



MEMO

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Jeramy Neefus, Principal Clerk, City Manager's Office
Date: May 9, 2025
Subject: Packet of Communications to Council

Listed below are the communications to the City Council known to staff as of May 9, 2025:

1. Daniel Bush, Ames Resident – April 22, 2025
RE: Request for Permanent Parking Restrictions on Eisenhower Avenue
2. Damion Pregitzer, Traffic Engineer – April 28, 2025
RE: On-Street Parking on Suncrest Drive
3. Karen Eggert, Ames Resident – May 2, 2025
RE: Cigarettes on Main Street
4. Bradley Hemmestad, Ames Resident – May 4, 2025
RE: Murals in Ames
5. Moses A. Ward, Ames NAACP Branch President – May 8, 2025
RE: 2025 Ames/Story County Juneteenth Celebration
6. Residents of Westbend Drive, Ames – May 9, 2025
RE: Opposition to Development at 113 N Dakota Avenue
7. Mark Lambert, City Attorney – May 9, 2025
RE: Property Taxes for Welch Avenue Lot T Property
8. Justin Clausen, Interim Public Works Director – May 13, 2025
RE: Resource Recovery and Recycling Campus (R3C) Update
9. Pa Vang Goldbeck, Assistant City Manager – May 13, 2025
RE: Proactive Actions in Addressing Homelessness

Hall, Renee

From: Daniel Bush <daniel@stonebrook.org>
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 10:02 AM
To: City Council and Mayor
Subject: Formal Request for Permanent Parking Restrictions on Eisenhower Avenue

[External Email]

Dear Ames Mayor Council,

I am writing on behalf of Stonebrook Church to formally request the establishment of a permanent parking restriction on the east side of Eisenhower Avenue between Bloomington Road and Taylor Circle.

This request follows recent temporary no-parking waivers we received for events on April 18 and April 20, 2025. During those events, we experienced significant congestion and safety concerns due to parked vehicles along that stretch of Eisenhower. Although we utilized our own safety cones to mitigate the issue, the situation highlighted the need for a long-term solution.

Our church has grown significantly, and we anticipate continued increase in both church-related traffic and use of the nearby park. We believe that implementing a permanent no-parking zone in this area will help ensure safer and more efficient traffic flow for both pedestrians and drivers.

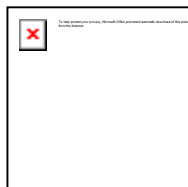
We appreciate the City's guidance on this matter and look forward to working with the appropriate departments to evaluate and implement this request. Please let us know if you require additional documentation or input from our side.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thank you,

Daniel Bush

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Daniel Bush

Executive Administrator

515-232-6290 | www.stonebrook.org



HELPING YOU FIND LIFE THROUGH JESUS



MEMO

To: Mayor, and City Council

From: Damion Pregitzer, Traffic Engineer

Date: April 28, 2025

Subject: Request to Allow On-Street Parking on Suncrest Drive (Cottontail Lane to Cedar Lane)

BACKGROUND:

At the January 28, 2025, City Council meeting, the Council referred a request from Mr. Spencer Cruise, who asked that parking be permitted on one side of Suncrest Drive between Cottontail Lane and Cedar Lane. Mr. Cruise noted that the lack of available parking poses challenges for his household, his guests, and for the two other residences along this block, all of which currently have no on-street parking directly in front of their properties.

Currently, parking is prohibited on both sides of Suncrest Drive in this area.

PREVIOUS SURVEY RESULTS:

In 2017, the City conducted a neighborhood-wide survey regarding parking on Suncrest Drive between Cedar Lane and Red Fox Road. This broader survey was initiated due to concerns about potential overflow parking from nearby apartment developments. Of the 90 responses received:

- 68 respondents preferred no parking on both sides,
- 17 respondents supported no parking on one side (with a majority favoring the north side if parking were to be allowed), and
- 5 respondents preferred limiting restrictions to within 50 feet of intersections only.

It is important to recognize that the survey was conducted across the entire neighborhood and not targeted specifically to the residents most directly affected by the lack of parking along the subject block. As a result, general opposition to on-street parking was anticipated, especially given that most survey participants were not experiencing the same on-street parking limitations.

CURRENT ASSESSMENT:

Suncrest Drive in this location is a 26-foot-wide residential street. Based on standard engineering guidelines, allowing parking on one side of the street would be feasible without significantly affecting two-way traffic flow or emergency vehicle access.

Restricting parking to just the north side between Cottontail Lane and Cedar Lane would provide a reasonable balance — offering needed parking for adjacent residents while limiting the overall amount of available on-street parking to minimize the risk of apartment overflow use.

Additionally, a no-parking zone extending 65 feet west of Cedar Lane would be retained to preserve intersection sight distance and maintain safe maneuverability near the corner.

Considerations:

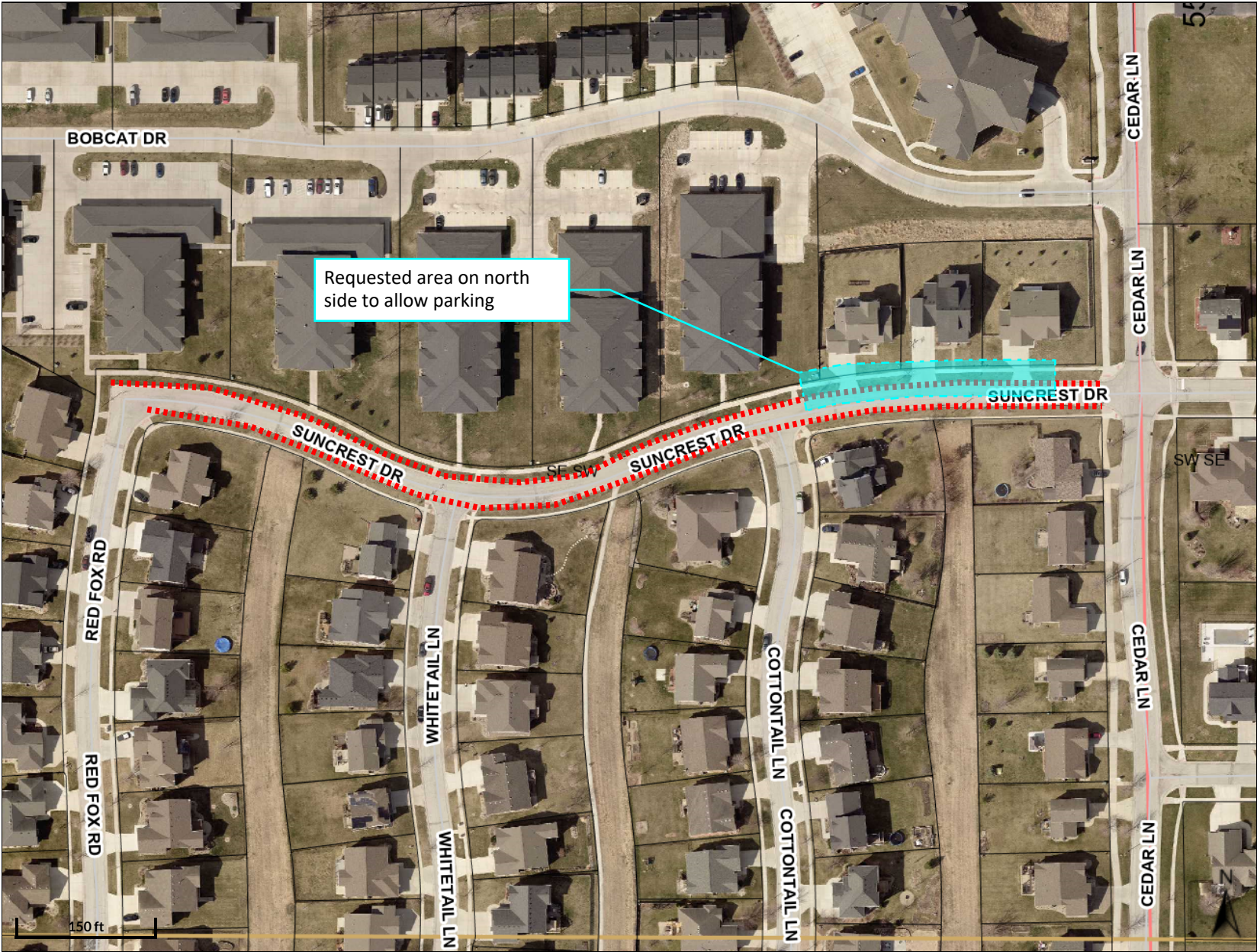
- Limiting the on-street parking allowance to just this one block directly addresses the needs of the impacted properties while maintaining broader neighborhood traffic safety and access.
- Retaining no-parking restrictions through the curves west of Cottontail Lane will continue to protect sightlines and road safety.
- While the 2017 survey showed general opposition to parking, it is reasonable to acknowledge that sentiment may vary when considering only those residents immediately impacted.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

