



# Zoning Staff Report

**Date:** January 14, 2025

**Case Number:** ZC-24-153

**Council District:** 8

## Zoning Map Amendment

**Case Manager:** Stephen Murray

**Owner / Applicant:** William Hornick / Rhett Bennett & Jennifer Holley, Black Mountain & Bob Riley, Half

**Site Location:** SE corner of Lon Stephenson Road & Forest Hill Drive      **Acreage:** 141.7 acres

### Request

**Proposed Use:** Light Industrial / Data Center

**Request:** From: “AG” Agriculture, “A-5” One Family Residential, “CR” Low Density Multifamily & “F” General Commercial

To: “PD/SU” Planned Development Specific Use for Data Center, educational uses, governmental uses (excluding correction facility and probation or Parole office), health care facilities, recreation, religious uses, utilities, grocery store, office, retail sales general; developed to “I” Light Industrial standards with development standards for building setback along Lon Stephenson minimum of 80 feet; no tree removal within 25 feet of Lon Stephenson Rd. southern ROW line; where no existing trees exist in the 25-foot buffer along southern Lon Stephenson right of way line, a minimum of 50% canopy tree planting will be planted and credited to the Urban Forestry requirements; primary entrance and address request to the Data Center will be from Forest Hill Drive (See Staff Report), site plan waiver requested

### Recommendation

**Land Use Compatibility:** Requested change **is compatible**

**Comprehensive Plan Map Consistency:** Requested change **is not consistent**

**Comprehensive Plan Policy Consistency:** Requested change **is consistent**

**Staff Recommendation:** **Approval (with site plan required)**

**Zoning Commission Recommendation**      *Approval 6-4*



# Zoning Staff Report

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## Project Description and Background

### Prior Consideration

At last month's hearing, the Commission considered the applicant's request for "I" Light Industrial zoning. The applicant was charged with continued communication with the neighborhood and to review the possibility of revising the application to a PD. The applicant's request has been amended to a PD to incorporate restrictions to make the proposed development more compatible with the surrounding area.

### Summary

The proposed site is located in Council District 8 on Joel East Road, west of Wichita Street. The applicant proposes to develop the site with a data center, The applicant is requesting to rezone from the existing "AG" Agriculture, "A-5" One Family Residential, "CR" Low Density Multifamily & "F" General Commercial zoning to "PD/SU" Planned Development Specific Use for Data Center, educational uses, governmental uses (excluding correction facility and probation or Parole office), health care facilities, recreation, religious uses, utilities, grocery store, office, retail sales general; developed to "I" Light Industrial standards with development standards for building setback along Lon Stephenson minimum of 80'; no tree removal within 25' of Lon Stephenson Rd southern ROW line; where no existing trees exist in the 25' buffer along southern Lon Stephenson right of way line, a minimum of 50% canopy tree planting will be planted and credited to the Urban Forestry requirements; primary entrance and address request to the Data Center will be from Forest Hill Drive (See Staff Report), site plan waiver requested. The applicant provided the following statement in regards to the proposed land uses on the site:

### Development Standards

The table below describes the differences between the initially proposed "I" Light Industrial and proposed PD.

Development Standard	"I" Light Industrial	Proposed PD
Setback along Lon Stephenson	20 ft	Minimum of 80'
Tree removal	Work with Urban Forestry some tree retention may be required	No tree removal within 25' of Lon Stephenson Rd southern ROW line; where no existing trees exist in the 25' buffer along southern Lon Stephenson right of way line, a minimum of 50% canopy tree planting will be planted and credited to the Urban Forestry requirements
Primary Entrance	TPW has final authority but typically can have an entrance on street frontages	primary entrance and address request to the Data Center will be from Forest Hill Drive
Height	45	45
Landscaping	Four percent of the net site area	Four percent of the net site area

### Applicant's Proposal



The subject property is planned to facilitate light industrial uses such as a Data Center development with low traffic impacts on existing and proposed roadways. The present conceptual development plan includes multiple building pads adjacent to the existing high power transmission lines that bisects the property from its western property line (Forest Hill Boulevard) to the eastern property line. Other light industrial uses and low traffic impacts like warehousing could be considered as well. All uses would follow light industrial development standards with no anticipated waivers for building height or setbacks.

