

Staff Report

Review of North Growth Designation and the Ames Urban Fringe Plan for Cameron School Road and GW Carver Avenue

March 1, 2016

BACKGROUND:

The City Council identified 6 tasks for the Planning Division to address over the next two years. One of the tasks is to review the Ames Urban Fringe Plan and development options for the area between the Northwest and Northern Growth Area. (See Attachment A-Location Map) This “Gap Area” sits between the Northern Growth Area to the east of GW Carver and the Northwest Growth Area that is situated west of Squaw Creek and centered upon North Dakota Avenue.

The Gap Area is part of the Ames Urban Fringe Plan (Fringe Plan). The Fringe Plan has a designation of Priority Transitional Residential for this area. (See Attachment B-Fringe Plan Map and Attachment C-LUPP Northern Growth) **Priority Transitional Residential allows for rural residential development at a minimum of 3.75 units per net acre, but does not require annexation to the City prior to development and leaves the timing of annexation to the discretion of the City.** (See Attachment E-Summary of Fringe Plan Designations) The Priority Transitional designation covers approximately 220 acres and 80 acres have a Natural Area designation within the Fringe Plan. The Ames Golf and Country Club land is approximately 160 acres of Recreation Area bordered by Rural Residential. Lands to the northwest of the Gap Area have a Rural Transitional Residential designation.

The Gap Area is mostly undeveloped with only a handful of homes existing in the area, before reaching rural subdivisions along Squaw Creek. Three property owners, Borgmeyer, Muench, and Dankbar, control over 90% of the area (See Attachment D-Ownership Map). Staff estimates there is approximately 160 net developable acres in the Gap Area when accounting for natural areas, future right-of-way, and open space requirements of City zoning. **Development at minimum required densities would provide for approximately 600 homes.** Development under the LUPP’s New Lands assumptions of an average of 5 units per acre, the area would generate approximately 800 homes.

The City Council analyzed annexation policies as part of the 2008 Targeted Growth Study and last reviewed its policies as part of Northern Growth amendment in 2011. **Following this review, the City Council amended the Land Use Policy Plan (LUPP) in 2011 to allow for annexation and development of land along Grant/Hyde Avenue as a non-incentivized growth area.** The area west of the railroad tracks was also designated as Northern Growth in the LUPP in 2011, but no changes were made to the Fringe Plan to implement such a designation. The “Athen” property that is now

under development as the Scenic Valley Subdivision was the subject of an individual Fringe Plan and LUPP Amendment in 2012 that allowed for it to be annexed and approved for development. Council agreed in 2014 to waive subdivisions standards and not require annexation of the Ames Golf and Country Club (AGCC) for their proposed 30 home development along GW Carver, However, the AGCC project has not yet been submitted for approval by the City and the waiver requests must again be reviewed by the Council.

City Services

The Gap Area was previously left out of the City's expansion plans due to costs of extending infrastructure and providing city services. This report provides background on what staff sees the primary policy issues related to considering whether the Gap Area should be planned for service by the City in the future. **The most significant issues known at this time relates to the sanitary sewer service. If Council chooses to move ahead with initiating a LUPP or Fringe Plan amendments, additional details concerning site development densities and options would need to be investigated as well.**

- **Sanitary Sewer**

There are two distinct sanitary sewer watersheds to discuss. The Borgmeyer/Ames Golf and Country Club and the Dankbar/Meunch areas.

Sanitary sewer for the Borgmeyer and the Ames Golf and Country Club is intended to be served from a main extension that will be a part of the Rose Prairie development and ultimately connect to the newly installed sanitary sewer along Grant Avenue. These areas were included in the sewer pipe sizing calculations for the Grant Avenue sewer along with the proposed single family residential homes in Rose Praire, Quarry Estates, Hayden's Crossing and the proposed Hunziker development on the west side of Grant Avenue just north of the existing city limits. The Borgmeyer and Ames Golf and Country Club areas were included in the sanitary sewer connection district established in 2014 to recoup the City cost of the installation of the sanitary sewer along Grant Avenue.

The Dankbar and Meunch properties provide challenges for being served by City sanitary sewer. This area of concern was highlighted during the Sanitary Sewer System Evaluation Council Workshop in May 2015. During the Sanitary Sewer System Evaluation, all manholes and pipes were inspected for condition as well as survey grade elevation to be utilized in updating the City's sanitary sewer model.

