



Conservation Business Development

While conservation subdivisions are typically done within residential sites, our vision is to take the concept of a conservation subdivision and apply it in a commercial site essentially replacing residences with businesses. Principles of this case study can be applied to the Amherst Business Park Development. Our vision for the Amherst site consists of:

"The Village of Amherst - small town atmosphere with big city possibilities."

Community Connections

Adding a trail through the business park would give the opportunity for future development. Looking into the future, the Northwest corner of the business park could be a potential connection to add a trail that leads to the downtown of the village. To try to further connect nearby communities, adding trails within the Business Park could link to the existing Tomorrow River Trail which connects from Plover to Manawa. Encouraging this trail system could provide an expansion of recreational activities and promote economic growth for Amherst due to increased activity of nearby communities.

- One central parking area for the entire business park site
- No further development of roads other than existing infrastructure within the site
- Well lit, wide, flat paths that are easily accessible to all ages and easily maintained in all seasons
- Promoting local businesses and community events.
- Spaces for community gathering and recreation.
- A central path that encircles the development site, with the idea that this path acts as a central pedestrian highway throughout the site (additional smaller connector paths can further allow for pedestrian flow to areas within the site)
- Connection to downtown Amherst and the central business district via a trail connection to downtown
- Greenspaces being a central feature to the path, feeling more like a park than an urban environment
- Access to local businesses and amenities directly off the path

Amherst Conservation Business Development



Nature Playscape

Incorporating areas in the community like a playscape for kids is an important aspect when looking to bring in a younger demographic. When families are looking to move into the community it is important to have areas within the community they can take younger kids. Incorporating trails and playscapes that are kid-friendly can increase the number of younger families that move into the community.



Pavilion

For a community to fully benefit from parks, trails and other recreation opportunities the areas must have attractive design as well as accessible amenities for everyone. A pavilion would be a great choice as it is a multipurpose facility. It is a great area for hosting social events, a comfortable place for a picnic, an area for shade, and a facility that can offer restrooms when in an outdoor setting.



Local Businesses

Designing businesses in conjunction with community open space provides socio-economic benefits that increase local shopping and dining. In time, investing in the local economy increases community engagement and instills a greater sense of pride in the community.



Trails

To implement minimal additions of impervious surfaces, trails are utilized within the Conservation Business Development. This concept not only benefits the environment but is a unique design to support existing recreationists that use the existing Business Park. The trails will be placed along the perimeter of the site and connect businesses and additional development to create a trail system within the Conservation Business Development.



Amphitheater

The purpose of the Amphitheater is to provide a community venue for a variety of local events, such as outdoor concerts, school events, and a multipurpose gathering place. This will also serve to attract more visitors to the Conservation Business Development and local businesses.

The following goals are implemented in our map on the Conservation Business Development

1. Promote Walkability Within the Community
2. Promote Local Establishments
3. Create Green Space and Implement Sustainable Design Features

The illustration above shows a master plan for the Amherst Business Park and surrounding sites. The map includes adding an amphitheater, pavilion, a playscape, and local businesses. Around and throughout the business park trails will be added to connect the different activities and greenspace areas.



Amherst Business Park Concept Research

We feel an increasingly popular development technique, conservation subdivision design, would be beneficial to the Amherst Business Park for several reasons. A conservation subdivision involving businesses rather than homes, would promote our goals for green space, incorporating local establishments, and increasing walkability within the village. In simple terms, a conservation subdivision is meant to preserve open space, natural features, while still allowing for the development of businesses and community spaces in the Village of Amherst.

“The Village of Amherst - small town atmosphere with big city possibilities.”

