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CITY OF ST. JOSEPH

St. Joseph Planning Commission

Monday, February 9th, 2026

6:00 PM

St. Joseph Council Chambers

75 Callaway St E

****The meeting will also be available through Zoom****

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Agenda Review and Adoption
4. Public Comment
5. Minutes – January 12th, 2026
6. Old Business
 - a. Rural Residential Zoning Ordinance – Discussion
7. Other Business
 - a. General Updates
8. Adjourn

ZOOM INFORMATION

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87642407431?pwd=bXlkL3NlM2VKNXVMdmk2MC91bUYxUT09>

Meeting ID: 876 4240 7431

Passcode: 797162

One tap mobile

+19292056099,,87642407431#,,,,*797162# US (New York)

Dial by your location

Find your local number: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87642407431?pwd=bXlkL3NlM2VKNXVMdmk2MC91bUYxUT09>

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the Planning Commission for the City of St. Joseph met on Monday, January 12th, 2026, at 6:00 PM in the St. Joseph City Hall opening with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Planning Commission Members Present: Commissioners Keith Louwagie, Andrew Mooney, Cody Evander, Isabella Margl, Jon Hazen

Staff Present: Nate Keller

Public Comments: None

Agenda Review & Adoption: **Margl made a motion to approve Agenda Review & Adoption. The motion was seconded by Louwagie and passed unanimously.**

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Margl made a motion to recommend Hazen as Chair. The motion was seconded by Mooney and passed unanimously.

Hazen made a motion to recommend Margl as Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by Mooney and passed unanimously.

Introduction of new PC member

Cody Evander introduced himself to the Commission and mentioned how passionate he is for the city and community.

Public Comment

None

Minutes – December 8th, 2025

Margl made a motion to approve the minutes of December 8th, 2025. The motion was seconded by Hazen and passed unanimously.

New Business

8a. Joint Planning Board member appointments

Hazen made a motion to recommend Margl and Thompson to serve on the Joint Planning Board. The motion was seconded by Louwagie and passed unanimously.

8b. Future Land Use Amendment

Keller provided a presentation going over the proposed amendments. The amendments are being proposed to facility a re-plat which would result in multiple lots being combined into one lot. The reason for this lot consolidation is to facilitate the planned construction of a new Monastery.

Hazen opened the public hearing at 6:11

No one spoke at the hearing

Hazen closed the public hearing.

Margl made a motion to approve resolution PC2026-001 Adopting a Finding of Fact Approving a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to the Future Land Use map. The motion was seconded by Mooney and passed unanimously.

8c. Rezoning

Keller provided a presentation going over the proposed rezones. The rezones are being proposed to facility a re-plat which would result in multiple lots being combined into one lot to support the proposed new construction of a Monastery.

Hazen opened the public hearing at 6:12

No one spoke at the hearing

Hazen closed the public hearing.

Margl made a motion to approve resolution PC2026-002 Adopting a Finding of Fact Approving a Rezoning Request. The motion was seconded by Louwagie and passed unanimously.

8d. Preliminary Plat

Keller explained that the preliminary plat is being proposed to consolidate multiple outlots/lots into one contiguous lot.

Hazen opened the public hearing at 6:12

No one spoke at the hearing

Hazen closed the public hearing.

Mooney made a motion to approve resolution PC2026-003 Approving a Preliminary Plat for Benedict Second Addition. The motion was seconded by Louwagie and passed unanimously.

9a. Zoning Amendment – Tattoo Shops and Definitions for Beauty Salon and Tattoo Shop

Staff presented a final draft ordinance amendment. The amendment as written would define what a Beauty Salon is and what a Tattoo Shop is and define where the use is allowed. A Tattoo Shop/Body Art establishment would be allowed in the B-1 Central Business District (downtown) according to the drafted amendment.

Hazen opened the public hearing at 6:16

Kevin Kluesner 29645 95th Ave spoke on the importance of having high aesthetic standards downtown to avoid any problematic businesses.

Hazen closed the public hearing at 6:17

Louwagie made a motion to approve Ordinance PC2026-004, Motion was seconded by Margl and passed unanimously.

Margl made a motion to approve Summary Publication Resolution PC 2026-005 of Ordinance PC2026-004. Motion was seconded by Louwagie and passed unanimously.

Other Business

10a Rural Residential Zoning Ordinance – Discussion

Discussion was led by Keller on the topic of Rural Residential smaller lot subdivision. The City Council is interested in exploring the topic of allowing smaller subdivisions with lots on septic and/or well.

Discussion focused on: infrastructure considerations, including requiring water service while allowing septic systems, existing infrastructure limitations, and avoiding isolated subdivisions without adequate city utilities. Commissioners discussed city growth boundaries (current and future), appropriate densities and lot sizes, the need for utility easements to allow future sewer connections, and septic system design and review by appropriate agencies such as the County.

