



City of Blaine

City Council Workshop

April 14, 2025 | 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. 2025-214 Closed Session Pursuant to MN Statute 13D.05 Subd. (3)(d) Security Briefing
Sponsors: Brian Podany, Safety Services Manager/Police Chief

3.2. 2025-81 Council Requested Items for Discussion
Sponsors: Michelle Wolfe, City Manager

3.3. 2025-82 Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Trail Development Project - Phase 1
Sponsors: Daniel Schluender, Director of Engineering

3.4. 2025-83 SBM Fire Department - Quarterly Update
Sponsors: Dan Retka, Fire Chief

3.5. 2025-84 2026 Budget - Review of Small Group Meetings; Outcomes and Council Direction
Sponsors: Jason Zimmerman, Finance Director

3.6. 2025-85 Compensation Study Introduction
Sponsors: Scott Johnson, Director of Administrative Services

4. Other Business

5. Adjournment



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2025-214

Agenda Date	Status
April 14, 2025	
In Control	File Type
City Council	Workshop Item

New Business -

Agenda Item # 3.1

Closed Session Pursuant to MN Statute 13D.05 Subd. (3)(d) Security Briefing

Background

Staff Recommendation

Questions for Council

Attachment List

None



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2025-81

Agenda Date	Status
April 14, 2025	
In Control	File Type
City Council	Workshop Item

New Business - Michelle Wolfe, City Manager

Agenda Item # 3.2

Council Requested Items for Discussion

Background

Request From Councilmember Robertson:

Councilmember Robertson is proposing that the city consider implementing an MS4 permitting process. This is a service currently conducted by the watershed district(s). An MS4 permit is required for any construction project that removes the vegetative cover and exposes soils to the natural elements or creates additional hard surface. The permit requires that these projects show how they will handle storm water runoff and protect water resources at or near the project. Attached are links to both watershed districts and what their requirements are and their processes.

Coon Creek Watershed District:

https://www.cooncreekwd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/2023_Rules_Permitting_Cheat_Sheet.pdf

Rice Creek Watershed District:

<https://www.ricecreek.org/permits/permitting-information/>

Strategic Plan Alignment

Councilmember Robertson indicated that she views this request as centered around Economic Development, which is a Strategic Priority.

In addition, this item could relate to the Strategic Priority of "Well-Maintained Infrastructure", Desired Outcome of "Reliable Utility Systems". It could also relate to the Strategic Priority of "Financial Sustainability", Desired Outcome "Well managed capital resources".

Urgency Level

Medium – within the next 2-3 workshops

Staff Recommendation

Per policy, this discussion will be limited to whether or not the council wishes to direct staff to prepare a future workshop agenda item for council discussion. Staff can answer questions about the nature of the work and timeline during the workshop.

Questions for Council

Is there council consensus to place this topic on a future workshop agenda?

Attachment List

None



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2025-82

Agenda Date	Status
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April 14, 2025

In Control	File Type
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City Council

Workshop Item

New Business - Jerome Krieger, Sr. Recreation Manager, Brent Larson, Project Engineer

Agenda Item # 3.3

Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Trail Development Project - Phase 1

Background

City Council previously approved the contract with Stantec for preliminary design, including an estimated cost for construction of a trail system through the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary. The proposed trail system has been in the works for many years, with the original north section of trail and boardwalk being constructed in 2016/2017. City staff have been working with Stantec to develop an up-to-date concept of the next phase of trails and boardwalk for the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary. Jacob Burgstahler, a Landscape Architect from Stantec, will present the preliminary trail layout map, elevations, building material options and cost estimates for the project. Phasing of the project will also be discussed.

The NRCB saw this presentation by Stantec at their March meeting.

Construction is currently budgeted for phasing throughout 2025-2027. The Open Space Capital budget is the funding source for the project. Currently, there is approximately \$6,000,000 in the open space fund.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the concept to continue to move forward with this trail project.

Questions for Council

Does Council have any preference for the boardwalk materials (i.e. wood, concrete or composite)?
Does Council have any additional feedback, or suggestions for amenities for the trail?

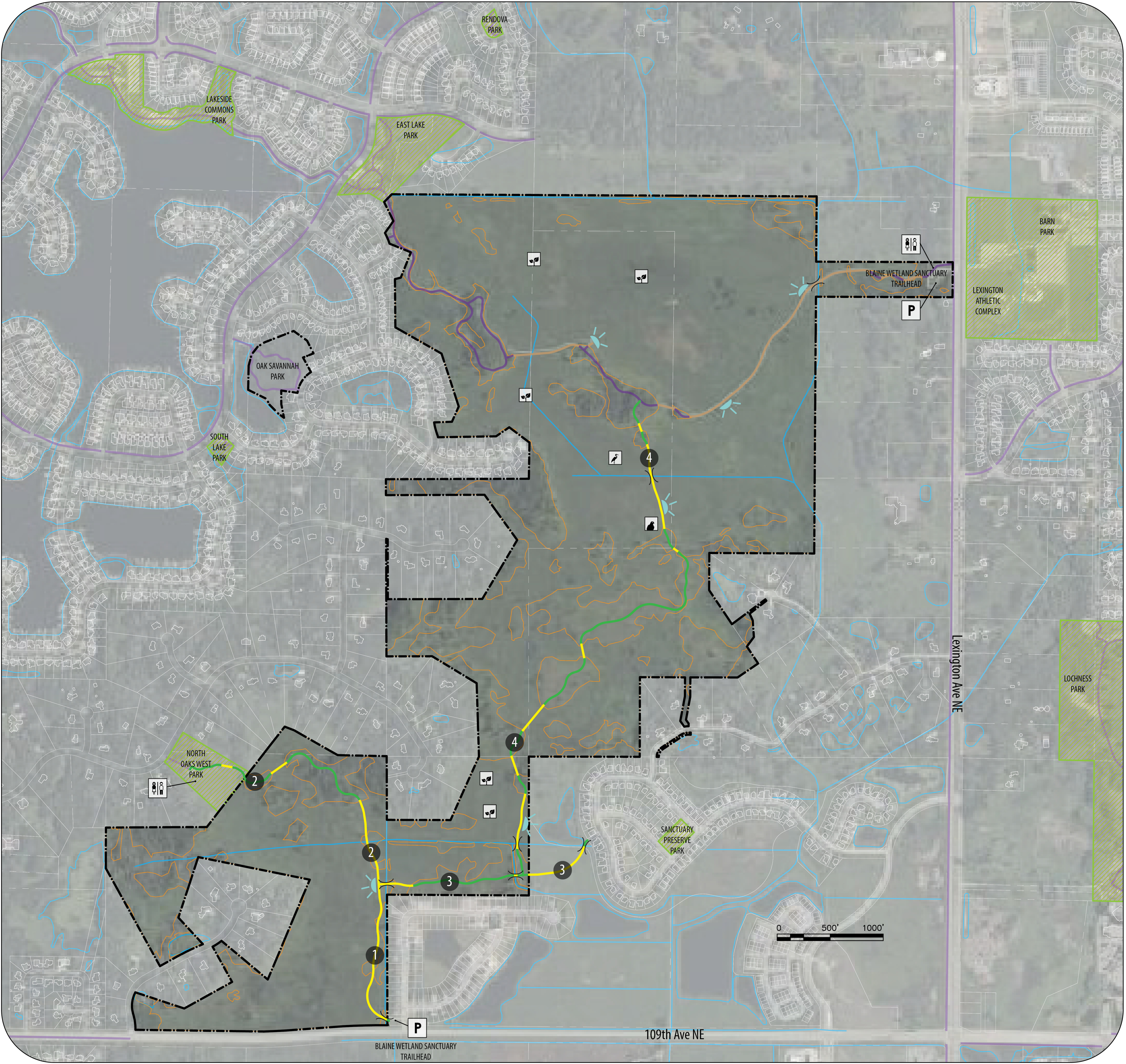
Attachment List

1. 190300236 BWS Trail Development (1)Presentation
2. Precast
3. Project Location Map_mailing to residents

