



City of Lake Elmo

651/777-5510

3800 Laverne Avenue North / Lake Elmo, MN 55042

City of Lake Elmo
City Council Workshop
3800 Laverne Avenue North
Lake Elmo, MN 55042
March 9, 2010

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. (?)

Agenda

1. Presentation on "Embrace Open Space" – Mark Schiffman
2. City Council Workshop – Follow-up Activities & Discussion
3. Adjourn

A social gathering may or may not be held at the Lake Elmo Inn following the meeting.





MAYOR & COUNCIL WORKSHOP

DATE: 3/09/2010
WORKSHOP
ITEM #: 1
PRESENTATION

AGENDA ITEM: Presentation on "Embrace Open Space"

SUBMITTED BY: Mr. Mark Schiffman, Embrace Open Space

THROUGH: Bruce A. Messelt, City Administrator *BAM*

REVIEWED BY: - NA -

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED: This item has been scheduled at the request of Mr. Mark Schiffman and "Embrace Open Space. Embrace Open Space is a collaborative among Twin Cities organizations concerned about protecting open space in our region. Our primary goal is to serve as a catalyst for greater citizen and elected leadership to conserve and steward natural areas and parks, lakes and rivers in the 11-county Twin Cities area

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Tonight's Presenter, Mr. Mark Schiffman, is a public affairs consultant and former mayor of Waconia. He is currently working with the organization Embrace Open Space (www.embraceopenspace.org), which recently commissioned economic studies in Washington and Hennepin Counties to answer the question "does open space generate a tangible financial value to communities?" The answer is yes and the impact is significant.

Embrace open Space believes the findings from this research will be very interesting to City Councils, staff, and Park Board and Planning Commissions, among others, particularly given the current economic environment and slowing regional growth. A brief presentation by Mr. Schiffman will be followed an opportunity for discussion.

STAFF REPORT: City staff recommend scheduling of this presentation, especially given Lake Elmo's affirmative presence in Embrace Open Space literature and the City Council's interest in reviewing this year both the current Comprehensive Plan and planning and zoning for the 10th Street N – I-94 corridor.

RECOMMENDATION: Based upon the above background information, it is recommended that the City Council view the proposed presentation and engage in a discussion with Mr.

Schiffman regarding the economic value of preservation of open space. No specific Council action is required or recommended at this time.

Alternatively, the City Council may elect to forgo some or all of the proposed presentation and discussion, as appropriate, and or determine if additional follow-up activity is warranted.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. June 16th, 2009 Star Tribune Article Regarding Open Space
2. Hennepin County Economic Analysis – Executive Summary. Embrace open Space; June 1st, 2009.

SUGGESTED ORDER OF BUSINESS:

- Introduction of Item City Administrator
- Report/Presentation..... Mr. Mark Schiffman
- Questions from Council to Presenter Mayor Facilitates
- Public Input, if Appropriate Mayor Facilitates
- Discussion Mayor & City Council

Study confirms open space near homes pays off

By LAURIE BLAKE, Star Tribune
June 16, 2009

In Hennepin County, homes within 200 feet of a park, natural area or greenway get an average property value boost of \$16,300 because of their proximity to open land, a study has found.

The benefit of large parks extends even further. Open areas of 50 acres or more lend increased value of 3 to 4.8 percent to homes up to a half-mile away, the study says.

These are the findings of a property value analysis by Embrace Open Space, a program of The Trust for Public Land, a St. Paul-based land conservation advocacy group.

"We are interested in raising public awareness of the benefits of conserving natural areas," said Jenna Fletcher, program coordinator for Embrace Open Space.

With funding from the McKnight Foundation, Three Rivers Park District and others, the study used census data, home sale and other information to conclude that Hennepin County's "total increase in property values due to the presence of open space is \$3.6 billion." That value generates \$36 million in tax revenues a year, the study calculates.

Embrace Open Space said it chose to study Hennepin County because of "its rapid population growth and degree of unprotected natural resources."

Addressing common questions about how conserving land affects tax revenues, the study says that tax revenues lost by keeping land as open space can be "offset in part if homes adjacent to open space have greater value and produce higher property tax revenue."

