

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

**SUBJECT: REVISION OF URBAN REVITALIZATION PLAN FOR CAMPUSTOWN
URBAN REVITALIZATION AREA**

BACKGROUND:

The Campustown Urban Revitalization Area and Plan (CURP) were established because the rehabilitation, conservation, redevelopment and economic development of this area are in the interest of public health, safety, and welfare of the residents of Ames. The Criteria Matrix of the Plan is used to guide City Council decisions regarding tax abatement in the Campustown Urban Revitalization Area.

Since the approval of the CURP, the City has gained more experience with the on-going impacts of the larger residential buildings in the area and the management of those impacts, as staff reported at the City Council meeting on February 10, 2009. The proposed new criteria relate to the following issues of safety and security for the public and the residents:

- Large crowds gathering spontaneously where no one is responsible for safety and which exceed capacity of exits
- Opportunities for illegal or dangerous interactions due to inadequate lighting or lack of protection against public access to residents or their vehicles
- Ability to throw objects to streets, sidewalks, or other places where people or vehicles may be
- Lack of access to natural light and air

At the February 10th meeting, the City Council directed staff to prepare recommended Plan revisions and set February 24 as the public hearing date. The proposed revisions would require all residential uses to meet the following additional criteria:

- Limit commercial space in the same building to the ground floor
- Provide separate entrances required for commercial and residential uses
- Locate all residential entrances to be visible from the street and provide secure access control at each
- Prevent access from the exterior to the interior through doors that serve only as fire exits
- Prohibit public access to structured parking, using overhead door and secure access control
- Provide transparent glass windows into all stairwells
- Provide camera monitoring of all pedestrian and vehicle entrances and areas
- Minimum widths of all exit routes: 48" for halls, 42" for doors, 60" between rails for stairs
- No balconies are permitted
- Provide for natural daylight requirements of applicable codes with exterior windows

- On facades facing any street use only fixed windows
- Design of all other windows shall prevent passing of sphere larger than 4" diameter
- Prevent by physical means access to all roofs
- Where access is not required, provide security fencing controlling access to all areas between new or existing buildings
- Provide a minimum of four 100 watt metal halide light fixtures on each building façade: two at elevation between first and second floors and two at elevation between third and fourth floor

City Council has chosen to consider new tax abatement criteria as the more voluntary and less restrictive approach to these issues. Abatement of property taxes on 100% of the added property value for three years is available under this program. This change to the CURP would use this financial incentive to more effectively promote safety and security for residents and citizens in the Campustown area.

Approved amendments to the Plan would apply to all future tax abatement projects in the Campustown Urban Revitalization Area, including 116 Welch for which prior approval for tax abatement has been requested. Although staff has requested additional information needed to act on that request, as well as comment on these proposed revisions to the CURP, the applicant has not yet responded.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. The City Council can approve the proposed changes to the Campustown Urban Revitalization Plan.
2. The City Council can approve alternate changes to the Campustown Urban Revitalization Plan.
3. The City Council can refer this item back to staff for additional information.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Public safety and security in Campustown varies widely depending on time of year, day of the week, property management practices, building design, and many other factors. Safety and security risks at the extreme end of this spectrum consume significant public resources for police, for other emergency responders, and for clean up and repair of private and public property.

Methods to protect the public and its resources could include additional laws or ending the tax incentive for residential projects altogether. However, the community has benefitted from the structured parking and durable materials that the tax abatement program has promoted. It would seem appropriate to require a higher standard that protects public resources for projects that will pay fewer property taxes in their first few years.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative #1 approving the proposed changes to the Campustown Urban Revitalization Plan. These changes to the Campustown Criteria Matrix will promote a higher level of safety and security for projects that receive the publicly funded incentive of partial property tax abatement.

Staff will bring to City Council the request for prior approval of tax abatement for the proposed project at 116 Welch after the application is complete and the needed additional information is received.

URBAN REVITALIZATION CAMPUSTOWN CRITERIA MATRIX

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PROJECT MUST MEET CRITERIA OF ONE OF THESE COLUMNS		PROJECT MUST MEET CRITERIA OF ONE OF THESE COLUMNS	
<p><i>Slum and Blighted</i> Properties where a majority of the assessed valuation of the properties has been determined to be substantially unsafe or to have an unsafe use by the City Council.</p>	<p><i>Parking</i> A minimum of 70% of the total required parking is provided in a structure. If utilizing a parking deck, the restrictions in Chapter 29.406 12 of the Municipal Code must be adhered to.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p><i>Mixed Use</i> The first floor must be used for permitted commercial and retail uses as shown in Table 29.803(2) of the Municipal Code. The second floor must be used for either commercial or retail uses as shown in the Table 29.803(2) or for household living. All floors above the second floor must be used for household living.</p>	<p><i>Adaptive Reuse</i> The building on the site was originally built before 1941.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>70% of the area of existing exterior walls of the structure will remain</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>Historic materials and designs are preserved and/or restored.</p>	<p><i>Underrepresented</i> Properties that are to include a business use where that actual sales of the business use is below the expected sales for the business use as determined by the City Council to be of benefit to the City (should be supported by a retail leakage study).</p>
		<p><i>Design Standards</i> Retail and office uses on the first floor adjacent to a public sidewalk must have direct access to the public sidewalk.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p><i>Signage</i> The signage design, scale, materials, and colors shall be in proportion to and consistent with the architecture of the building and support the business identity.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto; text-align: center; line-height: 20px;">OR</div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="width: 45%; padding: 5px;"> <p><i>Brick Material</i> 100% of the front and 80% of the three remaining sides of the structure shall be faced with clay brick for the first four stories. On stories five through seven any other building materials except vinyl will be allowed.</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%; padding: 5px;"> <p><i>Alternative Siding Material</i> If historically significant - use and repair of historically appropriate siding material is permitted and must be maintained for the term of the selected tax abatement schedule.</p> </div> </div>
ALL RESIDENTIAL USES SHALL ALSO MEET THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limit commercial space in the same building to the ground floor 2. Provide separate entrances required for commercial and residential uses 3. Locate all residential entrances to be visible from the street and provide secure access control at each 4. Prevent access from the exterior to the interior through doors that serve only as fire exits 5. Prohibit public access to structured parking, using overhead door and secure access control 6. Provide transparent glass windows into all stairwells 7. Provide camera monitoring of all pedestrian and vehicle entrances and areas 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Minimum widths of all exit routes: 48” for halls, 42” for doors, 60” between rails for stairs 9. No balconies are permitted 10. Provide for natural daylight requirements of applicable codes with exterior windows 11. On facades facing any street use only fixed windows 12. Design of all other windows shall prevent passing of sphere larger than 4” diameter 13. Prevent by physical means access to all roofs 14. Where access is not required, provide security fencing controlling access to all areas between new or existing buildings 15. Provide a minimum of four 100 w. metal halide light fixtures on each building façade: two at elevation between first and second floors and two at elevation between third and fourth floor 	