



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

## Planning Division

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February 16, 2017

### **High Point-Raymond Neighborhood Development Plan Initial Discussion of Primary Issues to be addressed in the Plan Update**

As staff completed an initial analysis of the study area, a series of issues and opportunities were identified that should be examined as part of the update. Since these issues could have major impacts on the land use and transportation patterns in the neighborhood development plan, staff requests the Plan Commission and Long Range Transportation Planning Committee provide preliminary comments. After receiving comment, staff will prepare a revised NDP concept to be presented at a public open house and then return to Plan Commission for a work session.

#### **What Has Changed**

Over the past 20 years, the context of the High Point Raymond plan area has changed significantly. What once may have been considered the edge of town has been pushed well beyond this area. Growth pressures have increase and housing demand and preferences have changed. In 1995, Epic and its 133 employees had just moved into their new location on Tokay Boulevard. While certainly not the only force of changes, no one could have anticipated the impact the company and its employees would have on the Westside.

One major asset this area can build on is anticipated future transit service. While the High Point-Raymond NDP area is not served by transit at this time, there is significant opportunity to provide effective transit service in the future. Unlike most NDPs, transit already extends beyond this plan area; right now it just doesn't stop there. This represents a major opportunity to build off service that currently exists. The closest regular transit line with stops is Route 57 which travels west on Raymond Rd before turning south on Muir Field Rd. North of NDP plan area, the University Research Park 2 is the planned terminus of the west Bus Rapid Transit line, which would provide frequent trips into central Madison. Along with the creation of the BRT system, some level of modification to the existing route structure is expected to maximize ridership potential of the system. A potential route feeding into the BRT system could occur along Pleasant View Rd, which would serve the west side of the plan area. Other potential changes could include local routes using High Point and Midtown Roads.

In the near-term, however, it should be noted that Metro is unable to expand service until financial and capacity barriers are overcome.

## Land Use Opportunities

### Midtown Corridor

High Point-Raymond was one of the City's first neighborhood development plans to proactively plan for a higher-density mixed use core. In the 20 years since its adoption much of the residential core was built, but little has progressed in establishing the commercial aspects of the mixed use node on Midtown Road. One of the contributing factors is likely limited visibility and traffic on Midtown Rd since the realignment of and connection to Raymond Rd has not occurred.

One question worth exploring is the whether the midblock location between Pleasant View and High Point Roads is the most appropriate location for a mixed use node. Further west, the NDP calls for low density residential in the northeast quadrant of the intersection (Theis Property), with a street network that likely would results in homes backing up to the major intersection. The initial impression of staff is a more appropriate land use should be considered for this area. A higher density residential, neighborhood-oriented commercial or a mixed use land use category could provide a better outcome, moving density toward planned commercial areas and potential transit corridors. These uses generally have building types and site designs that better face and front major corridors than the planned single family homes. Expanding the mixed use node west to Pleasant View Road would certainly increase visibility given the traffic counts of 20,000 cars per day on that corridor. With improved connectivity, this location would still be walkable for the vast majority of the neighborhood to the north of the existing mixed use node.

Another option could be adding a mixed use node at the future intersection of Midtown/Raymond and High Point Road. This node would likely be smaller and distinct from the existing node and possible expansion to Pleasant View Rd, given topographical constraints and lower traffic counts on High Point Road. It is possible for the study area to support two distinct commercial or mixed use nodes, as the intersections at High Point is approximately one half mile from the existing planned mixed use area at Waldorf Blvd, with Pleasant View Rd. another quarter mile beyond.

If commercial or mixed use is determined to be a more appropriate land use in these areas, it's worth considering how this change would interact with the planned, but undeveloped mixed use node at Midtown Commons. One option would be to focus future mixed use opportunity to parcels on Waldorf Blvd, and allow other properties on Carns Dr to develop with a higher density housing mix.

### North Neighborhood

North of Midtown, the neighborhood transitions to entirely residential, generally decreasing in density as the distance increases. Areas of planned higher density, however, are generally not well integrated into the neighborhood, often with little connectivity to other areas. While the densities themselves do not appear inappropriate, locations of density could be improved to create a more cohesive neighborhood and better leverage planned amenities including transit, parks and walkable commercial areas. Park spaces are frequently sited in backyard conditions, with limited street frontage. While this configuration does reduce costs to the City to some extent, it can lessen the number of people who are aware of the park and can detract from the perception of it being public space. There are also maintenance concerns with adjacent property owners encroaching onto public park land when a clear separation between private and public land, such as a street, does not

exist.

