

Staff Report

PRIORITIZATION OF PLANNING AND HOUSING DEPARTMENT WORK PLAN FOR FY15/16

March 10, 2015

BACKGROUND:

The planning staff is assigned to work on both policy planning and current planning projects. Policy planning includes studies, Municipal Code amendments, neighborhood support, and Land Use Policy Plan amendments. Current Planning includes customer service for general inquiries, boards and commissions, zoning review, and development project review.

For the past few years the Planning Division budget accounted for staff time as 20% on policy planning and 80% on current planning. Council's recently approved budget added an additional full-time planner position to increase the amount of time and resources available to work on policy planning issues. The projected split of Division resources with the new full-time planner is 35% for policy planning and 65% for current planning. A recruitment to fill this position has begun. We optimistically hope to have the new planner start work in the beginning of May.

The Division has experienced an upward trend of current planning projects for the past three years and forecasts a strong demand for new development for the FY15/16. Policy planning projects vary in time and resources depending on the complexity, public involvement, and urgency for review. The following is a summary of the policy planning projects completed from the past year and the current ongoing projects.

Accomplishments for 2014 and 2015:

- 1) LUPP Overview Workshops
- 2) Airport Tall Building Text Amendment
- 3) Office Parking Standard Text Amendment
- 4) Flood Protection Standards Options for New Development Workshop
- 5) Floating Suburban Zoning Standards and Master Plan Rezoning Text Amendments
- 6) Greek Fraternities and Sororities Parking Text Amendment
- 7) Chapter 31 and Historic District Text Amendments
- 8) Accessory Building Size Text Amendment
- 9) Steeple Height Text Amendment
- 10) Front Yard Parking for Group/Senior Living Text Amendment
- 11) South Ames/Research Park Annexation
- 12) Residential High Density Workshop
- 13) 4th Street Flood Plain Modeling

Ongoing projects:

- 1) Staff report on options for rental concentration standards
- 2) Campustown Façade Grant Pilot Program
- 3) Right-of-way and Infrastructure Improvements without Subdivision
- 4) Support Public Works for land use modeling in Long Range Transportation Plan
- 5) RH Evaluation Tool
- 6) Ames Golf and Country Club Rural Subdivision
- 7) South Duff Major LUPP Amendment “Brick Town” High Density Housing
- 8) Research Park Innovation District Zoning

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS:

Staff has prepared this report to define policy planning projects and to assist in setting the prioritization for projects for the next 15 months, including from now through June 30, 2016. There are currently 30 “projects” listed for the Planning and Housing Department by Council referral over the past three years. A complete status list of these referrals is included in Attachment 1. Attachment 1 lists when each item was referred, status, type of referral, estimated hours to complete the project, date of next milestone, and a description of the project.

In addition to the formal referral list, staff is offering the following list of additional projects based Council comments from prior workshops and staff identified interests for Code updates. Staff recommends the Council consider these items along with the projects on the referral list for prioritization. The bracketed range of hours is intended to give a sense of the staff’s estimate of the magnitude of each project.

- Flood Plain and Environmentally Sensitive Overlay Areas: *Add or clarify development standards within the Floodway or natural Riparian Areas for site disturbance and paving [25-50 hrs] (Does not intend to alter the 3-foot fill requirement)*
- Memorandum on an overview on inclusionary zoning [5 - 20 hrs]
- Update the Planned Residential Development Zoning District: *clarify the purpose of the PRD, relationship to older PUDs, consider changes to standards [90-180 hrs]*
- Follow up to the RH Workshop and consider RH design guidelines or new RH zoning district standards [60-200 hrs]
- Commercial Land Need Evaluation: *Staff recommends this as a component of the LUPP Update [100-250 hrs]*
- Review Subdivision Code development standards for consistency with LUPP and Zoning Ordinance: *this would bring terminology and standards more in line with each ordinance and review general development standards [60-175 hrs]*
- Pending Request as of 3-6-15 by Olde Main Brewery for a referral of text amendment to allow for brewery production within the HOC Zoning District

To help the Council sort and prioritize the large list of items staff has categorized the referrals into four categories on the following pages.

