

Staff Report

AMES PLAN 2040

October 26, 2021

BACKGROUND:

On August 24th, City Council directed staff to finalize the public draft of Ames Plan 2040 and seek public feedback during the month of September. The Plan was made available online at www.cityofames.org/amesplan2040 and promoted through social media channels, press releases, City newsletter, and email notification to the interested parties list of approximately 335 emails addresses. The staff report on October 12th provided City Council with the collected comments and the summary of discussion by the Planning and Zoning Commission. [The prior report with public comments received through October 12th can be found at this link.](#) Staff has received no other written comments through October 21st.

Some of the issues that came up more than once during the comment period included:

- Property owners in the southwest area south of Highway 30 concerned about how the area is represented in the Fringe Map as Urban Reserve.
- Statements concerning the need to conserve natural resource areas and the labeling/mapping of these designations.
- The amount of projected growth, patterns of growth
- Balance of housing types, lack of areas for future multi-family
- Infill housing and compatibility policies, applicability of the compatibility matrix
- Relationship of the Plan to the Climate Action Plan

On October 12th City Council made one motion to modify the references to the RN-3, RN-4, and RN-5 to include Manufactured Home Park Zoning as a zoning district option applicable to these designations. City Council stated that additional time was needed to review the other comments in order to determine if other changes to the final draft of the Plan were needed. Staff also indicated to City Council that issues related to map designations would be discussed on the October 26th agenda.

Text Changes

With City Council's receipt of the comments, staff is asking for direction on any specific policy adjustments or clarifications regarding the previously distributed public draft plan that should be considered at this time. Note that Staff will be incorporating edits to the draft plan related to known typographical errors, formatting, and adjustments for clarity back to RDG as well.

Staff proposes one adjustment to the Plan. Staff suggests the Project Review Process Mixed Use/Matrix (pages 68-74) be considered as advisory guidelines for

future land use/zoning changes and that they are not to be viewed as project specific requirements with approval of the Plan. This clarification will require wording changes in the final plan.

The intent of the matrix was to prepare City Council for issues concerning integration of additional uses as we move forward on infill options and redirection areas. Staff believes that the information is best applied at the zoning level through updates to development codes, rather than referring back to the matrix for project-by-project review. If City Council intends for it to be applied on project-by-project basis we would need to add information to the Implementation Chapter on how to apply it to project reviews.

Map Amendments and Land Use Designations

Public Comments pertaining to specific areas of the Maps are included as Attachment A. Staff comments are also added to these maps. In addition to the map markups, the following locations were identified in written comments.

1. Former “Champlin Property” southwest Ames adjacent to Dartmoor Road and Zumwalt Station Road comments requesting it designated as Open Space rather than RN-3 (Residential Expansion).(also noted on map)

Staff recommends the area should be retained as RN-3 due to its potential for future residential development while preserving existing natural area corridors.

2. Haverkamp Properties West Towne Apartments at 4820 Mortenson requesting RN-5 designation rather than Neighborhood Commercial Mixed Use (NC-MU).

The site was previously developed as mixed use with a mix of commercial uses and apartments under CCR zoning. Applicant would prefer to keep existing developed commercial spaces, but to have residential zoning to use the remainder of the space residentially. Abutting areas are residential high density and commercial. NC-MU does not identify residential zoning as a corresponding zoning district, nor does it identify CCR zoning as is currently in place on the property.

Staff recommends the area in general be adjusted from NC-MU to Community Commercial-Retail to reflect developed conditions, but this property could be either CCR or RN-5 as a transition from the commercial areas to the east. Site level details brought up by the owner would be addressed with any rezoning request subsequent to Plan adoption.

3. Designation of Natural Areas for existing wetlands southeast of Ames at 580th/260th. (also noted on map)

See the discussion about natural areas in general below. The owner indicates the land has established wetlands and they should be acknowledged. However, not all wetlands are noted on the Plan maps as natural areas due to the level of detail available for mapping at this scale.

Staff can support the change to Natural Areas as requested depending on the outcome of the topic discussion in general.

