

Staff Report

**Land Use Policy Plan Amendment Initiation Request for  
3115 S. Duff Avenue**

January 27, 2014

**BACKGROUND**

On November 18, 2014, the City Council recognized a request from Dickson Jensen to initiate a Land Use Policy Plan (LUPP) Map Amendment, but deferred action on the request. **Mr. Jensen is interested in pursuing a change of approximately 15-50 acres of land from Highway Oriented Commercial to High-Density Residential.** The subject area is multiple properties with access along South Duff Avenue (Highway 69) that extend as far back as 1,200 to 1,800 feet from South Duff Avenue. (See Attachments A and B.)

Council received information on the evaluation of high density requests at its January 13 meeting and decided to place this request on the January 27 agenda for Council consideration of initiation. Council also indicated that the site should be evaluated using the residential high density (RH) evaluation tool from January 13 meeting.

**Commercial and Multi-family Uses**

The existing Highway-Oriented Commercial zoning of the properties allows for the widest range of commercial uses, office, retail, lodging, restaurant uses, wholesale trade, etc. Apartment and townhome development sought by the developer is principally allowed within FS medium density zone and RH high density residential zone areas. The developer requests a designation for Residential High Density to develop the site with multi-family buildings.

**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 of providing 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 are also many active requests for new multi-family high density residential development projects.

- The subject properties are oriented specifically to Highway 69 and have the airport to the west. Commercial uses in this area would likely be oriented to the highway, since there is no access to the west due to the airport. Some properties may be a “B” level location for retail development. They would not likely be “A” level for strong big box retail development due to their location on South Duff and property configurations. This would result in either a strip commercial format near South Duff, or else development with a large setback for medium to large format box development.
- The adjacent land uses are highly mixed. The subject properties about a single-family home, a cemetery, a church, and miscellaneous commercial uses. Across Duff Avenue are single-family homes.
- The Municipal airport property borders the west boundary of the entire site.

### **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. Due to the overall size of the area and configuration, it is at times difficult to evaluate individual attributes that vary greatly across the site. 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 generally average for these attributes overall. The site does not have clear strong relationships to the subcategories to rank it highly, but at the same time it has many adjacencies to neighborhoods, services and jobs that provide general support of LUPP objectives. Notable rating issues include South Duff Avenue as both a barrier and a transitional element of the site to existing neighborhoods. Also, at the proposed scale of up to 50 acres the project may create its own sense of a neighborhood without development of other adjacent properties. If the project size scales down to a low end of the range or development concentrated in one area, it may rate differently.

#### *Site Features*

The site rated as average for consistency with LUPP policies regarding natural features. This is largely due to the areas being undeveloped, with a scattering of trees. In the north part of the site, there is a drainage channel that is man-made, but does relate to known drainage issues in the area. Notably, the influence of roadway noise and airport noise were low attributes of the site.

### 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 proposes a mix of building types with apartments and townhomes. This may or may not occur under a PRD rezoning or RH rezoning to implement a RH LUPP designation. The scale and diversity of housing intentions may rate the site high for building and housing variety, not just because of the mix within one project but due to the amount of housing to be built. However, with the available plan staff cannot rate specific details on design or buffering. Staff notes that this category would lend itself to further discussion about expectations and rating of these sub-categories, since at this time they are the most open-ended elements of the RH Evaluation tool, especially with a LUPP Amendment.

### Transportation

This site rated average to low overall regarding transportation. As an area that has mostly been developed rurally and incrementally, it does not have urban infrastructure in place. Potential major traffic concerns relate to a need for widening Highway 69, signalized access into the site, and potential impacts to the intersection operations of Airport Road and Highway 69. Cross connections to the Southdale neighborhood would be needed at the time of development, and planning for north/south circulation also needs to occur. All of these issues would require completion of a traffic study to understand the potential impacts and costs.

For transit access, staff rated the site as average due to the majority of the site being within a ¼ mile distance of the bus stop. The nearest Yellow Line stop is at the intersection of Jewel and South Duff. Staff rated the quality of service for the Yellow Line as average, since there is some capacity and the schedule supports trip reliability for weekdays. A person may take a bus and make connections during morning hours or after work to meet an 8 to 5 work schedule. Very limited midday service is provided by Grey Route, and there is no evening or Sunday service. Bike and pedestrian facilities in the area are limited are rated as low.

### Public Utilities & Services

As mentioned under Site Features, there are known drainage issues in the area that affect development of this site and the Southdale neighborhood to the east. Development of the site may advance interests for comprehensive drainage improvements for the area. Other infrastructure would need to be extended into the site to serve it. Even though the site is near the perimeter of the City, it rates high for response time by the Fire Department, with an estimate of less than a 3 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 lower 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. Council may decide to proceed or to not proceed with the process. If it does proceed, Council would then decide which type of amendment process is required. A full description of the Amendment process of [Appendix C](#) can be found at this [link](#).

