

**AGENDA  
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL  
MARCH 21, 2023**

**CALL TO ORDER:** 6:00 p.m.

**WORKSHOP:**

1. Presentation on Infill Development

**DISPOSITION OF COMMUNICATIONS TO COUNCIL:**

**COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Please note that this agenda may be changed up to 24 hours before the meeting time as provided by Section 21.4(2), *Code of Iowa*.**

## Staff Report

**INFILL DESIGN WORKSHOP**

March 21, 2023

**BACKGROUND:**

The City adopted Ames Plan 2040 in December 2021 as the new comprehensive plan to guide the growth and change of the community. The Plan was formulated over three years of public input, analysis, and Council workshops to derive a 20-year plan designed to meet the needs of adding 15,000 people to the City along with expansion of commercial and employment opportunities.

During the growth scenario analysis, the City Council evaluated options for growth to the north, south, east and west to serve 15,000 people. **However, the Plan also included significant policy support for infill opportunities within the existing community.** Excerpts of Ames Plan 2040 infill policies are included as Attachment “A”.

**Infill is commonly defined as development or redevelopment of underutilized land within the built-up existing areas of a community. Adding subdivisions and developing at the edge of community is not commonly classified as infill; it is more commonly classified as greenfield development.**

Due to the less predictable nature of redeveloping existing sites, infill developments were considered to be part of the City’s overall growth plan as additional opportunities in Ames Plan 2040, beyond the expansion of the City to serve the next 15,000 people. **There was no set target for redevelopment within the Plan, but it became a priority for implementation of the Plan to define in greater detail: 1) what infill is, and 2) where in fact these opportunities exist in the city. To this end, in January 2022, City Council identified a Council Goal of “Valuing Diverse Housing Options” with a task to hold a workshop on residential infill options to implement Plan 2040 policies.**

With the Council’s Plan 2040 discussion of growth and land use, the City adopted land use designations that describe neighborhood character in relation to housing patterns, density, and common building types. **The primary goals of these designations were to describe neighborhood context to help guide future decisions about land use and housing types and to not be tied to a defined density calculation for each site.** The Housing and Community Character element describes the City’s needs for housing diversity throughout the community and reinforces that design and character are critical components of ensuring community acceptance of change, specifically infill. A table illustrating Ames’ Current Housing Mix and Projected Needs is included as Attachment “B”.

**WORKSHOP FORMAT:**

The workshop will address to primary topics for City Council discussion. **The first topic is to identify infill standards that would apply city-wide and consider the creation of additional dwelling units without planning for large scale redevelopment.** Generally, infill design standards would address basic compatibility in terms of access, height, size, setbacks, yard space, orientation, privacy, and parking. For the first topic, the most common examples would be modifying zoning regulations to allow for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and two-family units or duplexes in low density residential areas

**The second topic is to review where the Plan 2040 identifies areas for infill that are oriented towards intensification that would likely include medium to larger redevelopment options.** Examples of planned redevelopment areas and infill include Redirection Areas, Urban Corridors, Near Campus University Areas, and specific plan areas such as the South Lincoln Mixed Use area.

**The workshop presentation will include examples and attributes of good infill design, including examples from other cities, that would apply to general infill interests and specific building types.**

### **SECOND UNIT AND ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT ISSUES:**

Accessory dwelling units (“ADUs,” also sometimes referred to as second units, granny flats, or mother-in law units) are a unique building type due to their relationship to the principal single-family dwelling on a site. ADUs are considered by some to be a good small infill option as they are typically smaller and do not require larger redevelopment. ADUs can be for current family or extended family members or be used as a rental unit. Although ADUs are generally small in size and geared towards one-bedroom unit sizes, they can be difficult to situate onto a property and they may incur substantial construction costs.

Over time, the City has limited the options for second units on single family properties, including single-family conversions and duplexes. This type of dwelling unit is not currently permitted in Ames. ADUs were also not directly allowed under the City’s prior zoning ordinance standards.

One of the key issues related to infill design will be to what degree infill housing is promoted by relaxing zoning regulations versus emphasizing consistency and compatibility of design for an area which would accommodate some infill opportunities. ADUs are good test case for this issue do is siting constraints when placed on an existing site compared to when they are built with a new home. A table illustrating a Comparison Review of ADU Codes of standards from other Cities is included as Attachment “C”.

