

CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT
Meeting Date October 27, 2025

REPORT TO: Michael Sable, City Manager

REPORT FROM: Michael Martin, AICP, Assistant Community Development Director
Rita Trapp, AICP, HKGi

PRESENTER: Danette Parr, Community Development Director

AGENDA ITEM: Century Ponds Proposed Development, 601 Century Avenue South
a. Public Hearing
b. Public Vacation of an Easement Resolution

Action Requested: Motion Discussion Public Hearing

Form of Action: Resolution Ordinance Contract/Agreement Proclamation

Policy Issue:

DR Horton is proposing a planned unit development with 133 detached single-family homes and 73 townhouse units on the former Battle Creek golf course owned by Ramsey County and located in the southwest quadrant of Lower Afton Road East and Century Avenue South. To move forward with the project, the applicant is requesting approval of a public vacation of a wetland buffer easement. The city council is required to hold a public hearing on this request.

The applicant is also seeking approval of a comprehensive plan amendment, rezoning to a Planned Unit Development, wetland buffer variance, preliminary plat, and design review which will be considered by the city council later in its agenda. The planning commission has already held a public hearing regarding these requests.

Recommended Action:

- a. Hold the public hearing.
- b. Motion to approve a resolution for the public vacation of an easement.

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

Background:

In 2019, Ramsey County announced the closure of the Ponds at Battle Creek golf course. In 2020 and 2021, Ramsey County and the City of Maplewood collaborated on a community engagement process to review potential development scenarios for this property. Building on this groundwork, Ramsey County identified a potential developer and ultimately approved a purchase agreement with DR Horton to develop the property.

DR Horton's proposed Planned Unit Development (PUD) will include 206 dwelling units, 133 of which are proposed single-family homes on two different lot sizes (55' and 65' lots) and 73 of which are attached townhomes. Each unit has an attached two- or three-car garage.

The proposed project's total lot area is 92.23 acres. The site is located along Century Avenue South, between Linwood Avenue East and Lower Afton Road East.

The single-family homes are on the northern end of the parcel, with access via Lower Afton Road and Century Avenue South. The townhomes are in the southern portion of the parcel, with access via Linwood Avenue East. Due to wetlands being preserved on the site, vehicle access is not permitted between the two parts of the development. The proposed development includes a 1.73-acre public park and 1.80 miles of public paved trail.

Process

The city council is required to hold public hearings on vacation requests. This report only contains information related to the requested vacation. The rest of the project details can be found in the staff report that outlines the requests related to the comprehensive plan amendment, rezoning to a Planned Unit Development, wetland buffer variance, preliminary plat, and design review which can be found later in the meeting agenda. The resolution included with this report contains a condition that requires the remaining project requests to also be approved by the city council for this easement vacation to take effect.

Public Vacation

The applicant is seeking city approval to vacate portions of the existing wetland buffer easement in the southwest portion of the property. The applicant requests a vacation of the wetland buffer easement because the description does not align with the approved wetland delineation. This request will remove a wetland buffer easement that is not aligned with the location of the existing wetland. The applicant is proposing to construct townhomes in this area, and Block 8, Lots 18 through 22, currently overlap with the buffer easement that the applicant is proposing to vacate. The applicant will create new buffers that align with the existing location of the wetlands with the final plat. The required public hearing for this request will be held by the city council.

The drawing to the right details in yellow the location of the areas to be vacated. The new wetland buffer areas are displayed in the dashed blue lines.



Reference Information

Site Description

Campus Size: 92.23 acres
Existing Land Use: Vacant, former golf course

Surrounding Land Uses

North: Lower Afton Road and Ramsey County Correctional Facility
East: Century Avenue, multi-family buildings, medical clinic and single-family homes – these uses are in the City of Woodbury
South: Linwood Avenue and single-family homes
West: Single-family homes and Saint Paul Police Training Facility

Planning

Existing Land Use: Park – Proposed to be Amended to Low Density Residential
Existing Zoning: Farm – Proposed to be Amended to Planned Unit Development

Attachments:

1. Public Vacation of an Easement Resolution
2. Overview Map
3. Applicant Narrative
4. Existing Wetland Buffer Easement
5. Proposed Easement Vacation Areas
6. Presentation Slides

PUBLIC VACATION OF AN EASEMENT RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Maplewood, Minnesota, as follows:

Section 1. Background.

