

Staff Report**INITIATE PLAN 2040 LAND USE DESIGNATION AMENDMENT TO CHANGE
NEIGHBORHOOD CORE TO RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD-3**

March 14, 2023

BACKGROUND

On December 13, 2022, the City Council approved a rezoning with Master Plan for the 108.21-acre Bluffs Development, of which approximately 85.62 acres were zoned to a combination of Suburban Residential Low Density (FS-RL) and Suburban Residential Medium Density (FS-RM) with the remaining 20 acres maintaining its Agricultural (A) zoning designation. Subsequent to this rezoning, Kurt Friedrich requested City Council consider initiating a land use amendment for part of the Bluffs development (Attachment A).

This remaining 20-acre Agricultural parcel currently has the Plan 2040 land use designation of Neighborhood Core (NC) for approximately 5 acres and 15 acres of Residential Neighborhood (RN-3) (Attachments B and C). **The applicant requests the entirety of the site become RN-3 to allow for a church to be developed on the entire parcel rather than on 15 acres of the site that are currently RN-3.**

The subject site was annexed in 2022. In 2017, prior to annexation, the property owner (Kurt Friedrich) requested an amendment to the Ames Urban Fringe Future Land Map and Land Use Policy Plan (LUPP) for the North Growth Gap Area from Priority Transitional Residential, Rural Transitional Residential, and Parks and Recreation Areas to Urban Residential with a Convenience Commercial Node at the intersection of Cameron School Road and George Washington Carver Avenue.

At the time of the request in 2017, Mr. Friedrich stated that the amount of existing and proposed residential development within the city limits and proposed residential development on this property would create a need for a stronger commercial presence in north Ames. He felt the Convenience Commercial Node at this intersection would provide that presence as the developer desired.

In the 2017 staff report, staff did acknowledge that proposed commercial node was not fully consistent with all the criteria for locating Convenience Commercial Nodes within the former LUPP policies based upon the service area of existing commercial nodes. Staff's principal concerns were related to locating commercial services on the edge of the City where there is no anticipated expansion of the city limits to accommodate future residential development. However, City Council agreed with the developer that additional commercial land area was desirable and approved the request with a 6-0 vote.

Plan 2040 Land Use Designation

As a result of that decision, the corner area was included as commercial within the Ames Plan 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Plan 2040 removed floating commercial nodes and assigned commercial designations to specific areas of development. Plan 2040 assigned different types of commercial designations based upon development needs and the character of an area. **Therefore, this corner was assigned approximately five acres of the Neighborhood Core designation, reflecting: 1) the intended scale of development for this area, and 2) that it would likely be vehicle oriented.**

Plan 2040 describes commercial land use needs and projections in two ways. The first is an overall mix of neighborhood and community commercial land use needs for the growth of the community. Plan 2040 estimated that approximately 150 acres of land is needed for these types of uses (Attachment C). The 150-acre estimate is a hybrid of past trends and projected growth.

In addition to the overall land use projection, Plan 2040 includes planned growth areas with designated commercial areas related to the context of residential development and the street network around it. **Attachment C includes excerpts of Growth and Land Use Principles and related policies.** This means that with our guiding principles and policies, the 150-acre projection is divided up into the planned growth areas, but the intended character in each area sets actual designations.

For this site the Neighborhood Core designation reflects its likely nature as a vehicular oriented commercial site. Plan 2040 includes additional land use commercial designations in north Ames, notably to the east of this site within the Borgmeyer property (Attachment B). The Borgmeyer property includes a 10 to 20 acre Mixed-Use Neighborhood Core commercial designation at the center of the site. The Borgmeyer property is intended to function more as an integrated mixed-use and pedestrian development with some high-density housing similar to a Somerset type of commercial development. This is distinguished in its character from the Friedrich site, which would be more vehicular oriented.

Examples of commercial areas and sites for land use designation and site size context:

Commercial Area	Example Type	Approximate Acreage (Gross)
Fareway/Casey's Commercial Node (Bloomington Rd)	Neighborhood Core	10 acres (car wash and gas station 2.5 ac / bank, grocery, office area 7 ac)
Somerset Village Center	Mixed Use Core	15 acres
Northern Lights Shopping Center (Wheeler Street)	Community Commercial-Retail	4 acres
Other Gas Station, DQ, Office (Orion/Wheeler)	Community Commercial-Retail	2.5 acres

PROPOSED AMENDMENT

At issue for the City Council is whether the commercial area on the Bluffs site is necessary and desirable, as previously proposed by Mr. Friedrich, for the area compared to the current proposal for residential land use designation. The requested residential designation is proposed by Mr. Friedrich to allow for the full 20 acre property to be sold as a large church site. Without approval of the request, approximately 15 of the 20 acres could be rezoned and proposed for a church with the current land use designations. The current Neighborhood Core Commercial Area designation does not have a corresponding commercial zoning district that would accommodate a religious institution use.

