

PLANNING DIVISION REPORT

July 18, 2013

**Proposed Amendment to the:
Pioneer Neighborhood Development Plan (Legistar ID 30872)**

Prepared by: Planning Division

Executive Summary

Request: An amendment to the *Pioneer Neighborhood Development Plan* changing an approximately 10-acre parcel of land located north of Silicon Prairie Parkway from Employment to Medium-Density Residential to accommodate consideration of a 248-unit apartment development.

Applicant: John McKenzie, 732 Bear Claw Way, Middleton, WI 53717.

Background Information: The *Pioneer Neighborhood Development Plan* was adopted by the Common Council in April 2004. The Plan recommends a mix of land uses including (but not limited) to employment, research and development, mixed-use, employment, light industrial and residential. The subject property is located south of Mineral Point Road, north of Silicon Prairie Parkway, and east of South Point Road. The Cardinal Glenn residential subdivision is located south of the subject parcel across Silicon Prairie Parkway. The Silicon Prairie industrial plat is located west of the subject parcel, across South Point Road. The remainder of the surrounding lands are in either agricultural or scattered rural residential uses. Blackhawk Church is located northwest of the parcel across Mineral Point Road..

The *Pioneer Neighborhood Development Plan* recommends Employment uses for the parcel. This recommendation is based on an identified need for more lands in the city of Madison that are suitable for employment and light industrial development. The future University of Wisconsin Research Park II to the east and the Silicon Prairie light industrial plat to the west across South Point Road provides the impetus for the plan recommendation to agglomerate Employment uses in the vicinity. To date, Employment uses have been slow to develop in the Pioneer Neighborhood, leading to interest by property owners to seek amendment of the Plan recommendation from Employment to Medium Density Residential uses.

Recommendation

The Plan Commission should recommend approval of the proposed amendment to the *Pioneer Neighborhood Development Plan* if it can conclude that:

1. any potential effect of the amendment on the long-term City objective of ensuring that sites will be available to meet future demands for employment and light-industrial development is acceptable;
2. that the design of the proposed apartment complex can and will make it an engaging and attractive addition to the neighborhood; and

3. that future uses on the adjacent employment sites can and will be compatible with the apartments

A DETAILED STAFF ANALYSIS IS PROVIDED BELOW:

Introduction and Reason for the Requested Amendment

An amendment to the *Pioneer Neighborhood Development Plan* to change the land use recommendation for an approximately ten-acre parcel of land located north of Silicon Prairie Parkway from Employment to Medium-Density Residential has been requested by the property owner and a prospective developer to allow consideration of a 248-unit apartment development on the site. This parcel is part of a larger area currently recommended primarily for future employment uses. An amendment to the *Pioneer Neighborhood Development Plan* would be required for the proposed residential development to be consistent with the land use recommendations in that plan.

An application to approve a Certified Survey Map to create the proposed development parcel, and an application to rezone this parcel from the Agriculture District to the Traditional Residential-Urban 1 (TR-U1) District, have also been submitted and will be considered concurrently with the subject neighborhood development plan amendment. At this time, a specific apartment development proposal has not yet been submitted for approval, but if the requested neighborhood plan amendment and rezoning are approved, detailed plans for the apartment development will be submitted later for consideration as a Conditional Use in the TR-U1 District.

Summary Description of Current Plan Recommendations and the Proposed Amendment

The *Pioneer Neighborhood Development Plan* was adopted by the Madison Common Council in April 2004 as an element of the City of Madison master plan, substantially replacing the June 1999 *Westside Neighborhood Development Plan*. The *Pioneer Neighborhood Development Plan* describes the anticipated agglomeration of development.