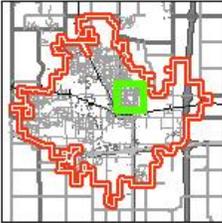
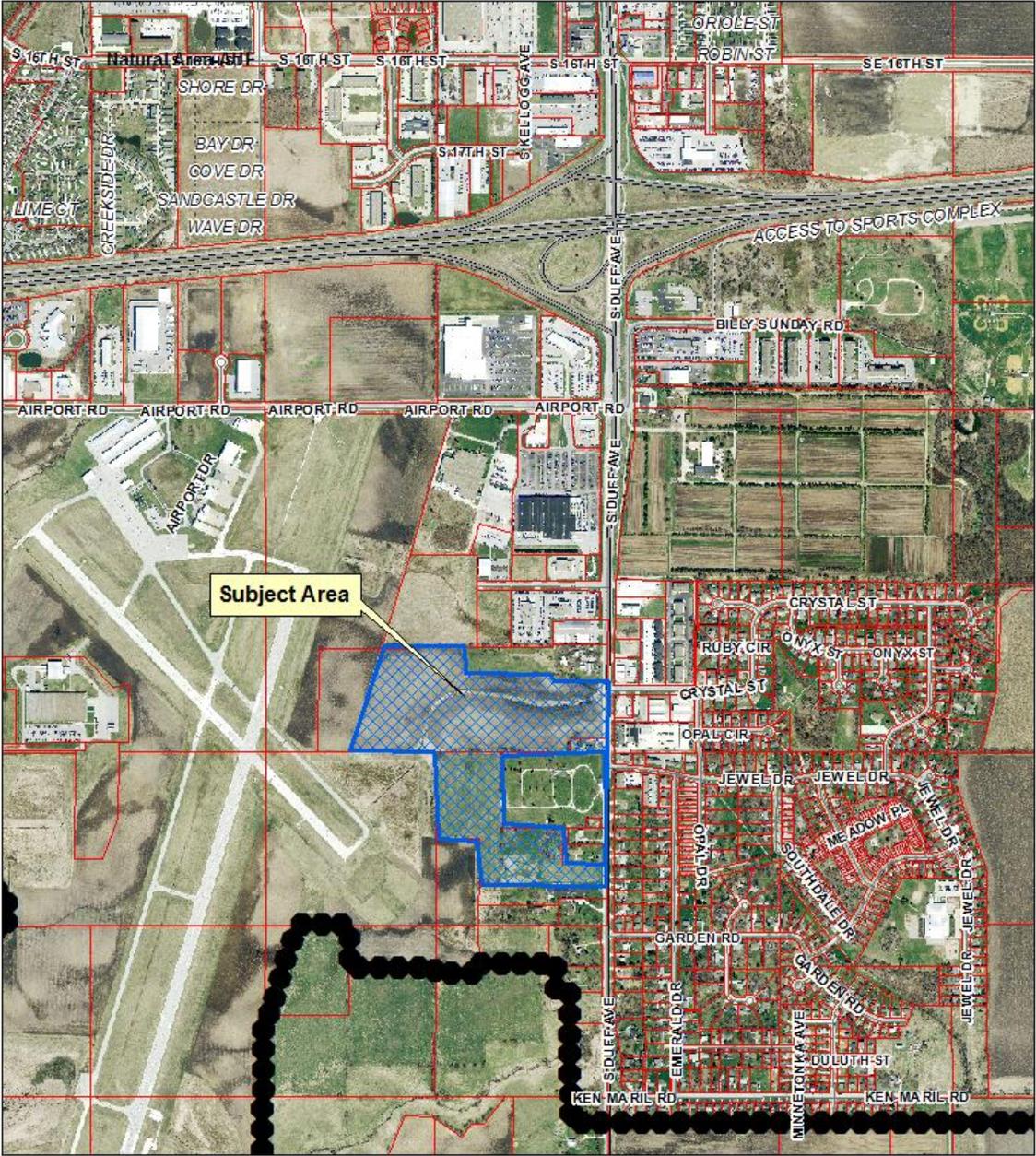
**Option 1** If the Council believes that the site is suitable for commercial uses and does not have interest in allowing for a new residential use in this area, it should decline to initiate the request.

**Option 2** If the Council believes there is potential interest in adding residential use to the area, it should initiate the process and then 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 the 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 properties and the Southdale neighborhood. Staff would assess the 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 reprioritization by the City Council of the Planning Division's current work plan to have staff actively work with the applicant on completing necessary studies and outreach meetings.**

Attachement A Location Map



Location Map

Attachment B





Attachment C  
S DUFF LUPP Amendment Initiation

<b>RH Site Evaluation Matrix</b>	<b>Project Consistency</b>		
	<b>High</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Low</b>
<b>Location/Surroundings</b>			
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	
<b>Site</b>			
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	
<b>Housing Types and Design</b>			
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
<b>Continued next page...</b>			

<b>Transportation</b>			
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 Average=seating capacity at peak times with limited schedule Low=either no capacity for peak trips or schedule does not provide reliable service		X	
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
<b>Public Utilities/Services</b>			
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		
<b>Investment/Catalyst</b>			
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

CONDOS

# 3 STORY  
# 1 + 2 BR

SINGLE FAMILY /  
DUPLEX / ROWHOUSE  
# ATTACHED GARAGES

DOG PARK

ROWHOUSES

CONDOS

# 2 STORY  
# 2 + 3 BR  
# CLUBHOUSE  
# POOL  
# PARK

ROWHOUSES

# 3 BR  
# 2 CAR ATTACHED GARAGES

base trace

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733 ft

1994

S Duff Ave

AC377 Google Search 41°59'43.80" N

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