A general concern regarding the natural area designation intent has been expressed about the Land Use Map and Fringe Map. Some comments asked for additional areas to be identified as natural and others were concerned about the accuracy and meaning of the designation. The issue of Natural Area is also represented in a composite map as part of the Environment Chapter where it is intended to show a range of potential development constraints ranging from soil types to flood plain.

Natural Area has been used within the current LUPP and Fringe Plan to represent both areas known to be “natural” in character as well as areas that are not desirable for development and intensification due to a desire to buffer the surroundings from potential negative impacts. These types of map layers are created based upon generalized data. Typically, the City or County would require additional a site-specific survey to assess specific conditions of a property.

This question could be resolved by keeping the mapping system as is the public draft plan and adding other additional known specific natural areas to the map as suggested for the areas southeast of Ames near 580th Avenue and 260th Street. An alternative change would be to clearly state that the natural area label is meant as an informational tool overlaid upon other land use designations. Additionally, it would need to be noted that the natural area layer is not definitive of all potential natural resources that could impact future use of a property.

To make the change as an overlay, the maps would need to be adjusted for an underlying land use designation to be shown on the Land Use Map and the Fringe Map with the addition of a transparent overlay layer for known natural area constraints. This could be done with the adoption of Plan 2040 at this time or the issue could be addressed as part of the upcoming Fringe Plan update with the County, as the natural area designation is a significant issue in the Fringe areas more so than within the City.

Staff proposed changes to the Land Use Designation Map are shown on Attachment B. Comments are included on the Map for City Council Review. Staff also proposes adding a note on the map that the boundaries of designation are not necessarily parcel specific. This allows for minor interpretations of boundaries as part of a rezoning request.

In light of recent review of the land use map, staff believes the Community Commercial/Retail designation needs to be modified regarding mixed use residential options. Page 70 describes the designation and includes CCR zoning, which allows for mixed use. **Staff recommends removing CCR from the list of corresponding zoning districts due to the preference for these areas as commercial development. If CCR remains as a corresponding district, the development guidelines column needs to have a bullet added that explains appropriate locations for CCR when planned in advance and connected to other residential areas.** Isolated mixed-use developments would likely not meet the objectives for commercial uses in the designation and would have limited value as residential neighborhoods.

Implementation Chapter

The Implementation Chapter is intended to help guide administration of the Plan. This chapter would include information providing context to the Policies and Actions as they related to future decision making. Staff recommends addressing clearly the Land Use Designation relationship to rezoning, Comprehensive Plan amendment procedures, and implementation project priorities.

Attachment C is an outline of projects that staff believes embody the intent and priorities of the Plan. Implementation of the Plan will require action by the City as the current project planning and zoning rules do not fully meet the described vision for 2040. Additionally, some of the topics are multi-disciplinary and are headed up by different departments within the City. Staff has categorized the priorities as:

- i. Infrastructure
 - a. Major Roads
 - b. Parks
 - c. Trails
 - d. Water
 - e. Sanitary Sewer
 - f. Storm Water
- ii. Development and Zoning Standards
 - a. Zoning Ordinance
 - b. Subdivision Ordinance
- iii. Plans and Sub-Areas.

The original scenarios evaluation exercise and subsequent selection of tiers for immediately needed growth areas includes a number of broad improvements needed to serve these areas. Not all of these projects can be completed at one time. This does not mean that other projects in the core of the City are not needed as well, but they are addressed through our traditional Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Planning and do not needed to be identified within this process.

The proposed infrastructure priority list addresses each growth area with 1-5 year and 5-10 year planning priorities. This plan would accompany the Comprehensive Plan, but it would not be inserted into the document itself. The City's CIP will then include a separate project page addressing various infrastructure needs related to Plan 2040. Staff is currently assessing these needs as part of its preparation of the 2022/2023 CIP budget proposal.

