

**AGENDA**  
**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL**  
**COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL**  
**SEPTEMBER 20, 2011**

**CALL TO ORDER:** 7:00 p.m.

1. Resolution setting date of public hearing for October 25, 2011, on CDBG 2011-12 Amended Action Plan
2. Council Workshop on Landscaping Requirements
3. Council Workshop on Fats, Oils, and Grease Program

**COMMENTS:**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT: SETTING PUBLIC HEARING FOR 2011-12 CDBG AMENDED ANNUAL ACTION PLAN**

**BACKGROUND:**

At the Council's September 23, 2011 meeting, a resolution was approved directing staff to amend the 2011-12 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Annual Action Plan. Council's action included redirecting \$25,000 of funding from the Neighborhood Housing Improvement Program to create a pilot program that will assist a property owner with funds to rehabilitate a single-family rental property and convert it into an owner-occupied unit.

Following federal rules for amending this plan, the next steps involve preparing the action plan for public comment and setting October 25, 2011, as the date of public hearing to submit the amended plan to the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development for approval.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. The City Council can set October 25, 2011, as the date of public hearing for the submittal of the 2011-12 CDBG Amended Action Plan to HUD with the proposed program activities as outlined in Attachments 1 & 2.
2. The City Council can delay setting the date of public hearing for the submittal of the CDBG 2011-12 Amended Action Plan to HUD, and direct staff to make further changes to the proposed program activities.

**MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

The Housing Improvements, Neighborhood Infrastructure Improvements, and Slum and Blight programs being recommended focus on the Council's goal of strengthening our neighborhoods and are consistent with the priorities of the City's 2009-14 Consolidated Plan.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative #1, thereby directing staff to proceed with amending the 2011-12 CDBG Annual Action Plan with the proposed projects as outlined in Attachments 1 & 2 and setting October 25, 2011, as the date of public hearing for submittal of the 2011-12 CDBG Amended Action Plan.

# ATTACHMENT 1

## PROPOSED 2011-12 AMENDED ANNUAL ACTION PLAN PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Project Activities	Program Description	Priority Goal	CDBG National Objective
<p>The <b>Neighborhood Sustainability Program</b> is comprised of the following subcomponent programs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Housing Improvement Rehabilitation Program:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Exterior Maintenance</li> <li>b. Emergency Repair Assistance</li> <li>c. <b>“Pilot”</b> Single-family Conversion Project</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. <b>Homebuyer Assistance</b></li> <li>3. <b>Slum and Blight Program</b></li> </ol>	<p>The overall goal of the Neighborhood Sustainability program is to increase the availability of housing to low and moderate-income families and to maintain and sustain decent, safe, and sanitary housing stock in existing neighborhoods by providing <u>home repair grants</u> for owner-occupied housing units, and repair assistance to property owners of single-family rentals for conversion back to single-family homeownership and <u>down payment and closing cost assistance</u> to first-time homebuyers, and demolish deteriorated properties.</p>	1,2	Low- & Moderate-Income Benefit
<p>The <b>Public Improvement Program</b> is comprised of the following subcomponent programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Neighborhood Infrastructure Improvements</b> (curb, street resurfacing, sidewalks, etc.) in targeted low- and moderate-income census tracts</li> </ul>	<p>The overall goal of the Public Improvement Program is to preserve and enhance <b>the viability and aesthetics of our core existing neighborhoods by maintaining the public infrastructure.</b></p>	3	Low- & Moderate-Income Benefit

## ATTACHMENT 2

<b>PROPOSED AMENDED 2011-12 Action Plan Expenditure Budget:</b>	
<b><u>Programs</u></b>	<b><u>Budget</u></b>
<b>Neighborhood Sustainability Program (Slum and Blight) Dangerous Buildings Program</b>	<b>135,000*</b>
<b>Neighborhood Housing Improvement Program (including City-owned properties)</b>	<b>426,762*</b>
<b>Pilot-Single-family Conversion Project</b>	<b>25,000*</b>
<b>Homebuyer Assistance Program</b>	<b>100,000</b>
<b>Neighborhood Infrastructure Improvements Program</b>	<b>406,297</b>
<b>2011-12 Program Administration (20% of 11-12 Allocation + 20% Anticipated Program Income)</b>	<b><u>110,648</u></b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,203,707</b>
<b>AMENDED 2011-12 Action Plan Revenue Budget:</b>	
<b>2011-12 CDBG Allocation</b>	<b>449,018</b>
<b>2010-11 Anticipated Program Rollover</b>	<b>650,466</b>
<b>2011-12 Anticipated Program Income</b>	<b><u>107,870</u></b>
<b>Total 2011-12</b>	<b>\$1,203,707</b>

\*Includes \$100,466 of Service Delivery expenses for Program Administration (inspectors, legal fees and documents, contracted staff assistance)



# Memo

Department of Planning & Housing

Item No. 2

**TO:** Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** Steve Osguthorpe, Planning & Housing Director  
**DATE:** September 16, 2011  
**SUBJECT:** Council Workshop – City Landscaping Standards

Among your City Council goals for 2010-12 is the following:

- **Further streamline and improve government processes**
  - Work to make City Council meetings and City processes more efficient and effective
  - Revisit City codes, policies, and procedures to streamline processes
  - Promote Ames as a welcoming place to do business by embracing a “Can Do” attitude

During review of projects, staff puts forth considerable effort both assessing whether a proposed development is consistent with Council’s adopted standards, and identifying creative ways to meet developers’ objectives within the bounds of our codes. **One of the more challenging sections of City code to implement has been the Chapter pertaining to landscaping standards**, both in terms of how the standards are applied during project review and approval, and how required landscaping is maintained over time. While reviewing their proposed development projects, staff has received various complaints and comments from development customers regarding the City’s current landscaping standards. Both staff and developers have noted that the end result of installed landscaping is often lacking, both in terms of its visual impact and perhaps even its environmental effects.

