

CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date July 8, 2024

REPORT TO: Michael Sable, City Manager

REPORT FROM: Michael Martin, Assistant Community Development Director

PRESENTER: Danette Parr, Community Development Director

AGENDA ITEM: D.R. Horton Concept Plan Review, Ramsey County's Former Ponds at Battle Creek Golf Course

Action Requested: Motion Discussion Public Hearing

Form of Action: Resolution Ordinance Contract/Agreement Proclamation

Policy Issue:

On October 10, 2023, the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners approved a purchase contract with D.R. Horton for the property at 601 Century Avenue South—the former Ponds at Battle Creek Golf Course. Representatives from D.R. Horton will attend the July 8, 2024, city council workshop to discuss their concept plan to develop the property.

Recommended Action:

This item is for discussion purposes, and no action is required.

Fiscal Impact:

Is There a Fiscal Impact? No Yes, the true or estimated cost is \$0

Financing source(s): Adopted Budget Budget Modification New Revenue Source
 Use of Reserves Other: N/A

Strategic Plan Relevance:

Community Inclusiveness Financial & Asset Mgmt Environmental Stewardship
 Integrated Communication Operational Effectiveness Targeted Redevelopment

City of Maplewood staff has met with D.R. Horton representatives over the past several months to discuss city requirements and procedures. The city council is holding a concept plan review so the developer can get feedback on their proposed development.

Background:

On November 10, 2022, Ramsey County issued a Request for Developer Interest for the former Ponds at Battle Creek Golf Course property, seeking proposals for residential development of the approximate 92-acre property. A letter of intent was negotiated by Ramsey County with D.R. Horton and executed on August 22, 2023. The purchase contract was negotiated based on D.R. Horton's concept plan for single-family and twin-home residential units while maintaining pedestrian access

to the trails and open space on the site. At the workshop, it will be the Maplewood City Council's first opportunity to weigh in on the concept plan for developing the property. This proposed development does not include the vacant land owned by Ramsey County to the north of the correctional facility.

D.R. Horton proposes approximately 239 homesites with a mix of detached single-family homes and townhomes. Attached to this report is a narrative from the developer giving an overview of the potential development, concept plan drawings, and presentation slides. To move forward with the development, the developer would need to submit the following land use applications:

- **Comprehensive Plan Amendment Application** (requires four votes for approval)
 - Property is currently guided Park; to develop as proposed, a residential designation is needed.
 - The Low Density Residential designation is the most likely to be requested, allowing 2.6 – 6.0 units per net acre.
- **Rezoning or Planned Unit Development Application**
 - Property is currently zoned Farm Residential; to permit townhomes and single-family homes with smaller lot sizes, the site's zoning needs to be addressed.
 - The Planned Unit Development is intended to encourage more efficient use of land, public services, and greater amenity by allowing, under certain circumstances, a more flexible means of land development than is otherwise afforded through the strict enforcement of zoning requirements.
 - The developer can also request a rezone to a district like the R-1S Small-Lot Single-Dwelling District and adhere to all minimum requirements.
- **Community Design Review Board Application**
 - The proposed townhomes require design review.
- **Lot Division Application**
 - The golf course property must be divided from the rest of the Ramsey County property containing the correctional facility. This is an administrative request.
- **Preliminary and Final Plat Applications**
 - To create the home sites, the property must be fully platted. This process can occur in the same year the lot division is approved.

Other land use applications may be needed if the project moves forward and other areas are identified.

Staff has been meeting with D.R. Horton to discuss city requirements and expectations for a project of this size. Numerous items have been identified and discussed, but the five main issues city staff has identified are below.

- **Need for improved architectural elements to the single-family homes and townhomes**
 - Staff has relayed concerns to D.R. Horton regarding the design of the front facades and the types of materials proposed. Staff believes both the design and materials can be improved and enhanced.

Sidewalk/Trail Connections

- Staff believes new sidewalks or trails should be constructed along the north and east boundaries of the site to fill gaps in the existing network to the west and south of this site.
 - A trail should be constructed to connect with Mailand Road from this site, providing access to Vista Hills Park to the west.
 - A sidewalk along the north side of Linwood Ave should be added that connects to the recommended trail along Century Avenue.
 - A trail is needed to connect the townhome development to the proposed park and the north housing development.
- **Size and Design of Proposed Park**
 - Staff recommends that the proposed park in the center of the site be expanded to a minimum of two acres and that a concept plan for the park be submitted for review by the city.
 - Staff believe this proposed park should remain private and be maintained by a homeowner's association without limitation to who has access to the park.
 - **Open Space Management Plan**
 - A plan must be developed and submitted to the City for review. This plan must show how the housing development will proactively manage the open space areas.
 - **Drainage Concerns**
 - City engineering staff has identified multiple areas on this site that currently cause water issues for the existing neighborhoods to the west. Any new development of this site must address and correct these issues.

It should be noted that the streets and utilities within the single-family home section of the development are intended to be publicly owned and maintained. Also, the developer is aware of the Saint Paul Police firing range to the southwest of the property and is conducting a sound study to determine if noise mitigation improvements will be needed.

Finally, in addition to the identified issues above, all ordinance requirements must be met, and other issues may be identified as project plans are further developed. At the workshop, staff requests that the city council keep these issues in mind as it gives feedback to D.R. Horton. D.R. Horton will have questions, and it will pose them to the city council for feedback.

Attachments:

1. D.R. Horton Project Narrative
2. Rendered Concept Plan
3. Concept Plan with Site Data
4. D.R. Horton Presentation

CENTURY PONDS

Concept Plan Narrative

Maplewood, MN

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Century Ponds (FKA The Ponds at Battle Creek Golf Course) is approximately 92 acres and located at the southwest intersection of Century Avenue and Lower Afton Road. The Ramsey County-owned golf course is no longer operational and thus the site is currently vacant. It is bordered on the north by Lower Afton Rd and the Ramsey County Correctional Facility, on the west by an existing low density residential, on the east by Century Ave and high-density residential uses, and on the south by Linwood Ave and the St. Paul Police Training Facility/Gun Range.

The Comprehensive Plan guides the property as Park. In addition to Rezoning and Preliminary Plat approval, a Comprehensive Plan Amendment will be required for residential use.

Generally, the site has minimal tree coverage, except along the westerly boundary. The goal is to preserve this natural buffer between the existing and proposed neighborhoods.

A wetland investigation took place fall 2023 and a Notice of Decision was received from the Board of Water and Soil Resources May 7, 2024. It was determined that there is approximately 10 acres of wetlands, which includes both incidental (exempt) and non-incidental wetlands. The current concept plan shows impacts to the incidental wetlands, while preserving the non-incidental wetlands.

CONCEPT PLAN

The current Concept Plan proposes approximately 239 homesites with a mix of detached single-family homes and townhomes. Samples of the home plans and elevations accompany this narrative. The goal in designing the site is to be sensitive to the existing conditions, including preservation of the natural areas and wetlands, as well as the vegetated buffer along the westerly boundary.

Another objective is to repurpose as much of the existing cart path into a trail system as feasibly possible.

