

Staff Report

COMMUNITY GARDENS AND FOOD FORESTS

March 9, 2021

BACKGROUND:

On April 14, 2020, City Council asked staff to provide a memo on what could be done to either better utilize the current community gardens or increase the community garden space. A memo (Attachment A) providing information on the current gardens and potential sites for expansion was sent to City Council and at its July 14, 2020 meeting Council directed staff to place this topic on a future agenda.

Additionally, on July 28, 2020 City Council directed staff to bring to Council information regarding developing a potential “food forest” when the community garden discussion is brought before Council.

Staff shared these two requests and the memo with the Parks and Recreation Commission at its August 20, 2020 meeting. The Commission was in favor of expanding the community garden program, but had reservations regarding developing a food forest in the park system. **The Commission directed staff to reach out to neighbors in the vicinity of two potential locations for community gardens: vacant land west of the intersection of Harrison Road and Welbeck Drive, and 830 Delaware Avenue (former North Dakota water tower site).** Commission members also noted the 830 Delaware location is being used at times by neighbors for recreation.

COMMUNITY GARDENS:

The community gardens in Ames operated by the Parks and Recreation Department consist of individual plots and/or raised beds. Most, if not all, individuals who rent a plot or bed, garden the area and then harvest the produce for their own use. Some gardeners will share, or swap produce with others, and at times social gatherings are held amongst the individuals at the gardens.

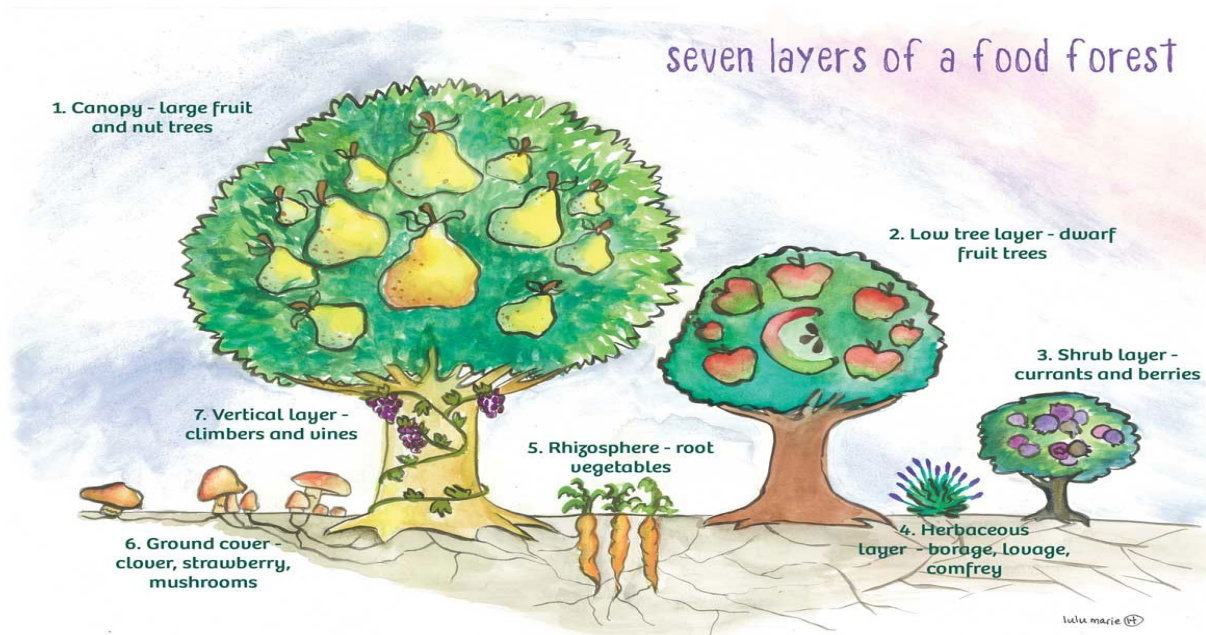
There are also community gardens in other places within the City or surrounding area where a group of individuals share gardening responsibilities of a communal plot and all gardeners share the produce at harvest times. This is not the type of garden the City operates.

FOOD FORESTS:

A food forest is similar to a community garden where participants share the responsibility of maintaining and cultivating the vegetation as well as sharing the produce. In addition, the plants in a food forest work together in a way that benefits each other, similar to the

way they co-evolve in a natural ecosystem. Wildlife such as birds help to propagate and add edible plant species as they deposit seeds from other areas that they have been eating at.

The diagram below shows a seven-layer food forest which includes trees, shrubs, root vegetables, ground cover, and climbers/vines. The plants in this forest coexist and are not generally separated in different garden plots.



GARDEN SURVEY:

A survey to gauge community interest in adding garden plots throughout the City was conducted in October 2021. The complete results of the survey are shown in Attachment B; however, there are some key points captured through public input as follows:

- 147 respondents completed the survey
- 76.8% currently garden with 59.1% gardening at their home
- 33.3% don't garden because they don't have space at their home
- 20.5% don't garden because there is no space close to their home
- 70.7% said they would be interested in a garden plot if the City added more
- When asked what is important regarding gardening at a City plot, the top three responses were as follows
 - Garden location is safe
 - Quality of garden resources (soil, water, etc.)
 - Garden location is close to home

PUBLIC INPUT:

On Wednesday, February 10, 2021, staff held two public input Zoom meetings to get feedback regarding the potential of expanding community gardens and adding food

forests in Ames. Postcards were sent to neighbors in the Harrison & Welbeck (243 postcards) and the 830 Delaware (489 postcards) neighborhoods. The meeting information was also sent via email to over 3,200 individuals in the Parks and Recreation database, posted on the Parks & Recreation Facebook page, and distributed as a press release to area media outlets. A brief overview of the current gardens, potential new sites, and a description of food forests was provided to attendees. A summary of meeting comments follow.

Community Garden at Harrison & Welbeck

Fifteen people attended this meeting and meeting notes are shown in Attachment C. In general, neighbors were not in favor of putting gardens at this site. Reasons for this include:

- Lack of parking on Welbeck
- Safety concern if strangers come into the neighborhood to garden
- Adding traffic to Welbeck
- Trashy look of gardens next to their property
- Deer will eat everything so a fence will be needed, and fences don't look good
- People use that space for recreation, and could it be left that way or add amenities (i.e. ball diamond, tennis courts, etc.)

