

CITY OF MINNETRISTA



CITY COUNCIL BUSINESS AGENDA ITEM 6A

Subject: Concept Plan Review of Woodland Meadows

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Through: David Abel, Community Development Director

Meeting Date: September 21, 2026

Background: M/I Homes and Rachel Development (the “Developer”) are working on the development of property generally located south of Highway 7 and east of Grimm Road. The City Council has reviewed a comprehensive plan amendment for these parcels, along with a concept plan and an EAW. The comprehensive plan amendment was approved and subsequently submitted to the Met Council for their review and approval. On August 26, 2026, the Met Council approved the comprehensive plan amendment and authorized the City to put it into effect.

Since approval of the comprehensive plan amendment, the Developer has completed a traffic study which has indicated a roundabout at Highway 7. The Developer is working with the City on the design for the roundabout and other necessary infrastructure. While this design process is underway, the Developer wanted to present a more refined concept plan for discussion with the City Council.

Discussion: The concept plan is an initial presentation of the applicant's intention and serves as the basis for conceptual discussion between the city and the applicant. The purpose of the review is to allow staff and the city council an opportunity to guide the applicant as to what is generally expected by the city, and to alert an applicant to potential problems with the proposal. This feedback can then be used by an applicant to make an informed decision on whether to proceed with a formal preliminary application. The sketch plan review does not require any formal approval or denial from the city council.

Attachments:

1. Applicant Narrative
2. Woodland Meadows Concept Plan

Mission Statement:

The City of Minnetrista will deliver quality services in a cost effective and innovative manner and provide opportunities for a high quality of life while protecting natural resources and maintaining a rural character.

WOODLAND MEADOWS
SKETCH PLAN REVIEW
7385, 7501 AND 7635
STATE HIGHWAY 7 AND
4520 GRIMM ROAD

INTRODUCTION

M/I Homes of Minneapolis/St. Paul, LLC (“M/I Homes”), in partnership with Rachel Development, Inc. (“Rachel Development”), is submitting an application for sketch plan review for the proposed development of properties located at 7385, 7501, and a portion of 7635 State Highway 7 to be called Woodland Meadows. The subject area consists of approximately 160 gross acres, inclusive of 4520 Grimm Road as described below and includes a total of 357 homes.

We have had great success with the Woodland Cove development within the City of Minnetrista and are excited to be partnering with the City on a new project. We value the City’s commitment to thoughtful growth, preservation of natural features, and the high quality of life it offers residents. We look forward to building on that foundation with this development.

In January 2026, the City approved a Comprehensive Plan Amendment re-guiding the subject properties from Urban Reserve to Residential Low-Medium and incorporating the area into the Metropolitan Urban Services Area (MUSA). This was approved by the Metropolitan Council on August 24, 2026. On June 15, 2026 the Council approved a negative declaration of the need for a Environmental Impact Statement. Also, along with the Comprehensive Plan Amendment, a simple subdivision was approved to expand the parcel at 4520 Grimm Road while reducing the lot size of 7635 State Highway 7; the 4520 Grimm Road parcel remains guided as Urban Reserve.

The community will feature a number of housing options, including 65-foot wide single-family homes, to villa homes, carriage single-family residences, and carriage townhomes—creating opportunities for first-time buyers, growing families, and aging in place residents alike. Lots of similar size are clustered to create a welcoming neighborhood that feels intimate while still being part of a larger, connected community. The denser townhomes and smaller lots are sited near the highway to create a buffer from the larger single family home lots.

Rachel Development, Inc., will develop a portion of the neighborhood for Charles Cudd Co who will construct villa homes along the southern portion of the site adjacent to Carver Park Reserve, while M/I Homes will develop and build the remaining residential units within the community.

MI Homes and Rachel Development, Inc., will each develop portions of Woodland Meadows. Rachel Development, Inc will be developing homesites along the southern portion of the site adjacent to Carver Park Reserve homesites for Charles Cudd Co who will be constructing villas, while M/I Homes will be developing and building homes in the remaining community which encompasses approximately the northern 2/3 of the property.

The purpose of this sketch plan review is to obtain preliminary feedback from the City’s Park Commission, Planning Commission, and City Council regarding the proposed development prior to advancing to preliminary plat and detailed engineering plans.

