

STAFF REPORT

Targeted Growth Priorities Follow-up

April 22, 2008

City Administrative and Planning staff met following the City Council workshop on April 1 to identify what additional information is useful to the City Council as it further discusses prioritized growth. This staff report is intended to address certain issues that were raised at the workshop and to create a framework of factors that the City Council can use to formulate whether the City should reprioritize the current growth priorities of the Land Use Policy Plan. The ultimate choice of the City Council would be whether to change the current growth priorities of the Southwest and Northwest and, if so, what direction(s) should the Land Use Policy Plan advocate.

LUPP Goals and Policies

The "Goals for a New Vision" from the Land Use Policy Plan are included as Attachment One. These should provide a general framework in determining growth patterns and priorities. Specifically, Goal 1 deals with managing growth and recognizing that population growth has occurred steadily in the past and is expecting to continue to grow. Goal 2 challenges the City to assure adequate developable land for that growth and be compatible with development that has gone before.

Goal 3 seeks to ensure that Ames is an "environmentally-friendly" place, aware of the impacts of development on our eco-system. Goal 4 addresses the values of sense of place and connectivity. These approaches build communities and strengthen neighborhoods.

Goal 5 raises fiscal consciousness and asks the City to comprehensively coordinate the installation of infrastructure. Goal 6 directly addresses housing supply and choices so that the needs of the entire market are met.

Goals 7 through 10, while equally important to the city, may play a lesser role in determining residential growth directions on the periphery of the city.

Differences among the 2000, 2006 and 2008 studies

A close reading of the 2000's "Phase II Annexation Study," 2006's "Southwest/Northwest Growth Priority Analysis," and 2008's "Analysis of the Costs and Development Possibilities of Growth Targeted to the Southwest, Northwest and North of Ames" may create some confusion as these studies were not entirely consistent in their comparisons.

The 2000 Phase II annexation study compared different geographic areas than did the later studies. Since the 2000 study, areas have been annexed into the City, taking them out of consideration for the 2006 and 2008 studies.

The "Phase II Annexation Study" presented in 2000 included an extensive analysis of capital and all operating costs associated with the following three large areas and one smaller area:

- Southwest Growth Area A (bounded by the UPRR tracks, County Line Road, US 30 and the then-westerly City limits)
- Southwest Growth Area B (mainly south of US 30 and west of State Avenue, including both sides of Worle Creek)
- Northern Annexation Area (west of today's Hayden Park, south of 190th Street, and east of George Washington Carver Road, including the Uthe farm and the undeveloped portion of the Taylor farm)
- Boundary Adjustment Area (unincorporated land south of US 30 and generally north of Oakwood Road)

This study "recommended that the Southwest A Area, the Uthe Farm, and the Taylor property be annexed and developed before annexation should occur in the Southwest B area." (See page 11 of that report.)

The "Southwest/Northwest Growth Priority Analysis" presented in 2006 studied the capital costs and differential operating costs of four sub-areas in the southwest and two sub-areas in the northwest. The financial analysis of *overall costs* recommended that development occur in this order:

- SW Area D (south of Oakwood Road)
- SW Area A (south of UPRR tracks, east of County Line Road, north of US 30, west of the westerly City limits)
- NW Area A (north of UPRR and south of Onion Creek)
- NW Area B (north of Onion Creek)
- SW Area B (south of US 30 and north of Worle Creek)
- SW Area C (south of Worle Creek)

When only *oversizing costs* were considered, SW Area B rose from fifth to third position.

This study recommended that unless willing developers step forward in the areas ranked above Northwest study area A, and since a major land-owner in that area was ready to proceed with development, it seemed appropriate for the City Council to direct staff to begin negotiations regarding annexation and extension of infrastructure to this area. (See page 29 of that report.)

The "Analysis of the Costs and Development Possibilities of Growth Targeted to the Southwest, Northwest and North of Ames" presented in 2008 compared the capital costs and differential operating costs of the six sub-areas included in the 2006 study and the following three additional sub-areas to the north:

- North Study Area Sub-area A (south of 190th Street and adjacent to US 69)
- North Study Area Sub-area B (south of 190th Street, east of George Washington Carver Road, and generally west of Hayden Park)
- North Study Area Sub-area C (west of George Washington Carver Road)

This study made no recommendations on direction of growth, but the relative rankings based on cost have changed. The result is that total costs of the Northwest are the least of the three study areas and that the Southwest were the greatest. (See pages 14-15 of that report.)

