

Staff Report
**Land Use Policy Plan Amendment Initiation Request for
1305 Baltimore Drive (Eastgate)**

January 27, 2014

BACKGROUND:

On September 9, 2014, the City Council directed staff to prepare a memo providing information related to Kurt Friedrich's request for a Land Use Policy Plan (LUPP) Map Amendment (see enclosure). **Mr. Friedrich desires to pursue a change of approximately 12 acres of vacant land from Community Commercial Node to High-Density Residential.** The subject area is multiple properties within the Eastgate commercial subdivision north of East 13th Street and west of Dayton Road. The subject area is located along Baltimore Road. (See Attachments A and B)

Council received a memorandum from the Planning and Housing Department on October 10th outlining relevant land use issues and the procedural options for the request. On October 14, Council deferred consideration of the request until after a general discussion of the high density housing interests of the City. Council received information on the evaluation of high density requests at its January 13, 2015 meeting, and decided to place this request on the January 27, 2015 agenda for Council consideration. Council also indicated the site was to be evaluated with the residential high density (RH) evaluation tool from the January 13 meeting.

Commercial and Multi-family Uses

The existing Community Commercial Node zoning principally allows for office, retail, lodging and restaurant uses, but it does not allow for as many uses as Highway Oriented Commercial. Apartment development sought by the developer is principally allowed within the FS medium density zone, the RH high density residential zone, and within Downtown and Campustown Service Center zoning as mixed use. The developer requests a designation for Residential High Density to develop apartments.

Land Use Issues

Staff has identified the following issues related to development of the area that may influence future decisions about appropriate land use.

- The City has seen a broad demand for housing over the past few years keyed to the increasing enrollment of Iowa State University along with the expanding job base of Ames. The developer has stated his intention to provide housing for the expanding job base. Council has previously received information about the development trends of the past five years, and staff's conclusion is that student

housing production has largely matched demand while the demand for workforce oriented housing persists. There currently are also many active requests for new multi-family high density residential development projects.

- Commercial development at this location has been incremental over a long period of time. Several parcels still remain undeveloped along the adjacent arterial streets, and no development has occurred on lots along Baltimore Road. The City has a limited amount of commercial office business parks, but a large variety of commercial office use locations within industrial areas.
- The adjacent land uses in the area are industrial. Abutting the area to the north is an industrial facility, one which processes organic and other bulk materials with outdoor storage.

APPLYING THE RH SITE EVALUATION TOOL

Staff completed the checklist from the January 13 Council meeting and has included it as Attachment C. Staff approached the site evaluation as considering suitability of the site for RH development based upon the current conditions of the site and surroundings within the context of the LUPP Goals and Objectives. Staff assessed the site as a “majority of the site” condition. Staff also needed to make reasonable assumptions base on representations by the developer of the intended project and staff’s experience with development of the proposed use. The evaluation tool does not evaluate the merits of keeping the current commercial land use designation.

Location/Surroundings

Staff rated the site as low to average for these attributes overall. It does rate high for its immediate access to employment options. Staff views the site as isolated from other residential neighborhoods and has limited access to a variety commercial services, parks and schools within an average 15 minute walk. Staff notes that the site is in the Gilbert School District, which has no schools in Ames’s neighborhoods. With regards to creating a broader residential area, there is little opportunity to expand or create a broader residential district due to the adjacent industrial uses. The applicant believes long term there is a potential to create residential development to the west of the site with annexation of property along Stage Coach Road. Developing land along Stage Coach Road east of the site would require significant feasibility planning with a Fringe Plan amendment and annexation.

Site Features

The site rates as highly consistent with LUPP policies regarding natural resources. This is principally due to the fact the area is made up of developed subdivision lots. The exception for the site is its low rating in regards to abutting a general industrial use to the north. Locating housing next to industrial uses can be a detriment to some business operations that may be concerned about nuisances, and may require on-site buffering and separation of residential development to provide residents some sense of compatibility.

