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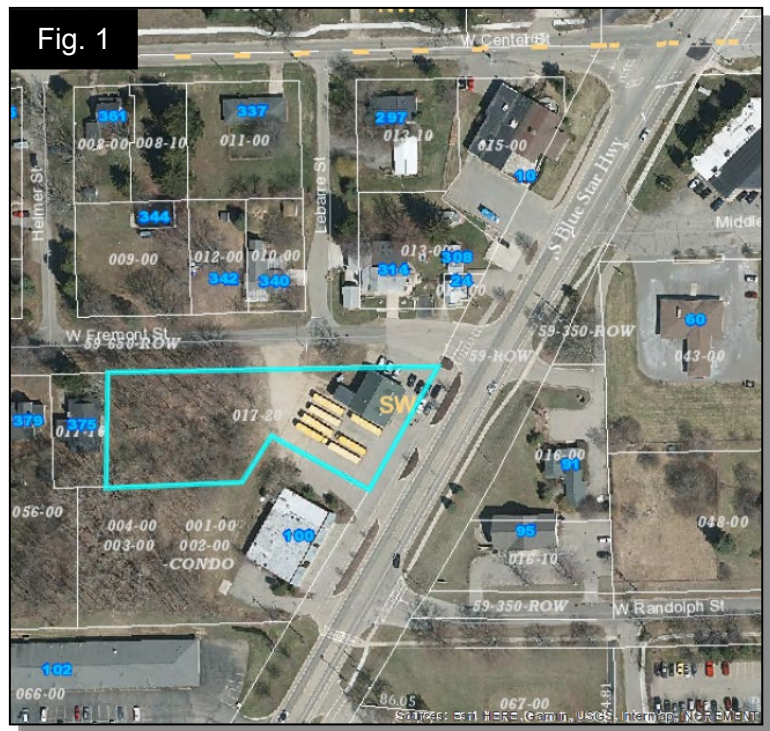
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MEMORANDUM

To: City of The Village of Douglas City Council
Date: May 9, 2023
From: Tricia Anderson, AICP
Andy Moore, AICP
RE: **Rezone Request from C-2, General Commercial to C-1, Village Center and R-5, Multiple Family Residential**

Mr. Tim Travis, Superintendent of Saugatuck Public Schools, has applied for the rezoning from C-2, General Commercial to C-1, Village Center and R-5, Multiple Family Residential and future land division of the parcel located at the southwest corner of Blue Star Highway and Fremont Street (PPN: 59-350-017-20). The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the City Council with our review comments and provide the written recommendation of the Planning Commission for the rezoning request pursuant to Article 28, Amendments, of the City of the Village of Douglas Zoning Ordinance.

Background. The subject parcel is owned by the Saugatuck Public School District and is currently zoned C-2, General Commercial. The property is currently used for school bus parking and storage on the eastern end of the parcel and the western end of the parcel is vacant and wooded. The applicant has expressed an interest in moving the bus lot to a more appropriate location sometime in the future and has also had discussions with a residential builder who is interested in purchasing the western end of the subject parcel and developing it with two single-family homes on two separate parcels. The survey demonstrating the proposed splits has been included in your packet.

