



WILLMAR



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

City Office Building
333 SW 6th Street, Box 755
Willmar, MN 56201
320-235-8311
Fax: 320-235-4917
www.willmarmn.gov

MEMO

TO: Willmar Planning Commission

Chair: Randy Czarnetzki
Vice Chair: Gary Geiger
Members: Bob Poe, Margaret Fleck, Aaron Larson, Rolf Standfuss, and
Steve Gardner.

FROM: Megan M. DeSchepper, AICP, Planner/Airport Manager *MMD*

DATE: February 10, 2016

SUBJECT: FEBRUARY 17, 2016 MEETING

The Willmar Planning Commission will meet at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 17, 2016, in the Council Chambers at Willmar Municipal Utilities-700 Litchfield Ave. SW (enter via southwest door). Please call me at 320-214-5195 if you cannot attend.

1. Reorganization
2. Call the meeting to order
3. Minutes of January 13, 2015. *
4. Downtown Design Standards discussion continued/information about possible Historical District.
5. Cairns annexation. *
6. Miscellany
7. Adjourn

*Included

**WILLMAR PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF WILLMAR, MN
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2016**

MINUTES

1. The Willmar Planning Commission met on Wednesday, January 13, 2016, at 7:00 p.m. at the Willmar City Offices Conference Room #2.

** Members Present: Randy Czarnetzki, Margaret Fleck, Gary Geiger, Bob Poe, Aaron Larson, Rolf Standfuss, and Steve Gardner.

** Members Absent:

** Others Present: Karla Tinklenberg, Bob & Jan Saulsbury, Roland Nissen, and Megan DeSchepper- Planner.

2. REORGANIZATION: Mr. Geiger made a motion, seconded by Mr. Larson, to nominate Mr. Czarnetzki for Chair.

Mr. Poe made a motion, seconded by Mr. Standfuss, to nominate Mr. Geiger for Vice Chair.

Mr. Standfuss made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gardner, to nominate Mr. Larson for Secretary.

The motions carried.

3. WILLMAR PUBLIC SCHOOLS REZONE AG TO G/I FILE NO. 16-01: The public hearing opened at 7:05 p.m. Staff presented on behalf of Willmar Public Schools the request to rezone from AG (Agriculture) to G/I (Government/Institutional) of property legally described as follows: part of the SW ¼ of the SW ¼ excluding the S 685' of W 468.8' of SW ¼ of SW ¼ and excluding part for plat of Pheasant Run, Section 13, Township 119, Range 35 (see file for full legal). There is a mix of residential, commercial, and agricultural land adjacent to the property.

Roland Nissen, an abutting land owner inquired if his property were being rezoned and if there was any site plans to review. Staff noted that only the parcel the School District purchased is being rezoned, no other properties. The only item being reviewed and considered at the meeting is the request for rezoning; no site plans have been submitted. In the future a site plan will come before the Commission for review.

With no further comments, the public hearing closed at 7:13 p.m.

Staff comments were reviewed and discussed (see Attachment A).

Mr. Gardner made a motion, seconded by Mr. Standfuss, to approve the rezone and forward it onto the City Council for a hearing and ordinance adoption.

The motion carried.

4. DOWNTOWN DESIGN STANDARDS DISCUSSION: The Commission reviewed and discussed a draft Downtown Designs Standards. They talked about the scale regulation limiting buildings to no more than 4 stories. They didn't want to prohibit a possible project that would be five or six stories if it fit the locale. It was noted anything over four stories would require plan review so that may be a way to deal with anything above that.

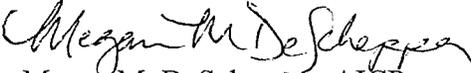
They talked about the Stormwater Ordinance and how that may impact downtown development as there is limited open space for ponding. They asked staff to share that Ordinance for review to see what would be required.

Then they talked about windows downtown. The draft had a sentence about reflective and faux glass being prohibited. After discussion about windows with tint, shades, or newspaper or other view blocking materials on them the Commission asked staff to better define that sentence.

