



**AGENDA
CITY OF CEDAR FALLS, IOWA
STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY, OCTOBER 02, 2023
5:15 PM AT CITY HALL, 220 CLAY STREET**

Committee meetings will begin at the time noted above with succeeding Committee meetings starting immediately following the conclusion of the previous meeting. Time periods for individual topics represent an estimate and is based on the time of completion of the previous Committee topic.

Call to Order

Roll Call

Community Development Committee

1. Native Plantings in City Right-Of-Way.
(30 Minutes, Building Official Jamie Castle)
2. College Hill Vision Plan.
(45 Minutes, Planning & Community Services Manager Karen Howard)

Public Works Committee

1. 12th & Clay Street Update.
(20 Minutes, Public Works Director Chase Schrage)

Adjournment

Native Plantings in the Right-of-Way

***Community Development Committee
October 2, 2023***



Referral

April 3, 2023:

Discuss the policy regarding prairie plantings in the city right-of-way.

ROW Native Plantings History

- 2015 No restrictions or text regarding Prairie Grass
- 2017 Current ordinance adopted
- 2019 Recodification – no change to the text of the ordinance

Native Plantings ROW Ordinance

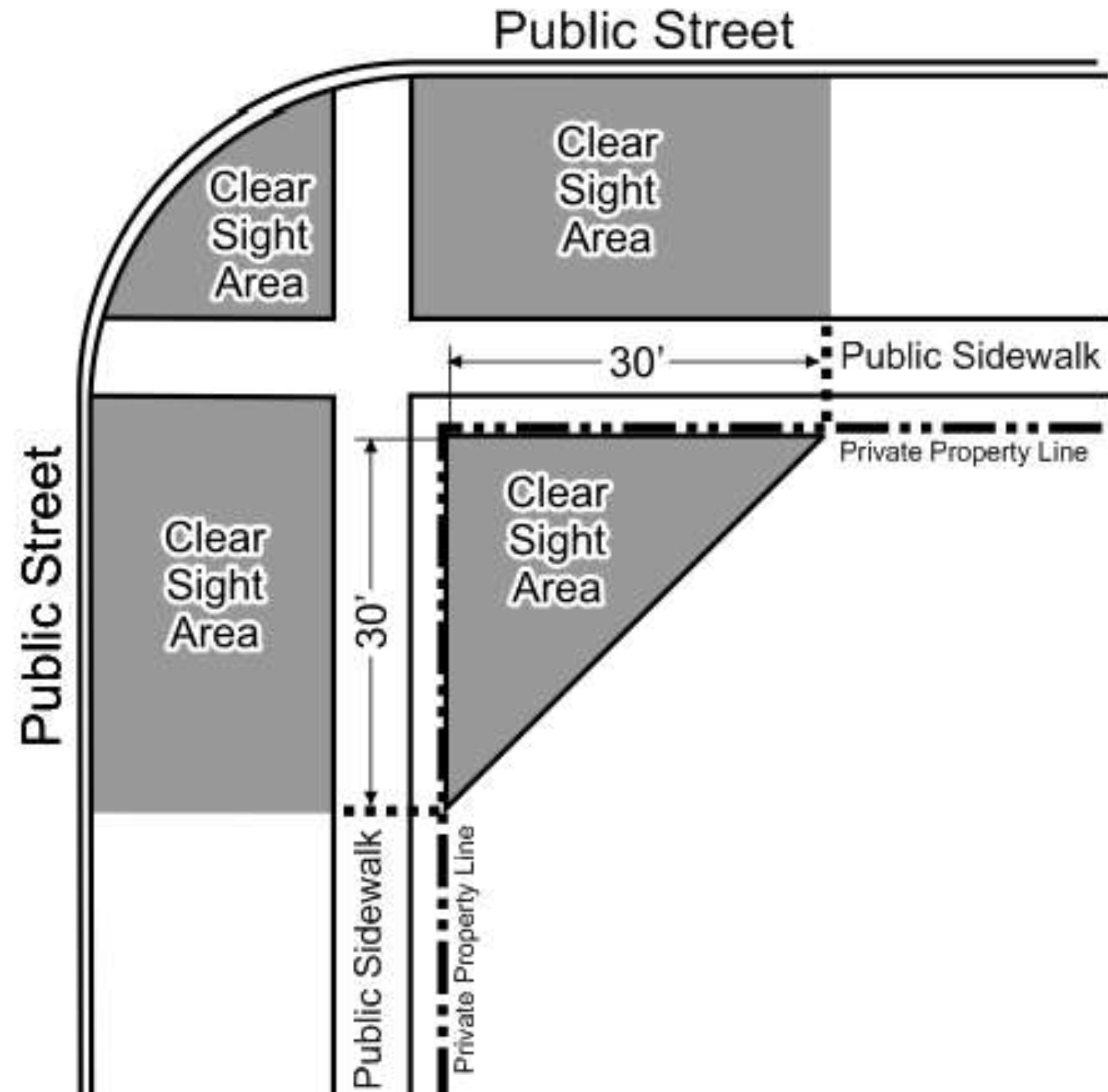
Sec 19-47(b) for plantings other than trees in the area between the curb line and the property line, the boundary of the planting area shall be a minimum of 18" from any adjacent street, curb, public sidewalk, alleyway or other similar thoroughway; and shall be defined with a turf grass mow strip that will be maintained in accordance with this Code. Such plantings shall not overhang across the public sidewalk or public street or alleyway.

Existing Native Plantings in ROW

Existing plantings in the ROW prior to 2017 amendment were allowed to stay.

As concerns or complaints are submitted, staff researches the timeframe such plantings have been in place. If prior to 2017, we ensure plantings meet Ordinance Section 19-47(c) – Sight areas for plantings other than trees.

Existing Native Plantings in ROW



If the plantings do not meet the Clear Sight Area, we ask the owner to:

- Trim and limit height to 24".
- Cut back the plantings at least once a year, based on best practice for native planting maintenance.

Complaints

- Create difficulties seeing pedestrians crossing the street:
 - Requested property owner to trim back to meet the sight requirements from previous slide
- Lack of maintenance:
 - When it is evident to us maintenance is lacking, we discuss with the owner and request a maintenance plan. Native plantings should be cut down a minimum of once a year.
- Not actual native plantings:
 - Owner claims native plantings but the area is simply overgrown. Owner is required to mow. If native plantings are desired they must meet current code.

Recommendation

Continue under current requirement that allows subject to limitations on their location and height.

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

City of Cedar Falls
220 Clay Street
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613
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www.cedarfalls.com

MEMORANDUM***Planning & Community Services Division***

TO: Mayor Robert M. Green and City Council
FROM: Karen Howard, AICP, Planning & Community Services Manager
DATE: October 2, 2023
SUBJECT: Overview of College Hill Vision Plan

At your October 2nd Committee Meeting, you requested an overview of the College Hill Vision Plan that was adopted in May, 2021. Attached is a copy of the presentation prepared by Ferrell Madden and presented at the April 5, 2021 Committee of the Whole meeting. The only thing that has been modified is the first slide to reflect the adoption date of the plan. The presentation in April 2021 was quite lengthy as the consultants went into significant detail on each area of the plan, including the appendices. I will not be going into great depth, but rather provide a general overview running through the slides fairly quickly to leave time for questions or discussion. I have included the entirety of the presentation in your packet, but do not plan to go through the 14 slides at the end regarding the appendices to the College Hill Vision Plan, unless the Council has specific questions.

If interested, you can view the original presentation in its entirety from the link to the April 5, 2021 Committee of the Whole meeting on the public meeting webpage: <https://www.cedarfalls.com/852/Public-Meeting-Agendas-With-Video>



College Hill Vision Plan

Adopted May 3, 2021

What's in the vision plan?

Item 2.

IMAGINE COLLEGE HILL! Vision Plan



Planning and Zoning Commission Recommended Draft
March 2021



OUR CEDAR FALLS
College Hill
Imagine the possibilities!

Walk-through:

- Executive Summary
- Project Introduction
- Analysis
- Charrette Week
- The Vision
- Next Steps
- Appendix

Executive Summary

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Plan Recommendations:

- Build on the work of the **College Hill Partnership**.
- Define **the public realm** with active building facades, improved sidewalks, and additional street trees.
- Ensure that future street and sidewalk rebuilding enhances **walkability**.
- Support a **multi-modal** environment.
- Understand **the market**—particularly as it relates to housing, new construction, and parking—to leverage opportunities for growth on College Hill.
- Create **gateways** to College Hill to provide a sense of arrival.
- Explore opportunities for **new/improved public spaces**.
- **Adjust the rules** for development (and parking).
- Recognize that College Hill (and nearby neighborhoods) play a **unique role** within Cedar Falls and warrant a **targeted approach**.
- Create a **better process** for development review and approval.
- Establish a true **bicycle network**.
- Coordinate **parking supply management**.