Development and Zoning standards will need updates to reflect the intent of the Plan. Staff does not propose creating a whole new zoning ordinance. However, substantial adjustments will be needed to align many of the standards with the Plan. The first priority will be to incorporate the Complete Streets terminology and improvement standards into the Subdivision Code. Corresponding adjustments to the Zoning Ordinance will also be needed then to reflect the terminology and goals for context sensitive design within the zoning districts. Additional changes related to other issues, including housing options,

are included within the list. Staff believes that these priorities should be viewed as the near term (1-5 year) needs. Due to the evolving nature of the City and its needs, there are no project priorities listed for later years as they will be decided by future City Councils.

Plans and Sub-Areas address detailed planning efforts for broader areas of the City. The update of the Ames Urban Fringe Plan is the highest priority due to our new Comprehensive Plan and the expiration of our 28E agreement with Story County in July 2022. Story County has already requested city participation in an update and the County concurred to do so with the extension of the 28E to July 2022. Staff would also approach Boone County with the Fringe Plan update. This section also includes work that will be headed up by Parks and Recreation Department for a Parks Master Plan Update and work by the Transportation Division on completing a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

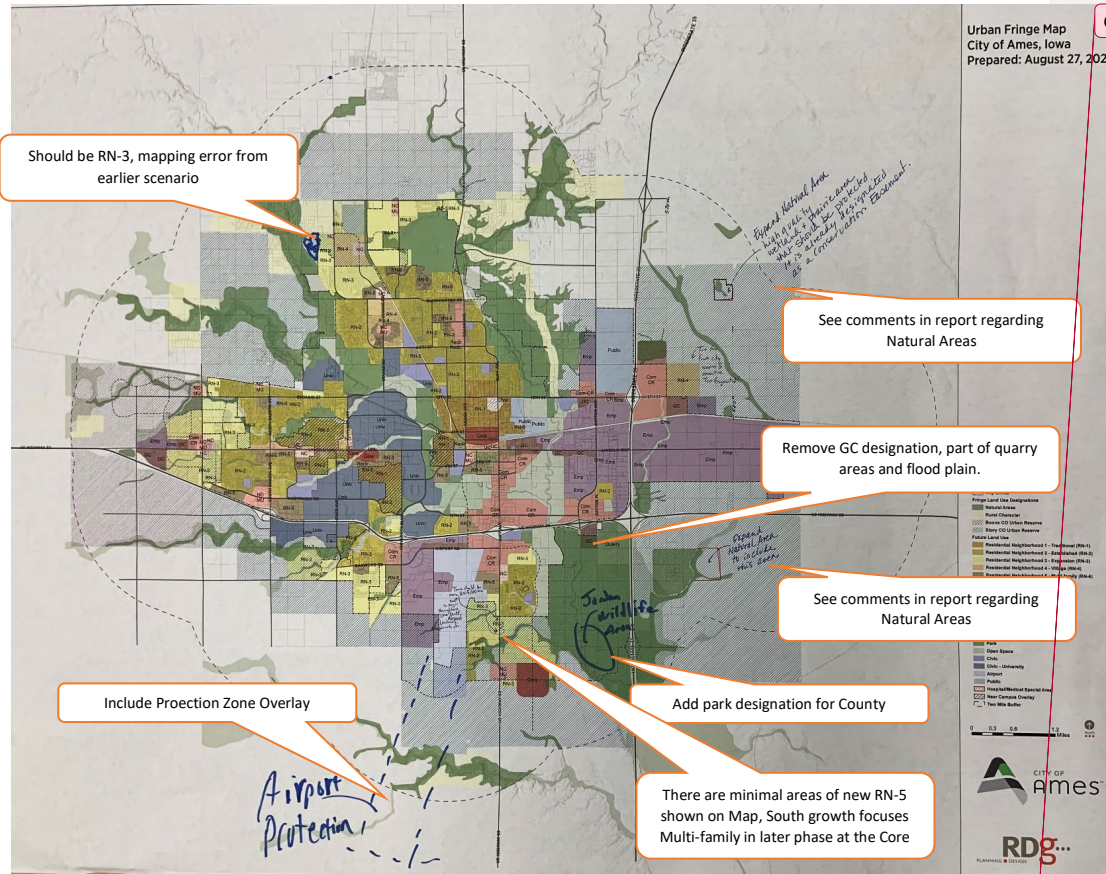
STAFF COMMENTS:

Staff needs direction at this time on making changes to the Draft Plan text and maps as identified by staff, as well as any other adjustments desired by City Council. Any approved changes will then be incorporated into the final draft for the public hearing and approval process.

