

May 17, 2022

DESIGN **EDGE**

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RE: Zoning Map Amendment - 38th Avenue and Helena Street
Application Number – DA-2311-00,
Case Numbers – 1982-2015-00

Erik,

This letter shall serve as our letter of introduction for the project.

The proposed project is the rezoning of two parcels within the City of Aurora. The lots are located as Parcel 1 – Lots 1-8, Block 1, Peterson Subdivision and Parcel 2 – Lots 3-4, Block 4, Peterson Subdivision. The property is currently zoned R-R (Rural Residential District) and it is the intent to rezone to I-1 (Business Tech District). We believe this is consistent with city plans which indicate this site located within the “Industry Hub” placetype in Aurora Places.

We have included a schematic plan of a proposed option for both parcels. Parcel one is a series of office/flex industrial spaces that could be leased as small space or combined into larger spaces. Viewed as offices from the street with loading located internally will provide a desirable view from all streets and blend into the surrounding neighborhood and provide a transition from commercial uses along Chambers and buffer I-70 nicely. Parcel two is currently planned as a standalone flex office/industrial building that could be occupied by one or multiple tenants.

The goal of all projects would be to meet all standards within the newly proposed I-1 for setbacks, height, parking and other requirements of the city. In addition, we have incorporated items discussed at our pre-application meeting into the sketch plan. Those items include setback adjustments, site access adjustments, on site detention, and a few other clerical items.

In addition to the items indicated above, we are including some additional supporting documentation that was requested at the first round of comments provided by the City. Those are listed as Appendix “A” Letter of Introduction Supplement.

Thank you for your time and consideration and we look forward to meeting soon to discuss this project in greater detail. If there is other information you require, please let me know and we will try and provide that to you in a timely manner.

Sincerely,



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Letter of Introduction Supplement – 38th & Helena Rezoning Application

As part of our introduction letter, we wanted to take the opportunity to address the City of Aurora's comments included in their feedback letter dated April 21, 2022. The content specifically relates to comment (2) which asked the applicant to address specific code criteria found in Section 146-5.4.1.C(3)(a)(ii) of the Unified Development Ordinance, namely:

1. The applicant has demonstrated that the proposed initial zoning or rezoning is consistent with the spirit and intent of the Comprehensive Plan, with other policies and plans adopted by the City Council, and with the purpose statement of the proposed new zone district(s);
2. The applicant has demonstrated that the size, scale, height, density, and multi-modal traffic impacts of the proposed initial zoning or rezoning are compatible with surrounding development or can be made compatible with surrounding development through approval conditions; and
3. The application demonstrates that the change in zoning will not create significant dislocations of tenants or occupants of the property, or that any impacts are outweighed by other public benefits or progress toward other Comprehensive Plan goals that would be achieved by approval of the application.

Consistency with Spirit and Intent of the Comprehensive Plan

We conducted a thorough review of "Aurora Places," the City's comprehensive plan, to demonstrate the considerable support for the rezoning request from Rural-Residential to Industrial-1. The content below will outline pertinent sections of Aurora Places and highlight how they support our request.

Chapter 2 – A City in Transition

- Fiscal Health
 - *"Aurora is deeply dependent on local sales tax to support its budget. In the 2018 Adopted Budget, sales tax revenue is the largest operating source of revenue, contributing 55 percent of General Fund sources. This source of revenue is largely driven by population demographics the availability of disposable income of Aurora households. Consumer spending by daytime Aurora-based employees and spending by visitors to the city are other sales tax contributors" (pg. 14)*
 - *"The second largest revenue source is local property taxes, which comprises 11 percent of the General Fund revenue." (pg. 15)*

Applicant Response

- The proposed rezoning to I-1 and subsequent development of an industrial flex/office park would help to improve Aurora's fiscal health by creating new jobs where Aurora-based employees and products sold by associated business can help grow the City's tax base. Furthermore, the development of this vacant parcel would increase the value of the land and the property tax revenue collected by the City.

