

Community Development Committee

Meeting date: June 4, 2018

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of June 13, 2018

Subject: City of Cottage Grove Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Review File No. 20479-2

District(s), Member(s): District 12, Harry Melander

Policy/Legal Reference: Metropolitan Land Planning Act (Minn. Stat. § 473.175)

Staff Prepared/Presented: Corrin Wendell, AICP, Senior Planner, Local Planning Assistance (651-602-1832)

Division/Department: Community Development / Regional Planning

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Adopt the attached Review Record and allow the City of Cottage Grove to place the Harkness Avenue Small Area Plan Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) into effect.
2. Find that the proposed amendment does not change the City's forecasts.
3. Encourage the City to consider alternative methods of development and stormwater management to preserve as much of the existing natural resources in the amendment site as possible.
4. Advise the City to implement the advisory comments in the Review Record for Transportation and Housing.

Background

The Metropolitan Council reviewed the City of Cottage Grove 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update (Update), ([Business Item No. 2010-418](#) Review File No. 20479-1) on January 12, 2010. This is the first amendment since the Update was reviewed. The amendment proposes to reguide 55 acres from Low Density Residential to Medium Density Residential and High Density Residential. The purpose of the amendment is to change land use designations to support the Harkness Small Area Plan. The site is located on Harkness Avenue between 73rd Street and 80th Street.

Rationale

The proposed amendment conforms to regional system plans, is consistent with Council policies except for Natural Resources policy, and is compatible with the plans of other local communities and school districts.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The proposed amendment is reviewed against the land use policies in *Thrive MSP 2040* (Thrive). To achieve the outcomes identified in Thrive, the metropolitan development guide defines the Land Use Policy for the region and includes strategies for local governments and the Council to implement. These policies and strategies are interrelated and, taken together, serve to achieve the outcomes identified in Thrive.

Funding

None.

Known Support / Opposition

There was some concern from neighboring residents regarding potential traffic impacts and lack of screening. The developer has made changes to the plans to address some of these concerns.

Review Record

City of Cottage Grove Harkness Avenue Small Area Plan Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Review File No. 20479-2, Business Item No. 2018-140

BACKGROUND

The City of Cottage Grove (City) is a community of approximately 37.8 square miles, located in southern Washington County. It is surrounded by the City of Woodbury, the City of Afton, Denmark Township, the City of Hastings, Nininger Township, Grey Cloud Island Township, the City of St. Paul Park, and the City of Newport (Figure 1).

Consistent with the policies adopted by the Council in June 2014 ([Business Item 2014-143](#)) regarding review of local comprehensive plans, this amendment is being reviewed under *Thrive MSP 2040* and its policy plans. The proposed amendment was found complete for review in a letter dated May 1, 2018.

Thrive MSP 2040 (Thrive) designates the City as a “Suburban Edge” community. The Council forecasts from 2016 to 2040 that the City will grow from 35,939 to 47,000 population; and from 12,169 to 17,300 households. The Council also forecasts that between 2016 and 2040, the City’s employment will increase from 7,988 to 9,000 jobs.

The Metropolitan Council reviewed the City of Cottage Grove 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update ([Business Item No. 2010-418](#), Review File No. 20479-1) on January 12, 2010. This is the first amendment since the Update was reviewed.

REQUEST SUMMARY

The amendment proposes to reguide 55 acres from Low Density Residential to Medium Density Residential and High Density Residential. The purpose of the amendment is to change land use designations to support the Harkness Avenue Small Area Plan, where the High Density Residential uses would be located on the west side of Harkness Avenue (21 acres) and the Medium Density Residential uses on the east side (34 acres). The proposal includes the potential development of 543 additional residential units to the area. The site is located on Harkness Avenue between 73rd Street and 80th Street.

OVERVIEW

Conformance with Regional Systems

The amendment conforms to the Regional System Plans for Parks, Transportation (including Aviation), and Wastewater, with no substantial impact on, or departure from, these plans.

Consistency with Council Policies

The amendment is consistent with the *Thrive MSP 2040* except Natural Resources policy, with the *Housing Policy Plan*, with water resources management, and is consistent with Council forecasts.

