectiveness and efficient growth

#10 Cultural heritage preservation

Land Use Policy Plan Goals Summary

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- Housing development issues are interrelated
 - **Goal 1** Plan and manage growth within City's capacity and preferences.
 - **Goal 2** - Availability of suitable land for commercial, industrial and residential. Guide character, location, and compatibility.
 - **Goal 3** - Environmentally sustainable community, minimize impacts on natural resources and use planning to minimize vehicle trips support multi-modal transportation.
 - **Goal 4**- Create and connect place and character, support neighborhood development and services
 - **Goal 5**- Cost effective and efficient growth

Land Use Policy Plan Goals Summary

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- Continued...
 - **Goal 6** Housing opportunities and wide range of choices. Provide for affordable housing, minimum densities, and high density development where designated with use and appearance compatibility.
 - **Goal 7** – Transportation system support and expansion
 - **Goal 8** - Downtown as a focal point
 - **Goal 9**- Economic development expansion and diversification
 - **Goal 10**- Cultural Heritage and Historic Preservation

Land Use Policy Plan Goals Summary

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- Multi-family housing needs would be met through:
 - Intensification of Campustown, Downtown, South Lincoln
 - Medium Density development with Suburban Residential Zoning or Villages
 - Did not plan for new High Density Residential areas
- High density residential has been determined on a case-by-case review of need and location, e.g.
 - Mortenson/South Dakota 2004
 - S. 16th/Grand 2003 and 2010
- RH LUPP Amendments have been a change from Commercial or Institutionally owned land

Multi-Family Development

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Apartment Units/Bedrooms Constructed or Under Construction (2010 –October 2014)

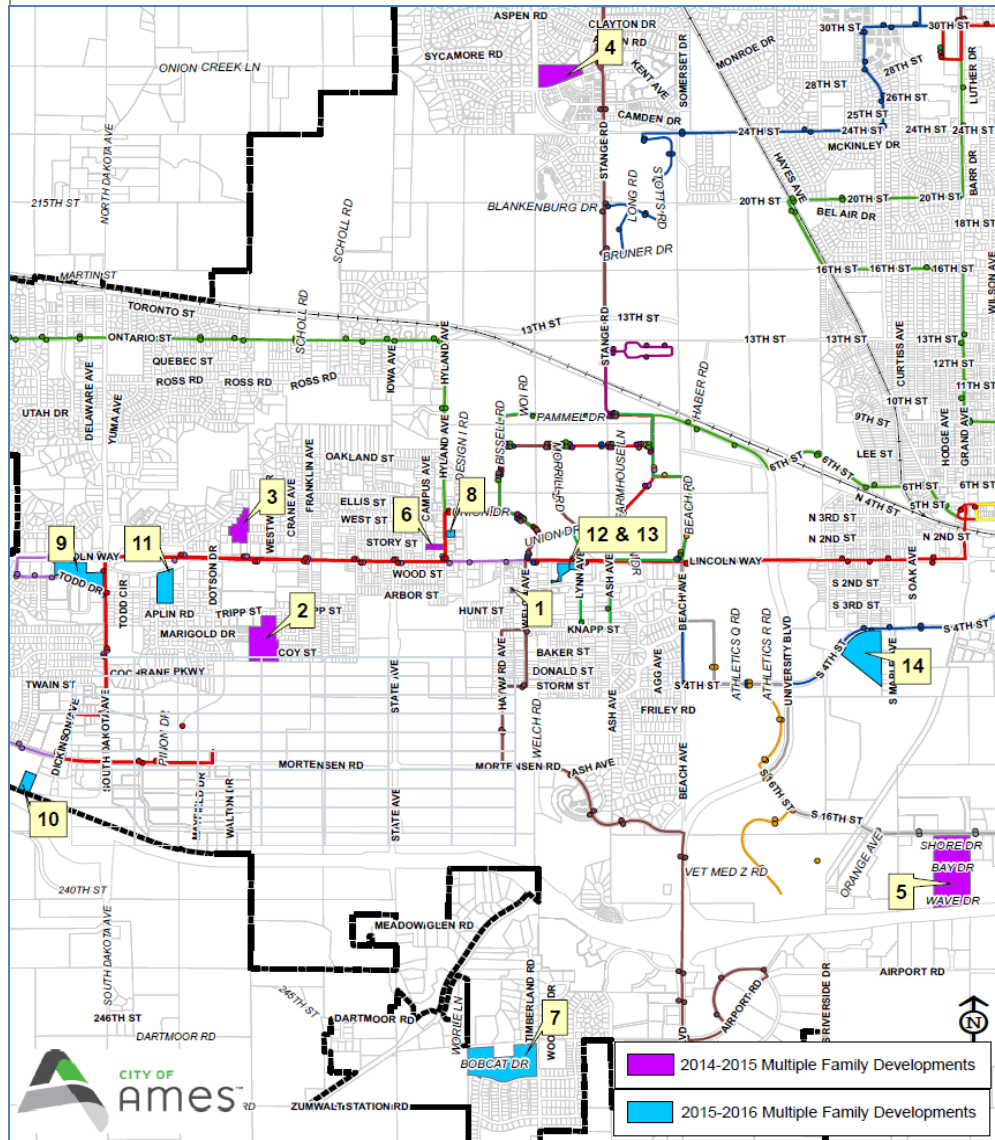
<i>Year</i>	<i>Apartments Building Permits Issued</i>	<i>Iowa State New Construction</i>	<i>Senior & Group Living Facilities Building Permits Issued</i>
2010	95 Units 211 BR		
2011	356 Units 872 BR		
2012	279 Units 563 BR		
2013	286 Units 824 BR	720 BR	
2014	344 Units 998 BR		123 Units 182 BR
Total Units & Bedrooms 2010-2014	1,360 Units 3468 BR (5-yr Average: 272 units/694 BR)	720 BR	123 Units 182 BR