At this workshop, staff will share a PowerPoint presentation illustrating the challenges and the possibilities in how landscaping is applied in Ames and in urban settings. The presentation will address many of the complaints we commonly receive.

Since this is the first time Council will be exposed to this subject, staff would like to use the workshop to bring basic background information on these landscaping issues to the Council and to answer questions on this subject. Ultimately, staff is seeking direction from Council on whether we should (1) maintain the status quo on landscaping standards and maintenance, (2) more fully enforce our existing maintenance standards, (3) amend the City’s landscaping standards (either enhance or relax), or (4) completely eliminate the landscaping standards. However, this is too big of an issue to both present and resolve in the same evening. If at the end of the workshop Council desires to pursue this subject further, we will arrange a follow-up time to allow more focused discussion and direction. That would allow time to seek public input, and for Council to reflect on the information presented before deciding on any specific course of action.

SO\clh

## City of Ames Landscape Standards

- Standards primarily in Section 29.403
- Landscaping generally required:
  - Along perimeter of commercial parking lots (5 ft.min.)
  - In setbacks abutting residential zoned lots (between 5 & 20 feet)
  - Within yards of apartment buildings
  - 15 - 20% of some commercial & industrial lots
  - 25% of Hospital/Medical Zone lots
  - 40% of single family home lots
- Additional requirements for some overlay zones

- Landscaping may be used as alternative method to screen mechanical units.

- Definition:  
"Landscaping means the improvement of a lot, parcel or tract of land with grass, shrubs and/or trees. Landscaping may include pedestrian walks, flowerbeds, ornamental features such as fountains, statuary, and other similar natural and artificial objects design and arranged to produce an aesthetically pleasing effect."

## QUESTIONS

*Are current standards working in terms of what they require?*

*Are they accomplishing our intended purpose?*

## Issues

- Providing sufficient room for landscaping.
  - Tendency to maximize site with other improvements.
  - Maximized coverage forces required landscaping to overlap utility easements.
- Retaining what has been planted.
  - Landscaping is often poorly maintained
  - Landscaping often dies
  - Landscaping is often removed

*Maximizing site*



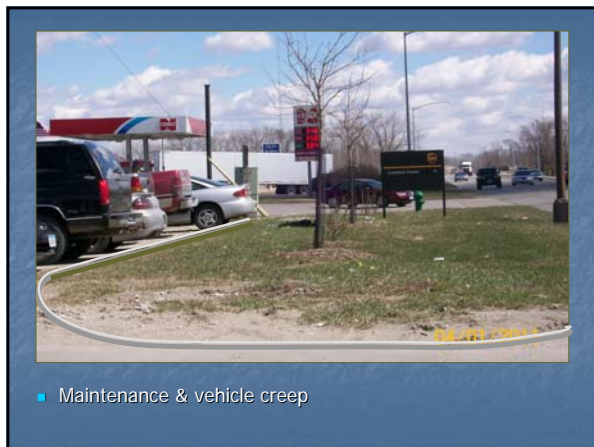
- Minimum-width landscaping visually expanded into ROW



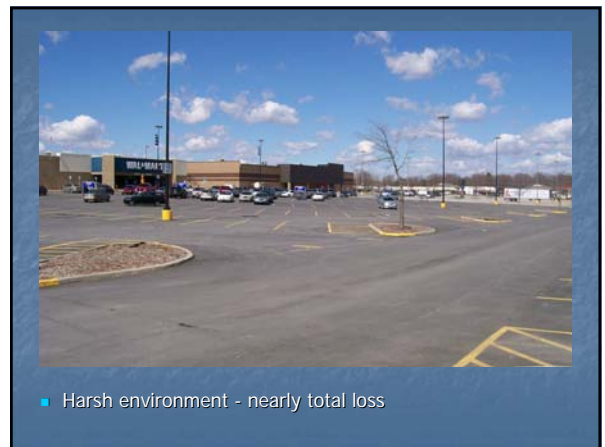
- ROW improvements directly abutting landscaping



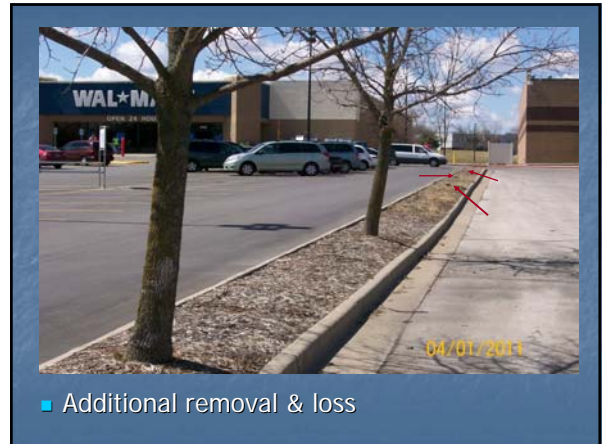
Encroachments into minimal area with curbs and walls



