

STAFF REPORT



A-2011-9
Official Zoning Map Amendment
Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map Amendment
City of Anoka
July 6, 2011

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The City of Anoka is proposing a 2030 Comprehensive Plan land use map amendment and official zoning map amendment to approximately 27.8 acres located generally east of 11th Avenue, north of North Street and south of Sunny Acres Park. The land use map amendment would change the land use on the 2030 Comprehensive Plan Land Use map from Undeveloped Space to Medium Density Residential. The rezoning would change the land from R-F Rural Farm to R-3 Low Density Multi-family Residential.

It has been a general goal of the City Council to continue to seek ways to increase City revenues by adding tax exempt property to the tax rolls and reduce the burden on all Anoka tax payers. In pursuit of this goal, all non-tax generating properties were identified; included city owned properties. One such property that has been discussed is the area identified in this application.

At the May City Council worksession, an in-depth report was given to the City Council about the past, current, and potential future uses of the entire 53.95 acres of city owned land east of 11th Avenue. The council memo from Greg Lee is included. Generally, the City Council felt the north portion of this land should continue to be used as a storage area for clean fill, topsoil, bituminous millings from city street projects and tree and brush material from tree contractors. The memo outlines the past use of the portion of this site as a city dump which makes it very difficult and discouraged for any development. A bone yard for various city materials exists near the middle of the property. This would be moved to the north end of the site.

Approximately 27.8 acres of land remains that could be incorporated as part of a new development and/or land sale. Much of the area is wetland and cannot be developed. Approximately 4.7 acres remain that could be developed.

At this time no development is proposed. Rezoning the property would prepare for it to be sold for development. If and when a development is proposed, there will be a public hearing before the Planning Commission and final determination by the City Council. Details relating to a plat, site design, etc. would be reviewed during this process.

Included for your review: Site location map with area highlighted, map showing developable area, site aerial, May 23, 2011 City Council memo from Greg Lee, minutes from May 23, 2011 City Council meeting, Letter to neighboring residents, email from resident.

ZONING MAP AMENDMENT

The property is currently zoned R-F Rural Farm. The rezoning would change the zoning to R-3 Low Density Multi-family Residential. This district allows for single family, townhome and multi-family use at lower densities than the R-4 district. Generally, the vision for this land is either detached single family homes, or a low density townhome development. The Planning Commission and City Council must review the following criteria when considering a change to the zoning classification of a property:

1. *Whether the proposed amendment corrects an error or addresses a changing condition, trend or fact.*

Staff Findings: For many years this land has been vacant. Not until recently did the City Council explore the potential of selling this land for development. The existing R-F zoning was sufficient for the past and current uses. However, because the City Council wishes to market this land for residential development at certain densities and uses, the R-3 zoning will be more appropriate.

2. *Whether the proposed amendment will protect the health, safety and welfare of the public.*

Staff Findings: The proposed R-3 zoning generally would allow for residential and public uses. Residential uses are the lowest impact land uses as compared to commercial and industrial. Because this area is located adjacent to residential zoning districts and public space, the proposed zoning should protect the health, safety and welfare of the public because the proposed zoning would allow for uses that are consistent with the surrounding neighborhood. A rezoning to a commercial or industrial zoning district would do otherwise.

3. *Whether the City and other service providers will be able to provide sufficient public safety, transportation and utility facilities and services to the subject property, while maintaining sufficient levels of service to existing development.*

Staff Findings: The developable area is approximately 4.7 acres. Depending on the type of housing proposed, the most units that likely could be developed are 45 attached townhomes. If detached housing is proposed it reduces the amount of units significantly. Even at the high end of the scale with 45 units, sufficient public safety should be able to be provided.

The property would be served by 11th Avenue, Grant Street, Lincoln Street and North Street. The densest development that could potentially occur is around 45 townhome units. According to the Institute of Traffic Engineers trip generation manual, a 45 unit townhome development generates approximately 19.8 AM trips, 23.4 PM trips, and 263 trips throughout the day. The state of Minnesota did Municipal State Aid Street (M.S.A.S.) traffic counts between 2006-2008. North Street was part of this study when

traffic counts occurred in 2007. Traffic counts show North Street, between 7th Avenue and 11th Avenue has on average 7,900 vehicles per day. Generally traffic from a future development could primarily use North Street to travel east and west. If all traffic used North Street, the daily 263 trips generated are about 3% of the total daily traffic on North Street. If/when a development is proposed, a traffic study may be required to show where potential traffic could go, as Lincoln and Grant Streets may also be used to travel west to 7th Avenue.

