

Staff Report

**Request for Rezoning with a Master Plan for 321 State Avenue
(Old Middle School Site)**

November 6, 2013

Subject: Report on status and description of a rezoning request to Residential Low Density (RL) with a Master Plan. Review the proposed project and determine need for a traffic study prior to holding a public hearing for the rezoning request.

BACKGROUND

Breckenridge Group Ames Iowa, LLC has approached the City to develop/redevelop three parcels of land located at 205 S. Wilmoth Avenue, 321 State Avenue, and 601 State Avenue, respectively. See Attachment 1. The three properties are currently designated as Low Density Residential or Village/Suburban Residential and all three are zoned Special-Government/Airport (S-G/A). See Attachment 2. The development concept articulated by the applicant is for a new student housing rental development that differs from traditional apartment type student housing developments. The concept has been for small individual buildings rather than a development of larger apartment buildings. Development of the properties requires a rezoning to allow for development consistent with an underlying land use designation.

On March 11 and March 15, 2013, two applications for rezoning of two of the three parcels of land were submitted to the City of Ames. The first request was for rezoning of 321 State Avenue, the subject parcel, which is a 10.8 acres site and the location of the former Ames Middle School (referred to herein as the middle parcel). See Attachment 3 Existing Zoning Map. The request is to change the zoning designation from S-GA (Special-Government/Airport) to RL (Low-Density Residential) for development of up to 78 dwelling units. See Attachment 4, Proposed Rezoning Map. The other pending rezoning request is for an undeveloped 28.9 acre site at 601 State Avenue (referred to herein as the south parcel). That request is to change the zoning designation from S-GA to FS-RM (Floating Suburban Residential Medium Density) for development of up to 390 dwelling units. This site was recently split from the larger lot on which the current Ames Middle School is located. Development of the two sites could yield up to approximately 468 dwelling units at their maximum development potential.

Breckenridge Group Ames Iowa LLC owns an additional third parcel, the former middle school athletic field, at 205 S. Wilmoth Avenue. That parcel lies along Lincoln Way and is referred to herein as the north parcel. That site is currently zoned as S-GA. The owner is not seeking a change of zoning designation at this time and has stated that this will be done in a later phase.

In response to the applicant's request to initiate a rezoning of the middle and south parcels, the City Council determined a master plan was needed to accompany the rezoning request. **City Council directed the applicant to consider a number of**

concerns related to development of all of the properties and specifically asked that all three parcels be included in a Master Plan, even though the north parcel had not yet been requested to be rezoned. See Attachment 5 for a list of zoning code requirements of a master plan and an excerpt of Council requested master plan conditions. Council also recommended that staff work to facilitate a discussion with the neighborhood and the applicant to address concerns for the development sites and the integration of the proposed rental development into the neighborhood.

The applicant agreed to a series of facilitated neighborhood meetings with Iowa State University representatives and the College Creek/Old Ames Middle School Neighborhood Association representatives in an effort to identify community issues and concerns in relation to the proposed development. A series of four meetings were held in June and July, with a final Neighborhood Association meeting in August to present a collective master plan concept to the neighborhood and the general public. The discussions with ISU and the neighborhood representatives encompassed many concerns and issues for the sites including such items as: land use, density, storm water and utilities, impacts to the surrounding neighborhood, quality of life concerns, on-site amenities, traffic, parking, lighting, and safety. Neighborhood representatives also met with staff to discuss their various interests and to understand the many steps in a development review process.

Project Description

The submittal of the Residential Low Density (RL) rezoning request with a master plan for the middle parcel constitutes a complete application for rezoning based upon the minimum submittal requirements of the Zoning Code. **See Attachment 6 for the proposed Master Plan.** However, the applicant has chosen not to provide the additional City Council requested information relating to the Middle Parcel and for the other two parcels at this time.

The rezoning request and Master plan submitted for review for the middle parcel are for a RL development with 50-78 single family residential units. The subject site has a LUPP designation of Low Density Residential. The Master plan also includes a public street connection at Tripp Street connecting from Wilmoth to State Avenue. A Master plan does not require the complete details of future development plans, such as a lotting pattern, local street circulation, and utility services. The only allowed use within the proposed RL zoning is single-family homes on individual lots. To develop the site in conformance with the proposed RL zoning and master plan, the applicant will be required to submit a preliminary plat for subdivision of the property subsequent to approval of a rezoning. Note that future development on individual lots within RL zoning does not require the sale of the homes individually and the homes may be rented rather than sold.