The Commission also discussed potential ordinance amendments, identifying two primary approaches: (1) creation of a new zoning district, or (2) amendment of the Rural Residential district to allow the use through a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). Keller reviewed the advantages and disadvantages of each option. Creation of a new zoning district would allow requests to be evaluated through rezoning and provide clearer justification for denial if criteria are not met. Allowing the use via CUP within the Rural Residential district could be feasible but would require clearly defined standards to avoid unintended proliferation of such developments.

Chair Hazen also invited Cory Ehlert and Joe Bechtold into the conversation as both were interested in the topic. Ehlert provided some developer perspective and Bechtold provided some resident perspective and asked questions about wells specifically irrigation wells.

Keller will come back next month with very rough ordinance language based on input from the Commission.

10b. General Updates

Keller provided updates on some potential multi-family projects that may move forward this spring/summer along with information on a T.A. Grant that has been submitted. If funded the TA grant will connect River's Bend park to the College Ave trail at Jade Rd. Keller is also looking into LCCMR funding for next Phase of River's Bend park (to complete the internal trails and other improvements).

Adjourn: Margl moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:20PM. The motion was seconded by Louwagie and passed unanimously.

Minutes approved by:

Nate Keller
Community Development Director



Planning Commission Agenda Item 6a

MEETING DATE: February 9th, 2026
AGENDA ITEM: 6a
ACTION REQUESTED: 6a – discussion only

PREVIOUS PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

6a – discussion occurred last month

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

6a Rural Residential Zoning Ordinance

Last month discussion occurred on how a Rural Residential smaller lot subdivision would be regulated. Some key elements that emerged included:

- Preference to add a new Zoning district versus amend the existing Rural Residential district
- If we were to amend the existing RR district at minimal we would need to add smaller lot subdivision as a Conditional Use and many standards should be included in the ordinance itself and be tied to:
 - Proper areas the use would be allowed
 - Acres or quantity of lot limits
 - Water hookup is required

Creating a new Zoning district is the desired and likely better path to go. For now staff have drafted a very rough template of how this zoning district may look. Subd. 3 would be the section that would be added if the RR district is amended to allow the use via a C.U.P.

Drafted language is included in the packet and key questions to ask are:

- Identifying areas where the smaller lot subdivision could be allowed (Exhibit A)
 - Staff will go through areas of town to the North, South, East, and West
- Identifying the minimal lot size the Zoning district should require (drafted version has 1.5 acres)
- Identifying the total acre and/or lot quantity count that should be allowed with a subdivision in this zoning district. *We would not want to allow for example a 100-acre development on septic or a large amount of single-family lots done over multiple phases. Developers may take advantage of and propose multiple phases on septic which can create very problematic issues in the future.*

Exhibit A shows a map identifying potential areas that may qualify for this new Zoning district with notes on other areas of the city that are at the current boundary. Note this is rough and just discussion for now.

NE Area characteristics

- Northside of a small section of Mullen RD
- To the North is St. Wendell Township of which no orderly annexation agreement exists and to the East is the city of St. Cloud
- Wetlands and other environmental features exist to the North
- No water is nearby so this area likely would not meet the water extension requirement and would only be allowed to fall under this zoning designation in the distant future at which time full utility extension may be appropriate

Southernmost Area characteristics

- To the South is either the Sauk River or Interstate 94
- Water could be extended but sewer is challenging and lift station is needed
- Topography on the West side of Jade Rd is extremely hilly and extending utilities is challenging

- For the property to the East of Jade Rd it is bounded to the North by Kennedy and to the South by River's Bend park. No utility extensions planned to service the park. Separation to Kennedy is provided through prairie and wetlands

Other areas of the city

Western area –

- Township property but property that falls under the Orderly Annexation Area agreement
- City reviews and issues permits in this district and Joint Planning Board oversees land use actions
- Area of potential future annexation
- Future land use map shows more intensive uses in this area (light industrial, mixed uses, etc) May be worth revisiting during the next Comp. Plan

Northern area –

- Pleasant acres to the North and St. Wendell Township (no orderly annexation agreement exists)
- 320th Street borders most of the area and is a significant East-West roadway

Eastern area –

- Township property but property that falls under the Orderly Annexation Area agreement
- City reviews and issues permits in this district and Joint Planning Board oversees land use actions
- Area of potential future annexation

SW area –

- Bounded by I-94
- Property across I-94 in St. Joseph Township but could be future annexation areas. If we are to amend the Orderly Annexation Area property on this side likely may be part of future annexation
– see Future Land Use map
- Wetlands and heavy vegetation exist on many of the parcels (e.g. Lake Sarah and Sisters of St. Benedict property)

INFORMATION FROM LAST MONTH AND UPDATED AS APPLICABLE

Key Policy Considerations

- Septic-served residential development should:
 - Be located at or near the City's boundary edges.
 - Avoid creating isolated "pocket" neighborhood where the development is surrounded by developments that have full city utilities or so as to prevent islands from forming once city utilities do get extended to surrounding properties
 - Be limited to clearly defined and transparent locations that are clear to the public, staff, and future Councilors.
- Future annexation areas and city growth potential must be considered, as:
 - City boundaries may shift over time.
 - This is particularly relevant south of the I-94 corridor if Orderly Annexation Agreements change.

