



City of Blaine Anoka County, Minnesota

Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Sq Dr NE
Blaine MN 55449

Legislation Text

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Workshop Item - *Erik Thorvig, Community Development Director*

Title

Southwest Corner of Main Street and Lexington Avenue Zoning Discussion

Background

As part of the visioning discussion that occurred in early 2021, four priority development areas were identified by the City Council. Those areas were the southwest corner of Main Street and Lexington Avenue, Northtown Area, 105th Avenue and Radisson Road, and the area west of Highway 65 north of 99th Avenue.

The areas were identified because they are either larger vacant parcels of land that are available for development, or redevelopment efforts are required. The Council identified the need to be more proactive in the future development of these areas to ensure what is developed is consistent with the vision of the community.

The southwest corner of Main Street and Lexington Avenue (project area) has a 40-acre parcel that is currently being marketed for sale. South of the 40-acre parcel is the City's new water treatment plant and three privately owned homes. A map is included which shows the project area (outlined in red), the future Lakes Parkway road connection with signal at Lexington Avenue and 122nd Avenue, and future Low Density Residential (LDR) land use to the west. An area outlined in grey identified with a question mark (?) has a land use designation of commercial in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, however, based on various natural boundaries such as ditches and wetlands, it may make more sense for this property to be developed as LDR with the properties to the west.

The approach staff would like to take with the area outlined in red is to create a zoning district that identifies various uses specific for this area along with design and development standards that are consistent with the requirements of the Planned Business District (PBD).

The City Council initially discussed this item at the May 10, 2021 workshop. The discussion was primarily focused on what uses to either permit or not permit in the district.

Permitted/Conditionally Permitted Uses

Attached is a list of proposed permitted or conditionally permitted uses. The following uses were added based on the previous discussion and additional feedback provided by the City Council.

- Multi-Family Residential when part of a mixed-use project with a minimum ground-floor level commercial component of at least 10,000 sf.

This language would prevent standalone apartment buildings, however permit them if they are part of a mixed-use project.

- Recreation/Amusement (not including fitness)

This language would permit uses/businesses such as X-Golf, Sky Zone, Fun Lab etc.

- Liquor Stores

Blaine's off-sale liquor licensing ordinance requires a minimum radius of 1-mile between liquor stores. This area of Blaine is outside of the 1-mile radius from other liquor stores, therefore would allow for another store. Most grocers the City of Blaine are trying to attract have a liquor store component, therefore it would be advantageous to allow them in this district.

Uses Not Permitted

Also included in the attached document is a list of uses that are not permitted. The following uses were added based on the previous discussion and additional feedback provided by the City Council.

- Pawn shops
- Event centers
 - Allowed if part of a hotel/convention facility.
- Manufacturing/warehousing and similar Industrial uses (not including office buildings).
- Senior assisted living and memory care facilities.
 - Senior apartments (no care provided) would be permitted.
- Tobacco/vape shops
- Residential uses other than when part of a mixed-use building.
- Auto repair and service
- Free standing carwashes not accessory to a gas/convenience store.

Uses to Discuss

There were several uses that either require further discussion from the May 10 workshop or weren't discussed.

- Fitness Uses (Gyms, yoga studios, etc.)

Fitness uses are generally allowed in all commercial zoning districts. Two councilmembers provided conflicting comments after the May 10 meeting. One councilmember felt a larger scale fitness center such as Planet Fitness may be odd at the corner however another councilmember suggested that a larger fitness use like Lifetime would be acceptable. Minimum or maximum square footages on these types of facilities could dictate the type of facility. Facilities could also either be not allowed or allowed with no size limitations.

- Gas/Convenience Store

The subject area could be attractive to a gas user given its on the “to work” side of Lexington Ave. and will have two corner sites at a lighted intersection in the future. Kwik Trip is located across Lexington Avenue and another Kwik Trip is proposed in Lexington Meadows at the corner of 109th and Lexington Avenue.

- Fast Food Restaurants

Staff did further research of other cities and found that most cities, like Blaine, differentiate restaurants into two categories; sit-down style and fast/convenience. Traditional sit-down style restaurants are listed as a permitted/conditional use. It's not possible to differentiate specific types of fast/convenience restaurants outside of limiting whether drive-throughs are allowed and/or whether they can be located in a single-user building. Not permitting stand-alone fast/convenience restaurants would likely limit such businesses as Taco Bell, McDonald's, etc. however would also limit a restaurant such as Portillo's, Chick-Fil-A, etc. Additionally, drive-throughs are critical to most fast/convenience restaurants and if said restaurants are only located in a multi-tenant building, they would need to be located on an end-cap in order to have a drive-through which is becoming more critical for restaurants. Minneapolis recently prohibited drive-throughs citywide and it was met with strong resistance from the industry.

Discuss Project Area

An area outlined in grey identified with a question mark (?) has a land use designation of commercial in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, however, based on various natural boundaries such as ditches and wetlands, it may make more sense for this property to be developed as LDR with the properties to the west.

Next Steps

Proposed changes will be brought forward formally to the Planning Commission in July and City Council in August. It is important to note that the intent of making changes is to be proactive and identify for future developers what the City would like to see for the area. However, it is possible that a specific project or user not specifically identified or discussed could look at the property. Under this scenario, the council has the ability to review a proposal at workshop and make changes if the project is favorable.

Staff Recommendation

Discuss the proposed uses and project area and provide direction to staff.

Attachment List

Project Area Map
List of Uses