The 2006 and 2008 studies arrived at different conclusions as to the relative costs of annexation to the Southwest and the Northwest chiefly due to the decision, in the 2008 study, to exclude the \$5 million overpass from the costs assigned to the Northwest. This exclusion was based on the view that the network traffic improvements are system wide costs and are based on a model that expected growth to occur in the Southwest and Northwest, but not the North.

Traffic Modeling

The network traffic improvements that were identified in the 2006 and 2008 studies were based on computer modeling done for the Ames Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Long-Range Transportation Plan. This plan, based on the LUPP priority growth areas of the Southwest and Northwest, generated a number of system-wide projects that were intended to meet certain service levels on the road system. The 2008 study also included the option of growth to the North, which was not in the Long Range Transportation Plan, therefore the Transportation Plan could not reasonably be expected to identify the projects needed to serve the city if growth occurred in that area. John Joiner, Public Works Director, has obtained information that modeling to include the North could cost \$65,000 and take twelve weeks to complete.

Near Term Lands

In the early part of this decade, the City was in a similar situation—residential development was nearing a buildout and the areas identified for further growth were not developing. Since the Southwest needed certain other conditions that were expected to take time to implement, the Near Term Lands were accepted as an interim development option. Since then, the US 30/S. Dakota Avenue interchange has been built and a second water pressure zone has been established for west Ames. South Dakota Avenue has also been widened and Mortensen Road extended to the west. These investments were expected to spur interest in development in the Southwest once the Near Term Lands approached buildout.

The Near Term Lands were described in the 2000 annexation study as the Uthe farm and the undeveloped portion of the Taylor farm. That land was annexed and

is being developed as Northridge Heights and Taylor Glen subdivisions, currently nearing buildout. Since the City Council accepted the Near Term Lands for development as the interim alternative, it is no surprise that 70 percent of the single-family and townhouse lots have been developed in the north. However, the intent was that as buildout was reached in the Near Term Lands and once the infrastructure improvements were made to the Southwest, then the Southwest would develop as the new priority area.

Growth Controls

The City has already designated growth priority areas as being the Southwest and Northwest. The City has also, through its Capital Investment Strategy, developed a cost-sharing arrangement to further the growth priorities, allowing the City to choose to participate in certain infrastructure costs. And yet, growth in those areas has been limited. While the City has prioritized and incentivized growth in the Southwest and Northwest, its only tool to control development outside the city limits and those priority areas is through its subdivision authority in the two-mile fringe, which may be limited.

Hybrid Scenarios

The 2008 study identified three Growth Priority Areas with a number of subareas within each. One comment raised at the April 1 workshop was about the possibility of picking and choosing among all the scenarios. Staff has looked at four scenarios that take a smorgasbord approach. These scenarios were based on whether they were immediately adjacent to the current city limits; had an identified, willing property owner; and/or were a prerequisite for further development in that study area. These scenarios include 1) Southwest B plus Northwest A; 2) Southwest B plus North B; 3) Northwest A plus North B; and 4) Southwest B plus Northwest A and North B. The costs and benefits of these scenarios are in Attachment Two. They measure the same inputs—dollars of infrastructure—and outputs—net developable acres—as the study.

Current Policies

Many of the identified capital and operating costs were derived from applying current city policies—for instance, the goal of having fire response ability of covering 85 percent of the city within five minutes. Another example is the traffic level of service being no less than Level C. While staff is not advocating changing these policies, modifications to them could reduce the cost of growth as it affects the various subareas, impacting the cost analysis.

Availability of Land

One issue that neither the City nor developers are in control of is the willingness of property owners to make their land available for development. While the Council may desire to choose the most cost-effective direction for growth, it should be emphasized that unless the property owners are willing to make their land available for development, the City will not be able to reach its growth needs in that given direction.

Environment

In addition to considering the cost-benefit analysis above in order to select a preferred growth direction, the City Council could also take into consideration directional growth that allows the City to best protect valued environmental resources such as Ada Hayden Heritage Park.