**Common issues that have been raised in other communities regarding Accessory Dwelling Units and two-family homes include:**

1. **Location on a lot** – Should ADUs be subject to the same side- and rear-yard setbacks as other accessory buildings?
2. **Height limitations** – Should ADU height restrictions be the same as for accessory buildings (no taller than a 1-story principal building or no more than the lesser of 80% of a multi-story principal building or 20 feet)?
3. **Attached ADU, detached ADU, or conversion of existing garage space** – Some communities limit ADUs to only one of these three types.
4. **ADU size** – Should there be a maximum square footage, a maximum percentage of the principal building size, or a maximum number of bedrooms?
5. **Require owner occupancy of at least one unit** – This would prevent an ADU from being constructed for rental purposes on a property where the principal structure is already a rental. Some states do not allow local governments to adopt this type of restriction.
6. **Require entrances to be oriented to appear as a single-family home** – This would limit the number of entrances on the front façade.
7. **Minimum lot size** – Should ADUs be restricted to only residential lots of 6,000 sq. ft. or greater? Smaller properties may not have available space for a detached ADU but may have interior space that could be converted to an ADU. Having a limitation on lot size would preclude many properties from participating.
8. **Allowances or requirements to be on a corner lot** – The setbacks on a corner lot may make it less feasible to facilitate an ADU. If the Council wants to facilitate ADU construction on corner lots, some allowances for reduced setbacks might be appropriate.
9. **Amount of additional parking to be required or parking configuration** – Eliminating the need for additional parking sometimes is justified by the availability of on-street parking or the distance to a transit route.
10. **Requirements for covered parking (garage) in single family areas** – This requirement might be adopted if the existing garage is being converted to an ADU, and replacement parking is required for the primary residence.
11. **Lot coverage limitations** – The City's Zoning Ordinance includes limitations on maximum building coverage, maximum impervious coverage, and maximum rear yard coverage. These limitations can preclude any additional buildings, including ADUs.

12. **Rear alley access, if possible** – Where alleys are available, the vehicular access should be required from the alley, such as in the Single Family Conservation Overlay Zone (O-SFC).
13. **Different permissibility in different zones** – Should ADU provisions apply City-wide in all zones, be limited to specific areas, or be permitted only in a new zoning district similar?

### **BROADER INFILL DESIGN ISSUES:**

Design issues similar to those described above for ADUs also apply to planned redevelopment and infill areas designated by Ames Plan 2040, but they would have a different context due to size and intended change of character to an area. **Focusing on smaller building types and townhome units for many infill areas would be desirable and the design standards can be written to focus on these types of housing as complementary to a neighborhood and its surroundings.**

The City has some limited experience with this type of an approach in the Single-Family Conservation Overlay District (SF-COD) and the South Lincoln Mixed Use District which prescribed certain design features to help make new building compatible with the existing surroundings. City Council approved a six-unit apartment project on Delaware Avenue in 2022 as a “pilot” project effort for infill where the allowable density was maintained but the types of units (townhomes) were accommodated where they would not have been previously allowed.

**City staff has developed a list of general infill issues that apply to broad areas of the community. Many of these issues relate to a strong street orientation predominant in older neighborhoods. The issues include:**

1. Maintaining front doors and entries facing the street
2. Creating individual unit identity along street frontages with townhomes (rather than a monolithic apartment building)
3. Eliminating lot size as a limitation for small, detached homes and courtyard home configurations
4. Limiting curb cuts along a street
5. Avoiding large sidewall-oriented units or garage walls that create a blocked-off street frontage (“slot homes”)
6. Parking and garage locations that replicate the pattern included within the block (e.g., a vegetated frontage should be maintained when that is the pattern)

7. Reducing the “extra” parking required for apartments within the University Impacted Areas
8. Reducing parking requirements for townhomes with three bedrooms or less to two parking spaces compared to apartment parking requirements of one space per bedroom.
9. Maximizing density in transit corridors and near campus
10. Usable private amenity space (some codes mandate a private outdoor space for every unit rather than a lot coverage limitation)
11. Setbacks and height limitations compared to existing smaller homes (The adjacent properties should be considered as well as the greater context of the street or block face.)

