

STAFF REPORT



A-2012-5
Zoning Text Amendment
Official Zoning Map Amendment
Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map Amendment
Land Generally east of Anoka County Library and north of County
Road 116
City of Anoka
May 1, 2012

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The City of Anoka is proposing a zoning ordinance text amendment to establish Chapter 74, Article V, Division 3, Section 74-240, B-5 Regional Business District. The City of Anoka is also proposing a 2030 Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map amendment and official zoning map amendment to approximately 47.68 acres located generally east of the Anoka County Library, north of Country Road 116 and west of 7th Avenue. The land use map amendment would change the land use on the 2030 Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map from Planning Area to SC-Shopping Commercial. Planning Area was a designation the Metropolitan Council allowed the city to use for this area because when the comprehensive plan was approved in 2008, discussions of future land use in this area had not been completed. The City Council did not want to designate the area public because of the anticipation it would change. The rezoning would change the entire 47.68 acres from R-F Rural Farm to B-5 Regional Business District.

It has been a general goal of the Anoka 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.

The city currently owns approximately 275 acres of land bounded by the Rum River, County Road 116 and 7th Avenue. In 2006 approximately 200+ acres of land was put into a conservation easement and is now called the Anoka Nature Preserve. In 2011 the City Council rezoned 22.5 acres just west of the library for residential land use. The remaining 47.68 acres east of the Anoka County Library is what is being considered as part of this application.

No development is proposed at this time. Rezoning, land use change and establishing a zoning ordinance for 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 subdivision, site design, stormwater management, etc. would be reviewed during this process. All property owners within 350' of the property would receive notice of the public hearing.

Included for your review: Area map showing area for 2012-5 application, 22.5 acres of residentially zoned property and Anoka Nature Preserve; Survey and legal description of the areas; Potential Access road map, letter sent to property owners within the 350' notification area, City of Andover Future Land Use Map.

ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT

The City of Anoka is proposing a zoning ordinance text amendment to establish Chapter 74, Article V, Division 3, Section 74-240, B-5 Regional Business District. This is a new business district created specifically for this area. The purpose of the district is to provide an area intended to promote commercial development, including retail, office, entertainment, service and other complimentary uses serving a trade area beyond the City boundaries. Development should be designed in an integrated and unified manner according to an overall plan emphasizing minimal impacts to adjacent land use, encouraging pedestrian activity, and have attractive and high quality buildings, decorative lighting, landscaping, signage, sidewalks and trails.

The following is a summary of the proposed ordinance.

Definitions – There are three definitions special to this district that relate to restaurant uses. The reason is because each of these uses are permitted differently in the district.

District Boundaries – It is anticipated a road will cut the property in half once developed. The north and south half are indentified in the ordinance separately and different uses are permitted in each part.

Uses – The ordinance outlines permitted, conditional, interim and prohibited uses in the north and south parts of the district. Generally the uses are retail, service, and office related. Larger retail buildings are permitted in the south part because it is a greater distance from residential land uses. Notable prohibited uses include gas stations, auto sales, other auto oriented uses, and free-standing fast food restaurants.

Height and Setback Regulations – Special consideration was taken into account for setbacks to the north city limits and Anoka Nature Preserve. For these two areas, a minimum building setback of 100 feet and minimum parking setback of 50 feet is required.

Any building must be setback a minimum of 25' to County Road 116 and 7th Avenue. Parking is not permitted in front of the building along those roads.

For development on the interior, a minimum building setback of 10' shall be provided to the right of way and adjacent property. This encourages compact development and buildings closer to interior roadways. Buildings are limited to 40' in height, however greater heights may be permitted if a conditional use permit is granted.

Exterior Site Requirements – Outdoor storage is not permitted and screening shall be required for service areas, trash and mechanical equipment. Exterior lighting standards are the same

standards that the city has established in the Main Street Mixed Use and Transit Oriented Development districts. Light emitted must meet a .1 foot candle power at residential property lines and .5 foot candle power at commercial property lines.