Compatibility with Plans of Adjacent Jurisdictions

The amendment will not have an impact on adjacent communities, school districts, or watershed districts, and is compatible with the plans of those districts.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTIONS

The Council has not acted upon an amendment since the adoption of the City of Cottage Grove 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update.

ISSUES

- I. Does the amendment conform to the regional system plans?
- II. Is the amendment consistent with *Thrive MSP 2040* and other Council policies?
- III. Does the amendment change the City's forecasts?
- IV. Is the amendment compatible with the plans of adjacent local governmental units and affected jurisdictions?

ISSUES ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Conformance with Regional Systems

The amendment conforms to the regional system plan for Regional Parks, Transportation, and Wastewater, with no substantial impact on, or departure from, these system plans. Additional review comments are detailed below.

Regional Parks

Reviewer: Corrin Wendell (651-602-1832)

The proposed amendment conforms to the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan (RPPP)*. The amendment site is within 0.5 mile of the planned regional trail search corridor, Prairie View, but the change in land use guiding from Low Density Residential to Medium Density Residential and High Density Residential is not anticipated to impact the Regional Parks System.

Transportation

Reviewer: Russ Owen (651-602-1724)

The proposed amendment conforms to the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP)*. This development will not have an impact on the existing transit or transportation network.

The proposed amendment site is near the Red Rock Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor, which the current TPP has listed in the County Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) Phase I Program of Projects. The Preferred Alternative in the Red Rock Implementation Plan prepared by the Red Rock Corridor Commission (September 2016) includes the 80th Street Station, located on East Douglas Point Road just south of 80th Street. The 0.5-mile station area of the proposed 80th Street Station just skirts the southernmost portion of the amendment site.

Advisory Comments

Council staff is concerned that during City planning meetings and hearings that the City characterized Red Rock planning as “Council efforts to enforce transit service on the City” as a defense of this proposed land use change in the face of criticism by landowners making public comment (both in person and in writing) with regard to the proposed change. It should be noted that the Red Rock Corridor planning process has been a locally driven process, with proposed route, mode, and station locations proposed through the local process, led by Washington County and the Red Rock Corridor Commission with participation by the City of Cottage Grove.

The perception expressed by more than one landowner within the amendment site regarding the proposed land use change was that “the Metropolitan Council’s (BRT) bus station proposal” and “the need for mass transit” were driving the need for this proposed land use change. While a small portion of the amendment site is located within the station area, the TPP provides additional land use direction for

station areas, including to “[p]rotect and restore important natural resources in the station area” (page 3.18).

Transit oriented development (TOD) land use requirements are necessary to support investments in transit, but the investments are derived from locally driven processes. Cities and counties are asked to support proposed transit investments and are made aware of any land use implications during this process.

Council staff advise the City to take into consideration all of the Council’s policies in making local land use decisions. This includes balancing the protection of natural resources with the efforts to support forecasted housing growth and create interconnected, transit-supportive neighborhoods. Council staff also advise the City to consider the walkability of this area given the steep slopes within the Harkness Study area as well as the existing auto-oriented street network.

Wastewater

Reviewer: Roger Janzig (651-602-1119)

The proposed amendment conforms to the *2040 Water Resources Policy Plan*. The Metropolitan Disposal System has adequate capacity for this project at this location.

Consistency with Council Policy

The amendment is consistent with Council policies for land use, forecasts, housing, and water resources. Additional review comments regarding consistency with those policies are detailed below.

Land Use

Reviewer: Corrin Wendell (651-602-1832)

The proposed amendment is consistent with the land use policies in Thrive, which designates the City as a Suburban Edge community. Thrive directs Suburban Edge communities to accommodate new development and redevelopment at an overall density expectation of 3-5 units per acre.

In early 2017, the City initiated the small area planning study for the 55-acre neighborhood in order to consider different land uses that might take advantage of the proximity to the Gateway North Commercial District to the south and existing infrastructure serving the neighborhood, the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station being planned by the Red Rock Corridor Commission and Washington County, and provision of additional lifecycle housing opportunities within the community. The study considered several alternative land uses and selected the land use alternative included in this amendment. The neighborhood currently consists of very low density residential land uses with lots averaging about 4 acres in size and having heavy tree cover.

