



Planning & Development Division
Planning & Economic Development Department

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File Number	PL 23-035	Contact	Kyle Deming	
Type	UDC Map Amendment	Planning Commission Date	March 14, 2022	
Deadline for Action	Application Date	N/A	60 Days	N/A
	Date Extension Letter Mailed	N/A	120 Days	N/A
Location of Subject	Duluth International Airport operations areas and an area northwest of the airport			
Applicant	City of Duluth	Contact		
Agent		Contact		
Legal Description	See Attached Map			
Site Visit Date	February 28, 2023	Sign Notice Date	February 28, 2023	
Neighbor Letter Date	February 27, 2023	Number of Letters Sent	24	

Proposal

UDC Map Amendment/Rezoning to change the zoning of 660 acres from MU-N to AP (Airport) and to change 110 acres from MU-B to AP in order to reflect the actual use of the land and to implement the comprehensive plan.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommend that the Planning Commission recommend approval of the rezoning amendment to the City Council (via ordinance).

	<i>Current Zoning</i>	<i>Existing Land Use</i>	<i>Future Land Use Map</i>
Subject	MU-N, MU-B, RR-1	Airport operations (proposed AP) and open space (proposed RC)	Transportation and Utilities
North	I-G and RR-1	Airport-related businesses and fire station	Transportation and Utilities
South	MU-B	Airport-related businesses and aircraft control tower	Transportation and Utilities
East	RR-1	MN Air National Guard operations area and open space	Transportation and Utilities
West	Hermantown	Businesses and open space	Hermantown

Summary of Code Requirements

- UDC Sec. 50-37.3.B: Planning Commission shall review the application, conduct a public hearing ... with public notice ... and make a written recommendation to council.
- UDC Sec. 50-37.3.C: The Planning Commission shall review the application, and Council shall approve the application or approve it with modifications, if it determines that the application: 1. Is consistent with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan; 2. Is reasonably related to the overall needs of the community, to existing land use, or to a plan for future land use; 3. Is required by public necessity, convenience, or general welfare, or good zoning practice; 4. Will not create material adverse impacts on nearby properties, or if material adverse impacts may be created they will be mitigated to the extent reasonably possible.

Comprehensive Plan Governing Principle and/or Policies and Current History (if applicable):

Governing Principles

- Governing Principle #4 – Support economic growth sectors. The aviation industry continues to grow and this rezoning clarifies areas for airport operations. It does not affect related businesses located outside the proposed AP zone.
- Governing Principle #2 – Declare the necessity and secure the future of undeveloped places. The proposed rezoning from RR-1 to R-C (Rural Conservation) will more completely establish this wetland area for preservation.

Comprehensive Plan Policies and Strategies

- Economic Development Policy #2 – Foster growth of existing employers and strategically recruit new employers.
 - Strategy S7 - Promote opportunities for easing travel for employees to and from Duluth, especially via initiatives such as the Northern Lights Express and through air service.
- Economic Development Policy #3 – Build on existing economic strengths and competitive advantage.
 - Strategy S3 - Maximize opportunities for economic growth on and around port and airport properties, consistent with their respective priorities. This rezoning clarifies areas for airport operations from business development.

Zoning:

- Airport (AP): Intended to protect and reserve lands dedicated for airport operations. Structures and development (e.g., parking, hangars) that are incidental to and supportive of airport operations may be permitted.
- Rural-Conservation (R-C): The district encourages conservation of open space, natural resources, and rural character. Allows residential and complimentary uses such as limited agriculture.

Future Land Use:

- Transportation and Utilities: Applicable to airports, the port terminals, large highway rights-of-way, and similar uses. Applies primarily to existing facilities.

History:

- Airport development began in 1930 with the creation of a municipal airport with turf runways. Development continued in 1942 with the paving of runways, extending the east-west runway to roughly its present length in 1951. The MN Air National Guard and the U.S. Air Force base began construction in the late 1940s and continued into the 1950s. The Air Force base closed in 1982, but the Air National Guard base remains active. The passenger terminal moved to the east end of the runways in the 1974 and was reconstructed in 2012. Cirrus Aircraft opened in their present location on the south side of the runway in 1994 and have expanded multiple times on adjacent sites. Northwest airlines constructed the maintenance base on the north side of the runway in 1995, which was recently sold to Cirrus Aircraft.

