

ORDINANCE NO. 4602

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF THE CITY OF AMES, IOWA, BY AMENDING SECTION 29.1109 AND SECTION 29.406(18)(C) THEREOF, FOR THE PURPOSE OF MODIFYING THE NORTHEAST GATEWAY OVERLAY DISTRICT (O-GNE) STANDARDS REPEALING ANY AND ALL ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT TO THE EXTENT OF SUCH CONFLICT; AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

BE IT ENACTED, by the City Council for the City of Ames, Iowa, that:

Section One. The Municipal Code of the City of Ames, Iowa shall be and the same is hereby amending sections 29.1109 and 29.406(18)(c) as follows:

" * * *

Sec. 29.1109. "O-GNE" NORTHEAST GATEWAY OVERLAY DISTRICT.

(1) **Purpose.** The intent of the "O-GNE" Northeast Gateway Overlay district is to ensure that regional commercial development within the "O-GNE" zoning designation results in a high quality development that meets the community and regional economic needs of the City while addressing environmental performance, efficiency, multi-modal transportation, aesthetics, and user experience related to site and building design features. The standards are also intended to help guide design and use compatibility with future planned residential uses to the east of 570th Street.

(2) **Applicability.** The "O-GNE" District must be designated by ordinance amending the Official Zoning Map.

(3) **Master Plan.** City Council approval of a Master Plan, after a review and recommendation by the Planning and Zoning Commission, is required prior to the submittal of any Major or Minor Site Development Plan for development of land in the "O-GNE" district. A major amendment to a Master Plan requires only City Council approval.

The Master Plan must address the conceptual layout of an overall site for uses with general building foot print and square footages, site access, internal circulation routes, and open spaces, and unless deferred by City Council, conceptual Building Architectural Style(s) or Site Development "Theme" for features such as lighting, signage, landscaping, building materials, and building proportions, that would guide future Site Development Plan review to ensure development has a cohesive and coordinated appearance amongst buildings and site features. The requirement to establish a style or theme is not intended to prevent use of corporate architecture that utilizes similar materials and design elements identified within the Master Plan.

Phasing of site improvements, if any, and delegated approval authority must be addressed within the Master Plan.

(4) **Site Development Plan.** Subsequent to approval of a Master Plan, individual Site Development Plans(s) will be approvable by the Planning and Housing Director if it is found to be in general conformance to the Master Plan and the City

development standards and regulations as defined in 29.1502. In the event the proposed Site Development Plan modifies substantial elements of the Master Plan, deviates from the Master Plan, or otherwise includes a use requiring Council approval, the application must be processed as a Major Site Development Plan.

An Integrated Site Development Plan of Chapter 23-Subdivision Code is not required to allow for shared site features included with an area of an approved Master Plan.

(5) **Design Standards.** The Overlay includes a combination of design standards that apply to site layout and building design. Design standards listed below provide direction on the design intent of features for the site and are to be adhered to in the design process with flexibility of their application to individual site features as meeting the intent for the overall development. Zoning development standards require compliance, but a project may be approved that utilizes flexibility of the 29.1502(7) Alternative Design Review.

(6) **Layout of Commercial.** The overall site layout should accommodate a cluster of commercial retail/restaurant uses as a node within the overall site design. Out parcels, big box stores, and other uses may also be approved as standalone uses. A concentrated "mall" type of layout is not required.

(7) **Access, Circulation, Parking.**

(A) Provide a complete and continuous network for circulation of pedestrians and bicyclists.

(i) Provide frontage improvements with shared use paths and sidewalks to City standards with driveway spacing in accordance with SUDAS, focused on limited access points to E. 13th Street.

(ii) Internal to a development, clusters of buildings must be interconnected with sidewalks. At least one prominent sidewalk spine must connect to E 13th Street. Large sites may require multiple pedestrian connection points to public streets from building(s) within the site.

(B) The north and south development sites with concentrated commercial development must accommodate a CyRide public transportation access route onto the site for a pickup and drop off location with the convenient ability to turn around and circulate out of the site to E 13th Street. Accommodating includes providing for an agreement or easement for travel onto the site and for the design and dimensions of parking lot and drives that meet needs of a bus.

(C) Provide Bicycle parking consisting of four visitor spaces for the first 10,000 square feet of commercial space. Provide an additional one visitor space for every additional 10,000 square feet of floor area, but in no event will more than 3% of the required vehicle parking after the first 10,000 square feet be required for bicycle parking. Bicycle parking must be distributed to different areas of a development site.

(D) All parking must be permitted to be considered shared parking for all uses located on a Master Planned site unless separated by E 13th Street.

(E) Locating drive-through lanes along the perimeter of a site abutting E 13th Street or 570th Street is discouraged. If a drive-through queuing or pickup area is located along the perimeter of the site, additional architectural treatment of the drive-

through and pickup area with a trellis, decorative screen wall, or other design element must be provided. Decorative landscaping must be incorporated along the perimeter of all drive-throughs and specifically along 570th Street for purposes of screening and compatibility to residential uses.

(8) Stormwater/Landscaping/Screening.

