

ITEM #: 30  
DATE: 11-26-24  
DEPT: P&H

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT: ORDINANCE REZONING 3200 AND 3300 UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD FROM "RI" (RESEARCH PARK INNOVATION DISTRICT) TO "FS-RM" (FLOATING SUBURBAN - RESIDENTIAL MEDIUM DENSITY) WITH A "PUD" PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT OVERLAY AND MASTER PLAN / MAJOR SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN.**

**BACKGROUND:**

The subject properties are owned by Hunziker Construction Services, Inc. The owner is proposing to rezone existing lots: 3200 and 3300 University Boulevard (Attachment A). Both properties are zoned Research Park Innovation District "RI", which does not allow for standalone residential use. The 3200 University site also includes an area of Environmentally Sensitive Overlay (O-E) along the north edge of the site, which is coterminous with the floodway for a small stream. The RI Zoning Master Plan includes the 3300 site as part of its HUB commercial area, while 3200 site is for industrial. The Master Plan depicts open space for the park area east of the sites.

Both platted lots are currently part of the Iowa State University Research Park. The lots were created in 2015 (3300) and 2016 (3200). Neither lot was ever part of the Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor, which is owned by Story County, and serves as the western access point to the park. This 100-foot area has an existing cross access easement for access to each site.

A request to amend the Land Use Map Designation to Residential (RN-3) to facilitate rezoning is a separate item on the same agenda. Assuming the land use amendment is approved, the owner is requesting that the properties be rezoned to allow for residential uses alone (not in conjunction with any other commercial or retail use). The requested zoning is Floating Suburban - Residential Medium Density "FS-RM" with a Planned Unit Development Overlay (O-PUD). The PUD Overlay with the FS-RM base zoning was required by Council to address the design sensitivity of the two sites related to the surroundings.

Although the two sites share an access point, they will otherwise be developed independently, as they are each rezoned. The combined rezoning is to address the overall potential development of the area, even though some site-specific elements and the timing will differ for each site. The overall layout is part of Attachment D.

The south, 2.06-acre site, 3300 University Boulevard, includes the Rezoning and the PUD Site Development Plan final approval for construction of 25 units. The Site Development Plan includes the driveway improvements and trail modifications on the abutting properties to the north. This lot will be developed first.

The north, 6-acre site includes rezoning to establish future use of up to 74 units with a PUD Master Plan that will require a subsequent Site Development Plan with more detailed information before it can be formally approved.

The ISU Research Park and now the current applicant, Hunziker, feel that neither of the subject lots is ideal for commercial/industrial development. The two entities agree that it is in their interest to have housing on these properties that can serve the employment center of the Research Park. Currently, both lots, and all of the Research Park, are designated as 'Employment' on the *Ames Plan 2040* Future Land Use Map.

Elsewhere on the agenda is consideration of a change in the designated use from Employment to Residential Neighborhood 3: Expansion (RN-3). The discussion of appropriate use is addressed within the companion Land Use Map Amendment Report. **The focus of this rezoning report is the appropriateness of the development patterns for the specific sites, assuming the corresponding Land Use amendment is approved.**

### **3300 UNIVERSITY SITE (South Lot):**

The applicant is proposing to have 25 residential units on the south lot (3300). Sixteen of those will be in two apartment buildings (eight units each) situated along the University Boulevard frontage. Accessory parking and garages are located in the middle of the site. The remaining nine units will be in clustered townhomes along the east (Tedesco Park) side. The apartment buildings and the townhomes will be two stories tall. All buildings will be in a contemporary style that complements the architecture of the Research Park. The design incorporates brick and siding with sloped roofs. See plans, Attachment E.

The RN-3 designation requires a minimum density of 10 units per acre for medium density projects such as this. With 2.06 acres on the south lot, the density of the property is 12.14 units per acre. The apartment buildings contain a mix of one- and two-bedroom units. The townhome apartments are all three-bedroom units.

The applicant is requesting several deviations from setbacks for the 3300 site to facilitate development of multiple buildings on the site in lieu of larger apartment buildings that meet setbacks. Staff encouraged differentiated buildings on the site and utilization of PUD for flexibility. The proposed parking plan also includes a deviation of locating a third space for each townhome apartment on the driveway of each of those units rather than in a separate parking lot area.

The PUD standards require setbacks around the perimeter of the site to reflect those of the base zoning, FS-RM. The standard FS-RM building setbacks are 20 feet in the front, 6 or 8 feet on the side, and 20 feet in the rear. The PUD allows for deviations from minimum setbacks at the perimeter only when there are "physical circumstances justifying a reduction." Reductions along streets are also permitted since they do not abut other properties.

