



*Caring People
Quality Programs
Exceptional Service*

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Kelly Diekmann, Planning & Housing Director;
Cory Scott and Marty Shukert, RDG

DATE: June 12, 2020

SUBJECT: **Ames Plan 2040 Workshop-Community Character and Unifying Themes**

City Council has worked with staff and RDG for the past 18 months on preparing a Comprehensive Plan. During this time City Council has reviewed public engagement comments, existing conditions and projections, growth scenarios, transportation principles, growth principles, land use principles, housing principles, environmental principles, and open space principles, draft land use designations and maps. **Our eleventh workshop will address community character principals and some of the expressed interests that are unifying themes for the Comprehensive Plan.**

As with the other workshops, City Council is acting in the steering committee role to provide feedback to RDG so they may move forward on developing a full draft plan. The Community Character chapter is the opportunity to refine details about the community that are related to our discussions on the physical components of the City, but also to identify the cultural characteristics that we believe are distinctive and valuable to the community. The combination of these two attributes helps to reinforce who and what Ames is as it evolves over the next 20 years. The second component of the presentation is a review of unifying themes, that is topics that were highlighted during the development of the Plan and viewed as cross-cutting in nature rather than a singular topic or chapter. This section identifies previously reviewed policies related to topics of sustainability, health, equity, and flexibility.

This workshop is intended to be the final workshop with City Council prior to completing the Draft Plan 2040. At this workshop Staff wants to make sure that we have addressed issues of interest to the Council so that there is no significant gap in the Draft Plan that would affect how it comes together. The draft PowerPoint included for the workshop includes a summary Slide 10 to assist in reviewing previously discuss priorities and concepts for the Plan.

LIVE.
GROW.
BELONG.



Workshop #11

June 16, 2020



Agenda



1. Community Character Principles
2. Background on Priorities
3. Unifying Themes for Plan
4. Next Steps





Community Character & Culture

VISION

Ames will advance aesthetic and design improvements that support a spirit of community, respect its heritage, and create new high quality buildings and spaces to build upon our character.



Community Taxonomy

A visitor's impression of Ames is significantly influenced by the pathways to and from their destination – home, workplace, and destinations. This plan builds off of the complete streets plan.

CORRIDORS

Corridors that give residents and visitors their impression of the community.

- **Complete Streets Expanded to Growth Areas provides the framework.**

GATEWAYS

Locations that welcome visitors to the community.

- **Primary Gateways** – Arrivals to community
- **Secondary Gateways** – Arrivals to special districts like Downtown and Campustown

NODES

Decision-making points for travelers. These are typically crossroads of frequently traveled corridors.

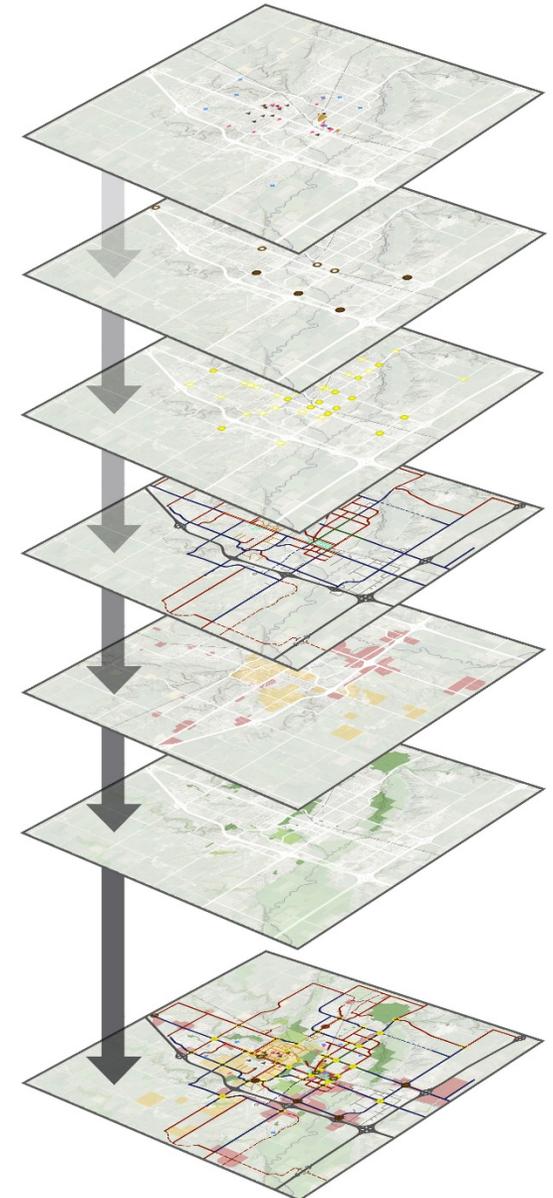
- Major Node – Typically crossroads of arterials
- Minor Node – Typically crossroads of arterial with collector.

