

COMMISSION ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: **MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT FOR RINGGENBERG PARK
SUBDIVISION 4TH ADDITION OUTLOT "A" (BOBCAT DRIVE
APARTMENTS)**

BACKGROUND:

The Ringgenberg Subdivision included a component of medium density development that was zoned Suburban Residential Floating Zone Medium Density (FS-RM) July 12, 2005. The design and layout of the approximate 16.14 acre site has been the subject of a number of proposals for apartment development in response to neighborhood concerns regarding density, access, buffering, and the appearance of the buildings. The current Master Plan was approved on November 26, 2013. Development of the site consistent with the 2013 plan was recently completed. Development included 8 two-story apartment buildings totaling 96 two-bedroom units, 3 single-family detached homes along Suncrest, and a 50 unit senior living facility (Village Cooperative) at corner of Cedar Lane and Oakwood Drive (See Location Map and Master Plan Attachments). Each of the buildings was approved on an individual lot with frontage on a public street, but the access to each lot was provided via a shared cross-access easement through the center of the site, now named Bobcat Drive.

The proposed amendment to the Master Plan is focused on the 1.4 acres of Outlot A at the center of the site. The proposed project requests approval of an amended Master Plan to allow for the subsequent platting of Outlot A as a buildable lot and a Major Site Development Plan for the construction of 12 two-bedroom apartments and 6 three-bedroom single-family attached houses that total 18 additional homes. As part of the 2013 Master Plan, 1.8 acres of "greenspace" as outlots (Outlot A 1.45 acres and Outlot B .43 acres) were part of the original project approval to meet the 10% open space requirement. However, Outlot A was also noted that it may be used for future development with an amendment to the plan. It was believed in 2013 that the outlot could at some point in the future be developed in combination with the remnant Ringgenberg homestead abutting the site to the north along Oakwood Drive. The Ringgenberg homestead is approximately two acres in size and zoned RL.

The Master Plan Amendment addresses the appropriateness of use and general layout. The associated application for a subdivision is necessary to review the lotting and improvement standards and the Major Site Development Plan addresses the details of building and site design. With the Master Plan Amendment, development of the site must be looked at within the context of its already developed surroundings and on its own as a proposed developable site. **The two primary policy issues related to the Master Plan are the request to meet open space requirements within the off-site common open space of the Ringgenberg Subdivision to the south and to allow for development internal to a site along a proposed private street within the current FS-RM zoning.** Additionally, the proposed Master Plan must be found to be consistent with Design Principles of F-S zoning.

The current Master Plan was approved at a net density of 11.5 dwelling units per acre and included 12% of the overall site as open space, relying upon Outlots A and B as meeting the minimum 10% open space requirement. No specific amenities or features were required in the current Outlot A and Outlot B. The developer's proposal would leave two small open space areas totaling approximately .6 acres on site for a total of under 4% of the site as common open space. The two small open spaces are vegetated with no specific improvements or amenities that make them usable open spaces or beneficial amenities to the residents of the Bobcat apartment area.

The developer proposes that with approved participation in the Ringgenberg Planned Residential Development Homeowner's Association to the south, the residents of the Bobcat site have access to additional open space that would exceed the FS zoning standard of 10%. **The developer asks that the 10% requirement be applied as a requirement to the original overall Ringgenberg area rather than as an individual Floating Suburban (FS) zoning district requirement.** The Floating Zone section of Zoning Ordinance identifies Suburban Low and Medium density (FS-RL and FS-RM) as Suburban designations and the Planned Residential Development (F-PRD) as a separate zoning district because it can be applied to any zoning district type as an alternative to other zoning districts. F-PRD zoning does not rely upon the same development standards of the FS zoning districts because of the flexible nature of the PRD zoning and its own design objectives.

The open space requirement is different between the current FS-RM zoning of the Bobcat Apartment area and the single-family home area to the south that is zoned F-PRD. The F-PRD area must achieve a 40% open space area requirement. The F-PRD was approved with a combination of private rear yard areas for each lot and common open spaces for bike paths, stormwater, and a playground along Cedar Lane. The Ringgenberg PRD was approved in May of 2012 with 11.24 acres of open space on private lots and 17.74 acres of common open space for a total of approximately 53% of the overall 53 acre site as open space. If 10% of the Bobcat Apartment area, 1.6 acres, was subtracted from common space in the PRD as an allocation to the FS-RM area, the remaining open space percentage would be 50.4% for the PRD. The combination of the Bobcat Apartment area with the PRD area would have an overall open space of 42% with 25% of the overall area as common open space.

