

NOTICE OF PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING

City of Cumming

Tuesday September 24, 2024 – 6:00 p.m.

Cumming City Hall

649 N 44th Street

Cumming, Iowa 50061

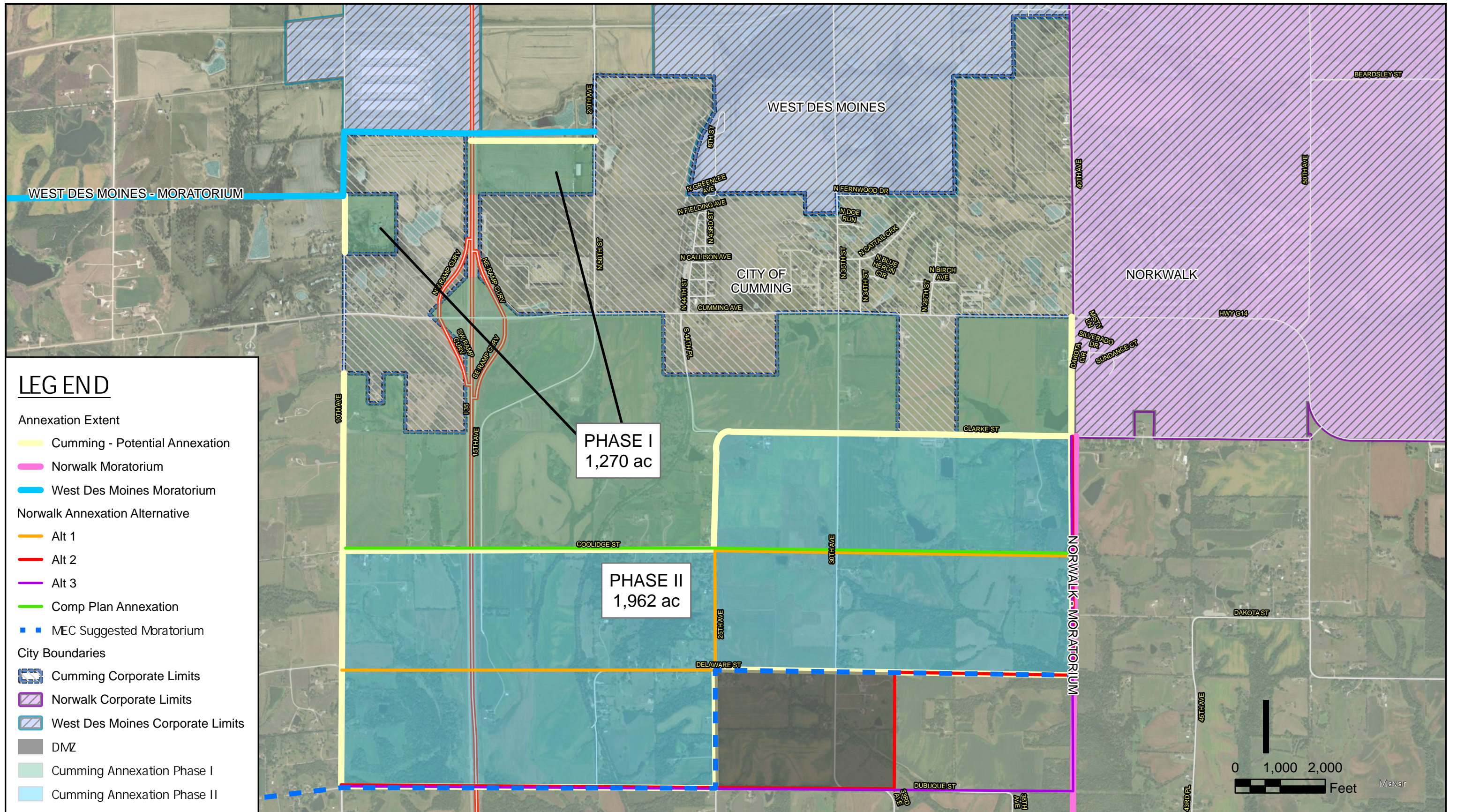
- I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA** as presented and/or amended.
- II. CONSENT ITEMS**
 - a. Approve Minutes from July 23, 2024 Meeting
- III. PUBLIC COMMENT**
- IV. PUBLIC HEARING**-None
- V. BUSINESS ITEMS**
 - A. Review and Recommendation to Council on Proposed Long Range Growth Boundary/Annexation Moratorium Proposal with City of Norwalk
- VI. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**
 - A. Iowa Living Roadways Community Visioning Program
- VII. UPCOMING PLANNING & ZONING MEETING:**
 - A. Next regular meeting – October 29,2024
- VIII. ADJOURN**

