



To: Mayor and City Council Members
From: Keith Abraham, Parks and Recreation Director
Date: September 18, 2020
Subject: Potential Park at 400 South 4th Street

On April 14, 2020, City Council asked staff to provide a memo regarding the possibility of the vacant lot at 400 South 4th Street being considered for development of a park.

400 SOUTH 4TH STREET:

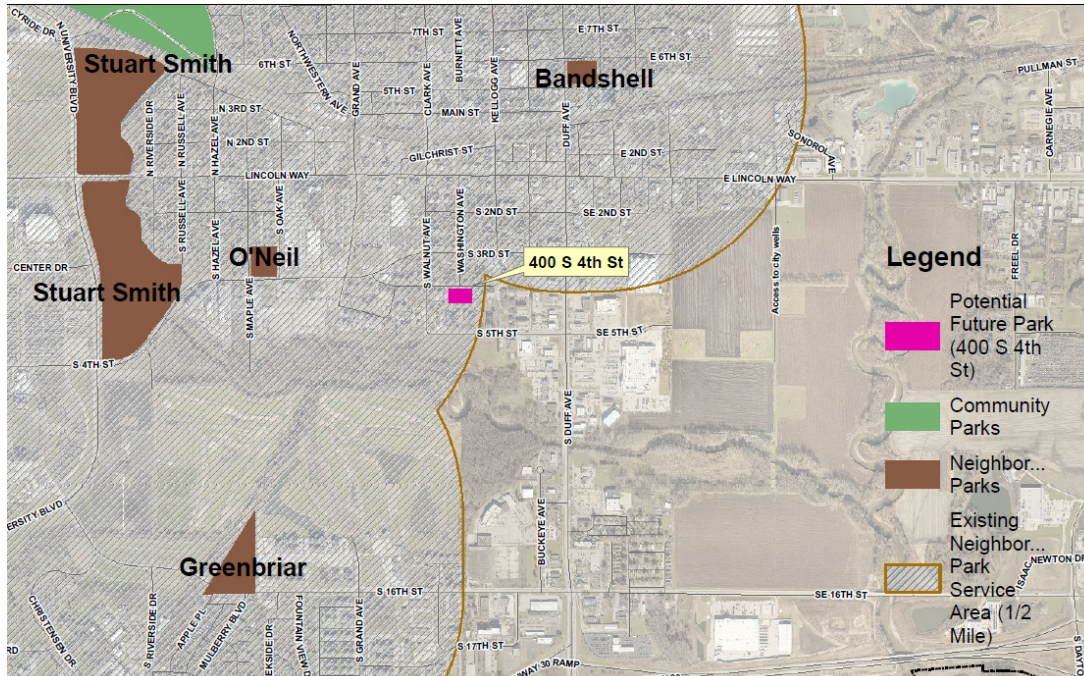
The property in question is on South 4th Street at the south end of Washington Ave. It is a 1.265-acre lot which was originally five lots owned by Classic Holdings LLC. In 2018, the five lots were consolidated into one parcel. Later in 2018, a Minor Site Development Plan for the construction of 18 apartments was approved and it expires on October 3, 2020. The developer has not moved ahead with the project at this time; however, no zoning rules have changed so it would be easy for the developer to resubmit the previously approved plan for a new approval if they so choose. The property is currently assessed at \$272,000.



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK SERVICE AREAS:

The City of Ames Parks Master Plan identifies several types of parks including neighborhood parks and community parks. Neighborhood parks have a service area of $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile while community parks have a service area of 1 to 2 miles. The property described above would be designated as a neighborhood park if it were developed as a park.

The below map shows the four neighborhood parks that are closest to this property. Of the four, a one-half mile radius from O'Neil, Greenbriar, and Bandshell Parks does encompass a wide majority of what would be covered by a new park at 400 South 4th Street. What isn't covered includes a few apartment complexes, some of Coldwater Golf Course, a portion of Squaw Creek corridor, and multiple commercial properties.



STAFF COMMENTS:

When determining whether to pursue a property for a potential park, several items are reviewed. These items are shown below accompanied by staff's comments for each:

- 1) **Parks Master Plan** - The plan does not identify the need of a neighborhood park being added in this area of Ames.
- 2) **Service Areas of Existing Nearby Parks** - As stated earlier, most of the residential units in this area are within the service areas of O'Neil and Bandshell Parks. If you were to identify Lincoln Way and Duff Avenue as barriers to Bandshell Park, more residential units in this area would not be covered by a nearby parks service area.
- 3) **Service Area of the Potential Park** - The service area for this potential park overlaps nearby park service areas and encompasses very few additional residential units unless Lincoln Way and Duff Avenue are barriers.
- 4) **Cost to Purchase** - Staff has not contacted the property owners; however, the assessed value is \$272,000 or approximately \$215,000 per acre. The appraised value most likely would be higher.

- 5) **Cost to Develop** - Staff has not done any cost estimates on developing this property, but City Council has been allocating \$80,000 for neighborhood park development. As a comparison, Sunset Ridge Park cost over \$120,000 to develop with over \$40,000 coming from the Property Owners Association fundraising efforts.
- 6) **Funding Available** - At this time, no funding has been identified for the purchase or development of this property. However, there is \$239,993 undesignated in the Park Development Fund.
- 7) **Other Factors** -
 - a. **Neighborhood Input** - Staff has not received any requests from neighbors in this area requesting this be developed into a park. If Council wants to pursue this further, public input would be needed.
 - b. **Minor Site Development Plan** - There is a current plan for developing apartments on this parcel, but the developer has not taken any further action.

Based on the information above, staff does not feel it is worth pursuing this property as a potential park.