



# Planning Commission

Tuesday, January 27, 2026

6:30 PM

Elk River City Hall

## Regular Meeting & Work Session Agenda

- Regular meeting in Council Chambers
- Work Session meeting in Council Chambers immediately following regular meeting

---

### 1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

### 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

### 3. CONSIDER AGENDA

### 4. CONSIDER MINUTES

#### 4.1 DRAFT Minutes - December 16, 2025

### 5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

An opportunity for the public to express their opinions and raise questions pertaining to the agenda item. All comments become part of the official public record. For this reason, all comments must be made at the podium so they can be heard and recorded. Comments may also be provided in writing. There will not be deliberations, discussions, or answers to questions until the hearing is closed. It is important to be courteous and allow each presenter to comment before adding additional testimony.

#### 5.1 Conditional Use Permit: Private Kennel, Ruth Dutchak - 11799 191st Ave NW

#### 5.2 Interim Use Permit: Renewal for Multi-Family Residential Unit, Sogdiana LLC - 732 Vernon Ave NW

#### 5.3 Conditional Use Permit: Vehicle Sales, Highway 10 Auto Sales - 17323 US Highway 10 NW

#### 5.4 Ordinance Amendment and Conditional Use Permit: Educational Use, Good Shepherd High School - 630 Freeport Ave NW

### 6. GENERAL BUSINESS

Items in which the information is presented by city staff or consultants, then deliberation and action occur. General Business items are not opportunities to receive or provide public input. However, the presiding officer may, at its sole discretion, solicit public feedback.

### 7. COUNCIL LIAISON UPDATES

### 8. MOTION TO ADJOURN REGULAR MEETING

### 9. WORK SESSION

Work Sessions are less formal meetings to encourage dialog. Official action or votes are not typically taken. At the conclusion of a discussion, a simple consensus provides staff direction for execution of the item. This portion of the agenda is audio recorded but not video recorded or broadcast. Work Sessions are open to the public; however, visitors who wish to provide input must be invited by the presiding officer, assume a seat at the discussion table and provide their full name and address for the official record.

#### 9.1 Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Discussion

## 10. MOTION TO ADJOURN

### **The Elk River Vision**

*A welcoming community with revolutionary and spirited resourcefulness, exceptional service, and community engagement that encourages and inspires prosperity*





**Meeting of the Planning Commission  
Held at the Elk River City Hall  
Tuesday, December 16, 2025**

**Members Present:** Chair Perry Beise, Commissioner Eric Johnson, Commissioner Robert Rydberg, Commissioner Dennis Booth, Commissioner James Zahler, Commissioner Dornan Bland

**Members Absent:** Commissioner Anthony Kaba, Councilmember Jennifer Wagner

**Staff Present:** Community Development Director Zack Carlton, Senior Planner Chris Leeseberg, and Sr. Administrative Assistant/Recording Secretary Katie Porath

**Others Present:** City Attorney Richard Hansen

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**3. CONSIDER AGENDA**

**Moved by Commissioner Johnson and seconded by Commissioner Booth to approve the agenda. Motion carried 6-0.**

**4. CONSIDER MINUTES**

**Moved by Commissioner Johnson and seconded by Commissioner Booth to approve the following consent items as outlined in their respective staff reports. Motion carried 6-0.**

4.1 DRAFT Minutes - November 25, 2025

**5. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

5.1 Ordinance Amendment and Conditional Use Permit: Discount Tire, PID 75-00899-0010

Mr. Leeseberg presented the staff report.

Commissioner Johnson asked if other tire shops in Elk River have a condition to keep their doors closed as Condition 8 states, "Overhead doors must be kept closed while operating tools and equipment to minimize noise impacts on adjacent businesses." Mr. Leeseberg stated that many home occupations do, but commercial businesses do not. This particular site is closer to residential areas than

-----  
other tire shops.

Commissioner Bland asked if there was a ratio of garage bays to number of required parking stalls. Mr. Leeseberg stated it was based on square footage of the building as well as the Planning Unit Development (PUD) in the area.

Chair Beise opened the public hearing.

**Todd Mosher, R.A. Smith, Inc., on behalf of Discount Tire**, asked the Commission to remove Condition 8 and described the hardship that keeping the doors closed would have on the business. He stated that the highway located next to the business creates more noise than the air wrenches used in the business.

Commissioner Rydberg clarified that the bay doors were facing Aldi and not toward Highway 169.

Chair Beise asked if the CUP could include a condition restricting the hours that the doors can be open. Mr. Mosher stated Discount Tire hours of operation have never changed.

Chair Beise closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Johnson stated he was comfortable removing Condition 8 as other tire shops in the area do not have this condition.

**Moved by Commissioner Johnson and seconded by Commissioner Zahler to recommend approval of an Ordinance Amendment codifying the Planned Unit Development (PUD) standards for the Elk Ridge Center area and adding Motor Vehicle Specialty Service Stations as a Conditional Use in the district. Motion carried 6-0.**

**Moved by Commissioner Rydberg and seconded by Commissioner Johnson to recommend approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the proposed Discount Tire operation in Elk Ridge Center, subject to the following conditions, as amended:**

- 1. City Council approval of the associated ordinance amendment (OA 25-10) and plat (P 25-26).**
- 2. Staff approval of all site, engineering, landscaping, and utility plans.**
- 3. The use of hazardous materials such as lubricants, oils, chemicals, and solvents must be handled in accordance with state standards.**
- 4. The outdoor storage of tires, new deliveries or used, is prohibited. All tires must be stored within the building and not visible from the exterior.**
- 5. All four sides of the building must meet the PUD design standards.**
- 6. The shared parking with the property to the south must be maintained and access between lots shall not be impeded.**
- 7. The applicant must provide evidence of easements which provide access between the lot and a public street.**

**Motion carried 6-0.**

5.2 Ordinance Amendment: Reasonable Accommodation Appeal Process, City of Elk River

-----  
Mr. Leeseberg presented the staff report.

Commissioner Johnson asked if an applicant was required to disclose private Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) data.

**City Attorney Richard Hansen, Campbell Knutson**, gave some additional information on the proposed ordinance. He stated that a request for accommodation would need to meet certain standards including:

- Is it a qualifying disability?
- Is it necessary?
- Is it reasonable?

Commissioner Johnson had concerns that staff changes could allow for someone with more leniency to approve projects at their own discretion.

Commissioner Bland questioned cases where a doctors note could provide a low level of evidence. If staff approves applications, they are neither appointed nor elected and, therefore, have no incentive not to take the path of least resistance. Staff may become burdened with these cases and approval should be the role of the Commission.

Mr. Leeseberg stated that staff takes on implementation of many other ordinances.

Commissioner Johnson highly encouraged staff to work with the City Attorney to establish qualified disability as each type of disability presented unique circumstances.

City Attorney Hansen agreed that reasonable accommodation requests would be considered on a case-by-case basis but having the ordinance would provide a "roadmap" to make determinations. He added that, while many of the requests would be planning-related items, some reasonable accommodation requests could be for different city departments.

Commissioner Johnson suggested modifying the proposed ordinance language to require attorney review.

Commissioner Bland reiterated that he believed the proposed language would put an undue burden on staff to make sure applicants met the standards.

City Attorney Hansen commented that staff can change but commission members can also change.

Mr. Leeseberg assured the commission that staff was more comfortable asking for attorney assistance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) decisions. He stated the Commission did not have to make a recommendation on the proposed ordinance at this meeting and could continue discussion at a future meeting.

City Attorney Hansen reiterated that the Commission recommendation would next go to the City Council for approval.

-----  
**Moved by Commissioner Johnson to recommend approval of the Ordinance Amendment creating an appeal process for reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, adding language to paragraph 3 "the Community Development Director and the City Administrator in consultation with the City Attorney".**

Mr. Leeseberg asked if the wording could be modified to include "or designee" and remove Community Development Director.

**Moved by Commissioner Johnson and seconded by Commissioner Booth to recommend approval of the Ordinance Amendment creating an appeal process for reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, adding language to paragraph 3 "the City Administrator or designee in conjunction with City Attorney". Motion carried 5-1. Commissioner Zahler opposed.**

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

There was no general business.

7. COUNCIL LIAISON UPDATES

Mr. Leeseberg gave an update on Council actions from the December 15, 2025 City Council meeting including approval of the Northstar Trucking Conditional Use Permit, with an extension to June 2026, and the Variance for a water-oriented structure.

Commissioner Booth requested that the Commission review land use.

Mr. Leeseberg added that the Variance for an apartment building was denied at the City Council meeting and the Sherburne County billboard request was approved.

8. MOTION TO ADJOURN REGULAR MEETING

**Moved by Commissioner Johnson and seconded by Commissioner Bland to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 6-0.**

The regular meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m. Chair Beise called the work session to order at 7:18 p.m.

9. WORK SESSION

9.1 Concept Review: Mille Lacs Motorsports II, Inc., PID 75-00014-1200

Mr. Leeseberg presented the staff report.

Commissioner Johnson asked why the applicant wanted to raise the four billboards by five feet.

**Tom Dehn, applicant, owner of Power Lodge Ramsey**, explained that he was considering purchasing the site. He did not want any of the billboards but, if they needed to remain, he would need them to be taller so they did not block his proposed project.

Commissioner Johnson agreed that billboards would block any business built behind it on that site. He

asked if the billboards could be removed or only keep the billboards at the two corners of the lot to avoid blocking a building.

Mr. Leeseberg stated that current city standards allow either a billboard or a building on a property.

Commissioner Rydberg asked if Franklin Outdoor Advertising, the billboard company, owned the property that the billboards sat on. Mr. Leeseberg stated he didn't know about the agreement between Franklin and the Specht property.

Commissioner Rydberg clarified that Mr. Dehn had not yet purchased the property.

Mr. Leeseberg stated that one option could be to rezone the property to a PUD with a special rule to allow billboards and buildings on the same property.

Chair Beise felt the Commission needed more information. Commissioner Rydberg suggested that Mr. Dehn negotiate with the seller of the property to remove the billboards. Commissioner Johnson suggested keeping only the billboards at the ends of the property. Commissioner Bland was not in favor of any billboards as that did not meet the intent of the rule.

The Commission was not in favor of allowing both billboards and buildings on the same site and requested additional information on the ownership and technicalities, including potentially subdividing the property. The project may also go to the council for concept review.

10. MOTION TO ADJOURN

**Moved by Commissioner Johnson and seconded by Commissioner Booth to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 6-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Katie Porath.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Perry Beise, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jolene Richter, City Clerk



# Request for Action

**To**  
Planning Commission

**Item Number**  
5.1

**Meeting Date**  
January 27, 2026

**Prepared By**  
Chris Leeseberg, Senior Planner

**Item Description**  
Conditional Use Permit: Private Kennel, Ruth Dutchak - 11799 191st Ave NW

**Reviewed by**  
Zack Carlton

## Action Requested

Recommend, by motion, approval of a Conditional Use Permit with the following conditions to satisfy the standards set forth in Section 30-654:

1. The Conditional Use Permit is for a maximum of 5 dogs over 20 pounds each (10 Animal Units).
2. All animals shall be properly licensed and maintained in accordance with city regulations.
3. No more than two (2) animals per supervisor shall be allowed outside of the fenced area.
4. The removal of animal waste shall comply with Section 10-5.
5. Outdoor kennel structures or runs are not permitted.
6. No dog designated as dangerous or potentially dangerous are allowed to be kept on site, and the keeping of such dog shall be grounds for revocation of the permit.
7. The existing fence shall be maintained in good working condition. Supplemental containment measures may be used as needed.
8. Failure to comply with the conditions of approval or applicable city code requirements may result in enforcement action, including revocation of the Conditional Use Permit.

## Background/Discussion

The applicant is requesting approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow a private kennel consisting of five dogs, which equates to ten animal units under city codes. Dogs over 20 pounds are counted as two animal units. The dogs consist of one Corgi (approximately 30 pounds), two German Shepherd crosses (approximately 55 pounds each), and two Standard Poodles (approximately 50 pounds each).

The applicant and their daughter previously lived separately, but combined households when they purchased the subject property, resulting in a total of five dogs. The dogs are primarily housed indoors, and there are no outdoor kennel structures on the property. The rear yard is fully enclosed with chain-link fencing. One dog that has previously escaped the fenced area is currently secured and undergoing training with an electronic containment system. All dogs are spayed or neutered.

One complaint has been received regarding a dog entering a neighboring yard. Since that time, additional containment measures have been implemented. A barking complaint has also been addressed by use of a bark

## The Elk River Vision

*A welcoming community with revolutionary and spirited resourcefulness, exceptional service, and community engagement that encourages and inspires prosperity*



collar when the dog is outdoors.

## **Applicable Regulations**

The issuance of a Conditional Use Permit can be ordered only if the use at the proposed location:

*1. Will not endanger, injure or detrimentally affect the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity or the public health, safety, morals, comfort, convenience or general welfare of the neighborhood or the city.*

The proposed use will not endanger, injure, or detrimentally affect neighboring properties or the general welfare of the neighborhood. The dogs are primarily kept indoors, no outdoor kennel structures are proposed, and the property is fenced. Corrective actions have been taken in response to past complaints, including improved containment and noise mitigation measures. With these safeguards in place, the use is not anticipated to adversely impact surrounding properties.

With the proposed conditions, this standard can be met.

*2. Will be consistent with the comprehensive plan.*

The property is zoned for Traditional Single Family Residential and is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Staff do not see a need to impose specific conditions to satisfy this standard.

*3. Will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding vacant property.*

As there are no vacant properties in the area, the approval of the CUP will not impede the normal and orderly development of surrounding vacant properties.

Staff do not see a need to impose specific conditions to satisfy this standard.

*4. Will be served adequately by and will not adversely affect essential public facilities and services including streets, police and fire protection, drainage, refuse disposal, water and sewer systems, parks and schools; and will not, in particular, create traffic congestion or interference with traffic on adjacent and neighboring public thoroughfares.*

The property is adequately served by existing public facilities and services, including streets, police and fire protection, refuse disposal, water, and sewer services. The use will not generate additional traffic or create congestion on adjacent public streets. No adverse impacts to parks, schools, or other public facilities are anticipated.

Staff do not see a need to impose specific conditions to satisfy this standard.

*5. Will not involve uses, activities, processes, materials, equipment and conditions of operation that will be detrimental to any persons or property because of excessive traffic, noise, smoke, fumes, glare, odors, dust or vibrations.*

Except for possible odors from dog waste, the proposed use will not involve activities or conditions that are detrimental to persons or property due to excessive noise, odors, or other nuisances. Measures have been implemented to address barking concerns, and the dogs are primarily kept indoors. No smoke, fumes, glare, dust, vibrations, or similar impacts are associated with the use.

With the proposed conditions, specifically #4, this standard can be met.

*6. Will not result in the destruction, loss or damage of a natural, scenic or historic feature of major importance.*

The proposed use will not result in the destruction, loss, or damage of any natural, scenic, or historic features of major importance. No site disturbance or structural changes are proposed.

Staff do not see a need to impose specific conditions to satisfy this standard.

7. Will fully comply with all other requirements of this Code, including any applicable requirements and Standards for the issuance of a license or permit to establish and operate the proposed use in the city.

The proposed use complies with all applicable requirements of the City Code, including standards for the issuance of a Conditional Use Permit and any applicable licensing or operational requirements. Continued compliance with animal control regulations and any conditions imposed with approval will be required.

Based on the findings above, the request for a private kennel consisting of ten animal units (five dogs) meets the applicable standards for a CUP. The proposed use appears to be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and can operate without adverse impacts when maintained in compliance with city regulations and any conditions of approval.

**Financial Impact**

None.

**Mission/Policy/Goal**

Ethical, efficient, and responsible.

**Attachments**

1. CU 25-14 Location Map
2. Narrative
3. Site Photo



# Project Location Map

Ruth Dutchak

Conditional Use Permit

Case No: CU 25-14



## Narrative

We have 5 dogs because I had 2 and my daughter had 3. When we each sold our houses and bought one together we combined our dogs and ended up with 5.


We have 1 corgi that is about 30 pounds; 2 German Shepherd crosses that are about 55 pounds and 2 Standard Poodles that are about 50 pounds each.

The dog scare in the house most of the time. There are no physical kennels outside.

The entire back yard is fenced with chain link fencing. In addition, our one escape artist (one of the Shepherd crosses) is currently being trained for a Halo electronic containment system.

All of the dogs are spayed or neutered.

There was one complaint filed about one dog escaping into the neighbors yard. Since that time he has been tied up and as stated earlier is being trained for a Halo electronic containment system as he gets under the existing fence. A barking complaint is being dealt with by the offender wearing a bark collar whenever he is outside.



115 191ST  
AVE NW

11799 191ST  
AVE NW

11783 191ST  
AVE NW



# Request for Action

**To**  
Planning Commission

**Item Number**  
5.2

**Meeting Date**  
January 27, 2026

**Prepared By**  
Chris Leeseberg, Senior Planner

**Item Description**  
Interim Use Permit: Renewal for Multi-Family Residential Unit, Sogdiana LLC - 732 Vernon Ave NW

**Reviewed by**  
Zack Carlton

## Action Requested

Recommend, by motion, approval of the Interim Use Permit with the following conditions:

1. The Interim Use Permit shall terminate February 17, 2029, or when the property changes ownership, whichever occurs first.
2. The building shall be inspected by the city's Building Official and Fire Marshal to verify compliance with all building and fire codes.
3. The Interim Use Permit will be recorded against the property to put any future buyers on notice that the Interim Use Permit will not run with property.
4. The structure shall be returned to a single-family home prior to sale or when the Interim Use Permit terminates.
5. The applicant shall submit a deposit in the amount of \$5,000 to ensure compliance with the Interim Use Permit conditions.
6. The applicant shall provide documentation that each tenant received a letter indicating the Interim Use Permit will expire on February 17, 2029, and the structure will be converted back to a single-family residential district.
7. No additional Interim Use Permits will be granted for a similar use on this property beyond February 17, 2029.

## Background/Discussion

The property is zoned RI-c single-family residential where multi-family residential structures are not a listed as an allowed use. The City Council approved an Interim Use Permit (IUP) for this property on March 16, 2020, and again on January 17, 2023, for a multi-family residential use, allowing the use in a single-family zoning district.

The structure was built in 1976 as a single-family home in a single-family district but has been converted to a three-unit multi-family structure for some time. The applicant is requesting, for a second time, an extension to their IUP to continue utilizing the single-family home as a three-unit multiple family building. The request is for another period of 3 years (36 months) or until he no longer owns the property, whichever occurs first.