Coordination with Septic Authorities

- Key recommendations include:
 - Establishing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or similar agreement with the County, which inspects and approves septic systems. County has the expertise to review developments with septic.
 - Requiring early coordination with the County during preliminary plat review to determine feasibility and compliance.

Staff Observations and Early Guidance

- Ensure a transparent process with clearly mapped areas where this development type may be allowed. This helps situate current and future Councils with clear understanding on where developments of this type would be permissible.
- Severely limit these developments to avoid septic development surrounded by municipal utilities.
- This should not be pursued solely at a developer's request to avoid utility extension costs.
- Require early septic review by Stearns County during concept and preliminary plat stages.
- Strongly consider requiring municipal water service while allowing septic:
 - Failed wells create greater long-term risks than failed septic systems.
- Consider placing a density max within the ordinance. Having a max density for example can prevent a developer from requesting a multi-phase development approval for 100+ single family lots. Capping how many lots would be allowed would also prevent potential complications of trying to serve a large scale development if multiple septic systems fail
- Ongoing coordination between the Planning Commission and City Council throughout the development of this topic is critical

Location and Applicability Criteria

If we are to allow septic for smaller lot subdivisions they should:

- Be limited to a small number of specific locations.
- Be near City growth boundaries where:
 - Utility extension is not feasible, and
 - Physical or infrastructure constraints exist.
- Be adjacent to existing Rural Residential areas and City boundaries.
- Not be allowed where City utilities:
 - Already exist, or
 - Can be reasonably extended.
- Examples of appropriate areas include those with:
 - Significant infrastructure limitations
 - Reliance on lift stations
 - Inability to serve the area with gravity sewer systems
- Maps are included to support discussion and will be reviewed by staff.

Potential Ordinance Pathways

- **Option 1 (preferred)**
 - Allow septic systems
 - Require municipal water service
 - Minimum lot size: *~1.5??? acre* (to be evaluated and discussion needed)
- ~~**Option 2**~~
 - ~~Allow private well and septic~~
 - ~~Minimum lot size: *~1.5 acres* (to be evaluated and discussion needed)~~
- ~~**Option 3**~~
 - ~~Amend the existing Rural Residential district~~
 - ~~Allow smaller lots through a Conditional Use Permit process~~
 - ~~Permit septic but require water hookups~~
 - ~~Apply strict limitations to avoid widespread CUP-based subdivisions~~

ATTACHMENTS: Drafted Ordinance language

Map highlighting potential properties that a new Zoning district like this could be established in.

OAA map and Future Land Use map

Lift Station map

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING THE RR-1.5 RURAL RESIDENTIAL ONE AND ONE-HALF ACRE ZONING DISTRICT AND REQUIRING MUNICIPAL WATER SERVICE

Section 502.28. RR-1.5 – Rural Residential One and One-Half Acre District

Subd. 1. Intent and Authority.

The RR-1.5 Rural Residential One and One-Half Acre District is established to allow limited rural residential subdivision development at reduced lot sizes, with a minimum lot area of one and one-half (1.5) acres, in specific areas approved by the City Council.

This district applies only to lands depicted on **Exhibit A**, which is incorporated by reference. Properties within the RR-1.5 District are intended to remain outside the City’s long-term urban growth area due to natural constraints, infrastructure limitations, or legally binding restrictions on municipal expansion.

All properties shall be served by municipal water. Individual Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems (SSTS) are permitted in accordance with Minnesota Rules Chapter 7080, as amended.

While the RR-1.5 District allows higher residential density than traditional Rural Residential zoning, development shall remain limited in scale and intensity and shall be consistent with the City’s Comprehensive Plan, infrastructure capacity, and applicable state and local regulations.

Subd. 2. Purpose.

The RR-1.5 District is established to achieve the following purposes:

- a. To facilitate smaller-acreage residential subdivisions in limited areas of the City that abut Rural Residential zoning districts or are located at or near the City’s corporate boundaries, as identified on Exhibit A.
- b. To expand housing opportunities in areas that are serviceable by municipal water but are not reasonably served by municipal sanitary sewer.
- c. To provide a transitional land use pattern that maintains rural character while allowing compatibility with future urban development.

Subd. 3(C). Rezoning Limitations and Threshold Criteria.

