City of Blaine
City Council Workshop

December 16, 2024 | 5:30 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

AGENDA

NOTICE OF WORKSHOP MEETING
In accordance with the provisions of Section 3.01 of the Blaine City Charter, a Council Workshop meeting is scheduled for the following purpose:

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. New Business

3.1. 2024-544 Lexington Crossings (125th and Lexington Avenue) Development Scenarios
Sponsors: Erik Thorvig, Community Development Director

3.2. 2024-592 State and Federal Legislative Agendas
Sponsors: Michelle Wolfe, City Manager

4. Other Business

5. Adjournment

City of Blaine
Staff Report

File Number: 2024-544

Agenda Date	Status
December 16, 2024	
In Control	**File Type**
City Council	Workshop Item

New Business - Erik Thorvig, Community Development Director

Agenda Item # 3.1

Lexington Crossings (125th and Lexington Avenue) Development Scenarios

Background

The property at the southwest corner of 125th Avenue and Lexington Avenue has been proposed for development. The 37.15 acre site is privately owned and was listed for sale. The property is under contract by two separate buyers, HJ Development (commercial development on the east side of future Zest Street), and Thompkins Development LLC (west side of future Zest Street).

HJ Development has proposed to develop five commercial buildings which include a grocery store, retail/restaurant, and a higher end daycare/preschool. Significant portions of the site would be preserved for wetland, stormwater ponds and open space. Thompkins Development would purchase land west of future Zest Street and has been working with North Shore Development Partners to construct an apartment building on Lot 6 (see attached plan), and would retain Lot 5 for future commercial development to be done by another developer.

HJ Development would construct all the infrastructure on the site including roads, utilities, traffic signal at Zest Street and 125th Avenue and site grading/preparation. The overall site development costs for roads, utilities, traffic signal at Zest Street and 125th Avenue, and site grading/preparation is approximately $5,487,524. Developers of the sites west of future Zest Street would be responsible for approximately $1,275,379 in infrastructure and site preparation costs, with HJ Development being responsible for approximately $4,212,145.

North Shore Development Partners submitted an application for a comprehensive plan land use amendment for the proposed apartment site.

The current land use for the entire property is Planned Commercial (PI). Development of an apartment building requires a land use change to high density residential. The City Council considered this item at their November 4, 2024, meeting. Several council members expressed concern about the land use change and a motion was made to postpone this item to allow the City Council to consider options for the project that would not involve an apartment building.

History

In 2021, the City Council identified this corner as a "Priority Area" during a city visioning process. A new zoning district was created for this area known as Town Commercial (B-5). The property was rezoned to B-5 and a comprehensive land use amendment to Planned Commercial (PC) was approved in August 2021. The property had previously been zoned Community Commercial (B-2) and guided commercial in the comprehensive plan.

On July 18, 2022, HJ Development presented a concept plan to the city council at a workshop (see attached). The concept plan included commercial uses and two apartment buildings on the west side of Zest Street. Discussion also occurred about the City participating financially in off-site road improvements south of the development property and connecting to Lexington Avenue. Additional discussions regarding land use and off-site road improvements occurred on June 5, 2023; August 21, 2023; and January 8, 2024. Minutes for those workshops are included.

On December 5, 2022, a preliminary plat was approved by the City Council which subdivided the existing property into two outlots and identified the future Zest Street alignment. The plat application was submitted by Thompkins Development, LLC. This plat created the areas to be acquired by HJ Development (Outlot B) and Thompkins Development, LLC (Outlot A). A final plat still needs to be submitted for approval. Until a final plat is recorded with Anoka County, the property still remains as one parcel.

Current Plan and Circumstances

Since being presented to the City Council in 2022, the concept plan has changed. Originally, two apartment buildings were shown on the concept plan. The current plan shows one, 120-unit apartment building. The apartment developer also changed from when the plan was originally proposed in 2022. Additionally, Jerry's Foods has entered into a letter of intent with HJ Development to be the grocery anchor for the commercial portion of the project. Additional due diligence completed by the developer in the last two years has identified the overall site development costs, requirements from Anoka County regarding a signal at 125th Avenue and Zest Street (which is required regardless of whether an apartment is approved), and wetland challenges that exist on the property.

As indicated above, the overall site development costs for roads, utilities, traffic signal at Zest Street and 125th Avenue, and site grading/preparation, is approximately $5,487,524. The developer(s) of the sites west of future Zest Street would be responsible for approximately $1,275,379 in infrastructure and site preparation costs with HJ Development being responsible for approximately $4,212,145. If an apartment building is not approved, Thompkins Development, LLC would cancel their purchase agreement for the land west of Zest Street as they would not have a development partner for the apartment site and are not willing to fund the up-front infrastructure costs without a developer.

HJ Development needs a partner for the west development sites to help fund the up-front infrastructure costs. If no developer exists for the west development sites, HJ Development would have to purchase the land for $1,100,000 and carry an additional $1,257,379 in infrastructure costs associated with the land. They are not financially willing or able to do this, which would in turn result in HJ Development abandoning the overall commercial project.

City staff reviewed various scenarios with both HJ Development and Thompkins Development where the City could financially participate to allow development to happen in lieu of an apartment building. The following is an analysis of scenarios that potentially exist.

Scenario 1 - City Approves Land Use Change for Apartment Site

Under this scenario, the original development plan would occur. HJ Development would purchase the east portion of the site and Thompkins Development would purchase the west portion of the site. Thompkins Development would sell the apartment site to North Shore Development and retain Lot 5. Thompkins Development/North Shore would contribute $1,275,379 towards the overall site development costs and HJ Development would complete all site improvements as proposed. There would be no financial impact on the City.

Scenario 2 - City Contributes $1,275,379 Towards Infrastructure Costs for Lots 5 and 6

Under this scenario, the City would contribute the infrastructure costs allocated to the sites west of Zest Street. This assumes the land use change is not approved. Though Thompkins Development would no longer have a partner for the apartment site to help fund their portion of the infrastructure, because the City is paying the up-front infrastructure cost, Thompkins Development would still purchase the property and find a commercial development partner. Staff proposed a scenario where the City would get paid back by the developer(s) of the west sites when those properties develop.

Thompkins Development's response to this structure was that "a deferred payment against the land will not be acceptable to any financial institution providing land loan financing for the acquisition." The City could provide the infrastructure amount and not get paid back.

Scenario 3 - Existing Thompkins Development, LLC Purchase Agreement is Assigned to the City

Under this scenario, the existing purchasing agreement between the land seller and Thompkins Development would be assigned to the City. The purchase agreement identifies a $1.1MM purchase price plus a $400,000 fee to be paid to Thompkins Development. The City would be responsible for $1,275,379 in infrastructure costs. Between the land purchase and infrastructure costs, the total would be $2,775,379. The City will be delivered two, 3.25 and 1.57 acre, development-ready sites. Based on comparable development ready commercial land values, the sites could be sold by the City to a commercial developer for $15-$20/sf., which equates to $3,149,388 - $4,199,184. This would require further negotiation with Thompkins Development. Both HJ Development and Thompkins Development have indicated this is their preferred option.

Financing Options

Given the nature of the proposed financial participation, generally staff would recommend utilization of EDA funds. Accounting for the current investments within the 105th Redevelopment project area and the approved purchase agreement with the master developer that contains a promissory note calling for first payment in December 2028, and a balloon payment in 2032, the EDA does not currently have reserves on hand to leverage for the 125th and Lexington project area.

With EDA funding not viable at this time, staff would recommend that council consider utilizing the Strategic Priorities Fund, which was established in 2019, with council adopting a Use of Strategic Priorities Funds Policy on September 7, 2022.

Per the policy, it is the intention of the City Council that the Strategic Priorities Fund be used only after careful deliberation and for two primary purposes:

- *As a funding source for items considered to be of high priority for accomplishing established strategic initiatives*
- As a supplemental, levy-stabilizing funding source from which to draw to maintain basic service levels in the event of an economic downturn

Additionally, expenditures or transfers from the Strategic Priorities Fund shall be made only after careful deliberation by the City Council. Use of funds for strategic initiatives must:

- Identify that the project has sufficient community-wide benefit which is consistent with established strategic initiatives, city goals, or programs
- *The project will advance or achieve one or more of the strategic initiatives identified in the City's adopted Strategic Plan*

The policy also requires the specific project to be funded and the amount of funds to be appropriated for the project be incorporated into an authorizing resolution adopted by an affirmative vote of at least five councilmembers.

Staff believes this project satisfies the requirements outlined within the Strategic Priorities policy as noted by the italicized and underlined text above.

Currently, an interfund loan of $3.1MM (which was the full balance of the fund) exists with the Strategic Priorities Fund to support the acquisition of 2043 105th Avenue. The loan was established with the condition that it would be eliminated should bonding be provided by the City, which was done via Taxable General Obligation Temporary Tax Increment Bonds Series 2024C. With proceeds expected to arrive on December 12, the loan will be eliminated, and the $3.1MM balance will be restored in the Strategic Priorities Fund.

Staff Recommendation

Questions for Council

Which, if any, of the scenarioes outlined in the report does Council prefer to proceed with?

Attachment List

1. Current Concept Plan
2. July 18 2022 Concept Plan
3. July 18 2022 Workshop Minutes
4. June 5 2023 Workshop Minutes
5. August 21 2023 Workshop Minutes
6. January 8 2024 Workshop Minutes