Based upon the City's growth planning for this general area, staff estimates that between 700 and 1000 housing units may be added through a mix of single-family dwellings and multi-family apartments developed between the combined areas of the Bluffs and the Borgmeyer property. A corresponding population estimate of 2.3 persons per household would yield approximately 1,500 to 2,300 people.

Although there are a number of methods to estimate commercial land use needs, staff believes these two areas with this population estimate could support approximately 10 acres as a mix of retail, office, and restaurant uses. A convenience store or gas station would likely be a desirable use in this area as well due to the lack of other commercial sites in the area. **Ultimately, the question for this requested land use amendment will pivot on the character of commercial, rather than total amount of land needed for commercial uses in this specific area of Ames.**

OPTIONS:

Option 1: Initiate a Minor Land Use Amendment for a Residential Neighborhood-3 (RN-3) Designation

City Council could agree to initiate a Comprehensive Plan amendment for residential. This option would remove the five acres of area designated for Neighborhood Core commercial area from The Bluffs site. The resulting designation would be RN-3 for all 20 acres of the property. **The owner could then proceed to apply for rezoning of the site to residential zoning district and pursue a Special Use Permit for the construction of a church that could occupy all of the 20-acre site.**

This option would be supported by assuming the commercial land use needs for this part of the City can be met through development of the Mixed Use Core area on the adjacent Borgmeyer site and that this site does not specifically need to have a site for commercial uses. The Mixed-Use Core area on the Borgmeyer site would not be intended as a vehicular oriented commercial area as is intended for the site at the corner of Cameron School Road and GW Carver.

If the subject site was not commercial, the RN-3 designation would fit as the appropriate land use designation for this site and match the surroundings. The property owner could apply for a rezoning to FS-RL or FS-RM with a Master Plan amendment if the land use

designation is changed.

The minor amendment process for this site would not require any specific outreach neighborhood meeting due to its fringe location at the edge of the city with no neighborhood development near the site. The amendment would be applied for by the property owner and require review by the Planning and Zoning Commission and then a final decision by the City Council.

Regardless of any land use change to the site, the property will continue to be subject to the terms of the pre-annexation agreement for traffic improvements and sanitary sewer capacity. The planned improvements to Cameron School Road and GW Carver would still be required. Development of site with a church or residential uses in lieu of commercial can be accommodated within the sanitary sewer capacity limits of the area.

Option 2: Retain the 5-acre Neighborhood Core Commercial Designation

City Council could decline the request to initiate a Comprehensive Plan amendment. This option would maintain the current land use designation for part of the site. Retaining the designation would support rezoning to a Convenience Commercial, Convenience General Service, or Neighborhood Commercial. These would typically be automobile oriented commercial zoning district choices.

The property owner could proceed with a rezoning application for approximately 15 acres to a residential zoning district and then pursue development of church on the remaining 15 acres of the site through approval of a Special Use Permit. The property owner would not be required to develop the corner site with commercial, but retaining the designation would not allow the site to be rezoned and developed with any other use.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Staff originally did not support creating an additional commercial node in 2017 based upon the prior LUPP policies for spacing of commercial nodes. Since that time the City's new Comprehensive Plan has a different approach related to planning for commercial uses. Although Plan 2040 included the Neighborhood Core designation based upon its prior approval, Staff believes that the commercial designation on the Bluffs site is only necessary to serve the needs of future growth in this area if City Council believes an auto oriented commercial area is desirable for the area. The Neighborhood Core location is well suited to vehicular oriented commercial use.

Staff believes that if the Neighborhood Core area is removed, the planned Mixed-Use Commercial area at the neighboring Borgmeyer site can provide enough land area to meet commercial needs for the projected population growth, but it is not planned as a vehicle oriented commercial area and would be more like the Somerset Village Center.

