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Real People. Real Solutions.

MEMORANDUM

Date:	7/9/2024
To:	City Council, City of Lake Elmo
From:	Nathan Fuerst, Consulting Planner
Subject:	Village Area Vision – Workshop Discussion

Overview

In recognition of the significance of the Old Village area to Lake Elmo's economic vitality and overall identity, the City of Lake Elmo initiated a visioning study to ensure future development aligns with the City's objectives.

At its workshop on July 9, 2024, Bolton and Menk staff will walk the Lake Elmo City Council through the following topics:

- Overview of Village Area Vision Study
- Public Engagement Update
- Policy Review Update
- Discussion City Council vision for the Lake Elmo Village Area

Public Engagement to Date:

Public engagement creates an opportunity to understand concerns from community members and eventually serves as an important data point when making policy decisions. Over the past month, City Staff and Bolton and Menk staff have worked closely to conduct public engagement. This started with a survey published on the City's website. Bolton and Menk and City staff held two public open house events at City Hall. Those events saw strong attendance and were advertised on the City's website, social media channels, on flyers sent to businesses and Village Area HOA's and with postcards mailed to residents in the village area not in an HOA. Data on the quantitative questions are appended to this report, while staff are still reviewing and summarizing the qualitative responses.

Policy Review to Date:

Staff have reviewed the applicable plans and policies guiding land use and development in Lake Elmo's Village area. A Policy Review Memo is appended to this report which summarizes the tools currently employed by the City to manage the Village Area.



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TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

Date:	7/02/2024
To:	City Council, City of Lake Elmo
From:	Nathan Fuerst, Consulting Planner Jenni Faulkner, Consulting Planner
Subject:	City of Lake Elmo, Village Area Policy Review

Overview

In recognition of the significance of the Old Village area to Lake Elmo's economic vitality and overall identity, the City of Lake Elmo initiated a visioning study to ensure future development aligns with the City's objectives. This memo is intended to summarize existing policies or plans that guide development and redevelopment in the Village Area. Considerations are provided that address the stated goals of the City and how these policies can better work together towards that vision.

The Village Area

The "Village Area" is delineated by different boundaries depending on which City policy document one might be reviewing. For the purpose of this policy review, the area in the image to the right generally defines the Village Area.



The Zoning Code

Purpose: To provide zoning regulations and be a tool for implementing the Comprehensive Plan and other guiding documents.

Regulatory Impact: Zoning ordinances are laws created and passed by the City to regulate land uses and development within the City's boundaries. Minnesota Cities are granted authority by State Statute and federal case law to control land use through zoning. The Zoning Ordinance regulates the specific land uses as well as lot provisions such as lot area, setbacks, and lot coverage. The ordinance also addresses site elements such as building design and materials, landscaping and screening, parking, and signage.

Zoning and the Village Area: The Zoning Code calls for 4 different Village land uses:

- V-LDR is low density residential 1.5 3.0 u/acre, meant for perimeter and buffer to adjacent low density uses
- V-MDR is medium density residential 3.01-8.0 u/acre, meant to bring people closer to Old Village amenities
- V-HDR is high density residential 8.01 u/acre -12 u/acre, meant to bring higher density and life cycle housing choose to Old Village Area. Non-residential uses on 1st floor.
- VMX is mixed use with commercial and public uses combined with higher density residential, 5-10 u/a, senior up to 16 u/acre, meant to establish vitality and intensity to support retail and service uses in the Old Village. Placement of buildings and pedestrian amenities are essential.

In addition, there is a significant amount of other zoning districts in the Village area:

- RS- Rural Single Family, are only for lots patted prior to 2005. No new lots can be created. The district allows for single family residential, parks and a variety of accessory uses.
- PF- Public Facilities are for parcels with parks, schools, or public facilities (city Hall and Fire Station sites).
- LDR- Low Density Residential is considered typical single family zoning district with city sewer and water. A large portion of the village area contains this land use.
- Commercial and Convenience Commercial and Medium Density Residential are in the NE corner of the area, just north of Stillwater Blvd which is currently the Holiday gas station and future Bridgewater Village commercial and medium density residential development.

The uses for the residential districts are straightforward, however the allowed or conditionally allowed uses of the Mixed-Use Village district may permit for undesirable uses. The district allows the following type of uses:

- Residential
- Public and Civic
- Commercial and Personal Service
- Food Service

- Retail Sales
- Auto type uses
- Recreation Uses

Most uses are conditional, including residential, while personal and business service type uses are permitted. Most accessory uses are also permitted. Several of the uses could have an outdoor component such as outdoor recreation, drive-up, or outdoor sales and storage lots.