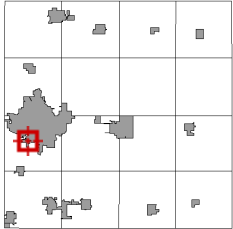
Staff recommends allowing on-street parking on the north side of Suncrest Drive between Cottontail Lane and Cedar Lane, with a 65-foot no-parking buffer west of Cedar Lane to preserve intersection visibility.

This approach strikes a practical balance between meeting the needs of adjacent residents and maintaining safe, efficient traffic operations in the neighborhood.

Suncrest Parking Request



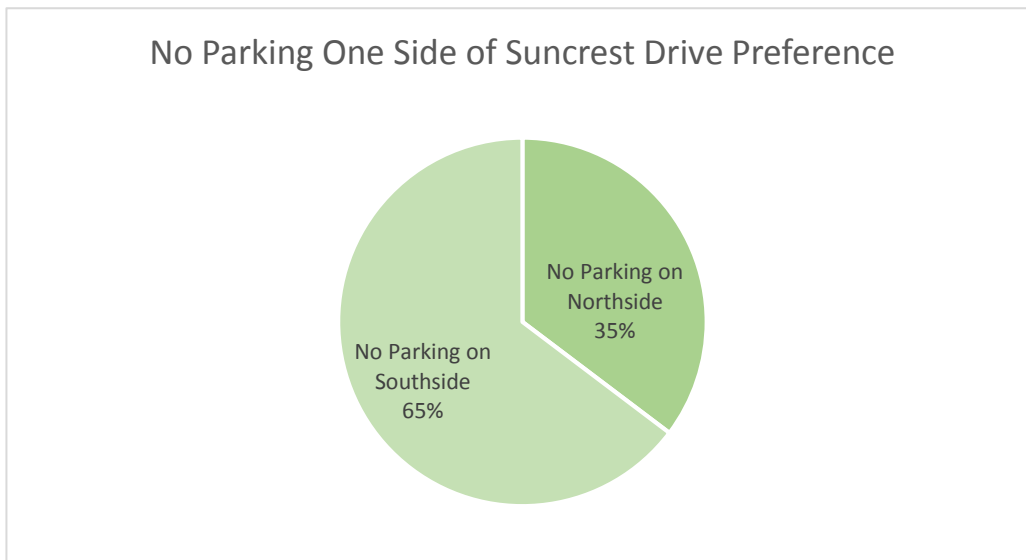
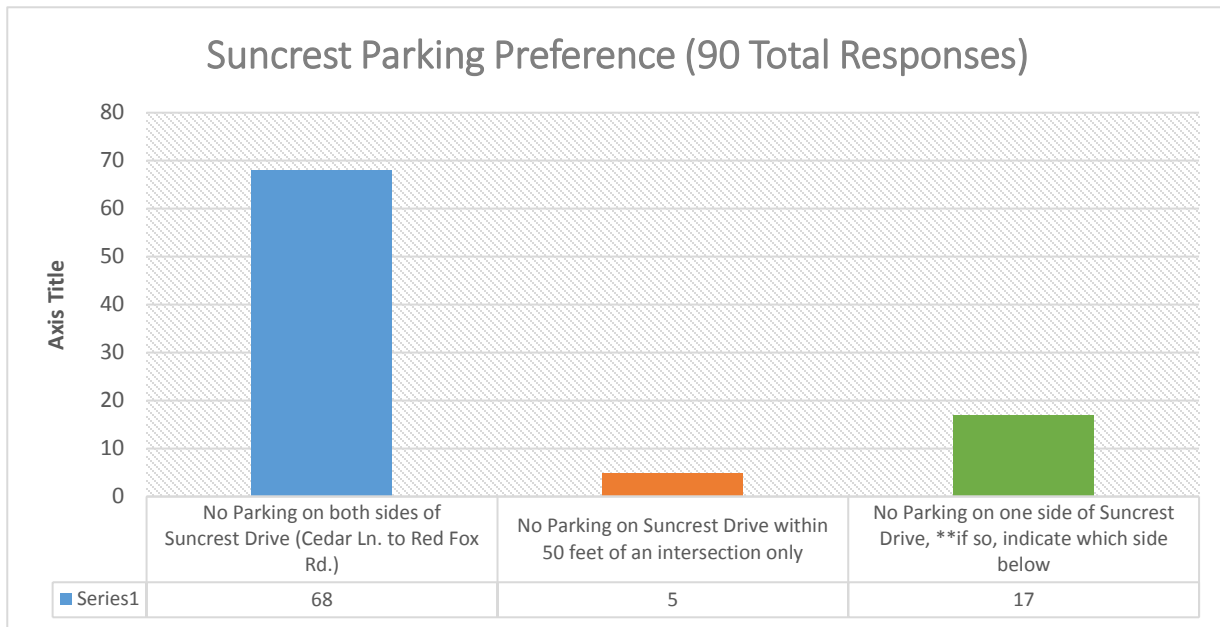
Overview