### **Five Points**

The remaining area where discussion of land use changes is warranted is the Five Points intersection. The Meriter property is home to a youth psychiatric hospital accessed from Raymond Rd and an outpatient clinic on McKee Rd. To the west of Meriter, 20 acres of low density residential is planned in the existing NDP. The relatively isolated nature of this land raises the question of whether residential is the most appropriate land use for this area. City services and amenities such as parks would be difficult to provide in a cost effective way for this area. Limited access would likely prevent the development of retail. Office or other uses which don't require direct access might be more appropriate but the market for office is unknown in this area.

Along Pleasant View and McKee Roads a 300 ft open space and community separation buffer was included in the in the existing plan. It was later incorporated in the Verona Madison Intergovernmental Agreement, which expired last year. The expiration of the IGA allows for the update to revisit the purpose of this buffer and make a recommendation if it should be included going forward. In 1997, the City was less focused on the relationship between buildings and the street, and a setback of 300' on major streets near the Ice Age Trail was considered appropriate. It's possible the buffer may produce a development pattern contrary to one of its original intents, to limit the visual impact of development from the Ice Age Trail. Pushing buildings back 300 ft not only detracts from the public space at the street edge, it also shifts development closer to land that is preserved and intended to be experienced as open space.

## **Transportation Issues and Opportunities**

### **Major Projects**

The largest transportation element of the plan will be the eventual realignment of Raymond Road and the extension of High Point Road through the Marty Farm. This will provide new continuous east-west and north-south corridors and improve the overall circulation throughout the area. The other major transportation project occurring is the reconstruction of Pleasant View Road, which includes disconnecting Raymond Rd from the Five Points intersection.

### **Jeffy Trail**

One of the more contentious issues of the High Point-Raymond NDP is the extension of Jeffy Trail to Raymond Road. Staff believes the planned connection to Raymond Road will improve neighborhood connectivity by establishing a southern exit to the neighborhood, improve emergency access, will not create a significant increase in through traffic to the neighborhood and will not negatively impact the walkability and bikeability of the area.

Staff is currently working with Madison Fire Department to quantify the decrease in response time the connection would create from Fire Station #7, the closest to the neighborhood. The connection, however, would shorten emergency trips by approximately two thirds of a mile and eliminate two sharp turning movements. In discussions with Bill Sullivan, MFD Fire Protection Engineer responsible for development plan reviews, he stated the extension of Jeffy Trail would improve response times and provide firefighters more flexibility in positioning equipment and

hoses. He recommends the connection be established.

Staff is also working with the MPO to quantify the traffic impact of the connection to Raymond Rd. Preliminary projections of traffic counts on Jeffy Trail are less than 1,000 vehicles per day with the planned extension. We are evaluating the potential reduction of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) within the neighborhood by residents as a result of the Jeffy Trail extension to Raymond Rd. Preliminary calculations indicate there could be a significant reduction in VMT within the neighborhood as a result of certain households using a connection closer to their residence.

### ***History of the Jeffy Trail connection***

*The planned connection of Jeffy Trail has been included in the High Point Raymond NDP since it was adopted in 1997. At that time Jeffy Trail was planned to be extended and connect to Pleasant View Rd; a 2005 amendment shifted the connection to Raymond Rd. Also in the 2005 and subsequent 2006 amendment, the residential density on Jeffy Trail south of Flagstone Dr increased from low density single family to a medium density category (later becoming Mill Creek Estates Condominiums and Hawks Creek Townhomes), and the planned connection to Raymond was likely a significant consideration in approving these amendments.*

*Four single family homes existed on Jeffy Trail prior to 2005. In 2007, the property of one of those homes was subdivided to allow for additional development<sup>1</sup>, and in the process extended the Jeffy Trail right of way. Since the property only contained the northern portion of the Jeffy Trail ROW, it prevented the construction of the road to the southern-most point of the property. As such, it was recorded on the deeds through a Declaration of Conditions and Covenants of the intent to extend Jeffy Trail. These documents should have been brought to the attention of subsequent purchasers of property within the Second Addition to Hawks Creek during title searches.*