The Visioning Process

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IMAGINE COLLEGE HILL! *Vision Plan*



Planning and Zoning Commission Recommended Draft
March 2021



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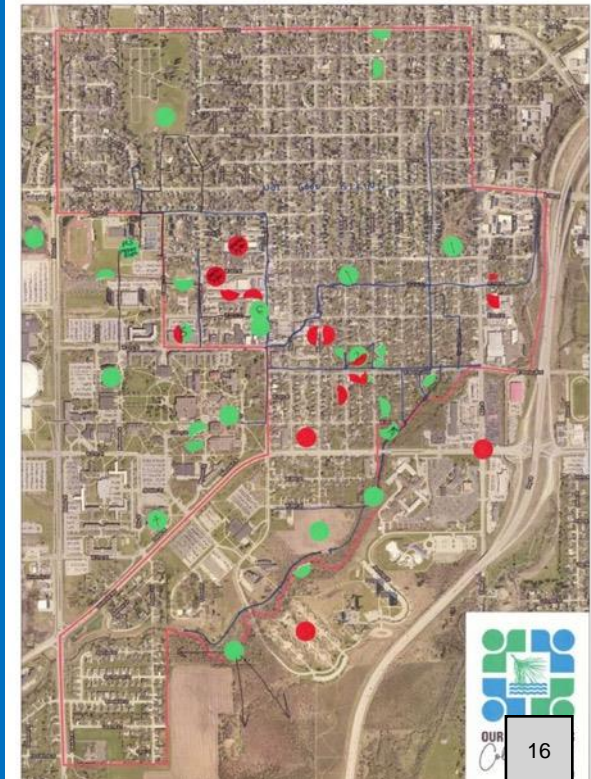
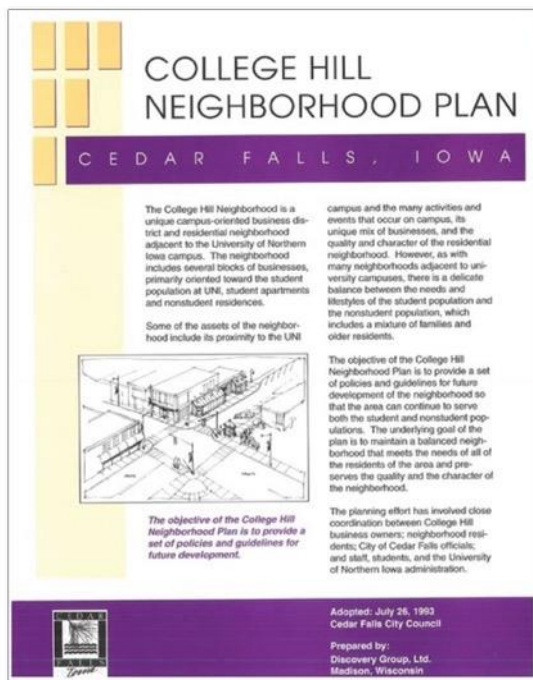
College Hill

Imagine the possibilities!

Analysis: Winter 2020

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- History
- Context
- Public input



Analysis: throughout 2020

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Market Considerations

Economic and Demographic Context

The economic and market analysis was based on stakeholder interviews. Key findings include:

College Hill has remained very stable over the years; however, the number of rental properties concentrated near the university. That concentration has a definite impact on both the residential and commercial potential of College Hill moving forward.

The extent and pace of new housing development, and even that growth will be requirements. High on-site parking requirements of development and translates directly to high density, which is unlikely to occur without a solution to the parking cost that the market cannot bear. The density of the existing, obsolescent housing that depresses the market.

Given the importance of walkability, compact business district, it will be important to pursue including lower ratios and permitting off-site parking in the future, if needed, to deter students and avoid paying for City or University parking) College Hill businesses. (*Parking considerations*)

Conversion of student housing back into single-family neighborhood areas a few blocks away. How this conversion affects the overall character of the neighborhood.

Although College Hill businesses are heavily concentrated, attracting residents during summer months (of both students and full-time residents living in businesses). Simultaneously, more diverse uses are needed. The size and stability of the business and residential benefit from a seamless connection between the business district and College Street.

These demographic and market realities have shaped the vision for the future.

The full Market Considerations report is provided in the appendix.

Imagine College Hill! PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT
February 2021

Transportation Review

MOBILITY ON COLLEGE HILL

College Hill is primed to be one of the preeminent multi-modal neighborhoods in the city, with an interconnected street network and the University of Iowa in proximity to provide the desired foot-traffic. The area is served by nearby, with trip origins and destinations in such proximity that cycling can be more attractive than driving. It should be easy for people to walk to the University of Iowa—if a person chooses to do so. College Hill is where UNI students and other city residents who want to live close to the University of Iowa needs within a short walking distance.

Getting the design of the streets “right” can mean the difference between a successful neighborhood “main street” district and one that motorists avoid. (Or one in which people only walk from their car to their destination, even if it is only a few blocks away). The goal is to plan for a neighborhood that is not designed primarily for their use for every trip.

Pedestrian-oriented, multi-modal districts should give residents and visitors the ability to walk, bicycling, ride-sharing, taking transit, and driving. Individual trips and activities. Complete Streets principles are a way to design a neighborhood. Although several College Hill streets have been identified for additional improvements in the near-term, all future street reconstruction should follow these ideas.

- Right-size streets (number of lanes, lane widths, slow speeds, and equitable accessibility for the active modes) based on context to the walking and bicycling environment
- Improve sidewalks and fill in gaps—create continuous system for walking and bicycling
- Enhance crossings for safety and accessibility: with curb bulb-outs, high-visibility markings and active warnings such as Rectangular Flashing Beacons where needed; improve intersection between transit and walking; and use measures like protected intersections where appropriate
- Implement transit shuttle (like former Panther Shuttle); seek fun partnerships when available. Make transit efficient and reliable
- Implement comprehensive pedestrian and bike network wayfinding destinations and routes (distance and time to popular destinations walking and biking)
- Establish working partnerships with College Hill businesses, residents, and UNI

Walkability

Walkability depends on several factors, including pedestrian safety, comfort, and people-places provide interest, slow-moving traffic with wide sidewalks, and fundamental for safety and comfort. Perceived safety is particularly important. Both vehicular speeds and the distance from curb-to-curb (the time it takes to cross the street) perception. Reducing the crossing distance by a combination of installing crosswalks greatly improve pedestrian safety and comfort.

Generous sidewalks are the best practice for mixed-use, high foot-traffic areas, providing enough space for clear passage, street trees, and landscaping. A combination of the “clear walkway”—the continuous

Zoning Review

A zoning code includes a range of tools that can be used to guide development, including: form standards, zone districts, use standards, site development standards, and review processes. Each tool plays a specific role in establishing an overall development pattern. Making sure the zoning standards are designed to implement the vision, goals, and policies of a comprehensive plan is a key step in ensuring the plan’s long-term success.

The Cedar Falls 2019 *Imagine Downtown Vision Plan* zoning analysis notes that it will be important for Cedar Falls to undertake a more comprehensive and cohesive update to the current zoning code to both ensure that the plan can be implemented and, equally important, to ensure that the current regulations will not act as a barrier to the community’s preferred development patterns that have been identified in the process of creating the *Imagine Downtown Plan*. The same analysis will be needed for this *Imagine College Hill Plan*. The College Hill zoning updates should be able to benefit from and be coordinated with the zoning changes made to implement *Imagine Downtown*. Key considerations should include the following:

1. Use All of the Zoning Tools Available. Even though zoning codes should include a wide range of tools that can be mixed and matched in a variety of ways, the current Cedar Falls zoning code is heavily focused on regulating through one tool—the individual zone district. As planning and the community have changed over time, new stand-alone zone districts have been created to address the problems of the day. The result of this approach is the creation of new base and overlay zone districts that are “layered” on to the existing zoning code. To accommodate the widening range of topics addressed by modern zoning, the newer zone districts include regulations that typically would have been addressed in another, separate section of the code. When a new commercial district was created, for example, it would include landscaping and sign standards applicable only within that district. The more generally applicable landscaping and sign regulations, included in the code outside of the zone districts, have been left to age in place. The idea behind this approach is good; new districts should have updated development standards. The problem, though, is that this approach has created multiple “parallel” codes; allowing the “old” regulations to be applied in those locations with “old” zone districts while limiting application of the new (and presumably more relevant) standards to the districts in which they’ve been drafted. This “siloed” approach to zoning ensures spotty and inconsistent development patterns. It also makes the zoning code difficult to navigate, for both the City and code users.

The City needs to create a set of modern, place-based zone districts with an emphasis on scale, form, character, and intensity to apply to the College Hill plan area. This should include both new districts and updates to currently applicable districts, such as the residential districts surrounding College Hill. Both the new and updated zone districts should be linked to generally-applicable, baseline site development standards as well as standards designed expressly for College Hill (e.g., parking, landscaping, stormwater, signs). The goal of these revisions would be to reconnect the various working parts of the zoning code and, while doing that, eliminating old regulations that are no longer useful. With these key pieces in place, the City will have a more highly connected zoning code that is both easier to use and easier to effectively amend.

2. Create Transitions between the University and Surrounding Neighborhoods. One aspect of College Hill that should be considered in the zone district revision process is how to design and regulate the area of transition between the more intense UNI and College Hill business district development and the surrounding primarily detached residential neighborhoods. The City’s current residential zone district line up and development standards for R-1, R-2, R-3, and R-4 may need a boost through the creation of new districts and development standards with more emphasis on form, character, including parking and landscaping, that are designed to provide a physical transition between the more intense mixed-use areas and the less intense neighborhoods.

3. Right-Size Use and Development Standards to Create Unique Places. Older zoning codes are more likely to regulate at a very general level, with one set of parking standards or one type of perimeter landscaping

VIRTUAL CHARRETTE: PUBLIC VISIONING WORKSHOP

The Community Design Charrette was a virtual process working with citizens and stakeholders to define a vision for the future of College Hill and nearby neighborhoods. The virtual charrette activities included a public hands-on design workshop, on-line design team Q&A sessions, video technical meetings, a web-based student survey, and a work-in-progress presentation.

