



Memo

Department of Planning & Housing

TO: Planning & Zoning Commission

FROM: Planning & Housing Department

DATE: April 30, 2010

SUBJECT: Discussion on Upcoming Workshop with City Council

To facilitate with the discussion on the upcoming workshop with the City Council on May 18, please find attached copies of your priorities for 2010, as well as a copy of the memo pertaining to the LUPP Update Follow-up dated January 15, 2010.

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Attachments



Memo

Department of Planning & Housing

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Steve Osguthorpe, Planning & Housing Director
DATE: December 18, 2009
SUBJECT: Planning & Zoning Commission Priorities for 2010

Each year, the Planning & Zoning Commission (P&Z) develops a list of things that it would like to address or accomplish during the coming year. The list may include proposals that involve special studies, or that require review of existing codes and policies to determine if amendments may be in order. Because these proposals require commitment of staff resources, the City Council reviews P&Z priorities and determines which (if any) should be folded into the coming year's work schedule.

Typically, P&Z priorities are discussed with the City Council during a joint meeting between both bodies. That meeting has not yet been scheduled. However, in anticipation of the City Council's retreat in January 2010, the Planning & Zoning Commission is anxious for the Council to be aware of the Commission's proposed priorities for 2010 so that the Council can consider these as it develops its own goals and priorities. Accordingly, at its December 16, 2010 meeting, the P&Z moved to forward the attached list of suggested priorities for the Council's consideration. You will note that the list is dated 2008, and that it is in fact the same list that was presented to the City Council last year. However, the precursor to addressing the listed items was the evaluation of the assumptions and projections which the LUPP goals and policies were based upon. The Council therefore directed staff to do that analysis, which is now complete and scheduled for Council review on December 22 in a report titled *LUPP Update: A Snapshot*. Accordingly, in addition to the attached listed items, the Commission also requests review of any sections of the LUPP that may need updated to reflect the data provided in said report. The P&Z doesn't yet know what additional sections may be involved. The Planning staff is preparing a list of those sections of the LUPP that relate to the data of that report and will present this to the P&Z at its January 6 meeting.

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Attachment

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NEW PLANNING INITIATIVES FOR FY 2009-2010
Suggestions from Planning and Zoning Commission Members
(12/03/08)

The Planning and Zoning Commission wants to evaluate the assumptions and projections, which the current LUPP and Zoning ordinance were based upon, and compare them to current planning data as they regard the City of Ames. In doing so, we will review the accuracy and validity of prior assumptions with the existing facts, future projections, and the City's current goals. Based on this review, the Planning and Zoning Commission may make recommendations for revisions to the LUPP and Zoning Ordinance, such as:

- LUPP and Zoning Evaluation
- Planning Base
- Industrial Land
- Planning for a Specific District
- Transportation & Traffic
- Growth Priorities & Direction
- Village
- Tax Base
- Annexation

See the attached Appendix to give additional insight into the bullets listed above.

APPENDIX

LUPP & ZONING EVALUATION

1. Review the LUPP and Zoning Ordinance in order to:
 - reflect current and future city values and goals,
 - understand where issues are arising (language/definitions, geography, code requirements, graphic interpretation, etc.),
 - reflect the desired direction of growth of Ames,
 - improve ease of use of the Plan and Code,
 - be proactive about making corrections, and
 - develop a simple framework/decision making process for revision (as necessary).

The technical aspects of this review should include:

- determining that its projections and intentions are accurate and up to date,
- evaluating whether the amount of growth and the mix of buildings, uses and open areas that the Plan includes are consistent with projections and intentions, and
- noting strengths and weaknesses.

PLANNING BASE

1. Examine the baseline data for land use policy and update as warranted, including:
 - population target and timeline out to 2030 for each major region of the city (Northwest, North, Northeast, Southwest, etc.),
 - current mix of apartments and single-family housing, and
 - current supply of commercial, industrial and open space land.