*In 2012, the City purchased the former Smithies property that would allow for the connection of Jeffy Trail to Raymond Rd to occur. In 2013 the City of Madison subdivided the property. The plat includes the Jeffy Trail connection and an extension of Trevor Way. Homesites along the Trevor Way extension have since been developed.*

*Purchase of the Smithies property and the eventual subdivision provided numerous benefits. The City would be able to establish the planned street connection and other infrastructure improvements and use proceeds from lot sales to cover their costs. The neighborhood would gain far more open space than could be required by parkland dedication had the property been developed to the extent allowed for in the plan. .*

*In 2014, the City constructed a shared use path just north of the Ice Age Trail between Raymond and Pleasant View Roads. As part of this work, a short trail stub was constructed to connect to Jeffy Trail as well as sidewalk connection to Trevor Way. From the existing terminus of Jeffy Trail, the first 300 feet of the path was built in the future road alignment and was considered a temporary improvement. The remaining 250 feet of the shared use path stub is a permeant neighborhood connection. No part of the Ice Age Trail will be altered, including the exclusive ped/bike crossing of Raymond Rd. If Jeffy Trail is extended to Raymond, it is possible as part of*

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<sup>1</sup> Second Addition to Hawks Creek

*the street design process that a multi-use path be included south of the roadway, meaning no net loss of off-street paths.*

*As part of the 2015 budget process, the extension was initially included in the draft version. At the request of former Ald. Subeck, Jeffy Trail was delayed, however she stated to residents via email that it is "highly unlikely that we would not move forward with the project in the future."*

This NDP update gives the City a chance to take a second look at all aspects of the High-Point Raymond study area. However, the second look shows a context that developed largely as planned in the area immediately surrounding Jeffy Trail. Plan amendments and developments that have occurred have not lessened the importance and appropriateness for the southern connection.

### **Raymond Road through Ice Age Corridor:**

When the plan was adopted in 1997, the NDP called for the segment of Raymond Road traveling through the Ice Age Trail to be vacated. As part of the update, staff believes it's worth revisiting this segment to determine if closings this section of road makes sense given how the context has changed over the past 20 year.

The upcoming closure of Raymond Road at the Five Points intersection and the planned creation of the new High Point and Raymond Rd intersection will result in a shift of character of Raymond Rd. west of High Point Road from a collector to a lower volume street. Along with the closure of Raymond at Five Points, a second intersection on McKee Rd. that was planned is no longer feasible due to the planned grade separated westbound movement. As a result, if Raymond Road is closed through the Ice Age Corridor, it will effectively create a 3,000 ft cul-de-sac comprised of Meriter Way, Wellness Way and Raymond Road segments.

While vacating Raymond could create an uninterrupted natural area following the Ice Age Trail corridor, it's appropriate to evaluate the impact Raymond Road as a low volume local street would have on the user experience of the Ice Age Trail. If the road is vacated, it's very possible the road itself would not be removed, but shift to a paved bike corridor. Further, since utilities follow the Raymond Road corridor, access would need to be maintained to allow for servicing of infrastructure. Maintaining the road as a street could also provide improved access to the open space corridors for potential users.

### **Stratton Way**

As originally adopted, the plan did not address the potential for an east west connection in the area north of McKee Rd. To a certain extent it did not need a connection extending the full width of the plan area, as land east of the Meriter property was originally planned to be open space. The plan allowed for this area to be developed as low density residential if it was not able to be acquired, but didn't provide any guidance on connectivity if it were to develop. That land was not acquired and later became Ice Age Falls.




When Meriter later built the outpatient clinic, an easement for the purpose of a future road connection with Stratton Way was platted. The only road that was constructed, however, was the segment of Meriter way. With the closure of Raymond Rd at Five Points, an east west street (Wellness Way) is being constructed from Raymond to Meriter Way.