BLAINE WETLAND SANCTUARY

BLAINE, MN MARCH 2025

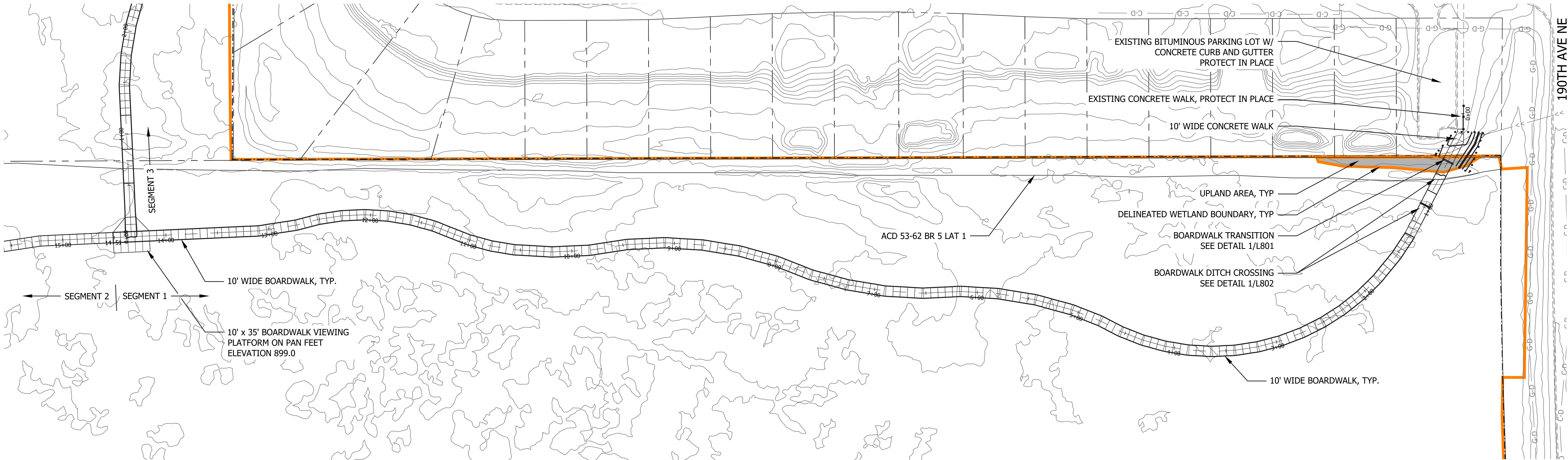
- LEGEND**
- Existing Trails
 - Existing Boardwalk
 - Parcels
 - Existing City Park
 - Site 7 Boundary
 - Proposed Trail
 - Proposed Boardwalk
 - Ditch
 - Bridge/Culvert Crossing
 - Delineated Wetland Upland Transition
 - Public Restrooms
 - Parking Lot
 - Wildlife Viewing
 - Rare Plant Area
 - Crane Nesting Area
 - Hawk Nesting Area



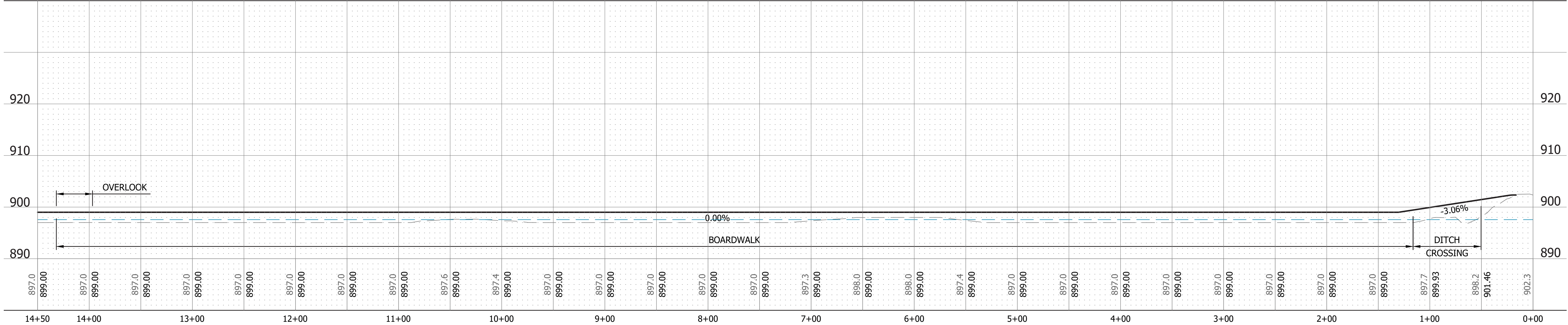
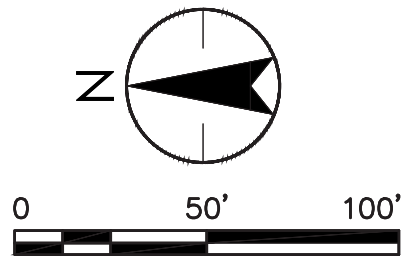
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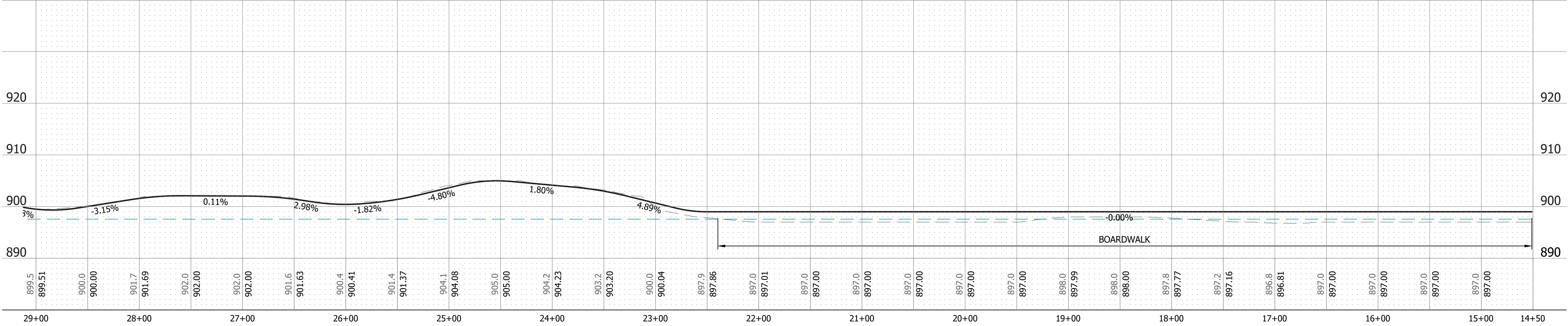
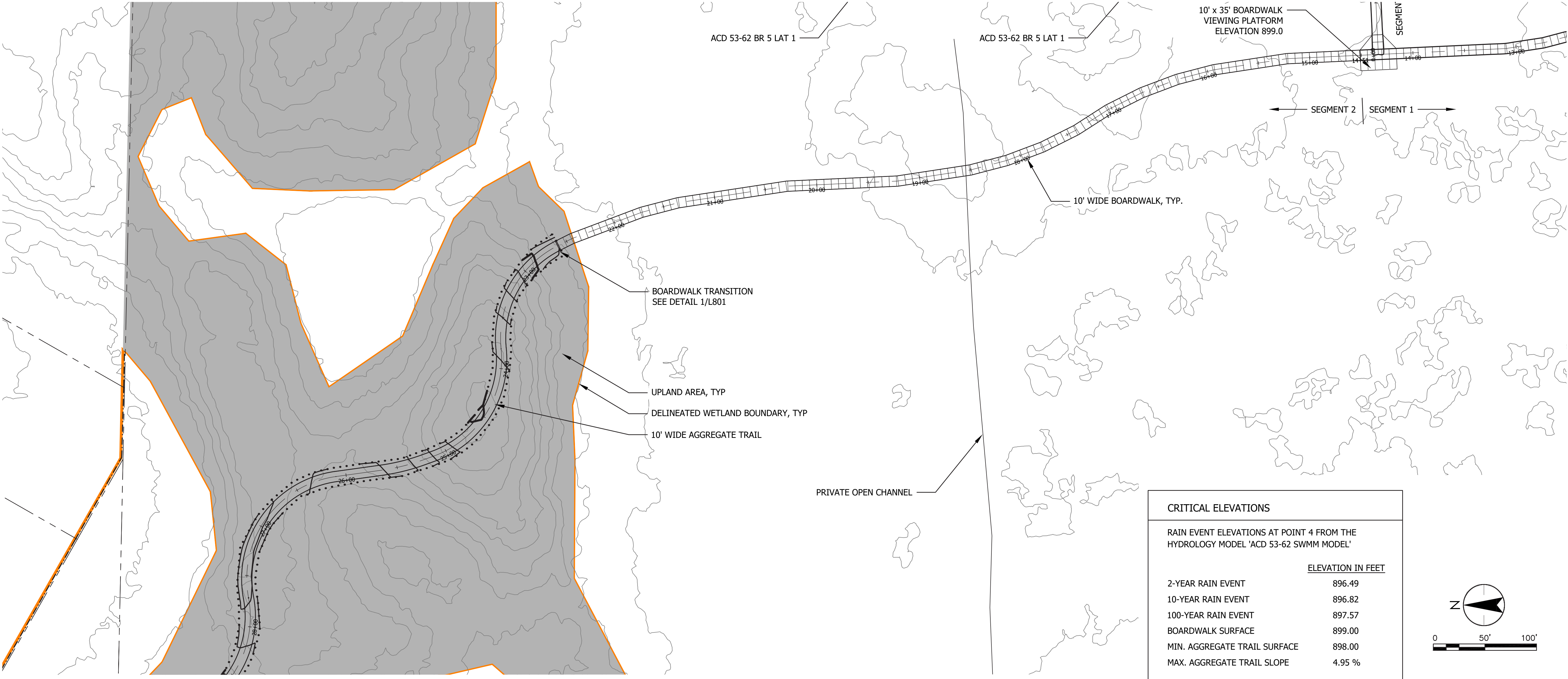
BLAINE WETLAND SANTUARY - LOCATION REFERENCE PLAN



