

## COUNCIL ACTION FORM

**SUBJECT: MAJOR SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN – AMENDMENT OF GREEN HILLS COMMUNITY PLANNED RESIDENCE DISTRICT (F-PRD) ZONE**

### **BACKGROUND:**

Project Description. Green Hills originated as a retirement community as part of a conceptual master plan with the nearby Gateway Hotel in 1979. The complex is comprised of 4-unit town homes, high rise apartments, and on-site health care services. The residential tower and health center were originally built in 1985-86. Green Hills now proposes to expand the health services and associated amenities for their residents. The expansion would include the following changes to the complex:

- Modernize the current health care center internally
- One-story, 6 bed addition on north side of existing building for a new memory care unit
- One-story, 14 bed addition on west side of existing building for skilled nursing
- Two-story addition on southwest side of existing tower for a new 16 unit assisted living
- One-story addition on southeast side of existing tower for a new wellness center/pool
- Net increase of 30 surface level parking spaces in the development
- Total increase of 3.14 acres of building and paving within the overall 30.44 acre site

Attached are pages 4 and 6, excerpts from the 22 page Major Site Development Plan. In order to conserve paper, the full 22-page site plan will be available at the Council meeting and is also available for public review at the Planning and Housing Department office. A web link to an Adobe PDF version of the complete site plan will also be posted with the online version of the City Council agenda. Also attached is a facility brochure provided by Green Hills. See the back page for an aerial photo of the current building layout.

Zoning. The F-PRD (Floating Planned Residence District) district is intended to provide for development of a variety of innovative housing types, including: attached and detached dwellings, zero lot line detached housing, clustered housing development, residential condominiums, and innovative multiple family housing projects. In all instances, development that occurs in areas zoned F-PRD must include integrated design, open space, site amenities, and landscaping that exceed the requirements in the underlying base zone's development standards. Property developed according to the F-PRD floating zone requirements creates a development pattern that is more aesthetic in design and sensitive to the natural features of the site and to surrounding uses of land than would customarily result from the application of base zone requirements.

The full text of the F-PRD requirements can be found in *Municipal Code* Section 29.1203. Staff's analysis according to the details of these requirements has been provided in *Attachment B*. Before approving the requested Major Site Development Plan, the Council should find that the details of the Ames *Municipal Code* align with the following statement of principle for the PRD zone:

*Property that is developed according to the F-PRD requirements shall create a development pattern that is more aesthetic in design and sensitive to the natural features of the site and to the surrounding uses of land than would customarily result from the application of the base zone requirements. Innovation and flexibility in design and development of property shall create a more efficient and effective use of land.*

Notice. A public notice sign was placed on the property and hearing notices were sent to all property owners within 200 feet of the Green Hills PRD boundary. Additionally, Green Hills held a neighborhood outreach meeting, as well as several internal meetings regarding this expansion. Green Hills reports 86% of members have voted in favor of the project.

Recommendation of the Planning & Zoning Commission. At its meeting of April 20, 2011, the Planning & Zoning Commission discussed the proposed expansion and held a hearing. No one from the audience addressed the Commission. With a vote of 5-0, the Planning and Zoning Commission recommended that the City Council approve the proposed Major Site Development Plan to amend the Green Hills Community Planned Residence District Zone.

Public Comments. Since the Planning & Zoning Commission hearing was held, a Green Hills resident submitted a packet of information, dated May 2, 2011, in opposition to the expansion. A copy of the cover letter from the packet is included for Council review as *Attachment C*. The full packet is available at the Planning and Housing Department office.

Conclusion. Staff has reviewed the proposed development against all required standards for the F-PRD zone and has addressed those standards in the attached staff analysis (see *Attachment B*). In summary, the impacts of the proposed expansion are minimal because of the internal nature of the project in context with surrounding residential properties off-site.

