

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: AMENDMENTS TO HISTORIC PRESERVATION STANDARDS OF THE AMES MUNICIPAL CODE (CHAPTER 31)

BACKGROUND:

As part of the budget deliberations of the City Council for fiscal year 2011-12, the City Council requested that staff provide a draft of the scope of work for a project identified as a City Council priority, to make revisions to Chapter 31 of the Municipal Code. This chapter pertains to historic district design standards. Because the project was not then well defined in terms of its scope in relation to estimated costs, the Council wanted to review the scope of work for the project before approving any funding. In response to this request, staff has prepared the attached scope for the Council's consideration.

Discussion of this issue began back in 2010, when the Council directed staff to begin the early stages of a two-year process of revising Chapter 31. The initial stage called for the development of the scope of work in preparation of hiring a consultant well versed not only in architectural history, but also in alternative materials and green preservation.

The Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan, adopted by the City Council in 2009, recommends such revision because of:

- (1) internal inconsistencies in the Chapter 31,
- (2) the need to expand the applicability of the chapter to districts other than Old Town in event that the City Council adds more listed districts, and
- (3) the need to assess the appropriateness of incorporating newer materials and techniques in their home improvements.

To date, the Historic Preservation Commission and City staff have begun to identify the problem areas of Chapter 31 that may be easily cleaned up by staff through careful editing and regularization of the text and those sections that will benefit from the knowledge and expertise of a consultant.

It should be pointed out that some of the tasks reflected in the attached scope of work that are being recommended by the Historic Preservation Commission will result in standards for structures and site features that, while reflected in the Council's approved Historic Preservation Plan, are not presently regulated. The City Council should initially determine if the following two policy changes are still supported.

- **Design Guidelines for alterations to existing garages and restrictions on the demolition of existing garages.**

-Presently, the alteration and demolition of existing garages in local historic districts is not regulated by Chapter 31. Only the construction of new garages is regulated by the current standards.

- **Design Guidelines for landscape features on properties designated as local historic landmarks, or included within a local historic district.**

-Landscape features are not regulated by the current Design Guidelines.

In addition to the above proposed changes, the City Council should be aware that Design Guidelines for commercial properties are to be drafted by the Consultant. This would facilitate the future establishment of a local historic district for Downtown or Campustown, should the City Council ever want to move in that direction. Presently, Design Guidelines apply only to residential properties designated as local landmarks, or included in local historic districts. However, the adopted Historic Preservation Plan supports Design Guidelines for Downtown as means to maintain the historic character of the commercial district.

The primary expense for the revision of Chapter 31, other than the hours of staff time involved in the project, is the hiring of a consultant with the expertise to produce revised design guidelines that will make use of twenty-first century building techniques and technology to the extent that they are appropriate for each building style listed in Chapter 31.

It is estimated that the total project cost will be \$60,000. The projected cost breakdown provided below is based on consultant costs incurred in 2002 and 2008 by the City of Dubuque for similar projects involving materials assessment and the writing of design guidelines.

We anticipate that the project costs will be shared by the City of Ames and funding from an Iowa Historic Resource Development Program (HRDP) grant. If selected through a competitive process, the HRDP grant program provides 50 percent of financing for a project with a 50% local match requirement. The local match may include a 25 percent in-kind contribution.

The estimated cost breakdown for this project is described as follows:

• HRDP grant funding sought for consultant wages (50%):	\$30,000
• City of Ames Cash Contribution (33%% match):	\$20,000
• City of Ames In-Kind Contribution (17% match):	<u>\$10,000</u>
Total Project Costs:	\$60,000

The HRDP grant application to the State Historical Society of Iowa must be postmarked no later than May 16, 2011. Projects funded in this grant cycle are to begin on July 1, 2011 and must be completed by November 30, 2013. City staff in the Planning and Housing Department would be responsible to prepare and submit the HRDP grant application.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. The City Council can approve:
 - a) the draft Scope of Work for amendments to Chapter 31 of the Municipal Code as attached,
 - b) the preparation and submittal of an HRDP (Historic Resource Development Program) grant for \$30,000,
 - c) the appropriation of \$20,000 as a local cash match for the grant from the City Council's 2010-11 Contingency Account, in addition to the commitment of an in-kind of \$10,000.