The Commission discussed the Willmar Downtown Development Design Teams wish for historical designated district (buildings) as well as historic preservation district standards and committee. The Commission asked to know more of the details on all those plans. Further discussion will be held at a future meeting.

5. With no further business to come before the Commission the meeting adjourned at 7:47p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Megan M. DeSchepper, AICP
Planner/Airport Manager

PLANNING COMMISSION-JANUARY 13, 2016

STAFF COMMENTS

1. WILLMAR PUBLIC SCHOOLS REZONE AG to G/I FILE NO. 16-01:

- The applicant is Willmar Public Schools, Willmar, MN.
- The applicant is requesting to rezone the property from AG (Agricultural) to G/I (Government/Institutional) for development of an elementary school on property legally described as follows: part of the SW ¼ of the SW ¼ excluding the S 685' of W 468.8' of SW ¼ of SW ¼ and excluding part for plat of Pheasant Run, Section 13, Township 119, Range 35.
- The property to the east is zoned R-3 (Low Density Multiple Family), property to the north is zoned R-2 (One and Two Family Residential), property to the west is zone LB (Limited Business), and property to the south is zoned AG (Agricultural).
- Willmar public schools wishes to develop the land into an elementary school which will require plan review by the Planning Commission should the rezone be approved.
RECOMMENDATION: Approve the rezone and forward the matter to the City Council for a hearing and Ordinance Adoption.



Proposed Willmar Commercial Historic District

- Contributing
- Noncontributing

- f. Encourage design standards in subdivisions and higher-density housing that take into consideration the social and psychological well-being of their residents.
- g. Encourage innovative site and housing unit design for energy conservation, aesthetics, open space preservation, bike and pedestrian access etc.
- h. Regulate home occupations carefully to avoid or minimize traffic problems and incompatible land uses in residential districts.
- i. Regulate industrial or commercial land uses to control truck traffic and to reduce land use conflicts with residential properties.
- j. Encourage the location of residential subdivisions where City services are readily available and in areas which have direct access to existing transportation routes.
- k. Promote the orderly growth of residential developments with logical expansion of municipal services and utilities.
- l. Encourage transition zones between low and high density residential developments.
- m. Restrict the location of mobile homes to mobile home parks where adequate services can be provided.
- n. Promote the use of rain gardens and infiltration basins to reduce storm water impacts.

Section G: Historic Preservation and Aesthetics

1. **GOAL:** To protect, preserve and enhance valuable historic and aesthetic sites throughout the community.
2. **OBJECTIVES:**
 - a. Protect, preserve, and restore key historic buildings and sites throughout the community.
 - b. Create, maintain, and enhance visually pleasing areas and neighborhoods throughout the community.
3. **POLICIES:**
 - a. Maintain a historic-design inventory of the community with special emphasis on the Central Business District.

- b. Enforce design, screening and landscape standards in the construction of all public facilities, utilities and buildings, when needed.
- c. Incorporate design and landscaping standards in all private development, including residential, commercial and industrial projects.
- d. Require all land uses which are either a potential source of nuisance or of questionable visual value such as junk yards, gravel and coal storage areas, etc. to be landscaped and screened from adjacent areas.
- e. Regulate the size, placement and visual appearance of all signs, whether private or public.
- f. Cooperate with local historic preservation groups for enhanced urban design throughout the community

Section H: Downtown

Willmar Downtown Planning

The Willmar Design Center and the citizens of Willmar have initiated downtown planning and have outlined a number of strategic actions to enhance the Downtown. The four main recommendations include 1) restoring Litchfield Avenue, 2) establishing a downtown commons area, 3) urbanizing First Street, and 4) developing a connection to the lakes. The Willmar Downtown Visioneer was created to summarize these initiatives. For more information, please contact the Willmar Design Center.

1. **GOAL:** To maintain and enhance the downtown area as a great place to live, work, shop, dine, and entertain.
2. **OBJECTIVES:**
 - a. Revitalize the downtown area for both business and residential uses.
 - b. Encourage a quality urban residential and commercial connection to the lakes.
 - c. Facilitate high pedestrian use and green space amenities.
 - d. Maintain and/or increase employment opportunities,

3. POLICIES:

- a. Encourage the restoration of Litchfield Ave. SW and SE by facilitating direct access to the bypass.
- b. Allow development with higher density and relaxed parking requirements beyond the existing Central Business District to facilitate redevelopment.
- c. Encourage development of the downtown commons area/parking.
- d. Support groups such as the Design Center that focus on downtown improvements.

