

**5.02: For Discussion Only: Discuss Acceptable Land Uses at 167<sup>th</sup> Avenue Commercial Node and Provide Feedback on Potential Shooting Range and Recycling Warehouse/Transfer at 6001 167<sup>th</sup> Lane NW**

**Presentation**

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson explained over the past several years, the City has discussed various options to address permitted uses at the 167<sup>th</sup> Avenue/St. Francis Boulevard retail node. The node currently experiences a high vacancy rate and concerns with property maintenance on some of the buildings have been expressed. The property is zoned B-1 General Business District, which is intended to provide a commercial area for goods and services for the surrounding neighborhoods and community on a smaller scale than the B-2 Business District.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated the intent of this evening's discussion was to introduce two proposed uses, both of which likely will necessitate an amendment to the Zoning Code, for the property located at 6001 167<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW (former Supervalu site) and the type of regulatory tools that would be necessary if either were to proceed. The proposed uses were:

1. Shooting range/fitness center with classroom space and a retail component.
2. Metal/clothing recycling center/warehouse with a small retail component.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson reviewed the first proposal for the shooting range/fitness center with classroom space and a retail component in detail. He noted the request was from an existing business in Ramsey called Total Defense. He explained Total Defense is proposing to have a retail store, gunsmithing and provide self-defense training courses. In addition, Total Defense was proposing to have an indoor shooting range. This was currently not a permitted use in the B-1 General Business District. He indicated that Staff contacted Blaine and Robbinsdale to discuss their indoor shooting ranges. The Robbinsdale range operates in a commercial district while the Blaine range is in an industrial district. Neither has any known complaints associated with them. Staff requested the Commission discuss the matter in further detail, determine the category for the suggested use and provide staff with direction on how to proceed.

Commissioner Bauer commented there were not enough residential homes in the area to keep this commercial development flourishing. He indicated a long-range plan should address the potential for more residential homes in the future.

Development Services Manager Gladhill indicated this commercial area was struggling at this time and the Commission needed to consider both the short-term and long-term goals for this area.

Commissioner VanScoy questioned how the long-term goals of the area would be managed if this use were to proceed in the short-term.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated an interim use could be approved to establish a timeline framework. He indicated the applicants may not be willing to proceed given the expense that would be invested into the buildings.

Development Services Manager Gladhill noted the short-term goals could be written into the long-term vision for this area.

Commissioner Bauer requested additional information from staff on the differences between a licensed use and conditional use permit.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson indicated a conditional use permit would allow the shooting range to be a permitted use with conditions addressing exterior concerns of the site. The conditional use permit would be tied to the land and would require a public hearing. A licensing procedure would be completed via staff, would be tied to the user and could be revoked if standards were not met within City Code. A license would have to be received on an annual basis.

Commissioner Bauer questioned if both a conditional use and license could be required.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson commented this would require a Zoning Code Amendment to add the need for a license and/or a conditional use permit for the suggested use.

Chair Levine stated the current property was vacant and he wanted to see the site more viable.

Development Services Manager Gladhill indicated by expanding the allowed uses in this commercial area to match the market the site would be more viable. However, this would have to be considered with the appropriateness of the area in the City of Ramsey.

Commissioner Bauer stated an interim use permit for the shooting range would not benefit the applicant due to the financial investments they would have to make in the building. He commented the applicant may not proceed if the City only gave them a five-year approval.

Commissioner Schiller was in favor of allowing the range as a permitted use as it would draw people to the area. He did not support the additional licensing procedure.

Commissioner VanScoy suggested the proposed shooting range go through the conditional use permit process.

Commissioner Field supported the sporting use and thought this use would become a magnet to draw users from the entire community to this commercial area. He recommended the range proceed as a permitted use so long as Zoning Code requirements were met.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated parking and noise regulations would have to be addressed based on the size of the shooting range, training space and retail component size.

Development Services Manager Gladhill thanked the Commission for their input on this item and stated from the comments received thus far, it appears the shooting range could be considered at a future meeting as a permitted use.

Commissioner Bauer was in favor of having the shooting range be licensed with the City as well.

Development Services Manager Gladhill commented the licensing procedure would allow for the use to be tied to the business owner and not the property.

Commissioner Schiller asked if Blaine or Robbinsdale required their shooting ranges to be licensed.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson indicated he did not believe either required a license, but the City of Blaine required a CUP.

Commissioner VanScoy stated the safety and security of the proposed business would also have to be addressed. He questioned who controlled these standards.

Development Services Manager Gladhill recommended the applicant be allowed to speak to the Commission.

Marty Fisher, Premier Commercial Properties, discussed the growth of the Total Defense business and noted they were currently leasing space at River Bend Plaza, which was located at the corner of Bunker Lake Boulevard and Highway 47. He indicated the owners were now proposing to expand their business to the 167<sup>th</sup> Avenue Commercial Node.

Dan Wellman, 2745 131<sup>st</sup> Avenue in Zimmerman, co-owner of Total Defense, thanked the Commission for their time this evening. He stated over the past 18 months his business has grown significantly and he has outgrown the size of his current space. For that reason, he has been looking for new space to allow for the expansion of his business to include a shooting range. He explained the construction of the range would be quite unique, as it would have a double concrete wall to minimize and suppress the noise.

Mr. Wellman reviewed the proposed floor plan for Total Defense in detail with the Commission. He indicated the proposed use, complete with gun range, archery range and self-defense classes would draw people to the site from the entire northwest metro area. He reviewed the location and demographics of previous clientele.

Commissioner Bauer requested comment on the language within the proposal regarding the “cool toys” sold by Total Defense.