Attachment A

From: Kurt Friedrich <kfriedrich@friedrich-realty.com>
Date: Friday, February 10, 2023 at 2:03 PM
To: City Council and Mayor <mayorcouncil@amescitycouncil.org>
Cc: Chris Gunnare <Chris.Gunnare@hopewdm.org>, Luke Jensen <ljensen@friedrich-realty.com>, Greg Broussard <greg.broussard@bolton-menk.com>
Subject: LUPP Map Change for Lutheran Church of Hope

[External Email]

Honorable Mayor and City Council;

As many of you know, we have been working with Lutheran Church of Hope to establish a permanent home for their growing ministry here in Ames. Hope currently meets in the community auditorium adjacent to City Hall for worship services and has added multiple services on the weekends to accommodate members and guests. To continue its growth and commitment to enriching lives in our community through Christ's love and service to others, they plan to build their ministry campus on the 20 acres at the NE corner of our Bluff's Subdivision (formerly Dankbar/Muench).

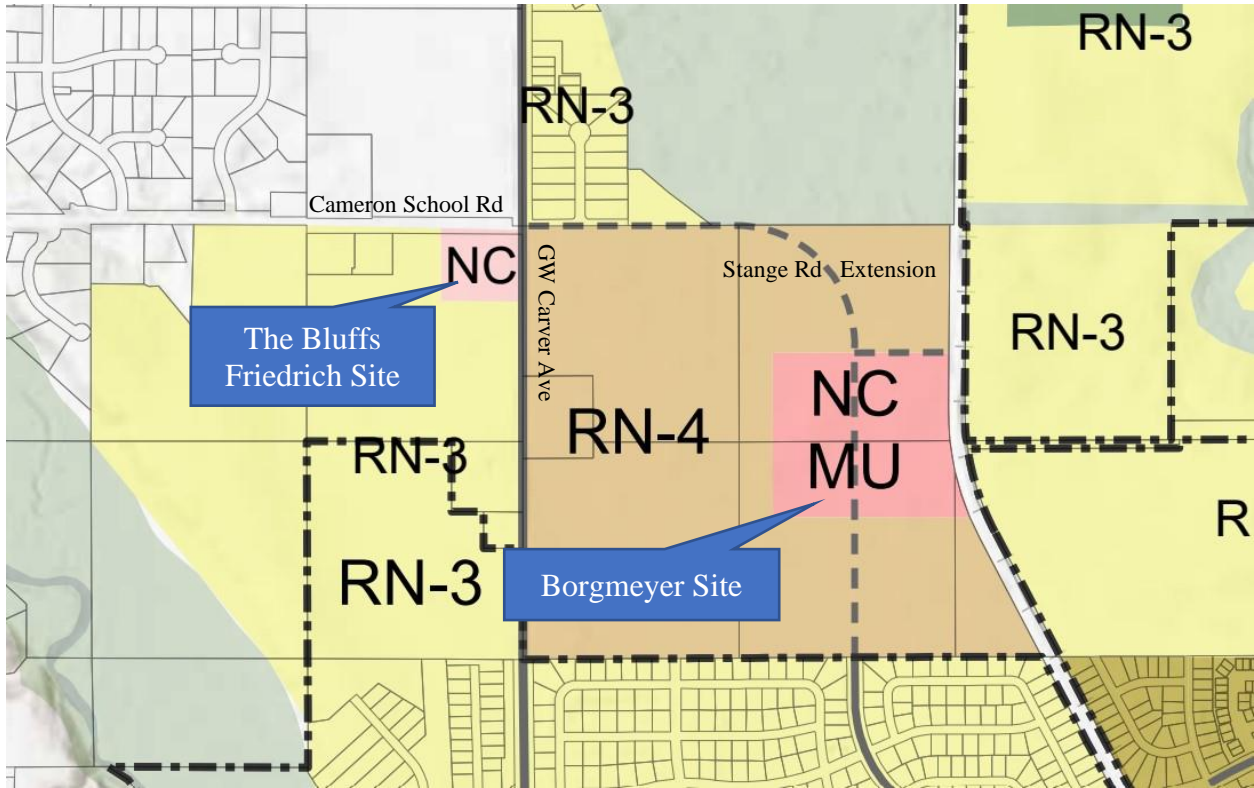
Back in 2017 we had requested that the Council consider the corner 5 acres be identified as a future commercial node. Council approved this request and more recently in the 2040 plan, Council maintained the node at this location on its land use map. Because Hope plans to utilize the area identified as commercial on the site for future expansion of their own facilities, and to avoid any potential roadblocks to that, they wish to have the commercial node removed from the map now. We are supportive of Hope's preference to remove the node as it is consistent with their long term plans for use of the site. Additionally, there is a much larger commercial node that has been identified on the Borgmeyer property to the east, so only a small portion of the potential commercial land in this area will be eliminated by the removal of this node.