Post 2030

In addition to the cost-benefit analysis, the City Council might also want to consider the potential for expansion beyond the 2030 time frame of the LUPP for each of the growth areas.

Urgency

Staff is seeking direction from the City Council on their desired growth priority directions. The City has received varying levels of expressed interest in development from property owners in the Southwest, Northwest, and North. The ultimate resolution of any future development will be driven by any changes to the current Land Use Policy Plan. Formal submittals include Rose Prairie subdivision proposed in the North area and Fieldstone in the Northwest (still out there and unresolved). Also, the finalization of the Urban Fringe Plan implementation agreement will be impacted by any change to the growth priority areas.

Prioritize (Weight) the Factors

There are a number of factors that the City Council could use in determining a growth priority strategy. In order to assist the City Council in processing this complex and interrelated subject, staff has prepared a list of such factors. This list may not be all-inclusive; or it may include factors not important to the Council. It includes:

- City cost of infrastructure.
- City cost of operations.
- Environmental impacts.
- Impacts on schools.
- Available land for development.
- Possibility of post-2030 expansion.
- Cost of identified network traffic improvements (e.g., N. Dakota overpass, Bloomington Road from Boone County to I-35)
- “Pain” of other interior network traffic improvements (e.g., widening Grand Avenue, changes to Grand/13th intersection, changes to Grand/20th intersection, changes to Stange/13th intersection, removing parking on Ontario Avenue, increased traffic along Hyde Avenue.)

The City Council should examine what factors are more or less important and weigh each of the individual growth areas or subareas (or

combination) against those factors, as well as against the goals and priorities of the Land Use Policy Plan.

ATTACHMENT ONE: GOALS FOR A NEW VISION (AMES LAND USE POLICY PLAN)

Goal No. 1. Recognizing that additional population and economic growth is likely, it is the goal of Ames to plan for and manage growth within the context of the community's capacity and preferences. It is the further goal of the community to manage its growth so that it is more sustainable, predictable and assures quality of life.

Objectives. In managing growth, Ames seeks the following objectives.

- 1.A. Ames seeks to diversify the economy and create a more regional employment and market base. While continuing to support its existing economic activities, the community seeks to broaden the range of private and public investment.
- 1.B. Ames seeks to integrate its growth with an economic development strategy for the Central Iowa region.
- 1.C. Ames seeks to manage a population and employment base that can be supported by the community's capacity for growth. A population base of 60,000-62,000 and an employment base of up to 34,000 is targeted within the City. Additionally, it is estimated that the population in the combined City and unincorporated Planning Area could be as much as 67,000 and the employment base could be as much as 38,000 by the year 2030.

Goal No. 2. In preparing for the target population and employment growth, it is the goal of Ames to assure the adequate provision and availability of developable land. It is the further goal of the community to guide the character, location, and compatibility of growth with the area's natural resources and rural areas.

Objectives. In assuring and guiding areas for growth, Ames seeks the following objectives.

- 2.A. Ames seeks to provide between 3,000 and 3,500 acres of additional developable land within the present City and Planning Area by the year 2030. Since the potential demand exceeds the supply within the current corporate limits, alternate sources shall be sought by the community through limited intensification of existing areas while concentrating on the annexation and development of new areas. The use of existing and new areas should be selective rather than general.
- 2.B. Ames seeks to assure the availability of sufficient suitable land resources to accommodate the range of land uses that are planned to meet growth. Sufficient land resources shall be sought to eliminate market constraints.
- 2.C. Ames seeks a development process that achieves greater compatibility among new and existing development.
- 2.D. Ames seeks a development process that achieves greater conservation of natural resources and compatibility between development and the environment.

- 2.E. Ames seeks to integrate its planning with that of Story County and surrounding counties in assuring an efficient and compatible development pattern, and in assuring that there are adequate agricultural resources to serve the region.

Goal No. 3. It is the goal of Ames to assure that it is an “environmentally-friendly” community and that all goals and objectives are integrated with this common goal. In continuing to serve as a concentrated area for human habitat and economic activity, Ames seeks to be compatible with its ecological systems in creating an environmentally sustainable community.

Objectives. In assuring the community’s “environmental-friendliness”, Ames seeks the following objectives.

