



Memo

Department of Planning & Housing

TO: Planning and Zoning Commission

FROM: Steve Osguthorpe, Director

DATE: May 29, 2009

SUBJECT: Commission Comments on Goals and Objectives of Land Use Policy Plan (LUPP)

Attached is the compilation of the Commissions comments on the goals and objectives of the Land Use Policy Plan (LUPP). If several Commissioners had similar comments, they have been combined into one comment. Comments made by only one Commissioner are also included. I thought it might be helpful to summarize this compilation. To facilitate your meeting with City Council, the summary is arranged around issues that the Commission considers to be a priority for the upcoming year.

Verify and Update Trends

The Plan relies on data about a variety of trends, including population, ISU enrollment, employment, housing (across a range of values), commercial land, industrial land, and area within the city limits. These data needs to be updated and then the community can adjust expectations, targets, and policies as appropriate. This could lead to revisions to Goals 1 and 2 and the objectives under each of these goals, as they are based largely on such trends, and should have more specifics.

Changing Energy Sources

The LUPP does not recognize or address the growing interest and use of “alternative” forms of energy. Goals and/or objectives on “environmental-friendliness” and mobility and alternative transportation should be revised to specifically address where and how to accommodate renewable wind and solar energy production and electricity used for transportation, as well as recognizing that other energy sources may emerge. The Plan should also guide how to balance these needs with other community values such as land use conflicts and aesthetics.

Linkages

More priority should be given to adequate bicycle trails to link the entire community and its surroundings. Other alternative forms of transportation should also be considered. This is important to the goal on connectivity, to the goal on transportation, and to the goal on the downtown as it should address integrating the expansion of parking with improving access by autos, bicycles, pedestrians, and mass transit.

Housing and Residential Development

In addition to updating the objectives for building residences based on updated trends, other objectives of the Plan should be reconsidered. Integrating residential areas with employment locations and commercial services may be more important than compactness and minimum densities. Aesthetic values and appearance compatibility between these uses may be more important to the community now than higher densities. Policies and programs are needed to accomplish more effectively the current objective on supply of housing for families with low or moderate incomes. Goals 2, 4, and 6 relate to these issues. *(Staff did not see that the Commissioners wanted to change objective 6-A on affordable housing. If that is not the case, it should be clarified at the meeting.)*

In addition to these four issues, the Commission's comments also emphasized the importance of Downtown and Campustown. Specific issues mentioned include intensification, vertical development, parking, pedestrian access, and the amount of space, although staff is not sure if this refers to space for private development or to public indoor or outdoor space. Since the comments were about specific aspects of the development of these areas, the Commission may want to refer to the "Policy Options" portion of the LUPP. Policy options for Downtown address access, parking, circulation, uses, intensity of development, and public space. Policy options for the University Impacted Area mention the intensification of the Campustown area. Policy options for the South Lincoln Sub-Area address several aspects of intensification for this area. Specific area plans have also been developed for each of these areas. Rather than address the needs for Downtown and Campustown at the general policy level of the LUPP, it may be more productive for the Commission to make recommendations for more detailed planning and/or implementation steps needed for each of these sub-areas.

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PLANNING & ZONING COMMENTS ON LUPP GOALS

JUNE 3, 2009

GOAL # 1: Planning and Management of Growth

Suggested revisions to goal statement: Recognizing that additional population and economic growth is desirable ~~likely~~, it is the goal of Ames to plan for and manage growth within the context of the community's capacity and preferences, achieving a population of 62,000. As Ames moves toward this growth, it is the further goal of the community to manage its growth so that it is more sustainable, predictable and assures quality of life.

Do the Chamber of Commerce and Ames Economic Development commission share this vision and goal? Do the decisions of the City and the activities of City departments reflect these objectives?

Objective 1 A: Is it our objective to have growth in retail and industry, which is what "a more regional employment and market base" means, doesn't it?

Objective 1 C: This is a very important objective. Therefore, we need current estimates to determine if we are on track to meet target population and employment by 2030, as this has a significant impact on the amount of residential, commercial and industrial land needed.

Historically Ames has grown population, housing and employment at 0.8% per year and it is the desire to maintain growth rates to these trend lines through 2030."