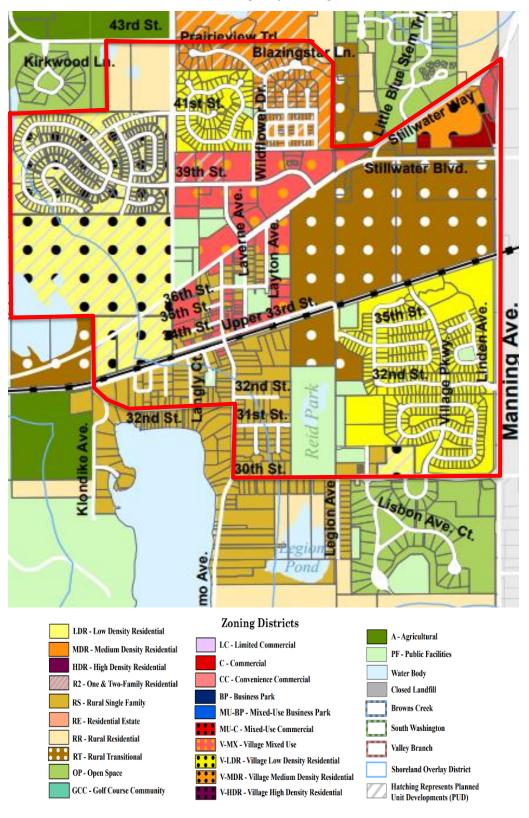
The Zoning Ordinance does reference the Village Districts and has the following emphasis:

- Refence to the Design Guidelines
- Circulation and limited access on CSAH 14
- Screening of existing residential structures
- Sidewalk and trail connections, esp. from cul-de-sacs to nearest through streets
- Theming Study (2013) to be incorporated.

Other Zoning Considerations:

- The Shoreland Overlay covers approximately the westerly 1,000 feet of the area and is all zoned residential. Limits on development and impervious surface are a consideration.
- The Airport Overlay covers a the eastern part of the area. The airport is on the east side of Manning, outside the city limits. The overlay zoning and impacts are on the west side of Manning Avenue within the city limits. There are noise considerations and height limits in this area.

- Consolidating districts in the village area may streamline the zoning review process and could reduce confusion about land uses or performance standards in the Village Area.
- ADU's and mixed uses could be permitted where Rural Single Family is now the zoning district. Existing housing and uses could continue to be preserved.
- Consider defining the Village Area within the City Code or adopting a zoning map with that area delineated.
- The City would benefit from more review or discussion in the following areas:
 - Land uses permitted or conditionally permitted in the Village Area.
 - Review and consideration of whether additional uses should be permitted
 - Understand existing performance standards in the districts affecting the Village area, and how they relate to the City's vision, comprehensive plan goals, or adopted Design Standards Manual.
 - Determine if the Theming Study remains relevant or should be removed from the code



Lake Elmo Zoning Map – Village Area

Lake Elmo Comprehensive Plan

Purpose: This document provides long-term guidance on land uses to ensure the efficient provision of public infrastructure in the City. In the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, municipalities are required to adopt comprehensive use plans every decade which guide development of land and public infrastructure. Metro area comprehensive plans must contain specific elements including land use, housing, transportation, water management, parks, etc. The planning horizon for Lake Elmo's 2040 Comprehensive Plan (hereafter the "2040 Plan") is from 2020 to 2040. The 2040 Plan was approved and adopted in November of 2019 after a considerable planning and community engagement process.

Regulatory Impact: The 2040 Comprehensive Plan is a legal document which, as required by state statute, is the guiding document for all development in Lake Elmo. Any development or redevelopment must comply with the Comp Plan. The City's zoning requirements must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Chapter.

Comp Plan and the Village Area: This review is broken down by certain elements of the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan:

<u>Future Land Uses (Chapter 3)</u> - Future Land Uses (see map on page 7) allowed in the Village Area include:

- Rural Single Family Sewered (0.1-2.0 du/acre) previously unsewered but currently singlefamily land uses located within the Village Planning Area.
- Village Low Density Residential (1.5 3 du/acre) single-family detached housing development
- Village Medium Density Residential (3.01 8 du/acre) single-family detached, duplexes, and townhomes/villa housing types.
- Village High Density Residential (8.01 12 du/acre) apartment buildings and multi-family dwellings.
- Village Mixed Use (5 10 du/acre) Integrated commercial/business and residential uses provide development types that benefit from proximity to each other.
- Commercial retail and service businesses primarily located in the MUSA. This excludes residential and industrial uses.
- Institutional Schools, religious institutions, City hall, municipal buildings, libraries, and other institutional uses
- Public/Semi-Public generally owned by the City or other agency, whose primary purpose is to support adjacent developments with stormwater management and other utilities.

<u>MUSA Staging (Chapter 3)</u> – The Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA) boundary provides an indication of where sewered development can occur. This is broken down into phases by decade. Only two areas of the Village are in MUSA staging areas beyond the current decade. One area is the remaining Schiltgen farmstead parcel south of North Star, the other is just north of Easton Village. Those

areas would require a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to develop sooner than 2035. (See Map on page 8)

<u>Subdistricts (Chapters 2 & 3)</u> – Chapter 3 of the 2040 Plan created the following subdistricts for the Village area:

- Civic District area north of Stillwater Boulevard N.
- Old Village District core of old village area centered around Lake Elmo Ave N.
- Elmo Station District area East of Layton Ave N. and containing primarily undeveloped land.