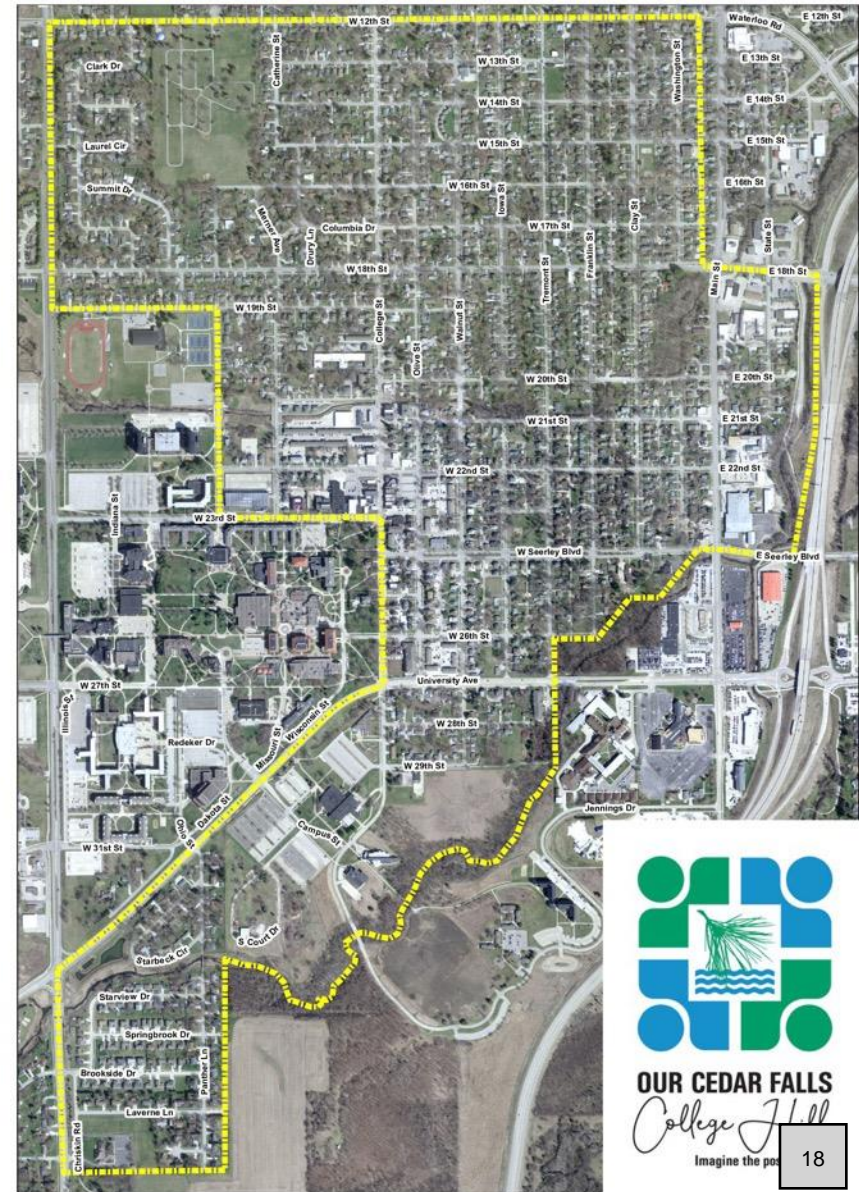
Envisioning the Future: Working Together to Share Concerns & Aspirations

On Saturday morning, October 3, a group of Cedar Falls residents gathered on-line to discuss College Hill—both their perceptions of its current strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities for the future. Despite the limitations of meeting virtually, small breakout groups led by a facilitator discussed a series of questions about College Hill, using an aerial photo of the study area as a reference and to capture the groups comments and notations. The groups focused on topics like walking and bicycling; the natural features; local business; character and scale of existing and potential new buildings; opportunity sites for redevelopment; and [connections/the relationship] to Downtown and the Cedar River. (The use of the aerial photo maps encouraged people to be specific with their comments and recommendations, identifying both problems and opportunities in specific locations.)

After working through current issues and concerns and discussing opportunities for the future, the groups reconvened and the facilitators highlighted the major ideas and concepts for the future of College Hill to the entire group. Although there were differences of opinion, several areas of consensus were evident. These points of consensus were studied and tested throughout the charrette week and form the foundation of the *Imagine College Hill Vision Plan*.

Common Topics

- preserve neighborhoods
- walkability & sidewalks
- street trees & natural amenities
- retail & dining options
- bicycles



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Virtual Charrette Week: October 2020

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Team Working Remotely

- Hands-On Public Visioning Workshop
- Studio Q&A
- Technical Meetings
 - Transportation
 - Economics
 - Public Works
 - Landlords/business owners
- On-line Student Survey
- Work-in-Progress Presentation

Work-in-Progress Presentation



*Cedar Falls College Hill
Vision Plan Charrette
October 14, 2020*

Current Market Realities

Housing & Commercial

Item 2.

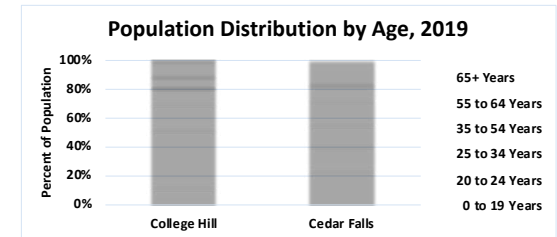
- UNI enrollment will dictate extent and pace of new housing development
- Close-in College Hill can support small increments of new housing
- New rental housing development will not happen without parking adjustments
- College Hill needs a bigger retail base to provide greater diversity
- Connect the Lower and Upper Hill to better support businesses in both
- Quality public spaces to create a more vibrant and appealing district

Market Considerations Report

Demographics

College Hill has remained very stable over the past 20 years when measured in terms of population and household counts. The study area had 2,589 residents in 2019 living in 2,009 households according to ESRI, a national demographic data provider. That represents an increase of 59 people (1.1 percent) and 62 households (3.2 percent). During the same period, Cedar Falls grew by 4,938 residents (13.6 percent) and 2,641 households (20.5 percent).

As one would expect, the student population is concentrated in College Hill – 39 percent of residents were aged 20 to 24 in 2019 as compared with their 18-percent share of citywide population. Another 18 percent of College Hill residents are 25 to 34 relative to 15 percent of city residents, reflecting graduate students and other older students as well as young families.



With that concentration of students, the nature of College Hill households is different with just less than one-third of its households in families as compared with 55 percent of city households. The median age of 24.3 is significantly lower than the 30.6 median age citywide. Household incomes are distinctly lower in College Hill – a median income of \$39,665 versus \$59,519 in the city. Renters represent 58 percent of College Hill households and 36 percent of city households.

College Hill residents are somewhat less dependent on driving alone to get to work; 11.1 percent walked to work and 1.9 percent bicycled or motorcycled in 2019 as compared with 8.5 and 1.6 percent of the city's employed residents, respectively. However, both groups still were much more likely to drive alone – 78.7 percent of College Hill residents and 81.2 percent of Cedar Falls residents. Car ownership was somewhat different as well.

Overall Strategy Needed

Item 2.

without new approach, opportunities for redevelopment are “locked up”

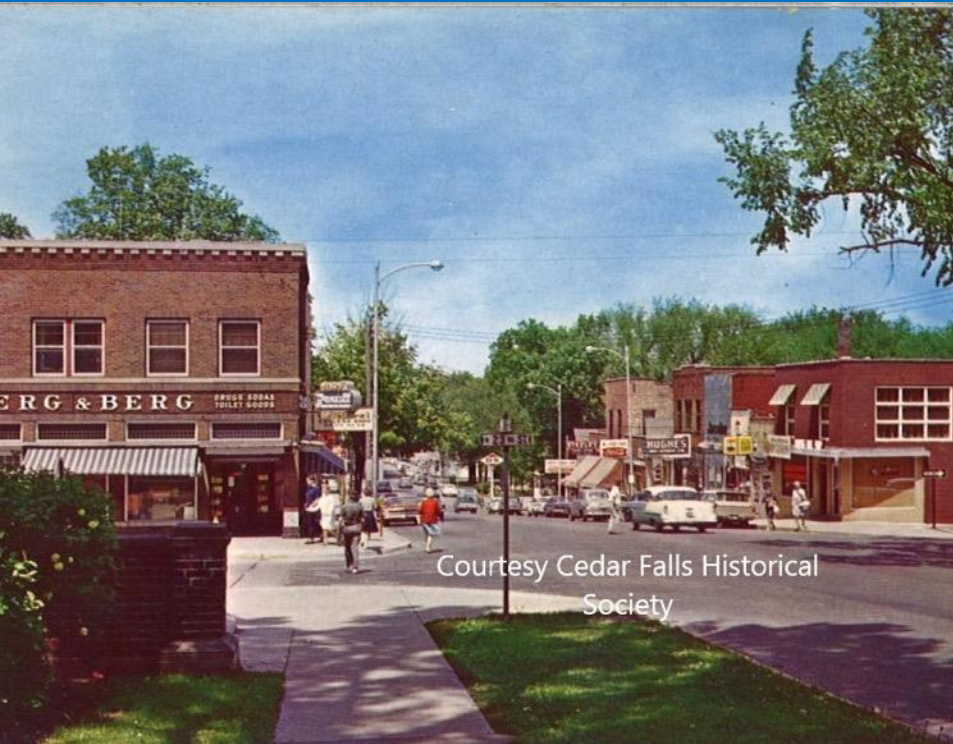
- Improve pedestrian environment
- Increase development potential in core—more residents=more retail & dining possibilities
- Right-size parking requirements in the Heart of the Hill (immediately around UNI)
- City/UNI coordinate parking management
- Consider a parking management district, if needed



Imagine College Hill Framework

Item 2.

Community Aspirations: the "Big Ideas":