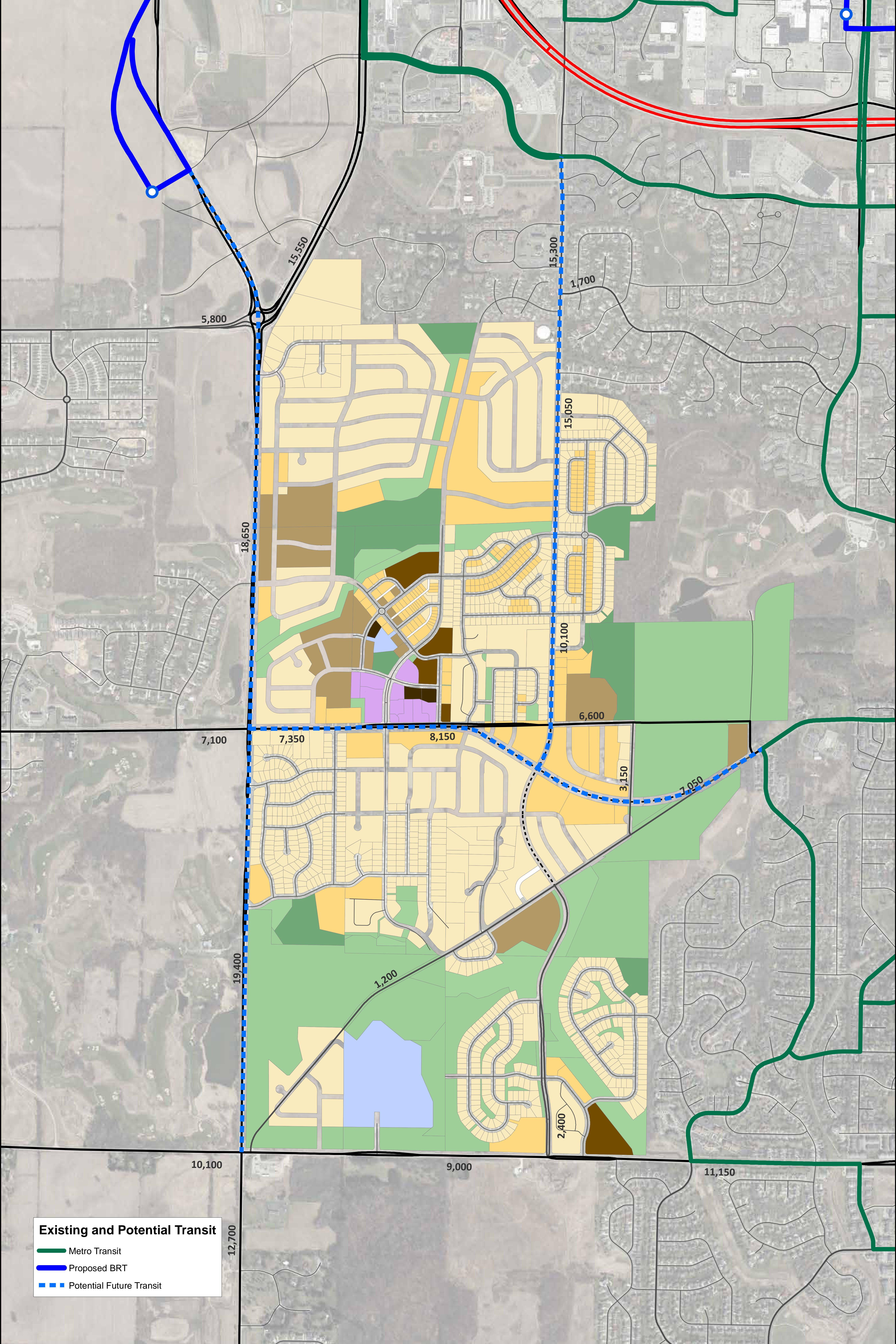
The potential to establish a connection to Stratton Way exists. Staff believes the potential for a connection should be maintained, as the very longterm use of large properties like Meriter is always uncertain. The most relevant question is whether it makes sense given the current land uses established and potential land use plan changes that may be considered as part of this update.