HOUSING

Rental concentration standard in low density residential zones	Council General Interest			Staff report provided in February for options on limiting rental concentration, awaiting Council direction.
Investigate ways to increase availability of affordable housing	Council Objective	120-300		Prepare background report for affordable housing definitions, prepare report on national examples of
Explore ways to increase availability of all types of housing	Council Objective	120-300		Prepare background report for housing needs and housing stock (help provide background for LUPP)

Additional Projects:

- Memorandum on an overview on inclusionary zoning *[5 - 20 hrs]*

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Planning Projects	Type	Estimated Planning Hours	Next Milestone	Project Comments
Right-Of-Way and infrastructure requirements outside of subdivisions	Staff Initiated	150	Mar-15	Draft Ordinances for sidewalks, shared use paths, street lighting, paving, dedications with new and substantial redevelopment. Require sidewalks both sides of street, widen sidewalks to 5 feet, require LED streetlights.
Wireless Standards Update	Staff Initiated	90	Jun-15	Update Zoning Standards consistent with federal regulations. Consider allowing for facilities in public right-of-way.
Landscaping Standards text amendment with consultation of a working group	Staff Initiated/developer interest	220		Create work group to consider effectiveness of current standards and examples of alternatives, prepare text amendment.
Request for review of drive through standards in commercial zones with high levels of pedestrian activity	Citizen Initiated	15		Memo on current standards. (additional hrs required for text amendments and public outreach)
Lighting Standards down-lighting and glare standards	Staff Initiated	120		Review lighting standards with Dark Sky standards. Staff Recommends Delete.
Hotel Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Text Amendment	Developer Initiated	0		Council received staff rpt., did not initiate but left on list. Developer moved on to other project.
Consider request to modify Campustown Service Center zoning standards for 20-foot access corridor requirement for each block.	Developer Initiated	5		Staff Report review of mandatory building opening requirement for access and utility corridors at mid-blocks in Campustown.
Request for lower apartment parking rate in East University Impact Area.	Council Response	10		Agendize for future Council discussion of request by Mr. Chester.
Revise Group Living and Front Yard Parking Terms	Council General Interest	15		In response to allowing for front yard parking for group living, revise the allowances for group living.

Additional Projects:

- Flood Plain and Environmentally Sensitive Overlay Areas: *Add or clarify development standards within the Floodway or natural Riparian Areas for site disturbance and paving [25-50 hrs]*
- Update the Planned Residential Development Zoning District: *clarify the purpose of the PRD, relationship to older PUDs, consider changes to standards [90-180 hrs]*
- Follow up to the RH Workshop and consider RH design guidelines or new RH zoning district standards *[60-200 hrs]*
- Review Subdivision Code development standards for consistency with LUPP and Zoning Ordinance: *this would bring terminology and standards more in line with each ordinance and review general development standards [60-175 hrs]*

Development Project Related

Planning Projects	Type	Estimated Planning Hours	Next Milestone	Project Comments
Research Park Zoning District	Developer Initiated	120	May-15	Create Innovation District zoning with Master Plan for ISU Research Park
Ames Golf and Country Club Rural Subdivision	Developer Initiated	50	Apr-15	Request to reconsider Xenia water service and sidewalk requirements with subdivision
Pursue East Industrial Opportunity	Council Objective	270		Master planning for Industrial uses. Steps include Urban Fringe Plan amendment to 590th, annexation, zoning.
Burgason 9 acre Fringe Plan Amendment to Urban Service Area for Annexation	Developer Initiated	30		Group with next Fringe Plan Amendment as time permits
Major LUPP South Duff Commercial to Residential	Developer Initiated	120	May-15	Two outreach meetings, coordination of studies, two public hearings, negotiate development agreements.
Mixed Use Overlay Text Amendment for Lincoln Way	Developer Initiated	40		Initiate a text amendment to create a mixed use overlay district for application to HOC properties along Lincoln Way. To be used for pilot project while working on Lincoln Corridor Plan. (No public outreach with text amendment)

