



NORTHWEST ASSOCIATED CONSULTANTS, INC.

4800 Olson Memorial Highway, Suite 202, Golden Valley, MN 55422
Telephone: 763.231.2555 Facsimile: 763.231.2561 planners@nacplanning.com

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sunfish Lake Mayor and City Council

FROM: Michelle Barness, City Planner

DATE: February 25, 2015

RE: Sunfish Lake – Inver Grove Heights Comprehensive Plan Amendment
Regarding the Re-alignment of Argenta Trail

FILE: 211.02

3/3/15 CC Mtg.
**Agenda
Item
6b**

BACKGROUND

Communities in the metropolitan area are required to notify nearby local government units of proposed comprehensive plan amendments (CPAs). Planning staff received notification of a proposed amendment to the Transportation chapter of the Inver Grove Heights comprehensive plan, which will identify a specific route for a realigned Argenta Trail (Co Rd 63) south of Interstate 494. Inver Grove Heights is considering realigning Argenta Trail to a future new interchange at I-494 and expanding it to function as an arterial road with four to six lanes.

When the City of Sunfish Lake received notice of a potential realignment and expansion of Argenta Trail south of I-494 via the Inver Grove Heights Alternative Urban Area-Wide Review (AUAR) Update Addendum in July of 2014, the City responded with concern about the impact of this type of improvement to CR 63/Delaware Avenue north of I-494. As such, with this current CPA review the City of Sunfish Lake may wish to further consider the potential implications of a realigned Argenta Trail on the community and provide additional feedback to Inver Grove Heights.

The Argenta Trail realignment area will be within a corridor identified by a joint Inver Grove Heights and Dakota County study currently under way. The final report of the study is not available for review by Sunfish Lake until at least February 27, 2015, and Inver Grove Heights is requesting feedback on the re-alignment proposals by March 16, 2015. This timeframe did not permit planning staff the opportunity to review then include the official study in the March planning packet for consideration by the Council. However, on request, the Inver Grove Heights City Planner has provided maps and a

study update of the proposed re-alignment options for review and consideration (please see attached). The Inver Grove Heights planner indicated that the proposed alignments in these materials are not anticipated to differ from the alignments shown in the actual study. The following is an analysis of the proposed re-alignment options provided.

ANALYSIS

According to the Argenta Trail Design Study update Inver Grove Heights and Dakota County are considering both immediate and long-term changes to Argenta Trail, which are divided between a north study area and a south study area (see attached). The study will identify specific improvements to County 63 (Argenta Trail) and County 28 (Yankee Doodle Road) through the Trunk Highway (TH) 55 intersection, to north of Amana Trail (future County 28), to be constructed in 2016. In addition, the study is considering the long-term alignment of Argenta Trail/CR 63 from north of Amana Trail to I-494 just south of Sunfish Lake. The north re-alignment options are not currently planned for final design, right of way acquisition or construction, but rather are being identified to permit Inver Grove Heights and the County to coordinate the design of the 2016 project to the south. The re-alignment options from the study will be presented to the Inver Grove Heights City Council around April 27, 2015. If the City of Sunfish Lake has any concerns pertaining to the north re-alignment options, these should be expressed in a response to the Inver Grove Heights planner by March 16, 2015.

Future Argenta Trail/CSAH 63, North Study Area: No Interchange Option.

This alignment option maintains the current alignment of Argenta Trail south of I-494 and north of CSAH 26, as opposed to redirecting this length of road to a new interchange at I-494. This option includes expanding Argenta Trail to a 150 foot right of way south of future 65th Street (shown on the attached maps), while maintaining the current 120 foot right of way north of future 65th Street, to where it meets I-494.

While Argenta Trail's expansion in this option is not proposed to meet or continue north of I-494, and heavier traffic associated with an expanded right-of-way is anticipated to be limited to the extent south of future 65th Street, all potential impacts to the remaining two-way CR 63/Delaware Avenue along Sunfish Lake's western boundary is unclear.

Required right-of-way acquisitions and impacts to adjacent parcels and wetlands are contained within the boundary of Inver Grove Heights in the no re-alignment option.

Future Argenta Trail/CSAH 63, North Study Area: Alignment Options 1 – 5.

These alignment options re-align Argenta Trail north of CSAH 26 progressively east of its current alignment to a new interchange at I-494. All of the new interchange options for the north study area include expanding Argenta Trail to a 150 foot right of way consistent with improvements south of CSAH 26.