## **ALTERNATIVES:**

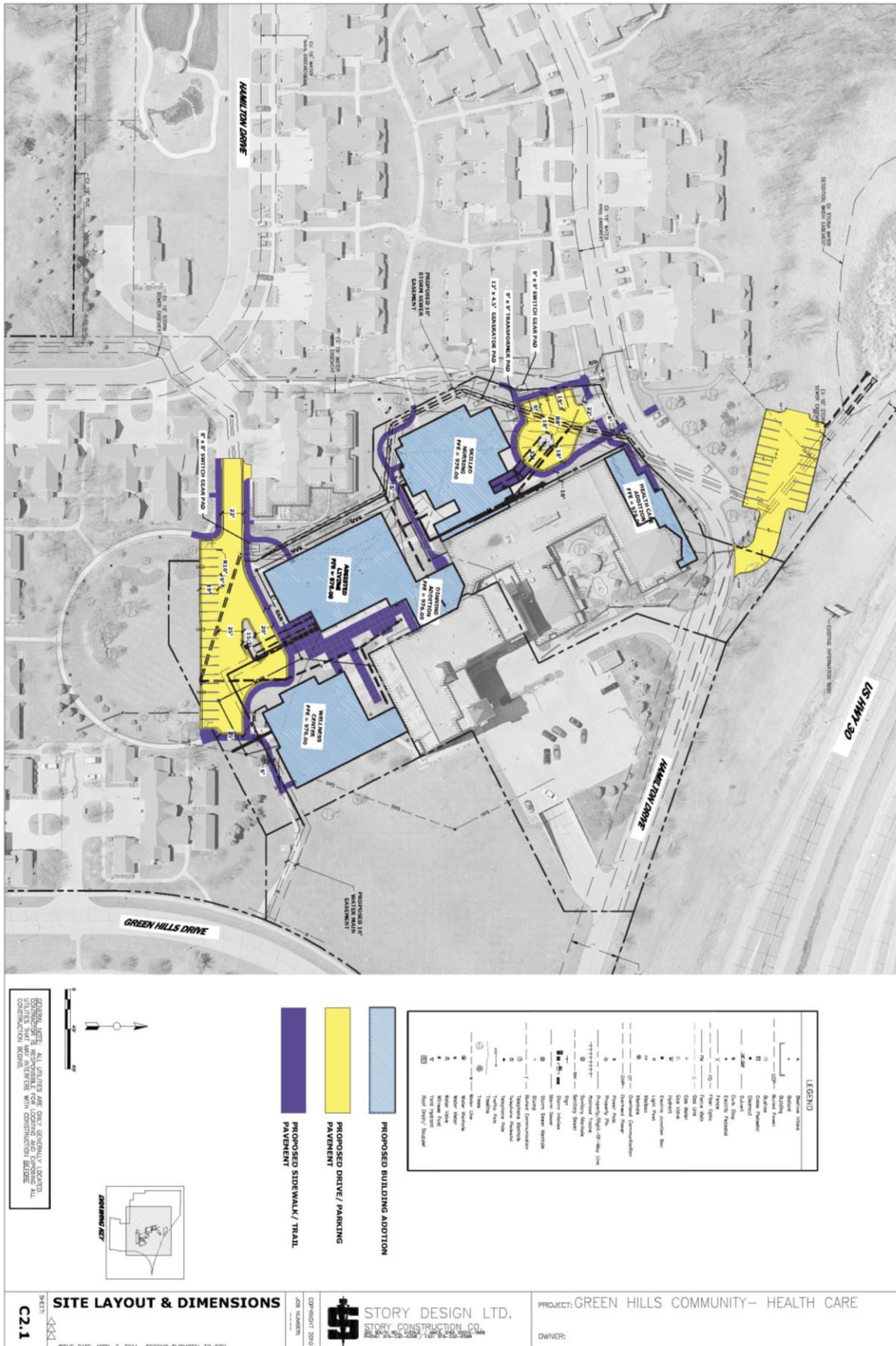
1. The City Council can approve the proposed Major Site Development Plan to amend the Green Hills Community Planned Residence District Zone.
2. The City Council can deny the proposed Major Site Development Plan to amend the Green Hills Community Planned Residence District Zone.
3. The City Council can modify this request for a Major Site Development Plan to amend the Green Hills Community Planned Residence District Zone.
4. The City Council can refer this request back to staff or the applicant for more information

**MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Both staff and the Planning & Zoning Commission have concluded that the proposed Major Site Development Plan for the Green Hills Planned Residence District Zone is consistent with the standards set forth for development under the F-PRD standards, and thus should be approved by the City Council.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council accept Alternative #1, thereby approving the proposed Major Site Development Plan to amend the Green Hills Community Planned Residence District Zone, based upon the analysis and conclusions that the proposed PRD is consistent with all development standards under the F-PRD zone.