The single-family homes are shown on smaller lots with a minimum width of 55 feet. The smaller lots sizes and townhomes create an ideal transition from the westerly lower density neighborhood to the easterly higher density apartment sites.

The Express Select detached single-family homes are generally 2-story single family designs. These homes offer flexibility in that they can be built as slab-on-grade or with basements, as well as with 2- or 3-stall garages. In this product line, there are approximately 7 floor plans ranging in size from 1,500 to 2,600 square feet. Each floor plan will have multiple elevation options, which will create variety in the streetscape. Similar homes are currently being constructed in DR Horton's Hinton Woods neighborhood (located at the corner of 65th St S & Hinton Ave S, Cottage Grove 55016).

The 26-foot-wide townhomes are 2-story slab-on-grade buildings. Each unit has a 2-car garage with 3- or 4- bedroom layouts. A homeowners' association will be responsible for building exteriors, grounds maintenance and the private roads. Similar townhomes are currently being constructed in DR Horton's Copper Hills neighborhood (located at the corner of Radio Dr & Dale Rd, Woodbury 55129).

The goals and objectives in creating this new neighborhood include the following:

- A neighborhood layout that is sensitive to the existing conditions, including the cart path/trail system, availability of utilities, topography, ponding and drainage patterns.
- Design a walkable environment with sidewalks and trails.
- Preservation of trees and buffer to existing homes.
- Creation of a future park that includes active and passive play spaces.
- Provide attainably priced homes and styles that complement the surrounding neighborhoods.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE

Summer 2024

- Habitat Assessment – review & identify habitats for various species.
- Sound Study – review sound levels related to the police training facility
- City Council Workshop Meeting
- Neighborhood Meeting

Fall/Winter 2024

- Comprehensive Plan Amendment Request
- Preliminary Plat & Rezoning Requests

Late Winter/Spring 2025

- Final Plat
- Begin Site Work – Grading

Fall 2025

- Begin Home Construction

CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. City Council support for Comprehensive Plan Amendment?
2. Product Mix: Single Family Homes & Townhomes
3. Trail System – Public vs Private
4. Neighborhood Park – Public vs Private
5. Off-site improvements (trails) – timing of improvements & impact to existing neighbors.
6. Land closing requires a Lot Division. Will City allow the Lot Division & Subdivision Plat (Final Plat) in the same year?
7. Any other feedback or discussion points of Council.

