

COMMISSION ACTION FORM

REQUEST: MAJOR SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN AMENDMENT FOR 3505 AND 3515 LINCOLN WAY (WALNUT RIDGE)

BACKGROUND:

In September 2015, the City Council approved a Major Site Development Plan for two parcels at 3505 and 3515 Lincoln Way to allow for the development of a commercial and residential mixed-use development. The subject site totals 2.23 acres and is located just west of the Franklin Avenue intersection. (See Attachment A Location and Existing Zoning Map) The property owners, Turn Key Investments, LLC and Chuck Winkleblack, are requesting approval of an amendment to the plan **to revise the overall Landscape Plan for the property to request removal of the west property line parking lot screening due to the installed retaining wall, revision to the north property line parking lot screening, and revision to the east parking lot screening due to the constructed slopes of the detention areas.** (See Attachment B).

The overall project includes two separate three-story buildings containing 10,912 square feet of commercial space and 18 dwelling units. The project has a single point of access from Lincoln Way and a second access point from a rear alley. The design incorporated commercial space at the front of the site perpendicular to Lincoln Way with outdoor seating and plaza areas. Parking is located in between buildings and to the rear of the site.

With the approval of a Major Site Development Plan, the City Council has the authority to approve a Landscape Plan which does not meet the strict landscape requirements of the zoning code, if the Council determines that the plan meets the purposes described in Section 29.403(4)(a), *"... to protect and promote the public health, safety and general welfare by requiring the landscaping of surface parking lots in such a manner as will serve to reduce the effects of wind and air turbulence, heat and noise, and the glare of automobile lights; to preserve ground water strata; to act as a natural drainage system and ameliorate stormwater drainage problems; to reduce the level of carbon dioxide and return oxygen to the atmosphere; to prevent soil erosion; to conserve and stabilize property values and to otherwise facilitate the creation of a convenient, attractive and harmonious community; to relieve the blight of the appearance of surface parking lots; and to generally preserve a healthful and pleasant environment."* **The applicant is requesting approval of a revision to the Landscape Plan to allow for the intent of the code to be achieved for screening by using an alternative planting plan compared to strict conformance to the L2 and L3 standards**

Under base zoning standards the project must meet a minimum L3 parking lot screen (6-foot high fence with interspersed shrubs and trees) along the north and east property line abutting the residential properties and L2 parking lot screening (3-foot high shrubs planted 4-foot on center and trees) along all other lot lines abutting commercially zoned properties. The L3 screen is a high screen consisting of either a fence or high shrubs

spaced at a maximum distance of 6 feet on center to form a screen 6 feet high. In addition, one landscape tree is required per 50 lineal feet of landscaped area or as appropriate to provide a tree canopy over the landscaped area. The L2 screen is a low screen consisting of low shrubs spaced at a maximum distance of 4 feet on center to form a continuous screen 3 feet high. In addition, one landscape tree is required per 50 lineal feet of landscaped area or as appropriate to provide a tree canopy over the landscaped area. Use of a wood fence is an allowed substitution to the planting requirement that reduces the overall number of shrubs to be planted.

The developer desires to change the L2 screen along the west property line due to the style of the retaining wall that was constructed that then limited the depth of soil for plantings and the limited physical space along the property line for plants to grow. The parking lot is located on the low side of the 5-6 foot wall so all visibility of parked vehicles from the neighboring property is obstructed in this area due to the wall. The developer proposes only ground cover in this area and to plant only one of two required trees due to the retaining wall location.

The proposed plan includes a revision to the other landscape areas of the site along the north and east property lines to screen the parking lot with the existing 6-foot wood fence and using a mix of grasses and shrubs to meet the intent of the parking lot screen requirements and the use of understory trees. Grasses typically are not counted to meet the minimum screen requirement of an L2 or L3 screen. The east lot line is the most difficult area to address landscaping as the slopes of the detention area limits planting space for such screen requirements. Lower height crabapple trees have been proposed along the north and east property lines to stay below the overhead power lines, but still meet tree requirement of the ordinance for trees within the screen areas.

