

Staff Report

REDIRECTION AREAS PRIORITIES

May 28, 2024

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*. *Ames Plan 2040* includes a specific Land Use designation known as Redirection Areas for certain previously developed 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.

In December 2023, staff presented a report to Council providing an overview of each of the eight Redirection Areas included within the Plan 2040 future land use map. The presentation was designed to help City Council prioritize opportunities for infill housing that correlated to Plan 2040 implementation priorities.

Of those eight areas, City Council directed staff to scope parameters for three areas listed below, in order that City Council could then prioritize a redirection area for study within the Planning and Housing Department Work Plan. A short summary of the intent for each area as identified in December is below, while a more complete overview of each area is included as an attachment.

- **Area #1. South of Campus (Hunt/Knapp):** The primary opportunity is increased housing, though student-related retail and restaurants might be a complementary fit. Focus would be on a mix of medium-density and high-density housing types. The current base zoning is for high density. The West University Overlay and the East University Overlay cover the area.
- **Area #2. West of Campus Lincoln Way (Campus/Howard/West):** The primary opportunity is additional housing, with commercial on Lincoln Way, Campus Avenue, and Hyland Avenue. The original extent of the Redirection Area boundary is very large including a mix of low-density single-family residential and high-density residential zoning. Roughly half of the properties are within the West University Overlay. The Lincoln Way frontage is part of the 2018 Lincoln Way Corridor Plan West District Focus Area. The south side of Lincoln Way is designated Urban Corridor not Redirection Area, but staff would include the frontage between Hyland and State Avenue within this area.
- **Area #7. Northwestern Avenue - West of Downtown:** The primary opportunity is housing and small mixed-use. This area is mix of commercial and residential zoning. It was highlighted in December due to potential synergy with the Downtown Plan

OPTIONS:

Staff has concluded the following about each area in terms of its likely immediate redevelopment potential and potential amount of time needed for outreach, meetings, drafting of standards, consideration of adoption of new standards.

- **Area #1 South of Campus (Hunt/Knapp):** This area is the most primed for redevelopment. Most of the properties are rentals, eight entities own most of the properties, there are a number of vacant lots, and the housing stock is in poor condition. Adjacent to the Campustown Service Center district, this area could serve as a transition between Campustown and the residential area to the south. Staff believes due to the smaller overall size and clear objectives, the total amount of time needed is 22-24 weeks.
- **Area #2 West of Campus Lincoln Way (Campus/Howard/West):** The initial boundaries of this area are quite large and include areas not likely to redevelop from owner-occupied single-family homes, in particular to remove the block in the northwest corner of the along Oakland and Forest Glen. Overall the area is quite diverse in zoning and housing mix with a variety of interests for the area related to housing types and Lincoln Way frontage enhancements. This will be the most time-consuming of the three areas to study in depth and complete outreach. Once the project starts, it may make sense to break the area into subdistricts: Lincoln Way, Near Campus (to the east), and the remainder to address the unique components of area. Staff believes this will have some strong near-term market interest for probably smaller redevelopment options or individual properties because of ownership patterns and land use patterns. Due to the size and diverse interests in this area, staff believes it will require 27-31 weeks.
- **Area #7 Northwestern Avenue - West of Downtown:** Staff finds that only the northeast block of this property is likely to redevelop and is not likely in the short term. The catalyst for redevelopment seems dependent primarily on the office buildings, controlled by one entity. These buildings do not appear to be deteriorating and will likely be in use for years to come. It is possible to add the properties on the north side of 6th Street, east of Grand Avenue to this area, as these mostly rental properties are primed for redevelopment. This was noted as a possibility in relation to the Downtown Plan as part of the December presentation. Staff believes due to the small size of the area that only 20-22 weeks are needed to complete all of the outreach and study steps.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Staff believes that Area #1 is one of the most primed opportunity areas for redevelopment due to proven attraction to the areas related to student housing. This area is adjacent to Campustown, is primarily rentals, has housing in need of replacement, is walkable and a desirable location for university students, and most of the properties are owned by eight entities (which will make redevelopment easier). Staff finds that working on Area #1 will pay dividends the most quickly. This area is also of a manageable size.

Area #2 also has great appeal for similar reasons to Area #1, but is more complex and larger in size, therefore requiring more resources for potentially a similar short-term benefit comparable to Area #1.

Area #7 was originally listed because of the upcoming Downtown Plan and the thought it had synergy

with that Plan. The Downtown Plan has not yet started, and staff believes at this time that this area could be deferred for later consideration with little immediate demand for redevelopment.

City Council recently approved an 18-month Work Plan for the Planning and Housing Department. With the approved Work Plan, staff indicated that a time allocation was reserved for one Redirection Area. It was shown to begin later as a project later in 2024 and work into or through 2025. If City Council chooses to prioritize a Redirection Area for study, staff believes starting at the end of 2024 is still appropriate. Starting this project then would follow completion of other ongoing projects, such as, the start of rewriting the Northeast Gateway Commercial Overlay Zoning, and the Council workshop on scoping of the zoning ordinance update.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Attachment A.pdf](#)

[Attachment B.pdf](#)

[Attachment C.pdf](#)