2. The City Council can approve:
 - a) the draft Scope of Work for amendments to Chapter 31 of the Municipal Code as revised by the City Council by adding, or deleting items (e.g. delete from the Scope the development of Design Guidelines for garages and/or landscape features),
 - b) the preparation and submittal of an HRDP (Historic Resource Development Program) grant for \$30,000,
 - c) the appropriation of \$20,000 as a local cash match for the grant from the City Council's 2010-11 Contingency Account, in addition to the commitment of an in-kind match of \$10,000.

3. The City Council can choose not to proceed with the project to revise Chapter 31 of the Municipal Code at this time.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

This project was approved by the City Council as one of the top priorities in the Work Program for the Planning and Housing Department. It is expected that the revisions to Chapter 31 will address the problems experienced with the current ordinance and provide valuable insight into the appropriate use of alternative materials for structures located in local historic districts, or designated as landmarks.

Assuming that this task remains a top priority for the City Council, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council approve Alternative #1 or

Alternative #2 thereby 1) authorizing the City staff to submit an application for a \$30,000 HRDT grant and 2) approving a \$20,000 local cash match for the grant from the City Council's 2010-11 Contingency Account, in addition to the commitment of an in-kind match of \$10,000.

The decision whether to proceed with Alternatives #1 or #2 is dependent on whether the City Council supports the policy changes suggested by the Historic Preservation Commission as highlighted above.

Scope of Work

Revisions to Chapter 31 of the City of Ames Municipal Code April, 2011

1. **Project Description.** Chapter 31 of the Ames Municipal Code provides standards for alterations, new construction and demolition that involves historically and architecturally significant structures. This project involves a comprehensive rewrite of Chapter 31 to address provisions in the Code that:

- Do not reflect current preservation practice in terms of allowable materials;
- Are consistent with Department of the Interior resource classifications, and
- Are inconsistent with other provisions of the Chapter.

The possibility of allowing the use of alternative contemporary materials on the exterior of historic structures will be explored. Application of Design Guidelines to garages and other accessory buildings in historic districts will be considered. An evaluation of the applicability of existing Design Guidelines, and consideration of “green” issues will be part of this project. Consistency of the Design Guidelines with ADA requirements will be addressed. Other issues and concerns will be identified as work on the project continues.

2. **Objectives.** The following objectives, as listed below, have been identified for this project.
 - A. *Review the existing Design Guidelines in Chapter 31 and update them where necessary to reflect current preservation practice and sustainability trends for the use of alternative materials in a variety of districts, including residential and potential future commercial districts and to reflect a range of “periods of significance.”*
 - B. *Incorporate Design Guidelines into Chapter 31 that address historic landscape features.*
 - C. *Develop Design Guidelines for garages, including, but not limited to, appropriate standards for solid/void ratio, materials, and appearance.*
 - D. *Develop new fence Design Guidelines that will be appropriate for the various historic districts and landmarks throughout the city.*
 - E. *Assess the impact of making the local historic district resource classifications (3-tier system of “Contributing”, “Compatible” and “Non-Contributing”) consistent with the National Park Service resource classification (2-tier system of “Contributing” and “Non-Contributing”) that would also be applied to garages.*

- F. *Analyze how terms are used in Chapter 31, and determine if a definitions are needed.*
 - G. *Develop Design Guidelines to distinguish between “Consistent” and “Compatible” in terms of materials and architectural design.*
 - H. *Develop Design Guidelines to address ADA issues (e.g. – how to sensitively incorporate a ramp into the design of the structure).*
 - I. *Develop specific Design Guidelines to allow the sensitive integration of egress windows, fire escapes, decks and other non-historic elements.*
 - J. *Enhance the format of the Design Guidelines to incorporate graphics, photos and diagrams in a manner that establishes a user-friendly format.*
 - G. *Establish Design Guidelines for all exterior features of historic structures and site features (including landscaping) for application to historic districts and landmarks throughout the community separate from Design Guidelines that are specific to individual districts.*
 - H. *Identify sustainability issues for historic properties and develop Design Guidelines that address those sustainability issues.*
3. **Tasks to be Performed.** The following tasks, to be performed by the Consultant, have been identified for this project.
- A. *Compile and assess information on current preservation practice and sustainability trends from various sources to develop a report clearly and accurately describing the use of alternative materials in a variety of historic districts, and periods of significance.*
 - B. *Prepare Design Guidelines for adoption that address the objectives described in #2 above.*
 - C. *Analyze the impact of making the local historic district resource classifications (3-tier system of “Contributing”, “Compatible” and “Non-Contributing”) consistent with the National Park Service resource classification (2-tier system of “Contributing” and “Non-Contributing”) that would also be applied to garages and present findings to the City.*
 - D. *Analyze how terms used in Chapter 31, and if applicable write a definitions that accurately reflect the use of the terms throughout Chapter 31.*
 - E. *Provide a process and timeline for identifying and soliciting input from property owners, business owners and other stakeholders, and a schedule for meeting with stakeholders.*