Legend

- Existing No Parking

Suncrest Parking Survey
Open Sept. 25 - Oct. 9, 2017



COUNCIL ACTION SUMMARY

Meeting Date: January 28, 2025

Agenda Item #: Dispositions

SUBJECT: Request for parking to be allowed on one side of Suncrest Drive

ACTION TAKEN: Request a memo from the Traffic Engineer

MOTION BY: Gartin

SECOND BY: Betcher

VOTING AYE: Betcher, Gartin, Junck, Rollins

VOTING NAY: Beatty-Hansen

ABSENT: Corrieri

By: Grace A. Bandstra, Deputy City Clerk

Sent to: Director of Public Works, John Joiner
Traffic Engineer, Damion Pregitzer

Hall, Renee

From: Spencer Cruise <spencer@fillingstationames.com>
Sent: Monday, January 13, 2025 1:21 PM
To: City Council and Mayor
Subject: ALLOW Parking on Suncrest Drive REQUEST

[External Email]

Dear Ames City Council Members,

I am writing to kindly request that the City Council consider allowing parking on Suncrest Drive. Specifically, the section of street between Cottontail Lane and Cedar Lane. I would ask that you would allow parking on one side of the street.

Our family lives at 2513 Suncrest and we have 4 drivers in our house. The current parking restrictions on this section of Suncrest create parking challenges for our family of five and our guests. As well as the other 2 home residences occupying this section of the street.

I respectfully ask the Council to review this matter and explore options to permit parking on Suncrest Drive. I am confident this adjustment would have a positive impact on the neighborhood and its residences.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me at spencer@fillingstationames.com or (515) 451-4618 if you have any questions or need further input.

Sincerely,
Spencer Cruise

Hall, Renee

From: Karen Eggert <k_mohr_eggert@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 2, 2025 8:39 PM
To: travis@amesalliance.com; City Council and Mayor
Subject: Cigs and smoke on Main

[External Email]

Good Evening,

I love to shop downtown Ames. This week you should visit Marmalade Moon for their house made ice cream or wonderful barista bar and then walk east to OakLane Candles, an amazing candle shop that uses nontoxic scents.

As you are walking east from one shop to the next, notice the gross cigarette butt pots, a green bucket on a brick, and butts everywhere. (Pics below) Be ready to cover your nose so you don't have to inhale the cigarette smoke.

Why do you allow this? Why do you look the other way and let this take place? It is do unfair to customers and the other businesses on Main Street. Believe me , compared to other towns, we are so fortunate in Ames with great shops.

These bar businesses can put their smoke pots in the alley behind the bars or establish a smoke room. Or.....the city can prohibit it and enforce it.

Please do something about this.

Karen Eggert
306 Westwood Dr
Ames









Sent from my iPhone

Hall, Renee

From: Bradley Hemmestad <bradleyhemmestad@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, May 4, 2025 10:28 PM
To: City Council and Mayor
Subject: Murals for the City of Ames
Attachments: PXL_20231105_125515224.jpg; PXL_20230628_233829494.jpg; PXL_20230721_024942109~2.jpg; Screenshot_20250504-215125~2.jpg

[External Email]

Hello, Ames! My name is Bradley Hemmestad, a local artist who has proudly called this city home for years. Ames has a charm that keeps me rooted, but adventure has always been in my heart. Over the past few years, I've crisscrossed the country on my trusty 1980 Kawasaki—held together with sticks, zip ties, and sheer determination. Against all odds, it's survived tornadoes, hurricane-force winds, the towering peaks of the Rockies, brutal hailstorms and record heat waves in the desert that would have sent lesser machines to the scrap heap.

Through my travels, I've witnessed the soul of countless cities—their creativity embedded in walls, streets, and the very culture that pulses through them. That artistic energy is what makes a city feel alive, weaving stories into every corner. And that's why I believe Ames has even more untapped potential—it deserves to be a place where art thrives, where creativity takes center stage, and where we celebrate the vibrant spirit that makes this city truly special. Let's bring more art to Ames and make it shine like never before!

I'm contacting you today to see if it would be possible that the city could fund a project or multiple projects to bring more of this vibrancy to Ames. I have done murals for other towns before such as Pocahontas, Dayton and Fort Dodge. And I would like to do something in for Ames now too!

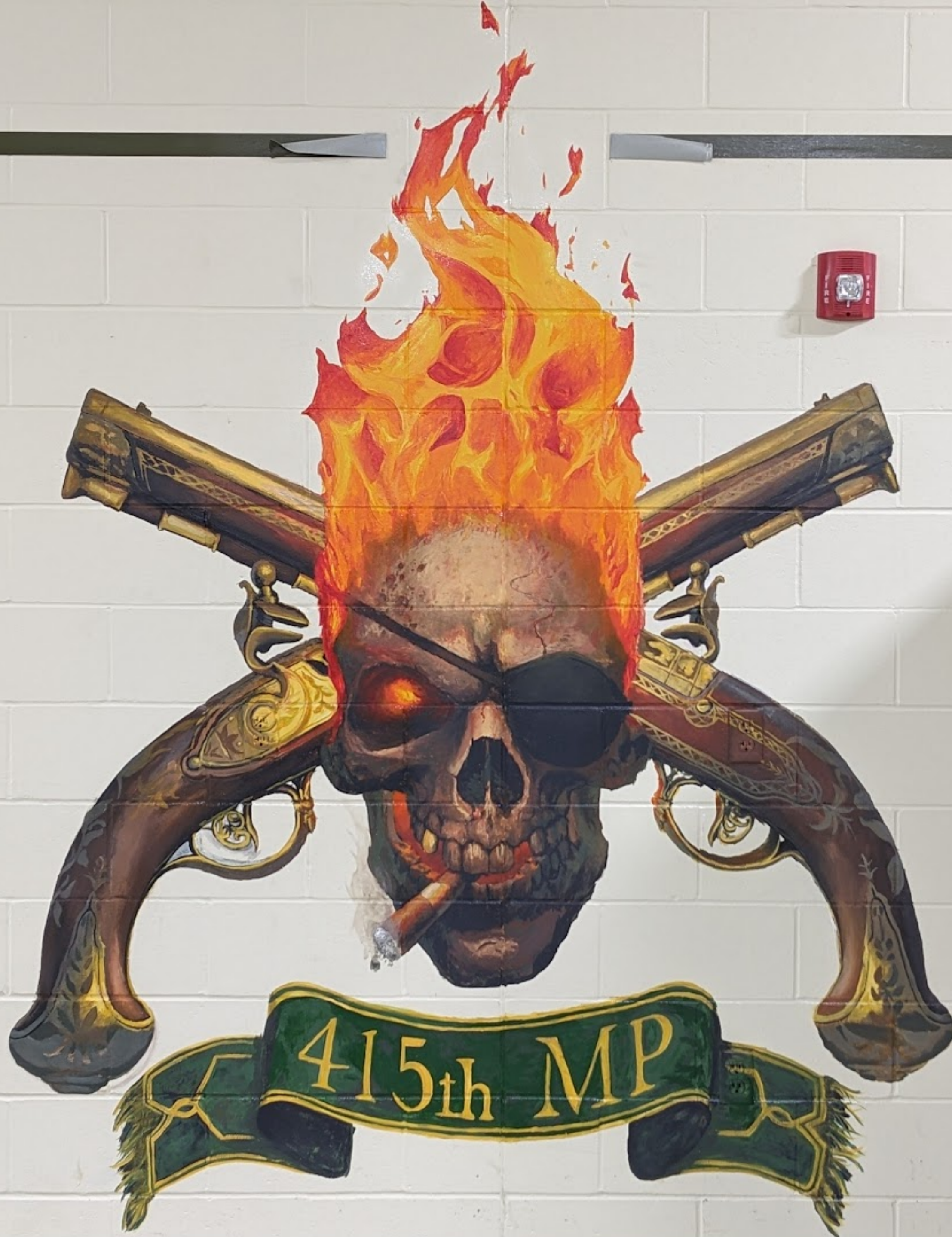
-The first linked image is my most recent mural done for the city of Fort Dodge military base and was done from start to finish in one day.