ORDINANCE 502 – ZONING ORDINANCE

Rezoning to the RR-1.5 Rural Residential One and One-Half Acre District is intended to be exceptional and severely limited in application and shall not be construed as a zoning district of general applicability. The burden of demonstrating compliance with the criteria below shall rest with the applicant.

A. Mapped Areas.

Only properties identified on Exhibit A shall be eligible for rezoning to the RR-1.5 District provided all of the criteria below are satisfied.

No property shall be rezoned to the RR-1.5 District unless the City Council makes written findings that **all** of the following criteria are satisfied:

1. **Comprehensive Plan Consistency.**

The proposed rezoning is consistent with the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan, including land use designations, growth policies, and infrastructure planning, and does not undermine planned urban development or future orderly annexation objectives.

2. **Infrastructure Limitation Finding.**

Municipal sanitary sewer service is not reasonably feasible to serve the property within the foreseeable planning horizon, as determined by the City Engineer, due to physical, environmental, or cost-prohibitive constraints.

3. **No Premature Urbanization.**

The rezoning will not result in premature or inefficient urban development, nor create expectations for future extension of municipal sanitary sewer service.

4. **Edge Condition Requirement.**

The property is located at the edge of the City boundaries or is physically constrained by permanent features such as public parkland, water bodies, wetlands, transportation corridors, or other barriers that reasonably limit future municipal expansion.

5. **Compatibility with Adjacent Land Uses.**

The proposed development pattern is compatible with surrounding land uses and zoning districts and provides a logical transition between rural and urban development forms.

6. **Developer-Initiated Rezoning Limitation.**

Rezoning to the RR-1.5 District shall not be approved solely for the purpose of increasing development yield, lot density, or marketability of land absent the public purpose findings required by this Section.

7. **Subdivision Control.**

The rezoning shall not result in subdivision patterns that would impede future orderly redevelopment, infrastructure extension, or annexation should municipal sewer service become available.

8. **Public Interest Determination.**

The rezoning serves a demonstrable public interest and does not primarily benefit a single property owner or development proposal at the expense of the City's long-term planning objectives.

ORDINANCE 502 – ZONING ORDINANCE

9. **Density Limitation.**

Rezoning and subsequent subdivision shall not result in the creation of more than thirty (30) single-family residential lots or forty-five (45) acres of developed land, whichever is less.

10. **Septic suitability.**

The property shall be evaluated by Stearns County Environmental Services in regards to septic design, location, soils, and other factors to determine if the proposed subdivision is compatible for septic systems.

Subd. 4. Permitted Principal Uses.

The following principal uses are permitted within the RR-1.5 District:

- a. Single-family detached dwelling units.
- b. Public parks, recreational areas, environmental preserves, and wildlife or game refuges.

Subd. 5. Conditional Uses.

The following uses are permitted only upon issuance of a Conditional Use Permit in accordance with this Ordinance:

- a. Short-term rentals, subject to the requirements of Section 505.13 of this Code

Subd. 6. Accessory Uses and Structures.

The following accessory uses and structures are permitted within the RR-1.5 District:

a. **Detached Accessory Buildings**, subject to the following standards:

- 1. Detached accessory buildings shall comply with all applicable building and zoning codes, except as modified herein.
- 2. Exterior building materials, including siding and roofing, shall be substantially similar in appearance to those used on the principal dwelling.
- 3. No detached accessory building shall be constructed prior to the construction of the principal dwelling to which it is accessory.
- 4. Detached accessory buildings shall not exceed twenty (20) feet in height.
- 5. Detached accessory buildings shall not be located over primary or secondary septic system locations.

b. Home occupations, subject to Section 502.16 of this Code.

c. Private swimming pools, subject to Section 502.12, Subdivision 4. In-ground pools may utilize an automatic pool cover in lieu of fencing where certified to comply with ASTM F1346-91, or successor standards. Pools shall not be located over primary or secondary septic system locations.

ORDINANCE 502 – ZONING ORDINANCE

d. Private sports courts, including but not limited to tennis or basketball courts, provided such courts are not located over primary or secondary septic system locations.

e. Personal amateur radio, television, and satellite dish antennas.

Subd. 7. Minimum Lot Area.

The minimum lot area within the RR-1.5 District shall be **one and one-half (1.5) acres**, or **65,340 square feet**.

Subd. 8. Yard and Setback Requirements.

a. Front Yard.

Minimum front yard setback shall be thirty (30) feet, except where existing development on the same side of the street establishes a different prevailing setback, in which case the setback shall be consistent with the established building line.

b. Side Yard.

Minimum side yard setback shall be fifteen (15) feet. On corner lots, the side yard abutting a public street shall be not less than thirty (30) feet.

c. Rear Yard.

Minimum rear yard setback shall be thirty (30) feet.

d. Accessory Structures.

Detached accessory structures shall be set back a minimum of ten (10) feet from side and rear lot lines. On corner lots, accessory structures shall be set back a minimum of twenty (20) feet from the side lot line abutting a public street.