Section I: Citizen Participation and Intergovernmental Cooperation

1. **GOAL:** To involve citizens, agencies, and organizations in the City's key decisions.

2. OBJECTIVES:

- a. Maintain open and regular communication relating to planning and development issues between different levels of government.
- b. Maintain open and regular communication relating to planning and development issues between the various community agencies and organizations.
- c. Maintain open and regular communication relating to planning and development issues with the public.

3. POLICIES:

- a. Encourage open communication relating to all planning and development issues between the different levels of government, including the townships, city, county, school district, regional development commission, and state agencies.
- b. Seek comment from adjacent governmental units on proposed new growth and development policies, comprehensive plans and development ordinances which are likely to have an area-wide effect.
- c. Integrate planning and development by involving the various City departments and appointed commissions in planning and development issues.
- d. Inform and educate the public, encouraging the widest possible citizen participation in the planning and development process.

Topic C:
*building conditions
and aesthetics*

Element C1:

Adopt Downtown Design Standards

As the City updates its zoning code, it should include downtown-specific zoning requirements that reinforce the urban, pedestrian character of the central business district. The Willmar Design Center and City staff have already begun a process to educate the Planning Commission on the value of downtown-specific codes. In general, codes should regulate four broad areas of design: urban form (building scale and placement), architecture, landscaping, and signs. They should not be too prescriptive, but rather set a tone and character for downtown.

SPECIFIC POLICY:

- Create and adopt downtown-specific zoning code regulations that encourage a high-quality, urban, pedestrian-oriented downtown

ELEMENT CHAMPION: City of Willmar

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: continuous

PRIMARY FUNDING SOURCE: Minnesota Main Street (funding for consultant time)

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS: Willmar Design Center

IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS:

- Work with Planning Commission to determine specific code language
- Incorporate code language into city-wide zoning code update
- Adopt zoning code update, with downtown codes embedded

OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS TO REFERENCE:

- C2: Downtown standards and codes will have some regulatory authority over improvements
- C3: Improvements should be encouraged to be historically appropriate
- D2 and D3: New development and major renovations will need to meet code requirements

Element C2:

Facilitate Facade Improvements

A nice looking, well kept downtown makes residents proud and brings in visitors. Over the past few years, outside funding has allowed the Willmar Design Center and the HRA to assist business and residential owners with facade upgrades. The impact is apparent and the practice should continue.

SPECIFIC POLICY:

- Work with owners and outside agencies to provide funding and guidance for improving exterior facades in downtown Willmar

ELEMENT CHAMPION: Willmar Design Center

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: continuous

PRIMARY FUNDING SOURCE: DEED grant, other grants

COMPLEMENTARY FUNDING SOURCES: local bank guaranteed revolving loans

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS: City of Willmar, HRA, Economic Development Commission,
Chamber of Commerce

IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS:

- Continue management of DEED grant funds
- Consider establishment of a revolving loan program with local banks

OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS TO REFERENCE:

- C1: Downtown standards and codes will have some regulatory authority over improvements
- C3: Improvements should be encouraged to be historically appropriate
- D2: Restaurant and retail attraction and retention can be affected by overall downtown facade quality
- D3: Redevelopments should feature high quality facades that contribute to the downtown as a whole

Element C3:

Encourage Historic Preservation and Restoration

Willmar features two National Register Historic Buildings. These historic buildings are links to the city's past, contribute to the overall downtown environment, and feature environmentally responsible re-uses of existing buildings. The practice of preserving, re-using, and designating historic buildings can contribute to the desirability of downtown Willmar, both for residents, businesses, and out-of-towners. This is not to say that all buildings must be historically inspired, and especially not to say that new developments should be falsely historicist. Rather, where appropriate, buildings should appear true to the era in which they were constructed, be that the 1900s, the 1950s, or the 2000s.