ABOUT M/I HOMES AND RACHEL DEVELOPMENT

M/I Homes has been in business for almost 50 years and has built over 150,000 homes in 17 markets within the United States. We entered the Twin Cities Market in 2015 by purchasing Hans Hagen Homes. Hans Hagen Homes was founded 60 years ago and was one of the largest and oldest home builders in the Minneapolis market.

Rachel Development has been developing projects across the twin cities for 11 years. During that time they have completed over 100 projects. Charles Cudd Co has been in business for over 30 years and is well a well-known award winning luxury home builder in the twin cities area.

SITE PLAN

CHANGES SINCE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT SKETCH PLAN

In response to site constraints, market demand, and feedback received during the neighborhood meeting, several refinements have been made to the sketch plan since it was presented to the City Council as part of the Comprehensive Plan discussion in January 2026. These modifications are intended to improve site design, enhance compatibility with surrounding properties, and better align the development with current market preferences while maintaining the overall unit count.

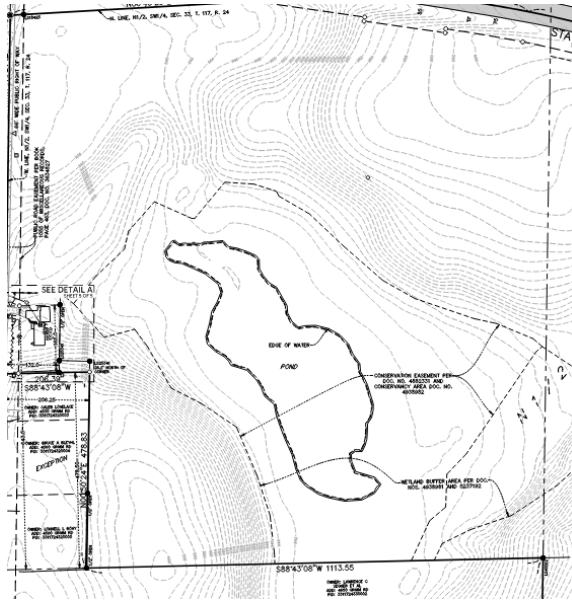
Key revisions include:

- **Access Location.** The primary access point from Highway 7 has been shifted slightly to the east. This adjustment responds to resident concerns while also taking advantage of improved site topography and better roadway sight distances.
- **Internal Street Network.** As a result of the access relocation, the internal street layout has been refined to maintain an efficient and well-connected neighborhood design.
- **Expanded Lot Offerings.** The plan increases the number of 65-foot-wide lots and reduces the number of 40- and 50-foot-wide lots to better reflect current market demand and buyer preferences. The overall number of homes remains unchanged.
- **Highway 7 Buffering.** Berming and landscape screening are being incorporated along Highway 7 to the greatest extent practical, enhancing the community's visual character and helping buffer future residents from the adjacent roadway.

DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

There are a number of characteristics of the site that create challenges and opportunities for creating a site plan for this development:

- **Conservation Easement and Wetland Buffer Area.** A conservation easement and wetland buffer area have been established over an existing wetland within the site (as shown below). This area cannot be disturbed by development activities. This constraint influenced the decision to adjust the lot configuration of 4520 Grimm Road and maintain that parcel in the Urban Reserve designation. While the long-term use of this area has not yet been finalized, it may serve as a community amenity through incorporation of passive recreation elements.



- **Wetlands.** In addition to the protected wetland described above, a larger wetland spans the southeastern portion of the site, along with smaller wetlands located in the northwestern area. The proposed development plan prioritizes avoidance of these resources, with only minimal and carefully managed impacts where necessary.
- **Highway 7.** The site's location along Highway 7 introduces access spacing limitations that have been incorporated into the site design. Landscaping and buffering are proposed along the highway corridor to mitigate visual and noise impacts for adjacent residential uses.
- **Forested Area.** The southern portion of the site is heavily wooded. The proposed plan seeks to retain a portion of this wooded area as shown, recognizing both its environmental value and its potential as a site amenity.
- **Elevation Change.** The site exhibits significant variation in elevation, ranging from approximately 1,046 feet in the south-central portion to approximately 940 feet in the northwestern corner. These grade changes will influence grading design, stormwater management, and overall site layout.

SITE STANDARDS

We plan to develop as a Planned Unit Development (PUD), similar to approved standards within Woodland Cove with slight amendments to respond to City input, market demand and also reduce the need for as many townhome units as was included at Woodland Cove while also meeting the density requirements of the Metropolitan Council. These standards are further outlined below.