### The Elk River Vision

*A welcoming community with revolutionary and spirited resourcefulness, exceptional service, and community engagement that encourages and inspires prosperity*



At their January 17, 2023, meeting, the council questioned how many years the IUP will be reapproved. With this application, it would be the third round of a three-year approval, a second extension. The minutes from the previous extension request for the Planning Commission and City Council are attached. If the commission is concerned with the length of the request, they can recommend a shorter duration of the IUP. Staff have included a recommendation for this application to be the last one granted for this use on this property.

### **Applicable Regulations**

Before the city council may authorize an interim use, it must make the following findings:

- 1. The period of time for which the interim use permit is to be granted will terminate before any adverse impacts are felt upon adjacent properties.*

The proposal is in a fully developed neighborhood of single-family homes. The city is not aware of any concerns or issues that have occurred since the original IUP was granted and through the first extension.

- 2. There is adequate assurance that the property will be left in suitable condition after the use is terminated.*

With the condition of the structure being returned to a single-family home prior to sale or when the IUP terminates, the use will be left in a condition suitable for a single-family home.

- 3. The use is similar to uses allowed in the zoning district in which the property is located.*

Single-family residential uses are allowed in the single-family zoning district. The proposed IUP, while multiple family, is a residential use.

- 4. The date or event that will terminate the use can be identified with certainty.*

The applicant is requesting the IUP terminate at 3 years, or until he no longer owns the property, whichever occurs first. This does not preclude the applicant from asking for an extension in the future or another owner requesting a new IUP. In this situation, the IUP approach is deflecting the non-conforming use onto someone else in the future. With the condition of converting it to a single-family structure, the termination of use may be identified with certainty.

- 5. Authorizing the use will not impose additional costs on the public if it is necessary for the public to take the property in the future.*

The use should not impose additional costs with the recommended deposit.

- 6. The applicant and user agree to all conditions that the city council deems appropriate for authorization of the interim use.*

This will be determined at the City Council meeting.

- 7. The applicant provides assurances deemed adequate by the city council that the use will terminate as provided in the interim use permit. The city council may require the applicant to deposit a cash amount with the city, or provide some other form of security, to ensure compliance with this criteria.*

Again, the applicant indicates the IUP will terminate after 3 years or until he no longer owns the property, whichever occurs first. With possible extensions or new owners, there is no certainty the use will be terminated. If the city requires the conversion to a single-family structure and secures an appropriate deposit to ensure compliance with the conditions the use can be terminated as provided in the interim use permit.

8. *Authorization of the interim use will not result in adverse effects on the public health, safety, or welfare.*

Since the approval of the original IUP and through the first extension, there has not been any record of adverse effects with the property.

9. *The proposed interim use is consistent with the City of Elk River Comprehensive Plan and conforms to the city's zoning regulations.*

Residential uses are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and while a multi-family use is not allowed in the zoning district, it is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

**Financial Impact**

None.

**Mission/Policy/Goal**

Ethical, efficient, and responsible.

**Attachments**

1. IU 25-08 Location Map
2. Narrative
3. Site Photo



# Project Location Map

Sogdiana LLC

Interim Use Permit

Case No: IU 25-08



## Narrative

RE: Renewal / Extension Request for Interim Use Permit – Case No. IU 20-01 Property Address: 732 Vernon Ave NW, Elk River, MN Dear Planning Department, I am submitting this request for renewal or extension of the approved Interim Use Permit (Case No. IU 20-01) for an additional term. Since March 2020, the property located at 732 Vernon Ave NW has been used as a multi-family dwelling under the current permit. Most of the tenants have resided at this location since the original approval. Any disruption to the current use may cause undue hardship to these residents and their families. Throughout our ownership and during the active permit period, the property has been maintained in full compliance with all applicable city codes and regulations. We are pleased to report minimal to no police activity and no incidents that would negatively impact the surrounding neighborhood. The property is consistently maintained by our management team, with assistance from responsible tenants who take pride in their homes and the community. We enforce strict lease provisions and conduct regular inspections to ensure compliance with all occupancy and property maintenance standards. Our tenants are cooperative, respectful, and contribute to maintaining the property's condition and curb appeal. These collective efforts help preserve neighborhood character and property values. We respectfully request that the City consider extending the current Interim Use Permit for an additional term, allowing continued stable occupancy under the same responsible management and compliance standards.

1710 7TH  
ST NW

1719 8TH  
ST NW

732 VERNON  
AVE NW

1716 7TH  
ST NW

1726 7TH  
ST NW



# Request for Action

**To**  
Planning Commission

**Item Number**  
5.3

**Meeting Date**  
January 27, 2026

**Prepared By**  
Chris Leeseberg, Senior Planner

**Item Description**  
Conditional Use Permit: Vehicle Sales, Highway 10  
Auto Sales - 17323 US Highway 10 NW

**Reviewed by**  
Zack Carlton

## Action Requested

Recommend, by motion, approval of a Conditional Use Permit with the following conditions to satisfy the standards set forth in Section 30-654:

1. The Conditional Use Permit shall not be recorded until all conditions have been completed.
2. The applicant and/or property owner must apply for all required commercial building, electrical, plumbing, and/or mechanical permits before any associated activities can occur.
3. The building shall be inspected by the city's Building Official and Fire Marshal to verify compliance with all building and fire codes.
4. The number of motor vehicle sales dealers shall be limited to one (1).
5. An amendment to this Conditional Use Permit will be required for additional dealers.
6. A minimum of 8 off-street parking stalls shall be maintained on-site and always remain available for customer and employee use.
7. No outdoor storage of vehicles not for sale (except employees and customers), parts, equipment, or materials is permitted.
8. No motor vehicle repairs or body work can occur.
9. The applicant and/or property owner shall ensure that any vehicle stored outside does not leak fuels or other hazardous materials onto the ground.
10. All regulations related to storage, disposal, and spill control for automobile fluids need to be followed.

## Background/Discussion

The applicant is requesting approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to conduct used motor vehicle sales and related activities within an existing commercial building and associated parking lot. The proposed use will occupy approximately 216 square feet of lobby and office space within the existing structure. No expansion of the building or site improvements are proposed.

The business will operate Monday through Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. The applicant has stated that there will be no outdoor storage, other than for sale vehicles, associated with the use.

The property contains 30 existing off-street parking stalls, of which 13 stalls are proposed to be utilized. Parking requirements for auto sales and similar uses require one parking space per 500 square feet of floor

### The Elk River Vision

*A welcoming community with revolutionary and spirited resourcefulness, exceptional service, and community engagement that encourages and inspires prosperity*



area, as well as one parking space per 5,000 square feet of land used for sales and display. The state also requires display area for a minimum of 5 vehicles per dealer.

Based on 216 square feet of interior space (1 stall) and approximately 6,000 square feet of outdoor display area (2 stalls), and the state requirements (5 stalls) the required parking is satisfied by the existing on-site parking supply and the 13 proposed stalls.

### **Applicable Regulations**

The issuance of a Conditional Use Permit can be ordered only if the use at the proposed location:

1. *Will not endanger, injure or detrimentally affect the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity or the public health, safety, morals, comfort, convenience or general welfare of the neighborhood or the city.*

The business will operate entirely within an existing commercial structure. No outdoor storage or repair activities are proposed. Hours of operation are reasonable and consistent with other commercial uses in the area. The proposed use will not endanger, injure, or detrimentally affect the use and enjoyment of nearby properties or the public health, safety, morals, comfort, convenience, or general welfare of the neighborhood or the city.

Staff do not see a need to impose specific conditions to satisfy this standard.

2. *Will be consistent with the comprehensive plan.*

The property is guided as Highway Business, which primarily consists of a mix of auto-oriented retail and service businesses, restaurants, and community- and regional-scale shopping centers. Highway business uses are located along Highway 169 and Highway 10 and have high visibility from these corridors. The use is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Staff do not see a need to impose specific conditions to satisfy this standard.

3. *Will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding vacant property.*

As there are no vacant properties in the area, the site is already developed, and the proposed use does not require changes that would limit future development options for adjacent parcels, the proposed use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding vacant or developed properties.

Staff do not see a need to impose specific conditions to satisfy this standard.

4. *Will be served adequately by and will not adversely affect essential public facilities and services including streets, police and fire protection, drainage, refuse disposal, water and sewer systems, parks and schools; and will not, in particular, create traffic congestion or interference with traffic on adjacent and neighboring public thoroughfares.*

The proposed use is low-intensity and will not generate excessive traffic. Adequate on-site parking is provided, and traffic access will not cause congestion or interfere with adjacent public roadways. The site is adequately served by existing public facilities and services, including streets, police and fire protection, drainage, refuse disposal, water, and sanitary sewer systems.

Staff do not see a need to impose specific conditions to satisfy this standard.

5. *Will not involve uses, activities, processes, materials, equipment and conditions of operation that will be detrimental to any persons or property because of excessive traffic, noise, smoke, fumes, glare, odors, dust or vibrations.*

The proposed use will not involve activities, materials, or conditions of operation that would be detrimental to persons or property due to excessive traffic, noise, smoke, fumes, glare, odors, dust, or vibrations. All sales activities will be conducted during normal business hours, and no mechanical or cosmetic repair work is proposed.

Staff do not see a need to impose specific conditions to satisfy this standard.

6. *Will not result in the destruction, loss or damage of a natural, scenic or historic feature of major importance.*

No site work is being proposed. The proposal will not result in the destruction, loss, or damage of any natural, scenic, or historic feature of major importance, as no site alterations or land disturbance are proposed.

Staff do not see a need to impose specific conditions to satisfy this standard.

7. *Will fully comply with all other requirements of this Code, including any applicable requirements and Standards for the issuance of a license or permit to establish and operate the proposed use in the city.*

The proposed use will comply with all applicable requirements of the City Code, including zoning regulations and licensing requirements, subject to compliance with the conditions of approval outlined below.

Staff have recommended several conditions to ensure compliance with city code requirements.

### **Financial Impact**

None.

### **Mission/Policy/Goal**

Support the growth and development of the community.

### **Attachments**

1. CU 25-17 Location Map
2. Site Plan



# Project Location Map

Highway 10 Auto Sales

Conditional Use Permit

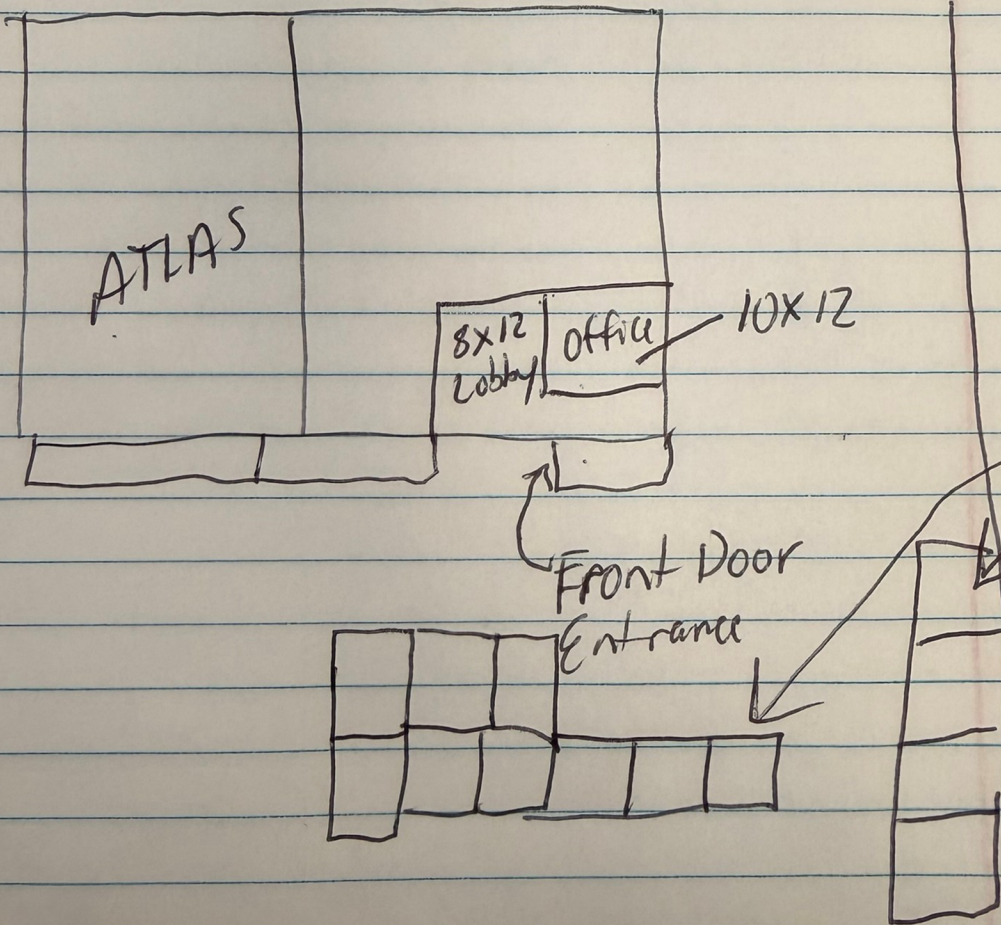
Case No: CU 25-17

# SITE PLAN

17323 HWY 10 EIK RIVER, MN 55330

overflow parking lot  
IN BACK

employee/parking



Cars display  
For SALE

Front Door  
Entrance

Entrance  
Road

HWY 10



# Request for Action

**To**  
Planning Commission

**Item Number**  
5.4

**Meeting Date**  
January 27, 2026

**Prepared By**  
Zack Carlton, Community Development Director

**Item Description**  
Ordinance Amendment and Conditional Use Permit:  
Educational Use, Good Shepherd High School - 630  
Freeport Ave NW

**Reviewed by**  
Chris Leeseberg

### Action Requested

Recommend, by motion, denial of the proposed ordinance amendment to add Educational Institutions as an allowed use in the MU-ERP zoning district as the use is not consistent with the goals and intended purpose of a commercial area.

Recommend, by motion, denial of a Conditional Use Permit for an Educational Institution as it is not an allowed use in the MU-ERP zoning district.

### Background/Discussion

The applicant, Good Shepherd Lutheran High School, has requested adoption of an ordinance amendment that would add Educational Institutions as a conditional use in the Mixed Use Elk River Plaza (MU-ERP) zoning district. The zoning district is a former Planned Unit Development (PUD) district that had the PUD agreement added to city codes in 2010. The zoning district is divided into three separate areas: multifamily residential, single-family residential, and commercial. Each of these areas are distinct in their location within the district and act as separate districts with their own allowed uses. The proposed amendment would apply to the commercial section as the proposed building site is within the commercial section of the MU-ERP zoning district.

Commercial districts, especially those along major highways, support retail and commercial uses, providing employment and economic opportunities throughout the community. Educational uses do not appear to support the goals of commercial districts, and based on that analysis, staff do not recommend approval of the amendment.

The associated Conditional Use Permit application cannot be approved without the ordinance amendment.

If the Planning Commission supports the proposed ordinance amendment, staff requests a formal recommendation for the ordinance amendment and continue the discussion of the Conditional Use Permit to February 24, 2026. This will allow the City Council to act on the ordinance amendment on February 17, 2026, and provide staff with additional time to review the CUP in more detail.

### The Elk River Vision

*A welcoming community with revolutionary and spirited resourcefulness, exceptional service, and community engagement that encourages and inspires prosperity*



**Financial Impact**

None.

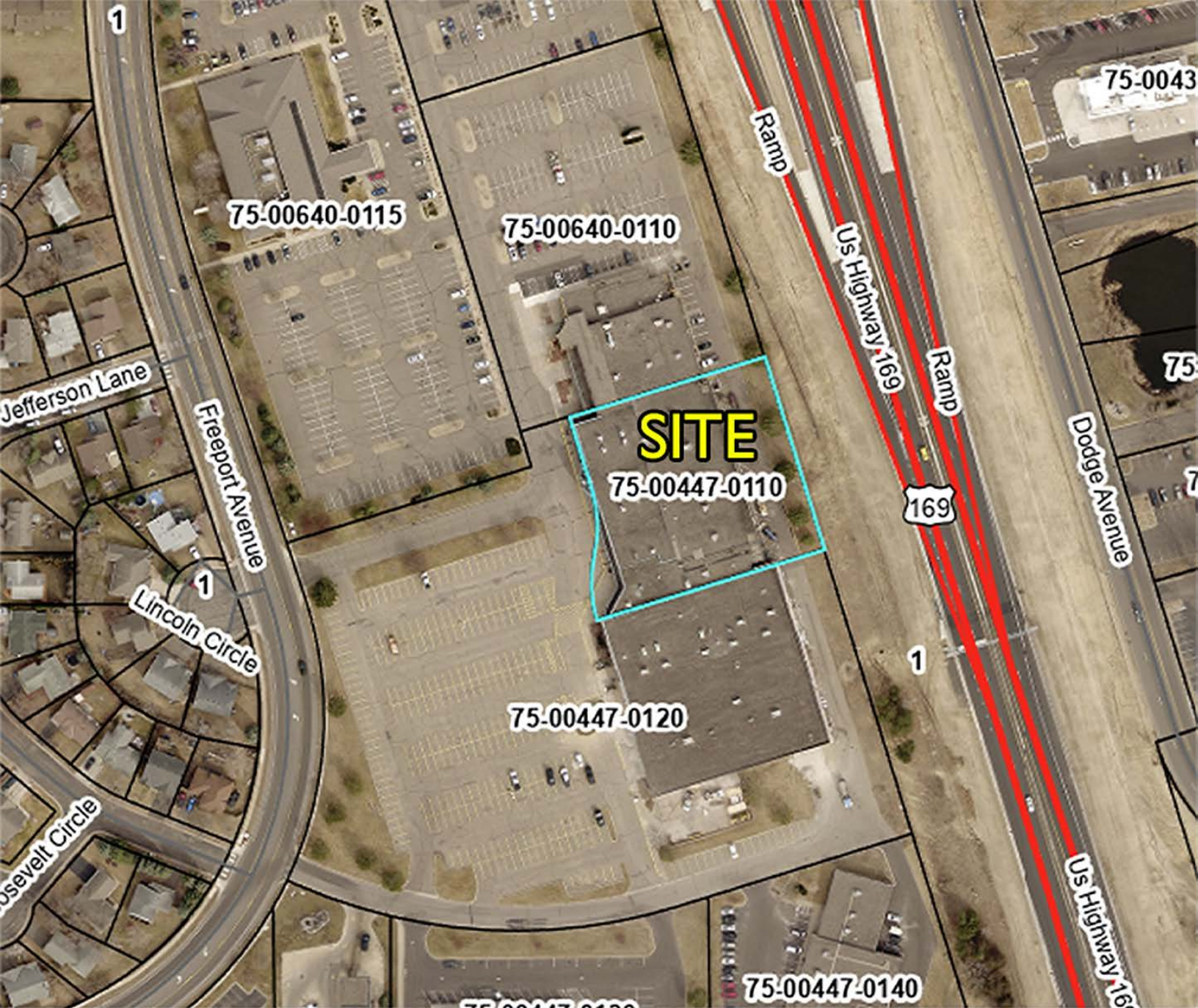
**Mission/Policy/Goal**

Responsibly grow.