The Zoning Code required information for a rezoning request is contained within the master plan; however, in evaluating the request staff has identified the potential for offsite traffic impacts from development of the project in combination with other pending

development in the area. **Staff recommends that the Planning and Zoning Commission request a traffic study that considers the project and cumulative effects of changes to traffic volumes in the project area be completed prior to holding a public hearing on the rezoning and master plan.**

Before the Planning and Zoning Commission can make its recommendation to the City Council, the Commission must conduct a public hearing on the rezoning request. **The staff report for the proposed project's status has not been noticed as a public hearing at this time due to staff's recommendation for a traffic study that is not available at this time.** The Planning and Zoning Commission must hold a public hearing and make its recommendation on the master plan and rezoning within 90 days of November 6, 2013 regardless of the applicant's response to the request for a traffic study.

With the addition of information about effects on traffic and circulation, staff would prepare a complete report for Planning and Zoning Commission review with a noticed public hearing. The report would outline any applicable goals and policies of the City to determine whether the proposed rezoning and master plan fit within the policies of the City. To make such a determination staff must review each rezoning request based on topics such as, existing and proposed land uses, access, impacts of the proposed development on existing services and infrastructure, and impacts of the proposed development on the surrounding land uses.

Staff specifically recommends requesting the traffic study due to potential for a large number of units to be built in the immediate area and to adjust the current long range transportation model. The long range transportation model needs adjustment to account for new development potential in the area on sites that were previously government owned and not projected for near term development. Any significant impacts identified by the traffic study may need mitigation per city standards and may be included in a development agreement as conditions of the rezoning. At the time of rezoning and with the agreement of the owner, **the City Council can impose further conditions than those allowed by the requested zoning designation, provided such conditions are agreed to in writing prior to the close of the public hearing. This approach is often referred to as "contract rezoning" and is authorized under Code of Iowa Chapter 414. Any conditions "must be reasonable and imposed to satisfy public needs which are directly caused by the requested change."**

It should be noted that if a rezoning request is ultimately approved for the subject property, the applicant will be required to complete a preliminary and final plat for the property before development of any of the proposed residential units. However, being the proposed rezoning request is for single family dwellings within the RL zone, no formal site plan approval will be required for the individual lots once platted.

The applicant has requested that the Planning and Zoning Commission proceed with the rezoning request and schedule a public hearing without a traffic study at this time. The applicant believes the traffic study concerning the Middle Parcel site is

not required as part of the RL rezoning request and can be appropriately reviewed during the subdivision review.

Alternatives:

1. Request a traffic study for the Middle Parcel site that includes analysis of the existing, project, and cumulative development conditions of the surrounding area prior to holding a public hearing and making a recommendation to the City Council on the proposed rezoning to RL with a master plan.
2. Determine a traffic study is not required for consideration of the RL rezoning and master plan application and direct staff to notice a public hearing for the next available Planning and Zoning Commission meeting date.
3. Request additional information from staff related to the subject site and RL rezoning request.

Staff Comments:

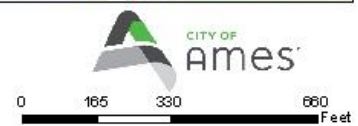
The applicant requested the rezoning application and master plan proceed to the Planning and Zoning Commission for a review of project. While the rezoning application includes the minimum Zoning Code requirements, staff has identified potential off site issues related to traffic for the area. At this time a traffic study has not been submitted by the applicant so staff is unable to determine if there are any offsite impacts of the proposed development.

Due to the potential for significant offsite impacts related to development in the area, Staff recommends Alternative #1 that the Planning and Zoning Commission request that a traffic impact study be completed and submitted to staff prior to the Commission holding the public hearing for the rezoning request. Note that regardless of the traffic study request, per Section 29.1507(10), rezoning proposals referred by the City Council to the Planning and Zoning Commission shall be acted upon and returned to the Council not more than 90 days thereafter unless time extensions are specifically requested by the applicant. Failure of the Planning and Zoning Commission to render a decision within the time specified will be deemed approval of the application as submitted.