The proposed amendment re-guides the proposed development area of 55 acres from an existing residential land use of Low Density Residential (1-4 units/acre) to Medium Density Residential (4.1-10 units/acre) and High Density Residential (10.1 to 20 units per acre) (Figure 3). The Concept Plan (Figure 4) includes 543 new residential units. The proposed change is consistent with the Council’s density policies and has minimal impact on the City’s overall planned residential density, which remains above 3 units per acre (changes are underlined in Table 1 below).

Table 1: Planned Residential Density

Category	2010-2030 Change				
	Density Range		Net Acres	Min Units	Max Units
	Min	Max			
Low Density Residential	2.5	4	905	2263	3620
Medium Density Residential	5	10	<u>253</u>	<u>1265</u>	<u>2530</u>
High Density Residential	10.1	20	<u>79</u>	<u>798</u>	<u>1580</u>
Mixed Use	6	20	69	414	1380
Plat Monitoring 2001-2016			233.5	923	
TOTALS			1539.5	5662	9110
Overall Density				3.7	6.98

Forecasts

Reviewer: Todd Graham (651-602-1322)

The proposed amendment is consistent with Council forecasts. The City offers that the plan amendment does not affect the community-wide forecast and an adjustment is not necessarily needed. Council staff find that the amendment would enable higher residential capacity on the subject site and that the proposed housing would contribute to the current forecast for Cottage Grove.

Advisory Comments

The City should consider adjusting the TAZ forecast allocations to reflect the expected development. The Harkness Avenue site is in TAZ #2469, which the Council had preliminarily projected to add 70 households during 2014-2040. The amendment discusses the gross addition of 543 new housing units. *Balancing adjustments* can be made to TAZs elsewhere in the community. The City can update the TAZ forecast through correspondence to the Council, with submission of the 2040 Plan Update, or in advance of the Plan Update.

Natural Resources

Reviewer: Jim Larsen (651-602-1159)

The proposed amendment describes the 55-acre site as heavily wooded, containing steep (12-18%) and very steep (>18%) slopes, and is located immediately adjacent on the southeast to local Oakwood Park. Lands immediately across Hardwood Avenue South to the west of the site are identified in the Council’s Natural Resources Inventory/Assessment (NRIA) as lands worthy of preservation, but no NRIA-designated lands are located within the amendment area. Even without the NRIA designation, it is likely that the resources within the amendment area are of similar character, but may have been excluded from quality designation based upon their existing low-density residential development status. The amendment site is currently approximately 90% wooded.

The proposed land use change development concept indicated as preserving the largest percentage of site woodlands of development alternatives evaluated would preserve only approximately 17% of the existing woodlands. The City’s planned method of stormwater treatment and management was identified as ponding, which requires large areas of bare level land, and several acres of mature trees were shown as needing to be clear-cut within the site to provide sufficient surface area in which to construct the needed stormwater infrastructure.

This amendment proposes permanent impacts to regional natural resources that would be inconsistent with *Thrive MSP 2040* Stewardship outcome and "Natural Resources Protection" policy language.

Advisory Comments

Council staff recommends further analysis of other land use and stormwater management alternatives that would preserve and potentially expand existing Oakwood Park to incorporate larger portions of the existing natural resources from within the amendment site should it redevelop in the future.

Housing

Reviewer: Tara Beard (651-602-1051)

The proposed amendment is consistent with the Council's policies for housing. The Plan currently provides sufficient land to address its share of the region's 2011-2020 need for affordable housing, which is 985 units. The proposed amendment increases the City's inventory of land guided to promote the development of low- and moderate-income housing. After this amendment, the City will be guiding over 180 acres of medium and high density residential land such that at least 1,446 units could be built.

Cottage Grove is a participant in Livable Communities Act programs, but has neither applied for nor received funds in recent history. The most recent affordable housing developed in Cottage Grove consisted of 7 owner-occupied homes that were completed in 2016.

Advisory Comments

The City should be aware that its share of the region's 2021-2030 need for affordable housing is 568 units. In preparing the 2040 comprehensive plan update, the City should note that the minimum density of land guided to address this need is 8 units per acre. The City is encouraged to contact their Sector Representative or Council housing staff with any questions regarding the Council's housing policy for the 2040 comprehensive plan update.