Based on this and other data compiled determine:

- mix of housing needed out to 2030 in each region, based on unit type (single family detached, single family attached, apartment, etc.) density (low, medium, high), development style (village, suburban) and price range,
 - retail and Industrial growth out to 2030 in each region, and
 - green space, parks, bike trails, etc. out to 2030 in each region
2. Research other ways to meet infill and density than the minimum density of 3.75 units per acre as stated in the Zoning Ordinance for new Suburban Low Density Residential areas.

INDUSTRIAL LAND

1. Determine how much industrial land will be needed in the future and make recommendations on proactive policies to make such land available, such as annexation and providing needed infrastructure.

PLANNING FOR A SPECIFIC DISTRICT

1. Campustown improvement plan; ISU is a class one research and teaching university. Campustown is the visitor's first impression of the university. It does not reflect a class-one university. People talk about the need to improve but so far we have not had much in the way of suggestions and getting the city and university to come together to develop and implement a plan to improve. We should do all that we can to assist the university in growing its student base. This results in significant economic growth. What is the long-term goal for Campustown? How do we achieve? What are the milestones and markers of success in this area?
2. Establish key districts in the community (Art and Culture, Campus Life, Trends' District, Recreation District, Night Life, etc.).
3. Northeast Ames Urban Fringe: Begin to discuss and understand the implications of the Urban Fringe Plan and the Story County zoning plans for the area north of Ames and East of I-35 so that we can make the case for Ames.
4. Main Street Business District: Is it making progress? Do the merchants need assistance in what? Why do we use parking meters downtown if all that we are doing is generating a breakeven deal for the city? (Refer to the Tribunes editorial on parking meters.) If there was a niche-marketing seminar put on by some niche-marketing retail expert (maybe this has been done) would it be of benefit?

TRANSPORTATION & TRAFFIC

1. Review city traffic patterns and four lane corridors within the city in an attempt to reduce congestion and better facilitate both NS and EW flow.
If the NW is the next area of growth, there will be no easy way to get to the preferred shopping areas of downtown and South Duff. Consider extension of Bloomington to Dayton and University Boulevard to Bloomington. Start planning for traffic flow in the urban fringe area.
2. As part of the above goals and planning determine and set long term traffic flow and state the desired mode of transportation to be most heavily supported. Will preference continue to be personal vehicles and parking space for same or will mass transit connector routes be encouraged or will walking biking accessible service nodes be a highest priority or only an after thought?
3. Transportation – make the flow of traffic through town easier. Look at the planned extension of Grand and its impacts, as well as other solutions. Include routes that avoid

railway crossings in the study. Also need to consider expanding the system of bike paths.

GROWTH PRIORITIES & DIRECTION

1. Growth Priorities: Ames needs to know where to grow and why. Without adequate development (land) for housing it will stifle economic development growth. For jobs we must have adequate housing. This we believe is true in the public sector, as well as the private sector development. This gets into such zoning codes as Density (3.75 units per acre.) We realize that this is not the place to preach, but why is Ames the only community in the state of Iowa that feels that it needs to manage housing developments through the use of density codes? Maybe we have incorrect data on this but would like to know.
2. Revisit the issue of preferred growth areas.
The vote to deny the recommendation of the P&Z staff and the Commission was a 3-3 vote. Before Ames builds an overpass at North Dakota, we would like to have the Council revisit their decision.
3. Growth Priorities: Review/Update City's priorities/desires for growth (where to, when, how, and why).

VILLAGE

1. Review the "village concept" with regard to present day appropriateness and applicable zoning restrictions.
2. Village and PUD Zoning: What have been the issues over the last 10 years? Why do they arise (code driven, developer driven, etc.)? Develop a framework (community values and goals) for decision making when altering or varying the plans in place. Understand what success is for these projects (residential and commercial absorption timing, aesthetic quality, ease of use, health, safety and wellness, maintenance aspects, etc.) and how we measure success (if we [the community] cannot measure it we [the community] cannot manage it).

TAX BASE

1. Diversifying our tax base and attracting more singles and young families.
2. Serious look at tax revenue streams and implications regarding zoning.

