

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

AGENDA TITLE:	Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Form-based Code and Legislative Rezone for the South Aurora Triangle
DEPARTMENT:	Planning and Development Services
PRESENTED BY:	Joseph W. Tovar, FAICP, Director Planning and Development Services

PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT:

The City Council approves the docket of proposed comprehensive plan amendments once a year. This year, there is only one privately sponsored proposed comp plan amendment, which will be presented for Council's docketing consideration in February. The only staff-initiated comprehensive plan amendment which we would like you to docket at this time concerns the part of the City that is bound by N. 145th Street on the south, Aurora Avenue N. on the east, and the Interurban Trail on the northwest (hereafter referred to as the South Aurora Triangle or SAT)

It is the purpose of this staff report to explain the location, rationale, and objectives for the staff's recommendation that the Council docket the South Aurora Triangle subarea plan. Council is not asked at this time to render a final judgment about the merits or details of the proposed plan amendment (or the proposed accompanying zoning amendments). Rather, this is only the docketing decision. It will be necessary to include this item on the docket in order for the staff to move the proposal forward with further refinement of code text, SEPA compliance, Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (DCTED) notification, and the public process, including a public hearing by the Planning Commission. The proposed amendments, or variants thereon, would only be approved by the City Council after that lengthy public process and assuming that when all the facts are assembled the Council then decides to adopt the proposed amendments.

These proposed plan and zoning amendments have been formulated by the staff in response to a variety of factors. First, the City's Economic Development Strategy, and several comprehensive plan policies, call for higher residential densities within the Aurora Corridor. Second, major capital improvement projects are nearing completion on two legs of the SAT; namely, mile one of the Aurora project and the connecting bridges of the Interurban Trail. Third, mixed-use and higher density developments in Lake City, and specific inquiries from developers and Aurora property owners in Shoreline, suggest that the market will support

larger projects than we have seen in Shoreline thus far. Fourth, the City Council has expressed an interest in utilizing innovative techniques such as form-based codes to improve the quality and character of new development while making the process more timely, fair, and predictable for both existing residents and property developers.

The City has the authority under the Growth Management Act to adopt subarea plans (RCW 36.70A.080(2)), and innovative land use management techniques (RCW 36.70A.090). Although not specifically named in the GMA, a form-based development code would clearly constitute an "innovative land use management technique."

The staff-proposed plan amendment would designate the "South Aurora Triangle" as a subarea on Fig. LU-1 in the Comprehensive Plan. The plan presently shows these areas for commercial and mixed use, which would cover the range of retail, restaurant, office, and residential. The primary thrust of the new plan designation would be to set the policy framework for the mixed use, form-based, design standard regulations that would accompany the plan amendment.

The proposed zoning map amendment would replace the current "Regional Business" and "High Density/48 units per acre" designations (See Ex. D) with a new zoning district titled "FBC-1." These changes are proposed only for the South Aurora Triangle. The specific details of the text for the FBC-1 zone are still being developed, but the major components would include:

- Broad categories of retail, restaurant, and office uses are permitted outright
- Residential uses also are permitted outright, but with the traditional limits on individual unit size and site density removed
- A floor area ratio to cap building bulk while still allowing design flexibility and variety from parcel to parcel
- A maximum building height of twelve floors (as opposed to the six now allowed)
- Site design requirements such as landscaping and through-block pedestrian linkages between Aurora and the Interurban Trail
- Street-wall build-to requirements along Aurora and setback lines along the Interurban Trail
- Architectural building design standards including elements to create human scale
- Potential for requiring that projects acquire transferred development rights to achieve the top floor(s) in multi-story buildings

Much has been written about "form-based codes" and similar innovative zoning techniques. Their basic premise is that a community's interests are better served with regulations that place primary focus on the physical form, bulk, shape and design characteristics of new development rather than the traditional focus on

land use categories. Land use is not ignored in a form-based code, but instead is regulated using broad parameters (e.g., listing "retail" as a broad category of permitted uses rather than listing only some of the dozens of variants on retail found in most traditional zoning codes). Such an approach better responds to market economics, while still affording the opportunity to prohibit undesirable uses.

I have personal experience writing form-based and design-oriented codes, first in Kirkland, more recently in Covington. I would be the primary author of the proposed text for the "FBC-1" zone. Assuming the Council approves docketing the plan amendments, I would have the proposed companion FBC-1 zoning text ready by the end of February, satisfy DCTED notice and SEPA requirements for both the plan and zoning amendments in March, and reach the Planning Commission for public hearing in April or June. Council could see a recommendation shortly thereafter.