Additional Pending or Proposed Estimated Bedrooms (as of October 1, 2014)

<i>Site Plan Review (Staff Approval)</i>	<i>Zoning with Master Plan</i>	<i>Iowa State Buchanan Hall Site</i>	<i>Total</i>
730 BR	200 BR*	700 BR	1630 BR

Total of constructed and current pending ≈ 1,800 units (5,900 beds with ISU)

Projected New Development Occupancy Map



2014-2015 Developments

ID	Development	Units	Beds
1	Chamberlain	8	40
2	Southfork 5th	18	36
3	Westwood Village	24	72
4	Somerset	48	96
5	Copper Beech	219	660
6	125 Hyland	13	44
Totals		330	948

2015-2016 Development

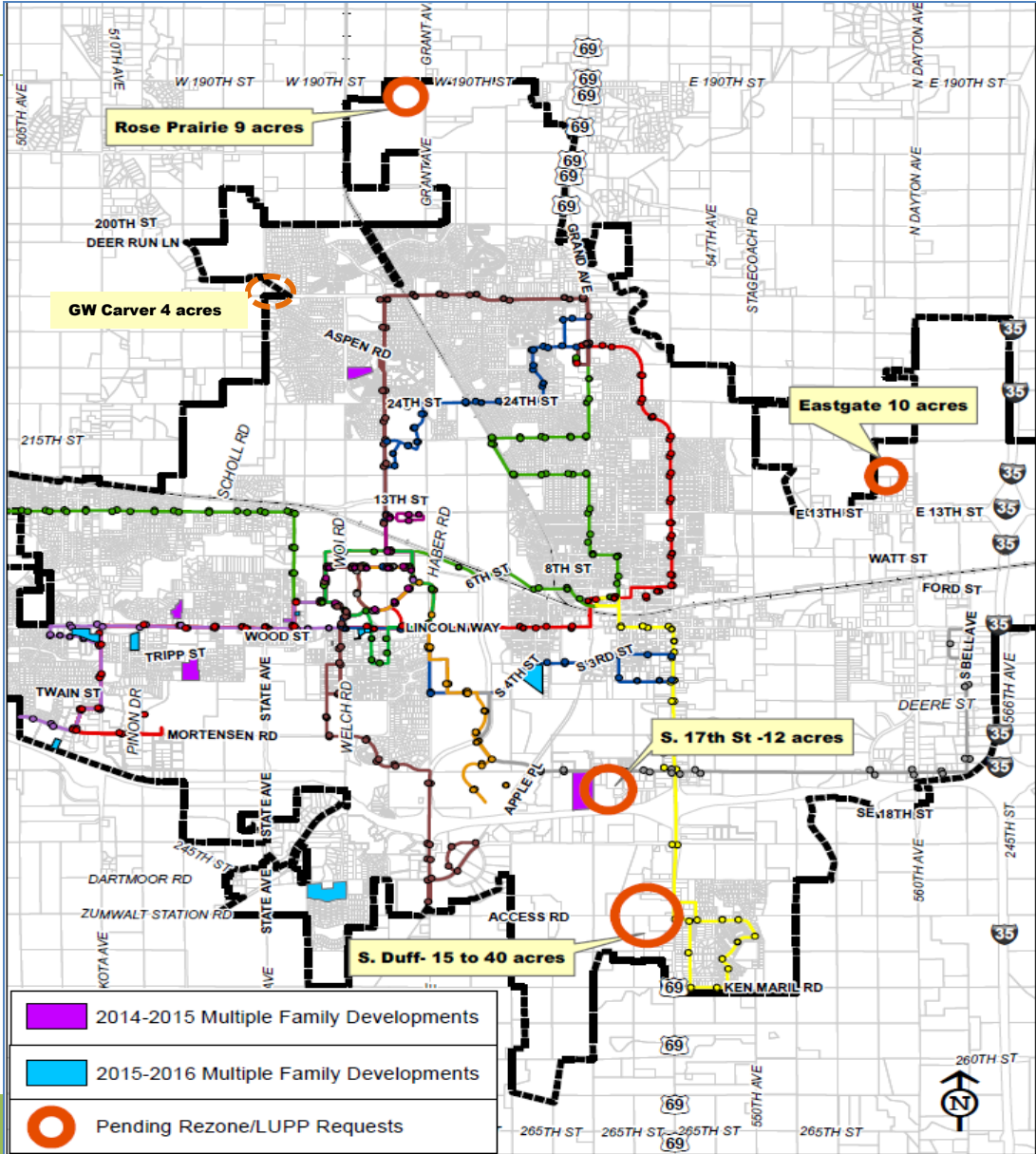
ID	Development	Units	Beds
7	Ringgenberg	96	192
8	140 Hyland	8	16
9	Todd/Lincoln Way	70	125
10	4710 Mortensen Road	35	108
11	Lincoln Swing	85	260
12	Gilbane Development	96	320
13	OPUS Development	53	144
14	1204 4th Street	134	376
Totals		577	1541