"We are trying to build the arguments for why should cities and counties and townships invest in parks and natural areas," Fletcher said.

Not only does the study show the benefit to properties close by, but it also shows that all properties benefit "just because there is open space in a city," she said. "If a city increases its investment

in open space, we can predict the increase in home values."

Embrace Open Space plans to present the study to selected cities this summer.

Hennepin County will use the information in discussions with developing cities about saving critical natural areas, said Rosemary Lavin, assistant director of environmental services for the county.

"There is a view that the county has a fair amount of open space, but we've got continuing development that is occurring throughout the county," Lavin said.

The open space study gives cities an economic reason, in addition to the natural environmental benefits, to balance land preservation with development, she said.

The study found that 18 percent of Hennepin County is open space and about a third of that is the parks, trails and natural lands in the Three Rivers Park District.

The study estimates that Three Rivers park lands and natural areas have increased home values by \$369 million -- a figure that translates to \$3.5 million a year in property tax revenues for Hennepin County.

Three Rivers contributed \$10,000 to the study to get that kind of detail about "what it is we bring to the community," said Three Rivers Commissioner Marilyn Corcoran.

"It helps to confirm that the trails and the open space combined are important to people, important to their quality of life, and we can validate that claim isn't just a hollow comment," she said.

Some people are "truly skeptics as to the value of a trail and open space," Corcoran said.

Boe Carlson, Three Rivers' governmental relations administrator, said, "I think everybody feels that parks are a good thing." What the study shows is they are also "a good investment of public dollars."

StarTribune June 29, 2009

EMBRACE OPEN SPACE

Hennepin County Economic Analysis – Executive Summary

Embrace Open Space commissioned an economic study of home values in Hennepin County to quantify the financial impact of proximity to open spaces on the value of nearby single-family homes. As communities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area begin to plan now for one million new residents coming to the region by 2030, such results can help communities better understand how decisions to conserve open space might affect property tax revenues.

The economic study conducted by Embrace Open Space addresses the following question: *Is there a quantifiable value increment -- enhanced value -- to residential properties that are located near open space, which includes parks and natural areas?* In other words, is there an “open space premium” for homes adjacent or near open space in Hennepin County? And, if so, *what is the value of that open space premium?*

This study examined single-family residential properties in Hennepin County that were sold between January 2001 and March 2006. It is these sales that provide the data for the regression analysis that answers the above questions. Over 81% of the single-family residences in the studied communities have greater value due to the presence of open space. The overall impact on property values county-wide is just over \$3.5 billion, resulting in approximately \$36million/year in increased property tax revenues. This increase in value of single family homes is due to the fact that 18% of Hennepin County land is protected as some form of open space¹.

As compared to Embrace Open Space’s earlier study of Washington County, this study breaks new ground by considering not only the impact on homes that are immediately adjacent (within 200 feet) of open space, but also the impact of being within a half-mile of very large open space (50 acres or more) and the impact on residential property values throughout a city due to that city’s percentage of land in preserved open space. Homes impacted by open-space proximity in Hennepin County benefit from these three components of open space premiums, described in further detail below.

Homes within 200 Feet of Open Space: Properties within 200 feet of open space generally benefit from a value increment. More specifically, this component of the open space premium applies to homes within 200 feet of an open space, where the open space is at least 1 acre in size and where there is not also water within 200 feet (the impact of water proximity on homes is much greater than other open space and is accounted for separately in the analysis). The open-space premium applies to almost all homes that fit these specifications - the only exception is homes larger than one acre that are in high-income areas (defined as areas where median income is above the 75th percentile).

¹ See definition of open space for this study on page 4.

This study also showed that large residential home lots (2 acres or more) are not affected by open-space proximity. For homes of a half-acre or less, the open-space impact is 3.5% (except for homes of a quarter-acre or less in low-income neighborhoods, where the impact is only 1.75%). For homes between half an acre and two acres (except those greater than an acre in high-income areas) the impact is 5.1%.

