Addendum

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DESIGN STANDARDS ANALYSIS

The NC zone has a purpose statement and associated design standards that govern things such as architectural design. Within this sphere the presence and feel of development is guided by these standards. The NC zone is intended and expected in or near residential neighborhoods. The intent is to accommodate neighborhood style businesses and small to mid-sized mixed use or apartment buildings.

Uniquely the NC zoning does not require traditional setbacks because of the varied types of existing buildings. Normally, apartment development would require a 25-foot front yard setback and 10-12 feet of side yard setbacks in medium density residential zoning. Within NC, it allows for zero setback in some situations if it meets the design standards and guidelines. The proposed changes for height and mass increases do need to be considered within this context of setback reductions and design requirements.

This proposed text amendment can be seen to help accommodate additional housing in this area as a result of increasing the allowed building mass and height.

The specific design standards in NC call for architectural designs these include but are not limited to:

Exterior Materials
- Clay Brick
- Stone
- Precast Panels

Mass & Orientation
- Modulation
- Variation in Textures
- Windows
- Front setback reduction with Front Entrance facing Street

Roof Form Variation
- Gabled roofs
- Varying roofline design for flat roofs

The proposed text amendment will not change any of the design standards in the NC zone.

Relation of Text Amendment to FAR & Height in the NC Standards

Making changes to the Height and FAR standards can be seen to alter the way a development within the NC zoned areas is anticipated to look and feel. The FAR limit specifically is designed to control the mass of a building relative to the size of the lot it is located on.

Eliminating FAR would allow for larger massed buildings on a given lot. This compatibility factor with the NC zone standards is complex across the community as the NC zone contains existing development and sits adjacent to various areas of varying development styles. Additionally, this change is compounded by allowing a 10' increase in height limit from 35' currently to 45'. Right now a building could typically not exceed 3-stories in the NC zone. At 45' it is possible a 4-story building could be constructed.

For example, from Clark Avenue to Duff Avenue between 6th and 7th Streets the NC zone is positioned between the Old Town Historic District to the north and the Downtown Service Center (DSC) zone to the south. A mix of building types are located within the NC zone here which include Fareway, small to medium sized businesses and offices, small apartments and churches. To the south is the Downtown Service Center (DSC) zone which could contain taller buildings that cover an entire lot such as large mixed use or office buildings. The DSC standards could accommodate buildings up to 100 feet.

In general the area has some larger scale buildings such as churches, the post office and the Sheldon Munn. North and east of Burnett there are two older high rise buildings which exceed 4 -stories.

In other areas of the community the NC zone is on smaller clusters of land and located within or adjacent to mostly single-family residential homes and lower density residential zoned area surrounding the NC zone. Allowing for greater mass of new buildings could impact the intended look and feel of the NC zone in the context of an existing low density residential neighborhood.

In many respects, most areas across the City zoned NC were not intended to accommodate larger massed buildings of the height and unlimited FAR such proposed in this text amendment request. Staff finds that the proposed changes don't generally fit many NC zoned areas across the city. **However, the area between 6th and 7th streets is a larger block of zoned land and different than the smaller clusters found across the City.**

Core Land Use Designation

Between Grand and Duff as well as 6th and 7th Streets the NC zone is located within Core Land Use designation of Ames Plan 2040 which provides support for higher densities of mixed development. The DSC zoned area to the south of 6th street encompassing downtown is also within the Core Land Use area. This is unique to other areas of the City where NC zoning is located as this area is the only area Core Land Use designation underlies the NC zone. (Core Land Use Excerpt Attached in this report as Attachment C).

The Core Land Use designation has a goal of supporting development that expands a variety of new uses, living environments into underutilized surrounding areas while

reinforcing adjacent neighborhoods. It also endeavors to provide opportunities for business, innovation and small business while maintaining status as significant centers of public life. Additionally, the Core areas expect Mixed Use Districts near downtown, accommodating a variety of uses including medium and high density residential and being pedestrian oriented often with enhanced streetscapes. No new zoning has been written to implement the Core designation and we currently rely on the NC zoning and DSC zoning to implement its concepts.

The existing and nearby buildings within the NC zone and to the south in the DSC zone can be found to be compatible in various circumstances and the construction of a 45' larger massed building in this area, subject to review of a Special Use Permit could be harmonious and in character with the surroundings. This also reflects the uniqueness of the NC zone and its locations across the City.

Parking Standards Amendment

The proposal to allow for 1 parking stall per unit when a project proposes 2 bedrooms or less per unit, for apartments in the Core Land Use area reflects this areas nature adjacent to downtown and adjacent to city owned properties with public parking located nearby as reflecting the character of the emerging development pattern in the immediate area. There are existing public parking areas in the neighborhood to the south and east with some capacity to accommodate vehicles related to any future development in this area.

In areas outside the Core Land Use designation parking ratios for apartments will remain the same as they are now. By comparison this would mean the following hypothetical examples:

- A 30-unit multi-family residential project of 2 bedrooms per unit (60 bedrooms) would require 60 parking stalls on site to meet parking standards. In the Core Land Use in NC a multi-family project would only require 30 stalls on site to meet the standard under the proposed amendment. This effectively would half the number of required stalls on site.

- If that same project contained only 1 bedroom units, the current standard and standard outside the Core Land Use would require 1.5 stalls per unit. This would require 45 stalls on site. Under the new standards this would require 30 stalls on site in the Core Land Use area.

Staff believes that in the Core Land Use Area adjacent to downtown the reduction in parking requirement for apartments is acceptable as it meets the intent of the Core Land Use areas promoting walkability and unique livable environments.

Special Use Permits

Special Use Permits are required for development of NC zoned sites when the site size exceeds 20,000 square feet in area. This means if a lot size is 19,000 square feet, then a Special Use Permit is not required as part of the approval process. A Special Use Permit requires that a specific project be found to be harmonious and compatible with the surrounding environment and neighborhood. The proposed project mentioned earlier this report on Burnette is on a site exceeding 20,000 square feet and will require approval of a Site Plan with a Special Use Permit at the Zoning Board of Adjustment. It is possible moderately sized project in the NC zone just under 20,000 square feet would never need a Special Use Permit as part of Site Development review. Staff believes this makes the restriction of allowing the text amendment to apply to the Core Land Use Area designation in the NC zone near Downtown the most appropriate.

The Planning & Zoning Commission did recommend to City Council to reduce the threshold for when a project requires a Special Use Permit to a new threshold of 10,000 square feet or larger. This recommendation is drafted into the proposed Text Amendment.