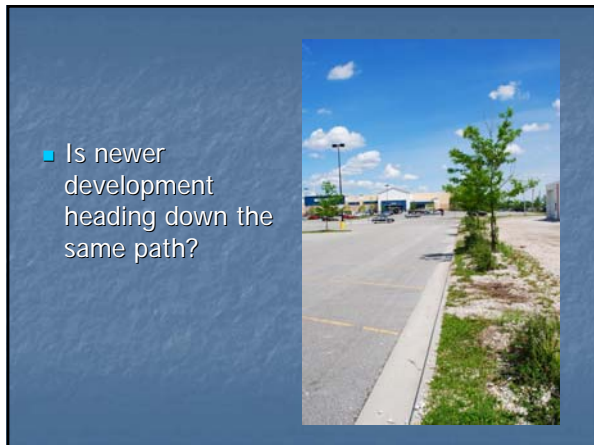
- Maintenance & vehicle creep



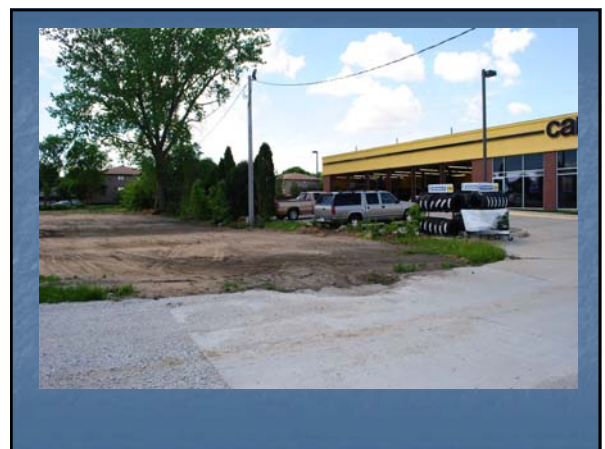
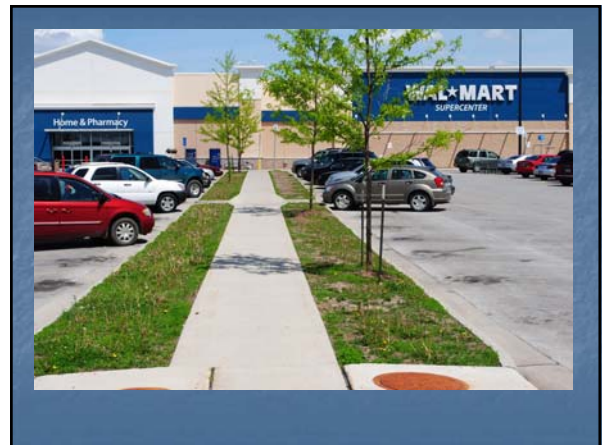
- Harsh environment - nearly total loss



■ Additional removal & loss



■ Is newer development heading down the same path?







## Issues

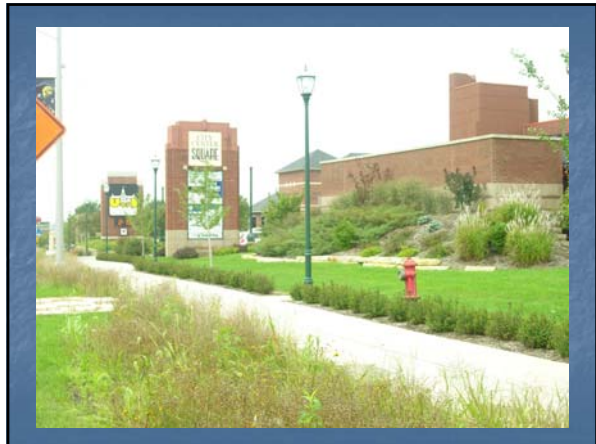
- Common complaints about required landscaping:
  - Takes up space needed for parking lots
  - "It's going to die anyway, so why require it?"
  - Conflicts with utility locations and transformer visibility
  - Obscures visibility of buildings and/or signs
  - Spacing requirement for trees and shrubs are too dense for plant health.
  - Required plantings will not survive in this climate
  - Doesn't account for snow storage

## Responses to Concerns

## Does Landscaping take up parking-lot space?

- Yes. More parking could be provided without landscaping





Will Landscaping die anyway?

- Landscaping will die:
  - under poor conditions.





Will Landscaping die anyway?

