

# CITY OF AMES LINCOLN WAY CORRIDOR PLAN

## Ames Neighborhood Workshop Summary

On the evening of March 2, 2016 a meeting was held at Zeke's community center with members of the Ames community whose neighborhoods are directly adjacent to the Lincoln Way Corridor Planning boundary. This meeting was the first of many opportunities for the Ames community to get involved in the Lincoln Way corridor planning process.

The meeting began with a brief overview of the projected planning process, highlighting the various ways people can get involved. Following the introduction, the workshop participants were guided through a four-question worksheet that identified the community's key issues, priorities, and strengths in relation to the Lincoln Way corridor.

### Issues or Concerns

Workshop participants were asked to identify five issues or concerns that are confronting the Lincoln Way Corridor. This first exercise was intended to bring forth any and all concerns that the neighborhoods might have in their unique perspective. Once all of the issues and concerns were listed, the participants were asked to identify their top three priorities. This allowed the community to see, by show of hands, the greatest priorities of the group. The following is a brief summary of the key issues discussed, in order of importance based on the priorities identified by the participants.

#### Pedestrian/Bicycle Mobility

Pedestrian and bicycle mobility was a key issue identified by the community in a variety of ways. Many of the comments eluded to a major concern in the specific areas near Campustown, where pedestrian and bicycle activity is already taking place, whether the infrastructure is in place or not. Specific areas of conflict were identified, including the area between the Memorial Union and the St. Thomas Aquinas church, the area between the university and the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) facility, and the area east of Hilton where pedestrians are often traveling to or from events and games.

Workshop participants indicated that there are overall concerns for pedestrian and bicycle mobility improvements along the corridor, as it is the easiest route east/west through Ames. While participants stated that they would like to see more continuous paths, including to the bike trail east of I-35 and to the west end where a large portion of the university community live, they would also like to see more traffic controls for bicycles, to ensure that they can get around quickly but safely.

#### Aesthetics & Character

A majority of the neighborhood workshop participants felt that, as a whole, the corridor could be more appealing and play a role in portraying a positive character of Ames. Because the Lincoln Way corridor is made up of many small, unique pockets, participants identified the fragmented character of Lincoln Way as an issue.

As a whole, participants said they would like to see a better sense of place and overall quality of life including the policing of vandalism and dumping, beautified medians, and better identification and celebration of historic landmarks. Related to specific to portions of the corridor, participants would like to see an improvement on the look of older housing along Lincoln Way, a preservation of the unique character of the various pockets along the corridor, a more cohesive size and look of signage and lighting for commercial pockets and aid in storefront renovations along Lincoln Way, and better gateway entrances at the east and west ends to match the entrance travelling north from University Boulevard.

## Vehicular Traffic Efficiency

Vehicular traffic along the corridor was identified as both good and bad by workshop participants. As a whole, the community is concerned about the increase in traffic that could be generated by new development, the possibility of Lincoln Way being widened even further, the speed of traffic through areas of high pedestrian and bicycle activity, and the locations of CyRide Bus stop locations.

Several concerns relate to the unique perspective of attendees as residents living along the corridor. These include access and safety near the Wilmoth block, difficulty accessing their driveways from the Lincoln Way corridor, cut through traffic limiting access out of their neighborhoods, and vehicles that divert away from the corridor and cut through their side streets in order to avoid congestion. Other concerns related to vehicular traffic efficiency along Lincoln Way include quicker snow removal, the design of sites to accommodate truck access to businesses, and the impact of drive thru's along the corridor especially from Duff Ave. to Grand Ave.

Participants identified possible solutions to these issues including adding more turn lanes, integrating adaptive signal technology, and adding a dedicated center turn lane on the eastern portion of Lincoln Way.

## Connectivity to Downtown

The neighborhood workshop participants identified a concern for connectivity between various areas or portions of the community, to the Downtown. Given that the Lincoln Way corridor crosses Ames entirely from east to west and is in close proximity to the Downtown, the community feels that this could be an opportunity to enhance connectivity. Participants identified the desire to somehow better connect the university to the Downtown.

Additionally, workshop participants specifically identified the desire to link Lincoln Way to the Downtown, noting that many times visitors will spend an enormous amount of time in the community, and on Lincoln Way, without ever noticing that the Downtown area exists. The community noted that this issue could be exacerbated because of the highway-oriented development along Lincoln Way is out of character from the local development of the downtown area.

## Types of Future Development

While the neighborhood workshop participants had varying opinions about the types of future development they do and don't want to see in the community, there was consensus that the community did not want to see only apartments along Lincoln Way. Rather, they want to maintain a level of diversity in uses along the corridor. Participants identified a desire to see more support for small businesses in order to conserve this character within Ames. Additionally, some participants identified a desire for more greenspace along the corridor. Finally other participants noted a desire to take a closer look at the highway oriented development along Lincoln Way, which is adjacent to the downtown but inconsistent with its local character.

## Campustown

Campustown plays a huge role in identifying the character and identity of Ames as a whole due to its proximity to Lincoln Way, and its adjacency and relationship to Iowa State University. Due to this relationship with the community, the workshop participants identified a few issues and concerns with the future of this development area, including the lack of parking in Campustown, the recent loss of historic buildings, and the overall perceived unpleasantness of the area.

## Environmental Concerns

Due to some intersection with floodplain areas along the Lincoln Way corridor, including two rivers, the neighborhood workshop participants identified issues related to environmental concerns. These included the need to begin monitoring pollution and sustainability along the corridor, the need to monitor and eliminate dumping, and the desire to explore more creative solutions to stormwater retention.

