

## Staff Report

**AMES PLAN 2040 UPDATE- WORKSHOP #3  
Scenario Analysis Task Description**

April 23, 2019

**BACKGROUND:**

City Council received an update on April 2nd from RDG on the emerging themes from the public engagement phase of the project and initial population projections in support of moving to the next major task of the project, which is scenario analysis. The RDG presentation from April 2<sup>nd</sup> is available on the [Ames Plan 2040 website](#). **City Council is asked at this meeting to provide direction to RDG on the preferred approach to conducting scenario analysis that will help inform later decisions on growth of the community as well as vision and goals for the community through 2040.**

Based upon current information on growth projections, as described by RDG on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, we reasonably forecast a 1.5% increase in population with a higher level growth rate of 2% as an option as well. Both population rates contemplate minimal change to the student enrollment numbers of ISU. The total population increases are roughly 15,000 people and 20,000 people respectively with these growth rates. Additionally, job growth is estimated at about 1% annually, or approximately a 25% increase in jobs for the City.

The scenario evaluation step will use these initial projections to consider the mix of housing, commercial, and employment land use needs for the City. RDG will continue to refine their work and assumptions for the projections during this phase as well. **The outcome of this evaluation task will be a broad analysis of growth and change to help create a comparison of options and context for selecting a preferred scenario at the end of this task.**

**SCENARIO OPTIONS:**

City Council is being asked on April 23<sup>rd</sup> to endorse an approach to scenario planning to allow for RDG to begin the next phase of the work plan. On April 2<sup>nd</sup> RDG provided a short introduction to the topic in preparation for the 23<sup>rd</sup>. City Council discussed with RDG approaches to scenario analysis that could be based on preferred land use or development “philosophies” to guide this task. Attached to this report is a memo with information from RDG on approaches that they have utilized with prior communities. This information is meant as background material to help guide a discussion April 23<sup>rd</sup> for its preferences on how to proceed. In addition to philosophies as the basis for scenarios, locational choices could be the defining approach to the scenarios evaluation. The April 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting also included a high level introduction to issues related to the expansion of the City. City Council discussed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> what were truly viable areas for growth and asked for more refined information or recommendations for expansion areas.

Staff has prepared three options for scenario evaluation in response to the information discussed on April 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Option 1- Infill Redevelopment Opportunities**

The City likely has opportunities to support growth within the current City boundaries and not all growth needs to be planned for with expansion of the City. Infill options were also identified in the community survey as preferred area for growth. However, staff does not believe an infill option that houses all of the projected growth is likely and some areas of expansion will also be necessary.

This scenario would include consideration of infill redevelopment opportunities. Infill can include housing and commercial activities. Staff initially recommends the basis for this scenario focused on the following areas:

1. Lincoln Way Corridor Plan Focus Areas,
2. South Lincoln Mixed-Use District,
3. East of South Duff Avenue and south of the Union Pacific railroad,
4. Campustown,
5. State nursery site,
6. Other underutilized or advantageously located commercial and higher density areas for meeting housing needs, transportation access, or commercial development needs.

### **Option 2- Comparative Land Use Concepts**

This scenario would begin with evaluation of a range of buildout concepts (philosophies) to create a comparison of land use needs and patterns for growth. This approach would consider projected development yields with different priorities for how to develop land, such as a philosophy of prioritizing one pattern or feature of development over another. Examples of development philosophies that could guide this option are conservation subdivision design, access to transportation, efficiency of development, new urbanism (village concepts), traditional suburban design features, green or sustainable development principles, housing densities, commercial areas, etc. **City Council would need to define two or three priorities to help RDG create distinct scenarios for comparison.**

This option would first focus on comparing readily serviceable areas abutting the City, typically areas previously analyzed by the City in the current LUPP as allowable Growth Areas. This exercise would establish land area needs through evaluation of identified philosophical priorities to create comparisons of scenarios. City Council would then iteratively consider where to locate planned growth as a subsequent step upon completing the first step of the evaluation with philosophical approaches. **This options consider land use preferences first and then addresses locational issues.**

### **Option 3- Location Directed Growth**

This approach is distinct in its approach to answer location related issues for significant growth assumptions first, before refining details on land use planning priorities. Through the initial assessment of existing conditions, it has been identified that there are significant infrastructure needs for virtually all major potential areas of city expansion. Because of this, knowing serviceability may be a higher priority as the first step of the evaluation process compared to land use planning preferences.

The intent of this option is to look individually at the capacity and attributes of an area related to supporting 15,000 people. RDG would apply their professional expertise with a best practices or hybrid approach to identify the land use mix for each area along with major constraints to reaching the projected population total. City Council would then review the comparison of these four areas serviceability and the underlying land use assumptions before giving direction on a preferred concept.

