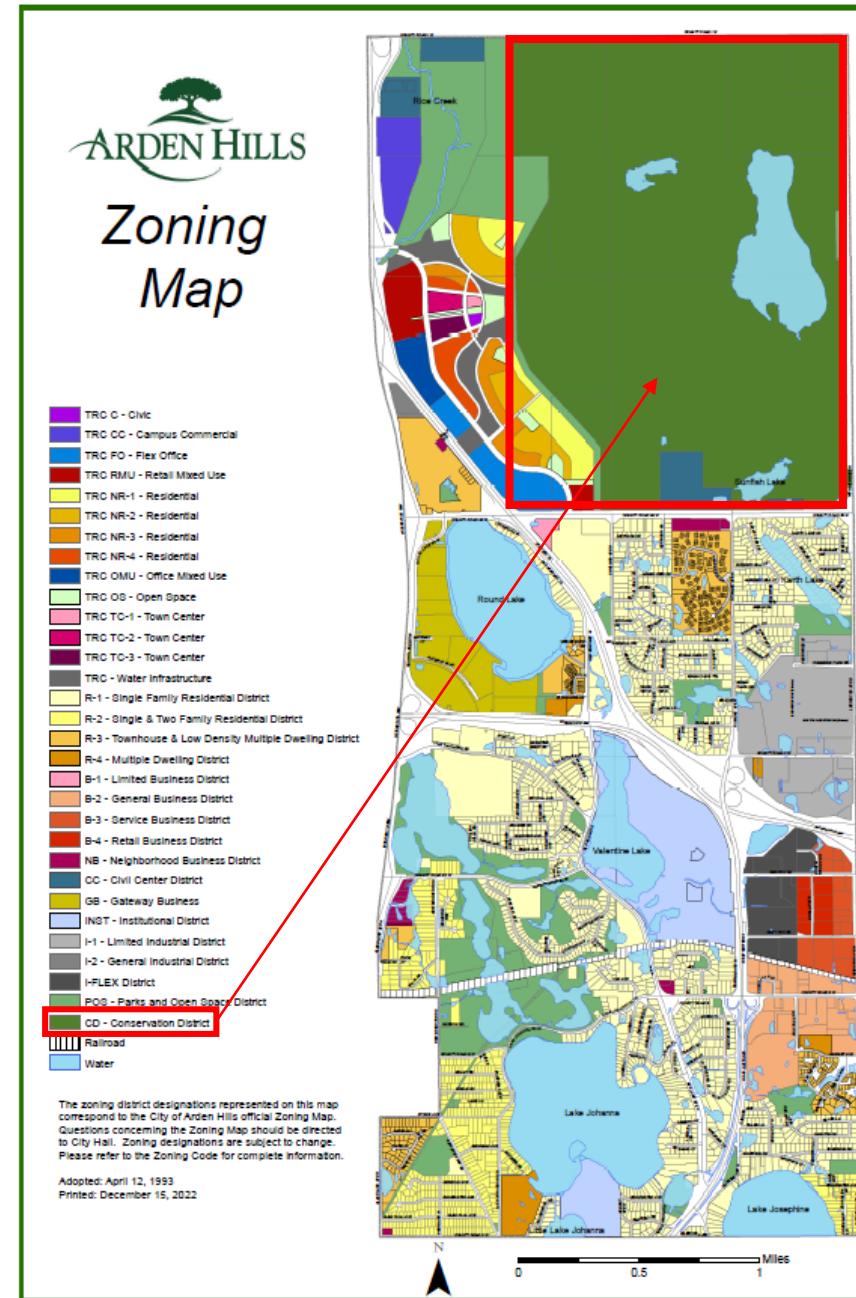


- **Planning Case #23-004** – Public Hearing Required
- **Applicant:** Alatus LLC
- **Request:** Zoning Code Amendment, Chapter 13 to the Conservation District



Action to Consider

- The Applicant is proposing to add language in the zoning ordinance to allow for the conditional use of solar energy systems within the Conservation Zoning District.