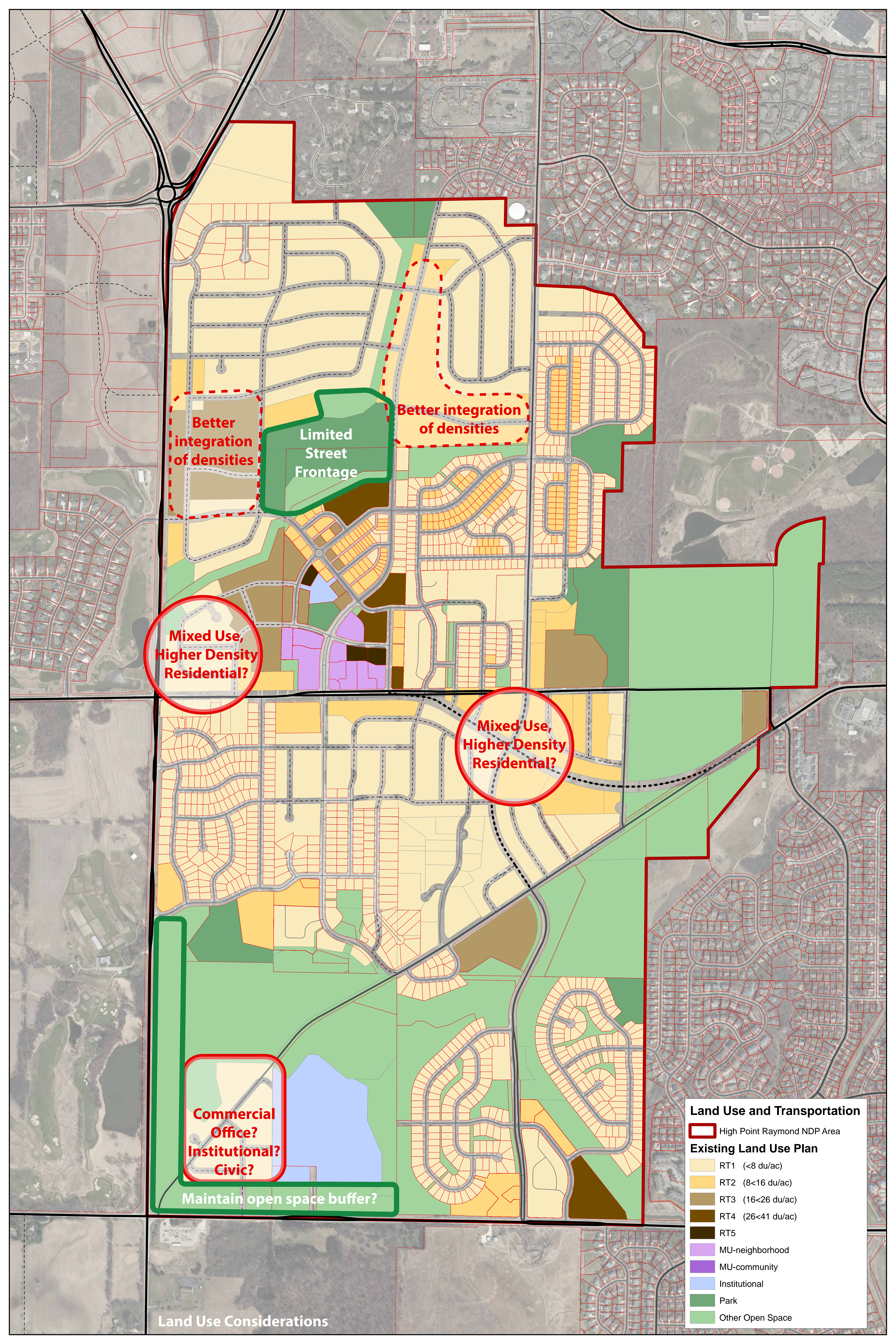
**“Old Midtown Road”**

The existing east terminus of Midtown Road in the current plan is shown to be vacated, leaving an uninterrupted open space between Elver Park and Raymond Road. Depending on the specific use of the open space, it may be appropriate to maintain the recently improved road. For example, if some of the space is used to expand Elver Park, a southern access to the park would be beneficial to the park and its users.

