

Staff Report

LINCOLN HIGHWAY SPECIAL CORRIDOR STUDY

September 23, 2008

The City staff presented the following questions to the Story County Planning and Zoning Commission members and County planning staff for consideration in regards to the proposed *Lincoln Highway Special Corridor Study: Story County, Iowa* (draft dated June 24, 2008). These questions regard the relationship between this corridor plan and the *Ames Urban Fringe Plan*, adopted by both the City of Ames and Story County. In some cases, both plans establish policies for the same land area. The questions also concern the relationship of the overall corridor plan to the Ames community. Since the Ames City Council has not yet formally reviewed the Lincoln Highway Special Corridor Study, the City staff believes it is important for you to do so and to offer input to the Story County Board of Supervisors prior to their formal adoption.

Questions Regarding the Proposed Corridor Plan

1. In the Story County Development Plan, the principles and objectives for cooperative planning areas around the incorporated communities of Story County address how growth and development will occur close to the communities, applying appropriate growth management practices. Following this policy, Story County has completed fringe area plans with both Ames and Nevada. Both of these plans identify areas for industrial and commercial growth adjacent to these communities that will be compact, close to housing and services and in places where infrastructure and needed services can efficiently be provided. Is it in conflict with these fringe plans to also plan corridors for industrial, residential and mixed commercial development that are continuous between Ames and Nevada?
2. The Plan proposes industrial and/or commercial land use for about 1500 acres between Ames and Nevada. This is in addition to 500 acres in the Ames Urban Fringe for Planned Industrial uses, 1800 acres in the Ames Urban Fringe for Long Term Industrial Reserve and more than 200 acres at the west edge of Nevada for either Industrial or Business Park use. What data is available to support the need for 4000 acres of commercial and industrial development land in this area?
3. If far more land is planned for development than the demand requires, what policies will prevent scattered, inefficient use of land; further separation of employment and commerce from residences and other services; low-cost competition making less likely higher quality, planned development integrated with communities; and loss of the experience of open space that is now available in the corridor? Is the amount and location of development in conflict with the Ames Urban Fringe Plan, which calls for future industrial development to be concentrated in the more than 500 acres designated as Planned Industrial on East 13th Street?
4. The proposed Lincoln Highway Corridor Plan and the Boone County Comprehensive Plan, taken together provide for a continuous corridor of development from Nevada to Boone.

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What will distinguish this from the typical urban development corridor? What will prevent this corridor from taking the appearance of the existing mixed commercial/industrial corridor on the north side of U.S. Highway 30 west of X Avenue in Boone County? What type of buffering or design standards are likely to prevent this image and yet maintain the visibility desired by commercial businesses?

5. Is the Plan consistent with the Ames Urban Fringe Land Use Framework Map that designates the area southeast of Ames as Agricultural/Long Term Industrial Reserve and with the policy that development in this area is to occur when the Planned Industrial area on East 13th Street is fully developed and when urban services are available?
6. Shouldn't Development Concept 5 on page 32 of the Plan recognize that the Ames Urban Fringe Plan provides land for residential acreage development, generally as expansion of existing large lot areas?
7. Won't continuing the current 35-acre minimum size for residential lots in areas with agricultural zoning adequately preserve the character of the historic Lincoln Highway corridor, consisting of scattered residences with open space and row crop uses?
8. Does the Plan's allowance for about 200 acres of estate lots with the "Lincoln Highway Residential" designation anticipate that these lots will be formed in the same manner as the farmstead lots that currently contribute to the character of the Lincoln Highway?
9. Will development south of the U.P. tracks based on the future triple-track and rail access occur only after these railroad improvements are underway?
10. Two interchanges with U.S. Highway 30 are proposed, resulting in nine interchanges from Nevada to Ames, or one every two miles. In addition, two more road corridors are proposed from Ames to Nevada. What are the costs of these facilities? Who will be responsible for these costs? Will the timing of this infrastructure be coordinated with development?
11. The Plan recognizes future traffic impacts on Lincoln Highway from current industrial users. Isn't a less expensive solution to promote use of key north-south roads, with nodal development at intersections with railroad and U.S. Highway 30, rather than to duplicate east-west corridors at the tracks and U. S. Highway 30?
12. How will conflicts between industrial and commercial uses along the north side of U.S. Highway 30 be prevented or mitigated?
13. Adequate water supply is a growing issue. What amount or what type of industrial use will threaten the adequacy of water for further population growth? How will this be prevented?

Staff Recommendations to City Council Regarding the Proposed Corridor Study

The questions provided by staff previously illustrate that of primary concern in this Study is the large amount of commercial/industrial land provided in addition to the industrial land provided by the Ames Urban Fringe Plan, especially in comparison to the amount of demand likely to occur.

The Development Concept for the areas between Ames and Nevada includes development along three corridors, which are - from north to south - the railroad corridor, the Lincoln Highway corridor, and the U.S. Highway 30 corridor (see plan attached). Staff has learned that the Lincoln Highway Residential land use shown along the Lincoln Highway corridor has been eliminated, which staff agrees with. The following recommendations address the other two corridors. Recommendations are also made with specific reference to the Ames Urban Fringe Plan.

The Study offers a strong vision of industrial development along the south side of the railroad and of commercial/industrial development along the north side of U.S. Highway 30. This strong vision includes road access, buffers for agricultural uses and design standards for an attractive highway frontage. However, with so much land designated, what is likely to happen is scattered development in many locations. In no one location will development ever reach the critical mass needed for the vision to become a reality. **Without purposeful implementation, what could well result is scattered, disconnected development that looks unplanned. In short: sprawl.**

For the U.S. Highway 30 corridor, in order to create compact, efficient growth with needed services and design features, **the implementation of the plan should begin with the nodes near Ames and Nevada and extend along the corridor only when the market needs the development land.** If Story County believes it needs a third rural development node, then only one more specific node should develop first, selected by Story County, through a request for proposals for a development park or by some other process. This development should occur only after design standards have been adopted and after determination of land requirements for an interchange. The proposed backage roads should be built along with the development. The implementation section of the Study should clearly state these policies for the order of development.