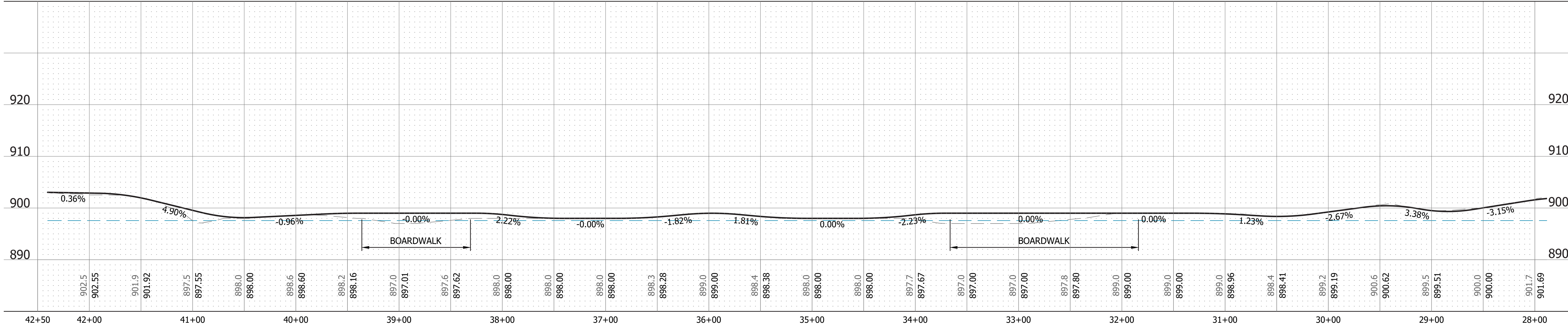
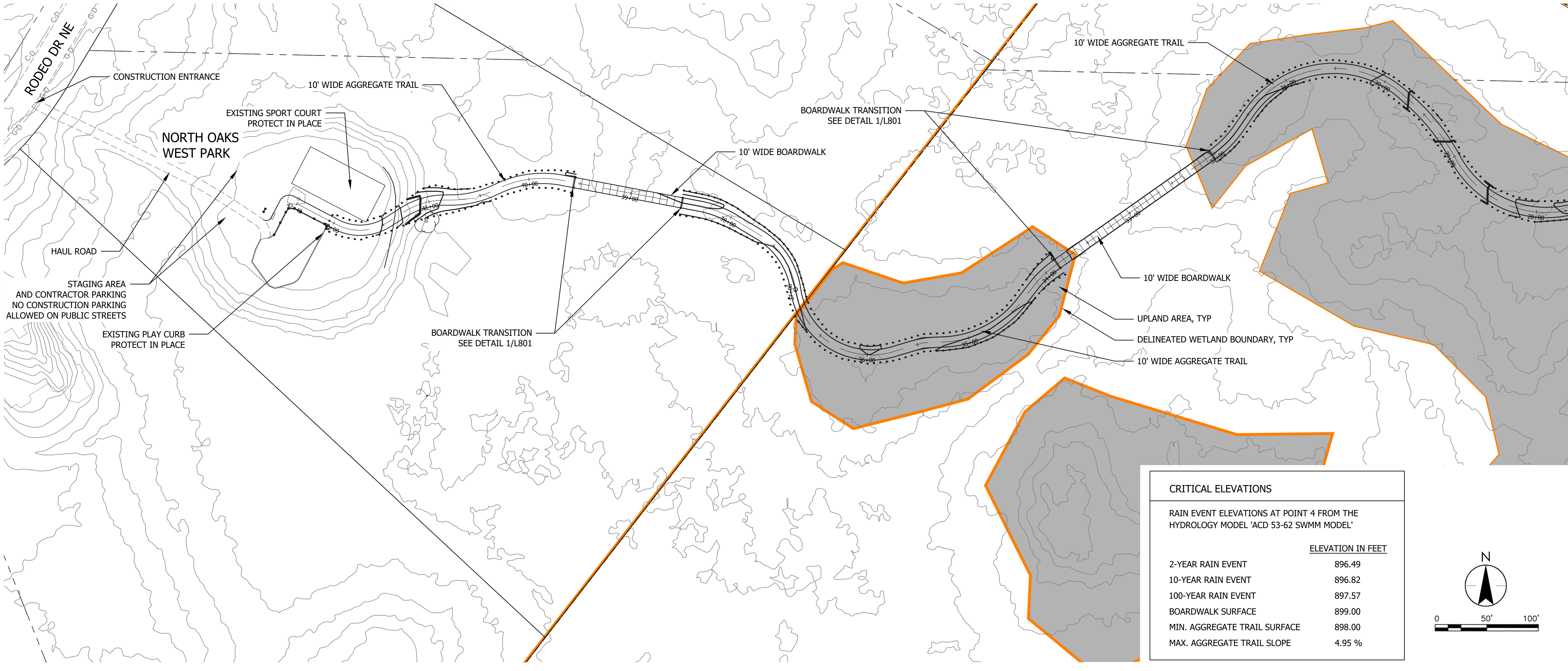
CRITICAL ELEVATIONS	
RAIN EVENT ELEVATIONS AT POINT 4 FROM THE HYDROLOGY MODEL 'ACD 53-62 SWMM MODEL'	
	ELEVATION IN FEET
2-YEAR RAIN EVENT	896.49
10-YEAR RAIN EVENT	896.82
100-YEAR RAIN EVENT	897.57
BOARDWALK SURFACE	899.00
MIN. AGGREGATE TRAIL SURFACE	898.00
MAX. AGGREGATE TRAIL SLOPE	4.95 %



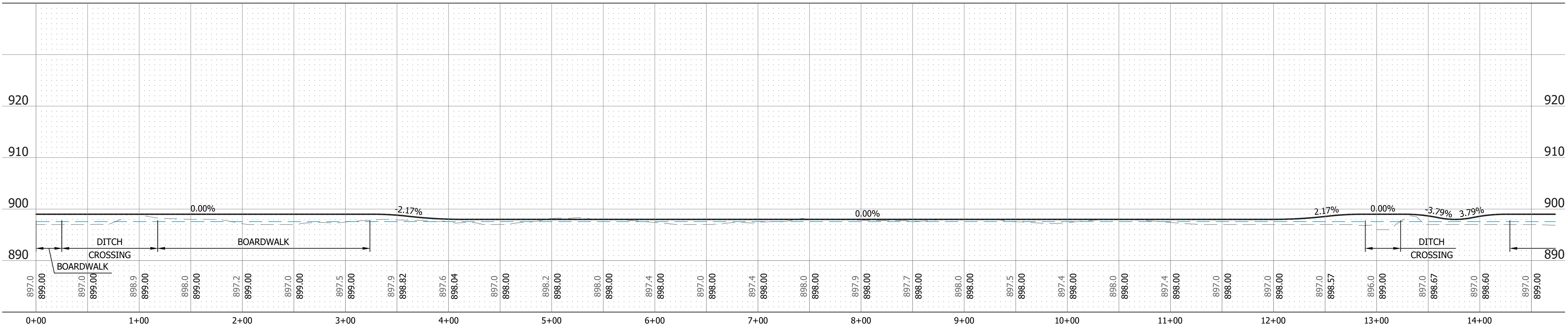
BLAINE WETLAND SANTUARY - PRELIMINARY PLAN AND PROFILE