- 3.A. Ames seeks to provide biodiversity through the inclusion of plant and animal habitats. Their inclusion shall be provided through such methods as conservation management, protection, replacement, etc.
- 3.B. Ames seeks to maintain and enhance the value of its stream corridors as drainageways and flood management areas, plant and animal habitats, recreational and scenic areas, and pathways for linking the overall community.
- 3.C. Ames seeks to protect and conserve its water resources for the following purposes: aquifer protection; water quality protection; user conservation management; plant and animal life support; water-borne recreation; scenic open space; and, provision of a long-term/reliable/safe source of water for human consumption and economic activities.
- 3.D. Ames seeks to protect and conserve its energy sources for the following purposes: energy consumption reduction through provision of an integrated multi-modal transportation system, and through land use practices that minimize vehicular trips; user conservation management; material recycling; and, long-term/reliable/safe source for the support of human and economic activities.
- 3.E. Ames seeks to protect and enhance its air quality and sky access for the following purposes: maintaining an atmosphere that is free of foreign particles and undesirable odors; oxygen enrichment through plant life; glare and ambient light management for night sky viewing; noise transmission management; and, provision of a long-term/reliable/safe source of clean air for the support of human and economic activities.

Goal No. 4. It is the goal of Ames to create a greater sense of place and connectivity, physically and psychologically, in building a neighborhood and overall community identity and spirit. It is the further goal of the community to assure a more healthy, safe, and attractive environment.

Objectives. In achieving an integrated community and more desirable environment, Ames seeks the following objectives.

- 4.A. Ames seeks to establish more integrated and compact living/activity areas (i.e. neighborhoods, villages) wherein daily living requirements and amenities are provided in a readily identifiable and accessible area. Greater emphasis is placed on the pedestrian and related activities.
- 4.B. Ames seeks to physically connect existing and new residential and commercial areas through the association of related land uses and provision of an intermodal transportation system.
- 4.C. Ames seeks to psychologically connect the various living/activity areas through closer proximity of residential areas and supporting commercial uses, common design elements, and inclusion of community amenities such as parks and schools. The connections should promote community identity.

Goal No. 5. It is the goal of Ames to establish a cost-effective and efficient growth pattern for development in new areas and in a limited number of existing areas for intensification. It is a further goal of the community to link the timing of development with the installation of public infrastructure including utilities, multi-modal transportation system, parks and open space.

Objectives. In defining the growth pattern and timing of development, Ames seeks the following objectives.

- 5.A. Ames seeks to establish priority areas for growth in which there are adequate and available land resources and infrastructure to meet the major development requirements through the year 2030.
- 5.B. Ames seeks to attract public and private capital investment in the priority areas for growth on a concurrency basis (i.e. having infrastructure available at the time of development approval). Public capital improvements (e.g. trunk lines and a major street system) could be used to leverage the location of development and the availability of land.
- 5.C. Ames seeks the continuance of development in emerging and infill areas where there is existing public infrastructure and where capacity permits.
- 5.D. Ames seeks to have the real costs of development borne by the initiating agent when it occurs outside of priority areas for growth and areas served by existing infrastructure.
- 5.E. Ames seeks to integrate its planning with that of Story County and regional planning agencies.

Goal No. 6. It is the goal of Ames to increase the supply of housing and to provide a wider range of housing choices.

Objectives. In increasing housing opportunities, Ames seeks the following objectives.

- 6.A. Ames seeks to increase the overall supply of low and moderate-income housing through the following means: (1) conservation of such units in existing areas that are not designated for redevelopment or intensification; and, (2) inclusion of such units in new market-driven housing developments through zoning incentives.
- 6.B. Ames seeks to establish densities of a net average 5.6 dwelling units per acre in maximizing the number of housing units in new areas.
- 6.C. Ames seeks to establish higher densities in existing areas where residential intensification is designated with the further objective that there shall be use and appearance compatibility among existing and new development.
- 6.D. Ames seeks to make housing ownership and rental more available and accessible through relieving the current constraints to land supply/availability. Relief is sought through increasing the supply of land by the following means: (1) releasing lands for development that are currently controlled by institutions; (2) annexing new lands; and (3) expediting development by targeting areas for public and private cooperative efforts.

Goal No. 7. It is the goal of Ames to provide greater mobility through more efficient use of personal automobiles and enhanced availability of an integrated system including alternative modes of transportation.