-The second image is a really old one from when I was a kid and I obviously am way more capable now but I still see it fitting to include it just because of the sheer scale. It was done for the Town of Dayton

Thank you for your time and I hope to hear from you soon! I would really enjoy to be able to work together on some projects for this wonderful city.

Sincerely,
Bradley Hemmestad

p.s. I had accidentally emailed this message through my mightymidge101 email first so I thought it best to send this through an email that I actually use (this one). So sorry for the duplicate emails.





DAYTON LABOR DAY
CHAMPIONSHIP WEEKEND
RODEO

DAYTON

DAYTON FIRE DEPT

MOUNTAINEER
PREMIER

COMMUNITY
TRUCK CENTER







#4120 – P.O. Box 529
Ames, Iowa 50010



2025 Ames/Story County Juneteenth Celebration
Saturday, June 14th

May 8, 2025

Ames Mayor and City Council
Attention: Steve Schainker, City Manager
PO Box 811
Ames, IA 50010

Greetings Mr. Schainker,

First and foremost, we thank the City of Ames for sponsoring the 3rd Ames/Story County Juneteenth Celebration Event. Because of your support, we were able to provide free food, games, and entertainment to approximately 250 attendees and complimentary tables and chairs to 25 vendors to showcase their products and/or programs.

We are in the midst of planning our 4th Annual Ames/Story County Juneteenth Celebration. Below are some of the highlights:

- **Saturday, June 15th**, will be our **Juneteenth Celebration at Bandshell Park**, from **12:30 p.m. until 5:00 p.m.** We are planning again to provide free food, games, and entertainment, and we are soliciting more organizations and vendors to showcase their products and programs.
- **Additionally**, we are expanding our educational outreach, where we are excited to partner with downtown businesses this year and the Ames Public Library to highlight the history of Juneteenth and the contributions of local citizens of color to our community. Posters and game cards will be in shop windows (available at the Ames Public Library [APL] and some shops). When completed, the cards can be traded for a prize at APL. There will also be a historical lecture on Iowa's colored troops by a descendant of one who served, in cooperation with APL and the Ames History Museum.

One of the major impacts of our 3rd Ames/Story County Juneteenth event was the feedback from individuals and families that they could not believe that food was free and that this was their meal for the day. Again, we are excited to have the opportunity to have this type of impact on the needs of citizens in our community, in addition to other fun activities being planned. We know that **the City of Ames** embraces helping to address food insecurities by promoting events that foster that philosophy. Attached are the 2025 Sponsorship Levels with Benefits. **We hope that we can again count on your sponsorship of a minimum of \$1,000 for this year's event so that we can continue to foster community participation and engagement in this nationally celebrated holiday.**

We want to thank **the City of Ames** in advance for your consideration of this partnership and sponsorship opportunity. Checks can be made payable to the Ames Branch of the NAACP, Unit #4120, and sent to PO Box 529, Ames, IA 50010.

We look forward to hearing from you soon. For event updates, visit our website at www.amesianaacp.org.

If you have questions, need additional information, or an invoice, and would like a table at the event, please contact Vanessa Baker-Latimer at juneteenth4amesstory@gmail.com.

In partnership,

Moses A. Ward, President
Ames (IA) NAACP Branch

2025 Sponsorship Levels and Benefits

Freedom Sponsor: \$1,000

- Logo on Banner displayed at the event.
- Logo on Website and all social media platforms
- 3-minute greeting at the beginning of the event
- 2 verbal recognitions during the event

Liberty Sponsor: \$500

- Logo on Banner displayed at the event.
- Logo on Website and all social media platforms
- One verbal recognition during the event

Unity Sponsor: \$250-\$400

- Logo on Banner displayed at the event.

Mayor Haila and Council,

We are residents of 4530 Westbend Drive, which is a neighboring parcel to the proposed development at 113 N Dakota on the agenda for next week's city council meeting. After carefully reviewing the proposed development and relevant city plans and codes, it is clear the proposed design does not fit the context of the neighborhood, should not have been allowed to proceed under medium residential with Planned Unit Development (PUD) overlay, and does not fit the vision, definition, or development guidelines of an Urban Corridor (UC), as identified in the Ames 2040 Plan.

The Westbend neighborhood is defined by single family homes carefully placed along a wooded ridge. In a recent survey of neighbors, the wooded nature of the neighborhood was the number one reason residents chose to relocate here. The proposed development will require clear-cutting 47 trees, including 17 century oaks, replacing them with tall townhomes crowing the hill and dominating the southern skyline. The city *All about trees* webpage states, "Trees are an important part of our community" and "Trees have been shown to increase property values." We agree, and believe this development does not meet the context of the neighborhood and will materially damage the viewshed and property values of both the adjoining properties and the properties higher on the hill that look over our homes onto the proposed development.

Mr. Jensen is proposing to rezone this area to medium density residential with a PUD overlay.

The Ames 2040 Plan identifies this area as an opportunity to rezone as UC and identifies Lincoln Way Mixed Use Overlay (O-LMU) as the appropriate existing zoning category, therefore it is inappropriate to use RM with a PUD overlay for this project. The Urban Corridor land use has a much narrower definition, goals, and development guidelines than a PUD, which is a tool to allow generously flexible deviations from municipal code. Furthermore, if the proposed development were to be allowed under RM with PUD-O, we believe the proposed development fails to meet four of the six requirements of a PUD (Sec. 29.1114, b, c, d, & f).