For the outlot to be developable it must meet the City's street frontage requirements, typically 35 feet, as well as other access and dimensional requirements. At the time of platting of Outlot A, it was made an outlot because it did not meet lot standards as a buildable lot and needed to qualify as common open space. Outlot A was platted with 20 feet of frontage along Oakwood Road and the same shared access easement over its south property line as the other properties in the Bobcat development. Bobcat Drive is an easement over 20 feet of property of each lot. It is built as a 26-foot wide paved driveway with 13 feet of its pavement on each lot within the 20-foot easement. As a driveway, it was not built with curbs, street lights, and sidewalks, etc. that would be part of a street. This is the case because the minimum lot size and frontage requirements for the current lots were met in relation to the public streets of Oakwood and Suncrest and not in relation to Bobcat Drive. **In this case the developer does not have 35 feet of frontage along a public street and proposes that Bobcat Drive become a recognized private street for the purpose of meeting lot frontage requirements.**

The formal approval process of the private street would be through acceptance within the subdivision process as a substitute for the public street. Private streets do not have a recognized standard by the City and are considered on a case-by-case basis; however, they are typically within PRD zoning rather than standard zoning districts due to the flexibility of lot requirements afforded to PRD developments. However, the subject site is not large enough for zoning as a PRD because it is less than 2 acres in size and intends to pursue the subdivision waiver process.

The attached addendum provides additional background and analysis of the proposal. Public notice was mailed to all property owners within 200 feet of the original Master Plan boundary for the Bobcat Drive Apartments. Public hearing signs were posted along Oakwood Drive and Cedar Lane as well.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. The Planning and Zoning Commission can recommend approval the Master Plan Amendment for Ringgenberg Park Subdivision Bobcat Drive Apartments Outlot A, subject to the resolution of the open space and private street issues.
2. The Planning Commission can recommend approval the Master Plan Amendment with conditions or modifications.
3. The Planning Commission can recommend denial of the Master Plan Amendment if it finds that the proposal is not consistent with City standards or policies.
4. Action on this request can be postponed and referred back to City staff and/or the applicant for additional information.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The developer proposes a mix of twelve small apartments and six single-family attached homes which they believe are compatible with the surroundings and create additional needed housing opportunities. The tradeoffs for allowing development on Outlot A at this time is the transfer of open space off-site from the Bobcat Drive area and the configuration of site with an internal orientation to Bobcat Drive as a private street.

The overall intensity of development for 18 additional homes does not impact the stormwater facilities that are already in place or the public infrastructure that is in place to serve the area. In terms of appearance, the buildings are generally compatible with their two and three-story building heights and configurations with covered parking for each home that is consistent with the surrounding uses. The buildings are situated internally to the site and are unlikely to be visible from the abutting single-family home neighborhoods that were concerned about the design of the site previously. The site does line the south boundary of the Ray Ringgenberg homestead that is zoned FS-RL. A formal review of the building design and layout will be part of a subsequent Major Site Development Plan and Preliminary Plat.

The primary decision needed for this project to move forward is if to allow for the site to utilize the common open space of the Ringgenberg PRD, if the developer is able to secure an interest with the current HOA. The main common space feature would be

accessed via Cedar Lane and is just over a ¼ of a mile from Outlot A. The developer understands the need for an agreement for this proposal to proceed, but has not yet secured permission from the HOA. The location of common space is still a zoning issue, regardless of a HOA agreement, to be approved by the City. Functionally, the larger amenity space of the Ringgenberg PRD is more desirable than the small unplanned areas of the Bobcat Apartments. However, the change of Outlot A from open space does affect the openness and feel of the internal area of the project that is intended to be a suburban medium intensity design. The remaining landscaped areas will all appear as yard areas around buildings and do not provide a “usable space” component for the overall site as much of the area was originally designed as perimeter buffering.

