



City of Duluth  
Planning Division

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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** June 1, 2015  
**TO:** Planning Commissioners  
**FROM:** Kyle Deming, Planner II *Kyle*  
**SUBJECT:** PL 15-064 – Rezoning to MU-B

At last month's meeting the commission tabled action on the proposed rezoning to MU-B of 160 acres on Rice Lake Rd. near the city boundary to learn more about why the property was classified "General Mixed Use" on the 2006 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map.

I discussed with staff members Charles Froseth and Keith Hamre, who worked for the City at the time of the Comprehensive Plan, their impressions of why this land was classified General Mixed Use. I also reviewed the Comprehensive Plan for policies that relate to this site. The following is a summary of what was identified.

The proposed rezoning area is on an arterial roadway where business and truck transportation can be accommodated without disruption to residential neighborhoods.

Because the proposed rezoning area is near the airport it does not lend itself to residential uses or other noise-sensitive uses. In 2000 the City did a land use plan for the area along Rice Lake Rd. south of Airport Rd. called the Northwest Corner Area Study. During this planning effort the Airport Authority strongly urged the City not to zone land near the ends of the runway for residential use to protect the airport and MN Air National Guard from being "hemmed in" with noise concerns like the Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport. The attached map from the Airport Overlay Zone shows the proposed rezoning area relative to the average noise levels, shown as "noise contours." These noise contours extend to the edge of this proposed rezoning area and could expand or contract based on the military aircraft assigned to the Air Guard.

The following Comprehensive Plan Policies apply to the airport area:

Economic Development Policy #2 states "Duluth will protect location-dependent economic uses, including seaport, railroad, and airport facilities, from encroachment by uses that are incompatible or not location-dependent."

Transportation Policy #26 speaks of the airport's plan for expansion and the need to balance expansion goals with noise, natural systems, and road transportation issues associate with expansion.

*II. A-1*

During the Comprehensive Planning process an effort was made to reserve land for future light industrial and business park sites throughout the community. The Rice Lake Rd. corridor was identified as a future expansion area. The Comprehensive Plan recommended the eastward expansion of the Airpark and then extending southeast along the east side of Rice Lake Rd. to North Star Academy (see attached Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map). This stretch of Rice Lake Rd. has water and sanitary sewer utilities, but because no utilities were available north of Airport Rd., where the proposed rezoning area is located, a different future land use was selected.

Much of the proposed rezoning area has the Sensitive Lands Overlay on it, indicating the presence of large areas of natural features, including forest and wetland areas. The applicant has provided (attached) a map showing where wetlands and slopes are found on the site.