Multi-Family Development

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- Active requests for additional rezoning or LUPP amendments to High Density:
 - S. 17th Street Rezone Commercial to RH- 12 acres-250 units
 - Eastgate LUPP Commercial to RH-10 acres- 200 units
 - S Duff LUPP Commercial to RH-15 to 40 acres-700 units
 - Rose Prairie Rezone to PRD for high density- 9 acres-180 units
 - Hunziker GW Carver to PRD for condos in low density- 4 acres-25 units
- Estimated development totals of the above requests:
 - Approximately 60 gross acres
 - **Approximately 700- 1,400 units in addition to what is already approved**
 - 1,600-4,200 bedrooms (*assumes mix of unit types with an average of 2 to 3 BR*)
- Buildout of these sites would be over next 2 -5 years in a high demand rental market,
 - Note this may not be the case without ISU enrollment increases
- Additional preliminary inquiries include-
 - Campustown, West Lincoln Way, and Research Park/Wessex Expansion Areas

Current RH Development and Requested RH



Single Family Development

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- Single-family development (attached and detached) average of 80 units a year for past 5 years

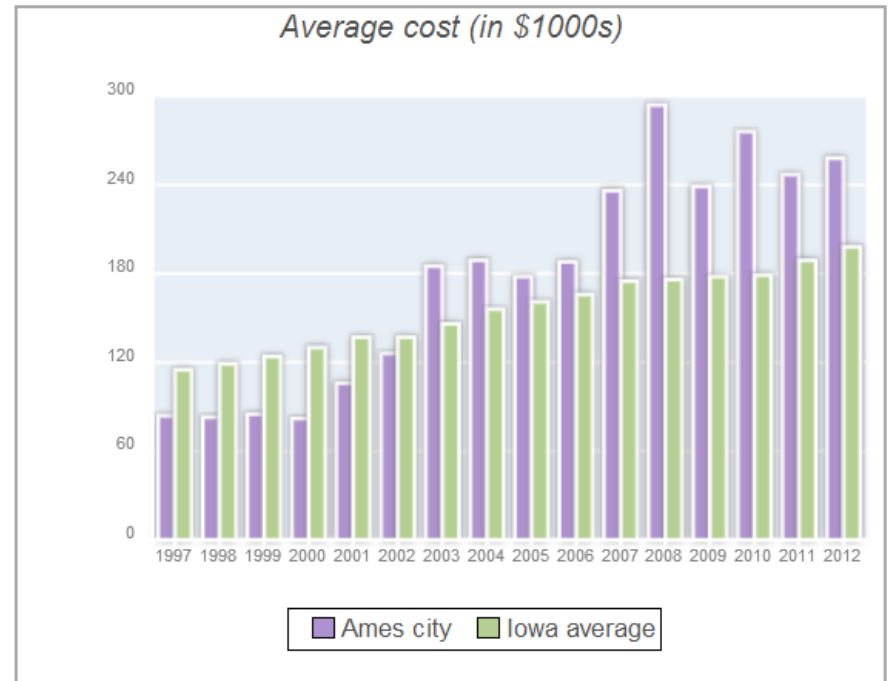
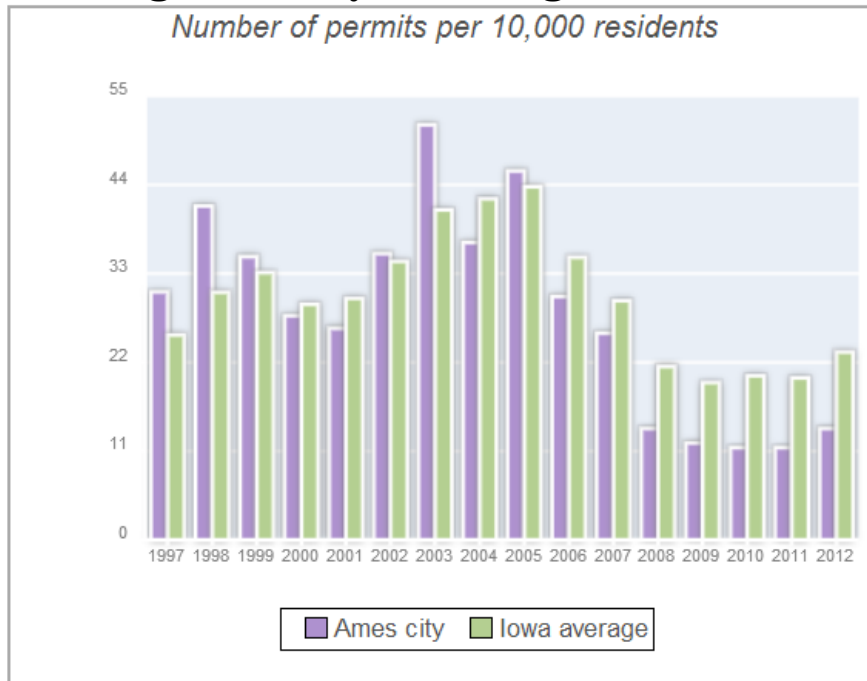
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014 ^{November}
Single-Family Detached	49	54	68	83	55
Single-Family Attached	9	4	2	43	28
SF Totals	58	58	70	126	83

- Ten year average for SF is 105 units per year.
- SF housing production peaked 2003-2005
 - Averaged (238 units) 195 SF Detached and 43 SF Attached over these three years

Single Family Building Permit Trends

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Single-Family Building Permits



Source: city-data.com

- ACS 5-yr avg. Median home or condo value 2011 \$171,341 (it was \$125,300 in 2000)
- ACS 5-yr avg. Median Family income \$79,628 2012 (it was \$56,439 in 2000)