Benefits of Conservation Subdivisions

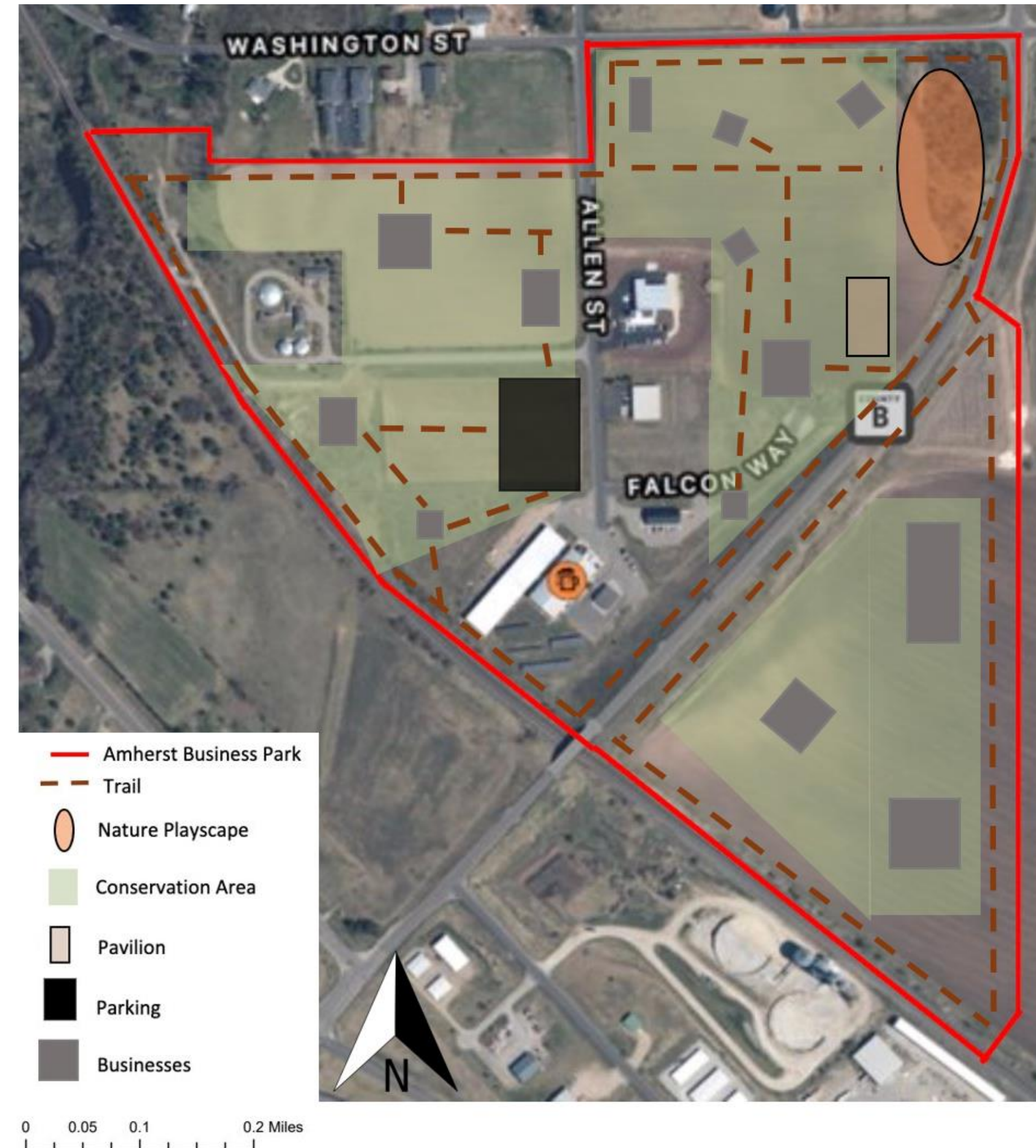
- The same number of businesses can be built in a less land-consuming manner, allowing the balance of the property to be permanently protected. This also adds to an interconnected network of community green spaces and trails.
- Natural areas preserved in conservation subdivisions provide important habitat for wildlife to dwell in and travel through.
- Conservation subdivision design offers a more effective and less costly approach to stormwater management than conventional subdivision layout.

