

# AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council



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## STAFF

Ryan Mounce, City Planner

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## SUBJECT

**Public Hearing and First Reading of Ordinance No. 028, 2025, Amending the Zoning Map of the City of Fort Collins, Classifying for Zoning Purposes the Property Included in the Heritage Annexation to the City of Fort Collins, and Approving Corresponding Changes to the Residential Neighborhood Sign District Map and the Lighting Context Area Map.**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to zone the property included in the Heritage Annexation into the Employment (E) zone district and place the property into the appropriate Non-residential Sign District and the LC1 Lighting Context Area.

*This item is a quasi-judicial matter and if it is considered on the discussion agenda it will be considered in accordance with the procedures described in Section 2(d) of the Council's Rules of Meeting Procedures adopted in Resolution 2024-148.*

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## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adoption of the Ordinance on First Reading.

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## BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

The requested zoning for this annexation is the Employment (E) zone district, which is in alignment with the City of Fort Collins Structure Plan and the East Mulberry Plan. The site encompasses a mix of developed and undeveloped land within a light industrial and employment business park. Residential neighborhoods exist to the north while undeveloped employment land can be found to the south. Existing employment, retail, and light industrial uses can be found to the east and west.

The nearby vicinity features a mix of both City and Larimer County zoning, as noted in the following table:

The surrounding zoning and land uses are as follows:

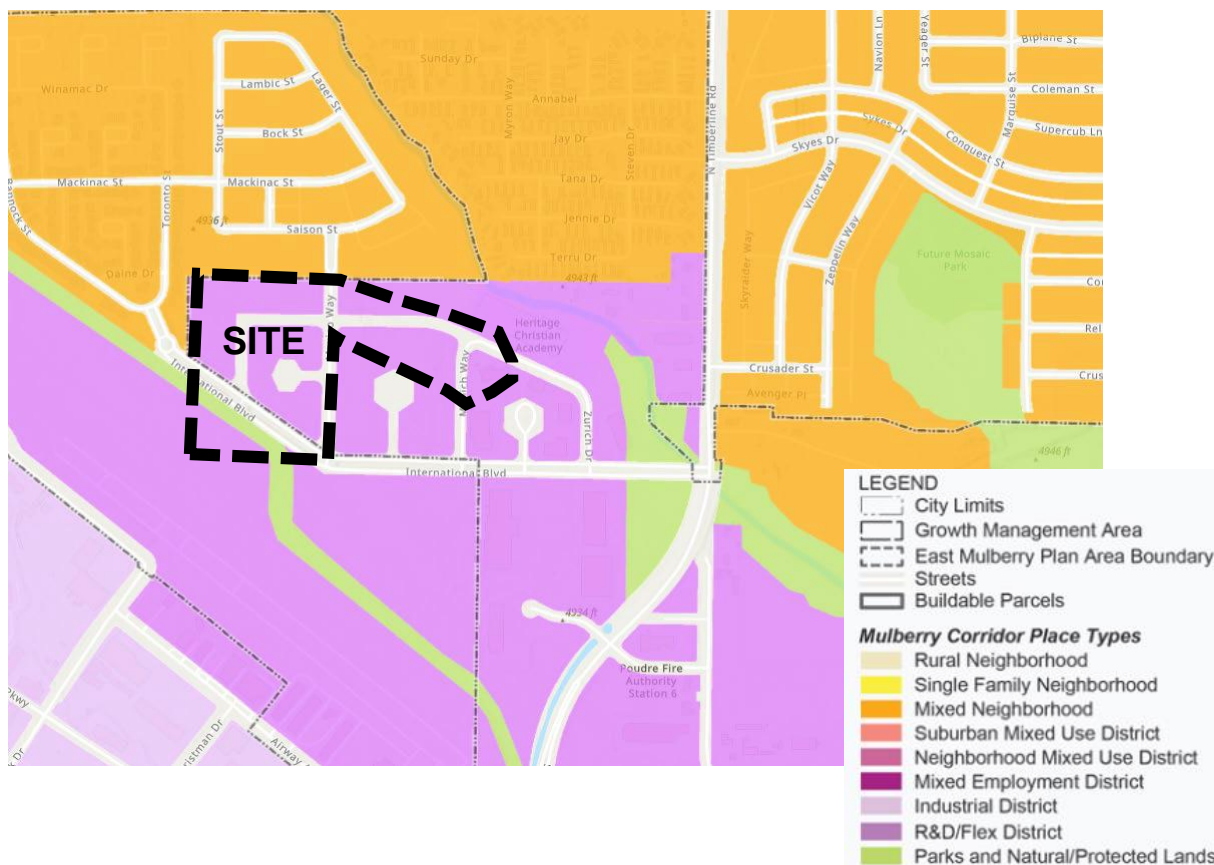
Direction	Zone District	Existing Land Use
N	Low Density Mixed-Use Neighborhood (LMN) and Larimer County Open (O)	Single Unit Dwellings, Single Unit Attached Dwellings & Manufactured Housing Community
S	Employment (E), Larimer County Industrial Light (IL)	Employment & Light Industrial Businesses; Undeveloped Land
E	Larimer County Industrial Light (IL)	Light Industrial Businesses
W	Larimer County Industrial Light (IL)	Retail & Light Industrial Businesses; Undeveloped Land