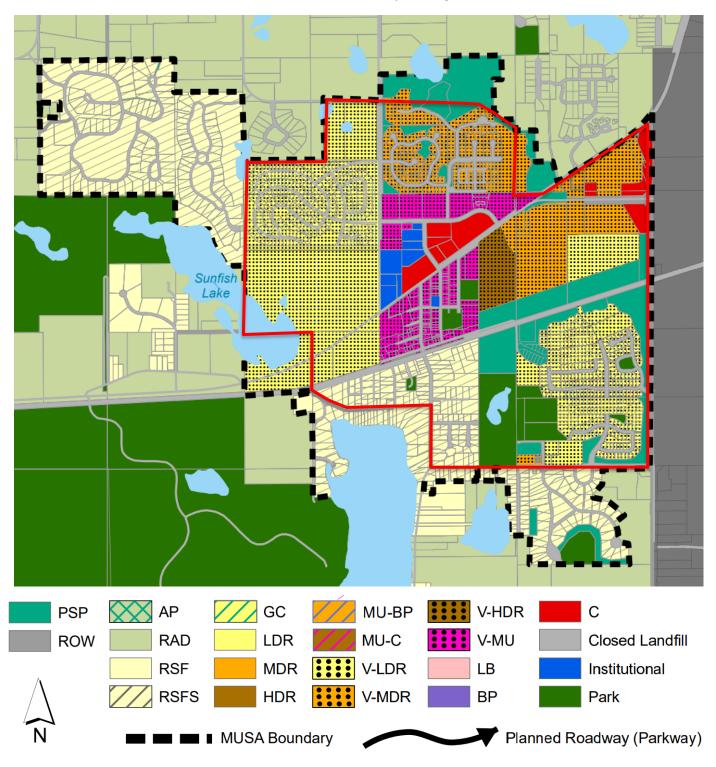
There is no narrative in the 2040 Plan to provide a description of the subdistricts, but goals are articulated in Chapter 2, which envision the creation of specific zoning overlays to support or require certain types of development in each area. Land Use Goals 4 – 6 discuss the subdistricts.

<u>Parks and Trails (Chapter 6)</u> – The 2040 Plan contains guidance for the development of park and recreation facilities in the City.

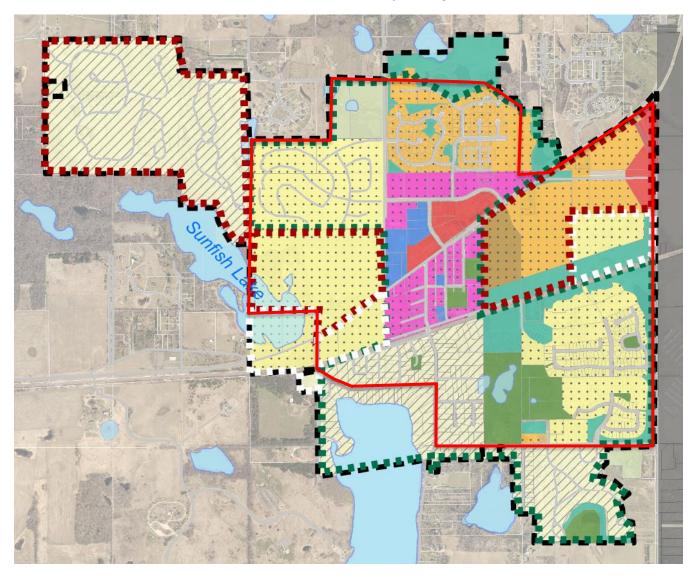
- Park Search Areas (Map 6-7) contains a search area for a Community Park over the Village Planning Area. A community park in this area is defined as a park an area of 10-15 acres that would serve as a community gathering place and landmark.
- Trail Search Areas (Map 6-8) contains existing facilities and search areas for new ones. A
 regional search corridor runs along Lake Elmo Ave. N. and Stillwater Blvd. N. for creation of a
 county facility. The map also contains search areas for local connections to/through the Village
 area and surrounding residential development. Village Parkway would contain a road and trail
 connection through undeveloped parcels to Easton Village.

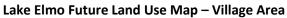
<u>Transportation (Chapter 7)</u> – The 2040 Plan contains guidance on planned functional classifications for roadways serving or running through the Village planning area. Designations for Stillwater Boulevard North, Lake Elmo Avenue North, 39th Street North, and the future Village Parkway all impact the way those roadways function. The classification may impact ROW width needs, access spacing, alignment and traffic speeds, etc.

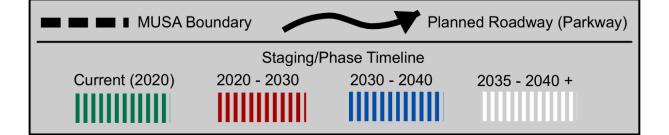
- Consider removing PSP Designation until development is complete north of UP RR Tracks.
- Reconsider split guidance of land north of Easton Village
- MUSA staging should be consistent across Village East to allow master planning.
- Reconsider Subdistricts and associated goals to realign with potential future development or redevelopment.
- Small Area Plan is needed to effectively plan land use guidance.



Lake Elmo Future Land Use Map – Village Area







Lake Elmo Design Guidelines

Purpose: To ensure development of the Village area is high quality and meets the goals and principles of the City. Specifically, high quality site design and building materials, promote open space to support the existing character of the city, accommodate vehicles that respect pedestrian environment, utilize natural ecosystems (stormwater) in development, cohesion of development into the neighborhood and community, and to foster connections through theming to create unique community identity. The Design Guidelines and Standards were last revised in February 2022.