The 2024 Comprehensive Plan recommends most of this property to be single family residential. Due to the existing high power lines, this property is not suitable for that use. Additionally, the Comprehensive Plan does not indicate any employment opportunities in the immediate area. The proposed uses would add higher paying jobs to the area. The future Comprehensive Plan should take these points into consideration in its next update.

## Surrounding Zoning and Land Uses

North n/a (City of Forest Hill) / rural residential, single family suburban residential, and senior living  
 East “AG” Agricultural / agricultural  
 South “A-5” One Family Residential / single family suburban residential  
 West “F” General Commercial & “MH” Manufactured Housing / undeveloped & manufactured housing park

## Zoning History

The property has been zoned F, AG, CR, and A-5” since at least 2004.

## Public Notification

### Written Notice

Written notice of the Zoning Commission public hearing was mailed to the owners of real property lying within 300 feet were mailed on December 20, 2024.

### Posted Notice

A sign was erected on the property not less than 10 days before the Zoning Commission public hearing date.

### Published Notice

A notice of the public hearing before the City Council will be published in the Fort Worth Star Telegram at least 15 days before the hearing.

### Courtesy Notice

The following organizations were emailed on December 20, 2024:

Organizations Notified	
Everman ISD	Fort Worth ISD
Streams & Valleys Inc	Trinity Habitat for Humanity

## Development Impact Analysis

### Land Use Compatibility

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Surrounding properties appear to be a mixture of suburban single family residential, large lot/rural residential, agricultural, along with some small manufactured home subdivisions to the west of the site. This site has access to both Forest Hill Drive as well as Lon Stephenson Road, which are currently two-lane roads that link Everman in the south and Loop 820 and Forest Hill in the north. They are considered neighborhood connectors on the Master Thoroughfare Plan.

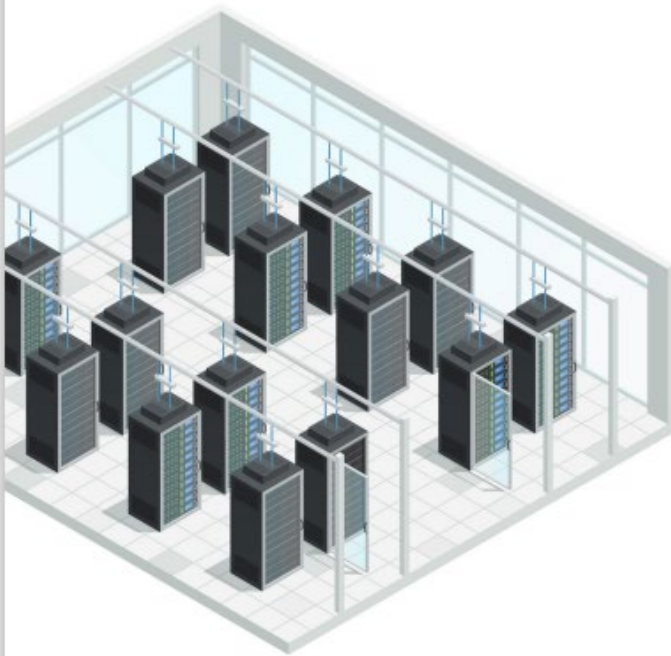
Staff often consults with the Urban Land Institutes (ULI) guidelines to provide insight on certain uses. The Urban Land Institute is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 48,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of shaping the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide. These guidelines provide additional information especially for relatively newer uses that cities rarely see but are becoming more prominent. Below is information related to "Local Guidelines for Data Center Development"

[uli-data-center-whitepaper\\_hm\\_2024-11-12\\_final-final-round.pdf](#)

## Differences from industrial warehouses

Data centers differ from other forms of commercial real estate. They constitute a relatively new category and, until recently, they were concentrated in select geographic areas. As a result, the buildings housing our essential internet infrastructure are widely misunderstood.

Typically, data centers are not explicitly mentioned in zoning codes. Instead, they fall under the umbrella of general industrial zoning uses. But because they store data, they are not typical warehouses. Their classification, as such, causes planning challenges, which we will detail further in a [later section](#).