Staff, at the developer's direction, requested an evaluation of the ability to serve 350 single family homes with sanitary sewer by Veenstra & Kimm. **In July 2015, Staff received the report showing, according to the model, the sanitary sewer model there is no additional capacity available.** The proposed development would create sanitary sewer overflows in 4 downstream manholes, near overflow in another and a surcharge pipe situation through the majority of the main trunk line within Northridge based on the density provided by the developer. Attachment F shows these locations.

As a result of this finding, Staff directed Veenstra & Kimm to develop options to be able to serve the Dankbar and Meunch properties. Three options were developed based on the densities provided by the developer. The locations are shown in Attachment G and the description and conceptual construction costs estimates are shown below:

Sewer Project 1. Construction of a new trunk sewer \$2.5M – \$3.0M

Sewer Project 2. Intercepting Somerset Subdivision \$0.5M - \$0.7M

Sewer Project 3. Intercept Northridge Heights, Somerset, Scenic Valley and the Dankbar/Meunch development \$1.5M - \$2.0M

Sewer Project 1 bypasses the Northridge trunk line and would provide the additional capacity needed to serve the Dankbar/Meunch area as well as potential future growth areas. However, this option requires two crossings of Squaw Creek.

Sewer Project 2 provides capacity for the Dankbar/Meunch area, however additional capacity for future development, beyond Dankbar/Meunch may not be available. There are concerns with the installation of a new sewer line adjacent to the newly reconstructed pond at Moore Memorial Park and the options have not evaluated in detail the impact to the proposed routes.

Sewer Project 3 bypasses the Northridge trunk line and would provide the additional capacity needed to serve the Dankbar/Meunch area as well as potential future growth areas. However, there are concerns with the installation of a new sewer line adjacent to the newly reconstructed pond at Moore Memorial Park and the options have not evaluated in detail the impact to the proposed routes.

There is potential for the Meunch property and/or part of the Dankbar property to be served wholly or in part by a sanitary sewer lift station that would take the sanitary sewer under GW Carver through Borgmeyer and Rose Prairie to Grant Avenue. However, this scenario has not been modeled for its viability.

- **Transportation**

A specific traffic impact study has not been done for development of this area. Staff has general information about traffic levels created during a 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) alternative scenarios analysis. The LRTP modeling utilized the current Fringe Plan and the LUPP designations to forecast development in the Gap Area. As part of the LRTP process, staff also analyzed broad alternative scenarios for growth locations in the City. One of the alternatives analyzed the traffic levels between development of the Gap Area and no development.

The total homes shown in this area was roughly 600 additional homes beyond existing approvals. Due to the Northern Growth designation in the LUPP, most of the density was modeled as occurring east of GW Carver on the Borgmeyer property. The alternative scenario had all of the new development from the Gap Area reallocated to

other parts of the City to keep the population and growth targets equal overall. **The general effects of development within the Gap Area were an increase of roughly 8% on traffic levels along GW Carver as people travel into the City along Stange Road, Bloomington, and 24th Street.** The LRTP identified areas of congestion at intersections along GW Carver and Stange Road as the primary arterial streets that bring people into the City and directly to Iowa State University from the north. The LRTP also includes medium and long term projects to address congestion in these corridors. **If the City moves forward with more refined development details for this area, a project specific traffic impact assessment would likely be needed.**

- **Parks and Recreation**

The LUPP establishes a goal of providing 5 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents of the City. Additionally, the Parks and Recreation Department has facility guidelines for neighborhood and community parks based upon service populations and distances between parks. Neighborhood parks are planned to serve residents within a ½ mile of a park and the City plans to strategically locate these parks in growing areas.

The Gap Area is situated in a manner that approximately half of the Borgmeyer property is within a 1/2 mile radius of the neighborhood park located in Northridge Heights. The other properties within the Gap Area are not located in close proximity to a public park. The City would need to consider how to plan for park facilities in this area and if they could be efficiently situated to serve the neighborhood needs or if alternative private common spaces could meet open space and recreation needs.

- **Emergency Services**

The Fire Department tracks emergency response times as one of its many performance measures. The department's performance measurement goal is to provide an average response travel time of 5 minutes or less to 85% of all incidents during a rolling five year period. As development moves to the north, the length of the average response time has the potential to increase based upon the location of existing stations. Using the City's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to analyze response times, development in the Gap Area would exceed the 5 minute travel time goal. Development in the Gap Area may affect the city-wide averages if new development in this area produced an inordinately high amount of emergency incidents.