Ethical, efficient, and responsible.

**Attachments**

1. Location Map
2. Allowed Uses in MU-ERP District
3. MU-ERP Zoning Map
4. Applicant's Narrative
5. Building Plans dated 12-5-2025



# Project Location Map

Good Shepherd Lutheran

Ordinance Amendment and  
Conditional Use Permit

Case No: ●A 25-11 & CU 25-16

Sec. 30-1584. - MU-ERP mixed use Elk River Plaza district.

(a) *Purpose.* The purpose of the mixed use Elk River plaza district is to codify the planned unit development into a single zoning district with three subsections: Commercial, single-family, and multiple-family.

(b) *Subzone A. Multiple-family residential.*

(1) Permitted uses are as follows:

- a. Residential, multiple family.
- b. Residential, single family.
- c. Townhouse, attached.

(2) Accessory uses are as follows:

- a. Accessory structures.
- b. Public shelters.
- c. Residential occupations.

(c) *Subzone B. Single-family residential.*

(1) Permitted uses are as follows:

- a. Single-family residential.

(2) Accessory uses are as follows:

- a. Accessory structures.
- b. Residential occupations.

(d) *Subzone C. Commercial.*

(1) Permitted uses are as follows:

- a. Business and professional offices.
- b. Class I restaurants.
- c. Nurseries, produce markets, and garden centers, which may include outdoor display.
- d. Outpatient health care facilities.
- e. Personal service establishments.
- f. Physical recreation or training.
- g. Public parks.
- h. Retail shops and stores.
- i. Sale of firearms.
- j. Zero lot line development.

(2) Accessory uses are as follows:

- a. Off-street parking facilities.
- b. Off-street parking facilities.
- c. Public shelters.

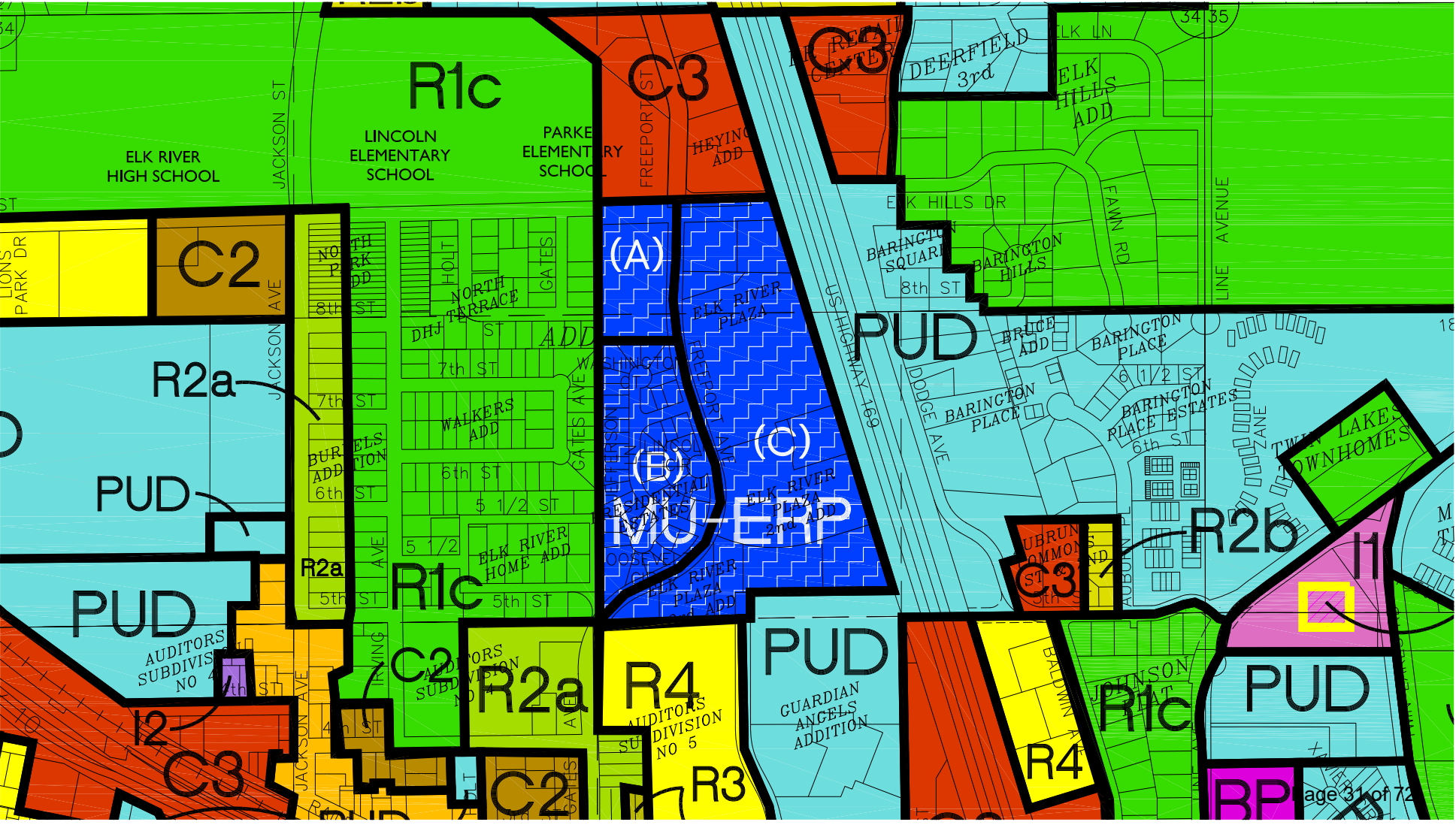
(3) Conditional uses are as follows:

- a. Carwashes.
- b. Class II restaurants.
- c. Commercial recreation, outdoor.
- d. Commercial recreational facilities, indoor.
- e. Dry cleaning establishment.
- f. Enclosed light manufacturing with related retail sales.
- g. Equipment rental businesses with no outdoor storage.
- h. Financial institutions.
- i. Funeral parlors.
- j. Governmental offices.
- k. Health care facilities, outpatient.
- l. Licensed day care facilities.
- m. Motor vehicle specialty shops.
- n. Nonprofit clubs, lodges, or halls.
- o. On-sale liquor establishments.
- p. Pawnshops (250-foot setback from any residential zone and 500-foot setback from schools, parks, day care centers, churches, and other pawnshops, measured from the property line).
- q. Produce markets.
- r. Religious institutions.
- s. Sauna establishments.
- t. Shopping centers.
- u. Veterinary clinics.

(Ord. No. 10-08, § 1, 6-21-2010; Ord. No. 15-34, § 1, 12-21-2015; Ord. No. 16-07, § 3, 4-18-2016; Ord. No. 16-10, § 1, 5-16-2016; Ord. No. 19-01, § 1, 1-22-2019; Ord. No. 19-12, § 1, 6-3-2019; Ord. No. 19-15, § 13, 8-19-2019; Ord. No. 20-03, § 3, 3-16-2020; Ord. No. 23-24, § 10, 11-20-2023)

**Editor's note**— Section 1 of Ord. No. 10-08, adopted June 21, 2010, set out a provision designated as § 30-1600. For stylistic purposes and at the discretion of the editor, this provision has been redesignated as § 30-1584.

—



R1c

C3

C3

DEERFIELD  
3rd

ELK HILLS  
ADD

ELK RIVER  
HIGH SCHOOL

LINCOLN  
ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL

PARKE  
ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL

FREEMONT ST  
HEYING  
ADD

REAR  
LATE

ELK HILLS  
DR

FAWN RD

LINE AVENUE

C2

(A)

PUD

R2a

(B)

(C)

ELK RIVER  
PLAZA  
2nd ADD

PUD

R2a

R1c

ELK RIVER  
PLAZA  
3rd ADD

R2b

PUD

AUDITORS  
SUBDIVISION  
NO 4

C2

R4

PUD

GUARDIAN  
ANGELS  
ADDITION

C3

PUD

12

C3

AUDITORS  
SUBDIVISION  
NO 4

R2a

AUDITORS  
SUBDIVISION  
NO 5

R3

R4

R1c

page 31 of 72

**Legal Description of Property**

We are proposing the development of a new Christian high school facility designed to support academic, spiritual, and community growth. The project includes classroom spaces, a multi-purpose worship and assembly area, administrative offices, and dedicated rooms for science, technology, and the arts. The proposed facility will provide a safe, functional, and faith-centered environment for students in grades 9–12, allowing us to expand our enrollment capacity and enhance the educational services we offer to families in the community.

We ask that Section 30-635 of the City Municipal Code be amended to permit the operation of a high school educational facility at 630 Freemont Ave NW, Elk River, recognizing the school’s commitment to educational excellence, community service, and responsible land use consistent with the City’s comprehensive plan.

**A Written Narrative see [Description of Project Narrative](#)**

**Project Narrative – GSL High School**

**Detailed Description / Scope of Project:**

GSL High School is a small Christian high school seeking to expand and formalize its facility to better serve its students and the community. The project includes the use of the existing building for educational purposes, along with interior modifications to optimize classroom, office, and multi-purpose space usage. The goal is to provide a safe, functional, and faith-centered learning environment for students in grades 9–12.

**Proposed Project:**

The proposal is to operate a private Christian high school within the existing building footprint. The facility will include classrooms, administrative offices, and a multi-purpose assembly/worship area.

**Consistency with City of Elk River Comprehensive Plan:**

The project aligns with the City of Elk River Comprehensive Plan by supporting educational services, community development, and family-oriented uses. The school promotes lifelong learning, civic engagement, and community values, contributing to the social and cultural objectives outlined in the plan.

**Hours of Operation:**

- Monday–Friday: 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM

- Occasional evening/weekend events for school-related activities (e.g., parent meetings, performances, community events)

**Number of Employees:**

- 2 Full-Time Staff
- 5 Part-Time Staff

**Parking:**

- Existing parking: 20 stalls
- No additional stalls are required; current parking accommodates staff, students, and visitors.

**Site Screening:**

- Landscaping and natural screening exist on-site.

**Proposed Building Materials:**

- Interior: Steel framing, commercial-grade flooring, acoustical ceiling tiles, and impact-resistant surfaces for high-traffic areas

**Compliance with Design Standards:**

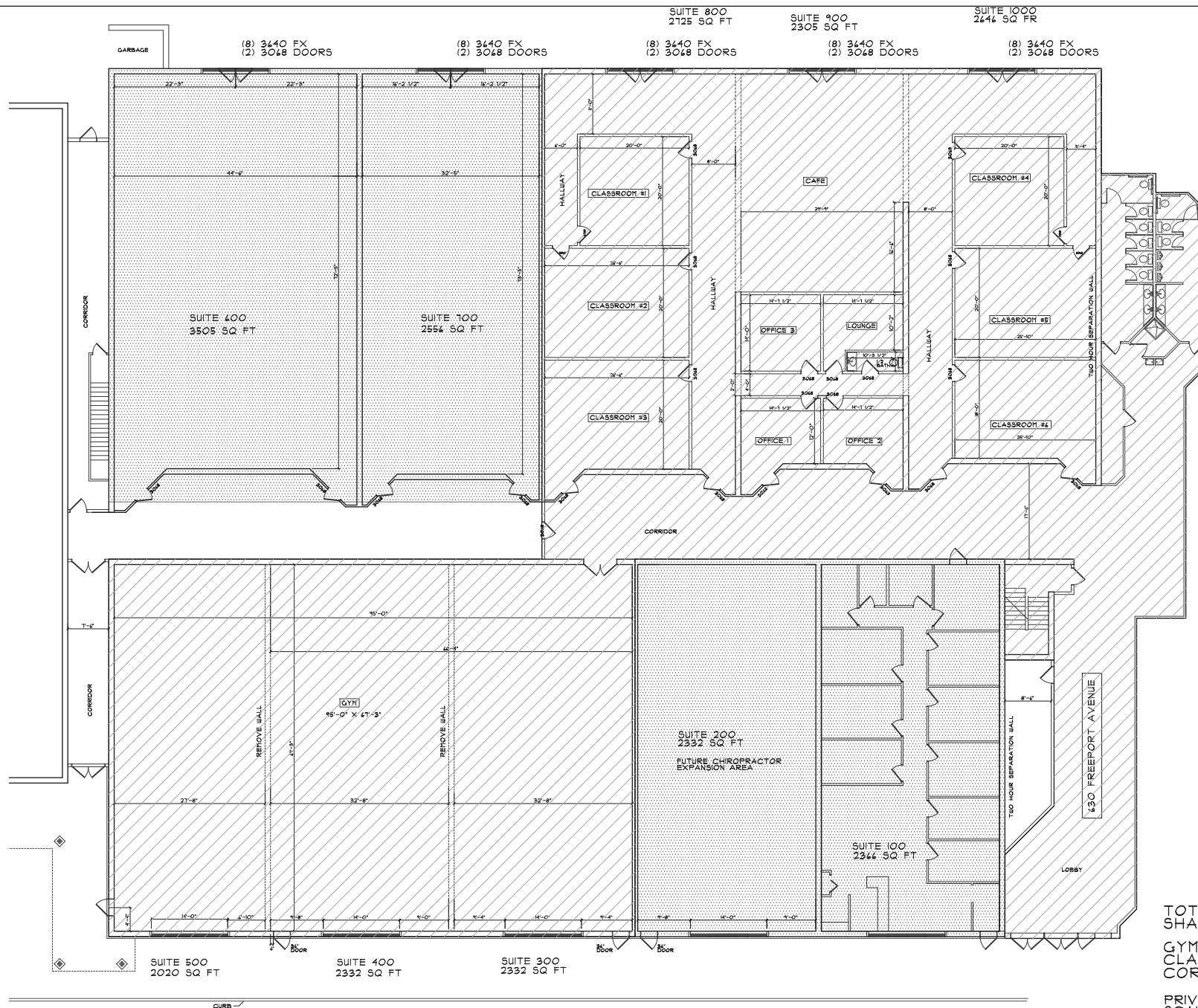
**All proposed materials meet or exceed Elk River design and building code standards, ensuring safety, durability, and an appearance compatible with surrounding structures.**

**Signage:**

- Separate permits will be obtained for each sign
- Proposed: 2 exterior signs identifying the school
- Size: To comply with city regulations
- Location: Front and back of the building
- Type: Non-illuminated channel letters as permitted

**Outdoor Storage:**

- No significant outdoor storage is planned.



TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE  
 SHADED AREA 18,611 SQ FT  
 GYM 6,680 SQ FT  
 CLASSROOMS 7,764  
 CORRIDORS/BATHS 4,173 SQ FT  
 PRIVATE SCHOOL  
 SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



# Request for Action

**To**  
Planning Commission

**Item Number**  
9.1

**Meeting Date**  
January 27, 2026

**Prepared By**  
Zack Carlton, Community Development Director

**Item Description**  
Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Discussion

**Reviewed by**  
Chris Leeseberg

## Action Requested

Discuss the current guidance provided by the Comprehensive Plan and provide staff with direction regarding possible changes.

## Background/Discussion

The city adopted an updated Comprehensive Plan in 2021 which removed the guidance recommendations from the Focused Area Study (FAST) and created consistent land use classifications throughout the community. These new land-use classes also expanded housing opportunities (duplexes, town homes, etc.) for many areas of the city. These changes were made to expand affordability by increasing the variety of housing types allowed in the community. Allowing small multifamily buildings in areas that had traditionally been limited to single-family homes creates opportunities for smaller, generally less expensive, residential dwellings.

The FAST area generally aligns with the uses that had been recommended in the 2010 study, but also created consistency with other areas of the community, which had previously been a concern.

The Planning Commission should review how these land use classes are defined (primarily the Mixed-Residential) and where the class may be appropriate. The Commission could consider redefining land use classes, removing the statement of "small scale residential" for example, and reclassifying areas to align with the commission's vision for the community.

Any recommendations of the commission will need to follow legal public notice requirements and include a public hearing. Changes discussed during the work session are not final until both the Planning Commission and City Council have held a public hearing and taken formal action.

## Financial Impact

## Mission/Policy/Goal

Explain how this meets the city's mission, current policies and/or council goals

## Attachments

- I. Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Housing Sections

The Elk River Vision

*A welcoming community with revolutionary and spirited resourcefulness, exceptional service, and community engagement that encourages and inspires prosperity*



## 2. FAST Development Recommendations



## CHAPTER 3

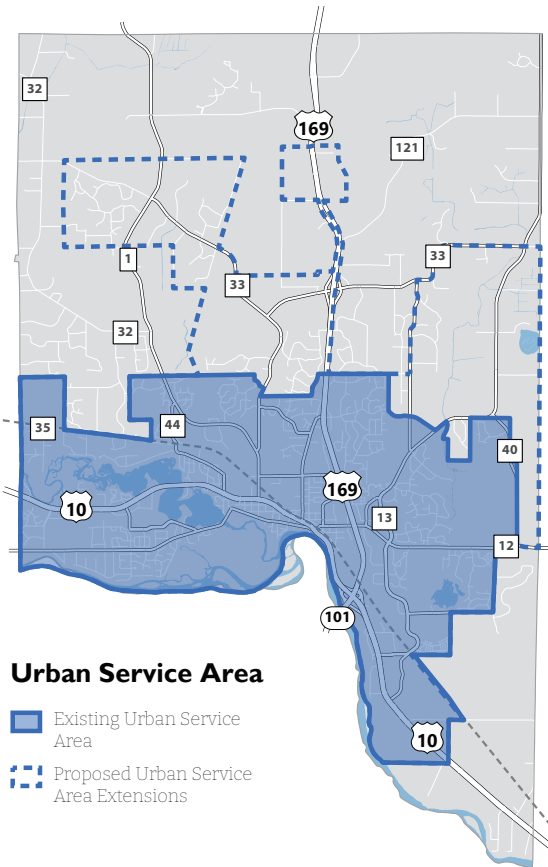
# LAND USE PLAN

The Land Use Plan is one of the most important elements of the Elk River Comprehensive Plan. It outlines how properties in different parts of the planning area should be used and identifies the type, character, and intensity of use for each region of the community. The intent of the Land Use Plan is to ensure that future development takes into account land use compatibility, access, market viability, environmental features, and community services. As such, the recommendations made in the subsequent chapters of the comprehensive plan relate back to the Land Use Plan.