Regulatory Impact: The Design Guidelines are intended to influence how sites are developed. They cover the Village Area as well as the I-94 Corridor Area and is for parcels within the MUSA public utility service area. Sites are reviewed for compliance at the final stage of development review or building permit review. The guidelines terminology are primarily recommendations and not requirements. They are written with lots of "recommendations", "may", "should" verbiage opposed to "must" and "shall". There are some required elements such as sidewalks, lighting, and signage. However, some of this language is subjective rather than prescriptive.

Design Guidelines and the Village Area: Only applies to *high density residential, commercial, business park and mixed uses*. The Zoning Ordinance references the design guidelines in the Village Districts in general, Mixed Use, Commercial, and Public/Quasi-Public districts (commercial uses). The guidelines address suggestions for:

- building placement
- streetscaping
- landscaping
- parking & delivery areas
- building design, mass/scale, roof, entries
- building materials
- lighting
- signage

- Identify the purpose of the design guidelines to ensure they still align with city goals.
- Certain sections or requirements may be seen as higher or lower priority. Issues directly tied to City goals could be codified in the zoning ordinance.
- Not all projects will reasonably meet all requirements in the design guidelines. Discussion is needed on the process for good projects to receive flexibility.
- Projects receiving PUD's could be required to comply with some or all design requirements.

2007 Lake Elmo Village Area Master Plan

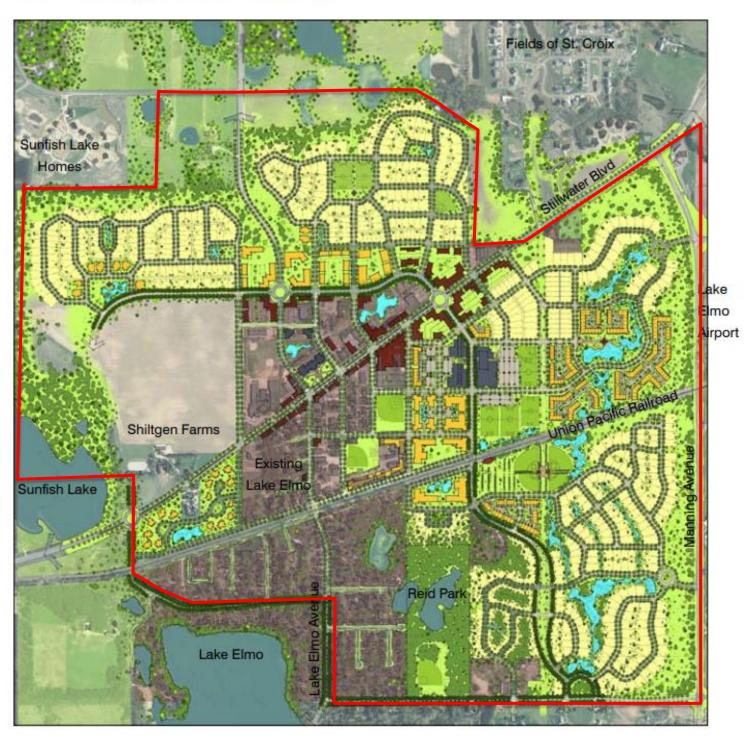
Purpose: This plan was created in 2007. The intent of the City's Village Area Master Plan (hereafter "2007 Master Plan") is to guide development of private land, and public infrastructure, along with revisions to applicable City Land Use guidance to allow the vision to materialize. The 2007 Master Plan created 13 principals to guide development and a conceptual vision for future development in the areas surrounding the "heart" of the Village.

Regulatory Impact: For Small Area or Master Plans to have regulatory impacts, they must be incorporated into the City's Comprehensive Plan or Zoning Ordinance. While the 2007 Master Plan may have influenced land use policies in both the City's adopted 2040 Plan and Zoning Ordinance, there are no references to this planning document. Therefore, it does not have a legally binding impact on development. The City's 2040 Plan has created subdistricts and associated Land Use goals which don't appear to either conflict with, or support, the 2007 Master Plan's vision.

The 2007 Village Area Master Plan Elements: The plan is generally broken down into the following elements:

- 1. <u>Background</u> which discusses guiding principles and a framework
- 2. <u>The Master Plan</u> a layout of the vision, with focus on the different aspects such as parks and trails, public and green space, streets, blocks & parcels, land uses, housing types, and densities.
- <u>Master Plan Components</u> discusses higher level components of the plan such as the Stillwater Blvd. corridor, Lake Elmo Avenue corridor, Public Facilities, Greenbelt, Existing Development, and planned housing.
- <u>Village Character</u> discusses case studies from, Detroit Lakes, Litchfield, Cannon Falls, and Redwood Falls, MN, Cedarburg, WI, and Zeeland, MI. Nearly all examples are of rural town centers as opposed to town centers in metropolitan areas.
- 5. <u>Utilities and other Infrastructure</u> discusses Sewer and water utilities, stormwater systems, and a street network with example road typologies.
- 6. <u>Planning Process and Planning Tools</u> this section is incomplete in the version reviewed by staff.

- The location of roadway connections and alignment of key corridors such as Lake Elmo Avenue and the Village Parkway have changed since the 2007 Master Plan was created.
- County Access spacing requirements and planning along Stillwater Boulevard likely mean that the roadway connections envisioned by this plan are infeasible.
- Nearly all of the single family residential developments envisioned in the Village Area has now occurred. This means local roads, sidewalks, and trail connections are set in a variety of areas.
- Future Land Use guidance in the City's 2040 Plan is inconsistent with the development, primarily east of the existing Village Area's core.
- Park needs across the community have been evaluated and may have changed since 2007.