### City of Fort Collins Structure Plan

The Structure Plan Map found in City Plan provides the broadest land use guidance applicable to the site via Place Type designations. Place Types describe the general land-uses, densities, and transportation characteristics for an area to help guide potential zoning when properties are annexed into the City.

The Structure Plan Map indicates opportunity for the “Research & Development/Flex” (R&D/Flex) place type for the annexing site and surrounding properties to the east, west, and south. This designation is similar to existing land use patterns nearby which feature a mix of light industrial and employment businesses.

### Structure Plan Map



As described in City Plan, the land use characteristics of the R&D/Flex place type include:

*Principal Land Use Employment uses that include administrative, engineering, and/or scientific research, design or experimentation; offices; breweries; manufacturing; warehouses; wholesaling; and business incubator space.*

*Supporting Land Use Limited distribution and logistics, convenience retail, commercial services, outdoor storage and other uses related to the principal uses.*

Place types represent flexible guidance to inform zoning based on the history and surrounding context of a site within general zoning categories. This place type is categorized as one of the City's Employment Districts alongside Employment, Industrial, and Campus (CSU) Designations. While City Plan discusses the potential for a future specific R&D/Flex zone district, at present, the most analogous zone districts to this place type remain either the Employment (E) or Industrial (I) Zone Districts.

In City Plan, the R&D/Flex District is discussed as a hybrid between these two zone districts, permitting a wide range of employment uses alongside secondary or supporting land-uses with the ability to allow some characteristics of Industrial zoning, such as outdoor storage and service yards.

The only other area of the community that carries the same R&D/Flex place type designation is the Prospect Park Business/Industrial Park located southeast of Prospect Road and Timberline Road. This area also features a mix of both Employment (E) and Industrial (I) zoning, and a mix of light industrial, employment, and institutional uses, reinforcing the appropriateness for the requested Employment (E) zoning of the subject property.