Staff has provided an initial diagram (Attachment A) of general evaluation areas for West, East, North, and South. Staff has eliminated some areas that there are known constraints from the April 2<sup>nd</sup> presentation in an effort to focus on the potentially more viable areas. City Council with this option would endorse general areas to evaluate by RDG using a mix of land use practices that they deem appropriate to each area. Each area may end up with different land use assumptions due to unique conditions or opportunities.

### **STAFF COMMENTS:**

With scenario analysis an approach must be endorsed for RDG to move forward on this important task. Essentially, City Council needs to identify what information is preferred in the first round of evaluation to guide its final decisions. **Staff has laid out Option 1 for considering infill options first which would inform land use needs for expansion, Option 2 first identifies the preferred approach to land use planning and development philosophies before vetting location preferences, and Option 3 highlights location issues first before considering detailed land use assumptions.**

**Within all of these options, staff believes that it is understood that major land use differences to be considered will focus on housing (single family and multi-family) and local/community commercial components, while the industrial and regional commercial assumptions are that the East Industrial, ISU Research Park, and 13<sup>th</sup> Street areas respectively will remain unchanged from the current the LUPP.**

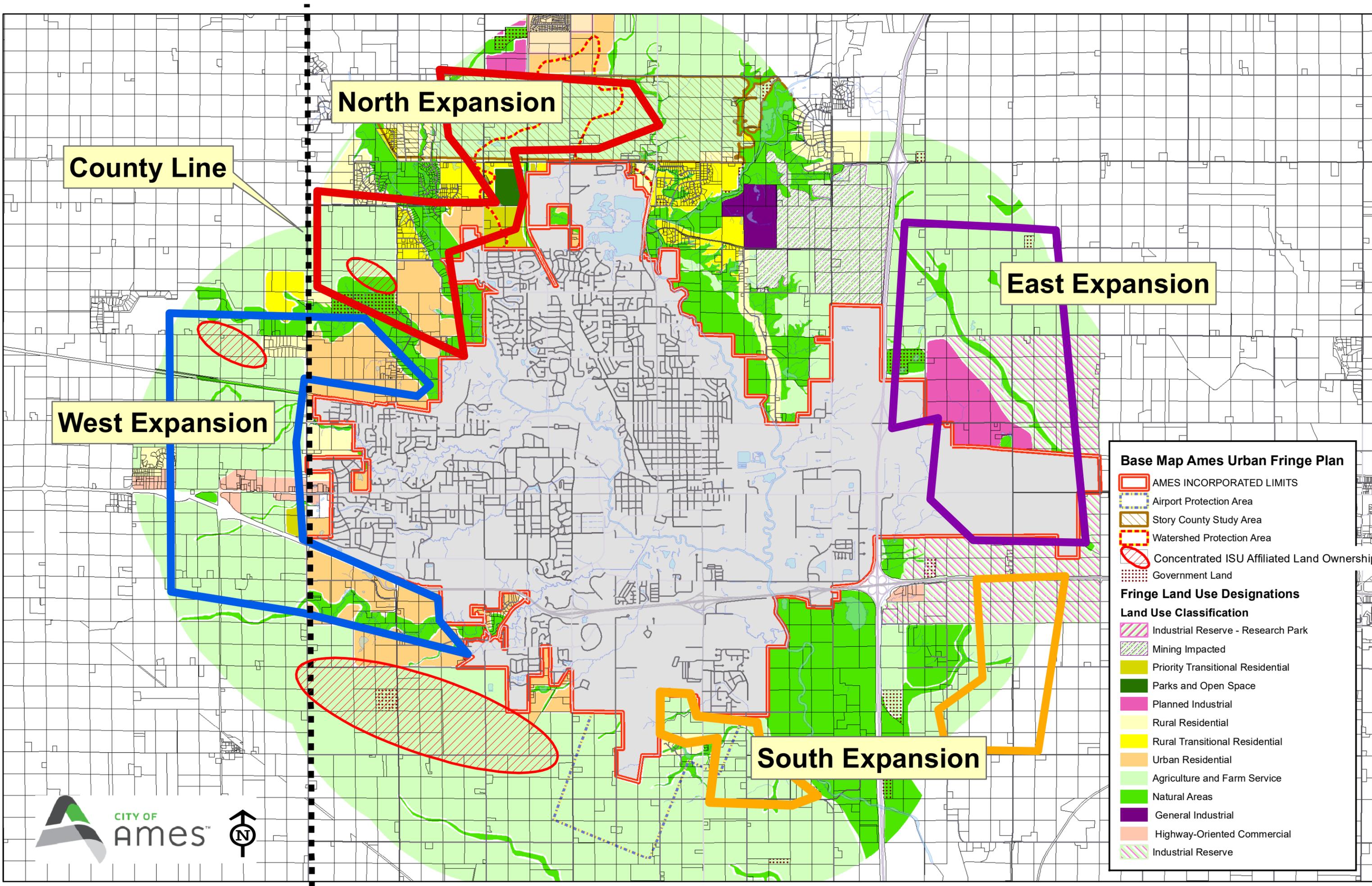
**Staff believes that choosing Option 1 and Option 3 would best serve the City at this time due to the significant unknowns about the viability of the location of growth and changes. Additionally, choosing Option 3 lets the City consider its longer term growth needs beyond 2040 by evaluating 15,000 people four different times (essentially 60,000 people), which may be important in making decisions about priorities for the next 20 years that will also influence the long term future of the**

