

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

**SUBJECT: CHAMBER OF COMMERCE REQUEST TO BEAUTIFY LINCOLN WAY
MEDIANS FROM BEACH TO SHELDON**

BACKGROUND:

The landscaping in the medians on Lincoln Way from Beach Avenue to Sheldon Avenue has significantly deteriorated due to a combination of harsh growing conditions, foot traffic, and the removal of ash trees.

Dan Culhane, President and CEO of the Ames Chamber of Commerce initially presented a concept to beautify the Lincoln Way medians in an email (Attachment A) sent to the Mayor and City Council on February 2, 2021. This original proposal included a request for a City funding contribution in the amount of \$25,000 to complete the proposed Lincoln Way Beautification Plan (Attachment B). Council took no action on this request.

A second email (Attachment C) was sent to the Mayor and City Council on March 30, 2021. **This request was asking for permission to proceed with the beautification project, as all funding for the project has been secured privately and no City contribution was requested.** At its April 13, 2021 meeting, Council directed staff to put this request on a future agenda.

CAMPUSTOWN LINCOLN WAY MEDIAN BEAUTIFICATION PLAN:

The plan presented by the Chamber was developed by Dan's Country Landscapes. It includes removing some of the current vegetation, removing some soil and replacing it with new top soil, adding new vegetation that is more tolerant of the environmental conditions in the medians, and adding a combination of trap rock (shown below) and mulch.



As part of the plan, the Chamber is requesting the City provide traffic control measures when the work is being completed and watering of the plants until they get established. Staff feels these two requests are reasonable and can be accomplished.

Ongoing maintenance of the medians is a staff concern as the mulch does need to be replenished annually. Weed control, plant maintenance, tree maintenance, and trash removal are additional items that also need to be done periodically. The Parks and Recreation Department is willing to assume these duties. **The Chamber of Commerce has agreed to replenish the mulch annually which includes purchasing material and providing the labor as long as the City provides traffic control while this is being done (Attachment D).**

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the request for the Ames Chamber of Commerce to proceed to implement the Campustown Lincoln Way Beautification Plan as presented, subject to their agreement to purchase the necessary material and replenish the mulch in the medians annually.
2. Approve the request with modifications.
3. Refer to staff for more information.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The proposed plan presented by the Ames Chamber of Commerce gives the Lincoln Way medians from Beach to Sheldon a much needed facelift. It could be argued that removing the overgrown shrubs/plants and replacing them with new vegetation improves safety to some degree by improving sight lines for motorists. The Chamber has also secured the funding to implement this plan and is committed to replenishing the mulch annually.

This plan is another example of a private/public partnership which improve the aesthetics in an area of our community. The presented plan beautifies the Lincoln Way medians adjacent to Campustown and requires no direct funding from the City.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative #1, as described above.

ATTACHMENT A

February 2, 2021 Email

Good Evening Mayor Haila and Members of the Ames City Council,

Karin Chitty, Director of the Campustown Action Association, and I write to you this evening with a financial request for a beautification project along the Lincoln Way corridor as it runs through Campustown adjacent to the Iowa State University campus. We are speaking specifically to the City of Ames medians and how to make them more aesthetically pleasing. Currently they are mostly barren and with the major investment made by the City of Ames to modernize the underground infrastructure and refresh Welch Avenue it seems fitting that a partnership could be developed to beautify Lincoln Way as it leads to Welch Avenue from the west and east. Sheldon Avenue would be the western end and Beach Avenue the eastern end.

Attached you will find a variety of renderings of what the medians could look like if the project were to proceed. The plan was designed by Dan's Custom Landscape and funded by the Ames Chamber of Commerce. The total project is just over \$56,000 and nearly half of the necessary funds have been raised to date, which you will see within the attached document. We are respectfully asking for a \$25,000 contribution from the City of Ames to help this project move forward this coming spring. The funding from the Ames Chamber of Commerce, Campustown Action Association, and a small portion of the private funding has been raised. Karin and I are currently awaiting a decision from the Ames Foundation on a contribution from that group as well as a few other private funders. Of course, we would not proceed with the project without all of the necessary funds raised.

This plan has been shared with City staff and concerns have been raised about the public safety aspects of the plantings in the medians. At one time, several years back, a plan was discussed between the City and ISU to install some form or barrier in the median to keep pedestrians from crossing Lincoln Way in the middle of a block. We can certainly understand that concern, yet believe plants and materials can be selected and installed to avoid any of them being an obstruction to site lines for pedestrians and vehicles. If at some point in the future the City and ISU come to some agreement and/or arrangement for installing some form of permanent barrier, quite possibly the landscaping being proposed could remain, or removed in favor of the more permanent solution. In the near term this would brighten and freshen up this corridor to add to the beauty of the ISU campus and the major investment on Welch Avenue where we are aware that trees and other landscaping will be completed this spring. The Campustown Action Association will also be replacing all of the banners on the light poles this spring as well.