7. Preliminary Plat

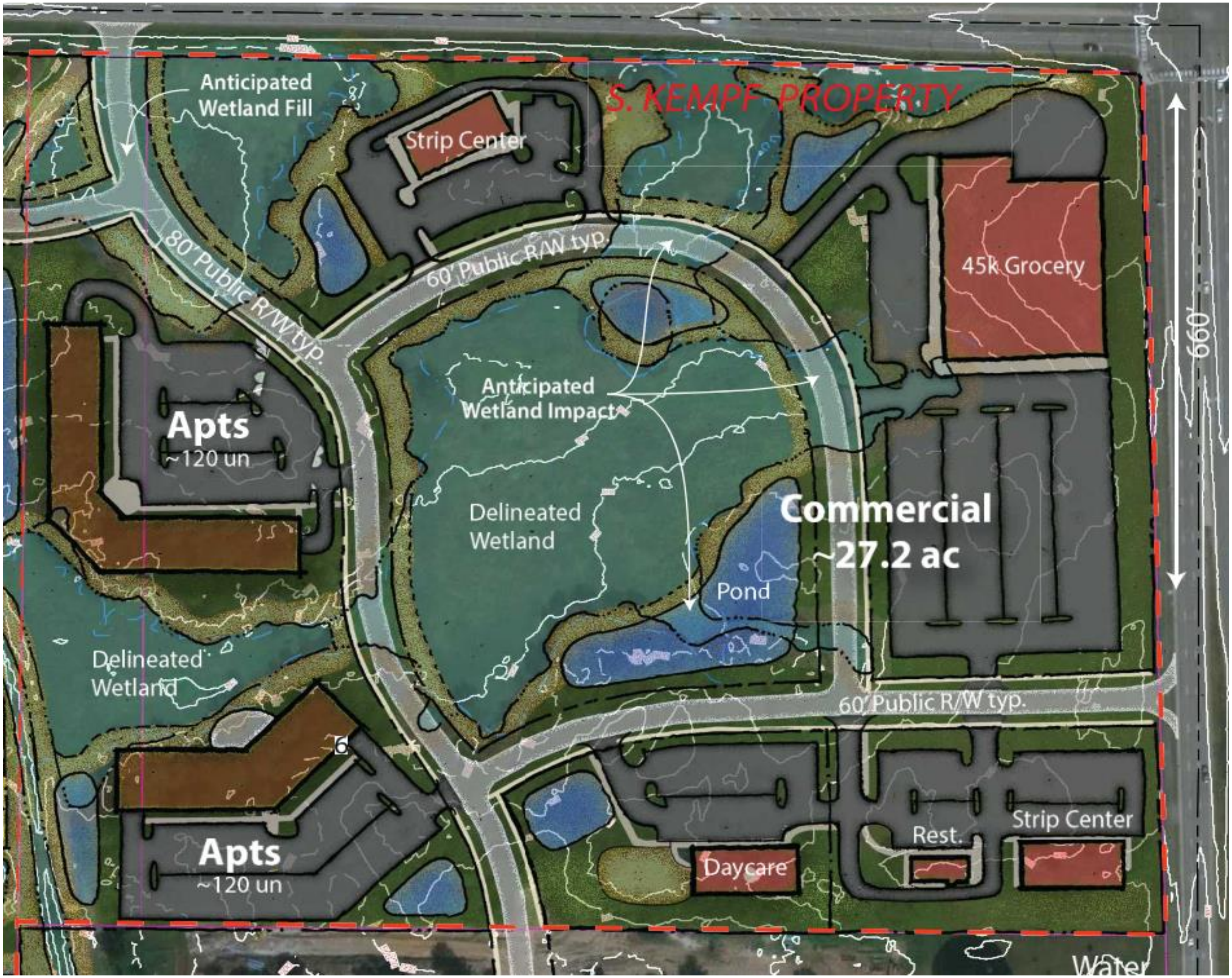
SITE DATA

Total Site Area (AC.)	40.33
Lot Area (AC.)	17.98
Lot 1 - Grocery Store	7.89
Lot 2 - Retail / Restaurant	1.38
Lot 3 - Retail / Restaurant	1.40
Lot 4 - Automotive	0.77
Lot 5 - Office / Retail	1.57
Lot 6 - Apartments	3.25
Lot 7 - Daycare Facility	1.72
Outot Area (AC.)	15.31
Outlot A	10.45
Outlot B	1.06
Outlot C	3.36
Outlot D	0.44
ROW Area (AC.)	7.04

LEXINGTON & MAIN CONCEPT PLAN

Blaine, MN | 09/05/24

CARLSON McCAIN



S. KEMPF PROPERTY
Anticipated
Wetland Fill
Strip Center
80' Public R/W typ.
60' Public R/W typ.
45k Grocery
660'
Apts
~120 un
Anticipated
Wetland Impact
Delineated
Wetland
Commercial
~27.2 ac
Pond
Delineated
Wetland
60' Public R/W typ.
Apts
~120 un
Daycare
Rest.
Strip Center
Water

North

Councilmember Massoglia stated he would not support TIF being used for any housing project in Blaine. He encouraged the developer to reconsider their rental rates in order to cover their costs.

Councilmember Newland asked if this would be a new TIF district. Mr. Thorvig reported this was the case.

Further discussion ensued regarding how property values within the Northtown area would be increasing over time and how this would assist with raising rental rates for the proposed project, while also assisting with paying off the TIF request in a shorter amount of time.

Mayor Sanders stated he supported this project, along with the rezoning of this property to high density. He believed this was a good project for this area stating this project would bring vibrancy to this area. He recommended the TIF request not be more than 10% of the project, noting this has been the amount considered in the past.

Mr. Thorvig stated he could work with Baker Tily and could come back to the Council with different TIF scenarios for this project.

Informational: no action required

3-2 125th Avenue and Lexington Avenue Concept Plan

Attachments: Attachments

Presentation

City Planner Sellman stated the subject site is located at the southwest corner of Lexington and 125th Avenue consisting of about 37 acres (27 acres on the corner and 10 acres adjacent). As part of the City Council visioning discussions in early 2021, this area was included and identified as a priority development area. The Council recognized the need to be more proactive in future development to ensure it is consistent with the vision of the community. A new zoning district was created for this area known as B-5 (Town Commercial), the site was rezoned to B-5, and a comprehensive land use amendment was approved for PC (Planned Commercial) in August 2021.

Ms. Sellman explained the submitted concept plan for discussion includes commercial/retail uses along Lexington Avenue and 125th Avenue, and two apartments on the interior of the development on the west side of the proposed Zest Street extension. This concept is proposed by three partnerships. HJ Development will develop the 27-acre commercial piece, Thompkins Development LLC will develop

10.3 acres with apartments and Enclave will own and manage the apartments. Staff commented further on the proposed project and requested feedback from the Council on the apartments and roadway extensions.

Chris Moe, HJ Development, introduced himself to the Council noting he had completed several developments in Blaine. He explained he has been working with Mayor Sanders and Councilmember Robertson to find an area where he could bring a new commercial development to Blaine. He introduced the project to the Council and stated he appreciated the City’s big vision for this area. He reported the apartments included in the project would assist with driving the proposed commercial.

Mayor Sanders thanked the developers for their interest in Blaine. He stated this was a critical property for expanding the City and he believed a grocery store would be a great fit as well as the apartments. He recommended more high-quality restaurants be considered and suggested walking paths through the wetland be constructed to allow the apartment residents to be able to walk to shopping or restaurants.

Councilmember Jeppson supported the City completing the road in order to attract development.

Mr. Moe discussed how completing the infrastructure would assist with attracting commercial development in this area.

Mayor Sanders requested staff pursue grants for this infrastructure in order to assist the City with this expense.

Councilmember Robertson commented this was a challenging piece of property and she supported the proposed development. She indicated her only concern with the apartment complex was with the building height and size. She encouraged the developer to reconsider the unit count for the apartment building. She supported the development having more standalone restaurant space and recommended the daycare be turned into another use.

Councilmember Massoglia stated he liked the mixed uses within this development. He understood residents were concerned about the overall density in this area, noting there was little room at the schools and parks in this area. He commented his only concern was how this area would be impacted if additional high density were located on the adjacent corner. Mr. Thorvig commented there may be some merit this and staff could speak to the Metropolitan Council regarding this matter.

Councilmember Newland indicated he supported the proposed development, especially if it included a grocery store. He asked what the City had in mind for controlling the access points onto the major streets. City Engineer Schluender commented on the entrance points and noted the City had had conversations with Anoka County. He explained a signal had been confirmed at Zest Street and the City would have to work with the County on spacing of the right-ins and right-outs.

Councilmember Jeppson understood this was a concept plan. She discussed how the large buildings along Highway 65 served a great purpose but were not aesthetically pleasing. She encouraged the developer to construct buildings at Main Street and Lexington Avenue that were attractive.

Councilmember Paul stated he believed this was a very good concept plan.

Mayor Sanders commented this could become a destination area with the right amount of creativity and with the proper plan. He anticipated the development at this intersection would draw residents from Ham Lake and Lino Lakes for shopping and dining.

Brian Bochman, Enclave, introduced himself to the Council noting his business was based out of North Dakota and St. Louis Park. He reported he currently has 17 projects underway in the metro area. He discussed how exciting this intersection was given the traffic counts. He stated this was a multi-family friendly development given how spaced out the adjacent neighborhoods were. He explained he was excited to be a part of this project and thanked the Council for their input.

Councilmember Massoglia asked if any parks would be constructed within this development. Brian Bochman, Enclave stated this would be difficult given the number of wetlands in the area.

Mayor Sanders thanked the developers for coming forward and presenting their concept plan in further detail to the City Council.

Informational: no action required

3-3 **Introduction of the 2023 Preliminary Budget**

Attachments: 2022.07.18 - Workshop Presentation - Prelim Budget Background Intro

Deputy Finance Director Bong presented core background information related to the 2023 preliminary budget to the Council in order to prepare for small group discussions which will be hosted late July and early

City of Blaine
City Council Workshop

June 5, 2023 | 5:30 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

MINUTES

NOTICE OF WORKSHOP MEETING

In accordance with the provisions of Section 3.01 of the Blaine City Charter, a Council Workshop meeting is scheduled for the following purpose:

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Sanders at 5:30PM.

ROLL CALL
PRESENT: Mayor Tim Sanders, Councilmembers Leslie Larson, Chris Massoglia, Tom Newland, Jess Robertson, and Lori Saroya.

ABSENT: Councilmember Terra Fleming.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Michelle Wolfe; Community Development Director Erik Thorvig; City Planner Sheila Sellman; Safety Services Director/Police Chief Brian Podany; Finance Director Joe Huss; Deputy Finance Director Ali Bong; Director of Engineering Dan Schluender; City Attorney Tom Loonan; Senior Parks and Recreation Manager Jerome Krieger; Police Sergeant Travis Hale; Communications Manager Ben Hayle; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

2. New Business

2.1. 2023-228 Metropolitan Council Update
Sponsors: Michelle Wolfe, City Manager

City Manager Wolfe stated Metropolitan Council Member Peter Lindstrom was in attendance to provide the city council with a general update.

Met Council Member Peter Lindstrom shared an update with council on District 10. He noted he served as an elected local government official for 20 years and was now serving on the Met Council. He reviewed the major items addressed by the Met Council which were waste water, transit, community development, HRA and parks. He thanked Councilmember Robertson for serving on the Met Council Transportation Board. He thanked the city council for their time and encouraged the council to contact him with comments or concerns.

2.2. 2023-213 Infrastructure Funding Options for Development at the Southwest Corner of 125th Avenue and Lexington Avenue

Sponsors: Erik Thorvig, Community Development Director

Community Development Director Thorvig stated HJ Development has been analyzing potential development at the southwest corner of 125th Avenue/Lexington Avenue. The subject property is 37.15 acres. The property, along with others to the south, were rezoned in 2021 to B-5 Town Commercial. The city council created this zoning district specifically for this area to encourage retail, restaurants, office, and other high quality commercial development. HJ Development has been analyzing potential development for approximately 12 months. The site is challenging due to a large wetland in the middle of the property. Most of the due diligence that has occurred is understanding development options and the associated development costs. They have also been trying to secure a high end anchor grocer. The developer is close to securing an agreement with an anchor grocer and could potentially disclose the grocer at the June 5 meeting.

Mr. Thorvig explained Chris Moe, HJ Development, presented to the City Council at a workshop on July 18, 2022. The presentation included a concept for commercial development on the east side of the proposed new Zest Street extension and approximately 200-240 apartment units on the west side of the proposed new Zest Street extension which would be developed by Enclave. The apartment project requires a rezoning and comprehensive plan land use amendment. At the workshop, the city council provided comments on the proposed apartments and overall, was receptive to the change. No formal changes to the zoning and/or comprehensive plan land use designation has occurred. This request would come forward with a formal development proposal. The developer did apply for a preliminary plat in 2022 which subdivided the property.