# Targeted Urban Service Area Expansion

There are several strategic areas of the city that can accommodate future development in concert with the sustainable expansion of the Urban Service Area. These areas have existing transportation infrastructure to which new development can connect as well as minimal wetlands and conflicts with neighboring land uses that make them well-suited for future residential, commercial, and industrial development.

The Urban Service Area map highlights the existing Urban Service Area in the city and overlays the proposed future Urban Service Area extensions. Expansion areas include portions of the Gravel Mining Area, land surrounding the Twin Lakes Road corridor, and the Elk Lake Road corridor. The *Housing Plan* and *Economic Development Plan* further elaborate on these expansion areas and provide key recommendations to ensure development is in line with the community's vision for the future.



# Future Land Use

The Land Use Plan identifies desired future land uses for all areas of the City of Elk River both within the Urban Service Area and out to the city's boundary. The plan provides a framework for future planning decisions that build upon the desired characteristics of Elk River's established residential neighborhoods, commercial districts, and employment areas.

## Assess Land Development Regulations for Alignment with the Comprehensive Plan

To ensure that all standards of review for development approval and zoning relief processes include alignment with the comprehensive plan the city should assess its land development regulations. This will ensure that elected and appointed officials have clear guidance when considering requests for map and text amendments, planned unit developments, and all other petition review processes. It will also provide fair certainty to residents, businesses, property owners, and developers.

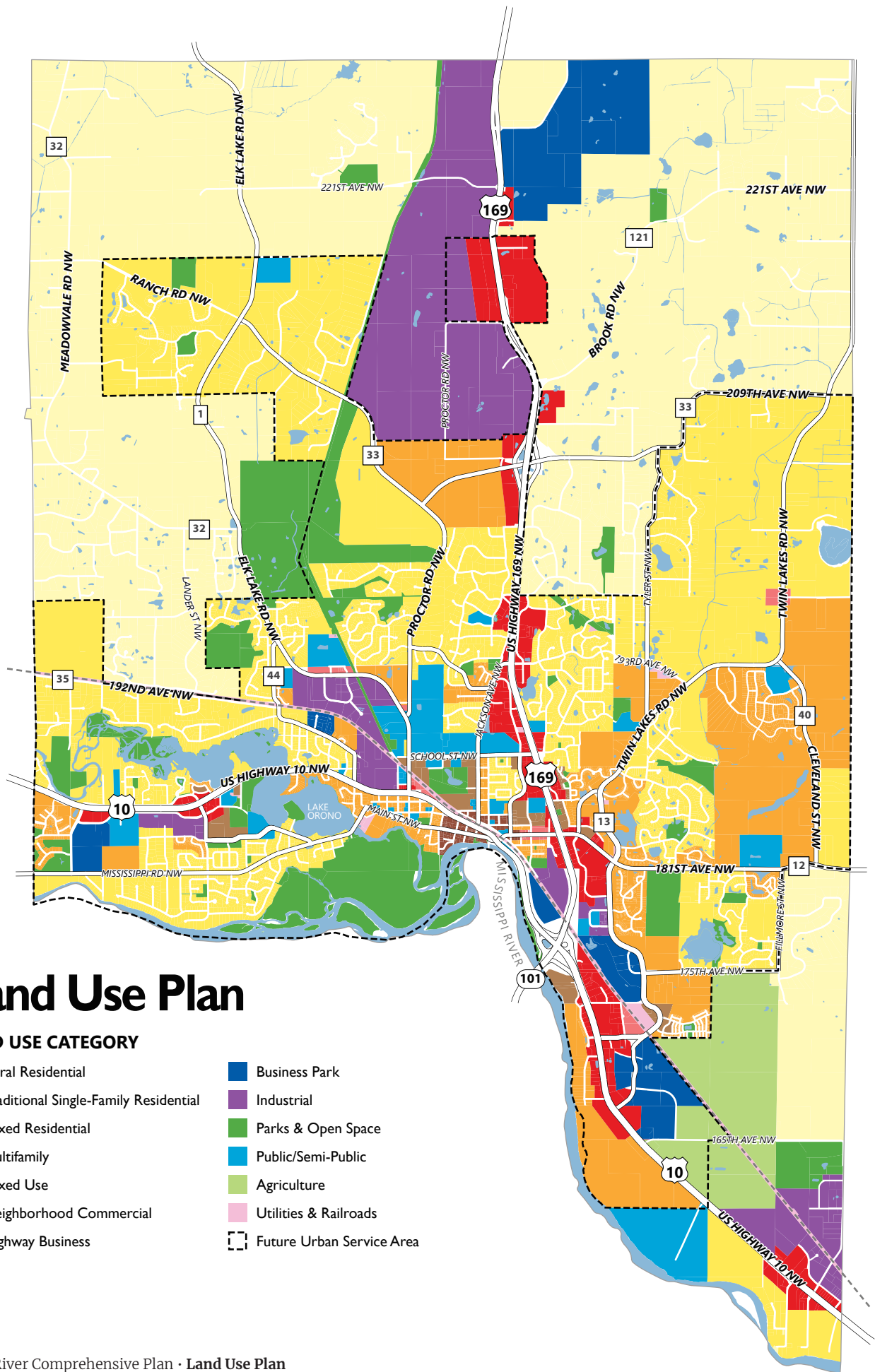
## Land Use Category

### Rural Residential

The rural residential category consists of large lot single-family homes. This is the predominant residential type in the north of the city beyond the Urban Service Area. This land use primarily consists of planned residential subdivisions and lots located directly on arterial roadways. This land use supports large lot residential development and allows agricultural operations as an accessory use where appropriate.

### Traditional Single-family Neighborhood

The suburban residential category predominately consists of single-family detached homes occupying moderately sized lots. This land use is the most prevalent residential type within the Urban Service Area and consists of a range of neighborhood typologies including the historic grid block pattern neighborhoods surrounding the downtown and newer curvilinear block pattern subdivision developments in the north, east, and west. This land use, while predominately single-family detached, should accommodate single-family attached, townhomes, and duplexes at transitional areas on the edges of these neighborhoods, along primary transportation corridors, and adjacent higher intensity uses such as multi-family or commercial.



# Land Use Plan

## LAND USE CATEGORY

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #ffffcc; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Rural Residential                     | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #0056b3; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Business Park         |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #ffcc00; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Traditional Single-Family Residential | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #6a3d9a; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Industrial            |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #ff9933; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Mixed Residential                     | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #38a83d; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Parks & Open Space    |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #a0522d; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Multifamily                           | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #00a0e3; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Public/Semi-Public    |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #8b4513; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Mixed Use                             | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #c1e1c1; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Agriculture           |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #e34a33; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Neighborhood Commercial               | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #d3d3d3; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Utilities & Railroads |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #cc0000; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Highway Business                      | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px dashed black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Future Urban Service Area                       |

### ***Mixed Residential Neighborhood***

The mixed residential category consists of neighborhoods with multiple housing types, including single-family detached, townhomes, duplexes, and small scale multi-family buildings. Mixed residential areas should include existing residential neighborhoods where a gentle increase in density is appropriate such as surrounding the downtown as well as new neighborhood subdivisions.

### ***Multi-family***

The multi-family category includes higher density apartment and/or condominium complexes in a master planned setting with common open spaces and recreational amenities. Multi-family areas make up the smallest portion of the city's housing stock and are primarily located off of major roadways with proximity to commercial areas.

### ***Highway Business***

The highway business category primarily consists of a mix of auto-oriented retail and service businesses, restaurants, and community- and regional-scale shopping centers. Highway business uses are located along Highway 169 and Highway 10 and have high visibility from these corridors.

### ***Mixed Use***

The mixed use category contains all commercial and supporting uses located in the historic core of the downtown as well as desired expansion areas to the west and north. Standalone commercial, multi-family, and mixed use with commercial use on the ground floor and residential above are all included in the mixed use category.

Downtown housing along Main Street should be in mixed use buildings with first floor/ground level commercial uses and residential above. On the periphery of the downtown core multi-family and mixed use are appropriate. The downtown mixed use area is oriented towards pedestrians and provides connections to the Mississippi River waterfront.

### ***Neighborhood Commercial***

The neighborhood commercial use category includes local-serving commercial that provides surrounding residents with daily goods and services like specialty food stores, daycares, or cafés. Neighborhood commercial uses are found near residential neighborhoods and reduce the need to drive across the city for essential commercial goods and services. Neighborhood commercial knits into the fabric of both established and new neighborhoods and complements these areas with appropriately scaled development that emphasizes connections and 360-degree architectural design.



### **Business Park**

The business park category primarily consists of office and corporate campus development. This use is located with access to major transportation corridors in the city (Highway 169 and Highway 10) and utilizes the city’s natural amenities such as its mature tree canopy and riverfront views to create attractive campuses. In addition, business park uses provide a transitional or buffer use between higher intensity industrial and lower intensity residential uses in the city.

### **Industrial**

The industrial use category includes both heavy and light industrial businesses such as manufacturing, warehousing, and excavation. These uses are primarily located off of Highway 169, Highway 10, and the BNSF Railroad which provide easy access for the transferring of goods throughout the region.

### **Parks & Open Space**

The parks and open space land use category includes parks that provide both active and passive recreation options as well as open space areas. Parks consist of public parks owned and maintained by the city as well as private parks in planned subdivisions. Open space areas include preserves or maintained natural areas within the city in addition to detention ponds and creeks within planned subdivisions and commercial or industrial areas.

### **Public/Semi-Public**

The public and semi-public use category includes local government uses, municipal facilities, community service providers, schools, and places of worship and assembly such as City Hall, fire stations, churches, and Elk River’s public schools. Coordination with schools and service providers is key to ensure these essential facilities have capacity and/or are located in areas that can support growth and development as it occurs.

### **Agriculture**

The agriculture use category includes land that is actively being used for the production of crops, livestock, and farming-related activities. Farmhouses and very low-density single family detached homes on the same parcel utilized for agricultural production are also included in this category. Agriculture is located primarily in the northern most portion of the city beyond the Urban Service Area.

### **Utilities & Railroads**

The utility and railroad use category supports local infrastructure and provide right-of-ways or easements for the transmission of gas, electric, water, and sewer. This includes both facilities and infrastructure as well as related right-of-ways.



Elk River Comprehensive Plan • Land Use Plan







## CHAPTER 4

# HOUSING PLAN

The City of Elk River is comprised of historic residential neighborhoods at its core, complemented by single-family subdivisions in the surrounding areas, and large lot rural housing along the city's northern fringe. Downtown Elk River features mixed use development, while multi-family development occurs primarily adjacent commercial developments along the Highway 169 corridor and near the Northstar Line rail station. Although the city has a mix of housing types, recent housing trends, including low vacancy rates, indicate Elk River has pent up demand for additional housing. The Housing Plan provides policies and recommendations that will enable the city to meet this demand and foster greater housing choice.

The plan provides guidance on housing reinvestment that enhances existing residential areas, emphasizes infill housing opportunities within the current Urban Service Area, and informs strategic conservation driven development of new residential neighborhoods. Further, the Housing Plan builds off of the Land Use Plan to ensure that growth and development reflects the desired vision of the Elk River community. The Housing Character Areas map identifies key areas in the community where the city should prioritize investment, residential infill, and expand opportunities for new residential development that provide a greater diversity of housing options in the community.

# Housing Vision Statement

*In 2035, the City of Elk River will provide a range of housing options from senior housing to entry level homes for new families, and apartments and condos for recent college grads and young professionals. Infill housing development downtown and in adjacent neighborhoods will reinforce the historic charm of the city and support the established neighborhood character of the area. This will be complemented by the development of new neighborhoods that include increased housing variety and provide more affordable options for both homeowners and renters as the community grows.*

## Goal:

Encourage residential development with a variety of housing types that fosters high-quality, livable neighborhoods to address the needs of existing and future residents.

## Policies:

- Target residential development.
- Support reinvestment and promote density .
- Encourage conservation design development.
- Foster greater housing choice.

# City-wide Housing Policies

The following section includes policies or strategies that can be applied to all housing in Elk River regardless of location. More neighborhood-specific policies that support the character unique to each area of the city are included in the following section.

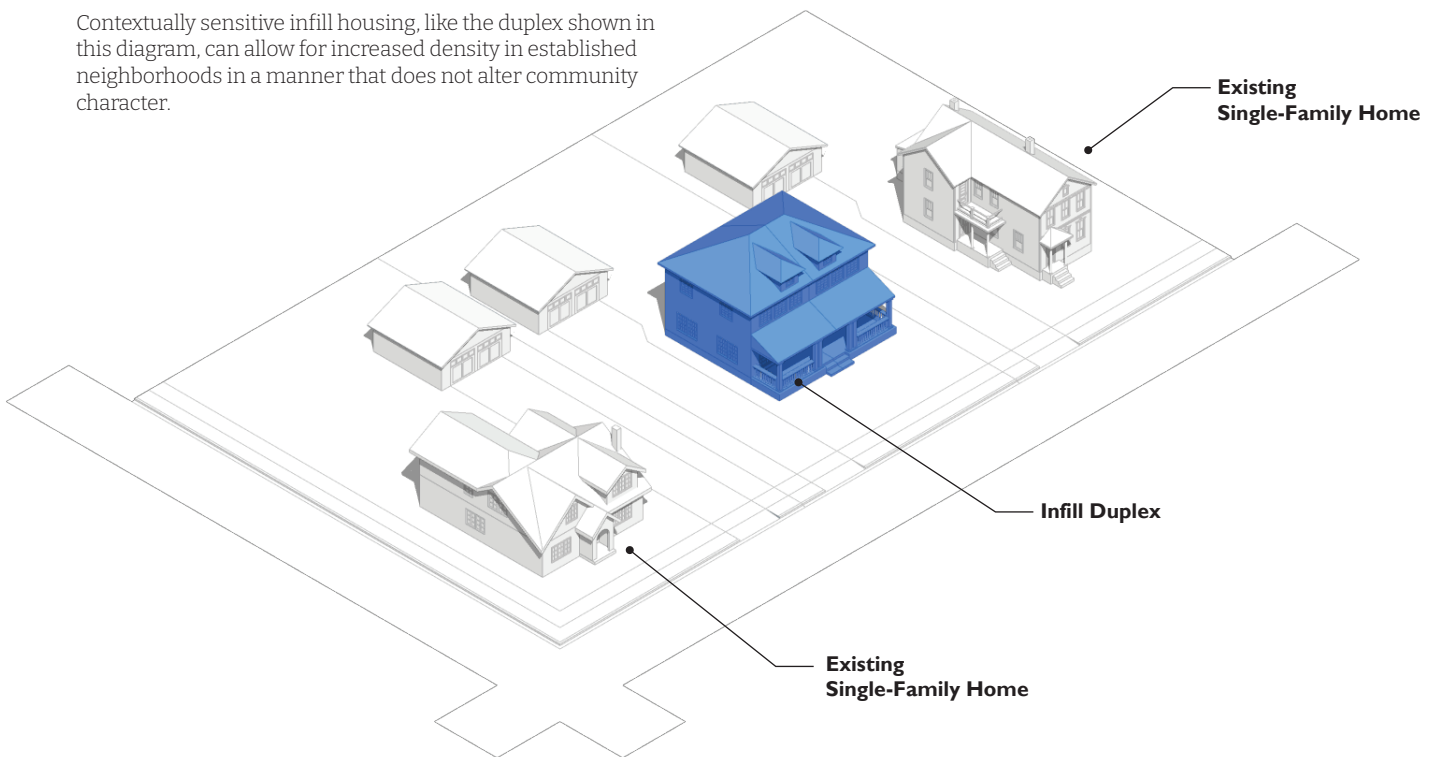
## Promote Context Sensitive Infill

With much of Elk River’s core already built-out with established residential areas, context-sensitive infill development is vital to increasing housing choice moving forward while preserving the cherished character of Elk River’s neighborhoods. This includes supporting the development of vacant or underutilized lots as well as redevelopment of aging properties into higher density missing middle housing types, discussed in greater detail on the following pages.

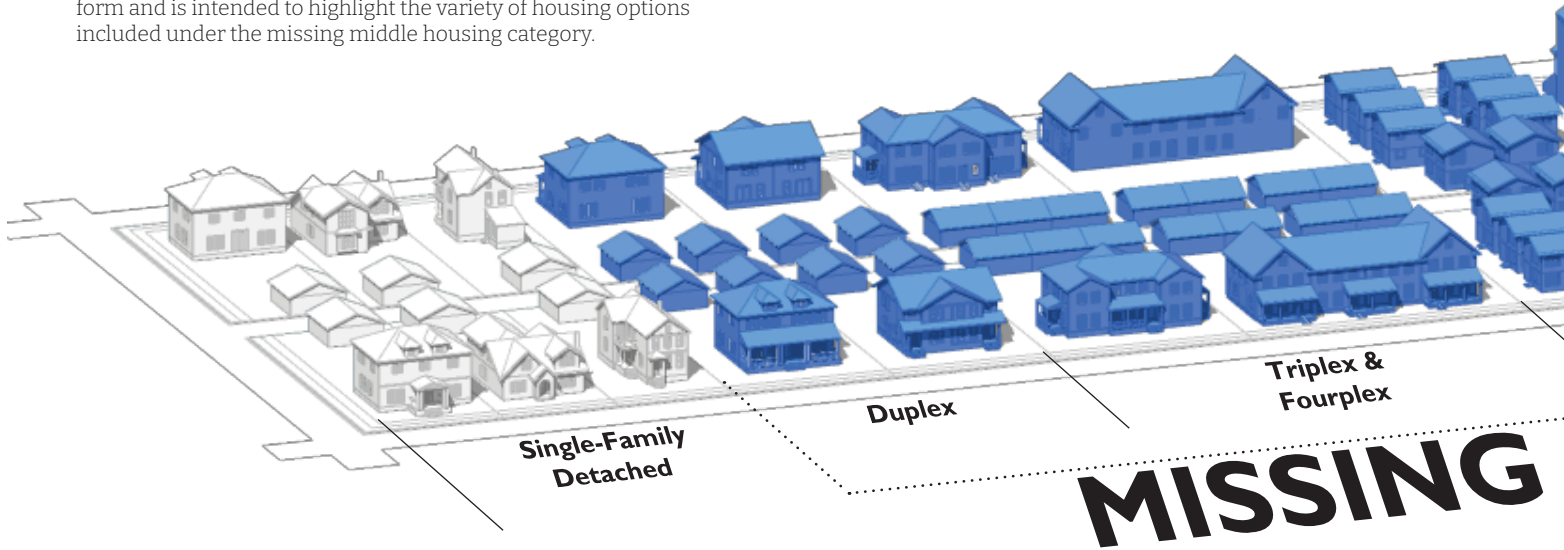
To increase missing middle housing stock and provide a greater variety of housing options, the city should encourage context sensitive duplexes, quadplexes, townhomes, courtyard buildings, and cottage courts. These types of residential developments should follow standards influencing building height, orientation, setbacks, and other design characteristics to ensure compatibility with surrounding development and neighborhood character.