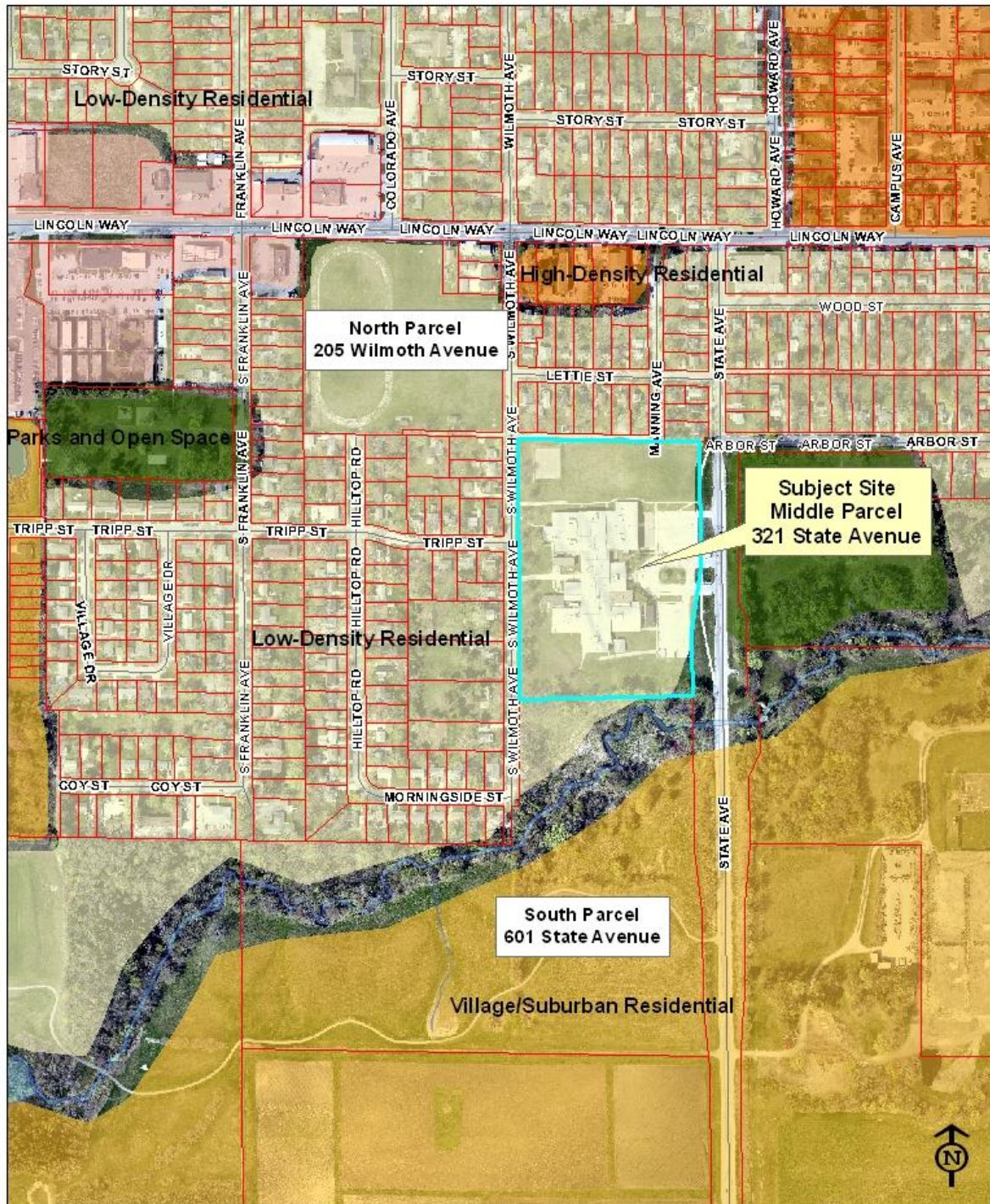
Attachment 1 Location Map



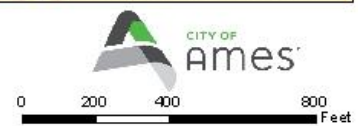
**Location Map
Breckenridge Development Properties**