Countywide, there are over 44,190 homes that benefit from being within 200 feet of open space, and the enhanced value = \$13,700 per home and the total value countywide is \$606 million.

City-Wide Open Space Proportion: Having more open space in a community adds to home values throughout the community. Specifically, the proportion of land that is open space impacts the value of homes in low and moderate income² neighborhoods in that city. In other words, cities with more open space are recognized as having greater amenity value, and people seeking to locate in particular communities appear to factor in that community's open space proportion when purchasing a home.

This new component of open space premium shows that, for every additional percent of open space that is protected (that is, if a city increases open space from 5% of city area to 6%), the impact is .2%. In this example, a \$200,000 home would be worth \$400 more. In all, there are almost 109,000 homes impacted in this way; the average impact is just over \$7,400 per home, and the total value across the county is \$808 million.

Proximity to Large Open Spaces: A new component explored in this study is the economic impact of homes near very large open spaces (greater than 50 acres). This study shows that people pay more to live close to very large open spaces; homes within a quarter-mile of large open spaces are worth almost 4.8% more; those beyond a quarter mile but within half a mile are worth 3% more.

Over 143,000 homes fall within a half-mile of large open spaces that benefit from this component of the open space premium. The average value increment per home is \$15,000 and the total value countywide is \$2.15 billion.

The average impact across all three of components of open space premiums is \$16,300 per home.³

² Income below the county-wide median.

³ Some residential homes benefit from more than one of these components. For this reason, the average increase for all affected parcels - \$16,300 - is somewhat greater than the average for those in each of the three affected categories.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

A study of this magnitude produces a breadth of learnings and observations. The findings are described in more detail below.

Finding: An open space premium exists

The study finds that over 81% of single-family residential homes in Hennepin County benefit from an open space premium because of the presence of open space. These are homes where a 1+ acre open space is within 200 feet, where the community has a high proportion of open space, and/or within ½ mile of a large open space (>50 acres). We did not see impacts on homes on lots larger than one acre and on homes that are in high-income neighborhoods,⁴ and small open spaces -- less than 1 acre in size -- do not generate residential open space premiums in Hennepin County.

After taking into account the impact of other key factors on home values in Hennepin County -- such as size, number of bedrooms, year built, etc -- **the value of open space premium is \$16,300 for homes that benefit from the open space premium, equal to 5.2% of residential value.**

In addition to the overall results, open space premiums and percent open space in each city, have been calculated separately for the 45 Hennepin County cities (and one township) in the study.

Finding: Significant impact on county-wide property valuation and tax revenues

Countywide, the total increase in property values due to the presence of open space is \$3.56 billion. Based on residential average tax rates⁵ within each community, the open space premium generates more than \$36 million in additional tax revenues each year across Hennepin County.

Finding: Density of development affects the open space premium

As expected, the impact of near-by open space is greatest in more densely developed communities. Related to this, this study found that there was virtually no open space premium for larger lot homes; in essence, the landowners own their own "open space" and are therefore less likely to pay a premium for open space bordering their homes.

Less developed communities can anticipate a future when they will be more fully built out, and plan ahead to conserve open space in order to capture the open space premiums as they grow.

Another consideration is that cluster development (smaller lots coupled with reserving a significant amount of the site as protected open space) can substantially increase the overall

⁴ Defined as areas where median income is above the 75th percentile.

⁵ Calculated from assessor's data that included annual property tax in 2006, then averaged across each community to determine a tax rate per \$1,000 in home value. Results verified by Hennepin County Taxpayers Services.

value of the land (and the amount of property tax revenues to the county)—even taking into account a substantial portion of the property being protected as open space—compared to use of that same property divided into relatively few large lots.

Finding: Impact of adding open space within a community

There are varying levels of open space in each city and township (ex: City of Osseo has 1.1% in open space; City of Champlin has 32.1%). This study examined the impact of various levels of open space for each community in the study. Across the 45 communities, 18% of the total area is in open space, and because of its presence, almost half of the \$16,300 open space premium is attributable to this open space.