**Existing and Potential Transit**

-  Metro Transit
-  Proposed BRT
-  Potential Future Transit





**Better  
integration  
of densities**

**Limited  
Street  
Frontage**

**Better integration  
of densities**

**Mixed Use,  
Higher Density  
Residential?**

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Higher Density  
Residential?**

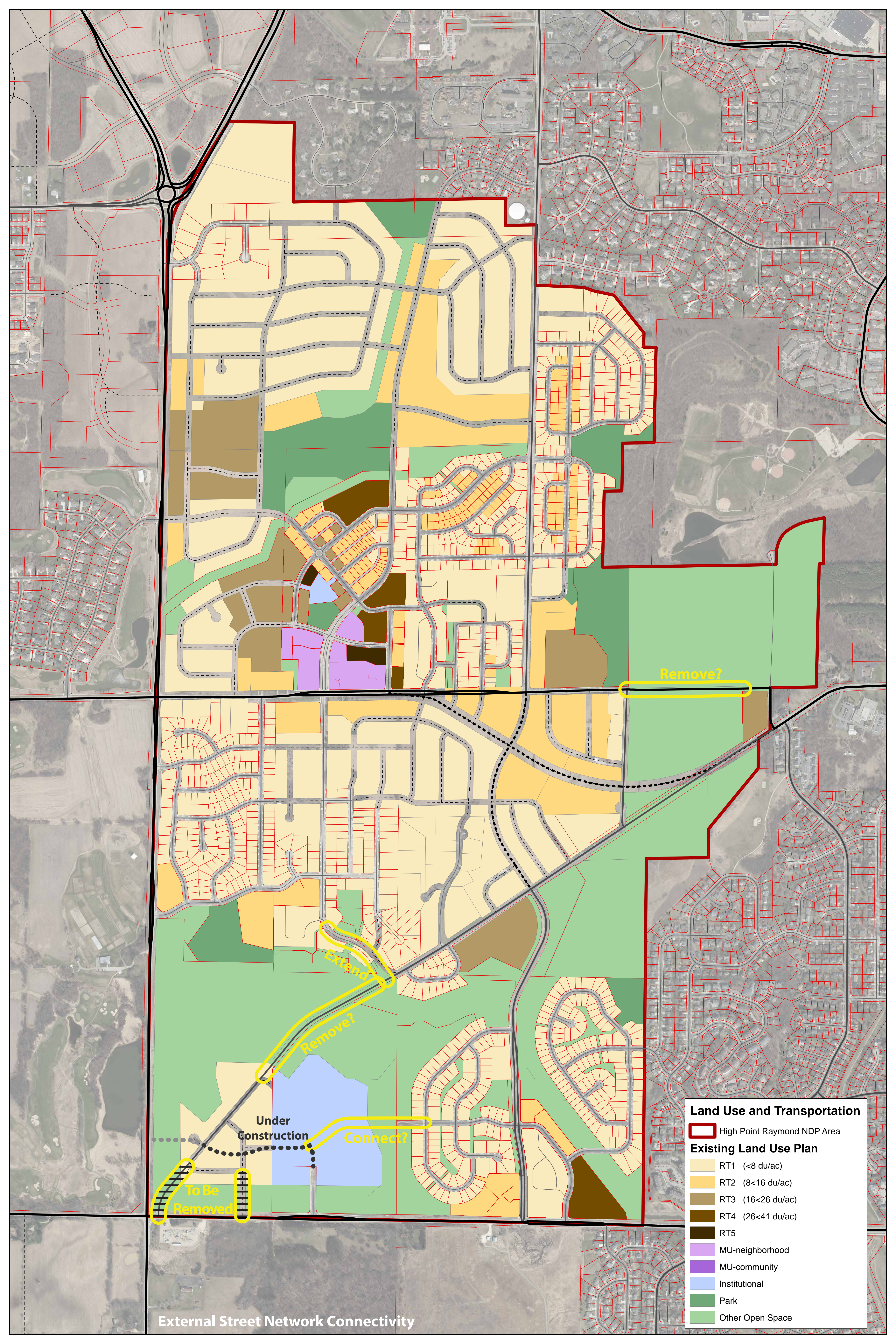
**Commercial  
Office?  
Institutional?  
Civic?**

**Maintain open space buffer?**

**Land Use and Transportation**

- High Point Raymond NDP Area
- Existing Land Use Plan**
- RT1 (<8 du/ac)
- RT2 (8<16 du/ac)
- RT3 (16<26 du/ac)
- RT4 (26<41 du/ac)
- RT5
- MU-neighborhood
- MU-community
- Institutional
- Park
- Other Open Space





Remove?