The Inver Grove Heights City Planner suggested that in these re-alignment scenarios the existing Argenta Trail north of CSAH 26 would likely be disconnected from the re-aligned Argenta Trail, but would continue to serve adjacent residential neighborhoods and parcels from I-494 south to CSAH 26. Inver Grove Heights has plans to explore the creation of a future 65th Street running east-west, which would create a connection between the disconnected Argenta Trail and the re-aligned Argenta Trail. This would enable Sunfish Lake residents moving south to Highway 55 to continue to do so with a slightly different travel route. With all the re-alignment options, heavier traffic associated with an expanded six lane road appears to be disconnected from CR 63/Delaware Avenue north of I-494.

Required right-of-way acquisitions and impacts to adjacent parcels and wetlands are contained within the boundary of Inver Grove Heights in the re-alignment options.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

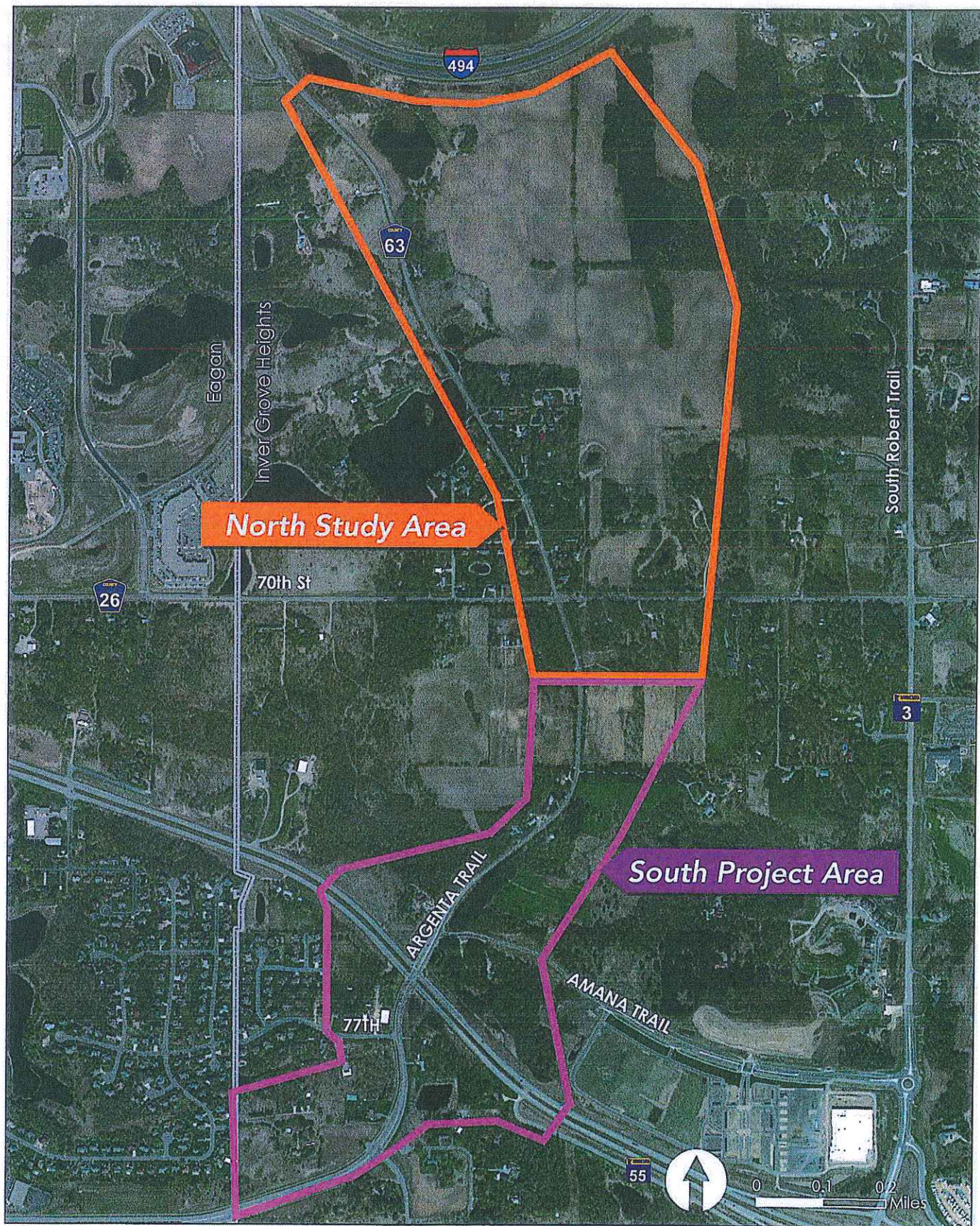
Based on this brief review of the proposed alignment options for Argenta Trail/CR 63 within the City of Inver Grove Heights, planning staff perceives that the key concern with regards to potential impacts on Sunfish Lake residents north of I-494 may stem from Inver Grove Heights deciding on a potential no re-alignment option. There are unknown impacts to traffic conditions along CR 63/Delaware Avenue north of I-494 should Argenta Trail south of I-494 remain in the same alignment but be expanded to a six lane road. While it appears that a six lane expansion would not meet I-494, traffic conditions north of I-494 may still be impacted, and it is unclear whether a six lane expansion up to I-494 would then be proposed at some point in the future. The City of Sunfish Lake may wish to present this concern in a CPA response letter to the Inver Grove Heights City Planner. Further, Sunfish Lake may wish to request that should a no-realignment option be pursued, coupled with a six lane roadway expansion, that Inver Grove Heights provide additional information regarding potential traffic impacts to CR 63/Delaware Avenue north of I-494 prior to solidifying plans.

