FORT WAYNE PLAN COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT • SEPTEMBER 2024

PROPOSALS:	Rezoning Petitions REZ-2024-0032 REZ-2024-0033, REZ-2024-0034, REZ-2024-0035, and REZ-2024-0036 – Decatur Road Area Proactive Rezone
APPLICANT:	Fort Wayne Plan Commission and the Proactive Rezoning Work Group
REQUEST:	To rezone properties in the Decatur Road area to better align with existing uses and the policy recommendations of the Southeast Strategy
LOCATION:	Multiple parcels in the Decatur Road Study Area- bounded by Pettit Avenue, Paulding Road, Hanna Street, and South Calhoun.
LAND AREA:	14.27672 acres – RP/Planned Residential; 19.20837 acres - C2/Limited Commercial; 10.44833 acres – NC/Neighborhood Center; 33.58623 acres – SC/Shopping Center; 4.221495 acres – C3/General Commercial.
PRESENT ZONING:	C2/Limited Commercial, C3/General Commercial, C4/Intensive Commercial, and I1/Limited Industrial.
PROPOSED ZONING:	RP/Planned Residential, C2/Limited Commercial, NC/Neighborhood Center, SC/Shopping Center, and C3/General Commercial.
ADJACENT ZONING & LAND USES:	North: R1/Single-Family Residential (Residences) and C2/Limited Commercial South: R1/Single-Family Residential (Residences) and C2/Limited Commercial West: R1/Single-Family Residential (Bishop Luers School) and C2/Limited Commercial East: R1/Single-Family Residential (Residences)
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS:	Lafayette Place Improvement, Fairfield Terrace /Belmont, Westchester, South Suburban Civic, Suburban Heights, Mount Vernon Park, Pettit-Rudisill, Southeast Area Partnership, Community Development, Neighborhoods Department

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS
The submittal documents were submitted by the filing deadline of August 28, 2024.

SITE HISTORY
The rezoning study area, referenced as the "Decatur Road Area", includes properties located between Pettit Avenue and Paulding Road, Hanna Street and Lafayette Street (US 27). This area includes a variety of auto-oriented commercial and light industrial uses, along with a variety of small retail uses. The area has a diverse mix of Hispanic and Burmese owned restaurants, groceries, and personal services. The largest anchor establishment in the area is the recently opened City Church (located in the former Scott's supermarket at 5300 Decatur Road).

The Decatur Road Area also includes the Southgate Plaza area located on the south side of Pettit Avenue between Calhoun and Lafayette Streets.

Current zoning for the study area includes I1/Limited Industrial, C4 / Intensive Commercial, C3/General Commercial, C2/Limited Commercial. This request proposes to rezone portions of this area to RP

/Planned Residential, C2 / Limited Commercial, NC / Neighborhood Center, SC / Shopping Center, and C3 / General Commercial.

STAFF DISCUSSION

In 2021, Fort Wayne Common Council adopted the guiding principles and policy recommendations for the Southeast Strategy Update, now included and incorporated as part of the All in Allen Comprehensive Plan. This newer Southeast Strategy Plan updates the 2007 Southeast Area Development Strategy. The updated plan covers a range of topics including Economic Development & Revitalization, Neighborhoods & Housing, Transportation & Infrastructure, Public Spaces & Interconnectivity, and Community & Pride. Land use recommendations, incorporated within the Community & Pride chapter, include the Decatur Road Area.

This rezoning request has been developed by the Proactive Rezoning Work Group, referenced as "Work Group". The Work Group, consisting of Community Development and Department of Planning Services staff, was created to implement zoning recommendations from neighborhood and sub-area plans. In 2022, the Proactive Rezoning Work Group initiated rezoning East Pontiac Street, as recommended in the Southeast Strategy Update. As part of these rezoning requests, the Work Group reviews and researches existing and proposed land uses and development forms within the study area to determine the proposed zoning classifications.

Based on recommendations from the Southeast Strategy Update along with additional analysis from the Work Group, it was determined that there are several zoning and land use conflicts present in areas zoned for industrial or higher intensity commercial uses. The primary land use conflicts in these I1/Limited Industrial zoned areas are properties used primarily for limited commercial or general commercial land uses. Rezoning areas to zoning districts more appropriate to existing development types will help to stabilize these areas, encourage desired land uses and prevent the encroachment of incompatible industrial or higher intensity commercial uses.

The proposed rezoning will have no adverse impact on the current conditions in the area or the uses in the area. The rezoning will not create additional non-conforming uses within this requested rezoning area.