Chapter 3 – Community Conversation

- A Strong Economy
 - *"The participants in the community conversation stressed the importance of economic growth for Aurora...According to participants, job creation and access to workforce*

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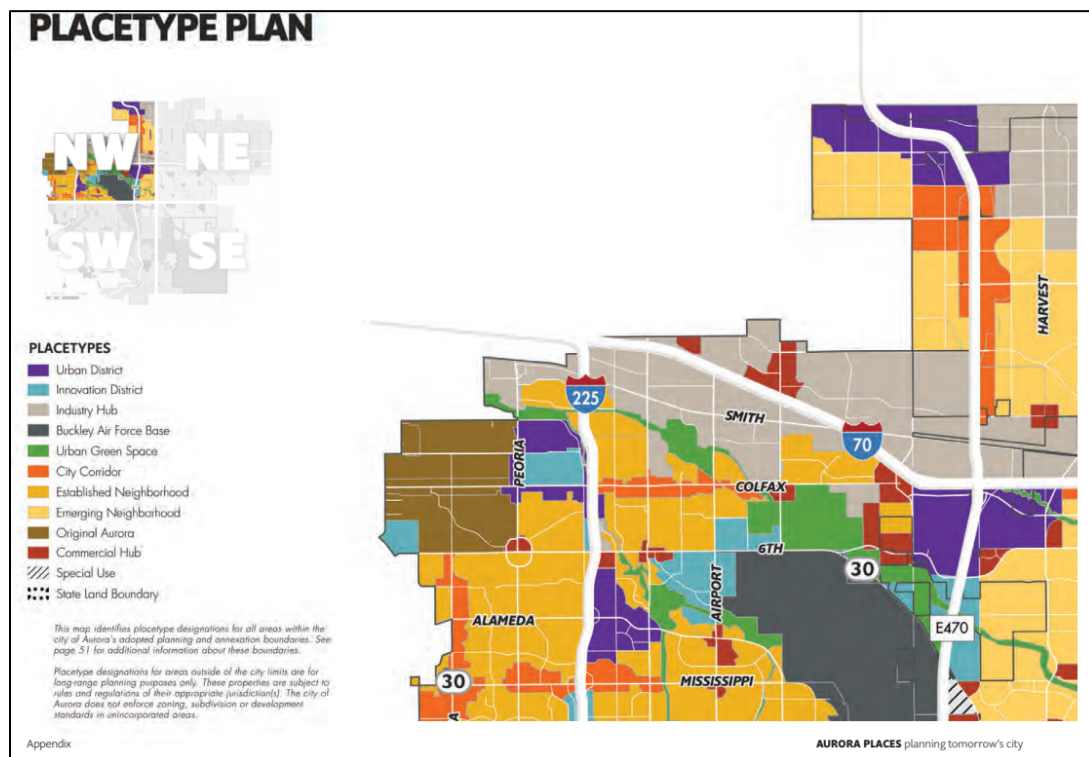
training resources are very important. There is a strong desire to improve support for small and local businesses.” (pg. 20)

Applicant Response

- Aurora prides itself, and as it should, on the community outreach conducted as part of the recent passage of Aurora Places. In their feedback, Aurora residents stressed the importance of economic growth and a strong focus on job creation and support for local businesses. The proposed rezoning to I-1 would allow for the development of small-scale commercial buildings which lends themselves to local businesses/employers rather than large corporate users. The I-1 would foster development on a currently vacant piece of land and support economic growth along the I-70 corridor which is exactly where this type of development should be located.

Chapter 4 – Placetypes

- Placed Based Approach
 - *“The placetypes provide a great deal of flexibility and potential for innovation. This place-based approach promotes the full potential of vacant and undeveloped properties by allowing them to draw on different types of land uses. The creation of places not only depends on the land uses but also on their specific design, functionality and access to infrastructure.” (pg. 24)*
- Placetype Plan



Applicant Response

- The property in question is situated comfortably within the Industry Hub placetype designation. The overarching placetype description on pg. 24 notes the city's place-based approach "promotes the full potential of vacant and undeveloped properties..." The property in question

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at 38th Ave and Helena St is a vacant, undeveloped parcel, and as such, has strong potential for a higher and better use.

- Placetypes and Land Use
 - *“Primary land uses are prominent and play a pivotal role in characterizing the placetype. Supporting land uses are less prevalent and strengthen the primary land uses.” (pg. 26)*
- Typical Land Uses
 - *“Light Industrial, Business Parks, and office space cover a wide range of uses that include storage, warehouse, research, light processing or assembly, office parks and others.” (pg. 27)*

Placetypes	Typical Land Uses													
	Single-Family Detached Residential	Single-Family Attached Residential	Multifamily Residential	Restaurant	Commercial Retail	Commercial Service	Entertainment and Arts District	Office	Light Industrial / Business Parks	Heavy Industrial	Buckley Air Force Base	Institutional (educational, religious, cultural)	Parks and Open Space	Urban Agriculture
Urban District	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Innovation District	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Industry Hub	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Buckley Air Force Base	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Urban Green Space	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Original Aurora	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Established Neighborhood	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Emerging Neighborhood	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
City Corridor	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Commercial Hub	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

● Primary Land Uses are more prominent and play a pivotal role in characterizing that placetype.
 ○ Supporting Land Uses are less prevalent and serve to support the primary land use.