Rural Development Requirements

Because the Gap Area land is designated as Priority Transitional Residential rather than an Urban Service area, it may be developed without annexation. **However, development would need to meet a minimum density of 3.75 units per acre and infrastructure must be installed to meet City specifications.** Approval of a subdivision would require consistency with Story County zoning and subdivision requirements, as well as the City's subdivision standards. **The Fringe Plan also specifies that development would need to occur with common water and sewer services within the Priority Transitional Residential designation.**

The Gap Area is within Xenia Rural Water territory. Development would likely be able to connect to Xenia to serve the area. Xenia has a water main already in place along GW Carver and Cameron School Road. Staff has not talked to Xenia about their ability or desire to serve homes in the area, but believes it has infrastructure capable of supporting rural development.

Sewer service is a more difficult issue to manage for rural development. Most rural development occurs with the use of individual septic systems. Individual septic systems are not consistent with the Priority Transitional Residential Designation nor would septic systems likely meet the County's standards. To meet requirements for sewer service, rural development would likely require partnering with the existing sewer treatment package plant of the Squaw Creek Subdivision located north of the Gap Area or creation of a new common system. A new common system would be subject to approval of the County and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) with maintenance and monitoring the responsibility of the customers (homeowners) that use the system.

POLICY OPTIONS:

The Dankbar's have expressed to staff that they are very interested in pursuing options for development of their property. Staff does not believe the Borgmeyer's are interested in development of their property in the near term based upon correspondence within the past 18 months about participating in an annexation. Staff has not reached out to other property owners in the area.

In review of the Gap Area, staff believes there are three primary policy options for the City Council to consider. City Council could also ask for more information or studies before giving policy direction for the area.

Policy Option #1: Maintain the Ames Urban Fringe Plan Priority Transitional Residential designation with no amendments to the Ames Urban Fringe Plan. No further policy direction would be needed from the City Council.

Under this option, a property owner could pursue development in a manner consistent with the Fringe Plan, but they would not be able to annex to the City. Developers would need to formulate solutions for water and sewer services and install infrastructure that meets City standards to be approved for development. The City of Ames would have to approve a Preliminary and Final Plat prior to development a property in the Gap Area.

Policy Option #2: Initiate an Ames Urban Fringe Plan Amendment to Urban Services Area for all or a portion of the Gap Area. An Urban Services designation mandates that a property must be annexed prior to development, but does not compel the City to annex property at any particular time.

City Council could initiate an Ames Urban Fringe Plan Amendment for review by Story County, Gilbert, and Ames with the intent of pursuing the eventual annexation of lands in the Gap Area rather than allowing for rural development to occur.

Under this option, if a Fringe Plan Amendment was approved, a property owner would not be able to subdivide their property without first annexing to the City. Prior to annexation, the costs of services and utilities would be further analyzed, and additional development details about densities and land use types would need to be projected for the overall area.

Policy Option #3: Initiate an Ames Urban Fringe Plan Amendment for the area (Dankbar and Muench) to the west of GW Carver to Rural Transitional. Rural Transitional designation allows for lower densities of development without immediate annexation to the City. Allowable minimum densities would drop to 1.0 unit per acre and allow for a maximum of 3.75 units per acre.

The properties to the west of GW Carver are in a different position for city services than the properties to the east of GW Carver. The City may not have an interest of annexing the land or intensifying its development to urban densities as is currently shown in the Fringe Plan.

The City Council could initiate a Fringe Plan amendment west of GW Carver if it believed there was no need to annex the land for development and lower density rural development abutting the City would be acceptable. This scenario would allow for Xenia rural water services and septic systems on individual lots to serve rural development. The land could still be annexed to the City in the future with infrastructure installed to City specifications, i.e. Bella Woods Subdivision is an example. Staff estimates that potential development density west of GW Carver could drop as low as a minimum of 70 homes versus a minimum of approximately 200 homes under the current Fringe Plan designation.