- Landscaping will die:
  - under poor conditions.
  - **without regular maintenance**

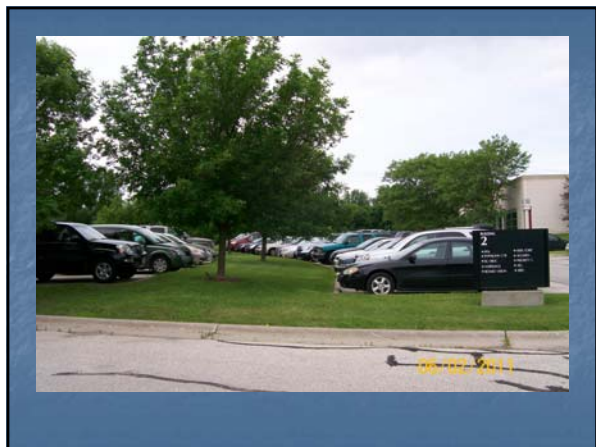
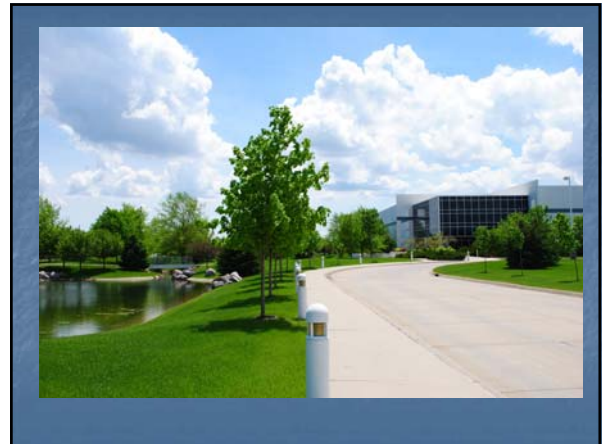


Will Landscaping die anyway?

Landscaping will die:

- under poor conditions.
- without regular maintenance
- **if it's not tolerant of snow storage**

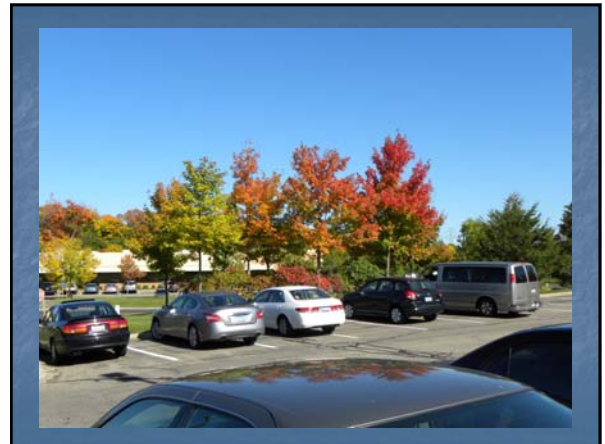
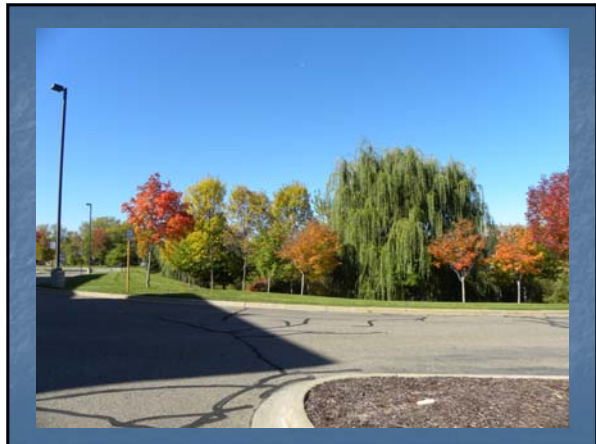
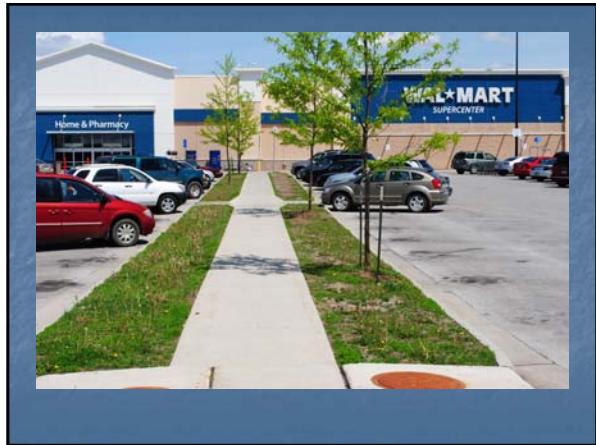


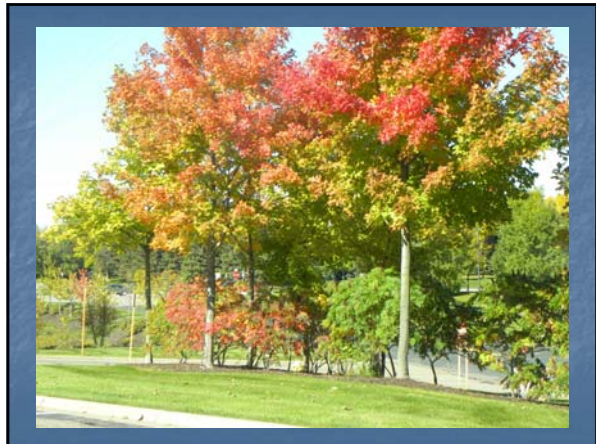


Will Landscaping die anyway?