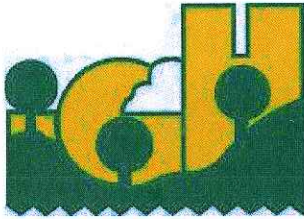
However, based on a conversation with the Inver Grove Heights City Planner, it is likely that Inver Grove Heights will in fact explore one of the re-alignment options to connect Argenta Trail with a new interchange at I-494. If this is the case, the most significant impact to Sunfish Lake residents may be a change in the north-south route from Sunfish Lake to Highway 55 to the south. In a CPA response the City of Sunfish Lake may wish to request additional information on the provision of connectivity between CR 63/Delaware Avenue north of I-494 and Highway 55 to the south, including additional information pertaining to a future 65th Street.

As of the date of this report, planning staff hasn't received feedback from the City Engineer regarding the Inver Grove Heights Argenta Trail re-alignment proposals. The City Engineer may be able to provide additional insight on potential traffic impacts for the varied re-alignment proposals. Should the City Engineer provide an analysis of the re-alignment proposals in the coming week, planning staff will present those additional

findings the evening of the City Council meeting. Otherwise, planning staff requests that the City Council provide feedback on this memorandum and the attached Argenta Trail re-alignment materials so staff can provide a response on the Inver Grove Heights Argenta Trail CPA by March 16th.

cc. Cathy Iago, City Clerk
Tim Kuntz, City Attorney
Mike Andrejka, Building Inspector
Don Sterna & Eric Eckman, City Engineers
Jim Naves, City Forester
Ron Wasmund, Septic System Inspector





Argenta Trail Design Study Update 1-30-2015

Thanks to all who attended the neighborhood meeting on December 30, 2014 and the second open house on January 7, 2015 for the County 63 (Argenta Trail) Design Study. 40 people attended the neighborhood meeting and over 60 people attended the open house. At both meetings, the team received numerous comments regarding multiple elements of Argenta Trail.

Design Study Summary

There are 2 main elements of the Argenta Trail Design Study:

1. Dakota County and the City of Inver Grove Heights are partnering to improve County 63 (Argenta Trail) and County 28 (Yankee Doodle Road) through the Trunk Highway (TH) 55 intersection to north of Amana Trail (future County 28). These improvements are planned for construction in 2016. The City and County, together with MnDOT, began the design process for the project in September.
2. Shortly after beginning the design for the TH 55 area, the scope was extended to include a study of the long-term alignment of County 63 from north of Amana Trail to I-494. This is being done to take the next step in implementing the adopted recommendations of the Regional Roadway System Visioning Study (RRSVS) in concert with the proposed Blackstone development. This also will allow the City and County to coordinate the design of the 2016 construction project to the south with the long-term alignment to the north.

Through the public involvement process, questions and comments have centered around three main areas. These are:

- **Argenta Trail Realignment @ TH 55**
- **Burr Oak Hills / Orchard Heights Neighborhood Connection to CSAH 28**
- **Future Argenta Trail Alignment – North**

Future Argenta Trail Alignment – North

After beginning work on the south portion of the Argenta Trail Alignment, it was quickly determined that the northern portion needed to be evaluated at the same time. The project team soon began creating an issues map for the area and that map was presented at the November 19, 2014 Open House. The team has since been working on developing alignment options for the north study area. These options were presented at a December 30, 2014 neighborhood meeting and at the second open house on Wednesday, January 7, 2015. Comments received from both the neighborhood meeting and the open house will be incorporated into information presented to the City Council and County Board. At this time, the project team is not hosting a third open house for the project. The north portion is not currently planned for final design, right of way acquisition or construction. The right of way needed for future county road corridors is acquired via dedication in development plats as they occur, and/ or is acquired as opportunities arise with willing sellers.