The property would be served by city utilities. The minimal size of any future development would not have an impact on the city's storm and sanitary sewer or electric utility.

4. *Whether the proposed rezoning will have significant adverse impacts on the natural environment, including air, water, noise, storm water management and vegetation.*

Staff Findings: This property is unique because it is located adjacent to the wetland. Any development would be required to go before the Planning Commission and City Council to ensure its compliance with city, county and state requirements. Development will have to meet setback requirements and mitigate against any other impacts to the wetland. Any stormwater runoff that is created will have to be treated and meet requirements of the Lower Rum River Watershed Management Organization. Any development would be required to follow the tree preservation ordinance which would require any significant tree removed during development to be replaced at a ratio of 1:1, except in no case need the tree replacement density exceed eight (8) trees per acre.

5. *Whether the proposed amendment will have significant adverse impacts on other property in the vicinity of the subject tract.*

Staff Finding: The neighboring property owners have enjoyed open space in this area. Whenever a zoning change occurs to land that has been vacant and publicly used and development may occur, there will be change. However, the Planning Commission should consider whether that change is an adverse impact. As stated before, residential uses are the lowest impact land uses as compared to commercial and industrial. Because this area is located adjacent to residential zoning districts and public space, the proposed zoning would allow for uses that are consistent with neighboring uses. Based on this finding, staff believes that though there could be a change from what exists today, the proposed amendment will have the least impact and more importantly not a significant adverse impact on other property.

6. *The suitability of the subject property for the existing zoning classification and proposed zoning classification.*

Staff Findings: The property is currently zoned R-F, Rural Farm and has been since the property was annexed from the city of Coon Rapids in 1994. R-F zoning exists in four places throughout the city. In this area, north of County Road 116, King's Island, and the

Anoka County Fairgrounds parking lot. R-F generally permits single family uses at a very low density (minimum lot size of 2.5 acres), agricultural, and public uses. In general, this zoning district likely should be removed from the zoning code and these areas zoned more accordingly. However, the existing uses do fall within the permitted uses in the district.

The report to the City Council on May 23rd provided reasoning for the location of developable land based on the suitability of the soil and difficulty to develop the north part due to issues underground. If development of this site were to occur, residential uses are the most compatible to the adjacent uses. Commercial or industrial uses would not fit the neighborhood and could cause a greater environmental impact. Because of the unique shape of the developable area, cluster type housing may occur. The R-3 will allow the densities need for this type of development.

7. *The need for the proposed use at the proposed location.*

Staff Finding: This site is special because of its seclusion and location adjacent to the wetland. The study of the larger 53.95 acres shows only a small area than can be developed. According to reports about today’s housing market, housing developers are looking for smaller, unique sites, closer to Minneapolis and St. Paul for development. This is in contrast to the large tracts of farmland that were developed in the 2000s in the exurbs (Monticello, Otsego, Rosemount, etc.). Based on this trend, staff believes that this type of site is ideal for a niche housing development that would assist to diversify the city’s housing stock.

2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN LAND USE MAP AMENDMENT

The 27.8 acre piece of land currently categorized as Undeveloped Space on the 2030 Comprehensive Plan Land Use map. Undeveloped Space is defined as “public land that is currently open, however, may or may not support development for any purpose in the future.” The proposed R-3 zoning requires a land use map amendment from Undeveloped Space to Medium Density Residential as State Statutes require a City’s comprehensive plan to be consistent with the zoning ordinance. The remaining land north of the subject area would remain Undeveloped Space on the land use map.

Surrounding Land Uses

	EXISTING USES	ZONING DISTRICT DESIGNATION	CURRENT LAND USE DESIGNATION
NORTH	City bone yard, storage area	R-F Rural Farm	Undeveloped Space
WEST	Single-Family/Multi-Family Residential	R-1 Single Family Residential; R-3 Low Density Multi-family; R-4 High Density Multi-family	Low Density, High Density Residential

SOUTH	North Street/Highway 10	N/A	N/A
EAST	Wetland/Commercial	General Commercial (city of Coon Rapids)	General Commercial (city of Coon Rapids)

Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies

The goals and policies summarized from various chapters of the Anoka Comprehensive Plan may help frame the discussion and issues when considering the land use designation change.