**The applicant is requesting 10-foot setbacks in the front (west side along University Boulevard) and sides and a 15-foot setback in the rear.** The proposed west side setback is supported by staff due to the configuration of the lot, which is wider than it is deep and has a substantial setback from the street pavement, though zoning setbacks are measured from property lines. The property line is approximately 50 feet from the curb line of University Boulevard, which is larger than typical for residential sites along roadways. **Adjusting the site towards University Boulevard frees up space for different building types and to have greater design sensitivity with townhomes towards the Park on the east side.**

The east setback abuts the Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor. Immediately abutting the site is prairie with one of the main trails of the park winding southeasterly through the area. The trail is 290 to

70 feet from the property line of the site. The design of the building along the east property line breaks up the massing with different angled roofs and rear patios. Using the townhome design with garage parking was a preferred building type for staff compared to a standard apartment building and parking lot that complied with setbacks. **The reduced setback should not affect the character of the Park or its amenities, as the immediately adjacent area is open.**

**The other side setbacks meet code and have more generous space than the minimum, when considered in the context of the site.** The south of the lot will have a drainage feature, making that setback considerably more than 10 feet for most of that property line. The north of the property is occupied in part by driveway, and only one townhome will be near the setback along that property line.

**Staff worked extensively with the applicant to refine the architecture and the park/residential interface.** The interface will have a small retaining wall and fence delineating the site from the parking park. At the request of the Story County Conservation Board, there will be an open fence design along the park, planned as a "rustic" split rail fence. There will also be a small retaining wall next to the fence that will help to ensure that the residential uses do not spill over into the park. Each townhome unit will have a small patio at the rear and each unit will be separated from the adjacent unit by a fence extending the length of the patio. (Note that the site plan indicates these features, but they are not represented with the elevations.)

The apartments along University Boulevard will have entrances facing the street and include high quality architectural treatments and materials in support of having a reduced front setback and presence along the street. The apartments will have brick and siding in white, brown, and black. The garage building matches the style of the apartments and includes windows on the street side to provide a more residential appearance.

The townhome unit fronts include brick treatments and three contrasting colors (black, white, and brown), which will match the apartment buildings. The garage-to-entry relationship meets PUD standards for identifiable entrances along the private drive accessing each of the units. The rear facade, along the park, is plain in its appearance compared to the front, with no brick and two colors of horizontal siding (Attachment D). The facade includes fenestration for views into the park and to create a residential appearance.

Front yard landscaping is also extensive and softens the development along the street. Street trees are planned along University Boulevard as would typically occur with residential subdivision, even though this site was not originally a residential subdivision.

#### **SITE ACCESS:**

**Staff worked with the applicant to refine the entrance to the property off the traffic circle where University Boulevard and Cottonwood Road meet for both vehicles and pedestrians and bicyclists entering the park.** The entrance will be shared for both lots and will also serve as an access for a planned parking lot for the park. The park path is proposed to be reconfigured to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle movement. The Story County Conservation Board has approved an easement along the park property for the shared entrance to cross the three properties.

**Note that the 3200 University Master Plan depicts a future driveway extension and potential park improvement for a parking lot in the park. No park improvements are included in the approval of the PUD, only the shared driveway and trail reconfiguration.**

### **3200 UNIVERSITY SITE (North Lot):**

**The developer has not completed full design work for this site and only requests Master Plan approval for the site with the PUD Overlay to be consistent with Council direction for a PUD rezoning.** The North site is for a Master Plan that would allow for up to 74 units in various building configurations. A formal site plan approval will be required to develop the site in the future. Within the PUD, the Master Plan conceptually represents the development intent and sets and "envelope" for future development.

This site is 6.0 acres and will have a maximum density of 12.33 units per acre. The proposed 74 units sets a maximum development cap for the site and is consistent with Fire Code limitations for this type of site within a limit of a single point of access. (Per Fire code regulations, there should not be more than 100 units accessed off a single driveway entrance. More than 100 units triggers a second access point unless all buildings have fire sprinkler systems.)

The current intention is to have no more than 74 units on the north lot in a combination of two-unit buildings and apartments. The PUD allows for a mixing of building types on the same lot. Staff believes that the Master Plan depicts a feasible development option for some of the site to be developed with a mix of unit types. **Generally, development of this site will have more impact on the feel of the park compared to the 3200 site, because it is set back from public streets and situated near trails and other features of the park.** Two informal trail loops are within 120-150 feet, including the low water ford crossing, the main paved trail is as close at 150 feet from the east property line. The nest, a staired access to the main pond, is 330 feet away.