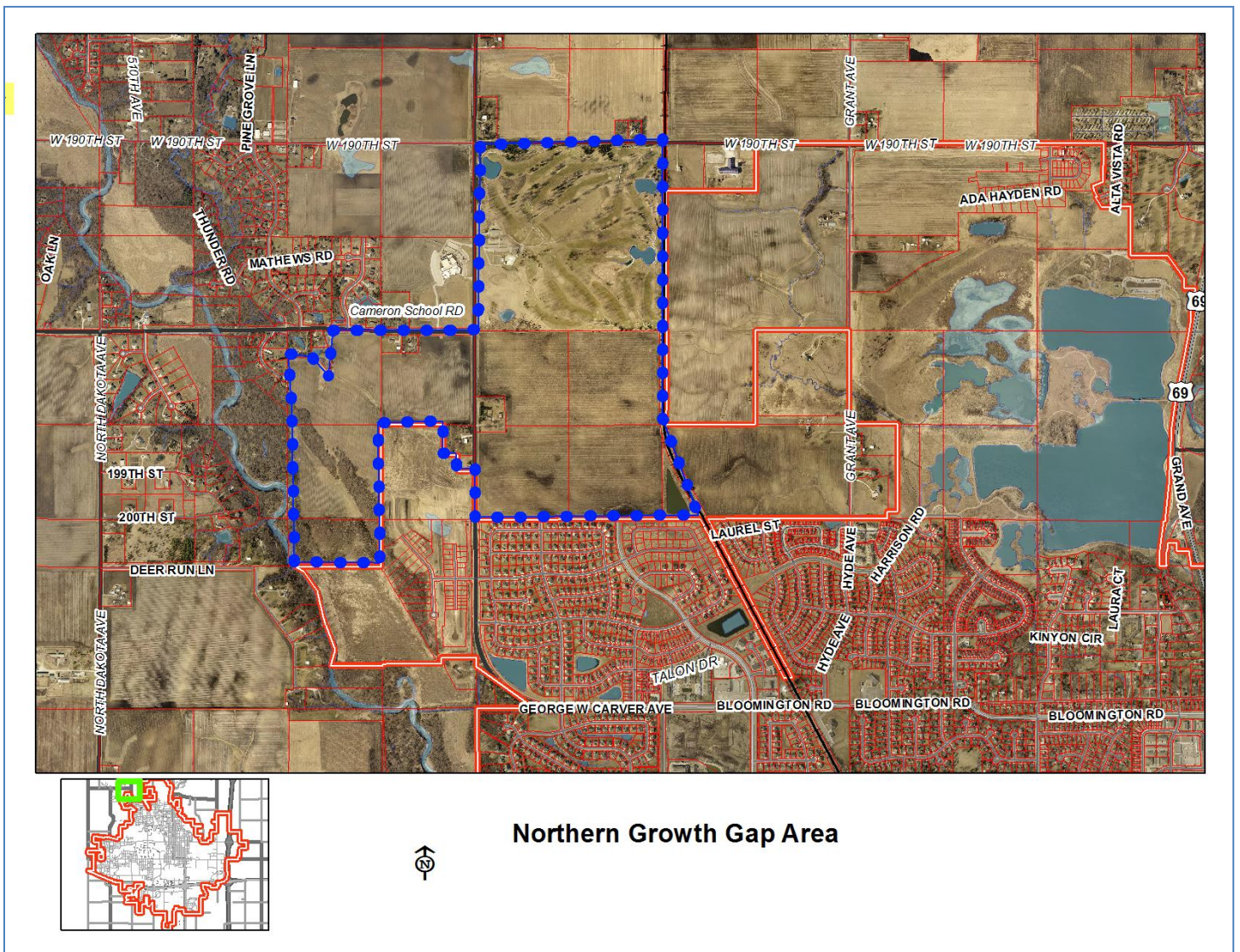
STAFF COMMENTS:

At the September 15, 2015 LUPP Update Strategy Workshop staff provided an assessment of the housing availability for readily developable land. Staff estimated that there is land available for development of 1,100 to 1,370 homes to house 3,000 to 3,800 people over the next 5 to 10 years. Development of the Gap Area was not included as part of these near term growth calculations. If the City Council was to plan for and permit development in the Gap Area, it would be in addition to the growth capacity described at the workshop.