Single-Family Development

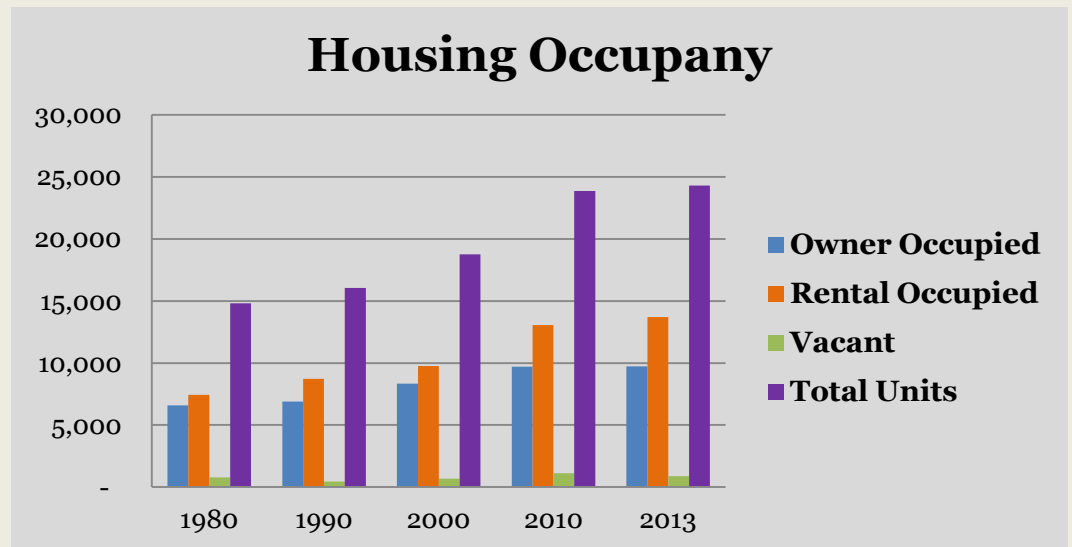
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- Most of the near terms lands are built out, e.g.
 - Ringgenberg, Sunset Ridge, and Northridge Heights, Sommerset
- Next wave of single family is North Growth with approximately 1,100+ housing units
 - Quarry Estates ≈ 160 SF units
 - Hunziker properties ≈ 220 SF units
 - Rose Prairie ≈ 700 SF units
 - Scenic Valley Subdivision = 150 SF units
 - Ames Golf and Country Club (abutting City) ≈ 25 SF units

Housing Statistics

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- Ames has a history of the majority of its housing units as Multi-Family
- ACS 2013 estimates 48% as SF Buildings and 52% as MF Buildings
- Census provides a count of owner/rental households
 - Vacancy varies between 5.3% and 2.8%



LUPP Assumptions

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- Population Projections can be met in Growth Areas, if developed, without accommodating requests for additional RH land
- Growth Areas largely undeveloped past 10 years
- North Growth starts in 2014
- Potential need of 5,000 to 7,000 housing units over next 16 years, dependent on housing types and household sizes

[This is an average of 412 units a year](#)

2008 Growth Area Study Assessment	
Ames population 2010	58,965
Population Capacity for growth inside city limits 2008	3,000
Capacity for growth within North Allowable Growth Area	3,000
Capacity for growth within Northwest Allowable Growth Area	8,995
Capacity for growth within Southwest Allowable Growth Area	9,375
Total Population of existing City and Fringe Area at total buildout	83,372

Council Discussion

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- **City Council Direction for LUPP Update:**
 - Work with the current Vision and Goals
 - Look at our residential housing needs, variety of housing, etc.
 - Review our Growth Area Planning
 - Integrate needed concepts and trends
 - Consider if there is potential for infill
 - Assess the potential for Lincoln Way as a Corridor Plan
 - ✦ Consider Lincoln Way and how it ties neighborhoods and the City together
 - ✦ Commercial/Employment Uses
 - ✦ Infill Housing
 - ✦ Transportation options, coordinate with adjacent uses and neighborhoods
- **Council Goal-Address Housing Needs**
 - Explore ways to encourage availability of all types of housing