## Projects or Actions

Participants were asked to try their best to identify specific projects or actions that could tackle one or more of the issues or concerns that they had with the Lincoln Way Corridor. The following bullet points identify the many ideas brought forth by the community, categorized by the issue it is intended to address, but not prioritized in any specific order.

### Aesthetics & Character

- Beautification/including overall expectation of rental properties upkeep
- Develop a beautification plan for streetscape
- Corridor-wide beautification
- Expansion of façade improvement program and revisit zoning east of the Grand corridor (Grand to Duff)
- Recognize the history of Lincoln Highway
- Vandalism—stop vandalism and dumping; have more police patrol at night
- Fix sidewalks
- Funds to help improve appearance for homes and businesses
- Streetscape with widening, sidewalk replacement, bus pullouts, turn lanes, and other places to put snow
- Preservation of good things
- Coordination of Lincoln Way from beginning to end
- Modify structures and appearance between Dakota and Hyland through incentive programs and zoning changes
- Create a look for corridor (history and modern)
- Put a sign that says “X miles to NY” and “X miles to San Francisco” on appropriate sides of the road

### Development Controls

- Zoning rules based on upkeep of properties (performance based code)
- Zoning guide development
- Zoning to encourage development of businesses that service both their local neighborhoods and traffic passing through
- Update and revision of zoning code to not rely on HOC zoning
- Get a handle on zoning (and rezoning). Don't let developers make decisions.

### Pedestrian Safety & Connectivity

- Pedestrian bridge(s)
- Repair sidewalks
- Pedestrian tunnels at intersection of Campustown
- Build walking bridges over Lincoln Way in Campustown
- Pedestrian walkway from MU to other side of the street
- Put pedestrian footbridges over Lincoln Way near University or put crosswalks every ½ block and slow traffic
- Fix sidewalks and add new ones
- Walk signals within all red lights in all directions
- More signage etc. to increase pedestrian safety
- Elevated crosswalk in campus area

## Bike Safety & Connectivity

- Bike lanes that offer safety and amenities (bike parking etc.)
- Bicycle connection east to west (entire corridor)
- Build bike lanes and paths
- Bicycle and walkpaths unequally developed
- Bike path connectivity continuous and sidewalk upkeep plan
- Complete streets project for beautification, historic preservation and signs, pedestrian bike traffic
- Continuous protected bike lane and side path on corridor

## Environmental Projects or Actions

- Trees, stormwater detention with native plants, and permeable surfaces

## Campustown

- Incentives plan for Campustown, Downtown, and Lincoln Way businesses to do façade improvements
- Reinvest in Campustown and maintain affordable rents for retail
- Stop Breckenridge's plan; no more apartments
- Build additional parking structures in Campustown or make current ones used more effectively
- Remove parking near Campustown, make Welch pedestrian only, and expand intermodal parking

## Vehicular Traffic Efficiency Controls

- Significant traffic studies, including safety
- Widen Lincoln Way or trim pullouts for Cyride to keep traffic flowing
- Turn lanes and reduction of traffic
- Redesign roadway as "complete street"
- Traffic impact study
- An integrated, aggressive, modern complete streets design
- Road diet on Grand to Duff (center turn lane)
- Turn lanes added
- Reduction of streets connecting to Lincoln Way
- Little changes to Lincoln Way to reduce speed and reduce the desire to speed, increase pedestrian safety
- Create a dedicated turn lane along the corridor business and residential access
- Change traffic lights to slow traffic on Lincoln Way add turn lane and speed bumps
- Cut outs for CyRide Stops
- Addition of turn lanes and traffic flow measures
- Stop signs on corners so vehicles can and will stop

## Others Projects or Actions

- Leave Lincoln Way as is
- Keep University and Downtown as separate entities
- Parking linked to neighborhoods
- Possible trail or shuttle in certain areas

## Strengths & Assets

While it is important to identify the issues and concerns that the community has in relation to the Lincoln Way corridor, it is also important to identify the many assets that the corridor provides to the community, to ensure that these positive aspects are maintained and built upon rather than disregarded and possibly lost. The following is a list of assets provided by the neighborhood workshop participants.

- Iowa State University
- Iowa State Center
- Intellectual resources
- Iowa Department of Transportation
- Rivers, and bridge over the rivers
- The large, white bark tree on the northeast corner of Lincoln Way and University Blvd
- There is a lot of potential
- Use university facilities to solve problems and create greenspace
- Main arterial street for east-west travel in Ames
- Traffic moves fairly well
- Save the sycamore at Lincoln Way and University Blvd
- Allows movement between east and west Ames in reasonable amount of time
- Gateway potential in Ames
- Maintenance of property along Lincoln Way
- Historic Bridges north of Lincoln Way in Campus
- History of the Lincoln Highway—first transcontinental improved road in the nation and designated as a state heritage byway by the DOT—turns on west end of campus and out of Boone County
- Potential to tie the entire town together with consistent streetscaping
- Diversity of facades—just make them nicer
- Excluding highway 30, it's only 1 of 2 direct routes across town
- Campustown
- Historical significance
- Straight-wayfinding end to end should be easy
- Landmark name recognition
- Good connection through Ames
- Historic home areas
- Historic points of interest along the corridor
- Family neighborhoods
- Character of the neighborhoods
- Showcase of Downtown, Campustown, and ISU
- Distinct neighborhoods and business districts
- Historic Character
- Branding
- Central access to various neighborhoods
- The character of the variety of areas along the corridor
- Main business district that runs through the entire community
- Historic nature of Lincoln Way
- Provides access to ISU
- Variety of land uses
- Potential to bring the corridor back to a corridor for residents rather than a freeway for people outside the community
- Ties campus and downtown together
- Mix of student housing (fraternities/sororities, student housing, apartments, etc.)