Typical Development vs Conservation Design

STREETS & LOTS FIRST Subdivision design starts with street locations, lot placement, and residential areas, leaving green space as an afterthought that fits between or around the businesses as an added value.	VS	STREETS & LOTS LAST Our Conservation subdivision design starts with the natural features of the land by identifying topography, vegetation, woodlands, wetlands, and other elements that should be preserved, then businesses are positioned between or around these elements.
WATER MANAGEMENT Stormwater retention ponds are designed after the storm giving them unnatural geometric shapes with exotic vegetation maintained to the waterline.	VS	WATER AS A RESOURCE While more complex to construct and manage, our stormwater management facilities are also designed as complete landscapes for ongoing wildlife and natural water management, not just stormwater.
UNMANAGED VEGETATION While “natural” vegetation could be considered good, it can also include many invasive species, which if not managed, can become a nuisance to the business.	VS	MANAGED VEGETATION We prefer the use of the term “managed vegetation,” protecting existing trees and allowing for growth of prairie, wildflowers, and grasses which add the benefit of ornamental, invasive growth in our communities.
OVER MANICURING Manicuring of entire open spaces is labor intensive and costly to the environment as chemical application is not included and reduced into environmentally sensitive areas.	VS	MINIMAL MAINTENANCE Minimal manicuring allows for less chemical application and more natural areas. A win-win. Low cost to you, the business, and the environment.
NATURE AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT Natural features of the land are destroyed in conventional developments because they were not incorporated into the land plan.	VS	NATURE IS AT THE CENTER While it is more costly, conservation development values our natural resources and protects the overall property value over time.
INACCESSIBLE NEIGHBORHOOD FACILITIES Community facilities are located as far as possible from the neighborhood.	VS	COMMUNITY GATHERING AREAS Common amenities like ice cream, pathways, and playgrounds are attractive gathering areas which draw the most from the residents to purchase and develop these facilities plus these are great places to meet your neighbors.



The above images show community trails, public green spaces and a community garden. These features are commonly found in conservation subdivisions.



Example from Chicago, Illinois

This diagram illustrates how the goals can be applied to the Amherst Business Park. The map shows how trails can be implemented increasing walkability. Creating new green spaces and having more areas open for local businesses can increase community involvement.



There's a high level of uncertainty inherent in starting a business, and outlets such as Chicago-based Boombox help entrepreneurs minimize risk through affordable, flexible small business spaces. Boombox is a pop-up rental kiosk, located in a Chicago neighborhood, providing space for independent businesses that desire a stronger presence in the community. This technique enables businesses to close the gap between a start up business and a permanent store front business. It is part of a growing shift towards supporting small businesses, enabling smaller and more flexible setups that can nimbly accommodate different sellers and their inventories.

Goal 2: Promote Local Establishments

- 1) Maintain Sense of Community**
 - Development should support local businesses first
 - Addition of local events and activities
- 2) Allow Local Vendors to Increase Community Presence**
 - Increase visibility for local businesses
 - Shared area could lead to increased commercial traffic
- 3) Provide a Unique Venue for Shopping Activities**
 - Combines shared community greenspaces with commercial sites
 - Unique venue for business unlike other midwestern villages

Conservation Subdivision Principles

“Conservation subdivision design goes beyond the simple goal of clustering buildings together and preserving a portion of the parcel as open space. Conservation subdivision design is:

- Based on the natural and cultural resource attributes of the property
- Reflects the broader environmental and social goals of the community
- Allows for greater flexibility in design to provide for greater natural resource protection”

(New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, Carolyn B. Russell, AICP)