 - Investigate ways to increase availability of affordable housing
 - Reevaluate building and zoning codes to determine if changes should be made to improve the existing housing stock at a lower cost

Council Discussion/Direction

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Key Questions For Discussion-

- What is the level of sustained demand for RH, without increased student housing?
- What are the additional immediate RH needs and response to the current requests?
- Does Council want a more complete citywide assessment for infill and/or growth area RH opportunities?
 - Part of Council Goal on housing conditions
 - Task related to LUPP review of housing types and needs

Attachment B
LUPP Objectives Long Form List for RH Development

LUPP Objectives	Y	N	NA
Manage Growth Objective 1 C-Population Target of 61,000- 73,000 & Employment			
Consistent with Growth Targets			
Support Economic Growth and Diversity			
Developable Land-Objective 2.A Focus on New area with limited intensification of existing areas			
Within New Lands			
Intensification of Existing Residential Neighborhood			
Location in core area of the City			
Developable Land-Objective 2.B Sufficient resources to accommodate planned growth			
Requests match projected needs			
Developable Land-Objective 2.C Development process for greater compatibility of new and existing development			
Architectural design			
Site improvements			
Landscaping			
Public Facilities			
Developable Land-Objective 2.C Conservation of natural resources and compatibility of new development and the environment			
Existing vegetation			
Flood Plain			
Environmental Sustainable-Objective 3.A Provide for biodiversity			
Site includes natural habitat			
Site development incorporates significant undisturbed elements of habitat			
Environmental Sustainable-Objective 3.A Enhance Stream corridors and flood management			
Site includes riparian area			
Development located within flood plain			
Site development incorporates recreation or scenic areas			
Site development incorporates pathways and greenways			
Environmental Sustainable-Objective 3.D Energy Conservation			
Location supports multi-modal transportation to reduce vehicle trips			
Site has direct access to CyRide service			
Environmental Sustainable-Objective 3.D Atmosphere Quality			
Location not exposed to noxious odors and fumes			
Location not exposed to loud noise or vibrations			