1.01 D.R. Horton has requested the Maplewood City Council to vacate the following portions of a wetland buffer easement.

That part of the Wetland Buffer Easement as described in Document No. 3510497, recorded in the office of the County Recorder, Ramsey County, Minnesota (said easement is in the Southeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 12, Township 28, Range 22, said County), lying southerly of the following described line:

Commencing at the southeast corner of said Section 12; thence North 00 degrees 25 minutes 17 seconds West, assumed bearing along the east line of said Southeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter, a distance of 690.07 feet; thence South 89 degrees 34 minutes 43 seconds West 411.82 feet to the point of beginning of the line to be described; thence continuing South 89 degrees 34 minutes 43 seconds West 100.00 feet; thence North 68 degrees 09 minutes 42 seconds West 16.88 feet; thence North 71 degrees 45 minutes 54 seconds West 76.39 feet; thence South 60 degrees 00 minutes 57 seconds West 51.96 feet; thence North 85 degrees 38 minutes 32 seconds West 29.32 feet; thence South 89 degrees 34 minutes 43 seconds West 100.00 feet, and said line there terminating.

That part of the Wetland Buffer Easement as described in Document No. 3510497, recorded in the office of the County Recorder, Ramsey County, Minnesota (said easement is in the Southeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 12, Township 28, Range 22, said County), lying easterly of the following described line:

Commencing at the southeast corner of said Section 12; thence North 00 degrees 25 minutes 17 seconds West, assumed bearing along the east line of said Southeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter, a distance of 1048.95 feet; thence South 89 degrees 34 minutes 43 seconds West 401.32 feet to the point of beginning of the line to be described; thence South 100.00 feet; thence South 25 degrees 33 minutes 41 seconds East 13.55 feet; thence South 12 degrees 01 minutes 40 seconds East 30.92 feet; thence South 00 degrees 15 minutes 56 seconds East 40.24 feet; thence South 30 degrees 48 minutes 39 seconds West 5.18 feet; thence South 108.30 feet, and said line there terminating.

Section 2. Criteria

2.01 Minnesota state statute requires that no vacation shall be made unless it appears in the interest of the public to do so.

Section 3. Findings

3.01 The Maplewood City Council makes the following findings:

1. The existing wetland buffer easement does not align with the approved wetland delineation for the site.
2. The vacation is not counter to the public interest.
3. A new public wetland buffer easement will be dedicated to align with the approved wetland delineation for the site to replace the vacated easement.

Section 4. City Review Process

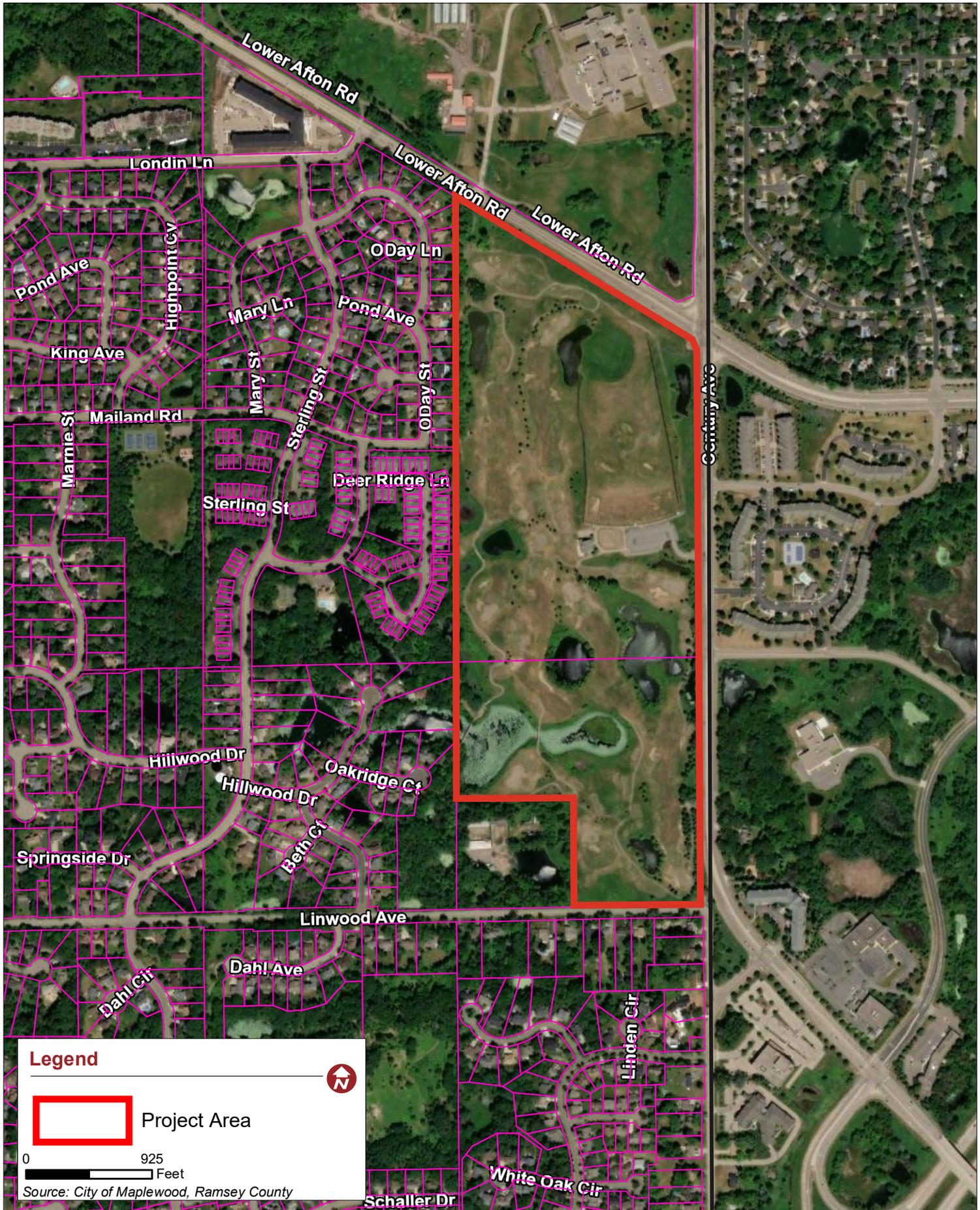
4.01 The city conducted the following review when considering the public vacation request.