Housing Type and Design

As an LUPP amendment there is little detail available regarding design. This is often the case at this stage. The applicant's schematic plan is based upon a market rate 3-story apartment design of RH zoning. Based upon the applicant's representations of intended development, the project but would rate as an average development approach within Ames. Staff notes that this category would lend itself to further discussion about expectations and rating of these sub-categories as they are at this time the most open-ended elements of the RH Evaluation tool.

Transportation

This site generally rates high in this location. For transit access staff rated the site as average due to the majority of the site being within ¼ mile distance of the bus stop. For capacity and schedule there are dueling components. The Pink Line has capacity for riders, but the schedule is for weekdays only and set up for commuting to work from the City Hall transit center rather than the reverse from the Eastgate site. This means that the quality of service and "trip reliability" is low due to minimal chance a person could arrive at work at 8:00AM or leave work at 5:00PM to catch a bus to get home. In terms of bike and pedestrian connectivity, a shared use path exists along 13th Street and Dayton Avenue for bike access to the City center and employment areas. Sidewalks are either existing or required with development within the Eastgate Subdivision, external connections rely upon the aforementioned shared use path.

Public Utilities & Services

The site rates high for availability of utilities and services. The site is an infill property in a recently developed subdivision, and all utilities are projected to be adequate for development. Even though the site is near the perimeter of the City, it rates as average for response time by the Fire Department with an estimated 3-5 minute average. If a site was projected to be in excess of five minutes or to have an expected heavy demand for services, it may receive a low rating for emergency response.

Investment/Catalyst

Staff's rating of this category is based on unique situations of projects related to LUPP objectives and implementation interests. It is not likely that most development requests will have a substantial influence on their surroundings within this meaning. Staff rated this category as low for this site due to no LUPP direction concerning this area or type of project.

OPTIONS

The applicant has requested the initiation of a LUPP Amendment. City Council may or may not decide to proceed with the process. Secondly, if it does proceed, Council should determine which type of amendment process will be required. A full description of the Amendment process of [Appendix C](#) can be found at this [link](#).

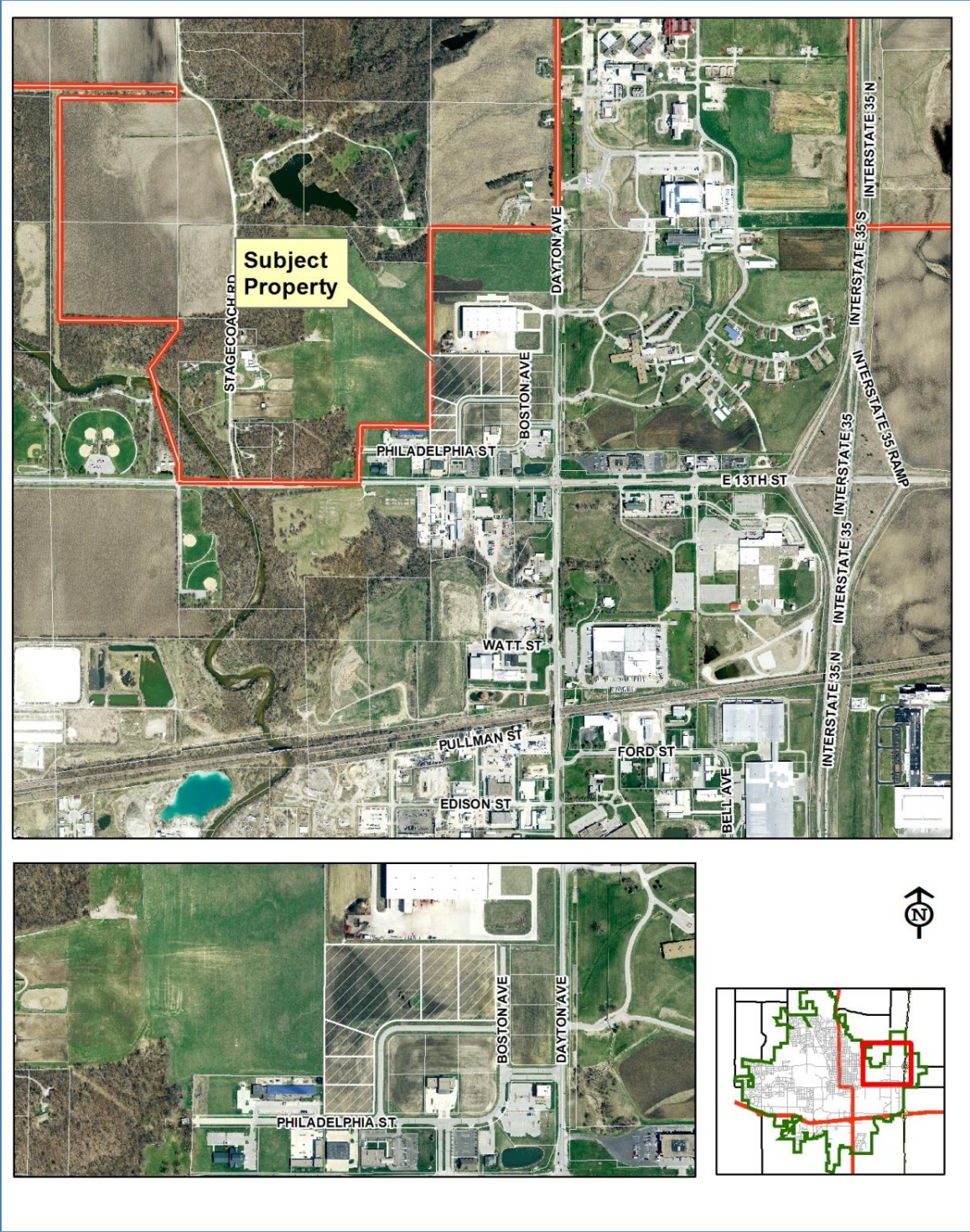
Option 1 If the Council believes that the site is suitable for commercial uses and does not have an interest in allowing for a new residential use in this area, it should decline to approve the request.