Mr. Thorvig indicated the plat dedicated the future Zest Street right-of-way through the development and created two outlots. One outlot is 8.83 acres and is on the west side of Zest Street. This would be the future apartment property. The other outlot is 25.83 acres and is on the east side of Zest Street. This would be the future commercial property. The purpose of the subdivision was to allow the potential sale of a portion of the land. However, this has not yet occurred. A final plat would need to be applied for to create the lots. Over the last 18 months, there has been discussion about the timing and financial responsibility of future roads and infrastructure in this area.

Director of Engineering Schluender stated the extension of these two streets was previously discussed. He commented on how there was limited development surrounding this area. He reviewed the funding sources available for these projects and noted the city could assess the neighboring parcels. He reported there were only three parcel owners and the project would be 100% assessed. He noted Zest Street and Lakes Parkway were identified as MSA roadways. He stated sanitary sewer and watermain were installed up to the treatment plant. He reported if this roadway were installed, stubs should be installed for future development purposes. He commented another option available to the City would be to bond for this project. He requested feedback from the council on how to proceed.

Finance Director Huss clarified bonding was a source of financing and the repayment would be through property taxes or assessments.

Chris Moe, HJ Development explained he has been working on this project for the past 12 months and he believed he would be bringing a great project to the community. He reported he has been working with city staff and an earth worker contractor to ensure he was designing the project to city standards. He indicated there were wetland challenges for the site and noted he would need cooperation from the city when it came to wetland credits. He reported his company typically builds and holds properties long term.

Mayor Sanders indicated he was grateful for the developer's vision for this property. He stated this was a priority area that needed an amenity driven project. He asked if MSA and utility dollars could be used for infrastructure expenses. Mr. Schluender reported this was the case.

Councilmember Saroya questioned who would be involved in this project. Mr. Moe reported HJ Development and Enclave would be involved in this project.

Councilmember Larson stated this was the first time she was hearing about this project and requested further information regarding the apartment buildings. Mr. Moe explained the idea was to have the project built at the same time. He noted without the grocer the apartments would not be completed. He commented further on how the apartments would create synergy for the entire development.

Councilmember Newland stated he was interested in this project. He commented on the roadways and noted he understood the roadways were necessary. He asked what roadway option staff would recommend. Mr. Huss recommended the council let policy guide them on this matter. He stated because this was a new roadway it would have to be 100% assessed or developer installed.

Councilmember Newland questioned if staff was gauging push back from the property owners on the idea of new roadways. Mr. Schluender commented staff has dealt with these two property owners in the past and neither expressed they were ready for development to occur. Mr. Huss reported the new roadways would assist with enhancing the value of these properties for development.

Mayor Sanders inquired how much MSA funding would be available for this project. Mr. Schluender stated 100% of the street would be eligible for MSA funding.

Mayor Sanders supported the city proceeding in this manner given the fact there was only three property owners and the city was one of those property owners.

Councilmember Robertson supported the city using the MSA dollars as well. She liked the idea of creating a large ponding amenity within this project. She did not support 100% assessing for this project given the fact they were large parcels. She noted it was within the council's purview to use MSA dollars for a project like this. Mr. Huss reported this was the case.

Mr. Schluender recommended staff layout the five year CIP if the direction for this project was to proceed with using MSA dollars.

Councilmember Robertson thanked the developer for embracing the city's vision for this property.

City Manager Wolfe reported she would like the city attorney and staff to review this item further to ensure the council would not be setting a precedent if only MSA funds were used for this roadway.

Mayor Sanders supported staff reviewing this matter further and looked forward to reviewing this report at a future meeting.

Councilmember Saroya requested further information regarding the proposed apartments. Mr. Moe reported the proposed apartments would be two four-story stick built complexes with approximately 150 units per building.

Councilmember Saroya asked if a traffic study had been completed. Mr. Moe indicated this has not been completed, but this could be done.

Councilmember Saroya expressed concern with the proposed apartments and noted she did not support this portion of the development.

Councilmember Massoglia reported he could support the apartments given their location and because they were away from single family homes. He discussed how the apartments would assist in supporting the proposed commercial uses. He explained he supported the city assessing some portion of the roadway project (30% to 35%).

Mr. Schluender stated the county improved 125th last year and took a 20 year growth pattern into consideration when they completed these improvements.

Councilmember Larson expressed concern with how the school district would be impacted if these two apartment complexes were constructed. She noted she did have concerns with Enclave as there were reports of utilizing undocumented workers on a project in Brooklyn Park and recommended Mr. Moe and staff investigate this further. Mr. Moe stated he has found Enclave to be a very reputable builder and stated he would look into this further.

Councilmember Robertson explained the school district has been working on a growth plan but she supported the city checking in with the school district further to see how this type of development would impact the surrounding schools. She commented further on how the apartment units were necessary in order to support a high end grocer and proposed commercial uses. Ms. Wolfe reported she met with the school district earlier this year and noted the district has requested to hold monthly meetings with city staff going forward.

Councilmember Saroya stated she was hearing from residents that Blaine was growing too fast and that the infrastructure was not keeping up. She questioned if the comprehensive plan had to be revisited in order to ensure traffic and school concerns are being properly addressed.

Mayor Sanders explained that not every apartment complex in Blaine has been controversial. He noted the apartments off of 109th and Lexington Avenue was completed with no neighborhood concerns and was doing very well.

Councilmember Larson stated she just got done door knocking 3,000 houses in this area and these neighbors were frustrated with the loss of trees and development in their area. She explained residents expressed the need for a high end grocer and questioned why Blaine was in the top five cities for apartment growth.

Councilmember Saroya asked what the correlation was to new apartment complexes and a high end grocer and if a grocer's employees would be slated to live there. Mr. Moe stated he was not the developer of the apartments but noted he did have an ownership interest in the apartments. He noted he did have a great deal of commercial space in the metro area and understood how apartment complexes assisted in driving visits to shopping centers, restaurants and grocery stores.

Mayor Sanders requested staff report back to the council with funding options.

2.3. 2023-216 Lakeside Commons Beach and Blaine Festival Update
Sponsors: Jerome Krieger, Sr. Recreation Manager

Safety Services Manager/Police Chief Podany presented an update on the Lakeside Commons Beach season.

Councilmember Saroya explained she appreciated how Police Chief Podany policed in a compassionate and ethical manner. She stated she was worried about the high school kids and what message would be sent when the gate was installed at the beach. She suggested other positive engagement opportunities be considered in order to provide activities for the youth in the community. Police Chief Podany stated the gate would only be put in place once the park was closed for the night.

Mayor Sanders stated many of the issues with youth were occurring during the day. He was concerned with the foul language and blatant disrespect that was shown to the officers by some young people and thanked the officers for the restraint and professionalism they show these individuals.

Ms. Wolfe reported the number of cameras at the beach had been increased. She commented on how this would assist with identifying kids that were causing trouble at the beach.

Ms. Wolfe distributed a schedule of activities for the Blaine Festival. She reviewed the schedule and noted a boy scout troop would be assisting with handing out candy this year and encouraged the council to reach out to Senior Parks and Recreation Manager Krieger with questions or comments.

Councilmember Larson questioned how long the parade would be. Councilmember Robertson estimated the parade takes about 45 minutes.

Mayor Sanders encouraged the city councilmembers to attend as many events as possible during the festival. He thanked the Blaine Festival Committee members for all of their work on this years event.

2.4. 2023-225 UAS (Unmanned Aircraft System) Overview
Sponsors: Brian Podany, Safety Services Manager/Police Chief

Safety Services Director/Police Chief Podany stated the Police Department is interested in acquiring an Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) system to enhance public safety within the City.

Sergeant Travis Hale explained the UAS would be used for a multitude of things, including searching for missing persons, suspects who have fled scenes, and providing aerial video coverage of special events and security risk incidents or locations (including sporting tournaments and Lakeside Commons beach/park). UAS technology has become increasingly common in public safety and there are other neighboring agencies within Anoka County with UAS programs. It was noted the department has adequate forfeiture funds to cover purchase and implementation costs of the program. Although the financial cost does not require city council approval, the police department wants to educate the council on the program and related use, including covering any privacy/data concerns. The department has pulled the item from previous years' budget requests, but with the continued increase in events and incidents for UAS utilization, the Department is interested in moving forward with this program now. It was noted the drone operators would have to pass a flight test with the FAA. He commented further on the proposed drone noting the costs and features that would be included. The next step for the proposed drone program would be to hold a public comment period.

Councilmember Massoglia expressed concern with using DJI drones and asked if there were any American made drones that could be used by the city. Sergeant Hale explained there were no American made drones that would had the same quality standards as the DJI drones.

Councilmember Saroya questioned what other agencies in Anoka County were using drones. Sergeant Hale reported Coon Rapids, Columbia Heights and the Anoka County Sheriff's Office had drone programs.

Council offered their support for the purchase of an unmanned aircraft system.

Mayor Sanders recessed the workshop at 7:00PM until after completion of the EDA meeting.

2.5. 2023-231 Closed Session Pursuant to MN Statute 13D.05(3)(c)(3) - Property Acquisitions Related to 105th Avenue Development Area

Sponsors: Erik Thorvig, Community Development Director

After motion by Mayor Sanders, second by Councilmember Massoglia, the Council met in closed session to discuss a property acquisition related to the 105th Avenue Development Area.

3. Other Business

The consensus of the council was to hold the July 5 city council meeting as scheduled with possible remote attendance by one or more members.

City Clerk Sorensen requested direction from the council on how to proceed with the fire board appointments.

Mayor Sanders stated he supported recommending one incumbent, Terry Wold, and one new applicant, Becky Booker, to be appointed to the SBM Fire Board.

Councilmember Newland explained he served on the fire board for six years, three of those years as the president. He stated he was honored to be interviewed by the mayor and council when he applied for this position. He commented on how the fire department was transitioning to duty crews and he believed Mr. Wold and Ms. Booker would be great candidates to assist the fire board with this transition.

Councilmember Saroya stated she was in support of interviewing each candidate. She noted not every candidate looks good on paper and would benefit from the interview process. She indicated it was her understanding member Carol Donahoe did not live in Blaine and said it was her hope the fire board could be diverse in order to properly represent the city of Blaine. She stated this was a sensitive issue for her as the former member had shared comments against her and requested the council do the appointments through an open and transparent process and recommended the interviews be held.

Councilmember Robertson commented this former member who was of concern was no longer serving and feared the council was taking too much time on this matter because the fire board was a separate governing body with their own bylaws. She was of the opinion interviews did not have to be held because there was already council consensus to appoint two individuals.

Mayor Sanders agreed he wanted the city's boards to be diverse. He noted the council appointed many people of color and women as well as adjunct positions in order to allow more people to serve on its boards and commissions and reiterated that Ms. Booker was a tremendous candidate who would serve the city well on the fire board.

Councilmember Massoglia stated he believed Mr. Wold and Ms. Booker would be great candidates for the fire board.

Ms. Wolfe reported she received an email from Councilmember Fleming noting she would defer to the city councilmembers and mayor who have more experience in this matter and that because there was an overwhelming consensus for two of the candidates she agreed there was no need to interview all candidates.

The consensus of the council was to place the appointment of the fire board applicants Terry Wold and Becky Booker on the June 20 city council agenda for approval.

4. Adjournment

The Workshop was adjourned at 9:45PM.

