

ITEM #: 7
DATE: 01/20/10

COMMISSION ACTION FORM

DATE PREPARED: January 15, 2010

REQUEST: Land Use Policy Plan (LUPP) Future Land Use Map Amendment to change the land use designation of the subject properties from Residential High Density (RH) to Downtown Service Center (DSC) ***See attached map***

PROPERTY OWNER: Collegiate United Methodist Church
2622 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

APPLICANT: CUMC Board of Trustees
2622 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

CONTACT: Gary Taylor
2412 Clayton Drive
Ames, IA 50010

LOCATION: Properties Requested by Applicant:
130 South Sheldon Ave
Properties Initiated by City Staff:
2622-2636 Lincoln Way - Church
112 South Sheldon Avenue - Church
113-119 Hayward Avenue - Church
2650 Lincoln Way – Taco Bell
2602 Lincoln Way – U.S. Bank

ACREAGE: 5.23 acres (city-initiated)
0.37 acres (requested)

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION: ***See attached map***
Residential High Density (RH)

PROPOSED FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION: ***See attached map***
Downtown Service Center (DSC)

CURRENT ZONING: 130 South Sheldon Avenue (and additional properties):
Government/Airport (S-GA)
West University Impacted District (O-WUI)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The City Council referred to staff the request of the Collegiate United Methodist Church to amend the Future Land Use Map of the Land Use Policy Plan for 130 South Sheldon Avenue. An application was submitted on December 18, 2009, for consideration by the City of Ames.

The requested change comes about because the current zoning of the property is S-GA reflecting the previous ownership of Iowa State University. The church purchased this vacant one acre parcel in 2007. The property does not have frontage but likely can be combined with an adjacent church property fronting on South Sheldon Avenue. Because the future land use designation is Residential High Density, a re-zoning to Campustown Service Center to match surrounding existing zoning cannot be supported. Therefore, the church requests a change in the Future Land Use Map. City staff therefore analyzed surrounding properties and determined a larger amendment area would be more consistent with existing zoning and uses. A land use change from Residential High Density to Downtown Service Center would support a re-zoning to either Campustown Service Center zoning or Downtown Service Center zoning. In this context, the surrounding zoning is Campustown Service Center.

To change only the applicant's property to DSC would result in an isolated area of DSC surrounded by RH. Staff therefore explored the possibility of expanding the proposed change to surrounding properties that are already zoned or developed commercial. Specifically, staff expanded the amendment area to include all of the land between South Sheldon and Hayward Avenues, bound by Lincoln Way and College Creek. Most of the land in the proposed amendment area is church property. There is also a Taco Bell property and U.S. Bank property. City staff sent notice to those two additional owners requesting comments. The bank has responded in favor of the amendment. The owner of the Taco Bell property has not yet responded, but has been informed that the residential designation is not consistent with the commercial zoning and use.

APPLICABLE LAW / POLICY:

Land Use Policy Plan Goals. In reviewing the proposal to change the LUPP Future Land Use Map, staff has examined applicable goals and policies of the Land Use Policy Plan (see pages 14-23 of the LUPP). Findings regarding the goals and objectives of the LUPP, as they pertain to changes proposed in the land use designation, are described as follows:

Goal No. 1 – Planning and Management of Growth

Recognizing that additional population and economic growth is likely, it is the goal of Ames to plan for and manage growth within the context of the community's capacity and preferences. It is the further goal of the community to manage its growth so that it is more sustainable, predictable and assures quality of life.

Objectives. *In managing growth, Ames seeks the following objectives.*

1A. *Ames seeks to assure the availability of sufficient suitable land resources to accommodate the range of land uses that are planned to meet growth. Sufficient land resources shall be sought to eliminate market constraints.*

Goal No. 2. – Developable Area Provisions

In preparing for the target population and employment growth, it is the goal of Ames to assure the adequate provision and availability of developable land. It is further the goal of the community to guide the character, location, and compatibility of growth with the area’s natural resources and rural areas.

