

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT TO REMOVE CAMPUSTOWN SERVICE CENTER (CSC) ZONING DISTRICT MID-BLOCK 20-FOOT SETBACK STANDARD ALONG LINCOLN WAY

BACKGROUND:

At the December 27, 2019 meeting, City Council discussed a request from a property owner to initiate a Zoning Text Amendment to eliminate a requirement for a mid-block 20-foot break for each block face in Campustown (Ames Municipal Code Table 29.803(3)).

“In order to provide access for vehicles and/or utilities to the interior of the block, there shall be a twenty-foot-wide opening between buildings, at the approximate mid-point of each face of each block...”

This request was specifically made for a planned redevelopment at 2516 Lincoln Way.

Based upon previous interpretations of the standard, City Council authorized proceeding with a text amendment focused on Lincoln Way block faces. City staff is now bringing forward proposed changes to the text of Table 29.803(3) for consideration.

The CSC district includes the 2300-2700 blocks on Lincoln Way and then continues south encompassing the primarily commercial district of Campustown (Attachment A). CSC Zoning was initially adopted in 2006 and applied to the outlined area. The 2700 block of Lincoln Way was rezoned to CSC in 2016.

The mid-block standard is intended to address the variety of access and utility constraints that exist in Campustown while permitting for redevelopment of the area. This mid-block break standard has historically been applied only if necessary to serve the stated purposes of the standard for access or utility needs. However, this approach has created ambiguity. Currently, only the 2300 and 2600 blocks of Lincoln Way have at least one opening at some point along the block face, while the 2400 block and 2700 block do not have a break along Lincoln Way. Other block faces in Campustown have a mix of alley, easements, or neither to meet the standard.

The purpose of the Campustown Service Center (CSC) Zoning District is for development is:

“...to be very dense with building coverage, large buildings in scale with the predominant building pattern in the Campustown commercial area, and buildings placed close together ...Building placement, the scale at the street, design and materials reinforce a dynamic, pedestrian-friendly neighborhood character.”

Many of the redeveloped sites are in alignment with this desired development pattern and a break in buildings exists on many other block faces within the CSC district, with the exception of Lincoln Way.

In December 2019, staff presented a memo to City Council with three possible text amendment options. These options included: 1) remove the break requirement only along Lincoln Way, 2) alter the language to state the mid-block break is applicable when necessary, as determined by the Planning Director, or 3) produce a comprehensive utility and planned access study within the CSC District to identify block faces that could not be served unless a break is provided.

City Council ultimately voted to move forward to remove the required mid-block break only along Lincoln Way based upon staff feedback that access to Lincoln Way for vehicles is undesirable and that utility access can occur from other blocks. If the amendment is approved, the 20-foot break would still be required along all other block faces within the CSC District, at a time redevelopment may occur.

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning and Zoning Commission met on May 4, 2022, to consider the proposed text amendment. The Commission discussed the need for the break and where it would apply within Campustown. Staff discussed its evaluation of the need for the standard and the history of how it has been applied. The Commission first moved to apply the change only to the 2500 Block of Lincoln Way, but the motion failed. Ultimately, the Commission voted 4-1 in favor of recommending to eliminate a midblock break along all Lincoln Way block faces.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the proposed text amendment to Table 29.803(3) to eliminate a midblock break requirement along all Lincoln Way block faces.
2. Refer this item back to staff for further information.
3. Do not approve the proposed text amendment.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The initial text amendment request for a change came from an interest in redeveloping the property at 2516 Lincoln Way that would be subject to the break standard. Alternative #1 would have the least impact to the CSC district as the break would still be required on other block faces allowing utilities to serve any future re-development and would not alter building, plumbing, fire or electric code requirements.

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

Table 29.809(3)
Campustown Service Center (CSC) Zone Development
Standards

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS	CSC ZONE
Minimum FAR	1.0, Except that the Zoning Board of Adjustment may determine through review of a use subject to approval of a Special Use Permit Use that such a proposed use and design is compatible in character with its surrounding and is exempt from meeting minimum FAR and minimum height.
Minimum Lot Area	No minimum, except for mixed uses, which shall provide 250 sf of lot area for each dwelling unit
Minimum Lot Frontage	No minimum, except for mixed uses, which shall provide 25 ft.
Minimum Building Setbacks: Front Lot Line Side Lot Line Rear Lot Line Lot Line Abutting a Residentially Zoned Lot	0 0 10 ft. 10 ft.
Minimum Landscaped Area	No minimum
Landscaping in Setbacks Abutting an R Zoned Lot	High Screen. See Section 29.403
Maximum Building Coverage	No Maximum
Openings between buildings	In order to provide access for vehicles and/or utilities to the interior of the block, there shall be a twenty foot wide opening between buildings, at the approximate mid-point of each face of each block. <i><u>This standard does not apply to the Lincoln Way block faces.</u></i> In addition to this mid-block areaway or drive, any lot without other means of access from a public street or alley may have one driveway from the street of up to 20-ft in width.
Minimum Height	25 feet, Except that the Zoning Board of Adjustment may determine through review of a use subject to approval of a Special Use Permit Use that such a proposed use and design is compatible in character with its surrounding and is exempt from meeting minimum FAR and minimum height.
Maximum height in portions of CSC bounded by: Lincoln Way Stanton Avenue Hunt Street Hayward Avenue	115 feet
Maximum height within fifteen (15) feet of the right-of-way lines of: Lincoln Way from Hayward Avenue to Stanton Avenue Welch Avenue from Lincoln Way to Chamberlain Street	30 feet, except buildings of three stories height or fewer with frontage on Lincoln Way and without residential use
Maximum Height in all other locations	75 feet.

ORDINANCE NO.

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF THE CITY OF AMES, IOWA, BY ENACTING A NEW SECTION THEREOF, TABLE 29.809(3) FOR THE PURPOSE OF REMOVING THE CSC ZONING DISTRICT SET BACK STANDARD; REPEALING ANY AND ALL ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT TO THE EXTENT OF SUCH CONFLICT; AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

BE IT ENACTED, by the City Council for the City of Ames, Iowa, that:

Section One. The Municipal Code of the City of Ames, Iowa shall be and the same is hereby amended by amending Table Section 29.809(3) as follows:

Sec. 29.809(3). CAMPUS SERVICE CENTER (CSC) ZONE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS.

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Maximum Height in all other locations	75 feet.

Section Two. All ordinances, or parts of ordinances, in conflict herewith are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict, if any.

Section Three. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and publication as required by law.

Passed this _____ day of _____, 2022.

Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

John A. Haila, Mayor