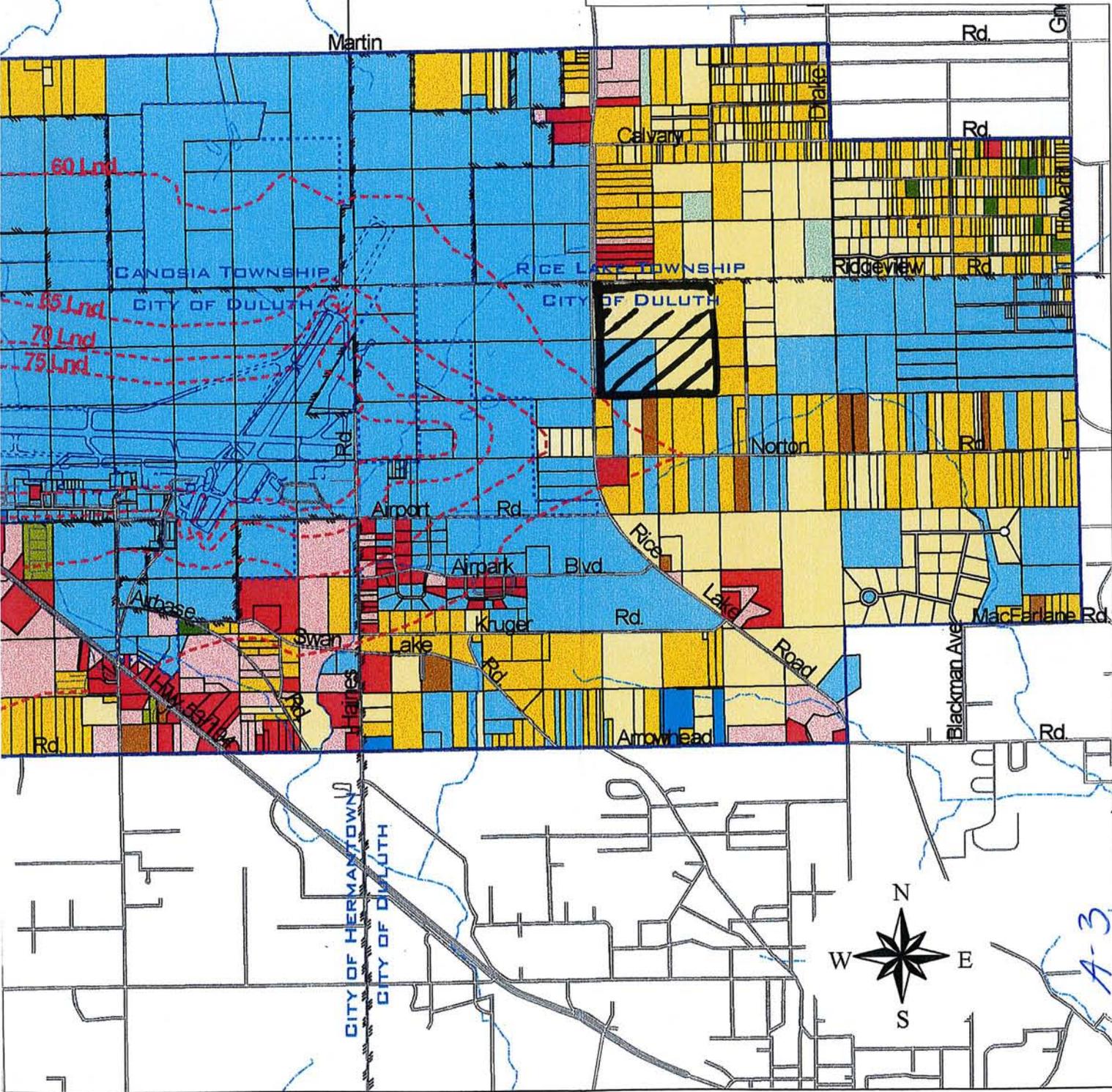
Taking into account all of the points above we believe the Comprehensive Plan recommended General Mixed-Use to allow for a flexible design solution and master planning to meet the challenges of this site, including the lack of utilities (which are now nearby), the need to protect the airport from incompatible land uses, and the need to protect the site's forest and wetland resources, while taking advantage of the site's location on an arterial roadway near the airport and the need for future light industrial and business park sites to meet economic development needs.