The second issue is orientation of the project as an internal site. The proposed homes create a somewhat secluded space in their relationship to the other multi-family buildings in the area. Staff believes that because of the orientation and location in the center of multi-family site, the proposed homes will in all likelihood not be owner occupied for a majority of units and should be considered more as rental housing choices with the proposed configuration.

The primary concern with the layout is the lack of public street frontage and reliance on an easement for access. The easement provides for a right of ingress and egress, but does not appear to bind all parties into a maintenance agreement nor does the street include the features normally associated with a street. In the context of the multi-family surroundings it does function very much like a private drive suited to the purpose of providing vehicle access as is the case with multi-family apartment complexes, more as an alley than a formal street. For Bobcat Drive to be acceptable as a private street, at a minimum it would need to have issues of maintenance and pedestrian circulation addressed upon its development.

The arrangement of the 18 homes appears to fit the minimum standards for zoning with resolution of the issues of open space and street type described above. Approval of the Master Plan would allow the developer to pursue the development concept and address the deficiencies of the site through platting and site plan approval process. Ultimately, development of the property could not occur without the platting of the outlot as a buildable lot and approval of the Major Site Development Plan for the multi-family housing.

Developing Outlot A at this time could be a lost opportunity for the site to be combined with the 2-acre Ringgenberg homestead site in the future as was originally contemplated. The combined Ringgenberg homestead site would be approximately 3.5 acres and would allow for a different layout of the site that could feature single-family attached or detach homes and create more home ownership opportunities than are part of this proposal. However, there is no obligation for the Ringgenberg site to be developed in connection with the current Outlot A site and it is unclear in what timeframe the property could potentially be available for purchase.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the Planning and Housing Department that the Planning and Zoning Commission approve Alternative #1, thereby recommending approval of the Master Plan Amendment for 12 apartment and 6 single-family attached homes. This recommendation comes with the reservations that the site may not be developable without resolution of the issues in this report and its development would need to be delayed until it can be used with the property to the north.

ADDENDUM

Public Improvements. The City and Developer have made various Development Agreements as the entire Ringgenberg Park Subdivision has been implemented regarding responsibilities for providing public improvements in and around the project. Current agreements related to the development of the subject site include the following provisions.

- City of Ames will construct the bike path along the west side of Cedar Lane.
- Developer will construct the bike path along the south side of Oakwood Road from the northeast corner of the site to the northwest corner of the site, including the frontage of the Ringgenberg farmstead. This path will be constructed during the first phase of the development of this site.
- As traffic in this southwest part of Ames increases, a turn lane on Oakwood Road may be needed, for which Developer will deposit \$80,000 into an escrow account. The deposit will be made on a pro-rated basis as the dwelling units on the north side of the subject property are completed.

These requirements are already binding on the City and Developer through these existing agreements. These obligations would not change with the amendment to the Master Plan. If the private street was approved as proposed, no additional public improvements are needed to serve the development.

Density Information. The gross area of the subject site is 16.14 acres. Common open space designated on the Plan of 1.89 acres and storm water detention areas of 1.31 acres can be deducted for a net site area of 12.94 acres. The proposed plan increase development from 149 dwelling units to a 167 units with a net set area of 14.34 for a net density of 11.64 dwelling units per acre. This exceeds the 10 units per acre required minimum net density for the FS-RM zoning designation AMC Table 29.1202(6) and is below the maximum development of 22.31 units per acre. It should be noted that the current Master Plan has a net density of 11.5 units per acre.

FS Zoning. Property that is developed according to the Suburban Residential requirements shall create a development pattern that adheres to the following development principles (AMC Section 29.1202(2)). Reference is made here to the FS-RM (Suburban Medium Density Residential) zoning standards (AMC Section 29.1202(6)), which are also attached. The approved Master Plan was found to meet these principles.

- (a) *A development pattern that contains generally distinct and homogeneous land uses. This development is to occur in the remaining in-fill areas and the targeted growth areas where the property owner does not select Village Residential development.***

Property to the north, east and south of the Bobcat Apartments is developed with single family detached residences, and a church is located directly to the east of the Bobcat Apartments. The property to the west is used for row crops and pastures. The current zoning of surrounding properties is shown on an attached map (Attachment D).