(A) Regional stormwater system(s) for an entire site are preferred for compliance with Ames Municipal Code Chapter 5B. A design preference is to integrate stormwater management systems in a treatment train approach into different areas of a site in ways that utilize primarily landscape plantings native to the area and if possible, include focal elements of the site such as flowing water, decorative ponds, and fountains. All stormwater features are to be attractively designed and landscaped.

(B) Use native trees, ornamental grasses, and shrub species, or their cultivars, for a minimum of 50% of required trees, grasses, and shrubs planted on the site. An alternative landscaping approach may be approved with the Master Plan.

(C) The overall site must provide for a high degree of tree diversity. No more than 4 trees of one species or 20% of any one tree species, whichever is more, is permitted.

(D) Provide landscaping, in combination with architectural treatments, to screen storage areas, trash enclosures, utility cabinets, mechanical equipment, service areas, and other similar elements. Break up large blank facades of buildings along public streets and primary drives with foundation landscaping or with designated planters. Provide landscaping adjacent to pedestrian walkways.

(E) All parking lot and loading areas are subject to the general landscape requirements of Article IV unless an Alternative Plan is approved.

(9) Building Design and Materials.

(A) The approved Architectural Style and Themes identified with the Master Plan shall guide building design and material choices related to the following standards:

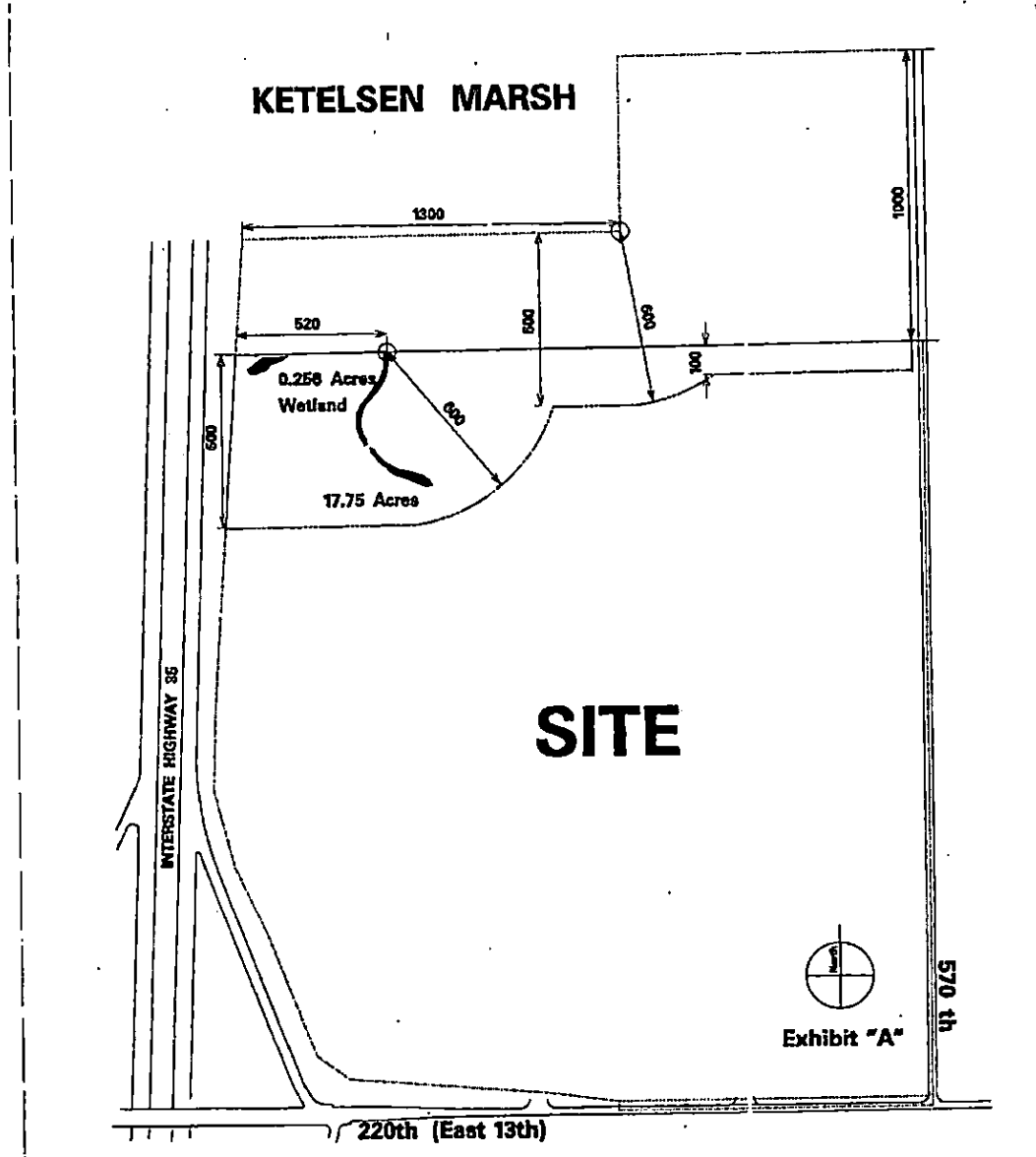
(i) Building facades must include masonry materials comprised of brick, natural stone or reconstructed stone, architectural features or accent features on all building elevations oriented to public areas of the site including facades adjacent to streets and highways. Architectural metal siding may be approved as an additional accent material. Concrete block or CMU and smooth tilt-up concrete walls do not meet this standard as being an accent. Screen walls, decorative walls or fencing may also be required to include complimentary materials as accents to primary design elements.