In addition to the \$25,000 contribution we would also ask the City of Ames to water the plantings once installed to get them started. According to Dan's Custom Landscape watering would not likely be required all that frequently once the plants got established. Any weeding and/or litter removal would be spearheaded by the Campustown Action Association with support from the Ames Chamber of Commerce, similar to the work we are doing in downtown Ames with Ames Main Street.

We are aware that you are currently working through the budgeting process, which is why we make this request today. This is a relatively inexpensive opportunity to greatly improve the aesthetics of this corridor and we are hopeful you will consider investing with the other funders to enhance this corridor, which in many ways is the front door to the ISU campus.

Karin and I stand ready to answer any questions or address any concerns you may have.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Dan

Dan Culhane, CEcD, CCE

President & CEO

ATTACHMENT C

March 30, 2021 Email

Good Evening Mayor Haila and Members of the Ames City Council,

I write to you again this evening, on behalf of Karin Chitty and myself, seeking your approval to beautify the medians on Lincoln Way through Campustown from Beach Avenue west to Sheldon Avenue.

I am pleased to share that the necessary funding has been secured privately to do the project without direct financial assistance from the City of Ames or Iowa State University. Rather, generous donations from Kingland Systems, The Ames Foundation, Campustown Action Association, and the Ames Chamber of Commerce will fund the improvements outlined in my last correspondence on this topic, which is below. You will recall that the cost was just over \$56,000.

We have received constructive feedback from City staff and I recently met with Keith Abraham where he outlined the concerns over the size of the river rock, which was proposed as an accent in the beds along with mulch. City code does not allow landscape rock any larger than $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch. I have met with Dan's Custom Landscape and they are proposing an alternative smaller than river rock - brick chips that are $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch, or smaller in size, or buck skin rock or trap rock. You will see photos attached of each alternate rock being proposed. Any of these would provide the accent effect and fall beneath the maximum size of rock that can be used.

Karin and I are respectfully asking for permission to proceed with this project given all of the initial costs will be covered privately. We will work with City of Ames staff to make sure that necessary protocols are followed and will coordinate the project so that any maintenance will be shared between Campustown Action Association and the City. Other than permission to proceed we would ask that the City commit to necessary watering of the plants as needed throughout the spring and summer season.

Along with the photos of the various types of rock, I am also attaching the original plan, which was previously provided to you. We would ask that this be referred to city staff so that we can work through any remaining issues and get the project moving sometime in late April or early May.

We recognize there may very well be a larger, more permanent plan for these medians in the future. In the meantime we believe this will be a positive and striking improvement that will enhance this major corridor through Campustown and the Ames community.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Dan

Dan Culhane, CEcD, CCE

President & CEO

ATTACHMENT D

From: Dan Culhane <dan@ameschamber.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 20, 2021, 11:52 PM
To: Abraham, Keith
Subject: Fwd: Lincoln Way Campustown Median Beautification

[External Email]

Hello Keith,

Per your call earlier today I would submit the following.

The Ames Chamber of Commerce and the Campustown Action Association remain committed to maintaining the aesthetics of the medians in Campustown from Beach Avenue to Sheldon Avenue along Lincoln Way.

Our request is permission to beautify them with new plants and mulch/rock and, in return, ask that the City of Ames keep them watered, once planted, so that they take root and thrive throughout the heat of summer. We will maintain them annually and will replenish the mulch/rock, as needed, along with any plant materials required. I would also request the City provide traffic control along Lincoln Way, as needed, during the installation, coordinating with the selected contractor.

Again, we have the resources to fund the improvements and we respectfully ask for the approval of the City to proceed with the project.

If you need something further please advise.

Thank you,

Dan

Dan Culhane, CEcD, CCE

President & CEO

Campustown Lincoln Way Median Beautification

Spring 2021



campustown
action
association



ames[™]
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE











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Project Costs & Proposed Project Support

PROJECT COST: \$56,282

Proposed Funders:

Ames Chamber of Commerce \$10,000

Ames Foundation \$ 5,000

Campustown Action Association \$10,000

Private Fundraising \$31,282

Total Funds \$56,282



Questions?

Dan Culhane, Ames Chamber of Commerce

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