Timeline: Future Argenta Trail Alignment - North

#	Project Item	Meeting	Timeframe
1	Identify Area Issues	Open House #1 (Nov 19, 2014)	November - Early December 2014
2	Alignment Options	Exceptions Neighborhood (Dec. 30, 2014)	Late December 2014 - Early January 2015
3	Alignment Options	Open House #2 (Jan 7, 2015)	Late December 2014 - Early January 2015
4	Discuss Alignment Options with the City Council	City Work Session (Feb. 2, 2015)	Early February 2015
4	Alignment Adoption by the City Council	City Council Meeting	February/ March 2015
5	Alignment Adoption by the County Board	Physical Development Committee and County Board Meeting	March 2015
6	Determine Improvements Necessary for Blackstone Development	City Council	Through Final Plat and PUD Approvals – timing TBD
7	Next Steps in Conceptual Design and Environmental Analysis for I-494 Interchange		TBD. Dependent on the ability to identify funds to conduct study.
8	Final Design and Construction of Interchange and Related County 63 Improvements		TBD. Process is likely to take at least 10 years.

Argenta Trail Realignment – North Portion Study Area (just north of TH 55 to I-494)

- When will a recommended alignment be determined?

*The PMT has evaluated five (5) viable alignment options, and the alignment options will be discussed with the City Council at the **Monday, February 2, 2015** Work Session. A recommended alignment is not expected to be determined at this meeting. The City Council will be able to review the alignments, open house information and comments received. Residents are welcome to attend.*

- Why wouldn't future Argenta be put on property that is currently open space versus impacting existing homes?

For Argenta Trail north of Amana Trail, the PMT is looking at all possible options for connecting to I-494. This is because there are impacts to property owners and costs no matter what alignment is considered. In addition to the land acquisition costs and the construction costs, there could be transmission line impacts and relocation costs, and wetland/drainage basin impacts and relocation costs; all of which need to be taken into account to ensure that future improvements provide the best value to the public.

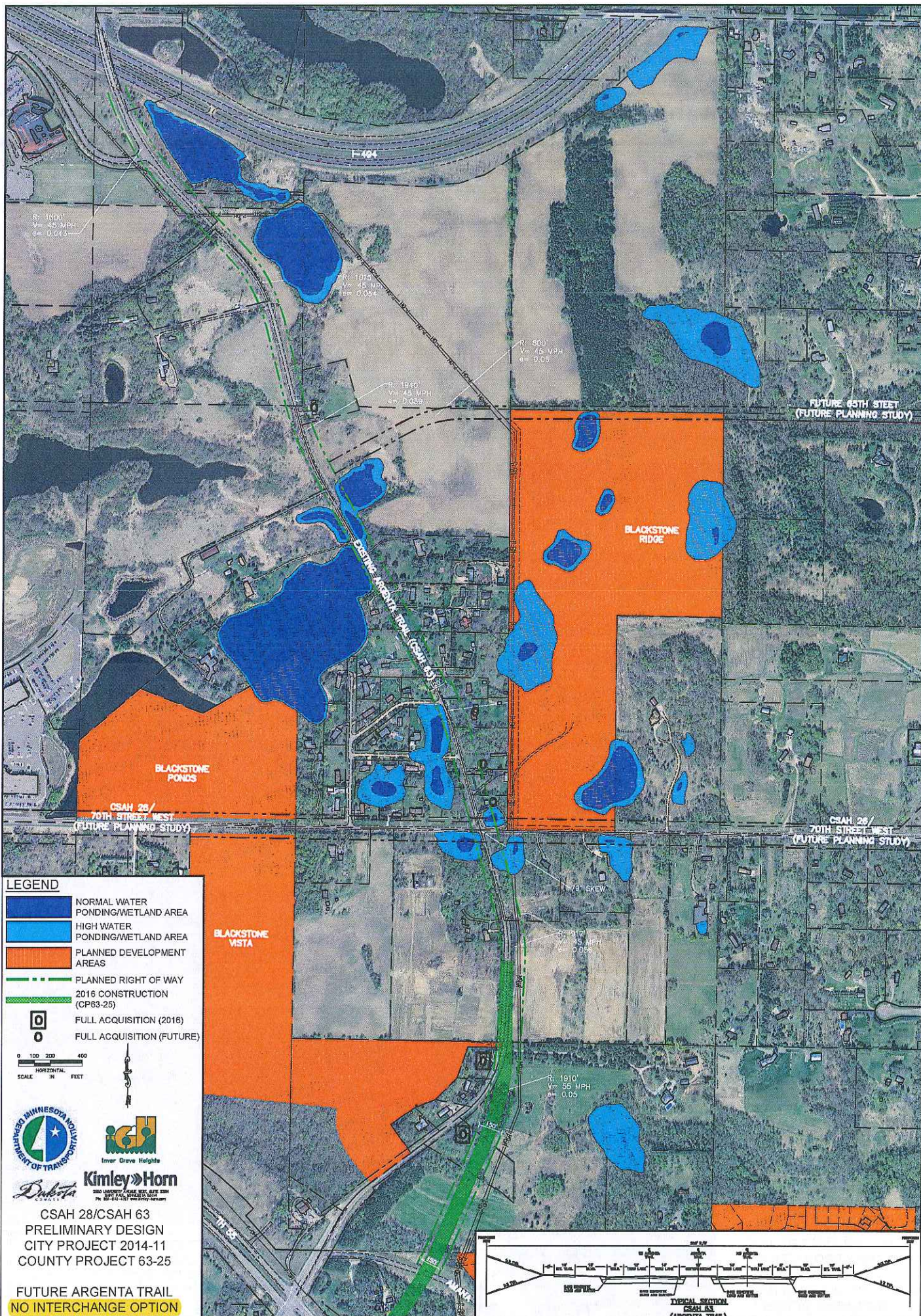
For any alignment alternatives that would impact properties in the exception neighborhood, it is highly unlikely that property would need to be acquired until either 1) an expansion of Argenta Trail along its existing alignment is required due to safety issues or an increase in traffic volume, or 2) the construction of a realigned Argenta Trail is needed as part of the construction of a future interchange at I-494.