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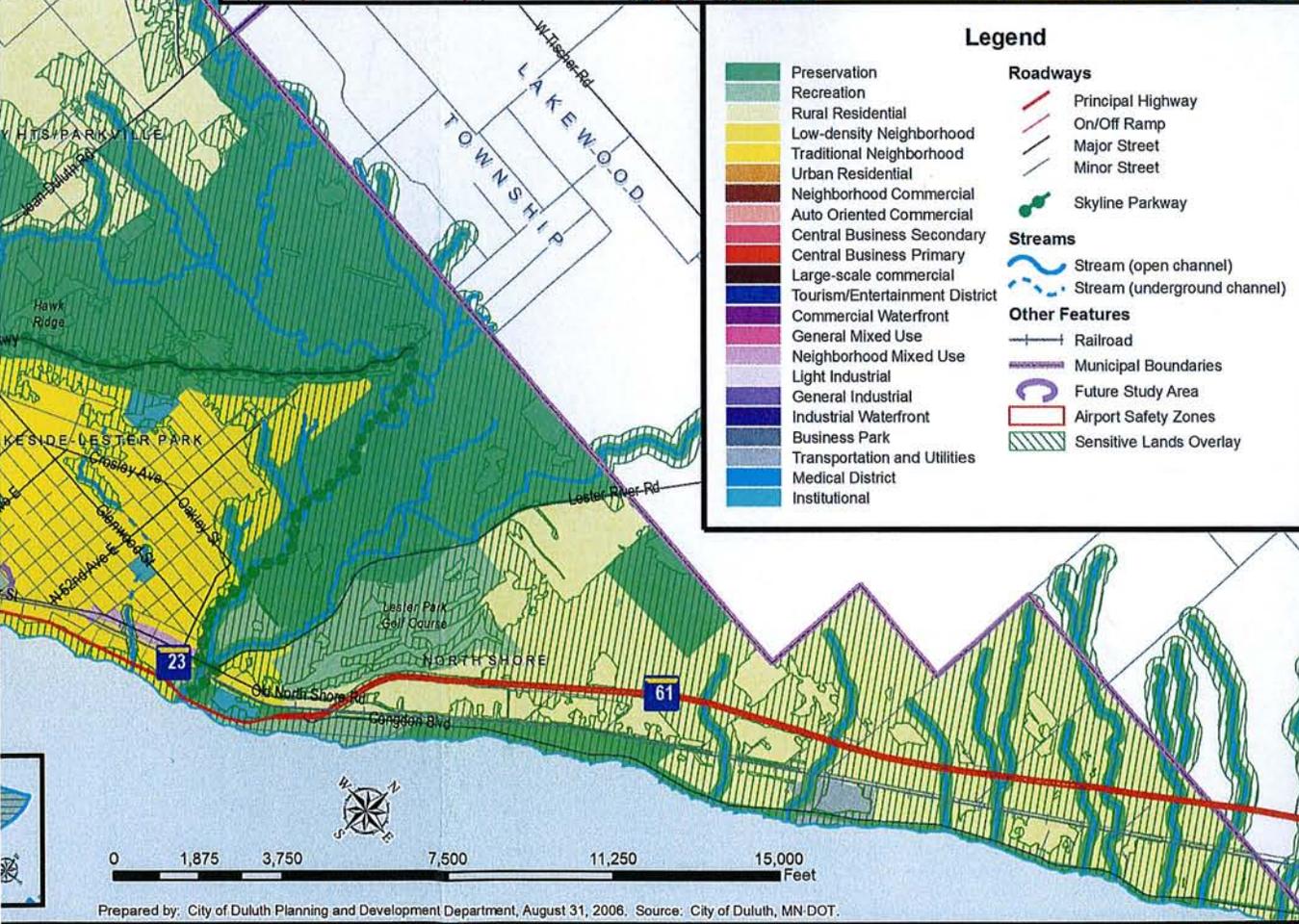
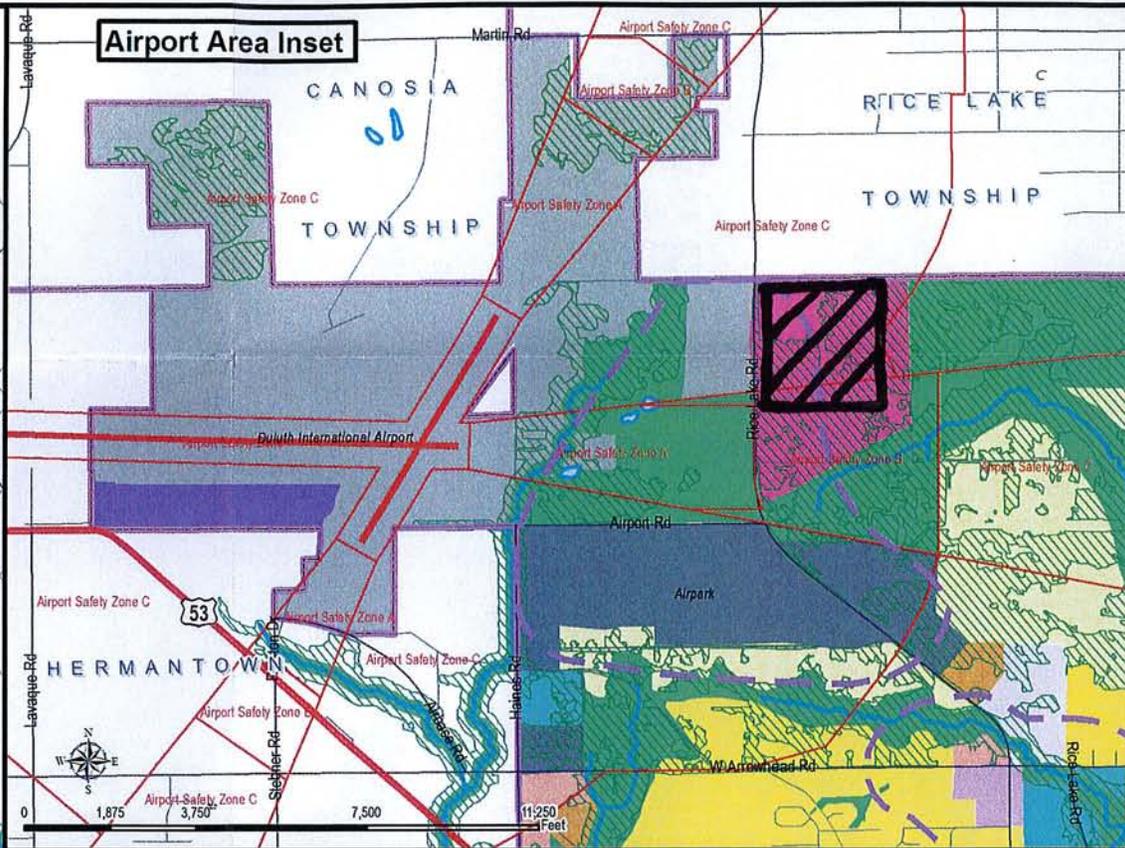
# Duluth