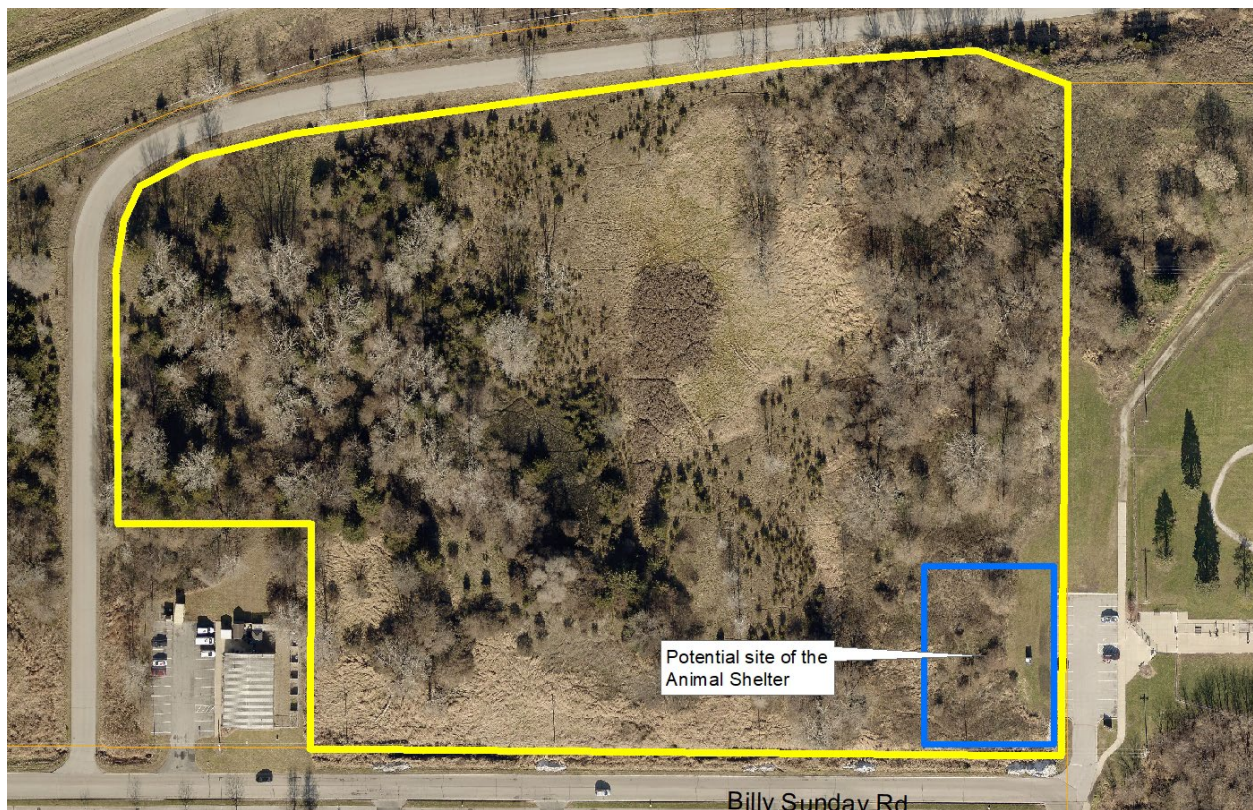
Community Gardens at 830 Delaware

Nine people attended this meeting and were excited about the idea of adding gardens to this property. Meeting notes are shown in Attachment D. There were comments regarding having a combination of gardens and green space to be used by individuals and families. Questions centered around garden plot size, fencing to keep deer out, and how to sign up for a plot. One ISU student asked if she could help with the project and staff responded yes to the offer.

Food Forests at City Property on Billy Sunday Road

Only one site, along Billy Sunday Road, was considered for a Food Forest because it offered the necessary amount of land and did not take away for existing park space.

Only one person commented on the food forest concept and he was in favor of this idea. He suggested we convert a manicured grass area for this purpose rather than utilizing the land on Billy Sunday Road adjacent the Dog Park. Traffic on Billy Sunday Road when Hunziker Youth Sports Complex has activity was also mentioned as a concern. The picture below shows the area adjacent the Dog Park proposed for developing a food forest.



Attachment E contains comments received after the public input meetings via email regarding community gardens and food forests.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION COMMENTS:

At its February 18, 2021 meeting Commissioners were presented with updated information regarding potential community garden and food forest sites, a summary of the public input sessions, and options to consider. Notable comments from Commissioners were as follows:

- Adding raised beds and a water source to the Carr Park garden is a good option
- Doesn't look like there is much support for gardens at the Harrison & Welbeck site
- Appears people are desiring gardens at the 830 Delaware site. Please note one Commissioner who lives in this neighborhood expressed that neighbors were not happy when they heard about the potential for gardens at this location. (This was not heard at the public input session)
- If a food forest were to be developed, partnering with other groups (i.e. Ames High School, ISU, etc.) is a must

After discussion, the Commission made the following recommendations to City Council:

- Recommended City Council approve adding more raised beds and a water source at the Carr Park site.

- Recommended City Council not approve developing a community garden on the property near Harrison and Welbeck.
- Recommended City Council approve developing garden beds on the east side of the 830 Delaware property.
- Tabled the discussion of developing a food forest at the property on Billy Sunday Road adjacent the Dog Park until more is known about the new Animal Control Shelter and potentially do the two projects together.

OPTIONS:

Several options with cost estimates are shown below for the City Council to consider regarding expanding community gardens and developing a food forest. The cost estimates may differ from those listed in Attachment A as items may have been added based on public feedback.

1. Direct staff to add more raised beds and a water source at the Carr Park site.

Cost:

Raised Beds (14 @ \$350)	\$4,900
Water Source	\$5,000
Total	\$9,900

2. Direct staff to develop/not develop a community garden on the property near Harrison and Welbeck.

Cost:

Ground Level Beds (12 @ \$0)	\$ 0
Fencing	
Posts (498' @ \$1.50/ft)	\$ 747
Rails (660' @ \$1.50/ft)	\$ 990
Fabric (2 rolls @ \$172/roll)	\$ 344
Concrete	\$ 1,500
Water Source	\$ 9,000
Sub-Total	\$12,581
Note: The estimated cost of adding a sidewalk	\$ 4,000
Total	\$16,581

3. Direct staff to develop/not develop a community garden at the 830 Delaware property. If the direction is to develop gardens at this site, does Council have a preference as to where on this site the gardens are located.