Curt Oaks, 6723 116<sup>th</sup> Circle in Champlin, co-owner of Total Defense, explained this would include holsters, sites, flashlights and other accessories. He apologized for the poor choice of word and would make a change. Mr. Oaks then discussed the building security given the proposed use.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson indicated the police department would review this application further regarding security and safety prior to approval.

Commissioner VanScoy asked if fire suppression would be necessary for the proposed use.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that the Building Official and Fire Marshall did review the two proposed uses and based on the preliminary information received, it did not appear that it would be required for this use but that it may possibly be necessary for the second proposed use.

Chair Levine asked if there were any additional comments or questions from the public in attendance.

Art Collinbach, 15940 Sodium Street, stated he currently drove to the Metro Gun Club in Blaine and he welcomed the proposed use to the City of Ramsey. He stated the range would draw a large number of people to Ramsey. It was his opinion the proposed use would assist in keeping Ramsey a safe community given the level of training that would be provided.

Russ Pawman, 17831 Vanadium Street, noted he was an avid outdoorsman and he was excited about the proposed use coming to the City of Ramsey. He explained he was a member of a gun range outside of the City. He thought the range would draw business into the City throughout the entire year.

Mike Bjorn, 6250 178<sup>th</sup> Lane, noted he shot at different ranges and would be pleased to see the proposed establishment move into the commercial area.

Chair Levine thanked the public for their comments this evening.

Development Services Manager Gladhill indicated staff would work with the applicant to frame a permitted use with a public forum for citizen dialogue to take place at a future meeting.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson reviewed the second proposal, which is for a metal/clothing recycling center/warehouse with a small retail component. He explained Triangle Recycling was an existing business operating in the City of Nowthen. The business recycles clothing through a network of clothing collection boxes strategically placed throughout the state. The applicant has expressed an interest in expanding the recycling program to accept electronics, small metals, mattresses and plastics, which would be implemented as Phase II of its operation. This process may be subject to permitting by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and possibly a conditional use permit through the City.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson indicated the proposed use most closely matches warehousing, which is an allowed use in both E-1 and E-2 Employment Districts, but is not allowed in the B-1 Business District. The applicant, upon understanding the current zoning, did state a small retail portion could be added, however, this would not be the primary use. In order for the use to be considered as proposed, either the B-1 Business District would have to be

amended to allow warehousing, either as a permitted, conditional or interim use, or the site would need to be rezoned to either E-1 or E-2 Employment District.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated concerns at this time were if the use were compatible with the surrounding uses along with the amount of truck traffic and potential outside storage. He requested the Commission discuss the matter in further detail and provide direction to staff.

Chair Levine expressed concern with outside storage in this area.

Bill Erhart, 4740 154<sup>th</sup> Lane, representative of Triangle Recycling, commented that the site had enough square footage to ensure that all storage would be conducted inside. He stated the traffic flow to this site would be no more than the grocery store and the proposed use would benefit the residential neighborhood as a recycling facility. He encouraged the Commission to consider the request to bring life back into this commercial area.

Commissioner Schiller asked how much truck traffic was anticipated to be flowing in and out of this site.

Jerry Bauer, 21226 Highway 47 in Zimmerman, indicated he had six box trucks, which would be leaving the site in the morning and returning in the evening. He noted the site would also have one semi-truck visit per week. This could increase over time as his business expands.

Commissioner Field questioned how many drop-off boxes were associated with Triangle Recycling at this time.

Mr. Bauer stated he had approximately 400 boxes throughout Minnesota that he was responsible for. This number would be increasing by another 100 boxes in the near future.

Development Services Manager Gladhill asked if any clothing containers would be stored outside.

Mr. Bauer explained he currently had some containers stored outside prior to being relocated. He stated this was very short-term until the units could be refurbished and replaced.

Commissioner VanScoy inquired how electronics and metal materials would be handled at this site. He asked if the box trucks would be stored onsite overnight.

Mr. Bauer stated these items would be sorted and stored indoors and then be brought to Schwartzman's. He then discussed how he proposed to have the rear of the building to be fenced to house the box trucks.

Commissioner VanScoy asked if the box trucks could be stored onsite overnight.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson indicated the storage of the trucks onsite could be seen as an accessory component. He stated buffering may be required to allow for the outdoor storage adjacent to the residential neighborhood.

Commissioner Bauer recommended the Commission consider this request carefully as he did not support a rezoning of this commercial property. He stated this area would continue to develop in the future and would require additional commercial development.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson commented another option that could be considered would be to consider an overlay district.

Development Services Manager Gladhill discussed that an overlay district would allow for the original zoning to remain in place and allow for an expansion of uses.

Joe Hague, Community Pride Bank in Ham Lake and property owner, stated his goal would be to fill the building. He indicated he had no retail opportunities for this area and he encouraged the Commission to increase the permitted uses for this area. He was not in favor of a temporary fix as this could limit future tenants.

Chair Levine supported the use of an overlay district for this property.

Development Services Manager Gladhill explained staff could review the warehousing component as a conditional use for this site with an overlay district.

Commissioner Field stated the applicant had a great business, however, this was the wrong location. He wanted to see uses at this site that would attract traffic to the area.

Commissioner Schiller agreed stating the existing building was becoming an eyesore and was in need of redevelopment.

Development Services Manager Gladhill commented the EDA was aware this retail area was in need of revitalization.

Mr. Erhart reiterated that the two proposals before the Commission this evening were mutually exclusive. He added that a great deal of retail had been moved to The COR and the City may have to reevaluate the needs at this site.

Chair Levine thanked the Commission, applicants and public for their input this evening.