



2012 Community Development Department Annual Report

I. Annual Summary

The Lake Elmo Community Development Department is submitting its annual report for consideration by the City Council and Planning Commission. The following narrative presents a summary of activities undertaken over the course of 2012.

Comprehensive Plan Amendments. The most significant project undertaken by the Community Development Department in 2012 was the ongoing work of amending the City's Comprehensive Plan to revise the I-94 Corridor and Village Land Use Plans. More specifically, the first amendment, focused on the I-94 Corridor and Housing Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan, was accepted by the City Council and authorized for adjacent jurisdiction and Metropolitan Council review on August 21, 2012. Staff anticipates that the external review of this amendment will be completed in early 2013, at which time the Council may officially adopt the amendment. Regarding the Village Land Use Plan, Staff is working to finalize the draft plan and anticipates bringing this Comprehensive Plan Amendment to the Planning Commission for Public Hearing in February of 2013.

Land Use Applications. Through the support of the Planning Commission, the Community Development Department worked on 23 land use applications/projects in 2012, including but not limited to amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, conditional use permits, zoning text amendments, and variances. The most common application processed related to land use was the zoning text amendment, of which the City worked through 8 applications. This uptick in the number of zoning text amendments can be attributed to a number of updates to the Zoning Code for the purpose of preparing the community for sewered growth.

Building Permits. The City of Lake Elmo processed 311 building permits, not including plumbing and mechanical permits, in 2012. The number of permits issued this year is consistent with amount of building activity over the past 5 years. In terms of new single family homes, the City issued permits for 31 new homes in 2012, as opposed to 24 homes in 2011. Through the addition of 31 single family homes and 8 manufactured homes, and the demolition of 3 homes, the City experienced a net increase of dwelling units of 36 units in 2012.

Staffing. Over the course of the year, the City of Lake Elmo added two new employees to the Community Development Department. These employees are Rick Chase, filling the role of Building Official, and Nick Johnson, filling the role of City Planner. With the full-time additions to the Staff, the City is better positioned to prepare for growth in the coming years.

Community Development Preparation Efforts. In addition to several updates to the City's Zoning Code, Staff has worked on two projects to ensure quality development outcomes: Design Standards and Theming. With the support of the Planning Commission, Staff has made significant progress on drafting a Design Standards Manual for development in the sewered districts. Staff anticipates that the manual will be completed in the spring of 2013. Through the support of the I-94 Corridor and Village Work Groups, Staff has also worked with Damon Farber and Associates on a Theming Project, intended to help guide design and amenities within road rights-of-way and public spaces. The Theming Project will also be completed in the spring of 2013.

II. Annual Review: Major Projects

Major projects included in the department's scope of work in 2012 include the following projects chronologically:

3M Legal Preparation. As part of the State of Minnesota's suit against 3M Corporation in regards to groundwater contamination in Washington County, Staff served as a support role to the City Attorney to collect all records pertaining to infrastructure planning in Lake Elmo.

Mn/DOT Landscaping Grant: HWY-5 Tree Planting and Landscaping Project. Once again Lake Elmo's Arbor Day Event on June 2, 2012 included a community planting project supported by a grant from the Minnesota Department of Transportation. Staff was able to obtain over \$17,000 in plant materials through the Community Roadside Landscaping Partnership Program. In addition to working with Mn/DOT landscape architects to manage the project, Staff worked with project supporters to recruit over 60 resident volunteers. The event resulted in a significant beautification for the downtown section of HWY-5 and fulfilled the City's obligation to host and Arbor Day Event as a Tree City USA member.

Village Area Septic System Survey. In order to collect more up-to-date data regarding the status of existing septic systems in the Village, Staff conducted a survey of all property owners in the Village inquiring about the condition and maintenance practices of their subsurface sewage treatment systems. The survey was conducted in an anonymous manner via mail, and had high response rate of 61%. In addition to gaining valuable perspective on the state of septic systems in the Village, the survey also asked property owners about their interest in being served by municipal sanitary sewer. The results of this question were the following:

- 58.0% of respondents answered that they were interested in sanitary sewer;
- 17.3% of respondents were not interested in sanitary sewer extension; and
- 24.7% of respondents were unknown regarding their interest.

In addition to surveying the Village, three other areas adjacent to the Village were surveyed using the same template to gauge their interest in sanitary sewer connection.

These areas were Legion Ave. N. (immediately south of 30th St.), the south side of 30th St. (between Lake Elmo Ave. and Legion Ave.) and Lake Elmo Ave. N. (between 20th St. and 30th St.). The results pointed toward the greatest interest in sewer being on 30th St., while Legion Ave. was more supportive than not, and Lake Elmo Ave. was not supportive of sanitary sewer connection.