SPECIFIC POLICIES:

- Designate appropriate buildings on state and national historic registers
- Encourage preservation of older buildings through adaptive re-use, removal of later facade treatments, and general upkeep
- Consider making era-appropriate improvements a condition of public funding

ELEMENT CHAMPION: Willmar Design Center

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: continuous

PRIMARY FUNDING SOURCE: DEED grant, other grants

COMPLEMENTARY FUNDING SOURCES: local bank guaranteed revolving loans

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS: City of Willmar, Economic Development Commission, HRA,
Chamber of Commerce

IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS:

- Continue management of DEED grant funds
- Consider establishment of a revolving loan program with local banks
- Identify additional buildings that could benefit from historically-appropriate facade upgrades or official historic designation.

OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS TO REFERENCE:

- C1: Downtown standards and codes will have some regulatory authority over improvements
- C2: General facade improvements should be appropriate to the building's original era

Element C4:

Update and Improve Lighting

Lighting contributes both to the perception of safety as well as the aesthetic quality of a downtown area. Willmar's street/pedestrian lighting is getting old, and will reach the end of its useful life within 10 years. The City should make plans for eventual replacement with higher-efficiency lighting in keeping with the overall character of downtown.

SPECIFIC POLICY:

- Replace street and pedestrian lighting with primarily pedestrian-oriented lighting that features high energy efficiency.

ELEMENT CHAMPION: City of Willmar

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: Long term (10+ years)

PRIMARY FUNDING SOURCE: City of Willmar general fund, Willmar Municipal Utilities

IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS:

- Determine replacement timeline and budget for the work in the city's long-term financial plan

OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS TO REFERENCE:

- A4/B1: The Becker Avenue Plan includes lighting, and, depending on timing, could either set the tone for downtown lighting or continue lighting projects already begun

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 1060
KNOWN AS THE WILLMAR ZONING ORDINANCE BY
ADDING SECTION 6.J.7. RELATING TO
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN STANDARDS

The City Council of City of Willmar does ordain as follows:

SECTION 4. Ordinance 1060 is hereby amended by adding the following text Section 4.A.5.g.

- g. *In the CBD, where off-street surface parking is provided it shall be setback 5' (five feet) from all street rights-of-way (see Section 3.P.). Surface parking shall be located at least 40' (forty feet) from any street intersection.*

SECTION 6. Ordinance 1060 is hereby amended by striking/amending Section 6.J.5.c. so as to read as follows:

- c. Setbacks (all) = ~~Not applicable~~. *Shall be zero (0) feet from all street rights-of-way.*

SECTION 6. Ordinance 1060 is hereby amended by adding a new SECTION 6.J.7. so as to read as follows:

SECTION 6.J.7. CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN STANDARDS

7. *Design Standards.*

- a. *Building Placement. In the Central Business District buildings shall be placed at primary street corners, defined as the intersections of Litchfield Ave. SW and 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Streets; Becker Ave. SW and 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Streets; and Benson Ave. SW and 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Streets. If no primary corner exists, buildings shall be placed as per setback requirements in Section 6.J.5.c.*
- b. *General Design. The design and construction of downtown buildings shall be in keeping with the scale and quality of existing buildings in the heart of downtown, primarily at the intersection of Litchfield Ave. SW and 4th St. SW. Design creativity is encouraged. Willmar has no defined and required aesthetic. Scale and architectural quality is more important than a particular style.*
- c. *Scale. Buildings shall be encouraged to be two, three, or four stories in height (buildings over four stories require plan review as per Section 6.J.2.i.) or shall be one story with an ornamental cornice constituting a minimum of one-half the height of the inhabited space.*

