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Proposed development would connect Bell Avenue

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Up to 14 new industrial lots could be added to an area just west of Interstate 35 in Ames if the City Council approves a decision from its Planning and Zoning Commission on Monday.

Commission members agreed Wednesday to recommend the project to the council.

If it gets city approval, the project will start soon, according to Chuck Winkleblack, of Dayton Park LLC, which is developing the property and is located at the offices of Hunziker and Associates, 105 S. 16th St.

"Depending on the weather, we'd like to start earthmoving by the end of March, and infrastructure could start in either May or June," Winkleblack said.

The development would connect two portions of Bell Avenue, starting with the existing Ames Community Development Park (home of the Coca-Cola plant and Story Construction, among others) and extending to a second business park developed by Hunziker to the south.

The southern portion is home to the Des Moines Area Community College Career Academy-Hunziker Center.

Developers hope the project will be finished by September, Winkleblack said.

If or when that happens, there are plenty of at least potential industrial land buyers who would be interested, according to Dan Culhane, president and CEO of the Ames Chamber of Commerce and Ames Economic Development Commission.

"As a matter of fact, we're already marketing that property (to potential buyers)," Culhane said. "We always are talking to people who are looking for industrial property."

Although the plan calls for 14 lots, ranging in size from a little more than one acre to more than five acres, Culhane said the site could be limited to two lots for the purpose of accommodating larger industries, Culhane said.

"It all depends on the clients who'd be interested when the land becomes available," he said.

While the new industrial land will help business marketing, it's only a step toward a goal of a creating a larger industrial area for the city, 50 acres or more, according to Culhane.

“This (new development) is a big help, but we’re just not well-positioned yet to attract interest from larger industries,” he said.

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