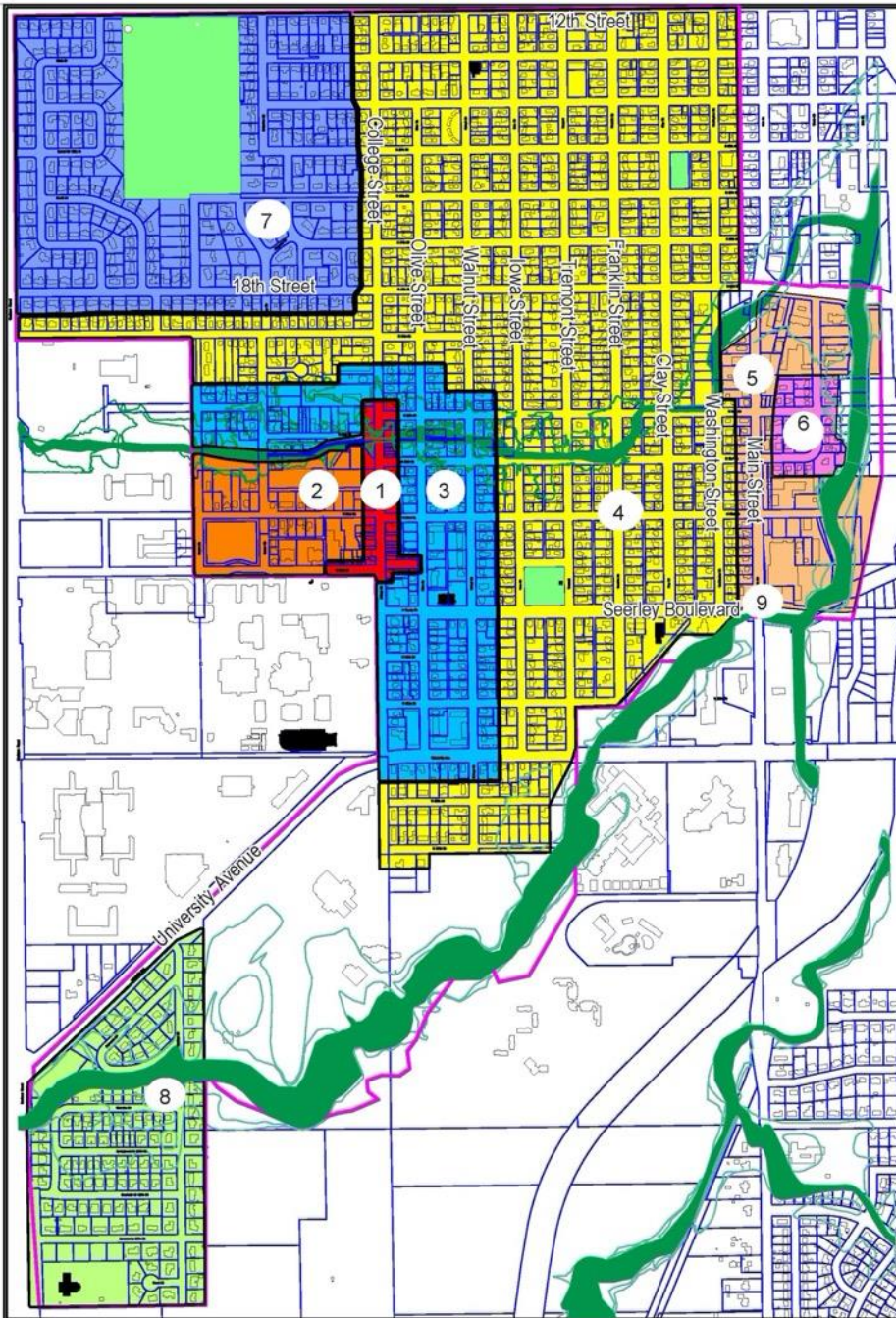
1. Stabilize and enhance neighborhoods
2. Concentrate and intensify student housing near campus
3. (Re)Connect Upper and Lower Hill
4. Treat natural areas as amenities (add and maintain street trees)
5. Manage parking better
6. Improve walkability
7. Make biking easier
8. Increase retail and dining options

What are character areas?

What kind of 'place' is it now?

&

What kind of 'place' might it be in the future?



CHARACTER



USE

Item 2.



Same use

CHARACTER



USE

Item 2.



Same use

CHARACTER = public realm + private development



CHARACTER = public realm + private development

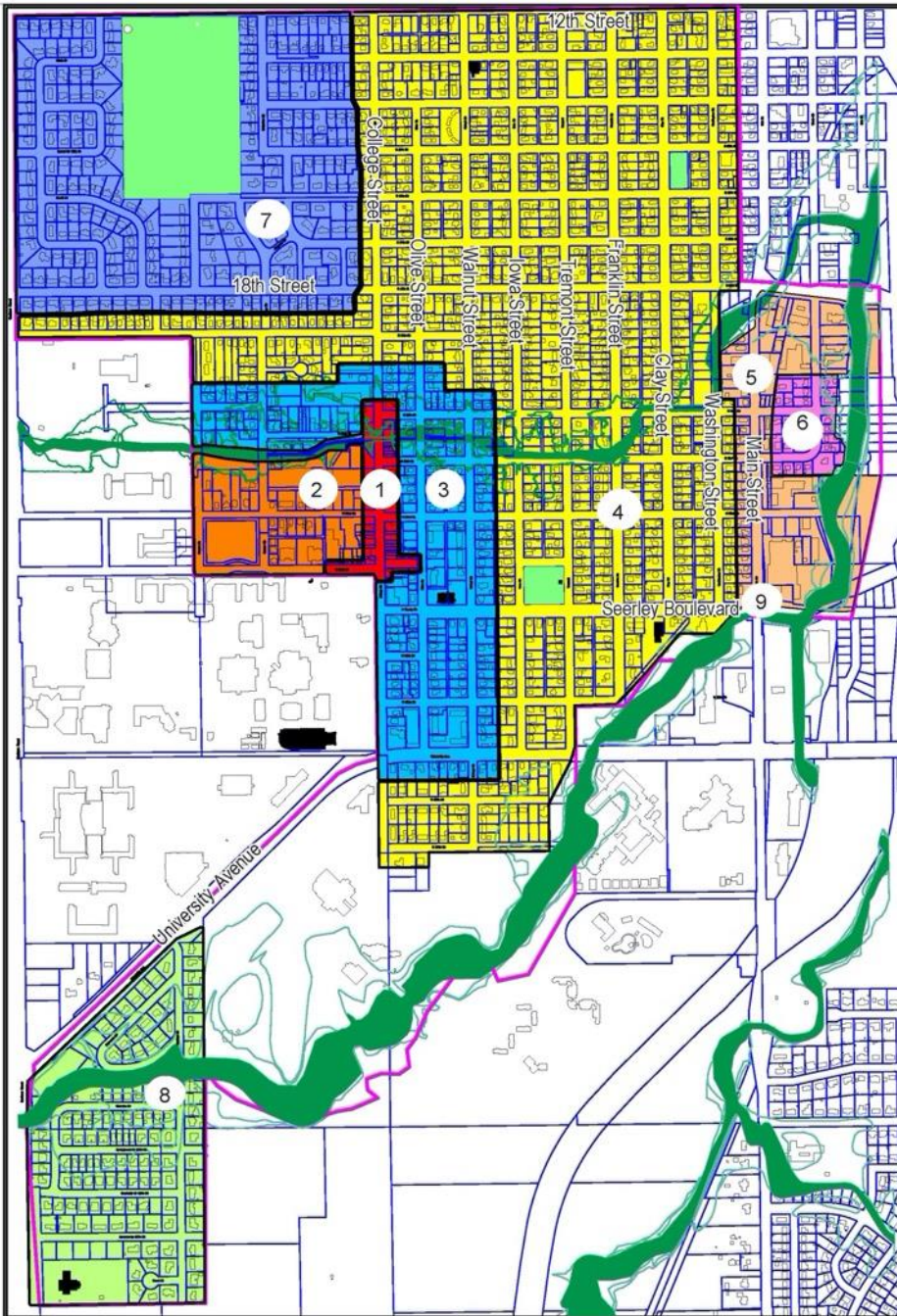


character areas

Item 2.

1. Heart of College Hill
 2. General College Hill
 3. University Neighborhood
 4. Seerley Park and Clay Street Park
- Neighborhoods:
5. Main Street Corridor (18th Street to Seerley Boulevard):
 6. East of Main Neighborhood:
 7. Fairview Neighborhood:
 8. Southwest Neighborhood:
 9. College Hill Gateway
Seerley Boulevard at Main Street:

29





Maximum Building Height:
4 to 5 stories*

Facade Transparency:
Ground floor 50-90%;
Upper floors 20-70%

First Finished Floor Elevation:
At grade

Permitted Projections:
Awnings, covered entrances, bay windows, shopfronts, balconies, and signs

Ground Floor Ceiling Height:
Minimum 14 feet clear

Frontage Build-Out:
Minimum 85%

Permitted Uses:
Ground Floor: Retail, Restaurant
Upper Stories: Office, Residential

Minimum Private Open Area:
10% of buildable area, at or above grade

Clear Sidewalk: 8-10 feet (plus tree planting strip with pervious paving)

**varying with specific location and adjacencies*



The Storefront is the quintessential neighborhood “main street” frontage, with retail and restaurant uses on the ground floor and residences or offices upstairs. The overall building form is the same as the General College Hill frontage, but with large display windows across the ground floor facade and frequent entrances along the street.

This frontage will be required in the Heart of College Hill Area and permitted in some limited portions of the General College Hill and Main Street Corridor Character Areas.

*Imagine College Hill: PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT
February 2021*



Frontages

Item 2.

Not one-size-fits all

General ideas about:

- Building scale
- Location on the lot
- Relationship to the street
- Windows and doors
- Porches, stoops, balconies, awnings
- Use parameters

Traditional Neighborhood Houses



Maximum Building Height:
2.5 to 3 stories* excluding basements

Facade Transparency: 30-70%

First Finished Floor Elevation:
Minimum 3 feet, maximum 6 feet above sidewalk

Permitted Projections:
Porches, bay windows and balconies

Ceiling Height:
Minimum 9 feet clear

Frontage Build-Out:
Minimum 50%

Continuous Facade Length:
Maximum 56 feet (non-corner lots)

Permitted Uses:
Residential, Home Office

Minimum Private Open Area:
20% of buildable area, at grade

Clear Sidewalk:
4-6 feet (plus tree planting strip)

**varying with specific location. The half-story refers to allowing habitable space within the roof—an Attic Story*



The character and intensity of the Traditional Neighborhood frontage varies but is generally moderate, linked to the individual Neighborhood Character Areas. It is typically a detached structure—configured as either single or duplex buildings, with accessory dwelling units (ADUs) accommodated.

Any infill redevelopment should reflect the surrounding neighborhood context, both in scale and location on the lot. These frontages typically have front yards and often generous porches, with rear parking, accessed from an alley. The alignment of new building facades will be closely tailored to work with the existing houses along the block frontage.

Frontages Item 2.