Summary of Current Plan Recommendations vs. Proposed Plan Recommendations

	Current Plan	Plan Amendment Proposal
Use	Employment uses: Professional offices, R&D, light industrial, technology manufacturing and processing	Apartments, townhomes, single family homes
Form	One – four stories; Bldgs. entrances toward street; Compact walkable job center: Special attention to building and site design along Silicon Prairie Parkway; Four sided buildings along Mineral Point Road; Sidewalks on both sides of street	Urban neighborhood building arrangement; avoid “super blocks” of nearly identical building size, placement and design; Bldg. orientation toward street; Parking behind or beside building; On-street parking; Seamless transitions to adjacent plan districts.
Density	Not applicable	Medium Density Residential with net density of 16-25 du/ac.

Critical Mass of Uses

A recommendation of the *Pioneer Neighborhood Development Plan* is to identify lands where Employment uses that would be closely linked physically and functionally to the Research and Development Center and the Light Industrial Districts should be located. The intent being to foster business relationships between enterprises in the three districts and potential shared facilities.

The proposed amendment to the *Pioneer Neighborhood Development Plan* would change the land use recommendation for an approximately ten-acre parcel within the planned Employment District from Employment to Medium-Density Residential. Medium-density residential is defined in the plan as having a net density between 16 and 25 dwelling units per acre. The plan describes typical Medium Density dwelling types as garden apartments (which are not defined in the plan), townhomes, condominiums (which most City plans consider an ownership option rather than a dwelling type), and single-family homes.

Form

Urban design recommendations in the plan for Employment areas encourage compact, urban building form and placement; employee parking areas located behind or beside buildings; underground, structured or shared parking; street parking on most streets; bicycle parking facilities and preparation of Transportation Management Plans.

Design recommendations for Medium Density housing include orientation toward the adjacent street, surface parking limited to either behind or alongside buildings, and street parking on all streets. It was recommended that residential buildings along Silicon Prairie Parkway be oriented toward the intersecting streets to reduce potential impacts from the adjacent Employment District.

The proposed plan amendment makes a slight change to the alignment of the future local streets serving the area east of South Point Road and north of Silicon Prairie Parkway. The change aligns the north-south street with existing Cross Oak Drive, and straightens the future east-west street so that the north-south street tees into it rather than vice-versa.

Evaluation of the Proposed Amendment

The proposed amendment to the *Pioneer Neighborhood Development Plan* represents a change in recommended land use that introduces residential uses where not previously contemplated. In evaluating the need for the proposed amendment and the potential impacts of the proposed change in land use on community planning objectives generally, and on the surrounding area specifically, staff considered several basic questions:

- What is the current availability in this neighborhood of alternative sites planned and suitable for the proposed multi-family development, and is the proposed amendment needed to accommodate apartment development in the near-term?

- What effect will the proposed change have on the near- and long-term availability of sites for employment development in the City of Madison?
- Is the proposed amendment area a suitable location for residential development?
- What are the potential impacts of the proposed residential development on the surrounding neighborhood and adjacent land uses, both existing and future?
- Is approval of the proposed amendment likely to encourage additional requests for developments not consistent with current recommendations in the adopted plan?

Near and Long-Term Availability of Alternative Sites for Multi-Family Development

A relatively large percentage of the total amount of vacant land in the neighborhood recommended for medium density residential is located on just two properties as is illustrated in the table below. While considerable land is recommended for medium-density residential uses in the *Pioneer Neighborhood Development Plan*, much of this land is located where near-term development is not realistically feasible, is not currently for sale for development, or both. Although a limited amount of land recommended for medium-density residential development exists elsewhere in the neighborhood at locations where near-term development probably would be feasible, it is unknown whether any of this land is actually available for development.

Location of Selected Recommended Land Uses

Proposed Land Use	Total Acres	Theis Property	UWRP2 Property	All Other Properties
Medium Density Residential	75.4	51.4	5.8	18.2
Urban Mixed-Use	15.3	7.0	8.3	0.0
Low-Medium Density Res.	109.3	18.0	0.0	91.3
Low Density Residential	290.2	13.3	0.0	276.9

Near and Long-Term Availability of Sites for Employment Development

The *Pioneer Neighborhood Development Plan* builds on a previous plan for the area (*Westside Neighborhood Development Plan*) that sought to provide lands for employment/light industrial uses. The 2004 *Pioneer Neighborhood Development Plan* substantially revised the *Westside NDP's* recommendations for the eastern end of the planning area to accommodate the University of Wisconsin's proposed new University Research Park.