**Attachment B:**

**Staff Analysis of Proposal Under**  
**PRD Development Principles and Supplemental Development Standards**

**Ames Municipal Code Section 29.1203: Planned Residential Development (PRD) Development Principles.** Property that is developed according to the F-PRD requirements shall create a development pattern that is more aesthetic in design and sensitive to the natural features of the site and to the surrounding uses of land than would customarily result from the application of the base zone requirements. Innovation and flexibility in design and development of property shall create a more efficient and effective use of land. Property that is zoned F-PRD shall adhere to the following development principles:

**1. *Provide for innovative and imaginative approaches to residential development that would not occur as a result of the underlying zoning regulations.***

- The request is a modification to a currently approved PRD. Although no changes to the stand alone apartments or townhomes is proposed, the increase in health services available to all residents supports the sustainability of the existing variety of housing types that does not generally occur in low density or medium density neighborhoods.

**2. *Result in a more efficient, aesthetic, desirable and economic use of land and other resources while maintaining density of use, as provided for in the Land Use Policy Plan and the underlying zoning.***

- Increasing the density of the health services in a central location is an efficient use of land that is also sensitive to surrounding neighborhoods.

**3. *Promote innovative housing development that emphasizes efficient and affordable home ownership and occupancy.***

- The proposed health service expansions do not remove any of the existing townhomes or apartments; therefore no change to affordability of home ownership is anticipated. The proposed expansions have been reviewed by the resident's association with strong support.

**4. *Provide for flexibility in the design, height, and placement of buildings that are compatible with and integrate with existing, developed neighborhoods and the natural environment.***

- The proposed building expansions are one- and two-story brick which integrates with the existing buildings on the site. Existing landscape plants will be salvaged where possible and relocated. The building expansions are internal to the development and would therefore have little impact on surrounding neighborhoods outside of Green Hills.



**5. *Promote aesthetic building architecture, significant availability of open space, well designed and landscaped off-street parking facilities that meet or exceed the underlying zone development standards, more recreation facilities than would result from conventional development, and pedestrian and vehicular linkages within and adjacent to the property.***

- The overall site contains an open space percentage of 70%, which is above the minimum 40% required. Large expanses of green space on the east and west perimeters of the site, as well as integrated landscaping between homes achieves the intent and minimum percentage for this requirement. Access to the large expanses of open space is provided by trails in the wooded area (west) and mowed lawn in the non-wooded area (east).
- The proposed new parking area to the south reduces the large open green space but maintains the trail connectivity, which is an essential element due to the size of the overall site. The off-street parking facilities exceed the landscaping requirements due to the significant setbacks from the outer boundary of the PRD. The addition of the pool is a recreational feature which is not common in conventional development. No changes are proposed to pedestrian and vehicle linkages surrounding the development. All changes are internal.
- The new parking to the north along the U.S. 30 right-of-way will be buffered by existing vegetation, higher topography, proposed trees and proposed shrubs. *Parking lot landscaping requirements can be found in the attached Municipal Code, Section 29.403 (4 pages).*

**6. *Provide for the preservation of identified natural, geologic, historic and cultural resources, drainage ways, floodplains, water bodies, and other unique site features through the careful placement of buildings and site improvements.***

- There are no known sites of significance that should be protected in the proposed expansion area. There is no development proposed on the wooded area of the site. The south and west perimeter of the site around the townhomes was originally designated as “Limited Development Zone” to provide a transition area between the development and single family neighborhood to the south and west. There is no development proposed in those areas.

**7. *Provide for a development design that can be more efficiently served by existing and proposed infrastructure, including: street, water, sewer, and storm water infrastructure, than would be otherwise required as a result of conventional development.***

- The existing street infrastructure was designed to anticipate this intensity of expanded development. There will be some minimal upgrades to existing utilities within the site to serve the slight increase in water and sewer demands. The storm water design continues to use the detention pond along U.S. 30, which the

owner will excavate as part of the project. Increasing the intensity of land use within an existing development is a more efficient use of public infrastructure than new development, which typically requires extensions and upgrades.