- d. *Materials. Buildings shall be constructed of high-quality materials such as brick, stone, stucco, or decorative masonry, with accent materials of metal, stone, glass, or other materials.*
- e. *Entrances. The primary building entrance should provide access directly to the public sidewalk, not to a parking area. A secondary entrance accessing a parking area is permitted.*
- f. *Windows. All facades at street level adjacent to the public right-of-way shall be composed of at least 40% (forty percent) windows that allow a clear view into and out from the building the remaining 60% shall be building or privacy glass (reflective glass or faux glass is not permitted).*
- g. *Architectural Projections.*
 - (1) *Elements may extend 2' (two feet) out over the public sidewalk, provided there is a minimum of 7.5' (seven and half feet) vertical clear zone between the sidewalk surface and the underside of the projection.*
 - (2) *Architectural projections shall be limited to awnings (for signs see Section 5.H.5.) and decorative building elements, which shall be an integral part of the building design and may only extend one foot over the public sidewalk.*
- h. *Awnings. (see Section 5.H.5.h. for signed awnings)*
 - (1) *Awnings shall be composed of fabric, or of hard materials complementary to the building design.*
 - (2) *Awnings may be lit on both sides, but may not be internally lit.*
 - (3) *Vinyl awnings are not permitted.*
- i. *Design Review. Building designs shall be submitted along with site plans for Plan Review by the Planning Commission.*

SECTION 3. Ordinance 1060 is hereby amended by adding the following text Section 3.P.9.

- 9. *Landscaping and parking lot buffers in the Central Business District where surface parking is provided shall be as follows:*
 - a. *Parking Lot Buffers. The five foot parking area setback shall constitute the required parking lot buffer, and shall be composed of one of the following options:*
 - (1) *An ornamental railing at least three feet high, in combination with perennials or shrubs in quantities to ensure eventual 100% soil coverage.*
 - (2) *A hedge of shrubs a minimum of 2' (two feet) high and a maximum of 4' (four feet high).*
 - (3) *Perennials or shrubs in quantities to ensure eventual 100% soil*

coverage, in combination with one ornamental tree (1 ½" caliper at installation) per 32' (thirty-two feet) of parking lot frontage.

***NOTE Planning Commission advisory about the type and size of the ornamental trees. Plantings shall be designed to allow sight lights for automobiles and existing parking lots.*

- b. Parking Lot Landscaping.*
 - (1) Parking areas larger than 30 stalls shall include 150 (one hundred fifty) square feet of interior landscaping for each 15 (fifteen) parking stalls.*
 - (2) Parking areas with public right-of-way frontage greater than 74' (seventy four feet) shall provide one shade tree (2 ½" caliper at installation) per 25' (twenty-five) feet of frontage.*
 - (3) Each 150 (one hundred fifty) square feet of interior parking lot landscaping shall include one of the following options:*
 - (a) Shrubs and perennials in quantities to ensure eventual 100% soil coverage, in combination with one ornamental or shade tree (1 ½" caliper at installation).*
 - (b) Perennials only, in quantities to ensure eventual 100% soil coverage, when the landscape area is sunken below parking lot grade and used for stormwater management.*

- c. Stormwater Management. Permeable pavement and other techniques to manage stormwater on site are encouraged. Techniques that return the rate of runoff to the equivalent of native grassland shall allow a 50% reduction in the interior landscaping requirement. The requirements of Stormwater Management Ordinance #1227 shall be met at all times.*

SECTION 5. Ordinance 1060 is hereby amended by adding the following text Section 5.H.5.k

- k. When applying for a sign permit, the applicant shall provide, in addition to a scaled drawing of the entire sign, a product sample, which may be one of the following:*
 - (1) If the sign will be fabricated by a reputable sign company, provide a small product sample of a similar sign design with similar materials and fabrication methods, or*
 - (2) If the sign will be fabricated by a reputable sign company, provide full-color photos of similar signs the company has fabricated installed, or*
 - (3) If the sign will be fabricated by an individual, provide a sample portion of the sign at full size and in full color. For example, if the sign will be painted, provide several letters painted on the same surface as the final sign.*

EFFECTIVE DATE. This Ordinance shall be effective from and after its adoption and second publication.