(ii) Increase visual identity and interest by providing for variations in wall planes and rooflines, such as incorporating variations in building height, building mass, roof forms, rooflines, changes in wall planes, and articulation of building facades in the architectural design of all buildings. Parapets must be used to conceal flat roofs and mechanical equipment. Projecting parapets must incorporate returns.

(10) North Buffer Establishment and Purposes.

(A) A buffer area with a maintenance plan must be established between any development within the "O-GNE" District and Ketelsen Marsh along the north property line of said development from the east boundary line of I-35 to the west boundary of 570th.

The buffer is intended to maintain the function of existing or restored wetlands and for compatibility with the Ketelsen Marsh. The buffer must be a minimum of six hundred feet (600 ft) in width along the existing south public use boundary of Ketelsen Marsh and must be one hundred feet (100 ft) in width along the south side of the remainder of the north boundary of the "O-GNE" District, as depicted below:



(B) The final recommendations for the design and establishment details of the buffer must be prepared by an expert in Environmental Sciences to ensure that the design is correct for the site and compatible with the existing vegetation at Ketelsen Marsh. The City Council may consider up to a 20% variation in the buffer design upon review of findings concerning the quality of functional value of wetlands in the area of the buffer, including consideration of restoration or other improvements.

(C) Native vegetation must be established in the buffer consisting of local ecotype native species, if available, appropriate for the site and consistent with existing vegetation at the marsh.

(D) Prior to approval of the buffer design, the developer must consult with the Director of the Story County Conservation Board concerning plant types and proposed maintenance plan. A conservation easement or separate outlot must be created for the buffer and include reference to the approved Maintenance Plan.

(E) A combination of brown, black or green chain link fencing and vegetation must be installed in the buffer area to intercept trash from the development and to minimize adverse effects of light on the marsh ecology.

(F) Communications towers are prohibited within the buffer.

(11) Signage & Lighting.

(A) A Sign Master Plan may be approved by staff that addresses sign design and sign area allowances for all buildings and property within the area of the Master Plan. Signage allowances for sites and buildings will be reviewed as part of the Site Development Plan before applying for a sign permit to meet requirements of Chapter 21.

(B) All ground-mounted signs must be monument style with a decorative base and a total height not exceeding twelve (12) feet in height measured from the ground to the top of the sign cabinet. Exceptions include internal directional signage and menu boards and a maximum of one 50-foot-tall decorative pylon sign along I-35 frontage and one 35-foot decorative pylon sign along E 13th Street frontage for the south and the north site. Advertising of businesses on a given site either north or south of E 13th Street cannot be considered off premise signage as a planned shopping center.

(i) Digital Displays. If digital displays are approved for use on a pylon sign with the Master Plan it must include message hold limitations and must automatically adjust lighting intensity for ambient conditions. At the time of sign approval for a pylon sign with a digital display, a NITS limitation for brightness will be reviewed to address light control and glare concerns. No digital displays may be approved along the 570th Street frontage.

(C) All outdoor lighting fixtures must be placed so as to minimize light trespass and glare beyond the property boundary. All lighting to be directed downward consistent with the Outdoor Lighting Code. All pole and wall mounted lights must not exceed a placement height of 25 feet measured from the ground to the luminaire, inclusive of any based, pole, building feature for locations within 200 feet of a public street frontage.

(i) Decorative lighting for architectural features, pedestrian spaces, plazas, etc. may be approved by staff as unshielded or architectural uplighting to accent public spaces or design elements of a building when determined to meet the intent of low intensity lighting and dark sky protection.

(ii) Use of facade or parapet strip lighting is discouraged overall and prohibited along the 570th frontage.

(D) Outdoor lighting must not exceed 0.3 footcandles at the property line along public streets and highways.

* * *

Section 29.406. OFF-STREET PARKING.

(18) **Remote Parking.** All parking spaces required by this ordinance shall be located on the same lot as the use served, except as noted below:

(c) Parking spaces required for principal uses permitted in the PRC zoning district may be located on any PRC zoned lot governed by and fully encompassed by the same site development plan or Master Plan.

***"

Section Two. All ordinances, or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict, if any.

Section Three. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and publication as required by law.

Passed this 28 day of July, 2026

Tanya Bunch
Deputy City Clerk

John A. Haila
John A. Haila, Mayor

First Reading: June 23, 2026

Second Reading: July 14, 2026

Third Reading: July 28, 2026

Passed on: July 28, 2026

I, Renee Hall, City Clerk of the City of Ames, Iowa, hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true copy of Ordinance No. 4602, passed by the City Council of said City at the meeting held on July 28, 2026 and signed by the Mayor on July 28, 2026, and published in the Ames Tribune on August 1, 2026.

Renee Hall
Renee Hall, City Clerk