The developer desires to add 18 additional housing units to the site with access

from the existing Bobcat Driveway. It is an internal location to existing multi-family development area and will provide similar housing to that which is around it. It does not change the interface of the site overall with its distinct boundaries to single-family subdivisions. The overall site achieves this principle.

(b) *An economic and efficient subdivision design with respect to the provision of streets, utilities, and community facilities with limited focus on building and development design integration and greater emphasis on vehicular mobility.*

The developer has submitted a Master Plan that represents an economic and efficient design, using private infrastructure, including an existing cross access easement over a private driveway. Due to the internal location within the multi-family development the plan allows for small living units configured off of the same vehicular drive as the other sites and meets minimum setbacks expectations. Review of the design details on compatibility would be part of a Major Site Development Plan review.

(c) *Effective landscape buffers between distinctly different land uses.*

The FS-RM zoning standards require a landscape buffer of at least 10 feet width in the setback area of a lot where it is adjacent to a lot zoned FS-RL. In this case the site abuts an RL lot to the north and the developer will provide the same 10 foot buffer and meet the required rear yard setbacks that provide a 20 building separation to the abutting RL lot. The original perimeter buffer of the Bobcat Apartments is not affected by the proposed amendment.

(d) *The provision of common open space in residential areas, where the maintenance of the open space is the responsibility of those directly benefiting.*

The zoning standards for the FS zoning district require common open space to comprise a minimum of 10% of the gross area of the property. This common open space may not include land within required setback areas. Outlots A and B are designated as common open space and comprised 12% of the gross area of the original current Master Plan and original property.

Outlot A has been designated an outlot to serve intermediately as open space, however no specific improvements was required other than for it to be graded and to have grasses. The Outlot A was also contemplated as available potentially for future development in a scenario where the abutting Ringgenberg homestead was to redevelop. The Master Plan Amendment would be needed in either scenario of the site being developed with the Ringgenberg property or as proposed as in individual site.

The developer proposes to secure a common interest in the Ringgenberg Subdivision to the south as a replacement for the 1.6 acres required of the Bobcat Apartment site. If this was approved and accepted the site's residents would have access to amenities that directly serve their interests.

(e) *A development pattern that ensures compatibility in the design of buildings*

with respect to placement along the street, spacing, and building height; and provides for spaciousness and effective vehicular and pedestrian circulation.

The internal location of the site is set well away from all the multi-family structure on the site and abuts one RL zoned home to the north. The Master Plan indicates setback and separation from the north lot that is consistent with rear yard setbacks and buffering requirements. The homes would be either 2 or 3 stories. Staff concludes that building designs, heights and placement establish a project that is compatible with its surroundings and therefore consistent with this Suburban Residential Development Principle.

However, the circulation and access to the site relies upon approvals of Bobcat Drive as a private street to meet frontage requirements and for sidewalk extensions to be constructed with the project that connect the internal site to the public street system. As an FS site the long block structure exceeding 660 feet necessitates pedestrian walkways connections through the block.

(f) A development pattern that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods and is consistent with the Goals and Objectives of the Land Use Policy Plan.

- As mentioned previously, the surrounding neighborhood is comprised of a variety of housing/building types, including a church, multi-family buildings, agricultural buildings, and one and two-story single-family residential homes. This site is set internal to a Multi-family development and does not have a direct relationship to the surrounding neighborhoods. The increased intensity of development with 18 homes will not affect infrastructure that serves the site.
- The goals and objectives of the Land Use Policy Plan (LUPP) that are relevant to this proposal are attached.

Goals and Objectives of the Land Use Policy Plan

Relevant to Proposed Master Plan

Goal No. 1. Recognizing that additional population and economic growth is likely, it is the goal of Ames to plan for and manage growth within the context of the community's capacity and preferences. It is the further goal of the community to manage its growth so that it is more sustainable, predictable and assures quality of life.

Objectives. In managing growth, Ames seeks the following objectives.

