

Staff Report

PLANNING AND HOUSING DEPARTMENT WORK PLAN PRIORITIES

October 24, 2023

BACKGROUND:

City Council last formerly reviewed the Planning and Housing Department Work Plan in February of 2022 for work through 2023. **Projects from the Work Plan and other more recent referrals on which the Planning staff is currently working include:**

- ADU Municipal Code Amendments
- Duplex (Two-family) Zoning Text Amendments
- Townhome infill housing type standards
- Technical Committee review of Walk and Roll Bicycle Pedestrian Plan (PW Lead Department)
- Affordable housing parking rate reduction Zoning Text Amendment
- Reinvestment District Application and The Linc Development Review
- West Towne Mixed Use residential use amendment
- Redirection areas and redevelopment area priorities for Infill
- Referral for staff approval and administrative exception processes
- Short-Term Housing Task Force referral staff report
- Low and Moderate Income Affordable Housing Strategy follow up
- Cedar Lane paving waiver request with “pioneer” infrastructure options
- Southeast Growth Area outreach and land use review for sanitary sewer extension (new)

The majority of the items on above list are projected to have their next step completed within the next four months. Some of the issues, such as the Redirection Areas, Housing Task Force, and Affordable Housing Strategy, could spawn additional long-term planning projects for implementation that would need prioritization. The last bullet is a new item to make Council aware of intended outreach to coincide with the Public Works Department design work for the sanitary sewer extension to the southeast growth area.

Additionally, City Council has initiated or received requests for new planning projects that need prioritization by the City Council. **Attachment A includes the combination of current projects listed above and all new and non-prioritized requests.** The non-prioritized project list is similar to the past with a mix of individual requests for development standard changes and longer term broader planning efforts.

There are four referral requests from individual entities pending prioritization by City Council that are listed as New Projects. City Council received staff reports on the Chataqua Park Ridgewood Neighborhood request and the Missing Infrastructure Pullman Street requirements at previous meetings. Additionally, Council received a request from

Alliant to consider deferrals on connection fees, sidewalks, and driveway paving in support of a large, planned substation for the Prairie View Industrial area. The newest request is a letter from the City's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) request support for changes to the historic review criteria and potentially standards. (Attachment C)

Staffs sees a challenge with a few of the New Items and follow up of previously prioritized items without first defining the scope of these projects to understand the staff time commitment. For example, work related to the Redirection Areas can vary greatly based upon the size of the area, potential types of changes, and public outreach efforts. Examples of estimates are included with the Plan 2040 implementation priorities as examples. One option for the Work Plan update at this time is to discuss the intended scope of some of the longer term projects and then return for prioritization with a more defined scope if the scope extent is unclear. At this time staff does not anticipate requesting funding for a consultant for any project, but it could be needed for a more specific plan areas needing a more robust evaluation and recommendations.

STAFF COMMENTS:

The majority of staff time for the next four months has been allocated to completing the projects that are already prioritized (See Attachment A). Any new initiatives are not planned to begin in earnest until the next calendar year 2024.

As stated above, it is difficult to balance immediate requests with needed broader and long range planning interests. **Staff believes the immediate text amendment requests of Alliant and Missing Infrastructure for Pullman responses do not require public outreach and, therefore, can be accomplished as time permits in December and January.**

The Historic District Nomination request requires a small allocation of time for a grant application and then extensive time for consultant administration of the nomination application. Preparing the grant application could be accomplished with current staff time or planned for 2024 as described with the staff report that is also on this agenda.

NEW PROJECTS:

Many of the New Projects have a potentially significant scope that is yet to be defined, Main Street Downtown Planning, Climate Action Plan Net Zero Standards, Affordable Housing Strategy Follow Up, Short-term Housing Taskforce Recommendations, and Redirection Areas.

POSSIBLE WORK PLAN FOR JANUARY 1, 2024 TO JUNE 30, 2025

Typically, Council assigns 3-5 significant projects (approximately 1,200 hours) to staff for an 18-month work plan timeframe. Looking out further the list could be increased with additional projects and hours.