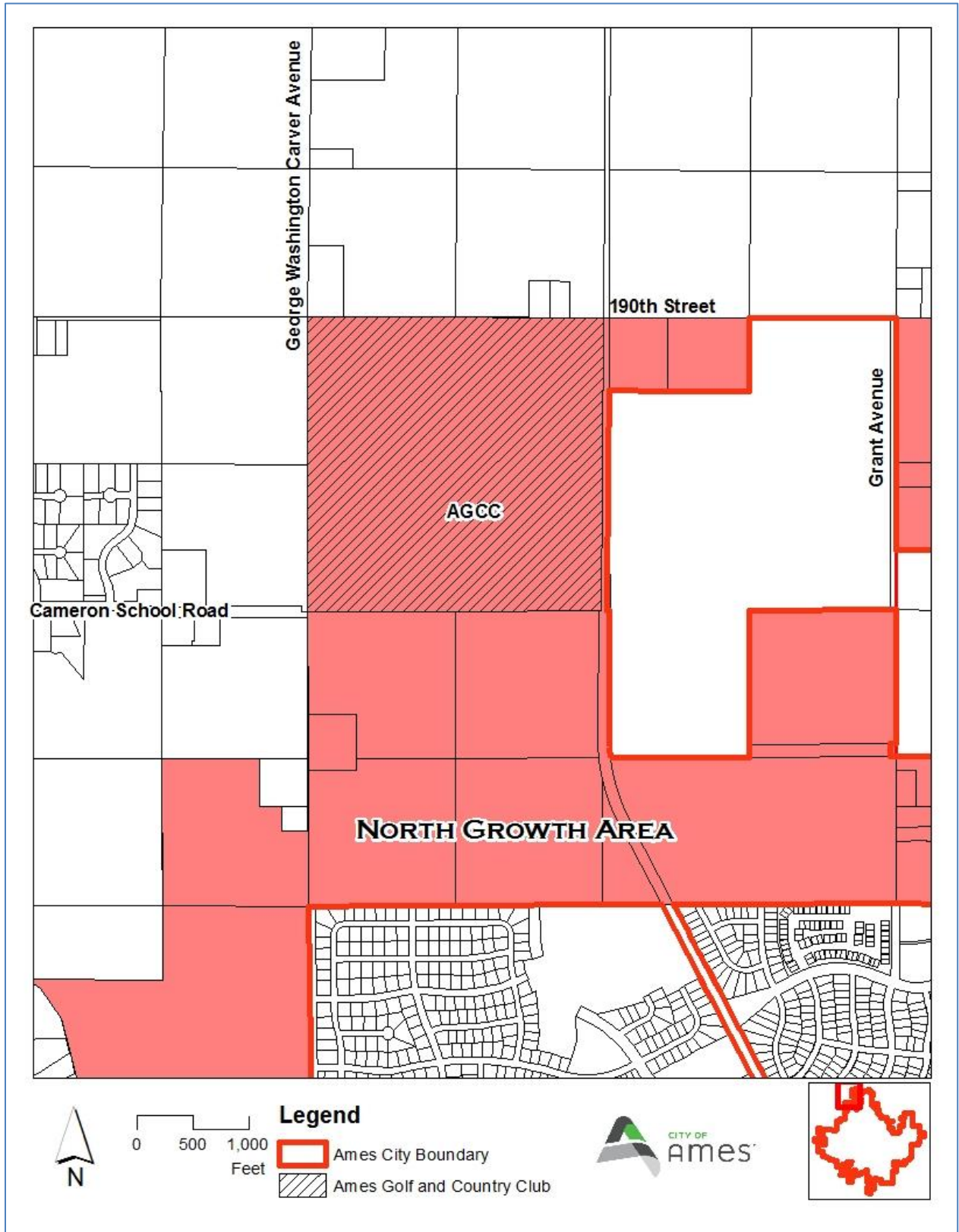
Based on the issues of providing services to the area and the apparent availability of land in the short term for single-family home development, staff believes that the area is not an immediate priority of the City to have annexed to the City. This belief is also influenced by the City Council's prior direction to prepare a Master Plan for the Southwest Growth Area that facilitates development beginning in 2020.

However, in the event the City Council wants to consider LUPP amendments and Fringe Plan amendments in support of potential future annexation, staff believes that the area should be categorized as a Non-Incentivized growth area as was the decision for the other Northern Growth areas along Grant/Hyde Avenue and for Scenic Valley. Additionally, an amendment process for the entire Gap Area would fit within the LUPP Major Amendment category and require development of options, preparation of studies, and conduct outreach on potential changes. City Council would need to establish a timeframe within Planning Division's program of work schedule for a LUPP Major Amendment process and specify which issues to address as part of the amendment process.