Taken together, the amount of land recommended for non-residential employment uses in the *Pioneer Neighborhood Development Plan* is greater than in the *Westside NDP*, but the amount of land specifically designated for light-industrial development is reduced because the Employment designation now encompasses a wider range of potential uses including, but not limited to, light-industrial uses, as summarized in following table:

Total Acres of Selected Recommended Land Uses

Proposed Land Use	Acres	% of Total
Research and Development	195.2	13.9
Light Industrial (incl. Public Works Fac.)	115.5	8.2
Other Employment	78.2	5.6

Not only is the combined acreage of land recommended for research and development, light-industrial, and employment uses greater than in the earlier plan, but the rate of absorption has been significantly less than was estimated in 1999. Indeed, most of the lands proposed for these uses are still vacant today. Thus, it could be argued that there is more land currently available and recommended for these uses than is actually needed under current development trends. However, this must be tempered by the fact that a large proportion of this land is located on the same two properties cited above in the discussion of the availability of sites for multi-family development. The following table shows the total amount of currently vacant land recommended for these three uses, along with the amount of this vacant land located on the Theis or University of Wisconsin properties.

Location of Vacant Acreage of Selected Recommended Land Uses

Proposed Land Use	Vacant Acres	Theis Property	UWRP2 Property	Other Properties
Research and Development	191	11	180	0
Light-Industrial (excl. DPW).	64	0	0	64
Other Employment	77	54	0	23

Note: Differences in the acreages shown in the two tables reflect rounding and differences in the databases used to construct the tables.

The University of Wisconsin Research Park 2 is planned for phased development as an integrated research and office park with uses that support the goal of promoting business development with a focus on technology and University-related research. While the park will be an excellent and attractive location for many types of research and technology-oriented business, it is not designed or intended for many other businesses that might also be seeking a west side location. Both the *Pioneer Neighborhood Development Plan* and the earlier *Westside Neighborhood Development Plan* designated areas for several different types of employment use with the expectation, for example, that a new production facility based on research conducted in a research/office setting could be located nearby on a site more suitable for light-manufacturing.

Of the approximately 141 vacant acres in the neighborhood planning area recommended for either light-industrial or employment uses, 54 acres are located on the Theis property. Of the remaining 87 acres, about 64 acres are within the platted Silicon Prairie development west of South Point Road, and the remaining 23 acres are located north of Silicon Prairie Parkway between South Point Road and the Theis property. The subject 10 acres being proposed for alternative development with multi-family uses is not a large percentage of all the land recommended for non-residential development in the neighborhood as a whole, but it is a larger percentage of the lands where light industrial uses might be located.

Large employment sites, and particularly sites for light-industrial uses, are relatively difficult to provide except in new neighborhoods being planned for development. Past experience has also demonstrated that retaining potential future employment sites, and particularly industrial sites, over the long term can be a challenge when the sites are also attractive locations for competing uses with stronger near-term demand. At this time, it does not appear that removing ten acres from the supply of planned employment land would significantly reduce the potential for future employment or light-industrial development in the City of Madison. The planning objective of

ensuring that land for these uses will continue to be available in the future should be recognized and kept in mind when making the decision.

Suitability of the Location for Residential Development

Three factors to be considered in evaluating the suitability of the proposed apartment site for residential development include: its location in the larger community, its relationship to the small but growing Cardinal Glenn residential neighborhood to the south, and its relationship to the potential uses in the remaining planned employment area adjacent to west, north and east.