Here's how data centers differ from industrial warehouses or factories:

- Data centers are more compatible with other uses nearby because, unlike factories or warehouses, they are odorless and lack truck traffic.
- They are often taller than traditional single-story warehouses. Data centers can be single-story or multistory. Single-story data centers start at around 30 feet (9.1 meters) and multi-story data centers go up from there.
- They require fewer employees once construction is complete, so long-term impacts on traffic, schools, and public services are minimal.
- They need fewer parking spaces and plumbing fixture counts than are typically mandated by industrial codes.
- Data centers require more robust underground and above-ground infrastructure.
- Unlike warehouses and factories, data centers have external electrical and mechanical equipment.
- Some data centers need multiple layers of redundancy, which we'll discuss [in a moment](#).
- Data centers require more security measures than industrial buildings, including 24/7/365 surveillance and controlled-access points.

It is important to note that the proposed PD will provide additional buffers, removal of uses, etc. This should reduce the impact to surrounding neighborhoods. In addition, data centers act more in line with office complexes and heavy truck traffic is not anticipated to impact the overall site.

That being stated, the proposed development could be sensible in this particular location despite the proximity to residential. However, providing a final site plan for this case is imperative to help assuage staff and neighborhood concerns.

The proposed rezoning is **compatible** with surrounding land uses.



## Comprehensive Plan Consistency – Far South Sector

The adopted Comprehensive Plan designates the subject property as *future single family residential, medium density residential, and neighborhood commercial* on the Future Land Use [FLU] Map. The proposed PD uses are not included in the list of zoning classifications that are acceptable within these FLU designations. The proposed zoning **is not consistent** with the Comprehensive Plan Map designation.

### FUTURE LAND USE AND ZONING CLASSIFICATIONS

Zoning implements the Future Land Use Map, which guides the location of appropriate places to live, play, and conduct business. The future land use maps and policies are used by staff, appointed commissioners, and elected officials when making decisions regarding zoning, annexation, budgeting, and major public facilities expenditures.