The Village Area Vision

2021 Village Area Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR)

Purpose: The purpose of an AUAR is to evaluate the potential environmental impacts within a large planning area and to ensure mitigation plans are effectively managed and implemented as development occurs. The Village Area Alternative Urban Areawide Review (2009 Village Area AUAR) comprises approximately 1,275 acres surrounding the City of Lake Elmo's historic downtown. This 2021 Update is prepared as an update and progress report to the 2009 Village Area AUAR and the subsequent 2016 Update. The analysis and information contained in this report provides an inventory of development to-date within the AUAR area and an update to relevant items or sections as needed and/or affected since the 2016 Update

Regulatory Impact: Per Minnesota Rules 4410.3610 Subpart 7, the City is required to update the 2009 Village AUAR every 5 years. The most recent update was in 2021. Until the Village Area is fully developed, the City will need to update the AUAR to ensure that the review and mitigation plans are consistent with the known and planned development within the AUAR area. If the AUAR becomes expired prior to the complete buildout of the Village area, individual projects may be required to receive a formal environmental review under statutory thresholds. This would cause delays and expense for development to occur, and reviews would be completed on a piecemeal basis.

The 2021 Village Area AUAR: The update provided an opportunity to revisit the original 2009 document and subsequent 2016 update. Many areas of the review had no change from the 2009 AUAR and 2016 update. Areas of additional review included the following:

- Review of development scenarios
- Development timeline update
- Land use guidance updates
- Land cover type updates
- Water use
- Water quality surface water runoff
- Water quality wastewater
- Traffic
- Compatibility with plans

Considerations:

• The City should plan to update the AUAR in 2026 in order to allow the AUAR to remain in effect until the complete buildout of the Village area. Several large parcel developments may otherwise trigger the need to complete environmental review.

2013 Lake Elmo Branding and Theming Study

Purpose: The Lake Elmo Branding and Theming Study seeks to establish a kit of parts that will create a strong visual identity for the gateways, streets, sidewalks and open spaces of Lake Elmo that reinforces the unique agricultural and open space heritage of the community.

Design Principles:

- Elements and furnishings will reflect a connection to the land through material and form.
- Elements and furnishings will be detailed and placed with a simplicity of purpose and function that pays tribute to the Lake Elmo agrarian heritage.
- Landscapes will reflect the native prairie, lakes and big woods that help define Lake Elmo as a special community within a metropolitan area.
- Elements and furnishings will be comfortable and functional.
- The Kit of Parts must have an authenticity that creates a memorable and lasting impression for visitors, residents and business owners.

Regulatory Impact: The City's Zoning Ordinance currently contains a reference that requires elements of the Lake Elmo Theming Study must be incorporated in to developments within the village districts where applicable. The City has design standards for the Village Parkway which will connect existing areas of the Village and with the current terminus in Easton Village. Buildout will be required with future development.

The 2013 Theming Study: The 2013 Theming study primarily focuses on the public right of way, and streetscape improvements that the City can implement, or require to be implemented, in existing or newly platted areas of the Village. The Theming Study generally touches on the following areas:

- Placement and Pattern in the Streetscape
 - Placement of lighting and trees in the streetscape
 - Creating a pattern in the streetscape
 - Maintenance and community commitment
- Streetscape requirements
 - $\circ \quad \text{Sidewalks}$
 - Parking
 - Corners and intersections
- Streetscape Components
- Street Furniture
- Implementation

- This document is not available online, it is recommended that it be added to the list of design standards on the City's website.
- The City should conduct plan reviews, particularly for newly proposed developments on the undeveloped east side of the current Village Area with this theming study in mind.
- A discussion by the City as to the relevancy and priority of theming may be helpful. Is this document still valid?

Heritage Preservation Commission

The City Code establishes a Heritage Preservation Commission to "engage in a comprehensive program of historic preservation and to preserve and promote the city's historic resources". This commission is tasked with several things. Specifically related to land use and interest in the Village Area, their causes is as follows:

- 1. To survey and recommend to the council the designation of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are of historical, architectural, archaeological, engineering, or cultural significance;
- 2. To recommend to the council rules governing construction, alteration, demolition, and use, including the review of building permits, and the adoption of other measures appropriate for the preservation, protection, and perpetuation of designated properties and areas;
- 3. To recommend to the council the acquisition by purchase, gift, or bequest of a fee or lesser interest, including preservation restrictions, in designated properties and adjacent or associated lands which are important for the preservations and use of the designated properties;
- 4. To recommend to the council the use of its powers of eminent domain to maintain or preserve designated properties and adjacent or associated lands;
- 5. To recommend to the council the granting of use variances to the zoning ordinance for the purpose of promoting historical preservation or continuity;
- 6. To participate in the conduct of land use planning processes by the review and comment on documents or actions relating to designated areas and on comprehensive plans; and
- 7. To recommend to the council the removal of blighting influences in designated areas, including signs, unsightly structures, and debris incompatible with the physical well-being of the areas.

There is currently no established commission. The commission stopped meeting with the onset of COVID restrictions in 2020 and has not been re-established.