City of Blaine
City Council Workshop

August 21, 2023 | 5:30 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

MINUTES

NOTICE OF WORKSHOP MEETING

In accordance with the provisions of Section 3.01 of the Blaine City Charter, a Council Workshop meeting is scheduled for the following purpose:

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Mayor Sanders.

PRESENT: Mayor Tim Sanders, Councilmember Tom Newland, Councilmember Lori Saroya, Councilmember Jess Robertson, Councilmember Terra Fleming, Councilmember Chris Massoglia, Councilmember Leslie Larson

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Michelle Wolfe; Community Development Director Erik Thorvig; City Planner Sheila Sellman; Safety Services Director/Police Chief Brian Podany; Director of Engineering Dan Schluender; City Attorney Tom Loonan; Finance Analyst Jenna Tritten; Communications Manager Ben Hayle; Public Works Director Nick Fleischhacker; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen. Also present Finance Director Appointee Jason Zimmerman.

2. New Business

2.1. 2023-306 Lakes Parkway and Zest Street Extension Cost Share Options
Sponsors: Daniel Schluender, Director of Engineering

Director of Engineering Schluender stated HJ Development previously presented their potential development at the southwest corner of 125th Avenue/Lexington Avenue. The subject property is 37.15 acres. The property, along with others to the south, were rezoned in 2021 to B-5 Town Commercial. The city council created this zoning district specifically for this area to encourage retail, restaurants, office, and other high quality commercial development. HJ Development has been analyzing potential development for approximately 12 months. The site is challenging due to a large wetland in the middle of the property. Most of the due diligence that has occurred is understanding development options and the associated development costs. They have also been trying to secure an anchor grocer. The developer is close to securing an agreement with an anchor grocer.

Mr. Schluender explained over the last 18 months, there has been discussion about the timing and financial responsibility of future roads and infrastructure in this area. On January 10, 2022, staff presented information on five different corridors where the city could be proactive in constructing infrastructure, independent of development. Typically, developers are responsible for paying for and constructing all public infrastructure within their developments. The five corridors identified would be difficult for development to construct as they are larger roadways with limited development potential surrounding them. Both the Lakes Parkway extension from the existing Lakes Parkway going east to Lexington Avenue and the Zest Street extension between 125th Avenue and the future Lakes Parkway were presented and discussed. Of the five corridors discussed, these two roadways had the most support to explore further.

Mr. Schluender indicated staff is preparing the following options to discuss and review:

- Option 1, is to advance the project with standard assessments of the improvements based on the city's assessment policy. Under this scenario, the benefiting properties would be assessed at 100% of the project cost.
- Option 2, is to advance the project with standard assessments of the improvements based on the city's assessment policy, with council ordering that the assessments be deferred until such time as the parcels being assessed are developed.
- Option 3, is to advance the project with an offset of the assessments (50%) and the use of the city's Municipal State Aid funds (50%).
- Option 4, is to advance the project with no assessments using the city's Municipal State Aid funds (100%).

City Attorney Loonan explained Options 3 and 4 would deviate from the city's assessment policy and may set a precedent in the future. He indicated this could be challenged by future property owners. He recommended the city council draft findings if a deviation were to occur from current policy. He reported if a deferment were pursued, the assessments would have to be paid no later than 30 years of being levied.

Mr. Schluender requested the council speak about which option they would like to move forward with and if these two roadways should be constructed.

Councilmember Newland supported the construction of the two roadways. He noted the development would benefit from the construction and the city should participate.

Councilmember Massoglia agreed noting it would be important to connect to Lexington Avenue. He fully supported the city participating in the roadway extension.

Councilmember Fleming agreed.

Mayor Sanders also agreed. He asked if the council had a preferred assessment option based on the information presented by staff.

Councilmember Massoglia stated he would support the 50/50 option (Option 3). He indicated he would be hesitant to do a deferment as he believed this would be unfair.

Councilmember Newland indicated Option 2 would be his preferred option. He questioned if State Aid dollars have been used before to construct a new roadway. Mr. Schluender stated Staid Aid dollars were used to resurface a roadway last year and noted these dollars have never been used to construct a new roadway.

Councilmember Fleming asked why these dollars have never been used to construct a roadway in the past. Mr. Schluender commented the rationale was because new development pays for roadway expansions. He stated these two corridors were unique because they were limited on what could develop on each side of them.

Councilmember Robertson questioned if assessments were the only option to assist with infrastructure costs. Community Development Director Thorvig explained TIF dollars could be used, but they were focused on other projects in the city.

Councilmember Robertson inquired if Option 2 would have a timeline put in place. Mr. Schluender indicated the deferment would allow the city to assess the parcel and the owners would not be responsible for the cost until the property sells or in 30 years.

Councilmember Robertson commented she had concerns about using the PMP dollars given the projects the city had planned for the next five years. She indicated she could support the deferment option, if allowed by state statute. Mr. Loonan reported this would be allowed by statute and the council would have to determine an interest rate.

Councilmember Massoglia stated he had concerns with Option 2 because deferments were not allowed for non-profits or farmers. Mr. Schluender explained these deferments were denied because the properties were already on improved roadways and this project was for raw land and new roadways. Mr. Loonan reported this was the case and stated a deferment took into consideration unimproved properties and the development that would come.

Councilmember Fleming commented it made sense the city should move forward with Option 2.

Councilmember Saroya noted she supported Option 3.

Mayor Sanders indicated he could support Option 2 or 3.

Chris Moe, HJ Development, spoke to the council regarding the timeline for this project. He anticipated this project would begin in early 2025 due to some endangered species on the site.

Council supported further exploration of Option 3 to advance the project with an offset of the assessments (50%) and the use of the city's Municipal State Aid funds (50%) at a future workshop meeting.

2.2. 2023-381 Council Small Groups Follow-Up and General Budget Updates

Sponsors: Jenna Trittin, Finance Analyst

Finance Analyst Jenna Tritten stated councilmembers participated in small group discussions between July 19 and July 31 during which staff presented initial General Fund budget information. Council had the opportunity to provide feedback, topics for future council workshops, and to ask questions. In response, staff has produced a final copy of the presentation from the small group meetings which includes a list of council proposed topics. General budget updates were reviewed by staff along with 2024 initial department requests under consideration.

Councilmember Saroya asked if water treatment facility upgrades should be considered then commented on her water concerns for Ward 1. City Manager Michelle Wolfe explained staff has prepared the preliminary general fund budget and the water treatment facility would be addressed under the utilities budgets when they come forward.

Councilmember Saroya reported she would also like a bigger investment for snow plowing in Ward 1.

Councilmember Newland commented on how the model for the fire department has shifted based on the feedback being received from the firefighters.

Ms. Tritten described how charitable gambling funds can be utilized by the city then reviewed key dates and schedule for the 2024 budget.

Mayor Sanders encouraged councilmembers to reach out to staff with questions regarding the budget as the council moves through the approval process.

Communications Manager Ben Hayle commented on the proposed communications budget for 2024. He discussed how it was important to increase engagement with the public in order to strengthen the city's brand and to improve public trust. He stated he was also interested in creating an internship program as well.

Public Works Director Nick Fleischhacker discussed his request for additional dollars for dead and diseased trees in the community. He stated at this time the city was falling behind on the number of dead/diseased trees in the city. He described how regular tree trimming was also necessary in order to keep sight lines clear on city streets. He explained $300,000 was in the budget for dead and diseased trees and noted he would be requesting an additional $300,000 to address tree trimming. He stated he would be seeking $1 million in 2025 to accelerate ash tree removal. He reported this expense would stop at some point once all of the ash trees were removed. He indicated his last request would be to address weed control within the city's parks in order to improve the quality of the turf.

Ms. Tritten explains there has been a request to increase the fireworks expense by $5,000 to $40,000. She noted the last time there was an increase was in 2016.She indicated the charitable gambling fund could support this increase. She asked if the council had any comments or questions regarding the information that was presented.

Councilmember Massoglia stated he would like to better understand how the proposed utility rates, with a 9% increase over the next three years, would impact the utility fund balances.

Councilmember Saroya questioned if the city would be considering adding a deputy director or grant writer on staff. Ms. Wolfe stated this request has not been brought forward. She indicated two police officers had been proposed in the budget and there was a list of other potential positions that were being considered.

2.3. 2023-380 Closed Session Pursuant to MN Statute 13D.05(3)(c)(3) - Discuss Property Acquisition of Parcel PID 21-31-23-24-0016

Sponsors: Erik Thorvig, Community Development Director

Motion by Councilmember Newland, seconded by Councilmember Massoglia, to enter into closed session to discuss property acquisition of parcel.

Motion adopted unanimously.

3. Other Business

None.

4. Adjournment

Signed by ______________________
Tim Sanders, Mayor

Signed by ______________________
Catherine M. Sorensen, CMC, City Clerk

The meeting adjourned at 7:04PM.

City of Blaine
City Council Workshop

January 8, 2024 | 5:30 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

MINUTES

NOTICE OF WORKSHOP MEETING
In accordance with the provisions of Section 3.01 of the Blaine City Charter, a Council Workshop meeting is scheduled for the following purpose:

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Sanders at 5:30PM.

2. Roll Call

PRESENT: Mayor Tim Sanders, Councilmembers Leslie Larson, Chris Massoglia, Tom Newland, Jess Robertson, and Lori Saroya (arrived at 5:36PM).

ABSENT: Councilmember Terra Fleming.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Michelle Wolfe; Community Development Director Erik Thorvig; City Planner Sheila Sellman; Safety Services Director/Police Chief Brian Podany; Police Captain Joe Gerhard; Finance Director Jason Zimmerman; Director of Engineering Dan Schluender; Communications Manager Ben Hayle; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3. New Business

3.1. 2024-018 Closed Session Pursuant to MN Statute 13D.05 Subd. 3(b) - Discuss Active Litigation with Blaine Atlantic, LLC
Sponsors: Erik Thorvig, Community Development Director

Motion by Councilmember Robertson, seconded by Councilmember Newland, to move into Closed Session pursuant to Minnesota Statute 13D.05 Subd. 3(b) to discuss active litigation with Blaine Atlantic.

Upon conclusion of the closed session topic, Mayor Sanders opened the meeting at 6:00PM.

3.2. 2024-019 NSC Turf Field Financing/Anoka County HRA

Sponsors: Erik Thorvig, Community Development Director

Community Development Director Thorvig stated at the December 11, 2023, workshop, the City Council discussed funding options for the NSC turf field project. One of the options discussed was receiving funding from the Anoka County HRA. There were several questions posed by the City Council. Since that meeting, staff has received additional information from Anoka County staff and analyzed different scenarios. Staff reviewed the scenarios available to the Council in further detail and requested direction on how to proceed.

Mayor Sanders stated the county HRA option is appealing noting once the $12 million is covered, the City would have $1.5 million annually and would save the city $6 million in interest. He indicated he was pleased the city had options when it came to funding the turf fields. He questioned what the mechanics would be to have the city cover the levy ($47 per home). Mr. Thorvig explained the county would levy the funding immediately and the money collected would pay the county back.

Mayor Sanders asked if there was a way for the city to offset the expense of the levy for the residents. Mr. Thorvig did not believe this was possible.