Landscaping is required for any areas that are not covered by impervious surface. A landscape plan must be submitted as part of any site plan review. Additionally landscaping/screening is required for parking areas to mitigate visual impacts to residential properties to the north and east. Parking areas shall be screened by either vegetation, berm, or building.

Parking Requirements – Parking requirements will be based on existing ordinance standards. Generally retail uses require 1 stall/200 sf. of building; offices require 1 stall/250 sf. of building; and restaurants require 1 stall/40 sf. of dining area.

Architectural Standards – Building material standards are similar to what is required for the Main Street Mixed Use District. The primary material for each facade shall be brick, stone, rock faced concrete block or similar material. Up to 25% can be of an approved secondary material.

Signs – Each business will be allowed wall signage based on building frontage, however if a building has a large frontage, no sign can exceed 200 sf. Monument signs will be permitted for each business on their property and such signs cannot exceed 10' in height and are limited to 40 square feet. Pylon signs are not allowed. One entrance monument sign for the development will be permitted at each of the primary entrances from 7th Avenue and County Road 116.

ZONING MAP AMENDMENT

The property is currently zoned R-F Rural Farm. The rezoning would change the zoning to B-5 Regional Business. The Planning Commission and City Council must consider 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: This land has always been vacant. Since the 1970s this land has been a topic for several different development options however none were ever acted on. In 2006, 200+ acres abutting the subject area were put in a conservation easement and is now known as the Anoka Nature Preserve. After this action the City Council has directed the Planning Commission to look at future land use for the remaining 22.5 and 47 acres east and west of the library. In 2011, the City Council rezoned the 22.5 acres west of the library for residential use. The existing R-F zoning was sufficient for the past and current uses. However, because the City Council wishes to market this land for development that will maximize economic growth in the community, the proposed B-5 zoning is more appropriate.

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

Staff Findings: The purpose of the district is to provide an area intended to promote commercial development, including retail, office, entertainment, service and other complimentary uses serving a trade area beyond the City boundaries. Development will be designed in an integrated and unified manner according to an overall plan emphasizing minimal impacts to adjacent land use, encouraging pedestrian activity, and have attractive and high quality buildings, decorative lighting, landscaping, signage, sidewalks and trails. Though there likely will be opposition to any development on the property because it has been vacant, the regulations and purpose of the B-5 district attempt to mitigate issues that could impact the health, safety and welfare of the public.

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 property is located adjacent to County Road 116 and 7th Avenue, both county roads. The site currently has access from 6th Avenue, a city street. Anoka County will be completing a project this summer which will add two northbound turn lanes, two westbound turn lanes, one southbound turn lane, and one eastbound turn lane at the intersection. New lights and other improvements are also planned.

Future access for this site and the 22.5 acres west of the library has been reviewed as part of the County Road 116/7th Avenue road project. Last summer, the City of Anoka and Andover commissioned a traffic study to analyze potential new intersections based on future land uses in the northwest, northeast and southeast quadrants of the intersection. The City of Anoka and Andover was asked to provide the future land uses. Anoka provided information accurate with what is being proposed in the ordinance.

The study specifically looked at potential new intersections at 7th Avenue and 43rd Avenue and at County Road 116 and 40th Lane extension (see included map).

7th Avenue and 43rd Avenue. The analysis shows that a full access at 43rd Avenue and 7th Avenue is important to maintain an acceptable level of service at the 7th Avenue and County Road 116 intersection. Without the full access at 7th Avenue and 43rd Avenue, the intersection of 7th Avenue and County Road 116 is forecast to fail and create queues and back-ups that affect the adjacent intersections. It also results in a significant increase in the overall corridor travel times. It is expected that the intersection of 43rd Avenue and 7th Avenue will meet signal warrants with the future development in the northwest quadrant.

This intersection is outside of the scope of the road project this summer. If/when development occurs either east or west of 7th Avenue; the developer will be responsible

for construction of necessary turn lanes and intersection improvements to serve the development.