Review and Discussion Items:

Staff finds that:

1. The areas proposed for rezoning are owned by the City of Duluth with the Duluth Airport Authority managing the lands for airport operations.
2. The Minnesota Planning Act provides that zoning (an "official control") should implement the general objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, and appellate courts have issued decisions that zoning must comply with the Comprehensive Plan or be considered arbitrary and capricious. Good zoning practice requires that zone districts be consistent with the future land use category identified for the area and the generally applicable provisions of the adopted comprehensive plan. The Future Land Use Map in the Comprehensive Plan shows all of the land proposed for rezoning classified as Transportation and Utilities. The zone district that most appropriately implements this future land use is AP (Airport).
3. Comprehensive Plan Governing Principles, Policies, and strategies listed above recognize the role the airport has in business growth and expansion and the proposed rezoning helps that by identifying area reserved for airport operations.
4. This rezoning will not create material adverse impacts on nearby properties because the AP zoning boundary is a recognition of the status quo, largely following the extent of land identified in the Airport's Layout Plan for airport operations.
5. The proposed zoning amendment is consistent with the purpose statements of the AP zone reserving land for airport operations.

6. Staff has discussed this rezoning with Airport Authority staff. No other agency, public, or City comments were received.

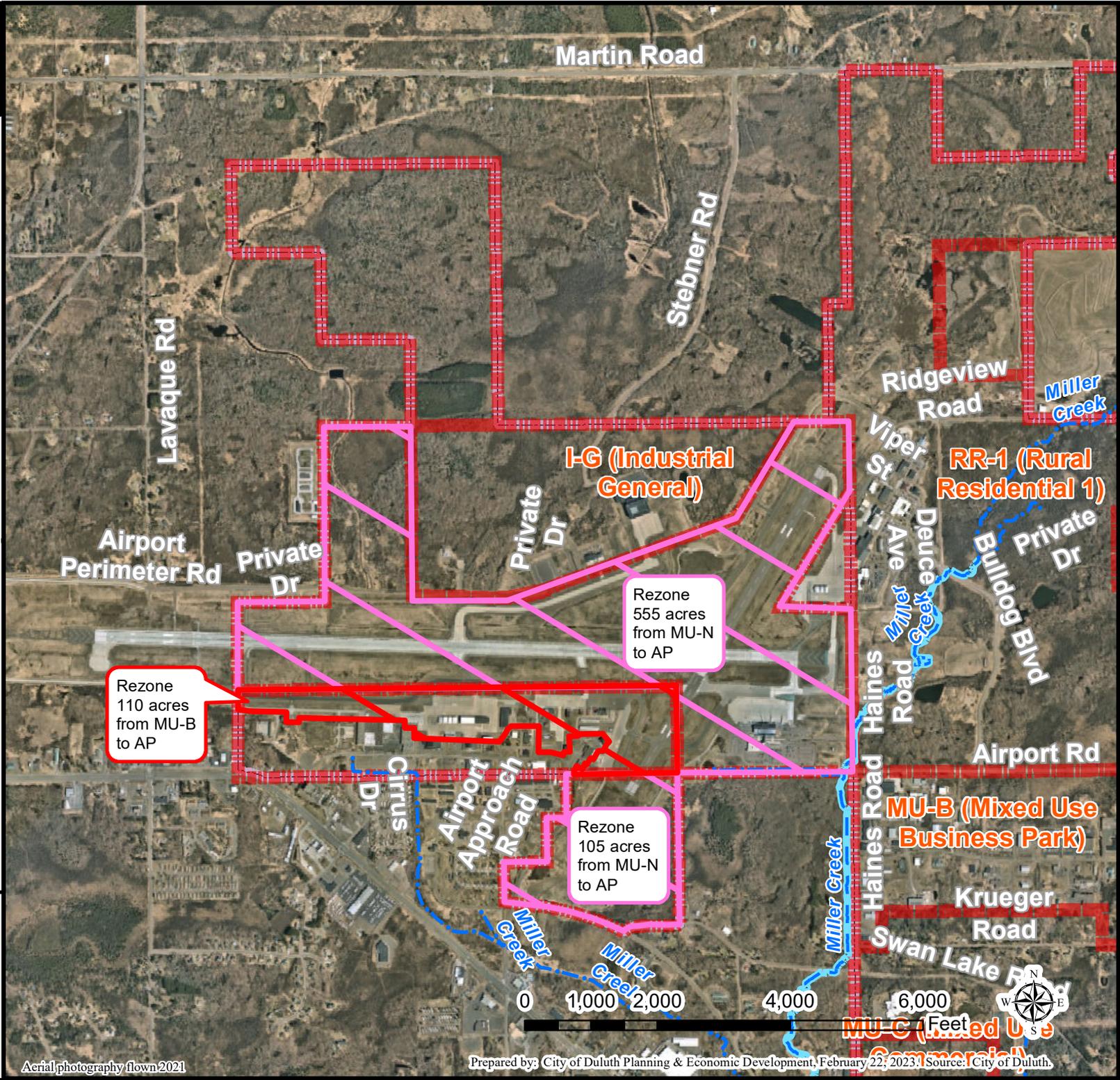
Staff Recommendation:

Based on the above findings, staff recommends to Planning Commission the UDC Map Amendment be recommended for approval by City Council for the following reasons:

- 1) This proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
- 2) The proposed amendment is consistent with the future land use category of "Transportation and Utilities."
- 3) Material adverse impacts on nearby properties are not anticipated.



Area Map



Legend

- Zoning Boundaries
- Streams
- Trout Stream (GPS)
- Other Stream (GPS)
- Municipal Boundary

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Future Land Use Map

Legend

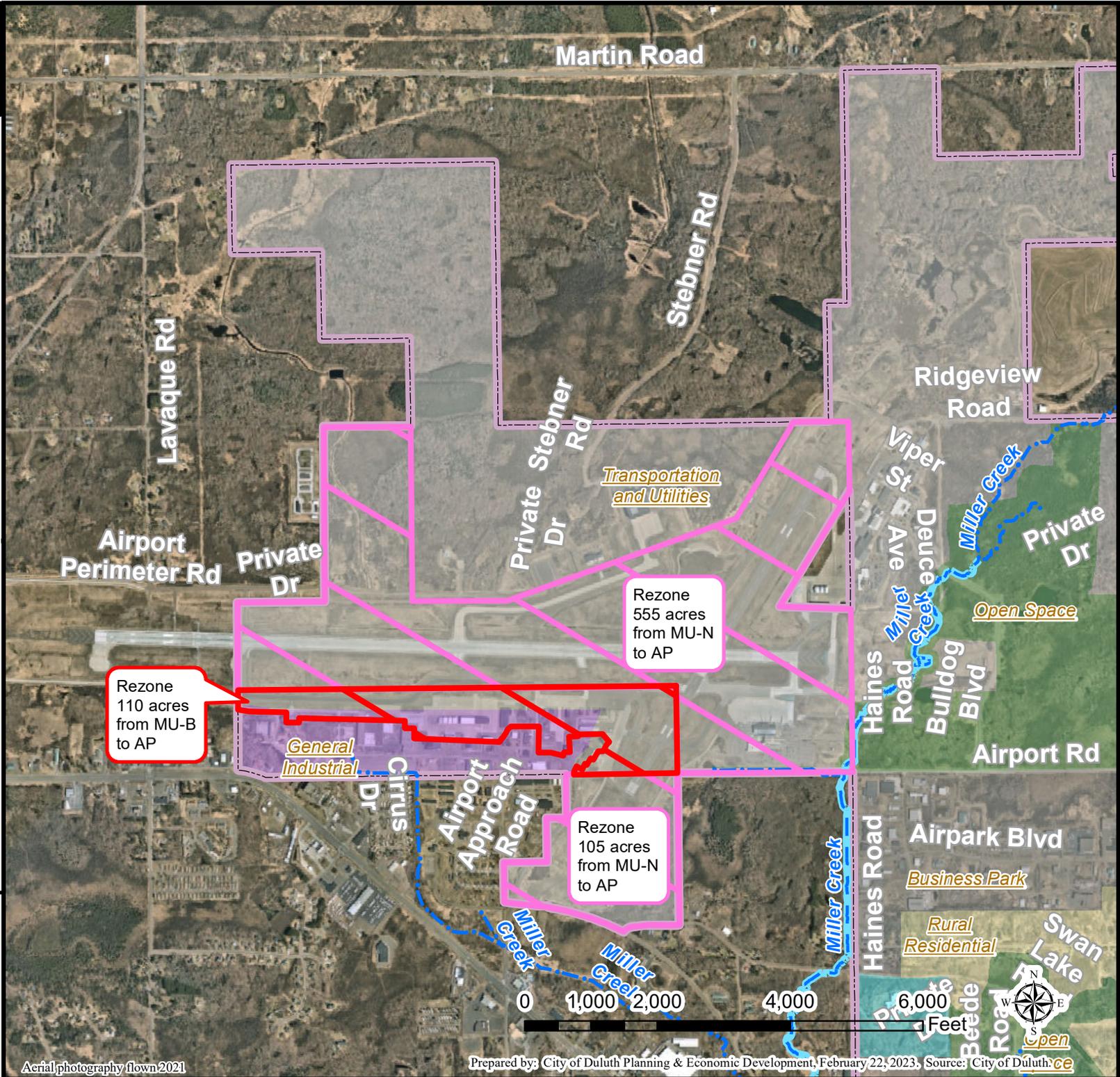
Streams

- Trout Stream (GPS)
- Other Stream (GPS)