Maximum Building Height:
2.5 to 3 stories* excluding basements

Facade Transparency: 30-70%

First Finished Floor Elevation:
Minimum 3 feet, maximum 6 feet above sidewalk

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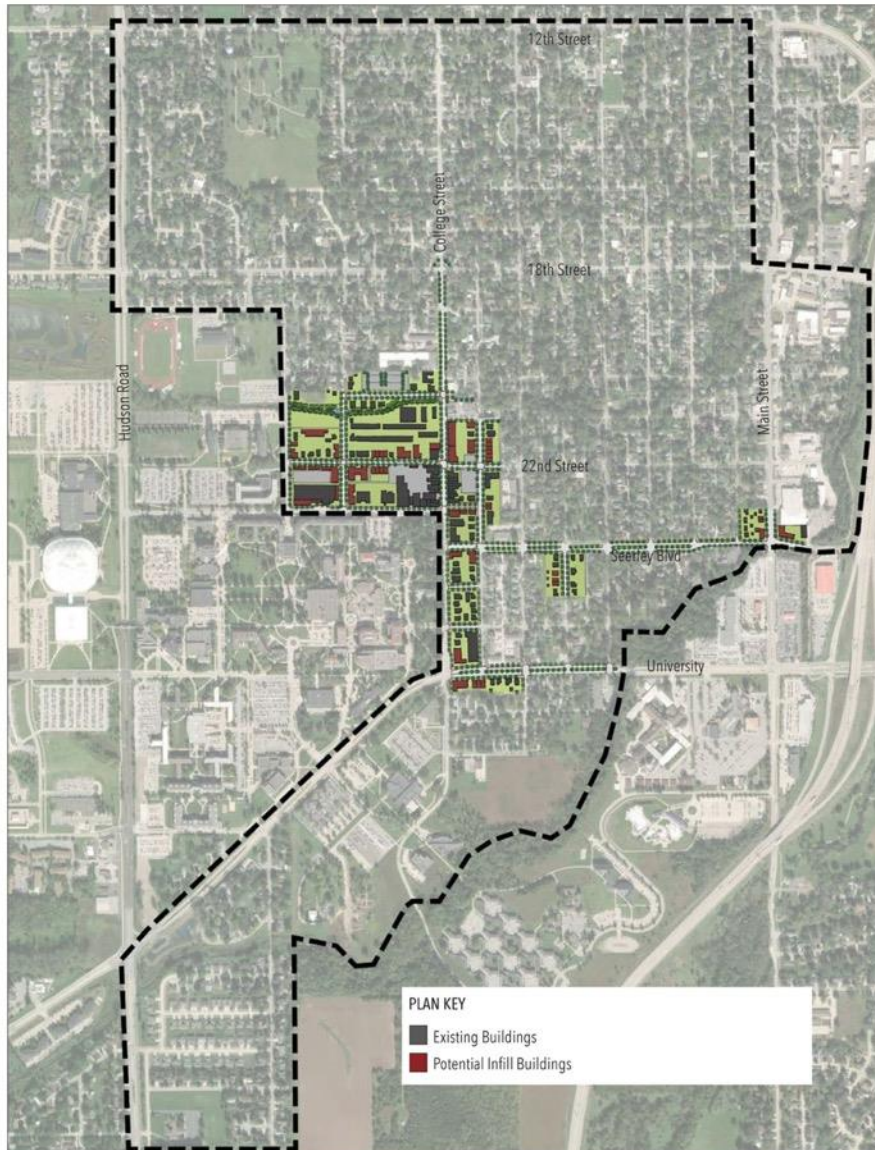
Permitted Uses:
Residential, Home Office

Minimum Private Open Area:
20% of buildable area, at grade

Sidewalk:
4-6 feet (plus tree planting strip)

The Vision

Item 2.



College Hill Vision Plan Design Principles

1. Buildings are aligned and oriented to the Street: buildings and street trees provide a sense of enclosure, framing and defining the Public Realm (or Street-Space).
2. Buildings oversee the Street-Space with windows, doors, porches, and balconies: these "eyes on the street" contribute to safe and vital public spaces.
3. Buildings in the core occupy block corners (reducing the perceived pedestrian crossing gap and maintaining the Street-Space)
4. Buildings are designed for the city environment: buildings aren't simply pushed closer together (that is sub-urban development) but are designed for the urban setting. Views are directed to the street and rear yard/garden, not into the neighbor's property.
5. Vehicle parking, garbage, and mechanical equipment, should be kept away from the Street-Space.
6. Reconnect or expand the street grid with a small block pattern whenever possible—always preserve existing streets and alleys.

The Vision

is an illustrative master plan (at left and redevelopment scenarios throughout the neighborhood sites, and re-imagined College Hill a framework for future investment, growth overall urban form and character of College Hill rather than the design of individual buildings.

at if..." scenarios. It is and further informed by solutions within the Cedarzens' work into physical

development might sible future build out of redeveloped. It includes the remain much as they and small scale infill time line, as the market it. It suggests where as well as areas that

ed variety of activities rimarily student) y expressed a desire d better access to daily t should be a place in nd common. Bicycling ross College Hill and rban design or overall e and character—there on plan intent.

icant roles. How do you re pedestrian friendly? eded to support a pment? What will it take allowed to deteriorate ic space? How do tween College Hill, wn? What needs to nd direction.

College Hill Vision Plan Design Principles

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Illustrative Projects: *Visualizing Change Before It Occurs*

The pages that follow illustrate several “what if” redevelopment scenarios to further explore what is shown in the Illustrative Plan (at left) in specific locations, at the scale of both buildings and streetscapes. For any of these scenarios there are several different building design possibilities, both in configuration and architectural style. The images are intended to provide a sense of an appropriate scale, massing, and siting.

1. Visualizing Change: Reconnecting Upper and Lower Hill
2. Prototypical Project: Mixed-Use Buildings along College Street
3. Prototypical Sites: Neighborhood Stability through Infill
4. Visualizing Change: A Gateway to College Hill (Seerley Boulevard & Main Street)
5. Prototypical Sites: Intensifying Housing along 22nd & Merner Streets
6. Visualizing Change: A New Plaza at 23rd & College Streets
7. Prototypical Project: Mixed-Use along 23rd Street
8. Prototypical Project: Re-Imagining Hidden Valley

Illustrative Projects – *What If?*

Stable Neighborhoods: Context-Sensitive Infill

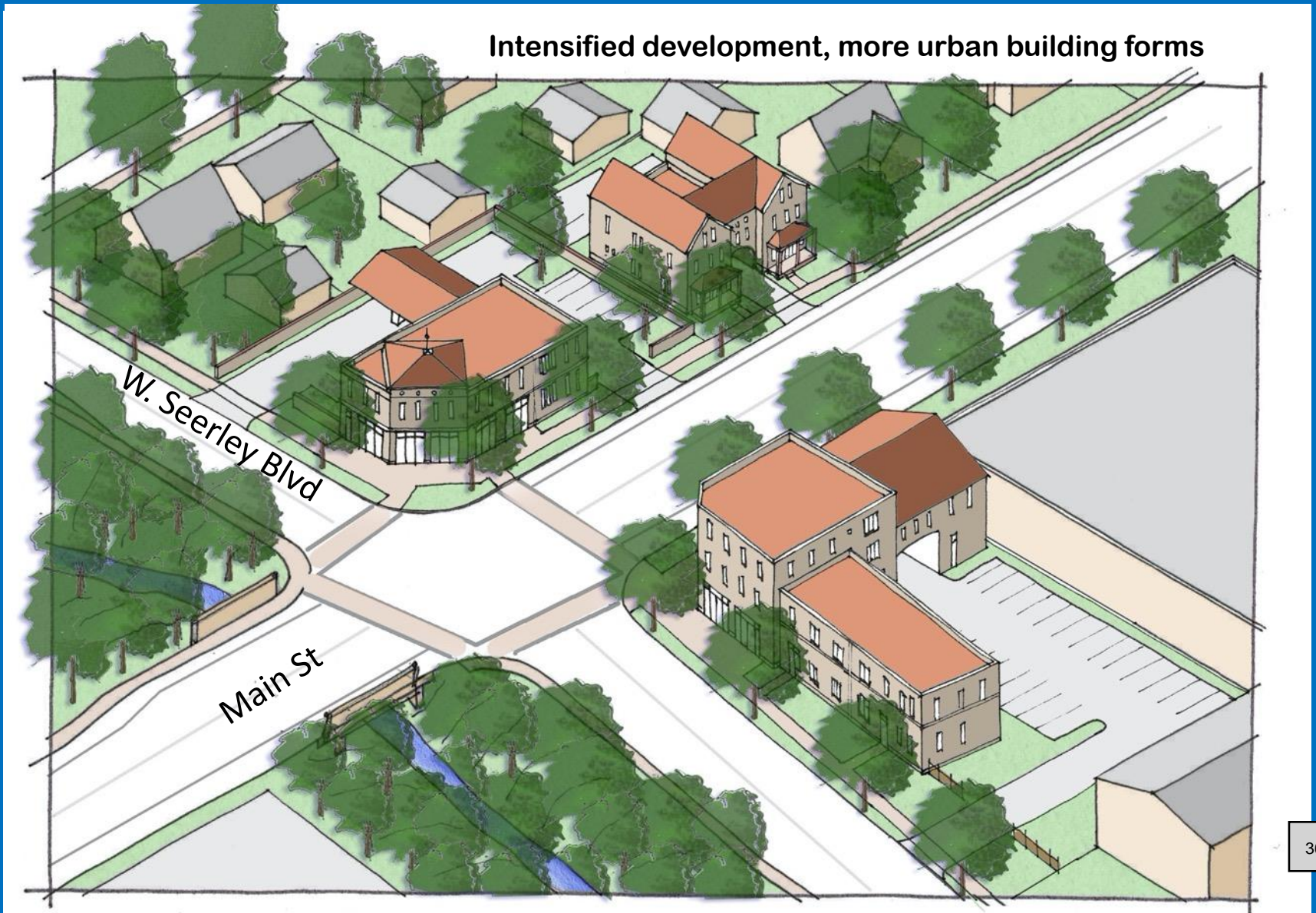
What If?

Item 2.



Gateways to College Hill: Seerly Blvd at Main St

What If? Item 2.