As proposed the amendment to the Landscape Plan does not materially impact the aesthetic of the project or function of the site and still meets the screen intent of the Zoning Ordinance.

Public Notice. Notice was mailed to property owners within 200 feet of the subject site and a sign was posted on the subject property. As of this writing, no comments have been received.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. The Planning and Zoning Commission can recommend that the City Council approve the Major Site Development Plan Amendment for 3505 and 3515 Lincoln Way to allow for the proposed revision to the Landscape Plan with the following condition:
 - A. The developer is responsible for the construction and maintenance of the 6-foot along all residential property lines.
2. The Planning and Zoning Commission can recommend that the City Council deny the request for the Major Site Development Plan Amendment for 3505 and 3515 Lincoln Way.

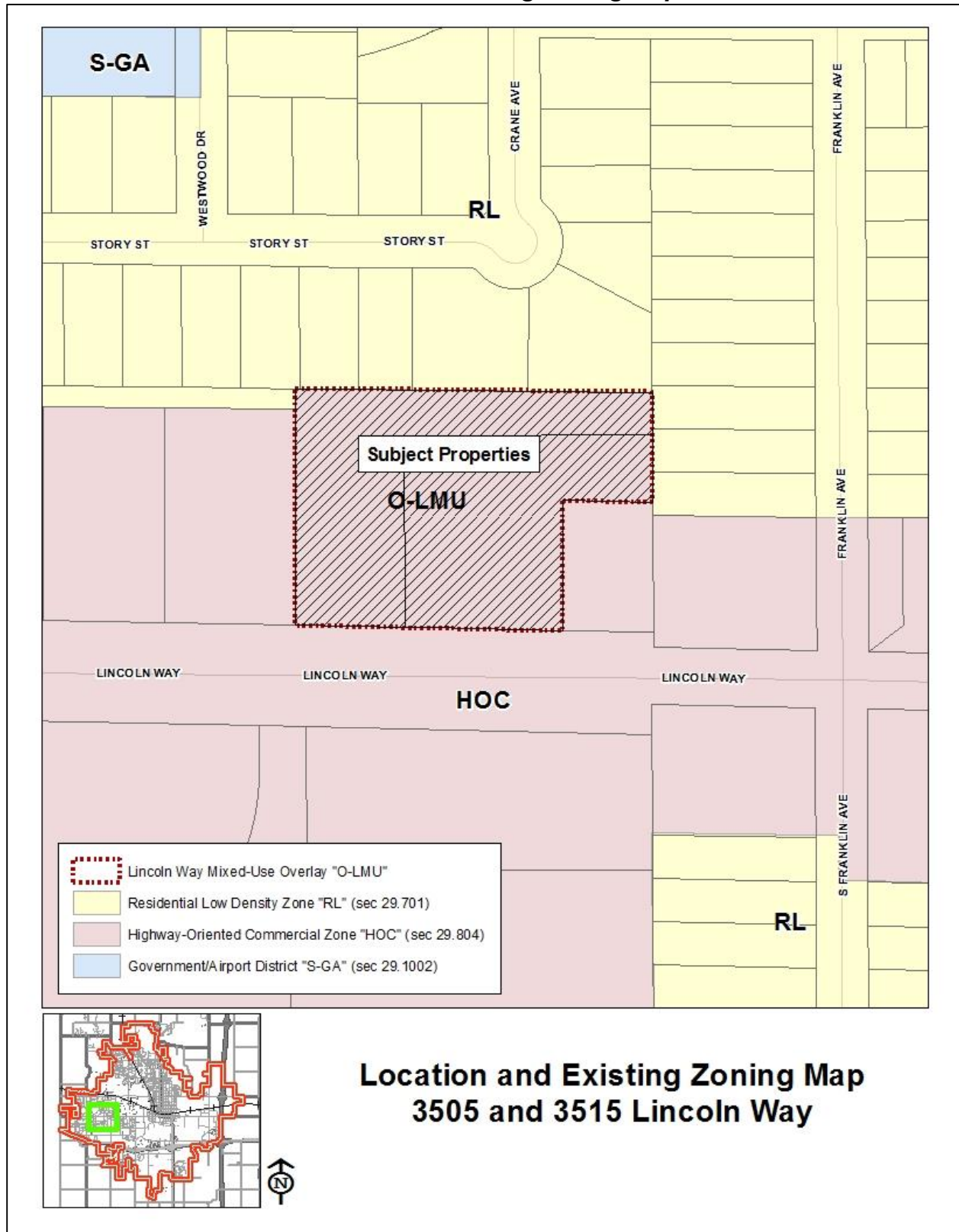
3. The Planning and Zoning Commission can defer action on this request and refer it back to City staff and/or the applicant for additional information.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