- This commission could provide insights and recommendations on the Village Area. Is the Heritage Preservation Commission something that should be re-established to support the Village Area goals?
- Could this commission provide value in supporting the village area and uses and the experience while engaging residents serving on the commission? Or would this commission add a layer of bureaucracy, whose objectives could be addressed administratively or through other processes?

Next Steps

Concurrent with this work, and in partnership with City Staff, public engagement efforts have resulted in hundreds of responses to the online survey and many conversations with residents at three different public events. Staff are in the process of gathering and reflecting upon the feedback provided from the community, which will help to inform next steps.

We appreciate the opportunity to conduct this review. After a discussion with the City Council at its July 9, 2024 workshop, we will refine the considerations found in this memo to create a list of policy recommendations.

Bolton & Menk, Inc.

Mattan Juest

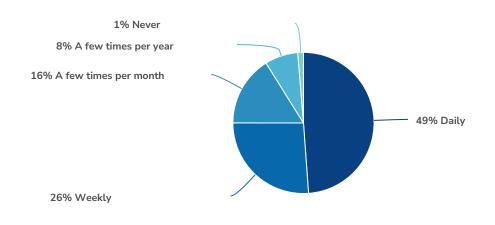
Nathan Fuerst, AICP, Senior Planner

Report for Lake Elmo Village Vision Plan

Response Counts



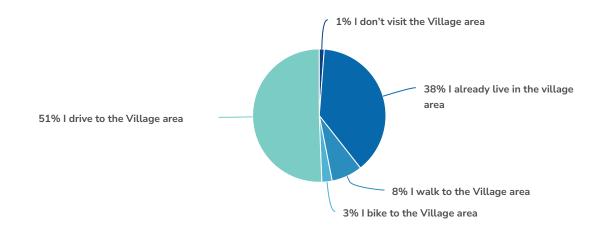
1. How often do you visit locations in the Village area?



Value	Percent	Responses
Daily	48.9%	452
Weekly	26.2%	242
A few times per month	16.1%	149
A few times per year	7.6%	70
Never	1.3%	12

Totals: 925

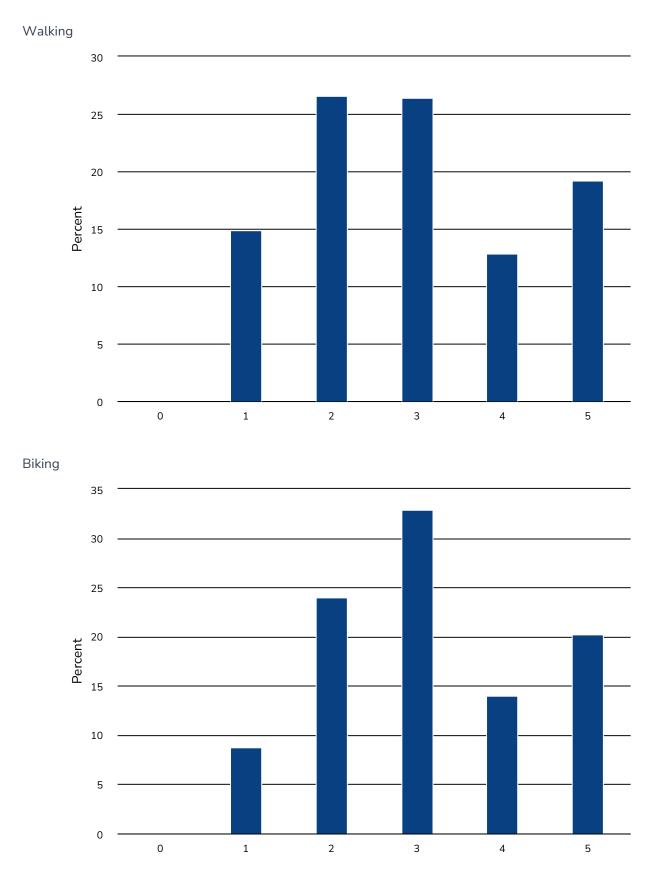
2. When you visit the Village area, how do you usually get there?



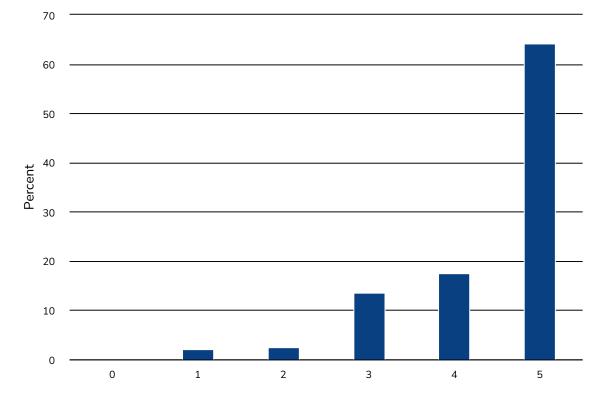
Value	Percent	Responses
I don't visit the Village area	1.2%	11
I already live in the village area	38.2%	353
I walk to the Village area	7.5%	69
I bike to the Village area	2.5%	23
I drive to the Village area	50.6%	467

Totals: 923

3. How would you rate the ease of getting to the Village area by each of the following travel modes? Use the slider to indicate between "Very difficult" and "Very easy" for each mode of travel.