The table below shows zoning standards for the R-2(A) in place compared with proposed standards and those previously approved for Woodland Cove.

Standard	R-2(A) Requirement	Proposed 40' Lots	Proposed 50' Lots	Proposed 65' Lots	Proposed Townhome Lots	Approved Woodland Cove Standard
Minimum lot area (sq. ft)	9,500 square feet	5,000 square feet	6,000 square feet	7,500 square feet	1,700 square feet	Lakefront and Custom Lots: 16,000-21,000 square feet Large Lots: 10,800 square feet

Woodland Meadows Sketch Plan Review

						Medium Lots: 8,000 square feet Small Lots: 6,000 square feet Townhomes: Not specified
Lot depth (ft.)	100 feet	120 feet	120 feet	120 feet	70 feet	Lakefront and Custom Lots: 130 feet All other lots: 100 feet
Lot width (ft.) (measured at OHW and building setback line)	70 feet	40 feet	50 feet	65 feet	24 feet	Lakefront and Custom Lots: 100 feet Large Lots: 90 feet Medium Lots: 75 feet Small Lots: 50 feet Townhomes: Not specified
Maximum lot coverage-all impervious (%)	45%	TBD with Preliminary Plat	TBD with Preliminary Plat	TBD with Preliminary Plat	TBD with Preliminary Plat	Per lot basis
<i>Front yard setback</i>						
- principal structure	30 feet	25 feet	25 feet	25 feet	25 feet	25 feet
<i>Side Yard Setback</i>						
- principal structure (including attached accessory structures)	10 feet	5 feet	5 feet	10/5 feet (15-foot spacing between buildings)	15-foot spacing between buildings	Lakefront and Custom Lots: 10 feet All other lots: 5 feet
<i>Non-Lakeshore rear yard setback</i>						
- principal structure	25 feet	20 feet	20 feet	20 feet	20 feet to right-of-way and 40-foot spacing between rear of buildings	Lakefront Lots: 35 feet Custom and Large Lots: 25 feet All other lots: 20 feet
<i>Lakeshore rear yard (streetside) setback</i>						
- principal structure	20 feet	20 feet	20 feet	20 feet	20 feet	Lakeshore and Custom Lots: 20 feet All other lots: 15 feet
Maximum building height (ft./stories)***	35 feet/3 stories	35 feet	35 feet	35 feet	35 feet	35 feet

DENSITY

As previously noted, the total gross acreage of the properties proposed for development is approximately 162 acres, inclusive of 4520 Grimm Road. The proposed plan includes 357 residential units. After removing areas constrained by steep slopes, wetlands and their associated buffers, and city-owned stormwater outlots, the site contains approximately 101 net developable acres, resulting in a density of 3.53 units per acre. This density meets the minimum requirement established by the Metropolitan Council's 2050 Systems Statement and falls within the allowable range of 3 to 5 units per acre for properties guided as Residential Low-Medium.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Because the proposed development includes more than 250 residential units, completion of an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) was required. The purpose of the EAW is to evaluate the project's potential for significant environmental impacts.

At its June 15, 2026 meeting, the City Council adopted a resolution issuing a negative declaration for the need to prepare a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), indicating that the project is not expected to result in significant environmental effects.

ACCESS/TRAFFIC STUDY

Two access points are proposed along Highway 7: one located at the southeastern portion of the site and a second at a central location along the frontage. A traffic study was prepared and submitted as part of the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) to evaluate these access configurations.

The study determined that the central access can support a full-access, side-street stop-controlled intersection with dedicated westbound left- and right-turn lanes on Highway 7, as well as separate left- and right-turn lanes on the side-street approach. The eastern access is recommended to operate as a right-in/right-out intersection with side-street stop control and an eastbound right-turn lane on Highway 7. This configuration may be further enhanced by the addition of a raised median along Highway 7 or a channelizing island ("pork chop" island) on the side-street approach.

Further coordination with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) will be required to refine the access design and confirm the appropriate configuration and implementation timing. We have prepared an Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) report, which will help MnDOT determine the appropriate intersection control at the access points.

STREETS AND UTILITIES

The streets providing access to the single-family residential areas are proposed to be public streets and will be constructed to a width determined in coordination with City standards. Streets serving the townhome areas are proposed to be private and will be owned and maintained by the Homeowners Association (HOA).