The Implementation Chapter will be added to the final draft of the Plan for the public hearing and adoption process. Staff believes including a list of identified priorities will help provide focus to our implementation efforts.

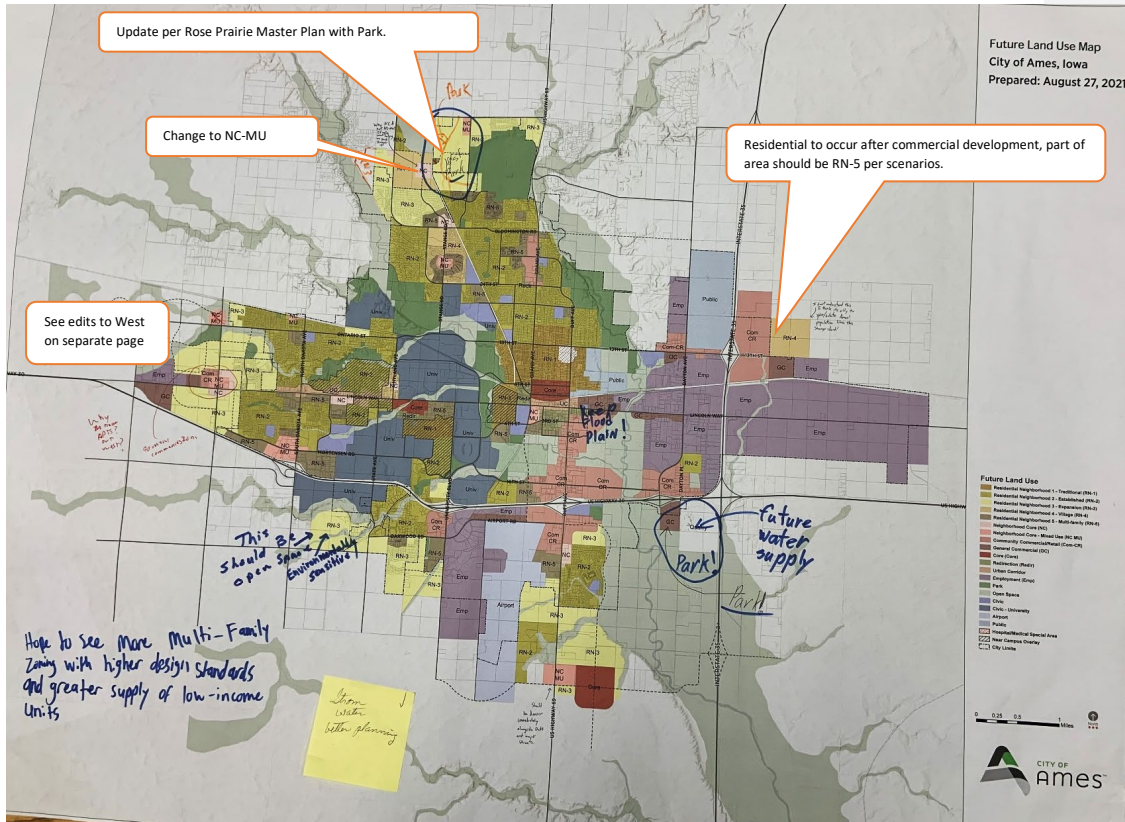
Staff recommends that the City Council approve an individual motion endorsing the proposed priority list (Attachment C) or providing specific direction on how to address priorities within an Implementation Chapter so that RDG and staff can finalize this chapter. City Council would still prioritize projects on an annual basis with the CIP and the Planning and Housing Department Work Plan. City Council will have an opportunity to provide more definition to the scope and approach to the suggested implementation projects at the time they are initiated.