#### APPENDIX C: FUTURE LAND USE BY SECTOR

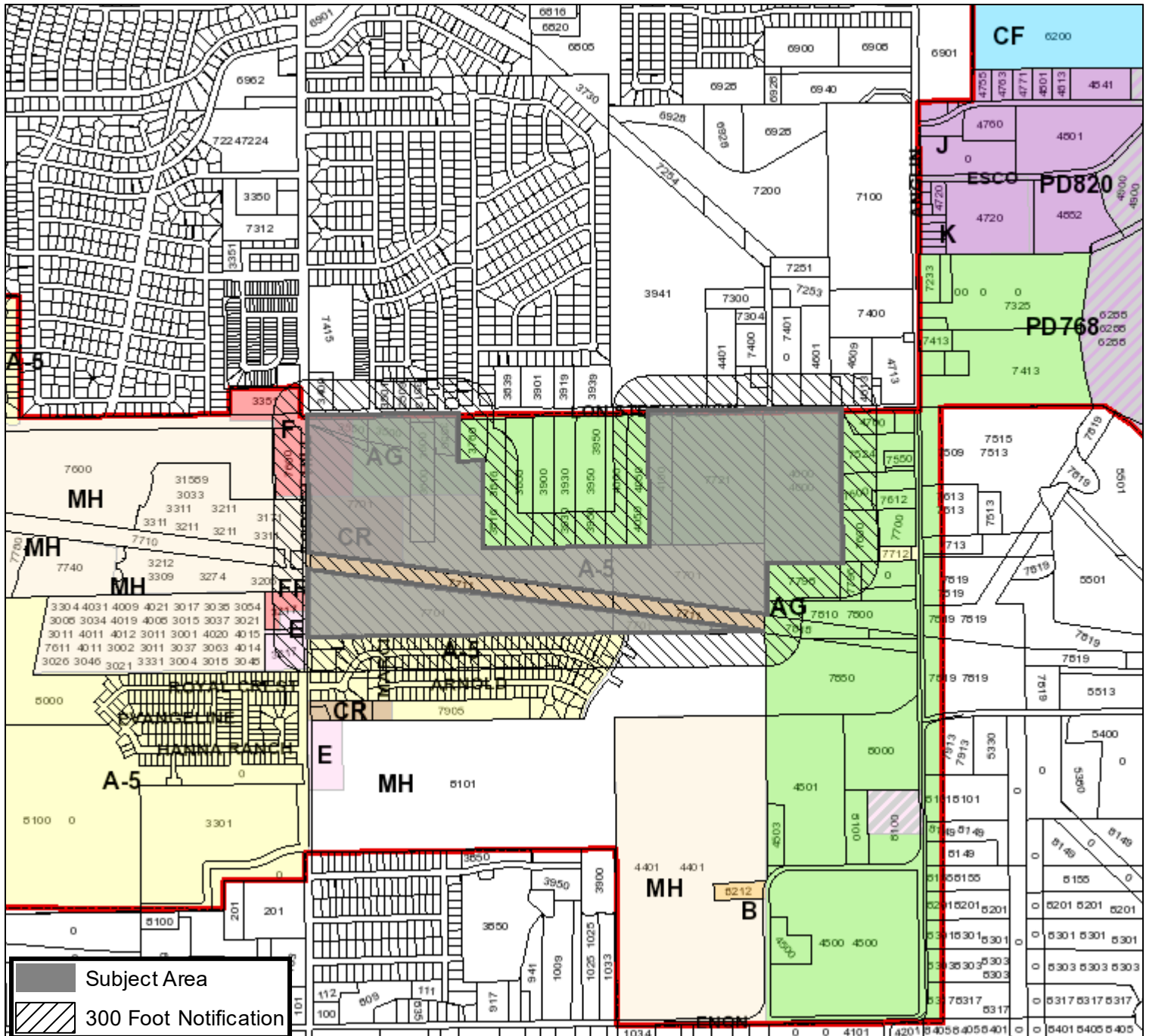
FUTURE LAND USE	DESCRIPTION	IMPLEMENTING ZONING
<b>RESIDENTIAL</b>		
Single-Family Residential	3,500+ sq. ft. lot single-family	A-10, A-7.5, A-5, AR
Manufactured Housing	Manufactured home parks and subdivisions	MH
Low Density Residential	2,500+ sq. ft. lot single-family, two-family, patio homes, townhouses, cluster housing	B, R1, R2
Medium Density Residential	Up to 36 units/acre multifamily	CR, C, D
<b>COMMERCIAL</b>		
Neighborhood Commercial	Retail, services, offices and mixed uses serving daily needs for a local market area	ER, E, MU-1, Applicable Form-Based Codes
<b>INDUSTRIAL</b>		
Light Industrial	Warehousing, transportation, light assembly, outside storage	MU-2, I, All Commercial

In terms of Policy, this request **is consistent** with policy the following policies:

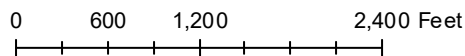
- Separate incompatible land uses with buffers or transitional uses. Some land uses have attributes such as height, proportion, scale, operational characteristics, traffic generated, or appearance that may not be compatible with the attributes of other uses.
- Encourage the preservation and enhancement of the natural landscape by retaining trees, natural drainage ways, and unique vistas.
- Promote fiscally sustainable growth on the periphery of the city by encouraging development adjacent to existing adequate infrastructure and discouraging leapfrog development.

### Area Zoning Map

Applicant: Rhett Bennett/William Hornick  
 Address: 3600 Lon Stephenson Road  
 Zoning From: AG, F, CR & A-5  
 Zoning To: PD/SU<sup>1</sup> Planned Development Specific Uses including data center W/Development Standards  
 Acres: 141.73181351  
 Mapsco: Text  
 Sector/District: Far\_South  
 Commission Date: 1/8/2025  
 Contact: 817-392-8043