These results suggest that communities can anticipate a positive community-wide impact of adding open space to their community. For example: If the amount of open space is doubled in a community, the analysis shows that all residential properties would increase in value by 1.3%. If the percent of open space in the community again doubles, the properties will increase an additional 1.3%.

This is important to think about as a community grows. When a community begins with 1% of its land use is open space, then increases it to 2%, the impact on property values is just as powerful as going from 10% to 20% open space in a community. This means that it is particularly powerful to add open space in communities that currently have very little open space.

Methodology

Definition of Open Space

There is no definitive source of information on what constitutes “open space.” The best starting point, however, is data from county and city assessors’ offices, which include information about open space parcels. In some cases, this assessor’s information provides a set of parcels that are clearly “open space” - parcels in the following assessment categories: parks, golf courses, woodlands, and public hunting grounds.

However, many open spaces in Hennepin County were *not* included in the list of properties in the above assessment classes, so additional manual analysis was conducted. Supplemental information was consulted, including the 2005 Generalized Land Use dataset (Metropolitan Council). By matching the land use areas on the Generalized Land Use dataset to the Hennepin County parcel dataset, each parcel could have a land use identified for it. Further analysis looked at combinations of land use and assessment category that looked like they might be open space (for example, publicly owned land with no buildings on it). Representative parcels were examined in more detail, and, in a few cases, researchers actually visited parcels.

On the basis of this manual analysis, additional parcels were included as “open space” owned by charitable organizations, and parcels listed as “state acquired” or otherwise in public ownership (federal property, state property), provided that they were listed in the land use map as parks,

golf courses, water, or undeveloped and have no buildings on them. (The assessor's database gives the assessed value of buildings on any parcel, separate from the value of the land itself; parcels with no building value have no buildings). There were many open space parcels in this group, as well as open space parcels held by charitable organizations. Also, many golf courses (as identified by the land use map) were listed in the assessor's database as commercial properties.

Land with a conservation easement is an important category of open space, particularly when the open space is an integral part of a cluster development. Many of the homes in cluster developments are adjacent to preserved open space and therefore command higher prices. However, parcels with conservation easements cannot be recognized from the assessor's database. In most cases, the open space is privately owned, and the conservation easement may not apply to the entire parcel. We obtained conservation easement information from organizations that hold such easements, and included as many as possible in the inventory of open space parcels.

Regression Analysis

While proximity to open space affects the value of a residential property, it is not the most important factor. Regression analysis was used to separate out the values of *all* the factors of a home's value. Regression analysis is a useful technique because the various determinants of the value of a particular single family home interact with each other. To address the challenge of multiple causation, this study used multi-variate regression, a statistical procedure that isolates the impact of each explanatory variable, holding all other factors constant. Regression analysis effectively compares homes of equal size with each other so that it can isolate the impact of other factors, such as open space proximity.

Timeframes

All analysis is pegged to February 2006 values. The homes that included in the study were sold in the period from January 2001 through February 2006. For homes sold before the end of the study period, the 2006 value was determined by taking the actual sales price and adjusting it by a calculated regression coefficient that shows that home values increased over the study period by .7% per month. For homes with no recorded sale, homes that sold before 1999, and homes not sold at arms length, value in February 2006 was calculated directly from the regression analysis. Using the regression coefficients, values were first calculated by ignoring any open space proximity and then calculated again using actual proximity; the difference between the two is the open space proximity impact.

Note that the study timeframe reflects a period when residential home values were high, before the significant downturn in home values in 2008. However, the nature of the study produces results that are directional and illustrative, and it is very likely that the scale of open space premium is of similar proportion when home values are lower.

Limitations of the study

The economic impact of preserved open space on countywide property values may, for several reasons, be even higher than indicated by the results of this study. This study does not measure the economic impact of open space proximity to other types of residential property, such as

condominiums, townhomes, multi-family dwellings and undeveloped residential land, nor the impact on commercial and industrial properties.

Note that this economic analysis addresses only the increase in home sale value; it does not quantify other community benefits, such as protecting water quality, providing wildlife habitat, supporting recreational opportunities, and preserving natural heritage.

STUDY FINDINGS: WHAT MIGHT THEY SUGGEST?