Staff has indicated its support of the removal of this node in our meetings and communications. We ask for your support of this change to allow Hope to move ahead with clarity of purpose and vision. Please advance this map change request for us.

Thank you,

Kurt W. Friedrich
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FriedrichRealty.com

Attachment B



Attachment C-Ames Plan 2040 Excerpts

CONDITIONS AND TRENDS: PHYSICAL

Projected Land Needs

Communities can grow in a number of different ways, ranging from sprawling suburban styles to compact, walkable urban areas. For Ames, projections for future development were created to estimate the necessary acreage for residential, commercial, and industrial land by 2040. These scenarios provide a range of development options geared towards a more efficient pattern of growth accommodating the projected 1.5% annual growth rate, resulting in almost 15,000 new residents by 2040. More information on scenario analysis and tiers are included in the Land Use Element.

To project the commercial and industrial land needs, the population proportion method was used which applies a ratio of the projected population to the current acreage devoted to each use. As a result, both scenarios will require an estimated 156 acres of industrial land. A range of land use efficiency factors were applied to the commercial land projections because a higher density scenario will have more efficient patterns of residential development leading to more efficient commercial development (mixed use, walkable) than the medium or a low-density scenario. The graphic to the right illustrates the land needs and how they were estimated for the two scenarios. The City selected a hybrid approach with the final tiers.

Medium-Intensity Scenario

In the medium-density scenario, the share of low-density residential is reduced from current rates of 80% to 45%, leaving room to increase medium and high-density shares.

Overall this would require a total of 1,257 acres of residential land. The following are housing types for each density level:

- » Low-Density: conventional single-family detached
- » Medium-Density: small lot single-family detached, single-family attached and townhomes
- » High-Density: small multifamily and multifamily typically in the 3-4 story range
- » Total commercial land needed in the medium-density scenario is approximately 150 acres, which assumes some commercial and retail developments in mixed use structures and districts, with some traditional standalone commercial areas, as well.

High-Intensity Scenario

A much larger share of residential use is allocated towards medium and high-density levels in this scenario than is currently the case.

Accommodates a growing population with less residential land needed (1,028 total acres), reducing the cost to the city for infrastructure upgrades and service extensions. The following are housing types for each density level:

- » Low-Density: conventional single-family detached (low-density), small-lot single-family detached, single-family attached and townhomes.
- » Medium-Density: small multifamily.
- » High-Density: 4-story or taller multifamily.
- » Total commercial land needed in the high-density scenario is only 127 acres because more commercial and retail developments will be in mixed use structures and districts, than standalone commercial areas.

SCENARIO ANALYSIS - PROJECTED LAND NEEDS

MEDIUM DENSITY



Share of Demand



of Units



Units/Acre



Acres Needed



HIGH DENSITY



Share of Demand



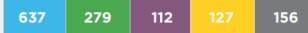
of Units



Units/Acre



Acres Needed



Source: RDG Planning & Design, 2019



Guiding Principles of Growth

G1: Sustainable Growth. The vision is for new growth to be both economically and environmentally sustainable. This encompasses housing densities that minimize the footprint of growth and reduce service cost per unit; maximum use of existing infrastructure; new investments that have citywide benefits; and preservation of environmental assets.

G2: Contiguous Greenfield Development. Ames will accommodate much of its projected population growth in areas contiguous to the existing built-up city. During the Plan 2040 process, the City identified alternative contiguous Tier 1 and Tier 2 areas as most readily able to serve the projected growth in population and employment. Providing multiple opportunity areas creates choices that support a variety of needs of a growing community.

G3: Infill that Enhances Urban Fabric. Ames will take advantage of existing infill sites within the existing urbanized area to increase both the efficiency and quality of its urban environment. Infill development may change the types and intensities of land use and introduce new building forms. Larger areas planned for change are described as redirection or redevelopment areas. As such, it requires an assessment of community needs and character of the surrounding area to guide planning and policy decisions on specific changes.

