

Staff Report

**REQUEST FOR A COUNTY-WIDE HOUSING STUDY**

November 14, 2017

**BACKGROUND:**

The Story County Board of Supervisors requested the City consider partnering in a new housing study for Ames/Story utilizing the same approach followed in a joint study in the 1990's. The prior housing study was a joint effort between participating jurisdictions to identify housing needs throughout the county which enabled Ames/Story jurisdictions to apply and receive grant funds from the Iowa Department of Economic Development based upon the needs identified in the study. The cost of the study was shared between the County and the City of Ames and included a 25 member taskforce to identify priorities for the study and to review its findings. RDG was the consultant for preparation of the study. At that time, the project was staffed by the City's Housing Coordinator and Planning Director from the County. The study included a survey of housing preferences, a visual assessment of housing conditions, and demographic data.

City staff recently met with Supervisor Lauris Olson to discuss the scope of the request. She has suggested that we follow the format of the original study and establish a task force and hire of a consultant. Staff from the County and City would be needed to provide support for the project. The cost of hiring a consultant to conduct the study is estimated to be \$70,000, and the County would anticipate that the study to occur in the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

**STAFF COMMENTS:**

The City has two significant housing and demographic informational reports planned for 2018. This includes a demographic assessment and growth projections for the upcoming new Comprehensive Plan and a federally mandated Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AAFH) study for the fall of 2018. Notably, the AAFH study includes all of Story County as required by the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and also must include public input sessions. The analysis for this report will not include visual assessments and preference surveys as was the case in the prior countywide study. However, the AAFH study will provide insight on a variety of fair housing issues and housing data. Additionally, the City must complete its federal 5-year Consolidated Plan in 2019.

**Due to the work involved in the upcoming studies, staff does not believe it currently has the resources to participate in a third housing study. The County would not need to assess conditions within Ames due to our own upcoming studies if they were to undertake a county-wide study. The City would be able to share its findings with the County and they could be incorporated into an overall study, if desired by the County.**