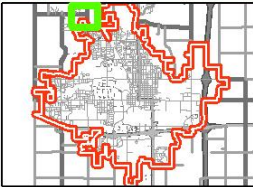
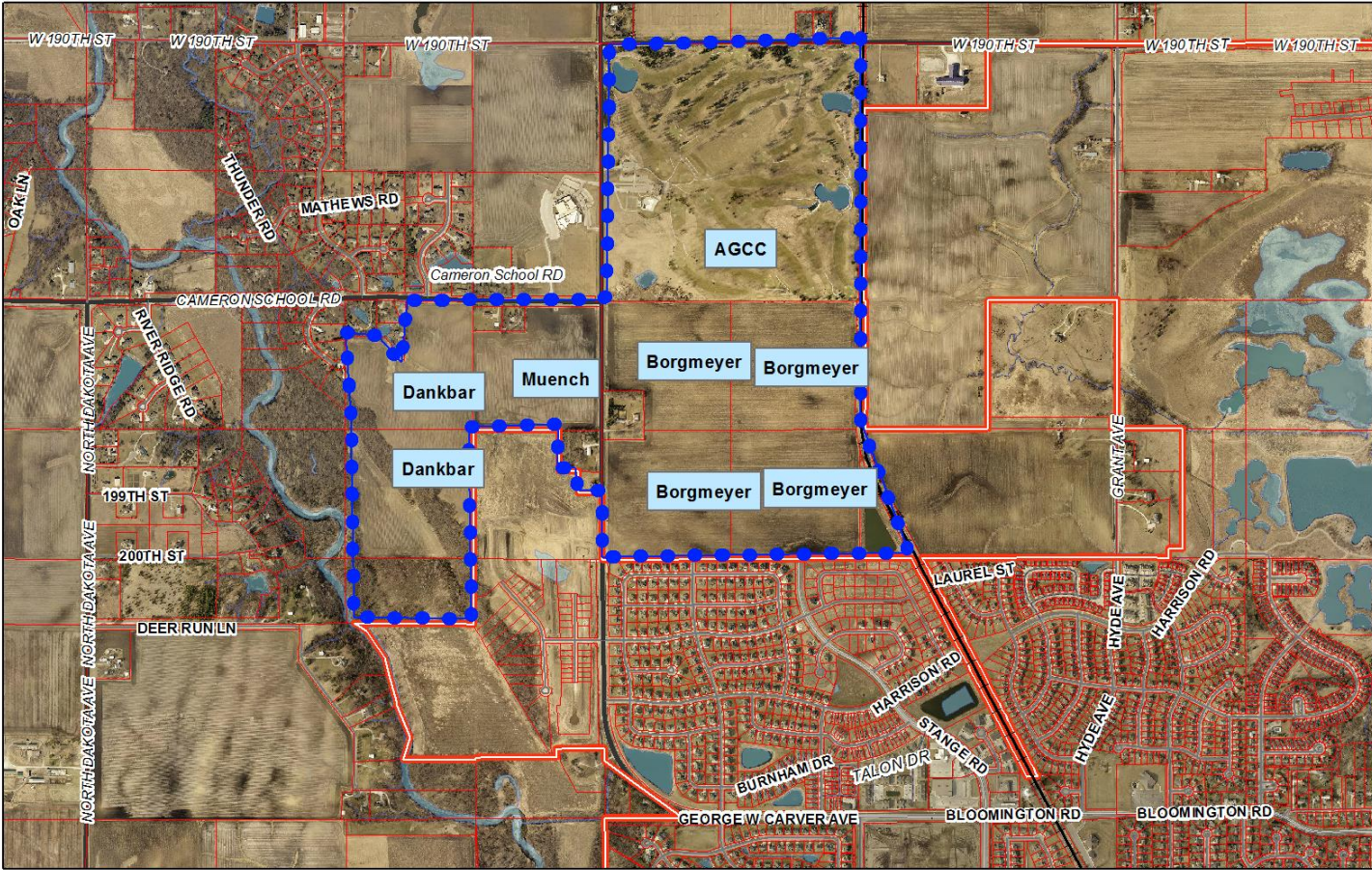
Attachment A-Location Map



ATTACHMENT C: LAND USE POLICY PLAN NORTHERN GROWTH



Attachment D-Major Property Owners



Northern Growth Gap Area

Attachment E- Summary of AUF Categories

The Ames Urban Fringe Plan (AUF) identifies two broad classes of land use for residential development. Each class has a description of what type of development is allowed and whether annexation into either Ames or Gilbert is expected prior to development during the expected life of the AUF (to 2030). The classifications also set the stage for subdivision improvement expectations.