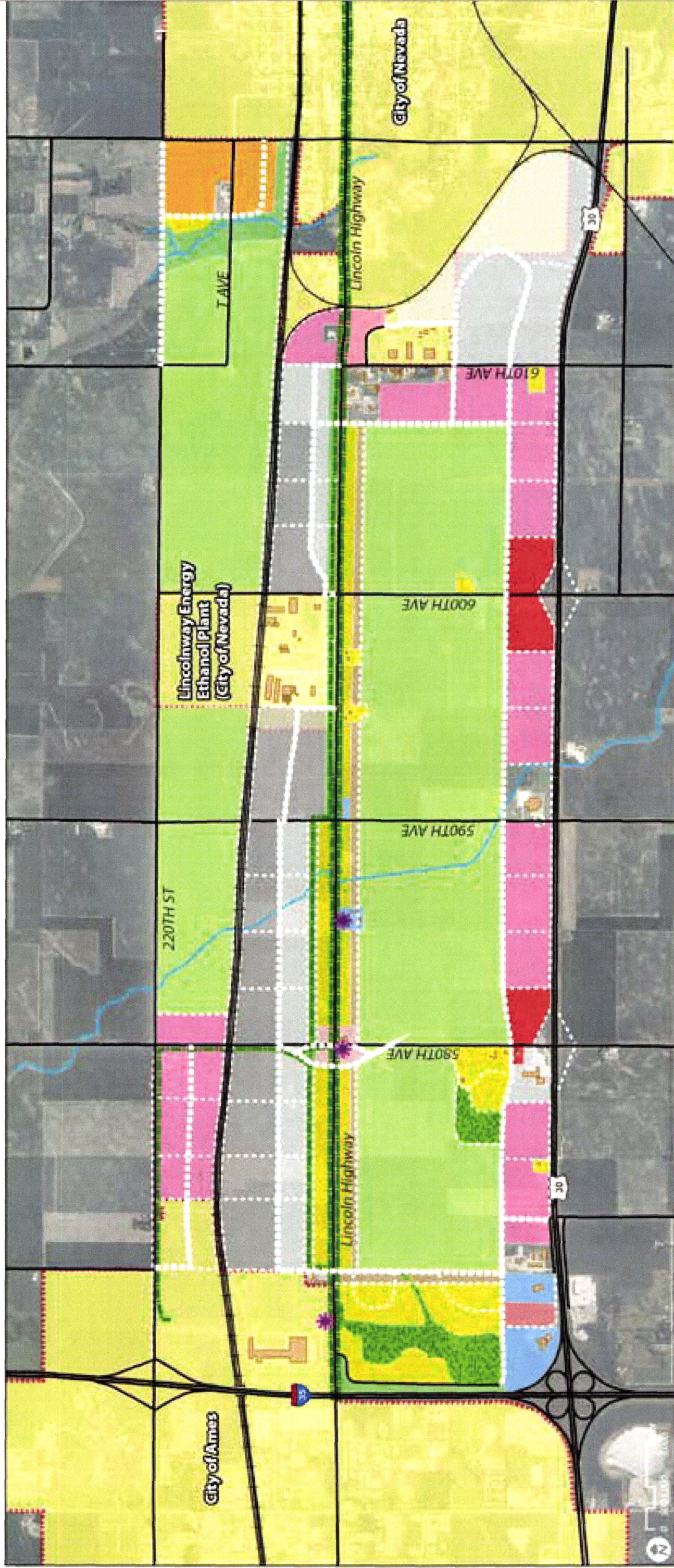
For the industrial land along the south side of the railroad, the implementation section of the Study should clearly state that **this will occur only after the railroad has committed to a siding and after determination of land requirements for an interchange.** This will ensure that sites with railroad access will still be available when that access is provided. **The access road on the south side of this development should be built along with the development.**

Impact on the Ames Urban Fringe Plan. City of Ames Staff finds that the Development Concept is not consistent with the Ames Urban Fringe Plan. The City of Ames should ask that Story County seek revisions to the Ames Urban Fringe Plan. With or without such a revision to the Ames Urban Fringe Plan, the Lincoln Highway Special Corridor Study should state that its recommendations intend to guide how development occurs within the Ames Urban Fringe only when land is needed for industrial expansion, as stated in the Ames Urban Fringe Plan policies

for the Agricultural/Long Term Industrial Reserve land use designation. These policies include **providing industrial uses here after the development of the Planned Industrial areas to the north and requiring urban level design requirements and service standards.**

Conclusions:

Implementation of the Lincoln Highway Special Corridor Study will have an impact on the entry routes into Ames and on the success of the joint City/County policies for development; therefore, they should be of critical concern to Ames and worthy of City of Ames input to the Story County Board of Supervisors.



Story County Lincoln High Special Corridor Study
Map 4.1 Development Concept Diagram (Ames - Nevada)

- Civic
- Agricultural
- Greenway
- Forward Area
- Residential Reserve Buffer
- Low Density Residential
- Lincoln Highway Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Future Commercial
- Commercial/Civic
- Commercial
- Commercial/Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Light Industrial
- Existing Buildings
- Rail Lines
- Waterways
- Existing Roads
- Proposed Roads
- Proposed Collector Streets
- Incorporated Areas
- Signature Features
- *Partial Trail Exists on shoulder of Lincoln Highway between Nevada and Ames