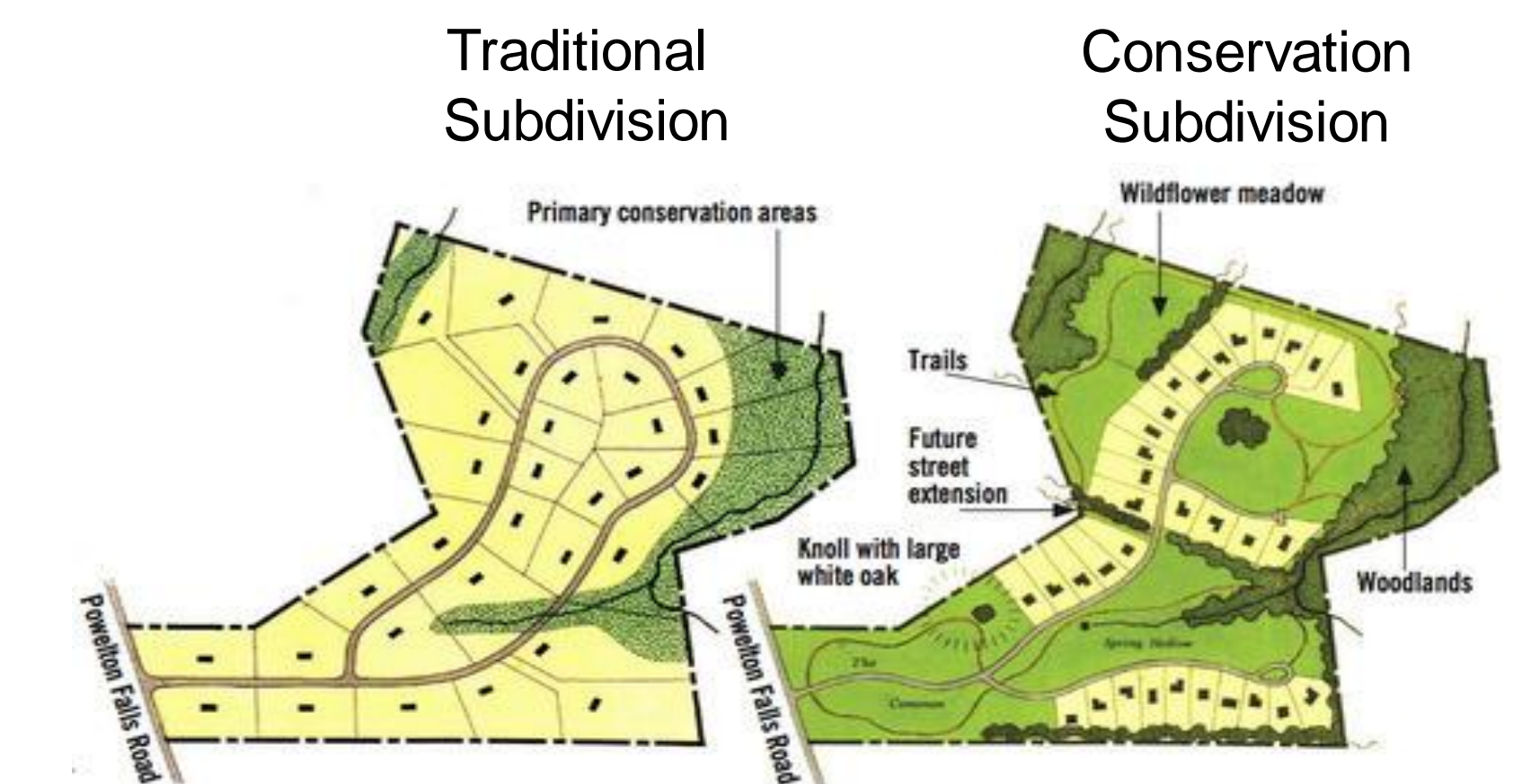
The aerial photo above shows the Hawksnest Conservation Subdivision in Delafield, Wisconsin. Note the ample open space, slightly smaller lot sizes, and trails characteristic of a conservation subdivision.

Conservation Subdivision Example

Siepmann Realty is a Southeastern Wisconsin Realty Corporation. One of their mottos when it comes to conservation subdivisions is “Nature Created it. We just made it home.” This is the idea behind their conservation subdivision designs and behind our conservation business park development. Nature at the center as a catalyst for interaction with local businesses.

The Hawksnest (Delafield, WI) case study:

- Lots are complimented with adjacent shared open space land and a wildlife area that doubles as a water retention area
- Roadways mimic natural topography and impervious surfaces are kept to a minimum
- Ample shared pedestrian/bicycle paths crisscross the subdivision development
- Lots are smaller to maintain small footprint in the landscape
- Managed vegetation, preserving original vegetation, and planting additional natural prairie grasses and native plants
- Shared community venues, parks, a rec center, and playgrounds provide places for residents to gather



The above illustration is an example of a conservation subdivision compared to a traditional subdivision development.

Example from St. Louis, Missouri

A sustainable design feature of incorporating nature in a community can be seen in the Anne O'C Albrecht Nature Playscape in St. Louis, Missouri. The nature playscape is in the Forest Park on 17 acres. The playscape is an experiential play space with natural landscapes that include native and diverse species. There are nine activity areas that include sand play areas, stump steppers, boulders and rocks, hand water pumps, tunnels, and much more. One of the main goals of playscapes like this is to encourage kids to connect with nature while they discover and learn.