1. On September 16, 2025, the planning commission considered the public vacation request.
2. On October 27, 2025, the city council discussed the public vacation request. City staff published two consecutive weeks of a meeting notice in the Pioneer Press and sent notices to the surrounding property owners. The city council gave everyone at the hearing a chance to speak and present written statements. They considered reports and recommendations from the planning commission and city staff.

Section 5. City Council

5.01 The city council hereby _____ the resolution. Approval is based on the findings outlined in Section 3 of this resolution. Approval is subject to the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall provide and dedicate a new public wetland buffer easement that aligns with the approved wetland delineation.
2. Approval of a comprehensive plan amendment, rezoning, variance, and preliminary plat applications for this project. If approval is not received, this resolution will become null and void.





August 5, 2025

Michael Martin
City of Maplewood
1830 County Rd B East
Maplewood, MN 55109

RE: Century Ponds - Easement Vacation

To Whom it May Concern:

Please find the below listed applications related to the proposed Century Ponds site:

1. Vacation of the wetland buffer easement.
2. Variance for grading and trails within in the wetland buffers.

VACATION OF WETLAND BUFFER EASEMENT

As indicated in the project narrative for the land use applications, there exists a wetland buffer easement in favor of the City of Maplewood around the large wetland in the southwest portion of the site. DR Horton requests this be vacated, as the wetland buffer easement description does not align with the approved wetland delineation. As described, the buffer currently encroaches into planned townhome Lots 18 through 22, Block 8 of the preliminary plat. New buffers will be created with the final plat of Century Ponds.

VARIANCE FOR GRADING & TRAILS WITHIN WETLAND BUFFERS

As part of the overall development of the site, grading will be necessary within the identified buffer areas. The purpose of the impacts is to remove existing trail, create new trails and create a stormwater system that will enhance the overall functionality and aesthetics of the wetlands on site. The accompanying Buffer Variance Exhibit quantifies 1.78 acres of impacted areas. Upon completion, the buffers will be seeded per approved plans.

In support of both applications, please find the following:

- Check in the amount of \$2,677 for application & recording fees

D.R. Horton, Inc.-Minnesota
20860 Kenbridge Court, Suite 100
Lakeville, MN 55044
www.drhorton.com

- \$1,246 for Easement Vacation
- \$1,431 for Buffer Variance

Easement Vacation

- Application - Easement Vacation
- Copy of the Grant of Wetland Buffer Easement to be vacated
- Exhibits and legal descriptions of the vacation areas

Wetland Buffer Variance

- Application - Wetland Buffer Variance
- Buffer Variance & Trail Exhibit - this shows the buffer variance areas as well as newly created sidewalks, trails to remain, trails to be removed and trails to be constructed.