### Context Sensitive Infill

Contextually sensitive infill housing, like the duplex shown in this diagram, can allow for increased density in established neighborhoods in a manner that does not alter community character.



Missing middle housing sits in the middle of the development spectrum between single-family homes and mid-rise to high-rise apartment buildings. This graphic illustrates the housing types that typically make up missing middle housing in scale and form and is intended to highlight the variety of housing options included under the missing middle housing category.



## Promote a Minimum Distribution of Housing Types in New Subdivisions

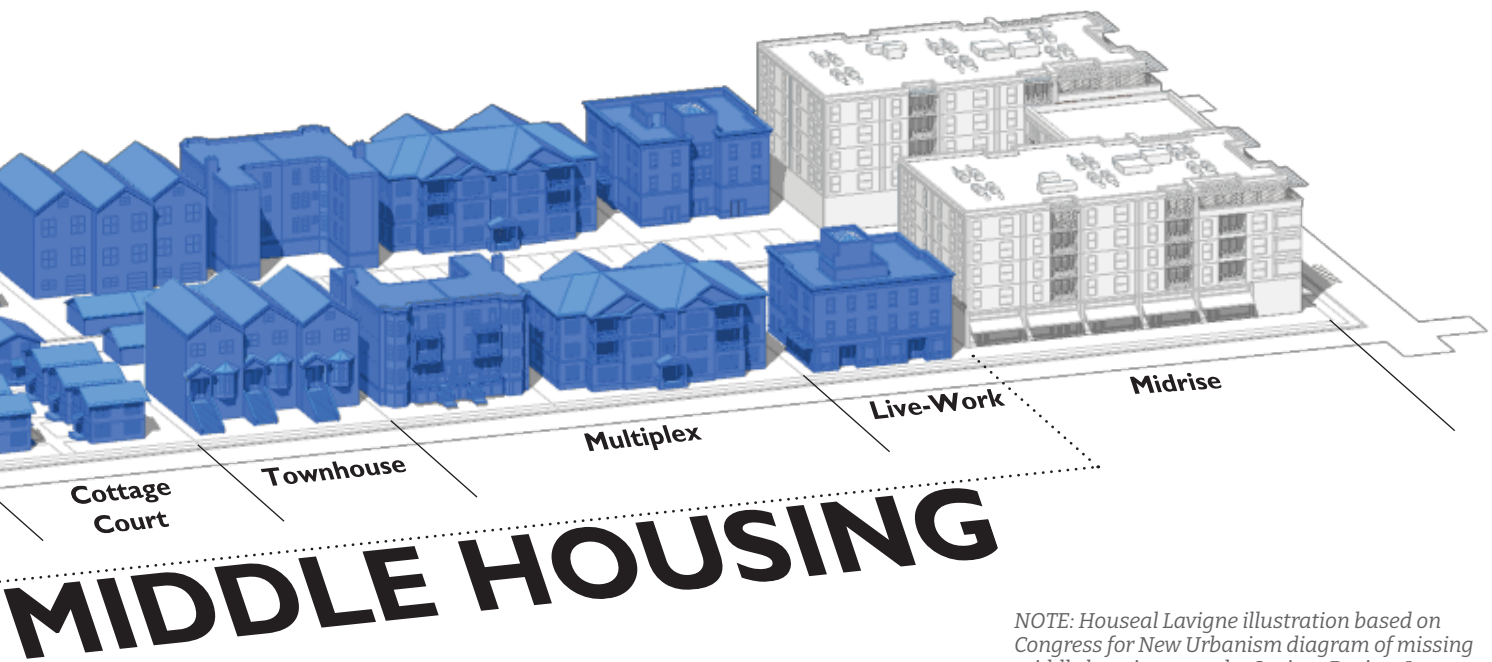
Elk River is challenged by a very tight housing market with low vacancy and a need for housing units that are attainable to households across a range of income levels. The city’s 2018 Comprehensive Housing Market Study found that to meet the demand for housing through 2025 the community needs to add a minimum of 690 new housing units consisting of roughly 115 senior housing units, 235 rental units (combined market rate and affordable), and 320 owner-occupied housing units. As of October 2021, 35 age restricted units, 40 rental units, 68 affordable rental units, and 342 single-family housing units have been constructed.

To continue to meet this near-term housing demand and accommodate long-term growth through 2035, the city should be proactive in promoting the development of a diverse mix of housing types, with a focus on missing middle housing types. The city should consider revising its subdivision development standards to require a minimum range of housing types in new neighborhood developments. For example, requiring a minimum of 10% of units to be provided in duplexes/townhomes in all new subdivision development would ensure that developers do not exclusively build single-family detached homes and provide missing middle housing types that include more affordable options.

The Comprehensive Housing Market Study recommendations should be used to help determine an appropriate range for the required distribution of housing types.



*Middle Housing Type Examples*



NOTE: Houseal Lavigne illustration based on Congress for New Urbanism diagram of missing middle housing types by Opticos Design, Inc.

### Missing Middle Housing Types

Missing middle housing types range from low density duplexes to mid density multiplexes and triplexes and are under represented in Elk River's housing stock. These housing types provide opportunities for the city to increase the diversity of its housing stock while maintaining the neighborhood character and small-town feel Elk River residents love. Missing middle housing types that the city should consider accommodating more broadly include:

**Duplex (Side-by-side)** – A one to two-story detached structure that consists of two dwelling units arranged side-by-side, each with an entry from the street. This type has the appearance of a small-to-medium sized single-family house and may include a rear yard.

**Duplex (Stacked)** – A two to two-and-a-half-story detached structure that consists of two dwelling units arranged one above the other, each with an entry from the street. This type has the appearance of a small-to-medium sized single-family house, may include a rear yard, and fits on narrower lots than the side-by-side duplex.

**Quadplex** – A detached two to two-and-a-half-story structure with four dwelling units, two on the ground floor and two above, with shared or individual entrances from the street. This type has the appearance of a medium-sized single-family house and may include a rear yard. This type is attractive to developers by generating four units on a typical 65'- 80' lot.

**Courtyard Building** – A medium-to-large sized one to three-and-a-half-story detached structure consisting of multiple side-by-side and/or stacked dwelling units oriented around a courtyard or series of courtyards. The courtyard replaces the function of a rear yard and is more open to the street in low intensity neighborhoods and less open to the street in more urban settings. Each unit is accessed from the courtyard and shared stairs provide access up to three units.

**Cottage Court** – A group of small one to one-and-a-half-story, detached structures arranged around a shared court visible from the street. The shared court is an important community-enhancing element and unit entrances are from the shared court. It replaces the function of a rear yard. The rear-most building can be up to two stories.

**Townhome** – A small-to medium-sized attached structure that consists of three to six multistory dwelling units placed side-by-side. Entries are on the narrow side of the unit and typically face a street or courtyard. The street façades have entrances and avoid garages.

**Multiplex** – A detached two-and-a-half-story structure that consists of five to 12 dwelling units arranged side-by-side and/or stacked, typically with a shared entry from the street. This type has the appearance of a medium-to-large sized single-family home and does not include a rear yard.

**Triplex** – A small-to-medium sized detached structure with three to three-and-a-half-stories that consists of three units typically stacked on top of each other on consecutive floors. Triplexes have one entry for the ground floor unit and a shared entry for those above. This type does not include a rear yard.

**Live-Work** – A small- to medium-sized attached or detached structure consisting of one dwelling unit above or behind a fire-separated flexible ground floor space that can accommodate a range of non-residential uses. This housing type is typically two to three-and-a-half-stories tall. The flex space and residential unit typically have separate street entrances. The flex space typically has a taller height, minimum 10 feet, and a storefront. This type does not include a rear yard.

## Encourage Quality Materials and Design

To ensure development reflects the community's desire for high quality and attractive housing, the city should encourage the use of high quality materials, design, and construction in all new development. The Pullman Place Cooperative multi-family 65+ community living development is a good example of high quality design and complementary architectural style that is context sensitive and should be used as a model for future multi-family development.

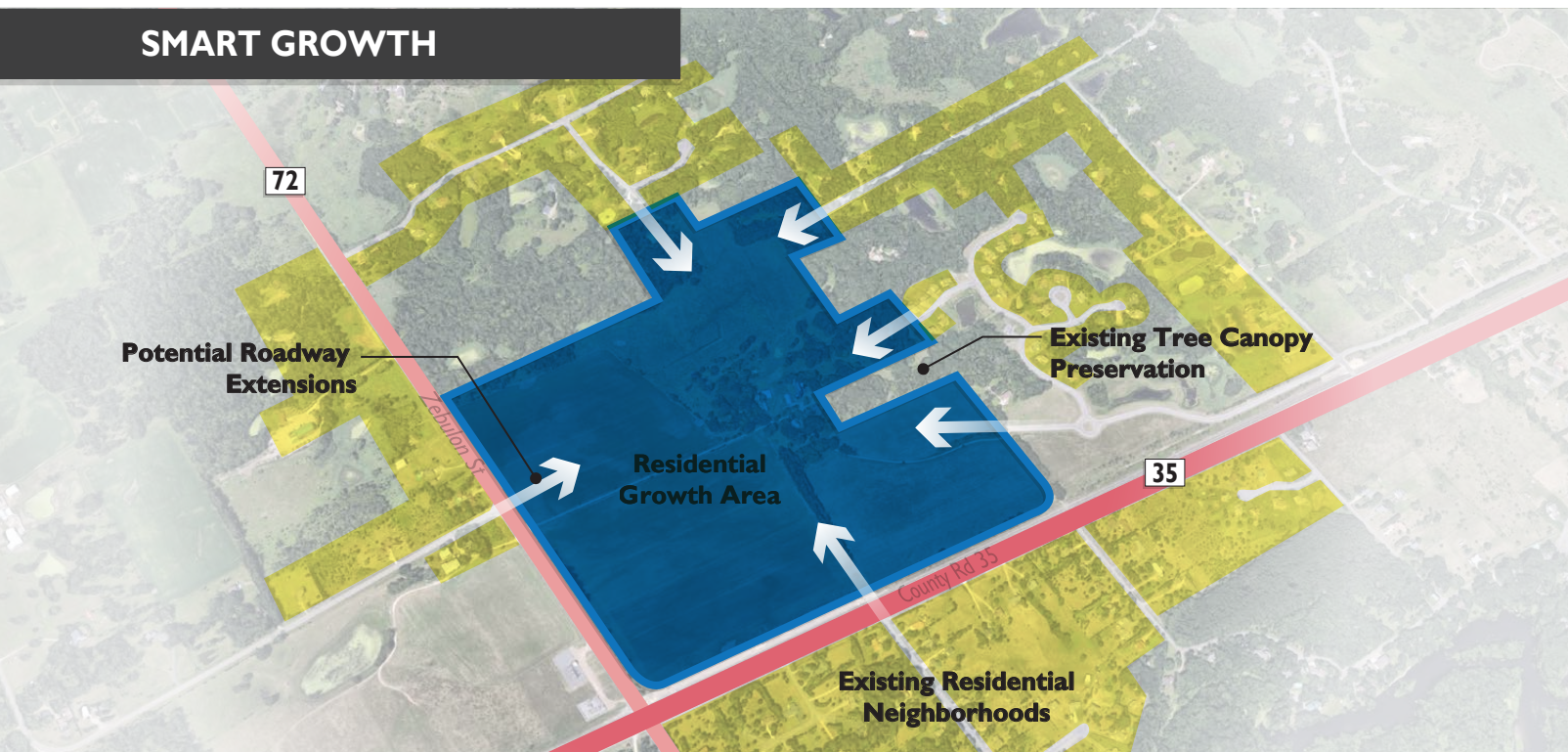
## Practice Smart Growth

The city should practice smart growth that prioritizes infill development and discourages greenfield development. As infill opportunities become limited, expansion of the Urban Service Area will be necessary. A smart growth approach to the expansion of the Urban Service Area would ensure that areas made available for new development have access to municipal utilities, are not in a flood hazard area or wetland, have access to roadways with capacity to support additional traffic, and can be connected to existing neighborhoods and destinations in the city.

To promote more efficient and sustainable development, the city should establish standards of review for subdivision applications that follow best practices in smart growth. By establishing these standards, the city would not only clearly communicate its preference for sustainable development, but would also ensure that elected and appointed officials are protected from arbitrary and capricious decisions regarding the approval or denial of subdivision applications.

## Proactively Up-Zone to Align with the Land Use Plan

The city should consider proactively up-zoning existing neighborhoods, as identified in the Housing Plan, for higher density housing. Municipal utilities currently have the capacity to support higher density development within these areas and permitting multi-family and mixed residential in strategic areas would help alleviate housing demand. By eliminating barriers to development, the city will communicate to developers that higher density infill development is a priority of the city. Up-zoning has the potential to add more affordable market rate homes in already well-connected and established neighborhoods and expand housing choice.

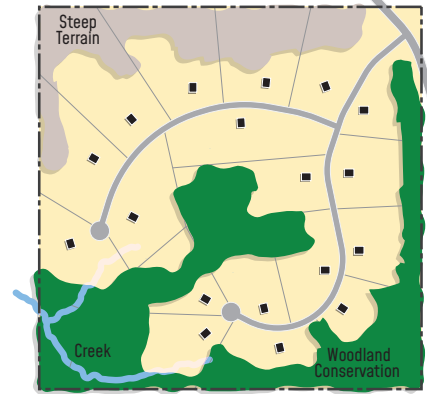


## Practice Conservation Design

Conservation design subdivision development, also known as cluster development, is an approach to residential development that preserves contiguous areas of open space and natural areas by clustering smaller residential parcels on select areas of a site. The overall housing density within the development remains the same, but the site design allows for larger areas of open space to remain intact and used to preserve wetlands, floodplains, or other natural features, and shared as neighborhood or community parkland. The Housing Character Areas map identifies wetlands and floodplain areas throughout the city. Residential parcels that are within the Urban Service Area and the floodplain and wetland overlay should be considered for conservation design. To encourage this type of development, it is recommended that the city update its subdivision ordinance to include provisions for the allowance of this type of development for residential and commercial development as well as business parks, where appropriate. Provisions should include:

- Prioritized list of resources to be conserved including existing tree canopy;
- Percent of total land area to be conserved as permanent protected, public open space;
- Incentive for increased density in exchange for land conservation; and
- Design guidelines for the layout of streets, lots, and conservation areas.

Conventional Development



Conservation Design Development



## CONSERVATION DESIGN



## Implement Green Infrastructure

The Elk River watershed spans 613 square miles and has suffered from high levels of pollutants in the past. Since 1994, roughly 275 water improvement projects have been conducted on the watershed. Better water quality has been recorded in both Lake Orono and Elk Lake over the last 10 years, however these water bodies still exceed the threshold for what the State considers a safe level of bacteria. Water is an integral part of the city's identity and keeping it clean, safe, and accessible should be a top priority. Impervious surfaces related to urban development within the watershed are a major cause of pollutants such as oil, metals, lawn chemicals, pet waste and other pollutants reaching surface waters especially in extreme rainfall and storm events.

To reduce the runoff of pollutants into the Elk River watershed the city should consider implementing development standards for all new subdivisions that incorporate green infrastructure design. Green infrastructure design strategies include, but are not limited to the following:

- Utilize low impact design best practices to minimize runoff and manage stormwater onsite;
- Pervious pavement on sidewalks, streets, and driveways;
- Planted medians and parkways with curb cuts to collect water runoff;
- Use non-chlorine (road salt) snow and ice control;
- Fertilizer application control;
- Bioswales and raingardens to collect and naturally filter water before it enters the watershed.



*Example: green stormwater infrastructure*

## Establish Roadway/Sidewalk/Trail Network Connections

To promote connections between existing neighborhoods and new developments, improve emergency service response time, and reduce congestion at peak commute travel times into and out of existing neighborhoods, the city should establish a robust network of pedestrian and vehicular connections. The city should consider establishing subdivision regulations that require new developments provide a minimum level of connectivity internally and with adjacent neighborhoods. In addition, new developments should also provide connections to the existing trail network following the *Trails Master Plan* and the *Parks and Recreation Master Plan*.