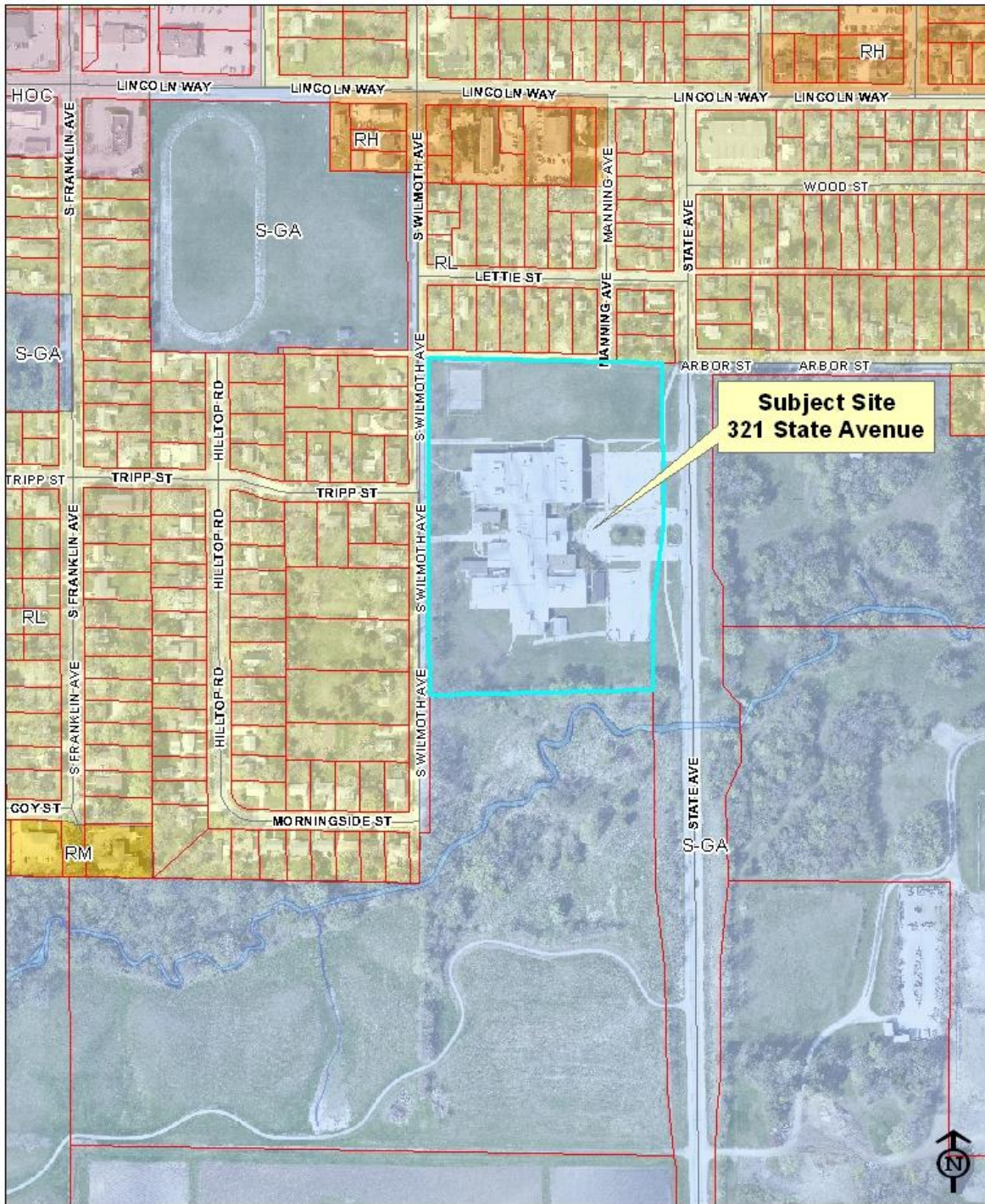
**Attachment 2
Existing Land Use Policy Plan Map**



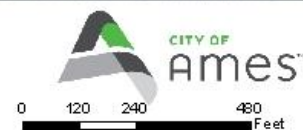
**Existing Land Use Policy Plan Map
Breckenridge Development Properties**



