

# Staff Report for the McHenry County Zoning Board of Appeals

**Application:** #Z25-0069

**PIN:** 18-06-400-003

**Address:** 6914 Mensching Rd, Huntley

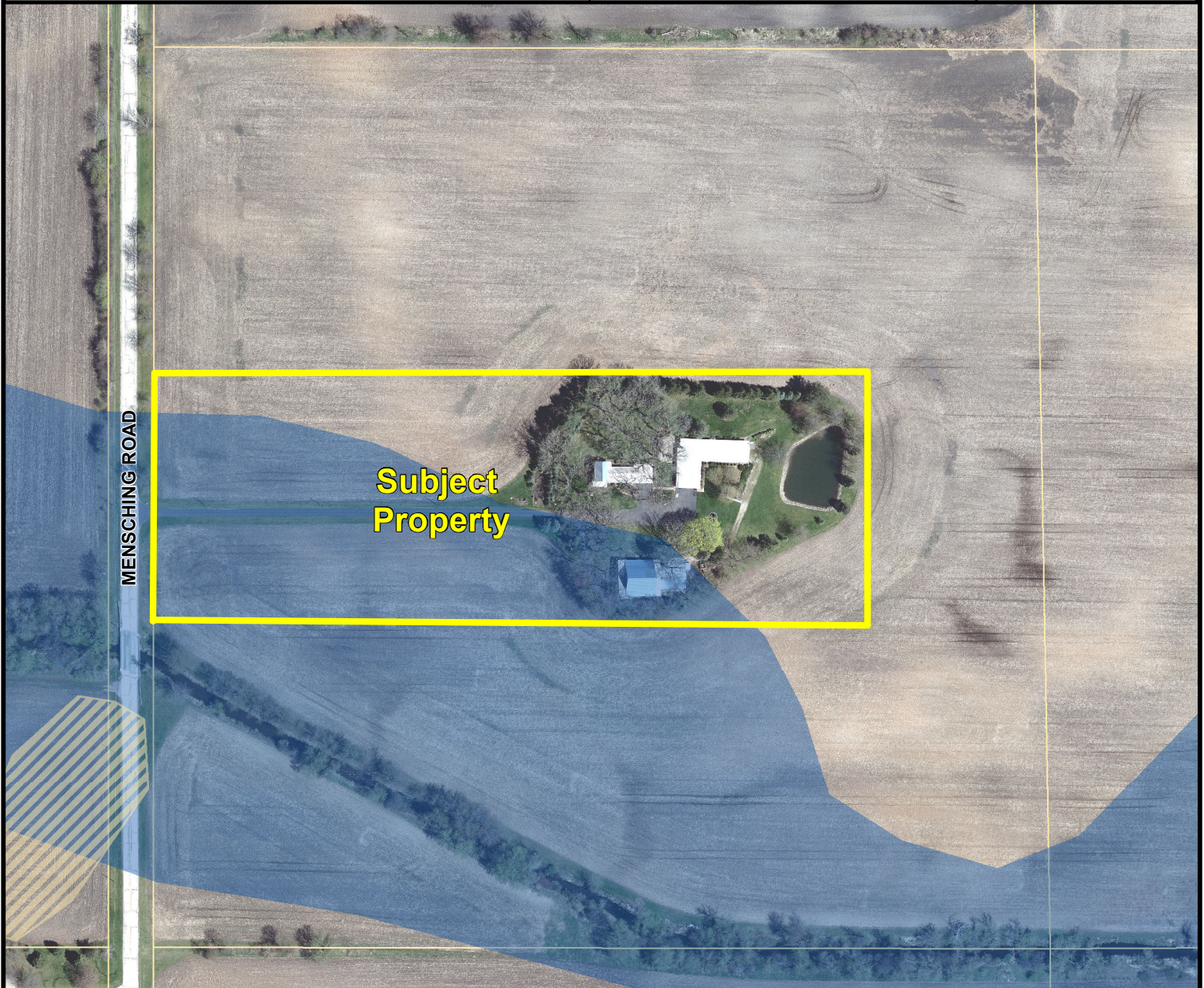
**Request:** A-1 Agriculture District to A-2 Agriculture District with two (2) variations - to increase the maximum permitted floor area for an ancillary dwelling unit; and to increase the maximum number of bedrooms allowed within an ancillary dwelling unit.

**Hearing:** September 11, 2025

**Applicant:** Nicholas Mason

**Location:** The subject property is located east of Mensching Road approximately one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five (1,775) feet south from the intersection of Mensching Road and Hansel Road, with a common address of 6914 Mensching Road, Huntley, Illinois in Grafton Township.