Councilmember Robertson stated the last thing she wanted to do was put up any roadblocks to this project. She indicated she was still apprehensive about joining the Anoka County HRA. She stated she was bothered by adding another line to residents' property tax statement by pursuing another levy. She explained when the council began this process, the goal was to navigate multiple governmental agencies to get a land lease and this hurdle was cleared. She reported the second goal was to not go to the taxpayers to cover the expense of the turf fields. She stated to her it felt disingenuous to get into a scenario where the city would be going to the taxpayers. She indicated she was frustrated by the response from the county. She commented on how she did not want the city to be beholden to the county indefinitely. She reported at this time, she would support the tax abatement option. She stated a backup option for her would be the EDA levy/abatement option.

Councilmember Newland stated he supported the tax abatement option. He discussed how the county HRA option would save money, but then the expense of the project would be assumed by Blaine taxpayers.

Councilmember Massoglia agreed with trying to minimize the burden on Blaine taxpayers. He understood the desire to save $5 million in interest and encouraged staff to continue to find cost saving options. He stated he supported the tax abatement option.

Councilmember Saroya questioned where the developers portion came from. Mr. Thorvig indicated this was a predetermined value put on the NSC property through old legislation when the land was acquired.

Councilmember Saroya inquired if the land value designation could be increased.

Mayor Sanders stated it was his understanding a 90-year lease was in place and noted the NSC pays $300,000 for their land. Mr. Thorvig provided further information on how the land would be owned going forward.

Councilmember Saroya indicated she was struggling with all of these options. She explained she was told residents would not have to pay for this project so she originally offered her support. She stated it feels like taxpayers would be paying for private control of this property. She said she did not approve of the optics of this project and would not be offering her support. Mr. Thorvig reported the tax abatement option would be using new property tax revenue to cover debt service.

Doug Green, Baker Tilly, commented on the bonding numbers and estimated the interest rate would be 3%. However, he noted he was unsure what the interest rates would do in the next three months.

Councilmember Robertson asked what the timeline was for this project. Mr. Thorvig explained the city had to have the funding source identified by March 31.

Mayor Sanders encouraged staff to reengage with the school board and county to let them know the city was interested in moving forward with the tax abatement plan.

Councilmember Larson supported the city moving forward with the tax abatement option.

Council consensus was to pursue the tax abatement option with the EDA levy/abatement option as a back-up if needed.

3.3. 2024-020 Concept Subdivision Review for 9240 West 35W Service Drive
Sponsors: Sheila Sellman, City Planner

City Planner Sellman stated the subject site is 4.71 acres and is zoned Single Family Residential (R-1AA) and guided Low Density Residential (LDR). The applicant is requesting feedback on rezoning to Development Flex (DF) for 22 townhomes with a private street. The townhome units will be in groups of three and four. In addition to the rezoning, a comp plan amendment is necessary for the proposed townhome development. The LDR designation allows for single-family homes and manufactured homes with a density of 2.5-6 units an acre. The applicant was unable to lay out a single family detached subdivision on the lot that met the minimum density of the LDR land use (2.5 units per acre) due to the configuration of the wetlands on the property, and is therefore proposing a townhome development. In order to allow for the townhome development, the land use designation will need to be changed to Low Density Residential/Medium Density Residential (LDR/MDR) which has a density of 2.5-12 units an acre and allows single family residential, manufactured homes, and attached single family such as triplexes, quads, and townhomes. As proposed, the density is 5.96 units an acre. As proposed, there are 22 townhome units that are in blocks of three or four and accessed by a private street. Staff commented further on the proposed subdivision and requested feedback from the Council.

Councilmember Newland requested further information regarding why the current zoning for single family does not work. Ms. Sellman explained density calculations allow for wetlands to be removed, and after this land has been removed from the equation, the lot sizes will not work for single family residential.

Councilmember Robertson indicated she could possibly support this project. She explained the surrounding lots were not typical city lots but all varied in size. She noted she did not want quality of life to be upset for the neighboring properties. She hoped that if a development were to occur on this site that the proposed facades would be elevated and the trees be protected.

Councilmember Newland explained he was leaning towards not supporting this concept. He reported there were no townhomes in this area and the area was surrounded by commerce, industrial properties and a park and ride. He did not support this site having townhomes given the high level of traffic that would be passing by this property on a daily basis. He commented on how the surrounding neighborhood was against the church that was proposed in this area because it meant the tree buffer would be lost.

Councilmember Larson indicated she normally doesn't like switching from low-density residential to a higher density. However, she was not opposed to this proposal because the units are not stacked or a higher elevation. She did not believe the surrounding property owners would see the proposed townhomes. She explained she appreciated the high level of trees that would be saved as this would provide a buffer between the existing homes and proposed townhomes.

Councilmember Massoglia stated he did not strongly support this proposal. He was of the opinion this was a prime spot for a light industrial use.

Councilmember Saroya indicated she did not support changing the zoning, nor did she support the proposed townhomes. She asked what the options were for this property if the townhomes did not move forward. Ms. Sellman reported a comprehensive plan amendment and rezoning would be required to develop this property. She explained the property could develop into townhomes, apartments or an industrial use. Mr. Thorvig stated an industrial use or commercial use would have more impact than the proposal currently before the council.

Councilmember Robertson stated the intent behind the proposal was to recoup land costs. She anticipated the landowner could build two homes on this property. Ms. Sellmen estimated two or three homes could be build.

Councilmember Larson commented if the council were oppose the townhomes, she wondered how the neighbors would respond to an industrial proposal.

Councilmember Massoglia indicated the neighboring homes were quite a distance from this property. He was of the opinion a light industrial use would have a minimal impact.

Mayor Sanders stated Commers Water was just to the south of this property and the homes could not see that location.

Councilmember Robertson discussed how tree removal on the subject property could adversely impact the neighbors and their view of the new use.

Councilmember Massoglia stated this was a fair point, but he believed the city does have a need for additional light industrial properties.

Councilmember Newland suggested a tree inventory be completed on this property.

Councilmember Robertson supported this suggestion and recommended a traffic study also be completed.

Councilmember Saroya asked if the city has engaged with the surrounding residents. Ms. Sellman reported this would not occur until a formal application was brought to the city.

Council shared concerns about the attractiveness of the proposed units and felt that the units did not fit with the site. Council was not opposed to the proposed elevation compared to an apartment building given the current presence of tree coverage and felt the site may be better suited for a light industrial use. Council suggested a tree study and traffic study be conducted to determine potential tree loss and road/driveway access before final direction could be provided.

3.4. 2024-021 Lakes Parkway and Zest Street Extension Cost Share Options

Sponsors: Daniel Schluender, Director of Engineering

Director of Engineering Schluender stated this item was first introduced to council at a workshop meeting in July 2022, when the HJ Development team presented their potential development at the southwest corner of 125th Avenue/Lexington Avenue. There was information provided in the staff report regarding the City potentially sharing in the infrastructure costs associated with the development of the southwest corner. Unfortunately, there was little discussion at that workshop about a potential cost share in infrastructure improvements. This item was brought back to council in June, 2023, where staff presented to council the estimated cost of the infrastructure outside developer's property/project boundaries. That infrastructure includes a portion of Zest Street, and Lakes Parkway from Zest Street, east to Lexington Avenue. The estimated construction cost for these roadway portions is estimated at $1,068,471. The Lakes Parkway extension to the west of Zest Street is not considered at this time and would be addressed if/when development occurs that abuts this road. Council requested that staff bring back funding options to advance the project (Lakes Parkway from Lexington Avenue to Zest Street and Zest Street from Lakes Parkway to the north end of the treatment plant parcel). Staff reviewed the options available to the Council and requested direction on how to proceed.

Councilmember Massoglia indicated he would support Option 3 or 4.

Councilmember Larson asked what needs to get started. Mr. Schluender indicated a developer laid out a preliminary plan for a potential development and noted this developer was seeking direction from the city on how this roadway would develop. Mr. Thorvig explained HJ Development was locked into the commercial piece of the development and was looking to begin construction in 2025. He noted what happens on the west side of the roadway was still fluid.

Councilmember Robertson indicated she could support the use of MSA dollars for this project. She indicated this was a unique project. She commented on how the city has offered wetland credits or other assistance to other developments and for this reason, she could support offering aid to this project.

Councilmember Saroya questioned how MSA dollars could be used by the city. Mr. Schluender explained MSA dollars can be used for maintenance of state aid routes in Blaine. He noted they are also used when reconstructing MSA roadways.

Councilmember Saroya asked how big the MSA fund was at this time, and how much was being proposed for this project. Mr. Schluender reported the city receives $2 million annually and the city uses around $1.5 to $2 million each year for projects.

Councilmember Newland stated he supported using the MSA funds for this project. He supported Option 3 moving forward.

Mr. Thorvig commented on how the commercially zoned properties along this roadway would increase in value once the roadway was completed.

Councilmember Newland asked how the neighbors felt about pending development. Mr. Schluender indicated the city has not had conversations with the homeowners directly, but they are aware that development is occurring around them.

Councilmember Robertson questioned when these properties were rezoned. Mr. Thorvig reported the rezoning occurred two years ago.

Councilmember Larson stated she supported Option 3 or 4 moving forward.

Councilmember Saroya inquired if the residents were thinking about selling or were they being forced out of their homes because of the proposed that was occurring around them. Mr. Schluender explained the last time he spoke with both property owners was to purchase right of way for installation of the water and sewer. He noted one of the individuals has entertained offers but may not be interested in selling yet and the other parcel owner knows it is a development opportunity but it was all about timing at this point. He reported staff would be speaking with the property owners after this meeting.

Councilmember Newland stated he did not believe Option 4 was fair given the fact the property owners would have zero assessment. For this reason, he supported Option 3 moving forward.

Mayor Sanders asked if Option 3 would allow for a deferment until the properties developed. Mr. Schluender stated he could speak to the city attorney to see if this was an option.

Councilmember Larson recommended Option 3 move forward.

Council consensus was to use Option 3 to advance the project with an offset of the assessments (50%) and the use of the city's Municipal State Aid funds (50%) and if allowed defer the 50% payment until the parcels develop.

Mr. Schluender explained he would reach out to the commercial developer stating there was a general consensus for Option 3, noting this project could be laid out for 2025 construction.

3.5. 2024-022 State and Federal Legislative Agendas
Sponsors: Michelle Wolfe, City Manager

City Manager Wolfe stated the City of Blaine has contracts in place with one state lobbying firm and two federal lobbying firms. It is important to establish the city's legislative agendas as a means to set goals for our lobbyists. For the past few years, funding for T.H. 65 has been the city's clear number one priority. With the successful 2023 efforts to obtain funding for the Phase 2 segment of the project, our legislative priorities need to be re-established. Staff reviewed the draft state lobbying priorities document. It also includes goals for lobbyists. In addition, there is some verbiage included regarding how staff will approach requests for city positions on proposed legislation. During the workshop discussion, staff would like feedback from council regarding the priorities and other topics.

Ms. Wolfe reported in terms of federal lobbying, the top priority was T.H. 65. The other focus for our federal lobbying has been grants. Staff's suggestion for focus in 2024 is on grants. We will be meeting with our federal lobbying teams to review our capital plans and other city priorities to identify potential federal grant programs, including congressional directed spending ("earmarks"), which could be pursued during the year. The Ferguson Group will be our primary resource for grant programs. The Jacobson Law Group will focus on potential 2024 earmark requests. Once those meetings have occurred, staff will report back to the City Council regarding proposed plans for the year. As with state legislation, if we become aware of any federal bills for which we should take a position to have our lobbyists represent, we will bring the matter to the attention of the council as outlined in the State priorities document. Staff reviewed the proposed priorities for the upcoming year and requested direction from the Council on how to proceed.