Objectives. In achieving a more mobile community, Ames seeks the following objectives.

- 7.A. Ames seeks to establish a comprehensive and integrated transportation system that includes automotive, public transit, pedestrian, bicycle and ride-sharing modes.
- 7.B. Ames seeks a transportation system that is linked with the desired development pattern of the overall community and areas therein.
- 7.C. Ames seeks to establish new transportation corridors that have been planned, in part, to minimize impacts on significant natural resources.
- 7.D. Ames seeks to increase the efficiency of existing traffic movement in reducing air pollutants from automobiles (e.g. improving intersection movements to minimize delays and conserve energy).
- 7.E. Ames seeks a development pattern that protects and supports the airport and its flight approach zones.

Goal No. 8. It is the goal of Ames to enhance the role of Downtown as a community focal point.

Objectives. In expanding and strengthening the role of Downtown as a community focal point, Ames seeks the following objectives.

- 8.A. Ames seeks to maintain and enhance a strong central activity center through the intensification, expansion and diversification of uses including visitor attraction, entertainment, high density residential, offices and business support services.
- 8.B. Ames seeks to improve and integrate the appearance of Downtown through thematic design, preservation of historically and architecturally significant structures and reuse of structures involving economically marginal activities.
- 8.C. Ames seeks to expand parking in Downtown and to integrate automobile access with additional modes of transportation.

Goal No. 9. It is the goal of Ames to promote expansion and diversification of the economy in creating a base that is more self-sufficient and that is more sustainable with regard to the environment.

Objectives. In creating an economic base that is more self-sufficient and environmentally sustainable, Ames seeks the following objectives.

- 9.A. Ames seeks more diversified regional employment opportunities involving technology-related services and production, office centers and retail centers.
- 9.B. Ames seeks to attract and support a small- and medium-size business center that utilizes the skills and products of the area's trained workforce.
- 9.C. Ames seeks to expand its research and technology development through greater private, public and university coordination and cooperation.
- 9.D. Ames seeks economic activities that are compatible and sustainable with its environment.

Goal No. 10. It is the goal of Ames to maintain and enhance its cultural heritage.

Objectives. In maintaining and enhancing its cultural heritage, Ames seeks the following objectives.

- 10.A. Ames seeks to provide a record of its earlier development through conservation, preservation and restoration of historically/architecturally significant structures and areas where economically feasible.
- 10.B. Ames seeks to integrate historically/ architecturally significant structures and areas with new development in a compatible and unifying manner.
- 10.C. Ames seeks to protect its archaeologically significant resources. Where such resources are endangered, the community should seek buffering and relocation measures.

ATTACHMENT TWO: VARIOUS SCENARIOS

The following table lays out four scenarios of development. Each scenario consists of at least two subareas from different study areas. The subareas were selected as they are either immediately adjacent to the current city limits; had an identified, willing property owner; and/or were a prerequisite for further development in that study area. The four scenarios are:

1. Southwest B plus Northwest A
2. Southwest B plus North B
3. Northwest A plus North B
4. Southwest B plus Northwest A plus North B

	Scenario 1 SW "B" + NW "A"	Scenario 2 SW "B" + N "B"	Scenario 3 NW "A" + N "B"	Scenario 4 SW "B" + NW "A" + N "B"
Net Developable Acres (NDA)	679	548	779	1,004
Total Population	7,809	6,321	8,962	11,546
Total Infrastructure Costs	\$13,110,888	\$13,655,522	\$13,653,190	\$20,209,800
Total Oversize Costs	\$2,928,425	\$2,922,873	\$3,012,642	\$4,431,970
Total Capital Costs	\$4,680,000	\$7,020,000	\$6,350,000	\$7,355,000
Total Infrastructure and Capital Cost per NDA	\$26,198	\$37,610	\$25,669	\$27,454
Total Oversize and Capital Cost per NDA	\$11,204	\$18,087	\$12,015	\$11,740
Annual Operating Cost	\$360,830	\$1,241,243	\$1,074,675	\$1,338,374
Annual Operating Cost per NDA	\$531	\$2,258	\$1,379	\$1,333
Number of Households in Ames Schools	1,553	480	1,093	1,563