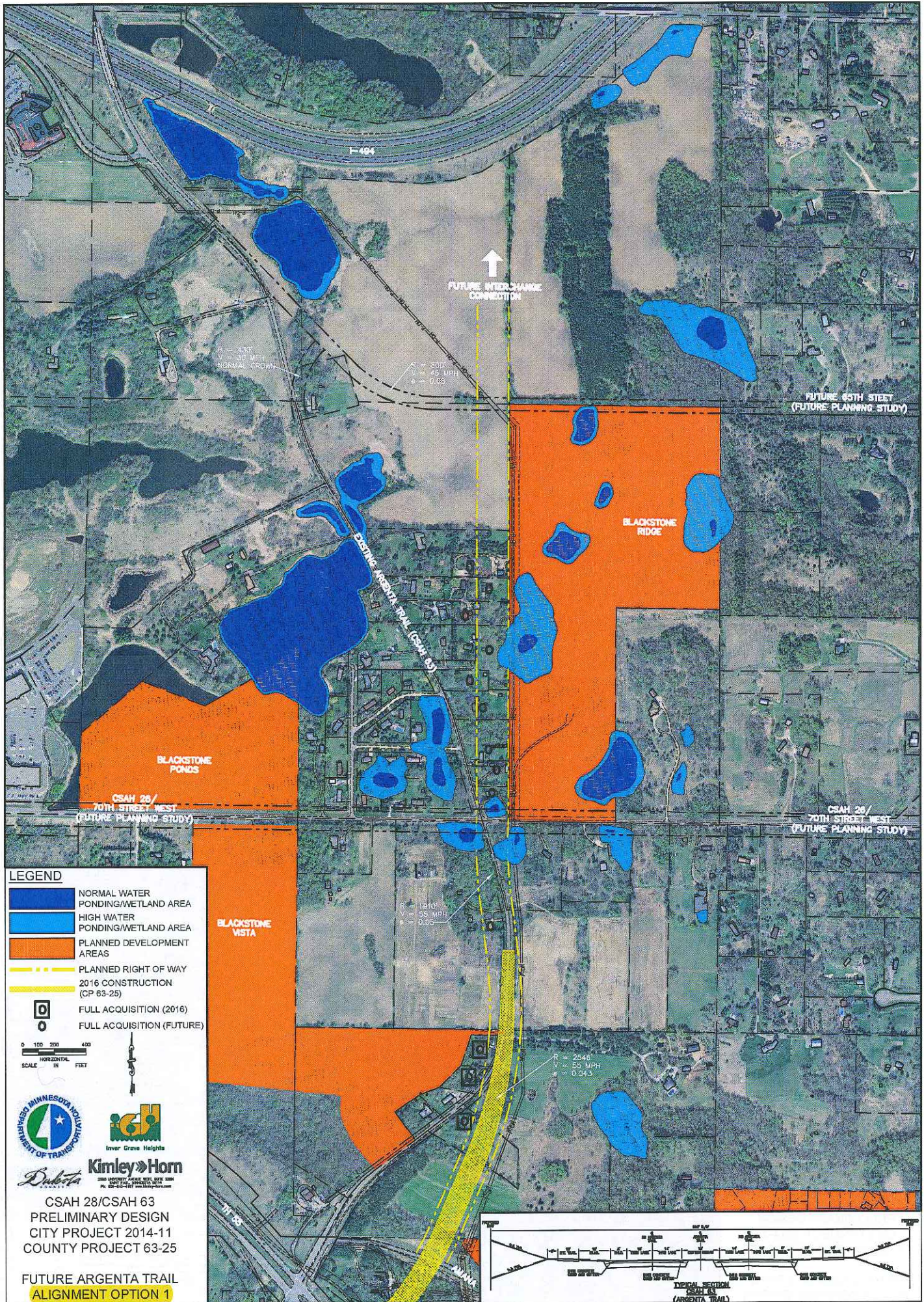
- Do residents have a 'vote' on which alignment they prefer?