Mr. Thorvig commented on a potential sales tax district that could be pursued by the city for the 105th Redevelopment Area/tourism district. He explained the funding received could be used to pay down the turf debt and to maintain this area.

Councilmember Saroya indicated she could support a tourism tax, but she did not want this tax to be charged to Blaine residents.

Councilmember Massoglia stated he would be open to discussing a tourism tax for the months of June and July, but he did not believe this should be very high on the city's legislative priorities.

Councilmember Robertson supported the city keeping this an option because this would be a non-property tax revenue source for the city. She supported the city finding a way to pursue dollars for Fogerty Arena because they are in need of energy improvements.

Mayor Sanders suggested federal dollars be pursued for these improvements.

Councilmember Massoglia asked that staff provide the council with more information regarding Fire Station 5, noting all members of the council may not support this plan. Safety Services Director/Police Chief Podany stated discussions have been suspended to allow the city to get through the budget cycle and the new year. He reported this topic will be brought to the full council at some point.

Mayor Sanders stated he would like to be alerted if there is a committee hearing regarding the cable television issue. He noted the council Could then discuss the topic and make a decision.

Councilmember Massoglia agreed. He commented on how the attorney for North Metro Television, who is also the attorney for CCX, drafted the legislation regarding this matter. He discussed who the proposed legislation would allow franchise fees to be imposed on those with cable, fiber and internet subscriptions.

Ms. Wolfe reported the goal for many of the items listed by staff would be for the lobbyists to monitor and report back to the city.

Councilmember Saroya explained she liked the list then asked that further work be done to protect manufactured homes. Mr. Thorvig stated he could speak with Ms. Showalter to learn more about this legislation.

Councilmember Saroya asked that homelessness and encampments be another item added to the list to be monitored. She recommended childcare/healthcare and mental health be focused on. She inquired how the city could engage its state reps for the upcoming session. Ms. Wolfe reported with Highway 65 staff worked with the state reps directly, but the initiatives for 2024 would require more monitoring and discussion. She noted the list of items to be monitored would be shared with the state reps to ensure they know where the city is at.

Councilmember Robertson suggested funding for the city's ADA transition plans be pursued both from the state and federal government. Ms. Wolfe explained the city may not be successful in receiving dollars for this topic, but noted she would add this priority to the list for federal grant or earmark dollars.

Ms. Wolfe noted she would redraft the priorities and provide the new document to the council for review.

4. Other Business

City Clerk Sorensen provided the council with an update regarding city commissions and boards. She reported the city received 15 applications by the December 31 deadline. She explained these applications would be provided to the council for review in the coming weeks in order to schedule interviews.

Ms. Wolfe noted staff would be contacting each of the councilmembers to learn about how they are utilizing their city issued devices.

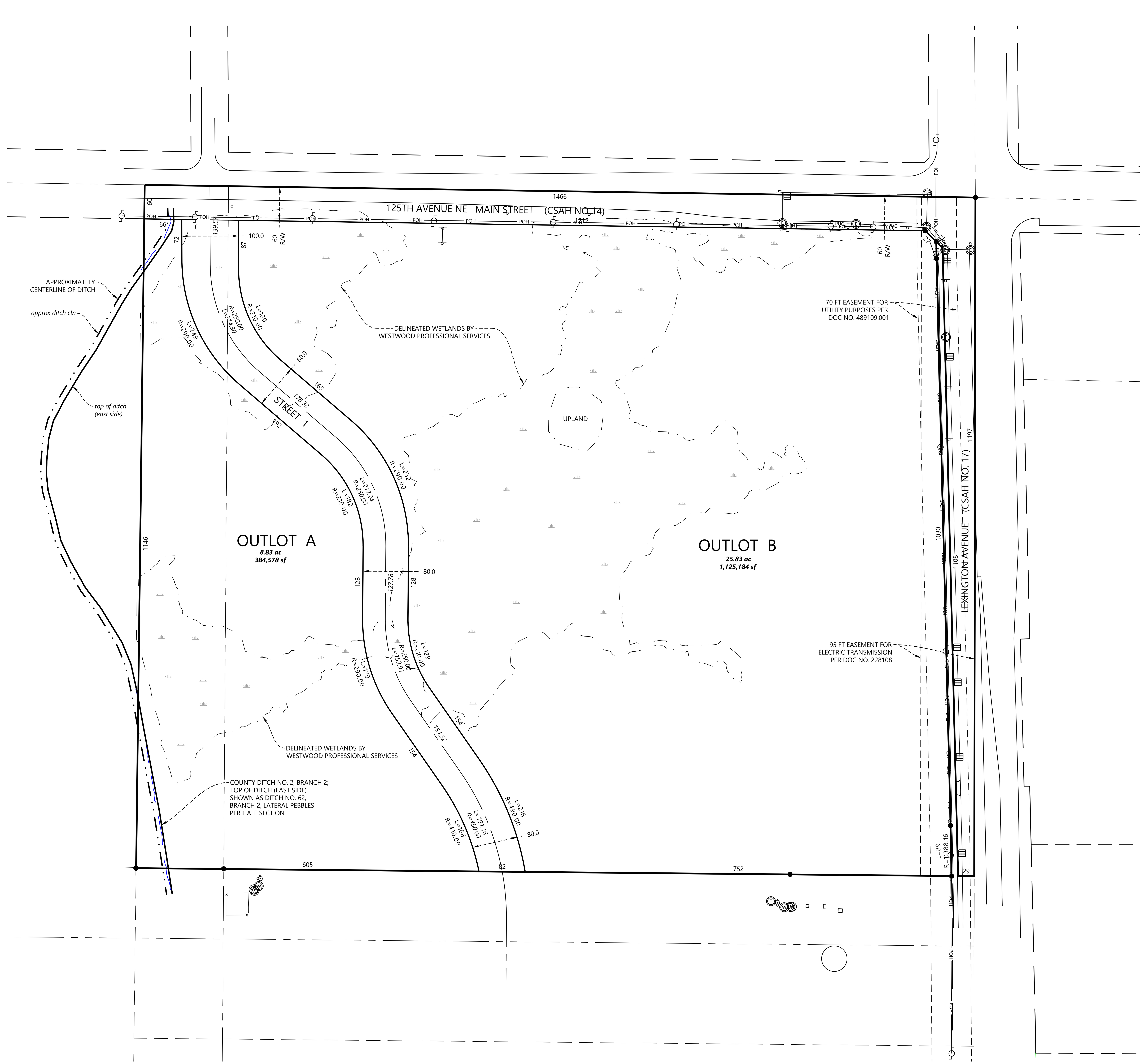
Ms. Wolfe reported staff does not have a date set for the council/staff retreat but will be sending date options soon.

5. Adjournment

Signed by ______________________________
Tim Sanders, Mayor

Signed by ______________________________
Catherine M. Sorensen, CMC, City Clerk

The workshop was adjourned at 8:10PM.



Call 48 Hours before digging:

811 or call811.com

Common Ground Alliance

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

That part of the North Half of the Northeast Quarter of Section 11, Township 31, Range 23, lying East of the West 1170 feet of said North Half of the Northeast Quarter and North of the South 123.38 feet of said North Half of the Northeast Quarter, EXCEPT Parcel 49, Anoka County Highway Right of Way Plat No. 61

SITE DEVELOPMENT DATA

- EXISTING ZONING: B-5 - TOWN COMMERCIAL
- GROSS SITE AREA: 40.33 AC
  - MAJOR R.O.W. (CSAH NO 14 & CSAH NO 17): 3.17 AC
  - NET SITE AREA: 37.16 AC
- OUTLOT A 10.04 AC
- OUTLOT B 27.12 AC

DEVELOPMENT NOTES

1. ALL LOT DIMENSIONS ARE ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST FOOT.
2. ALL AREAS ARE ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST SQUARE FOOT.

LEGEND

- HYDRANT
- WATER MANHOLE
- WELL
- ELECTRIC BOX
- ELECTRIC MANHOLE
- GUY WIRE
- POWER POLE
- TRAFFIC SIGNAL
- TELEPHONE MANHOLE
- CABLE TV MANHOLE
- NATURAL GAS METER
- STEEL/WOOD POST
- SIGN
- BOUNDARY LINE
- RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE
- LOT LINE
- EASEMENT LINE
- SECTION LINE
- CTV CABLE TELEVISION LINE
- GAS GAS LINE
- POH POWER OVERHEAD
- PUG POWER UNDERGROUND
- STO STORM SEWER
- TUG TELEPHONE UNDERGROUND
- WAT WATERMAIN
- X FENCE LINE
- CURB & GUTTER
- WETLAND
- FOUND MONUMENT (SEE LABEL)
- CAST IRON MONUMENT (SEE LABEL)

1" = 100'

0' 100' 200' 300'

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

KEMPF PROPERTY

N:\0036556.01\DWG\CIVIL\0036556.01S-PPP01.DWG

DESIGNED:	
CHECKED:	CLM
DRAWN:	SRM
HORIZONTAL SCALE:	100'
VERTICAL SCALE:	

INITIAL ISSUE: 10/07/2022

REVISIONS:

10/13/2022 ADJUSTED THE SOUTH LINE DISTANCE OF OUTLOT A (SRM)

PREPARED FOR:

TOMPKINS DEVELOPMENT, LLC

PO BOX 293
MARINE ON ST. CROIX, MINNESOTA 55047

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PLAN WAS PREPARED BY ME OR UNDER MY DIRECT SUPERVISION AND THAT I AM A DULY LICENSED LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

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DATE: 10/07/2022 LICENSE NO. 26971

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BLAINE, MINNESOTA

Westwood

Phone (952) 937-5150 12701 Whitewater Drive, Suite #300
Fax (952) 937-5822 Minnetonka, MN 55343
Toll Free (888) 937-5150 westwoodps.com

Westwood Professional Services, Inc.

PRELIMINARY PLAT

PROJECT NUMBER: 0036556.01

SHEET NUMBER: 1 OF 1

DATE: 10/07/2022

City of Blaine
Staff Report

File Number: 2024-592

Agenda Date	Status
December 16, 2024	
In Control	**File Type**
City Council	Workshop Item

New Business - Michelle Wolfe, City Manager

Agenda Item # 3.2

State and Federal Legislative Agendas

Background

The City of Blaine has contracts in place with one state lobbying firm and two federal lobbying firms. It is important to establish the city's legislative agenda as a means to set goals for our lobbyists. For several years, through the 2023 legislative session, funding for T.H. 65 was the city's clear number one priority. With the successful 2023 efforts to obtain funding for the Phase 2 segment of the project, our legislative priorities need to be re-established on an annual basis.

Attached is a *draft* state lobbying priorities document. It also includes goals for lobbyists. In addition, there is some verbiage included regarding how staff will approach requests for city positions on proposed legislation. During the workshop discussion, staff would like feedback from council regarding the priorities and other topics covered in the attachment.