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THE ELTON EXTERIOR UNIT

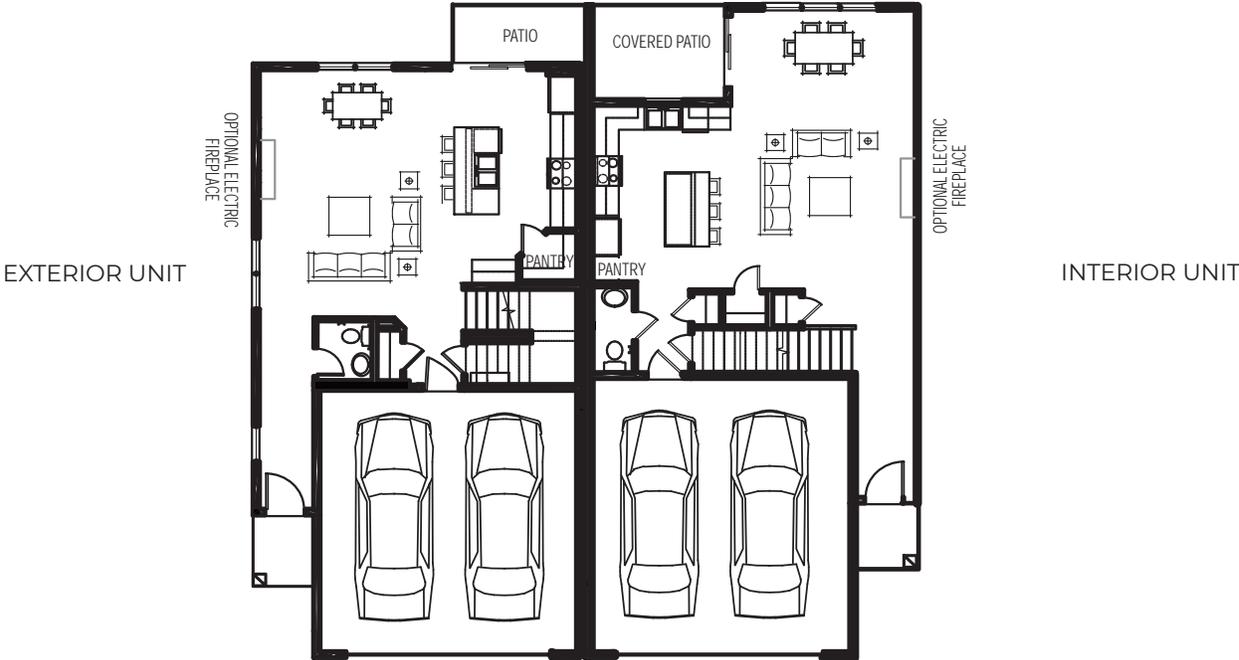
4 Bedroom, 2.5 Bath
1,965 Square Feet

THE FAIRMONT INTERIOR UNIT

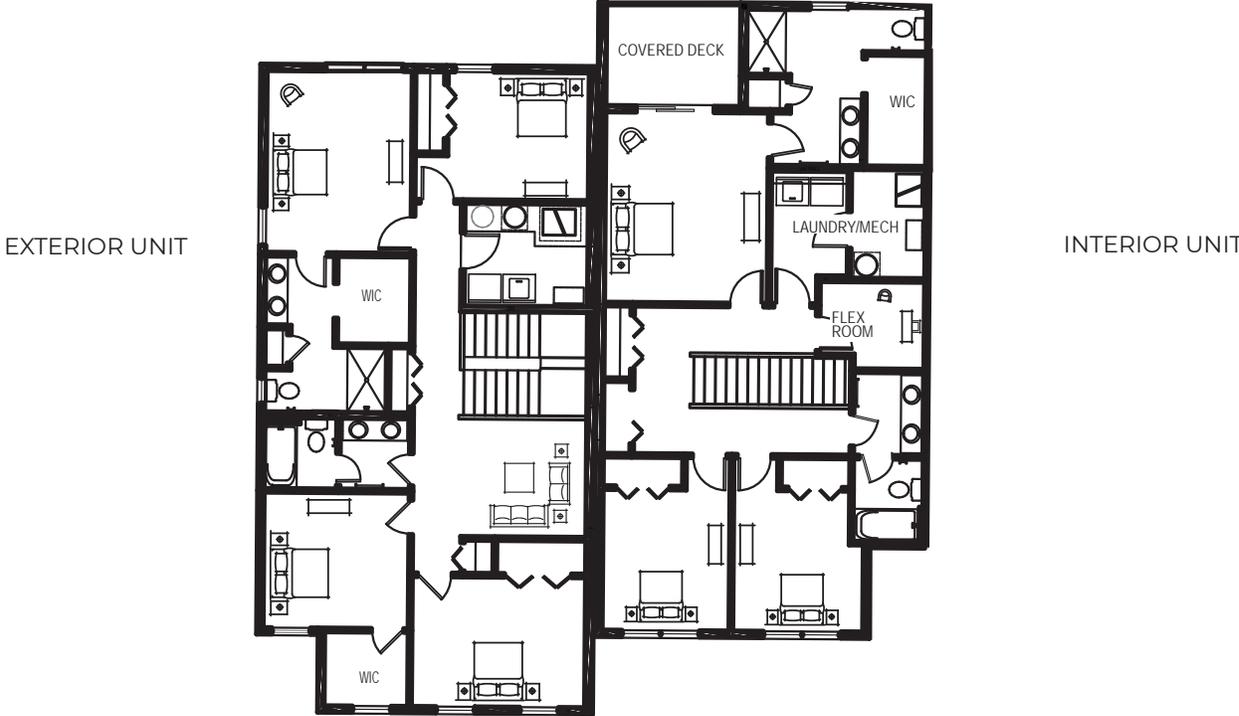
3 Bedroom, 2.5 Bath
1,894 Square Feet



MAIN LEVEL



UPPER LEVEL



D.R. Horton is an equal housing opportunity builder. With basement foundations, water heaters and HVAC systems will be relocated to the first or second floors, as specified. All pricing, included features, terms, availability and amenities, are subject to change at any time without notice or obligation. Elevations and exterior materials may vary. Square footages, measurements and dimensions are approximate and will vary based on foundation type and options selected. Pictures, artist renderings, photographs, colors, features, and sizes are for illustration purposes only and will vary from the homes as built. Options and upgrades are available at an additional cost and are subject to availability and construction cut-off dates.

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HEARTLAND COTTAGE M



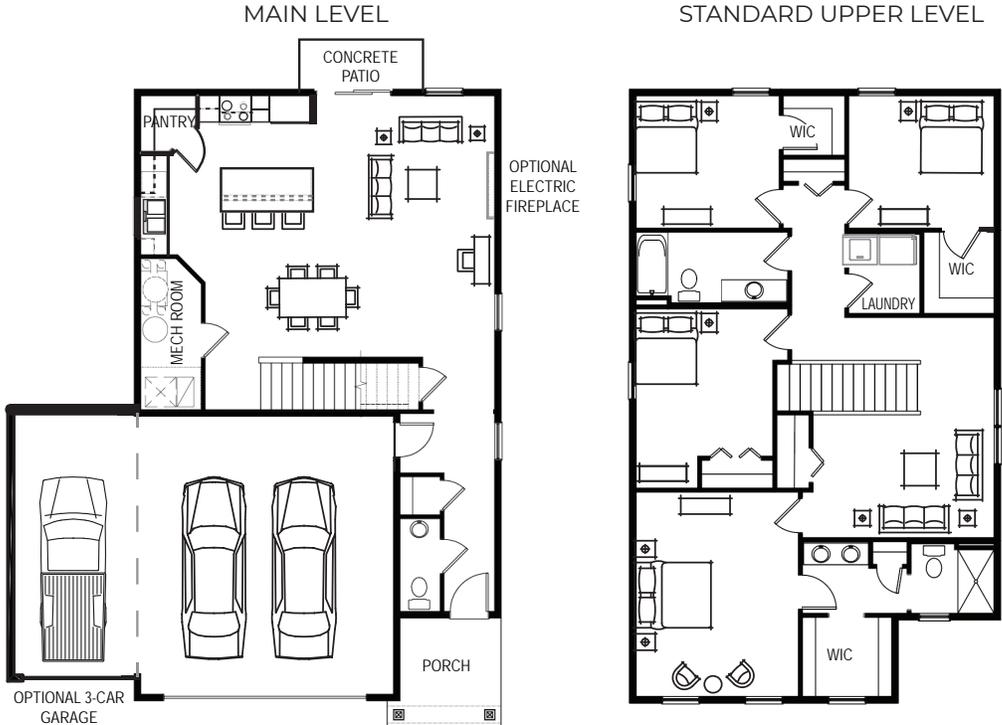
NORTHERN CRAFTSMAN B L



PRAIRIE D O



SLAB ON GRADE PLAN



BASEMENT PLAN



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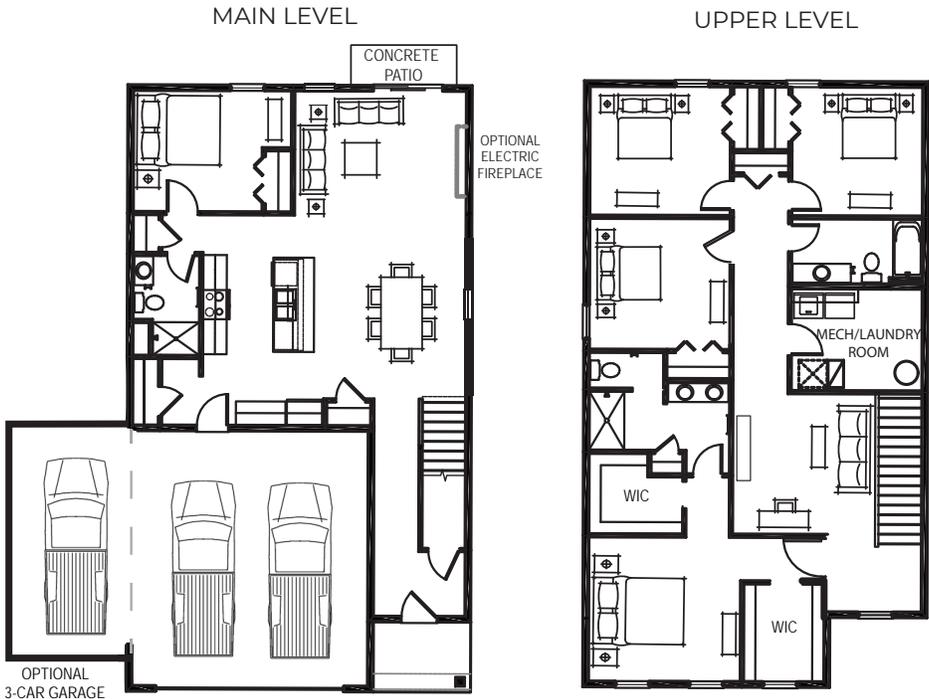