As part of the public outreach for this rezoning request the Work Group hosted an open house on April 17, 2024, from 5:30-7:00 p.m. at Bridge of Grace Ministries located in the nearby Mount Vernon Park Neighborhood. Postcards were mailed to the property and business owners in the affected area in advance of the open house. The postcard also directed people to an interactive web page specific to the rezoning which informed users about the project and allowed them to directly contact the staff team. Prior to the open house, Work Group staff canvased the study area to distribute flyers to property and business owners about the upcoming open house and website. This approach allowed staff to have in-depth conversations with several property/business owners about the rezoning for their specific property.
Subsequent to the open house, additional one-on-one meetings and correspondences took place with business and property owners to discuss the rezoning. Because of the diversity of business and property owners within the study area, accommodations were made to include translated materials (both written and audible).

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW

Future Growth and Development Map, Goals, and Strategies

The project site is located within the Priority Investment Area; the following Goal and Strategies would be applicable:

> **LUD1** – Encourage compatible infill development and redevelopment in the Urban Infill and Priority Investment Areas

LUD1.1 – Explore new zoning classifications, updated development regulations, and other tools to encourage compatible infill development and redevelopment.

Overall Land Use Policies

Staff determined the following Land Use Policies would be applicable and supportive of this request:

LUD Policy 2 – Promote complete neighborhoods through sustainable development, preservation, and growth by encouraging and enhancing mixed use neighborhood areas

LUD Policy 4 – Nonresidential development which is adjacent to residential neighborhoods should be limited to lower intensity neighborhood commercial uses.

LUD Policy 7 – Encourage compatible adaptive reuse of vacant, obsolete, or underutilized nonresidential buildings.

Generalized Future Land Use Map

The project site is located within the Production Center and Community Commercial designations.

Overall Land Use Related Action Steps

Staff determined the following recommendations would be applicable and supportive of this proposal:

HN1.1 – Promote the creation of complete neighborhood areas through compact development, increased density, and infill.

ED 1.2.3 – Identify gateways and corridors to target for proactive land use planning, beautification efforts, and appropriate context-sensitive development and redevelopment.

ED1.3 – Support business development and expansion, and new business attraction.

ED1.3.2 – Identify barriers to the development and expansion of businesses and explore the creation of new incentives and programs to address identified barriers.

Compatibility Matrix

This proposed RP/Planned Residential, C2/Limited Commercial, NC/Neighborhood Center, SC/Shopping Center, and C3/General Commercial zoning fall into the Community Commercial designation, as well as being adjacent to Traditional Neighborhood designated areas. These proposed rezonings are considered compatible in or adjacent to this Generalized Future Land Use category.

This proposed rezoning also includes C2/Limited Commercial which falls into the Production Center designation which is potentially compatible with additional mitigation/consideration.

Other Applicable Plans

Southeast Strategy Update Plan

The rezoning request satisfies the following guiding principles and policies of the Southeast Strategy Update:

Guiding Principle - The physical environment should have a consistent, high quality visual character

Z&LU 1 - Zoning classifications should be compatible with existing land uses and development patterns in developed areas.

Z&LU 2 - Nonresidential development adjacent to residential neighborhoods should contain lower intensity, neighborhood-oriented uses that focus on the needs of the surrounding community.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: "Do Pass" of Rezoning Petitions REZ-2024-0032, REZ-2024-0033, REZ-2024-0034, REZ-2024-0035, and REZ-2024-0036 **after considering the following:**

1. Approval of the rezoning request will be in substantial compliance with the City of Fort Wayne Comprehensive Plan and should not establish an undesirable precedent in the area.

2. Approval of the request will not have an adverse impact on the current conditions in the area, or the character of current structures and uses in the area.

3. Approval is consistent with the preservation of property values in the area. Most of the surrounding area is currently developed, and portions of the site are also currently developed. The application of the proposed zoning districts will better align with existing land uses and will allow for more appropriate development on currently developable parcels within the study area.

4. Approval is consistent with responsible development and growth principles based on existing uses and infrastructure in the area. The site was fully developed in the past, and encouraging compatible development consistent with the historical form would be consistent with the historical use of infrastructure in the area.

MEMO

To: Fort Wayne Plan Commission
From: Proactive Rezoning Work Group, City-CD, DPS
Date: **8/06/24**
RE: Decatur Road Area Rezoning – Plan Commission Filing

CC:
Paul Spoelhof, Director of Planning & Policy
Michelle Wood, Senior Planner, Department of Planning Services

---

On July 15, 2024, the Fort Wayne Plan Commission initiated rezoning multiple parcels in the Decatur Road Area- bounded by Pettit Avenue, Paulding Road, Hanna Street, and South Calhoun. Based upon that action, the Proactive Rezoning Work Group is submitting the following five (5) rezoning applications for the September 9th Plan Commission Public Hearing.