G4: Quality Urban Experience. The City endeavors to provide urban and suburban experiences that suit a variety of interests. All new development areas will be supportive of a healthy and safe urban environment to be enjoyed by all residents. New growth will include a planned diverse mix of housing and include or provide good access to trails, public parks and open space, services, and commercial development. Quality of design, including building architecture and relationships to its surrounding, along with improvements to the

public realm, are key components of an urban experience and a attractiveness of suburban locations.

G5: Review and Approval Process. The ongoing land use planning process defines priorities and policies, while development review affirms consistency with specific standards that implement these policies. Decisions will be made through a transparent, collaborative process that includes stakeholders, and moves toward solutions that are compatible with long-term community goals. This process should be viewed by all parties as fair and reliable.

G6: Planning for Equity. Ames will continue to grow in diversity of its people and jobs during the next twenty years. Equity with growth requires consideration of the needs of a diverse population. This includes adding affordable housing, multiple housing types, and market-based price points, supporting economic growth, expanding transportation choice, providing accessible institutions and services, and maintaining a variety of amenities.

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Ames new growth will be both economically and environmentally sustainable.

G1-1. Establish a minimum gross residential density target of 6.0 units/acre for each new development area. Within districts, mix residential development types to produce this minimum target.

G1-2. Establish a minimum net residential density in new single-family subdivisions or development projects of 3.75 units/acre. Medium and higher density developments shall incorporate 10 units per net acre or greater. Through master planning, establish corridors and centers that encourage higher densities. Encourage integration over separation of different housing types within a development.

G1-3. Maximize use of existing infrastructure, focusing on incremental extensions to reduce added cost of services per unit of development. Use the Capital Improvement Plan to identify and implement upgrades of existing infrastructure needed to support growth and infill.

G1-4. Incorporate transportation system planning and service levels into project design and development decisions. Include connections to adjacent existing and planned development and provide for alternative transportation modes. See also Mobility

G1-5. Encourage mixed uses, identify locations for focused growth, and provide efficient transportation routes to key community destinations. Minimize community-wide vehicle miles traveled with planned locations for services and jobs related to housing.

G1-6. Avoid project development in environmentally sensitive areas when feasible. Incorporate appropriate buffers, mitigation, and conservation design techniques when required to maintain environmental assets.

G1-7. Incorporate growth-related measures identified by the Ames Climate Action Plan into this Plan. See also Environment Chapter.

G1-8. Support existing commercial areas and incorporate employment and economic development initiatives and sites into growth area planning

- » Use economic development and recruitment strategies for non-resource intensive uses and for development that expands or supplements economic choices in the City. See also Environmental Chapter.
- » Future retail and commercial uses will be impacted by changing trends for online ordering and delivery of foods, and many businesses will operate in a hybrid manner of in-store and online. As more information is known about these trends, review zoning standards and practices to address distinctions between primarily in-store retail needs and location for delivery based commercial. This may include review of parking standards, loading areas, pedestrian oriented design requirements, and commercial use definitions. See also Growth & Land Use Chapter.
- » Continue efforts for the Downtown and Lincoln Way Corridor to expand in person shopping, nightlife, and other types of experiences as an amenity and economic development tool.
- » Recognize Campustown as a small business opportunity area for local and home grown businesses that support student life around ISU, but also as an important commercial center that can benefit the broader community that sustains small businesses.
- » Plan for needs related to small businesses, start ups, and creative entrepreneurial activities. This can include reuse of existing buildings, blocks, or even creating whole districts for mixed use maker space, innovation districts, and artisan crafts and goods.

CONTIGUOUS GREENFIELD DEVELOPMENT

Ames will accommodate much of its projected population growth in areas contiguous to the existing built-up city.

G2-1. Provide a choice in the residential market and reduce the distance to major employment and activity centers by distributing growth in multiple directions.

G2-2. Within designated growth areas, place development priority in the following sequence:

- » Areas in all directions contiguous to existing development that can be served by existing infrastructure or by relatively low-cost extensions.
- » Areas within the urban services area that require significant infrastructure extensions or new facilities that will facilitate service to a broad area or number of different properties.

G2-3. Use the Capital Improvement Plan in conjunction with specific Development Agreements to identify, and implement needed upgrades and extensions of infrastructure to support new growth and infill.

