

Staff Report

AMES PLAN 2040 UPDATE- WORKSHOP #2

April 2, 2019

BACKGROUND:

The City Council initiated the creation of a new Comprehensive Plan in late 2018 and hired RDG as the lead consultant for the project. The comprehensive planning effort has now been branded as Ames Plan 2040. At the April 2nd workshop, RDG will provide an update on the progress that has been made on the Plan with public engagement, assessment of current conditions, and projections for growth. The RDG presentation regarding feedback and projections for is posted with this agenda item.

The workshop is intended for Council to receive information and discuss the progress of the project; **no formal decisions are required on April 2nd**. A follow up meeting to the April 2nd workshop is planned for April 23rd regular City Council meeting, where Council will be asked to provide direction on the next steps of the project.

The initial phase of public outreach is intended to gain an understanding of current perceptions of the community and identify issues and big ideas concerning the community's growth over the next 20 years. The process was intended to allow for open expression of any issue about the community and its future.

Public engagement started with a public workshop kick-off event on February 5th, 2019. Additional workshops and focus groups meetings have occurred throughout February and March and will continue into the middle of April. Approximately 400 online surveys have been completed and over 300 people have interacted with Ames Plan 2040 through in person engagement opportunities. A complete summary of feedback and current survey results are available online at the City's website at www.cityofames.org/amesplan2040.

Along with seeking public input, the consultant team has begun the technical evaluation of the City. An existing conditions economic report describing the current setting of the City has been prepared by economists Gruen + Gruen. This report is also posted on the Ames Plan 2040 website with highlights as part of the presentation. RDG has also begun considering population and housing projections, which will be discussed on April 2nd. The preliminary assessments for growth consider population and employment growth of approximately 25%. This level of growth would equate to a 15,000 to 20,000 increase in population with an assumption of steady enrollment at ISU.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Staff has heard diverse input concerning the quality of community, planning for growth, support for parks and recreation, housing needs, and consideration of environmental issues, economic development, and transportation issues. RDG has condensed the public feedback to six “big picture” thoughts that start to shape ideas for consideration in the next phases of the project.

“Big Picture Thoughts” (excerpt from presentation):

- A City with Variety
- Transportation Equality
- Vibrant and Balanced Market
- Embrace the Environment
- Be Bold and Unique
- Character at All Scales

RDG will detail these ideas in the presentation on April 2nd and there will be more discussion at the workshop on the feedback received. The initial phase of community outreach, including remaining focus groups and the online survey, will continue through the middle of April.

At the conclusion of this workshop and with City Council’s direction, staff and RDG will continue to work towards the next step of the process of design scenario options to evaluate growth of the community. **Final determinations or decisions on the next steps of the process are not required on April 2nd, as we have set aside April 23rd as follow up from the workshop with the intent of finalizing the scenario evaluation process of the next phase.**