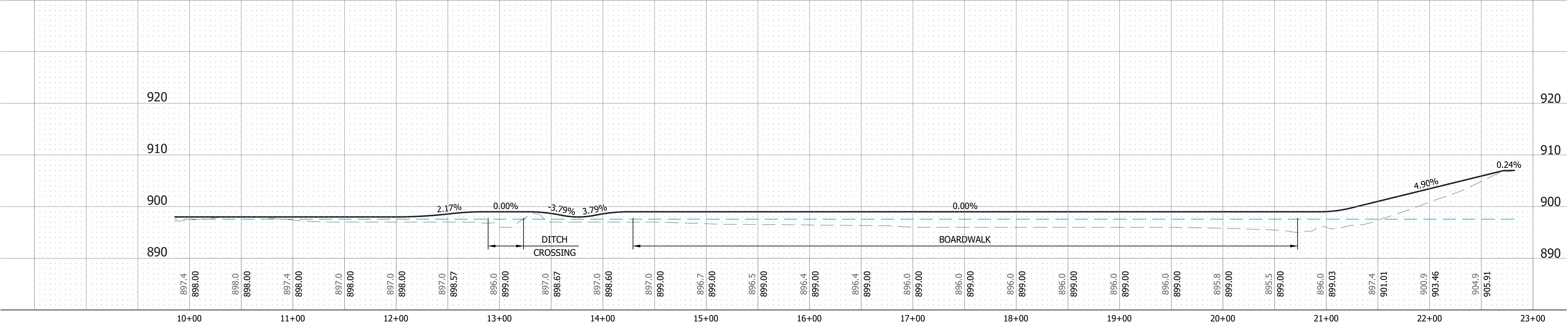
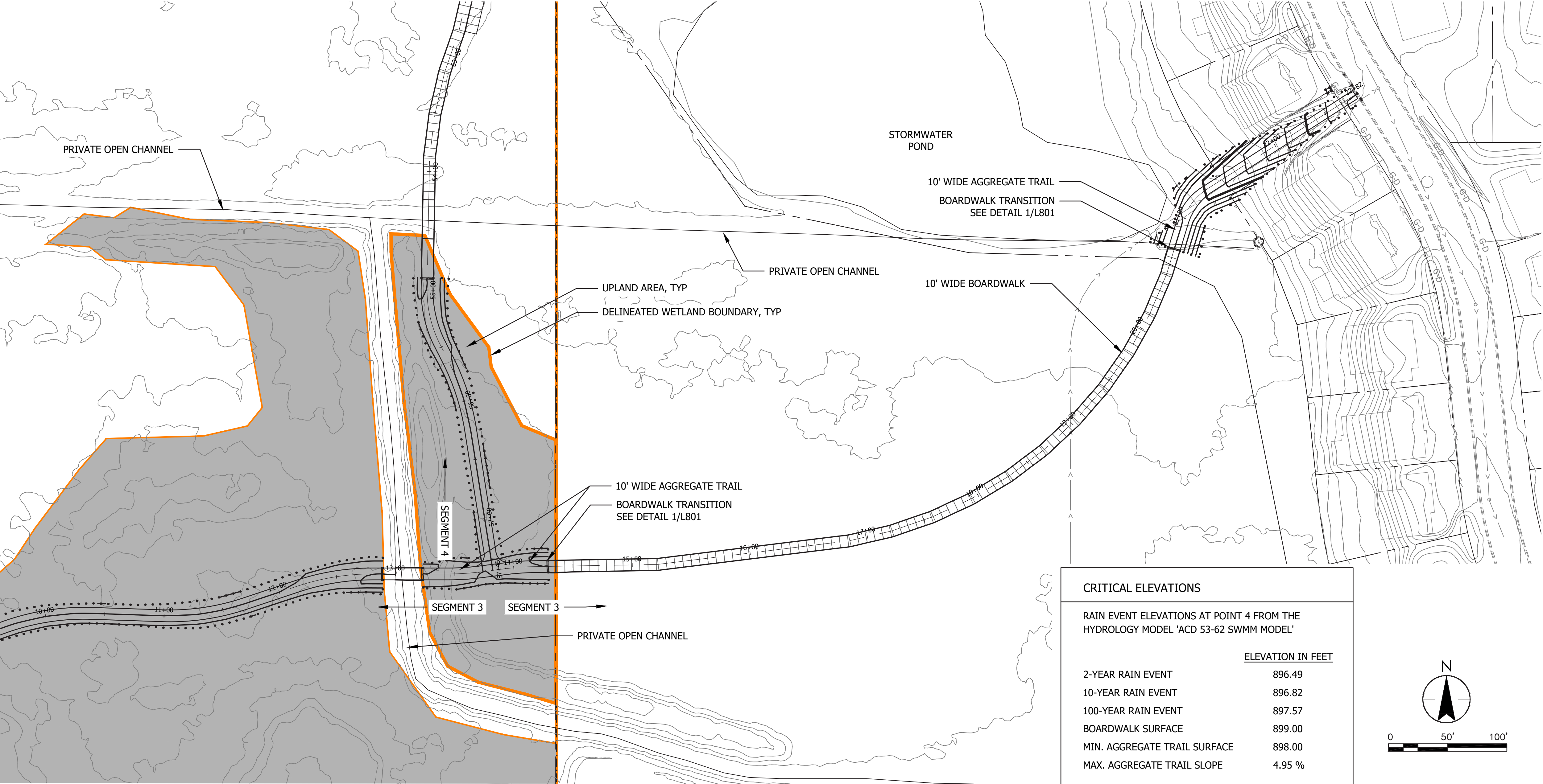