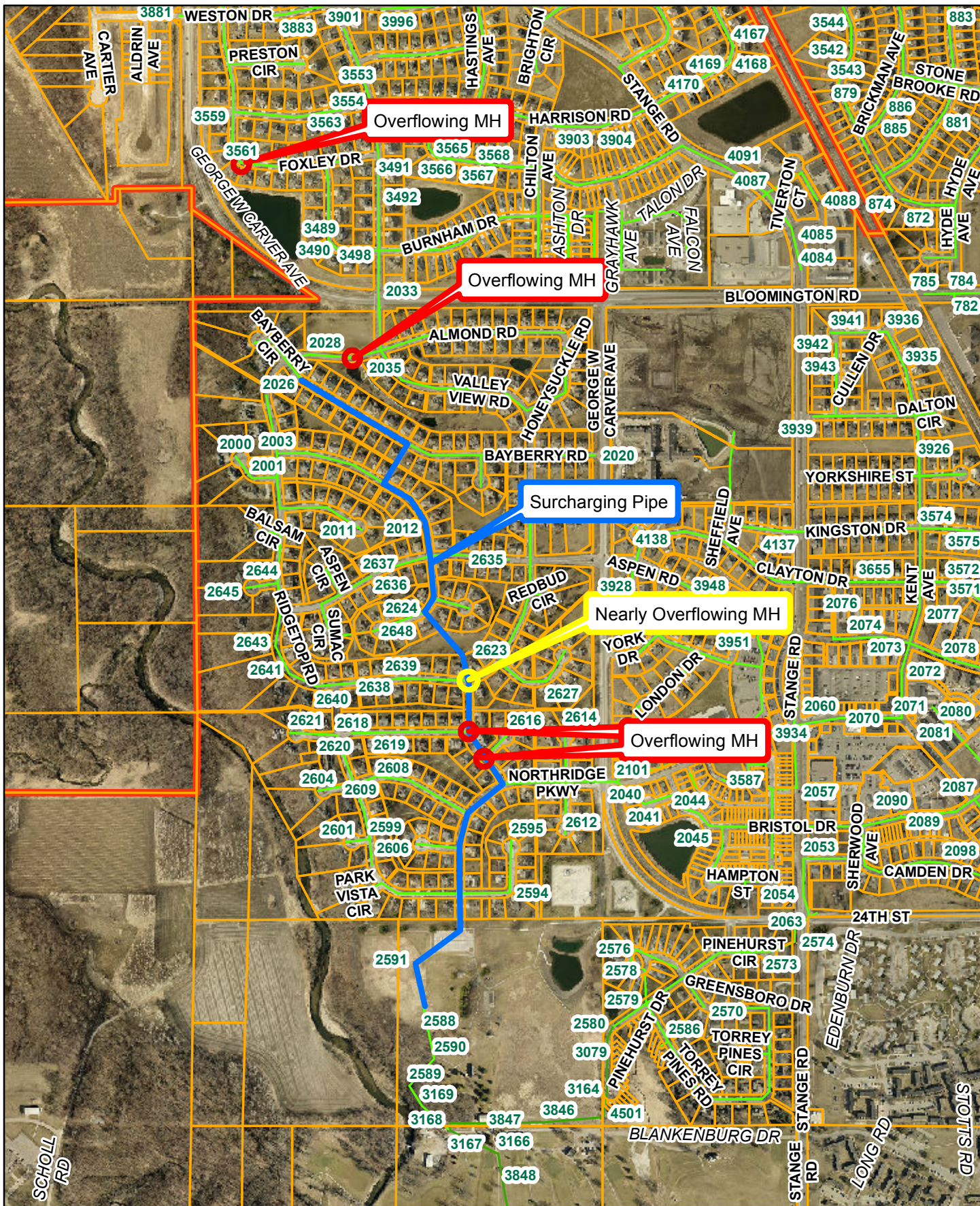
- **Rural/Urban Transitional Classification:** These are areas where development is possible during the life of the AUF and there is potential for annexation depending on proximity to the City.

Rural/Urban Transitional is further divided into Rural Transitional Residential and Priority Transitional Residential.

- **Rural Transitional Residential:** This designation exists further from the City's boundaries and is believed to be less likely than Priority Transitional Residential to be annexed into the City. **The AUF allows for densities between 1.00 and 3.75 dwelling units per acre.** The infrastructure requirements of the City subdivision ordinance (Design and Improvement Standards) apply unless waived by the City Council
- **Priority Transitional Residential:** Areas with this designation are adjacent to the City limits. While annexation is likely within the life of the Plan, development can occur prior to annexation. **However, development is expected to meet a minimum of 3.75 units per acre and provide infrastructure equivalent to City services.**

To date, no development has occurred in a Priority Transitional Residential Area. Developers have sought changes to the AUF to designate portions of the Priority Transitional Area to Urban Residential and subsequent annexation (e. g., Rose Prairie and Athen).

- **Urban Service and Urban Residential Classification:** These are areas that are adjacent to the City limits and are expected to be annexed prior to development. After annexation, full development is allowed at City densities (no less than 3.75 dwelling units per acre) and with full City services.