Incidentally, the subject of form-based codes will be addressed as one of the first topics in the "Shoreline Speaker Series" that launches in February. First up will be Mr. Mark Hinshaw, nationally recognized urban design expert and *Seattle Times* columnist, who will provide an overview of the "state of the art" of land development and community design, illustrating his points with many specific examples from communities throughout the region and country.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: There are no financial impacts of this council action. The necessary staff work can be undertaken with present budget resources.

RECOMMENDATION:

The staff recommends that the City Council authorize the inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan docket the staff-drafted proposed map and text amendments for the South Aurora Triangle area as shown in Exs. "G" and "H."

Attachments

- Ex. "A" - Existing Future Comprehensive Plan Map
- Ex. "B" - Detail of Existing Comp Plan in the South Aurora Triangle
- Ex. "C" - Existing Comp Plan Policies LU 14, LU 17, LU 18, LU 19, LU 21, LU 22, LU 25, LU 29, LU 30, LU 34, and LU 36 on pages 29-32
- Ex. "D" - Existing Zoning Map (with SAT shown in broken line)
- Ex. "E" - Topography
- Ex. "F" - Aerial Photograph
- Ex. "G" - Proposed amended Comprehensive Plan Map
- Ex. "H" - Proposed new Comprehensive Plan Text regarding the South Aurora Triangle
- Ex. "I" - Proposed amended Zoning Map showing new "FBC-1" zoning district bound by N 145th Street, Aurora Ave N., and the Interurban Trail.

Approved By:

City Manager 

City Attorney 

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**Point Wells
Potential
Annexation
Area**

Woodway

Edmonds

Mountlake Terrace

Lake Ballinger

StreetBock #s

**City of Shoreline
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Representation of Official
Land Use Map Adopted By
City Ordinance No. 292 and 388.

Legend

- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Mixed Use
- Community Business
- Regional Business
- Public Facilities
- Single Family Institution
- Special Study Area
- Ballinger Special Study Area
- Briarcrest Special Study Area
- North City Business District
- Paramount Special Study Area
- Private Open Space
- Public Open Space

0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet

This map is NOT an official map. No warranty
is made concerning the accuracy, currency,
or completeness of data depicted on this map.

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**Comprehensive Plan
Land Use**

Figure LU-1 : Comprehensive Plan Land U

Exhibit A

EXHIBIT A

(PORTION OF FIG. LU-1)

- ## Exhibit B

Land Use Element – Goals & Policies

- building height
- bulk and scale
- type and number of accessory buildings
- pervious and impervious surface coverage
- lot coverage by buildings
- setbacks for front, back and side yards
- storm water runoff
- provision of public sewers and water
- limits on outside storage of more than one inoperative vehicle
- landscaping
- privacy and defensible space
- attractive street frontage
- screening of on site storage of recreational vehicles and boats
- landscaping
- compatibility with neighborhood character

LU11: Allow detached or attached accessory dwelling units associated with single family detached houses with the following considerations:

- one accessory dwelling unit per lot
- the applicant constructs satisfactory stormwater mitigation as defined in the Municipal Code
- owner must occupy one of the units
- cannot be larger than 50% of the living area of the main unit
- one additional off-street parking space must be provided

LU12: The Medium Density Residential land use designation is intended for areas currently developed with medium density residential dwelling uses; and to areas where single family detached dwelling units might be redeveloped at slightly higher densities; and to areas currently zoned for medium density residential. Single family dwelling units, duplexes, triplexes, zero lot line houses, townhouses and cottage housing will be permitted. Apartments will be allowed under certain conditions.

The permitted base density for this designation may not exceed 12 dwelling units per acre unless a neighborhood plan, subarea plan or special district overlay plan/zone has been approved. Appropriate zoning for this designation is R-8 or R-12 Residential.

LU13: Encourage the integration of public open spaces into residential neighborhoods, (including small pocket parks) and protection of existing stands of trees and vegetation which serve as buffers.

LU14: The High Density Residential designation is intended for areas near employment and commercial areas; where high levels of transit service are present or likely; and areas currently zoned high density residential. This designation creates a transition between high intensity uses, including commercial uses, to lower intensity residential uses. All residential housing types are permitted.

The permitted base density for this designation will not exceed 48 dwelling units per acre unless a neighborhood plan, subarea plan or special district overlay plan

has been approved. Appropriate zoning for this designation is R-12, R-18, R-24 or R-48 Residential.

- LU15:** Periodically review new multifamily residential development and redevelopment standards adopted by the City to ensure that the standards:
- preserve and/or enhances existing vegetation, including trees;
 - includes architectural/design features, such as building modulation, porches, balconies, window treatment, to enhance the existing community character and improve street frontage;
 - address siting that protects the natural environment (e.g. habitat areas, site terrain, wetlands);
 - respect adjacent development by providing setbacks, height reductions and/or buffers for lesser densities;
 - provide an attractive street frontage;
 - cluster on site to provide the maximum open space, including recreation and/or play areas and other amenities available to residents;
 - provide for privacy between units;
 - provide for ground orientation and/or usage for all units;
 - provide for on-site, screened parking for vehicles which is not located in front yard setback areas;
 - screen any onsite storage for recreational vehicles;
 - do not allow for outside storage of more than one inoperative vehicle;
 - provide pedestrian connections within project and to adjacent uses such as bike lanes and walking trails; and
 - screen loading and unloading areas.