In terms of federal lobbying, our recent focus has been on congressional directed funding/"earmarks". For 2024,staff reviewed the capital projects/equipment plans and worked with our lobbying team to identify potential options for funding. Another focus for our federal lobbying has been grants. Staff's suggestion for 2024 is to continue with these efforts for funding sources. Staff met with the team from The Ferguson Group to review our capital plans and other city priorities. TFG prepared a plan that identifies potential federal grant programs, including congressional directed spending ("earmarks"), which could be pursued during the year. The Ferguson Group will be our primary resource for grant programs, and they assist staff with identifying top prospects for earmark funding as well as grants. The Jacobson Law Group will focus on supporting our 2025 federal earmark requests. Staff proposes working with our federal lobbying team to determine which of our projects have the best opportunities for successful earmark funding and begin preparations for submission. We will report back to council with the top options. During the workshop discussion council can provide feedback on the projects listed in the attachment prepared by TFG.

As with state legislation, if we become aware of any federal bills for which we should take a position to have our lobbyists represent, we will bring the matter to the attention of the council as outlined in the attached State priorities document.

Attached for review are year-end reports from Lockridge Grindahl and TFG. The year-end report from Jacobson Law Group will be attached once received.

Staff Recommendation

Questions for Council

Provide input and feedback for the city's 2025 state and federal legislative agendas.

Attachment List

1. Lockridge 2024 Year-End Report
2. The Ferguson Group 2024 Year-End Report
3. State Legislative Priorities 2025
4. Federal Agenda Priorities 2025

Lockridge Grindal Nauen (LGN) Legislative Report to the City of Blaine for 2024

It is a privilege to represent the City of Blaine at the Minnesota State Capitol. We are proud to have designed and executed successful efforts to secure full funding from the state for both the Highway 65 project and the 105th street project. Our work together over several years has been extremely successful. We are honored to have worked hard, hand-in-hand with the City of Blaine, to achieve these legislative outcomes for the Blaine City Council and Blaine residents.

We are pleased to provide a 2024 year-end report on our work:

Strategic Work to position the 105th Development

LGN set up and facilitated meetings with the City of Blaine and peer communities and experts at the state to learn best practices for large regional developments and opportunities for assistance. We also coordinated numerous meetings with key non-partisan Senate and House staff to research, review and analyze potential legislative strategies to benefit the City of Blaine in the upcoming session, laying the groundwork for numerous avenues that the City could pursue to support this development project.

Protecting Local Control

LGN monitored a variety of legislative proposals that would affect local control. We worked in coalition with numerous association groups to defeat many proposals that would have adverse impacts on the City of Blaine's ability to make local decisions. Our team follows all key legislation pertaining to local governments, to help inform the City on proposals such as the 2024 legislature's attempt at imposing prevailing wage requirements on local projects, authorizing local option sales taxes for communities, and more.

Meetings with Key Walz Administration Leaders

In addition to our work at the capitol, LGN work closely with key leaders in Governor Walz's administration on issues as they arise for the City of Blaine. Most recently, our team coordinated and facilitated a meeting with the Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources and the City of Blaine to discuss ongoing challenges related to the City's wells, connecting the City with the key officials involved in the well permitting process.

Housing Concerns

As one of the major policy discussions during the 2024 legislative session, LGN monitored and worked closely with stakeholders and legislators to respond to the various housing proposals to limit local control around zoning and planning. We communicated with the Blaine delegation and supported lobbying efforts in opposition to the proposed legislation.

Our team also closely monitored legislative proposals with potential impacts on manufactured home parks, ensuring the city was alerted to significant developments. We also tracked and provided detailed reports on the progression of measures related to Rental Increase Limits for Senior Housing. By staying engaged in these issues, we worked to position the city of Blaine to respond effectively to legislative proposals affecting housing stability and affordability for vulnerable populations.

State Capital Investment for the City of Blaine

A combination of our lobbying strategy and our strong relationships with Blaine legislators and numerous legislative Chairs has secured$102 million in Trunk Highway and General Obligation bonds for the City of Blaine, a historic investment by the State. This victory, combined with our continued close work with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) and the Governor's office, resulted in MNDOT's decision to designate an additional $30 million dollars for the Highway 65 project. We worked hard to ensure this success was not eroded and all initial steps of project are underway.

We continued the relationship building with the newest members of your delegation, Representative Norris and Senator Kreun, and continued to have great relationships with Representative West and Representative Newton.

We also worked closely with the following key decision-makers and staff as a part of our lobbying strategy:

· House Capital Investment Chair Fue Lee

· House Minority Lead on Capital Investment Dean Urdahl

· Senate Capital Investment Chair Sandy Pappas

· Senate Minority Lead on Capital Investment Karin Housley

· House Minority Leader Lisa Demuth's Leadership Staff

· Senate Minority Leader Mark Johnson

· Speaker of the House Melissa Hortman and Leadership Staff

· Senate Majority Leader Erin Murphy's Leadership Staff

· House Capital Investment Committee Staff

· Senate Capital Investment Committee Staff

· Governor's Senior Advisor on Capital Investment

· Governor’s Senior Advisor on Transportation

· House Transportation Chair Frank Hornstein

· Senate Transportation Chair Scott Dibble

· Minnesota Department of Transportation Staff

· Minnesota Management and Budget Capital Budget Staff

We also directed your legislative delegation to meet with key decision-makers and they did so effectively.

Miscellaneous Work

Our team worked on numerous miscellaneous items as requested and directed by Manager Wolfe and the Mayor. We continued to monitor and brief the city on many issues that Blaine cares about. Some examples include Earned Sick and Safe Time, Paid Family Leave, SROS, long-eared bat protections’ impact on Blaine development, water permit fees, and efforts by south metro legislators to finance and build a MYSA facility in the south metro.

Preparation for the 2025 Legislative Session

In advance of the 2025 session, we have met with the Mayor and City Manager to discuss the City’s upcoming legislative proposals. LGN has identified several opportunities for the City, including tax increment financing and other taxation tools, an opportunity for a social district, and capital investment opportunities. Our team has worked with the City’s legislative delegation to begin the process of drafting legislation and has connected City staff with the appropriate legislative staff to begin work on these proposals.

Communications with the City of Blaine

Finally, our bi-partisan lobbying team provided regular updates throughout the legislative session. During the legislative session, we met on a bi-weekly basis with Manager Wolfe, her team members, and Mayor Sanders. We continued to check-in regularly throughout the interim via check-in calls and are easily accessible via email or phone when needed. We also attended and presented at Blaine City Council work sessions as requested.

Thank you for allowing us to work on your behalf. It is a pleasure to work with you and we look forward to many more successes together.

Memo

TO: City of Blaine, Minnesota

FROM: David Hoover

DATE: November 26, 2024

2024 Federal Advocacy and Grant Services Review

This memorandum provides an overview of the federal advocacy and grant services provided by The Ferguson Group (TFG) to the City of Blaine in Calendar Year 2024. TFG was successful in securing Congressionally Directed Spending funds for the Joint Powers Command Vehicle, working with City Departments to establish federal funding strategies for priority projects, providing counsel on grant applications, and updating the City on federal legislative and regulatory developments and their effects on City operations.

Fiscal Year 2025 Appropriations

In January 2025, TFG met with City Departments to review and prioritize projects for fiscal year (FY) 2025 Appropriations funding requests. Two projects were selected – the Joint Powers Command Vehicle Replacement (CV-1) and the Water Tower #2 Rehabilitation. TFG reviewed project eligibility requirements, previewed the funding requests with the City's congressional delegation, completed and submitted application forms, drafted letters of community support, and provided updates on the appropriations process.

Senators Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith jointly submitted the City's $750,000 Congressionally Directed Spending request to replace the aging Joint Powers Command Vehicle, which will provide state-of-the-art law enforcement and emergency response services during major public events, natural disasters, and other public safety incidents in Blaine and surrounding communities.

On July 25, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved the FY 2025 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies bill, which includes the City's $750,000 request. Congressional appropriators are likely to keep earmarks in the FY 2025 Federal Budget, which Congress is expected to pass by either December 20 or March 31, 2025.

Federal Funding Strategies

In August, TFG scheduled hour-long consultations with City Departments to better understand their project funding needs over the next two years. TFG reviewed the City's 2024-2028 Capital Improvement Program and met with staff from Police, Fire, and Safety Services; Public Works and Engineering; Administration and Finance; Parks and Recreation;

and Community Development. TFG provided a summary of those meetings, including each department's funding and/or policy priorities, of which several are highlighted below. TFG has incorporated these funding priorities into the City's Grants Matrix and Federal Policy Update Tracker and continues to monitor grant opportunities.

Police, Fire, and Safety Services:

- Parking and storage facilities for Police and Emergency Management vehicles and related assets
- Safety Services equipment, including Interoperable radios, camera trailers, and body-worn cameras
- Mental health and wellness services

Public Works and Engineering:

- Lift station rehabilitation
- Water use and conservation
- Water utility regulatory challenges

Administration and Finance:

- Municipal bonds advanced refunding
- Cable franchise regulations

Community Development:

- Northtown Mall soil and groundwater mitigation; stormwater management
- Workforce development

Parks and Recreation:

- Trails and boardwalk rehabilitation

Federal Grants Consulting

Per the City's request, TFG advised North Metro TV and its members on its application for the NTIA Digital Equity Competitive Grant program. TFG provided an overview of the grant program, offered advice on the application process and eligibility requirements, provided feedback on the draft narrative, and responded to questions from North Metro TV staff during scheduled calls.

Separately, TFG worked with the City's Parks and Recreation Department to evaluate the U.S. Department of Transportation's Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Grant Program as a source of funding to rehabilitate the City's trail facilities and community-wide trail linkages. Due to minimum cost requirements for Planning and Design projects, the City did not move forward with a grant application.

Federal Grants and Policy Updates

TFG updated and streamlined the City's Grants Matrix and Federal Policy Tracker, which provides key information, such as upcoming application windows, eligibility requirements, cost matches, and links to TFG Grant Profiles for a variety of federal grant programs of interest to the City. The tracker now includes a Federal Policy section that lists legislative and regulatory developments that may affect the City and actions taken to address those issues. The tracker also includes a section on information recently shared with the City, such as TFG Grant Alerts, Memos, and Special Reports, and includes links to those materials for convenient review.

TFG continues to send its weekly and bi-weekly newsletters to the City, including the Legislative Update and Outlook, Grants Update, Transportation Notes, Infrastructure Funding Bulletin, and the Interconnect. TFG also continues to meet online with the City Manager on a bi-weekly basis to provide updates on federal legislation and regulations of interest to Blaine, and open or upcoming grant solicitations aligned with City funding priorities.

2025 Federal Outlook

With their control of the Administration and Congress solidified, Republicans are moving forward with their agenda to overhaul tax, immigration, and environmental rules, among other planned policy shifts. Republicans aim to use the budget reconciliation process to extend and expand tax cuts and repeal certain clean energy tax credits. With the transition to a new Administration, some grant priorities may gradually shift to reflect evolving goals, with potential emphasis on infrastructure, workforce development, veterans' programs, and industrial and economic competitiveness.