DISTRICTS

Areas with distinctive character, including special business districts, historic areas, and ISU campus.

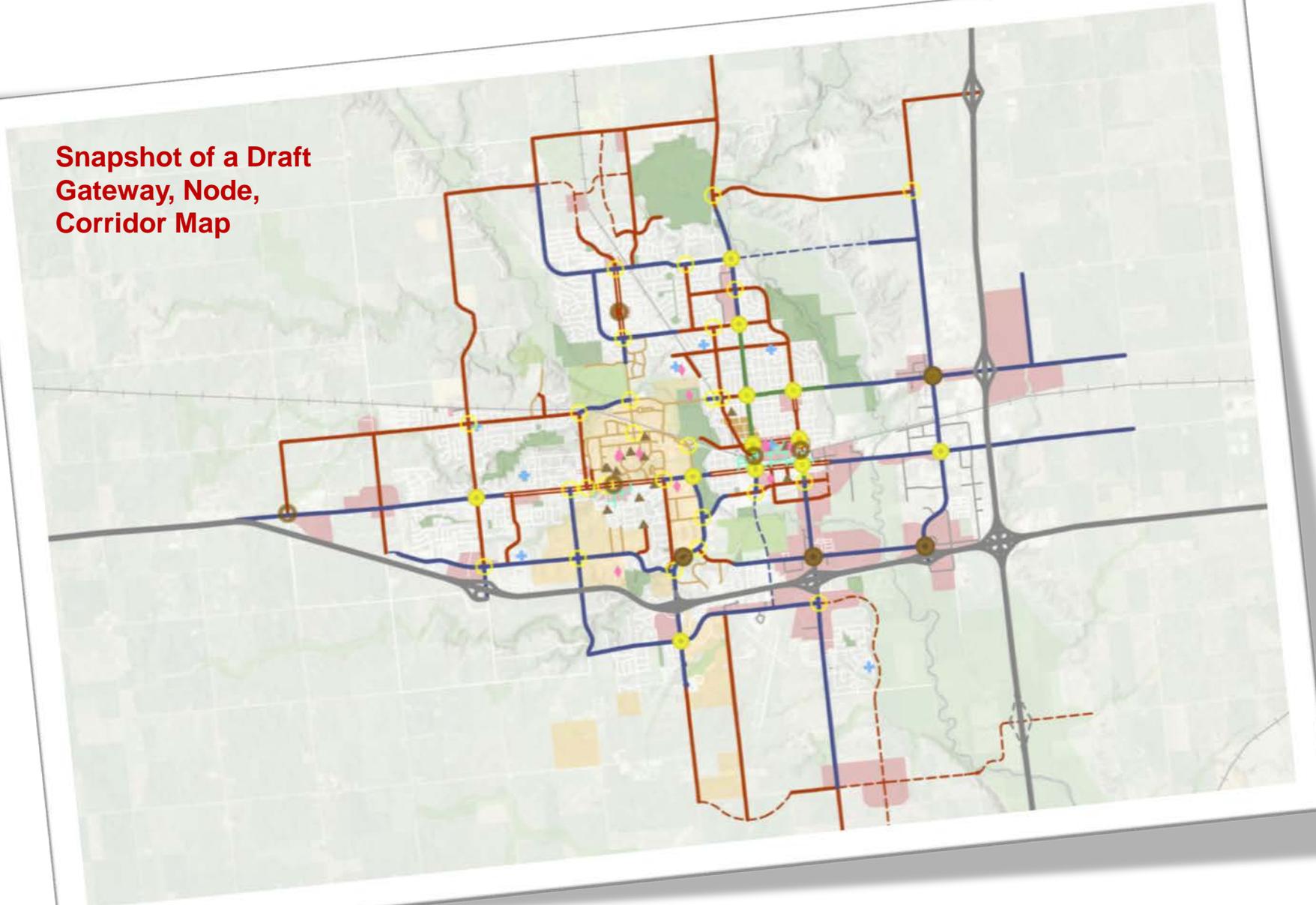
ENVIRONMENTAL FABRIC

Parks, greenways, waterways, and sensitive areas.



Community Taxonomy // Complete Streets Expanded

Snapshot of a Draft Gateway, Node, Corridor Map



Complete Streets

- Mixed Use Street
- Industrial Street
- ISU Institutional Street
- Mixed Use Avenue
- Avenue
- Avenue - Future
- Boulevard
- Boulevard - Future
- Thoroughfare
- Highway
- Highway - Future
- Neighborhood Street
- Neighborhood Street - Future

Gateway

- Major
- Minor

- School
- Cultural Site
- Registered Historic Building

- Historic District
- ISU
- Commercial Areas
- City Of Ames Parks
- Other Open Space
- Greenway



Notable Supporting Principles from Prior Workshops



URBAN EXPERIENCE (GROWTH PRINCIPLE)

PLANNING FOR EQUITY IN COMMUNITY GROWTH (GROWTH)

DIVERSE HOUSING OPTIONS (LAND USE)

MULTI-MODALITY-COMPLETE STREETS (TRANSPORTATION)

MAINTAIN THE QUALITY OF EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS WHILE ALSO ENCOURAGING REINVESTMENT AND ENHANCEMENT OF EXISTING HOUSING STOCK (HOUSING)

USE OF DENSITY AND/OR BUILDING TYPES TO DEFINE DEVELOPMENT AREAS (HOUSING)

ADVANCE IDENTIFICATION AND REDEVELOPMENT OF REDIRECTION AREAS (HOUSING)

REFLECT COMMUNITY VALUES WITH PUBLIC SPACE FOR SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL WELLBEING THAT PRIVATE OPEN SPACE ALONE CANNOT ACCOMPLISH (PARKS, TRAILS, & OPEN SPACES)

PLAN A SYSTEM OF INTERCONNECTED GREENWAYS (PARKS, TRAILS, & OPEN SPACES)

DESIGN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES (ENVIRONMENT)

PRESERVE A NETWORK OF GREEN SPACES (ENVIRONMENT)



Principles // Community Character & Culture



1. MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE AMES' HERITAGE

Ames will seek to identify its valuable historical resources and work to conserve, preserve, and restore historically significant structures and archaeological resources.

2. RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF THE ARTS IN ENHANCING AMES'S APPEARANCE AND EXPANDING ITS CULTURAL OPTIONS

Ames will continue to support visual and performing arts as an enhancement to our culture as well as the built environment. Art installations, exhibitions, music, festivals, and other community events are desirable to create a sense of community and bring economic advantages to the City.