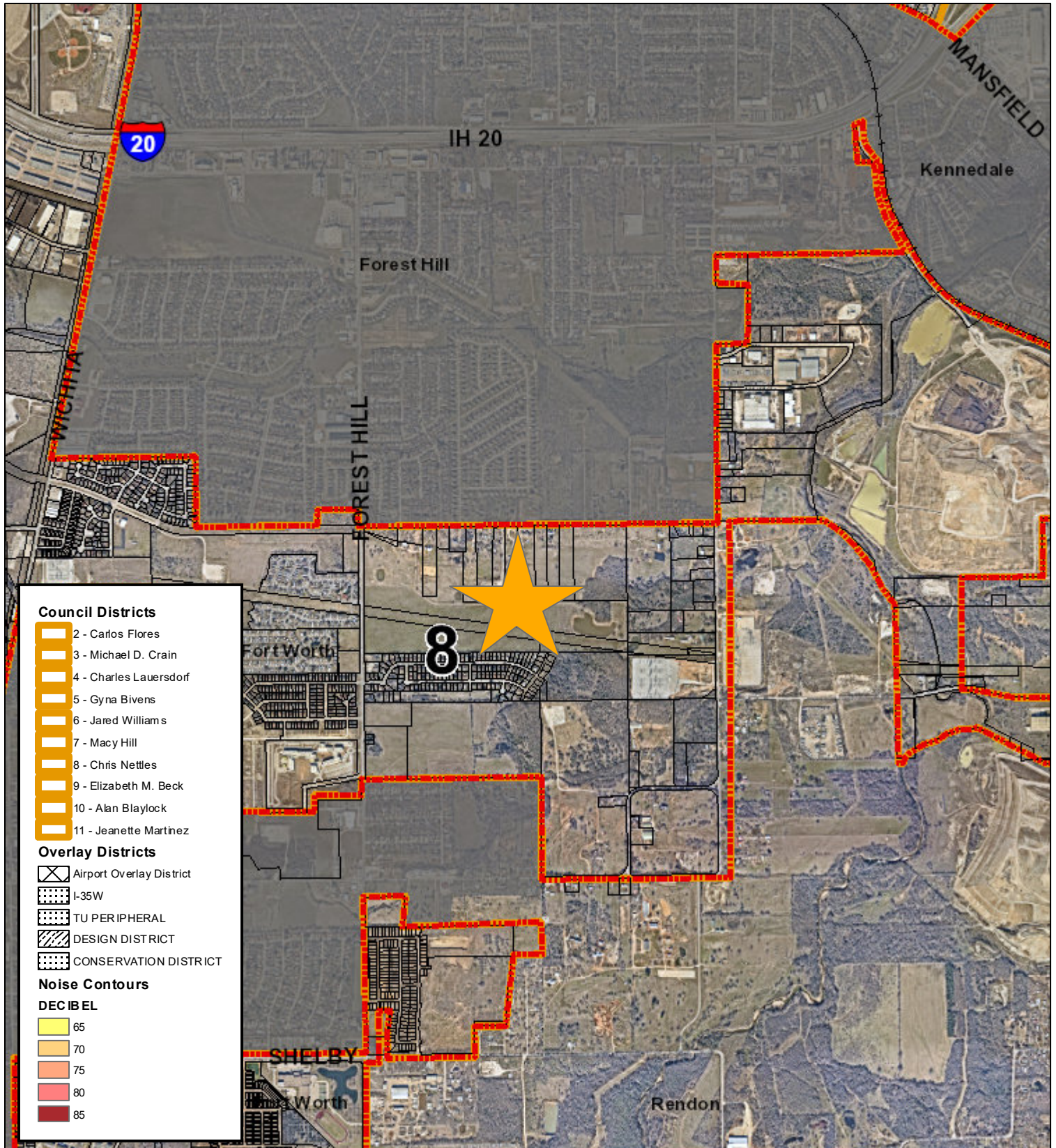


[Grey Box] Subject Area  
 [Hatched Box] 300 Foot Notification





### Area Map



**Council Districts**

- 2 - Carlos Flores
- 3 - Michael D. Crain
- 4 - Charles Lauersdorf
- 5 - Gyna Bivens
- 6 - Jared Williams
- 7 - Macy Hill
- 8 - Chris Nettles
- 9 - Elizabeth M. Beck
- 10 - Alan Blaylock
- 11 - Jeanette Martinez

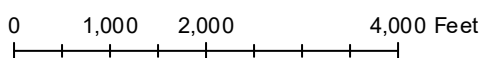
**Overlay Districts**

- Airport Overlay District
- I-35W
- TU PERIPHERAL
- DESIGN DISTRICT
- CONSERVATION DISTRICT