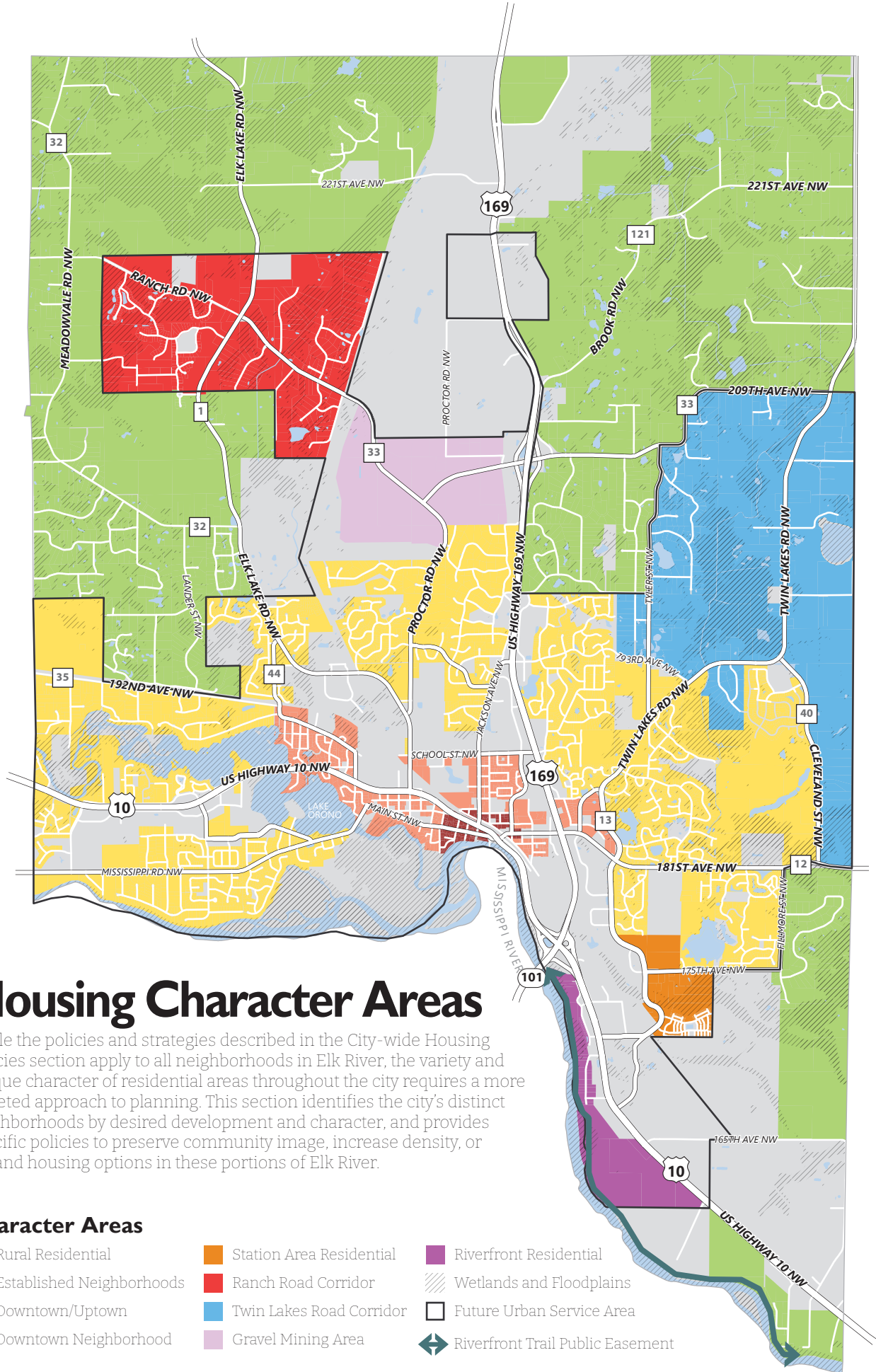
The city should also consider establishing a street hierarchy for subdivision streetscape elements that unify future development. Requiring sidewalks with uniform widths, parkways, and landscaping will improve connectivity while enhancing aesthetic continuity between and within neighborhoods.

## Common Open Space

New developments in areas underserved by existing parks, as identified in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, should also incorporate common open space to provide passive or active recreation opportunities for residents. Providing open space is especially crucial for new development in the northern portion of the city, as much of this area is outside of the city's neighborhood park service area walkshed. This means homes in this area are not within walking distance of a park.

### SIDEWALK & TRAIL CONNECTIONS





# Housing Character Areas

While the policies and strategies described in the City-wide Housing Policies section apply to all neighborhoods in Elk River, the variety and unique character of residential areas throughout the city requires a more targeted approach to planning. This section identifies the city's distinct neighborhoods by desired development and character, and provides specific policies to preserve community image, increase density, or expand housing options in these portions of Elk River.

## Character Areas

- Rural Residential
- Established Neighborhoods
- Downtown/Uptown
- Downtown Neighborhood
- Station Area Residential
- Ranch Road Corridor
- Twin Lakes Road Corridor
- Gravel Mining Area
- Riverfront Residential
- Wetlands and Floodplains
- Future Urban Service Area
- Riverfront Trail Public Easement



## Rural Residential

Rural residential areas include established rural residential developments in the north of the city. Rural residential is located outside of the Urban Service Area and is not connected to any municipal utilities. As such, these developments typically utilize septic and wells for sewer and water. Rural residential features large lots that are typically located off of arterial roadways. While large lots are the primary type of development, the rural residential character area also includes some subdivision developments. Because rural residential is located outside of the Urban Service Area it is not recommended for increased residential development.

### Encourage Trail & Sidewalk Connections

While many of the existing rural residential subdivisions have limited sidewalks and connections to neighboring subdivisions, they are well positioned to incorporate extensions to the city's adopted *Trails Master Plan* network. Elk River should encourage the creation of these trail and pathway connections throughout existing rural residential neighborhoods as infrastructure maintenance occurs. This will promote walkability and connect residents to the city's parks and other destinations. In addition, the city should also encourage new rural residential development incorporate sidewalks, make connections to adjacent neighborhoods, and provide access to the city's trail network.

## Shared Septic

Many rural residential areas utilize shared septic systems for wastewater treatment. As these systems age, they become increasingly expensive to maintain. The Windsor subdivision development in the northwest of Elk River has already reached out to the city to request municipal service extension to connect their shared septic system into the city's service lines.

In the future, the city may be asked to connect more developments into the municipal sewer system. As such, the city should be prepared to handle these requests and work with residents and the Public Works Department to design a balanced approach for such service extensions in the future. The *Infrastructure and Urban Service Area Management Plan* chapter further elaborates on how shared septic systems can be connected to the Elk River municipal sewer system.



Example: Area with shared septic in Elk River



## **Established Residential**

Established residential areas include stable neighborhoods or subdivisions with primarily single-family detached development. The majority of these neighborhoods were built over 40 years ago in the north, west, and more recently in the east of the city. Established residential areas are within the existing Urban Service Area and are directly connected to municipal sewer and water. Established residential areas include a variety of block layouts but are primarily curvilinear. Many of the existing established residential neighborhoods feature sidewalks and connections to adjacent neighborhoods.

### ***Strategic Infill***

While much of the established residential areas in the city are built out, there are still opportunities for infill development. Areas of strategic infill development, as identified in the Housing Character Areas map, are intended to fill gaps between existing neighborhoods. In addition, strategic infill should be contextually sensitive to surrounding development and provide opportunities to further expand pedestrian and vehicular mobility between neighborhoods and across the city. As such, it is key that infill development provide a robust network of sidewalks and roadways that link up to existing roadways/sidewalks/paths in adjacent neighborhoods.

### ***Expand Pedestrian Connections***

Existing pedestrian routes within established residential areas should be tied into the future trails network as roadway improvements are made to provide seamless connections and access to key destinations in the city. New development should provide a complete network of sidewalks and roadways that support access to adjacent neighborhoods and provide seamless ties to the city's trail network that make it easy to walk, bike, or drive.

### ***Encourage Density***

The majority of established residential areas consist of only single-family detached home. Although the character of these neighborhoods is desirable, they do not maximize the development potential of residential land within the city's Urban Service Area. Mixed residential development, which encourages a range of compatible housing types within a single residential development, is one strategy that should be used to accommodate greater variety within Elk River's housing stock and allow for more flexibility to build desirable and more dense residential development. Mixed residential should also be utilized to provide a buffer from lower intensity traditional single-family neighborhoods to higher intensity uses such as multi-family, mixed use, or commercial development.



## Downtown Neighborhoods

Downtown neighborhoods, as highlighted on the Housing Character Areas map, include the residential neighborhoods surrounding the downtown. Downtown neighborhoods feature some of the oldest homes in the city with construction of some dating back to the turn of the 20th century.

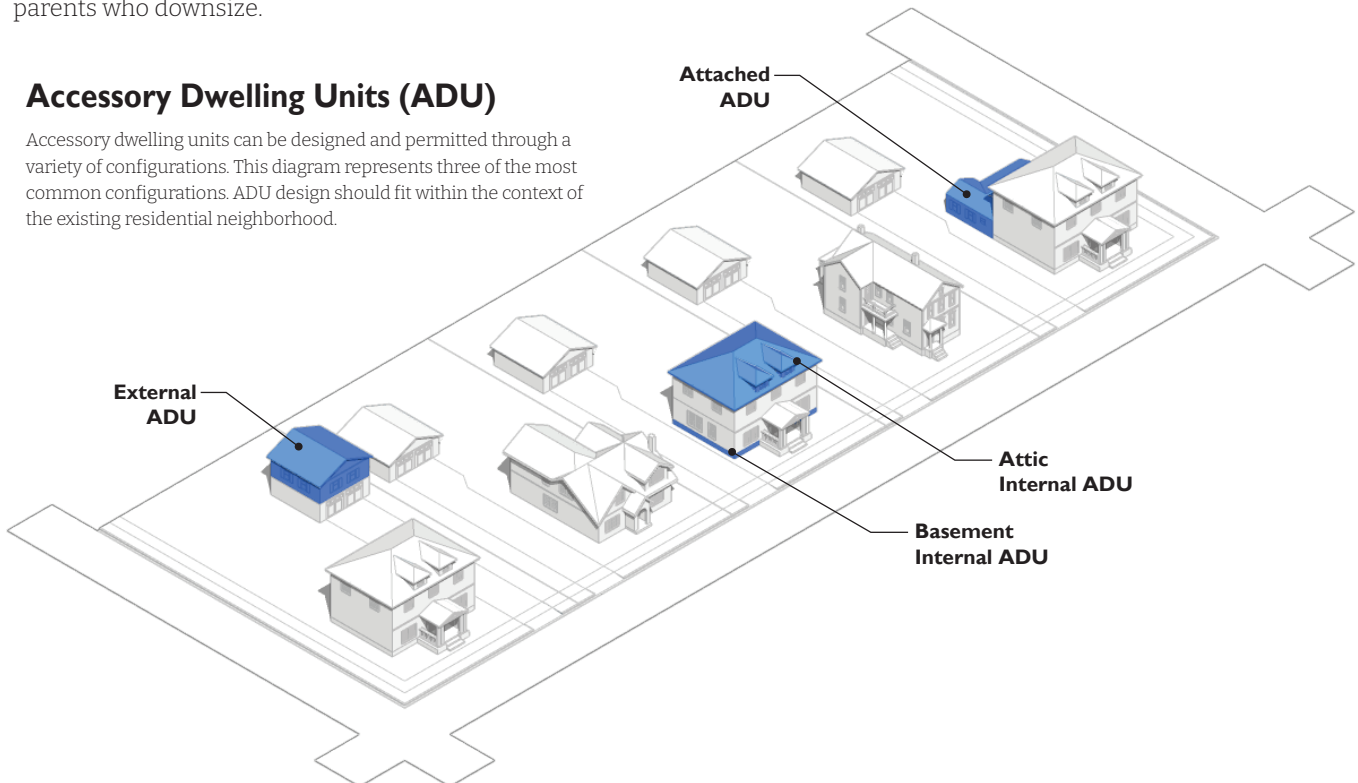
### Promote Accessory Dwelling Units

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) sometimes called “granny flats”, can provide for greater density in existing single-family neighborhoods without altering established community character. ADUs also provide opportunities for multi-generational housing, supporting parents or grandparents who downsize.

The city should consider updating its land development regulations to allow ADUs in all mixed residential and single-family neighborhoods, especially those surrounding the downtown. The update should include design standards that ensure ADUs are contextual and do not alter the overall character of neighborhoods, whether the ADU is internal or attached to the primary residence or external of the primary residence and above or in the place of a garage. Design standards could control the location of ADU entrances to minimize visibility from the street, control bulk and massing to ensure the design of the structure reflects the design of the primary residence, and more.

### Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)

Accessory dwelling units can be designed and permitted through a variety of configurations. This diagram represents three of the most common configurations. ADU design should fit within the context of the existing residential neighborhood.





### **Reinvest in Existing Housing**

Investing in the oldest homes built in Elk River not only improves the appearance and overall attractiveness of historic neighborhoods and the vibrancy of the downtown, but also helps support the largest source of naturally occurring affordable housing in the community. Studies completed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) have found that older houses typically maintain lower rents and sales prices than newer housing and as such make up the majority of affordable non-government subsidized housing across the United States. The city should work alongside the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) to encourage and enforce the continued maintenance and reinvestment in these critical neighborhoods to ensure a healthy, diverse, and affordable housing stock is available to residents of Elk River.

### **Waive License and Permit Fees Associated with Maintenance**

Reinvestment into the exterior of a home can be expensive and time consuming. Although most costs are associated with materials and labor, other costs may stem from the fee to place a dumpster or receive a license or permit. The city should consider working with a contracted partner for trash collection to waive these fees for a limited time period every year to encourage homeowners to reinvest in their properties. For example, the city could allow dumpsters to be placed on the street for groups of five or more neighbors looking to improve their homes.

### **Encourage Expansions of Existing Single-Family Detached Homes**

Many homes in the downtown neighborhoods have considerable yard space before they would be restricted by rear setback requirements. However, the maximum lot coverage for these parcels is a major restriction to any expansion of these homes. Making it easy to expand existing single-family detached homes can help diversify the overall housing stock in the city and also allow homeowners to meet the needs of their growing family, modernize their homes, and make them more marketable in the long run, while still fitting within the existing neighborhood character. The city should encourage expansions by reducing barriers to design, permitting, and construction through a variety of means such as:

- Assessing and amending residential district bulk and dimensional standards to allow for higher lot coverage;
- Waiving or reducing permitting fees on certain project types;
- Providing community information sessions on how to complete permit applications for homeowners completing their own work;
- Providing assistance to homeowners on how to find a licensed contractor in the city;
- Providing information sessions/guidance on how to schedule inspections once work is complete; and
- Expanding inspection times to include weekends and/or hours after the standard workday from 5:00-7:00 p.m.

In addition, the city should also advertise the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) as a key resource for low and moderate income homeowners looking to complete home expansions in Elk River. The HRA is a public corporation empowered to undertake certain types of housing and redevelopment projects in the city. The HRA has resources and funds available for homeowners to make improvements to their properties located within the Urban Service Area.



## Downtown/Uptown

The downtown/uptown area consists of a mix of uses including commercial, multi-family, and mixed use developments with residential units or offices above ground floor commercial space. The building stock in the downtown/uptown area features some of the most historic structures in the city. Although this is a great asset, it also presents unique challenges related to maintenance, adaptive reuse, and the ability to meet current market demand. In addition, the built-out nature of the historic downtown provides limited opportunities for infill which makes redevelopment a key aspect of supporting housing in the area.

### Leverage the Waterfront

The Mississippi River is a fantastic amenity that provides recreation, leisure, and waterfront views that are extremely attractive to residential developers. The city should leverage this asset to require developers in the downtown to create new public connections to the waterfront and for properties along the water's edge to provide a public easement for the future Mississippi River Trail extension. See the *Economic Development Plan* chapter for more details on how the waterfront can be utilized to leverage desired development and connections.



Downtown Mixed Use



Rivers Edge Commons Park



## Riverfront Residential

The northern portion of the Riverfront Residential area is identified for high density housing along the riverfront to take advantage of river views and to provide public riverfront access and amenities. Due to this area's proximity to the busy Highway 10 commercial corridor, deep setbacks and landscape buffering should be encouraged to ensure a pleasant residential environment.

The southern portion of the Riverfront Residential area, should be developed as mixed residential with a combination of small lot single-family detached homes, duplexes, and townhomes. This area is an extension of the existing residential areas along Yale Street and should be well connected to these existing homes. Common recreational amenities should be included in future development and take advantage of the adjacency to the river.

Further, the city contains many mature trees which provide numerous benefits to the community including shade, wildlife habitat, and aesthetic character. Wherever possible mature trees should be preserved and incorporated into new development as open space amenities and utilized to buffer or screen residential and lower density developments from higher intensity land uses such as commercial and the highway.

## Station Area Residential

The area directly surrounding the Northstar Station is identified for mixed residential with multi-family directly adjacent the station. This area should be developed with multiple connections to surrounding developments that provide easy access to commercial uses to the south and promote walkability with a complete network of sidewalks. The area north of the Northstar Station, identified as "Hillside Heights" in the *FAST District Plan*, is recommended for mixed residential development. This area should provide a transition to lower density housing to the north of 175th Avenue to seamlessly integrate into the existing residential neighborhoods surrounding the site and to fill the gap between them. In addition, new housing development should complement existing housing in the subarea and leverage the existing natural amenities including wetlands and woodland views, preserving tree canopy and these natural amenities utilizing best practices in conservation design where possible.

# DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The master plan for the 171st Avenue FAST outlines a course for change over a 25 year planning horizon. The FAST will ultimately become a series of unique districts showcasing residential, office, retail and industrial uses within the naturalized setting of Elk River. The master plan acknowledges significant transportation pattern changes and respects uses adjacent to the study area. The master plan guides land use and transportation changes for the area allowing near term investment always with an eye toward the future vision.

# 5

# DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

## HIGHLIGHTS

- » **Intensified mixed-use at transit station:** Over time, as the Northstar line matures and more people are looking for convenient access to transit, the area around the transit station will emerge as a prime location for housing, office and neighborhood retail with a compelling village atmosphere.
- » **Diverse employment base:** The master plan suggests a focus on creating a range of job opportunities beyond a living wage for Elk River. Industrial uses will promote a focus on manufacturing, energy and green business and commercial and office uses will create for opportunities from science and technology to research and development.
- » **Eco-business park:** An ecological focus for the future industrial uses leverages the “Energy City” brand of Elk River. Opportunities for shared facilities, reduced energy and emissions and re-use of manufacturing by-products will position the area as one of Minnesota’s first “Zero Waste” business park.
- » **Residential villages:** Building on the success of Elk River Station, the master plan suggests areas for a dense, compact and urban form of residential development, These distinctive villages uniquely responding to the site by taking advantage of natural amenities and topography and supply residents with a range of housing options and lifestyle choices.
- » **Strengthened pedestrian connections:** A network of recreational trails and comfortable sidewalks will knit together the study area with enhanced walking and biking experiences. This system of public, highly pedestrian spaces and facilities will provide a crucial amenity framework for high-quality development and redevelopment.
- » **Enhanced natural systems & open space amenities:** Building on the framework established by the large wetlands and surrounding city parks, the master plan suggests opportunities for additional public parks, plazas and urban spaces. Preservation of significant landscape features are critical steps to ensuring the essence of the FAST and the Elk River scenic landscape.
- » **Near term & long term focus:** With the impending transportation changes to the adjacent regional highways, the master plan suggests ways for development to occur in a shorter window of time while at the same time outlining the necessary steps to ensure near term development blends with the future development and transportation patterns.

### Land Use:

The Future Development Framework Plan, Figure 5.2, illustrates the major patterns of development, transportation and open spaces shaping the vision for the 171st Avenue FAST.