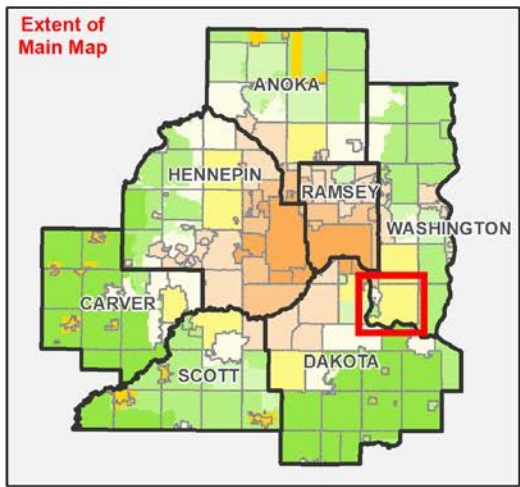
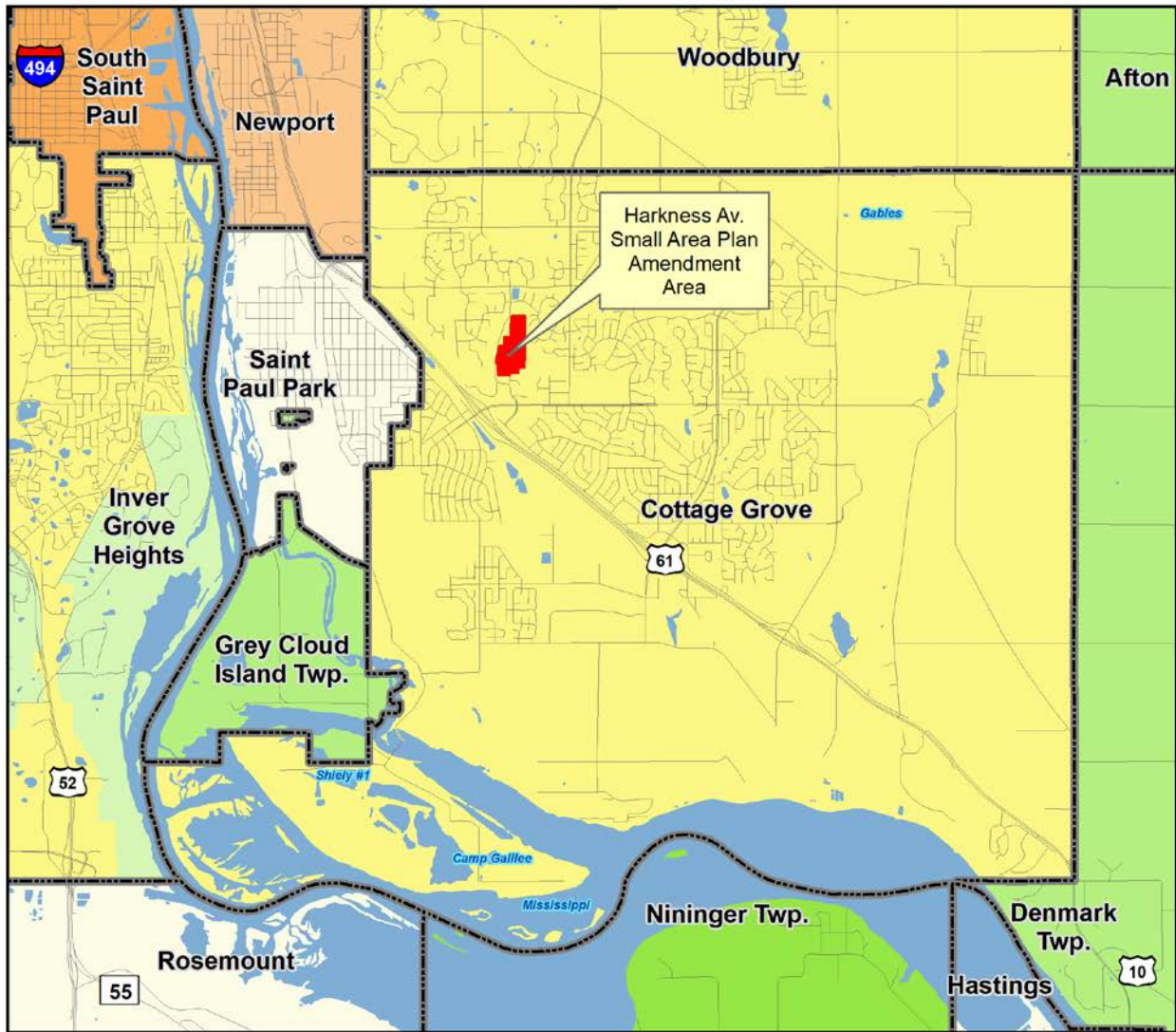
Compatibility with Plans of Adjacent Governmental Units and Plans of Affected Special Districts and School Districts