3. PROVIDE FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND DIVERSE OPPORTUNITIES

Community events, programming, and other activities are an opportunity to bring people from different backgrounds together and meet diverse needs of Ames. Additionally, the City can use expanded outreach efforts to under-represented populations, such as minority groups and students, when planning for public spaces, community plans, and other significant projects in support of an inclusive environment.

4. RECOGNIZE AND REINFORCE A SENSE OF PLACE FOR EXISTING AND NEW AREAS

Ames seeks to sustain its recognized character while planning for change and building upon its past success into the future with desirable design features and amenities, such as pedestrian friendly environments, urban and concentrated centers, connections throughout neighborhoods, districts, and the city, enhancement of environmental resources, and architectural quality and compatibility. This includes maintaining and enhancing downtown and campustown, creating greenways, and supporting existing and emerging neighborhoods and commercial areas.



Principles // Community Character & Culture



5. ADD DISTINCTIVE DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS

Land use and site design characteristics for areas adjacent to gateways and nodes should be guided through consideration of building placement, parking, and access that reinforces the walkability and aesthetic environment of the surroundings. Gateways to Ames should include specialized signage, lighting, and landscaping approach. Recognize that some areas are more reliant on historic character for their success and quality while some areas will embrace new design techniques and create a new high-quality environment. Blending of these ideas is essential for successful transitions.

6. IMPROVE DESIGN QUALITY

The City seeks to expand the use of good design features within private development as well as City infrastructure. The goal is to create positive investment in the aesthetics and image of the City, not just efficiency and density with design. Embellish the surroundings to create interest, whimsy and identity that include a focus on people and the environment. New development, buildings, and public spaces are expected to address design features with new proposals.

7. CREATE OPTIONS FOR ACTIVITY

Ames has a variety of places to go where people can gather and be active in their community – parks, trails, event facilities, and unique shopping experiences. New development will incorporate similar features and uses reflective of these community preferences and expand opportunities as the City grows.



Potential Actions // **Community Character & Culture**

1. Create **infill and development standards** for compatibility in residential areas and transition areas focused on design over density
2. Apply **high quality design features throughout the community** and with all types of development
3. **Sub-area planning** will include evaluation of existing character and how the area is intended to evolve to identify differences
4. **Modify zoning standards** to address placemaking, environmental protections, building design goals for priority areas of the City.
5. **Utilize city programs**, i.e. façade grants, and zoning standards to promote historic preservation
6. **Update commercial zoning** to recognize placemaking priorities compared to automobile access and parking priorities
7. Plan for coordinated **City beautification** through gateways, medians, corridors to support identity and beautification
8. Consider **art as an invitation to explore and experience diversity** within the community through visual pieces as well as gatherings and performances; include spaces to allow for these interests.
9. Include **outreach initiatives** with the Comprehensive Plan implementation and administration requirements to encourage diverse participation in planning and design efforts



Plan 2040 Vision and Priorities

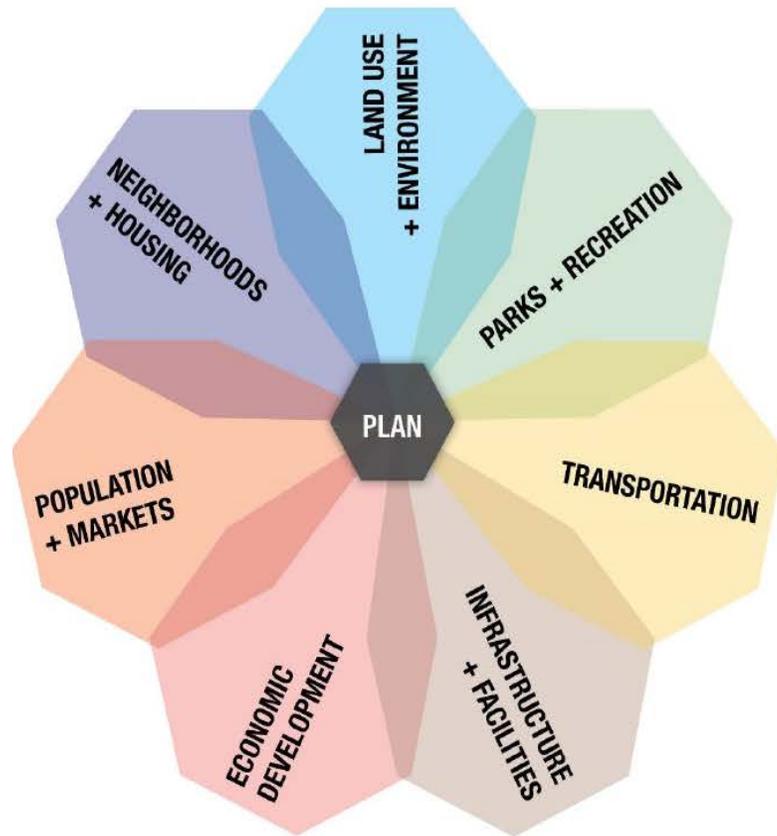
THE GOALS FOR AMES PLAN 2040 HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED AND REFINED OVER THE PAST 24 MONTHS.

