

Staff Report

**REVIEW OF AMES PLAN 2040 REDIRECTION AREAS RELATED TO FUTURE WORK
PLAN PRIORITIES**

December 19, 2023

BACKGROUND:

City Council held an infill design workshop in March of 2023. This workshop was designed to provide general background information on a variety of infill housing interests and design issues related to policies of Ames Plan 2040. **One of the actions directed by City Council was to return with a review of infill opportunity areas that could be prioritized by City Council for further study or zoning amendments.**

Ames Plan 2040 included a specific Land Use designation known as Redirection Areas for large areas identified during the adoption of the Plan that could have significant change over the next 20 years and warranted further study to define use and design priorities before committing to changes. Generally, Redirection Areas are focused on options to add additional housing or mixed-use opportunities, in some cases potentially commercial uses. **This report addresses the Redirection Areas as eight general areas that are based upon the land use designations included within the Plan 2040 future land use map.**

Redirection Areas are not all of the infill opportunities that may exist in the City. There are other scattered sites across the community that could include small infill projects that are not designated Redirection Areas and are intended to be addressed through other policies of the Plan. Some examples of scattered sites not labeled as redirection areas include the City owned site of the unused Harrison Road right-of-way, former school maintenance building at 1621 Wilson Avenue, urban corridor designated properties along west Lincoln Way, Hyland and Sheldon properties adjacent to Campus, and properties within downtown along 6th Street. Scattered sites are not the primary objective of this report, but may be of interest to City Council as separate projects.

A summary of each of the Redirection Areas and individual attributes are included as an attached presentation. These areas include:

#1. South of Campus (Hunt/Knapp)

Mix of low density and medium density housing, zoning primarily for high density with West University Overlay. Primary opportunity is increased housing.

#2. West of Campus Lincoln Way (Campus/Howard/West):

Large area is a mix of low density residential and high-density residential zoning, including West University Overlay. Lincoln Way frontage part of the 2018 Lincoln Way Corridor Plan West District Focus Area. South side of Lincoln Way designated Urban Corridor not Redirection Area, but staff would include the frontage between Hyland and State Avenue with this area. Primary opportunity is additional housing, limited commercial.

#3. South of Lincoln Mixed Use.

Large area centered around 3rd Street with a mix of single family, apartment, and commercial structures. Previously designated as special purpose district with tailored zoning for redevelopment based upon compatibility with existing low-density homes. Opportunity for commercial and housing choices.

#4. South Lincoln /East of Duff

Area is zoned HOC with a number of nonconforming uses, including individual residential homes. Primary opportunity for commercial and may include housing choices.

#5. Ferndale/ North Grand Mall Residential

Areas developed with medium density apartments adjacent to the mall and primarily zoned RH. Primary opportunity is housing adjacent to mall.

#6. 28th Street/ East of North Grand Mall Residential

Small area developed with medium density apartments and funeral home adjacent to the mall and primarily zoned RH. Primary opportunity is housing and small mixed use.

#7. Northwestern Avenue-West of Downtown

Mix of commercial and residential zoning. Primary opportunity is housing and small mixed use.

#8. Lincoln Way Elm/Oak

Area zoned highway commercial with mix of service businesses. Future site of City aquatic center. Focus Area within the Lincoln Way Corridor Plan. Primary opportunity for commercial and may include housing.

Staff will review these areas with City Council on December 19th to discuss the character, attributes, and potential for change.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Each of the Redirection Areas as unique features and interests. The potential for change and market interest for reinvestment will also vary with each area. **The summary of the areas is designed for City Council to determine if one or more the areas should be planned for a neighborhood planning study within the next 12-18 months.**

Staff envisions conducting outreach to any identified area at the start of any planning process to gain input on interests and issues for the area. After the outreach, staff would provide feedback to City Council and seek direction on how to proceed with land use and zoning changes to facilitate any specified development types or whether the area should remain as is. With City Council's direction after the initial input, a specific proposal would be generated for public review and eventual approval by City Council as likely zoning district changes. An alternative and more streamlined process would have the City Council define their interests for development options and outreach could be for a specific development proposal and then gauge the neighborhoods interests and concerns.

Depending upon the general redevelopment interests, size of the area, and outreach process will determine the amount of time that needs to be allocated to a study or plan for each area. Once City Council identifies their top priorities, staff will prepare an estimated schedule and scope of work for City Council to evaluate as part of the Planning Division Work Plan later this winter.

Staff believes that the Redirection Areas with the most immediate potential for change are Area #1 and Area #2. The demand for multi-family development is strong and would be the likely driver of development options in these areas.

Staff also sees some synergy benefits to considering the #7 Northwestern Area as a priority in relation to Downtown planning, which could also be expanded to include the fringe of the Downtown Core designated area at the corner of 6th and Grand Avenue. These areas both have long term redevelopment potential, but it may not be within the next few years.

The South Lincoln Mixed Use area #3 is an intriguing area for review to potentially establish new priorities. Zoning of this area currently allows for many desirable uses. Redevelopment is currently possible here, but the study may produce different priorities and potential changes to zoning standards. Staff sees this potentially as slightly lower priority based upon current zoning permitting redevelopment. Development along Lincoln Way is likely the primary catalyst for significant development interest in this area compared to influences of South Duff.

The other Redirection Areas have merit for consideration as well, but they would seem to have lower immediate needs for study.

Although infill on scattered sites is not the main purpose of this report, through the evaluation of infill interests and recent conversation about short term housing options staff believes using a city-controlled site as a test case for providing small lot style housing would also be a worthwhile activity in addition to studying the larger Redirection Areas. **Therefore, staff will prepare a scope of work for an RFP development process for the Harrison Road right-of-way for City Council to consider as a priority with the work plan as well.**