County Road 116 and 40th Lane. The study showed that if development were to occur north of County Road 116, the intersection would meet warrants for a signal. Anoka County will be upgrading the intersection at County Road 116 and 7th Avenue in 2012. A new intersection from County Road 116 to serve any development north would not be part of the road project this summer and would not occur until development occurs. This additional access should alleviate traffic on 6th Avenue that may be created as a result of development.

Based on the proposed improvements to the transportation system in the area, staff believes sufficient transportation service will be maintained.

The property will be serviced by city utilities. Currently there is an 8 inch water line that provides service to the Anoka County Library and is located under 6th Avenue (dead end road adjacent to the library). Sanitary sewer is also available under 6th Avenue. These utilities were sized in anticipation of residential development for all 275+ acres north of County Road 116. If the utilities need to be enlarged for commercial development, this would be done at the cost of the developer at the time of construction.

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: The property is adjacent to park property. The proposed ordinance takes into consideration adjacent uses and requires a greater setback than what typically would be required in a commercial district. For example, in the B-1 district, buildings only have to meet a 20' setback to adjacent property. In the B-5 district buildings must meet a 100' setback to the Anoka Nature Preserve. These increased setbacks are meant to minimize impact on the natural environment in the Anoka Nature Preserve.

If/when the property is developed, the storm water management planned will be reviewed by the Lower Rum River Watershed Management Organization (LRRWMO). Because the site is currently entirely permeable, all stormwater that is generated from development will have to be contained onsite. This likely would be accomplished through onsite ponding that will be an amenity to any development. Due to the stormwater treatment requirements of the LRRWMO, staff believes there will not be an adverse impact on the Rum River.

The site does not contain any significant trees. The city leases the property to a farming operation in the summer, however this use is considered a temporary use of the land until it can be developed. Because of the lack of trees on the site, there should be no impact to vegetation.

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

Staff Finding: The general public and adjacent property owners/users have enjoyed open space in this area. Whenever a zoning change occurs to land that has been vacant, adjacent to publicly used land and development may occur, there will be change. However, the Planning Commission should consider whether that change is an adverse impact.

The property is adjacent to existing residential uses in the City of Andover to the north and east and Anoka Nature Preserve to the west. As stated in review criteria #4, the proposed ordinance takes into consideration adjacent uses and requires a greater setback than what typically would be required in a commercial district. In the B-5 district buildings must meet a 100' setback to residential property to the north and the Anoka Nature Preserve. Lighting shall not exceed .1 foot candle at residential property lines or .5 foot candle on non-residential property lines. This is a typical requirement that already exists in the Main Street Mixed Use and Transit Oriented Development districts. Screening will be required for parking areas and any outside storage to minimize impacts.

Though vacant now, Andover has identified the land at the northeast corner of County Road 116 and 7th Avenue for neighborhood commercial and high density residential uses. The proposed B-5 zoning should complement those future uses.

If development is proposed, the Planning Commission and City Council will have a specific opportunity to address potential adverse impacts on adjacent property and require certain conditions upon a development approval.

Based on this finding, staff believes that though there could be a change from what exists today, ordinance regulations and review procedures have been put in place to mitigate adverse impacts on adjacent 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. R-F zoning exists in four places throughout the city. In this area, east of 11th Avenue, 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 use does fall within the permitted uses in the district.

The property is located on the corner of County Road 116 and 7th Avenue. Traffic counts for the intersection according to the 2008 MnDOT data, show approximately 31,700 daily vehicle trips. This traffic volume is similar to County Road 116 and Highway 47

(35,400), and 7th Avenue and Main Street (35,200) which are county intersections with commercial land uses. This would argue that the proposed uses are consistent with similar intersections in the city. Additionally, the City of Andover has identified commercial uses on the northeast and southeast corners of the intersection.

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

Staff Finding: The proposed zoning district will permit uses that will serve the local residents and the 31,700 daily traffic trips that occur. Residential zoning has been approved for the 22.5 acres west of the library. The proposed zoning will offer a variety of land uses in this area. The proposed zoning is generally consistent with what Andover has shown for the future on the northeast quadrant of the intersection.