Landscaping will die:

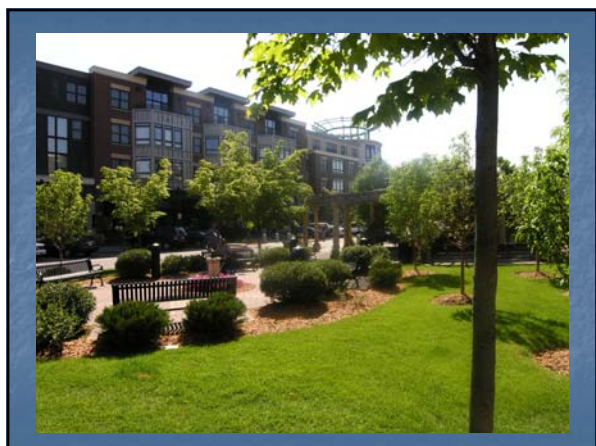
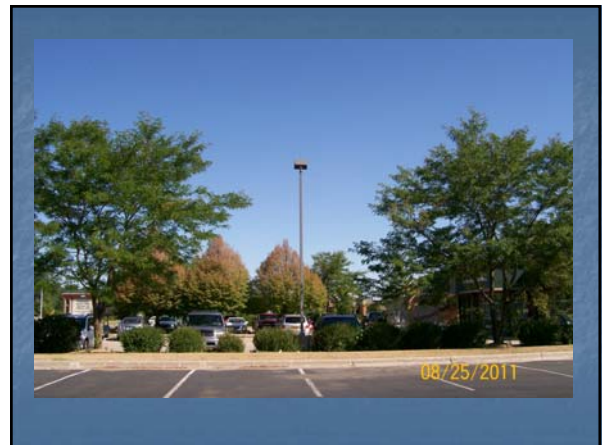
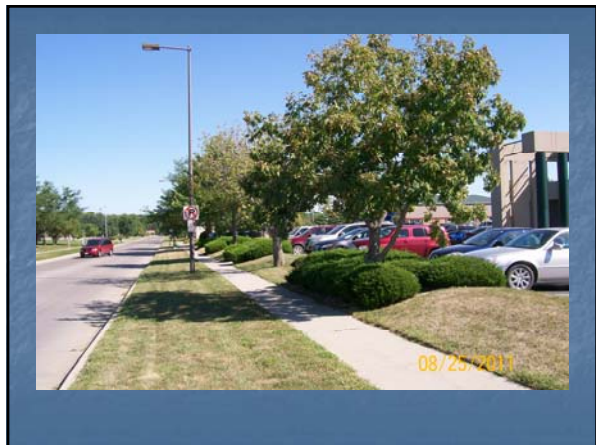
- under poor conditions.
- without regular maintenance
- if it's not tolerant of snow storage
- **Without needed irrigation**





## Do our tree and shrub spacing standards result in unhealthy plants?

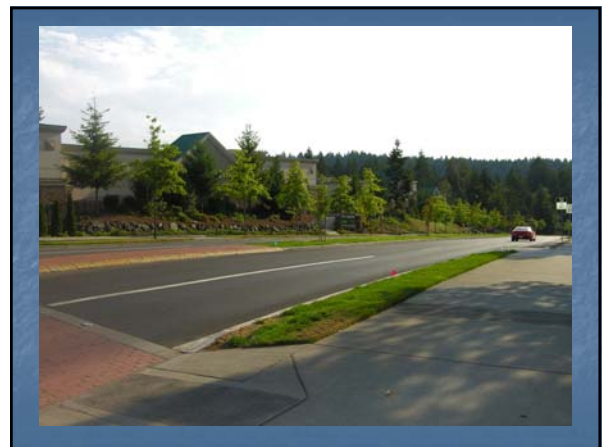
- No.
  - Average spacing in mature forest: 15-20 feet.
  - Maximum spacing of street trees in City code: 30 – 50 feet. (Depending on species)

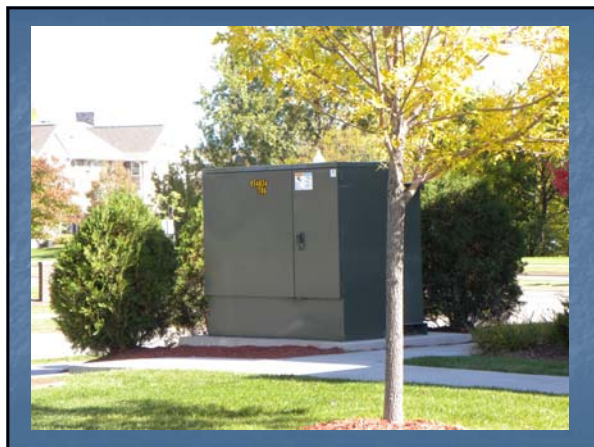
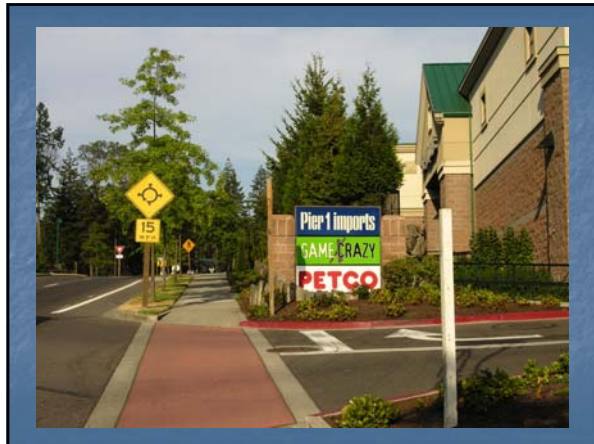




Does landscaping affect utility location?