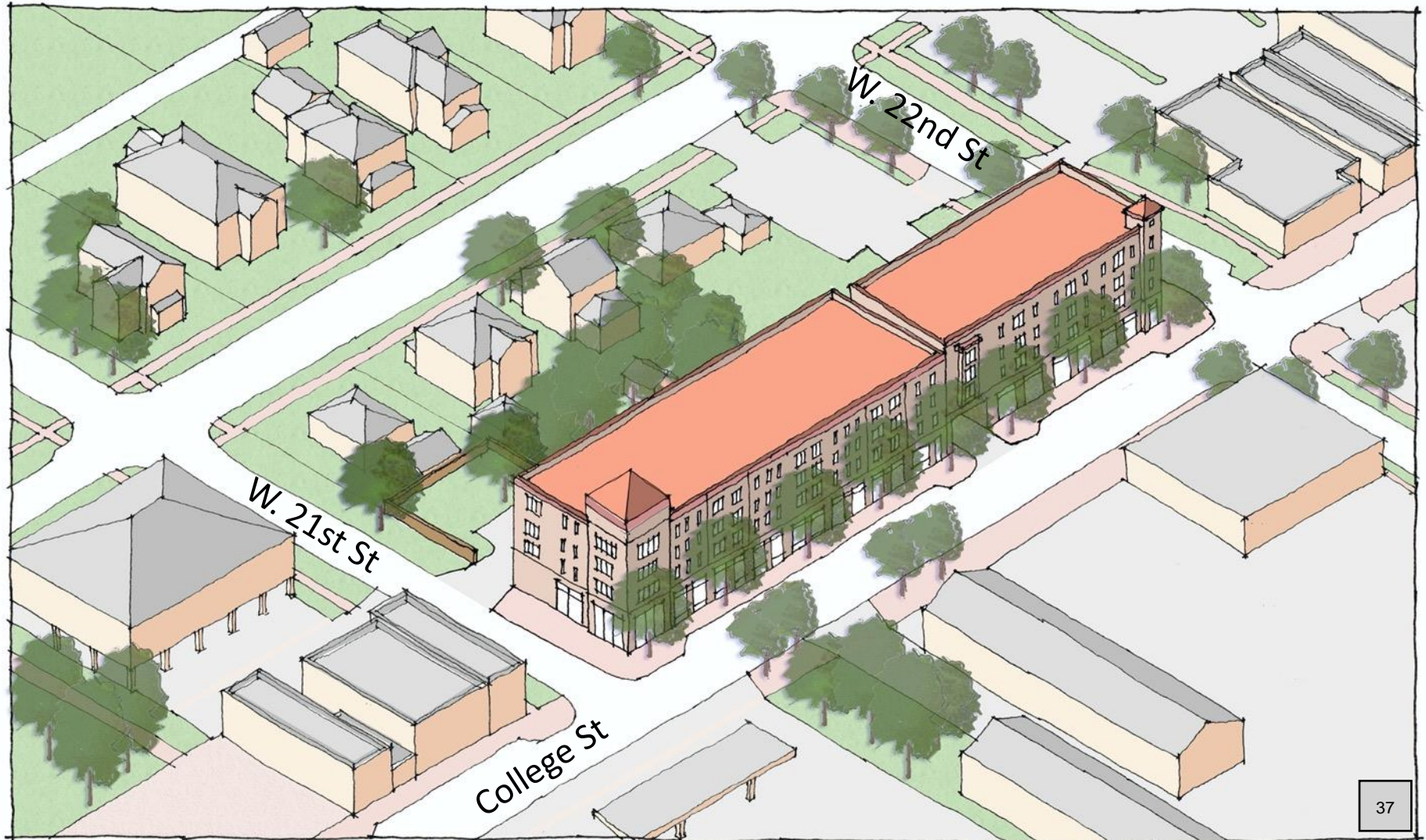


Reconnecting the Upper and Lower Hill: College from 21st to 22nd

What If?

Item 2.

Storefronts along College St, Residences above



Illustrative Projects – *What If?*

Item 2.

College St and W. 22nd St



Illustrative Projects – *What If?*

Item 2.

College St and W. 22nd St



Illustrative Projects – *What If?*

Item 2.

College St and W. 22nd St



Illustrative Projects – *What If?*

Item 2.

College St and W. 22nd St



Illustrative Projects – *What If?*

Item 2.

College St and W. 22nd St



Illustrative Projects – *or?*

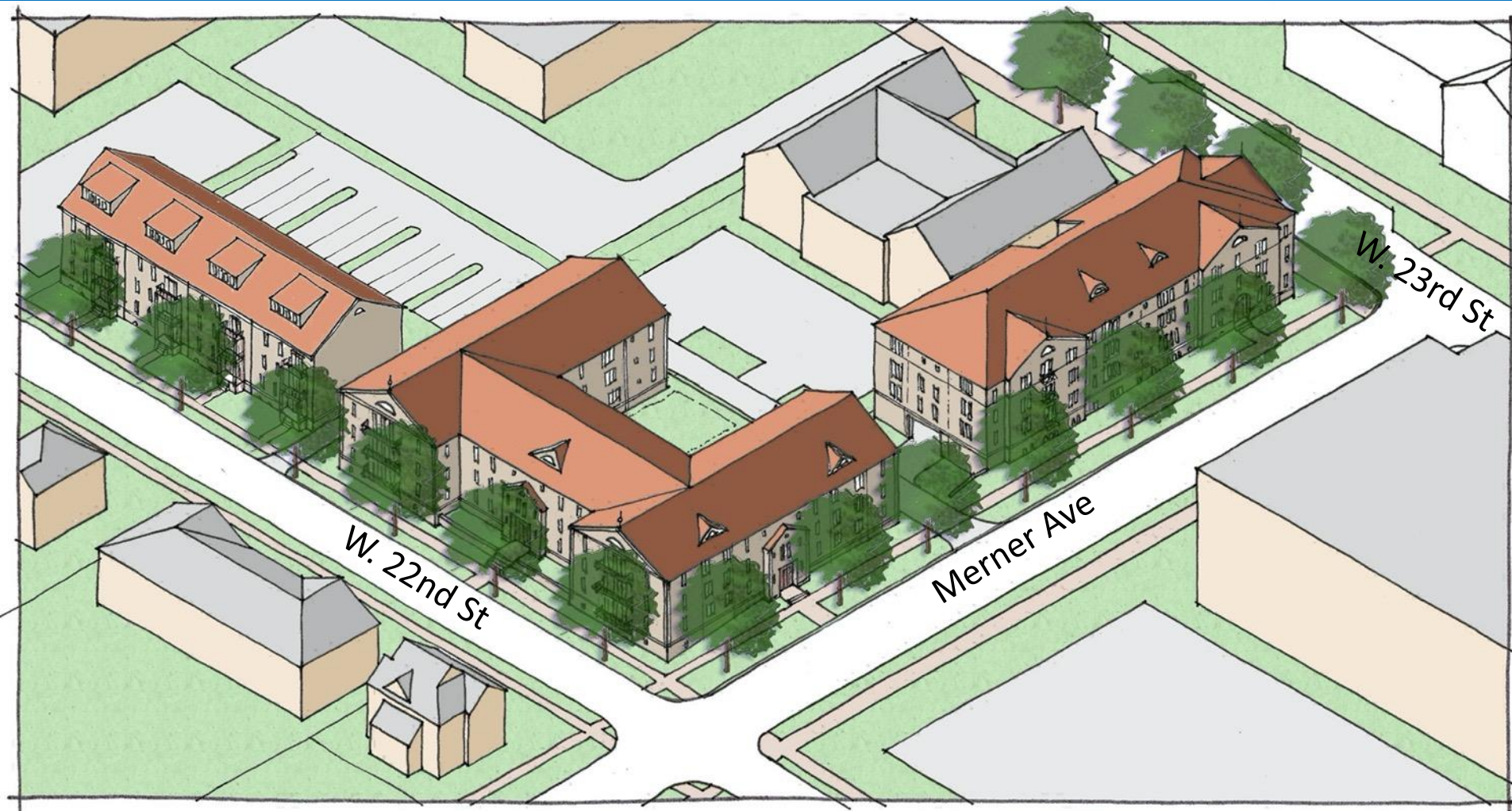
Item 2.

College St and W. 22nd St



Infill Housing in the Heart of College Hill

What If? Item 2.



College

A Plaza at 23rd Street New Mixed-Use Buildings

What If? Item 2.



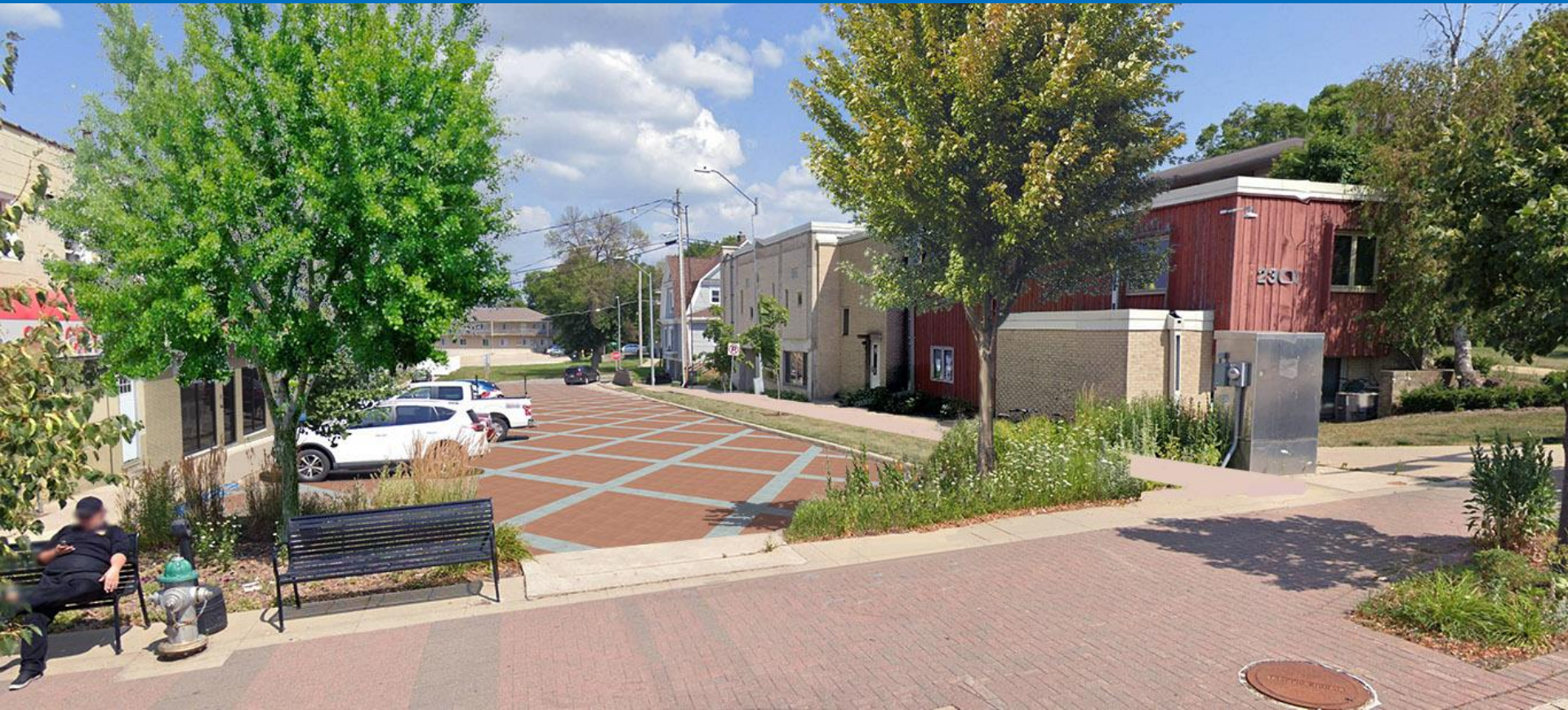
A Plaza at 23rd Street New Mixed-Use Buildings

What If? Item 2.