Attachment 3 Existing Zoning Map



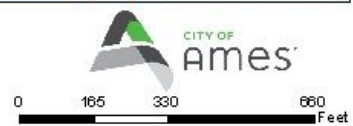
**Existing Zoning Map
321 State Avenue**



Attachment 4 Proposed Zoning Map



**Proposed Zoning Map
Breckenridge Development Properties**



Attachment 5
Code Requirements for a Master Plan and City Council Requested Conditions of
the Master Plan for Old Middle School South, Middle, and North Sites

Per Section 29.1507(4): Master Plan Submittal Requirements:

- a. Name of the applicant and the name of the owner of record.
- b. Legal description of the property.
- c. North arrow, graphic scale, and date.
- d. Existing conditions within the proposed zoning boundary and within 200 feet of the proposed zoning boundary: Project boundary; all internal property boundaries; public rights-of-way on and adjacent to the site, utilities; easements; existing structures; topography (contours at two-foot intervals); areas of different vegetation types; designated wetlands; flood plain and floodway boundaries; areas designated by the Ames Land Use Policy Plan as Greenways and Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- e. Proposed zoning boundary lines.
- f. Outline and size in acres of areas to be protected from impacts of development
- g. Outline and size in acres of areas proposed of each separate land use and for each residential unit type
- h. Pattern of arterial streets and trails and off-site transportation connections
- i. For proposed residential development provide the number of unit type for each area, expressed in a range of the minimum to maximum number to be developed in each area
- j. For proposed residential development provide a summary table describing all uses of the total site area, including the number of units per net acre for each unit type and each zoning area.

City Council Conditions of Master Plan (April 9, 2013 Meeting):

- a. In the RL zone consider locating each home on an individual lot as typical in a traditionally subdivision or alternatively consider requiring a Major Site Development Plan for a site with multiple single-family homes on a single lot.
- b. Descriptions of buffering and security. These should be physical design features that can be expected to be incorporated into the site and building designs, rather than employment of personnel which may be diminished over time.
- c. As part of the Master Plan, the City Council may wish to see a street connection of Tripp Street from Wilmoth Avenue to State Avenue. Such interconnectivity of residential neighborhoods is a consistent expectation of the City Council in reviewing other developments.
- d. As part of the Master Plan, the owner should identify the natural resources of the site, such as the flood plain, Greenway and Environmentally Sensitive Lands of the LUPP, conservation easements. Further, the owner should provide information as to how these resources will be protected as part of the project.

- e. As part of the Master Plan, the owner should identify any common facilities, such as open spaces or amenity buildings.
- f. As part of the Master Plan, the City Council asked that all three properties be included. Although a rezoning is sought only for the middle and south parcels at this time, it is the owner's expressed expectation that the north parcel would be a later phase.
- g. Items listed as part of the letter submitted from Iowa State University dated April 4, 2013:
 - 1. Impact on adjacent agricultural plot and field work, require adequate fencing
 - 2. Light pollution on adjacent experimental field plots
 - 3. College Creek watershed impact and downstream water management.
 - 4. Portions of State Street are in institutional road. Responsibility for funding road improvements. Who will pay for widening, signalization other possible improvements?
 - 5. This project may require traffic signalization or construction of a roundabout at State Street and Mortensen to safely manage traffic.
 - 6. Adequate parking in the area.
 - 7. CyRide cost increases for bus service. ISU and students fund ~70% of CyRide operations. Where will financial support come from for expanded service?
 - 8. Impact on Arboretum and Cross County Track on east side of State Street.
 - 9. Walking and bicycle paths from the housing area to campus and retail and residential development to the west.
 - 10. Impact on ISU recreations are to east.
 - 11. Law enforcement and fire protection impact.
 - 12. Campustown revitalization is higher priority for resource commitments and may be a better location for expanded student housing.
 - 13. Long term ISU enrollment trend. Is housing of this type needed and can it be converted to other uses if there are changes in enrollment trends?
 - 14. Impact on residential neighborhood and housing that many of our younger faculty and staff occupy. The neighborhood is opposed to the project.
- h. As part of the Master Plan, the City Council asked that the plan include the equivalency of subdividing the property so that every building is on a separate lot and meets all City requirements.

Attachment 6 Proposed Master Plan