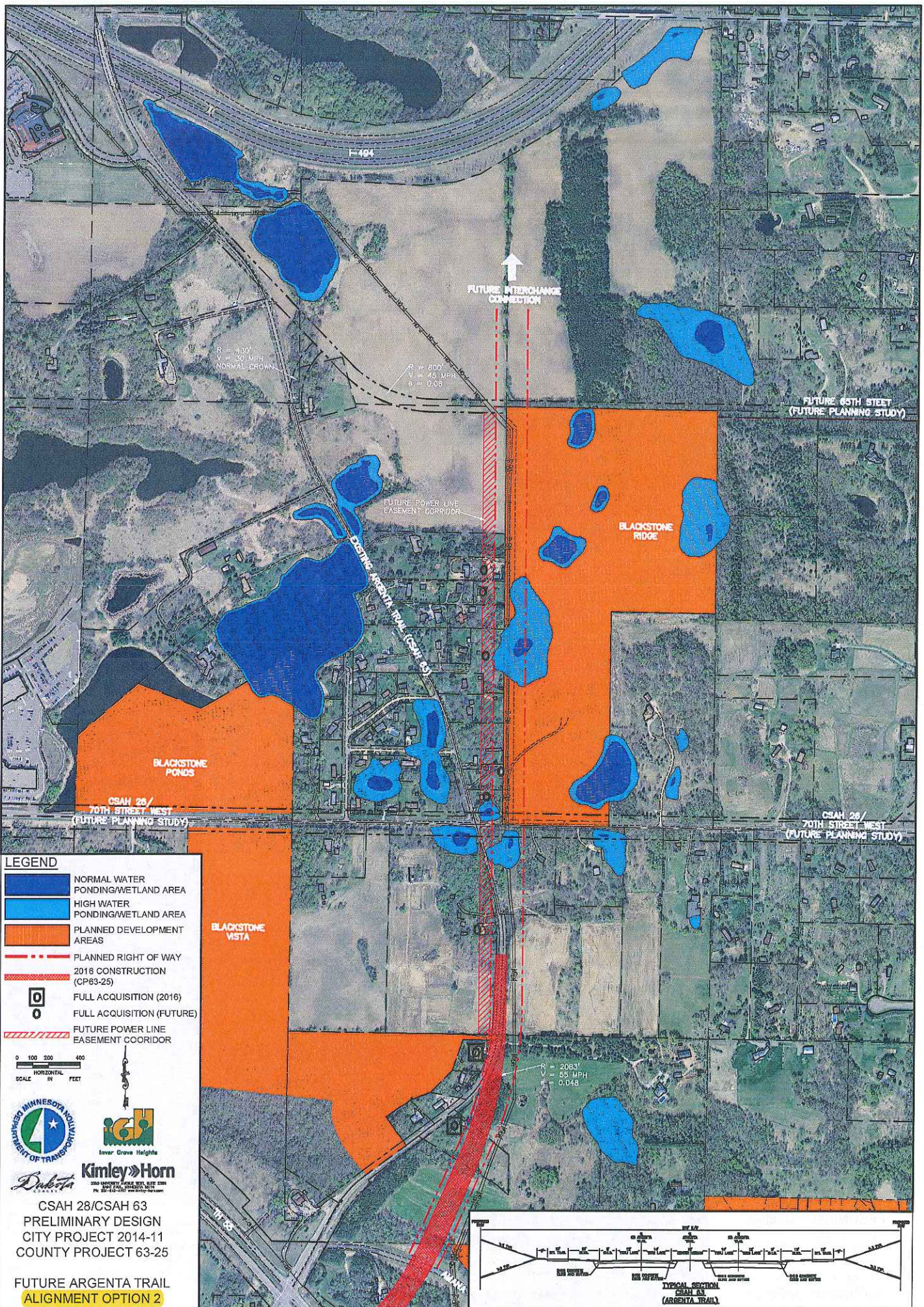
As part of the study process, the PMT develops alignment options that are presented to the public for comment. The team uses public comments to further evaluate the alignment options through understanding the pros/ cons of each and to work towards narrowing down the options. Resident's 'votes' come through comments submitted to the PMT. The PMT presents this information to the City Council.