Attachment C Open House Maps Comments



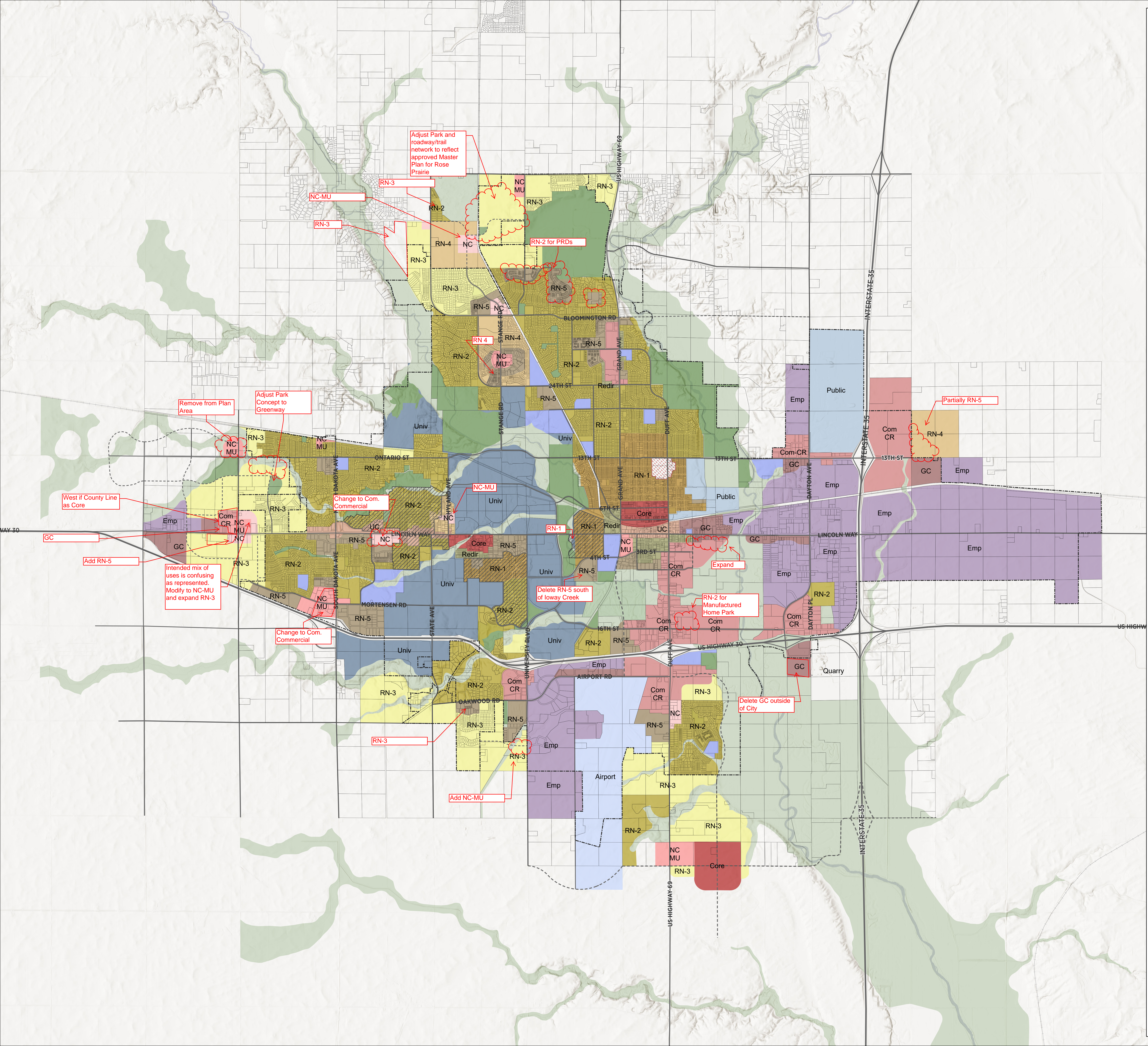
Commented [DK1]:

