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PKTs. 9-04-2020

MEMO

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Brian Phillips, Assistant City Manager
Date: September 8, 2020
Subject: Metronet Service Areas

At the July 14, 2020, City Council meeting, the City Council requested information from Metronet regarding two neighborhoods that did not appear to be included in Metronet's initial build map for Ames: the Ironwood neighborhood and the Kingman Road neighborhood.

Staff has consulted with Metronet regarding these two areas. Metronet has confirmed that it has placed infrastructure in the Ironwood neighborhood and is prepared to serve residents there.

Metronet has indicated that the Kingman Road neighborhood is difficult to access. The neighborhood is surrounded on three sides by Iowa State University property and on the fourth by the railroad. Although overhead electric lines exist in the area, the easements these lines are in are exclusively designated for electric cables, not for telecommunications. Therefore, attaching fiber or burying it to serve this neighborhood would require obtaining an easement either from the railroad (to bore under), or from Iowa State University (to attach to electric poles). Both of these options have costs to Metronet and would require lengthy review processes before an easement could be granted.

As an alternative means to serve this neighborhood, City staff has proposed allowing Metronet to attach its cables in conduit to the City-owned bridge at Minnesota Avenue. This would allow a crossing of the railroad to be completed so Metronet could expand into the neighborhood. The City owns the right-of-way to the east of Minnesota Avenue on either side of the span, which would allow Metronet to install buried lines to the bridge, then attach a conduit on the side of the bridge to span the railroad crossing. City staff is reviewing this alternative with the City's bridge consulting engineers to ensure it is technically acceptable, and Metronet informed City staff on September 3 that it will begin to design infrastructure for this neighborhood.

No further action is required from the City Council in response to this memo.