Extend?

Remove?

Connect?

Under Construction

To Be Removed

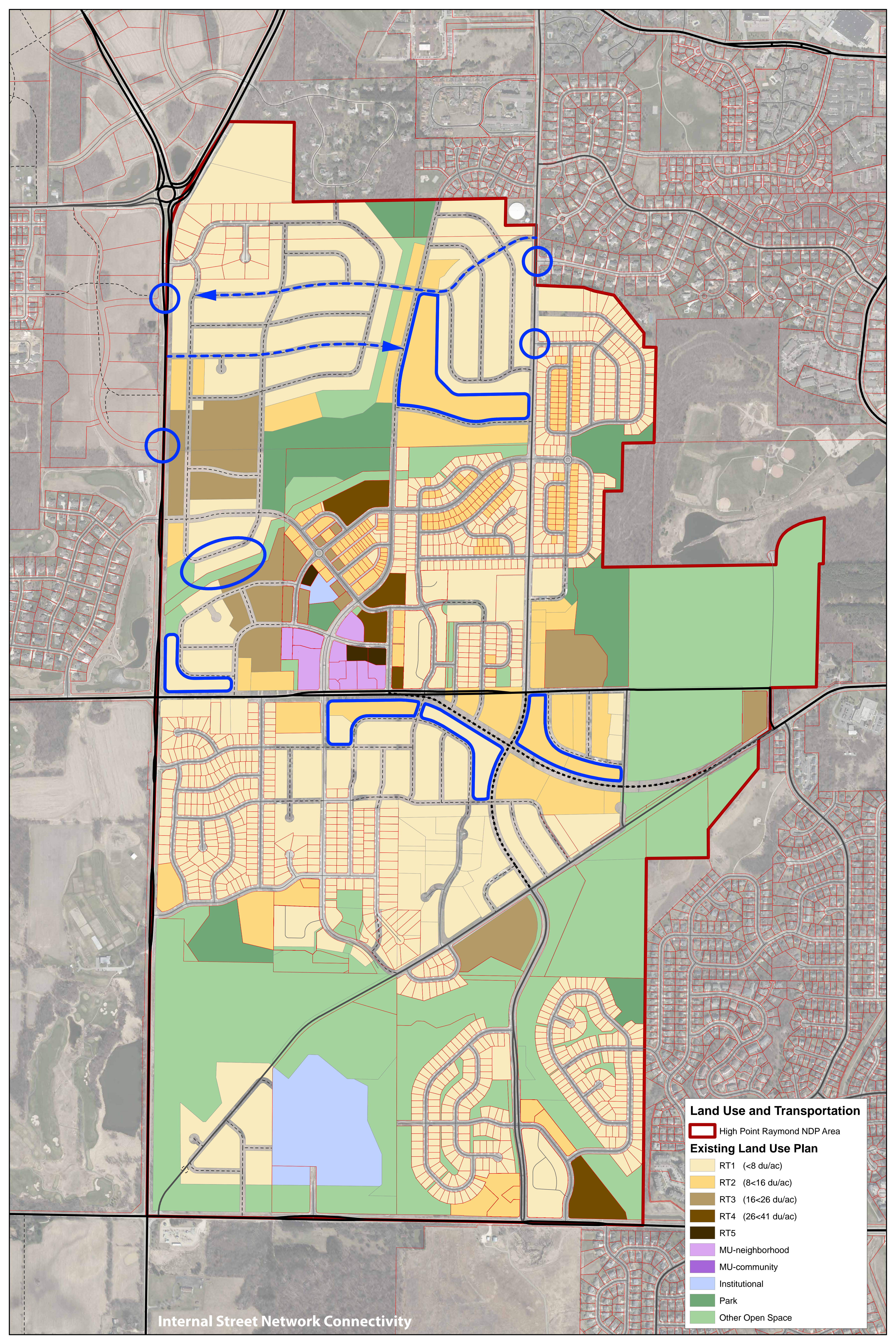
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External Street Network Connectivity