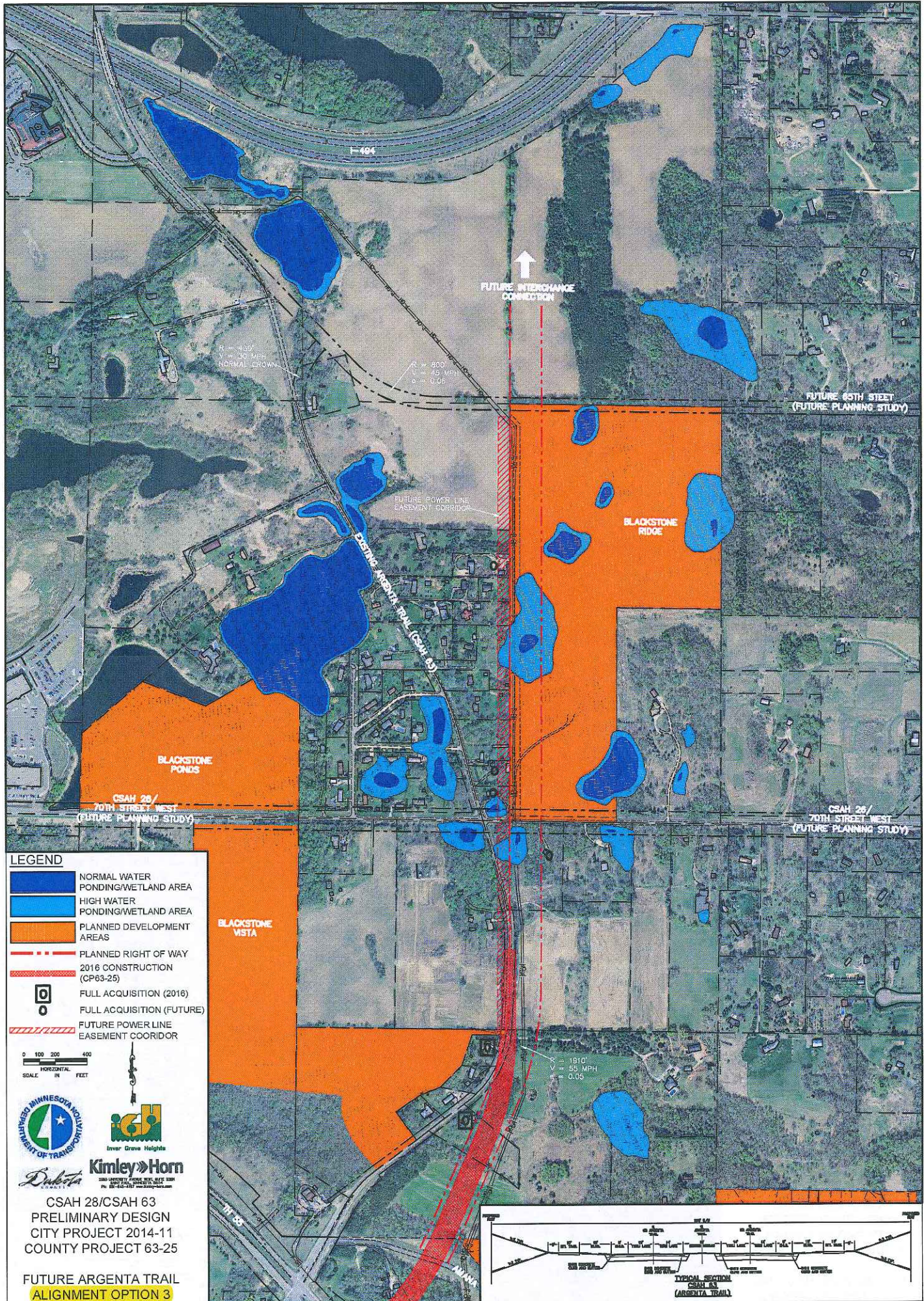
- Who makes the decision on the future alignment of Argenta Trail?