Location in the Larger Community. At the present time, very little other development exists near the site except the limited employment development in the Silicon Prairie park and the Cardinal Glenn residential subdivision. The site is a mile west of Junction Road, which is the current edge of contiguous urban development, and separated from it by two large properties that may not develop for many years. Transportation connections are essentially limited to the two existing roadways, Mineral Point Road and South Point Road, for the foreseeable future. There currently are no bicycle connections to this neighborhood, and no transit service. At this time, there are no activity centers or community gathering places in the neighborhood other than the small City park in Cardinal Glenn.

Relationship to Residential Uses in the Surrounding Neighborhood. The proposed ten-acre apartment site is located north of Silicon Prairie Parkway, directly across this street from existing and planned residential uses fronting this boulevard. Based on the conceptual site plan submitted with the rezoning application (which is preliminary and not being reviewed at this time), the proposed apartment complex will consist of seven three-story buildings plus a club house and pool. Although the proposed buildings are three-stories in height, the transition to the lower-intensity development south of Silicon Prairie Parkway should be fine if the development is well-designed, particularly since the Parkway is a relatively wide boulevard with a median. The building placement and other elements of the conceptual site plan, the site design, detailed building plans and elevations, will be carefully reviewed when more-complete plans are submitted as part of a future conditional use application.

It is impossible to evaluate the visual relationship between the proposed apartment complex and the established residential uses south of Silicon Prairie Parkway in comparison with the potential relationship with the currently-recommended employment uses, because virtually nothing specific is presently known about those uses. Even assuming that the employment uses would be well designed, as specified by the neighborhood plan, it is reasonable to assume that an apartment development probably would provide at least as an attractive neighbor for the residential uses south of Silicon Prairie Parkway as many potential employment uses. And a good transition from lower density residential to employment uses.

The apartment site will have streets on three sides, including a north-south street extending from existing Cross Oak Drive. In the future, there will be another north-south street along the east edge of this development that ultimately will connect farther south through the entire Pioneer Neighborhood---although this probably will not occur until those properties develop. An east-west street along the northern edge of the proposed development site will eventually be extended west to South Point Road. These planned streets will provide good connections between the proposed apartment development and the rest of the neighborhood, including, for example, access to the existing public park in Cardinal Glenn. As additional street

connections, bicycle routes, and other transportation facilities are developed in the neighborhood, these will benefit the proposed apartments along with the rest of the community.

The site proposed for apartment development is close to the two primary connecting streets currently serving the neighborhood, Mineral Point Road and South Point Road. The site is not far from the existing public park, which is the only community facility currently available. The City's Parks Division staff has expressed the need to plan for a new community park in the Pioneer Neighborhood as it develops over time.

Relationship to the Remaining Planned Employment Area. Another issue is this proposal's relationship with the planned employment area that will surround it on three sides, including impacts on the apartments at the interface between uses, and the potential effect that the apartment development might have on long-term development of employment uses, both in the immediate area and in the Pioneer Neighborhood generally.

The neighborhood development plan specifically recommends that development be oriented toward the adjacent public streets, and the apartment buildings that face the new north-south and east-west streets will be directly across from future employment uses whose type, scale, and operating characteristics are presently unknown. Although the current neighborhood plan also proposes employment uses opposite residential uses, this interface is along a single street, Silicon Prairie Parkway, and that street is a relatively wide boulevard. The new streets west and north of the proposed apartment development will be standard 66 foot wide streets without a median. In addition, because access to both South Point Road and Mineral Point Road will be restricted, traffic generated by the future employment uses will likely use these same local streets.

It should be expected that the City's review and evaluation of future development proposals in the remaining employment area will also consider the relative proximity of the new apartment complex and the potential impacts that a proposed future employment use could have on those residences.