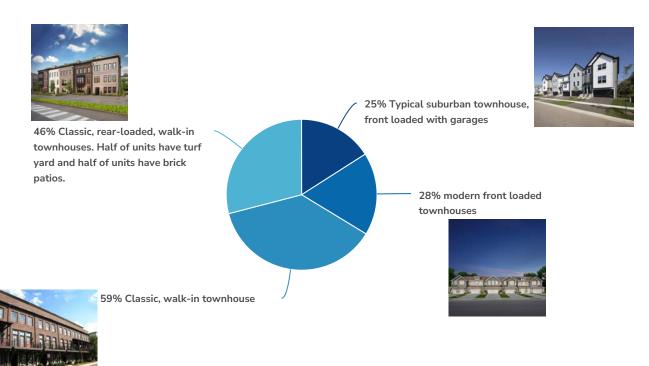
Driving



11. Select all the types of single-family houses you would prefer in the Village area.

Source of the second		mily house; rear ranch style house modern Transference
Value	Percent	Responses
Single family house; rear loaded white ranch house	h style 77.8%	428
Single family house; modern carriage house	40.0%	220
Single family house; modern prairie style; fro side-loaded garage	ont porch; 57.8%	318
Single family house; modern manor style; fro garage	ont-loaded 43.3%	238

12. Select all the types of townhouses you would prefer in the Village area.

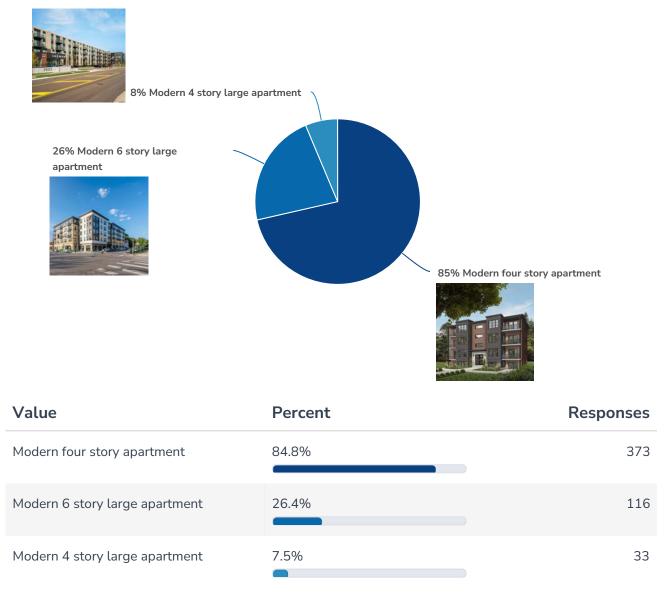


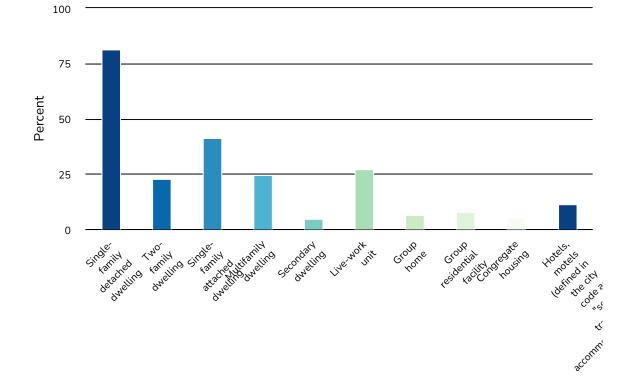
Value	Percent	Responses
Typical suburban townhouse, front loaded with garages	25.4%	130
modern front loaded townhouses	28.2%	144
Classic, walk-in townhouse	59.3%	303
Classic, rear-loaded, walk-in townhouses. Half of units have turf yard and half of units have brick patios.	46.2%	236

13. Select all the types of small-/mid-sized apartment buildings you would prefer in the Village area.



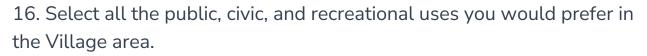
14. Select all the types of mid-/large-sized apartment buildings you would prefer in the Village area.

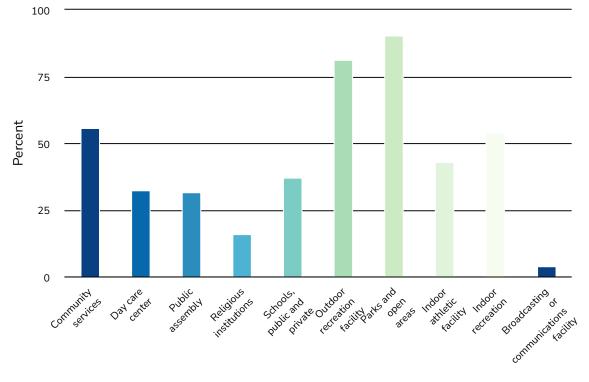




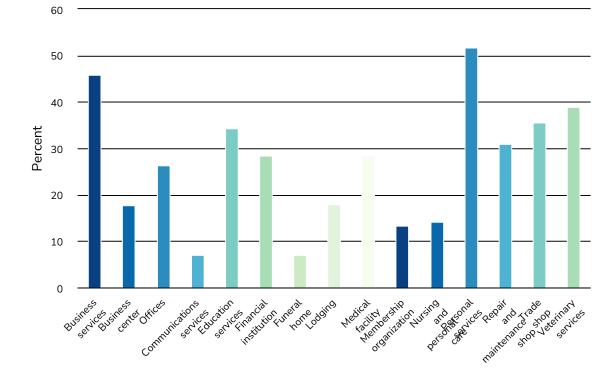
15. Select all the residential uses you would prefer in the Village area.