1. RFP 2018
 - a) Itemized themes and technical topics for review in the plan
2. City Council Kick-off December 2018
 - a) Role of a Comp. Plan
 - b) Defining Successful Process
 - c) Identify strengths, challenges, targeted topics
 - d) Big picture outcomes
3. Public Outreach Summary April 2019
4. Plan Priorities and Format Discussion September 2019
5. Scenario evaluations and draft principles December 2019-current



Plan 2040 Vision and Priorities

RDG summary of themes from initial Public Engagement in the April 2019



BIG PICTURE:

from discussions

- A City with Variety
- Transportation Equality
- Vibrant and Balanced Market
- Embrace the Environment
- Be Bold and Unique
- Character at All Scales
- Ames for All - Inclusivity



Plan 2040 Vision and Priorities

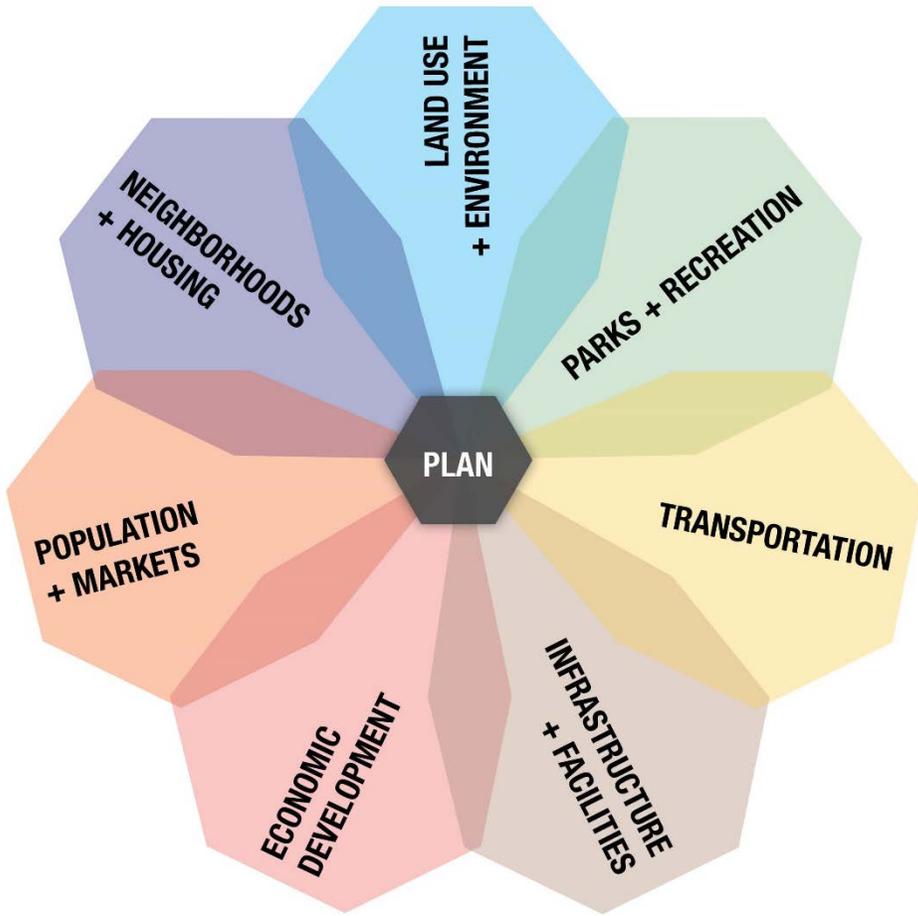
To consider Ames as an evolving city that will not only grow outwardly, but also invest in existing areas and support change within the community that ensures Ames is an inclusive, thriving, and vital community with a diverse economy, environmentally sustainable practices, and a high quality of living that meets the needs of both current and future residents.