### **OTHER ISSUES:**

Beyond City policies and standards, there are other influences on adding units to existing sites. **There are several subdivisions with covenants in place that would prohibit ADUs and two-family units. The City will not be able to override those limitations, which may result in a concentration of second units in older subdivisions (which generally do not have covenants in place) if standards are changed city-wide.** The issue of rental concentration was a significant issue three years ago and based upon state law, there are limited options for the City to manage rental concentration when allowing for new units.

Another issue that could affect infill design is a bill pending in the Iowa Legislature that limits City’s ability to require certain aesthetic features and building materials for single family, two-family, accessory buildings, and apartments of 12 units or less except in certain special zones. If this bill is approved, it may limit the City’s ability to craft standards supporting neighborhood character through use of building orientation and design elements.

In November 2022, the City Council received a request from Kurt Friedrich to consider an infill option for a duplex related to a vacant property on Jewel Drive (Attached). The unique circumstance of 320 Jewel Drive is that it once had a duplex on the property that was demolished by the prior owner approximately 10 years ago. The property is zoned RL and although duplexes are considered a pre-existing use for the zoning district, the building was unable to be rebuilt due to flood plain encroachments at the time. The flood plain mapping for this area has since been revised and a new structure could be built on the site, but a duplex is no longer allowed to be rebuilt on this site under the RL zoning because it has been gone for more than one year.

Staff has communicated that a change to RL zoning standards or a rezoning of the broader area that includes other duplex properties from RL to RM would be necessary to

develop a duplex at 320 Jewel. The broader discussion of the workshop could inform Council policy in general for areas that may be suitable for new duplexes or potentially for rezoning to allow for changes. City Council discussion of design features would also help guide what type of housing is appropriate for an infill site such as 320 Jewel that is the transition from older 1960s/1970s duplexes in the area to single family detached homes.

**NEXT STEPS:**

**Following the workshop discussions, staff will return to the City Council in April to seek direction regarding how to proceed with specific zoning issues related to infill housing. City Council will also need to direct staff regarding how to proceed with community outreach efforts, depending on the types of zoning changes City Council wants to pursue.**



## Attachment A

### What does Ames Plan 2040 say about Infill?

#### GROWTH ELEMENT

**G3: Infill that Enhances Urban Fabric.** Ames will take advantage of existing infill sites within the existing urbanized area to increase both the efficiency and quality of its urban environment. Infill development may change the types and intensities of land use and introduce new building forms. Larger areas planned for change are described as redirection or redevelopment areas. As such, it requires an assessment of community needs and character of the surrounding area to guide planning and policy decisions on specific changes.

**G3-1.** Identify infill properties and areas within the existing built-up area, focusing on sites that are 1) vacant and buildable; 2) underutilized or sporadically developed; 3) occupied by unnecessary parking, storage yards, or other paved areas; and 4) blighting influences in neighborhoods.

**G3-2.** Coordinate infill development with the capacity of existing infrastructure.

**G3-3.** Make smooth transitions in scale and intensity of use from pre-existing context to higher intensity development. Support high-density redevelopment only in planned or targeted land use redirection areas. Use prevailing density as the guide for redevelopment but allow for building variations to meet infill objectives.

**G3-4.** Establish design standards and guidelines for individual infill sites that are compatible with the **scale** of surrounding neighborhoods or other urban design factors. In specific areas, planned increases in intensity of use will determine increased height and an urban form, but still include architectural design quality.

**G3-5.** Include within infill projects missing transportation and trail links necessary to complete system continuity.

**Scale.** Infill development often introduces new and sometimes bigger buildings and different architectural styles into an existing area. Good infill design minimizes the conflicts that these changes can sometimes create with adjacent properties. For example, a three-story building can step down when it is adjacent to a one or two-story building, or lower buildings would be located along the adjacent edge. Densities or footprint of buildings might also “step down” at these boundary conditions. The actual context helps determine the best way to minimize conflicts at these transitions.

#### LAND USE ELEMENT

**LU2: Compatibility with Flexibility.** Ames land use pattern should minimize conflicts between adjacent land uses. Some land uses are inherently incompatible and should be separated. In other cases, a **variety of design techniques** where different uses and intensities meet can reduce incompatibilities and more successfully integrate different uses into a cohesive city environment. Homogeneous building form and uses are not necessarily the goal of the plan. Guidelines should provide developers with reasonable flexibility and room for innovation.