- Yes, particularly for trees and shrubs

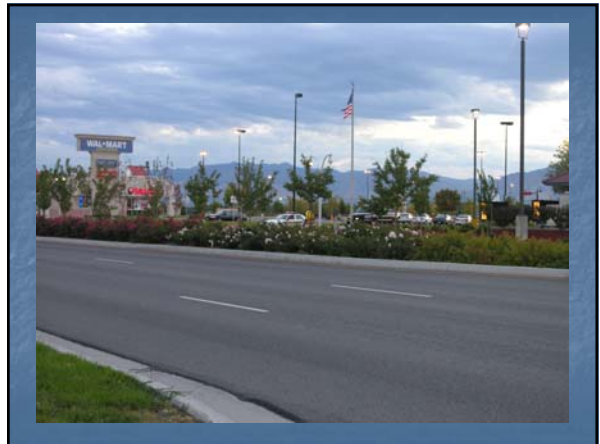
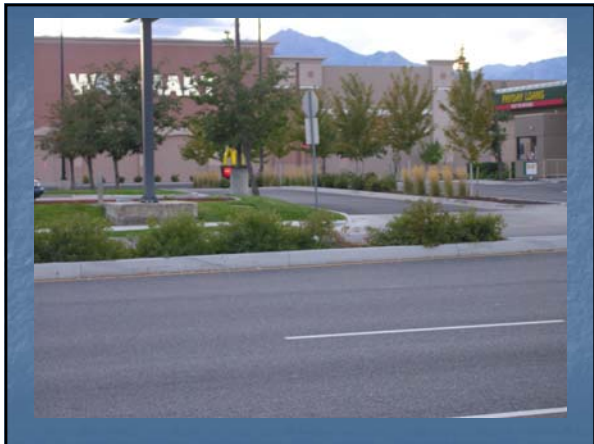
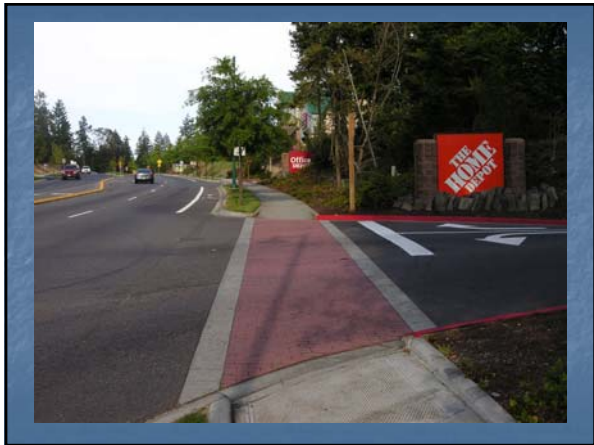


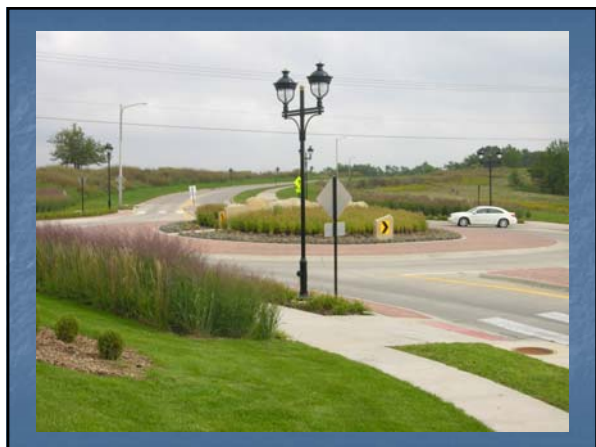
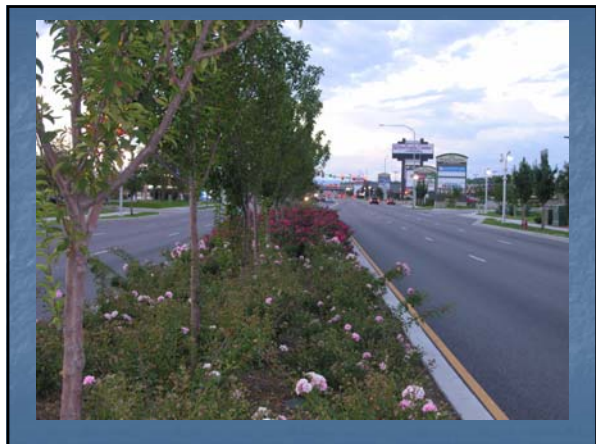


Does landscaping obscure visibility of buildings and signs?

- Yes. Is that bad for business?







Are we on the right path?

- Are current standards effective?
- Is the result worth the effort?
- Do our standards need better on-going enforcement?
- Should we let development monitor itself?

Options

1. Maintain status quo
2. Retain and enforce current standards
3. Eliminate current standards. That would:
  1. address current complaints
  2. simplify review process
  3. eliminate current violations
4. Amend current standards. That may be necessary if . . .