2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN LAND USE MAP AMENDMENT

The 47.68 acre piece of land is categorized as a Planning Area on the 2030 Comprehensive Plan Land Use map. The area is described in the comprehensive plan as follows: *“In the early 1970’s the City of Anoka acquired approximately 267 acres of land at the northern tip of the City just north of Bunker Lake Boulevard and west of Seventh Avenue. The land has remained publicly owned and undeveloped since. In 2007, a conservation easement was placed on approximately 198 acres of the land preventing development perpetually. Two areas of land remain for possible development. The first area is 47.68 acres and located directly along Seventh Avenue and Bunker Lake Boulevard. The second area is 22.5 acres and located just north of Bunker Lake Boulevard and east of the Rum River. This property was area of focus during the 2030 Comprehensive Plan public process. Suggested uses for this land varied. The land is identified as a Planning Area on the 2030 General Land Use map because it is unknown at this time how the City will proceed. When determining future uses for this property, the City will take into consideration park, housing, and economic development needs for the City.”* The proposed B-5 Regional Business District zoning requires a land use map amendment from Planning Area to SC-Shopping Commercial as State Statutes require a City’s comprehensive plan to be consistent with the zoning ordinance.

Surrounding Land Uses

	EXISTING USES	ZONING DISTRICT DESIGNATION	CURRENT LAND USE DESIGNATION
NORTH	Single Family Residential (Andover)	R-2 Single Family Estate	Rural Residential
WEST	Anoka County Library	R-F Rural Farm	Institutional
SOUTH	Anoka Ice Arena	R-F Rural Farm	Park and Recreation
EAST	Single Family Residential, Vacant, Utility (Andover)	R-4 Single Family Urban R-1 Single Family Rural NB – Neighborhood Business	Transitional Residential NC – Neighborhood Commercial

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 SC - Shopping Commercial category is designed to accommodate neighborhood shopping areas. These areas are characterized by ease of access, shared parking areas, uniform building character, single or unified ownership, and separation of the automobile from the pedestrian.

In this category, retail stores and parking are clustered for the following reasons:

- Less land is required to provide an appropriate level of service.
- Relationships to abutting land are much improved due to less peripheral length and combining of similar activities (loading, storage, etc.).
- Most goods required are available without driving between stores or shopping areas.
- Shopping can be the focal point of major residential areas with other neighborhood service and public facilities supporting the center.

Neighborhood shopping centers provide convenient day-to-day shopping within easy walking distance or within a five-minute drive of all residents within its primary trade area.

Type of Development

- The following uses are appropriate in the SC – Shopping Commercial category:
- Neighborhood shopping center
- Planned unified shopping
- Big-box retail -- one or more large supermarkets or franchise stores.
- Other tenants, including hardware stores, minor appliance stores, cleaning and repair services, barber and beauty shops, card and gift shops, bakeries, coffee shops, clothing shops, florists, small variety shops, and specialty shops.
- Complimentary uses include local business and professional offices.
- Typical adjacent uses are service stations and drive-in facilities.

Location Criteria

SC - Shopping Commercial uses should be:

- Located near intersections of thoroughfares and/or collectors roadways.
- Centrally located at a common point on the periphery of three or more neighborhoods.
- Adjacent to high-density residential areas.

The land use section of the comprehensive plan also outlines several goals to consider when reviewing land use.

1. Encourage a land use balance within the City to promote the efficient provision of City services, the generation of revenues to cover the cost of those services, and a mix of employment and housing opportunities. Land use balance refers to an appropriate mix of various land uses that are interdependent and mutually supportive.
 - Ensure that public properties are maintained in a timely manner.
 - Improve and upgrade older public utility and infrastructure facilities through a program of scheduled improvements.
 - Continue to expand and continue to diversify the economic base.
 - Encourage the provision of life cycle housing.
2. Assure that the City's land development regulations provide for efficiency, compatibility, compliance, variety, flexibility, and innovations.
 - Grant zoning changes only when it can be demonstrated that rezoning will result in a community or neighborhood benefit that outweighs any potential adverse impact upon surrounding properties. Conformance with policies of the Community Plan and other adopted City plans may be used to demonstrate community or neighborhood benefit.
 - Incorporate performance standards, where appropriate, into land development regulations and criteria.
 - Periodically review City ordinances and development regulations and amend, if necessary.
3. Development a master plan for the City owned land north of Bunker Lake Boulevard and west of Seventh Avenue.
 - Complete market studies to determine appropriate uses.
 - Consider economic development, housing needs, and other land use needs in the city when developing the plans and determining future land use of these areas.
 - Consider uses that compliment the conservation area.
 - Consider access and traffic impacts.
 - Consider design standards to encourage quality buildings.
4. Evaluate future use of City owned lands.
 - Periodically update the City Council on City owned land that is underutilized and could be used for future economic development where appropriate.
 - Consider the citywide benefit of selling/developing City owned land.