- 1.C Ames seeks to manage a population and employment base that can be supported by the community's capacity for growth. A population base of 61,000-73,000 and an employment base of up to 34,000 is targeted within the City. Additionally, it is estimated that the population in the combined City and unincorporated Planning Area could be as much as 67,000 and the employment base could be as much as 38,000 by the year 2030.

Goal No. 2. In preparing for the target population and employment growth, it is the goal of Ames to assure the adequate provision and availability of developable land. It is the further goal of the community to guide the character, location and compatibility of growth with the area's natural resources and rural areas.

Objectives. In assuring and guiding areas for growth, Ames seeks the following objectives.

- 2.B. Ames seeks to assure the availability of sufficient suitable land resources to accommodate the range of land uses that are planned to meet growth. Sufficient land resources shall be sought to eliminate market constraints.
- 2.D. Ames seeks a development process that achieves greater conservation of natural resources and compatibility between development and the environment.

Goal No. 3. It is the goal of Ames to assure that it is an "environmentally-friendly" community and that all goals and objectives are integrated with this common goal. In continuing to serve as a concentrated area for human habitat and economic activity, Ames seeks to be compatible with its ecological systems in creating an environmentally sustainable community.

Objectives. In assuring the community's "environmental-friendliness", Ames seeks the following objectives.

- 3.B. Ames seeks to maintain and enhance the value of its stream corridors as drainage ways and flood management areas, plant and animal habitats, recreational and scenic areas and pathways for linking the overall community.

- 3.C. Ames seeks to protect and conserve its water resources for the following purposes: aquifer protection; water quality protection; user conservation management; plant and animal life support; water-borne recreation; scenic open space; and, provision of a long-term/reliable/safe source of water for human consumption and economic activities.

Goal No. 4. It is the goal of Ames to create a greater sense of place and connectivity, physically and psychologically, in building a neighborhood and overall community identity and spirit. It is the further goal of the community to assure a more healthy, safe and attractive environment.

Objectives. In achieving an integrated community and more desirable environment, Ames seeks the following objectives.

- 4.A. Ames seeks to establish more integrated and compact living/activity areas (i.e. neighborhoods, villages) wherein daily living requirements and amenities are provided in a readily identifiable and accessible area. Greater emphasis is placed on the pedestrian and related activities.
- 4.B. Ames seeks to physically connect existing and new residential and commercial areas through the association of related land uses and provision of an intermodal transportation system.
- 4.C. Ames seeks to psychologically connect the various living/activity areas through closer proximity of residential areas and supporting commercial uses, common design elements and inclusion of community amenities such as parks and schools. The connections should promote community identity.

Goal No. 5. It is the goal of Ames to establish a cost-effective and efficient growth pattern for development in new areas and in a limited number of existing areas for intensification. It is a further goal of the community to link the timing of development with the installation of public infrastructure including utilities, multi-modal transportation system, parks and open space.

Objectives. In defining the growth pattern and timing of development, Ames seeks the following objectives.

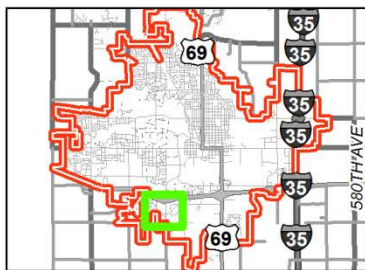
- 5.C. Ames seeks the continuance of development in emerging and infill areas where there is existing public infrastructure and where capacity permits.
- 5.D. Ames seeks to have the real costs of development borne by the initiating agent when it occurs outside of priority areas for growth and areas served by existing infrastructure.

Goal No. 6. It is the goal of Ames to increase the supply of housing and to provide a wider range of housing choices.

Objectives. In increasing housing opportunities, Ames seeks the following objectives.

- 6.B. Ames seeks to establish densities of a net average 5.6 dwelling units per acre in maximizing the number of housing units in new areas.
- 6.C. Ames seeks to establish higher densities in existing areas where residential intensification is designated with the further objective that there shall be use and appearance compatibility among existing and new development.