Option 2 If the Council believes there is potential interest in adding residential use to this area, it must determine if the project requires a Major Amendment of a Minor Amendment Process.

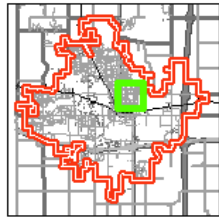
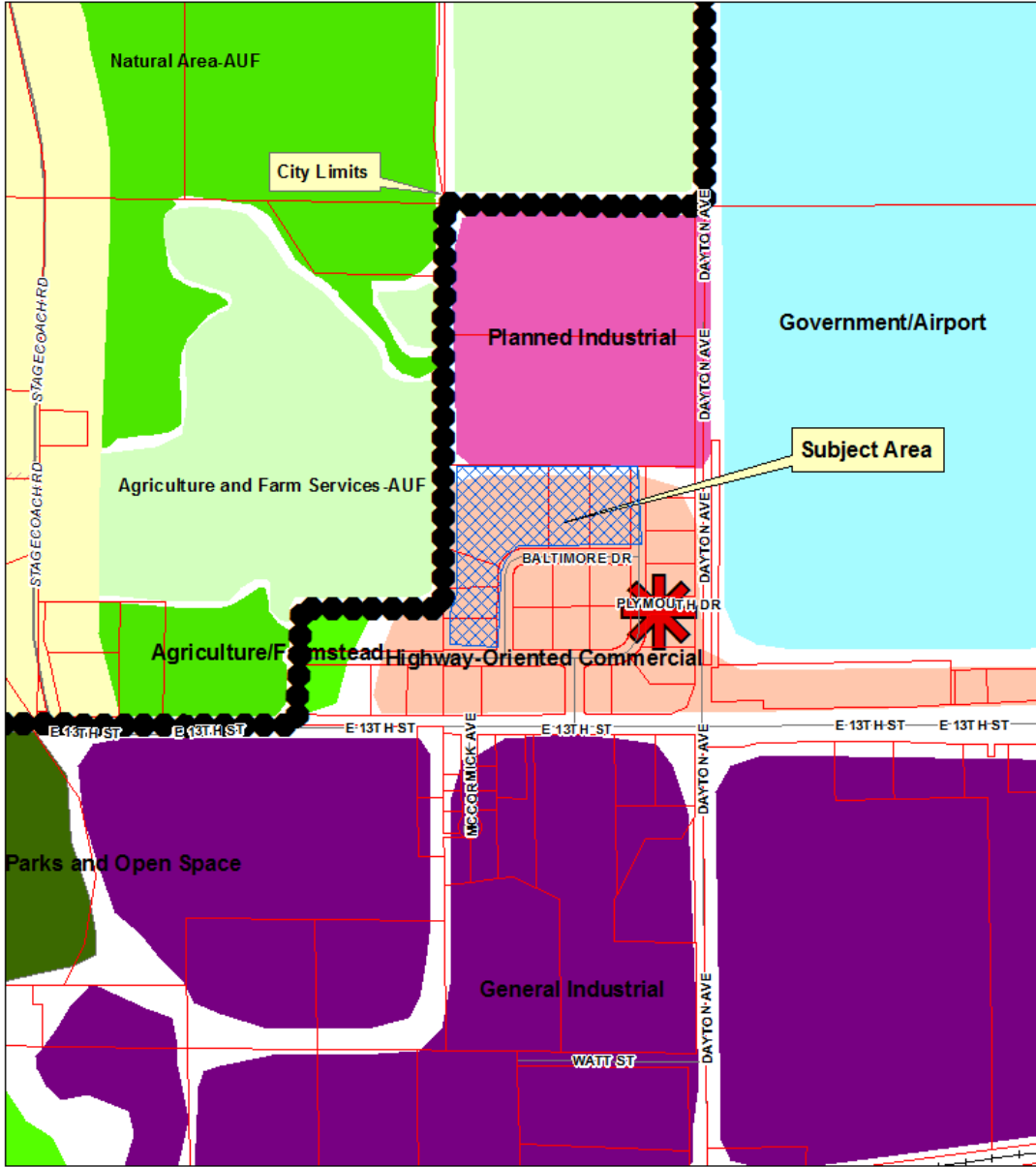
A minor amendment is designed for “single-step” changes or for meeting immediate needs. It does not require workshops or neighborhood involvement. A minor amendment goes through a public hearing process with the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council. For this site, this process would take approximately 2-3 months if no additional major studies are needed.

A major amendment is appropriate for proposals that are not contemplated within the framework of LUPP goals and policies or for projects inconsistent with the LUPP. A referral for a major amendment would signal the need for a comprehensive assessment of the area and for outreach to neighboring businesses. Staff would assess suitability of this site and area for adding residential uses and the ability of the City to serve a new neighborhood or district. A major amendment would require prioritization by the City Council of the Planning Division's work plan along with the many other work tasks already assigned.

Attachement A Location Map



Attachment B



LUPP MAP
1305 Baltimore

Attachment C
Eastgate LUPP Amendment Initiation

RH Site Evaluation Matrix	Project Consistency		
	High	Average	Low
Location/Surroundings			
Integrates into an existing neighborhood with appropriate interfaces and transitions High=part of a neighborhood, no significant physical barriers, includes transitions; Average=adjacent to neighborhood, some physical barriers, minor transitions; Low=separated from an residential existing area, physical barriers, no transitions available			X