- LU16:** Allow clustering of residential units to preserve open space and reduce surface water run-off. Specific limitations or incentives for clustering will be established in the zoning code to assure that clustered development will be compatible with the surrounding land uses and consistent with the underlying zoning.

Mixed Use Land Use

- LU17:** The Mixed Use designation applies to a number of stable or developing areas and to the potential annexation area at Point Wells. This designation is intended to encourage the development of pedestrian oriented places, with architectural interest, that integrate a wide variety of retail, office and service uses with residential uses.

Appropriate zoning designations for the area include, Neighborhood Business, Community Business, Office, Regional Business, Industrial, R-8, R-12, R-18, R-24 and/or R-48.

Commercial Land Use

- LU18:** The Community Business designation applies to areas within the Aurora Corridor, North City and along Ballinger Road. This designation provides for retail, office and service uses and high density residential uses. Significant pedestrian connection and amenities are anticipated. Some limited industrial uses might be

allowed under certain circumstances. Appropriate zoning designations for this area might include the Neighborhood Business, Community Business, Regional Business, Office, R-12, R-18, R-24, or R-48.

LU19: The Regional Business designation applies to an area within the Aurora Corridor north of N 185th St. and south of N 192nd St. This designation provides for retail, office, service, high density residential and some industrial uses. Significant pedestrian connection and amenities are anticipated. Appropriate zoning designations for this area include Community Business, Office, Regional Business, Industrial, R-12, R-18, R-24 or R-48.

LU20: Provide public investment and priority services to specified neighborhood and community business areas to increase their overall economic health through methods such as:

- organizational development of merchants association
- coordinated permit review for new development
- coordinated land use planning and subarea planning for business and neighborhood areas
- Metro King County transit improvements
- transportation and traffic improvements
- pedestrian and bicycle improvements
- aesthetic improvements such as street trees and street furniture
- enhanced business area image
- community-building through events and celebrations
- an area-specific planned action environmental review
- a "Main Street Program" approach, if suitable

LU21: Ensure vital and attractive commercial areas through a public/private investments including:

- pedestrian amenities and street aesthetics, such as trees, benches, etc.
- adequate transportation services such as bus routes, parking, roads, loading and delivery zones, bicycle and pedestrian routes
- public spaces such as plazas, pocket parks, intersection treatments and amenities, and public squares
- appropriate signage excluding billboards
- transportation demand management programs such as carpooling and bus usage
- gateway treatments and public art

Public involvement will be required.

LU22: Provide incentives such as increased height and bulk up to 30% of allowed floor area ratio if a development provides at least three of the following:

- public plaza with landscaping
- landscaping which exceeds requirements by 30% or more
- pocket parks available for the public and maintained by the commercial development
- substantial public amenities such as art, exceptional street treatment through furniture, fountains, or public informational kiosks
- architectural features such as clock towers, facade treatments, distinctive building entrances, public meeting rooms and gathering spaces