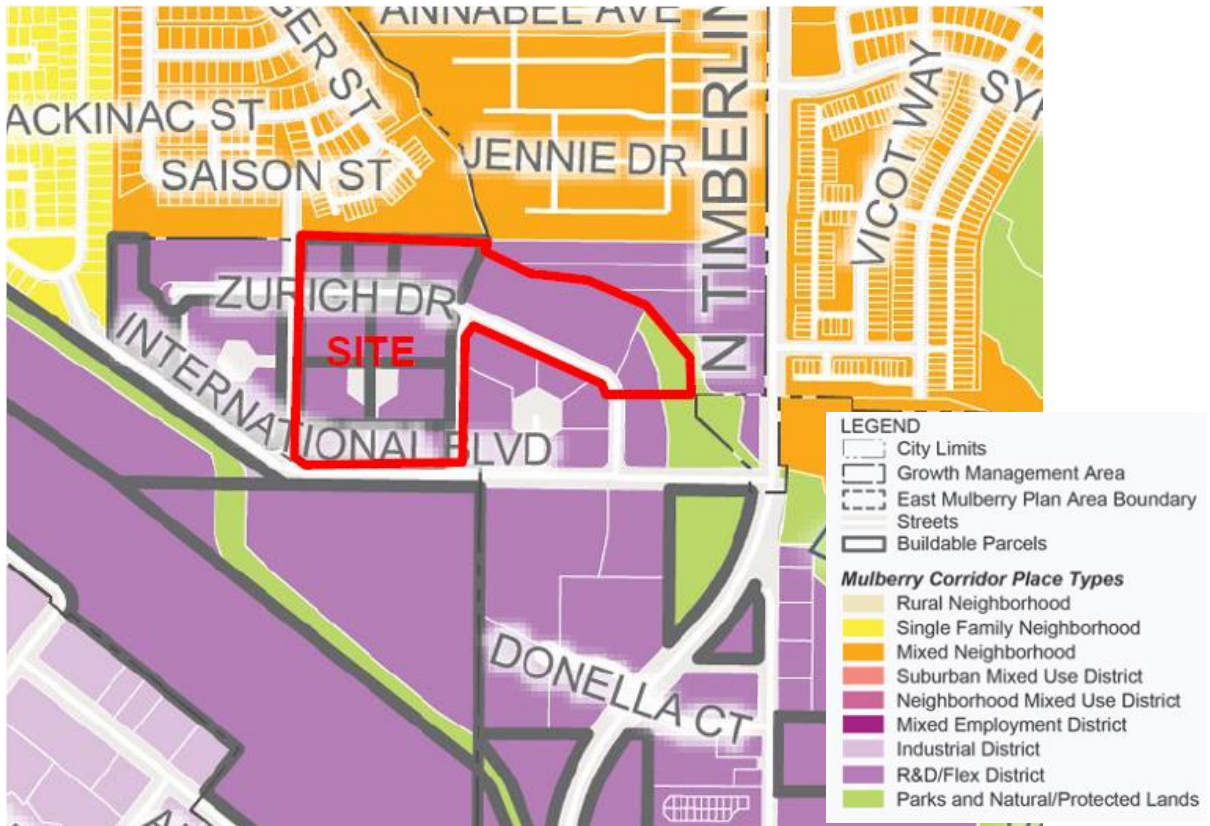
The vicinity to the Heritage annexation site also features a mix of employment office, light industrial/industrial flex, and retail businesses to the west, east, and south. Combined with a large area of existing Employment (E) zoning to the southwest, the overall context supports the proposed Employment (E) zoning. Staff also feels Employment (E) zoning represents the most compatible designation for the site over Industrial (I) given the proximity of residential neighborhoods abutting the site to the north and northeast.

In addition to the Structure Plan, City Plan also encourages the use of more specific guidance found in neighborhood and subarea plans. The site is located in the study area for the East Mulberry Plan, which provides similar land use guidance to City Plan for the R&D/Flex place type and associated Employment (E) zoning.

### **East Mulberry Plan**

The East Mulberry Plan was adopted in December 2023 and updated the original 2002 East Mulberry Corridor Plan. The update provides renewed land use and policy guidance for the Mulberry corridor, including the subject annexation property. The Plan's land use framework shifted from one based on zoning to place types to match the City Plan Structure Map, and the land use guidance illustrated below matches the current Structure Plan Map with guidance for the R&D/Flex place type.