Underlined words indicate suggested additions to the Sept. 2019 statement that was used as an overall guide to the process of drafting principles



Plan 2040 Vision and Priorities

*Refined topics and issues for drafting
Principles from Sept. 2019*



Topics

- Expansion opportunities
- Efficient extension of Infrastructure
- Strategic infill redevelopment options
- Diverse housing opportunities, with a need to support lower cost homeownership and multifamily housing options
- Transportation planning with complete streets principles
- Community character and placemaking
- Economic expansion for jobs and commercial uses
- Regional significance related to Story and Boone County, as well as Des Moines Metro area within the Cultivation Corridor
- Environmental sustainability
- Inclusive interests and equity for a diverse community
- Subarea or neighborhood plans for unique conditions
- Parks, open space, healthy lifestyles

UNIFYING THEMES

Cross-cutting topics and issues that apply in many areas of the Plan.

Sustainability

Health

Choices

Inclusivity



UNIFYING THEMES

SUSTAINABILITY

Health

Choices

Inclusivity

ENTIRE ENVIRONMENT CHAPTER

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH (GROWTH + HOUSING)

Ames new growth will be both economically and environmentally sustainable. New development areas will be incremental to existing urbanized land; create high quality, well-connected neighborhoods; and use existing and future public investments efficiently.

CONCENTRIC DEVELOPMENT (GROWTH + HOUSING)

Ames will accommodate its projected population growth on both infill sites and contiguous new greenfield growth areas that coordinates existing infrastructure with incremental extensions of services.

BALANCED TRANSPORTATION PLANNING (TRANSPORTATION)

Ames will balance the size of infrastructure improvements with cost, environmental constraints, impacts to all modes, operational quality and levels of service.

STEWARDSHIP AND VARIETY OF OPEN SPACE (PARKS)

Public open space can provide for recreation as well as natural and environmentally sensitive area preservation. The City's planning will account for needed passive area experiences as well as active recreation. Some facilities may serve a dual purpose and offer opportunities to enhance the natural environment with flood control, stormwater management, water quality, reestablishment of habitat.

DESIGN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES (CHARACTER)

The city's greenway network connects neighborhoods to nature and presents a framework for linking the entire community. The city's most environmentally sensitive land is protected, while areas that allow development have environmentally-friendly guidelines.



UNIFYING THEMES



Sustainability

HEALTH

Choices

Inclusivity

URBAN EXPERIENCE (GROWTH)

Land use policy will create a rewarding, healthy, safe, and comfortable environment for all of its residents and visitors.

CONVENIENT SERVICES (LAND USE)

All parts of Ames will have convenient access to neighborhood commercial services and other vital community facilities.

VITAL MIXED USES (LAND USE)

Ames will encourage mixing of uses to create more active, interesting, and efficient city environments, while maintaining compatibility where different uses adjoin.