The findings of this study suggest important implications for long-term development planning. Local officials wishing to recoup some of the tax revenues “lost” because newly acquired open space is not taxable should consider the impacts of future zoning decisions, in light of the findings of this study, to determine whether there might be zoning approaches that could help further their communities’ growth strategies and help recoup some of the “lost” revenue. The findings of the study provide the foundation for discussion in a number of areas, including such considerations as the following:

1. An opportunity to maintain home values: For municipalities and counties, a commitment to acquiring and maintaining preserved open spaces (both public and private) as part of future land use planning and zoning should be viewed as an opportunity to maintain property values and not entirely as a loss in tax base. Creative land use planning and zoning, including setting aside preserved open spaces, can help increase the value of adjacent and city-wide residential homes, resulting in higher tax revenues from those properties.
2. A variety of designs for new developments: Consideration of a variety of designs for new residential developments may result in higher property valuations for the development, increased tax revenues for the county or municipality, the potential for increased demand for such properties with open space proximity, and enhanced quality of life for property owners with proximity to open spaces.
3. A more visually pleasing and inviting community atmosphere: Preserved open spaces—including parks and community walking paths— can result in a more visually pleasing and inviting community atmosphere, which may translate into potential new residents recognizing a higher premium on the value of any property in the area.
4. Grouping homes together on smaller lots: Results of this study suggest opportunities to secure significant financial benefits from developments focused on grouping smaller residential lots together (less than one acre) adjacent to open spaces, rather than larger lots that do not benefit from the open space premium.
5. Future design of parks and other open space areas: Recognition of the open space premium could influence the future design of parks, golf courses and other public/private areas. If the goal were solely to maximize the total open space premium, the design could maximize the length of the outer perimeter of the open space, thus providing greater opportunity for a larger number of residential properties to benefit from proximity to the open space— and resulting in

increased property tax revenues. Such decisions, however, should be based on a number of considerations, including accessibility to the open space, impact of the design on wildlife habitat, and other important factors. To assist land use decisions that balance multiple considerations, a “value analysis framework” is described in the Embrace Open Space report titled *The Economic Value of Open Space: Implications for Land Use Decisions* (2005).

CONCLUSION

These results provide a better understanding of the economic impact of open space on residential home values, which is important information for homebuyers, policymakers and open space planners.



MAYOR & COUNCIL WORKSHOP

DATE: 3/09/2010

WORKSHOP

ITEM #: 2

PRESENTATION

AGENDA ITEM: City Council Workshop – Follow-up Activities & Discussion

SUBMITTED BY: Request of the Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Bruce A. Messelt, City Administrator *BAM*

REVIEWED BY: Sharon Lumby, City Clerk

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED: This item has been scheduled at the request of the Mayor and City Council as a follow-up to the recently held Council Retreat and Planning Session. It is hoped the Mayor and City Council will review the basic understandings emanating from the Retreat and begin suggested follow-on activities and discussions.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The City Council held its annual Planning Retreat on February 26th and 27th, 2010. During this time, the City Council discussed various visions and ideas for Lake Elmo and also assessed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats from the perspective of the community, the city organization, and the City Council.

As part of this follow-up, the City Council also agreed to work on a default listing of possible topics for strategic objectives and goals, as well as potential specific projects or activities to be undertaken as part of the implementation of a healthy strategic planning effort.

STAFF REPORT: City staff recommends scheduling time at this Workshop to review the initial results of the Retreat and begin the next steps in developing a Strategic Plan for 2011-2015.

RECOMMENDATION: Based upon the above background information, it is recommended that the City Council engage in a discussion with City staff and itself regarding initial results of the Retreat and the suggested “next steps” in the strategic planning process. No specific Council action is required or recommended at this time.