ANNEXATION

1. Proactive annexation -- for both residential and industrial uses.
2. This is an item the Commission should be proactive on.
3. Any examination of the LUPP will raise questions regarding annexation. Embedded in the examination are the assumptions of growth both in numbers and in space, including zoning and type. Projecting 5, 10, 15 years down the road, what assumptions still are valid and what might be changed. What kind of flexibility in the LUPP is necessary to maintain integrity but still be nimble. The Commission and the Council have differed on the specifics of annexation making this issue one which needs discussion among the Commission and Council members. The Commission notes the points below are some of the items that would be examined.
 - a. Look at the issue of annexation for both industrial lands and residential opportunities.
 - i. consider tax base and revenue for city
 - ii. consider environmental issues and maintaining a green image
 - iii. consider infrastructure needs and costs
 - b. Examine whether proactive annexation opens up opportunities for growth and/or management
 - c. Examine the status of the directions in which city growth is currently ranked and see if there is a need to adjust the measures
 - d. How can LUPP help with zoning decisions?



Memo

Department of Planning & Housing

TO: Planning and Zoning Commission
FROM: Charlie Kuester, Planner
DATE: January 15, 2010
SUBJECT: LUPP Update Follow-up

The Planning and Housing staff prepared a report for the Planning and Zoning Commission detailing changes in certain metrics identified in the 1997 Land Use Policy Plan. Staff evaluated the best available data and obtained estimates of the current population of Ames, current housing stock, and current employment. The report also compared these metrics of where the City is now to where it was in 1997, and where the LUPP projects it to be in 2030.

Assuming that the 1997 projections of growth in 2030 projects were linear, the population of Ames is growing at twice the pace that was expected. From 1997 to 2008, population in Ames grew 17.2 percent (from 48,238 to 56,510 as estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau). This represents an annualized growth rate of 1.60 percent. If this rate were sustained, the target population of 59,600 for Ames will be reached in 2012.

Housing grew at a slightly faster pace than population, resulting in a greater housing vacancy rate. From 2000 to 2008, the number of housing units grew 18.2 percent. Most significant is the increase in structures having 10-19 units, which rose 72.6 percent; and structures with 20 or more units, which rose 40.7 percent.

Job growth is on target with the rate predicated in the LUPP. However, the Land Use Policy Plan anticipated that job growth and population would rise at the same rate. Data show that, in fact, population has risen at a rate almost double that of job creation. Total employment for the county has risen from 44,870 in 1998 to 47,500 in 2007 (5.9 percent total growth). Also, what Census Bureau data show is that the mix of jobs by industry is diverging from what was predicted in 1997. For instance, while the LUPP predicted growth in retail and government jobs, those sectors have actually declined.

While the purpose of that staff report was to take a “snapshot” of Ames—where is the city in regards to those metrics—the report raises questions as to whether certain aspects of the Land Use Policy Plan need to be examined in light of the unexpected growth in population. This memo identifies those areas of the LUPP for which these new measures of growth have an impact. While much of the LUPP focuses on “how” the city will look, there are several sections that address the “size” of the community. The following sections identify those chapters and pages of the Land Use Policy Plan that should be re-examined based on the recent analysis.

CHAPTER ONE: PLANNING BASE

The population projection for the LUPP is the basis on which many other policies are built. Housing, employment, and land use needs are all based on how to accommodate the projected population.

The population projection for 2030 in Chapter One for Ames and its planning area is between 65,000 and 67,000—for Story County it's between 94,000 and 96,000 (p.7). The appendix (p. 129) includes a projection of 59,600 for Ames in 2030. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates the 2008 population of Ames as 56,510. If this rate of growth were to be sustained, the 2030 population projection for Ames would be met in 2012.

