

Administration

To: Plan Commission

From: Mason Becker, Manager of Economic Development and Strategic Initiatives

Date: May 14, 2025

Subject: Rezoning of City-owned land on Highway A/Milford St

Background

Several years ago, the City acquired nearly 170 acres of property located between the wastewater treatment facility and Highway A/Milford St. While much of the property to the east was planned to be retained as a conservation area, roughly 60 acres of land were identified as being buildable.

The City recently completed a certified survey map (CSM) to divide the property. In the past year, the City has also conducted due diligence on this agricultural land, including a Phase I & II Environmental Site Assessment and a Phase I Archeological Investigation. These steps found that there are no major concerns with the property being developed in the future.

The City's 2019 Comprehensive Plan has an identified goal of fostering and diversifying future industry development. It should be noted that this is currently the only major buildable piece of land owned by the City.

Through discussions with Thrive ED, and as discussed at a past Plan Commission meeting, Food and Beverage or Biohealth may be areas of opportunity for development of this property. While final determination on that and possible naming/branding of the property can occur in the future, staff feel this is an opportune time to rezone the property.

Currently, this parcel is zoned Planned Office and Institutional:

Description and purpose. This district is intended to permit high-quality office and institutional land uses at an intensity compatible with the overall community character of the City. A relatively low maximum floor area ratio (FAR) and significant areas of landscaping are required in this district to ensure that this effect is achieved. In order to ensure a minimum of disruption to residential development, no development within this district shall take direct access to a local residential street or a residential collector street.

Rationale: This district is used to provide for the permanent protection of an area for those who desire a high-quality office environment which maintains the attractiveness of the site and retains enough open land in its development to ensure that the community character is maintained as long as the PO District designation is retained, regardless of how much development occurs within that area.

This use seems unrealistic, given current economic trends, and it is unlikely the City will attract development of an office park or similar use at this time.

Staff propose to re-zone the property to Planned Industrial. Mayor Stocks has been briefed on this concept, and was comfortable with bringing this re-zoning request forward.

Planned Industrial:

Description and purpose. This district is intended to permit both large- and small-scale industrial and office development at an intensity that is consistent with the overall desired suburban community character of the community. Beyond a relatively high minimum green space ratio (GSR), the primary distinguishing feature of this district is that it is geared to indoor industrial activities not typically associated with high levels of noise, soot, odors and other potential nuisances for adjoining properties. In order to ensure a minimum of disruption to residential development, no development within this district shall take direct access to a local residential street or a residential collector street.

Rationale: This district is intended to provide a location for suburban-intensity light industrial land uses, such as assembly operations, storage and warehousing facilities, offices and light manufacturing, which are protected from potential nuisances associated with certain development permitted within the GI District. In addition, land uses shall comply with the minimum performance standards presented in Article XI.

This zoning would support the goal of job creation in the identified sectors mentioned above. Staff did not feel that Heavy Industrial would be appropriate, given increased housing development nearby at Rock River Ridge and Edge Field. This zoning is also compatible with the current Future Land Use- Planned Mixed Use.

Budget Goal

Fosters community growth by assessing opportunities, stakeholder input, environmental needs, and modern code and policy priorities

Financial Impact

Development of this City-owned land would bring the property back onto the tax rolls, create jobs, and generate economic growth in the community.

Recommendation

Staff recommends a positive recommendation of the rezoning to the Common Council.