**Planned Residential Development (PRD) Supplemental Development Standards.** Property that is zoned F-PRD shall be developed in accordance with the Zone Development Standards listed in Table 29.1203(5). Each of those standards is listed below:

1. ***Area Requirement. A minimum of two (2) acres shall be required for all areas developed as F-PRD.***
  - The subject site includes 30.44 acres. Therefore, the area requirement is met.
2. ***Density. Densities shall comply with the densities provided for in the Land Use Policy Plan and the underlying base zone regulations. In the case of more than one base zone designation, each area of the PRD project shall comply with the density limitation that is established for the base zone of that area. Density transfer from one area of a PRD project to another area of the same project with a lower base zone density is not permitted.***
  - The entire site is designated Residential Low Density (RL) on the Future Land Use Map of the Land Use Policy Plan (LUPP). The RL designation has a maximum of 7.26 dwelling units per net acre. One hundred forty (140) owned dwelling units divided by 30.44 acres equals 4.6 dwelling units per acre, which is less than the limit of 7.26. Additionally, the property was zoned RM prior to the PRD rezoning. RM can therefore be considered the base zone. Since RM has a maximum density of 22.31 units per acre, 4.6 dwelling units per acre is also found to be less than the RM maximum. In consideration of the LUPP and the base zone, the project complies with density requirements.
3. ***Height Limitations. Structures proposed to be developed in areas zoned PRD shall be compatible with the predominant height of the structures in adjacent neighborhoods.***
  - The heights of the proposed expansions are one and two story, which integrates with the townhomes within the site and the single-family homes south of the site.
4. ***Minimum Yard and Setback Requirements.***
  - The PRD zone does not have a minimum setback requirement. The Green Hills community is managed in two financial entities: the homeowners and the health center, therefore there is a property line between the residential tower and the health center portions of the building. Although there is not a zoning code requirement for a building setback, the Building Official has worked with the architect to determine compliance with fire separation codes along property lines. The City has the flexibility to not require zoning setbacks, but does not



have the flexibility to allow exceptions from fire codes. Therefore, the proposal meets zoning standards and will also be a safely operated building in conformance with fire codes.

**5. *Parking Requirements.***

- The proposed modifications and the overall development meet all City of Ames parking requirements due to recent revisions to minimum parking requirements and provisions for remote parking.

**6. *Open Space Design Requirements.***

- The proposal reduces the internal large open space to the south, but maintains the trail connectivity and installs new plaza areas in areas where the existing plaza will be replaced with building expansion. The new parking that replaces a portion of the open space will be at a lower grade than the green space, which will serve to ameliorate the commercial nature of surface parking. Parking lot lighting along the south parking lot perimeter will meet Outdoor Lighting Code for cutoff angle. There are mature landscape trees and shrubs on a berm along the southern edge of the green space, which provides a transitional screen between the health care services area and the townhomes to the south.
- The Green Hills residents are actively involved in landscape plant selection and maintenance on an on-going basis; therefore, the residents are engaged in a way that makes the open spaces a sustainable and enjoyable aspect of residency.

**7. *Maintenance of Open Space and Site Amenities.***

- The maintenance of open space and site amenities is owned and operated by Green Hills.

Attachment C: Paulson Letter

May 2, 2011

Planning and Zoning Commission  
Attn: Sam Perry  
Ames, Iowa

Dear Gentlemen,

*I am a resident owner of a Green Hills town home since February 2002. Green Hills is a wonderful place to live but they do a terrible job of reporting their financial activities to the residents. The financial structure involves two separate corporations [Greenhill Residents Association and Green Hills Health Care Center].*

*The Green Hill Health Center is interested in providing some additional facilities. I would be a supporter of these items if they did not place them in the center of the resident association property. The plan you have been asked to approve will require major expenditures for moving storm drains, sanitary sewers, water lines and electrical lines. This added expenditure could be a deal breaker.*

*Is there an alternative site for the health care expansion? Yes but it is not being considered because management is saving it for additional independent living units. The reasoning is additional units will be needed to pay for the health care expansion. Look at the map on page 7 of the commission action form. It is the pointed area at the bottom of the site map.*

*Paragraph 6 of the horizontal property regime for Green Hills "No Partition" and Paragraph 29 "Amendment" are attached for your information.*

Sincerely,



Ivan W. Paulson  
2330 Hamilton Dr  
Ames, Iowa 50014