One arrangement of the new activities with an hours estimate could be as follows (no particular order):

Item #6 - Low Income Affordable Housing Strategy Follow Up: 150-300 hours

Item #14 - Infill Redirection Area Priorities: 150-800 hours

Item #16 – Short-term Housing Taskforce Recommendations: 100-250 hours

Item #25 - Main Street Requested Downtown Plan: 50-100 hours

Item #28 - Annexation Net Zero/Passive Home Policy: 60-120 hours

Item #30 - Chataqua Park Ridgewood Nomination: 300 hours

With this type of list, it would leave a substantial number of projects non-prioritized. It may be possible to add other items as well depending upon the outcome of some of the decisions regarding the scope of issues.

REQUESTED ACTION:

Staff is requesting City Council's direction regarding which projects to add, which projects to be deleted, and which projects to remain on the Parking Lot list for future consideration.

Since staff will not be addressing any new projects any earlier than January 2024, the City Council does not need to make a final decision tonight regarding the Planning staff's work plan priorities for the next 18 months.

Attachment B-Plan 2040 Implementation Chapter Excerpts

At the time Ames Plan 2040 was approved, the Implementation Chapter included a list of initiatives categorized as Infrastructure, Plans and Sub-Areas, and Zoning Subdivision Standards. This list captured the most significant needs related to implementing concepts of Plan 2040 in the near term, it is not an all-inclusive list of potential actions for implementation of Plan 2040. For the 2022 Work Plan discussion a topical list of implementation measures was provided to City Council. The list below is carryover from the 2022 Work Plan discussion for items that were not prioritized and completed tasks are shown with strikeout.

Plan 2040 Housing Related Initiatives

- ~~i. Citywide assessment of allowing construction of Accessory Dwelling Units with existing homes. Staff believes this is intended to be an extensive effort of evaluating options and doing public outreach (300-800 hours).~~
- ~~ii. Allow for two family homes (duplexes) within FS-RL and potentially other zoning districts (50-200 hours).~~
- iii. Update FS-RL and FS-RM zoning to reflect intended densities and building types for Growth Areas (80 hours)
- iv. Modify F-VR zoning for use in Growth Areas (40-150 hours)
- v. Low- and Moderate-Income Housing Strategy addressing zoning constraints (if any), financial incentives (e.g. TIF or property tax abatement), site acquisition for new construction, locations for existing house acquisition and rehabilitation projects. (150 hours) **(Workshop Held)**

Plan 2040 Infill Related Initiatives (Council referral to discuss priorities in general winter 2023)

- i. East and West University Impact Area standards review, including parking and how to implement zoning for the RN-4 land use designation within the West University Impact Overlay. (100-300 hours)
- ii. Urban Corridor Designation along Lincoln Way (west of Campustown), needs implementation zoning that does not exist. (100 to 180 hours)
- iii. Create design standards for desired small scale infill projects, applies to multiple issues and zoning districts. (150-300 hours) **(Initial Workshop March 2023)**
- iv. University Overlay for Redirection Area Hunt and Sheldon, rezone area for redevelopment (100 to 200 hours)
- v. South Lincoln Mixed Use Plan from Cherry to Walnut, new Plan and rezoning (300-500 hours)

Plan 2040 Commercial and Other Standards Related Initiatives

- i. Implement commercial use designation changes, requires new General Commercial zoning district with changes to Highway Oriented Commercial and Planned Regional Commercial zoning district, see also Urban Corridor designation listed under Infill (120-200 hours)
- ii. Parkland dedication ordinance (75-125 hours)

- iii. Review commercial zoning district standards for consistency with Growth Area plans. (40 hours)