**Noise Contours**

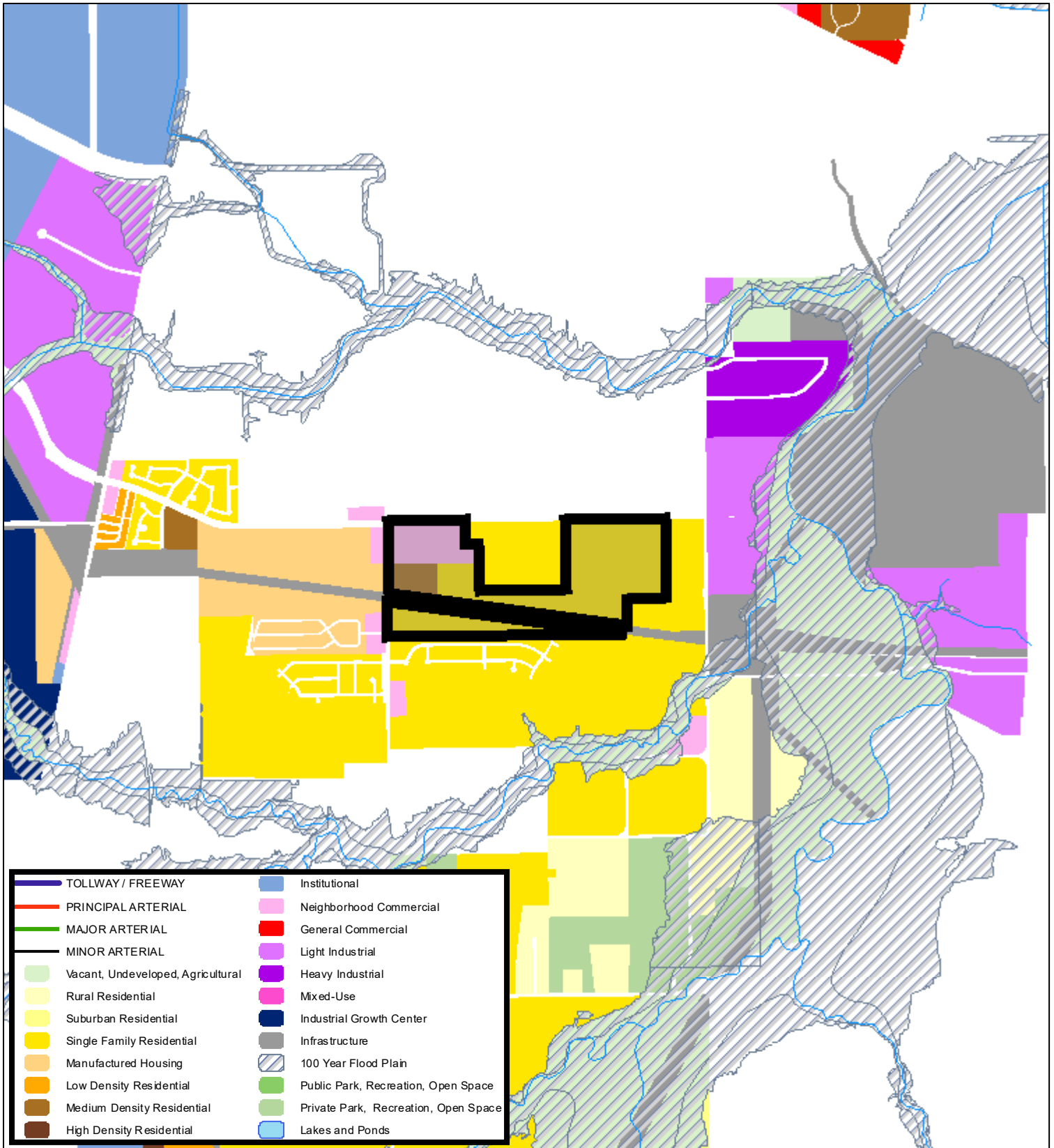
**DECIBEL**

- 65
- 70
- 75
- 80
- 85





### Future Land Use



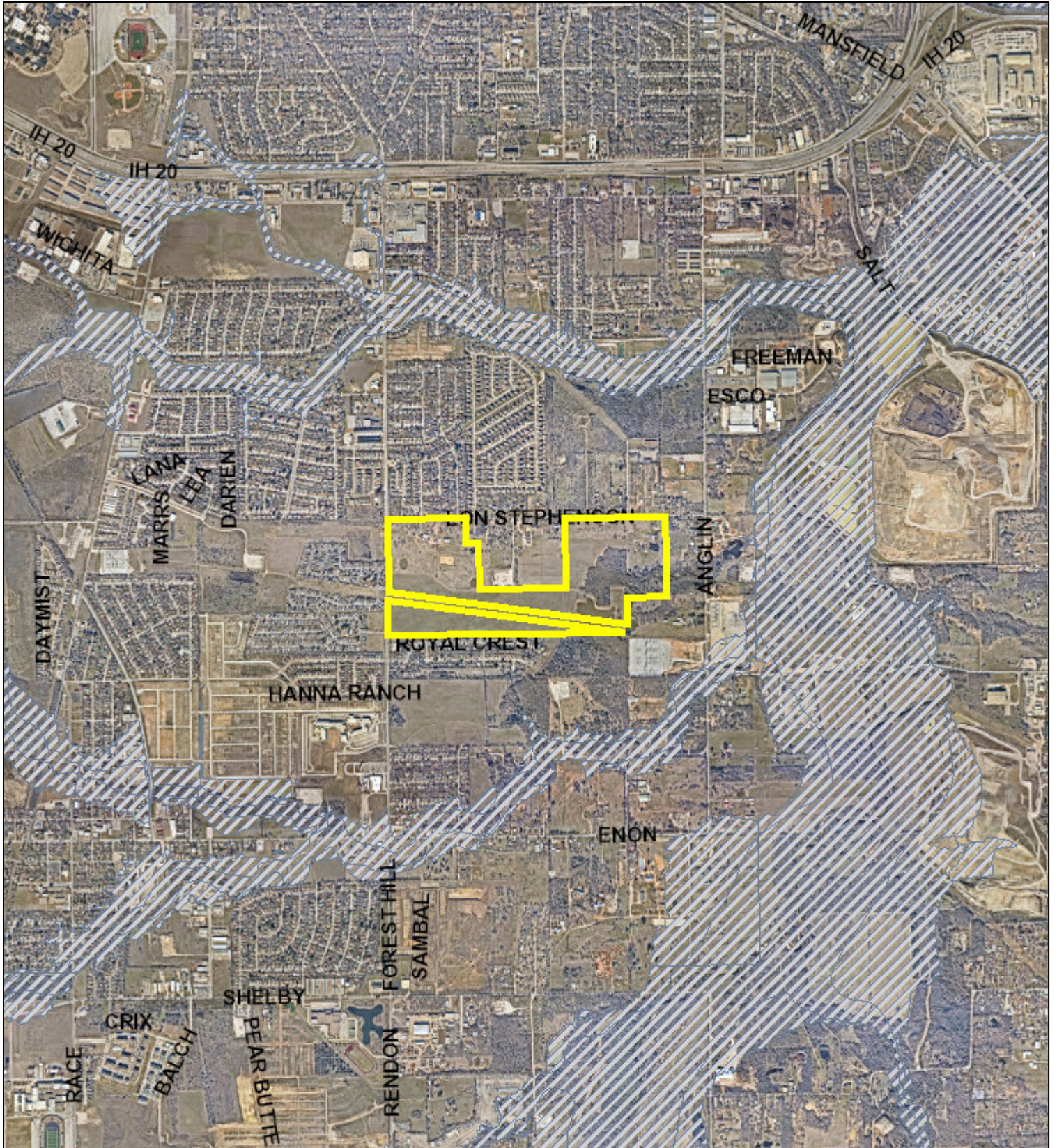
2,100 1,050 0 2,100 Feet

A Comprehensive Plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries. (Texas Local Government Code, Section 213.005.) Land use designations were approved by City Council on March 6, 2018.





### Aerial Photo Map



0 1,375 2,750 5,500 Feet