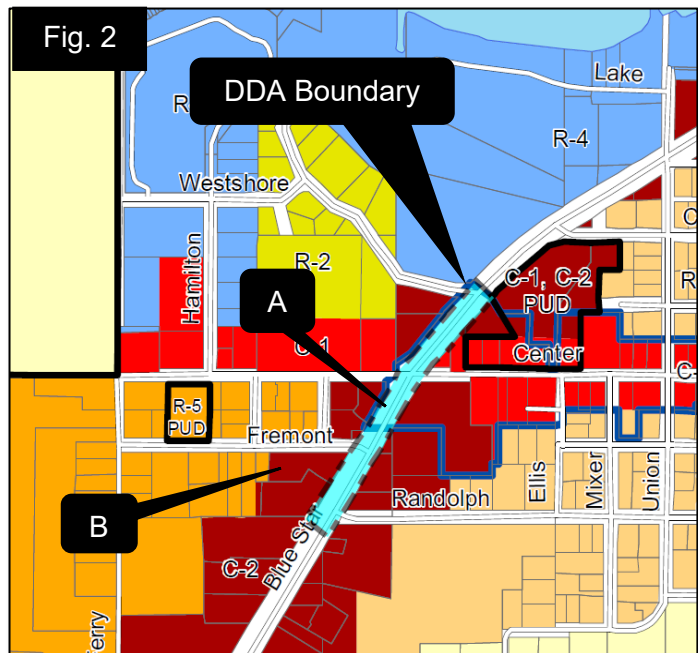


Planning Commission Recommendation: On April 20, 2023, the Planning Commission forwarded a favorable recommendation to the City Council for the approval of the rezoning request for the bus lot property in accordance with the survey provided by the applicant. As noted above, if the rezoning is approved, the applicant intends to split the property into 3 parcels total. The City Council will review the proposed splits concurrently with the second reading of the rezoning request. If the Council is inclined to offer a final approval for the rezoning at the second reading on June 5, 2023, the splits can be approved subject to the condition that they are not processed and sent to the County until after the zoning becomes effective (7 days following the publication of a summary of the rezoning in a newspaper of general circulation).

Review of Rezoning Request. Section 28.05 provides the required information that must be submitted by the petitioner. The Planning Commission provided their favorable recommendation to the City Council for the requested rezoning based on the consideration of the factors listed in Section 28.06, Planning Commission Recommendations. These factors are listed below, along with our remarks.

1. *In reviewing any application for an amendment to this Ordinance, the Planning Commission shall identify and evaluate all factors relevant to the application and shall report its findings in full along with its recommendations for disposition of the application, to the City Council within a reasonable period of time. The matters to be considered by the Planning Commission shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following:*
 - a. *What, if any, identifiable conditions related to the application have changed since the existing zoning district was established which justify the proposed amendment?*

Remarks: Blue Star Highway is a county road for the majority of its length. Areas near the interstate exits and entrances have historically been occupied by auto-centered uses, such as gas stations, automotive repair, fast-food establishments, hotels, etc. The zoning of the areas between the two interstate exits and entrances consists mostly of C-2, General Commercial. C-2 is a district that would allow more intense land uses (both by right and by special exception use), such as gas stations, car washes, office buildings, car and boat sales, etc. Conditions over time in the area near Blue Star Highway and Center



Street (including areas north to St. Peters St. and south to Randolph St., shown in Figure 2 as “A”) have proved to not be conducive to those auto-centered and more intense land uses. These areas are near Downtown Douglas, so the character has a downtown feel due largely to the close proximity to residential uses and the walkability of the area. Figure 2 provides the existing zoning of this area, with the subject parcel called out as “B”.

Additionally, when the zoning map was adopted and the Master Plan was updated in 2016, the community was not experiencing the same housing situation that it faces today. Because conditions have changed in terms of the need for housing in the City, a rezoning from C-2 to R-5 would be justifiable to create more opportunities for housing.

- b. What are the precedents and the possible effects of such precedents which might result from the approval or denial of the petition?*

Remarks: The precedent that may be set by approving the requested zoning district is a demonstration that smaller-scale uses are more desirable along this stretch of Blue Star Highway compared to uses permitted in the C-2 zoning district. This area serves as an important transition area to residential neighborhoods, so smaller-scale commercial is much more compatible.

In terms of the R-5 zoning request on the west end of the subject parcel, it would not appear that any precedents would be set, other than the City’s desire to create more opportunities for housing.

- c. What is the impact of the amendment on the ability of the City and other governmental agencies to provide adequate public services and facilities, and/or programs that might reasonably be required in the future if the proposed amendment is adopted?*

Remarks: The amendment is not anticipated to negatively impact the City’s ability to provide adequate public services to this parcel.

- d. Does the petitioned district change adversely affect environmental conditions, or the rights of a neighboring property owner?*

Remarks: Single-family residential are proposed for the R-5 parcels. This area is wooded and trees would need to be cleared in order to accommodate the homes. The use for the proposed C-1 parcel has not yet been identified. When/if an interested party purchases that lot, a proposed development will be evaluated by Planning Commission for site plan review and related processes to ensure ordinance requirements are being met.

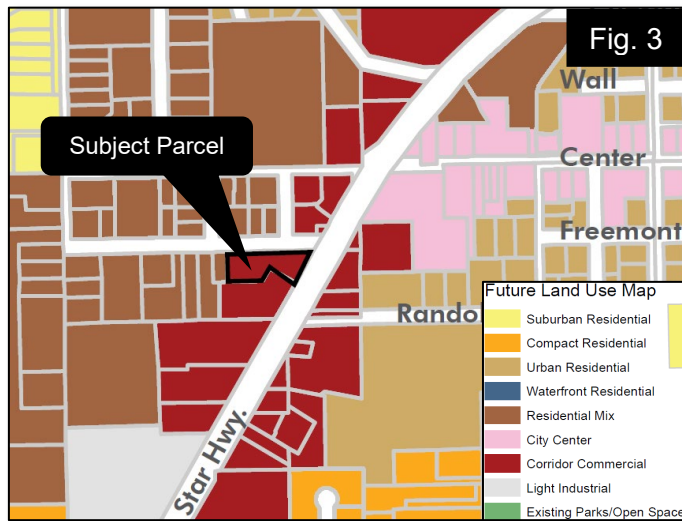
- e. *Is the class of uses permitted in the district appropriate for the location proposed to be rezoned?*