- ... we would like to ensure more of this .



## What ever option we choose . . .

- It's not about the Midwest climate
- It's not that landscaping can't survive here
- In the same climate types and in similar settings, we find
  - Function or enhanced aesthetic
  - More full landscaping or flexibility in parking
  - Minimal upkeep or maintenance intensive

Function . . .



and enhanced aesthetic;

Parking flexibility . . .



and parking with fuller landscaping;

Minimal maintenance . . .



and maintenance intensive.

## What is the right balance?

The type, quantity and condition of landscaping can be a significant contribution to the aesthetic quality and economic vitality of a community . . .

But few things take more care and resources to achieve and maintain.



## Possible Next Steps

- Follow-up meeting with City Council
- Planning & Zoning Commission Workshop
- Focus Groups
- Other?

End

## STAFF REPORT

### FATS, OILS, AND GREASE PROGRAM WORKSHOP

September 20, 2011

On Tuesday, September 20, staff from Water and Pollution Control, Public Works/Operations, and Fire/Inspections will present City Council members with an overview of the city's Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) control program.

FOG control has long been a requirement in Ames. However, grease-related blockages do still occur, creating problems for our customers. Further, the impact of FOG as a contributing factor in sanitary sewer overflows is becoming a point of significant emphasis by state and federal regulators. Staff recommends that a pro-active update to the Ames FOG program be undertaken. The purpose of the update would be to clarify the requirements of the existing program, as well as to increase the effectiveness of existing requirements. Addressing these needs proactively will allow the Council to establish policies and practices locally, as opposed to having outside regulators impose FOG requirements on the community.

The approach being taken by City staff is that the Ames community needs a FOG program that accomplishes three goals simultaneously; namely,

- protecting public health and the environment,
- preserving a business climate where commerce can thrive, and
- ensuring sewer service rates that are reasonable and affordable.

The presentation on September 20 is intended to share with Council the need for updating the current requirements and to lay out a process to be used in preparing the update. **A key element of that process will include a partnership with customers who have an interest in this subject.**

The workshop presentation will include a high-level overview of the types of FOG control elements that are frequently included in other communities' programs. Staff will share sample FOG programs from other communities that span a wide spectrum of possible options, touching on the following program elements.

- Customer classes to which the program requirements could apply
- Types of permissible FOG control devices
- Sizing requirements for control devices
- On-going maintenance requirements after installation
- Triggers for re-evaluation of existing installations
- Equitable ways to allocate costs of the program

**The purpose of the workshop is not to bring a fully-developed program to Council for approval or endorsement.** No decision has yet been made as to which program elements to include or exclude when revising the Ames program. **Staff is not seeking**

**specific policy decisions from Council at this time. However, to whatever extent Council forms conclusions on program elements they would specifically like to have included or excluded, Council's direction at this time would be beneficial and welcome.**

A preview copy of the Power Point that will be presented on Tuesday evening is attached. Also, shared below are several definitions from the City's adopted 2009 Uniform Plumbing Code that may be useful during the discussion.

#### Grease Interceptor

A plumbing appurtenance or appliance that is installed in a sanitary drainage system to intercept nonpetroleum fats, oil, and greases (FOG) from a wastewater discharge.

#### Hydromechanical Grease Interceptor

A plumbing appurtenance or appliance that is installed in a sanitary drainage system to intercept nonpetroleum fats, oil, and grease (FOG) from a wastewater discharge and is identified by flow rate, and separation and retention efficiency. The design incorporates air entrainment, hydromechanical separation, interior baffling, and/or barriers in combination or separately, and one of the following:

A – External flow control, with air intake (vent): directly connected

B – External flow control, without air intake (vent): directly connected

C – Without external flow control, directly connected

D – Without external flow control, indirectly connected

[These interceptors comply with the requirements of Table 10-2.]

Hydromechanical grease interceptors are generally installed inside.

#### Flow Control

A device designed to limit the volume of water per period of time entering a hydromechanical interceptor expressed in gallons per minute.

#### Gravity Grease Interceptor

A plumbing appurtenance or appliance that is installed in a sanitary drainage system to intercept nonpetroleum fats, oils, and greases (FOG) from a wastewater discharge and is identified by volume, thirty (30) minute retention time, baffle(s), not less than two (2) compartments, a total volume of not less than three-hundred (300) gallons, and gravity separation. [These interceptors comply with the requirements of Chapter 10 or are designed by a registered professional engineer.] Gravity grease interceptors are generally installed outside.

# Concepts for a fats, oils, and grease program

September 20, 2011



## Workshop Overview

- Staff introductions
- Why we're here
- Current situation in Ames
- Other Iowa programs
- Key elements
- Wrap up

## News Headlines

- Elmhurst, IL – Complaint filed with Attorney General
- AG could fine Elmhurst \$50,000 for each violation and \$10,000 per day of violation.
- Grease clogged an eight-inch pipe causing 1,700 gallons of untreated wastewater to spill into the Wahiawa Botanical Gardens.

