



**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADVISORY BOARD AND
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION**

City of Johnston
6221 Merle Hay Road, Johnston, IA 50131

Minutes
Joint Meeting: Wednesday, April 7th, 2010

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order

The meeting came to order at 6:07 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Comprehensive Plan Advisory Board:

	Robertson	Dubas	Shiefelbein	Cordaro	Wittman	Kimball	N. Johnson
Present	X		X			X	
Absent		X		X	X		X

Planning & Zoning Commission:

	Robertson	Wiskirchen	Temple	Moran	Jeske	Petersma	D. Johnson
Present	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Absent							

City Staff Present: David Wilwerding, Aaron Wolfe, Deb Schiel-Larson, Steven Witmer

City Council Present: Jim Hibbs

3. Review Open House and JEDCO Meeting Results

4. Review Electronic Input

Mark Koegler summarized the Open House and JEDCO meeting results.

5. Discuss Land Use Topics

a. Future Growth Areas

i. Northwest

Koegler discussed the Northwest Growth Area and the possible alternative plans.

Shiefelbein stated that he prefers Alternative Two. It may not develop to business, but it will be easier to label it commercial first and change it later to residential if desired as opposed to labeling it residential first and trying to change it to commercial later.

Robertson asked how developed the area is now. Koegler explained there are a handful of homes but not heavily developed.

Robertson stated that he also prefers Alternative Two.

Temple asked about the feasibility of Alternative Two. Koegler responded that it may be a stretch. It would be difficult to achieve in the short term because of the distance to the Interstate and Highway 141 and the business park area will be in competition with the Highway 141 corridor in Grimes. It is not impossible but definitely a long-term plan.

Temple stated that he also prefers Alternative 2, but is not sure it is realistic. Current residents in that area would probably not be interested in development in that area, they like the rural setting. Based on that, probably Alternative One is more realistic. Temple disclosed his family does own land in this area.

Koegler noted that the final land use map will not show the level of detail shown in these plans, the roadways shown are conceptual to help visualize how this area might develop under these land uses.

Johnson asked if there could be a middle ground between Alternative One and Two. Temple observed that people in the area might be accepting of some office uses but probably not so much for industrial uses.

Petersma asked about the Granger Comprehensive Plan area. Koegler explained that it shows a residential land use pattern in the area adjacent to this.

Petersma commented that Alternative 2 looks nice for a perfect world, but Alternative 1 is probably more realistic. However there probably would be some opportunity for some commercial in the area of the interchange on Highway 141.

Temple asked what the current Polk County Comprehensive Plan shows for this area besides residential. Wilwerding answered that it shows agricultural uses. Wilwerding noted that Polk County is willing to work with Johnston on development in that area because they are aware the city is looking at this area.

Jeske noted that several people have said they prefer Alternative 2 but that it might not be realistic. In her view it may be better to reserve the area for a business park, but that may be long term.

Kimball noted that the business park area in Alternative 2 is the least desirable for residential, so it may be better to keep it commercial now and it can always be changed later if desired.

Wilwerding noted that Alternative 2 also has more mixed use, and suggested the idea of taking the business park area shown in Alternative 2 and adding it to Alternative 1 plan.

Wiskirchen asked about the difference in school locations between plans. Koegler replied that it is not consequential, the areas will be adjusted to more realistic parcel size.

Koegler discussed the area west of Highway 141 south of Granger and that there are substantial wetland areas, it would be very difficult to grow in that area. It may be worth some text to discuss it in the plan, but no projections for growth in that area. Moran suggested

designating it as park or open space. Koegler responded that the plan could talk about open space potential of the area.

Temple asked how far north Grimes intends to go in their new plan. Wilwerding responded that it will go up to Chevalia Run but no further north. Temple suggested looking north of that boundary, it is too premature to plan anything but it should be mentioned.

ii. River East

Koegler discussed the River East area.

Temple asked if there are only 280 acres of usable land in this area. Koegler responded yes, but that is based on 2008 inundation levels, there may be some small additional areas that could be developed to some extent.

Jeske inquired if the commercial properties are of marketable size. Koegler responded yes. It is envisioned that the commercial in this area would be of a different character to the commercial envisioned in the NW area, this would be more of a light industrial area. Jeske commented that it would be good to have that area for that type of business.

Kimball observed that the likelihood of this area developing is dependent on the interchange going in.

Temple asked about widening NW 66th Avenue and rebuilding the bridge. Wilwerding replied that it will happen and Johnston will participate in the project.

Robertson suggested using the area for parks, it would be better to use areas like this for parks instead of taking good land for them.

Koegler noted that the County has expressed some interest in open space/park uses in this area.

Moran asked about utilities. Wilwerding replied that sewer and water is potentially available but could be at significant cost. Temple commented that he would like to see the numbers for projected utility cost, but seems like a lot of investment for just 280 acres of developable area.

Wilwerding noted that Polk County's thought is there might be a commercial node at the interchange if that happens, otherwise they intend to keep it as agricultural to protect flood areas.

b. Community Land Use

i. Merle Hay Road Gateway

Koegler – comments and discussion with participants at open house were that the city should do something with this area. What is shown here should be sensitive to what is proposed further north as part of the MHR Redevelopment Plan.

Koegler discussed the concept plan and alternative plan.

Kimball commented that the key to redeveloping the Merle Hay Road corridor is more residential at the north end. If that happens, the commercial will come. Koegler noted that that sentiment was also reflected in some of the comments received at the Open House.

Temple asked about the MDR areas in the concept plan. Koegler explained that they are shown that way in current plan. Wilwerding noted that the Triton townhomes are presently there, otherwise it is low density residential currently.

