



PARK COMMISSION

DATE: 3/17/14

AGENDA ITEM: IV.B – NEW BUSINESS

ITEM: Wildflower at Lake Elmo Sketch Plan Review

SUBMITTED BY: Nick Johnson, City Planner

REVIEWED BY: Kyle Klatt, Community Development Director
Dean Zuleger, City Administrator

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED:

The Park Commission is asked to review a Sketch Plan, Wildflower at Lake Elmo, submitted by Robert Engstrom Companies, for a proposed 143 unit single family residential subdivision in the northern portion of the Village Planning Area. The Park Commission is asked to review the plan to provide direction on park and recreation facilities for the development.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As noted in the Sketch Plan Narrative, the applicants are proposing some type of conservancy in the northern portion of the site. Planning for this amenity is very preliminary at this time, and it is still not determined if there will be a public component. In addition to this natural preservation area, the applicant is proposing to include multiple interior park-like courts within the residential development. It is the City's understanding at this time that these lands will be private and HOA maintained.

The proposed subdivision has yet to be presented to the Planning Commission or City Council. However, in reviewing a Sketch Plan for a single family neighborhood proposed on the property to the west, the Planning Commission requested that a small neighborhood park be incorporated into the plan. In addition, they suggested that the small neighborhood park could be shared with the Wildflower at Lake Elmo development. The Park Commission should consider if and where a neighborhood park would be appropriate in for this proposed development.

Finally, it should also be noted that the City has engaged with discussion with the school district on the possibility of entering a joint powers agreement (JPA) to make facilities at Lake Elmo Elementary School open to the public as a shared City-School District facility. This facility does have two smaller baseball diamonds, one soccer field and playground equipment. If the City entered into a JPA with the school district, these facilities, which are in relative close proximity to the proposed subdivision, could be made available to the public.

RECCOMENDATION:

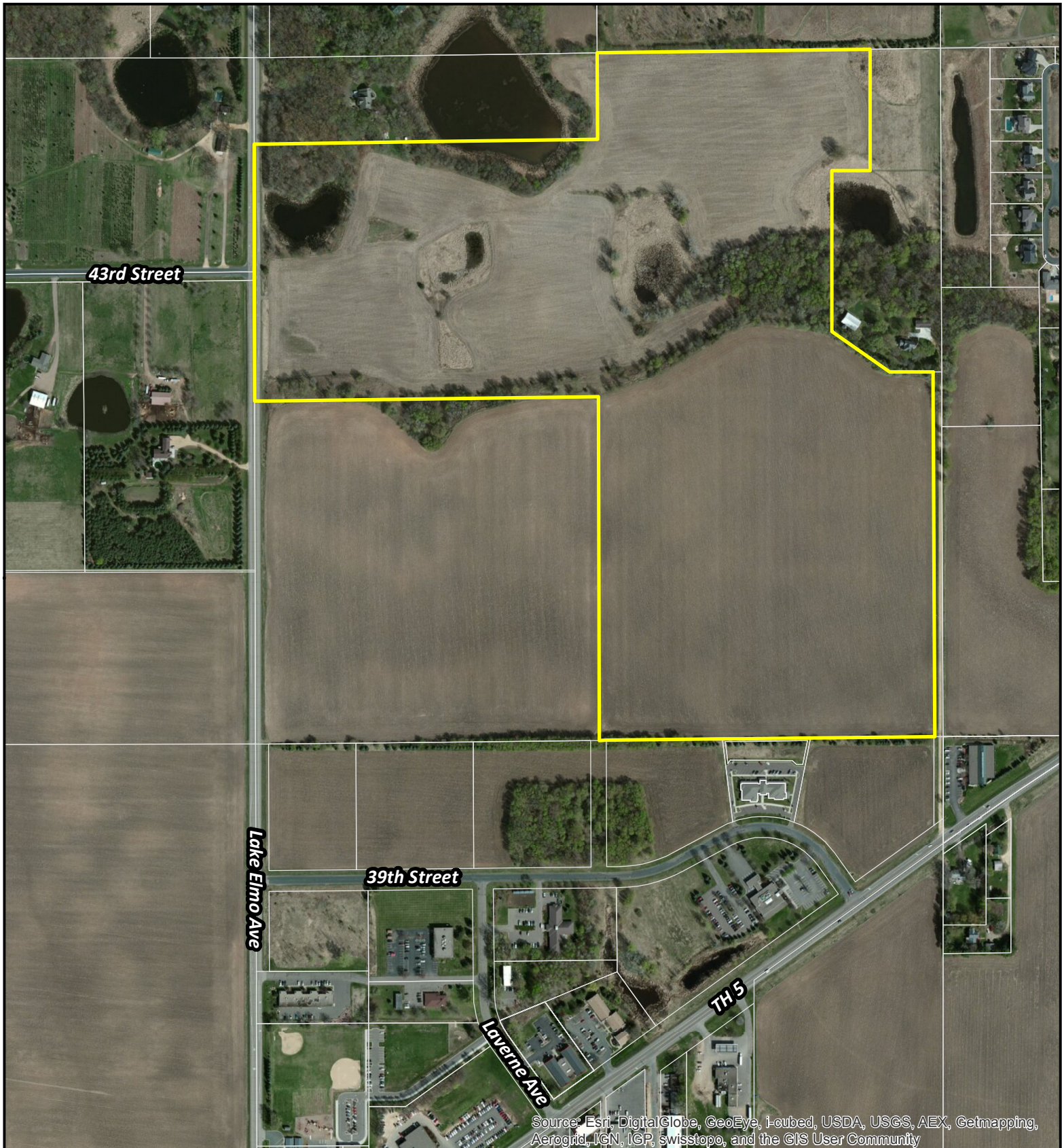
Staff is recommending that the Park Commission provide guidance to the applicants in the form of a formal motion.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Location Map
2. Sketch Plan Narrative
3. Wildflower at Lake Elmo Sketch Plan