GOAL #2 Developable Area Provisions

To ensure that the amount of land made available for various uses adequately meets the needs created by population and jobs growth, the following types of analysis is needed:

- realistic correlation between anticipated jobs and development acres
- amount of developable land available
- uses, density and other zoning provisions tied to specific sites
- appropriate infill areas for intensification

Need to state what the desired outcome is, such as "growing to an incorporated land mass of XX,XXX acres"

GOAL #3: Environmental Friendliness

Goal should state also: Implementing, where feasible, all laws and practices that keep Ames an "environmentally-friendly" community.

Objective 3 C: Add specific reference to protecting the Ada Hayden area?

Objective 3.B add after "...and pathways for linking the overall community by limiting or discouraging the building of permanent structures in the flood way or flood fringe of stream corridors even if this could be accomplished through changes in elevation for structures."

Objective 3 D. Add specific reference to use of alternative energy options?

Add Objective 3.F "Ames seeks to enhance renewable energy production by encouraging installation of renewable electrical energy systems, such as but not limited to wind, solar, and micro-hydro, at industrial, commercial and residential properties while maintaining control over placement and esthetics of such systems."

Objectives need to be updated annually as new energy sources and opportunities present themselves, such as wind, etc.

GOAL #4: Sense of Place and Connectivity

Objective 4 A – Suggested revision: “Ames seeks to establish more integrated ~~and compact~~ living/activity areas (i.e. neighborhoods, villages) wherein daily living requirements and amenities are provided in a readily identifiable and accessible area. Greater emphasis is placed on the pedestrian and related activities.”

Goal needs to be more specific about implementing practices and strategies that protect the aesthetic values of Ames and expand upon its vision of being a well-planned, interconnected city.

Is this the place we might add increasing connectivity through more bike trails?

GOAL #5: Cost Effective and Efficient Growth Pattern

Add to goal statement: Employing a growth pattern and the timing of development fully linked to the installation of the necessary public infrastructures (i.e., utilities, multi-modal transportation system, parks, and open space).

Objective 5 B: Clarify that concurrency means having infrastructure available at time of development approval.

Add Objective 5.F "Ames seeks to identify specific locations within the city, such as Main Street and Campus Town, where vertical intensification should be encouraged while preventing vertical intensification in the rest of the city consistent with the existing character of established neighborhoods."

GOAL #6: Housing Opportunities Expansion

Add to goal statement: Providing a diversity of housing units that total 34,000.

Objective 6 A. Commissioners had various comments:

The supply of low income housing is lacking in Ames. Could we get more specific data about this? Have we progressed in this sector in the last decade? Statistics as data?

Need to increase housing opportunities of all levels in order to meet the need of the people seeking new housing. Suggested sentence: "Ames seeks to increase the overall supply of housing which will include low and moderate income housing as well as market driven housing."

Increase all housing based on market needs.

Objective 6 B: Suggest deleting this density objective

Objective 6 C: Suggest deleting this intensification and compatibility objective

GOAL #7: Mobility and Alternative Transportation

Add to goal statement: Ensuring a diversity of transportation options and the pathways to support such transportation diversity, while ensuring goals #3 and #5 are adhered to

Include increasing bike and walking paths and linkages to nearby towns.

Reintroduce a trolley from north, south, east and west the crosses a central drop off at the Memorial Union.

Add Objective 7.F "Ames seeks to develop a greater reliance on electricity for the transportation sector, including but not limited to hybrid electric vehicles, electric vehicles and electric mass transit, in order to reduce the cities carbon footprint."

GOAL #8 Downtown as a Central Place – Community Focal Point

Need similar goal for Campustown

Objective 8 A: How do we make the downtown the focal point of interest? Adequate space seems to be the first issue to tackle.

Objective 8 B: Suggested revision: Ames seeks to improve and integrate the appearance of Downtown through thematic design, preservation of historically and architecturally significant structures and reuse of structures involving economically marginal activities when appropriate.

Objective 8 C. Encourage alternative transportation and consider addition of plug-ins for electric vehicles.

"Ames seeks to expand parking availability in Downtown while simultaneously encouraging more pedestrian traffic by integrating automobile access with greater public transit delivery systems to Downtown and creative parking access near transit hubs well outside of downtown."

Need Objectives to give specifics such as building a community center or how this area will expand to accommodate the planned growth of Ames.