This Ordinance introduced by Council Member: _____

This Ordinance introduced on: _____

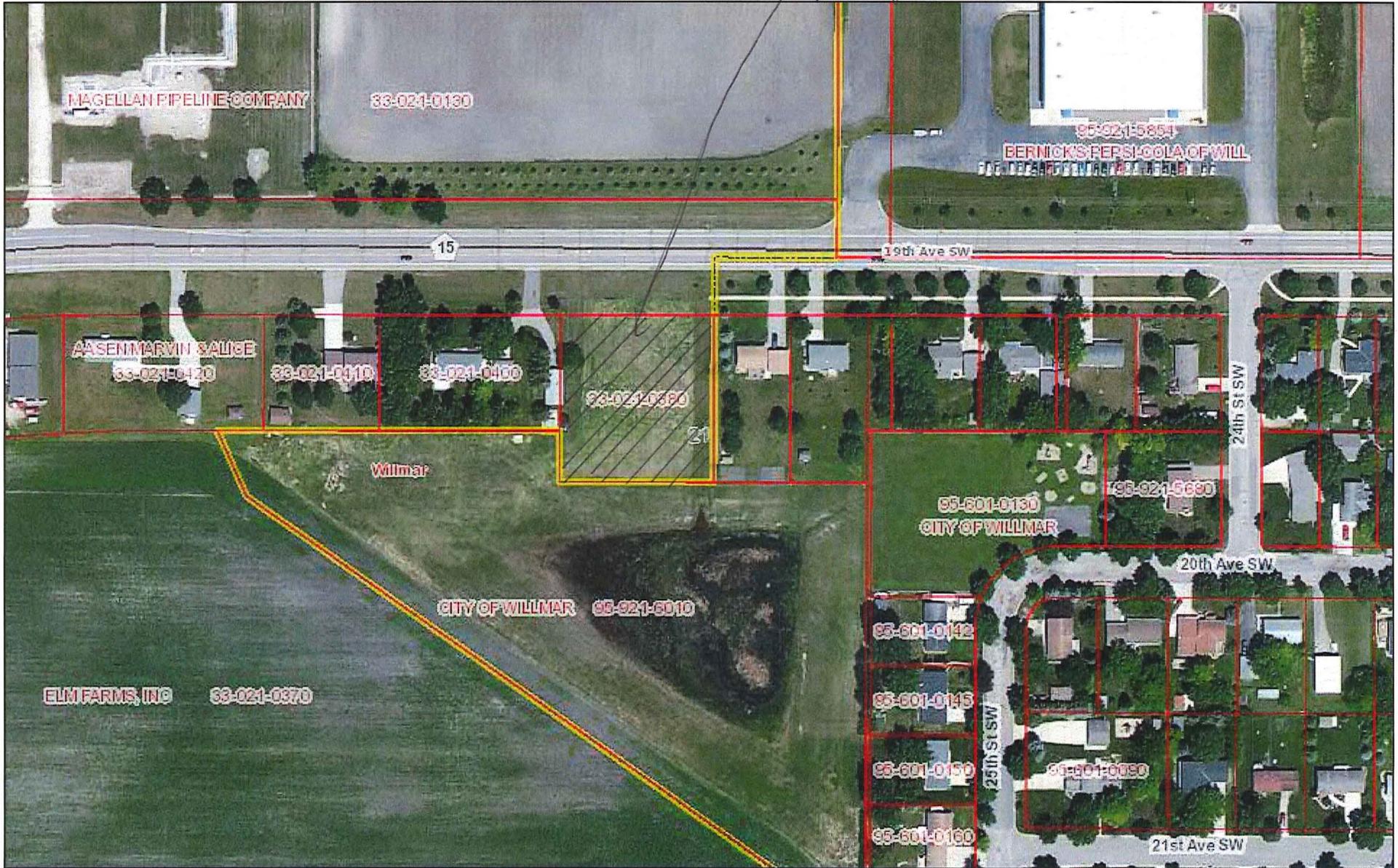
This Ordinance published on: _____

This Ordinance given a hearing on: _____

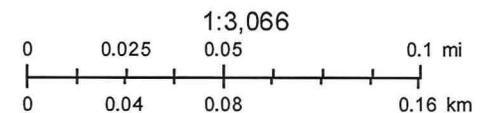
This Ordinance adopted on: _____

This Ordinance published on: _____

*Cairns
Annexation
Request .96
acres*



February 10, 2016



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and