ORDER OF BUSINESS:


- Introduction City Planner
- Report by Staff City Planner
- Questions from the Commission Chair & Commission Members
- Discussion by the Commission Chair & Commission Members

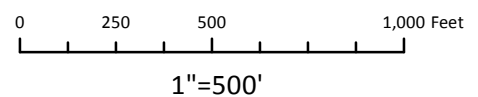


Location Map: Wildflower at Lake Elmo



Data Source: Washington County, MN
3-13-14

 12.029.21.32.0001
Wildflower at Lake Elmo



ROBERT ENGSTROM COMPANIES

Bob Engstrom, 3/6/2014

Wildflower at Lake Elmo

Robert Engstrom Companies has acquired a 101-acre site. The site is located west of the second phase of The Fields of St. Croix and in close proximity to the Old Village of Lake Elmo.

Approximately 60 acres, when combined with an outlot from The Fields of St. Croix, will be dedicated to Natural Habitat restoration and creation, along with surface water management.

A preliminary site plan has been prepared which has structure that relates to the fabric of the Old Village and embodies much of the Lake Elmo planning that has occurred in recent years. There are four different types of residential housing products. Sixty six lots are approximately 60X115' in a Garden Court setting that has interior park-like features in the center of the block, similar to our long-lasting Summit Place development in the Cathedral Hill district of St. Paul. This product would have association- maintained exterior grounds and be attractive to empty nesters, baby-boomers, singles, and others. Target price range is estimated at \$300,000-375,000. Most of these homes face the street, thereby providing an attractive streetscape. The second product is 80 and 90 foot wide lots by 135' and suitable for custom homes. A grouping of nine lots overlooks a proposed wetland area and prairie. Another product is 10 high-value sites on the bluff overlooking the Wildflower Conservancy. The last product is ten lots adjacent to Lake Elmo Avenue and adjoining the Wildflower Conservancy. Hopefully, these homes will provide surveillance for the large natural area and maybe even discourage the deer.

All homes will strive to have distinctive architectural design and will be subject to architectural approval by the developer.

Utilities

City water and sanitary sewer will be available to this site.

The preliminary site plan shows new surface water retention and treatment areas on the adjacent farm field and retention areas on the lower level of the conservancy. It is a goal to keep all storm water on site. A wetland delineation has been completed and subject to Barr Engineering review in the spring.

...RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPERS...

4801 West 81st Street • Suite 101 • Minneapolis, Minnesota 55437

www.engstromco.com • (952) 893-1001 • Fax (952) 893-1841

ROBERT ENGSTROM COMPANIES

Wildflower is intended to capitalize on the national Healthy Communities movement. The sidewalks and pathways will be convenient walking and biking opportunities. The landscape philosophy is to include some bee and pollinator-friendly plants as part of each homeowner's landscape. Public art might include distinctive benches, street signs, mailboxes, and sculpture. Dark skies street and home lighting will be friendly to pollinators and people alike.

In 1994, at Cloverdale Farm, we required, in the Declaration of Covenants, that the homeowner maintain at least one-half of their 2 1/2 acre lot in natural landscaping. Wildflower is adjoining the Old Village of Lake Elmo and has smaller lots with sanitary sewer and municipal water service. It is believed that requiring homeowners to include some native plantings as part of their landscape plan in a new residential development will be a "timely first" for Minnesota and, perhaps, nationwide. Douglas Tallamy, the esteemed University of Delaware professor, and author of "Bringing Nature Home" says that the bee/pollinator crisis will only be solved by individuals planting native plants in their own yards.

Wildflower Center

A possible wildflower center that serves as a signature for the Wildflower development is located near the State Highway #5 entrance.