**Aerial Map**



## Elevation

(feet above sea level)

- 10-foot contours
- 2-foot contours

## ADID Wetland Map 2005

- High Functional Value Wetland (hfw)
- High Quality Wetland (hqw)
- Wetland (w)
- Farmed Wetland (fw)

## FEMA Flood Hazard Areas

- 0.2 % Annual Chance of Flood
- 1% Annual Chance of Flood
- Floodway

Feet 110 55 0 110 220  
1 inch equals 221.3 feet





## Staff Report for the McHenry County Zoning Board of Appeals

### STAFF COMMENTS

*The following comments and conclusions are based upon staff analysis and review prior to this hearing and are to be considered viable unless evidence is established to the contrary. Staff may have additional comments based upon the testimony presented during the public hearing.*

### **BACKGROUND & REQUEST SUMMARY**

The applicant is requesting a map amendment to rezone an eight and a half (8.5) acre portion of land from the A-1 Agriculture District to the A-2 Agriculture District. This tract is part of a larger forty (40) acre parcel, which is intended to remain as a separate, stand-alone vacant parcel.

In conjunction with the rezoning request, the applicant is seeking two (2) variances on the proposed A-2 Agriculture-zoned parcel. A variance to increase the maximum permitted floor area for an ancillary dwelling unit; and a variance to increase the maximum number of bedrooms allowed within an ancillary dwelling unit.

According to the plat of survey, the subject property currently contains a one-story frame residence, a two-story frame barn, and a split-level frame ancillary dwelling with a detached garage.

### **MCHENRY COUNTY UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE**

- The Applicant must meet the Approval Standards for Map Amendment, listed in §16.20.010.E.1 of the *McHenry County Unified Development Ordinance*.
- The Applicant must meet the A-2 District Rezoning Standards, listed in §16.36.020 of the *McHenry County Unified Development Ordinance*.
- The applicant must meet the Approval Standards for Granting a Variance, listed in County Code Section 16.20.020.F of the *McHenry County Unified Development Ordinance (UDO)*.

### **STAFF ANALYSIS**

#### Current Land Use & Zoning

The property is currently zoned A-1 Agriculture and has been used as a Single-Family Residence with Agriculture uses. To the north, approximately a quarter (0.25) mile from the subject parcel, there are a few E-1 Estate zoned properties. Lots to the south, east and west of the site, have A-1 Agriculture designations. The proposed reclassification is consistent with the A-1 Agriculture zoning surrounding the subject property.

#### 2030 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use map

The proposed reclassification and two (2) variances are consistent with the future land use designation of **Agriculture and Environmentally Sensitive Area**.

#### 2030 Comprehensive Plan & 2030 and Beyond Analysis

The 2030 Comprehensive Plan and 2030 and Beyond Plan support the reclassification to the A-2 Agriculture District. There is minimal impact to the agricultural, natural, and water resources on the site (*See comments below*).

*McHenry County 2030 and Beyond, Adopted October 18, 2016—*

#### Big Idea #1 Let's make our communities healthy, active, and green

*"We can make it happen by promoting development that is compact, contiguous to, or located within municipalities in order to preserve rural landscapes while providing greater mobility choices for all residents." (p.12)*

- The subject property is located within one and a half (1.5) miles from the City of Huntley.
- The proposed reclassification will preserve the rural landscape and will not increase the density already established for this area.

#### Big Idea #2 Let's build on our strengths

*"We can make it happen by preserving our open space and agricultural landscapes, which provide recreational opportunities, including ecotourism, and sustain our rural lifestyle and agricultural industry." (p. 14)*

- The proposed reclassification is a mechanism to preserve agricultural lands in the county.

### Big Idea #3 Let's grow smarter

*"We can make it happen by focusing development that is compact, contiguous to, or located within municipalities, and away from areas designated for agriculture and lacking infrastructure and services."* (p. 16)

- The proposed reclassification is consistent with the agriculture use of the surrounding properties. Granting the reclassification would not prohibit agriculture uses in the area to continue.

### Big Idea #4 Let's expand our economy

No applicable text.

## *McHenry County 2030 Comprehensive Plan, Adopted April 20, 2010*

### Community Character & Housing

*"Living with the land is the core belief of the rural lifestyle and it's because of these farmers, conservationists, and caretakers that the County is able to still hold on to its history and traditions...." "It is this way of life that still gives McHenry County its rural character. It fosters the protection of nature, the recharging of aquifers, and the preservation of the County's rich resources for future generations."* (p. 23)

- Reclassification to the A-2 Agriculture District preserves the essential aspects of the rural character by allowing agriculture uses to continue.
- A small Eastern portion of the subject property is within the Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Area (SARA).

### Agricultural Resources

*"Maintain and protect the most productive agricultural lands, where appropriate, by discouraging nonagricultural growth in these areas."* (p. 29)

- The proposed reclassification to the A-2 Agriculture District would have a minimal impact to agricultural resources and allow agriculture land uses to continue.