Cost:

Ground Level Beds (12 @ \$0)	\$ 0
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Fencing	
Posts (498' @ \$1.50/ft)	\$ 747
Rails (660' @ \$1.50/ft)	\$ 990
Fabric (2 rolls @ \$172/roll)	\$ 344
Concrete	\$ 1,500
Water Source	\$ 5,000
Sub-Total	\$ 8,581
Note: The estimated cost of adding a sidewalk	<u>\$12,000</u>
Total	\$20,581

4. Direct staff to develop/not develop a food forest at the property on Billy Sunday Road adjacent the Dog Park.

Cost:

No estimates have been determined as no group has come forward to provide guidance on this topic.

5. Proceed with any or all of the above Options.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Should the City Council wish to proceed with expanding our community garden offerings, staff would suggest that we initially focus on Carr Park and the Delaware property for community gardens and delay moving ahead with a food forest at the property adjacent to the Dog Park until a final decision is made regarding the future home for a new Animal Shelter.

In terms of implementation, the infrastructure for these gardens (plant beds, water source, fencing, and sidewalks) should be constructed over the next twelve months to allow for an opening in the Spring of 2022.

Since no funds have been appropriated for this expanded effort, monies to cover these expenses could come from the Park Development Fund or from any savings realized from current CIP projects in the Parks and Recreation Department.

ATTACHMENT A

To: Mayor and City Council Members
From: Keith Abraham, Parks and Recreation Director
Date: July 14, 2020
Subject: Community Gardens

On April 14, 2020, City Council asked staff to provide a memo on what could be done to either utilize the current community gardens better or increase the community garden space.

CURRENT GARDENS:

Parks and Recreation currently manages two community garden spaces which are at 1) Squaw Creek Park, and 2) Carr Park. More information on each of these garden areas is below:

Squaw Creek Park

This park at the south end of South Maple Street is the main community garden area in the park system and it contains 63 garden plots that are 10' X 25' or 10' X 40' in size. There are three water hydrants available and space is provided for garden debris and composting. Gardeners pay \$20-\$25 per year for the space and most gardeners use the same garden plot year after year. Due to demand, 17 plots and two water hydrants were added to bring the total to 63 and three respectively. As you can see in the picture below, there is little, if any, room to add additional plots to this garden area.



Carr Park

In 2016, four raised garden beds were installed at Carr Park, 1704 Meadowlane Avenue, to provide a gardening opportunity for individuals with disabilities or mobility issues. Since then, an additional 10 raised beds have been added to bring the total to 14. This site does not have a water hydrant but it is planned to add one in the future. Gardeners pay \$15 per year for the bed and most gardeners use the same one year after year. As you can see in the picture below, additional raised beds could be added to this garden area.

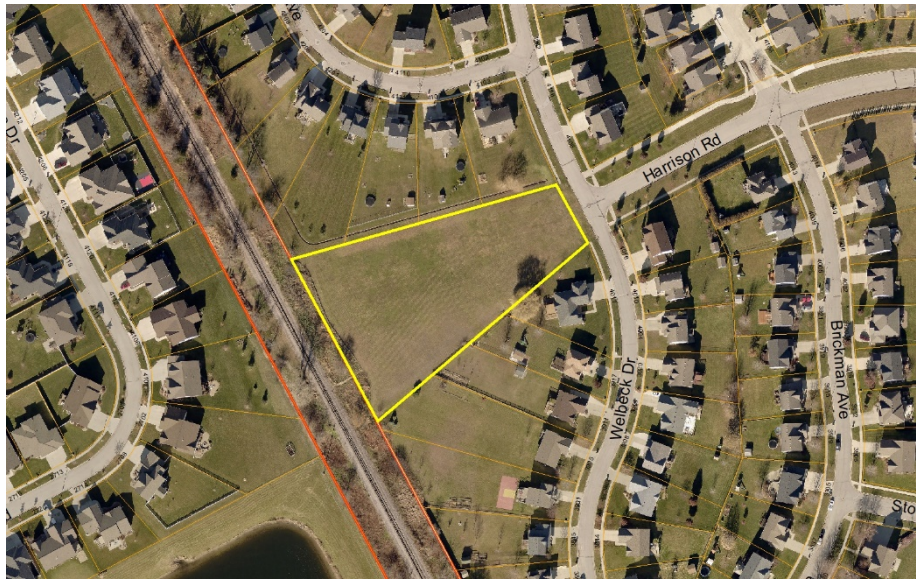


POTENTIAL AREAS FOR EXPANDING COMMUNITY GARDENS:

Staff reviewed parkland and non-parkland owned by the City and determined that there are three areas described below that warrant consideration for use as a community garden. If the City Council directs staff to explore any of these areas further, staff would need to reach out to the neighbors for feedback. The potential areas with descriptions and associated development costs are highlighted below:

1) Harrison Road Right-of-Way

This area is just west of Welbeck Drive and is approximately 1.8 acres. It does not appear Harrison Road will be extended over the railroad tracks so this could be a good use for this land that has sat vacant for many years. It is currently being mowed by an adjacent property owner. The lot is large enough that other amenities could be added in the future (e.g. play equipment, shelter, etc.) if a need is determined. The cost to connect water to this site, delineate garden plots, and signage would be approximately \$8,000. Additionally, this lot currently does not have a sidewalk and if it is decided to add one, there would be an additional cost (approximately \$4,000) to developing this site.