#### RN-1 (Traditional Neighborhood)

» **Identify architectural qualities and patterns that support character of an area and support retention of these features with design guidelines.**



Priority is to maintain existing residential character ... Appropriate infill options should be limited to second units or small attached townhome type units that maintain the character and scale of traditional homes. Maintain single-family character on single-family residential blocks.

- » Develop standards for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) that allow them without degrading neighborhood character.
- » Use design and character priorities in place of density for planned developments and small-site infill options.
- » Review zoning standards to address design compatibility and **allowances for setback and coverage exceptions** in support of reinvestment in single-family homes.

## **RN-2 (Established Neighborhood)**

- » Infill limited to attached units and small townhome developments adjacent or near existing attached units and public space.
- » On infill sites, **use scale and design to respect context.**
- » Consider exception processes related to additions, garage placement, and accessory dwelling units to support reinvestment in existing homes.
- » Use overlays and neighborhood plans to address specific areas with conservation and design guidelines to reflect the broad geographic diversity, lot sizes, and architectural styles.

## **RN-3 (Expansion Neighborhood)**

- » Permit accessory dwelling units with lot size and design standards.

## **HOUSING ELEMENT**

**H1-3.** Work with neighborhoods to explore modification of selected single-family zoning districts to **permit accessory dwelling units and duplexes on lots that meet specific criteria focused on design compatibility.**

**H2-1.** Maintain the character of existing single-family blocks in established neighborhoods...

**H2-5.** Use zoning and building standards to **address neighborhood design and architectural compatibility...**

**Citywide assessment of potentially allowing for Accessory Dwelling Units, including review of issues related to lot sizes, occupancy limitations, covenant restrictions, design standards, size limitations, and parking requirements.**

**H4: Redirection Areas.** Ames will identify land use redirection and infill areas and encourage their eventual redevelopment. Infill development can provide a variety of urban housing environments in areas that are underused or inefficiently used and can take advantage of Ames's existing resources.

## **COMMUNITY CHARACTER ELEMENT**

**3 - Create infill and development standards for compatibility in residential areas and transition areas focused on design over density.**

**C4:** Recognize and reinforce a sense of place for existing and new areas.

Community character enhancements that bolster the image of the community and promote a defined area with a sense of place and compatibility with its surroundings.



## Attachment B Current Housing Mix and Projected Needs

### EXISTING ANALYSIS



Share of Land (Ames Plan 2040)



# of Units (Am. Community Survey)



### SCENARIO ANALYSIS - PROJECTED



Share of Land Demand (Ames Plan 2040)