BLAINE WETLAND SANTUARY - PRELIMINARY PLAN AND PROFILE

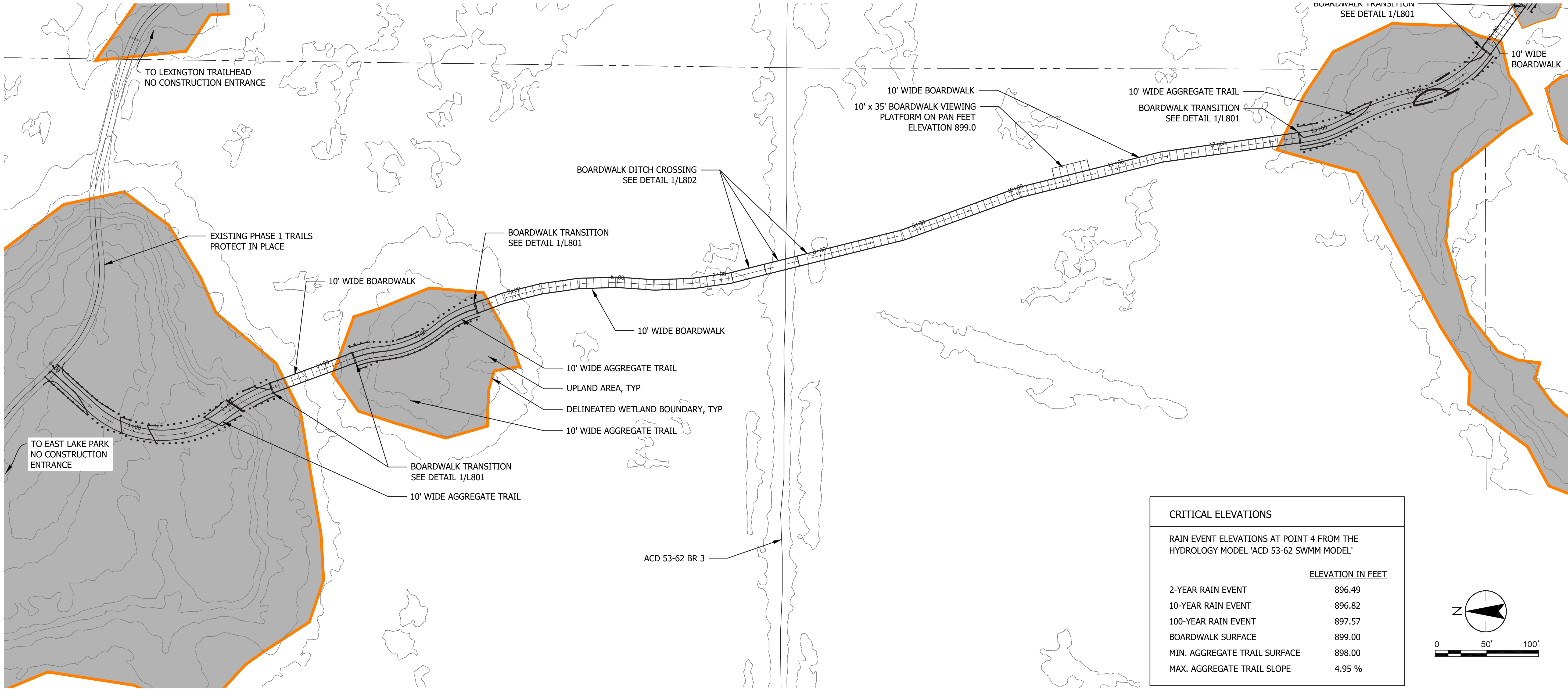


BLAINE WETLAND SANCTUARY - PRELIMINARY PLAN AND PROFILE

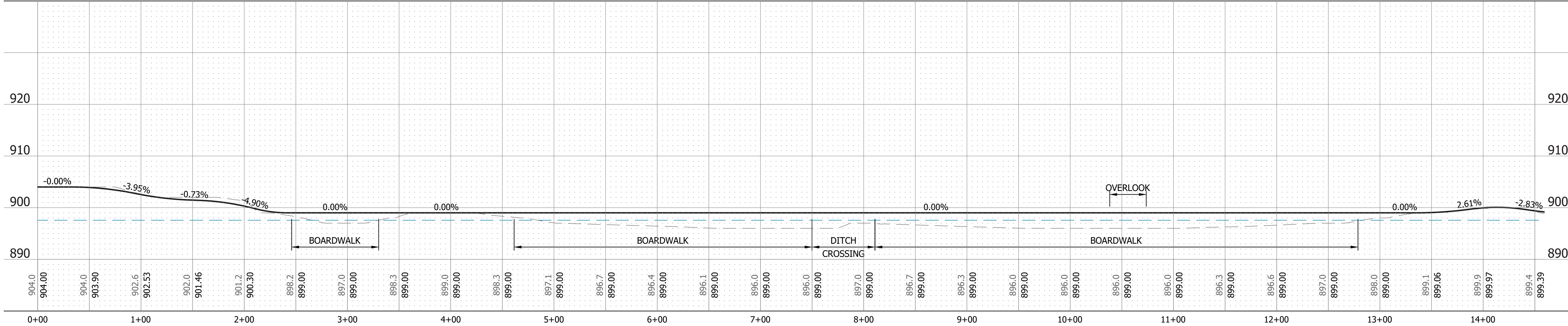




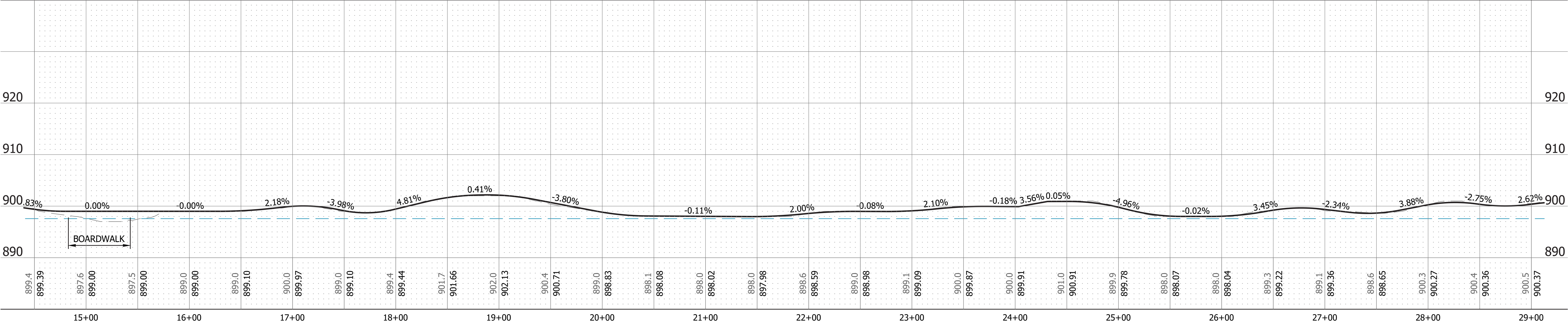
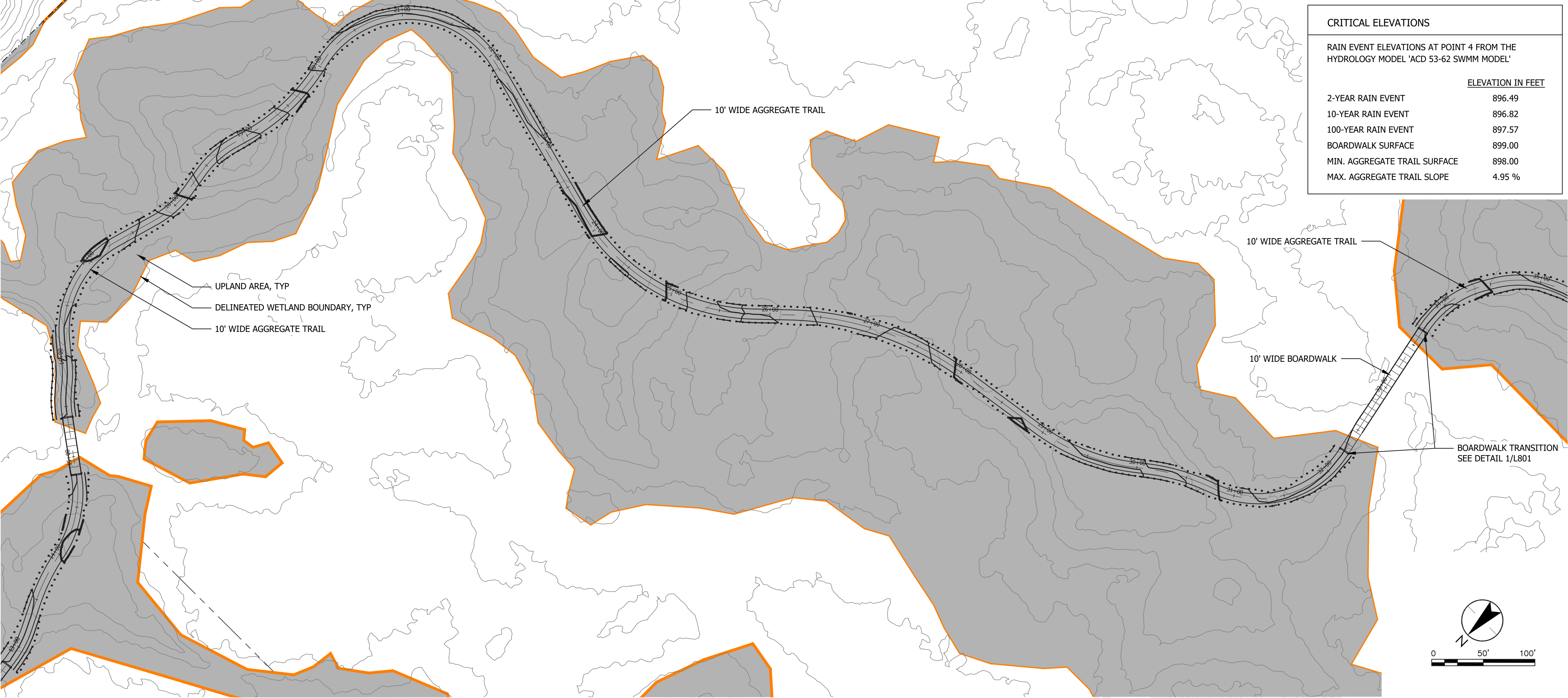
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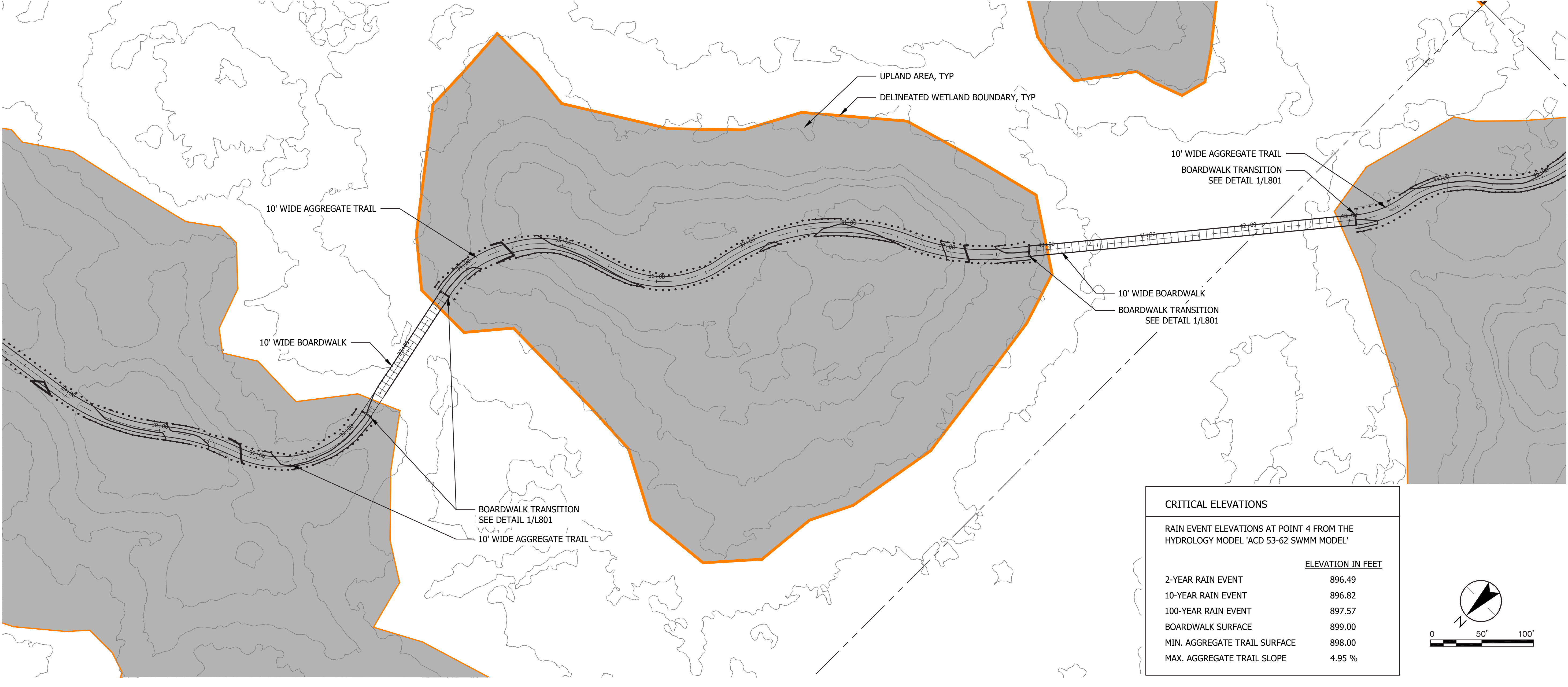
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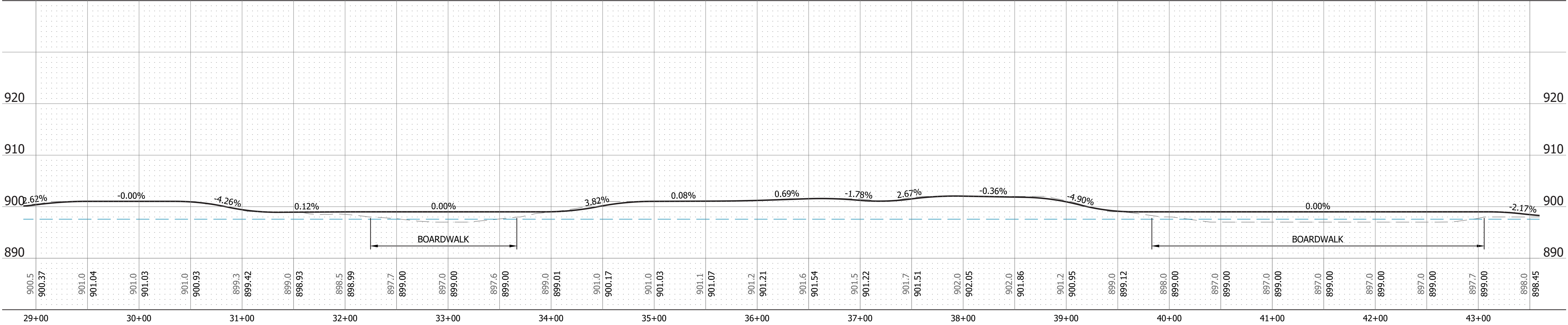
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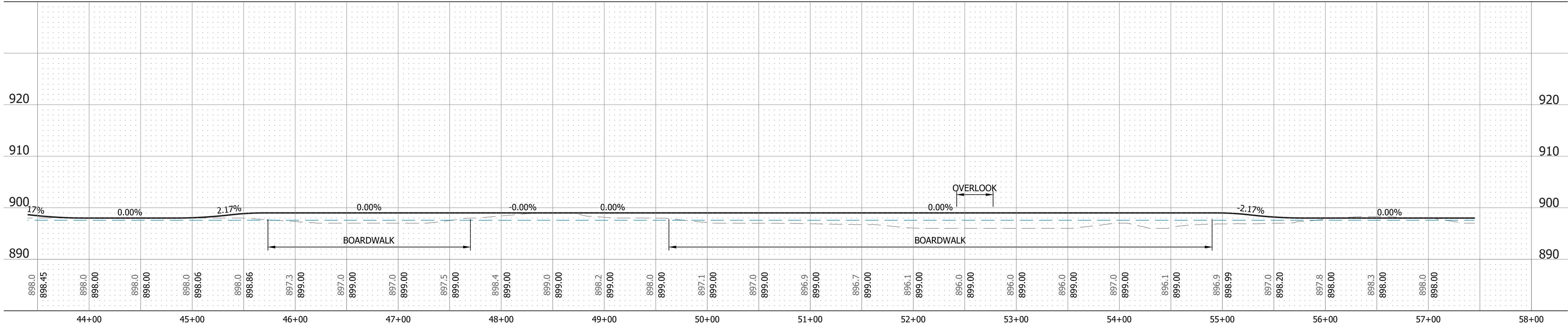
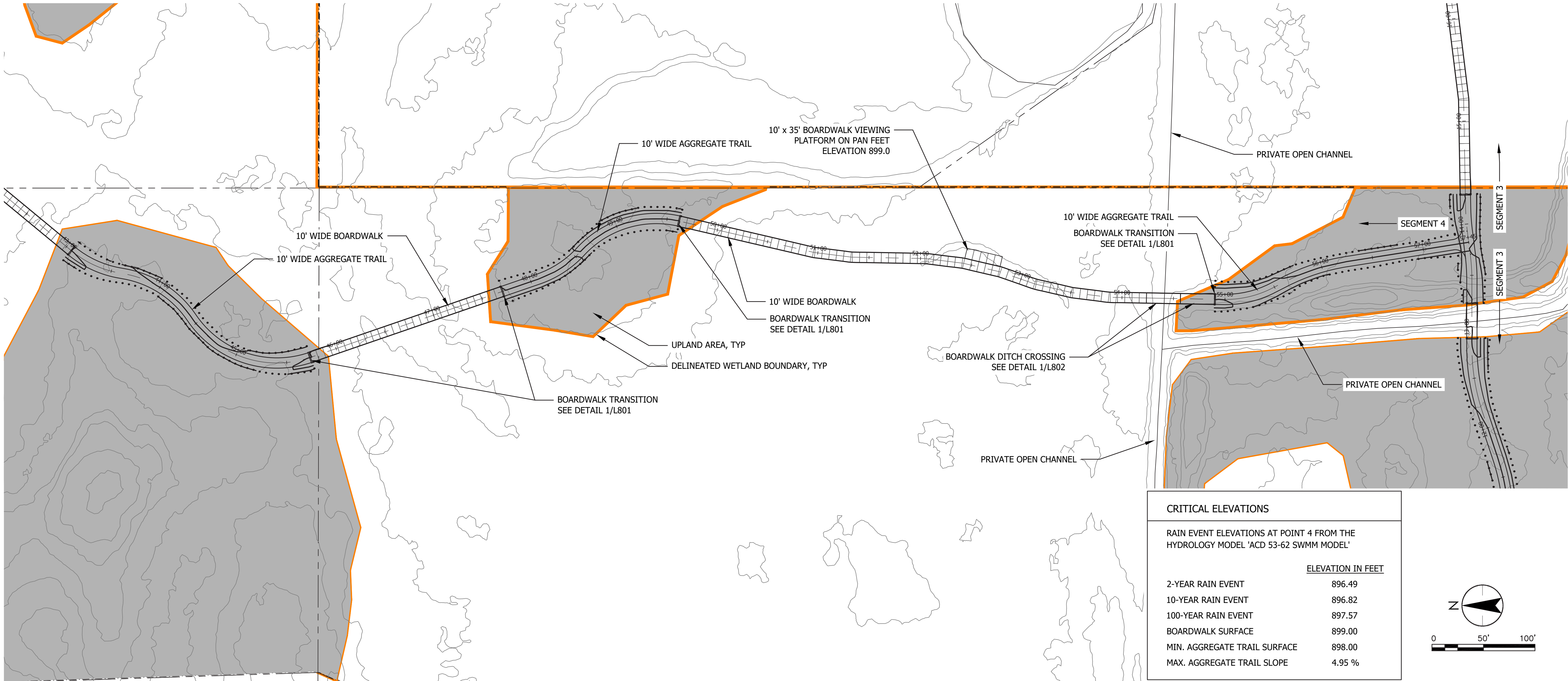
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BLAINE WETLAND SANCTUARY - PRELIMINARY PLAN AND PROFILE