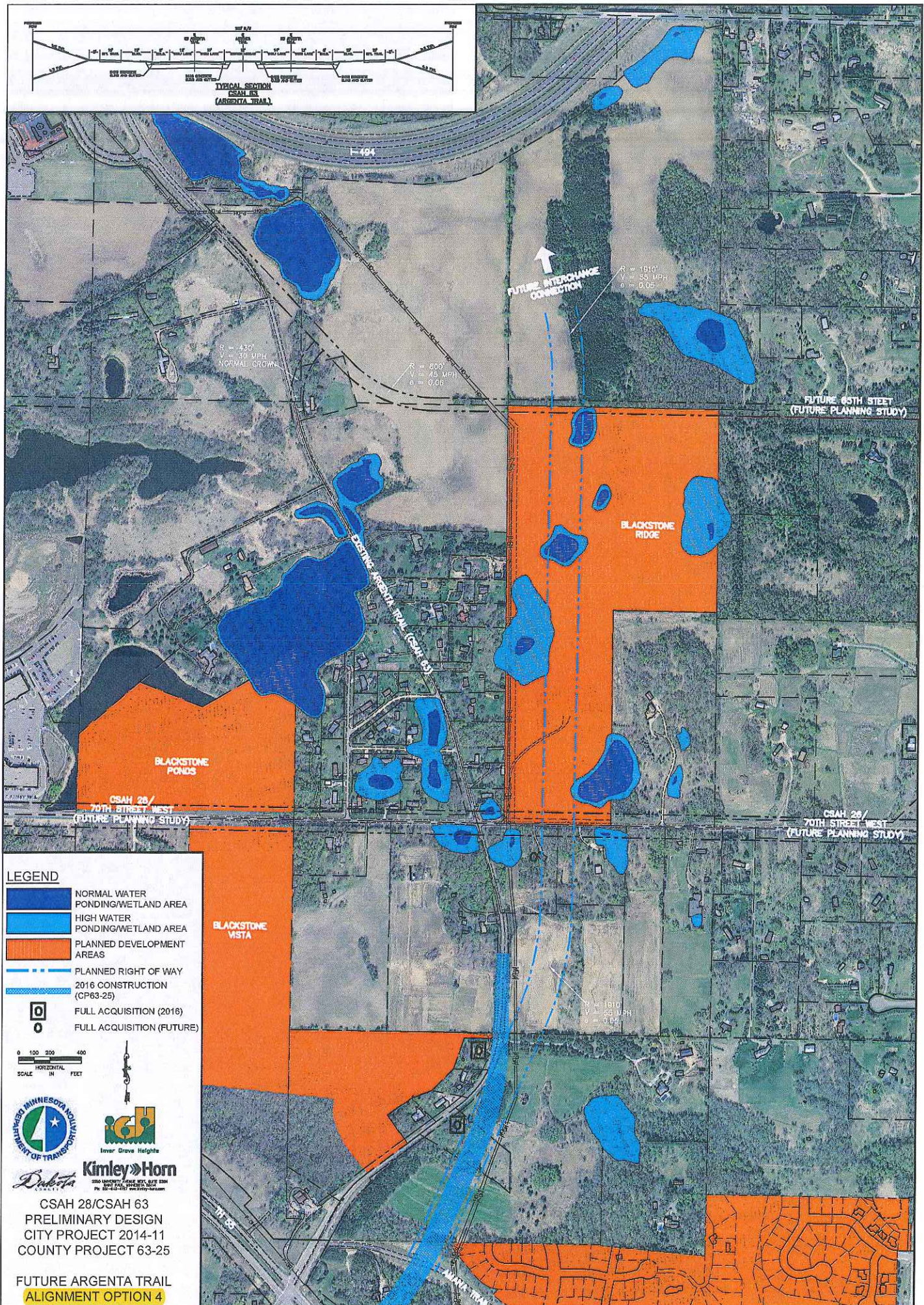
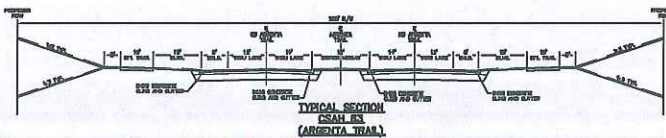
The goal is for the City Council and County Board to adopt the same future alignment for Argenta Trail since the two agencies will need to work together and be partners in the approvals and costs related to improving Argenta Trail in the future.





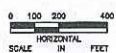






LEGEND

- NORMAL WATER PONDING/WETLAND AREA
- HIGH WATER PONDING/WETLAND AREA
- PLANNED DEVELOPMENT AREAS
- PLANNED RIGHT OF WAY
- 2016 CONSTRUCTION (CP63-25)
- 0 FULL ACQUISITION (2016)
- 0 FULL ACQUISITION (FUTURE)



CSAH 28/CSAH 63
PRELIMINARY DESIGN
CITY PROJECT 2014-11
COUNTY PROJECT 63-25

FUTURE ARGENTA TRAIL
ALIGNMENT OPTION 4