Attachment A-Location Map



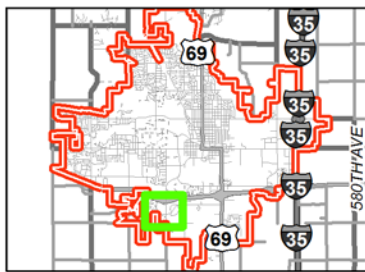
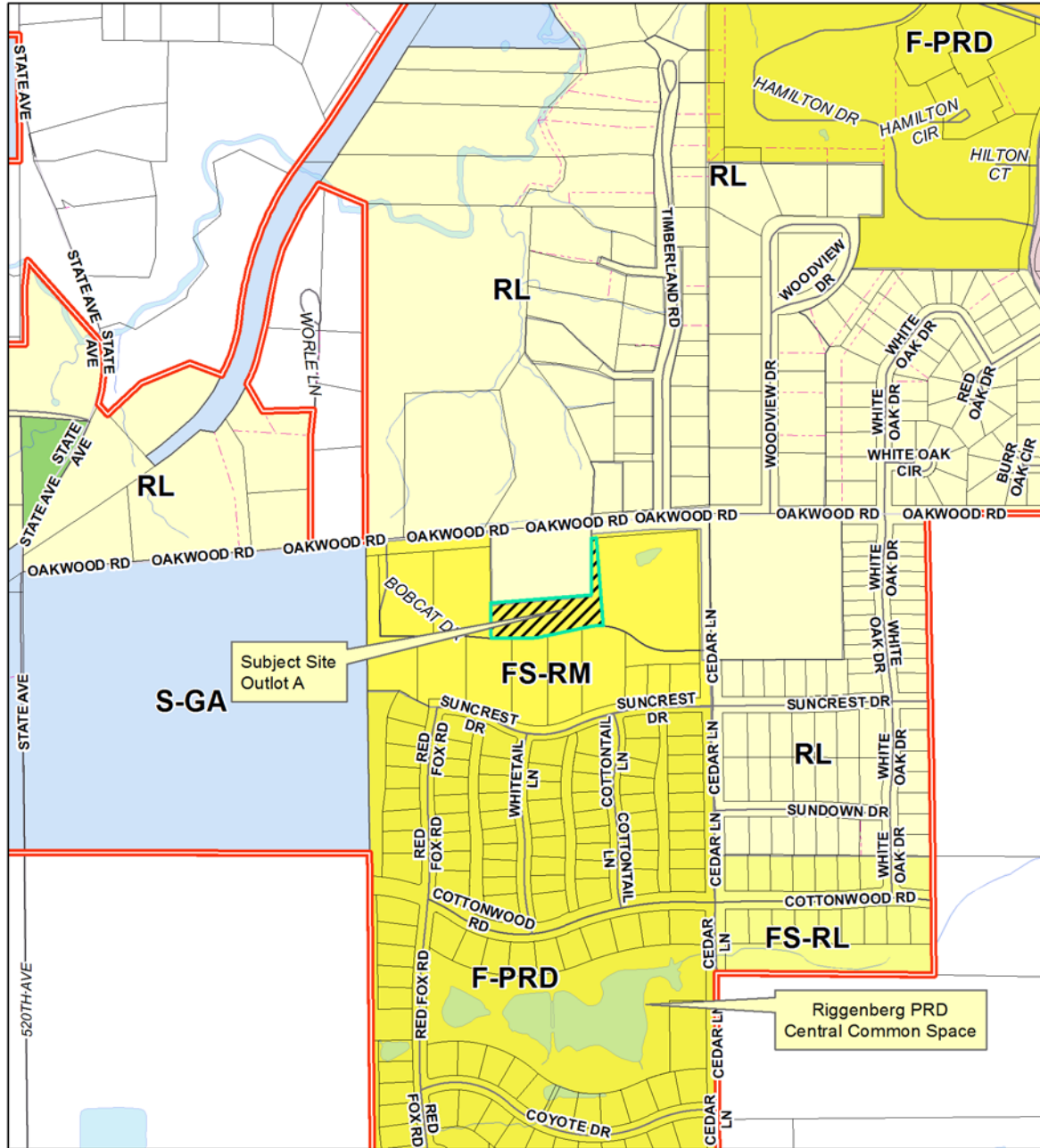
Location Map

Attachment B- Current Approved Master Plan



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Attachment D-Zoning



Zoning Map