The proposed amendment is compatible with the plans of adjacent jurisdictions. No compatibility issues with plans of adjacent governmental units and plans of affected special districts and school districts were identified. Of the ten respondents, only one raised a concern about an issue larger (and not related) to the proposed amendment. Woodbury is concerned about stormwater in both cities and the challenges previous planning efforts have created for the watershed.

ATTACHMENTS

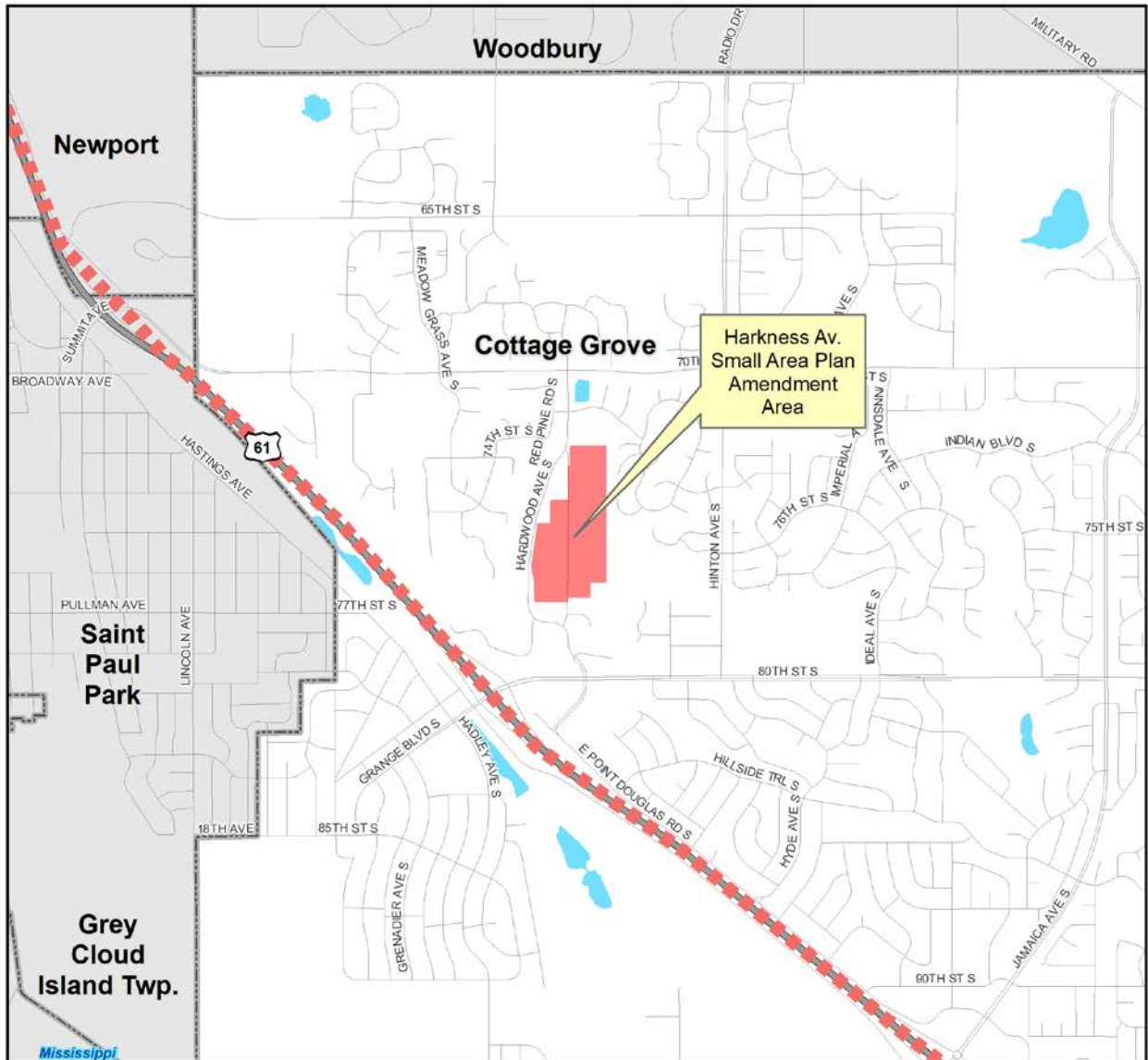
- Figure 1: Location Map showing Community Designations
- Figure 2: Location Map showing Regional Systems
- Figure 3: Existing and Proposed Planned Land Use Maps
- Figure 4: Proposed Harkness Small Area Plan Concept Plan