Located near daily services and amenities (school, park ,variety of commercial) High=Walk 10 minutes to range of service; Average=10 to 20 minutes to range of service; Low= Walk in excess of 20 minutes to range of service. *Parks and Recreation has specific service objectives for park proximity to residential			X
Creates new neighborhood, not an isolated project (If not part of neighborhood, Does it create a critical mass or identifiable place, support to provide more services?)			X
Located near employment centers or ISU Campus (High=10 minute bike/walk or 5 minute drive; Average is 20 minute walk or 15 minute drive; Low= exceeds 15 minute drive or no walkability)	X		
Site			
Contains no substantial natural features on the site (woodlands, wetlands, waterways)	X		
Located outside of the Floodway Fringe	X		
Separated adequately from adjacent noise, business operations, air quality (trains, highways, industrial uses, airport approach)			X
Ability to preserve or sustain natural features		X	
Housing Types and Design			
Needed housing or building type or variety of housing types		X	
Architectural interest and character		X	
Site design for landscape buffering		X	
Includes affordable housing (Low and Moderate Income))			X
Transportation			
Adjacent to CyRide line to employment/campus High=majority of site is 1/8 miles walk from bus stop; Average= majority of site 1/4 mile walk from bus stop; Low= majority of site exceeds 1/4 miles walk from bus stop.	X		
CyRide service has adequate schedule and capacity High=seating capacity at peak times with schedule for full service			X