Improved pedestrian realm with retail and dining opportunities

What If? Item 2.



Improved pedestrian realm with retail and dining opportunities

What If? Item 2.



Improved pedestrian realm with retail and dining opportunities

What If? Item 2.



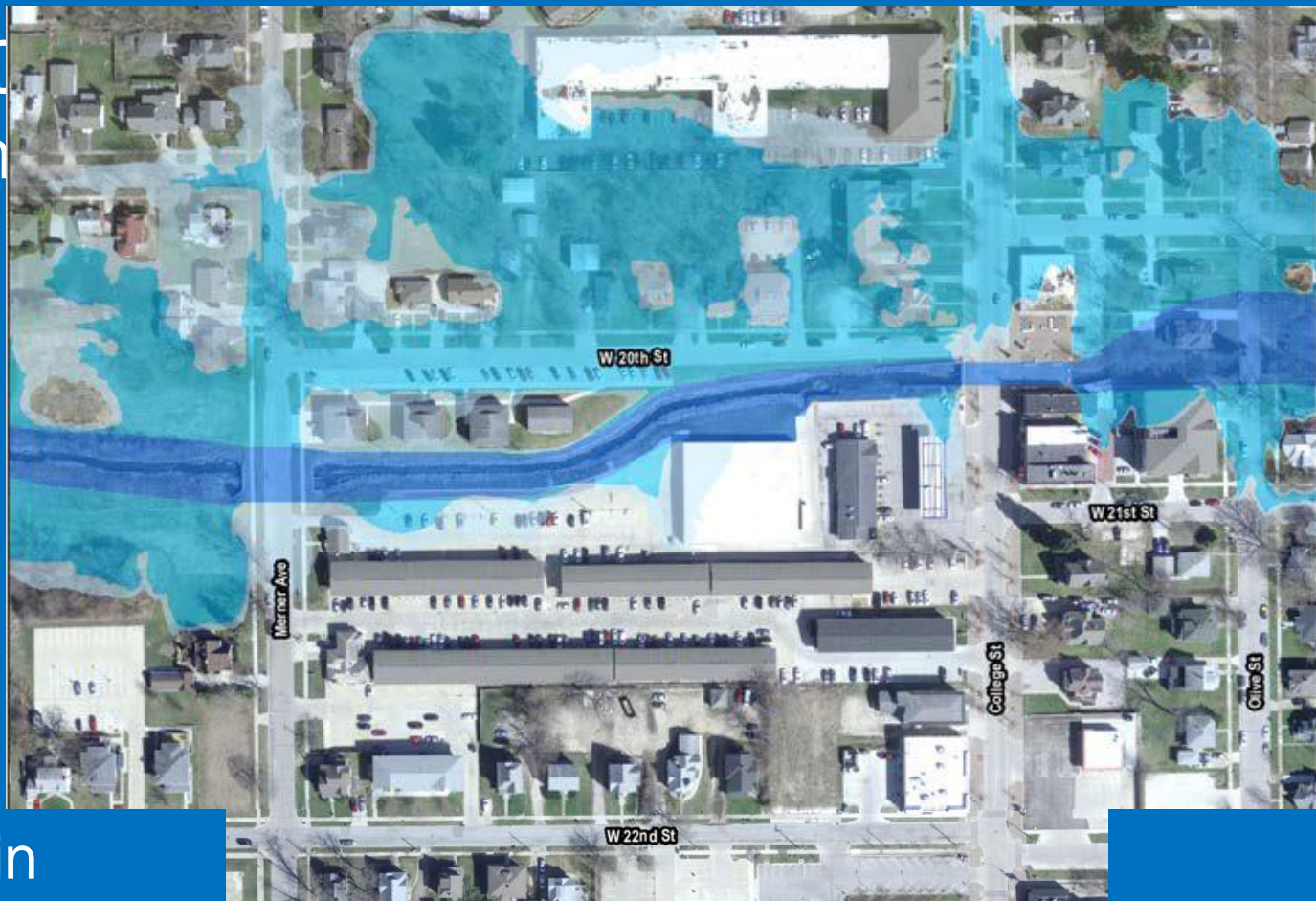
Improved pedestrian realm with retail and dining opportunities

What If? Item 2.



Dry Run C Improvement

Item 2.



Flood Plain Issues



Hidden Valley... Ped/Bike Path, Campus to Olive

Item 2.



Hidden Valley... Shared ('Green') Parking

Item 2.



Hidden Valley: New Green, New Mixed-Use Buildings/Blocks

What If? Item 2.



Recap: Vision Plan Big Ideas

Item 2.



1. Stabilize and enhance neighborhoods
2. Concentrate and intensify student housing near campus
3. (Re)Connect Upper and Lower Hill
4. Treat natural areas as amenities (add and maintain street trees)
5. Manage parking better
6. Improve walkability
7. Make biking easier
8. Increase retail and dining options

Questions?

Next Steps & Appendix

Item 2.

Making the Vision a Reality



The preceding pages illustrate potential redevelopment projects that show one way in which the *Imagine College Hill Vision Plan* might be implemented over time. Each example—whether *Visualizing Change*, a *Prototypical Project* or a *What If...* scenario—addresses one or more of the plan goals and recommendations. Those goals and recommendations are based on a synthesis of stakeholder interviews, site and market analysis, and community aspirations gathered during the course of the *Imagine College Hill Project*. Similar redevelopment projects could be undertaken in other locations within the *Imagine College Hill* study area.

The timing of plan implementation and sequence of redevelopment projects will depend on public, private, university, and non-profit sector involvement, decision-making, and investment, within the context of the local Cedar Falls market. This should be viewed as a long-term effort; some ideas may be implemented sooner than others. As new projects are proposed, they should be evaluated based on how well they fulfill the following.

SUMMARY OF PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

See the *Executive Summary* on pp. 2-4 for a brief description of each.

- Build on the work of the College Hill Partnership
- Define the public realm with active building facades, improved sidewalks, and additional street trees
- Ensure that future street and sidewalk rebuilding enhances walkability
- Support a multi-modal environment
- Understand the market—particularly as it relates to student housing, new construction, and parking—to leverage opportunities for growth on College Hill
- Create gateways to College Hill to provide a sense of arrival
- Explore opportunities for new/improved public spaces
- Adjust the rules for development (and parking)
- Recognize that College Hill (and nearby neighborhoods) play a unique role within Cedar Falls and warrant a different approach
- Create a better process for development review and approval
- Establish a true bicycle network
- Coordinate parking supply management

NEXT STEPS

The *Imagine College Hill Project* was initiated not only to establish a road map or framework for future growth and development, but also to provide inspiration for the quality and character of that development. The ideas presented in this plan will be implemented in partnership between the City, the private and non-profit sectors, and the University—and at the behest of the citizens of Cedar Falls. Each group has an important role to play. Some tasks are already underway, while others can be undertaken in the near-term, with others requiring more time (depending on the completion of prior tasks, market conditions, etc.) to be implemented over the medium- and long-term.

Recommended initial steps to implement the *Imagine College Hill Plan*

- Adopt new zoning for the entire College Hill Study Area, with the express purpose of plan implementation and an emphasis on a streamlined process and the appropriate form and character of new development.
- Move forward with plans to improve walkability and expand public spaces, including the completion of the sidewalk network, planting of street trees, and creation of new publicly accessible plazas and green spaces in accordance with this plan.
- Continue implementing the Parking Study strategies.
- Consider a defined parking district for the core character areas to better manage the available on-street parking in the plan area.
- Encourage greater collaboration between the City and University to create a true “car free” neighborhood through the recruitment and support of more diverse businesses and transportation options.

Implementing the *Imagine College Hill Plan* will require cooperation and collaboration between all involved. The city can write the rules and provide the infrastructure, but it will require private sector investment to build the compact, mixed-use walkable neighborhood center envisioned by the community. The updated zoning and new development review process should make it easy for people who meet the new standards to build the community vision for College Hill.

What We Heard

Item 2.

Public Review Draft: *February 10 – March 24*

- On-line Survey results – 44 responses
 - *77.3% said plan definitely, generally or somewhat provides a good framework*
 - *25 respondents (57%) did not participate in the vision plan process*
 - *13 (30%) respondents neither lived, worked, owned property, or attend school in the study area*
- Feedback to City Staff
- Public comments at P&Z
 - General support of College Hill Partnership & UNI
 - Concerns about outreach to and involvement of black, indigenous, and persons of color
 - Questions about potential changes to parking requirements

Extensive Outreach

- Direct mailings to residents, businesses, and property owners (*initially and at restart*)
- Media announcements and interviews
- Outreach via College Hill Partnership & UNI
- Project website
- Kiosk and shopfront posters

Vision Plan text revisions

Item 2.

Added descriptions and clarifications related to:

- Project outreach
- Stabilizing neighborhoods
- Emphasis on more diverse housing options & affordability
- Leveling the playing field between student and non-student rental households

Parking strategy : Policy vs. Regulations

Item 2.

IMAGINE COLLEGE HILL! Vision Plan



Planning and Zoning Commission Recommended Draft
March 2021



Regional Greenway; and cities across the country can tie entire neighborhood revitalization efforts to physical street and infrastructure changes like complete streets that allow people to walk and bike. Such long-term investment in "quality of life" infrastructure could assist with stabilizing the College Hill neighborhoods.

COLLEGE HILL PARKING

The design team reviewed the recent College Hill Parking Study through the lens of urban design and placemaking. While generally in agreement with the proposed approach, the team recommends that additional strategies be considered, particularly in relation to university and private parking management and resources, to better support the goals and vision of the *Imagine College Hill Plan*.