The projections for employment (p. 8-9) in the LUPP should be re-examined in light of the recent data. While the numbers of jobs in 2007 seem to be on-pace with the 2030 projections (assuming a straight line growth rate), the mix of jobs is diverging from expectations. In 2007, government jobs declined 2.0 percent from 1998 rather than moving towards the LUPP projection of 7.6 percent growth in 2030. Likewise, retail jobs also experienced a decline (minus 5.3 percent) rather than the double digit growth that was projected. The most recent data available are from 2007 and, therefore, don't reflect the recent national and regional changes in economic conditions.

The projections for housing (p. 10) reflect a growth rate slightly higher than that of population. This was anticipated in 1997 with the adoption of the LUPP and was expected to increase elasticity in the housing supply. In fact this has occurred, resulting in an increase in the vacancy rate of housing units in the city.

The LUPP projected a need for the development of 3,000 to 3,500 acres to meet the growth needs of the city (p. 11). These acres lie within the City or within the Planning Area—the two-mile fringe outside the city boundaries. The recently completed staff report did not measure land development acreage from 1997 to 2008 so it would be useful to evaluate land usage since the adoption of the Land Use Policy Plan. Following that analysis, the necessary land areas (by use type) needed to accommodate a new projected population can be done.

Objective 1.C of Goals For a New Vision (p. 14) should be updated if a new population projections were developed.

Objective 2.A of Goals For a New Vision (p. 15) should be updated if new land use projections are prepared.

CHAPTER TWO: LAND USE

Future land use allocation (p. 29) should be evaluated, not only to reflect the faster growth experienced by Ames, but also to see if they are consistent with the expectations of the scale of development. For instance, the LUPP anticipates an additional 125-150 acres for convenience/neighborhood-scale activities. These include commercial development within villages, as well as Convenience Commercial nodes (CVCN). With a size limit of “between two (2) and five (5) acres, but not greater than ten (10) acres, (p. 57)” there would need to be between 15 and 62 nodes identified on the land use map. Besides the commercial core in Somerset, there are just four. There should be a re-evaluation of what should be the projections of acreage for all land use types—residential, commercial, industrial and public.

CHAPTER FOUR: ENVIRONMENTAL

This chapter has two items that should be re-examined based on the recent growth estimates. One is the projection for water usage (p. 87); the second is projection for wastewater flow (p. 90). The Water and Pollution Control Department recently completed an analysis of their future needs for water treatment

capacity. The analysis anticipates a population of 62,800 by 2033. Downstream, the Public Works Department is seeking funding for a capacity analysis of the wastewater collection system.

CHAPTER FIVE: PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

This chapter (p. 97) describes provisions for parks and open space. One factor in determining parkland level of service is population. The Parks and Recreation Department relies on population projections, to some degree, for park planning. However, of greater interest is the direction of growth so that the Department can be pro-active in obtaining appropriate land suitable for community and neighborhood parks.

SUMMARY:

Because the recent U.S. Census Bureau estimate of the population of Ames indicates that the population is growing faster than anticipated by the land Use Policy Plan, the city should consider producing and adopting a new population projection for the plan horizon year of 2030. With that new projection, the following pages of the LUPP should be re-examined and, if appropriate, updated:

- Page 7 and 129: Population projections.
- Pages 8-9: Employment projections.
- Page 10: Housing projections.
- Page 11: Land use projections.
- Page 14: Objective 1.C
- Page 15: Objective 2.A
- Page 29: Land use allocations.
- Page 57: Commercial land use needs.
- Page 87: Water usage projections.
- Page 90: Waste water projections.
- Page 97: Park land needs.

Some of the recommended examination of the data, such as population projections and housing needs, can be accomplished by staff. However, other projections of the future, such as housing types, employment, jobs mix, and land use allocations, will need to be driven, to some degree, by policy choices that the city needs to make. The Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council will need to have those discussions on policy.

A FOLLOW-UP ON THE DATA

A question arose at the Planning and Zoning Commission as well as at the City Council concerning the employment data. The employment numbers from both the U.S. Census Bureau (County Business Patterns) and Iowa Workforce Development (Current Employment Situation) are a measure of the numbers of jobs. A person who is working two jobs is reported twice. In addition, both sources make no differentiation between part-time and full-time employment.

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