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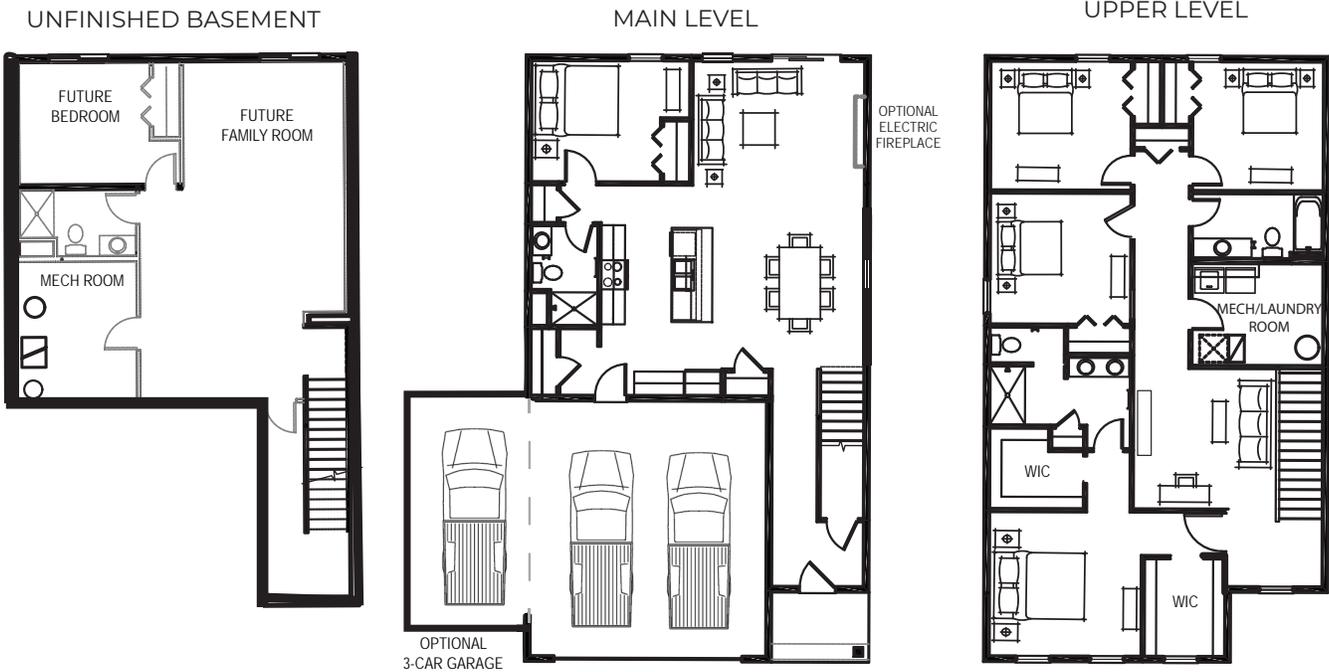


PRAIRIE D O

SLAB ON GRADE PLAN



BASEMENT PLAN



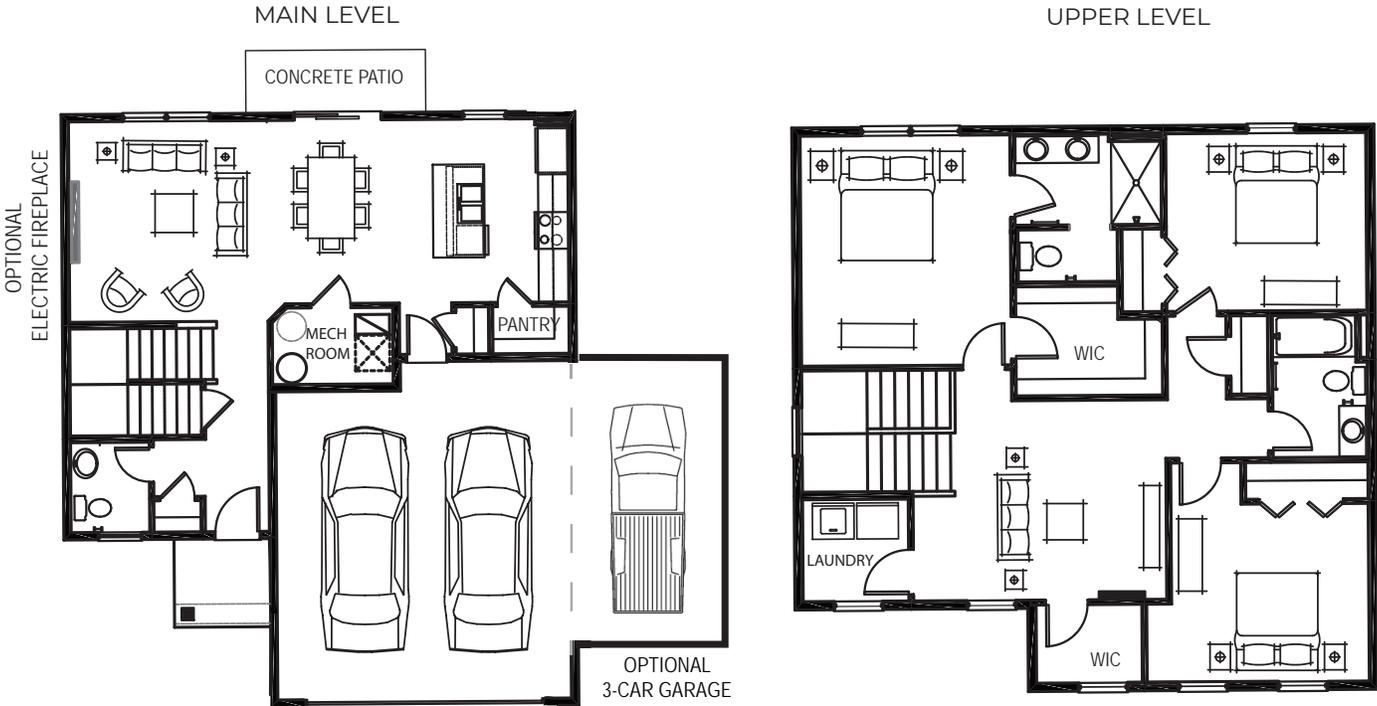
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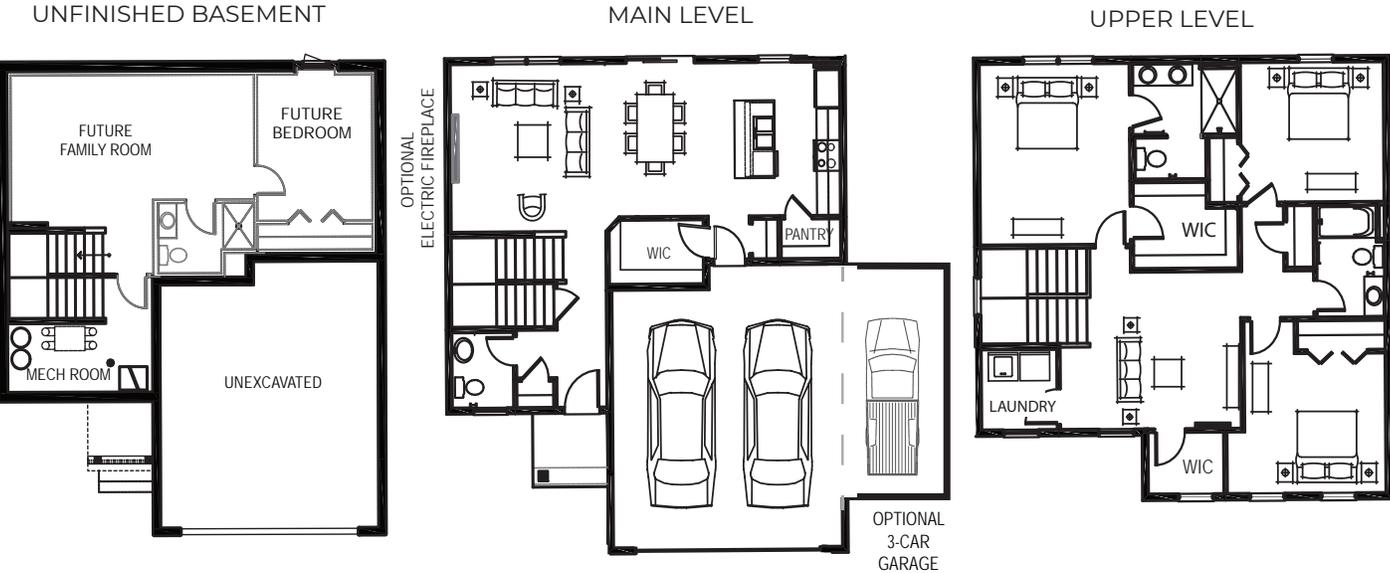
THE SIENNA