Plan 2040 Transportation Related Initiatives

- i. Modify Chapter 23 Subdivision Code with terminology and concepts of the Complete Street Plan. Includes changes to ROW widths, street types, pedestrian and bicycle improvement specifications. (100 – 200 hours)
- ii. Update Zoning Ordinance standards to reflect Complete Street concepts, includes design requirements to match street types aimed at walkability (60 hours, in tandem with Chapter 23)
- iii. ~~Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (Public Works lead department) related updates to planning concepts within Ames Plan 2040 and development standards of zoning (40 hours)~~

Plan 2040 Plans and Sub-areas Related Initiatives

- i. ~~Ames Urban Fringe Plan Update (Already committed 250 hours Story County, additional time for final plans with Boone County)~~
- ii. Gateway and beautification plan for rights of way. (Initial report 100 hours)
- iii. Parks Master Plan Update (P&R lead department) as it relates to land use plans and parkland standards (Not budgeted for 2023/24)
- iv. ~~Redirection Areas, select specific areas like Grove Avenue for individual consideration. (50-500 hours)~~
- v. Infrastructure Project Planning guide for short (1-5 year) and mid-term (5-10 year) priorities in the CIP. (60 hours) **(Priority water and sewer projects in current CIP with ARPA funding)**

MEMORANDUM

TO: Ames City Council

FROM: Historic Preservation Commission

SUBJECT: Chapter 31 Revision Project

DATE: October 9, 2023

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is requesting that revision of Municipal Code Section 31.10 be added to the City Planning Department's work plan for 2024. This section of the code covers Certificates of Appropriateness, which are required for some construction activities in a Locally Designated Historic District.

The specific tasks requested are:

- **Staff support in proposing revision of Section 31.10.** HPC members and Planning staff have been discussing potential edits to various sections of Chapter 31 during the last two years. Section 31.10 was identified by HPC during its October 3rd, 2023 meeting as a particularly important section to revise this year. Section 31.10 impacts homeowners, has relatively straightforward edits, and should reflect other text edits potentially being made to Chapter 31 for Accessory Dwelling Units.

Potential draft edits to Section 31.10 have been identified by HPC and discussed with staff but they need to be refined before presentation to Council. The requested support is for Planning staff to continue assisting HPC, as they have in the past, by reviewing and commenting as HPC refines draft wording.

- **Staff support in researching** other Iowa city historic preservation ordinances and information available from the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions that pertain to Certificate of Appropriateness provisions. The requested support is for Planning staff to assist HPC in researching these resources. The NAPC membership is paid for in the current HPC budget.

Many of the draft edits discussed by HPC to-date are clarifications to terms used in Section 31.10, such as 'building', 'structure', 'alterations', etc., that define when a Certificate of Appropriateness is required. Clarifying these terms is straightforward and will help homeowners comply with the COA process. There are also two potentially substantive draft edits that Council should be aware of. These are still just under discussion and may or may not be in the final suggested edits:

- 31.10 (1) (multiple instances in this Section) draft edit replaces references to 'building' and 'structure' with 'historic resource'. This edit could help align Section 31.10 with nomenclature used in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (Section 31.12), but it is also a broader term that includes more than structures. This could mean

regulating items that are not regulated by the current Design Guidelines. This is a substantive change, and not just a clarification.

- 31.10 (3) (c) draft edit: "A new principal structure shall be ~~representative of~~ compatible with one of the architectural styles approved in the district." This edit follows The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (Section 31.12(9)) in requiring new construction to fit aesthetically into designated neighborhoods but avoid copying the existing buildings. Copying can be seen as undesirable because it creates a false sense of history. The existing text in this subsection is for new principal structures but it could be expanded to include new non-principal structures and ADUs. These draft edits would change how Design Guidelines are treated for new structures, which is a substantive change. It would not change Design Guidelines or requirements for existing structures.

This project will provide suggested text edits on Section 31.10 within a year to the City Council for consideration. We hope the outcome will lead to eventual adoption of the edits. We believe this endeavor to be well worth the support of the City Council because it will ultimately help make this code more user friendly and support addition of ADUs, which can be a significant benefit to our community.

The HPC desires to continue discussing other sections of Chapter 31 in its work plan, but these are outside the scope of this current request.