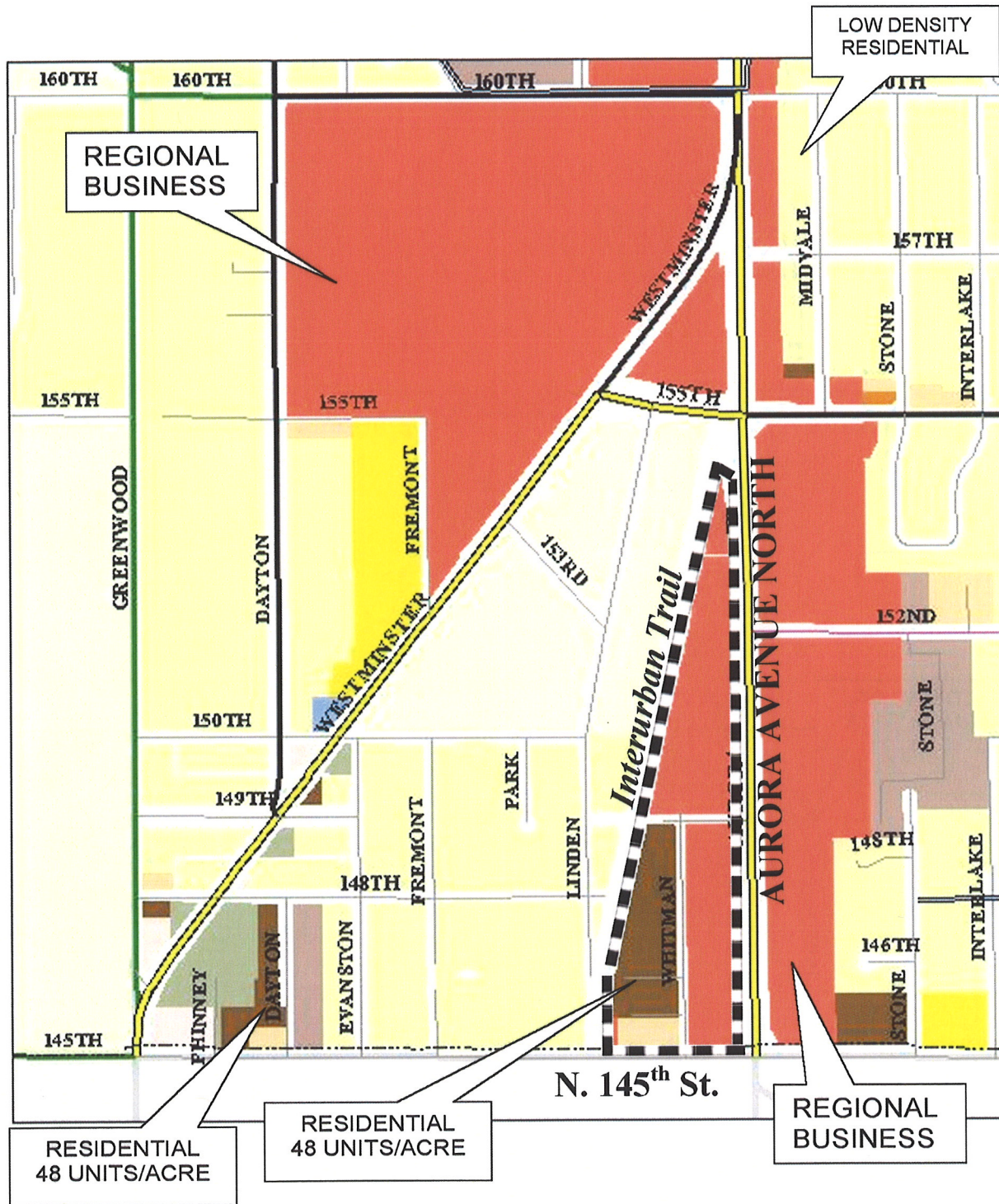
Public involvement will be required.

Industrial Land Use

- LU23:** Ensure that existing industrial uses adjacent to I-5 derive access from that highway and mitigate their impacts on the adjacent land uses and City streets.
- LU24:** Support a development review process for additions or enlargements to existing industrial uses that:
- includes a public review process
 - protects environmental quality
 - mitigates potential impacts on utility and capital facilities
 - provides for an efficient and timely review process

