

Staff Report

**WAIVER REQUEST FOR A RURAL TWO-LOT MINOR SUBDIVISION OF LESS THAN 35 ACRES WITHIN TWO MILES OF AMES AT 50184 180TH STREET**

February 24, 2026

**BACKGROUND:**

Brad McCartney, of 50184 180th Street in rural Story County, recently contacted the City Council regarding his desire to subdivide a single seven-acre property into two parcels (Attachment A-Letter, Attachment B-Subdivision Proposal). In order for this to occur in the County, he has requested that the City Council waive development standards. Any division of land within two miles of Ames is subject to City review for conformance to the City's subdivision code or for consideration of a waiver of city standards (Attachment C-Location Map).

The subject property currently has one house on it. The property is northwest of the City nearly two miles from the current boundary of the City at the northern edge of the City's two-mile jurisdictional boundary. City staff identified the property as primarily Natural Area with some Agricultural based upon the policies of Ames Plan 2040 in relation to existing conditions and proximity to loway Creek (see Attachment D Sketch Plan letter). The property is not located in an Urban Reserve Area.

**The purpose of the proposed subdivision is to split the existing farmstead of approximately 7.67 acres of land into two parcels of 4.523 acres and 3.147 acres separately and build a new home on the western 4.523-acre parcel. An existing home on the property would occupy the eastern 3.147 acre parcel.**

**Mr. McCartney is seeking a waiver of the City's Subdivision standards that would otherwise require public improvements with the division, and to waive the minimum lot size policy related to rural land use designations. Both of the identified land use designations do not support subdivisions based on the intended land use of Ames Plan 2040. However, the property is at the farthest edge of the City's two-mile boundary and could be considered for a waiver of City standards if found not to conflict with City interests.** Story County would permit the division as a Rural Parcel Subdivision to create one additional lot, if the City waives its requirements.

**OPTIONS:**

**Option 1: Approve Waiver of City Review**

This option would waive the City review of this subdivision in its entirety, thereby releasing it to Story County for its review. The City would not review any component of the subdivision.

The subject subdivision cannot be accomplished within the City's regulations because of its distance from the City. Furthermore, its location does not impact planned growth areas of the

City.

This option requires filing a formal approval of a waiver by the Council. With a release of subdivision review, the applicant may proceed with submitting an application to Story County for review.

**Option 2: Require a Final Plat to be submitted and reviewed with a waiver for minimum lot size of less than 35 acres.**

This option would require a Final Plat for review and consideration by City Council before being considered by Story County. The intent would be to waive all improvement requirements, but retain review authority of the subdivision and its lot configuration. A Plat of Survey may be acceptable in lieu of Final Plat, pending coordination with Story County.

**Option 3: Decline to waive standards in support of a subdivision at this location**

This option would maintain that the Natural Area Conservation and Agricultural Area as-is with no intensification of housing by rejecting the request for a waiver from Mr. McCartney.

**STAFF COMMENTS:**

Mr. McCartney has communicated to staff his desire to subdivide his farmland in Story County. Ames has a policy of only subdividing land in the Urban Fringe into parcels that are at least 35 acres for areas seen as Agricultural and Farm Service classifications and not allowing subdivisions in designated Natural Area Conservation Subdivisions that intensify use near the City and do not include urban development standards, which can be counter to the City's plans for growth and expansion.

**However, upon review of the Ames Plan 2040 Future Land Use and the location of this property staff does not believe that this property will ever be brought into the City. The location of this division is at the edge of the City's two-mile jurisdictional boundary. The area in general is highly unlikely to be incorporated into the City in the future due to existing development patterns in this area.**

**As such, given the distance near the edge of the two-mile boundary and that it is unlikely to ever come into the City, staff supports granting a waiver.**

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

[Attachment A- Owners Letter to Council.pdf](#)

[Attachment B-Proposed Subdivision.pdf](#)

[Attachment C- Location Map.pdf](#)

[Attachment D- 50184 180th Street Sketch Plan Letter.pdf](#)