Comments from the Neighborhood Meeting

A public meeting was held the evening of July 9th, 2013 at the Blackhawk Church. Based on the input from this meeting, residents in attendance seemed generally supportive of the proposed apartment development, or at least there was little if any expressed opposition. The concerns expressed at the meeting were more in regard to the neighborhood as a whole, rather than the potential impacts of the proposed apartment development. These included several concerns related to transportation, such as the relatively few road connections, a lack of bicycle paths, difficulty getting onto Mineral Point Road and the need for traffic signals, and vehicles speeding through the neighborhood. There was also interest in further improvements to the neighborhood park, particularly as it now would also be serving the apartment residents, and in having the park fees collected from the development used for these improvements and elsewhere in the neighborhood. There were also questions about future uses in the employment area, and about what might happen if the proposed apartments were not developed after the plan was changed and the site rezoned.

Conclusion

The decision to amend the *Pioneer Neighborhood Development Plan* to accommodate a proposed apartment development on ten acres currently recommended for employment uses is essentially a policy choice about how the community wants to use those lands. Based on the evaluation above, staff do not consider the proposed site to be inherently an undesirable location for multi-family residential development. At present, the site is relatively far from the more-developed parts of the city and the residential-supporting activities they provide, and the only potential neighborhood gathering place is a small partially-improved City park; but this is true of most peripheral neighborhoods in the early stages of development. Early developments are often out there on their own with few supporting uses and an incomplete transportation network that includes limited or no bus service. But the proposed apartments will be located adjacent on the south to the small, but growing Cardinal Glenn neighborhood, and will have good access to the two major streets serving the neighborhood and good connections to the limited local street network that currently exists. The proposed apartments would also add to the housing choices in the neighborhood, which is an important community planning objective. The apartment buildings as currently proposed will be larger and taller than existing residential development in the adjacent neighborhood, but if well-designed, the complex could fit-in well with the neighborhood and provide additional variety and amenity. Good design is critical, however, and will be carefully evaluated when detailed plans for the development are submitted for review.

Staff is more concerned with the interface with future developments in the remaining employment area adjacent to the site on three sides, and it should be expected that the relationships between uses will be among the important factors considered when the first employment project is proposed in this area. As discussed in the evaluation, it is possible that future proposed employment projects that cannot provide a reasonably attractive transition between uses, or that have other undesirable impacts on the apartments (or on the residential uses south of Silicon Prairie Parkway) may not be supported. If the neighborhood plan is amended to allow apartment development on the subject site, it should be with the understanding that these apartments are meant to become an attractive, engaging part of the neighborhood, and not an enclave surrounded by future incompatible uses.

Another important consideration is the potential near- and longer-term effect that the proposed plan amendment could have on the objective of ensuring that adequate sites for employment uses generally, and light-industrial uses specifically, are available in the west side of the city. Recommended employment and light-industrial areas were included in the *Westside/Pioneer* and several other neighborhood development plans in specific response to the lack of available development sites for these uses. While the current demand for Madison sites may be less than optimistically estimated in 1999, this could be at least partly due to competitive differences between communities that might be addressed at a future time as part of an economic development strategy; and market conditions often change over time, in any case. Ten acres less of potential employment development land will not make a significant difference in the City as a whole, or even necessarily in the Pioneer Neighborhood, but other requests for similar changes in land use may be made in the future, and it was the cumulative, incremental conversion of planned industrial land to other uses that led to the dearth of sites in the 1990's. It is important, therefore, that consideration of the proposed amendment include consideration of its possible effect on economic development policy, and of whether the amendment primarily represents an acceptable response to a unique situation, or if it also reflects a re-

evaluation of the relative importance of certain types of employment and light-industrial development to in the City's economic goals and/or its strategy for ensuring that appropriate sites are available for these uses in the long-term.

Recommendation

The Plan Commission should recommend approval of the proposed amendment to the *Pioneer Neighborhood Development Plan* if it can conclude that:

1. any potential effect of the amendment on the long-term City objective of ensuring that sites will be available to meet future demands for employment and light-industrial development is acceptable;
2. that the design of the proposed apartment complex can and will make it an engaging and attractive addition to the neighborhood; and
3. that future uses on the adjacent employment sites can and will be compatible with the apartments.