When City Council approved the Major Site Development Plan for development of the properties addressed as 3505 and 3515 Lincoln Way, it determined that the Plan meets the minimum criteria and standards for approval listed in Ames *Municipal Code* Section 29.1502(4)(d). The requested Major Site Development Plan amendment meets the applicable design standards and criteria of the Zoning Ordinance and is still in line with the original Major Site Development Plan and criteria. The original approval also included a condition that the developer was responsible for the construction of or maintenance of any existing fence along the residential property line to meet the zoning requirements for landscape buffering.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the Department of Planning and Housing that the Planning and Zoning Commission act in accordance with Alternative #1, which is to recommend that the City Council approve the request for the Major Site Development Plan Amendment for 3505 and 3515 Lincoln Way.

Attachment A
Location and Existing Zoning Map



Attachment C
Design Standards for Major Site Development Plans
(from Ames *Municipal Code* Section 29.1502(4)(d))

When acting upon an application for a Major Site Development Plan approval, the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council shall rely upon generally accepted site planning criteria and design standards. These criteria and standards are necessary to fulfill the intent of the Zoning Ordinance, the Land Use Policy Plan, and are the minimum necessary to safeguard the public health, safety, aesthetics, and general welfare.

1. The design of the proposed development shall make adequate provisions for surface and subsurface drainage to limit the rate of increased runoff of surface water to adjacent and downstream property.
2. The design of the proposed development shall make adequate provision for connection to water, sanitary sewer, electrical, and other utility lines within the capacity limits of those utility lines.
3. The design of the proposed development shall make adequate provision for fire protection through building placement, acceptable location of flammable materials, and other measures to ensure fire safety.
4. The design of the proposed development shall not increase the danger of erosion, flooding, landslide, or other endangerment to adjoining and surrounding property.
5. Natural topographic and landscape features of the site shall be incorporated into the development design.
6. The design of the interior vehicle and pedestrian circulation shall provide for convenient flow of vehicles and movement of pedestrians and shall prevent hazards to adjacent streets or property.
7. The design of outdoor parking areas, storage yards, trash and dumpster areas, and other exterior features shall be adequately landscaped or screened to minimize potential nuisance and impairment to the use of adjoining property.
8. The proposed development shall limit entrances and exits upon adjacent streets in order to prevent congestion on adjacent and surrounding streets and in order to provide for safe and orderly vehicle movement.
9. Exterior lighting shall relate to the scale and location of the development in order to maintain adequate security, while preventing a nuisance or hardship to adjacent property or streets.

10. The proposed development shall ensure that dust and other forms of air pollution, noise disturbances, odor, glare, and other nuisances will be limited to acceptable levels as prescribed in other applicable State and City regulations.
11. Site coverage, building scale, setbacks, and open spaces shall be in proportion with the development property and with existing and planned development and structures, in adjacent and surrounding property.