TFG will monitor and provide analysis on the evolving federal landscape, including any legislative and regulatory changes that may affect the City and its funding priorities. Likely staff changes in federal agencies and on Capitol Hill will provide opportunities for the City to share its Federal Agenda with new policymakers and to strengthen existing relationships. TFG looks forward to working with the City and its congressional delegation during the 119th Congress and with the new Administration.

CITY OF BLAINE

STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2025

Draft 12/10/24

The following legislative priorities are of the highest importance to the City of Blaine. The City of Blaine and the lobbing team from Lockridge Grindal Nauen (LGN) will work with the legislature, and Blaine's legislative delegation to advocate for these initiatives.

2025 Focus Priorities:

1. **<u>Social District</u>**

This effort would involve the City of Blaine having authority to establish a social district, similar to the Cities of Shakopee, Anoka, and Stillwater. If authorized by the legislature, the city can designate specific areas within the city where open alcohol containers are permitted, based on requirements set forth in law. The sports entertainment district is the impetus for the request.

2025 Goals: LGN will work with our local delegation and other stakeholders at the legislature toward including Blaine in the existing social district law.

2. **<u>District Sales Tax (Sports Entertainment District)</u>**

There has been discussion about the ability to establish a limited-area sales tax in the Radisson & 105^{th} redevelopment area.

2025 Goals: While there is currently a moratorium on any new sales tax initiatives, the 2025 effort would be to start working towards the city ability to establish such a sales tax for the district once the moratorium is lifted.

3. **<u>Transportation</u>**

Senator Kreun has indicated an interest in working with the city on a transportation project. Staff has met with the Senator and his legislative aide and they are discussing potential projects. The options are limited as neighborhood streets would not be a candidate, and we would need county partnership on other major thoroughfares. However, a few potential projects have been identified and will be further explored. Council will be updated as discussions continue and will be asked to select a project for the Senator to promote on the city's behalf.

2025 Goals:

LGN to support the city's work with Senator Kreun and the other members of our local delegation to pursue funding.

Continued from previous years:

1. **<u>Trunk Highway 65</u>**

Public safety improvements and easing congestion on Trunk Highway 65 (TH 65) are of great importance to the City of Blaine and its residents. The 2023 legislative session resulted in fully funding segment 2 of the project. For the 2025 session, Anoka County and other stakeholders will be taking the lead on segments 1 and 3. The City of Blaine will support their efforts to advance those portions of the project.

2025 Goals:

LGN will continue to monitor proposed legislation and meetings with partners who support Highway 65 funding including:

- The Highway 65 Corridor Coalition
- The Metro North Chamber of Commerce as requested
- Anoka County Board Meetings as requested
- LGN will continue to monitor and support remaining phases of Highway 65.
- LGN will work collaboratively with Anoka County on Highway 65 as requested where needed and directed by the city

2. **<u>Support Local Control</u>**

In matters before the legislature, in general the City of Blaine supports retaining local control by the elected Blaine City Council and the staff.

2025 Goals:

- Monitor legislative proposals and report to the city any that challenge local control; develop city position and share with local delegation and legislative leadership

- Work in conjunction/partnership with LMC and Metro Cities; assist City Staff with data gathering and letters of support when requested

3. **<u>Oppose Unfunded Mandates</u>**

The City of Blaine opposes passing unfunded mandates on to cities. We oppose efforts by the state to fund policy priorities through mandates on cities without state funding attached.

2025 Goals:

- Monitor legislative proposals and report to the city any that contain unfunded mandates; develop city position and share with local delegation and legislative leadership

- Work in conjunction/partnership with LMC and Metro Cities; assist City Staff with data gathering and letters of support when requested

4. Oppose Efforts to Mandate Reduction in Development and Building Fees

Housing First – Housing First MN has led efforts in previous legislative sessions to reduce development and building related costs that cities charge which, in their opinion, drives up the cost of housing. We believe our costs are justified and oppose changes this group is advocating for. The League of Minnesota Cities and Metro Cities represent cities opposing these changes.

2025 Goals include:

- Monitor legislative proposals and report to the city any that contain mandated fee reductions; develop city position and share with local delegation and legislative leadership
- Work in conjunction/partnership with LMC and Metro Cities; assist City Staff with data gathering and letters of support when requested

5. Monitor Proposed MPCA Fee Increase for MS4 Permits

MPCA previously recommended a fee increase from $80 per year (collected as $400 at every five-year renewal) to $5,000-8,000 annually. The City of Blaine is opposed to any fee increase unless MPCA can explain the services provided and the rationale for said increase. The MPCA is not currently actively proposing a fee increase, however, this is a topic that should be closely monitored.

2025 Goals:

- Monitor and assist the city of Blaine in opposing the significant fee increase proposed by the MPCA for the MS4 Permits.
- Gather information from MPCA and/or other reliable sources as to the status of the proposed fee increase and the rationale for the increase.

7. Law Enforcement-Related Legislation

The Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) annually develops a legislative agenda. Chief Podany may request Council direction as to whether or not to support, monitor, or oppose specific legislation. He may also request Council's support to is he is asked to testify on certain legislation. Staff will coordinate with City Council, and update the legislative priorities as appropriate.

2025 Goals:

- Monitor legislative proposals and coordinate with Chief Podany to develop proposed city positions; once council approved, share city positions with local delegation and legislative leadership

8. Limits on Park Dedication Fees

Historically there have been proposals to cap Park Dedication fees at a maximum of $5,000. This is another specific example of a limit on local control. We believe our costs, which are annually reviewed by City Council, are justified.

2025 Goals:

- Monitor legislative proposals and report to the city any that contain attempts to cap these fees; develop city position and share with local delegation and legislative leadership

- Work in conjunction/partnership with LMC and Metro Cities; assist City Staff with data gathering and letters of support when requested

9. **Other Potential Matters for Discussion**

- Support NSC requests for capital funding
- Regional Emergency Base for Fire/Hazmat, etc., Station 5/PD Base - As we look at a new Station 5, we are exploring the possibility that the proposed station be a regional asset for things like HAZMAT/Chemical Team, DNR Wildland firefighting, various other options., and that it also include parking and storage capabilities.
- Lift Moratorium on Cities Increasing Sales Taxes for Parks and Trails – as a matter of local control, continue to have a process which allows individual cities to determine whether to pursue local sales tax for parks and trails or other purposes
- Digital Media Fee to Support Local Community Television – Continue to monitor LMC and MACTA activities related to modernization of revenue streams for community television and updated forms of franchise fees for broadband and streaming services.
- Funding for Non-Municipal State Aid City Streets
- Official State Mapping Responsibility
- Authority to implement Infrastructure Fees
- MN Plumbing Board (DLI) Storm Sewer Requirements Ruling

Formal Reports to Council:

The lobbying team will report to City Council regularly via e-mail and check in calls with the Mayor and City Manager. The team will formally report to City Council as a whole at workshops as needed.

City Positions on Legislation

Staff is sometimes asked by the LMC or Metro Cities to submit letter of support or opposition regarding proposed legislation. Other times, staff becomes aware of proposed legislation that is of interest or concern. If clearly consistent with legislative priorities, the City Manager or designee will prepare a letter outlining the city's position and share it with the lobbying team and/or local delegation. If it is not, the City Manager or designee will send out an email to Council to see if there are any concerns with the city sending such a letter. These are usually on a very quick turn-around schedule; if time allows, these requests will be discussed at a workshop, otherwise, by e-mail.

Staff is sometimes asked to testify on various matters at the legislature.

If the request is related to something already on the city's legislative priorities list, we will advise Council that the employee will be testifying via e-mail, Council Update, or at a workshop (depending on timing)

If regarding something that is NOT on our legislative priorities, we will provide Council with notice that the employee would like to testify the topic. Staff will ask if there are any concerns to let us know. If we do not hear back, we will proceed.

We may from to time ask for a city position on proposed legislation. Generally, we would like to follow this format:

Actively Opposed

Oppose (if asked)

Monitor

Support (If asked)

Actively Support

When we take this action, we will amend it to our legislative priorities document.

City of Blaine, MN – 2024 Federal Agenda Priorities

Public Works	Action Item	Possible Funding Sources / Advocacy Opportunities
Pedestrian Ramp & Signal Upgrades	Upgrade pedestrian ramps, intersection signals, and trails for ADA compliance.	• Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Planning Grant • FY25 Transportation-HUD Highway Infrastructure Projects (HIP) Appropriations Earmark
Stormwater Utility	Construction of or improvements to storm water drainage systems, outfall replacement, ponds, and other structures.	• Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grant • FY25 EPA State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG) Appropriations Earmark
Water Utility	Replacement of water mains, survey of lead service lines, remediation of PFAS/PFOA chemicals, upgrades to remote monitoring system (e.g., fiber optic plant and SCADA system).	• FY25 EPA State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG) Appropriations Earmark
Sewer Utility	Rehab of wastewater lift stations, trunk lines, and SCADA system upgrades.	• Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grant • FY25 EPA State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG) Appropriations Earmark

Community Development	Action Item	Possible Funding Sources
105th Avenue Redevelopment Plan	Soil and groundwater remediation of brownfield sites within the plan area.	• EPA Brownfields Program Cleanup Grants
Northtown Redevelopment Plan	Provide infrastructure (e.g., water and wastewater, roads, etc.)	• FY25 Transportation-HUD Economic Development Initiative (EDI) Appropriations Earmark
Workforce Development	Address City's Industrial businesses' needs for skilled training	• DOL Apprenticeship Building America (ABA) Grant

Safety Services	Action Item	Possible Funding Sources
Mobile Command Vehicle	Purchase of new mobile command vehicle or technology retrofit of existing asset to provide increased security for events (e.g., USA Cup, 3M Open).	• FEMA Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) • DOJ COPS Technology & Equipment Grant • FY25 CJS-DOJ-COPS Appropriations Earmark
New Fire Station	Construction of new SBM Fire Station	• FY25 Transportation-HUD Economic Development Initiative (EDI) Appropriations Earmark • Advocacy (H.R. 1814/S. 977 – FIRE Station Act)
Mental Health Counseling	Improve the delivery of and access to mental health and wellness services.	• Law Enforcement Mental Health & Wellness Act (LEMHWA) Program • COPS Hiring Program (CHP)

Parks & Recreation	Action Item	Possible Funding Sources
Blaine Wetland Sanctuary	Remediation and protection of wetland sanctuary.	• Interior Department Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program • Land and Water Conservation Fund: State and Local Assistance Program (LWCF Stateside)
Trail Connections	Repair and management of existing trails (bike and/or pedestrian), construction of new trails, or connection of existing/new trails.	• FHWA Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP) • FHWA/MN DNR Federal Recreational Trails Program Grants • FY25 Transportation-HUD Highway Infrastructure Projects (HIP) Appropriations Earmark

Finance & Technology	Action Item	Possible Funding Sources / Advocacy Opportunities
Election Security and Voter Access	Improving the physical security of the elections office through installing improved locks, cameras, and security systems.	• DHS Preparedness Grant • Byrne JAG Local Grant

Municipal Bonds	Support preservation of tax-exempt municipal bonds and the reinstatement of advance refunding.	• Support the Local Infrastructure Financing Tools (LIFT) Act (H.R. 8396)
Cable Franchise Fee Regulations	Monitor changes in cable franchise fee legislation and regulation.	• Support the Protecting Community Television Act (H.R. 907/S.340)