2. Between North Dakota Avenue and Delaware Avenue (Former water tower site)

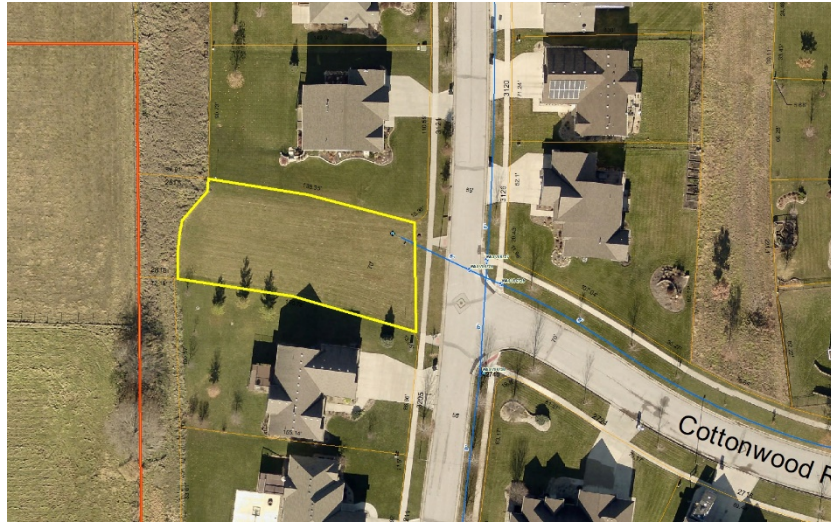
This area is just east of Utah Drive between North Dakota and Delaware. There is an electrical substation south of the approximately one acre open area which could be used for gardens. When the water tower was removed, the footings were cut at a depth of three feet below ground level which should not interfere with gardening. It is currently being mowed by the City. The cost to connect water to this site, delineate garden plots, and signage would be approximately \$6,500. Additionally, this lot currently does not have a sidewalk and if it is decided to add one, there would be an additional cost (approximately \$12,000) to developing this site. For reference, there is sidewalk to the north of this lot, but not to south.



3) Cottonwood Road Right-of-Way

This area is just west of Red Fox Road and is approximately 0.3 acres. Unlike Harrison Road, Cottonwood will be extended west to State Avenue at some point in the future. Until that happens, this site could be used for community gardens. It is currently being mowed by the City. The cost to connect water to this

site, delineate garden plots, and signage would be approximately \$5,000. This lot does have a sidewalk, so there would be no additional cost to developing this site.



STAFF COMMENTS:

The three new sights mentioned for consideration would spread community gardens to the north, south, and west of the city limits in addition to the two existing gardens which serve central and east Ames.

ATTACHMENT C

Community Garden Meeting Regarding the Property Near Harrison and Welbeck

Postcards sent to 243 Residents in the area.

Approximately 15 participants. The meeting started at 5:32 PM

Chat participant wanted to know if there were other options for the space as kids in the neighborhood use the site for baseball etc.

Chat participant wanted to know if everyone currently gardening in the community gardens is from Ames? Joshua Thompson stated that they were all from Ames.

Jill wanted to know where the gardeners would park? The residents need the parking on Welbeck. Abraham stated that the gardeners would need to use street parking.

Would the garden be open to residents of the neighborhood only? Abraham stated they would be open to anyone.

Chat participant wanted to know why not use the land at Bloomington and Hyde? Abraham stated if they meant Lloyd Kurtz Park, there may be other things planned for that area.

How much traffic would this bring into the neighborhood? Thompson stated that he goes by the Squaw Creek gardens frequently and he never sees more than two or three cars there at one time during weekdays. On the weekends, when the gardens are busiest, there may be a maximum of ten cars at a time. There are 63 plots at that location which is more gardens than would be placed at this site.

Jennifer wanted to know if it is just people in the neighborhoods near the gardens that use the current garden spots. Abraham stated that at the Squaw Creek location are used by people who live throughout the city. At the Carr Park location, the gardeners are more from the surrounding neighborhood.

Does public transportation go to that location? Staff will research this.

Chat participant has a backyard near the site and would not be comfortable with outside people using the site. Safety is a concern if strangers come into the neighborhood.

Abraham asked what the department could do to alleviate those concerns. **No answer.**

Chat participant wanted to comment that the proposed food forest area is very busy and sometimes traffic is a nightmare at Hunziker Sports Complex. Abraham stated there are some things in the transportation plan for Billy Sunday Rd. that will alleviate some of that traffic.

Jill states that the Squaw Creek area is “trashy looking” and does not want this by her property. She would rather have it at Bloomington and Hyde. She would like to know if this area could be a recreation spot instead. Abraham stated this area is in a neighborhood and would be different than the Squaw Creek location. All comments will be considered at the Parks and Recreation Commission next Thursday.

Three to four cars daily will just add to the congestion on Welbeck.

Chat participant states the nearest bus stop would be on Bloomington.

Chat participant wanted to know the size of the plots. Abraham stated they could be a combination of raised and ground level beds of different sizes. **Cost?** The cost would be similar to the current price. (10'x40' is \$25, 10'x25' is \$20 and the smaller ADA raised beds are \$15)

Fencing? Fencing would be put up by Staff.

Is this meeting to determine if the gardens are placed there. This meeting is a part of the process. **Can we comment?** Yes, you can attend the Commission and Council meetings virtually.

Jennifer lives three houses down. She does not want to bring any cars into the area. It is a long way from CyRide to carry things, and she feels community gardens are an eyesore that she does not want to look at. Abraham again stated that this garden would be in a neighborhood and would be treated differently than the area at Squaw Creek. There would be fencing and maintenance at the site. **Who will maintain a plot if a gardener abandons it?** P & R staff would do the cleanup of the plot.

Anna lives on Crestmoor. She states that there are over 50 kids in the area which is quiet and safe. She does not want any strangers coming into the area. She would like the sidewalk finished in the area. Abraham will investigate the sidewalk and pass it along to the correct person.

Chat participant states that the deer will eat everything and wants to know if there will be water at the site. Abraham replied that there would be water and fencing at the location.

Hector stated that the proposed food forest area is already a natural area and does not feel we should upset the current ecosystem there.

Chat participant does not want to see this out their window and has concerns about the parking.

Jennifer asked how people in the neighborhood say what they want. Abraham stated that is the purpose of this meeting.

Kate says there is a safety concern with the railroad. Many people use this area for recreation.

Anna says the railroad backs up to the spot. There are not many trains and the neighbors pay attention to what is going on. Could fencing be put up? Abraham repeated that the site would be fenced if used for a community garden. **She wants something useful for their neighborhood, not a community garden.**

Jill wants the city to leave the green space for the neighborhood.

Will the city maintain the space? Abraham repeated that the City would maintain anything we put there.

When will this go to the Council? Abraham replied that this would go to the Park and Recreation Commission on February 18. The Commission could make a recommendation to the City Council. Council could get this as soon as February 23 or it could be discussed at one of the March meetings depending on the other items on the agenda. Abraham also explained the process and when the Commission and Council documents are posted.