**The concept layout of the Master Plan will need substantial refinement in the future to address: floodplain setbacks at the north portion of the site; stormwater treatment; utility extensions, including looping of a water main to the north across the creek; buffering; and separation of apartments from the park open space. It should be noted that before the Site Plan can be approved in the future, these specific items must be addressed.**

The applicant and the Research Park have agreed to have an outreach meeting at the time that the north lot is developed. The current request is to have a Master Plan for the north lot that lays out basic aspects of the property. This will occur before submitting for a formal Major Site Development Plan approval as required under the PUD Overlay.

### **NOTIFICATION & OUTREACH:**

A neighborhood outreach meeting, with notice via mail and signs in the Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor, was held on June 27, 2024. Staff and agents from the Research Park and the developer, Hunziker Construction Services, Inc., met with neighbors and a representative of the Story County Conservation Board, which owns Tedesco Park. Hunziker presented the site plan for 3300 University Boulevard and discussed the future of the north lot (3200). An explanation of the setting and the location of the two sites in relation to the park was a critical element of the discussion. In general, feedback was focused on the parking interface, especially related to 3200 with its current wooded character compared to the open grassy area of 3300.

Staff and the applicant/owner have agreed that there will be a subsequent outreach meeting for the north lot (3200) at the time that the PUD Major Site Development Plan is proposed.

Notice for the Planning & Zoning Commission meeting followed minimum code requirements with

mailed notice to owners within 200 feet, newspaper published notice, and placement of a sign along University Boulevard.

### **PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION:**

The Planning and Zoning Commission considered the requested Rezoning and Master Plan on November 6th. After a staff presentation, the Commissioners discussed the appropriateness of having residential uses in the Research Park in light of the fact that the research uses might involve hazardous materials or processes which could be dangerous.

The Planning and Zoning Commission voted 3-1 to recommend approval of the rezoning with site development plan and master plan approval.

### **ALTERNATIVES:**

1. The City Council may approve the request for rezoning of both 3200 and 3300 University Boulevard from "RI" Research Park Innovation District to "FS-RM" Floating Suburban - Residential Medium Density with:
  - a. A "PUD" Planned Unit Development Overlay and Major Side Development Plan for 3300 University Boulevard; and
  - b. A PUD Overlay with a Master Plan for 3200 University Boulevard allowing for two-unit and apartment dwellings not to exceed a total of 74 units, with the retention of the "O-E" Environmentally Sensitive Area Overlay. *Note that final dwelling unit counts, building locations, site improvements, buffering, landscaping will be determined with a subsequent Site Development Plan.*
2. The City Council may approve with conditions for rezoning either or both 3200 and 3300 University Boulevard from "RI" Research Park Innovation District to "FS-RM" Floating Suburban - Residential Medium Density with a PUD Overlay and a Major Site Development Plan or Master Plan with an O-E Overlay.
3. The City Council may deny the request for rezoning of both 3200 and 3300 University Boulevard from "RI" Research Park Innovation District to "FS-RM" Floating Suburban - Residential Medium Density with:
  - a. A "PUD" Planned Unit Development Overlay and Major Side Development Plan for 3300 University Boulevard; and
  - b. A PUD Overlay with a Master Plan for 3200 University Boulevard allowing for duplex and apartment dwellings not to exceed a total of 74 units, with the retention of the "O-E" Environmentally Sensitive Area Overlay.
4. The City Council may defer action on this request and refer it back to City staff and/or the applicant for additional information.

### **CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

The proposed rezoning based upon FS-RM will be consistent with the Ames Plan 2040 Comprehensive Plan assuming the Council approved the land use designation change from Employment to Residential Neighborhood-3: Expansion (RN-3). The proposed housing types are allowed in the proposed zoning and the proposed density achieves the required minimum density.

The PUD Overlay is intended to address two issues for the sites. The first is design compatibility with the surroundings with sensitivity to the adjacent park open space. The second is to promote diverse housing types with high quality design features.

The proposed development at 3300 will contain a mix of housing types that will help to serve a growing office and research center. The PUD enables desirable townhome rental apartments with garages that would likely otherwise be difficult to accommodate on the site. The site has been designed to complement existing infrastructure and community assets (Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor). These features make it a good candidate for PUD zoning and site plan approval due to the arrangement of the site improvements and housing variety.

The 3200 University site, if it is rezoned to FS-RM should also include the PUD Overlay and Master Plan to help guide the general development principles of the site. Final layout, design, and density will be determined at a later date with formal Major Site Development Plan review.

**Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the Council act in accordance with Alternative #1.**

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

[Addendum.pdf](#)

[Attachment A.pdf](#)

[Attachment B.pdf](#)

[Attachment C.pdf](#)

[Attachment D.pdf](#)

[Attachment E.pdf](#)

[Attachment F.pdf](#)

[Rezoning ORD 3200 University Blvd.docx](#)

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