Average=seating capacity at peak times with limited schedule Low=either no capacity for peak trips or schedule does not provide reliable service			
Pedestrian and Bike path or lanes with connectivity to neighborhood or commute	X		
Roadway capacity and intersection operations (existing and planned at LOS C)	X		
Site access and safety	X		
Public Utilities/Services			
Adequate storm, water, sewer capacity for intensification High=infrastructure in place with high capacity Average=infrastructure located nearby, developer obligation to extend and serve Low=system capacity is low, major extension needed or requires unplanned city participation in cost.	X		
Consistent with emergency response goals High=Fire average response time less than 3 minutes Average=Fire average response time within 3-5 minutes Low=Fire average response time exceeds 5 minutes, or projected substantial increase in service calls		X	
Investment/Catalyst			
Support prior City sponsored neighborhood/district investments or sub-area planning			X
Creates character/identity/sense of place			X
Encourages economic development or diversification of retail commercial (Mixed Use Development)			X



**Danfoss Power
Solutions (US) Company**

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January 22, 2015

Mayor Campbell and Ames City Council
515 Clark Avenue
Ames, Iowa 50010

Re: Friedrich Request to Amend Land Use Plan at Eastgate

Dear Mayor Campbell and Ames City Council:

I was recently approached by Kurt Friedrich from Friedrich Iowa Realty regarding a proposal to amend the land use plan at Eastgate to allow high density residential land use for professional apartments. As the Danfoss plant representative for the Ames plants, I solicited feedback from multiple leadership sources and disciplines within our facilities regarding this subject. I found strong support for use of this land for professional apartments. From our perspective, it would fill a void for executive apartments close to our facility. As this does not currently exist on the northeast side of town this possibility generated excitement very quickly.

As we discussed further, the location has other things working in its favor that would attract professionals. Proximity to Interstate 35 and outdoor activity near the park would be a nice benefit to residents. Since utility and road infrastructure is already in place it seems like a natural enhancement for the area.

Should you have any questions about our interest and support of the development, feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Todd Schmidt
Plant Director, Ames

Kurt Friedrich Broker/Owner, CRS

From: Stacy Woodward <stacywoodward25@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2015 4:14 PM
To: Kurt Friedrich Broker/Owner, CRS
Subject: Eastgate

Kurt,

Thank you for taking the time today to present us with your proposed project at Eastgate. As a neighboring property owner we are in support of your plan to add high-density residential land use.

Stacy Woodward
Owner, Stage Coach Stables
1568 Stagecoach Road

Kurt Friedrich Broker/Owner, CRS

From: Russ Weis <russw64@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2015 6:48 PM
To: Kurt Friedrich Broker/Owner, CRS
Subject: Re: Eastgate

Kurt,

The professional apartment idea is a great idea . The location next to the interstate would be very handy for people working in Ames or the Des Moines area .

With all the big Bussiness in this area the demand for housing is very high for short and long term dwelling . I have the pizza ranch in the area and we would love to have new neighbors like you . Good luck and look forward to seeing you in the neighborhood .