Chat member asked if there were any other options for the space like a rec area. Abraham stated that the Lloyd Kurtz Park shelter, volleyball court and playground are well used, however the green space seems to be underutilized. Abraham asked how many neighbors use the recreation/green space at Lloyd Kurtz park. **Two or three people indicated they used Lloyd Kurtz.**

Comments regarding why they don't use the recreation space at Lloyd Kurtz:

Kids bring stuff out to play with - they don't want to carry it that far.

Lloyd Kurtz is farther way than this space.

Play equipment at Lloyd Kurtz gets hot in the summer. (Abraham stated that would be typical of most playgrounds in the summer)

Neighborhood kids prefer to play together in this space.

It was asked again who would maintain the space. Abraham repeated that the spot would be maintained by staff and would be a different kind of garden space than the Squaw Creek gardens due to its location. Gardeners are contacted if they do not maintain their space and staff clears it out if it is abandoned.

Chat participant asked about fitness/calisthenics parks. Abraham said we have walking paths but there is not specific equipment for working out. Staff is exploring some parkour equipment for the park system.

Chat participant works hard to maintain their yard and is uncomfortable with outsiders coming into the neighborhood. Abraham said that some people from the neighborhood would likely use the garden plots as well.

Chat participant stated that the storm sewer always has garbage and leaves in it. Abraham stated he would pass this along to the proper person.

Chat participant states they would prefer to keep the neighborhood quiet.

Abraham informed the participants that he appreciated their comments and ended the meeting at 6:23 PM.

ATTACHMENT D

Community Garden Meeting Regarding the Property at 830 Delaware

Postcards sent to 489 residents in the area.

Approximately 9 participants. The meeting started at 6:32 PM

Elizabeth would like general information on reserving a plot. Joshua Thompson, Parks and Facilities Superintendent, explained the current process to her.

Joan was wondering if she could go ahead and sign up for a Delaware plot now. She wondered if they had to wait for the City Council to approve something like this. Abraham explained the process to her.

Joan wondered what size the plots would be. She feels that 10x40 may be too much for her but the raised plots at Carr Park seem rather small. Abraham explained that there may be a variety of plot sizes.

Jim asked if water would be available. Abraham said that the City would bring water to the site. He also asked what the probability was the Delaware location would be approved. Abraham said that it depended on the outcome of tonight's meeting.

Macaley said she was excited to hear about this but did want to say that the green space was used daily by the neighborhood and by people as a dog run. She wondered if there was an option to have both gardens and green space, especially as there is some higher density property to the north of the area. Abraham said that the area was served by Hutchison Park, but some green space could be maintained.

Elizabeth, who is a student studying Community Gardens, asked if the department would allow her to help on this project. Abraham said that student involvement would be great and gave her his contact information.

Would the gardens be fenced as there are a lot of deer? Abraham stated the gardens would be fenced. He also explained that this plot is in a neighborhood so it would be handled in a different way than the squaw creek gardens.

Abraham clarified that what he was hearing was the neighborhood wanted water, fencing, and a combination of gardens and green space should this project go forward.

Lou asked if the area where Delaware goes into North Dakota had been looked at.

Abraham said staff had investigated that area, however the land is quite sloped and there have been some accidents at that intersection.

Off topic question regarding the tree buffer that was on the east side of the substation died. Can the buffer be replaced? Abraham said he can pass this on to Electric. He was not sure as trees and substations don't always go together.

Elizabeth asked about the next meetings. Abraham said the Park & Recreation Commission will discuss it at the February 18 meeting which will be livestreamed. It will go before the Council at the February 23, March 9, or March 23 meeting depending on the meeting agenda. He also gave information for livestreaming.

Meeting ended at 7:10 PM

ATTACHMENT E

INPUT RECEIVED BY EMAIL

Harrison & Welbeck Comments:

Keith – thank you for taking the time to have the virtual meeting and especially for answering all of our questions and listening to our concerns. My two biggest concerns with the garden are the parking and the appearance. I reside at 4011 Welbeck which is the house adjacent to this bare space on the south side. In the summertime, it seems that the majority of residents along Welbeck park at least one car on the street which makes the street congested and when driving, if a car is coming from the other direction, one car always has to pull over to let the other thru as the street is not wide enough for two traveling cars and a parked car as well. I feel like adding more cars to the mix will make more congestion and also make it more dangerous for the numerous small children that reside on Welbeck and on Crestmoor, the street on the north side of the city owned bare area. Also, numerous bicyclists use Welbeck and Harrison to go to and from Ada Hayden. It is very busy with bike traffic from spring to fall. And many parents walking with kids in strollers, wagons, etc also go along Harrison to get to Ada Hayden so I do not feel it is safe to add more unnecessary traffic to this area.

And there is garage sale season.....navigating this area during garage sale season is like trying to get your car out of Jack Trice stadium parking lots after a football game! If the gardens are added, the gardeners won't even be able to find adequate parking unless they park at one of the churches along Bloomington and walk to their garden.

The other concern is what the gardens will look like. I know when I brought this up last night you had asked me if I thought raised vs unraised beds would be more attractive. I don't think it matters much although raised beds would require taller fencing. With the high turnover of the gardens (50% each year), it seems like a number of them will go unmaintained and become an eyesore. You had also stated the City would maintain the area around the beds. However, my neighbor has mowed that entire almost 2 acre space in the 11 years I have lived there. He said the City used to rarely mow it and it became an eyesore to the entire area so he has been mowing it for at least 11 years. If the City could not maintain it before, how can we be assured they will maintain it once there are beds and fencing there which will make it harder to maintain? I also think to have effective fencing, it will have to be tall as there are lots of deer in the area and the taller the fencing, the more of an eyesore this will become. The Squaw Creek garden has always been very messy looking and not well maintained but that is not in a residential area. The one at Carr Park is not adjacent to any housing. And the one at Carr Park has parking that is not on the street.

I hope the City can find an alternative spot to use that is less residential and more hidden. I just do not feel like this garden area would benefit the surrounding community because the neighborhood consists of residents that own their home and have yards where they could grow their own garden. This current green space is already heavily utilized by kids and adults in our neighborhood and even though I do not have children, I would be very disappointed to see it no longer be utilized for this.

Thanks again for your time – I really appreciate you taking into consideration our comments and concerns.