Additional Projects:

- Pending Request as of 3-6-15 by Olde Main Brewery for a referral of text amendment to allow for brewery production within the HOC Zoning District [30 hrs]

Planning and Policy

	Planning Projects	Type	Estimated Planning Hours	Next Milestone	Project Comments
	Land Use Policy Plan Update	Council Objective	1280	Mar-15	Council Workshop June 2014 defined scope of update: Refined existing language for the Vision and Goals; Assess housing needs; Master planning for growth areas; Assess infill opportunities; Incorporate appropriate current planning interests, e.g. sustainability, health, place making, and resiliency. Return to Council with timeline and approach prior to RFP.
	Lincoln Way Corridor Plan	Council Objective	400	Mar-15	Consider Lincoln Way and how it ties neighborhoods and the City together, Commercial/Employment Uses, Infill Housing Types, Transportation Options.
	Develop a facade grant program for Campustown	Council Objective	120	Apr-15	Work with pilot projects in the springs, build project in the summer, finalize program fall 2015.
	Support Public Works in preparation of the Long Range Regional Transportation Plan Update	Staff Initiated	100	Mar-15	Provide land use and growth assumptions for modeling.
	National Register Nomination for Downtown Main Street	Council General Interest	150		Preliminary site sheets complete. Requires RFP for historian to complete a national register nomination.
	Sign Code for Digital Signs and Billboards	Staff Initiated	180		Complete research, outreach, text amendments on display types for standards and performance requirements for digital displays.
	Ames Urban Fringe Plan Review with Story County and Gilbert on potential update land use classifications and	Council General Interest	30		Meet with staffs, identify common interest and report back for direction on any updates.
	Expand airport protection area for land uses outside of the city	Staff Initiated	200		Assess land uses around airport within the counties and create a mutual ordinance for limitation of land use, could be delegated to next Airport Master Plan Update.
	Campustown Action Association Changes to Urban Revite Criteria	Public Initiated	100		Amend Urban Revite Criteria to promote local and small users of new commercial space.

Additional Project:

- Commercial Land Need Evaluation: *Staff recommends this as a component of the LUPP Update [100-250 hrs]*

RECOMMENDED PRIORITY PROJECTS:

Land Use Policy Plan

Council previously indicated the LUPP Update and the Lincoln Way Corridor Plan as top priorities for the City. Council provided general direction for scope of the LUPP Update that includes working within the current Vision and Goals of the LUPP. This means that extensive outreach to develop a new vision and goals is not needed prior to working on the following tasks:

- Reworking of the concepts and updates to reflect current needs of the City.
- Look at future housing needs and growth and the types of housing needed for future demand.
- Review the Growth Areas and look at master planning for growth areas.
- Integrate contemporary planning concepts into the plan for sustainability, place making, health, community character and design, mobility, etc.
- Consider infill potential
- *New-* Conduct a commercial land use assessment
- *New-* Update the Circulation Element with transportation policies for vehicles, bicyclists, pedestrians, and complete streets, this is to be informed from the LRTP Update.

Staff will return with a more detailed timeline and list of tasks prior to a request for proposals for hiring of a consultant. Staff estimates completion of all task over 18 months.

Lincoln Way Corridor Plan

The Lincoln Way Corridor Plan is classified as a separate project from the LUPP Update. It will proceed on an independent path from the LUPP. The Lincoln Way Corridor Plan will take the approach of an urban design plan to identify opportunity sites for revitalization and enhancement and to address Lincoln Way's potential as a signature street for Ames. The plan will consider the diversity of uses along the corridor, strategic opportunities for redevelopment and infill opportunities, support of the pedestrian environment, creating a cohesive identity along Lincoln Way. This will specifically include options for new building types for neighborhood infill and revitalization. It will also look at options for commercial/residential mixed-use options in the HOC zones along the corridor. Outreach for the plan will include assessments of neighborhood interests, commercial and employment interests, ISU, and DOT. Staff estimates the project will take 9 to 12 months.