The City of Cumming welcomes public participation in its board and commission meetings. If you are unable to attend in person, you may access the meeting using the link and information below.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2382663968?omn=88347159156>

Meeting ID: 238 266 3968



Cumming-Norwalk Annexation Review

Describe community and transportation elements, opportunities

Cumming, Iowa is in the unique position of being a town of less than 500 people, but also directly adjacent to the Des Moines Metro, Interstate 35 and the Great Western Trail. The city is experiencing growth due to our location, and now is our time to plan and strive for a fully connected community. Growth began slowly over the last 20 years, with two new neighborhoods of large estate residential lots, Apple Creek and Prairie Shores. While these homes and properties are beautiful, there are no sidewalks. The Great Western Crossing (GWC) residential and commercial development began construction in 2020, west of the older neighborhoods and east of Old Town Cumming, our downtown. GWC is filling in sidewalks within their development, but they do not connect to Prairie Shores and Apple Creek or back to Old Town at this time.

The City of Cumming is divided north-south by Cumming Avenue/Highway G-14. East-west traffic has increased on this two-lane highway, due to the City's proximity to Interstate 35 and the lack of I-35 access in our part of Warren County. In 2023, construction of a shared use path along part of Cumming Avenue/G-14 was undertaken as part of the GWC development. The path runs on the north side of the highway and provided a new connection that was literally in use the day the finished pavement was approved-everyone loved it! A similar partial connection is underway with a shared use path now under construction on the south side of Cumming Ave/G-14, which will actually link to the Great Western Trail, the first new connection since its original construction. This path will also have a crossing and beacon at the 50th Street intersection for going across the highway.

Perhaps the most critical area exists where Old Town Cumming was built out over 100 years ago, at N. 43rd and N 44th, the two north-south blocks making up the city's business district and also our oldest residential properties. Old Town has some older sidewalks, but most people use the streets for walking and biking. Old Town connects directly to the Great Western Trail, which is a wonderful element of the community, but the remainder of our town has either no real connection, or only partial connections that are slowly building out.

Currently, N 44th Street is being extended south as part of the Middlebrook Agrihood, a planned unit development with multiple working farms and a strong recognition of the area's agricultural heritage in the new design. The emphasis on walking, biking, recreating and being in nature is the hallmark of the Agrihood. These elements are leading the design process for placement of businesses and homes. We would love to see these elements throughout the City of Cumming, because we believe the desire and intent are there-just not the connectivity.

We are seeking advisement and knowledge from this great program to help us to continue to connect, to tell our story of a walking, moving, healthy and connected place, as we manage the very unique variables we currently have in our transportation system. Rather than quick movement to widening roads, adding lanes, adding traffic lights (still don't have any of these!), how can we integrate, connect and provide the best for the community and its many, many visitors? Yes, we are also that city, hosting Ragbrai's Great Fall Ride and numerous events and street parties throughout the year that bring hundreds of people and bikes. A particularly critical area is at the intersection of N and S 44th, which is mere feet from the Great Western Trail and a heavily used trailhead parking lot.

Cumming, Iowa very much has its own identity, with its history and long-term residents, many families

going back generations. The Iowa Living Roadways Community Visioning process would do so much to help us especially new residents that may not go back generations, harness, polish and unite that identity for generations to come.

Describe transportation enhancements

Cumming Avenue/Highway G-14 is a gateway for the City of Cumming. Three areas of focus:

An entranceway would, ideally, visually welcome people in and show pride in community. What does that look like? The city's Hometown Pride Committee put in many hours coordinating a local artist to be commissioned to create public art pieces to place through the community. The art work reflects the community's history and is often the topic of questions and praise from visitors. The community may want to enlarge this design for the entrance in some way, or develop something completely different in the form of signage, art, banners, lighting or a combination. Entranceway design would ideally result in a feeling of welcoming, pride and community.