Utility planning for the site is currently underway. This includes evaluating the need for a lift station and identifying potential locations. To date, the most favorable site identified is located east of Grimm Road and south of Highway 7 within the project area. Preliminary utility concepts indicate that water service will be extended to the site from the east, while sanitary sewer service will be provided from the west. The forcemain is anticipated to be accommodated within the Highway 7 right-of-way and installed via directional drilling to minimize impacts.

The existing 12-inch watermain located along the north side of Highway 7 has sufficient capacity to serve approximately 50–60 homes within the initial phase of development. The City has initial plans for a new watermain extension from the new water treatment plant to the first right-in/right-out access within the development, continuing through the site and reconnecting to Highway 7. To proceed with development as proposed, we are requesting confirmation from the Council that these plans will be formalized and construction of this watermain will occur sometime in 2028.

TRAILS/PARKLAND/CARVER PARK PRESERVE

While a public park is not currently proposed as part of the development, we are exploring the opportunity to utilize the parcel at 4520 Grimm Road as an open space amenity for future residents. Concept plans include the development of an internal trail system within this area, and sufficient right-of-way is being provided for a future along Highway 7 that will be installed by others.

We have initiated discussions with the Three Rivers Park District regarding Carver Park Reserve located to the south, including the potential for trail connections between the two systems. These concepts are still being evaluated and will be refined as planning progresses.

PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT

As discussed during the Comprehensive Plan Amendment process, the Metropolitan Council requires a minimum density of 3.5 units per acre for this development. Achieving this required density is not feasible under the underlying zoning standards without additional flexibility. Accordingly, use of the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process is necessary to accommodate these requirements.

The intent of the City's PUD district is to provide flexibility in neighborhood design in order to maximize public benefits, encourage innovative and high-quality development, and ensure projects remain economically viable and marketable. The City's PUD ordinance identifies key public values that should be achieved through this approach. The following outlines how the proposed development meets those intended objectives:

- a. *Maintain the sense of open space character of the community. Open space shall be of a size, shape, location, and usability for its proposed purpose. Whenever possible, common open space shall be linked to the open space areas of surrounding developments;*
 - Of the approximately 162 acres of the proposed development, there are approximately 72 acres (44%) of open space that includes wetlands and wetland buffers, pond outlots, steep slopes, and 4520 Grimm Road, which will be kept in Urban Reserve.
- b. *Preserve natural open spaces for their aesthetic and ecological values and provide buffering between developments and adjacent roadways;*
 - The parcel at 4520 Grimm Road is proposed to remain guided as Urban Reserve. The overall site plan has been designed with careful consideration of existing natural features, including wetlands and their associated buffers, steep slopes, and forested areas, with an emphasis on avoiding and minimizing impacts wherever feasible. Lots located along Highway 7 are proposed to be deeper than those within the interior of the development, allowing for additional landscaping and buffering to help mitigate visual and noise impacts from the roadway.
- c. *Maximize the use of ecologically-based approaches to stormwater management, restore or enhance on-site ecological systems, and protect off-site ecological systems including the application of Low Impact Development (LID) practices;*
 - Stormwater reuse is being proposed, and as previously mentioned, care is taken to minimize ecological impacts as much as possible.

