

MEMORANDUM

To: City of Whitewater Plan and Architectural Review Commission

From: Allison Schwark, Zoning Administrator

Date: December 8, 2025

Re: Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Amendment

Summary of Request	
Requested Approvals:	Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Amendment
Location:	Bluff Rd, (A410100001, A410100002, /A410100003, /A503200001/A50320002)
Current Land Use:	Undeveloped
Proposed Land Use:	Single Family Homes
Current Zoning:	B-3, Highway Commercial and Light Industrial
Proposed Zoning:	R-1S, One-Family-Small lots Residence
Future Land Use, Comprehensive Plan:	Current: Highway Commercial Proposed: Single Family Residential

Staff Review

The applicant is requesting a Future Land Use Map Change from Highway Commercial to Single Family Residential. In correlation with this submittal the applicant has also presented a rezone request, and a preliminary plat for consideration.

This future land use designation is intended for single-family detached residential development, served by public sanitary sewer service. Small institutional uses such as parks, schools, and churches may also be built on lands mapped under this designation. Single-Family Residential - City areas are envisioned mainly in and around pre-existing single family areas. This category is also a key component of the Future Neighborhood future land use designation.



Policies and Programs: The following policies and programs are recommended for this future land use designation:

- When considering future rezoning requests, the existing City zoning districts most appropriate to implement this future land use designation include the R-1 Single-Family Residential District and the R1x District.
The proposed development is requesting this zoning designation for this development which is consistent with the comprehensive plan.
- Encourage new development in Single-Family Residential - City areas generally at densities of four to six homes per acre. Promote the construction of compact, smaller lot single-family uses.
The proposed Stonehaven development directly supports the Comprehensive Plan objective to encourage new development in Single-Family Residential-City areas at densities of four to six homes per acre. With 14 single-family homes planned the project falls within the recommended density range and uses the land efficiently while maintaining compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood.

In addition, the project advances the goal of promoting compact, smaller-lot single-family housing. The R-1S zoning district is specifically designed to accommodate modest lot sizes and a more compact development pattern. By transitioning the property from Highway Commercial to a small-lot residential district, the developer is able to provide attainable single-family homes that meet modern housing demands without altering the established residential character of East Bluff Road.

Overall, the development fulfills the intent of this policy by delivering appropriately scaled, compact single-family housing at the density level envisioned for Single-Family Residential–City areas.

- c. Minimize incompatible land uses (e.g., high traffic generators, noisy users) within or adjacent to Single Family Residential - City areas. Where such uses do occur in close proximity, encourage the use of buffers to mitigate the impacts such land uses could have on these residential neighborhoods.

The proposed rezoning from Highway Commercial to One-Family Residential–Small Lots helps minimize incompatible land uses adjacent to an established Single-Family Residential–City area. Commercial zoning allows for higher-intensity uses such as retail, service businesses, or auto-oriented activities that typically generate increased traffic, noise, and lighting. These characteristics can create conflicts with nearby homes and negatively affect neighborhood quality. By converting the parcels to residential use, the development eliminates the possibility of future high-traffic or noisy commercial operations on Bluff Road, thereby preventing land-use incompatibilities before they occur. Instead, the land will transition to the same low-intensity residential character already present to the south along East Bluff Road, resulting in a more cohesive and predictable development pattern.

Because the proposed use mirrors the surrounding single-family neighborhood, no buffering is needed, as the rezoning itself removes the potential for incompatible activity. This change strengthens the long-term stability of the existing residential area and ensures that future development will enhance rather than conflict with the neighborhood's character.

- d. Plan for interconnected street, sidewalk, trail and open space networks in new residential areas; between individual subdivisions; and between new neighborhoods, parks, the University, schools, the downtown, the Business Park, and the Technology Park.

By rezoning the parcels from commercial to residential, the development will be constructed to meet residential subdivision standards, which typically require pedestrian-friendly infrastructure such as sidewalks, internal street connections, and appropriate access points to the existing road network. Highway Commercial zoning does not require or encourage these circulation features, but a residential district does, allowing the site to integrate more naturally into the surrounding neighborhood fabric.

The project provides an opportunity to extend or connect existing sidewalks or pedestrian routes along Bluff Road and East Bluff Road. Converting the land to residential use allows the City to ensure that new homes contribute to a continuous pedestrian network that links this area with nearby neighborhoods and public amenities.

Overall, by transitioning the site away from commercial use and incorporating it into the City's residential network, the development supports the broader goal of building a safe, connected, and walkable community that links homes to parks,

schools, the University, and major activity centers.

- e. Promote diversity in housing architecture, design, formats, and colors. Promote housing designs in which garages are recessed from the front façade of the house, side-loaded, or detached and located behind the house. In any case, the garage should not dominate the front façade of the house.

The developer plans to offer several different floor plans, exterior layouts, and a variety of siding and trim color packages. This variety prevents the neighborhood from appearing repetitive or uniform and instead creates an attractive, visually appealing residential streetscape that enhances the overall character of the area.

Additionally, the following should be taken into consideration:

1. The extent to which the project provides a positive and lasting contribution to the character of the neighborhood.

The proposed development provides a significant and lasting contribution to the neighborhood by addressing a well-documented regional shortage of housing. Housing studies and presentations from Walworth, Jefferson, and Washington Counties have identified persistent unmet demand for high-quality, family-style development that support working households. This project responds directly to that need by introducing thoughtfully designed, modern housing that will enhance neighborhood vitality and strengthen the city's overall residential fabric.

2. A determination that such project is supported by adopted City plans covering the area, including the City's desire to preserve certain areas outside of the district for single-family housing that is not student-oriented.

The project is fully consistent with adopted City comprehensive and strategic housing plans that emphasize balanced growth, housing diversity, and preservation of established single-family areas. The change to single-family housing will further protect that preservation.

3. The extent to which the project improves the appearance and condition of the building and lot, and increases or at least maintains the value of the subject property and surrounding properties for current and possible future uses in accordance with City plans.

The currently vacant and underutilized parcel will be transformed into a productive, high-quality residential use consistent with City plans. The development will significantly enhance the site's appearance and contribute to neighborhood appeal through attractive, cohesive design. By introducing modern construction and improving the visual landscape, the project will maintain or increase property values in the area and reinforce the surrounding residential character.

The proposed project site has been undeveloped and has remained vacant for several years under the current zoning and future land designation classification. As the City of Whitewater continues to grow, change, and expand, it is common that future land use and zoning designations may need to be amended and changed to better fit the needs of a growing community. The City of Whitewater has struggled to find commercial development for these sites that would not negatively impact the existing adjacent residential neighborhoods.

The proposed project area is surrounded by a variety of uses and zoning designations, with technology park to the north, commercial to the west and east, and residential to the south and west. Single family housing would provide a good transition between the existing low impact commercial usage, future technology park development and the adjacent single-family developments. Additionally, the development promotes a walkable, connected community by situating residents near the Business Park, convenience stores such as Dollar General and Kwik Trip, and nearby city parks. These connections will encourage active transportation, reduce vehicle dependency, and support neighborhood engagement. Architectural design will incorporate durable materials, quality landscaping, and pedestrian-oriented site planning to ensure long-term visual appeal. Collectively, these features contribute to a resilient, attractive, and livable neighborhood environment.

Planner's Recommendations

- 1) Staff recommends that Plan Commission recommend **APPROVAL** to the City of Whitewater Common Council for the Comprehensive Plan Amendment to change the Future Land Use Map from Highway Commercial to Single Family Residential as it aligns with the goals, objectives, and policies set forth in the City of Whitewater Comprehensive Plan.