# of Units (Ames Plan 2040)



Units/Acre



Acres Needed



#### LEGEND:

-  Single Family Detached
-  Duplexes & Townhomes
-  Condominiums & Apartments

## Attachment C

### Comparison Review of ADU Codes

City Population	Year Implemented	Owner Occupancy	Size Requirements	Maximum (Impervious) Lot Coverage	Additional Parking Required	Maximum Height	Design Standards	Public Hearing Required	Success Rate	Other	Other
<b>Ashland, OR</b> 21,360	Mandated by State; ARUs	No	50% of primary residence; not greater than 1000 sq ft	Conform with underlying zone; Maximum varies by zone, 40% - 75%	None Required	Lessor of 35' or 2.5 stories; 30' in historic district	None	No	191 RDUs before 2017. Since 2017, 78 RDUs have been permitted	Stream-lined process; only requires building permit	Not allowed to treat two-family any differently than single-family
<b>Bloomington, IN</b> 79,168	2017	Yes	840 sq ft; Two bedrms	Conform with underlying zone; Maximum varies by zone, 30% - 50%	None Required	25'	None	Initially required SUP in 2017; Amended in 2020 to allow By Right with specific standards	30 ADUs permitted 2017-2022	Min Lot Size- In 2017 required but amended in 2020 to allow all developed lots to qualify	Working on offering pre-approved plans
<b>Cedar Rapids, IA</b> 137,710	2019	No	Limited to footprint of principle building or 1000 sq ft	Conform with underlying zone; Maximum varies by zone, 40% - 80%	One space per ADU	Conform with underlying zone	None	Initially required SUP in 2019; Amended in 2021 to allow By Right	Seven ADUs permitted 2019-2023	Recently enlarged max size from 800 to 1000 sq ft and increased from up to two ADUs per lot	
<b>Corvallis, OR</b> 59,922	Mandated by State	No	85% of PD or 900 sq ft	Conform with underlying zone; Maximum varies by zone, 60% - 70%	None Required	Conform with underlying zone	None	No	Probably more than 15 per year	Private Outdoor Space required for every unit (min 48 sq ft) with window that looks out onto it	
<b>Des Moines, IA</b> 214,133	Adopted in 2019 with Form Based Code	Yes	Not greater than 50% of floor area of principal household unit	Maximum impervious 50%; Maximum building coverage 30%; Maximum rear yard 25%. Staff may increase bulk regulations by 30% through Type 1 alternative.	One space	17'	Match roof type, building materials, character of principal building; Principal building may have only one entrance facing the street	SUP required unless within 1/4 mile of transit route	Six ADUs permitted 2019-2023	Amended code in 2022 to relax regulations	
<b>Lawrence, KS</b> 87,463	before 2017	Yes	Not greater than 33% of living area of principal residence or 960 sq ft whichever is less	Conform with underlying zone; Maximum varies by zone, 70-80%	One unless on-street parking available	25' or height of the principal building, whichever is less	Only one entrance on front façade; if in rear yard entrance must face front lot line	No	<15	Min lot size 7000 sq ft for ADUs; An amendment is planned to make available in all residential districts (no lot size limitation)	Same setbacks as Accessory Buildings (5 ft rear and side yard)

Prepared by Ames Planning Division,  
March 2023

Date: 11/8/22

To: Mayor & Council

Re: Property at 320 Jewel Dr, owned by R. Friedrich and Sons, Inc.

Greetings;

We have reached out to Staff to see if any progress had been made with regards to addressing zoning limitations that aren't consistent with infill projects and the 2040 Plan—specifically as it pertains to the lot we own at 320 Jewel Drive. The previous owner of this property tore down the duplex that existed on this lot with the understanding that he could rebuild a new duplex in its place. However, the zoning has changed and does not permit the building of a duplex. There are many duplexes and other multifamily structures either adjacent to or within close proximity, of the subject property.

The City and developers have also completed stormwater improvements nearby. Flood zones have been updated and reduced, so as to benefit existing residences and accommodate additional development in the area.

We have a massive shortage of housing in the community. We are asking that the Council/Staff provide guidance giving us a pathway to reconstruct a duplex on this property. We would like to begin construction in the Spring of 2023.

Thank you for your assistance,

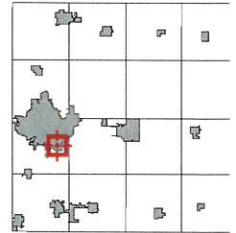


Kurt Friedrich

President, R. Friedrich & Sons, Inc.



**Overview**



**Legend**

-  Parcels
-  Lots
-  Townships
-  Corporate Limits
-  Road Centerlines

Parcel ID	0923204020	Alternate ID	0923204020	Owner Address	FRIEDRICH R AND SONS INC
Sec/Twp/Rng	23-83-24	Class	R - Residential		100 6TH ST
Property Address	320 JEWEL DR	Acreeage	n/a		AMES, IA 50010
	AMES				

District 01001 - AMES CITY/AMES SCH  
 Brief Tax Description TEAGARDEN'S 3RD SD, AUDITOR PLAT LOT 6 LOT:3 AMES  
 (Note: Not to be used on legal documents)

**Concerning Assessment Parcels and Platted Lots Within the City of Ames Jurisdiction:**

The solid parcel boundary lines represent the legal description as recorded and are not necessarily the official platted lot lines. Dashed lines are official platted lots. If a parcel contains dashed lines, please contact the Ames Planning & Housing Department (515-239-5400) to determine which lines can be recognized for building permit or zoning purposes. If you have questions regarding the legal description or parcel measurements, please contact the Story County Auditor's office (515-382-7210).

Date created: 11/8/2022  
 Last Data Uploaded: 11/8/2022 4:53:52 PM