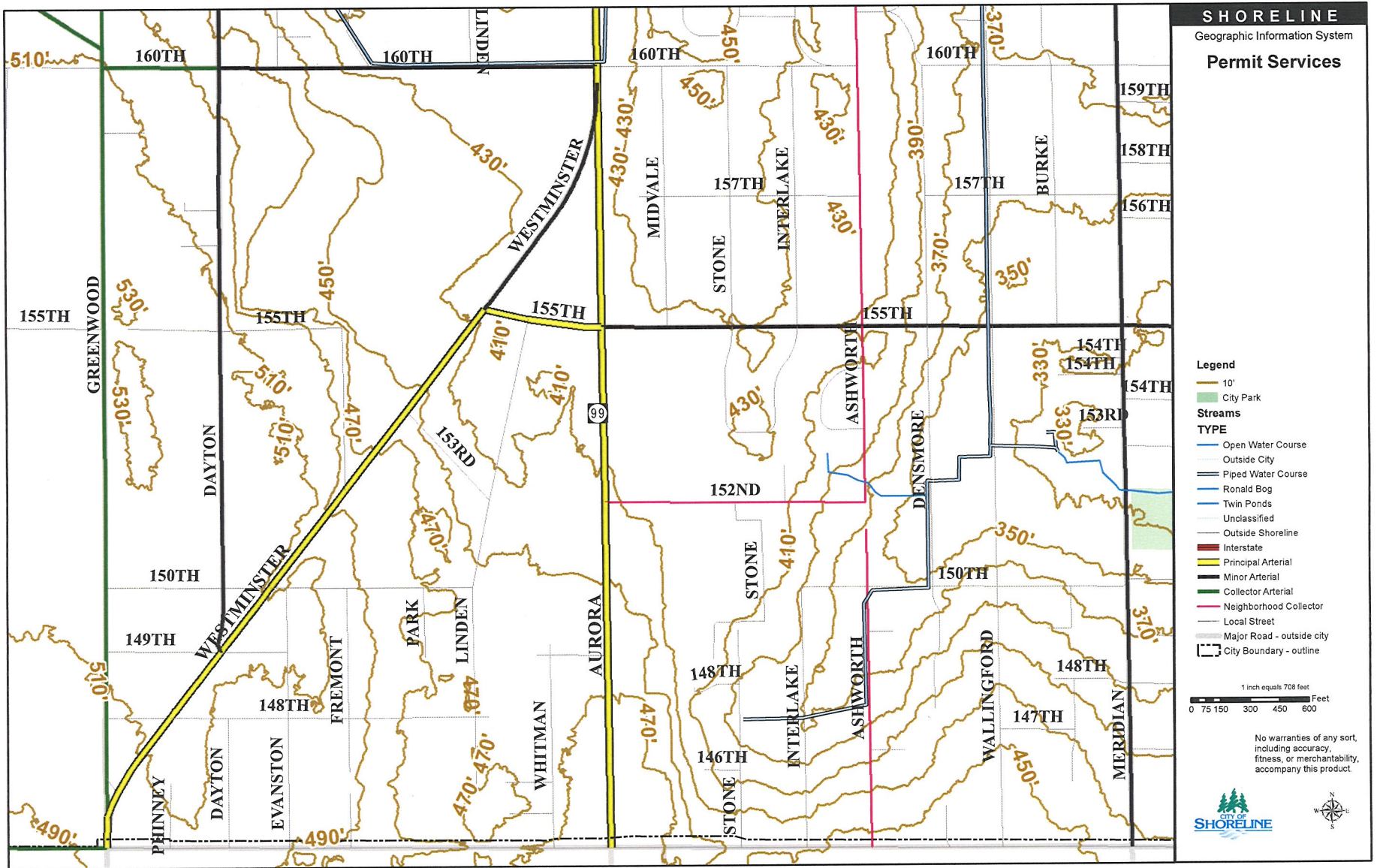
Aurora Corridor

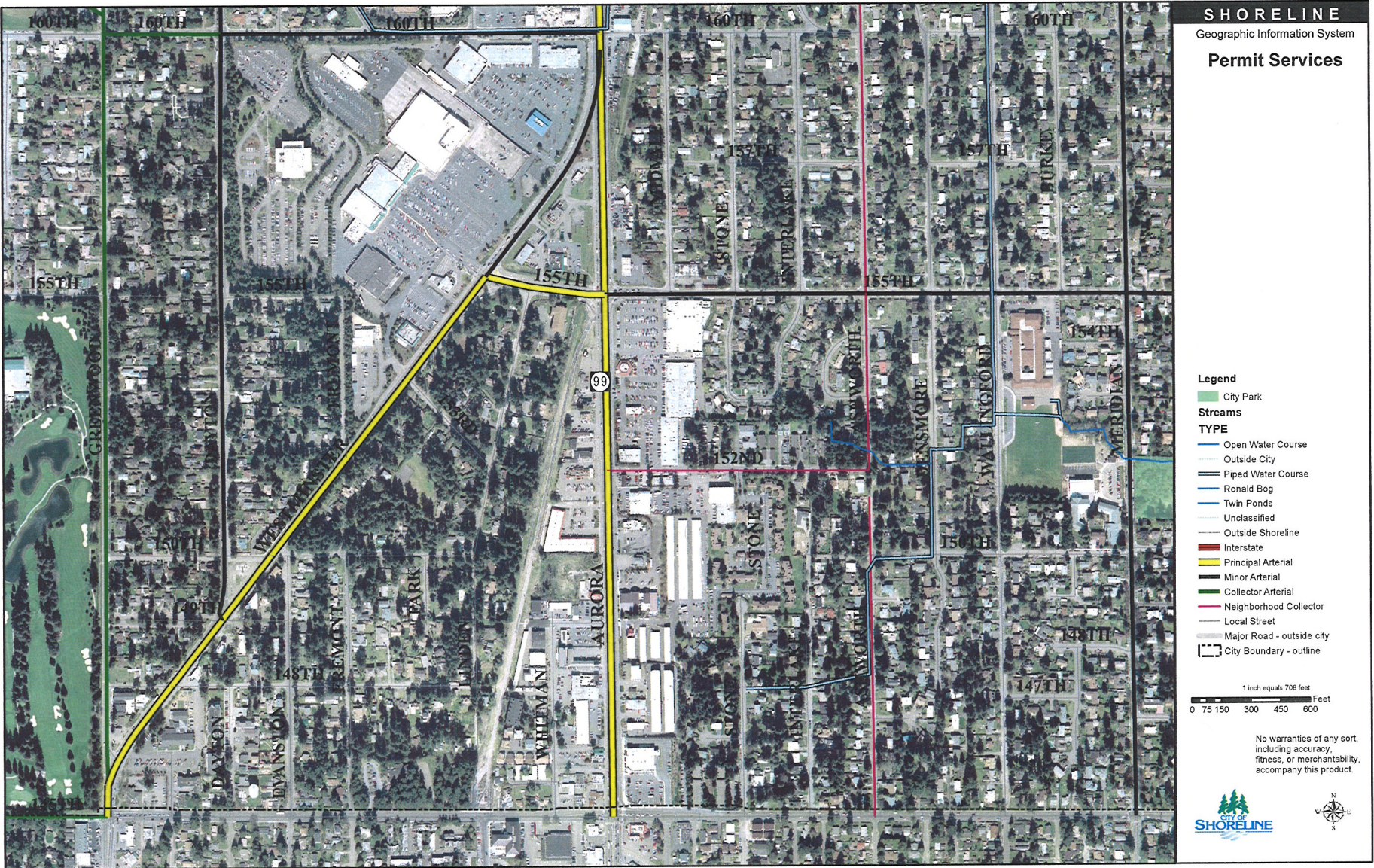
- LU25:** Pursue opportunities to improve the City's image by creating a sense of place on the Aurora Corridor for doing business and attracting retail activity.
- LU26:** Include parks and open space in the Aurora Corridor plan.
- LU27:** Ensure that street design and urban design is distinctive in the center part of the Aurora Corridor, from 175th through 185th.
- LU28:** Encourage the redevelopment of key, underused parcels through incentives and public/private partnerships.
- LU29:** Create opportunities to stimulate development of a "showcase" example and template for future development.
- LU30:** Encourage a mix of residential and commercial development in close proximity to create retail synergy and activity.
- LU31:** Protect adjacent single-family neighborhoods from traffic, noise, crime, and glare impacts of the Corridor through design standards and other development criteria.
- LU32:** Seek shuttle transit service for the Corridor.
- LU33:** Negotiate with Seattle City Light and work with City Light Right-of-Way leaseholders to obtain an easement to develop a non-motorized Interurban Trail and other public amenities from N 145th to N 200th streets.
- LU34:** The Interurban Trail should provide cross-town access, enhance the Corridor, connect to other trails, walkways, and sidewalks, accommodate and consider other public facilities and civic improvements, and buffer private property.
- LU35:** Improve lighting and law enforcement to help reduce crime and improve safety.
- LU36:** Provide opportunities and amenities for higher density residential communities to form within or adjacent to the Aurora Corridor in harmony with the surrounding neighborhoods.