Value	Percent	Responses
Single-family detached dwelling	81.4%	447
Two-family dwelling	22.8%	125
Single-family attached dwelling	41.5%	228
Multifamily dwelling	24.8%	136
Secondary dwelling	4.9%	27
Live-work unit	27.1%	149
Group home	6.7%	37
Group residential facility	8.0%	44
Congregate housing	5.3%	29
Hotels, motels (defined in the city code as "semi- transient accommodations")	11.5%	63



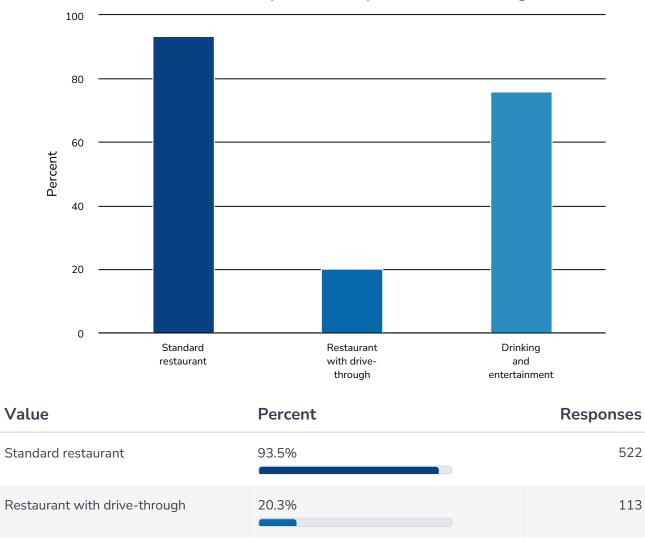


Value	Percent	Responses
Community services	55.9%	314
Day care center	32.4%	182
Public assembly	31.9%	179
Religious institutions	16.2%	91
Schools, public and private	37.2%	209
Outdoor recreation facility	81.5%	458
Parks and open areas	90.6%	509
Indoor athletic facility	43.2%	243
Indoor recreation	53.9%	303
Broadcasting or communications facility	4.1%	23



17. Select all the services you would prefer in the Village area.

Value	Percent	Responses
Business services	45.9%	229
Business center	17.8%	89
Offices	26.5%	132
Communications services	7.2%	36
Education services	34.5%	172
Financial institution	28.5%	142
Funeral home	7.2%	36
Lodging	18.0%	90
Medical facility	28.5%	142
Membership organization	13.4%	67
Nursing and personal care	14.2%	71
Personal services	51.9%	259
Repair and maintenance shop	31.1%	155
Trade shop	35.7%	178
Veterinary services	39.1%	195



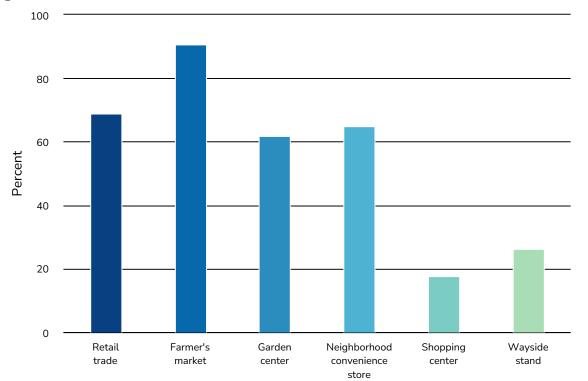
76.0%

424

Drinking and entertainment

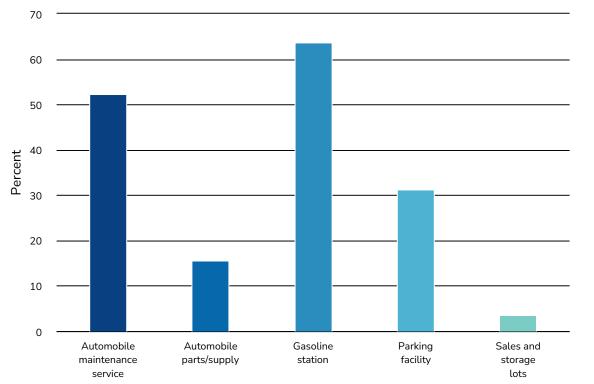
18. Select all the food services you would prefer in the Village area.

19. Select all the types of merchandise sales uses you would prefer in the Village area.



Value	Percent	Responses
Retail trade	68.9%	387
Farmer's market	90.9%	511
Garden center	62.1%	349
Neighborhood convenience store	64.9%	365
Shopping center	17.8%	100
Wayside stand	26.5%	149

20. Select all the automobile or vehicular uses you would prefer in the Village area.



Value	Percent	Responses
Automobile maintenance service	52.3%	205
Automobile parts/supply	15.6%	61
Gasoline station	63.8%	250
Parking facility	31.4%	123
Sales and storage lots	3.6%	14