

November 27, 2007

Commissioner David Potts, Chairperson  
Oakland County Coordinating Zoning Committee  
1200 North Telegraph Road  
Pontiac, MI 48341

SUBJECT: County Code No. MP 07-06, Planning & Economic Development Services' review of the Auburn Hills Collier Road Area Land Use Study

Dear Chairperson Potts and Committee Members:

The City of Auburn Hills Planning Commission is proposing to amend its Master Land Use Plan map by changing a site on Collier Road from its current "Non-Residential" classification to a "Residential" classification. The following is a review and analysis of the proposed amendment.

Under the recent amendments to the Municipal Planning Act, which took effect December 20, 2006, Auburn Hills is required to send a copy of the draft amendment to Oakland County and neighboring communities for comment prior to adoption. Oakland County has 40 days to submit comments on a draft amendment. The December 4, 2007 Oakland County Coordinating Zoning Committee (CZC) meeting falls within our 40-day comment period. Neighboring communities also have 40 days to submit comments directly to Auburn Hills and are asked to send a copy of any comments to the County as well. Once the comment period has expired, the Planning Commission can hold a public hearing and take final action to amend the plan.

According to the City Planner, the Cities of Pontiac, Lake Angelus, and Rochester Hills; and the Townships of Waterford, Orion and Bloomfield were sent a copy of the draft amendment. These communities have received notification of the CZC meeting. In addition, copies of the amendment were sent to the following agencies and utilities: Auburn Hills Chamber of Commerce, Road Commission for Oakland County, Michigan Department of Transportation, Oakland County Drain Commissioner, SEMCOG, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Canadian National Railway, DTE Energy, Consumers Energy, SBC Ameritech, Comcast Cable, and the Lake Orion, Rochester, Pontiac, and Avondale school districts. Of these agencies, only the Oakland County Drain Commissioner was sent a notice of the CZC meeting, although Auburn Hills did supply my address to the other agencies and utilities for comments. Comments have been received from the City of Pontiac and are attached.

### **Plan Contents**

The Auburn Hills Master Land Use Plan map only has the following three categories: Residential, Non-Residential, and Public. Residential densities are shown on the map. This amendment addresses one location on Collier Road, just east of Baldwin Road, adjacent to the City of Pontiac. The map change will affect four parcels and a portion of a fifth. The site is approximately 32 acres and is part of a larger area planned for Non-Residential. The proposed amendment would change this area to Residential with an allowed density not to exceed 4 units per gross acre. One of the parcels is currently planned for Residential (2 units per acre) but its allowed density would increase with this amendment. A one-page summary of the amendment is

attached along with an aerial of the site. The amendment states that no mobile home park will be permitted and there is a preference for owner occupied units, not rental.

**Coordination with Surrounding Community Boundaries**

Under state law, the county’s review is required to include a statement indicating whether the proposed plan is “inconsistent with the plan of any city, village, or township” that received notice of the draft plan. The amendment area is only adjacent to the City of Pontiac.

**East Boundary –City of Pontiac:** The Pontiac 2010 A New Reality Comprehensive Plan was adopted in December 1991 and has been amended several times since. The last amendment date in our files is July 2006 when the Land Use Plan map was amended. In this location, the City of Pontiac shares a short boundary with Auburn Hills on the south side of Collier Road. While the four main parcels that make up this amendment are vacant, the surrounding area to the east both in Auburn Hills and especially in Pontiac is definitely industrial and heavy industrial in nature. The following chart shows surrounding conditions.

	<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Zoning</b>	<b>Master Plan</b>
<b>North</b>	Vacant Land (proposed Angelus Forest Condominiums)	P.U.D. Overlay	Residential (2.0 dwelling units per acre)
<b>West</b>	6 homes on deep lots on Collier Road  Vacant Land (proposed Mosaic Condominiums)	R-1, One Family Residential (8,400 sq. ft. min. lot size) and RM-2, Multiple Family (density determined by formula)	Residential (7.0 dwelling units per acre)
<b>South</b>	Auburn Park Condominiums	RM-2, Multiple Family (density determined by formula)	Residential (3.0 dwelling units per acre)
<b>East</b> (Auburn Hills)	Light Industrial Building Cell Tower Surplus Steel (with outdoor storage) Elect. Transmission Lines Railroad Tracks Crushing Plant	I-1, Light Industrial I-2, General Industrial I-3, Heavy Industrial	Non-Residential
<b>East</b> (Pontiac)	Scrap Metal Processing and Recycling Yard	M-2, Heavy Manufacturing	Industrial

## **Analysis**

This master plan amendment is being sought so the applicant can develop residential condominiums on four of the five parcels. The current zoning for the three parcels south of Collier Road is I-1, Light Industrial. The easternmost parcel is owned by Consumers Energy and is not part of the development proposal. For the two parcels north of Collier Road, the westernmost parcel is zoned R-1, One Family Residential, while the larger parcel has mixed zoning. The northern half of this parcel is zoned R-1, and the southern half is zoned I-1. A rezoning for condominiums would not be consistent with the current master plan, therefore this master plan amendment is being considered.

As the chart shows, residential is planned for the Baldwin corridor. Multiple family condominiums already are developed south of the site, while new condominiums are proposed both west and north of the site. Residential on the proposed site would be in keeping with the residential character developing in this area. However, immediately to the east are industrial uses, including heavy industrial. Adjacent to this site in the City of Pontiac is a Scrap Metal Processing and Recycling Yard. To the east of that facility is the Highwood Industrial Park. To the northeast is the former City of Pontiac Collier Road Landfill. This landfill is now closed but the site is still used as a Transfer Station.

Oakland County Planning and Economic Development Services (PEDS) staff has some concerns with this amendment regarding compatibility. The current classification of Non-Residential is more consistent with the City of Pontiac's master plan than the proposed classification of Residential. The change will not have a negative impact on the City of Pontiac, and the City of Pontiac sent a letter indicating "No Objections". However, the industrial uses in Pontiac and in Auburn Hills may have a negative impact on the future owners of the proposed condominium units. We concur with some of the issues raised at the August 16, 2007 Auburn Hills Planning Commission meeting. Minutes state *"One concern is that the residential use may not be appropriate abutting the existing industrial businesses. Noise, truck traffic, and outside storage of materials could be objectionable to future condominium owners. Another concern by the planning commission is the crushing plant regarding noise and air quality."* Industrial truck traffic was quite noticeable when a site visit was conducted by PEDS staff.

If the City of Auburn Hills chooses to amend its plan in this location, PEDS staff encourages the Auburn Hills Planning Commission to give strong attention to setbacks, buffering, and landscaping during the site plan review process. A preliminary site plan was provided with the background information on this amendment. It showed how the topography of the site and the wetlands on the property could be used to buffer and separate the residential units from the scrap metal facility. It appears that the units can be visually shielded from surrounding industrial uses.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the review of the surrounding community's master plan, the Auburn Hills Collier Road Area Land Use Study is inconsistent with the City of Pontiac's Pontiac 2010 A New Reality Comprehensive Plan. However, Pontiac has sent a letter indicating *"The City has no objection to the proposed residential land use abutting the industrial property within the City, as it is a less intensive use and is not expected to have a detrimental effect on surrounding property."* In addition, Oakland County Planning and Economic Development Services has articulated

concerns about the need for adequate setbacks and buffering for any new residential units in this area adjacent to heavy industrial uses.

Oakland County has not prepared a countywide development plan, so there is no countywide plan to which to compare the plan.

Sincerely,

Charlotte P. Burckhardt, AICP, PCP  
Principal Planner

Enclosures