Applicant Response

- The chart above depicts primary and supporting land uses within the Industry Hub placetype designation. The rezoning of the property to I-1 would allow for the development of a light industrial/business park which is a primary land use and plays a “pivotal role in characterizing that placetype.” The typical uses found within the Industry Hub zone district align closely with our planned use if the I-1 rezoning request is approved.

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▪ Industry Hub

- *“The Industry Hub includes areas typically dedicated to manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, fulfillment centers, freight operations and renewable energy enterprises. This placetype plays an important role in the city's employment base and economy, but can sometimes create outdoor activity and should be appropriately buffered from residential and commercial areas. It can generate high volumes of traffic from both its employees and associated truck traffic. Adjoining roadways should accommodate traffic without negatively impacting quieter placetypes or traffic on local streets serving residential areas4” (pg. 32)*
- *“Locate Industrial Hubs near major highways. Configure a street grid sufficient to accommodate large industrial facilities and truck traffic.” (pg. 32)*

Applicant Response

- The location of the proposed zoning on 38th Ave and Helena St. lends itself well to buffering from adjacent land uses and limiting traffic associated with development under the I-1 zoning. The site is adjacent to Chambers Rd. and I-70. Most traffic will access the site from 38th Ave off Chambers and then enter the property through curb cuts on 38th Ave and Helena St. Our preliminary site plan was intentionally crafted so that vehicular travel will predominantly remain to the west and avoid using roads within the area to the south and east of the property. The property is located adjacent to I-70 and we'll be reconnecting the street grid in the area (Helena to Jasper Streets) per staff's request. The construction of the new street will help buffer our property from the one to the south. Additional buffering will occur through building orientation and ample landscaping which will be further developed during the site development plan process.

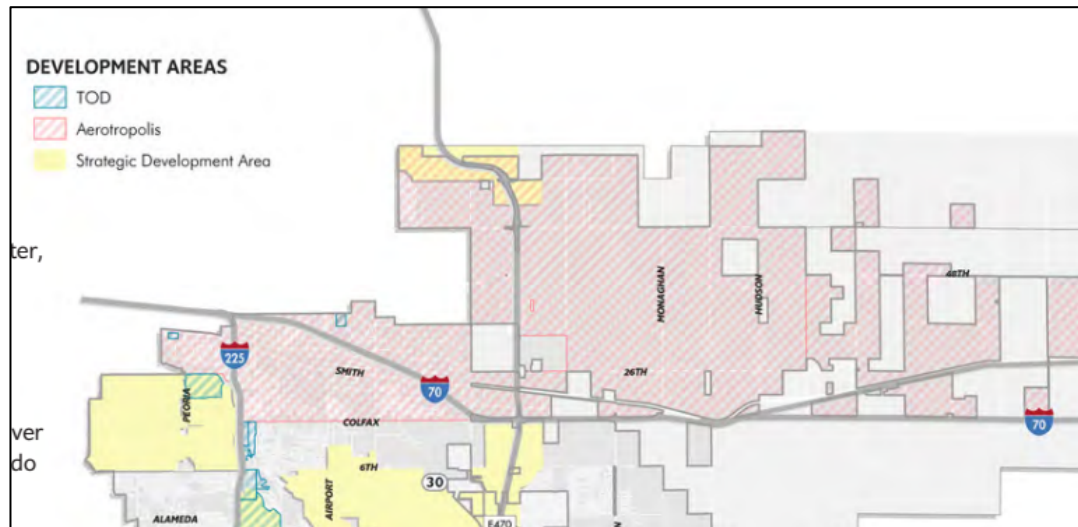
Chapter 5 – Connecting Places

▪ Redevelopment and Reinvestment

- *“Like many communities that developed substantially since the mid-20th century, Aurora's aging neighborhoods and commercial centers face a growing need for revitalization. Housing, commercial buildings, infrastructure and public facilities are aging and in need of repair or replacement to return those areas to a place of vibrancy and desirability. While most of this reinvestment will come from the private sector, the city has an active role to play in planning, initiating and supporting reinvestment in key areas and projects.” (pg. 57)*
- *“Targeted Industries The city and its partners work to attract and expand key industries in order to broaden and deepen the diverse local economy. These businesses may be growth industries with a strong long-term outlook, complementary or support industries to existing job sectors, or emerging industries in which Aurora offers a competitive advantage. However, Aurora's employment is diverse, and opportunities in other sectors will be pursued as well. Targeted industries include: Advanced manufacturing, Aerospace and defense, Bioscience, Creative industries, Healthcare, Hospitality, Energy, Transportation and logistics.” (pg. 59)*