Objectives. *In assuring and guiding areas for growth, Ames seeks the following objectives.*

2A. *Ames seeks to provide between 3,000 and 3,500 acres of additional developable land within the present City and Planning Area by the year 2030. Since the potential demand exceeds the supply within the current corporate limits, alternate sources shall be sought by the community through limited intensification of existing areas while concentrating on the annexation and development of new areas. The use of existing and new areas should be selective rather than general.*

Staff Comments: The subject properties and surrounding properties include a mix of existing commercial and institutional development that would serve as a resource for new development only if the market would support redevelopment through the demolition of existing structures. Therefore, the proposed map amendment is consistent with Goals 1 and 2.

Goal No. 3 – Environmental - Friendliness

It is the goal of Ames to assure that it is an “environmentally-friendly” community and that all goals and objectives are integrated with this common goal. In continuing to serve as a concentrated area for human habitat and economic activity, Ames seeks to be compatible with its ecological systems in creating an environmentally sustainable community.

Staff Comments: The site of the proposed LUPP amendment is within an area that is designated as both Greenway and Floodplain on the Greenways and Environmentally Sensitive Lands Map (GESL) of the Land Use Policy Plan. Therefore development of the southern portion of this site is limited by existing flood plain zoning regulations, regardless of what zoning or land use classification is applied. Although that same southern portion is also designated as “Greenway” on the map, this area has not been identified in the City’s Long Range Transportation Plan as an area scheduled for a park or trail connection. There are no similar connections adjacent to this property along the creek. The proposed map amendment does not change the site’s Greenway designation on the GESL Map, nor is the proposal contrary to Goal 3 because of existing flood plain zoning requirements. Further, a path or trail could still be negotiated at some future point, if it were the City’s desire to install one in this area to better connect existing open spaces, such as the nearby Lake Laverne

and Arboretum Park. The grant request for the Intermodal Transportation Hub, south of this site, includes a plan for a trail connection on the south side of the creek, which could also satisfy the Greenway objective in a shorter time frame than incremental private development.

Goal No. 5. – Cost-effectiveness and Efficient Growth Pattern

It is the goal of Ames to establish a cost-effective and efficient growth pattern for development in new areas and in a limited number of existing areas for intensification. It is a further goal of the community to link the timing of development with the installation of public infrastructure including utilities, multi-modal transportation system, parks and open space.

Objectives. *In defining the growth pattern and timing of development, Ames seeks the following objectives.*

5C. *Ames seeks the continuance of development in emerging and infill areas where there is existing public infrastructure and where capacity permits.*

Staff Comments: Maintaining the existing commercial uses on this property promotes Goal Five's objectives for compact development, which reduces the community's overall costs because of the close proximity of the mixed uses, such as banking and fast food, within the dominant residential and institutional campus environment.

Goal No. 6 – Housing Opportunities Expansion

It is the goal of Ames to increase the supply of housing and to provide a wider range of housing choices.

Staff Comments: The proposed amendment would result in a marginal decrease in land available for high density residential development. However, the cost of removing the existing commercial and religious/institutional buildings within the amendment area makes it unlikely that this area would be selected for rezoning and redevelopment into high density residential.

Goal No. 9 – Economic Expansion and Diversification

It is the goal of Ames to promote expansion and diversification of the economy in creating a base that is more self-sufficient and that is more sustainable with regard to the environment.

Staff Comments: The proposal would maintain the nature of the existing development, and perhaps allow more intense commercial development. A religious institution is allowed by Special Use Permit in either residential or commercial zoning districts. The two commercial properties on either side of the church could be redeveloped into more intense commercial developments, but would likely require more land for such a change.

The proposal is consistent with the pending grant request for funding the Intermodal Transportation Hub, directly to the south of this site. One of the requirements for the grant was that the project would promote economic development in the adjacent area. Therefore, the proposal is consistent with Goal 9.