Figure 1: Location Map Showing Community Designations



- ThriveMSP 2040 Community Designations**
- Agricultural
 - Rural Residential
 - Diversified Rural
 - Rural Center
 - Emerging Suburban Edge
 - Suburban Edge
 - Suburban
 - Urban
 - Urban Center
 - Ncompass Street Centerlines

Figure 2: Location Map Showing Regional Systems

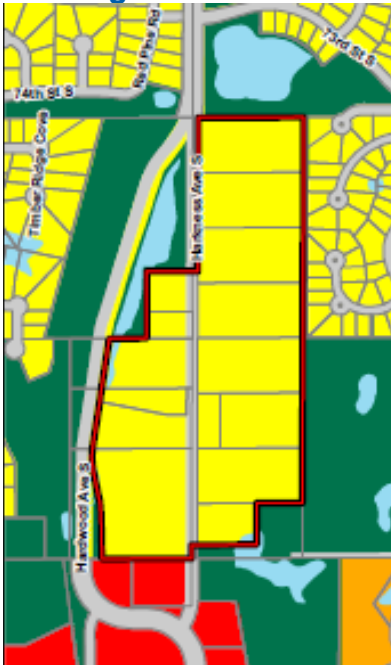


Regional Systems

- Planned Fixed Guideway Stations
- Existing Fixed Guideway Stations
- Regional Transitways**
- Existing, Fixed Guideway
- Proposed, Fixed Guideway
- Existing, Bus Rapid Transit
- Proposed, Bus Rapid Transit
- Wastewater Treatment**
- Meters
- Lift Stations
- MCES Interceptors
- MCES Treatment Plants
- Regional Highway System**
- Interstates
- US Highways
- State Highways
- County Roads
- Ncompass Street Centerlines
- Regional Parks**
- STATUS**
- Existing (Open to Public)
- In Master Plan (Not Open to Public)
- Planned Units
- Existing Regional Trails
- Planned Regional Trails

Figure 3: Existing and Proposed Planned Land Use Maps

Existing Planned Land Use



Proposed Planned Land Use

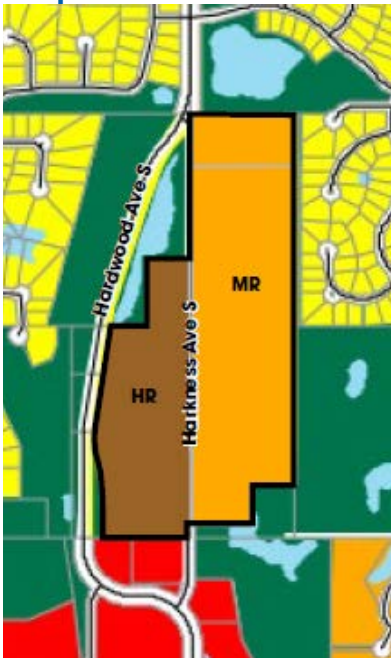


Figure 4: Proposed Harkness Avenue Small Area Concept Plan