Zoning District Background

- Conservation District adopted in 2013 to create a zoning district that was consistent with “parks and open space areas” within the Comprehensive Plan as required by State Statute.
- Conservation District is guided by the Park Preserve future land use classification in the Comprehensive Plan.
- The CD District only applies to the Arden Hills Army Training Site (AHATS).
- In 2014, the City rezoned 2/3’s of the AHATS property to the Conservation District. 2016 the remaining acreage was rezoned. The City did not rezone the entire AHATS property originally in 2014 because Ramsey County was working with the Federal Government to purchase some of the area to be incorporated into their park system.

Conservation District purpose is *“To provide a “holding” zone for federally owned lands on the Arden Hills Army Training Site to ensure that future development is staged, maintains a sustainable level of public expenditures for utilities and services, and protects those areas generally determined to be unsuitable for development due to the presence of wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, certain drainage and soil conditions, and critical wildlife habitat.”*

The chart below lists current permitted and conditional uses in the Conservation District:

| Accessory | Conditional Use | Conditional Use (Accessory) |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Utility Distribution Lines</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Utility Transmission Lines</i> • <i>Research and Development Facility</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Telecommunication antennas, dishes, or towers</i> |

AHATS Background

- AHATS property is owned by the Federal Government and used primarily by the Minnesota National Guard as the Arden Hills Army Training Site.
- Within the site, there is approximately 62 +/- acres that is commonly referred to as the “Primer Tracer Area”. This portion of the property was previously used as a manufacturing facility for the production of component primers and tracing compounds associated with small caliber ammunition production.
- Back in 2015, Ramsey County in partnership with Xcel Energy had considered purchasing the Primer Tracer area from the Federal Government. Preliminary concept was:
 - 20+ acres to be developed for an Emergency Management Center
 - 40+ acres would be a solar array supporting energy initiatives of the Rice Creek Commons site
- Due to logistical and economic factors, Xcel Energy informed all parties that they would no longer be considering the Primer Tracer site as a future solar project location.
- City did have draft language to allow for a solar array on the Primer Tracer site, but did not move the language forward for approval as the project with Xcel did not move forward.
- Today the Federal Government has once again expressed an intent to sell the Primer Tracer Property “as is” through GSA Auctions with the auction stated to open on May 22nd.
- A Future Buyer would be responsible for handling all of the processes associated with the future development of the site (i.e. land use approval, demolition and cleanup, permitting, etc.).

Overview of Ordinance Amendments

Applicant's Narrative:

- Add a definition for Solar Energy System - Section 1305.04 Definitions
 - Solar Energy System: A system or set of devices whose primary purpose is to collect, convert, store and distribute solar energy, including for heating and cooling of buildings, electricity generation, water heating and other energy-using processes.
- The Land Use Chart within Section 1320.05 would be amended to include solar energy system:
 - Add a land use category for Solar Energy System as a Conditional Use (CUP) under the CD.

Additional Code Amendments to consider:

- Revise the purpose statement for the Conservation District in Section 1320.04, Subd. 17
 - Add a new paragraph B stating that the District provides for areas for the development of solar energy systems.
- Amend Section 1320.15 Special Requirements for the CD
 - Create a new Subdivision 3 that outlines special CUP requirements for Solar Energy Systems. This provision should address future review standards for solar energy.

Proposed language:

A Solar Energy System shall be evaluated as part of the Conditional Use Permit review for development consistent with the District Requirements as outlined in Section 1320.03 and the City Council through the CUP may allow flexibility to design standards including but not limited to setbacks, lot coverage, height, access, size, screening, and fencing based upon site suitability and abutting properties and area.

Public Notices

- Notice was published in the *Pioneer Press* on March 30, 2023. Notice was prepared in accordance with City Policy. No comments have been submitted following this notice.
- Two residents commented in favor of this application during the Planning Commission meeting.

Questions?

Planning Case 23-004 – Zoning Code Amendments – Chapter 13, Conservation District