SLAB ON GRADE PLAN



BASEMENT PLAN



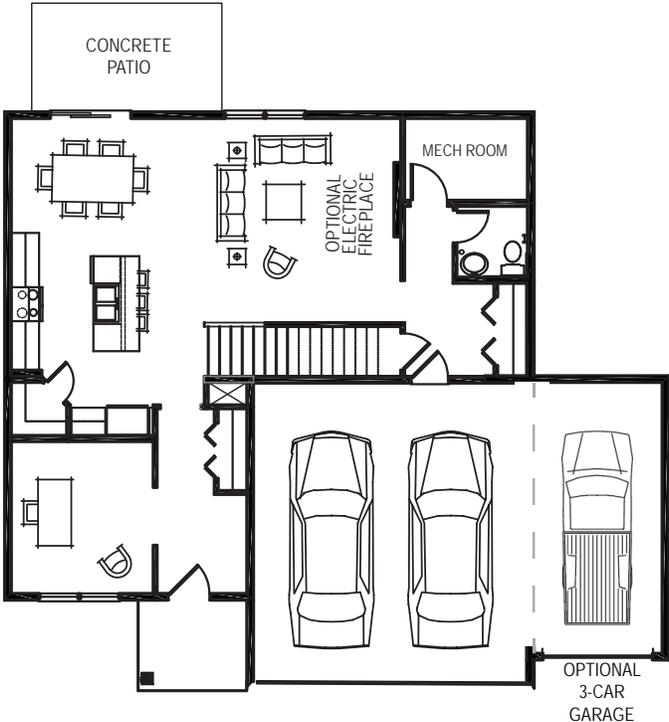
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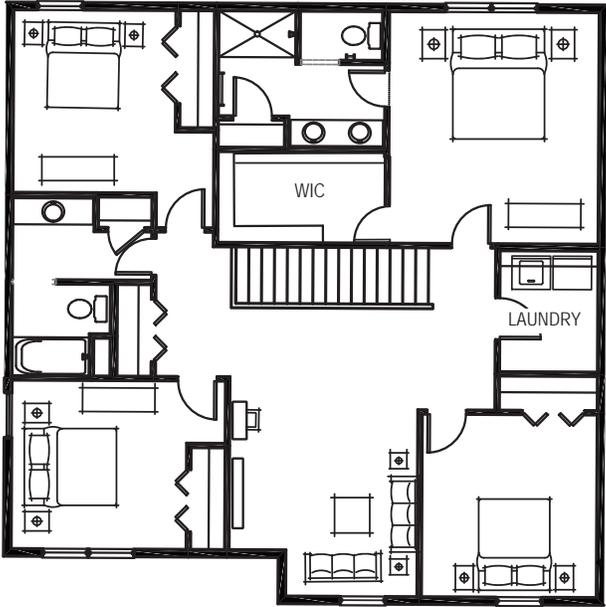
THE HUDSON