Subd. 9. Height Limitations.

Buildings, excluding agricultural structures where otherwise permitted by law, shall not exceed forty (40) feet in height.

Subd. 10. Lot Coverage.

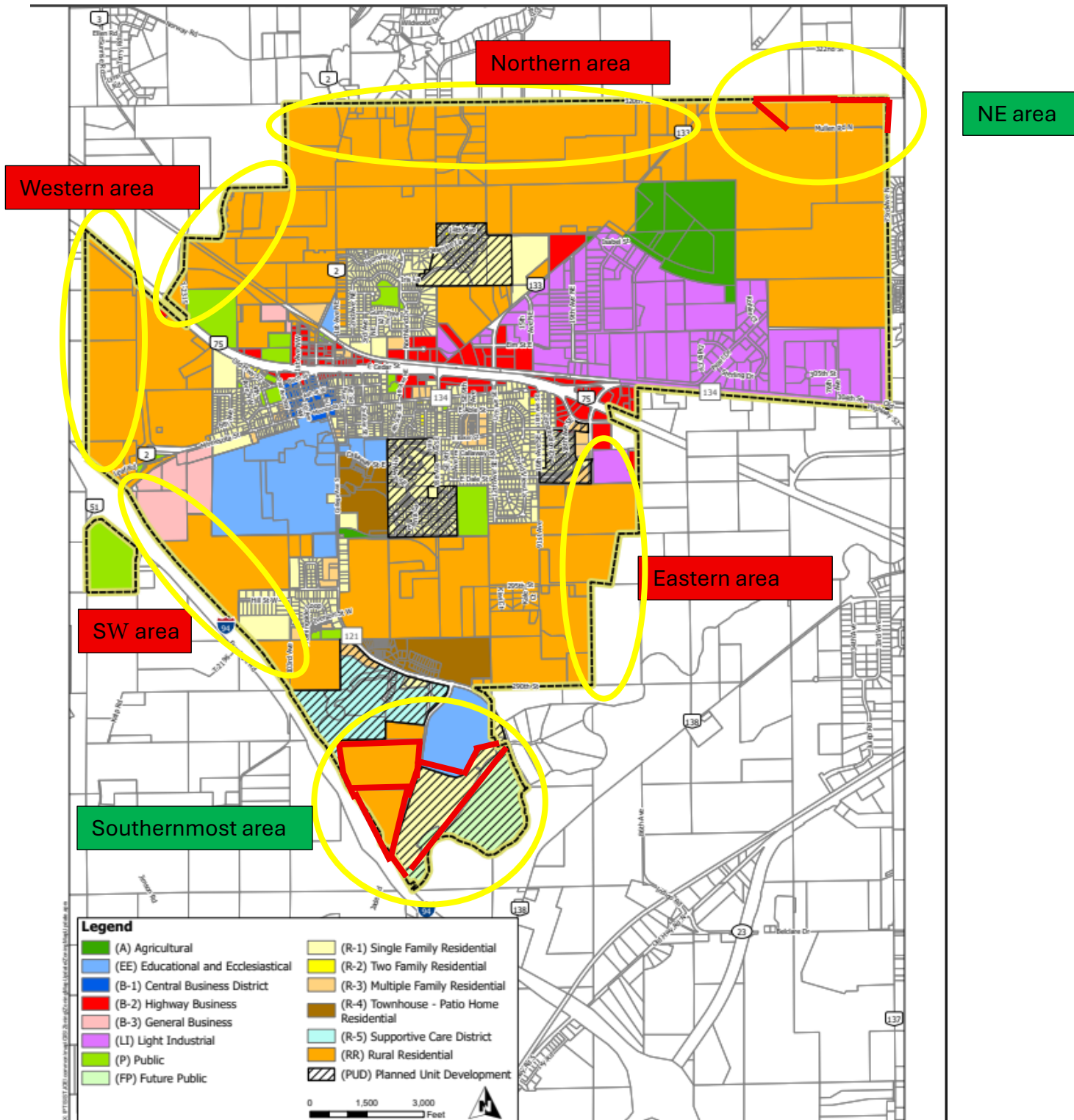
No structure or combination of structures shall occupy more than **thirty percent (30%)** of the total lot area.

