



MEMO

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Jeramy Neefus, Principal Clerk, City Manager's Office
Date: November 21, 2025
Subject: Packet of Communications to Council

Listed below are the communications to the City Council known to staff as of November 21, 2025:

1. Travis Toliver, Ames Main Street Executive Director – November 19, 2025
RE: Downtown Ames Guiding Vision Update
2. Alicia Wrabek, Ames Resident – November 21, 2025
RE: Request for Zoning Text Amendment to Accessory Dwelling Unit Limits



November 19, 2025

City of Ames
515 Clark Ave.
Ames, IA 50010

Re: Downtown Ames Guiding Vision Update

Mayor Haila and Members of the City Council,

On behalf of the Ames Main Street board of directors and members of the Guiding Vision Implementation Taskforce, I want to provide a brief update on the Downtown Ames Guiding Vision Plan and the progress being made in identifying both short- and long-term goals for the district.

To date, the taskforce, has identified several priority projects that will help launch efforts to see the guiding vision into reality while also strengthening the Downtown experience and supporting continued growth. These include:

- Launching a Pilot Parklet Program
(for which a separate \$10,000 outside funding request will be submitted to be considered for the upcoming budget process for FY 26-27)
- Establishing a Shared Dumpster Program to improve efficiency and aesthetics within the district
- Creating a Sip & Stroll District to enhance special events and visitor engagement
- Collaborating with Ames Parks & Recreation on the Tom Evans Plaza Refresh project planned for 2026-27.

We respectfully request and would appreciate the opportunity to share a more detailed update with the council in-person at your December 16th meeting.

Thank you for your continued support of Downtown Ames.

Onward!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Travis Toliver'.

Travis Toliver, IOM
Executive Director

Hall, Renee

From: Diekmann, Kelly
Sent: Friday, November 21, 2025 2:47 PM
To: Hall, Renee
Cc: Walsh, Parker
Subject: Citizen Request for preparation for text amendment

Hello Renee, below is an email addressed to Parker that is for the City Council non-agenda packet.

The property owner is requesting a text amendment to allow larger detached structures than the current 900 square foot limit.

Kelly Diekmann
Planning and Housing Director

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www.CityofAmes.org | ~ Caring People ~ Quality Programs ~ Exceptional Service ~



From: Alicia Wrabek <alicia@timberbrookbuilders.com>
Sent: Friday, November 21, 2025 12:21 PM
To: Walsh, Parker <Parker.Walsh@cityofames.org>
Cc: Eric Flenniken <flenniken1017@gmail.com>; Nicole L <nlarsen4961@gmail.com>; Tyler Lee Wrabek <tyler@timberbrookbuilders.com>
Subject: RE: Preparation for text amendment

[External Email]

Parker,
Thanks for the quick chat, I'm feeling good about this. Looking forward to and crossing my fingers for a favorable outcome at the next meeting! Below you'll find our proposed amendment.

The code today:

The maximum gross floor area shall not exceed 900 square feet for a detached garage or accessory building/structure to a Single-Family Dwelling or 1,200 square feet for accessory uses to a Two Family Dwelling

Detached garages and accessory buildings in the rear yard shall not occupy more than a total of 25% of the rear yard.

Purpose of the Amendment:

Eric and Nicole Flenniken own a residential lot that is approximately 3.5 times larger than the average Ames lot of ~10,000 sq ft. Their 36,000 sq ft parcel provides substantially more capacity for an accessory structure than a typical lot in the city. However, the current zoning code applies a fixed, one-size-fits-all maximum of 900 sq ft for detached accessory structures serving single-family homes, regardless of lot size.

This creates an unintended limitation:

- A homeowner on a 36,000 sq ft lot is restricted to the same maximum accessory structure size as a homeowner on a 9,000 sq ft lot.
- Under a literal reading of the code, the Flennikens could legally build five separate 900 sq ft structures distributed across their rear yard (because each structure is capped individually), yet they cannot build a single 1,600 sq ft garage—despite the fact that their lot can easily accommodate it while maintaining all development standards.

This outcome does not align with the intent of the code, which is to ensure:

- Accessory structures remain subordinate to the principal dwelling
- Rear-yard massing remains controlled through the 25% rear-yard coverage rule
- Neighborhood character is preserved through existing setback, height, and design requirements.

The current interpretation inadvertently creates a situation where multiple large structures are permissible, but a single, consolidated, and visually coherent structure is not. This encourages fragmented development patterns rather than thoughtful site planning.

The purpose of this amendment is to allow larger lots—such as the Flennikens’—to build a single appropriately scaled accessory structure that:

- Remains smaller than the principal residence
- Occupies less than the 25% rear-yard cap
- Represents less than 10% of the total lot area
- Meets all height, setback, and design criteria
- Preserves neighborhood compatibility

By allowing proportional accessory structure sizing on lots above 20,000 sq ft, the amendment restores fairness, prevents unnecessary variances, and supports the city’s intent for orderly and consistent residential development.

Proposed Text Amendment:

Amend Section 29.408(7)(iii) – Size

(iii) Size.

(a) For lots up to 20,000 square feet, the maximum gross floor area shall not exceed 900 square feet for a detached garage or accessory building/structure to a Single-Family Dwelling, or 1,200 square feet for accessory structures to a Two-Family Dwelling.

(b) For lots greater than 20,000 square feet, the maximum gross floor area for a detached accessory structure may exceed the limits in subsection (a) when all of the following conditions are met:

1. The combined footprint of all accessory structures does not exceed 25% of the rear yard area, as defined in Sec. 29.201.
2. The combined footprint of the principal structure and all accessory structures does not exceed 35% of the total lot area.
3. The gross floor area of any individual accessory structure is less than the gross floor area of the principal structure on the lot.
4. The accessory structure contains no habitable space unless permitted under Sec. 29.409 as an ADU.
5. The structure complies with all applicable setback, height, and design requirements of this chapter.

Alicia Wrabek

Owner

Timberbrook Builders LLC.

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timberbrookbuilders.com



Timberbrook
Builders