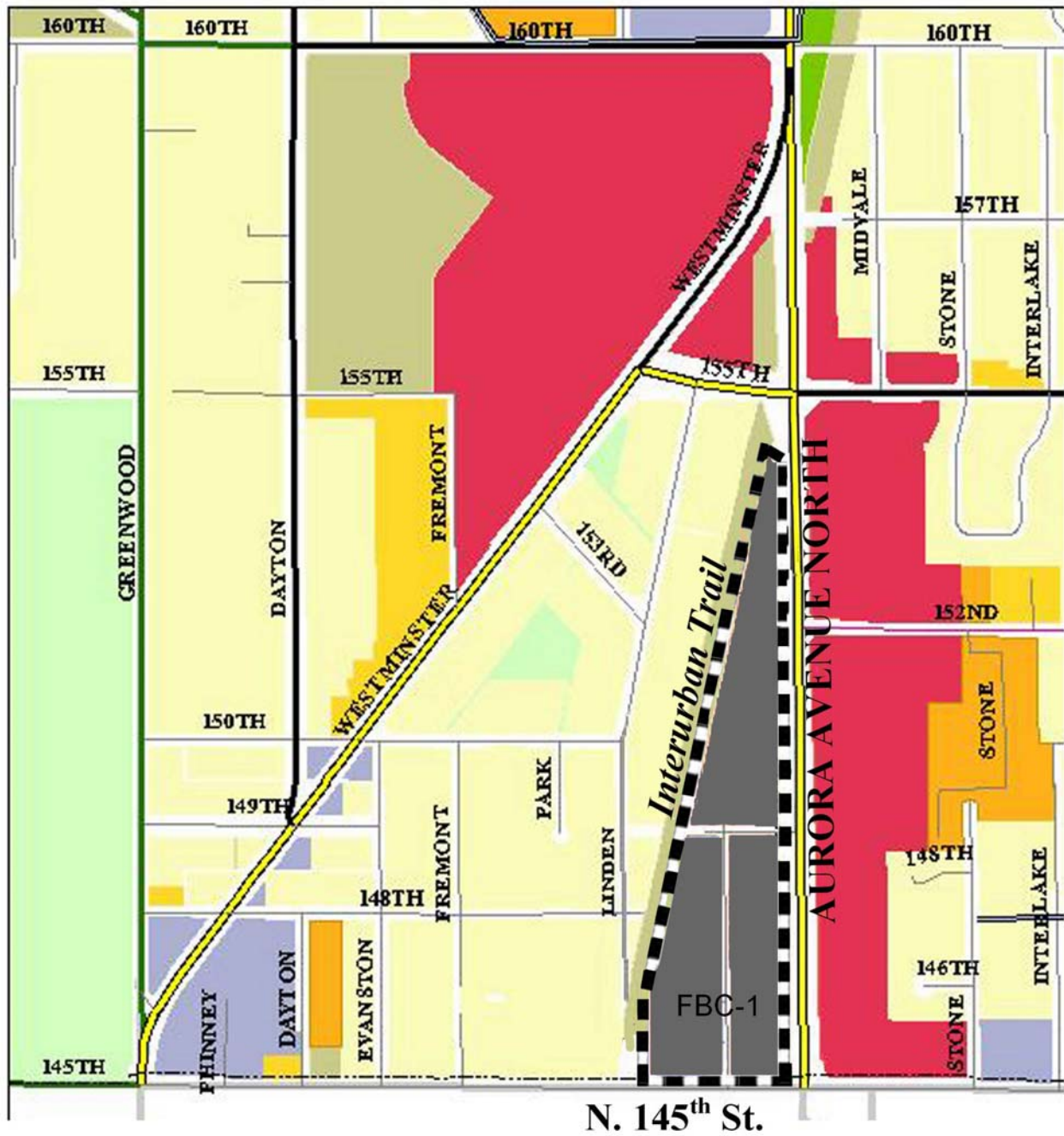


EXISTING ZONING









PROPOSED
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
LAND USE MAP

(PORTION OF FIG. LU-1)

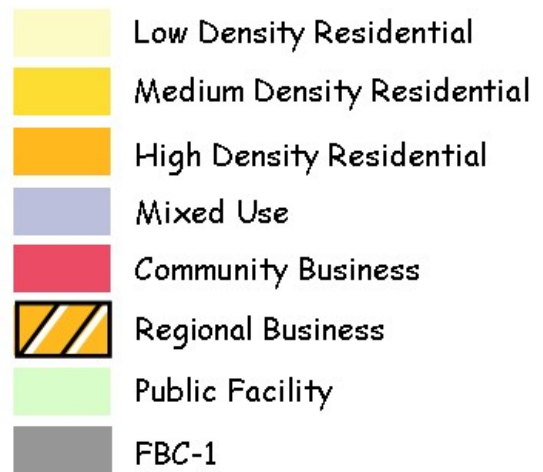


Exhibit G

Appendix 6

South Aurora Triangle Subarea Plan

Figure LU-1 is the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map for the City. It shows a broken line delineating the three sides of South Aurora Triangle Subarea: Aurora Avenue North on the east, N. 145th Street on the south, and the Interurban Trail on the northwest. The land use designation for this subarea plan is “FBC-1” which is an acronym for “Form-Based-Code District No. 1”.

The purpose of the FBC-1 Comprehensive Plan designation is to implement a number of comprehensive plan policies by applying them with specificity to a distinct geographic subarea of the City. A number of specific land used policies regarding the Aurora Corridor are set forth on page 32 of the Plan, including the following:

LU25: Pursue opportunities to improve the City’s image by creating a sense of place on the Aurora Corridor for doing business and attracting retail activity.

LU29: Create opportunities to stimulate development of a “showcase” example and template for future development.

LU30: Encourage a mix of residential and commercial development in close proximity to create retail synergy and activity.

LU 31: Protect adjacent single-family neighborhoods from traffic, noise, crime, and glare impacts of the Corridor through design standards and other development criteria.