Best potential practices to explore for the intersection of N 44th, Cumming Avenue/G14 and the Great Western Trail. Old Town Cumming is all that there is left to carry forward the scale and design of the original town. The Agrihood's first new block on S44th is respecting these elements; creating walkable blocks, pedestrian scale experiences, street level activity and mixed-use buildings. Adherence to strict traffic engineering and design, without allowing for the integration of ultra thoughtful people scale design for pedestrians and bikes, could create a four-lane road that may not be essential and could separate the community physically, becoming further auto dominate.

Neighborhood connectivity. Community members would have the ability to be involved in the discussion at its inception, as it can be difficult for cities to introduce sidewalks where they historically haven't been. If sidewalks are not a universal answer, how do we plan for more trail connectivity, or other possibilities.

Describe other benefits and changes

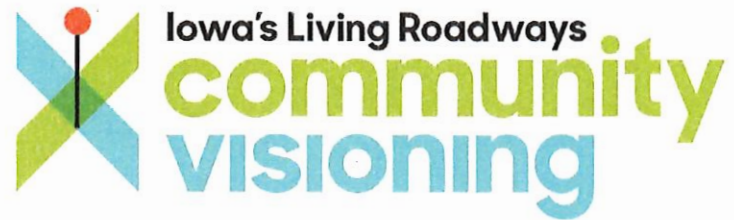
Our knowledge of this program and its staff tell us that it would be a process the community can unite around. As noted above, Cumming is a tiny town that has changed very little in its 100+ year history. Now it is changing, and though elected officials are diligent and thoughtful about the pace of growth and what is constructed, people have concerns. This place is special. Everyone wants to protect it. In 2020-2022, a large-scale regional distribution center was proposed, reviewed and eventually constructed in Cumming in 2023. There was a great deal of public opposition, which was heard and carefully evaluated by the Mayor and City Council. There was also a great deal of potential benefit in employment and new taxable property valuation. Great care was taken to bring the best possible product forward for development, and many have reported it is much different than what they expected. The community is healing, but it is not yet healed. Working through this process would be wonderful timing.

The elements of low impact design for stormwater management, prairie reclamation, native species establishment and other sustainable practices have been implemented to a degree in Cumming. More is welcome, and it could be a very unique canvas in Cumming Avenue/G-14.



(319) 373-0650 • (800) 369-1269
www.treesforever.org
80 W 8th Avenue • Marion, IA 52302

September 17, 2024



Rita Conner
City Administrator, City of Cumming
649 N 44th St
Cumming, IA 50061

Dear Rita,

Congratulations! **Cumming** has been selected to participate in the 2025 Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning Program. As a participant in the program, Cumming will be a partner in a successful collaborative effort sponsored by the Iowa Department of Transportation, delivered and facilitated by Iowa State University, Trees Forever, and private landscape architects.

A press release (Word document) will be emailed to you in the coming days so you can share Cumming's selection for the program with local media outlets.

Trees Forever Field Coordinator, Karen Johlas-Szilkowski, has been assigned to guide your community through the Community Visioning process. She will facilitate the meetings and be your contact for all things Community Visioning. One of their first tasks will be working with the steering committee to organize a virtual kick off planned for later in October, where steering committee members will learn more about the Community Visioning program, how it can transform a town, and what to expect through the entire process.

Please mark your calendars and register today for the Iowa's Living Roadways Annual Celebration held at the Gateway Center in Ames on Thursday, November 7th 2024. We'll be starting at 9 am and wrapping up around 3:30 pm. Details and a registration link can be found on the events calendar of the Trees Forever website. The direct link to register is here <https://treesforever.org/event/ilrcelebration/> We are celebrating **28 years of Community Visioning** and will highlight work done by this year's Community Visioning communities and give you the opportunity to interact with other participants and learn about their experience.

Again, congratulations on Cumming being selected as a Community Visioning participant for 2025. We look forward to working with you and your community in the coming year and plan to see you on November 7th in Ames!

Sincerely,

Brad Riphagen
Community Visioning Program Manager

Jeff Jensen
Director of Community Programs