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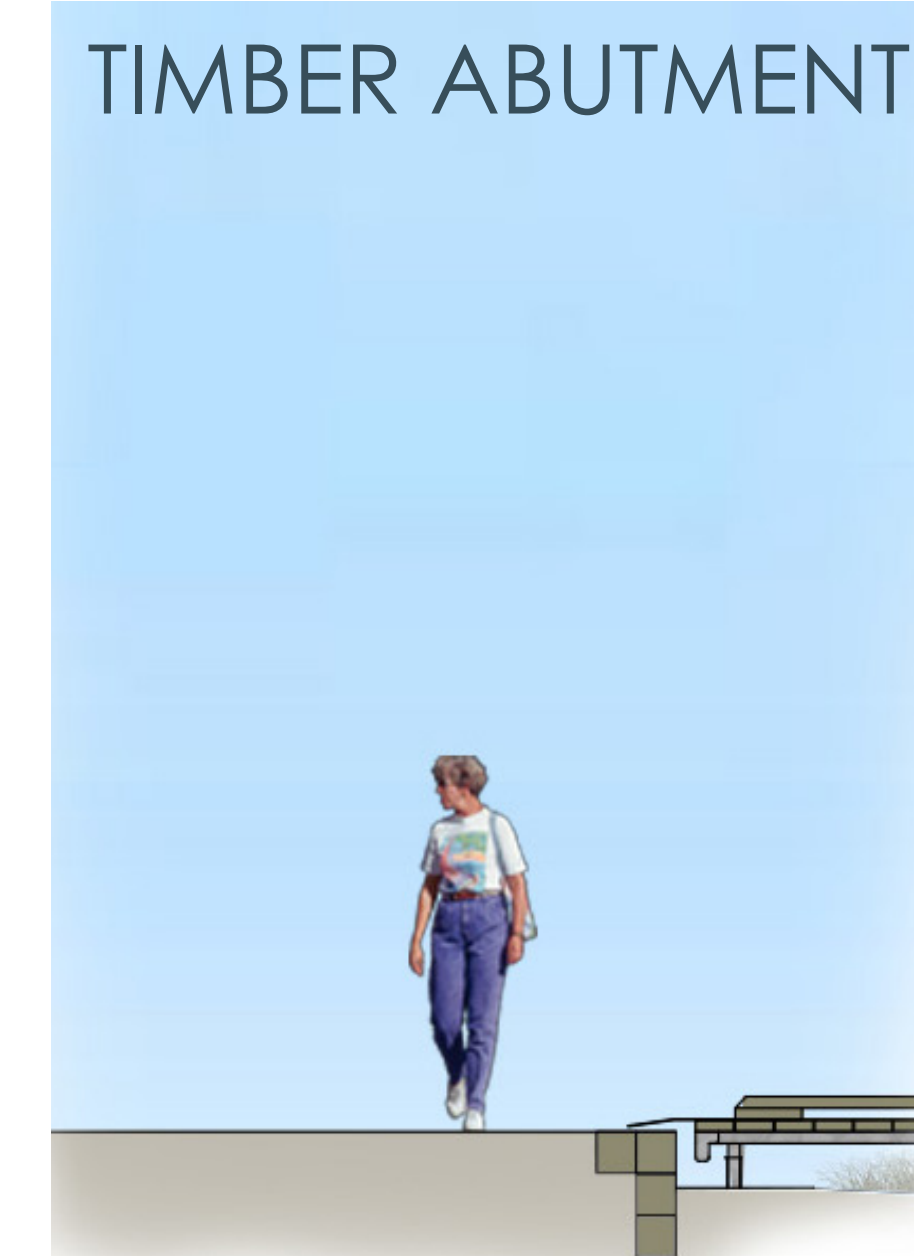
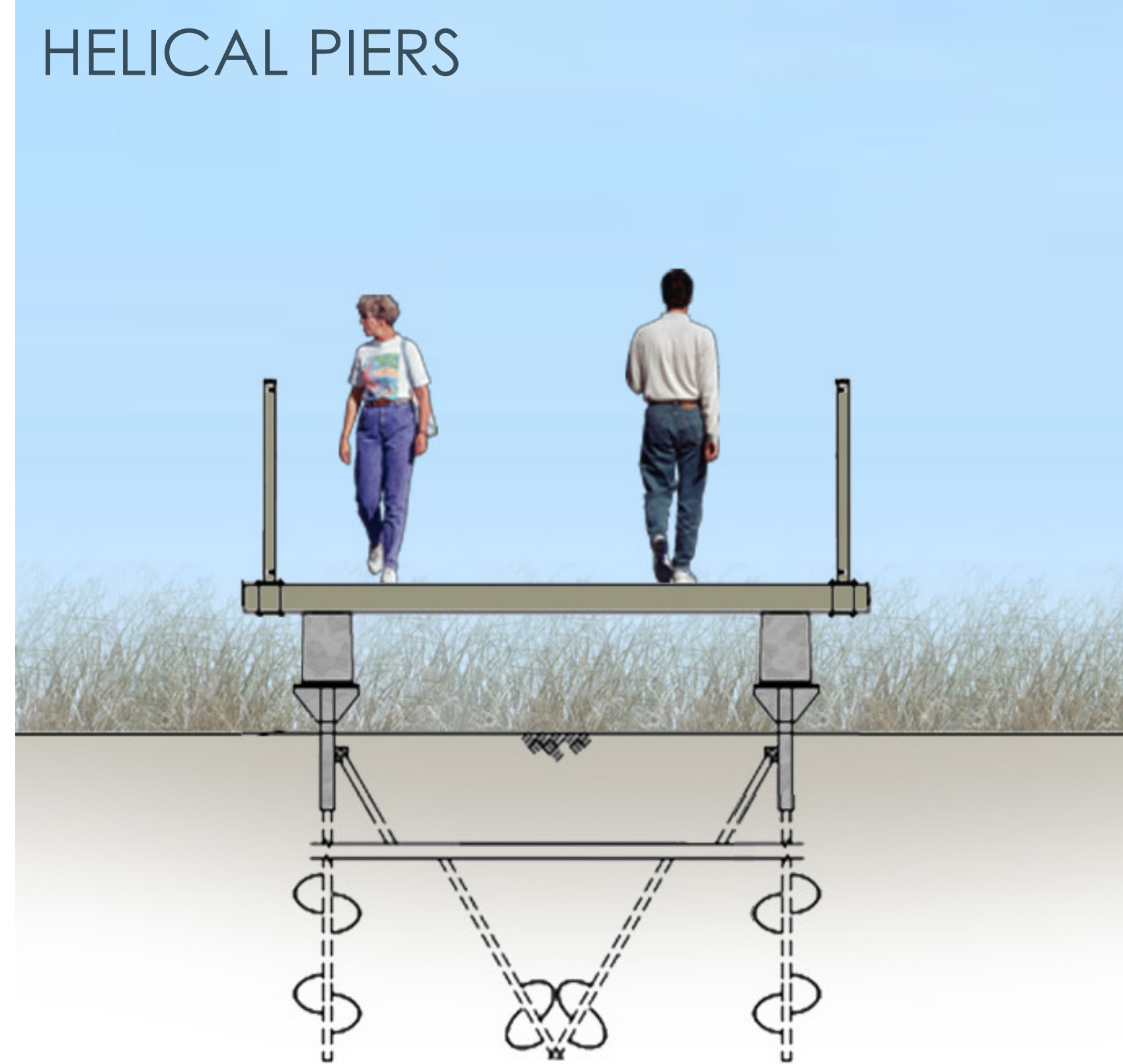
METAL FRAME WITH WOOD/COMPOSITE DECKING