Alternatively, the City Council may elect to forgo some or all of the proposed discussion, as appropriate, and or determine if additional follow-up activity is warranted.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. “Good, Bad, Wish We Had” Assessment
2. SWOT Analysis

SUGGESTED ORDER OF BUSINESS:

- Introduction of Item City Administrator
- Report/Presentation..... City Administrator/Clerk
- Discussion Among Council Mayor & City Council
- Public Input, if Appropriate Mayor Facilitates
- Follow-up Exercise City Administrator/Clerk

Lake Elmo Perception

Smith – Reputation – obnoxious politics, anti-developers

Park – Open Space, not generic suburbs

DeLapp – Bedrock for zoning control-developer did not control, property owner controlled. You don't have Open Space if you're open to development

Johnston – Like Open Space feeling

Emmons – Quality of town, has special feel

If the City sets the table and sends out invites, would people come without invites.

Johnston – If we want desirable business have to send out invitations, Perpetual Planning Prevents Progress,

Emmons – Agreed

Johnston - Recognize and implement MOU

Park – Would not want to fight MOU

DeLapp – Don't let eight property owners dictate what they want

Good - Bad - Wish We Had

Brett Emmons

GOOD

Anchor downtown – historic architecture, small street parking landscaping along street.

Blessed with natural resources (lakes), Plan green belt around development in Old Village

BAD

Randall Arndt's video is good. Sprawling, no identified center, walkable versus strip on highway. Narrower streets and turn lanes can be obstacles for moving traffic.

Strip for Old Village and I-94 Corridor

Signage – have restrictions and guidelines otherwise become unsightly.

WISH WE HAD

Landscaping-more inviting, patio seating, lighting, signage control, Brick street approach, concern with width of road to height of buildings. Too high or too narrow doesn't work.

Sculptures, public art make downtown area more inviting.

Solar panels – energy usage.

Examples: Grand Avenue – How do the beautiful houses in Old Village fit.; Industrial

Park – ½ mile radius walkable town

Example: Antigua, Guatemala – signage control on buildings, cobblestone streets, downtown becomes huge destination, be restrictive, have a clear vision, do not have to be against business.

Dean Johnston

GOOD

Neighborhoods

Open Spaces

Good Comprehensive Plan

Residents proud of community

BAD

Insufficient playfields/trails

No recreation program/facilities

Must commute to work – very hostile environment

Hostile political environment

Not supportive of desirable business

WISH WE HAD

Value added creative jobs

Senior housing

Life cycle housing

Viable downtown

State of art library

Nicole Park

BAD

Example: Intersection in Stillwater by Perkins Restaurant and Washington Avenue.

Develop good safe intersections on I-94

GOOD and WISH WE HAD

Examples shown: Office park and ice rink located next to each other.

KFC – old brick building renovated and had only a small sign

Think of anchors for building downtown.

Townhomes for 55+ seniors - a high quality building has to be connected and walk able.

Example: Highland Theater is a destination. Maybe we would have a 3 picture theater

Signs can have same look

Senior development down along I-94 corridor (transitional care) with court yard, bank, etc.

One-level homes – good architecture, green buffer space around them (detached townhomes for seniors, sizeable one level)

Steve DeLapp

GOOD

People create their own skating rinks so the City does not have to have rinks or recreational programs.

Sunfish Park – No one from Lake Elmo in park

Lions Park – not single person there on rink

Downtown Lake Elmo attacks people

Discover Crossing – stone bridge installed

BAD

Examples: Ivy Ct. Front yard – asphalt of 60 ft, large garage
Highway 5 – auto dealership, no trees, wasteland, doesn't say Welcome
I-94 billboard – truck signs, 25' sign on Hudson Blvd, barrel man and his trash
Need enforcement

WISH WE HAD

Form follows function – Example: Manceno, CA
New England town – sign regulations
Boardwalk – shared amenity, create artificial pond
Buildings – nothing fake look old
Welcoming narrow streets with trees Example: Hill Trail and Hidden Bay in Lake Elmo

Anne Smith

GOOD

Schiltgen Farm Upgrade
Picture of leadership – staff support Council wishes
Park and recreation areas Example: Roosevelt and rink area
Fall Festival – picture of volunteers
Downtown – Close Architectures Landscape Plan (map provided did not get radius correct)
City Trail Plan is a good plan

WISH WE HAD

The tenacity to get trail plan done.
Jobs – good solid strategic plan
Downtown – small streets, angle parking, landscaping for Lake Elmo Avenue and
Highway 5, round-about squares, (she shared Emmons' vision)