SLAB ON GRADE PLAN

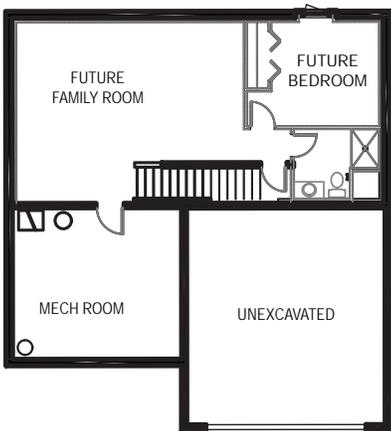


UPPER LEVEL

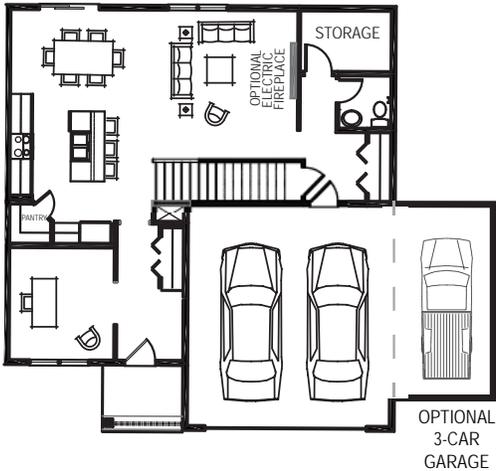


BASEMENT PLAN

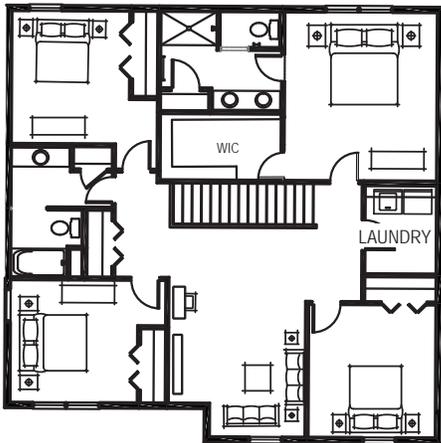
UNFINISHED BASEMENT



MAIN LEVEL



UPPER LEVEL



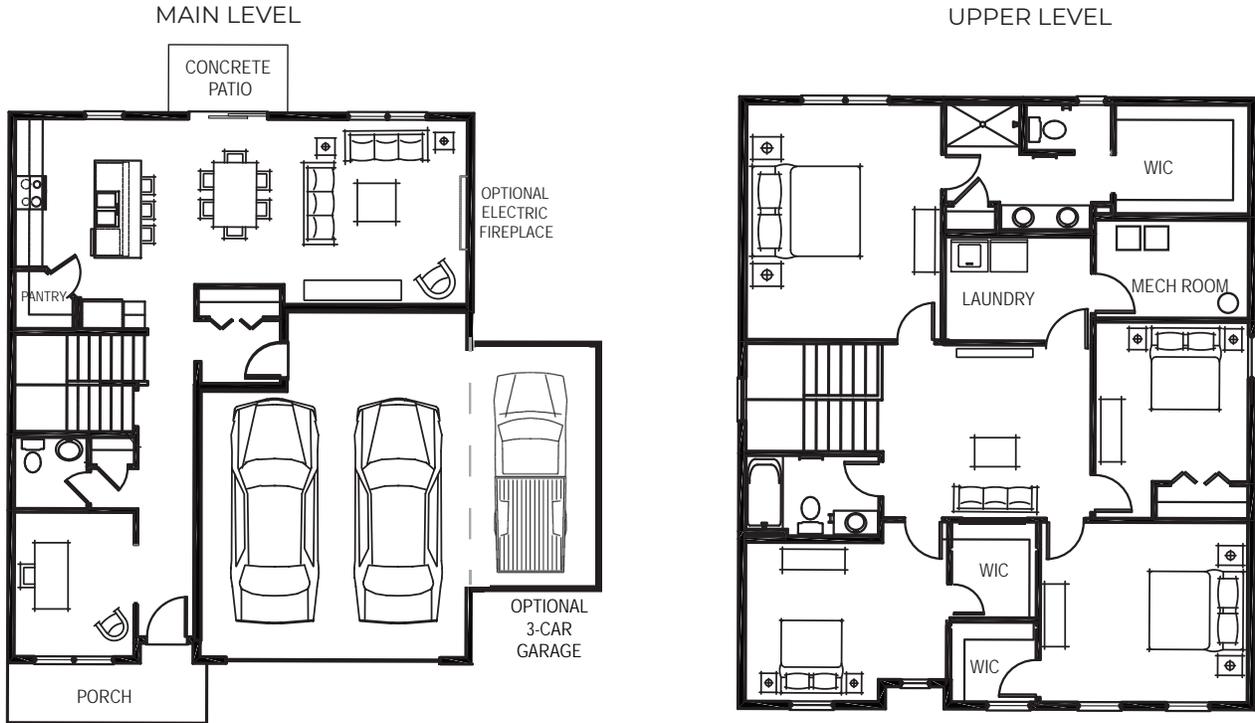
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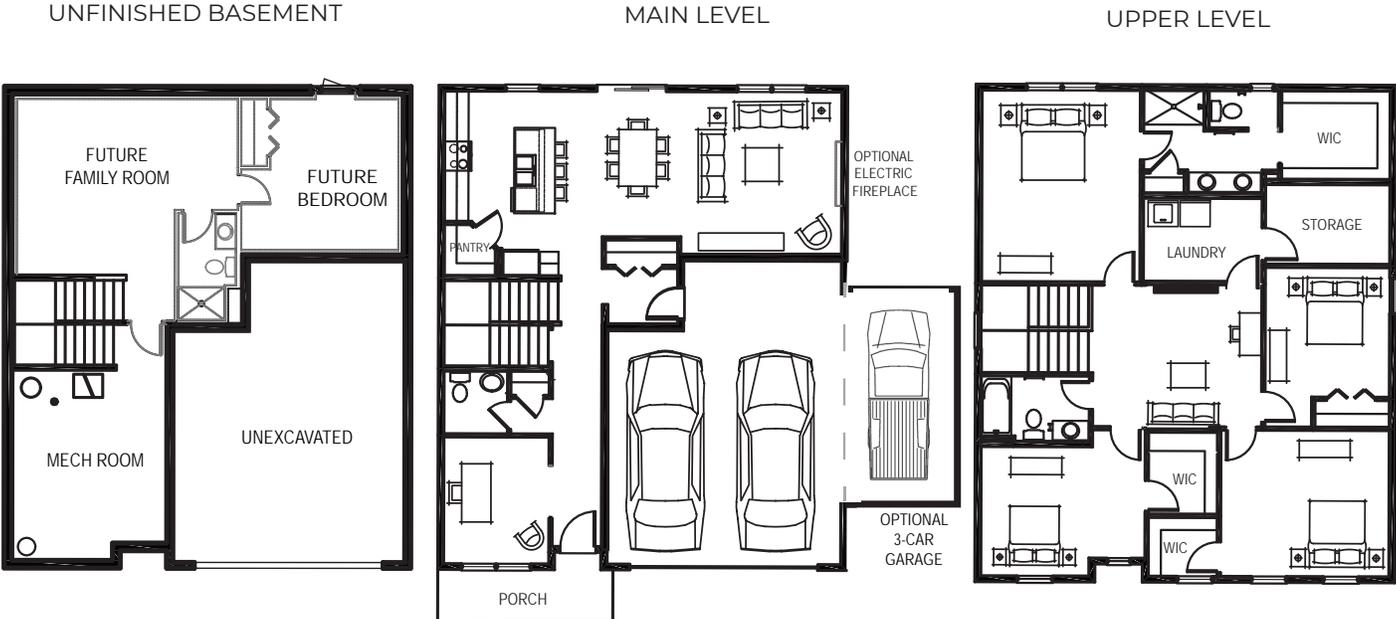
THE HOLCOMBE



SLAB ON GRADE PLAN



BASEMENT PLAN



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AMERICAN CLASSIC A

X



HEARTLAND COTTAGE C

X



NORTHERN CRAFTSMAN B

X



PRAIRIE D

X



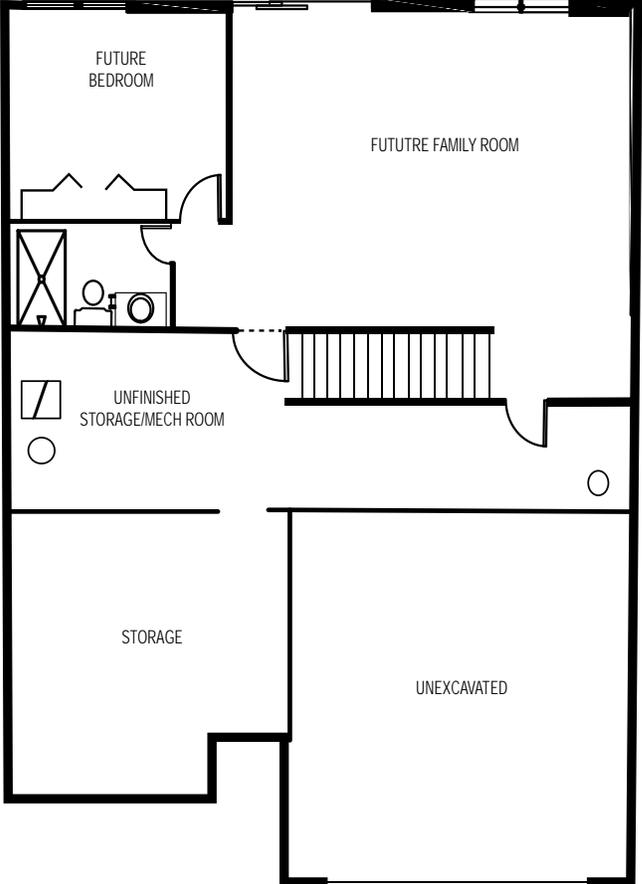
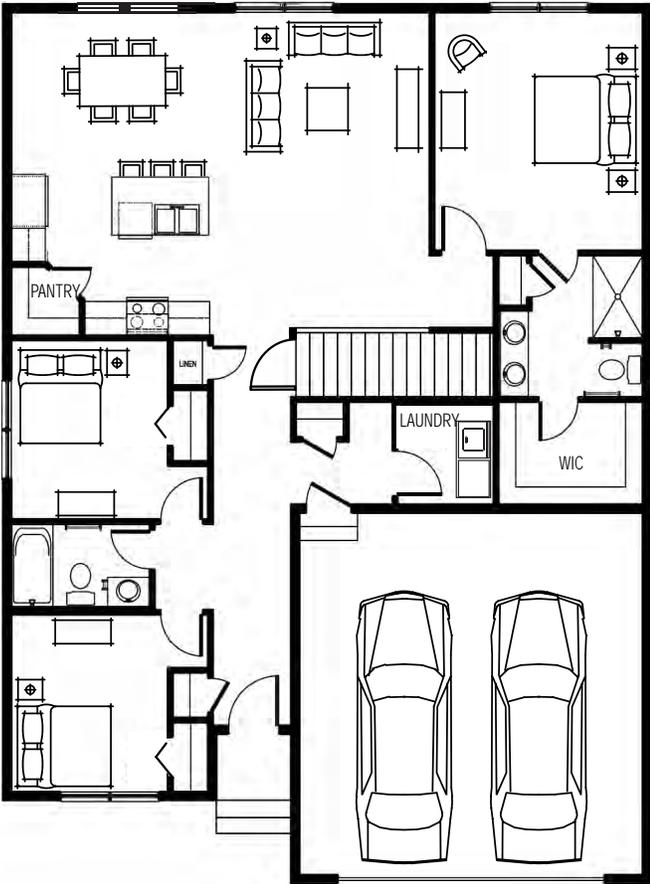