Building Permit Review Process. In another effort towards preparing the City for future growth, Staff evaluated the building permit review process in order to improve efficiency and accuracy. These efforts were led by new Building Official Rick Chase, who worked with both Planning and Engineering to streamline communication and procedure for the building community. Related to these efforts, the City has also researched several permitting and code enforcement applications to improve reporting and records.

Buberl/Nass Detachment. Staff has continued to support the City Attorney in efforts to appeal the court ruling that allowed for the detachment of multiple properties in the northeast portion of the city to Stillwater Township.

Gateway Corridor Technical Committee. In addition to former Mayor Dean Johnston, Staff participated in the Gateway Corridor Technical Committee. The results of this process, known as Alternatives Analysis (AA), led to the selection of a preferred alternative of a route on the south side of I-94 in Woodbury, MN.

I-94 Corridor Work Group. The Planning Department continued to meet with members of the I-94 Corridor Work Group to guide land use planning in the corridor. The group was represented by members of the City Council, Planning Commission and other stakeholders in the area. Meetings with the Work Group served to guide land use planning efforts that have resulted in a draft Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

Village Area Work Group. The Planning Department continued its work with the Village Area Planning Work Group throughout 2012. The Work Group met 16 times during the course of the year and conducted two larger open houses to solicit public feedback. Additionally, the Planning Department sponsored a local business forum to present the plans to village business owners, met with a broader stakeholder group, and presented a draft plan at two separate Planning Commission workshops.

I-94 Corridor Comprehensive Plan Amendment. Through the support of the I-94 Work Group, Staff drafted a Comprehensive Plan Amendment containing updates to the Land Use Plan for the I-94 Corridor. The Land Use Plan contained land guided for residential development of various densities, as well as land guided for commercial and business park development. The Comprehensive Plan Amendment was authorized by the City Council for adjacent jurisdiction and Metropolitan Council review on August 21, 2012. The Amendment is currently being review by the Metropolitan Council. Once the review is over, the City Council may approve the Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

Housing Chapter Comprehensive Plan Amendment. As part of the submission to update the I-94 Corridor Land Use Plan, the City was required to update the Housing Chapter within the Comprehensive Plan to reflect the proposed land use changes. The information contained within the Housing Chapter includes an overview of the existing housing stock, as well as overall population trends provided by census data. The data revealed that the median age of the Lake Elmo population has been consistently rising over the decades. In addition the, there are more residents over the age of 65 than at any time previously. Finally, the American Community Survey data revealed that the median home value in Lake Elmo between 2006-2010 was \$396,500. This may explain the gap within the Lake Elmo population of the 20-40 age cohorts or groups.

Annual State Planning Conference. The Planning Director was able to attend the State Planning Conference in September in Alexandria, MN. He was able to attend sessions related to form-based codes and other innovative planning techniques related to zoning and implementation.

Design Guidelines Manual. In preparation of upcoming development, Staff has worked with the Planning Commission on drafting design guidelines for four (4) development types: high density residential, commercial, business park and mixed-use development. The guidelines are intended to maintain a high quality of standards in site and building design for development in Lake Elmo. With the support of the Communications Specialist, Planning Staff will work on the final layout of the document and complete the project in the spring of 2013. The final version of the document will also incorporate elements from the Lake Elmo Theming Project, which is set to be completed in the spring as well.

Theming Project. Through the direction of Damon Farber and Associates, Staff has been working with members of the various work groups to complete a Theming exercise intended to brand the public space in Lake Elmo with a specific theme in mind. Whereas design guidelines are intended for the private realm, the Theming project is geared towards the public spaces of the community, such as roads and public gathering spaces. The result of this process will be a 'Kit of Parts' that includes various color palettes, site amenities, and other designs that are reflective of the Lake Elmo theme. This project should wrap up in the spring of 2013.

Water Tower Antenna Upgrades. Staff has been working with T-Mobile, AT&T and Sprint to process three requests for equipment upgrades on the downtown water tower at Langly Court North. This project is a part of the wireless communication carrier's efforts to upgrade to 4G service in the area. In addition, Staff also renegotiated the terms of the lease agreements with these wireless communication companies.

Village Open Space Conservation Strategy Review. In order to support work related to the Village Land Use planning efforts, Planning Staff engaged the Minnesota Land Trust in conducting research into the best possible strategies for land conservation in the Village. The Minnesota Land Trust has historically been a strong partner for the City of Lake Elmo, and indicated that they would be willing to participate in additional conservation work in the Village. The strategies explored include possible grant funding

opportunities conservation through development. Whichever strategy that is ultimately employed for conservation in the Village will most likely include support from the Minnesota Land Trust.

Whistling Valley Closeout. Staff worked with the Engineering Department to close out the development agreement and improvements for the Whistling Valley III development. All improvements have been accepted by the City.

