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FOREWARD

This plan for Ames is about *connections* — connections involving land use, environment, recreation, mobility and infrastructure. This plan is also about connections involving people with their neighborhood and community in creating a sense of place.

There is growing opinion, nationally, that our urban development policies are not working in the way that we had envisioned. Neighborhoods and communities developed in the past 35 years are often characterized by inefficient densities, lack of diversity, and increasing physical and social separation. The failure of densities is reflected in an over-reliance on automobiles; the absence of more creative mixes of land use and design is often replaced by stifling homogeneity and repetition; and, the most prominent icon of separation is the wall.

Ames is a community characterized by relatively high densities, potentially creative spaces and few walls. It is a place where people can experience the opportunities associated with a major urban setting and still enjoy the benefits of a smaller community. The community's vision seeks to maintain this character, while enhancing quality of life, therein. Through planning for growth opportunities, the connection and integration of people, places and activities is sought in creating a sense of place in a special community called Ames.

The following assessment and recommendations provide a comprehensive plan for guiding the achievement of these connections. This plan represents a community effort lasting over 30 months. Given how rapidly society changes, the time that this plan has taken may seem lengthy by some standards. While time is important and so are results, the process that has been created by this planning effort should not be overlooked. It is a community - wide process involving every element of Ames in the debate and decisions.

During the process of this plan, many valid concerns and valuable ideas have been identified by a large number of individuals and agencies. An effort has been made to address these concerns and incorporate these recommendations within the plan where consensus has been reached by the overall community. Additional opportunity for bridging the broad planning context of this comprehensive plan and the more specific objectives of individual neighborhoods should occur within the recommended sub-area planning to follow.

The Ames community — its residents, businesses, institutions, service organizations, news media, elected officials and governmental staff are to be commended for their efforts in creating this comprehensive plan. Through your debate you showed that you cared; Through your ideas you showed your creativity; and, Through your efforts in achieving consensus you demonstrated the real meaning of community.

Appreciation is expressed to all of those who worked so hard in creating this plan. The number is so great that the reference can only be for collective groups — the citizens of Ames, the Policy Advisory Committee, the Planning Commission, the City Council and the City staff offices of City Manager, Planning and Housing, Engineering and Parks. Thank you for an outstanding effort.

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