Please let us know if you need additional information in processing this request. Thank you.

Respectfully,

DR. HORTON, INC. - MN

Mike Suel
msuel@drhorton.com
952.985.7823

Deb Ridgeway
dridgeway@drhorton.com
952.985.7864

Enclosure

0680
LK
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GRANT OF WETLAND BUFFER EASEMENT

THIS INDENTURE is made this 18th day of June 2002, by the County of Ramsey, a political subdivision of the State of Minnesota ("Grantor") in favor of the City of Maplewood, a municipal corporation under the laws of the State of Minnesota ("Grantee").

WITNESSETH: Whereas Grantor is the owner of certain real estate located in the City of Maplewood, Ramsey County, Minnesota, and a portion of said land contains a wetland which Grantee desires to protect and preserve;

NOW THEREFORE, for and in consideration of the foregoing and the sum of \$1.00 and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, the Grantor hereby grants and conveys to the Grantee and easement in perpetuity to the real estate described in Exhibit A annexed hereto and by reference made a part of hereof for the purpose of preserving and protecting said easement area in its natural state as a wetland, buffer and open space.

It is understood and agreed that this indenture imposes no other obligations or restrictions upon the Grantor except as stated herein.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Grantor has executed and delivered this instrument as of the date first above stated.

BOARD OF RAMSEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

DOC# 3510497

Certified Recorded On
JUNE 24, 2002 AT 09:00AM

Signed [Signature]
OFFICE CO. RECORDER
RAMSEY COUNTY MN



By [Signature]
Jim McDonough, Chair

By [Signature]
Bonnie Jackelen, Chief Clerk
2002-170

ENTERED IN TRANSFER RECORDS
6-24-02
DIRECTOR, PROPERTY TAXATION
Ramsey County, Minnesota

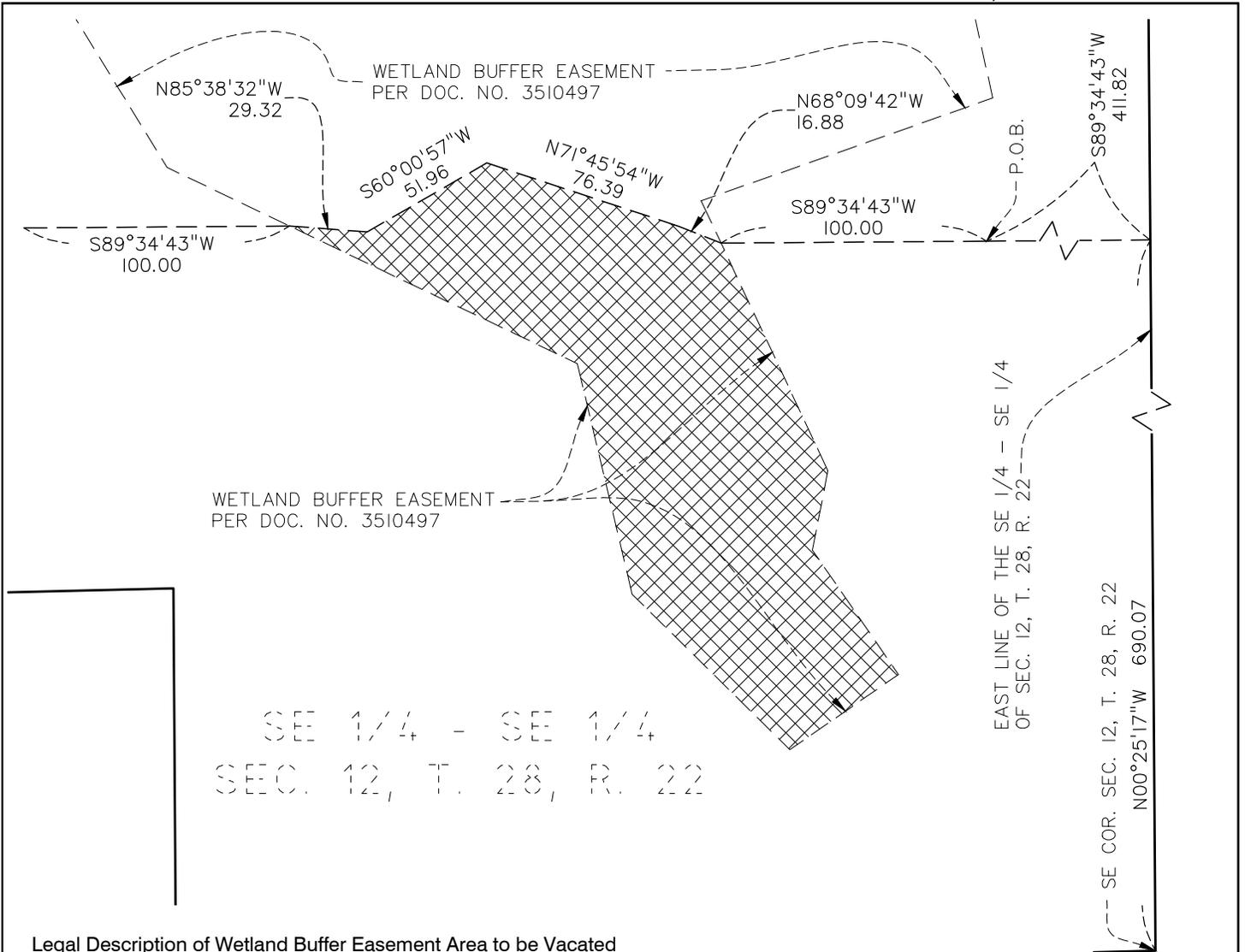
By [Signature]