## East Mulberry Plan Framework Map



Similar to the Structure Plan analysis above, the land use guidance provided by the East Mulberry Plan is consistent with the proposed Employment (E) zoning. The R&D/Flex place type designation and proposed Employment (E) zoning supports the goal and purpose statements for this area by providing opportunities for both primary employment and secondary, supporting land uses that can compatibility transition from the more industrial Airpark to the southwest of the site to the more residential areas north and northeast of the site.

The East Mulberry Plan describes the purpose of areas designated under the R&D/Flex designation as follows:

*The R&D Flex District is one of the most flexible place type designations and supports a wide range of light industrial, employment, and commercial/retail land uses. Application of the R&D place type is supportive of Plan goals to remain a viable place for business and industry and promote additional neighborhood services and retail. This is particularly relevant for large portions of the Transitional / Mixed-Use Character Area which forms a bridge between established industrial development and new residential neighborhoods. The flexibility and range of uses within this place type make it ideal to accommodate a variety of future functions and land uses serving the needs of industrial and residential users while applying more modern buffering and compatibility development standards.*

Based on the context of the site and its surroundings as well as guidance provided by the City Plan Structure Plan Map and the East Mulberry Plan, staff supports the proposed Employment (E) zoning.

### Sign District

Given the proposed Employment (E) zoning, staff recommends the property be placed in the Commercial/Industrial Sign District and not be included in the Residential Sign District.

## Lighting Context Area

On March 26, 2021, the City adopted new exterior lighting standards and established Lighting Context Areas that generally correspond to the City’s zone districts. The corresponding table identifies the general categorization between lighting context areas and zoning districts in the community.

Table 3.2.4-1 Lighting Context Area		
Lighting Context Area	Land Use	Corresponding Zone Districts
LC0	Natural Area/Conservation Easement	P-O-L (City Natural Areas)
LC1	Single Family/Multi-Family/Light Industrial/Employment/ Portions of Harmony District	P-O-L (City Parks); R-U-L; U-E, R-F; N-C-L; R-C; L-M-N; M-M-N; I; E; T
LC2	Commercial/Industrial/ Portions of Harmony District/High Density Residential	C-N; C-C; C-C-N; C-C-R; C-G; C-L; H-C; I-, R-D-R, D, H-M-N
LC3	Portions of Downtown, 24-Hour Emergency Medical Sites	D, M-M-N

Staff recommends Lighting Context area LC1 for the site, similar to other areas of the community zoned as Employment (E). Specifically, LC1 is defined as:

LC1 - Low ambient lighting. The vision of human residents and users is adapted to low light levels. Lighting may be used for safety and convenience, but it is not necessarily uniform or continuous. Typical locations include low and medium density residential areas, commercial or industrial areas with limited nighttime activity, and the developed areas in parks and other natural settings.

### CITY FINANCIAL IMPACTS

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None.

### BOARD / COMMISSION / COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

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The Planning and Zoning Commission recommended Council zone the Heritage Annexation into the Employment (E) zone district 7-0 at the Commission’s December 19, 2024, hearing. The Commission also recommends placing the site in the appropriate Non-Residential Sign District and the LC1 Lighting Context Area.

### PUBLIC OUTREACH

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A joint neighborhood meeting for the annexation and zoning and proposed Overall Development Plan for the site was held on September 5, 2024. All other notification requirements for the annexation as required by State and local law have been met.

A majority of questions and comments at the neighborhood meeting related to the ODP application, specifically traffic impacts associated with growth of the school and student drop-off/pick-up schedules.

## ATTACHMENTS

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1. Ordinance for Consideration
2. Vicinity Map
3. Annexation Narrative
4. Annexation Petition
5. Annexation Zoning Map
6. Structure Plan Map
7. East Mulberry Plan Framework Map
8. Existing Zoning Map
9. Existing Lighting Context Area Map
10. Draft Planning & Zoning Minutes – December 19, 2024, Hearing