Jill Allen

4011 Welbeck Drive

Good evening. I live on Brickman Avenue and see that area of grassland that is heavily used in the spring, summer and fall. With the garden project on 13th street that is an eyesore to the community, I do not feel having the garden here is appropriate. Why not use the land at the park on Hyde and Bloomington. I vote no to the gardens on Welbeck and Harrison. Too many families with kids that use this area and feel the increased traffic would be a safety nightmare. Thank you for considering this information

Cate Frey
4107 Brickman Avenue

Good morning!

I appreciate everything you and the city are doing with the garden projects and hope there is clear direction for these areas. Thank you

Cate

I believe you had a meeting recently regarding new garden plots for rent in Ames. I just wanted to let you know that I would be very interested in having garden plots at the Harrison/Welbeck location. I have thought for a long time that the ground there should be used for something like community gardens. I would hope that there would be water available.... What was the result of the discussion in the recent meeting?

Thanks,
Myrna Katz

Ok....I live near there, and honestly have seen very little use by anyone recreationally.... I doubt parking would be that big a deal since every one would just come and go on their own schedule....not a group thing.

830 Delaware Comments:

I believe ~10x20 plots or raised beds would provide gardeners with nice options for gardening. Having a fence and water access would be a must in that location. Thank you for pursuing this. I'm very excited about the possibility of a community garden here.

Willy Klein

Hello Sir,

I was excited reading the postcard I just received concerning the proposed community garden at 830 Delaware Ave. Unfortunately, I didn't see it in time and missed the meeting. Is there any chance you have either a recording of the meeting or other information you'd be willing to send me?

Thanks in advance,
Stephanie Haila

Hello Joshua,

Thank you for informing us of our garden plot options at the zoom meeting last evening. I had a little trouble with my zoom feed so I wasn't quite sure my message was noted.

I sent in my form to reserve a 10x20 or 10x25 foot garden area. Since I live on the south side of town, I would like the garden to be in the Delaware Street location, if possible.

Thanks again for your help! Stay warm and safe!

Jaye Stefani

1505 Little Bluestem Court, Unit 101

Joshua,

I submitted a request for a garden plot tonight but left the location blank. I would like to be placed on the list for space in the Delaware Ave garden. I would be interested in a larger space. The raised beds at the Carr garden are on the small side, I understand the ADA access necessary, but would consider 2 raised bed gardens if they are similar in size to the Carr gardens.

Follow up question – if/when this is approved, when do you believe the gardens would be available?

Thank you.

Jim Lowry

Josh,

I am writing in support of establishing a community garden at the Delaware site. I had signed up for the Squaw Creek site but would prefer Delaware if available. I live in the neighborhood and would be glad to volunteer to help make this happen.

Thanks Lou Scallon,

Constant Contact Survey Results **Survey Name:** 2020 Community Garden

Survey Sent to 6,542 Email Addresses In Database

Email opened by **1,840 people**

Posted invitation and link on P&R Facebook **440 Views, 7 engagements**

Posted invitation and link on COA Facebook **1398 Views, 42 engagements**

147 RESPONSES

City Council has asked staff to determine if there is a need to either expand the current garden areas or develop new gardens in different sections of town. To help you understand what the City of Ames currently operates, a description of the two garden locations are shown below: Squaw Creek Park This park at the south end of South Maple Street is the main community garden area in the park system and it contains 63 garden plots that are 10' X 25' or 10' X 40' in size. There are three water hydrants available and space is provided for garden debris and composting. Gardeners pay \$20-\$25 per year for the space and most gardeners use the same garden plot year after year. As you can see in the picture below, there is little, if any, room to add additional plots to this garden area.



Squaw Creek Community Garden Plots

Carr Park

In 2016, four raised garden beds were installed at Carr Park, 1704 Meadowlane Avenue, to provide a gardening opportunity for individuals with disabilities or mobility issues. Since then, an additional 10 raised beds have been added to bring the total to 14. This site does not have a water hydrant, but it is planned to add one in the future. Gardeners pay \$15 per year for the bed and most gardeners use the same one year after year. As you can see in the picture below, additional raised beds could be added to this garden area.



Carr Park Community Garden Plots

Currently, there is a waiting list for garden space at these two areas. Please assist staff in gauging community interest regarding gardens by answering the following questions. Thank You!

Do you currently garden?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
YES	<div></div>		113	76.8 %
NO	<div></div>		34	23.1 %
No Response(s)			0	0.0 %
Totals			147	100%

If you currently garden, where do you garden?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
At my home	<div></div>		87	59.1 %
I have a plot at the City's Squaw Creek Garden	<div></div>		14	9.5 %
I have a raised bed at the City's Carr Park	<div></div>		2	1.3 %
At a non-city of Ames garden. (Please list the location in the comment space below.)	<div></div>		8	5.4 %
Not applicable	<div></div>		19	12.9 %
Other	<div></div>		3	2.0 %
No Response(s)	<div></div>		14	9.5 %
Totals			147	100%

• a plot in Minnesota near relatives
• In planters on my deck
• Ames high garden club
• Certainly having a local plot would be great. We don't get to the existing one regularly. Perhaps it shouldn't even count.
• my church
• I garden at my family's farm. I would love to see the city take some park land and make orchards. I've been working on my own orchard for several years. I think this could be in green space in parks like Brookside (near 6th stree). Of course, it would require deer fencing as they'll nibble on the trees--and trunk protection from mice and rabbits.
• My home garden is mostly shaded
• I am a gardener who just moved to a place where I can't garden.
• Lockwood Cafe gardens
• On Oakwood. It has been eliminated for a housing project.
• My home does not have enough direct sun.
• I am in plot 11 and would like a 2nd plot
• I have also gardened for 3 years at Squaw Creek.
• I have plot #1 and as I gardened this summer many people stopped and asked me about the process to acquire a garden. I believe there is great interest but little advertisement of this opportunity.
• At Oakwood Road. I also garden at home (containers).
• Oakwood road, Christopherson property now sold to be developed and no longer available to gardeners
• I also garden at my home. We would love an additional raised garden at Carr Park.
• Previously leased a plot at Squaw Creek Garden.
• My folks have some land outside of Ames, but I would love a local plot!
• Though I have several small gardens on my property, there is not enough space for the size of garden I would like to have nor is my property sunny enough for what I'd like to grow.
• It is a challenge to garden there with weeds, pest and animals but lots of fun. Kind of has a feel of a kid's secret clubhouse being tucked away back on south Maple street. Nice and quiet. Friendly people garden down on squaw creek .
• MY HOME GARDEN HAS SHADE FROM TREES IN COMMON PUBLIC AREA. i GET 25 SUN% SUNLIGHT IN GROWING SEASON.
• St. Cecilia School
• Only a very little bit at home- too much shade.
• Had a garden on Oakwood this year. However this won't be available next year due to a new housing development. Had a 30' x 35' garden.
• I have a plot I share with Reid Brown.
• I am in an apartment and my plants are all in pots on my balcony - with mixed success.
• Love the Endless Woodchips

If you currently garden, why do you do so? (Select all that apply.)