Additional projects

With the addition of our new planner, we will have capacity to work on the LUPP Update and the Lincoln Way Corridor Plan and to add 22 policy planning projects. Alternatively, the number of projects could be more if there is higher mix of small scale projects. The strategy is to begin a number of items concurrently to allow for different staff to work on projects as opportunities present themselves in between the cycles of current planning development review.

Staff has created a list of recommended projects shown on the following page. If approved, these projects will begin at different times over the next 15 months. The list is a mix of housing issues and development standards that appear to have broad applicability or more immediate issues related to development trends.

STAFF RECOMMENDED LIST

Date Listed	Status	Planning Projects	Type	2015 January-June	2015 July-December	2016 January-June	2016 July-December	Estimated Planning Hours	Next Milestone	Project Comments
14-Jan	Prepare RFP	Land Use Policy Plan Update	Council Objective	90	450	450	300	1290	Mar-15	Council Workshop June 2014 defined scope of update: Refined existing language for the Vision and Goals; Assess housing needs; Master planning for growth areas; Assess infill opportunities; Incorporate appropriate current planning interests, e.g. sustainability, health, place making, and resiliency. Return to Council with timeline and approach.
14-Jun	Prepare RFP	Lincoln Way Corridor Plan	Council Objective	120	250	150		520	Mar-15	Consider Lincoln Way and how it ties neighborhoods and the City together, Commercial/Employment Uses, Infill Housing Types, Transportation Options. Begin preliminary general outreach to select residential and commercial area to identify interests. Return to Council for direction prior to RFP.
14-Oct	Staff Report	High Density Residential Development Council Discussion	Council General Interest	35						Held a work Shop 11-18-14; Provide site assessment tool January 2015 for use with new LUPP and rezones.
14-Jun	Staff Report	Rental concentration standard in low density residential zones	Council General Interest	50				100	Feb-15	Staff report provided, awaiting further direction.
14-Jan	Draft Ordinance	Right-Of-Way and infrastructure requirements outside of subdivisions	Staff Initiated	125				150	Mar-15	Draft Ordinances for sidewalks, shared use paths, street lighting, paving, dedications with new and substantial redevelopment. Require sidewalks both sides of street, widen sidewalks to 5 feet, require LED streetlights.
14-Jan	CC Grant Awards	Develop a facade grant program for Campustown	Council Objective	60	60			200	Apr-15	Work with pilot projects in the springs, build project in the summer, finalize program fall 2015.
14-Jan	Underway	Support Public Works in preparation of the Long Range Regional Transportation Plan	Staff Initiated	40				95	Mar-15	Provide land use and growth assumptions for modeling
14-Dec	Deferred	Wireless Standards Update	Staff Initiated	90				90	Jun-15	Update Zoning Standards consistent with federal regulations. Consider allowing for facilities in public right-of-way.
13-Jul	Underway	Research Park Zoning District	Developer Initiated	100	20			150	May-15	Create Innovation District zoning with Master Plan for ISU Research Park
14-Aug	Underway	Ames Golf and Country Club Rural Subdivision	Developer Initiated	40				65	Apr-15	Request to reconsider Xenia water service and sidewalk requirements with subdivision
14-Dec	Staff Report	Riverside Manor S. 4th Street Flood Modeling Analysis	Developer Initiated	20						Staff Report on options for preparing a third party engineering analysis of impacts of filling Riverside Manor on S. 4th Street
14-Jan		Explore options for parking standards that improve storm water management	Council Objective		40			150		Staff report with research on parking rates and design requirements, prepare text amendments and do public outreach (may coordinate with Landscaping referral)
14-Jan		Investigate ways to increase availability of affordable housing	Council Objective	70	165			120-300		Prepare background report for affordable housing definitions, prepare report on national examples of housing strategies (additional hrs required for amendments and outreach)
14-Jan		Explore ways to increase availability of all types of housing	Council Objective			180		120-300		Prepare background report for housing needs and housing stock (help provide background for LUPP)
14-Jan		Pursue East Industrial Opportunity	Council Objective		120	150		270		Master planning for industrial uses. Steps include Urban Fringe Plan amendment to 590th, annexation, zoning.
11-Nov		Landscaping Standards text amendment with consultation of a working group	Staff Initiated/developer interest		80	100		220		Create work group to consider effectiveness of current standards and examples of alternatives, prepare text amendment
11-May		Sign Code for Digital Signs and Billboards	Staff Initiated			150		150		Complete research, outreach, text amendments on display types for standards and performance requirements for digital displays.
15-Jan	Studies Underway	Major LUPP South Duff Commercial to Residential	Developer Initiated	120				120	May-15	Two outreach meetings, coordination of studies, two public hearings, negotiate development agreements.
15-Mar		Mixed Use Overlay Text Amendment for Lincoln Way	Developer Initiated	40				40		Initiate a text amendment to create a mixed use overlay district for application to HOC properties along Lincoln Way. To be used for pilot project while working on Lincoln Corridor Plan. (No public outreach with text amendment)
14-Dec		Revise Group Living and Front Yard Parking Terms	Council General Interest		15			15		In response to allowing for front yard parking for group living, revise the allowances for group living
15-Mar		Flood Plain and Env. Sensitive Area Overlay standards for site disturbance and paving	New-Staff Option	35				25-50		Add or clarify development standards within the Floodway or natural Riparian Areas for site disturbance and paving
15-Mar		Memorandum on inclusionary zoning overview	New-Staff Option	15				5 to 20		Provide a background review on inclusionary zoning
15-Mar		Update the Planned Residential Development Zoning District	New-Staff Option			140		90-180		Clarify the purpose of the PRD, relationship to older PUDs, consider changes to standards
15-Mar		RH Zoning or Design Guidelines	New-Staff Option		60	40		60-200		Create design standards in support of the RH Evaluation Tool for Design and Community Character