Land Use Projections. The LUPP includes “land use projections” for commercial and residential development (see page 11 of the LUPP). Commercial land use projections are stated as follows: *“Based on the projected population increase for the collective Planning Area, another 800-900 acres are required for commercial growth. The projection also assumes an increase in regional attraction.”*

Residential Projections: Based on a projected population of 65,000-67,000 and an accompanying 25,000-25,800 housing units for the collective Planning Area, another 1,700-2,050 acres are required for residential growth. The projection assumes an average density of approximately 6 dwelling units per gross acre (approximately 4.5 dwelling units per net acre).

Staff Comments: The community has invested in other areas which are more suited for new residential development because of vacant land being available. The subject properties are more suited for commercial service development given the current use of those subject properties and established institutional development in the general vicinity; as indicated in the 2005 UIA Sub Area Plan (***an element of the Land Use Policy Plan***). Unless the church or the City makes efforts to redevelop this established area of the community for new residential development, it does not seem likely that such redevelopment will occur.

The 2005 University Impacted Area Sub Area Plan can be downloaded here:
<http://www.cityofames.org/HousingWeb/Planningweb/UIA/UIAPlan.pdf>

Future Land Use Classification. The LUPP includes an extensive classification system for future land use. The definitions of future land use classifications are described as follows for High Density Residential and Downtown Service Center.

- *“High-Density Residential- All multi-family residential uses that involve more than eleven and two tenths (11.20) dwelling units per net acre.”* (see page 30 of the LUPP)
- *“Downtown Service Center - Specialized business services, governmental services and retail commercial uses that are associated with highly intense activities and central location. Specialized mixing of activities, parking and design provisions may apply. Floor area ratios are 1.0 and higher.”* (see page 31 of the LUPP)

Staff Comments: Given that there are no high density residential uses in the subject area and that the existing uses serve the adjacent area in a manner consistent with mixed use planning objectives, the proposal is therefore consistent with the LUPP.

ANALYSIS:

It is unclear to staff what the original intent for a High Density Residential designation was. However, the existing land uses were the same at the time of the last major LUPP update. In order for a typical high density residential project near campus to happen, an area of land larger than any one of these parcels must be consolidated. Because of the existing developed nature of the area, the likelihood for demolition, consolidation and redevelopment in this area is low. Furthermore, the existing mixed uses of the subject area are compatible with the surrounding area. **An amendment changing the subject area from a residential designation to a commercial designation would be consistent with the existing zoning and uses because a church is allowed in either designation.**

Additionally, the subject area is within the West University Impacted Area (UIA) Overlay Zone. The 2005 Sub-Area Plan for the University Impacted Area identifies the subject area as being a Campustown Service District, with the Service Core being one block to the east (*see attached map*). The plan further expands on the importance that the UIA has in providing a transition between campus and the lower density residential uses (UIA Plan, page 3). Therefore, amending the Future Land Use Map to maintain the commercial nature of the subject area is consistent with the Sub-Area Plan.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. The Planning & Zoning Commission can recommend that the City Council approve the request of the applicant and include the additional church properties and two commercial properties identified by City staff for a Future Land Use Map amendment from High Density Residential to Downtown Service Center.
2. The Planning & Zoning Commission can recommend that the City Council amend the Future Land Use Designation of 130 South Sheldon Avenue ONLY from High Density Residential to Downtown Service Center.
3. The Planning and Zoning Commission can refer this request back to staff or the applicant for more information prior to forwarding a recommendation to City Council.
4. The Planning and Zoning Commission can recommend to the City Council to maintain the existing High Density Residential future land use designation.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is the recommendation of the Department of Planning and Housing that the Planning and Zoning Commission recommend Alternative #1 to the City Council, approving the request of the applicant and including the additional church properties and two commercial properties identified by City staff for a Future Land Use Map amendment from High Density Residential to Downtown Service Center.