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1,485 SQUARE FEET

BASEMENT PLAN



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**THE HENLEY
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AMERICAN CLASSIC A

K



HEARTLAND COTTAGE C

O



NORTHERN CRAFTSMAN B

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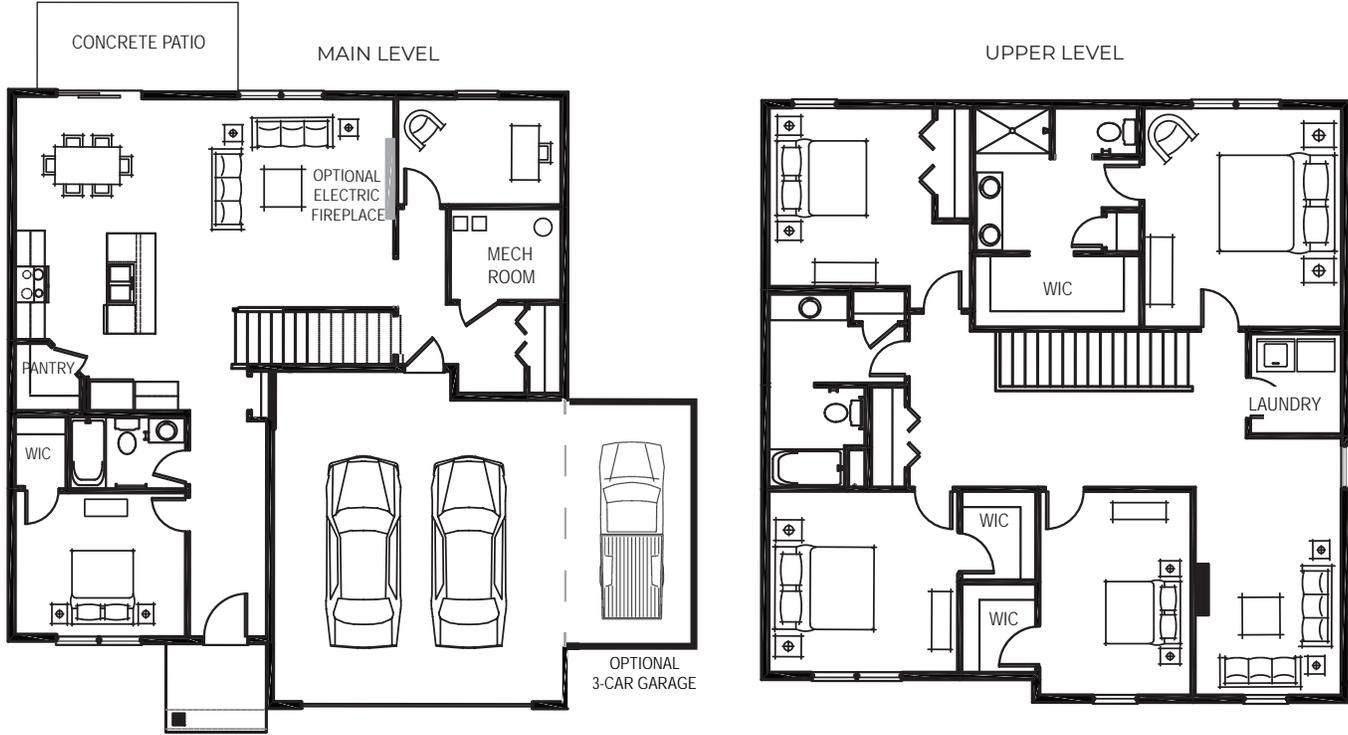


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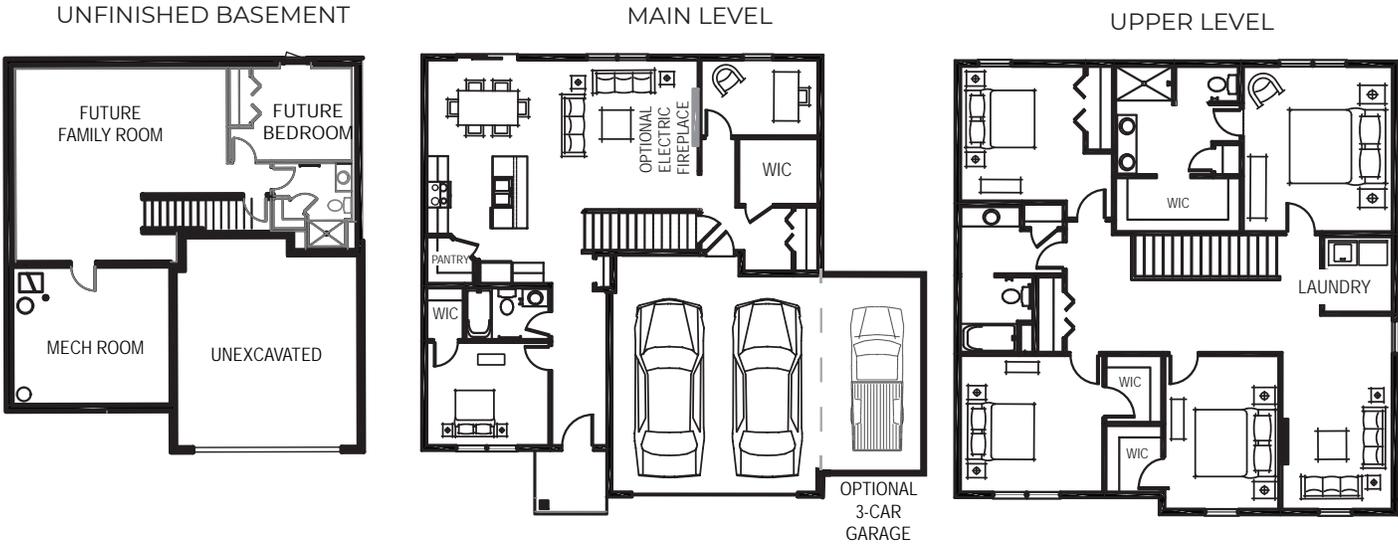
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SLAB ON GRADE PLAN