Sec. 29.1114(b) requires a PUD to increase the diverse housing types for a variety of income levels. Based on the information shared in the outreach meeting, these units will be expensive for their size and the economics imply they are likely to be used as rentals. As a family who has recently purchased a house in Ames, I can attest we have plenty of expensive housing and rental options already. Parts (c) and (d) require maintaining high quality open spaces for common use. The proposal identifies an area of ravine on the other side of a 120 foot long, 10-foot-tall retaining wall as its 10% "readily accessible" common open space (Municipal code Table 29.1114 (5)). Part (f) encourages context-sensitivity, which we have already demonstrated is lacking. **Given the extremely generous flexibility a PUD provides, strict adherence to the codified purpose must be demanded.**

The Ames 2040 Plan identifies this lot as an opportunity to rezone as a new land use, "Urban Corridor." The description of UC in the 2040 Plan includes, "Potential for denser redevelopment with [...] infilling of left-over sites. Dominant commercial uses but may include residential [...] Older low-density residential can be in poor condition." Indeed, the O-LMU identified as the appropriate zoning for UC is commercial-focused and offers housing combined with commercial as a secondary option. The surrounding undeveloped lots are not "vacant," they are intentionally, and generously, preserved in a natural state by neighbors for the benefit of the neighborhood. **The parcel in question is not a left-over site or in poor condition; it had a lovely single-family home on it for decades and light residential is still the best use of this site.**

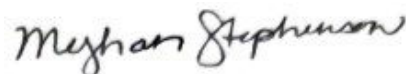
The goals of the UC land use category include, "Encourage positive evolution of corridors through application of Corridor Urbanism principles [excerpts]: Respect for past development patterns and existing businesses; capitalizing on opportunities presented by oversized parking lots vacancies, and underused sites; and enhancing the street environment." **This proposal fails to meet these goals.** This proposal also fails to meet the only applicable development guideline for UC— to "Incorporate medium- and high-density residential use on underused sites, unnecessary parking areas, and gaps along corridors, including Lincoln Way." Again, these "vacant" sites aren't gaps or underused, they have been intentionally preserved as green space for the enjoyment of the neighborhood.

Mr. Jensen is proposing an awkward, cramped rental complex in the middle of treasured forested land enjoyed by the entire neighborhood and the many hundreds of drivers who sit at the Lincoln Way and Dakota intersection every day. His proposal to cram twenty units into one and a half acres over the stumps of ancient oak trees, squeezed up against the neighboring parcels comes off as a greedy overreach. **A RM PUD is the wrong zoning for this parcel, and his project would fail to meet the requirements even if it were.**

Sincerely,



Matt Stephenson, PhD
4530 Westbend "The Best Bend" Drive



Meghan Stephenson, MSN

Major issues with the proposed development

1. The municipal code does not define *context* (Sec. 29.201), but the people who know the neighborhood best will proudly describe the context of our neighborhood. The Westbend Neighborhood includes Westbend Drive, Southbend Drive, Northbrook Circle, Parkridge Circle, and Westbend Circle. The neighborhood is composed of **single-family owner-occupied homes carefully placed along a forested ridge**, many with a mid-century modern design aesthetic favored by the original developer, Bob Buck. The zoning of neighborhoods across N Dakota and Lincoln Way are immaterial to establishing the context of the Westbend Neighborhood.
2. The Ames 2040 Plan identifies this lot as an opportunity to rezone as Urban Corridor (UC) and identifies Lincoln Way Mixed Use Overlay (O-LMU) as the appropriate existing zoning category (Ames 2040 Plan, page 65). Both UC and O-LMU have a commercial focus. A Planned Unit Development Overlay (PUD-O) is a tool for adding flexibility to infill medium residential lots. Since the 2040 Plan identifies this area as an opportunity for commercial, it is inappropriate to use a special overlay intended for residential infill for this project. **This issue was discussed at the June 25th 2024 council meeting** and a PUD was allowed because no one spoke in opposition, which the neighborhood would have provided had we been aware.
3. The proposed development does not meet the design requirements of a Planned Unit Development Overlay, namely the 10% common open space requirement (Municipal code Table 29.1114 (5)), but also fails at context-sensitivity (Municipal code Sec. 29.1114(1)(f), see context in point 1).
4. Twenty units is too many for a 1.69-acre lot surrounded by light residential. Indeed, this proposal would fail to meet the 2-acre minimum for a PUD if it did not have an infill exception. The proposal also requires an exception for how close units can be to N Dakota *and* an exception to the maximum height for a retaining wall so he can build out over as much of the ravine as possible. These are all indications that the developer is trying to cram in more units than the site can support.
5. The proposed development violates Section 29.1114(6)(c) of the Municipal Code: “Massing. Multi-family buildings proposed abutting single-family and or two-family buildings should be of a scale, massing, window proportions, and architectural style that is compatible with abutting lower density residential development.” **The 10-foot high, 120 foot long retaining wall is not an architectural style that is compatible with the adjacent properties**, nor are the three-story modern townhomes perched atop it.
6. The development requires a ten-foot high, 120 foot long retaining wall to cram units as close to the ravine as possible. A retaining wall of this visual impact violates the context of the neighborhood, damages the viewshed and property values of adjacent properties,

and introduces new nick-points on a steep ravine that will accelerate erosion, incurring structural issues for the existing homes along it, and water quality issues for Clear Creek.

7. Views of mature forested ravines are uncommon in Ames, and a major selling point for homes in the Westbend Neighborhood. Three-story townhomes placed uphill from existing single-family homes will make them visually taller than the RM maximum of four stories and replace the skyline of hundred-year-old oak trees with looming townhomes. A recent survey of residents listed the wooded nature of the neighborhood as the number one reason they moved there. Replacing the views of a wooded ravine with the backs of rental units will substantially harm property values for all of the houses on Westbend Drive and Northbrook Circle east of Southbend Drive.
8. This ravine is in the Clear Creek watershed and is currently stable and not eroding. **The city is spending millions of dollars to stabilize ravines and waterways that have been developed**, such as the Ioway Creek streambanks in Brookside Park and the College Creek headwaters along South Dakota. Allowing development of this density on a steep ravine is counter to the city's water quality improvement efforts.
9. **The staff report on the proposed development lists the properties to the south and west as "vacant". This is not an accurate description.** Two of the neighbors own those properties and generously keep them in a natural state for the benefit of the entire neighborhood. These properties are part of a greenbelt that runs from the proposed new community park at Ontario and Y Avenue through Emma McCarthy Lee Park, Moore Memorial Park, and Brookside Park. This greenbelt is a major thoroughfare for wildlife into and out of the city center and narrowing it with medium density housing will contribute to the isolation of wildlife habitat inside the city.
10. On the City's website, under the "Living" tab on the home page, the city is promoting itself in many ways. For example, under the "Trees" menu selection on the left, the city states: "Trees are an important part of our community and enhance the environment by: absorbing carbon dioxide; improving water quality through filtration and erosion control; providing temperature control and wind breaks; and supporting wildlife habitat necessary for biodiversity. Trees have also been shown to increase property values, reduce crime, and improve mental health." All of these benefits would be reduced for the Westbend Neighborhood and our downstream neighbors if this property is clear-cut.
- ~~11.~~ I hold a Bachelor's, Masters', and PhD in Wildlife Ecology from ISU. Using the tree inventory provided, **there are 17 oak trees on this property I estimate to be older than 100 years, and the largest six are closer to 200 years.** These trees are likely from the first generation that started regrowing after settlers cut down nearly every large tree in the state. An old-growth oak grove of this size and age is rare, and this is one of the best examples in the city. Clear-cutting them for another overpriced rental complex is not the best use for this property.