**City. City Council would choose Option 2 if defining specific philosophies for growth up front are the priority for the City.**

**Because this direction that is being requested from RDG is an important step in the work plan of defining the scope for evaluating options before selecting a preferred option later this summer, staff would recommend that public input be taken at this meeting.**

**NEXT STEPS:**

Any of the options listed above will help lead to the ultimate step of selecting a preferred scenario to serve as the basis for writing the Plan. City Council will receive information on the evaluation of scenarios this summer. City Council will then consider the comparisons and provide direction of how to refine the options into a preferred scenario. This scenario task is expected to be completed within the next six months. In addition to the comparative analysis of the scenarios, City Council will also begin discussion this summer of its vision and goals for the City and how these interests will help shape a preferred scenario as well.



**North Expansion**

**County Line**

**East Expansion**

**West Expansion**

**South Expansion**

**Base Map Ames Urban Fringe Plan**

- AMES INCORPORATED LIMITS
- Airport Protection Area
- Story County Study Area
- Watershed Protection Area
- Concentrated ISU Affiliated Land Ownership
- Government Land

**Fringe Land Use Designations**

**Land Use Classification**

- Industrial Reserve - Research Park
- Mining Impacted
- Priority Transitional Residential
- Parks and Open Space
- Planned Industrial
- Rural Residential
- Rural Transitional Residential
- Urban Residential
- Agriculture and Farm Service
- Natural Areas
- General Industrial
- Highway-Oriented Commercial
- Industrial Reserve

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Kelly Diekmann, Planning & Housing Director

**DATE:** April 16, 2019

**SUBJECT:** Ames Plan 2040 Scenario Planning Background

In accordance with the consultant's work plan, the next step following the Ames Today/Public Engagement phase of the Ames Plan 2040 project is Scenario Analysis. Prior to starting this phase, the City Council is being asked to provide direction to RDG at its April 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting on the preferred approach to scenario analysis. The Scenarios task is intended to help provide a broad evaluation of a number of alternatives for the City's growth and change over the next 20 years. Ultimately, the goal at the end of this task is for the City to identify a preferred option on both the locations of growth and the anticipated types of development that the City would support for those areas. The preferred option will then become the basis for formulating the actual new Plan.

At the April 2<sup>nd</sup> workshop the concept of scenarios was discussed in preparation for the April 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. RDG has conducted scenario analysis a number of different ways to assist cities in preparation of a comprehensive plan. RDG introduced at the April 2<sup>nd</sup> workshop the concept of using "philosophies" on growth to help shape the evaluation of scenarios. For the purpose of this discussion, philosophy is equated with assumptions on the land use mix and primary layout elements of development that affect the amount of land needed in an area for growth. Generic examples of philosophies could include prioritizing conservation principles, housing density, mix of housing types, efficiency, green/sustainable design, transportation access, market demand, new urbanism (village concepts), suburban, etc. Attached to this memo are examples from RDG of prior work they have done for other cities in regard to applying philosophies/approaches to analyzing growth within scenarios for Oklahoma City, Cedar Rapids, and Brookings South Dakota.

Examples of "philosophies" in the current LUPP would be the embodiment of the vision statement in our land use concepts for a preference for village development, commercial areas, conservation planning, and also support for suburban development options. Rarely does a City choose one overarching philosophy for all development in a City due to multiple interests and locational differences within a city. It is common that a hybrid expectation materializes out of the evaluation or discussion on the needs of a community.

Scenarios analysis for Ames must also include a locational or directional growth element as was also discussed on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Philosophies alone are not likely to address core issues about where and how to grow due the known constraints to growth around the City. An assessment of locational differences of similar growth assumptions may be the more significant component of the Scenario analysis task compared to philosophies. Addressing infill opportunities is likely a separate scenario from the evaluation of the expansion of the City outward.

Council will receive additional information on Friday in preparation for the 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting about a recommended approach to the task. City Council will then review information from RDG about the scenario options on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and provide direction to RDG on a preferred approach to the scenario task.