Community Character and Place- Objective 4.A- Provide for integrated and compact living areas to supply daily living requirements and amenities			
location in close proximity to schools (15 minute walk)			
Location in close proximity to park and recreation facilities(10 minute walk)			
Location integrated with similar uses, part of a neighborhood			
Location in close proximity to variety of commercial services (15 minute walk)			
Location in close proximity to employment (30 minute walk)			
Community Character and Place- Objective 4.B- Physically connect residential and commercial areas with related uses and transportation			
Direct access to appropriate CyRide route			
CyRide service capacity available			
Direct access to cycling facilities			
Adequate and safe pedestrian sidewalk and path connections to other areas			
Adequate roadway capacity within the area and adjacent of the site			
Community Character and Place- Objective 4.C- Establish sense of place and identity for living and activity areas			
Use of design elements for architectural identity			
Use of site design to buffer uses			
Use of site to provide for amenities			
Neighborhood includes appropriate community amenities of school, parks			
Use of common areas to promote identity			
Cost Effect an Efficient Growth-Objective 5.A. Establish Growth Priority Areas			
Located within an allowable growth area			
Located within an incentivized growth area			
Cost Effect an Efficient Growth-Objective 5.C. Development within infill areas with adequate infrastructure			
Adequate Sanitary Sewer without lift stations			
Adequate water service without pump stations			
Adequate emergency response and protection			
Adequate roadway improvements			
Wide Range of Housing Choices- Objective 6.A Increase affordable housing to low and moderate income households			
Conserves existing affordable units			
Incorporates new affordable housing units within development			
Wide Range of Housing Choices- Objective 6.C Establish Higher Density where designated and appearance is compatible			
Compatible architectural design in massing, height and design quality with surroundings			
Site Layout compatibility with surroundings with access points			
Site Layout compatibility with surroundings for site improvements of buildings, activity areas			

Landscape design for buffering and integration into the area			
Wide Range of Housing Choices- Objective 6.C Increase housing availability			
Annexation of new lands			
Targeted area for development partnership			
Mobility Objective 7.B Transportation system lined with desired development pattern			
Mobility Objective 7.D Efficient vehicular transportation system			
Existing roadway/intersection congestion			
Project roadway/intersection congestion			
Mobility Objective 7.E Protect Airport operations and flight approaches			
Adjacent to airport			
Downtown Objective 8.A Diversify and enhance downtown			
High Density Residential located downtown			

Attachment C
RH Evaluation Evaluation tool

RH Site Evaluation Evaluation tool	Project Consistency		
	High	Average	Low
Location/Surroundings			
Integrates into an existing neighborhood with appropriate interfaces and transitions			
Creates new neighborhood, not an isolated project			
Located near daily services and amenities (15 minute walk to school, park ,variety of commercial services)			
Located near employment centers or ISU Campus (20 minute walk, 15 minute drive)			
Site			
Contains no substantial natural features on the site (woodlands, wetlands, waterways)			
Located outside of the Floodway Fringe			
Separated adequately from environmental concerns for adjacent noise, operations, air quality (trains, highways, airport approach, industrial uses)			
Ability to preserve or sustain natural features			
Housing Types and Design			
Needed housing or building type or variety of housing types			
Architectural interest and character			
Site design for landscape buffering			
Includes affordable housing (Low and Moderate Income)			
Transportation			
Adjacent to CyRide line to employment/campus (10 minutes walk to bus stop)			
CyRide service has adequate schedule and capacity for more riders			
Served by pedestrian and bike facilities with connectivity to neighborhood or for commute			
Adequate roadway capacity and site access (existing and planned LOS C, safe approaches)			
Public Utilities/Services			
Adequate storm, water, sewer capacity for intensification			
Consistent with emergency response goals			
Investment/Catalyst			
Supports prior neighborhood/district investments or planning for services and infrastructure			
Creates character/identity/sense of place about an area			
Encourages economic development or diversification of commercial uses (mixed use)			