COMPLETE STREETS (TRANSPORTATION)

Ames will use a Complete Streets approach to serve all users and modes.

REFLECT COMMUNITY VALUES WITH PUBLIC SPACE FOR SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL WELLBEING (PARKS)

The City of Ames parks and open spaces are a jewel of the community and point of pride that brings people together from across the community.

ACCESSIBLE AND DESIRABLE OPEN SPACE OPPORTUNITIES (PARKS)

Provide for parks and open space within walkable distances of homes in addition to larger scale community park facilities

APPLY CLIMATE CHANGE CONSCIENCE POLICES (ENVIRONMENT)

Complete a greenhouse gas inventory and Climate Action Plan to assess strategies that may reduce Ames's emissions related to climate change. Future changes to the plan and polices may be necessary to realize this principle.



UNIFYING THEMES



Sustainability
Health
CHOICES
Inclusivity

FLEXIBILITY WITH COMPATIBILITY (LAND USE)

The land use plan will provide both reasonable flexibility to developers while protecting the integrity and quality of the neighborhoods around them.

DIVERSE HOUSING OPTIONS (LAND USE)

Land use policy will encourage integration of different residential densities into the fabric of neighborhoods.

MULTI-MODALITY (TRANSPORTATION)

Create and maintain a connected multimodal network, including planned extensions of transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and micro-mobility facilities.

FLEXIBILITY WITH COMPATIBILITY (HOUSING)

The land use plan will provide both reasonable flexibility to developers while protecting the integrity and quality of the neighborhoods around them.

VITAL MIXED USES (HOUSING)

Ames will encourage mixing of uses to create more active, interesting, and efficient city environments, while maintaining compatibility where different uses adjoin.

MAINTAIN AND EXPAND THE SYSTEM OF PARK TYPES TO MEET VARIED NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY OVERALL (PARKS)

Incorporate needed facilities into existing parks as well as into newly designed parks. Parks and trails will be designed to ensure that the spaces are safe, enjoyable, fun, and distinct

CREATE OPTIONS FOR ACTIVITY (CHARACTER)

Ames has a variety of places to go where people can be active in their community – parks, trails, event facilities, and unique shopping experiences. Safe walking and bicycling paths should connect people to these opportunities and other places like schools, workplaces, and businesses.



UNIFYING THEMES



Sustainability
Health
Choices
INCLUSIVITY

PROCESS (GROWTH + HOUSING)

Land use decisions will be made through a transparent, collaborative process that remains true to long-term community goals.

PLANNING FOR EQUITY (GROWTH + HOUSING)

Future development in Ames and the public investments that support it, including housing, parks, and other community assets and features, will redound equitably to the public.

PLACES FOR EMPLOYMENT (LAND USE)

Ames will continue to provide appropriately located space for a wide range of enterprises that provide employment for existing and prospective residents.

MULTI-MODALITY (Complete Streets) (TRANSPORTATION)

Create and maintain a connected multimodal network, including planned extensions of transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and micro-mobility facilities.

DIVERSE HOUSING OPTIONS (HOUSING)

Land use policy will encourage integration of different residential densities into the fabric of neighborhoods.

INVOLVE PEOPLE FROM ALL BACKGROUNDS (CHARACTER)

Design processes for public spaces will promote inclusion of under-represented populations, including outreach to minorities and student groups.

REINFORCE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN EXISTING AND NEW AREAS (CHARACTER)

The connecting paths between new and existing should provide continuity and promote community identity with common design elements.



UNIFYING THEMES



Sustainability

Health

Choices

Inclusivity

Do you see another theme from our past discussions?

Are there issues that have not been addressed from initial goals?



Schedule



TODAY:	Community Character
JUNE:	RDG Draft Development
JULY:	RDG Draft Refinement
AUGUST:	Council Receive Draft Plan
FALL:	Council Review Public Outreach/Review Approval



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BELONG.



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