PRECAST CONCRETE



BLAINE WETLAND SANTUARY - BOARDWALK MATERIALS



BLAINE WETLAND SANTUARY - BOARDWALK SUPPORT

BLAINE, MN MARCH 2025

190300236



BLAINE WETLAND SANTUARY - AGGREGATE TRAIL



OPINION OF PROBABLE COST - SUMMARY

BLAINE WETLAND SANTUARY TRAIL DEVELOPMENT
PROJECT NO. 190300236
BLAINE, MINNESOTA
2025

Item	PermaTrak	Modular Trails	Wickcraft	Custom Mfg
BASE BID: SEGMENT 1	\$1,747,841	\$1,946,091	\$2,211,156	\$2,430,181
BASE BID: SEGMENT 2	\$1,514,439	\$1,678,839	\$1,900,643	\$2,088,743
ALTERNATE BID: SEGMENT 3	\$1,460,382	\$1,632,682	\$1,827,580	\$1,972,470
ALTERNATE BID: SEGMENT 4	\$2,965,728	\$3,266,178	\$3,657,275	\$3,972,420

	Sidewalk (ln ft)	Boardwalk (ln ft)	Bridge (ln ft)	Gravel Trail (ln ft)	Total Trail (ln ft)	Trail Length (mi)
Segment 1	31	1,335	66	0	1,432	0.27
Segment 2	0	1,096	0	1,691	2,787	0.53
Segment 3	137	962	132	1,146	2,141	0.41
Segment 4	0	1,983	165	3,587	5,735	1.09
Total	168	5,376	363	6,424	12,095	2.29



BLAINE WETLAND SANTUARY - PROJECT SUMMARY



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BLAINE WETLAND SANTUARY - PRELIMINARY TRAIL SETBACKS

BLAINE, MN MARCH 2025

190300236



BLAINE WETLAND SANTUARY - PRELIMINARY TRAIL SETBACKS

BLAINE, MN MARCH 2025

190300236



BLAINE WETLAND SANTUARY - PRELIMINARY TRAIL SETBACKS

BLAINE, MN MARCH 2025

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BLAINE WETLAND SANTUARY - PRELIMINARY TRAIL SETBACKS

BLAINE, MN MARCH 2025

190300236





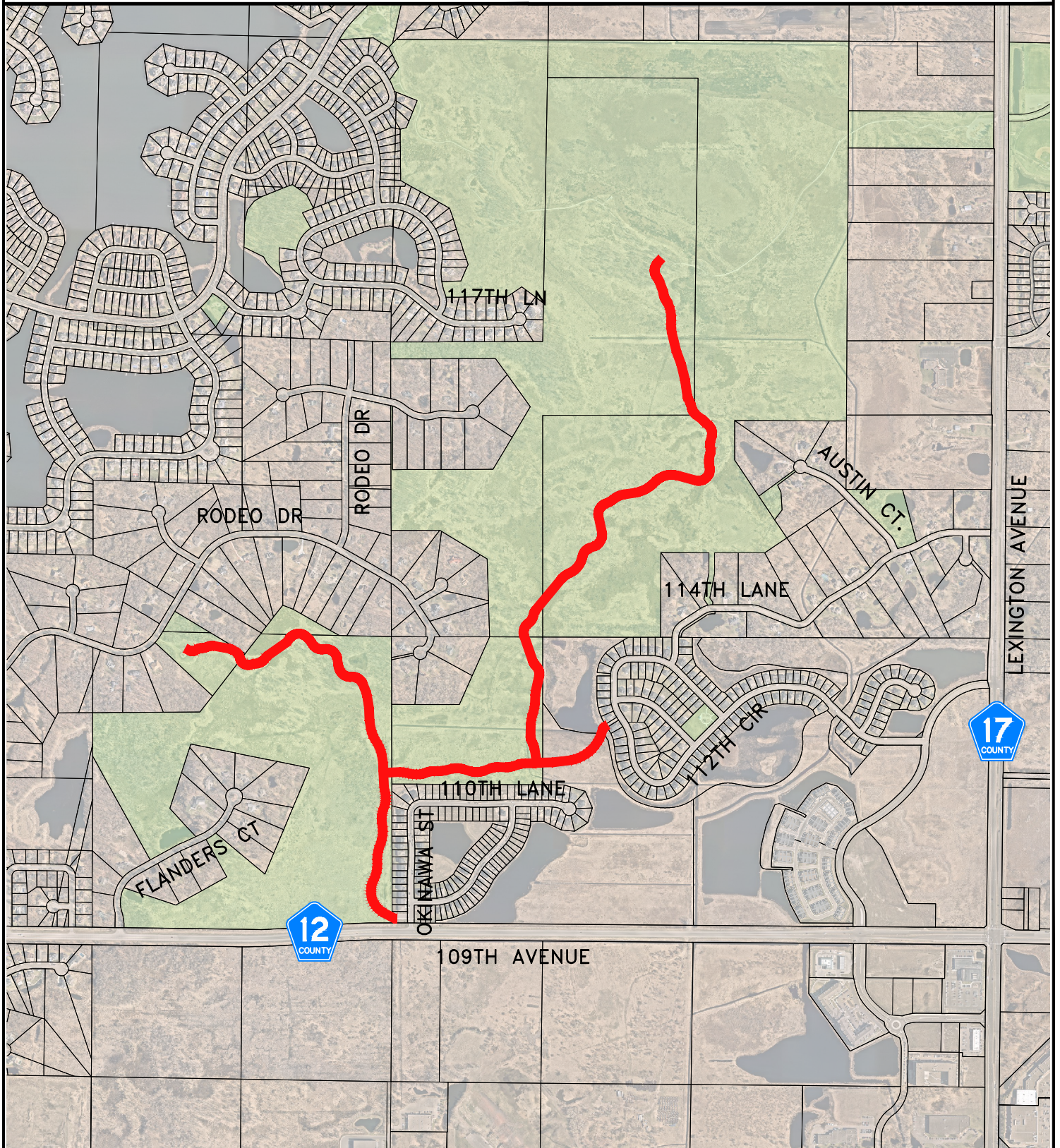
CITY OF BLAINE

LOCATION MAP



BLAINE WETLAND SANCTUARY TRAIL PROJECT

— PROPOSED PROJECT LOCATION





City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2025-83

Agenda Date

April 14, 2025

Status

In Control

City Council

File Type

Workshop Item

New Business - Dan Retka, Fire Chief

Agenda Item # 3.4

SBM Fire Department - Quarterly Update

Background

Chief Retka will provide City Council with a quarterly update.