## News Headlines

- Duluth, MN
- 2003 saw unprecedented number of overflows
- 2004 Administrative order – required plan to eliminate overflows
- 2009 consent decree
  - 15 year plan
  - \$130 million in improvements
  - \$400,000 civil penalties



## In Ames

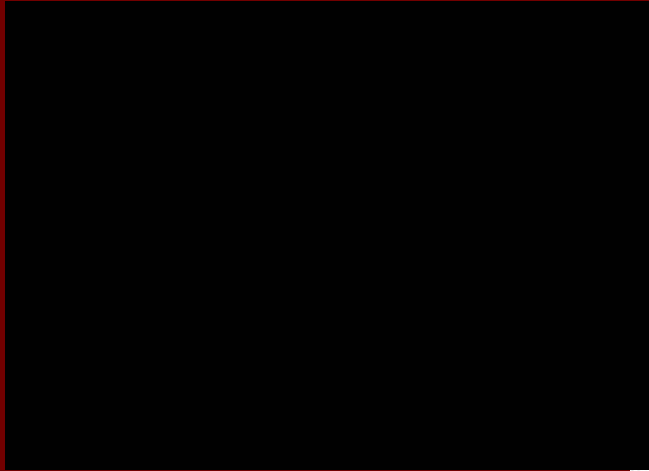
- Three restaurants shut down because of sewer backup
  - Backup from grease blockage traced to fourth restaurant upstream
- Bank had sewage back up into building
  - Grease blockage caused backup
  - \$60,000 in damages

## Need for program

- Protect public health
- Protect environment
- Reducing blockages and sewer overflows
- Equitably distribute collection and treatment costs to our customers



■ Videos







## Key players

- Cooperative effort
- Multi department City team
  - Inspections
  - Public Works Operations
  - Water and Pollution Control
- Involvement from food service establishments



## Update on program

- First meetings Oct 20 & 21, 2010
  - What is FOG?
  - Why is it a problem?
  - Ways to minimize FOG in collection system
  - Example ordinances
- More research on other program criteria
- Identified key elements to program
  - Feedback



## Understanding the need

- Current situation in sewer system
  - Damage to neighbors
  - Cost to others
  - EPA & IDNR enforcement
- FOG prevention
  - What can be done to prevent this?



## Evolution of code changes

- Uniform Plumbing Code
- '03 code
  - 200+ local amendments
- '06 code
  - Subcommittee evaluated amendments
  - More business friendly by minimizing amendments



# Terminology

- 2006 UPC
- UPC requires capturing grease...
- Old terminology "grease trap"
- Current terms:
  - Hydromechanical grease interceptor
  - Gravity grease interceptor



# 2009 UPC

- FOG is to be intercepted from ...
  - Grease waste line(s) leading from sinks and drains, such as floor drains, floor sinks and other fixtures or equipment in serving establishments such as restaurants, cafes, lunch counters, cafeterias, bars and clubs, hotels, hospitals, sanitariums, factory or school kitchens, or other establishments where grease is introduced into the drainage or sewage system in quantities that can effect line stoppage or hinder sewage treatment or private sewage disposal.



## 2009 UPC

- Any combination of hydromechanical, gravity grease interceptors and engineered systems shall be allowed in order to meet this code and other applicable requirements of the Authority Having Jurisdiction when space or existing physical constraints of existing buildings necessitate such installations.
- Inspections requested IAPMO interpretation



## Programs around Iowa

- Iowa City
- Muscatine
- Des Moines WRA-encompasses DM metro, suburbs, Ankeny





## Key elements

### ■ Extent of program

- Iowa Code Chp 137F – food service establishment: “...an operation that stores, prepares, packages, serves, vends, or otherwise provides food for human consumption...”
- UPC - A grease interceptor ... shall be installed in any business establishment with kitchen facilities including restaurants, cafes, lunch counters, cafeterias, supermarkets, convenience stores, bakeries, bars and clubs, hotels, hospitals, sanitariums, factory or school kitchens, or any other commercial establishment where grease may be introduced into the sewer system



## Key elements

### ■ Grease removal equipment

- Sizing requirements
  - UPC sizing requirements changed from 2003 to 2009
  - Seating capacity, hours of operation, fixture units, kitchen equipment
- Types of allowed equipment
  - Minimum size?
  - Internal?
  - External?
  - Application (restaurant type) specific installation?



## Key elements

- Grease removal equipment (cont)
  - Maintenance requirements
    - Maintain in good working order - UPC
    - Amount of maintenance required – does it depend on application? Manufacturer's requirements?
    - Documentation – what would be needed?
    - Inspection
    - Sampling
    - Private property access



## Key elements

- When should compliance occur?
  - New
    - All new business?
  - Remodel
    - Dollar threshold
    - Types of building permits
    - Kitchen modifications
    - Menu modifications
  - Change of business or owner
  - Existing businesses
    - Allowed to continue "as is" – unless problems occur
    - Time limit for compliance
    - Comply with effective date of program



## Key elements

- How to educate, inspect, review documentation
  - How to ensure compliance?
  - Inspection/education position?



## Key elements

- Equitable way to allocate costs/incentives
  - Business grants
  - Evaluate fees at WPC
  - Tiered sewer fees



## Next steps

- Complete research into other FOG programs;
- Meet with FSE's to get reaction to specific concepts and examples;
- Develop a hypothetical program and share with FSE's;
- Incorporate feedback and present to Council; Target-September 2012.



Questions or comments?