If you currently garden, why do you do so? (Select all that apply.)				
Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Access to fresh produce	<div><div></div></div>		108	82.4 %
Community involvement & socializing	<div><div></div></div>		20	15.2 %
Recreation	<div><div></div></div>		71	54.1 %
Learn more about gardening	<div><div></div></div>		38	29.0 %
Save money	<div><div></div></div>		44	33.5 %
Enjoy gardening	<div><div></div></div>		102	77.8 %
Not applicable	<div><div></div></div>		16	12.2 %
Other	<div><div></div></div>		14	10.6 %
Totals			131	100%

Encourage beneficial insects and birds

It's a very visible bed. I don't want it to go to weeds.

Mental health boost

Improves mental health

always have!

I farmed before I started working in town. This is an important link to my prior

good life skill to teach our children

therapy

self reliance and local food

Grow food not found in local stores

teach students about caring for creation










It is amazing to watch nature at work, plants, pollinators, worms, etc.

Engage with nature

enjoy outdoor activities

If you do not currently garden, why not? (Select all that apply.)

If you do not currently garden, why not? (Select all that apply.)

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
I do not have space for a garden at my home			26	33.3 %
I do not have enough time to garden			7	8.9 %
I do not know how to grow the food I want to eat			7	8.9 %
I do not have reliable transportation			1	1.2 %
I cannot afford gardening supplies			1	1.2 %
There is no garden space close to my home			16	20.5 %
I already have the vegetables I need			1	1.2 %
Not applicable			41	52.5 %
Other			7	8.9 %
Totals			78	100%

shade and deer are more of a problem than "space" for garden

Dang rabbits

I don't enjoy gardening.

Not interested

Recently moved here, but gardened in my previous town

I enjoy gardening but have small space and limited time thus year. Want to try

I have room much clay 8n my yard. deer Nd rabbits are also a nuisance

If additional community gardens were to be developed throughout the City, are you interested in having a garden plot?

Answer	0%		100%	Number of Response(s) Response Ratio
YES	<div></div>			104 70.7 %
NO	<div></div>			41 27.8 %
No Response(s)	<div></div>			2 1.3 %
Totals			147	100%

How important are the following items to you for being able to garden?

1 = Important, 2 = Somewhat Important, 3 = Not Important

Answer	1	2	3	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Garden location close to home				140	1.3
Garden location on bus route				120	2.7
Quality of garden resources (soil, water, etc.)				133	1.2
Cleanliness of the garden area				132	1.4
Gardening equipment provided (rakes, etc.)				123	2.3
Garden location is safe				136	1.2
Social atmosphere at the garden				125	2.0

*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

If you were to participate in a City community garden, would you be willing to pay a small annual fee (under \$25) for a garden plot?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
YES	<div><div></div></div>		136	92.5 %
NO	<div><div></div></div>		5	3.4 %
No Response(s)	<div><div></div></div>		6	4.0 %
Totals			147	100%

If you were to participate in a community garden, what kind of space are you interested in?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
An individual garden plot for my family and me	<div><div></div></div>		83	56.4 %
A shared plot where many people work together and share the harvest	<div><div></div></div>		19	12.9 %
A food pantry plot where people work together and donate the harvest to those in need	<div><div></div></div>		16	10.8 %
A food forest concept where 5-7 layers of fruits, vegetables, and nuts are grown in unison	<div><div></div></div>		15	10.2 %
Other	<div><div></div></div>		5	3.4 %
No Response(s)	<div><div></div></div>		9	6.1 %
Totals			147	100%

All of these sound good




Not interested at this time

All with varying interest. Curious about food forest, but likely lower

I think an individual plot underneath the food forest concept would be ideal!

Fruit trees berry patches outside of family plot for all

What type of plot would you be interested in?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Land bed (plot is at ground level)			72	48.9 %
Raised bed (typically 8-20" above ground level)			53	36.0 %
Accessible raised bed (typically 28-34" tall and no wider than 24" across)			9	6.1 %
No Response(s)			13	8.8 %
Totals			147	100%

If you were to participate in a community garden, approximately how many square feet of garden space would you prefer?

Would you prefer:			Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Answer	0%	100%		
25 or less	<div><div></div></div>		23	15.6 %
26-100	<div><div></div></div>		61	41.4 %
101-200	<div><div></div></div>		20	13.6 %
201-300	<div><div></div></div>		10	6.8 %
301-400	<div><div></div></div>		8	5.4 %
401 or more	<div><div></div></div>		12	8.1 %
No Response(s)	<div><div></div></div>		13	8.8 %
Totals			147	100%

If you were to garden, what types of plants are you interested in growing? (Select all that apply.)

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Fruits/berries	<div></div>		78	56.1 %
Vegetables	<div></div>		136	97.8 %
Herbs	<div></div>		104	74.8 %
Flowers	<div></div>		72	51.7 %
Other	<div></div>		1	<1 %
Totals			139	100%

Trees! Apples Galore!

Please list locations you feel would be ideal for a community garden in Ames?

