

**Staff Report****PLANNING AND HOUSING DEPARTMENT  
WORK PLAN PRIORITIES****JUNE 14, 2016****BACKGROUND:**

On May 24<sup>th</sup>, City Council requested that an up to date Planning Division work plan be provided to the Council. Council made this request to be able to consider the time commitments related to recent referral requests, including the 2700 Block of Lincoln Way redevelopment project.

The planning staff is assigned to work on both policy planning and current planning projects. Current planning includes customer service for general inquiries, boards and commissions, zoning review, and development project review. Policy planning includes studies, Municipal Code amendments, neighborhood support, and Land Use Policy Plan amendments. The Planning Division periodically reviews the work plan with City Council to ensure we are committing staff's time to the City's greatest interests. Council fully reviewed the Planning Division Work Plan in March 2015 and added additional projects in September 2015 as a result of the LUPP Update workshop.

Ames has experienced a sustained demand for current planning services over the past three years and is projected to continue for the next fiscal year. Major current planning projects still to be finalized in the next fiscal year include the Crane Farm/Mortenson Apartments, Village Park Apartments, South Duff rezoning and apartments, Rose Prairie Subdivision, and annexation and subdivision for Hunziker South (Auburn Trail Subdivision) on Grant Avenue.

During this same timeframe Council has asked for policy projects to be initiated based upon available time and priorities. Policy planning projects vary in time and resources depending on the complexity, public involvement, and urgency for review. The following is a summary of the policy planning projects completed from the past year and the current ongoing projects.

**COMPLETED COUNCIL PRIORITY PROJECTS AND REFERRALS MARCH 2015 TO JUNE 2016:**

- 1) Campustown Urban Revitalization Area Criteria (Non-Formula Retail)
- 2) Lincoln Way Mixed Use Overlay Text Amendment
- 3) Breckenridge Settlement Agreement
- 4) Sidewalk and Missing Infrastructure Ordinances
- 5) Sidewalk Subdivision Standards
- 6) LUPP Update Workshops

- 7) Research and Innovation Zoning District Ordinance
- 8) Land Use Projections for Long Range Transportation Plan
- 9) Floor Area Ratio Text Amendment
- 10) Small Production Facility/Brewery Amendment
- 11) Campustown Façade Program
- 12) SW Growth Area (McCay) Annexation Agreement
- 13) Environmentally Sensitive Overlay Zoning for Floodway
- 14) South Duff LUPP Major Amendment (rezoning and development agreement pending)
- 15) Rose Prairie Development Agreement Amendment (zoning and final agreement pending)
- 16) Ames Golf and Country Club Rural Subdivision
- 17) Mobile Home Park Perimeter Setback Text Amendment
- 18) Zoning Text Amendments DSC minimum Floor Area Ratio and Institutional Uses
- 19) Other miscellaneous text amendments (solar, hospital medical setback, site visibility triangle)
- 20) Staff report on North Growth Gap Area (Sanitary Sewer Analysis Task pending)

#### **COMMITTED PROJECTS:**

- 1) East Industrial Annexation and Master Plan
- 2) Lincoln Way Corridor Plan
- 3) Landscape and Parking Sustainability Update Ordinance
- 4) 321 State Avenue Affordable Housing Development (Old Middle School)
- 5) Housing Background Report (combination of Council goals and referrals)
- 6) Wireless Ordinance Update (state and federal law changes 2015)
- 7) North Growth Gap Area Sewer Analysis (Public Works Consultant)

#### **COMMITTED, NOT YET STARTED:**

- 8) SW Growth Master Plan (1<sup>st</sup> Step Prepare RFP October 2016)
- 9) New Comprehensive Plan (1<sup>st</sup> Step Prepare RFP Fall 2017)

## **ADDITIONAL PROJECTS:**

In addition to the nine committed projects listed above, City Council through its establishment of Council Goals, referrals, and prior work plan priorities have a list of 21 other projects to consider in prioritizing the Planning Division work plan. **Attachment 1 is a new work plan chart that indicates the current status of committed projects and the list of projects that have not yet been prioritized.** Although not all of the project scopes are well defined, staff has added a column to the work plan with estimates the range of hours needed for each project. This estimate is intended to help Council have an understanding of the order of magnitude of Planning Division resources needed for a project. City Council should note that often there are additional city staff resources needed to complete the project e.g. City Attorney's Office and the Public Works Department that are not reflected on this chart.

**As City Council begins to review the attached work plan, it would be appropriate to think about if the Planning Director has captured the intent of each project in its description, general magnitude of the project, and to think about future sequencing of interests.** As we always remind the Council, this list does not predict future referrals that may be requested of the City Council.

Our past advice has been to consider if a request is relatively straight forward and focused in its scope and if it is considered similar to a development project. Development projects typically have a defined scope and set public review process and generally fit the systems that are in place to address such issues. **When categorized similar to a development project, it would not needed to be specifically prioritized but understood to work through the system as time allows.**

**When an item has broader implications in terms of research and options, or has potentially affects many parts of the community, it is more appropriate to consider the project against Council's other referrals and priorities before giving direction to staff.** When needed, Staff will assist the City Council in categorizing the requests when they are submitted and Council requests background memorandums or staff reports.

## **AVAILABLE CAPACITY:**

**Given the number of committed projects identified earlier, staff has the capacity to take on one more significant project through August 2016. Although there are 23 projects identified in the work plan that do not have a committed timeframe, staff has identified four projects that recently have been discussed with the Council and may be appropriate to consider as an immediate interest to work on this summer.**

### **Project 1 – Social Service Provider Text Amendment**

The Social Service Provider related text amendment could be treated as a minor referral or as a more significant project requiring prioritization depending the extent of public involvement that is desire by the Council.

**Project 2 – 2700 Block of Lincoln Way**

Given the fact that seven steps are needed to accommodate this request, this project needs to be prioritized.

**Project 3 – Downtown Housing Project Options**

City Council has directed the Planning & Housing Director and Council Member Betcher to participate in a Downtown Housing Committee that has recently completed its immediate task of assessing an individual site for development options. However, the committee is now interested in considering additional housing development options in the Downtown area. This request appears to be consistent with the Council's objective to "explore public/private improvements (e.g. entertainment, parking, housing, amenities) for public/private space in Campustown and Downtown."

**Project 4 – North Growth Gap Area Plan Amendments**

City Council has recently directed the Public Works Department to assess the sanitary sewer capacity for the North Growth Gap Area and beyond, but has not prioritized consideration of Fringe Plan and LUPP amendments to respond to potential development interests in the area. Council deferred initiating such amendments in the spring until it has reviewed the overall work plan and had more information on the ability to serve the general area.

**STAFF COMMENTS:**

**While there is currently only enough staff capacity to begin one additional major project this summer, in the fall a number of projects will be completed that will allow for further initiatives. Therefore, staff would recommend that Council return in the fall to prioritize the remaining projects for FY 2016/17.**