Plotter Equipment Acquisition. Staff researched and purchased a new plotter for the Community Development Department. In addition to more accurate and efficient printing, the equipment includes a large scale scanner, allowing Staff to scan engineering and plan-size sheets. This will be important as the City moves to an electronic record retention program (Laserfiche). In addition, the equipment will be useful as Staff work through the subdivision and development process in the coming years.

Dale-Frandsen Sketch Plan Review – Lennar Homes. At the Planning Commission meeting on December 10, Staff presented a review of a sketch plan submitted by Lennar Homes for the Dale and Frandsen properties in the I-94 Corridor. As part of the review, Staff completed an in-depth review by the Development Review Committee, consisting of members of the Planning, Engineering, Public Works and Fire Departments. This review will serve as the baseline as the applicants proceed towards Preliminary Plat. In addition, presenting the Sketch Plan provided the Planning Commission the opportunity to provide input to the applicants.

Village Area Comprehensive Plan Amendment. Over the course of the year, the Planning Commission reviewed draft land use maps for the Village Area plan, and reviewed a draft plan late in 2012. The Commission is on track to review a final draft and conduct a public hearing on a Comprehensive Plan Amendment for the Village in February of 2013. The plan incorporates a revised open space preservation plan and proposes a general mixed-use district over the central portion of the planning area.

City Code Amendments. In 2012, Staff processed ten (10) City Code Amendments, including the following:

- Outdoor Lighting Ordinance Review
- Illicit Discharge Ordinance
- Sewered Zoning Districts
- Definitions and Use Classifications
- Shoreland Standards – Water Oriented Accessory Structures
- Therapeutic Massage Ordinance
- Planned Unit Development (PUD) Ordinance

Land Use Applications. In 2012, Staff processed nine (9) land use applications, including the following:

- Well Site #4 Minor Subdivision: 11240 50th Street North (Mandrinich & City of Lake Elmo)
- Oakdale Gun Club CUP Amendment: 10386 10th Street North
- Bergmann IUP Review: 11211 60th Street North
- Summit Board Shop Grading Permit: 9242 Hudson Boulevard North (Heinen)
- Therapeutic Massage CUP: 11200 Stillwater Boulevard North (Koen)
- Lennar Homes Subdivision: Sketch Plan Review

Board of Adjustment Actions . Planning Staff processed four (4) variances in 2012:

- Lot Size Variance: 5577 Lake Elmo Avenue North (Weber)
- Septic System Variance: 11194 36th Street North (Christ Lutheran Church)
- Lot Size Variance: 8961 37th Street North (Franzwa)
- Accessory Building Setback Variance: 974 Jasmine Avenue North (Jader)

III. Statistical Information

A. Planning Commission Meetings

1. Regular Meetings: 20
2. Workshop Meetings: 2
3. Public Hearings: 15

B. Planning and Zoning Permits

2012 Planning and Zoning Applications					
Planning Applications	Approved	Denied	Pending	Amended	Total
Comprehensive Plan Amendments			2		2
Zoning Map Amendments					0
Zoning Text Amendments	7		1		8
City Code Amendments	1		1		2
Conditional Use Permits	2			1	3
Interim Use Permits				1	1
Sketch Plans	1*				1
Concept Plans					0
Preliminary Plats					0
Final Plats					0
Minor Subdivisions	1				1
Lot Line Adjustments	1				1
Variances	3	1			4
Vacations					0
Sign Permits	2				2
Appeals					0
Other					0

*Sketch Plan reviews do not require formal action by the City.

C. Building Permits: 5-Year Summary

Building Permits Issued (by type): 5-Year Summary								
Year	SF Dwellings - Remodel/Repair	Demo	Manufactured Homes	Mult-Family	Commercial/Ind Remodel/Repair	New Commercial	Single Family	Total
2008	355	12	9	0	31	0	23	430
2009	338	4	12	0	32	0	29	415
2010	265	10	6	0	20	0	26	327
2011	320	2	0	0	24	0	24	370
2012	250	3	8	0	19	0	31	311
Total Units	1278	31	35	0	107	0	133	1853
Average	255.6	6.2	7	0	21.4	0	26.6	370.6

D. Housing Starts: 5-Year Summary

Housing Starts in Lake Elmo: 5-Year Summary					
Year	Single Family	Multi-Family	Manufactured Homes	Dwellings Demolished	Net Increase in Dwelling Units
2008	23	0	18	10	31
2009	29	0	9	4	34
2010	26	0	1	8	19
2011	24	0	0	0	24
2012	29	0	8	3	34
Total Units	131	0	36	25	142
Average	26.2	0	7.2	5	28.4

Respectfully Submitted,

Kyle Klatt
Planning Director