At present there is a three fold mission for the center which will be part of the Wildflower Conservancy:

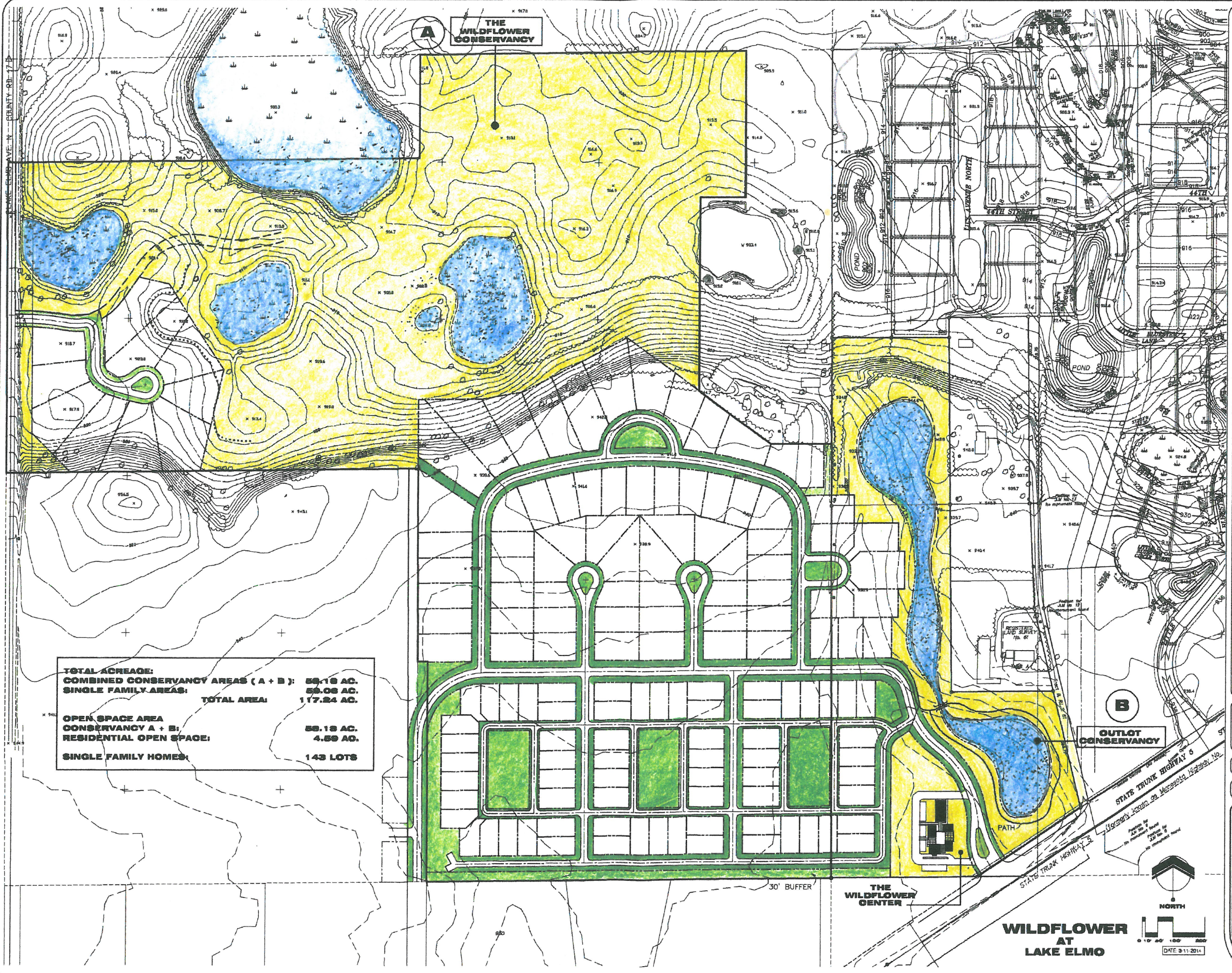
1. Demonstrate agricultural practices that can be compatible with native pollinator habitat.
2. Serve as an educational resource for native plants for homeowners and public officials.
3. Provide a gathering place for neighborhood and city social events. This is consistent with National Healthy Community guidelines which encourage a destination for walkers and bikers and also serves as a meeting place for social interaction.

The organization and funding of the Wildflower Conservancy are yet to be determined. Details such as a farmers market facility are yet to be discussed.

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TOTAL ACREAGE:		
COMBINED CONSERVANCY AREAS (A + B):		59.18 AC.
SINGLE FAMILY AREAS:		59.08 AC.
TOTAL AREA:		117.24 AC.
OPEN SPACE AREA		
CONSERVANCY A + B:		59.18 AC.
RESIDENTIAL OPEN SPACE:		4.59 AC.
SINGLE FAMILY HOMES:		143 LOTS

DESIGN: _____
DRAWN: _____
CHECKED: _____

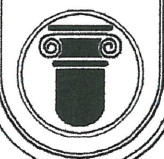
REVISIONS: _____
DATE: _____
#:

**WILDFLOWER
AT
LAKE ELMO**
LAKE ELMO, MN

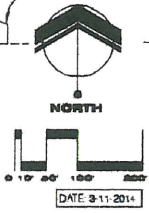
**CONCEPT
SITE PLAN**

SHEET: **1** OF: **1**

**DESIGN
FORUM
INCORPORATED**
ARCHITECTURE / PLANNING
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
4201 78TH STREET, SUITE 101
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55412
PH: 952.831.4841 FAX: 952.831.2904



**WILDFLOWER
AT
LAKE ELMO**



DATE: 9/11/2014