F. Complete the review, assessment and analysis involved in meeting the objectives above and present findings.

G. Draft revisions consistent with the objectives described and the feedback received from the City at completion of Task G.

H. Attend and conduct meetings with stakeholders as defined in Task F.

4. **Project Timing and Steps.** The following table summarizes the steps necessary to complete the project and the timing for each of the steps.

Timing of Project Steps	
Timing	Project Steps
06/11	City Council to approve Agreement with the Consultant
07/11	Staff to secure volunteers to help with the project
08/11	Consultant to Proceed with the Survey
08/11	Project Coordinator to meet with Consultant to coordinate meetings with Stakeholders, City Council, Historic Preservation Commission, Planning & Zoning Commission and SHPO throughout the project
08/11	Consultant and Project Coordinator meet with SHPO at the beginning of the Consultant work
08/11-06/12	Project Coordinator to meet with the Consultant each month from the start of the project to completion
08/11-06/12	Consultant to meet with Stakeholders as agreed
08/11-06/12	Consultant to meet with HPC as needed to review progress
08/11-06/12	Consultant to meet with CC as needed to review progress
08/11-06/12	Consultant to meet with SHPO as needed to review progress
06/30/12	Completion Deadline for the Consultant's work

5. **Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Digital Data Requirements.**

The City of Ames, Iowa has an ever expanding GIS system. Therefore the recommendations, reports and studies prepared by consulting agencies for the City of Ames shall be related to existing spatial base map data whenever possible. If research and windshield-type surveys are conducted which relate to spatial entities, such as land parcels or buildings, these shall be recorded in GIS format. The GIS data shall include any tabular information that was created as part of the research and consulting work. Point, line or polygon features shall be used to store the tabular information. Before completion of GIS data, a sample of output shall be approved by the City of Ames in order to test data conversion and maintain a smooth project completion. City of Ames staff will supply parcel and/or street base map information upon request, to assist the consultant. Any composite maps which result from the research or consulting work shall also be submitted in GIS and PDF formats. The format requirements for GIS data are below. These shall be provided on CD/DVD or online FTP server.

Format: ESRI Shape file or ESRI Geodatabase

Coordinate System: All GIS data shall be submitted in the North American (horizontal) Datum of 1983 (NAD83), National Geodetic Vertical Datum 1929 (NGVD29), in the Iowa North Zone of the State Plane Coordinate System.

Two Minimum Linking Fields: Parcel ID (Geocode) and Parcel Address (meaning these two fields shall be contained in the files provided and have identical values as the corresponding parcels in the county parcel base map). The Parcel Address field shall contain the number and street in the same field (ex: "129 Main Street"). An additional field which may be allowed as a substitute in the case of one or both of the above not being possible, is a GPS point coordinate, such as a northing/easting, such as for a building front door/or building footprint approximate centroid.

Digital Documents – Adobe PDF: The City of Ames, Iowa has an ever expanding paper record system. Therefore all research and studies shall be submitted in PDF format in addition to hard copies in order to conserve City file storage space and improve archiving. The PDFs shall be exported images from production software rather than scans. This will facilitate ready access to the public as well as improve text searching functionality. PDFs shall also be supplied on CD/DVD or online FTP server.

6. **Products.** The preparation of revisions to Chapter 31 of the City of Ames Municipal Code will result in the following products to be provided to the City of Ames, prior to the final contract payment to the Consultant, and at scheduled points throughout the project.
 - A. One paper and one electronic copy of the report and findings associated with "Task A."
 - B. One paper and one electronic copy of the final version of the Design Guidelines, referenced in "Task B", prepared for public review and comment.
 - C. One paper and one electronic copy of all reports and findings associated with "Tasks C and D."
 - D. One paper and one electronic copy of the process, timeline and schedule described in "Task E."
 - E. One electronic copy of all materials used in presentations to Stakeholders, Historic Preservation Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission, and the City Council.