

ITEM #:	22
DATE:	01-13-26
DEPT:	P&H

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

**SUBJECT: GREENBRIAR COMMERCIAL AREA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
AMENDMENT REQUEST**

BACKGROUND:

City Council received an email in November, see attached, from Luke Jensen representing the development group of the planned 150-acre Greenbriar development located in North Ames requesting a comprehensive plan amendment. The subject property has an RN-4 residential neighborhood designation with a centralized Neighborhood Commercial-Mixed Use (NC-MU) Designation located along the Stange Road extension planned through the site.

The developer desires for City Council to initiate an amendment to Ames Plan 2040 Future Land Use Map to create an approximate 8-acre commercial area at the intersection of Cameron School Road with extension of Stange Road. The existing centralized designation would be removed and become RN-4 to match the surrounding. See attached map.

Staff has had multiple discussions with the developer about the intent of the RN-4 designation and the NC-MU designation that were created at the time of the adoption of Plan 2040. RN-4 is a new designation that differs from the typical RN-3 suburban expansion designations that are common for most of our growth areas. RN-4 describes a vision for development that is planned around walkability, connectivity, higher densities, and diverse housing types. In this case the NC-MU was included for the site as a centralized anchor for the development and to meet a limited amount of commercial need. The commercial area would be an organizing and identity element of the neighborhood relating to the RN-4 intent.

At the time of the Plan 2040 scenario analysis that created the basic land use patterns of the Plan, the NC-MU was anticipated at the crossroads of Stange and a new east/west street connection to Hyde Avenue that would be grade separated over the adjacent railroad. The initial crossing concept was eventually dropped from the Plan, but the overall land use concept of RN-4 for this area was maintained to meet neighborhood development and housing goals of the City.

Local examples of RN-4 development layouts would include parts of Somerset and Prairie Trail in Ankeny where a variety of attached and detached homes were developed around shorter block lengths and open spaces. RN-4 does not prescribe an architectural style, but there is a presumption that builders would need to choose home types that fit the varied sites and reuse of typical larger lot home plans would not occur throughout the project.

A PUD Overlay for zoning is planned as the implementation tool to address the RN-4 goals for housing compared to standard FS-RL and FS-RM. The NC-MU area will also likely be part of a PUD compared to use of standard base zoning. However, this has not yet been determined as staff has not reviewed detailed information from the developer for the NC-MU area.

The developer has indicated to staff that they don't believe that commercial can be successful in the central location along Stange Road and would only build commercial if it is located along the higher traffic volume location of GW Carver and Cameron School Road. Based upon the developer's stance for commercial, they prefer to move the commercial to the higher volume roadway of GW Carver across from the planned commercial in The Bluffs at Dankbar Farm project.

Staff is flexible about the amount of commercial development needed for the area as there was no minimum amount planned to meet a specific need in this area. The commercial designation was not predicated on meeting a particular market demand or minimum square footage, because in this area a designation for commercial already exists near the site with the Bluffs at Dankbar Farms project and the developed areas to the south. Moving the designation, however, does make meeting the intent of the RN-4 and NC-MU potentially more difficult because it would be situated outside of a central location and along two higher volume streets.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Initiate a developer application for Comprehensive Plan Amendment to relocate the NC-MU area to the intersection of Cameron and GW Carver as a Minor Amendment with a required neighborhood meeting.
2. Retain the NC-MU designation at its planned central location.
3. Initiate a developer application to remove the NC-MU designation in its entirety and have RN-4 only for the site.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The proposal to move the commercial may have merit in terms of developer's interest for the types of commercial they plan for the area. At the same time, relocating the commercial will alter the pattern of development envisioned for this site and the developer will need to address the RN-4 neighborhood development goals with their preferred commercial location.

City Council should also note that the relocated commercial area relates to the recent discussion by City Council for development incentives and road improvements for a roundabout at the intersection of Cameron School Road and GW Carver. At this time staff does not believe the road improvements would be different in this area if the area is changed to commercial, subject to final design details being reviewed.

Moving the node may make for a more viable larger commercial area, but it does become segregated from the neighborhood making the intent of RN-4 harder to realize for creating a compact interconnected area.

Staff believes that if the change to the location of the NC-MU is ultimately approved, RN-4 designation goals would still apply and the developer would have to address these interests with the rezoning and subdivision processes.

Staff has not yet been presented with a concept that details out the commercial or planned multi-family areas of the site in order to be able to determine how changing the

NC-MU location will ultimately impact the remaining RN-4 development.

Initiating the process of a comprehensive plan amendment, as requested by the developer, will permit continued evaluation of the overall site concept, thereby giving the developer the opportunity to present plans that achieve the purposes of the RN-4 designation and realizes their goal for larger commercial node along GW Carver.

Therefore, it is the recommendation for the City Manager that City Council adopt Alternative 1.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Attachments](#)