Within the context of the broader College Hill urban design, mobility, and market analysis, and building on the parking management strategies in the study, the following should be key implementation priorities to produce the desired environment (and parking supply). Unlocking the redevelopment potential on College Hill will require managing parking through a multi-pronged approach, in addition to improving the pedestrian and bicycle environment as described above.



- **Revise the current parking standards as part of the zoning update.** There are several available approaches and tools. Ultimately, the solution to College Hill parking concerns will likely be "both/and" rather than "either/or," as there are a myriad of competing interests for parking within the district. Right-sizing the parking requirements, particularly in the heart of College Hill within close proximity to UNI and the business district, is the place to start. From a market perspective, the current requirements of one on-site parking space per bedroom simply does not pencil out for small-scale redevelopment projects as envisioned for College Hill. Reducing the minimum residential requirements within the core character areas—the Heart of the Hill, General College Hill, and University Neighborhood (see p. 35 for detailed character area descriptions and locations), while permitting off-site parking within a defined distance, should be considered. Developers should be encouraged to help provide such additional parking supply, for residents and visitors to College Hill.
- **Coordinate parking management with UNI.** The parking fee structures, hours of public availability, and enforcement for the city and university parking should be similar. Currently, students and university employees alike take advantage of the "free" on-street parking supply in nearby neighborhoods rather than purchase parking permits. In addition, as the *Imagine College Hill Plan* is implemented, consider marketing College Hill as a place where students can live car-free and rely on a robust multi-modal system that is convenient, safe, and reliable for the bulk of trips that residents need to make in the district.
- **Continue to implement the parking study strategies.** Set triggers for next steps in the overall strategy and monitor the parking supply and demand on an annual basis to be able to proactively address concerns before solutions are needed. Evaluate each step's effectiveness, and adjust when appropriate, as each strategy is implemented.
- **Consider additional parking management tools in the future, as needed.** These might include: a parking management district within a defined area close to the campus and business district and a fee-based residential parking permit program within the management district, if appropriate.

Unlocking Redevelopment Potential

Item 2.

- Revise the current parking standards as part of the zoning update
- Coordinate parking management with UNI
- Continue to implement the parking study strategies
- Consider additional parking management tools in the future, as needed

Parking Occupancy and Utilization

Once the parking inventory was completed WGI field technicians performed parking occupancy counts on Wednesday May 1, and Thursday May 2, 2019 in the morning, afternoon and evening. While near the end of the school term, the collection dates represented regular class schedules, not finals, or when classes are not in session.

Parking occupancy levels in College Hill are largely created by, and a reflection of, a combination of proximity and policy. The unregulated on-street parking is highly utilized from mid-morning through the afternoon, with many streets exceeding 85% occupancy. Field observations indicate most of these parkers are affiliated with the University and are a mix of students and staff. Campus Street and Marner Avenue are near 100% occupancy and effectively full throughout the day and

The College Hill district has parking demand concerns due to a couple significant factors.

- ∞ The parking in College Hill is less expensive than parking in University facilities.
- ∞ College Hill is closer in proximity to the center of campus than many of the University parking areas.

These two factors combine to make College Hill a preferred parking location even though the University has plenty of available parking at reasonable rates.



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Appendix: Parking Ratios & Prototypical Projects

During the Imagine College Hill Project, the consultant team reviewed the recent College Hill parking study, which studied the current residential parking requirements from the perspective of both the local real estate market, and basic site layout and building design. The recommendations to reduce the minimum parking requirements in the *Market Considerations* (p. 17) and *Appendix* (p. 62); *Transportation Review* (p.18); and *Illustrative Projects* (p.45) sections of this plan are based on this analysis and the aspiration to have more students living within walking distance of campus.

The current minimum parking requirements are one space per bedroom, which in the College Hill/UNI context assumes that every student has a car. (While historically many college students shared bedrooms, the current student rental practices indicate that is no longer the case. Even the UNI dormitories have moved toward single-room occupancy.) Any renter who does not have a car will be paying for a space that they do not need and do not use. A mandated-but-unused parking space on College Hill is expensive land that could be put to a better use. The exact number of students who have cars may fluctuate a few percentage points from year to year, but it is always well below 100%.

The Prototypical Projects that are illustrated were created for this Vision Plan and based on real-world figures: typical apartment sizes (1000 square feet per 2-bedroom apartment) and standard parking space configurations. The table below provides the unit and bedroom counts for the projects as illustrated, with ground floors being non-residential, and including the increase in units created by adding floors to the building (with parking spaces remaining constant). The estimated amount of on-site surface parking that could be provided on each site is based on a calculation of: the area remaining after the building footprint area and the vehicular circulation area are subtracted from the total lot area. *Note that only one of the Prototypical Projects below would meet the current parking requirements, underscoring the importance of revising the standards if redevelopment and intensification of student housing near campus is the goal.*

TABLE KEY:

Yellow Boxes: the number of parking spaces that can fit on the lot as illustrated

Red Boxes: the parking provided does not meet the ratio at the top of the column; therefore the project would not be permitted

Green Boxes: the parking provided does meet the ratio and therefore the project would be permitted

The "parking sink" on the bottom row provides the number of parking spaces in the prototypical off-site parking lot illustrated on p.56.

IMAGINE COLLEGE HILL -- PROTOTYPICAL PROJECT PARKING SUPPLY					
Configuration	Site	Units/BRs	Current Rate 1/BR	.75/BR	.5/BR
# of Spaces	<u>22nd & College</u> 19 spaces				
3 Stories		12 du/24 BR	N	19 Y	13 Y
4 Stories		19/38	N	28 N	19 Y
# of Spaces	<u>21st & College</u> 40 spaces				
3 Stories		22/44	N	33 Y	22 Y
4 Stories		33/66	N	50 N	33 Y
# of Spaces	<u>22nd & Merner</u> 54 spaces				
3 Stories		25/50	Y	37 Y	25 Y
4 Stories		37/75	N	56 N	37 Y
# of Spaces	<u>23rd & Merner</u> 27 spaces				
3 Stories		14/28	N	21 Y	14 Y
4 Stories		21/42	N	32 N	21 Y
	<u>Parking Sink</u> 166 spaces				

The Vision



Existing conditions -- College Street between 21st and 22nd Streets, view to southeast



Mixed-use buildings with active street frontage—improving the pedestrian realm and reconnecting Upper and Lower Hill

The Vision

Item 2.



Existing conditions: older houses converted into student apartments



Prototype 1: 22nd Street lots individually redeveloped as row houses or stacked flats



Prototype 2: When lots are consolidated, more intense redevelopment, such as medium-sized apartments, is possible



All: A mix of redevelopment types and intensities is possible, as above

IMAGINE COLLEGE HILL -- PROTOTYPICAL PROJECT PARKING SUPPLY

Item 2.

Configuration	Site	Units/BRs	Current Rate 1/BR	.75/BR	.5/BR
# of Spaces 3 Stories 4 Stories	<u>22nd & College</u> 19 spaces	12 du/24 BR 19/38			
			N	19 Y	13 Y
			N	28 N	19 Y
# of Spaces 3 Stories 4 Stories	<u>21st & College</u> 40 spaces	22/44 33/66			
			N	33 Y	22 Y
			N	50 N	33 Y
# of Spaces 3 Stories 4 Stories	<u>22nd & Merner</u> 54 spaces	25/50 37/75			
			Y	37 Y	25 Y
			N	56 N	37 Y
# of Spaces 3 Stories 4 Stories	<u>23rd & Merner</u> 27 spaces	14/28 21/42			
			N	21 Y	14 Y
			N	32 N	21 Y
	<u>Parking Sink</u> 166 spaces				

Off-Site Parking

Re-imagining Hidden Valley (continued)



Dry Run Creek and the new reduced floodplain and floodway



Multi-use path and greenway along Dry Run Creek (above) and "green" parking lot (below)



• Near Term–Step Two:

This plan proposes the use of several parcels in the floodplain on the north side of 20th Street between College and Merner Streets as a carefully designed and environmentally sensitive "green" parking lot. The spaces would provide a 'parking sink', accommodating parking that would otherwise be required on redevelopment sites closer to the UNI campus and College Street. The lot would be shielded from the street with trees and hedges and it could provide bio-swales or rain gardens that would assist with stormwater management and provide bird and pollinator habitat.

Item 2.

Existing Condition: F

The Dry Run Creek floodplain and floodway have been reduced by the City's infrastructure improvements. Unfortunately, however, much of the land on 20th Street between Campus Drive and College Street remains in the reduced floodplain, with its development potential compromised.

Vision: A "What if..." Scenario

• Near Term–Step One:

Coordinate with UNI to build (and plant) a positive pedestrian and bicycle connection along Dry Run Creek from Campus Drive to College Street and use the floodplain between College and Merner as a public space. This will turn what is currently just stormwater infrastructure and unbuildable floodplain into an attractive public greenway. (Although there are plans to improve the sidewalks along 22nd Street, the existence of the "desire path" in this general location indicates that students are likely to continue to take the shortest route to the Lower Hill.) The drawings propose a multi-use path running along the creek between Merner and College Street, extending to Campus Drive to the west, with canopy shade trees planted along it. This will offer a more public, well-lit, and safer connection from the University residence halls to the shops of College Street. It will also complement the current plan to extend the pathway from Pettersen Plaza eastward to Olive Street.

“penciling out”

Building Height/Intensity and Parking

The prototype buildings shown here are of modest heights, illustrating typical building square footage that could also accommodate reasonable parking demand on-site without requiring a parking “ramp” above or below grade. As illustrated, these building heights and parcels can accommodate approximately 54 parking spaces on-site, or .75 spaces per bedroom, which is lower than current minimum parking standards. In order to intensify student housing, a new approach to providing and managing parking on College Hill will be necessary. (see p. 21). Building heights above 5 stories require a different and more expensive construction type as well as much more parking—often making taller structures cost prohibitive. *(For more on required minimum parking ratios, see the Appendix.)*

What's Next

Item 2.

1. City Council Plan Review & Adoption

- *Recommend consideration and adoption of the plan on April 19th*

2. Zoning Code update for College Hill area –

- *Building on Downtown Code updates*
- *Fall – release draft and review proposed College Hill zoning updates*

Review the plan at www.ourcedarfalls.com

Questions?