Return to: Ramsey County Parks and Rec. Dept.
Attn.: Kevin Finley RETURN TO
2015 N. Van Dyke Street
Maplewood, MN 55109

103

EXHIBIT A

That part of the Southeast 1/4 of the Southeast 1/4, Section 12, Township 28 North, Range 22 West, Ramsey County, Minnesota describe as follows: Commencing at the Southwest corner of said Southeast 1/4 of the Southeast 1/4, thence northerly on the west line of said, Southeast 1/4 of the Southeast 1/4 a distance of 888.4 feet to the point of beginning of the land to be described; thence South seventy-four degrees, nineteen minutes, thirteen seconds East, a distance of thirty-five point five feet; thence North zero-three degrees, forty-three minutes, thirty-seven seconds East, a distance of two hundred nine point two feet; thence South seventy-eight degrees, fifty-nine minutes, twenty-four seconds East a distance of one hundred forty-four point seven feet; thence North thirty-five degrees, thirty-nine minutes, fifty-four seconds East, a distance of two hundred nine point three feet; thence North sixty-two degrees, eleven minutes, zero-eight seconds East, a distance of one hundred forty-three point six feet; thence South thirty-nine degrees, forty-four minutes, fifteen seconds East, a distance of one hundred seven point nine feet; thence North eighty-six degrees, thirty-three minutes, zero nine seconds East, a distance of eighty-three point two feet; thence South thirty-one degrees, zero six minutes, thirty-one seconds East, a distance of sixty-seven point seven feet; thence South sixty-four degrees, zero one minute, fifty-nine seconds East, a distance of one hundred seventy-one point three feet; thence South twelve degrees, fifty-six minutes, forty-seven seconds East, a distance of eighty-nine point three feet; thence South forty-four degrees, fifty-nine minutes, fifty-nine seconds East, a distance of eighty-three point four feet; thence North fifty-five degrees, forty minutes, eleven seconds East, a distance of forty-nine point seven feet; thence South thirty-four degrees, fourteen minutes, fifty-six seconds East, a distance of fifty-six point nine feet; thence North eleven degrees, eighteen minutes, thirty-five seconds East, a distance of thirty point six feet; thence South twenty-four degrees, forty-four minutes, twenty-two seconds East, a distance of one hundred twelve point three feet; thence North seventy degrees, fifty-six minutes, thirty-two seconds East, a distance of one hundred sixteen point four feet; thence South twelve degrees, zero five minutes, ten seconds East, a distance of seventy-six point four feet; thence North forty-two degrees, forty-seven minutes, fifty seconds East, a distance of ninety-seven point one feet; thence South thirty-six degrees, zero five minutes, zero six seconds East, a distance of one hundred forty-six point zero feet; thence South sixty-three degrees, forty-two minutes, forty-two seconds East, a distance of one hundred eighty-five point two feet; thence North fifty degrees, zero seven minutes, fifty-nine seconds East, a distance of one hundred sixty-nine point four feet; thence North eighty-two degrees, thirty minutes, zero seconds East, a distance of one hundred forty-one point two feet; thence South thirty-nine degrees, zero five minutes, thirty-five seconds East. A distance of two hundred sixty point one feet; thence North forty-six degrees, twenty-seven minutes, thirty-eight seconds East, a distance of two hundred fifty-one point one feet; thence South forty-five degrees, thirty-four minutes, twenty-two seconds East, a distance of one hundred thirty-four point four feet; thence South zero one degree, zero eight minutes, twenty-six seconds East, a distance of two hundred twenty-one point zero feet, to the point of beginning.