Attachment C Open House Maps Comments



Future Land Use Map City of Ames, Iowa Prepared: August 27, 2021

Staff Proposed Edits October 26, 2021



- Future Land Use**
- Residential Neighborhood 1 - Traditional (RN-1)
 - Residential Neighborhood 2 - Established (RN-2)
 - Residential Neighborhood 3 - Expansion (RN-3)
 - Residential Neighborhood 4 - Village (RN-4)
 - Residential Neighborhood 5 - Multi-family (RN-5)
 - Neighborhood Core (NC)
 - Neighborhood Core - Mixed Use (NC MU)
 - Community Commercial/Retail (Com-CR)
 - General Commercial (GC)
 - Core (Core)
 - Redirection (Redir)
 - Urban Corridor
 - Employment (Emp)
 - Park
 - Open Space
 - Civic
 - Civic - University
 - Airport
 - Public
 - Hospital/Medical Special Area
 - Near Campus Overlay
 - City Limits



Attachment C-Proposed Project Priorities for Implementation Chapter

With the approval of Plan 2040 there will be much work to be done as we build towards the Vision. The Plan's Policies and Actions generally describe conditions that influenced the initial creation of the Plan as well as considerations applicable to future decisions throughout the life of the Plan. This means that many of these statements are to be applied at the time we are changing or considering making changes to City Plans and standards in the future, versus having a defined step to move ahead with the Plan. Although there is significant latitude for timing and location priorities in the Plan, the following component of the Implementation Plan prioritize policy decisions and infrastructure investments that focus the efforts of the City over the next ten years. The City may choose to take on initiatives in addition to those listed below.

These efforts fall into three categories and are applicable to multiple departments, not just the Planning and Housing Department. Note that the planning efforts and projects described below do not include financing strategies. Specific financing strategies coordinated with property owners or developers are subject to City Council approval.

Infrastructure Plans

- Use the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to include Growth Area investment strategies for major roadways, trails, water, parks ,and sanitary sewer.
 - Develop a Project Planning guide for 1-5 year and 5-10 year infrastructure needs.
 - Include Ames Plan 2040 Project Page in the CIP
- Continue to address future water service needs within growth areas through agreements with Xenia Rural Water and Iowa Regional Utility Association (formerly Central Iowa Water).

Development Standards for Zoning and Subdivision

- Update Subdivision Code to include Complete Streets typologies and standards for public improvements.
- Update Zoning Ordinance to include references to new design requirements/guidelines and relationships to street typologies of the Complete Streets Plan.
- Prepare and ordinance for parkland dedication requirements with subdivisions.
- Amend FS-RL and FS-RM zoning to address broader housing options, such as mix of housing types, allowances for two-family dwellings and density ranges matching intended uses for growth area land use patterns.
- City-wide assessment of potentially allowing for Accessory Dwelling Units, including review of issues related to lot sizes, occupancy limitations, covenant restrictions, design standards, size limitations, parking requirements.
- Analyze University Impact Area Overlay parking and design standards in order to reduce parking and update design requirements.
- Review zoning districts and general standards for conformity with new land use designations and described uses, including but not limited to:
 - F-VR zoning to address neighborhood and village land use descriptions for future growth areas

-Update of commercial zoning districts along with creation of new general commercial zoning district.

Plans and Sub-areas

- Coordinate an Ames Urban Fringe Plan update with Boone County and Story County.
- Prepare a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (Transportation Division)
- Prepare a Parks Master Plan Update (Parks and Recreation Department)
- Create City gateway and beautification plan for rights-of-way and entryways
- Evaluate redirection areas and needs for sub-area plans

-Initiate new South Lincoln Mixed Use Sub-Area Plan from Cherry Street to Walnut Avenue.

-Initiate redirection area planning and zoning changes for University Overlay areas along Hunt Avenue and Sheldon Avenue

-On a biannual basis identify redirection and sub-area planning priorities