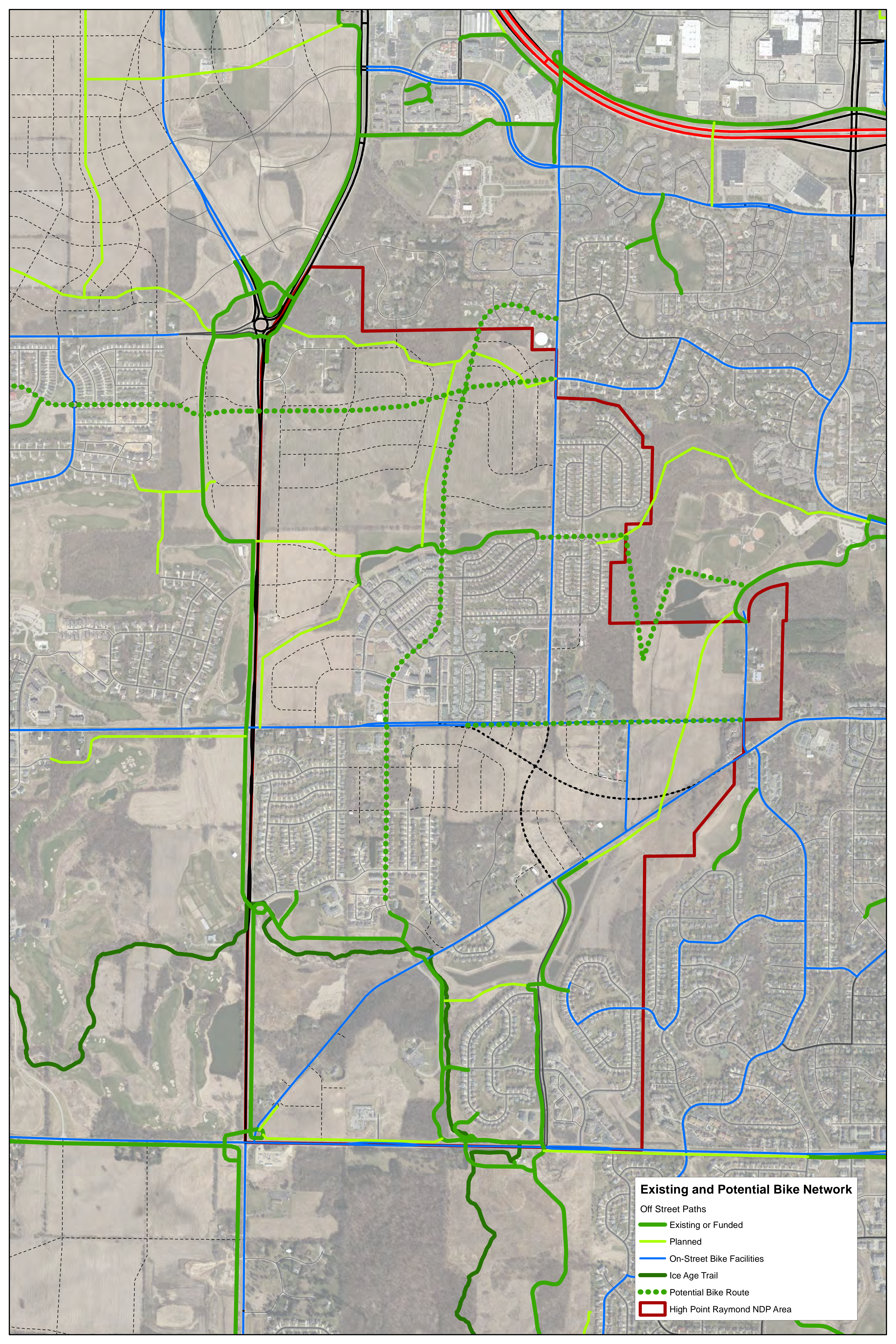
**Land Use and Transportation**

**High Point Raymond NDP Area**

**Existing Land Use Plan**

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- RT4 (26<41 du/ac)
- RT5
- MU-neighborhood
- MU-community
- Institutional
- Park
- Other Open Space

Internal Street Network Connectivity



**Existing and Potential Bike Network**

- Off Street Paths
  - Existing or Funded
  - Planned
- On-Street Bike Facilities
- Ice Age Trail
- Potential Bike Route
- High Point Raymond NDP Area