

ITEM #: 37

DEPT: P&H

Staff Report

PLANNING DIVISION WORKPLAN

April 14, 2026

BACKGROUND:

COMPLETED PROJECTS:

The City Council last established a comprehensive Planning Division Workplan in May 2024. In the past year, the City has completed significant projects and referrals related to:

Enhanced public notification, Final Reinvestment District Application, Housing Development Incentives, West Campus Overlay Zoning, Annexation for North Ames, Downtown Vision, Harrison Workforce Housing project, Chautauqua Ridgewood Historic District Nomination, Driveway Standards Updates, Digital Billboard standards and lease, Furniture Mart site plan and URA, state mandated variance and Accessory Dwelling Unit standards revisions, Mary Greeley Medical Center building concept review along Kellogg, along with other minor zoning text amendments and other referrals.

PROJECTS IN PROGRESS:

However, there currently are other ongoing initiatives in various states of progress:

- Downtown Multi-Modal Parking Structure Planning Grant (Notice of Award April 6th, no schedule determined, potential to begin Fall 2026)
- Irons Subdivision Sewer Extension Options (Report to Council April 28th)
- AGCC and Irons Subdivision Annexation (Council initiated, begin process Summer 2026)
- Development Incentive Agreements and URAs (ongoing through Summer 2026)
 - The Linc
 - Hayden's Preserve
 - The Bluffs
 - Greenbriar
 - Ontario Scholl Rd Workforce Housing
- E 13th Street Elwell Property Zoning Amendments (May 2026, start rezoning process to remove contract rezoning and keep commercial zoning and overlay for the property. Text Amendments to the NE Gateway Overlay to simplify commercial development review)

- South of Campus Redirection Area (Update April 28th, determine next steps for potential zoning changes)
- Downtown Vision Implementation Committee (ongoing)

PROJECTS DIRECTED BY THE COUNCIL, BUT NOT YET STARTED:

- Last spring, the planned new initiative was to proceed with an 18-month process for rewriting the subdivision and zoning ordinances to create a new Unified Development Code. Due to other Council priorities, the rewrite did not begin. [The original report from April 15, 2025 meeting is at this link.](#)
- Chapter 31 Text Amendments for Double Pane Windows and Infill of Openings
 - Note staff would also address an emerging issue of heat pump mini-split supply lines with new guidelines for exterior alterations
- Old Town Neighborhood General Outreach Meeting concerning Historic District Standards and Requirements
 - HPC Workplan from February also includes an initiative to consider interests in changing substitute material standards for alterations, e.g. windows and siding types.
- Council Vision and Goals with tasks that apply to the Planning and Housing Department

B. WE VALUE DIVERSE HOUSING OPTIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY

B1. Increase quantity and variety of single and multi-family housing units at various price points or rental rates related to new construction and rehabilitation of existing housing.

B1.T1. Analyze: 1) resident demographics (including income), 2) target housing price points, and 3) possible incentives to “match” income.

NEW PROJECTS FROM THE NON-AGENDA PACKET NOT YET STARTED:

- Luke Jensen request to consider zoning changes to NC or DSC zoning district and create incentives for Downtown housing development north of 6th Street
- Leon Wuebker request for Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Annexation of property in Boone County for Employment and Residential development, Council previously requested additional information
- Kwik Star CGS Zoning Text Amendment to increase allowed gas fueling positions

NEW STAFF REQUESTED PROJECTS NOT YET STARTED (cleanup issues)

- Assortment of minor zoning text amendment cleanup issues that include:
 - Clarification of Data Center Use as industrial, not commercial office

- Allow for 20% alternative design flexibility for ADU setbacks, clarify stories for ADUs attached vs. detached units
- Adjustment of ground mount Solar standards, primarily for large properties, e.g. church sites,
- Front yard accessory structure exception for properties with large setbacks
- Subdivision Code Arterial Road access standards, allow per SUDAS spacing for large sites rather than request a waiver
- PUD Overlay defined gross density vs. net density calculation

STAFF COMMENTS:

Staff believes that the five projects that will require a substantial time investment to complete depending on the Council's priorities are:

- 1) Downtown Parking Structure Planning Grant project
- 2) Unified Development Code (UDC) project
- 3) Old Town Historic District Outreach project Regarding The Nature Of The Historic District Regulations
- 4) Affordable Housing Demographic Analysis project
- 5) Downtown Housing Project North Of 6th project

Therefore, Staff has not presented a proposed work plan at this time until the City Council provides a prioritization of the above projects.

With the summary of projects and requests in this report, staff is only seeking a general prioritization so that a more defined workplan can be created. Once the priorities are known, staff will present at a future meeting options for a Workplan that schedules projects out for 12-16 months, and those that are not prioritized remain in the "parking lot."

ATTACHMENT(S):