Staff Recommendation

Questions for Council

Attachment List

None



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2025-84

Agenda Date	Status
April 14, 2025	
In Control	File Type
City Council	Workshop Item

New Business - Jason Zimmerman, Finance Director

Agenda Item # 3.5

2026 Budget - Review of Small Group Meetings; Outcomes and Council Direction

Background

At the February 10th City Council Workshop, staff presented a review of the 2025 budget process with suggestions to improve the process going forward. As part of those discussions, the development of a budget schedule was determined to be worthwhile for several reasons, as it provides a structured and organized approach to the complex budgeting process. In essence, a budget schedule is a vital tool for local governments to effectively manage their finances, ensure accountability, and promote transparency.

As outlined in the budget schedule, Finance Department staff have scheduled small group discussions with all members of the Council during the second week of April to provide measured assumptions that incorporate operating, capital, and debt funding strategies as outlined in previous budgetary cycles while maintaining existing staffing and service levels at anticipated 2026 costs. An outcome of these small group meetings will be the creation of a policy-driven framework containing key themes, goals, and expectations for the 2026 budget and property tax levy. Pending informal consensus of the Council, this document will be shared with departments to provide an outline of budget guidelines to ensure conformance with Council direction.

While further discussions will be required to address the wide spectrum of funds the City maintains, the initial focus of the budget kick-off will be on the 2026 property tax levy, as a preliminary, or maximum levy must be certified to the County Auditor by September 30 in accordance with state statute.

Because small group meetings are scheduled through April 11, the draft summary of Council guidance will be attached the morning of April 14.

Remaining Budget Schedule:

February 10	Budget Kick-off
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March 10	Budget Key Dates Discussed
April 1 - 11	Small Group Meetings with Mayor and Councilmembers
April 14	Review of Small Group Meetings; Outcomes and Council Direction
June 9	General Fund and EDA Budget and Tax Levy
June 23	Internal Service Funds (<i>Budget Retreat – 4th Monday</i>)
July 14	Capital Funds Budget
August 11	Review General Fund, EDA, and Capital Budgets and Tax Levy
September 1	Reserved for Budget Review if needed
September 15	Adopt Proposed General Fund, EDA, and Capital Budgets and Tax Levy
September 22	Charitable Gambling and Communications Funds
September 29	Utilities and Refuse Funds (<i>Budget Retreat – 5th Monday</i>)
October 13	Review Charitable Gambling Fund Scoring
October 13	Review General Fund, EDA, and Capital Budgets and Tax Levy
November 10	Review Utilities and Refuse Funds
December 1	Truth-in-Taxation Public Meeting
December 15	Adopt Final General Fund, EDA, and Capital Budgets and Tax Levy

Staff Recommendation

Provide feedback to ensure staff and Council alignment on the 2026 budget and property tax levy.

Questions for Council

Does the City Council consent to the summary of outcomes and direction outlined for the 2026 budget and property tax levy?

Attachment List

1. 2026 Budget Schedule - Council
2. Presentation



2026 Budget Schedule Council Dates



February 10	Budget Kick-off
March 10	Budget Key Dates Discussed
April 1 - 11	Small Group Meetings with Mayor and Councilmembers
June 9	General Fund and EDA Budget and Tax Levy
June 23	Internal Service Funds (<i>Budget Retreat – 4th Monday</i>)
July 14	Capital Funds Budget
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September 22	Charitable Gambling and Communications Funds
September 29	Utilities and Refuse Funds (<i>Budget Retreat – 5th Monday</i>)
October 13	Review Charitable Gambling Fund Scoring
October 13	Review General Fund, EDA, and Capital Budgets and Tax Levy
November 10	Review Utilities and Refuse Funds
December 1	Truth in Taxation Public Hearing
December 15	Adopt Final General Fund, EDA, and Capital Budgets and Tax Levy



2026 Budget/Levy Small Group Council Outcomes

Finance Department

April 14, 2024

Small Group Meetings Process



- ▶ City staff conducted meetings with council members during the week of April 7
- ▶ Focused on discussing the leading indicators driving the 2026 budget & property tax levy
- ▶ Finance provided information based on current financial condition
 - ▶ Departments have not provided line-item budgets

Council & Staff Budgetary Roles



► Council

- Be informed regarding items impacting the budget/tax levy
- Provide direction, policy, and framework for expectations
- Adopt a budget / tax levy

► Staff

- Operationally implement a process to achieve Council goals
- Provide a budget that includes “explanatory statements” as necessary
- Enforce the budget

Question for Council

- ▶ Does Council Consent to the Summary of Direction Provided During Small Group Discussions and Overall Implications



Council Small Group Budget Direction

- ▶ Equitable compensation for city staff
- ▶ Preserve existing complement of full-time staffing
- ▶ Prioritize new funding for capital investments
- ▶ Sufficient resources for internal service funds
- ▶ Connect budget requests to the strategic plan
- ▶ Evaluate non-personnel related expenditures
- ▶ Leverage unrestricted reserves to fund non-reoccurring requests
- ▶ Maintain posture to incentivize development/redevelopment
- ▶ Reduce reliance on the property tax levy



Overall Implications

- ▶ Fiscal Responsibility
- ▶ Strategic Planning
- ▶ Economic Development
- ▶ Capital Investment
- ▶ Employee well-being
- ▶ Tax Levy % of Increase < 2025



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2025-85

Agenda Date	Status
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April 14, 2025

In Control	File Type
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City Council

Workshop Item

New Business - Scott Johnson, Director of Administrative Services, Lori Carbajal, Human Resources Manager

Agenda Item # 3.6

Compensation Study Introduction

Background

In 2024, the City of Blaine budgeted for a compensation plan review by Gallagher to update the study implemented for the City in 2021. The 2021 process included a comprehensive review of positions and classifications, plan structure, and market analysis. A review of plans every three to five years is recommended as a best practice to stay competitive in the market and maintain integrity of the plan. (Similarly, salary and benefit information is gathered and analyzed for each labor contract negotiation process.)

Goals for having a sound and competitive compensation structure include addressing the following:

- High employee retention rates/low turnover rates
- Successful recruitment to fill vacant positions
- Compliance with Minnesota Pay Equity statute
- Decreased liability for compensation-related claims

Gallagher began work on the market study in the late fall of 2024, and included work to analyze current salary trends within the public sector industry to ensure that the City of Blaine will have a competitive market position in attracting and retaining top talent. The goal was to ensure that compensation practices are competitive, equitable, and aligned with the city's budgetary priorities. Gallagher will be completing their work in the near future and staff is providing an introductory presentation on their comprehensive market study.

Staff Recommendation

This is a brief introduction to the topic. A future workshop session will be schedule to review to results of the work and any recommendations for implementation.

Questions for Council

Attachment List

1. Presentation

Gallagher Study Update



Background

- ◆ Original Compensation Study by Gallagher was implemented in 2021
- ◆ Funds were budgeted for the update as part of the 2024 Budget
- ◆ Started process with Gallagher in the fall of 2024
- ◆ Scope of update – analysis of current salary trends within the public sector industry to ensure the City remains at market average

Gallagher Study Update



- ◆ The study was not a complete makeover of the current compensation plan. Gallagher was simply asked to review and tweak the existing compensation plan to make sure Blaine remains at the market average over the next 3-5 years (per the recommendations of the original compensation study).
- ◆ Best practice is to review the plan every 3-5 years to ensure the plan continues to have structural integrity and remains competitive
 - ◆ Interim reviews prevent the need for large studies and completely new plans at higher costs
 - ◆ Review done consistent with existing Council policy direction regarding compensation – goal to be at market average

Gallagher Study Update



The primary objectives of the study:

- ◆ Ensure the City does not fall below the market average
- ◆ Ensure equitable compensation relationships within the organization
 - ◆ Necessary to remain in compliance with Minnesota Pay Equity Statute
- ◆ Enable maintenance by the City staff post implementation

Gallagher Study Update



Where are we now:

- ◆ Currently analyzing the results
- ◆ Staff will meet with Gallagher in the near future to review the information and address any questions
- ◆ Gallagher is tentatively scheduled to bring the final results to a City Council Workshop in May