- d. *Provide high-quality park, open space, and trail opportunities that meet or exceed the provisions of the parks, trails, and open space plan;*
 - While a formal park area is not currently proposed within this portion of the development, the plan emphasizes connectivity through the incorporation of a trail network. As previously noted, these trails are intended to link key areas within the development and provide connections to surrounding amenities, supporting both recreation and mobility.
- e. *Minimize the extent of the development footprint and impervious surfaces to the extent possible to reduce initial infrastructure costs and long-term maintenance and operational costs;*
 - The use of smaller lot sizes helps minimize overall site disturbance by reducing the development footprint within ecologically sensitive areas. This approach allows for more efficient use of roadway and utility infrastructure while limiting impacts to wetlands, wooded areas, and other natural features.
- f. *Ensure long-term stewardship of natural resources for all lands set aside as parks, open spaces, and other forms of conservation lands;*
 - As previously mentioned, we are avoiding any impact to the wetland that is within a conservation easement and wetland buffer area. Impacts to other wetlands and their associated buffers are being avoided as much as possible.
- g. *Provide a convenient and efficient multi-modal transportation system to service the daily needs of residents at peak and non-peak use levels, where possible;*
 - A traffic study has been completed for the proposed development, and an Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) report is currently being prepared. This analysis will help inform and confirm the appropriate intersection control measures at the proposed Highway 7 access points.
- h. *Foster economic and cultural diversity by providing a complementary mix of lifecycle housing;*
 - As previously noted, the development will include a range of housing types to meet varied market needs, including townhomes suited for first-time homebuyers, competitively priced Carriage single-family homes, larger homes on 65-foot lots for move-up buyers, and villa-style homes designed to support aging in place.
- i. *Encourage conservation of energy and other resources to enhance the prospects for creating a sustainable community;*
 - We are committed to incorporating energy efficiency and responsible resource management into our developments to support the creation of sustainable communities. Homes are designed and constructed using high-performance building practices, including energy-efficient HVAC systems, enhanced insulation, advanced framing techniques, and high-quality windows and building envelopes that reduce energy consumption and improve long-term durability. Water-efficient fixtures and landscaping practices are also utilized to conserve water resources. In addition, site design is approached with an emphasis on preserving natural features where feasible, reducing earthwork, and integrating open space and native plantings to support local ecosystems. Through these combined efforts, we strive to deliver communities that are environmentally responsible, cost-efficient for homeowners, and aligned with long-term sustainability goals.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

A neighborhood meeting was held on May 27, 2026. There were eight neighbors in attendance. The following summarizes feedback received from the meeting:

- Attendees expressed concern about future residents entering adjacent farmland and potentially disturbing livestock. The development team is coordinating directly with these neighbors to walk the property, better understand their concerns, and identify appropriate solutions.
- Residents indicated a desire for enhanced screening and buffering along Highway 7, as well as greater variety in home design and architectural character.

- Concerns were raised regarding potential impacts to existing wildlife and habitat within the area.
- Residents noted concern about increased traffic volumes and associated impacts along Highway 7.

DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE

We anticipate grading of the initial phase after preliminary plat approval in Spring of 2027. We are aiming to submit preliminary plat by the end of September 2026. We anticipate a total of four to five development phases.

RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS

Woodland Meadows will have an HOA that will provide for the maintenance of the overall common elements in the community, including landscaping, irrigation, and snow removal from sidewalks of common areas. The villa and townhome homeowners will pay additional fees under the HOA that provide for a higher level of maintenance, including lawncare in the summer and snow removal in the winter, and exterior maintenance of the townhomes. The HOA will also provide for restrictions on outdoor storage, parking (no boats, campers, or trailers) in order to keep the community looking orderly and well maintained.

ELEVATIONS

Homebuyers will have the ability to select from a wide range of floor plans, exterior materials, architectural features, and landscape designs. Careful attention is paid to ensuring the use of varied elevations and materials to avoid any monotony of architecture from the street. Exterior materials include vinyl siding and may also include stone or brick accents. Attached are elevations for the wide range of floor plans.

PREDEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT/CITY DESIGN WORK

Due to the significant utility oversizing proposed as part of this development—which will support future growth to the west—we are requesting a predevelopment agreement with the City and that the City take on the design and project management of the lift station and force main and potential roundabout. Both the lift station structure and associated facilities, including the forcemain, will need to be designed and constructed to accommodate anticipated future development. Additionally, a potential roundabout would require coordination with other government entities.

The timing of lift station construction will require further evaluation. To maintain the project schedule and ensure the lift station is operational by fall 2027, it may be necessary to procure long-lead items, such as the lift station control panel, prior to final development plan approval. As a result, a predevelopment agreement will be essential to authorize early procurement activities in advance of final plat approval.

CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

M/I Homes and Rachel Development respectfully submit this sketch plan for review and are seeking feedback from the Park Commission, Planning Commission, and City Council on the proposed development. We welcome input on the overall site layout, housing mix, access, open space approach, and integration with existing natural features as we refine the plan and move forward into preliminary plat and detailed design. The proposed plan has been developed with careful consideration of site constraints and required density expectations, and we request that feedback be provided within that context.

STRUCTURE ELEVATIONS

Single Family Homes



Taylor



Victoria

Villa Homes



Cedarwood



Willow

Carriage Homes



Lexington



Trenton

Carriage Townhomes



Charles Cudd Villa Home Examples