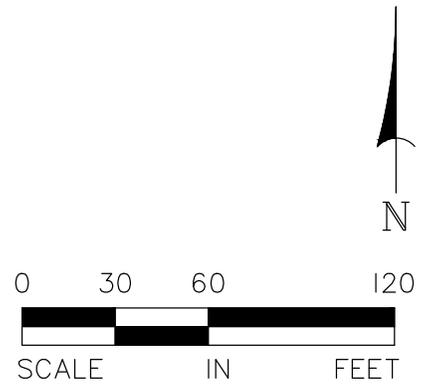


Legal Description of Wetland Buffer Easement Area to be Vacated

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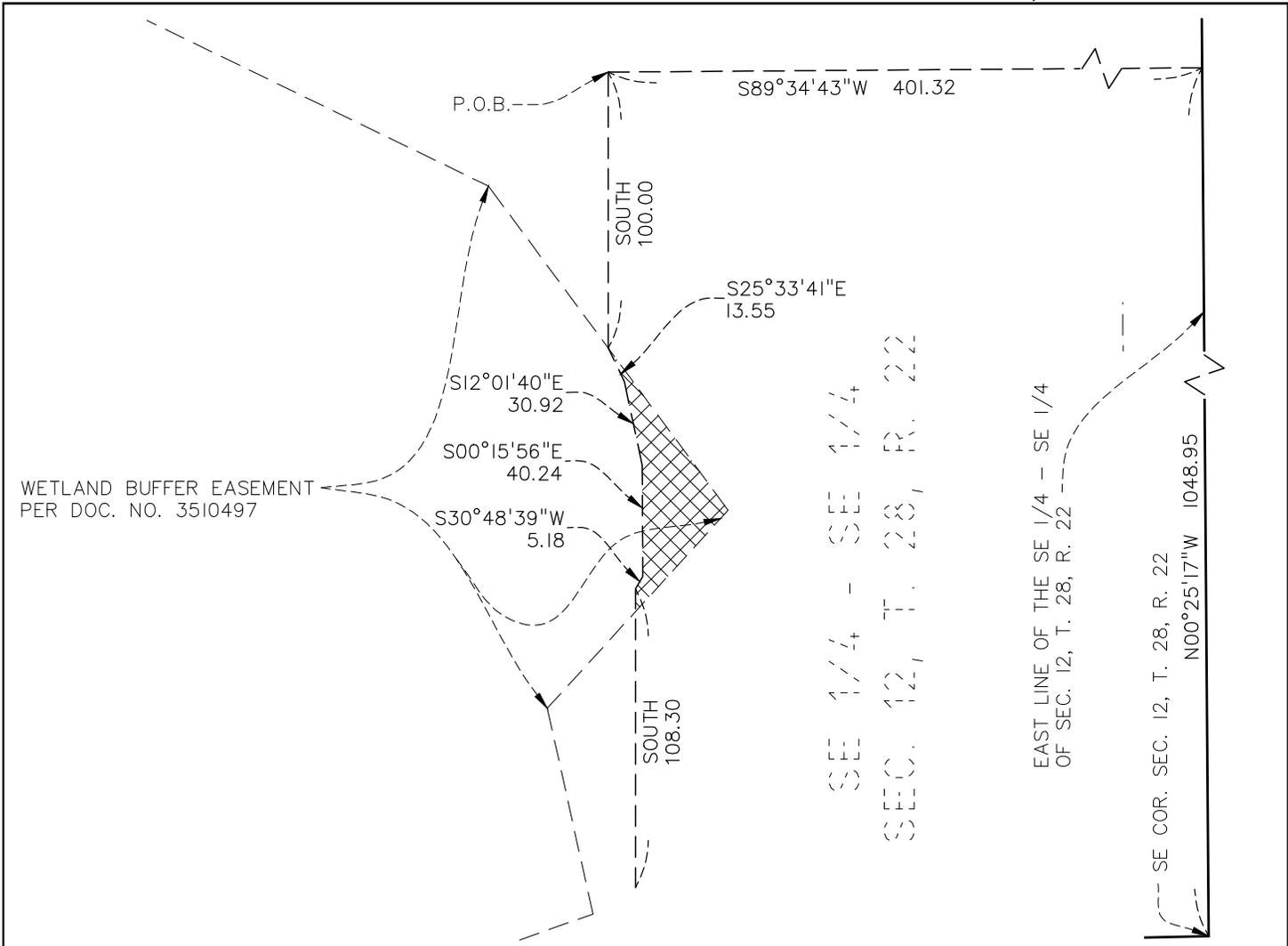