### Greenways, Open Space & Natural Resources

Objective: *"Promote land uses that minimize the impact on land, water, energy, and other natural resources"...* (p. 43)

- The McHenry-Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District *Natural Resources Inventory* was received. According to the letter, the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (Panel 17111C0305J) designates the southwestern portion of the subject property as Zone A (100-year floodplain). As a result, permit requirements may apply if future construction is proposed within this area. The letter also states that a full NRI report is not required, as no wetlands or additional floodplain areas were identified on the parcel. For further details, please refer to the attached NRI Letter #L25-044-4705.

### Water Resources

Objective: *"Preserve, improve, and replenish the quality and quantity of existing groundwater resources."* (p. 63)

- The proposed reclassification does not include any new improvements that would increase impervious surface area.

### Economic Development

No applicable text.

### Infrastructure

No applicable text.

### Land Use

Objective: *"Preserve areas with aggregate resources from encroachment from development uses."* (p. 125)

- As previously noted, the proposed reclassification will preserve the rural landscape and will not increase the density already established for this area.

## STAFF ASSESSMENT

The applicant is requesting a map amendment from the A-1 Agriculture District to the A-2 Agriculture District on eight and a half (8.5) acres. In addition, the applicant is seeking two (2) variances: one variance to increase the maximum permitted floor area for an ancillary dwelling unit; and a variance to increase the maximum number of bedrooms allowed within an ancillary dwelling unit.

The request is consistent with the existing Agriculture and Single-Family Residential land uses of the area. The request is also consistent with the recommendations provided in the 2030 and Beyond Plan and the 2030 Comprehensive Plan text. The reclassification is consistent with the future land use map designations of **Agriculture and Environmentally Sensitive**. A small Eastern portion of the subject property is within the Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Area (SARA) however, no additional improvements are contemplated in conjunction with this reclassification. Staff has no objection to the applicant's request for reclassification.

Report prepared July 25, 2025, by Melody Jacobson, Planner - McHenry County Department of Planning & Development.

## **Section 16.20.010.E.1 of the McHenry County Unified Development Ordinance**

*Approval Standards for Zoning Amendments.* The Zoning Board of Appeals recommendation and the County Board decision shall consider the following standards. However, the Zoning Board of Appeals' recommendation and the County Board's decision on any zoning text or map amendment is not controlled by any one factor under the following standards, but rather the approval of amendments is based on a balancing of the factors under each standard.

1. *Approval Standards for Map Amendments.*

- a. The compatibility of the proposed zoning with the existing use and zoning of nearby property.
- b. The extent to which property values of the subject property are diminished by the existing zoning.
- c. The extent to which the public health, safety, and welfare of the public are promoted by the existing zoning.
- d. The relative gain to the public, as compared to the hardship imposed upon the applicant, if the proposed zoning is denied.
- e. The suitability of the property for the purposes for which it is presently zoned.
- f. The length of time the property has been vacant as zoned considered in the context of land development in the vicinity of the subject property.
- g. The community need for the proposed use.
- h. The consistency of the proposed amendment with the adopted comprehensive plan and the appropriateness of the comprehensive plan to the subject property.

### **Section 16.36.020 of the McHenry County Unified Development Ordinance**

In addition to meeting the standards for a map amendment in § [16.20.010](#) (Zoning Map and Text Amendment), all rezonings to the A-2 District must meet the following additional requirements:

- A. Only property in the A-1 District is eligible for rezoning to the A-2 District.
- B. The subject property shall have an existing lawfully constructed residential dwelling on the property. Mobile homes, agricultural trailers, and agriculture employee housing do not qualify under this standard.
- C. The zoning petition shall be restricted to a single existing or proposed parcel.
- D. The subject property shall meet one (1) of the following three (3) relevant exemptions from the Plat Act (765 ILCS 205/ *et seq.*) as amended. In the event that the Plat Act is amended, the provisions of the Illinois Compiled Statutes shall control.
  - 1. The division or subdivision of land into parcels or tracts of five (5) acres or more in size which does not involve any new streets or easements of access.
  - 2. The sale or exchange of parcels or tracts of land following the division into no more than two (2) parts of a particular parcel or tract of land existing on July 17, 1959 and not involving any new streets or easements of access.
  - 3. The sale of a single lot of less than five (5) acres from a larger tract when a survey is made by an Illinois Registered Land Surveyor, provided that this exemption shall not apply to the sale of any subsequent lots from the same larger tract of land, as determined by the dimensions and configuration of the larger tract on October 1, 1973, and provided also that this exemption does not invalidate any local requirements applicable to the subdivision of land.