Economic Development

There are several 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.

Goals:

Expand the Retail Sector: To build the retail sector by attracting specific and targeted retail businesses.

- Attract specific desired retailers including a grocery store and fine dining restaurant.
- Attract retailers that fill gaps in the local mix.
- Attract businesses that offer certain quality of life experiences.
- Maximize occupancy of retail space.
- Increase the number of retail businesses and retail employment.

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:

Capitalize upon investment/development opportunities at the following intersections with priority given to those identified in **bold**.

- **Main/Ferry**
- Main/2nd Avenue
- Main/7th Avenue
- 7th Avenue/East River Rd
- 7th Avenue/38th Avenue
- **US 10/Thurston**
- **US 10/Main Street**
- **County Road 116/7th Avenue**
- County Road 116/Hwy 47
- County Road 116/Round Lake Blvd
- **County Road 116/Thurston Avenue**
- Ferry/Pleasant
- US 10/Ferry Street
- US 10/7th Avenue

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

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

- Anoka Enterprise Park
- Central Business District-intersection of Main Street and Rum River
- **Commuter Rail Village-intersection of rail line and Rum River**
- Federal/Hoffman
- Franklin School
- Highland Park
- **Historic Rum River District project**
- **West Main Shopping Center**
- City Hall re-use
- Third Avenue, Van Buren to Harrison
- County leased lot redevelopment
- Jackson Street
- **Land North of County Road 116.**
- Schwartzmans/Fairgrounds
- Thurston/Bunker

Transportation

As mentioned in the zoning review the property is located adjacent to County Road 116 and 7th Avenue, both county roads. The site currently has access from 6th Avenue, a city street. Anoka County will be completing a project this summer which will add two northbound turn lanes, two westbound turn lanes, one southbound turn lane, and one eastbound turn lane at the intersection. New lights and other improvements are also planned.

Future access for this site and the 22.5 acres west of the library has been reviewed as part of the County Road 116/7th Avenue road project. Last summer, the City of Anoka and Andover commissioned a traffic study to analyze potential new intersections based on future land uses in the northwest, northeast and southeast quadrants of the intersection. The City of Anoka and Andover was asked to provide the future land uses. Anoka provided information accurate with what is being proposed in the ordinance.

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County Road 116 and 40th Lane. The study showed that if development were to occur north of County Road 116, the intersection would meet warrants for a signal. Anoka County will be upgrading the intersection at County Road 116 and 7th Avenue in 2012. A new intersection from County Road 116 to serve any development north would not be part of the road project this summer and would not occur until development occurs. This additional access should alleviate traffic on 6th Avenue that may be created as a result of development.

Parks and Recreation

This property has always been vacant. This property has not been designated or recognized as park area in the Park and Recreation section. The property is adjacent to the Anoka Nature Preserve which is different than a typical city park because of its various protections.

Staff believes that based on the information provided, the proposed zoning and land use classification are consistent with the 2030 Comprehensive Plans criteria for land use, goals and implementation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the zoning ordinance, rezoning to B-5 Regional Business District, and 2030 Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map amendment based on the findings that are outlined in the staff report.

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.

Because these action items will be considered by the City Council separately, staff asks that individual motions be made for each item in the following order:

2030 Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map Amendment

Zoning Ordinance Establishment

Rezoning from R-F to B-5

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