BAD

Behind in technology to track records
Focus on budget – have not kept up with necessary cuts furloughs, what's reasonable
Looking at quarterly reports
Enforcement debauchees,
What do future diverse groups of residents want?
Equipment plan needs

Council comments on retreat:

Park – Great, thankful for the City Administrator, needs consistency
DeLapp – Agree, the meeting was the most important in five years, decision making as a group, need to get to the core issues and need the facts to deal with issues
Johnston – there are 4-5 major issues, significant issues. that's progress
Emmons – Learn new things, free flow of issues, some friction in areas
Smith – It's not All or None ---find middle ground

STRENGTHS

COMMUNITY:

1. Parks and parks system
2. Happy residents that trust their Council/staff
3. Volunteer culture
4. Open Space – Leadership
5. Intelligent residents
6. Residents putting City first and neighborhood second
7. Strong sense of place – residents love Lake Elmo for what it is.
8. Strong and close community spirit in village area

CITY:

1. Public Works/Fire Dept.
2. Staff wants to move forward and work hard
3. One shared downtown
4. All undeveloped land
5. Enough undeveloped land to improve environmental ethic and standards
6. Great park system
7. Small town approach to services/infrastructure (keeps \$ & debt down)

COUNCIL:

1. Approachable
2. Open to ideas, wants to focus on quality future for Lake Elmo
3. Good Plans
4. Care about quality
5. Diverse backgrounds
6. Strongly like (love) and support City

WEAKNESSES

COMMUNITY:

1. Not involved enough in Fall Festival and other City stuff.
2. Lack of transportation options
3. Weakness in attracting volunteerism
4. Not enough jobs
5. Split community
 - a. School Districts and their communities
 - b. Church communities
 - c. Youth sports communities

CITY:

1. Follow through (No Action Item List)
2. Budgeting
3. Commission misunderstand roles
4. Different standards for different people and land
5. Pockets of isolated clusters of residents
6. Government service efficiency
7. Zoning Enforcement
8. Small staff = staff must be good at many things (not specialized)
9. Institutional memory is low
10. Staff in maintenance mode versus visioning/innovation mode

COUNCIL:

1. Plan Implementation!
2. Politicizing
3. We are not sending out the invites and setting the table to attract and create the future we want. This takes time.
4. Knowledge on what works to attract jobs
5. Strong personalities creates conflict
6. Agree on approx. 70-80%, but fight on the 20%

OPPORTUNITIES

COMMUNITY:

1. Senior housing
2. Life-cycle housing
3. Quality/innovative
4. Jobs
5. Lake Elmo has a reputation as A GREAT place to live and visit.

CITY:

1. The City could be buying land in certain areas to have future opportunities.
2. Using web and quarterly to full potential (disbursement of information)
3. We still have time to distinguish our surrounding communities in our own and unique innovative way.
4. Green incentives and funding: external and internal

COUNCIL:

1. We all care about the future quality of Lake Elmo
2. Diverse make-up of governing body
3. This is our chance to set Lake Elmo's seat at the table within our surrounding communities.

THREATS – (External)

COMMUNITY:

1. Vandalism
2. If part of the community keeps fighting growth, the growth they'll/we'll end up with in the end will be left-overs.
3. City being split up by various conflicting institutions and outside factions (i.e. divide and conquer)
4. Met Council MOU – over development
5. Development pressure

CITY:

1. Sewer implementation (w/poor market WAC's)
2. Met Council
3. Loss of library
4. Water
5. Lawsuits by landowners if we don't move forward with MOU.
6. Thru-traffic
7. All undeveloped land
8. Billboard/signage visibility of I-94
9. Met Council MOU & WIF
10. Water system overextended
11. Costs of infrastructure in uncertain times

COUNCIL:

1. Reputation of business climate
2. Lack of understanding of business site selection process
3. Views of very few trying to represent masses
4. Not enough time and money
5. Too much one-sided pressure from people who think they had money to make off City residents and by stealing City's exceptional reputation