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AREA SUMMARY:

GROSS AREA: 4,018,231 SF (92.25 AC)
 WETLANDS: 447,131 SF (10.27 AC)
 NET AREA: 3,593,100 SF (82.49 AC)

NET DENSITY: 2.90 UNITS/AC

EXISTING ZONING: PARK
 PROPOSED ZONING: R- PUD

LOT BREAKDOWN:

SINGLE FAMILY (53' 39') 162
 TOWNHOME 77
 239 LOTS

MINIMUM LOT SIZE: 55'X120' (6,600 SF)

SETBACK:

FRONT=30'
 REAR= MINIMUM OF 20% OF PAD LENGTH
 (ASSUMED 30')
 SIDE: 5' AND 10'
 20' WHEN ADJACENT TO ROW

REAR YARD SETBACK TO BE 30' ALONG
 LOWER AFTON ROAD, CENTURY AVE AND
 LINWOOD AVE

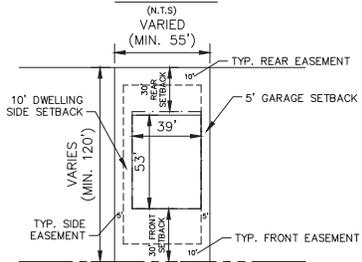
SITE DATA TABLE:

GROSS AREA: 4,018,231 SF (92.25 AC)
 JURISDICTIONAL
 WETLANDS: 447,454 SF (10.27 AC)
 OPEN SPACE
 (EXCLUDES WETLANDS): 1,535,821 SF (35.26 AC)

SINGLE FAMILY LOTS: 162
 MAX: 15,693 SF (0.36 AC)
 MIN: 6,600 SF (0.15 AC)
 AVERAGE: 8,695 SF (0.20 AC)

COUNTY ROAD 72 ROW: 119,300 SF (2.74 AC)
 PARK AREA: 51,419 SF (1.18 AC)
 GUEST PARKING: 10 SPACES

TYPICAL LOT:



LEGEND:

- BUILDING SETBACK
- PROPERTY LINE
- LOT LINE
- ROW
- PROPOSED WETLAND BUFFER EASEMENT
- EXISTING WETLAND BUFFER EASEMENT
- WETLAND (PER KUJLAUG)
- EXEMPT WETLAND/ POND (PER KUJLAUG)
- PROPOSED PARK SPACE

CENTURY PONDS

CONCEPT PLAN DATA

- 92 Acres (82 Net Acres)
- 239 Total Homes Proposed
 - 162 Single Family
 - 77 Townhomes
- 2.9 Units per Net Acre



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HOUSING OPTIONS

Select
Single Family
1,500 to 2,600 SF

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THE ELM



AMERICAN CLASSICA



HEARTLAND COTTAGE C



NORTHERN CRAFTSMAN B



PRAIRIE D



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Single Family
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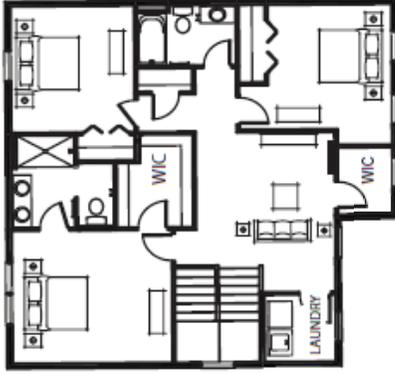


HEARTLAND COTTAGE C



PRAIRIE D

UPPER LEVEL



MAIN LEVEL



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HOUSING OPTIONS

Select
Single Family
1,500 to 2,600 SF

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HOUSING OPTIONS

Select Single Family

1,500 to 2,600 SF

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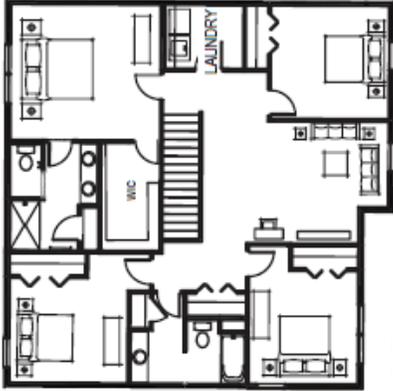


NORTHERN CRAFTSMAN D



PRAIRIE D

UPPER LEVEL



MAIN LEVEL



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HOUSING OPTIONS

Select
Single Family
1,500 to 2,600 SF

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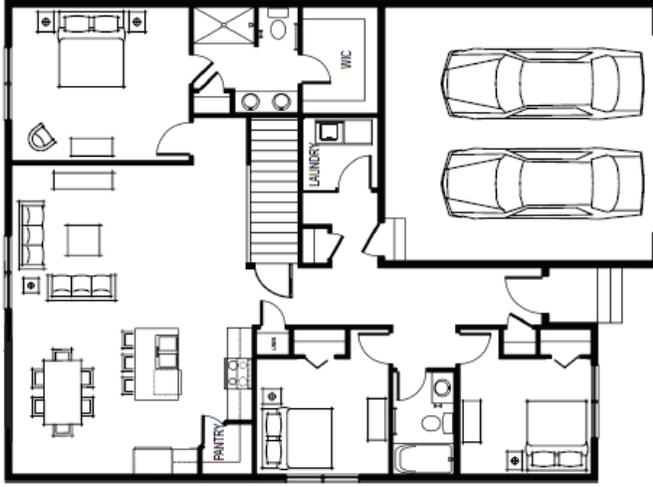
HEARTLAND COTTAGE C



NORTHERN CRAFTSMAN E



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PROPOSED SCHEDULE



SUMMER 2024

- Environmental Studies – Habitat Assess & Sound
- City Council Workshop Meeting
- Neighborhood Meeting

FALL / WINTER 2024

- Comp Plan Amendment Request
- Preliminary Plat & Rezoning Requests

WINTER / SPRING 2025

- Final Plat
- Begin Site Work (Grading)

FALL 2025

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DISCUSSION TOPICS



- Council support for Comprehensive Plan Amendment?
- Proposed Product Mix – Single Family & Townhomes.
- Trail System – Public vs Private.
- Neighborhood Park – Public vs Private.
- Off-site Improvements (trails) – timing of & impact to existing neighbors.
- Land closing requires lot split. Will City allow Lot Split & Subdivision Plat in the same year?
- Any other feedback or discussion points of Council.

D.R. HORTON CONTACTS

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(952) 985-7864

THANK YOU!

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