FUTURE REFERRALS:

One of the difficulties in estimating time for long range planning projects is their relationship to current planning (development projects). Staff previously has provided some general direction about how to treat individual project referrals by asking Council to consider specific direction about researching options, needed studies, outreach efforts, and education. Council will have to consider future request against the priorities of the work plan.

When a referral is relatively straight forward and focused in its scope, staff recommends considering the item similar to a development project. Development projects typically have a defined scope and set public review process. When categorized similar to a development project, it would not need to be specifically prioritized and would work through the system as time allows. When an item has broader implications in terms of research and options, or potentially affects many parts of the community, it is more appropriate to consider the project against Council's other referrals and priorities before giving direction to staff. When needed, Staff will assist the Council in categorizing the requests when they are submitted.

STAFF COMMENTS:

There are a variety of choices on how to proceed between choosing smaller projects or larger projects. **Staff believes that choosing to initiate the LUPP this spring and the Lincoln Way Corridor Plan fits the Council's priorities. In addition, Council's Goal of *Addressing Housing Needs* and the first two objectives for affordable housing and availability of housing fits well with current public interest and as a potentially informative companion item to the LUPP Update.** The additional items on staff's recommended list broadly affects development and planning interests. Within this recommendation, there will likely be corrections to the timing and adjustments of priorities as new interests and referral request are brought before the City Council.

If Council accepts staff's recommended list and deletes the night sky lighting issue, it would leave 12 other projects not on the priority list for the next 15 months. If Council desires to move one of these other projects to the Priority List, it would need to remove a project or projects of a similar magnitude.

Staff offers one significant alternative to staff's recommended work plan. **To gain capacity this summer for wider range of immediate priorities, the Lincoln Way Corridor Study could be deferred to begin in January 2016.** This would allow staff to accelerate the completion of its recommend projects or for Council to substitute different projects in place of the Lincoln Way Corridor Study. This would justify moving the Mixed Use Overlay District referral forward to set up a basic framework for consideration of case-by-case mixed use projects in the interim.