83 Response(s)

- West Ames -- Sunset Ridge area or north of there.
- North side of the Ames. Somewhere close to Somerset
- Lloyd Kurtz Park
- Brookside park, carr park, mccarthy lee park
- either the south maple or Carr park are good. Also near high school is good.
- I'd like to see the flower bed at the location I described above become a community garden so that I wouldn't have to pay for everything out of my own pocket to make this plot look nice.
- Daily park.
Edward's elementary
- Not aware of any, but somewhere close to South Dakota in West Ames would be ideal
- Over by Fountain View apartments. There's plenty of space by the fields to the east for a community garden.
- Stuart-Smith park by fourth street; Ontario by research park; 24th street near fellows;
by furman aquatic center
- Northridge greenspaces, neighborhood greenspaces
- Central Ames/Brookside park area
- Ada Hayden
- Off Ontario area.
- Near downtown, maybe at Roosevelt park?
- Roosevelt Park, Brookside Park
- Old Edward School Park
- North Ames
- The North of 24th and West of Hyland parts of Ames would be good
- Not sure
- Vacant lot at the intersection of Harrison and Welbeck.
- Carr Pool
- Some place in north Ames.
- I don't know. I live at 700 South Dakota ave
- Southeast part of the South of Highway 30 area. A portion of the East of Duff area bounded by Lincoln Way, Highway 30, South Duff and I-35.
- West Ames!
North Ames!
East Ames!
South Ames!
- Haven't really thought about it.
Also, I'm open to other kinds of gardening beyond individual plot but had to choose just one.
- North of Bloomington Near Stange
- In addition to Carr Park, the Homewood Golf Course land adjacent to 20th Ave. and within a block of Meadowlane would serve many of my neighbors.
- north ames
- Carr Park
- Open area across from police station. If you are not using it for low income housing. The area curves and shelter could benefit.
- Brookside park - very central and accessible by various modes of transport.
- South of the horrible south Duff corridor.. would not want to drive up south duff to get to garden.
- Old Edwards School site
- A plot near the North and/or West side of Ames.
- On the north end of town, perhaps in Moore park.
- More gardens at Carr Park would be great!
- Near Kate Mitchell
- West ames middle school area or West of pond area on Mortensen Out by the new wetland park It is a learning wetland and could be a learning garden as well
- South Ames

- west ames
- West Amed
- The location of the old middle school (Woodland).
- Nearer to ISU campus, on the west side of town. It would be ideal for the city and university to partner, which could allow for community plots to be located on underutilized university lands. The old SW Athletic fields and Arboretum come to mind. Another possibility is Gateway Hills Park, which the city already owns.
- Ames High School, also other schools that have been repurposed.
- Empty lot off of Coy St. toward Franklin Ave.
- East Ames
- West Ames
- West Ames near Boone County border (500th street or Y Ave)
Along Ontario street
- If there's property available in the West Ames area, there are a lot of apartment dwellers and homeless that might benefit. Perhaps something near Reliable street, or near the West Ames Hyvee?
- More at Carr park
- North Dakota and Delaware
South of Old middle school site off State Ave.
Middle school and east of the current complex (tree pile there now)
- North Ames
- The vacant land off North Dakota (across from the cemetery/between Delaware Ave and North Dakota)
- Lloyd Kurtz Park
- A central downtown area, like in/near one of the Duff parks or Brookside park.
- near the historic district / old town
- West Ames Parks
- Open area by Delaware ave.
- PREFERABLY MOORE PARK, I AM OK WITH ANY COMMUNITY GARDEN.
- North Ames. Please let me know if St. Cecilia can partner in any way. This is Sara Rooney, Principal, St. Cecilia School.
- Somerset area
- Somewhere north of 13th street. Moore park?
- By Cameron School Rd.
North Dakota Rd
X Ave.
190 st.
Hyde
- North of Lincoln Way and west of the university.
- City land between North Dakota and Delaware Ave
- Pretty much any flood plain or park
- Most areas will be acceptable.
- Any space that the city mows would be a great start.
- West Ames, Downtown
- Old Edwards School site
- Idk
- Any open, area within the Stuart Smith park.
- Off the top of my head I do not know the cross streets, but what about the area where the City of Ames had proposed building the community health center (and which was sadly voted down) and which was supposed to have garden plots as part of that health center project anyway ... NW Ames
- Im not familiar. Is there space near aquatic center or city park
- NORTHEAST AMES
- Christofferson Park
Yard around City Hall

- <https://goo.gl/maps/2pgx9H1GngD3GmhC9>
I know Churches aren't city property but This one has a garden for the Food at First Program. churches might be interested in this.
- <https://goo.gl/maps/26LWRzGCitP9njhD6>
Any park or large lawn that the city is currently paying for mowing is a good candidate
- As long as there water source , any location will be ok
- Lincoln Park, the city owned lots near the mew Tripp Street extension
- perhaps west side of town
- near ames middle school
- near furman aquatic center

What is your age?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
17 and under			2	1.3 %
18-25			4	2.7 %
26-34			16	10.8 %
35-54			57	38.7 %
55-64			36	24.4 %
65 and over			31	21.0 %
No Response(s)			1	<1 %
Totals			147	100%

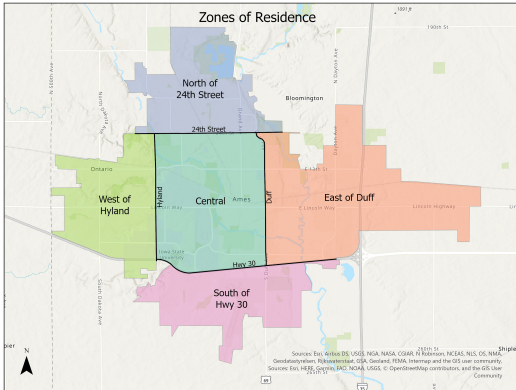
What is your race/ethnicity? (Select all that apply.)

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
African, Black or African American			2	1.4 %
Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander			15	10.6 %
White (non-Hispanic)			112	79.4 %
Hispanic/Latinx			2	1.4 %
Native American/American Indian			1	<1 %
Other			1	<1 %
Perfer not to answer			12	8.5 %
Totals			141	100%

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Less than High School			2	1.3 %
High School/GED			2	1.3 %
Some College			13	8.8 %
Under Graduate Degree			48	32.6 %
Graduate Degree			78	53.0 %
Trade School or Apprenticeship			2	1.3 %
No Response(s)			2	1.3 %
Totals			147	100%

TextBlock:



ZONE MAP OF AMES

Where do you currently live? (Please select area nearest to your home.)

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
North Ames (North of 24th St)			43	29.2 %
East Ames (East of Duff Avenue)			10	6.8 %
South Ames (South of Highway 30)			8	5.4 %
West Ames (West of Hyland Ave)			33	22.4 %
Central Ames (In between the areas above)			50	34.0 %
Other			1	<1 %
No Response(s)			2	1.3 %
Totals			147	100%

recently moved out of Ames but work in Ames