EXHIBIT A

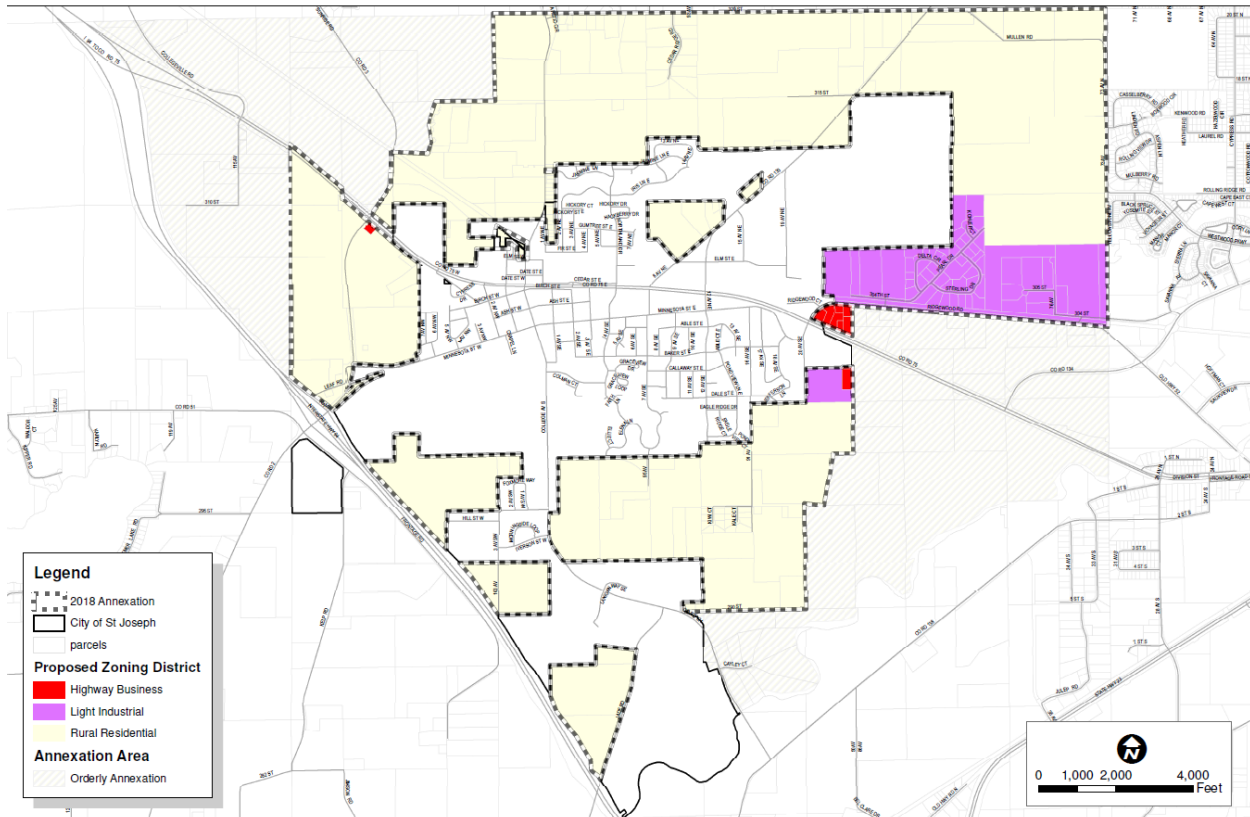
(RR-1.5 District Map – Incorporated by Reference)