Johnson commented that he sees the hotel property as being retail more likely than office. Temple noted that the hotel property is set back from road, he is not sure how much retail it would support. Koegler explained that the hotel site could be combined with adjacent properties to create a larger parcel.

Robertson suggested the hotel site could be business with high density residential either on the second floor or located to the rear of the property.

Hibbs commented that he thinks that retail/commercial/hotel would fit here.

Moran stated he sees most people heading south for hotels, would need to change uses in the immediate area to draw more traffic north of the interstate. He sees this area as primarily retail. Wilwerding observed that Quiktrip is probably the only property on the north getting much interstate traffic.

Johnson noted that the hotel site sits low, and is hidden from the interstate by trees.

Shiefelbein noted that usually at convenience store stops on Interstates there is a restaurant area adjacent, that is not present here.

Robertson suggested looking at how NW 86th interchange has developed, it has restaurants and hotels. Moran noted that Stoney Creek Inn is situated away from the road but is always booked. Wilwerding observed that it is probably capturing some of the long-term business travelers.

ii. NW 86th Street/NW 70th Avenue

Koegler discussed plan.

Jeske asked about the size of the commercial parcel. Wilwerding estimated maybe 12 acres.

Koegler suggested this area may be more suited to neighborhood commercial types of uses.

Kimball commented that it is unlikely that the southwest corner will be a corporate HQ, given competition. Koegler replied that that can be very difficult to predict. Wilwerding noted that this parcel has been on the finalist list more than once for companies looking for a corporate site.

Moran commented that there is no mass transit option and it is not located near the interstate or Highway 141. Hibbs noted that DART busses currently run to John Deere Credit and Pioneer, the service could probably be extended to this site.

Temple commented that if corporate area is what the current property owner wants, we should leave it that way.

Temple asked if the MDR designation shown is single family only. Koegler responded that as envisioned here it would allow townhomes. Jeske stated that MDR seems appropriate.

iii. NW 100th Street/70th Avenue

Kimball commented that he prefers Alternative One. Koegler agreed that Alternative One is probably more realistic. Shiefelbein asked how large of an area the park referendum for. 120 acres. Koegler noted that Alternative One shows a park of about 40 acres. Shiefelbein asked how that compares to other parks. Wilwerding noted that Lew Clarkson Park is about 55 acres but includes unusable areas along the creek, the usable area is probably close to 40 acres.

Koegler suggested that the future park use will need to be considered, if it is intended to have ball fields and high use, it is probably better to locate on a main street rather than tucked within a neighborhood.

Temple asked if the amount of office/commercial is similar between both plans and the main difference is size of the park. Koegler replied yes.

Koegler explained that Jim Sanders had suggested putting the commercial areas on one side of the road to cut down on road-crossing trips between commercial areas.

Jeske commented that she prefers the south-side arrangement of commercial/office on Alternative Two. The north side seems to have more residential character and is not most ideal location for those.

Johnson asked about an interconnection to the YMCA and Walmart. Wilwerding answered that there should be opportunities to work with Grimes to have connectivity with those parcels.

Robertson noted that with Walmart coming in, there are already other businesses moving into the area.

Shiefelbein asked about Grimes' intentions south of YMCA property. Koegler replied that they are currently showing office/retail transitioning to medium density residential.

Hibbs left at 7:31 p.m.

Kimball noted that the consensus appears to be to move the commercial areas south of NW 70th and the park adjacent to NW 100th Street.

Koegler asked if any commercial uses should be on the north side of NW 70th Avenue. Wiskirchen stated that the commercial should be put on the south side, but perhaps keep some office uses on the north side.

iv. East of Merle Hay Road

Koegler noted that based on discussions at the Open House and submitted commented there has been a substantial change in attitude in this area since the 1998 plan was developed. City is looking at plans for serving this area.

Robertson agreed, a lot of properties have changed hands and newer owners are more interested in infrastructure. Sewer and streets are the big issue.

Temple noted that a lot of people want sewer but don't want to upset their neighbors by asking for it.

Temple suggested that the land between NW 55th Avenue and NW 57th Avenue that was shown in MHR Gateway map should be shown on this map as well.

c. Transportation

i. NW 54th Avenue Connection

Kimball stated he would like to see the NW 54th Avenue Connection happen but it would be costly to do correctly. Could it be possible to do it in a less expensive manner and just accept that it would probably be flooded every year for a period of time. Koegler responded that the question can be put to the engineers but it may not reduce cost that much.

Robertson stated that he remembers the last time this was discussed and Alva Long said if it was built it would be the most expensive road ever built. Would the benefit of the connection be worth the cost of building it.

Robertson suggested locating a road by the interstate.

Kimball stated that it would be a mistake to take it off the table. Jeske agreed, it might be economically infeasible but it is too early to take it off the table at this point. Johnson agreed, this should stay on the map, but most people probably realize it will not happen in the life of this plan.

Temple noted that even moving it closer to the interstate it still crosses a lot of floodplain. Still the plan should show it as a possibility.

Petersma stated that keeping this connection in the plan is buying a lot of headache for something that probably isn't going to happen.

Petersma commented that he would like to see council's discussion of this but they should be provided the history of the last time this was considered.

Moran discussed "complete streets" and noted there is not much connectivity of trails to retail areas. Trails are great but sometimes you want to be able to walk to retail or a restaurant.

ii. Other transportation issues

4. Other Issues

6. Next Steps

Koegler explained that there will be a directional meeting with City Council on the 19th. Draft materials for review will be generated after that. The expectation is that there will be meetings roughly monthly during the summer.

6. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.