My name is Don Eichner. My wife, Mary, and I live at 4538 Westbend Drive. The parcel of land Mr. Jensen wants to re-zone is presently Residential Low Density and is directly behind our property. Mr. Jensen wants to rezone it to Residential Medium Density and build 20 townhomes on 1.6 Acres directly behind our home.

We bought a lot and built our home in 1974 on Westbend Drive because of the unique qualities of the neighborhood along with the privacy and beauty of the trees and woods in the area. The trees behind our lot and on the South side of the ravine provide a buffer for us and the neighborhood. Bob Buck designed and built many of the homes in Westbend Drive neighborhood. Each home tends to fit well on their lot with many tucked between large oaks that were part of the original **Litzell Farm** property. I spoke with Mr. Buck a few years back and he said, “**I did everything possible to save as many trees as possible** “. He did just that and was proud of the development.

The woods and ravine behind our property provide a beautiful view from our back porch. In addition, they provide a home and food for many animals that live in the ravine and surrounding area. We can see deer year-round as they travel and often bed down on the ravine slope in the winter. The woods are home to numerous birds and squirrels. I will note that the deer are also fond of our shrubs and flowers, but it is a small price to pay. The woods are an important part of this neighborhood and one of the reasons people buy homes here. Ames just received a “**Tree City**” USA status award, it’s second since 1983 and a growth award.

Many of the trees to be removed are large oaks. On the far side of the ravine, after what seems to be clear cutting, we will be left to look at a retaining wall and 3-story town homes. This will dramatically change the landscape and our privacy. How does that comply with being designated as a “Tree City”?

We feel that our home and those homes around us will decrease in value. Would you want this in your back yard?

Before this approval process goes any further, I will ask you to “**Come and walk the area**” and see for yourself how many beautiful trees are on the chopping block. I walked the area again last week and would be happy to provide a guided tour. Around 25 or more old-growth oak trees are supposed to be cut. Is that what we want in a city designated as a “**Tree City**”? If I were the developer, I would be ashamed to destroy such a beautiful lot.

Hall, Renee

From: Hall, Renee
Sent: Tuesday, April 15, 2025 8:57 AM
To: City Council and Mayor
Cc: tkawrite@gmail.com; Schoeneman, Amelia
Subject: FW: Email message to P/Z Commissioners and Ames City Council

For your review.
Thank you.

From: Teresa Albertson <tkawrite@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 14, 2025 8:27 PM
To: Schoeneman, Amelia <amelia.schoeneman@cityofames.org>; Liz Block <lizblockwb@gmail.com>; Don Eichner <eichnerdonmary@msn.com>; Hall, Renee <renee.hall@cityofames.org>
Subject: Email message to P/Z Commissioners and Ames City Council

[External Email]

Dear Amelia and Renee, could you please make certain this attached letter/email is forwarded to the Planning and Zoning Commissioners and each City Council Member and the Mayor? Thank you, I would appreciate it.

Please email and/or call with any questions or concerns.

April 14, 2025

Dear City of Ames Planning and Zoning Commissioners:

Mike Clayton
Mike LaPietra
Mike Sullivan
Julie Winter
Jim Blickensdorf
Matthew Voss
Cheryl Moss

I am the owner of 4612 Westbend Drive, Ames where I reside. I am writing concerning Luke Jensen's request to rezone property in my backyard at 113 North Dakota. This request is up for consideration April 16 before the City of Ames Planning and Zoning Commission. I am out of town this week and am writing to share my strong opposition to this rezoning and development request.

This proposal from LJREC LLC, and the City of Ames' staff recommendation to the Planning and Zoning Commission contradicts the City's 2040 Plan and multiple other stated goals the City has put forward. The staff's presentation of this plan to the Commission is fraught with errors and biases. Therefore, this plan should be denied and the property should remain low-density, residential zoning. Additionally, the Commission should recommend to the City Council that the 2040 plan be revised to reflect this current status of the property and all of the property adjacent to it.

Background

When I sit on my back deck, enjoying Ames' beautiful weather and the stunning wooded property to the east, south and west of my home, I can easily see the property Luke is hoping to rezone and develop.

I attended the "outreach" meeting with City and LJRED Development staff in December of 2024. I closely reviewed Luke's proposal at that time and I have studied his updated proposal.

Additionally, until 2023, I served Iowa for many years as a community-based news reporter for the Des Moines Register where I reported on city government in central Iowa, including Ames. I have attended hundreds of city government meetings, including Planning and Zoning Meetings.

I'm familiar with local government policy processes and I reported on the Ames 2040 plan when it was under consideration. I'm aware of and reported on the multiple meetings the City hosted regarding the plan where residents repeatedly voiced a request to protect property values while also seeking development growth opportunities. Over and over, City staff and council members in attendance assured the public that respecting property values and neighborhood cultures would be respected when considering growth.

My Top 10 Reasons to Deny This Proposal

1. To begin with, the City's staff provided the Commission with an incomplete analysis of this project. The Commission Action Form provided for the Commission begins with a section titled "Background." This section describes the developer's request to the Commission, but doesn't mention the neighborhood's meeting with Luke Jensen and City staff on this project, and the neighborhood's vehement and unanimous opposition to this proposal. Because this critical background element was not mentioned until much later in the document, the staff has unfairly and inaccurately biased the Commission in favor of this project.

2. The background section of this report barely refers to the critical water quality nature of this property to the Clear Creek watershed. Currently, significant work is underway along South Dakota Avenue, on the west side, to improve stability and drainage to the properties there. Historically, the city has spent millions of dollars and significant time creating policies that protect watersheds, drainage and water quality including work at Ada Hayden Lake and work along the Skunk and Ioway rivers. For the staff to ignore the negative impact of this project to the health of Clear Creek is contradictory to the City's stated current priorities and the priorities of the past.
3. The staff report incorrectly states that the area surrounding this 1.69 acre parcel to the east is zoned high density and commercial.

In fact, that high density property is not located next to the 1.69 acres in this rezoning request, but is actually located far to the east, on the other side of a wide avenue, North Dakota Avenue. Historically, the city of Ames has used major streets to separate significant zoning differences. Therefore, suggesting that the property to the east of these 1.69 acres is zoned as Residential High Density creates an inaccurate understanding of the area and the context of this zoning request.