ORDINANCE 502 – ZONING ORDINANCE

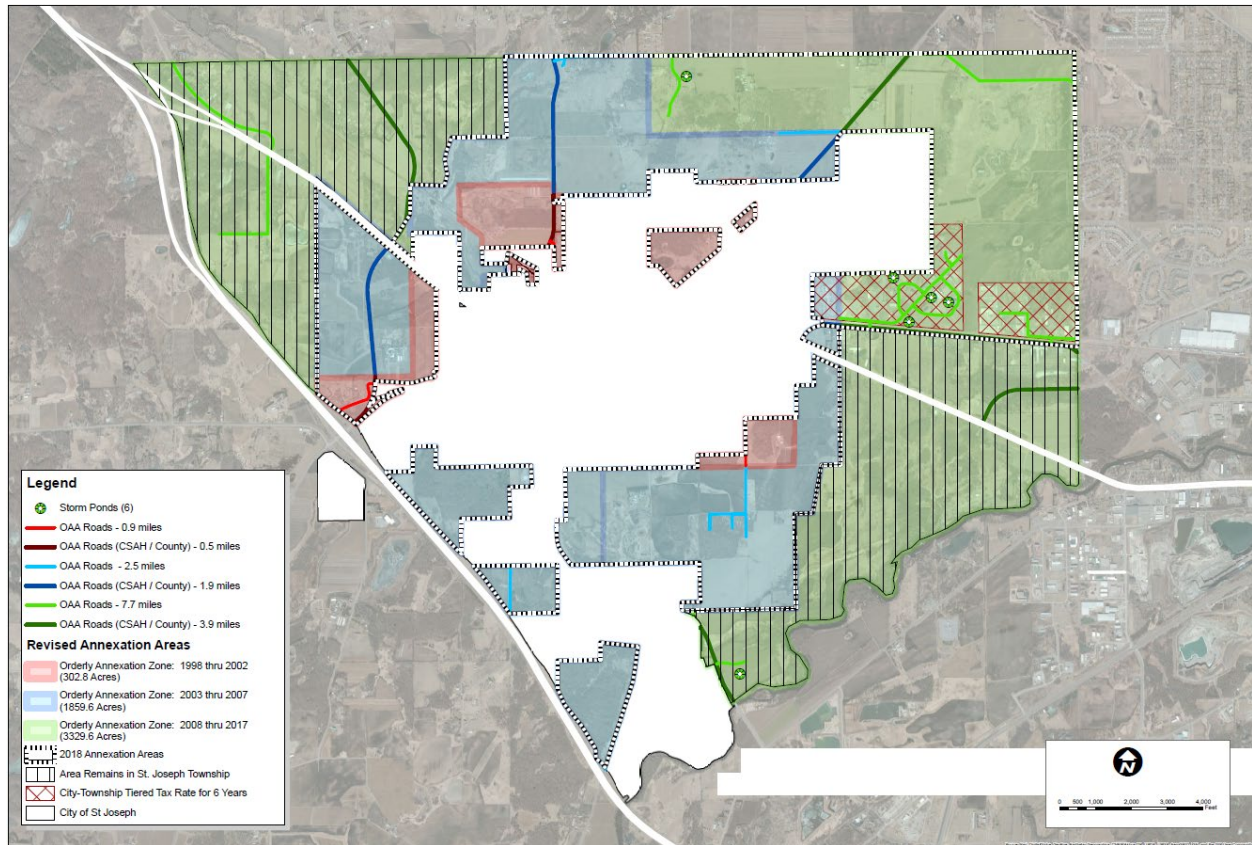
EXHIBIT A

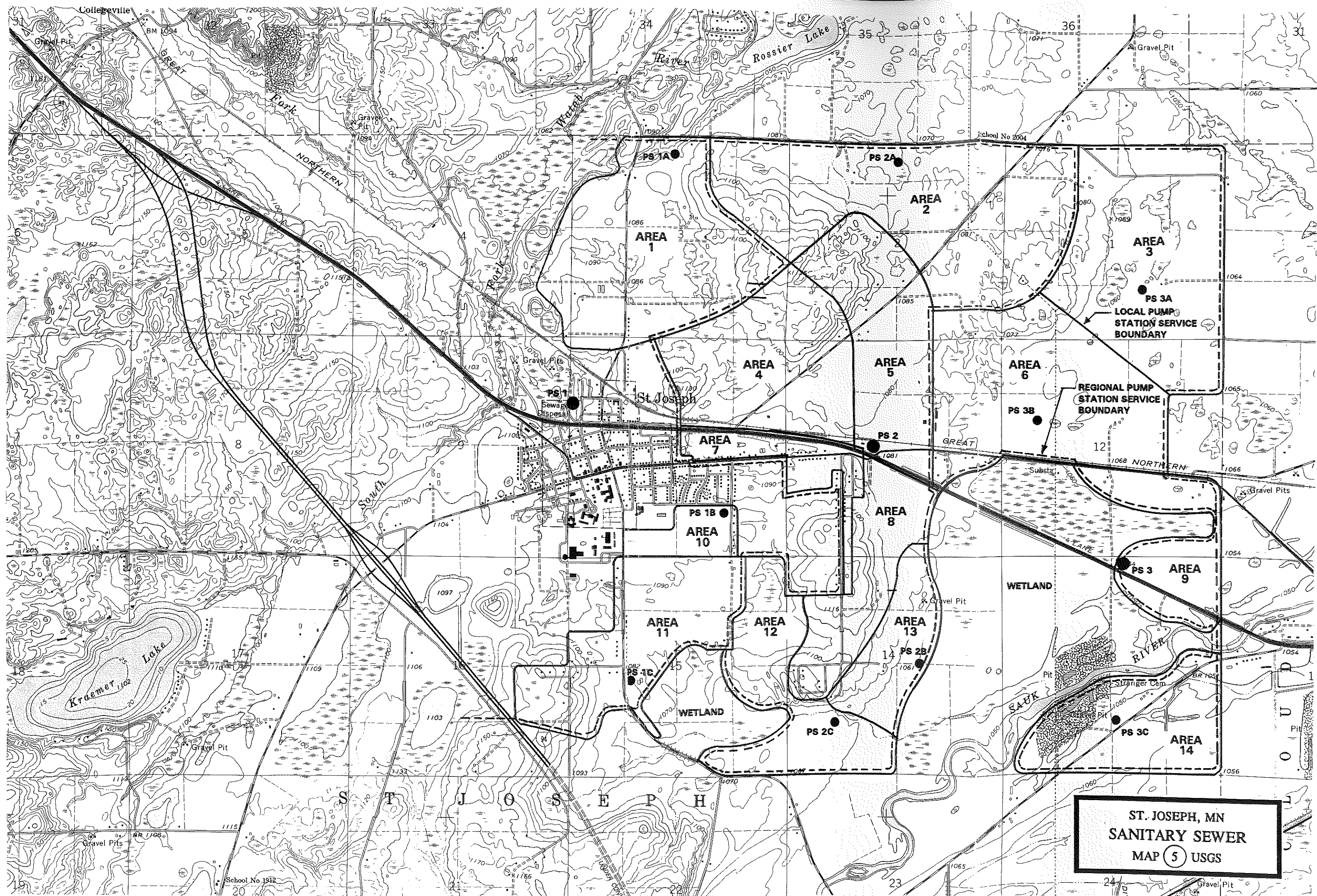


ORDINANCE 502 – ZONING ORDINANCE