GOAL #9: Economic Expansion and Diversification

Objective 9 A: Attract non-polluting businesses that utilize the regional workforce.

Objective 9 B – Suggested Revision: "Ames seeks to attract and support a ~~small and medium-size~~ business center that utilizes the skills and products of the area's trained workforce.

Need objective on achieving an increase in tax receipts of \$XX,XXX.

GOAL #10: Cultural Heritage Preservation

(No revisions)

GENERAL COMMENTS:

1. The Goals should state a distinct desired outcome of the plan.
 - a. The City of Ames is...
 - b. The City of Ames will be "X" in 2030, 2050...
 - i. What is the vision for the future of Ames?
 - ii. If a preferred future is not stated then any future is a success for the plan.
2. The data that the plan bases some of its goals and their objectives on should be regularly reviewed for validity.
 - a. I'm curious to know if the .8% population growth, job growth, and housing development trends have changed since 1990
 - i. This seems to be a common sense item...if we don't regularly measure the base assumptions of the plan how do we gauge the success of the plan today?
 - ii. This was the impetus – at least for me - for our discussion with Council in the first place...not that the plan or it's goals and objectives need to change, but asking the question, "Is the plan still working for the City of Ames?" If so, great. If not, WHY?

- b. Specifically as the data relates to Goals 2 and 5.
3. The Objectives should be reviewed for current relevance (has the City changed, has the world changed since 1994-1997) and target how they are achieved with some level of detail.
 - a. Specifically as they relate to Goals 3 and 9.

Goals should always be written with the SMART acronym in mind. It is as follows, and examples are included (taken from careerintelligence.com):

- **Specific:** Goals need to be something specific. Often we set goals that are so loose, it's nearly impossible to judge whether we hit them or not. For example, a statement like "I will lose weight" is too vague. How will you know if and when you've reached your goal? Saying, " I will lose five pounds this month" is more specific. At the end of the month it will be a simple matter of weights and measures: take your measurements and get on the scale.

- **Measurable:** Goals need to be measurable. For example, many of us want to increase our number of contacts. But, "making new contacts" is an ambiguous statement. A clearer objective is "I will attend four networking events each month and try to connect with one person at each." It's a simple, concrete goal. This makes it easy to see if you hit your target.

- **Achievable:** Goals need to be reasonable and achievable. Nearly everyone has tried to drop a few pounds at one time or another. Often their success or failure depends on setting practical goals. Losing 15 pounds in 30 days is unrealistic (unless you're planning a medical procedure). Losing six to eight pounds in 30 days is reasonable. Don't set yourself up for failure by setting goals that are out of reach.

- **Realistic:** Goals need to be realistic. When we're kids we think we can do anything. As adults we learn that while we can have a lot, we can't have it all at the same time. It's important to honestly evaluate yourself. Do you have the ability and commitment to make your dream come true? Or does it need a little adjustment? For example, you may love to play tennis, but do you have the time, talent and commitment to become a pro? Be honest.

- **Time Framed:** Goals need to have a time frame. Having a set amount of time will give your goals structure. For example, many of us want to find a new job or start their own business. Some people spend a lot of time talking about what they want to do, someday. But, without an end date there is no sense of urgency, no reason to take any action today. Having a specific time frame gives you the impetus to get started. It also helps you monitor your progress.

The goals of any plan should lead to a collective vision if their outcomes are achieved.

Overall, these two areas are lacking in the LUPP that we recently reviewed, as the plan is working to respond to ten (10) specific visions related to 10 (ten) community goals. In other words, separated out, they are awesome. Collectively, they are awesome. But individually and collectively, they do not provide an overarching end goal or single stated vision for the Ames community.

It also must be noted that I strongly support each goal and the individual 10 (ten) visions. I strongly urge our leadership to discover, anticipate, state, and pursue a stated, overarching vision for our community. This is critical as we continue to plan and make decisions. In other words, where is Ames trying to go, what is it trying to become, what decisions do we need to make, enhance, prioritize, seek, and/or avoid to ensure we are on track to being/achieving that stated, overarching vision?

This plan is absent, throughout, on stating whether Ames views itself as a place that values ethnic, socio-economic, employment, and cultural diversity. Please advise.

There needs to be a focus on Campustown in this plan, somewhere.