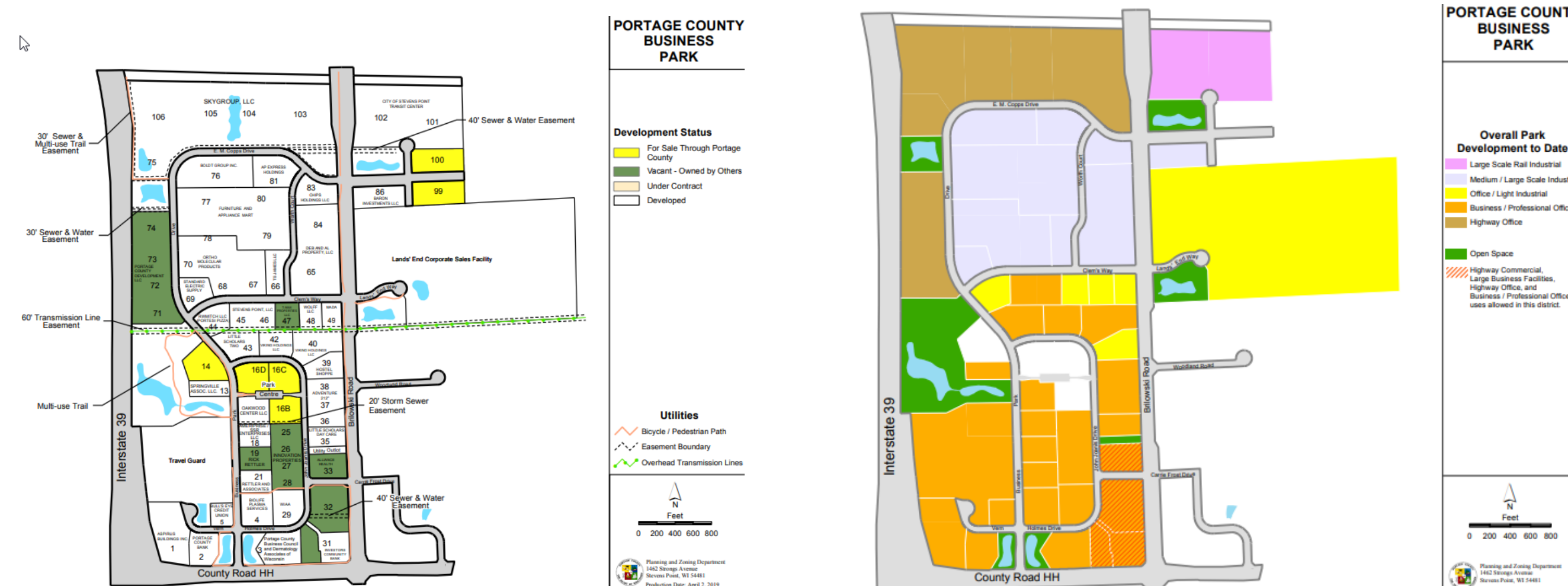


Goal 3: Create green space and implement sustainable design features

- 1) Encourage Recreational Opportunities**
 - Provide areas for recreation
 - Include parks, trails, pavilions, and gathering spaces
 - Encourage an active and healthy community
- 2) Enhance Natural Areas**
 - Include wildlife habitat
 - Increase species biodiversity
 - Decrease impervious surfaces
- 3) Provide Ecosystem Services**
 - Clean air
 - Water filtration
 - Recreational benefits
- 4) Increase Sense of Place**
 - Increase quality of life
 - Provide space for community events and interactions
 - Increase property value to surrounding homes and businesses

Goal 1: Promote Walkability Within the Community

- 1) Safety**
 - Walking spaces shielded from traffic
 - Adjacent roadways limited to 25mph speed limit
 - Adequate crosswalks and pedestrian friendly features
 - Wide and well-lit paths
- 2) Distance**
 - 20-minute walkshed from necessities
 - Necessities: grocery stores, schools, dining, parks and recreation spaces, entertainment, banks and other institutional sites, places of worship, etc.
- 3) Convenience**
 - Ease of access for pedestrians
 - Cost and time effective for travel and daily life
- 4) Comfort**
 - Easy access to paths
 - Ample benches, shelters, and viewpoints
 - Wind and weather blocks
 - Aesthetics considered



Goal 1: Promote Walkability Within the Community