Additionally, the commercial property mentioned in the report is located far to the south, across Lincoln Way, the former route of a major national highway, Old Highway 30. Suggesting that these 1.69 acres is surrounded by high density and commercial zoning is inaccurate.

Although there is high density and commercial zoning nearby, the fact is that these 1.69 acres are ***surrounded*** by low density residential zoning ***ONLY***.

4. On the [City's website](#), under the "Living" tab on the home page, the City is promoting itself in many ways. For example, under the "Trees" menu selection on the left, the City states:

"Trees are an important part of our community and enhance the environment by: absorbing carbon dioxide; improving water quality through filtration and erosion control; providing temperature control and wind breaks; and supporting wildlife habitat necessary for biodiversity. Trees have also been shown to increase property values, reduce crime, and improve mental health."

Additionally, the City's website promotes itself as a designated Tree City USA without interruption since 1983. However, the staff report on this development project makes no mention that to approve this project will directly contradict the City's claims that "trees are an important part of our community." The proposed development is on one of the very few wooded parcels left in our community that isn't already designated as a park. In fact, the wooded properties are the number one reason listed in a recent communication with our neighborhood as to why residents decided to move to this part of town. The wooded properties is one of the biggest reasons west Ames is so unique from the rest of the community.

5. Throughout the City's 2040 planning project, elected officials and staff repeatedly assured residents that maintaining property values and increasing property values would be a significant goal of the plan. However, the finalized print version of the plan makes no mention of these promises.

The City's website, as quoted above, specifically states that trees increase property values. Therefore, allowing this project to move forward along with the subsequent loss of a huge percentage of this neighborhood's mature trees definitely will cause a decrease in nearby property values, as claimed by the City's own documentation. Allowing this project to move forward is in direct contradiction of the City's assurances made to the citizens during the 2040 planning process.

6. I'm shocked by the extensive requested set-back deviations this developer is making for this project. The City's development set-backs and other development rules were created to not only protect the citizens of today but also the citizens of tomorrow. If this project cannot be built on this property while also upholding the City's set-back requirements, then this is the wrong place for this project.

7. Precedence shows these kinds of in-fill projects are being built on properties that are adjacent to other higher-density developments. For example, some townhomes were built in 2024 on North Dakota about 3/4 of a mile north of where this proposed project is located. Those townhomes were built adjacent to apartment buildings, duplexes and four-plexes with transient community members. They were not built adjacent to single-family, low residential zoned, stable neighborhoods.

8. During the outreach meeting in December, Luke Jensen told the neighborhood residents that the profit margin wouldn't allow for him to develop the land with a low-residential zoning. "The numbers don't work," he said. What that really means is that Luke can't make as much profit as he wants to, if he were to develop the property and

honor the neighborhood's low-residency zoning. It is not appropriate for the City to allow Luke to line his pockets on the backs of this long-time and unique neighborhood community. For this project to be built, it should be built in a more transient area of town, not in a well-established low-density, stable neighborhood.

9. Luke states in his proposal that the development will be centered on the "grassy clearing" in the center of the property. However, anyone who has personally visited this property will see there is no way this development could be located on this small grassy clearing, which I would estimate is about 1/4 or 1/5 the size of my lot. I seriously doubt a single home could be built on this small grassy clearing, not to mention a sprawling townhouse development.

10. In the City of Ames' 2040 Plan's section titled Neighborhoods, Housing & Subareas, the city states these goals:

- a. "preservation of existing housing should be an important priority."
- b. "...maintaining the quality of existing neighborhoods by encouraging reinvestment and conserving and enhancing existing housing."
- c. "Maintaining the quality of existing neighborhoods is fundamental to an effective city housing policy."
- d. "Change will occur, but change must be managed and directed in way that strengthen the city's residential areas."
- e. "Strategic infill...increases the value and quality of the local environment."

I could list many more examples from the 2040 plan as noted above. But my message is clear: Approving this project is contradictory to the 2040 plan.

Respectfully submitted,

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Cc: Ames City Council members and Mayor

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"Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today."

Thich Nhat Hanh

MEMO

Legal Department

To: Mayor Haila, Ames City Council

From: Mark O. Lambert, City Attorney

Date: May 9, 2025

Subject: Property taxes for Welch Lot T property

At the April 22, 2025, Ames City Council meeting, the Council passed a motion directing the Legal Department review the property tax status of the Welch Lot T property. Welch Lot T is a municipal parking lot that exists on property owned by Green Book LLC and leased to the City. The question raised was whether the City should have to pay property taxes on the portion of the Welch Lot T property that the City is leasing. The current lease provides that the City pay the property tax for the City-leased portion of the property.

Iowa Code Section 427.1(2) says that “The property of a...city...when devoted to public use” is exempt from property taxes. The statute directly states that the City has to own the property for it to be exempt. [Underlining added]

That public ownership is required for a property to be exempt from property taxes is mentioned in several Iowa Supreme Court decisions, citing a three-step test to determine if public property is not taxable:

“(1) the property must be owned by the (county); (2) the property must be devoted to public use; and (3) such property must not be held for pecuniary profit.” *Van Buren County Hosp. v. Board of Review of Van Buren County*, 650 N.W. 2d 580, 586 (Iowa 2002). [This decision cited this same language from the decisions in *City of Osceola v. Board of Review of Clarke County*, 490 N.W.2d 539, 541 and *Airport Bldg. Corp. v. Linn County Assessor*, 406 N.W.2d 806, 808 (Iowa Ct.App.1987)]

[Please note that although this language refers to a county, the same statute applies to counties and cities.]

Charitable organizations are a different matter. Nonprofit charitable organizations are exempt from property taxation under Iowa Code section 427.1(8)(a), which exempts “all grounds and buildings used by” charitable

organizations. **So, use by a charitable organization is enough; they don't have to own the property to be exempt from property taxes, but a city is required to own the property and use it for a public use in order to be exempt from property taxation.**

I should note that in addition to ownership being a requirement for the property (or a portion thereof) to be exempt from property taxes, equitable ownership (such as buying a parcel on contract) would likely also qualify the property for the exemption.

So, as the City does not own Welch Lot T, but is merely leasing it, the City is not entitled to an exemption from property taxes for the portion of the lot the City leases.

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MEMO

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Justin Clausen, Interim Public Works Director
Date: May 13, 2025
Subject: Resource Recovery and Recycling Campus (R3C) Update

BACKGROUND:

The City is pursuing a new approach for the disposal of solid waste. This approach involves establishing a new Resource Recovery and Recycling Campus (R3C) to receive solid waste, recyclables, and yard waste. Under this new approach, the solid waste would be consolidated and transported to a landfill for disposal; recyclable materials would be forwarded to recyclers; yard waste material would be either composted on site or hauled off-site for disposal.

This memo provides an update on the ongoing development of the R3C project.