G2-4. Use Future Land Use Map to define areas for growth and change and desired development options to meet housing and economic development goals. See also Land Use Map.

G2-5. Include higher-density nodes for commercial and housing that are easily accessible within each growth area and have adequate density to support public transportation service.

G2-6. Continue to meet or exceed national standards for flood plain development protection requirements. See also Environment Chapter.



Guiding Principles of Land Use

LU1: Relating Land Use and Transportation.

Land use planning must be planned in coordination with Ames' network of streets, trails, paths, and transit lines. The land use plan is closely related to the Complete Streets Plan, with higher intensity uses clustered along streets that have the capacity to serve them successfully. A system of multi-modal connections will be the framework for a land use plan that promotes variety and diversity of uses.

Sufficiency of other related support services, including infrastructure, emergency response, and parks will be correlated to the intensity of use.

LU2: Compatibility with Flexibility. Ames land use pattern should minimize conflicts between adjacent land uses. Some land uses are inherently incompatible and should be separated. In other cases, a variety of design techniques where different uses and intensities meet can reduce incompatibilities and more successfully integrate different uses into a cohesive city environment. Homogeneous

building form and uses are not necessarily the goal of the plan. Guidelines should provide developers with reasonable flexibility and room for innovation.

LU3: Residential Density and Diversity. New residential development in Ames will achieve densities sufficient to use infrastructure efficiently, support neighborhood services, minimize adverse effects on the environment, and provide residents with a quality urban environment. As an inclusive community, Ames will encourage diverse housing types and price points that serve the needs of a range of demographic and economic groups. In addition, reactions to the Covid pandemic may require different housing forms than those built to date, maintaining target densities but with common space that provides greater distancing possibility.

LU4: Vital, Convenient Mixed Uses. Ames will encourage a compatible mix of uses to create more active, interesting, and efficient city environments, while providing residents convenient access to neighborhood commercial services and other vital community facilities.

LU5: Places for Employment and Enterprise.

Ames will continue to provide appropriately located space for a wide range of enterprises that provide employment for existing and prospective residents. The City's planning for industrial uses includes large areas for expansion within the ISU Research Park and Prairie View Industrial Center. Additionally, small business, commercial office, and trade uses are planned for diverse locations across the City. Zoning standards will address design and use requirements recognizing the diverse needs and locations of employment uses.

Neighborhood Core (NC)

CHARACTERISTICS

- » Serves local consumer needs for a group of neighborhoods.
- » Smaller scale development may include convenience commercial, personal services, specialty or small-retail, grocery, small multi-tenant building, child care, local services and office uses.
- » Typically located at sites convenient to automobile access, including intersections of boulevards, thoroughfares, and avenues.

Older neighborhoods may have street parking and minimal off-street parking.

- » Usually characterized by single-use buildings but may accommodate mixed uses or some multi-tenant buildings. Typically separated from street by parking.

APPLICABLE EXISTING ZONING CATEGORIES

- » NC Neighborhood Commercial
- » CGS Convenience General Service
- » CCR Community Commercial Residential

GOALS

- » Provide neighborhood commercial and support services to all residential areas.
- » Recognize role of neighborhood centers as important features for residential communities.
- » Generally oriented around small businesses and low intensity of use in older areas.
- » Compatible scale and visual quality with surrounding residential areas.
- » Improve pedestrian and bicycle access between commercial clusters or establishments and constituent neighborhoods.

DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

- » Encourage walkability and planned relationships among separate buildings in multi-building projects.
- » Relate and orient buildings to surrounding public streets, including direct sidewalk to front door access.
- » Reduce visual impact of parking areas that separate buildings from streets.
- » Provide improved accommodations for pedestrian and bicycle access, including direct paths from residential areas that avoid using major streets and bicycle parking.
- » Support incremental upgrades to existing properties to meet neighborhood design and compatibility goals.
- » Increasingly incorporate elements of "Neighborhood Core - Mixed Use" standards in the routine design of neighborhood commercial projects.

PUBLIC ACTIONS

- » Develop standards for shared access and interconnected parking when possible, improved front yard landscaping and street relationship, and alternative neighborhood access on foot or by bicycle.
- » Support placemaking initiatives, enhanced landscaping, and other features that improve visual quality and reinforces neighborhood connections.
- » In historic neighborhoods or special character areas, develop and adopt standards for site reinvestment and enhancements that strengthen street orientation and site and building quality.