The Future Development Framework Plan prescribes land use categories ranging from commercial and industrial uses to a new mixed-use transit center with density ranges from 24-32 units per acre. Figure 5.3 depicts ranges of density and intensity for each land use type. This land use typology, more clearly articulates the development intensity, building scale, and general character for each of the land uses.

In general, land use designations vary slightly from the 2003 Comprehensive Plan. The mixed-use designation becomes more prevalent and depending on specific areas within the project area, certain mixed-use designated areas are targeted toward commercial or retail use, while other areas guide office or residential uses. Figure 5.1, the Development Yield Summary, outlines the projected level of development for each land use.

For the purposes of further discussing land use and development character, the 171st Avenue FAST has been divided into sub-area as illustrated in the following chapter. Figure 6.1, highlights the various sub-areas within the development framework plan.

Land Use	Acres	Units	Retail Sq. Ft.	Office Sq. Ft.	Industrial Sq. Ft.
Existing Residential	55	52			
Higher Density Residential	155	1,675 - 2,230			
Transit Center	120	400 - 530	35,000	1,450,000	
Service / Commercial	35		15,000	15,000	
Destination Retail	45		810,000		
Temporary Destination Retail	25		65,000		
Jobs Area	245			430,000	3,632,000
Open Space	250				
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>2,127 - 2,812</b>	<b>925,000</b>	<b>1,895,000</b>	<b>3,632,000</b>

Figure 5.1: Development Yield Summary



FUTURE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN

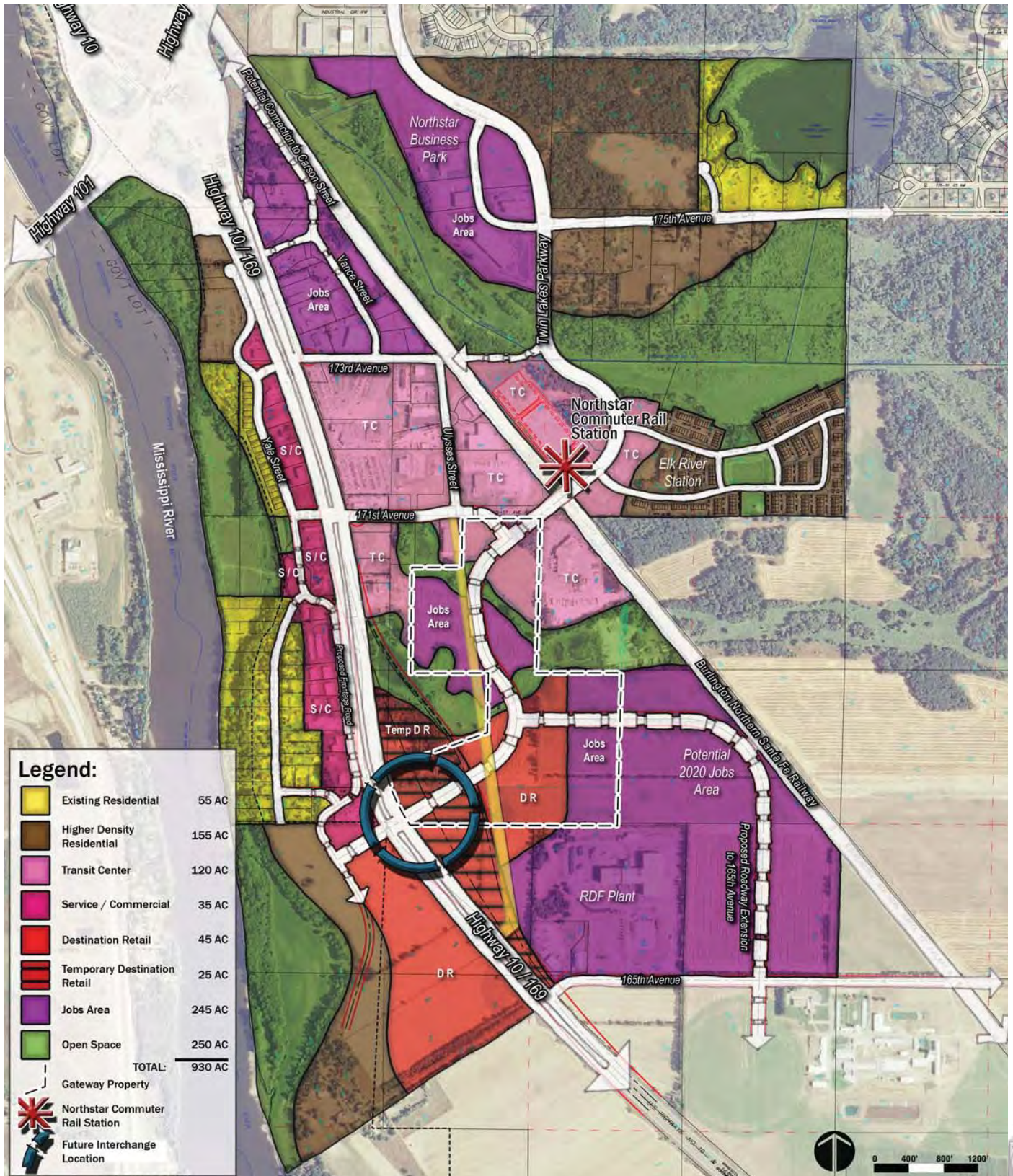


Figure 5.2: Future Development Framework Plan

# DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

## LAND USE TYPES

			<p><b>Existing Residential: 55 AC.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Single family, duplexes, townhomes and multiple-family dwellings</li> <li>* Average density range: 3 - 4 du/ac</li> </ul>
			<p><b>Higher Density Residential: 155 AC.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 3 - 4 Story Buildings</li> <li>* Surface Parking, Structured Parking</li> <li>* Housing Types: Apartments, Condominiums, Lofts, Senior Housing</li> <li>* Density Range: 24 - 32 du/ac</li> </ul>
			<p><b>Transit Center: 120 AC.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 2 - 5 Story Buildings</li> <li>* On-Street / Structured Parking</li> <li>* Ground Level Retail/Office/Industrial</li> <li>* Upper Level/Office/Residential</li> <li>* Density Range: 24 - 32 du/ac</li> </ul>
			<p><b>Service/Commercial: 35 AC.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 1 - 2 Story Buildings</li> <li>* Surface Parking</li> <li>* Retail/Office uses</li> </ul>
			<p><b>Destination Retail: 45 AC.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 1 - 2 Story Buildings</li> <li>* Surface Parking</li> </ul>
			<p><b>Temporary Destination Retail: 25 AC.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 1 Story Buildings</li> <li>* Surface Parking</li> <li>* Long Term Lease - Notice of timeline for future interchange</li> </ul>
			<p><b>Jobs Area: 245 AC.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 1 - 3 Story Buildings</li> <li>* Surface Parking</li> </ul>
			<p><b>Open Space: 250 AC.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Natural Features, Visual Amenity</li> <li>* Stormwater Filtration</li> <li>* Wildlife Habitat and Movement Corridors</li> <li>* Agriculture Production and Research</li> <li>* View sheds</li> <li>* Trails</li> </ul>

Figure 5.3: Land Use Types

## TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE:

### **Highway 10/169**

As the expert panel indicated early on in the master plan process, Highway 10/169 is the key for success of the 171st Avenue FAST. The presence of the regional highway provides the traffic and visibility making retail, commercial, office and industrial development possible. The transition of Highway 10/169 to a freeway will be a significant trigger for development and redevelopment and integral to the roadway change will be the placement of the future interchange.

### *Future Interchange*

The location of the future interchange has significant land use impacts. The master plan examined numerous scenarios for the interchange. Option A worked the best to balance the desires of the existing businesses for the interchange to be as far north as possible without compromising the existing single family neighborhood to the west. This location coupled with the direct routing of Twin Lakes Parkway to the interchange provide a direct route to the Northstar commuter station. Ultimately, the location of the interchange is closer to the built environment and will likely increase property values further into the built area and increase the chances of broader development areas benefiting from the interchange.

### *Additional Considerations for Highway 10/169*

In 2012, MN DOT plans a resurfacing of Highway 10/169. As part of this project, it is understood that MN DOT will be closing all medians except for 171st and 165th Avenue for safety reasons. Altering access points in this manner will likely initiate some turnover for uses along Highway 10/169 and strengthen the need for more internal roadway connectedness. In the future, the city should work with MN DOT to further investigate overpass options near 171st Avenue to better connect the land uses west of Highway 10/169 to the study area.

### *Rail Line*

The master plan suggests providing an additional crossing of the BNSF rail line near 173rd Avenue. This additional crossing will allow for improved traffic flow for the commercial and industrial uses in the north of the study, rather than funneling all traffic to Twin Lakes Parkway to cross the rail line. As the city lobbies to shift the rail line north near downtown, the city should investigate the feasibility of either an at-grade or grade separated crossing in this location. While creating an additional crossing is challenging, it is still worthwhile as something to strive for to create better and more intensive development.



An additional rail crossing should be considered at 173rd Avenue

The opportunity for a rail spur off of a major freight rail corridor could be significant for industrial uses in the FAST. The master plan suggests a parallel spur line to serve the industrial uses surrounding the RDF plant.

# DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

## TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE DIAGRAM

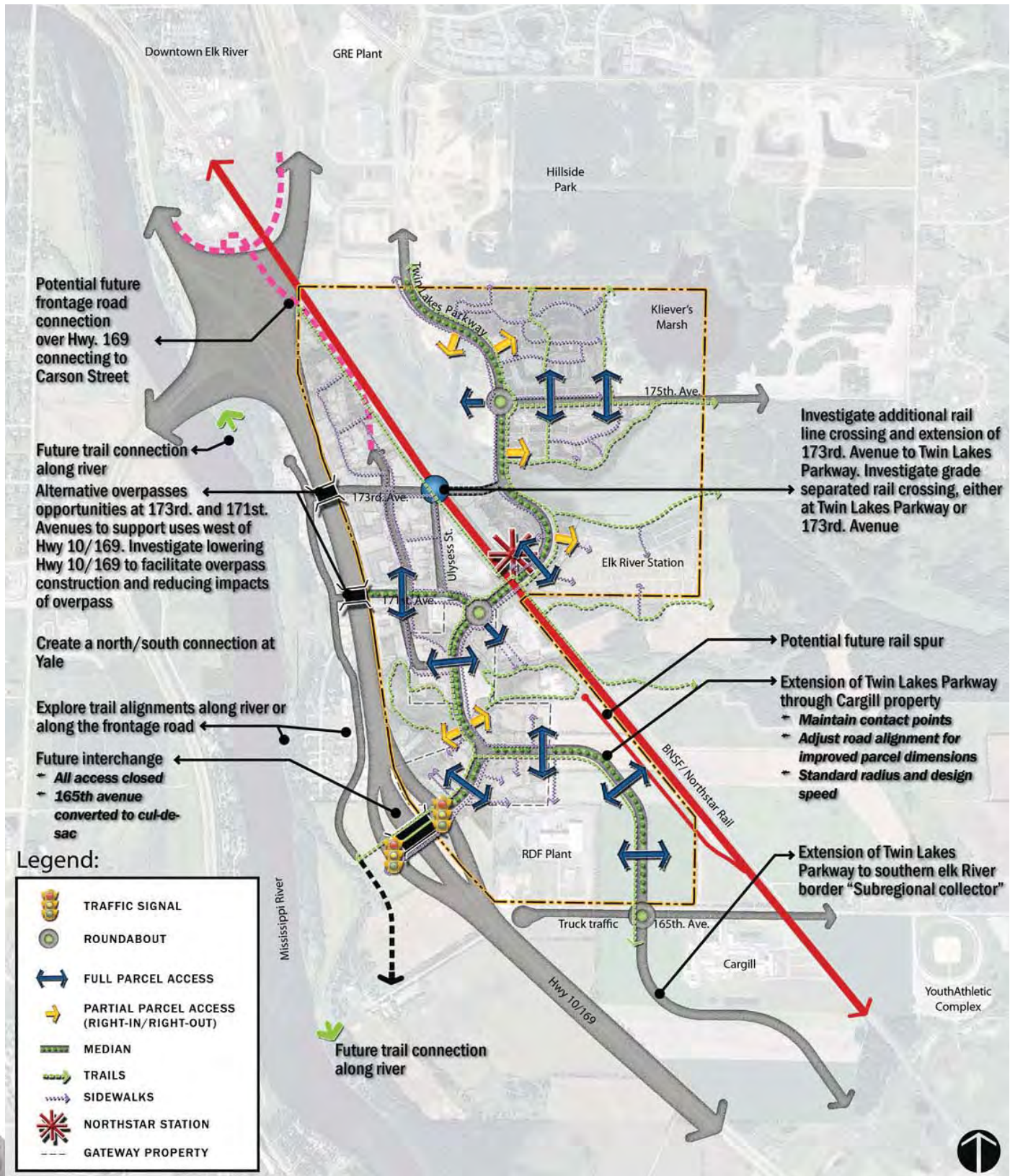


Figure 5.4: Transportation Infrastructure Diagram

## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE:

The Mississippi River, expansive wetlands, native oaks, and pine groves provide a distinct character for the project area. The protection and enhancement of these landscape features are important elements to retain as development occurs in the district. These natural features provide added value to surrounding development and provide recreational opportunities when public trails are integrated to the open space network. This master plan suggest establishing a framework for development patterns centered around existing natural systems, stormwater treatment, parks and open space and trails, or green infrastructure.

### **Open Space, Wetlands, Natural Features**

The development pattern in the FAST is truly shaped by natural features. With almost 25% of the land area in the wetlands or floodplains, these natural systems are highly visible and contribute to the scenic character of the area. The northern and southern wetland reaches provide natural breaks between development zones, and the plan promotes providing increased public access to the edges of these natural systems. The plan also encourages the preservation native vegetation. As development occurs and where appropriate, existing topography and larger stands of existing trees should be preserved to maintain the scenic character for the FAST.

### **Parks**

The master plan suggests the potential creation public park space along the river front and in the Northern Heights sub-area and a strong connection north to Hillside City Park. A number of public parks are adjacent to the site and connections to these parks are important to attract residents and employment to the study area.

### **Viewsheds**

Viewsheds into the site from along Highway 10/169 are important to signify the FAST project area. Site designs reflective of the natural setting of Elk River should be considered. Internally, the large wetlands afford sweeping views of the natural landscape and development should take advantage of these assets.

### **Stormwater Treatment**

The master plan encourages the stormwater infrastructure features such as stormwater ponds, infiltration basins and bio-swales are designed as natural open space amenities for the surrounding development. Furthermore, these features should be interconnected to the broader system of wetlands and natural areas as illustrated through the Pinnacle and Office Village sub-areas.

### **Urban Forest**

The master plan encourages the preservation of existing vegetation and establishing a strong canopy of urban street trees throughout the FAST.



*The natural systems are highly visible and contribute to the scenic character of the site.*



*Wetlands occupy 25% of the land area*



*Connections to nearby parks are important*



*Stormwater treatment as an amenity*

# DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

## Green Infrastructure Diagram

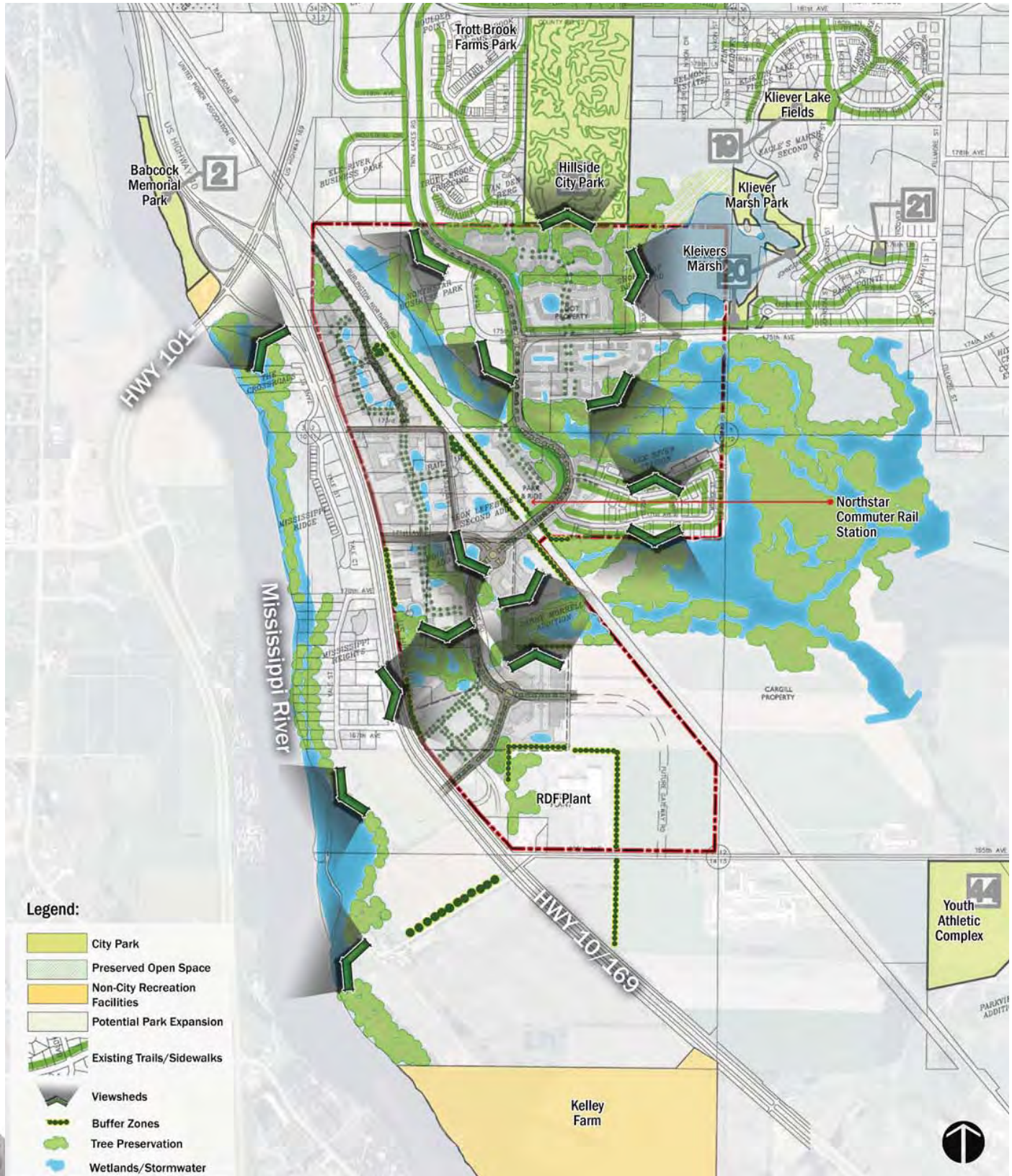


Figure 5.5: Green Infrastructure Diagram

## TRANSIT SYSTEM:

### *Northstar Commuter Rail Station*

The Northstar commuter rail is a plus for growth in the FAST area, but not a primary driver for change. As the system matures and ridership grows it is important the station meets the demands of the patrons. Adequate parking will be a necessity. While the current lot provides 700 spaces, additional space may be needed in the future. A parking deck or ramp structure should be considered for the station in consideration with mixed-use development before more surface parking spaces are added since little land exists for development immediately adjacent to the station. Providing adequate facilities for bike commuting are also suggested. Bike lockers allow a safe, secure location for commuters to store their bikes. A well integrated trail system will further promote bike commuting to the Northstar station.