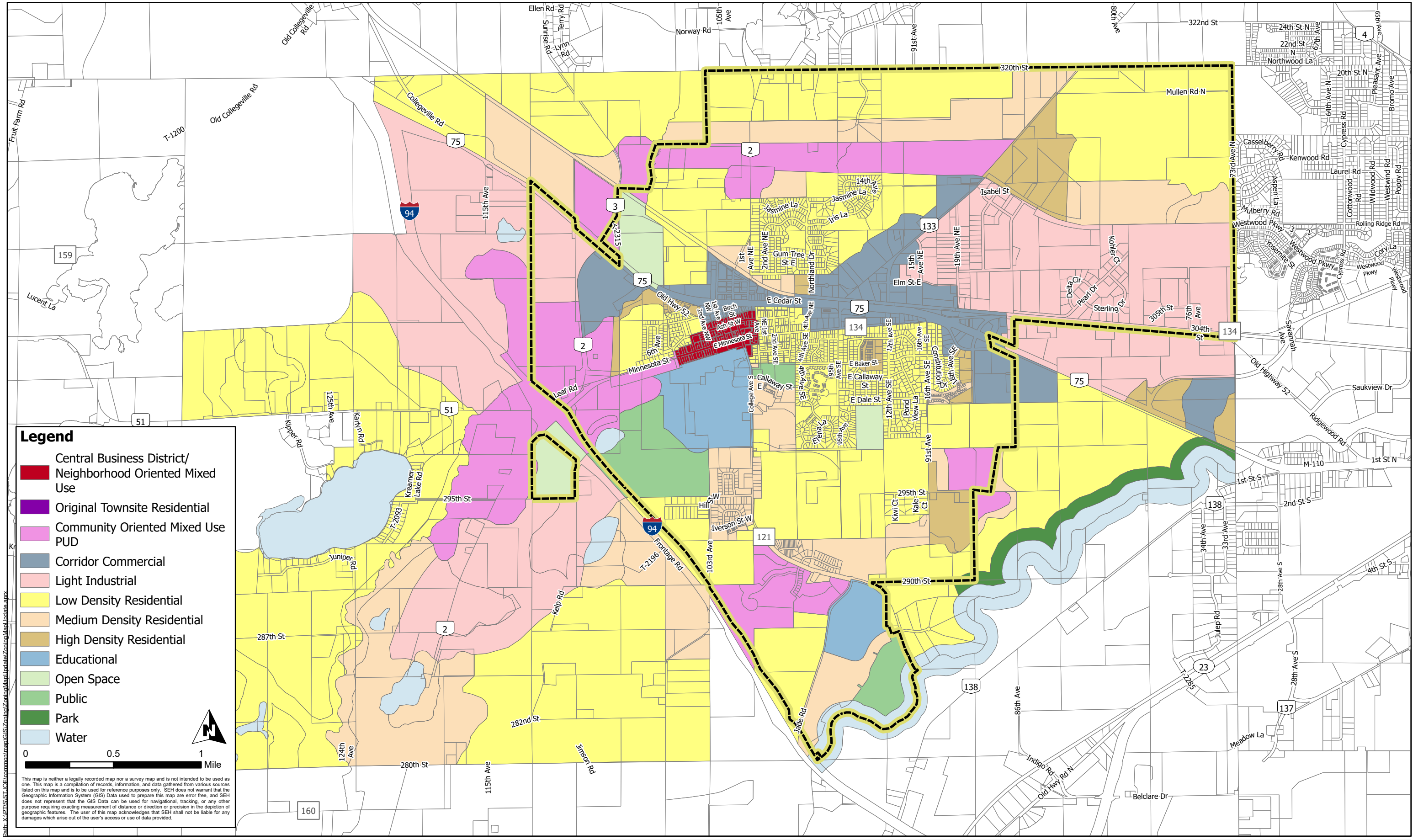


ORDINANCE 502 – ZONING ORDINANCE





ST. JOSEPH, MN
SANITARY SEWER
MAP 5 USGS



Future Land Use Map

St. Joseph, MN