Figure 11.0

## Airport Overlay Zone Parcel Zone



# Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map



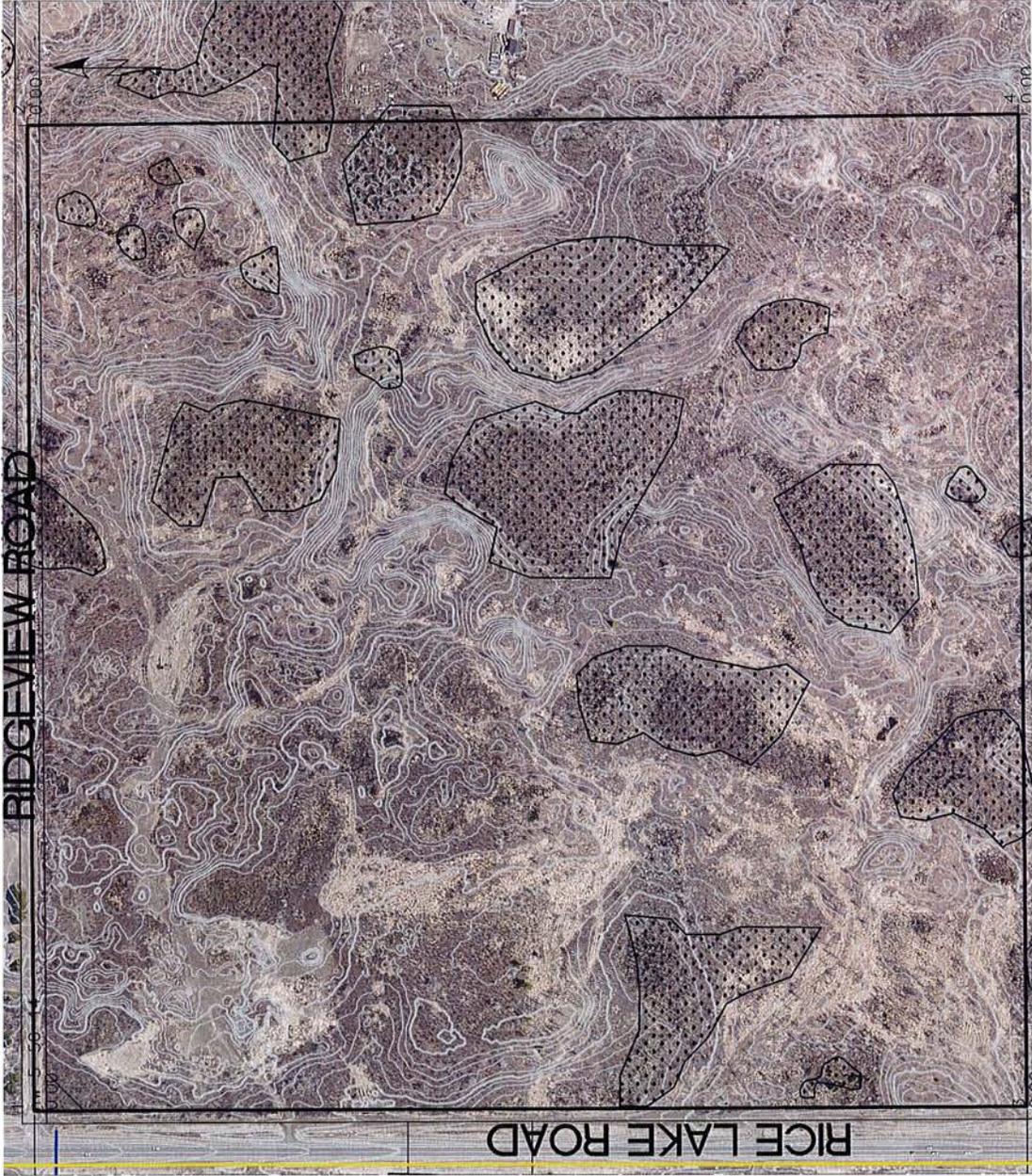
**Legend**

	Preservation		Principal Highway
	Recreation		On/Off Ramp
	Rural Residential		Major Street
	Low-density Neighborhood		Minor Street
	Traditional Neighborhood		Skyline Parkway
	Urban Residential		Stream (open channel)
	Neighborhood Commercial		Stream (underground channel)
	Auto Oriented Commercial		Railroad
	Central Business Secondary		Municipal Boundaries
	Central Business Primary		Future Study Area
	Large-scale commercial		Airport Safety Zones
	Tourism/Entertainment District		Sensitive Lands Overlay
	Commercial Waterfront		
	General Mixed Use		
	Neighborhood Mixed Use		
	Light Industrial		
	General Industrial		
	Industrial Waterfront		
	Business Park		
	Transportation and Utilities		
	Medical District		
	Institutional		

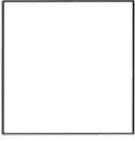
Prepared by: City of Duluth Planning and Development Department, August 31, 2006. Source: City of Duluth, MN-DOT.

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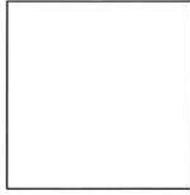




**LEGEND**



TYPICAL 2.5  
ACRE LOT



TYPICAL 5.0  
ACRE LOT

WETLANDS SHOWN ARE  
FROM THE NATIONAL  
WETLANDS INVENTORY MAP



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DATE:  
3/30/2015

**NORTHLAND CONSTRUCTORS**  
**RICE LAKE ROAD DEVELOPMENT**  
**DULUTH, MINNESOTA**

**EXHIBIT  
NO. 3**

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