Design File: 4000041	Checked By: DE
Dwg Name: ESM VAC-SOUTH	Drawn By: DE
Date: 2/4/25	Scale: 1" = 60'

CENTURY PONDS
WETLAND BUFFER EASEMENT VACATION EXHIBIT
MAPLEWOOD, MINNESOTA



Alliant Engineering, Inc.
 733 Marquette Ave, Ste 700
 Minneapolis, MN 55402
 612.758.3080 MAIN
 612.758.3099 FAX
 www.alliant-inc.com

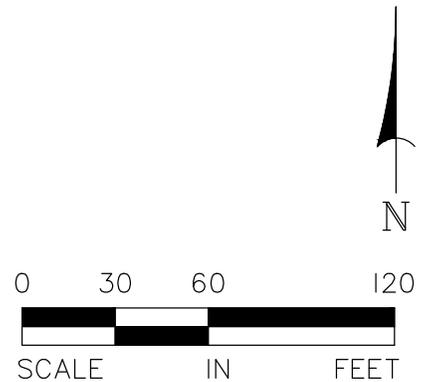


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 Wetland Buffer Easement Area to be Vacated



Design File: 4000041	Checked By: DE
Dwg Name: ESM VAC-EAST	Drawn By: DE
Date: 2/4/25	Scale: 1" = 60'