## **Section 16.20.020.F of the McHenry County Unified Development Ordinance**

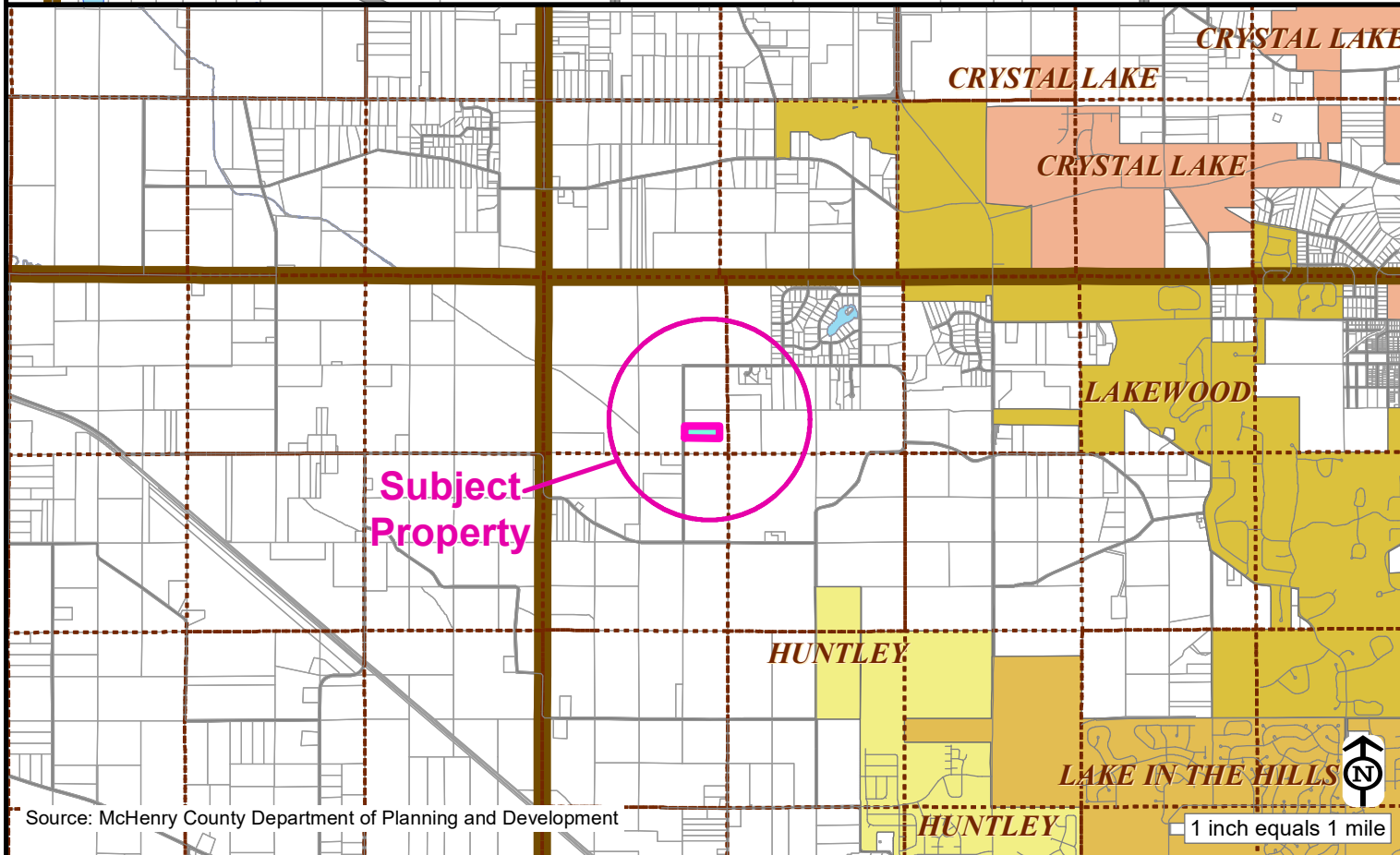
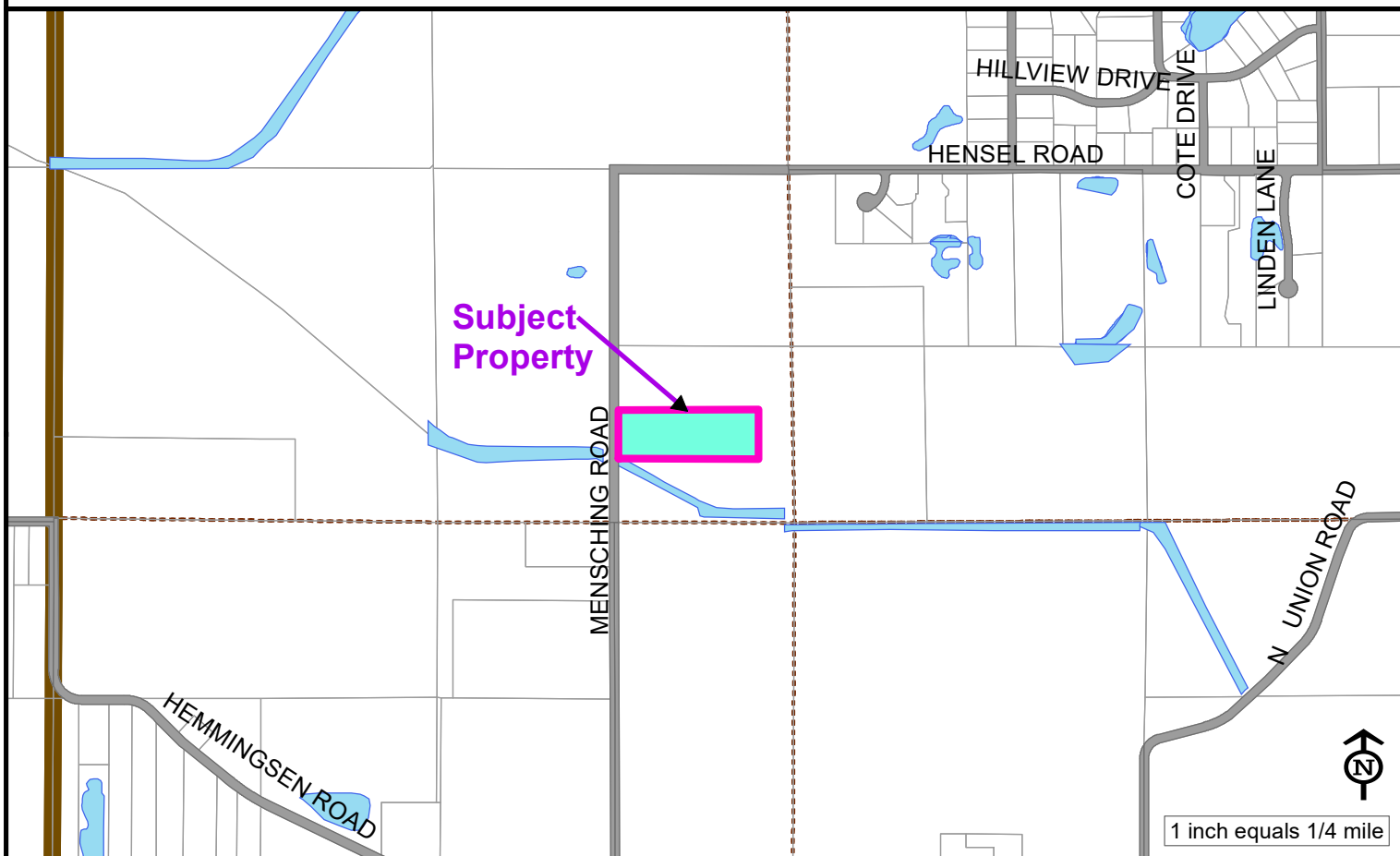
*F. Approval Standards for Zoning Variations.* No zoning variation from the provisions of this Ordinance may be granted unless the Zoning Board of Appeals or Hearing Officer and County Board makes specific findings that the request meets each of the standards imposed by this section. These standards are as follows:

1. The particular surroundings, shape, or topographical condition of the specific property involved would result in a particular hardship upon the owner, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience, if the strict letter of the regulations was carried out.
2. The conditions upon which the application for a variation are based are unique to the property for which the variation is sought and are not generally applicable to other property within the same zoning district.
3. The purpose of the variation is not based exclusively upon a desire to increase the monetary gain realized from the property.
4. The alleged difficulty or hardship is caused by the Ordinance and has not been created by any person presently having an interest in the property.
5. That the granting of the variation will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to other property or improvements in the neighborhood in which the property is located.
6. That the proposed variation will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property, or substantially increase the congestion in the public streets, or increase the danger of fire, or endanger the public safety, or substantially diminish or impair property values within the adjacent neighborhood.
7. That the granting of the variation requested will not confer on the applicant any special privilege that is denied by this Ordinance to other land or structure of the same zoning district.

Location Map

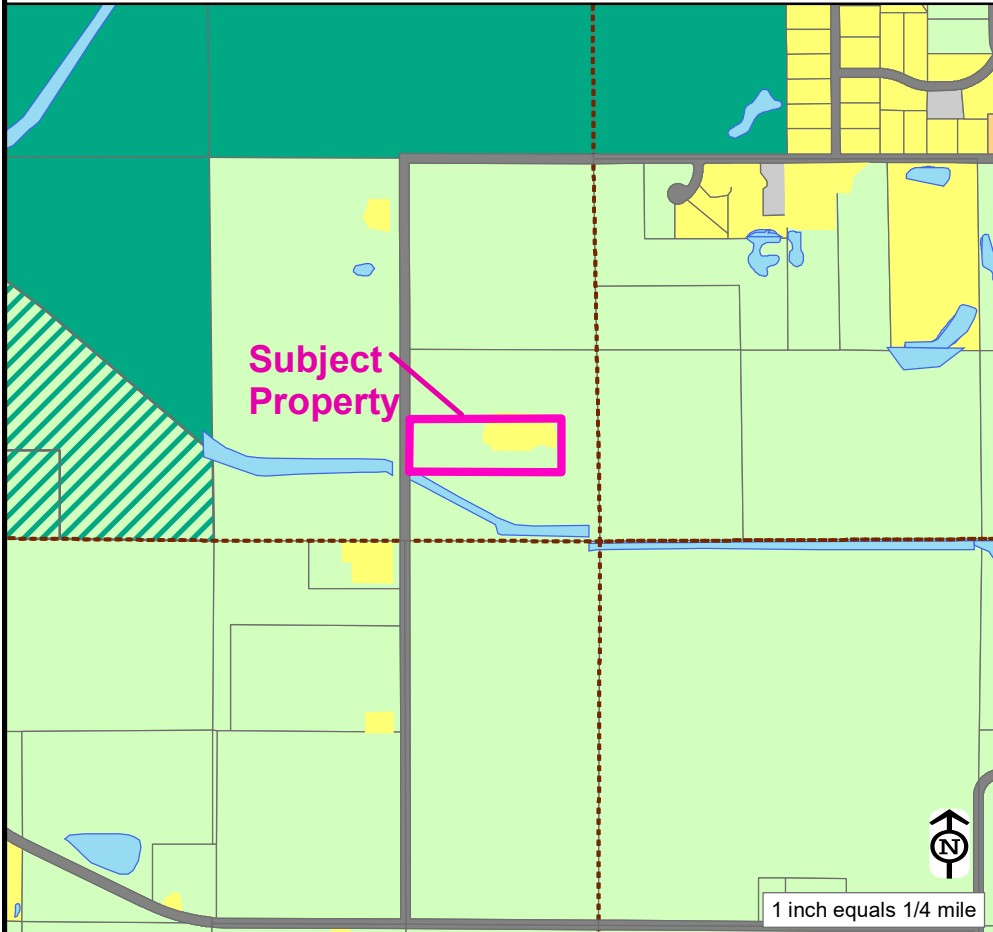
6914 Mensching Rd, Huntley, Illinois

Grafton Township





## Current Land Use Map



### Current Land Use

*Agriculture / Single-Family Residential*

### Adjacent Land Use(s)

North: *Agriculture*

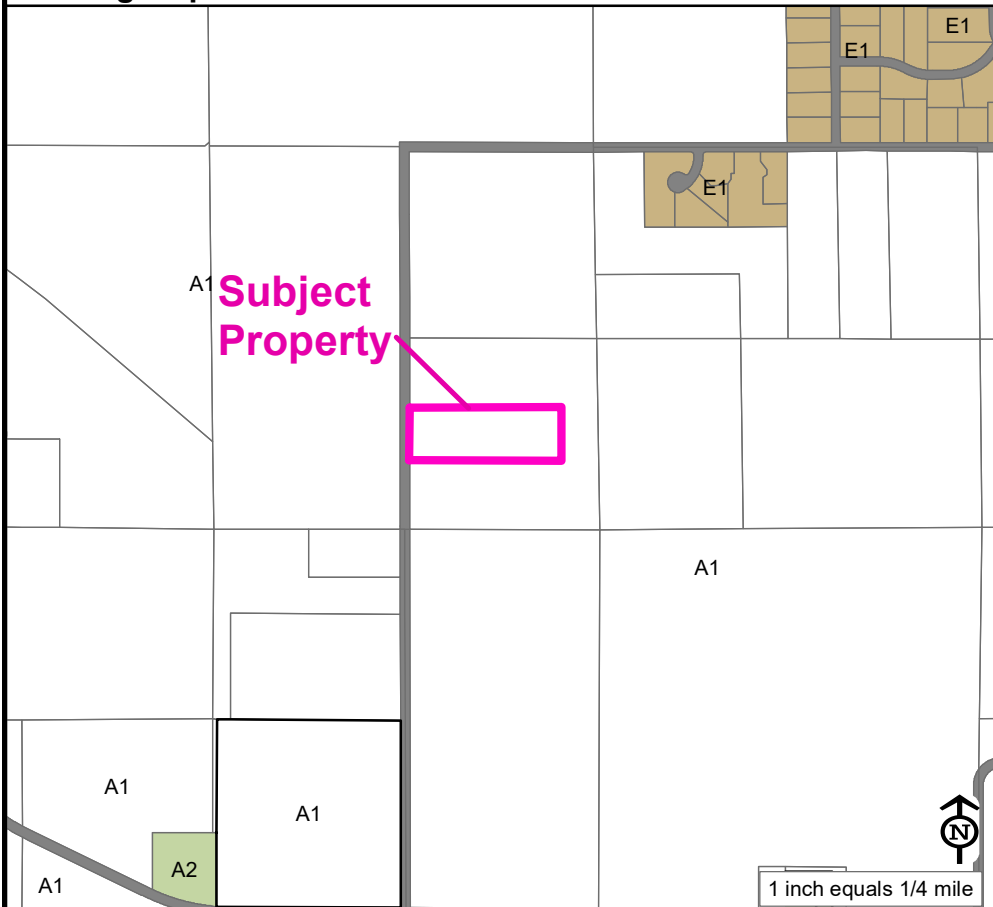
South: *Agriculture*

East: *Agriculture*

West: *Agriculture*

- Agriculture
- MCCD Agriculture
- Single-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Open Space
- Golf Course
- Commercial
- Office
- Industrial
- Mixed Use
- Earth Extraction
- Vacant
- Government / Institutional
- Transportation, Communication, Utilities
- Under Review

## Zoning Map



### Current Zoning

**A-1 Agriculture**

### Adjacent Zoning

North: *Agriculture*

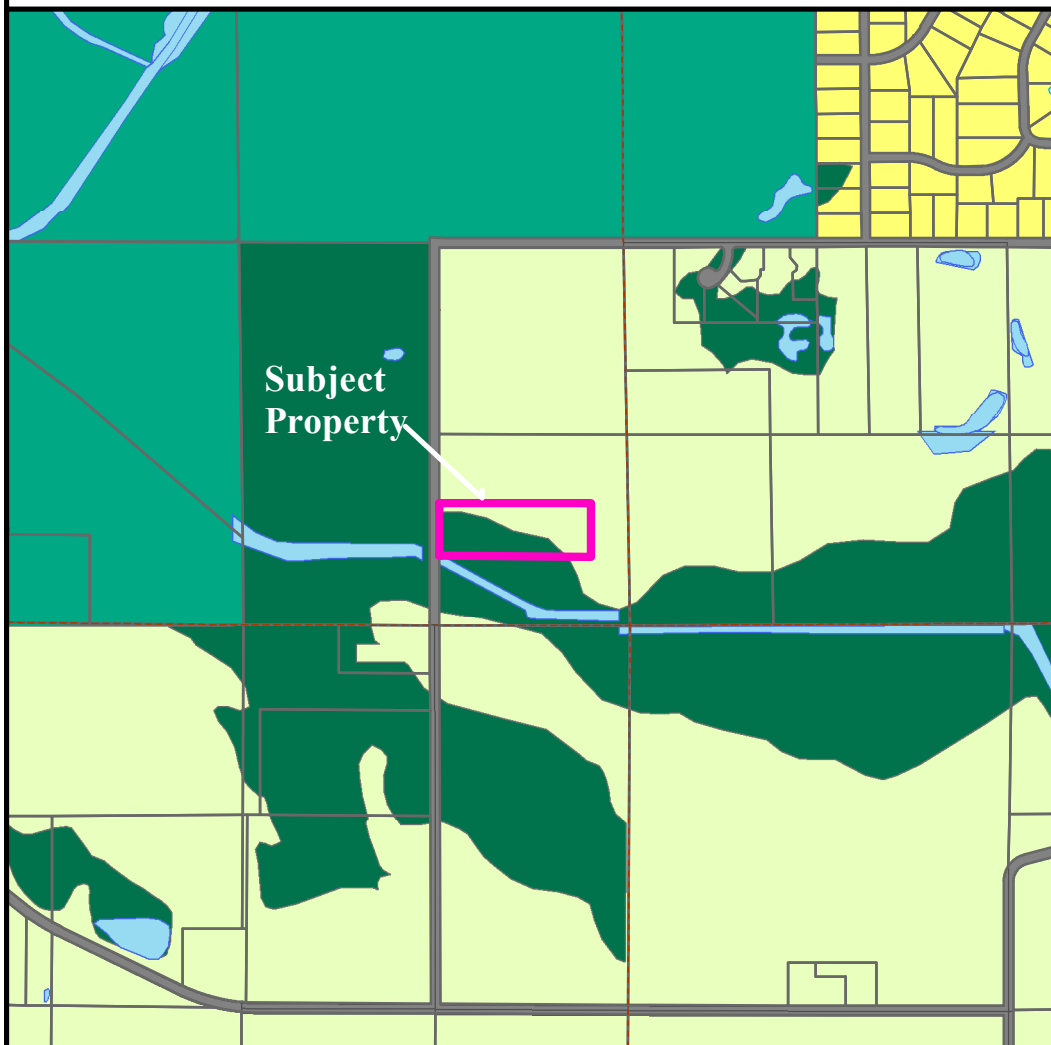
South: *Agriculture*

East: *Agriculture*

West: *Agriculture*

- A-1 Agriculture
- A-2 Agriculture
- E-5 Estate
- E-3 Estate
- E-2 Estate
- E-1 Estate
- R-1 Single-Family Residential
- R-2 Two-Family Residential
- R-3 Multiple-Family Residential
- B-1 Neighborhood Business
- B-2 Neighborhood Business
- B-3 General Business
- O Office / Research
- I-1 Light Industrial
- I-2 Heavy Industrial
- PD Planned Development
- C Conditional Use
- V Variation
- Incorporated