The Decatur Road rezoning is a recommendation from the Southeast Strategy Update Plan, adopted in 2021 by Fort Wayne Common Council. The plan recommends rezoning portions of this area to a more appropriate zoning district for the actual land uses and to encourage more compatible land uses and development patterns for the surrounding area.

The request is to rezone portions of this area to RP IPlanned Residential, C2 I Limited Commercial, C3 I General Commercial, NC I Neighborhood Center, and SC I Shopping Center. The current zoning for this area includes I1ILimited Industrial, C4 I Intensive Commercial, C3IGeneral Commercial, C2ILimited Commercial.

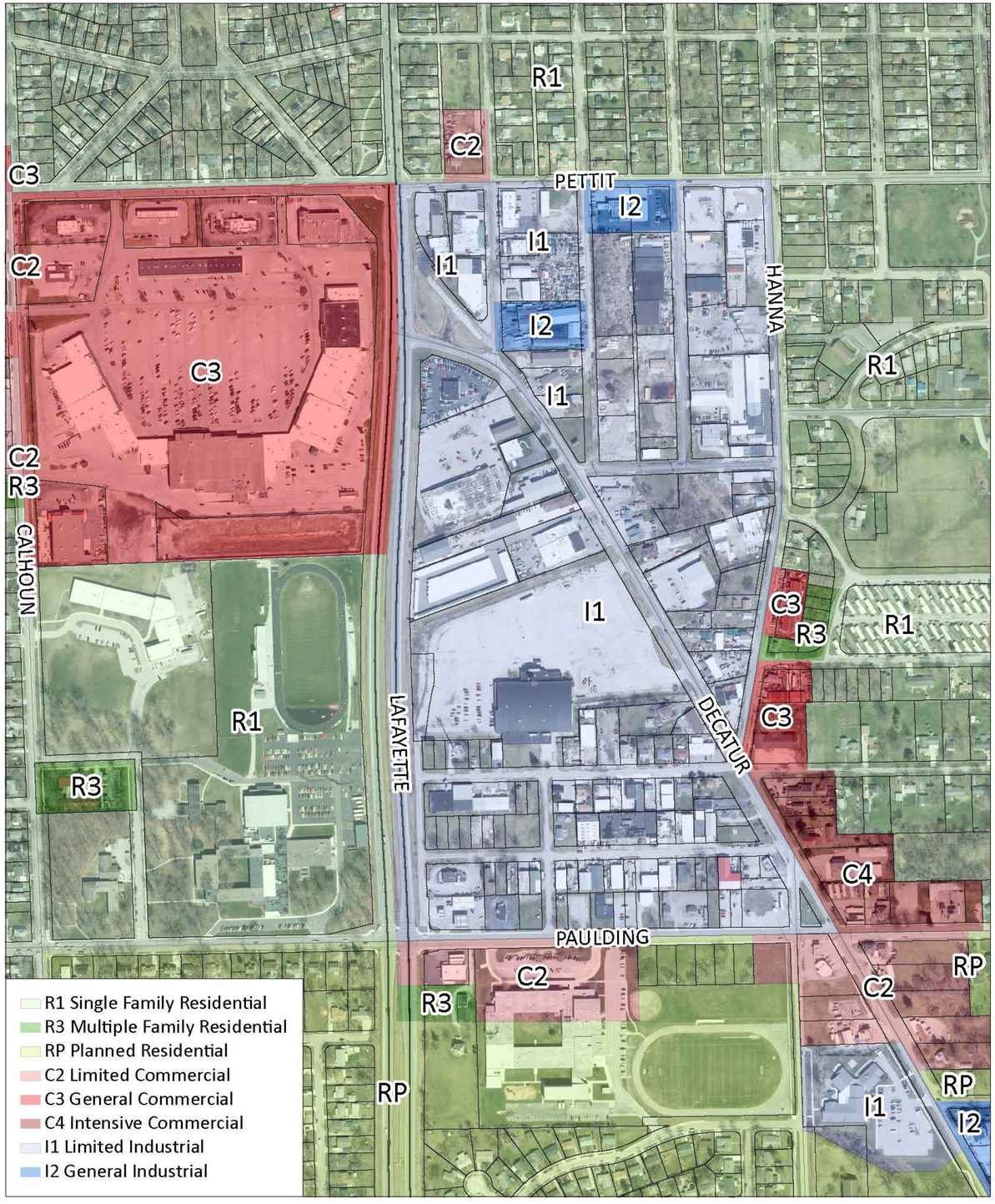
A staff person from the Proactive Rezoning Work Group will attend the September 9th Plan Commission meeting to present and answer questions regarding this rezoning.

A map of the rezoning area and the rezoning applications are attached.

Proactive Rezoning Initiative: Southeast Strategy

Decatur Road

Current Zoning



Proposed Zoning