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▪ Strategic Development Areas



▪ Aerotropolis

- *“An aerotropolis is a dynamic, urban place in which the layout, infrastructure, and economy center around the airports. An aerotropolis is more than any single development, it is largely characterized by a collection of transportation-linked businesses and supporting industrial and commercial development. However, appropriately-located residential, retail and restaurants will also be included.” (pg. 63)*

Applicant Response

- The Rural-Residential zoning located adjacent to Chambers Rd. and I-70 presents a unique opportunity for the City of Aurora to help promote revitalization and investment. Numerous properties in the area are undeveloped despite their visibility and immediate access off I-70. A zoning change in this area to I-1, and the city’s support for such a change, could help spark considerable reinvestment along a major economic corridor. Additionally, Aurora Plans identifies the subject site within the Aerotropolis development area that generally supports industrial and commercial development rather than residential uses.

Chapter 6 – Goals, Policies and Practices

▪ A Strong Economy

- *“Goals*
 - *Support a growing availability of job opportunities for people with a variety of skill levels and experience.*
 - *Achieve greater balance between the number of residents and jobs in Aurora. Continue to support the growth of primary employment to bolster the local economy.*
 - *Support locally grown businesses along with business startups and expansions.*
- *Recommended Practices*
 - *Work with the development community to encourage construction of high-quality office space in urban districts, innovation districts and other placetypes.*

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- *Identify and reserve ideal locations for significant and strategic commercial and employment uses in Urban District, Innovation District, City Corridor, Commercial Hub and Industry Hub placetypes.*
- *Continue to use zoning designations to locate industry hubs, particularly along the I-70 corridor and in the Aerotropolis area, in large land areas well-suited for industrial and distribution operations.*
- *Take advantage of Aurora's proximity to Denver International Airport for new economic opportunities. Focus on job creation and industrial development opportunities in those areas.*
- *Work with existing and potential businesses to support a vibrant local economy with increasing numbers and a diversity of high-quality, high-paying jobs at all skill levels, particularly at employment centers." (pg. 88)*

Applicant Response

- Many of the goals and recommended practices above apply extremely well to this rezoning request. A rezoning to I-1 would help support greater commercial and employment uses within the Industry Hub placetype located adjacent to the I-70 corridor within the Aerotropolis area.

Consistency with the I-1 Intent Statement in the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO)

Aurora's UDO provides the following intent statement for the I-1 zone district in 146-2.5.3 – "The purpose of the I-1 district is to provide employment centers with offices, office showrooms, light manufacturing, research and development operations, and a limited range of associated retail services, at a low- to medium scale with high building design quality in an integrated or campus-like setting." The intent statement expressed in the UDO is consistent with Aurora Places and bolsters our rezoning request for I-1. If approved, the request will foster the development of an industrial flex/office park that will serve as an additional employment center in the area.

Ensuring Compatibility with Surrounding Development

The property's location near Chambers and I-70 makes it optimal for the I-1 zone district and limits impacts to surrounding development. For starters, most of the ingress and egress from the property will occur on 38th Avenue and Helena Street as these will be the closest access points from those vehicles turning onto 38th from Chambers. Because the site is located closer to Chambers and west of the Rural-Residential zoning, traffic traveling beyond the property to the east will be minimal.

We have put together a high-level site plan that shows ample setbacks between future structures on the property and surrounding uses. It's anticipated that an industrial flex/office park on the property would be one-story and commiserate with the height of other structures in the area. Future buffering from surrounding uses will be accomplished during the site plan process if the rezoning is approved. Per staff's request, we have committed to reconnecting the street grid from Helena to Jasper Street. This new road, curb and gutter will provide an additional separation from the proposed use and the property to the south.

The I-1 zoning, and more intense commercial uses are common within the area. Industrially zoned properties are located to the south of 35th Avenue, just three short blocks away from the subject property while several Rural-Residential properties are adjacent to the Lazydays RV dealership.

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Limit Dislocation of Tenants/Occupants of the Property

The property is undeveloped thus the rezoning request will not lead to the dislocation of any tenants or occupants from the site. Rather, if the rezoning is approved, the I-1 zoning will provide the opportunity for future small business to locate on the site and provide a positive economic benefit to the City of Aurora.