### *Community Circulator Bus*

With the potential for more increased reverse commute trains, the city of Elk River should examine the feasibility of a community circulator bus to work in concert with the Northstar schedule. The circulator would connect community employment centers, downtown and commercial centers to the Northstar station eliminating the need for the automobile for some commuters.

## IMPACT ANALYSIS:

A fully developed plan for the 171<sup>st</sup> Avenue FAST will impact the existing public infrastructure systems in the area. With the introduction of development and redevelopment in portions of the project area, improvements to the public systems will be necessary and advantageous to foster more intensive development.

### *Roadway and Traffic Analysis*

As the master plan for the 171<sup>st</sup> Avenue FAST indicates, the road network is critical to the long-term success of all uses within the plan, especially when access restrictions are implemented along Highway 10/169. It is anticipated that upgrades to the intersection at 171<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Highway 10/169 addressing grading, sightlines and stacking will be needed as development occurs in the FAST. Additionally, internal roadway connections from development areas will need to be designed to mesh with the extension of Twin Lakes Parkway to the south through the Gateway in order to facilitate traffic flow through the area.

### *Infrastructure*

Initial analysis by City staff of the sewer and water indicates that upgrades to major infrastructure systems will be needed at some point during the development time line. Most impacts will come from realignment of sanitary sewer and water lines with roadway improvements. The overall capacity for sanitary sewer and water flows will need to be further studied as development proposals come forward. Additionally, further electrical network planning will need to occur in the project area.



A parking deck or ramp may be needed in the future to accommodate increased demand for the Northstar commuter rail.



Bike lockers allow a secure location for commuters to store their bikes



A circulator bus would connect other key activity centers in Elk River with the Northstar station

# DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

## DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER - SUB AREA DIAGRAM

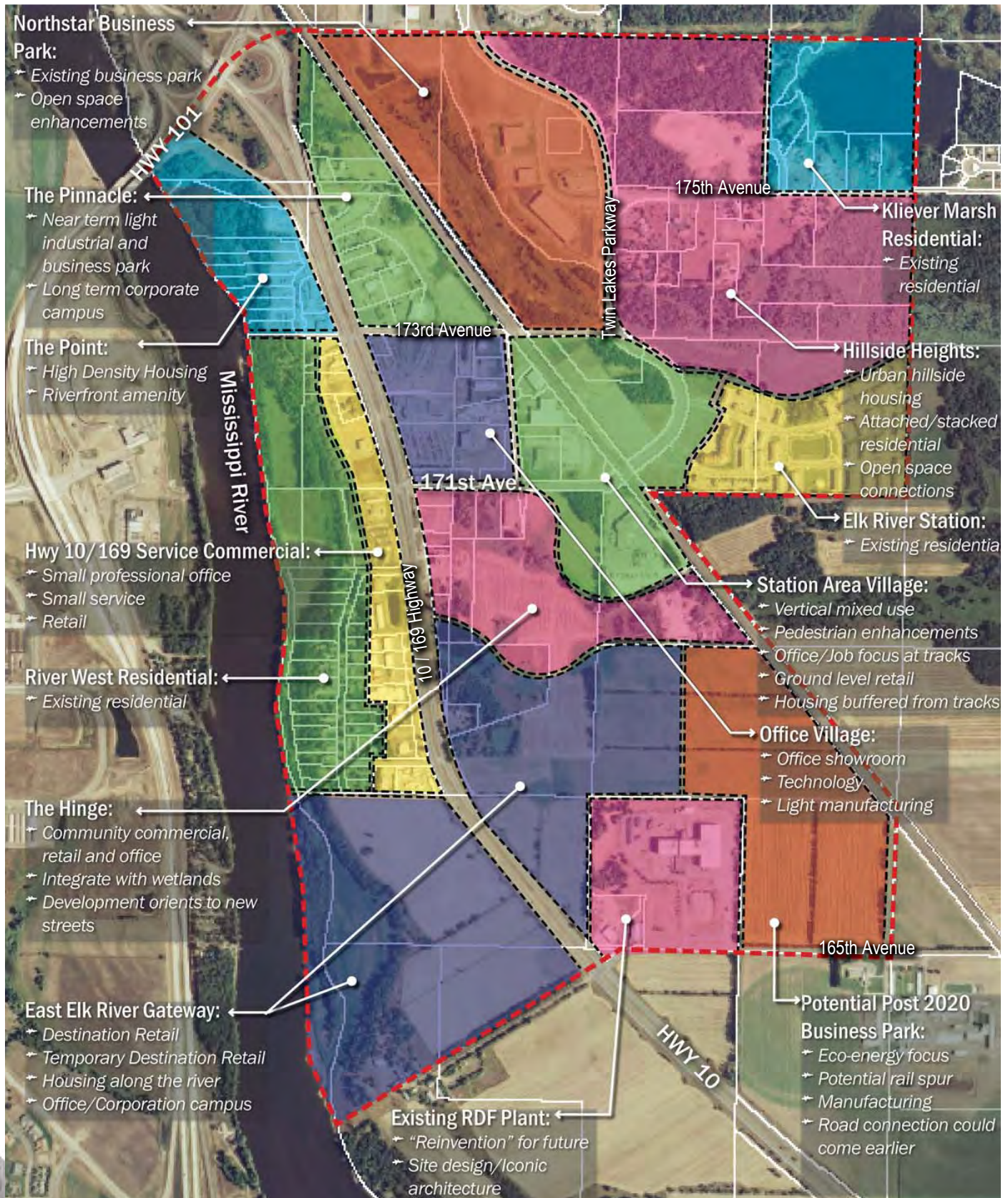


Figure 6.1: Development Character - Sub Area Diagram

# DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

## Residential Neighborhood Districts



### KLIEVER'S MARSH AND RIVER WEST RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

The existing residential uses surrounding Kliever's Marsh and nestled along Yale Street along the Mississippi River are not anticipated to see and significant change as a part of the FAST study.



Existing Single Family Homes Surrounding Kliever's Marsh

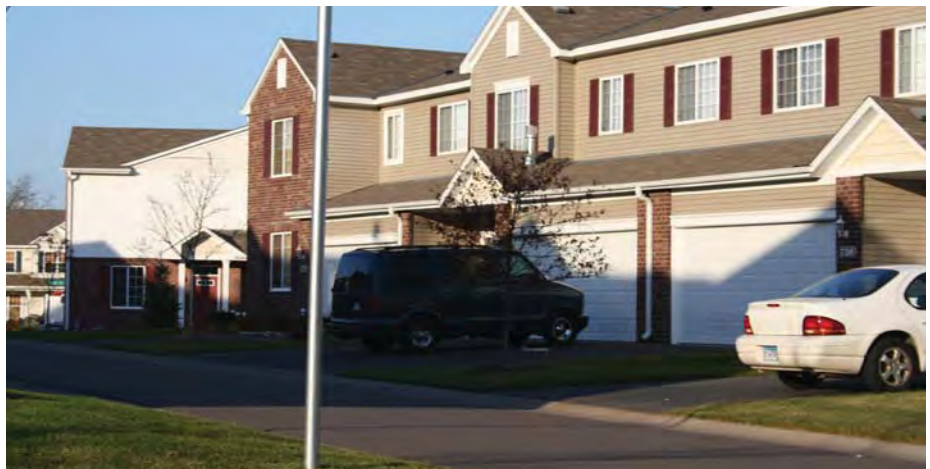
### ELK RIVER STATION



Elk River Station is a successful model for higher density housing near the transit station. The development provides multiple housing options, in a well organized, compact development pattern.



Existing Elk River Station with a range of housing types



## HILLSIDE HEIGHTS



This district showcases a range of housing options and takes advantage of wetland views and wooded rolling topography. A design priority will be creating a physical connection between

Hillside City Park to the north and the large wetland complex on the southern boundary and developing park spaces and a continuous public trail network along the periphery of the wetland.

The internal street network connects with the existing street network on adjacent property and establishes smaller organized development parcels within the district. **Housing types respect adjacent uses by scaling down** from larger stacked housing near the intersection of 175th Avenue and Twin Lakes Parkway to more detached villa & townhome housing types near the existing single-family uses to the east.

**Building placement emphasizes the street** within the center of the district, taking advantage of long views across the wetland and preserving existing woodlands in the north. High quality streetscapes with sidewalks, boulevard trees and pedestrian scaled lighting should be considered on all streets of the district.



Hillside Heights District Vignette Study

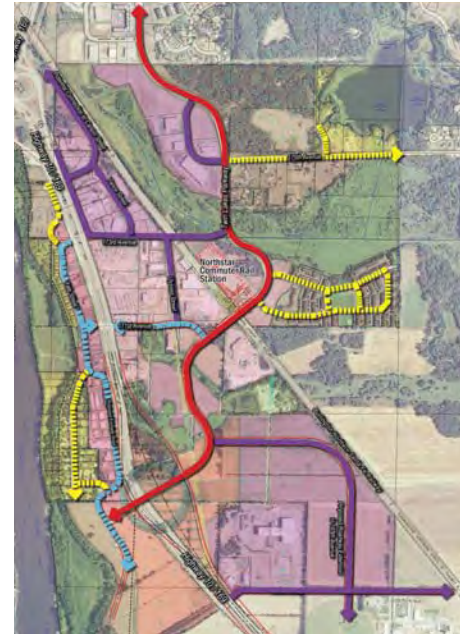
# DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

## LOCAL STREET NETWORK CHARACTER

The street system changes in the master plan are suggested in order to improve traffic circulation and pedestrian connectivity to the rest of the community. The majority of roadway alterations are integrated to extension of Twin Lakes Parkway south to the future interchange and the conversion of Highway 10/169 to a freeway.

### Twin Lakes Parkway

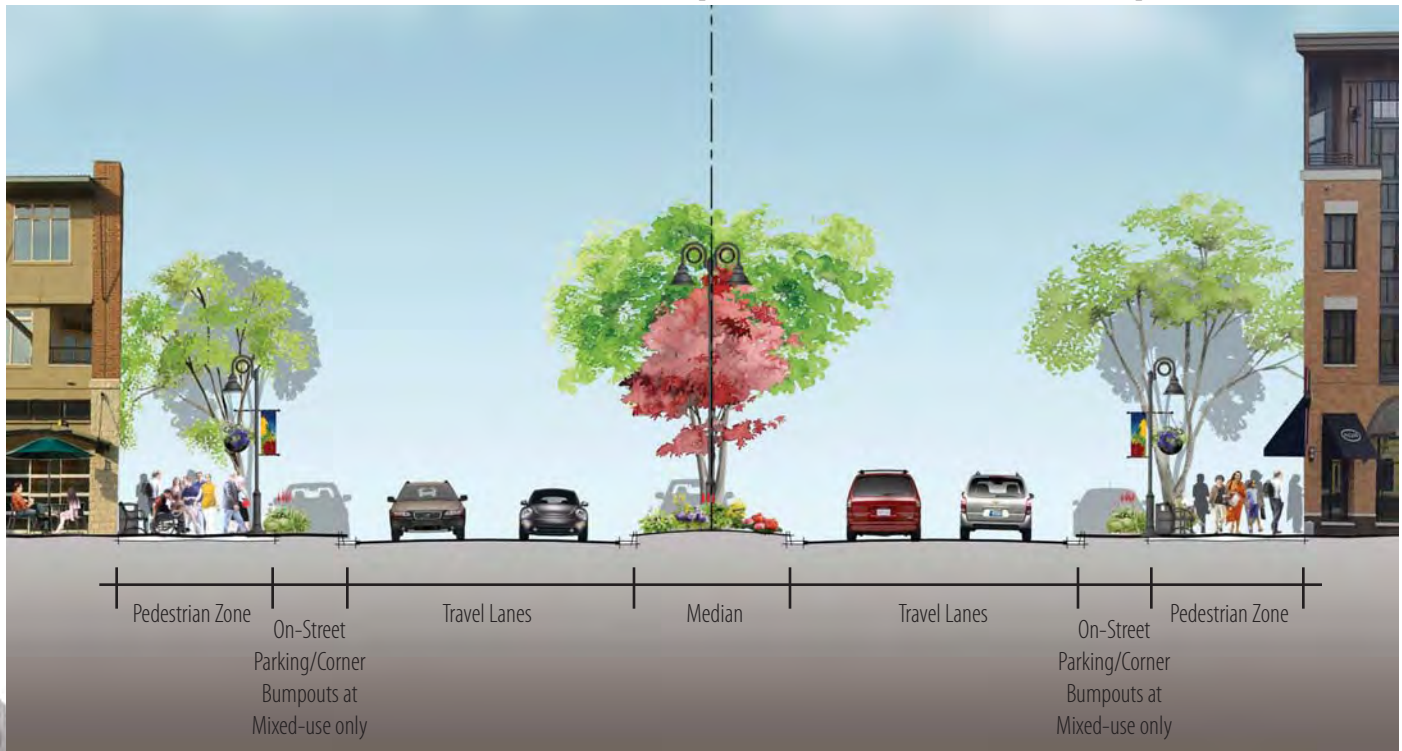
Twin Lakes Parkway provides the infrastructure framework for organizing future development and redevelopment in the study area. The master plan envisions the roadway as a four lane collector with a planted median with a 40 mile an hour design speed, and lower speeds through the Station Area Village sub-area. Access management along the roadway defines the development pattern and general parcel configurations for numerous uses. Full intersections require a minimum of one-eighth mile between them, while right-in, right-out access occurs at roughly 300 feet intervals. The master plan suggests the use of round-a-bouts at major intersections along Twin Lakes Parkway through the study area; 175th Avenue and 171st Avenue. Round-a-bouts in these locations will aid in traffic flow and will be designed with large radius and roll-up aprons to accommodate truck traffic. A traffic signal is suggested for the intersection at the transit station providing a safe crossing and to benefit the retail uses in the mixed use district. The 120' right-of-way for Twin Lakes Parkway should continue throughout the project area.



Streetscape typology diagram

- Twin Lakes Parkway
- Commercial Street
- Residential Street
- Office/Industrial Street

## TWIN LAKES PARKWAY SECTION (mixed use District)

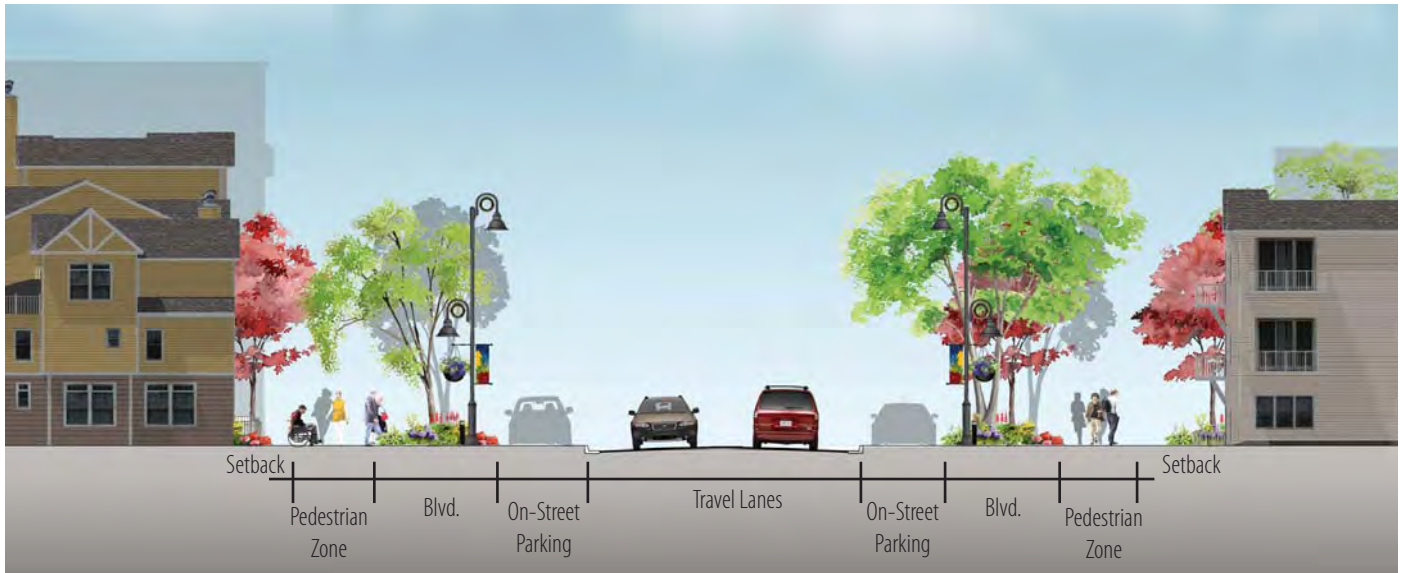


Pedestrian Zone
On-Street Parking/Corner Bumpouts at Mixed-use only
Travel Lanes
Median
Travel Lanes
On-Street Parking/Corner Bumpouts at Mixed-use only
Pedestrian Zone

# DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

## Residential Streets

Streets within residential districts organize the development pattern into a curvilinear grid responding to natural systems & topography. These streets are traditional in character with opposing drive lanes, on-street parallel parking, turf boulevards, sidewalks, street trees and lighting. Residential streets have a 60' right-of-way.



**Residential section**



**Commercial street section**

## Commercial Streets

Commercial streets in mixed-use and retail areas have extensive streetscape elements. Site furnishings such as benches, bike racks and trash receptacles should be installed on wide sidewalks. Pedestrian scaled street lighting and boulevard trees will provide separation from the street. Commercial streets have a 70' right-of-way.