Land Use Plan

The Comprehensive Plan lays out general criteria to consider when designating land use. When creating zoning ordinances, this criterion is considered as a base, and the zoning ordinance typically regulates density, uses, etc. further. The current classification is Undeveloped Space. This category is public land that is currently open, however, may or may not support development for any purpose in the future.

In contrast, the Medium Density Residential category encourages single-family homes at higher densities, but also allows for attached housing units in the form of twin homes or townhomes. The following are the guidelines and criteria for development within medium-density residential areas:

- Five to ten units/acre
- Type of dwellings allowed are single-family, detached dwellings, and attached housing in the form of twin homes and townhomes.
- Must abut and have reasonably direct access to intermediate arterials, minor arterials and collectors; should be located near large areas of permanent public open space (community parks, schools, etc.); near neighborhood shopping and service facilities.

The land use section of the comprehensive plan also outlines four goals to consider when reviewing land use. One of those goals is to encourage a land use balance, a mix of housing opportunities, and life cycle housing. The City of Anoka’s housing stock ranges in both value and design. Development in this area, with its unique characteristics would encourage a mix of housing opportunities. Another goal is to evaluate future use of City owned lands by periodically updating the City Council on City owned land that is underutilized and could be used for future economic development where appropriate.

Economic Development

There are two goals and implementation steps in the economic development section that relate to the development of vacant, city owned land to increase tax base and also investment specifically in this property They are:

Goals:

Diversify and Expand the Tax Base: To strengthen the tax base through balanced land use and business diversification.

- Promote development of vacant land with uses that achieve city goals and complement existing uses.

Implementation:

Invest in sites and neighborhoods ready for growth based upon market conditions

- Promote development and investment at the following sites with priority given to those identified in **bold**.

- **11th Avenue**

- 3rd/Jackson

- Castle Field

- **Eniva Corporation**

- Graco Inc.

- Hunts Bus

- K-Mart

- Mobile Home Park

Housing Plan

The Housing section supports a mix of housing types to meet the needs of current and future residents. The housing goals that relate to this proposal include.

- Increase the quality and value of the existing single family and multifamily housing units in the City of Anoka.
- To diversify the housing stock, promote home ownership among all housing types and provide housing options to attract young buyers and families
- To provide opportunities for older residents to remain living in the City.
- Analyze neighborhood utilities, transportation networks, buffers between different zoning districts and building trends, including new construction and alterations.
- Provide a balance of various housing types to serve "life cycle" housing needs in the City.

Transportation

This site will have access from 11th Avenue. Based on previous and current concerns from the neighborhood to the north, no access will be provided to Cleveland Street. According to the Institute of Traffic Engineers trip generation manual, a 45 unit townhome development generates

approximately 19.8 AM trips, 23.4 PM trips, and 263 trips throughout the day. The state of Minnesota did Municipal State Aid Street (M.S.A.S.) traffic counts between 2006-2008. North Street was part of this study and traffic counts occurred in 2007. Traffic counts show North Street, between 7th Avenue and 11th Avenue has on average 7,900 vehicles per day. Generally traffic from a future development could primarily use North Street to travel east and west. If all traffic used North Street, the daily 263 trips generated are about 3% of the total daily traffic on North Street. If/when a development is proposed, a traffic study may be required to show where potential traffic could go, as Lincoln and Grant Streets may also be used to travel west to 7th Avenue.

Parks and Recreation

This property has generally always been vacant. Over time there have been different uses of the area which included a residential homestead and various city uses. Because it is located adjacent to Sunny Acres Park and city owned, it sometimes may be considered as a park by the public. This property has not been designated or recognized as park area in the Park and Recreation section. Any new development will be encouraged to have interior trails and recreational areas that will serve residents of the development but also potentially residents in the surrounding area by making connections to Sunny Acres Park.

COMMISSION ACTION

The Planning Commission can recommend approval of the application, denial of the application, or postpone the decision to allow for more information to be obtained.

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