Thank you,
Russ Weis , owner/ operator
Pizza Ranch of Ames

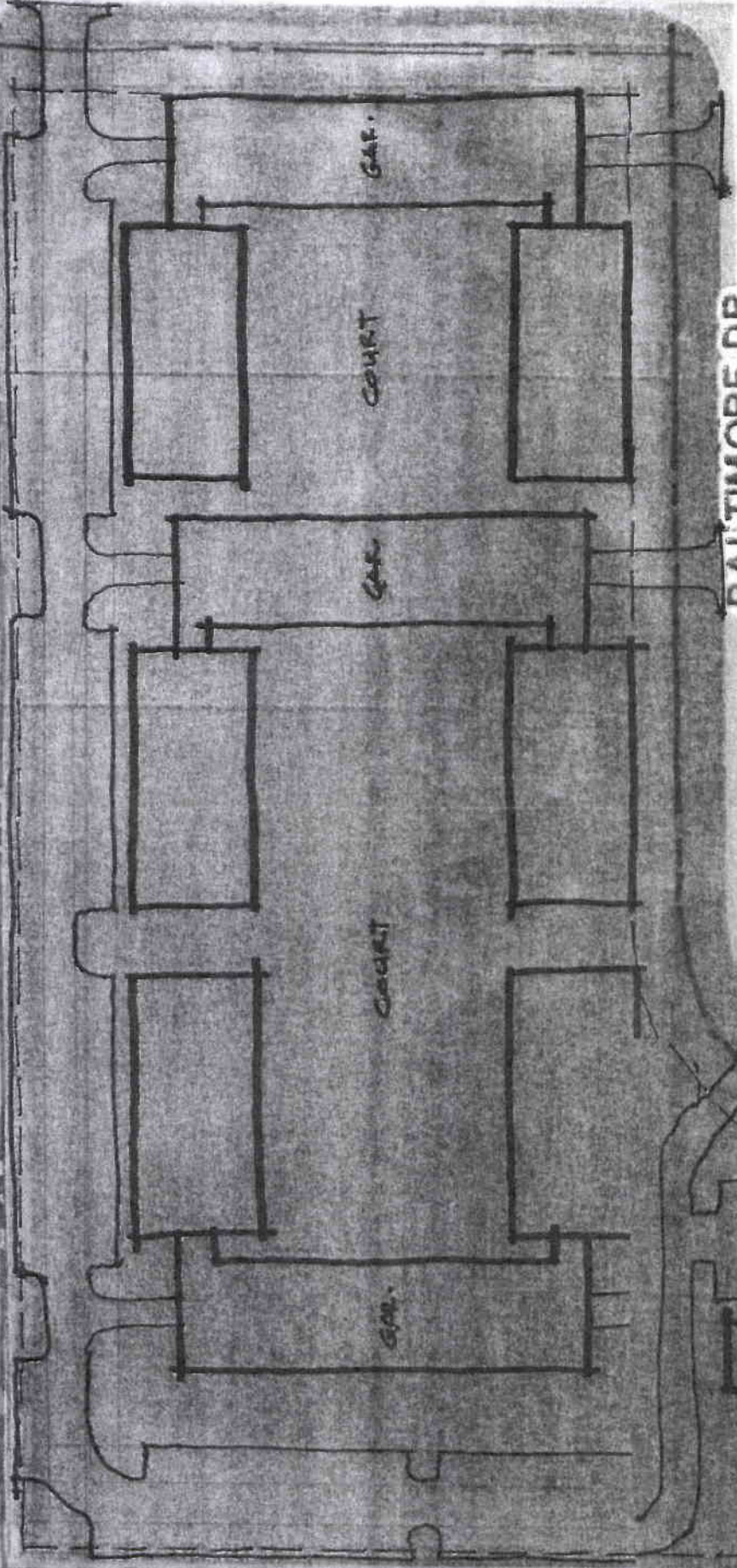
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CONCEPT ONLY

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BOSTON AVE

PLYMOUTH, DR



BALTIMORE DR

A.H.

COMMONS

EASTGATE APT. DEVELOPMENT
CONCEPT "B"

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