

Site History

[Previous Uses and Owners](#)

The Des Moines Ordnance Plant site was part of a 2,200 acre site that was used during World War II for manufacturing munitions. Over 19,000 people worked at the plant and produced 2 million rounds of ammunition per day.

Deere and Company purchased the production facilities on the northwest corner of the site after World War II. The John Deere Des Moines Works has operated there since 1947, currently employing over 1,000 people.

Iowa State University purchased 1,031 acres of the Ordnance Plant site in 1947 for use as a dairy research center and for the study of plant sciences. The Des Moines Area Community College purchased property on the southeast portion of the site in the 1970s for an Ankeny campus.

[The City of Ankeny](#)

The City of Ankeny has long had an interest in the research farm site being converted to residential and business uses to spur economic development and to increase the tax base.

The Iowa State Legislature adopted legislation in 2003 that allowed Iowa State University to sell the research farm and use the proceeds to construct a new dairy research facility and plant science research area near the Ames campus.

The City of Ankeny commissioned a concept master plan for the site in 2004 and named the project *Prairie Trail*. The concept master plan was developed with public input and envisioned a mixed-use development, including single-family and multi-family residential, retail, office, and light industrial. The plan also included parks, open



Prairie Trail site

Site History cont.

space, conservation areas, and civic and cultural facilities. The City completed negotiations to purchase the site (outlined in red in the drawing at the right) from Iowa State University in June of 2005 for \$23.6 million.

The City issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) in June of 2005 to developers with an interest in master developing the site. The Ankeny City Council selected DRA Properties, LLC (DRA) as the Master Developer in July 2005. The Prairie Trail concept master plan was intended to be a general guideline for the development. In September 2005 the Ankeny City Council approved a development agreement, a purchase agreement, and a land sale contract with DRA Properties.

In October 2005, the City issued an RFP to national urban design and planning firms for a detailed master plan to include urban design, financial feasibility, conservation design, and civil engineering. After the City and DRA interviewed several firms and selected the team led by Urban Design Associates in December 2005.

DRA Properties, LLC

DRA purchased the property from the City for \$23.6 million in September of 2005. The City committed to construct infrastructure for the development in an amount not to exceed \$20 million. DRA agreed to create a Civic Trust Fund of up to \$25 million on a matching basis of \$1.25 for every \$1.00 of infrastructure constructed by the City. The Civic Trust Fund will be used for cultural and civic facilities at Prairie Trail.