Future Land Use

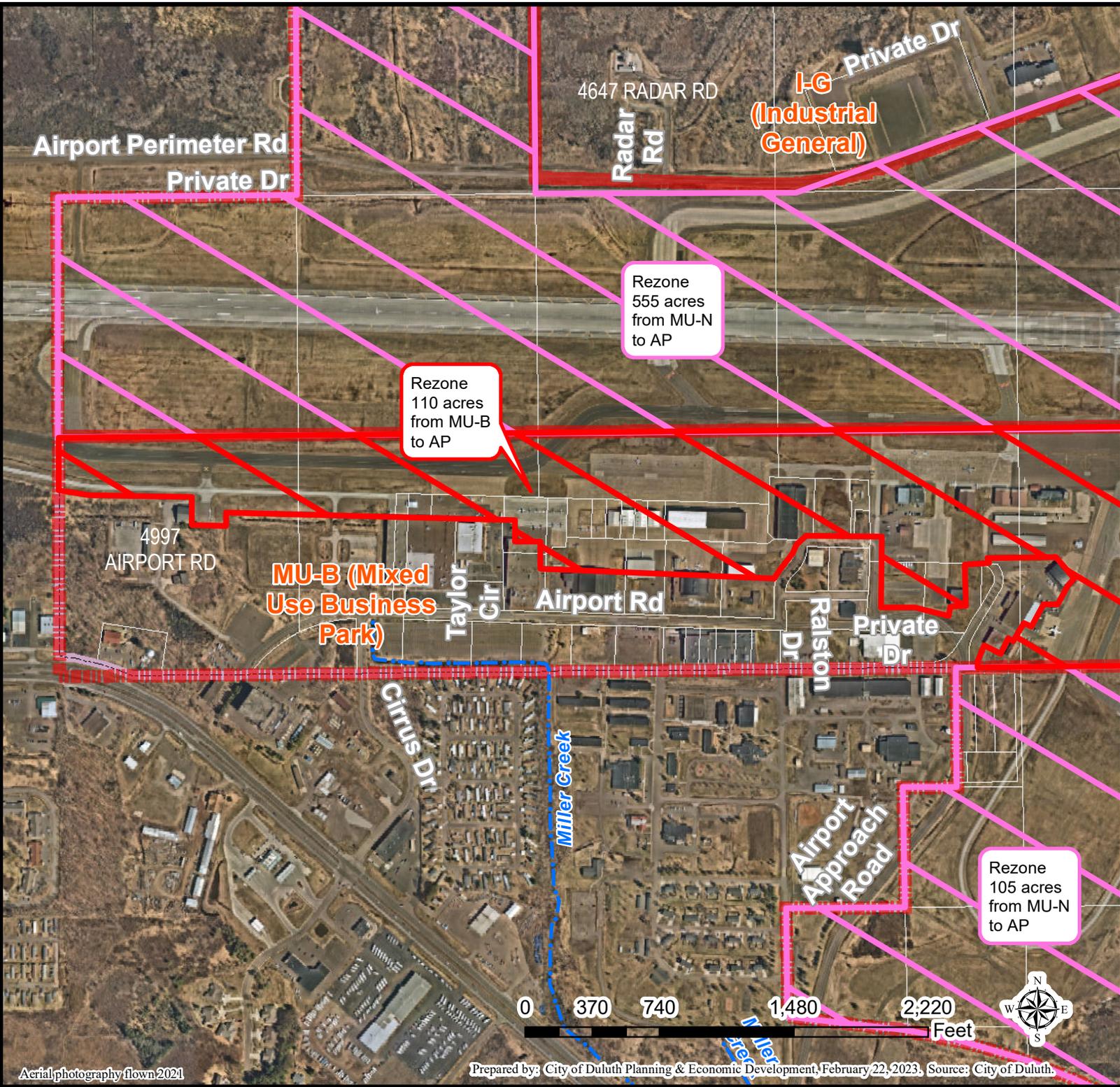
- Open Space
- Rural Residential
- General Industrial
- Business Park
- Transportation and Utilities
- Institutional
- Municipal Boundary

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Site Map - Airport Rd. area



Legend

- Zoning Boundaries
- Streams
- Other Stream (GPS)
- Municipal Boundary

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