# McHenry County 2030 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map



## Future Land Use Map Designation

*Agriculture/  
Environmentally Sensitive Area*

- Agricultural
  - Open Space
  - Environmentally Sensitive Area
  - Estate
  - Isolated Estate
  - Residential
  - Isolated Residential
  - Retail
  - Mixed Use
  - Office, Research, Industrial
  - Gov't, Institutional, Utilities
  - TOD Existing Rail Station
  - TOD Future Rail Station
  - Active Earth Extraction Site
  - Municipality
- Scale: 1 inch = 1/4 mile

## Municipal / Township Plan Designations

Grafton Township: Agriculture

Huntley: Single Family Estate (1+ Acres)

## McHenry County 2030 Comprehensive Plan — Text Analysis

### Land Use

**AGRICULTURAL** – represents existing agricultural acres, including cropland, pastureland, farmyards, and farmsteads, that should remain in agricultural use through the 2030 planning horizon. Development in the Agricultural District should be strictly limited to agriculture, agricultural residences, and agricultural support uses.

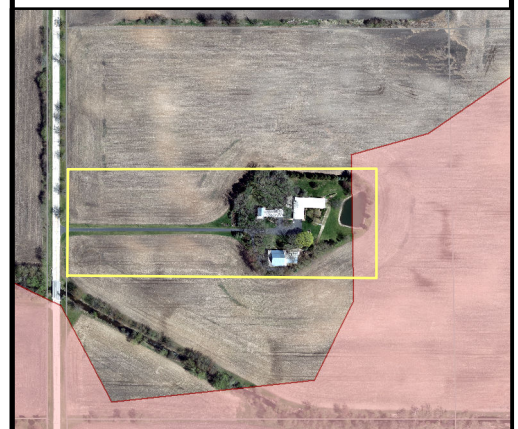
### Land Use

**ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS** – include existing floodplains, floodways, wetlands 10 acres and larger. These environmental resources are further discussed in the Greenways, Open Space, and Natural Resources and the Water Resources sections of the 2030 plan. Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of adjacent land uses.

### Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Areas

The site is partially located in a zone with elevated contamination potential.

## Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Areas (SARA)



Sensitive Recharge Area



# McHENRY-LAKE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



1648 S. Eastwood Dr. Woodstock, Illinois 60098 (815) 338-0444 ext. 3 [www.mchenryswcd.org](http://www.mchenryswcd.org)

June 11, 2025

Nick Mason  
2017 Tyler Trl,  
McHenry, IL 60051  
Email ([nick@haydenoutdoors.com](mailto:nick@haydenoutdoors.com))

Re: Parcel # Part of 18-05-300-005, 18-05-300-006, 18-06-400-003  
Common Location: 6914 Mensching Rd., Huntley, IL  
NRI# L25-044-4705  
Zoning Change: A-1 to A-2

Dear Mr. Mason:

The McHenry-Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District has carefully reviewed your application for Natural Resource Information Report on the Ralph Doden property as applied for in Report #25-044-4705. Due to the amount of previously disturbed soils on the site, the SWCD finds that impact to natural resources from the proposed use is minimal for the purposes of the NRI report. A full Natural Resource Information Report will not be necessary, but we would like to highlight a few resources on and adjacent to the property.

The FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (Panel 17111C0305J) indicates Zone A, 100-year floodplain on the southwestern portion of the parcel (see attached map). If additional construction is to occur it is recommended that you contact the McHenry County Department of Planning & Development for possible permitting requirements.

No wetlands were found on the A-2 site from office maps. Our wetland inventory is for informational and planning purposes only. Any proposed drainage work, in wet areas, requires a certified wetland delineation. If drainage work is to occur, please contact the Army Corps of Engineers and McHenry County Department of Planning & Development for permit information.

This letter fulfills your requirement to notify the SWCD of land use changes as per the Illinois Compiled State Statutes, Chapter 70, Par. 405/1 et seq. Illinois Revised Statutes, Ch. 5, Par 106 et seq. and the McHenry County Stormwater Ordinance. If you have any questions concerning this letter, feel free to call our office.

Sincerely,

Spring M. Duffey  
Executive Director



cc. McHenry County Department of Planning and Development



*Resources for the Future*