PROPERTY ACQUISITION/ENVIRONMENTAL

On March 25, 2025, City Council approved purchase agreements for five properties at 220, 306, 312, 318, and 400 Freel Drive. These agreements include a due diligence period expiring prior to the scheduled closing on July 18, 2025.

A Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) was completed, and the 539-page final report was delivered on May 1, 2025. **One Recognized Environmental Condition (REC) was identified based on a site walkthrough by the consultant. This REC involved two empty 55-gallon drums labeled "Sulfuric Acid 66BE." No visible signs of contamination—such as discolored soil, odors, or stunted vegetation—were observed.** The site is currently leased to Waste Management for equipment storage.

The ESA recommended additional soil boring work and downstream sampling to ascertain if further contamination existed. Geotechnical boring work was already completed and included one boring directly adjacent to the REC location and two others near the recommended downstream locations. No contamination indicators (e.g., odors, sheen, or oily water) were noted in these borings. Based on this information, staff believes the ESA recommendations have been effectively addressed.

Preliminary geotechnical boring logs suggest no significant barriers to development from a site soils perspective. However, some soil stabilization work may be required in areas where heavy processing equipment will operate. Final recommendations will be included in the full

geotechnical report expected by the end of May. The Phase 1 report and boring logs can be made available to the Council upon request.

The Council also directed staff in closed session on March 25 to pursue additional property acquisitions. Unfortunately, although one property owner had previously expressed a willingness to entertain offers and an appraisal was obtained, the property owner has since stated that they are no longer interested in a sale. Staff is continuing to examine opportunities to secure additional land near the site.

PRELIMINARY DESIGN AND FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

At a special meeting on May 7, 2025, the City Council approved a contract with HDR Engineering, Inc. to provide preliminary design services. **This includes conceptual layouts, cost estimates, a financial analysis, and a proposed tipping fee structure to ensure cost-effectiveness for residents and partner agencies. A kickoff meeting is scheduled for later this week, with a final report expected in late June 2025, and presentation to Council in July.**

CARROLL COUNTY 28E AGREEMENT

Once operational, the R3C will transfer municipal solid waste (MSW) to the Carroll County Landfill. A proposed 28E agreement has been submitted to the Carroll County Solid Waste Commission to formalize a long-term partnership for MSW disposal. **Discussions have been positive, and the agreement is expected to go before the Carroll County Board of Supervisors later this month. Following their approval, the agreement will be presented to the City Council for final consideration.**

BOONE COUNTY 28E AGREEMENT

To maintain continuity of operations until the R3C is complete, the existing Resource Recovery Plant (RRP) will remain in service. The City is targeting a July 1, 2027, R3C opening, although this may shift based on construction and equipment delivery timelines.

The City's current 28E agreement with the Boone County Landfill for MSW disposal expires on June 30, 2025. Staff met with Boone County officials on April 30, 2025, to request an extension through June 30, 2027, with the option to extend to June 30, 2028, if delays occur. This agreement is scheduled for formal consideration by the Boone County Board of Supervisors on May 14, 2025, and will subsequently be presented to City Council.

STORY COUNTY PARTNER AGENCIES 28E AGREEMENTS

The City of Ames is the agency responsible for MSW disposal for the City of Ames, unincorporated areas of Story County, Iowa State University, and all cities in Story County except for Colo, Collins, and Sheldahl. **Current 28E agreements with these partner agencies are valid through 2034.** Renewing these agreements is critical to plan for the long-term financing the R3C.

Following HDR's financial analysis and tipping fee recommendations, staff will seek Council and other stakeholder input and proceed with final design planning. Long-term agreement renewals will follow Council approval of proposed tipping fees and design concepts.

RECYCLING

Robust recycling initiatives will be key to the R3C's success. Reducing the MSW volume sent to Carroll County through recycling and diversion will require substantial behavior change across Story County.

In the next few months, staff anticipates requesting Council direction regarding community recycling strategies, including curbside collection, fees, and implementation timelines. Staff has identified that increased recycling efforts, implemented prior to the opening of the R3C, have the potential to alleviate some costs for the Power Plant (and subsequently, Electric customers). These cost savings may be considerable, given the potential costs for Power Plant natural gas supplies and delivery, which will need to be contracted for by the end of this calendar year.



MEMO

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Pa Vang Goldbeck, Assistant City Manager
Date: May 13, 2025
Subject: Council Referral – Proactive Actions in Addressing Homelessness

At the February 25, 2025, meeting, Council requested that staff provide a memo that recommends proactive actions that could be implemented in the near term to create a more positive environment for individuals experiencing homelessness and other individuals that may be impacted.

Below is an outline of some City opportunities that already exist for individuals experiencing homelessness and for individuals that may be impacted by homelessness. This is not an all inclusive list.

Individuals experiencing homelessness (may not be exclusive to this population):

- Any youth can request consideration for a Parks and Recreation scholarship to reduce the cost of camp or classes. Scholarships are also available to reduce the cost of youth, adult, and family swim passes.
- The Library provides a free seeds program where any community members can get free seeds if they want to garden.
- The Animal Shelter allows free sheltering of animals for up to 7 days for those experiencing homelessness if they're seeking shelter.
- The Homeless Outreach and Support Team (HOST) was allocated flex funds from the City Council for a pilot project that allows team members to assist individuals experiencing homelessness with items other agencies don't cover or have, such as a backpack to hold belongings. Additionally, HOST has been conducting weekly meetings, acting as a repository of information about services to assist individuals seeking assistance to better coordinate a unified response.
- Staff can reach out to local shelters to see if they would like help to prepare a space on their property for a garden that clients can use.

For residents looking for ways to connect with their neighbors to address homelessness and other community issues:

- Resource Recovery provides gloves, bags and tools needed for hosting a community cleanup events should a neighborhood or group want to volunteer.

- The Neighborhood Block Party Trailer is available to Ames residents to use. The purpose of this trailer is to make hosting an event easier for neighborhood gatherings and to promote community connectedness or strengthen existing connections.
- The City's Ames Mental Health Advocate periodically provides free mental health classes that are open to the community.

The City is only one of several entities impacted by the issue of homelessness. There are other opportunities or resources available through other agencies to individuals experiencing homelessness or individuals impacted by homelessness.

With the recent rollout of the Conversations on Homelessness Ames and Story County Strategic Plan 2025 Report, the City and other community partners have recommendations on where to focus investments and assistance.

It should be noted that the City Council's pilot flex fund has allowed the outreach team opportunities to assist individuals experiencing homelessness in ways needed that are identified by the individuals themselves. In June, the outreach team will provide an update to the City Council on the pilot flex funds and outreach activities.

Finally, the City Council did add questions on the 2025 Resident Satisfaction Survey to help understand community feedback about services to homeless individuals as well as issues including mental health care, childcare, and food insecurity. This report is expected to be completed this fall, but some preliminary data may be available earlier.