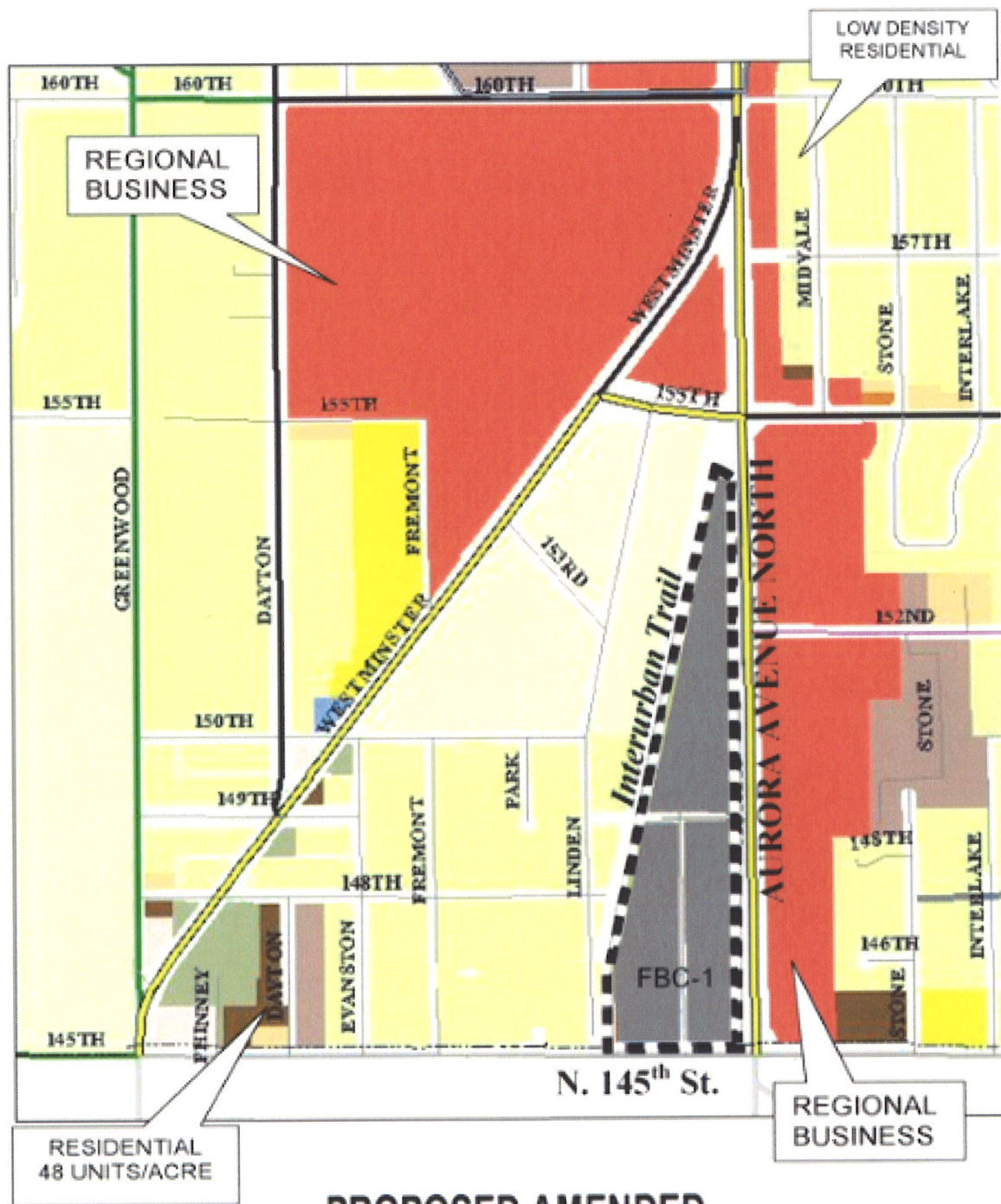
LU 34: The Interurban Trail should provide cross-town access, enhance the Corridor, connect to other trails, walkways, and sidewalks, accommodate and consider other public facilities and civic improvements, and buffer private property.

LU 36: Provide opportunities and amenities for higher density residential communities to form within or adjacent to the Aurora Corridor in harmony with the surrounding neighborhoods.

The South Aurora Triangle area provides an opportunity to realize many of these comprehensive plan policies, particularly in view of several unique circumstances. First, it abuts commercial land uses on two sides and is separated from low density residential uses on the third side by the southern segment of the Interurban Trail as well a significant mass of mature trees which parallels the trail. Second, the majority of these lands abut the completed first

mile of the Aurora Avenue project, which is a significant investment of public funds providing major pedestrian, vehicular, transit, landscaping and utility amenities to properties in this area. Third, the recently improved Interurban Trail bridges link the South Aurora Triangle with the rest of the bicycle and pedestrian trail system north of N. 155th. Taken together, these circumstances make the South Aurora Triangle an ideal location to encourage significant private investments in retail, restaurant, office, and residential uses, as well as mixes of these uses.

The City's twin objectives for the South Aurora Triangle are to stimulate economic development and create a high quality built environment that is walkable, livable, and transit-oriented. To achieve these objectives, the City should prepare innovative development regulations that focus on the form and character of new development in the South Aurora Triangle and less on the specific uses or unit count within the buildings themselves. Such regulations should allow for flexibility and variety in the form and height of buildings while clearly articulating and illustrating standards for site and architectural design.



PROPOSED AMENDED ZONING MAP



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