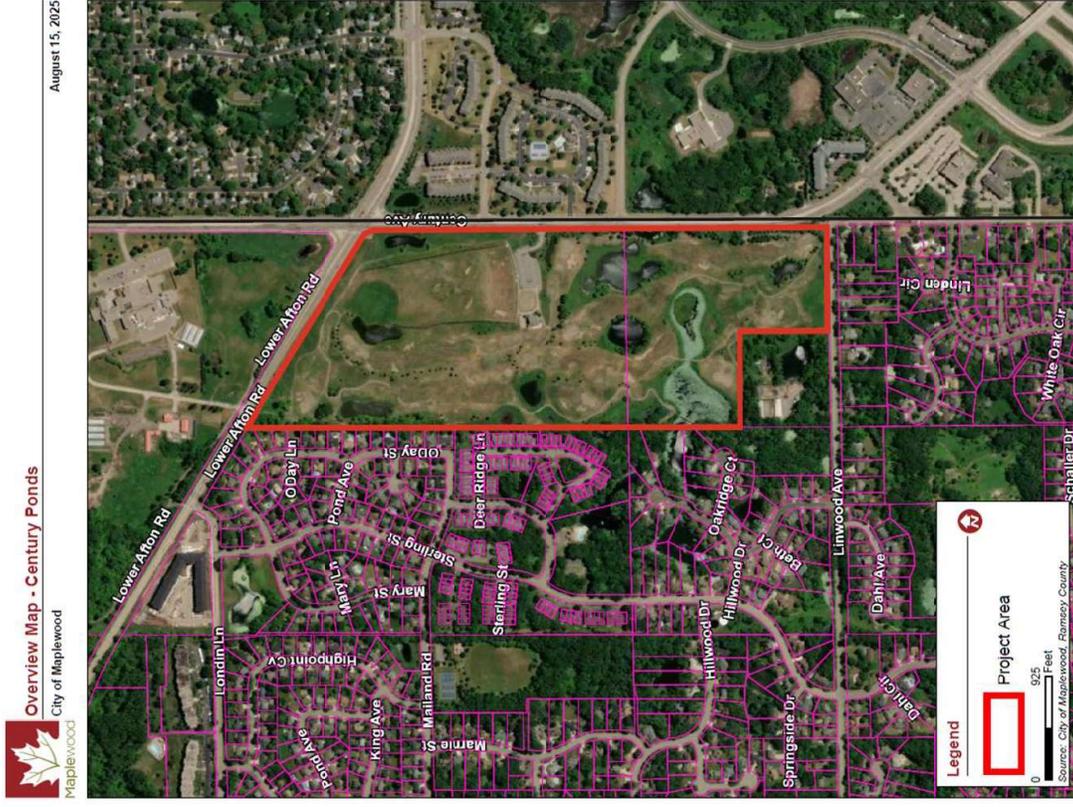
CENTURY PONDS
WETLAND BUFFER EASEMENT VACATION EXHIBIT
MAPLEWOOD, MINNESOTA



Alliant Engineering, Inc.
 733 Marquette Ave, Ste 700
 Minneapolis, MN 55402
 612.758.3080 MAIN
 612.758.3099 FAX
 www.alliant-inc.com

Century Ponds PUD

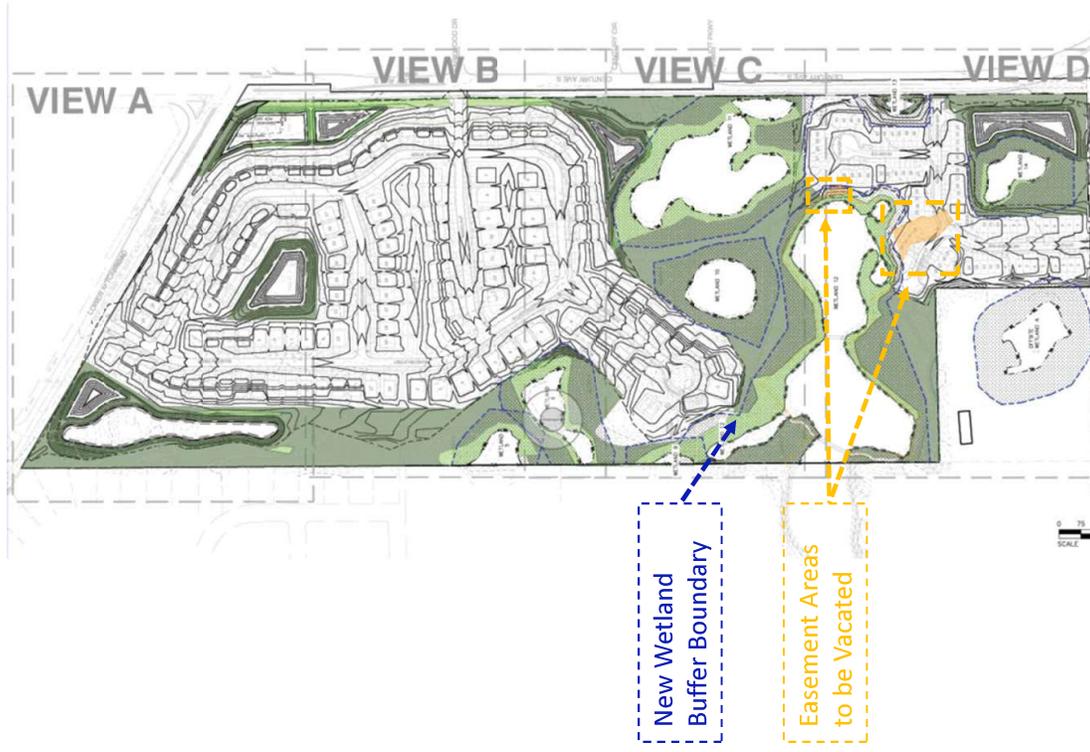
- Requesting approval for
 - **Public Vacation**
 - Requires Public Hearing with City Council
- Council will consider following requests later in the meeting
 - Comprehensive Plan Amendment
 - Rezoning to a PUD
 - Wetland Buffer Variance
 - Preliminary Plat
 - Design Review
- Planning Commission held public hearing on these items



Century Ponds PUD

Public Vacation

- Requesting vacation of portions of existing wetland buffer easement in southeast portion of property
- Current buffer easement does not align with wetlands in approved wetland delineation
- Applicant will establish new buffers and easements to match delineated wetlands



Century Ponds PUD

Recommendation

- Hold the public hearing regarding the public vacation of an easement request
- With conditions of approval found in the report, staff is recommending approval of this public vacation of an easement