Remarks: Yes. The list of uses permitted by right and by special use permit are included in your packet for the R-5 and C-1 zoning districts. The C-1 zoning district allows for uses that are more compatible in scale and intensity to residential uses. Again, the area between St. Peters and Randolph are of a character that more closely resembles the downtown district than an auto-centric stretch of Blue Star Highway.

- f. *Does the petitioned district change generally comply with the Tri-Community Comprehensive Plan, or a subsequent document that guides land use and development decisions in the City of the Village of Douglas?*

Remarks:

- Proposed R-5 District: Yes. The Master Plan serves as a guide for decision-making surrounding land use. Goal #1 for housing and neighborhoods



relates to facilitating the development of a range of housing types to meet the needs of current and projected future populations. Adding additional opportunities for housing is one objective in meeting this goal. Goal #2 indicates that the City will diversify its housing stock to encourage more people to seek long-term, permanent residency within the city. One of the objectives in meeting this

goal would be to “facilitate infill housing through density standards and unit size allowances” The rezone of the west end of the subject parcel to R-5 opens up many housing options, each of which are compatible with the surrounding uses, which contain a mix of residential housing types.

- Proposed C-1 District: Yes. Again, with the Master Plan serving as a guide for land use decisions, a review of the zoning plan provides insight into compatible zoning districts for each future land use designation. The subject parcel has a future land use designation of Corridor Commercial, which is described as follows in Figure 4:

The zoning plan further indicates that the Corridor Commercial future land use designation would align with C-2 as a primary compatible zoning district OR C-1 as a potentially compatible zoning district. Potentially compatible zoning districts are likely to be a good fit in those areas that could be better served with land uses that are less intense. Although the Village Center district is primarily situated along Center Street, this shouldn't preclude the Planning Commission from approving a zoning district that more closely matches the desire of the Blue Star corridor in the stretch between St. Peters and Randolph.



- g. What is the ability of the property in question to be put to a reasonable economic use in the zoning district in which it is presently located?*

Remarks: The subject parcel could be developed and put to reasonable economic use in the current zoning district, however, the City has an opportunity to influence the size and scale of future development by approving the rezoning. The west end of the C-2 zoned subject parcel could be developed, as zoned, with a use that may not be as desirable in terms of compatibility with the surrounding residential to the north and west.

Additional Information. The following paragraphs were offered to the Planning Commission to take into additional consideration as they made their decision at the April 20, 2023 meeting.

As indicated earlier in this memorandum, the idea that C-1 should be limited to only Center Street should be carefully taken into consideration. Although the zoning map and future land use map appear to suggest that the City desires large scale commercial along the entire stretch of Blue Star Highway, we view the uniqueness of the short corridor between St. Peters and Randolph to be an area that should be developed similar to to the downtown area.

Many of the themes weaved into the Master Plan would be indicative of the unique, small-town character of Douglas, and that the desire is for that character to be preserved. The Master Plan also supports smaller scale development with walkability and connectivity to other corridors within the City. The Planning Commission may wish to consider some changes to the corridor shown in Figure 2 to better reflect the desire to keep commercial business on a smaller scale as it serves as somewhat of a transition to

the outlying stretches of Blue Star Highway. These areas are more appropriate for larger-scale commercial as it approaches entrances and exits to the interstate.

Recommendation. We are supportive of this request based on the findings noted in this memorandum and based on the Planning Commission's favorable recommendation to the City Council to approve the rezone of parcel 59-350-017-20 located on the southwest corner of Fremont and Blue Star Highway, from C-2, General Commercial to C-1, Village Center and R-5, Multiple Family Residential. Procedurally, if the City Council finds reason to deny the rezoning as proposed, it may be sent back to the Planning Commission for further consideration.

An ordinance to amend the zoning ordinance and map has been prepared for your consideration, should the Council be inclined to offer approval for the rezoning request at the second reading.

As always, please feel free to contact us with any questions or comments.