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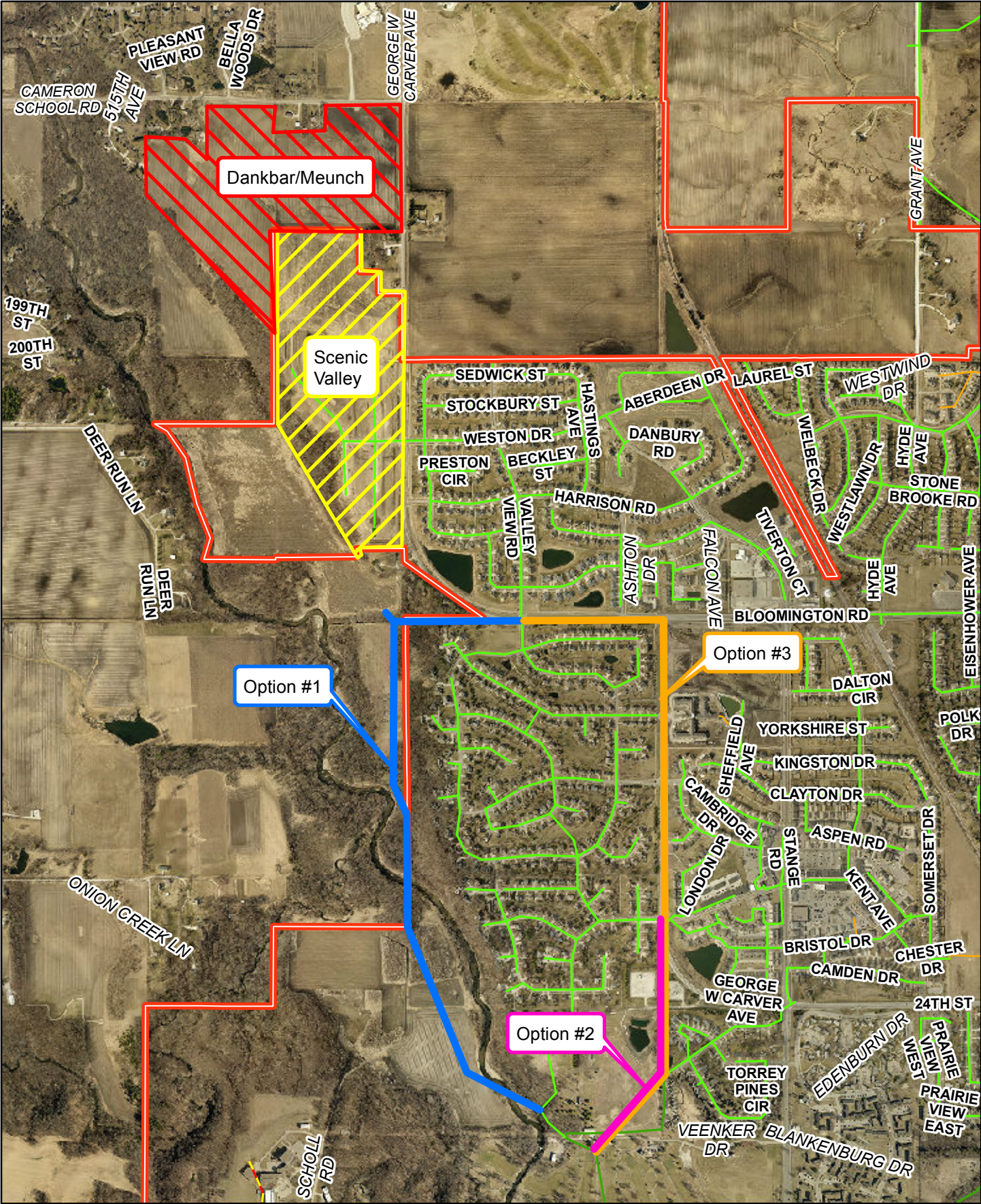


Dankbar/Meunch
Sanitary Sewer Impacts



Scale: 1 in = 833 ft
Date: 9/9/2015

Attachment G



Geographic Information System (GIS) Product Disclaimer: City of Ames GIS map data does not replace or modify land surveys, deeds, and/or other legal instruments defining land ownership & land use nor does it replace field surveys of utilities or other features contained in the data. All features represented in this product should be field verified. This Product is provided "as is" without warranty or any representation of accuracy, timeliness or completeness. The burden for determining accuracy, completeness, merchantability and fitness for or the appropriateness for use rests solely on the User.



North Growth Gap Area
Sanitary Sewer



Scale: 1 in = 1,333 ft
Date: 2/19/2016