

Information for File #2015-03354-MMJ; New Waconia High School

Applicant: Waconia Public Schools

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Section, Township, Range: SW ¼ of Sec. 22, T. 116 N., R. 25 W.

Information Complete On: 02/25/2016

Posting Expires On: 03/05/2016

Authorization Type: MN-LOP-05

This application is being reviewed in accordance with current practices for documenting Corps jurisdiction under Section(s) 9 & 10 of the Rivers and Harbor Act of 1899 and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

We have made a preliminary determination that the aquatic resources that would be impacted by the proposed project are subject to Corps of Engineers jurisdiction under Section(s) 9 & 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 and/or Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. If an approved jurisdictional determination is completed as part of the review process for this application, a copy will be posted on the St. Paul District web page at the following link: <http://www.mvp.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory.aspx>.

Project

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE:

Waconia Public Schools is proposing to develop a 59.29-acre site on the outskirts of the City of Waconia to expand and repurpose the existing Clearwater Middle School and Safari Island Community Center for use as a New High School. The project would also repurpose the existing High School for use as a New Middle School, and expand parking, athletic fields and stormwater ponding while providing improved site access, safety, and maintenance and operations facilities.

NAME, AREA AND TYPES OF WATERS (INCLUDING WETLANDS) SUBJECT TO LOSS:

The project as proposed would result in the discharge of fill material into two farmed wetland basins (Wetlands 1 and 2), impacting approximately 74,403 square feet (1.71 acres) of seasonally flooded basin type wetland. Wetland 1 would be filled and excavated to support the New High School expansion, realignment of CSAH 10, extension of Community Drive, and related stormwater ponding. Wetland 2 would be graded and filled to effectively and efficiently utilize the property for the required athletic fields and related facilities, including the minimally-sized parking lots and supporting amenities.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Off-site alternatives: The Waconia School District explored and evaluated 13 alternative site locations for expansion of the schools and athletic facilities. As shown in the attached Figure 6. These sites included: (1) Dirck's; (2) Burandt's (3) St Boni Site; (4) K of C; (5) Brown's; (6) HS; (7) Rock Isle (7) 1200 Oak; (8) S. of Clearwater; (9) 284; (10) Klein Dr; (11) Airport Road; (12) Radde/Brockpahler; and (13) Island View Rd. The 13 sites were evaluated for a wide spectrum of land suitability factors. Wetlands were considered as part of the suitability assessment. Other factors considered included: (1) available land size and configuration; (2) topography; (3) soils; (4) stormwater ponding; (5) natural vegetation; (6) views and vistas; (7) development and infrastructure costs; (8) availability of utilities, including sanitary sewer, storm sewer, electricity, and water; (9) nearby roadways and accessibility; (10) location and proximity to student population; (11) adjacent land uses; and (12) visibility.

After working with consultants to evaluate these sites and land suitability factors, Waconia Schools selected Site 3 (the St. Boni Site) as part of the plan to develop more schools, and solicited voter feedback through a bond referendum in 2011. The bond referendum to purchase an alternative site location failed. On May 17, 2011, Waconia School District voters rejected an \$8 million referendum to buy land for school expansion. More voters favored the plan set forth under a subsequent bond referendum in 2014, which featured the current proposal to expand the existing secondary education campus. That bond referendum passed and Waconia Schools moved forward by purchasing four parcels for school expansion. These included the part of Site 11, which was purchased for development of a New Elementary School, and parts of Sites 5 and 8, which were purchased for the New High School, New Middle School, and athletic field expansion.

On-site Alternatives: An alternative project design that would physically avoid wetland impacts was considered, see attached Figure 7. However, this alternative is not considered practicable because it would not provide adequate stormwater treatment or athletic fields. Even though the wetlands would be physically avoided under this alternative, adjacent land uses would result in incidental wetland drainage and stormwater impacts. The wetland avoidance design would physically avoid Wetland 1, but Wetland 1 would still be impacted by the adjacent stormwater pond and other nearby land uses. The adjacent stormwater pond and the new alignments of CSAH 10, Community Drive, and the High School service road would all divert natural runoff away from Wetland 1. The new stormwater basin shown on Figure 7 would not be large enough to contain large runoff events, so Wetland 1 would likely undergo long periods of partial drainage interrupted by large influxes of partially treated stormwater runoff.

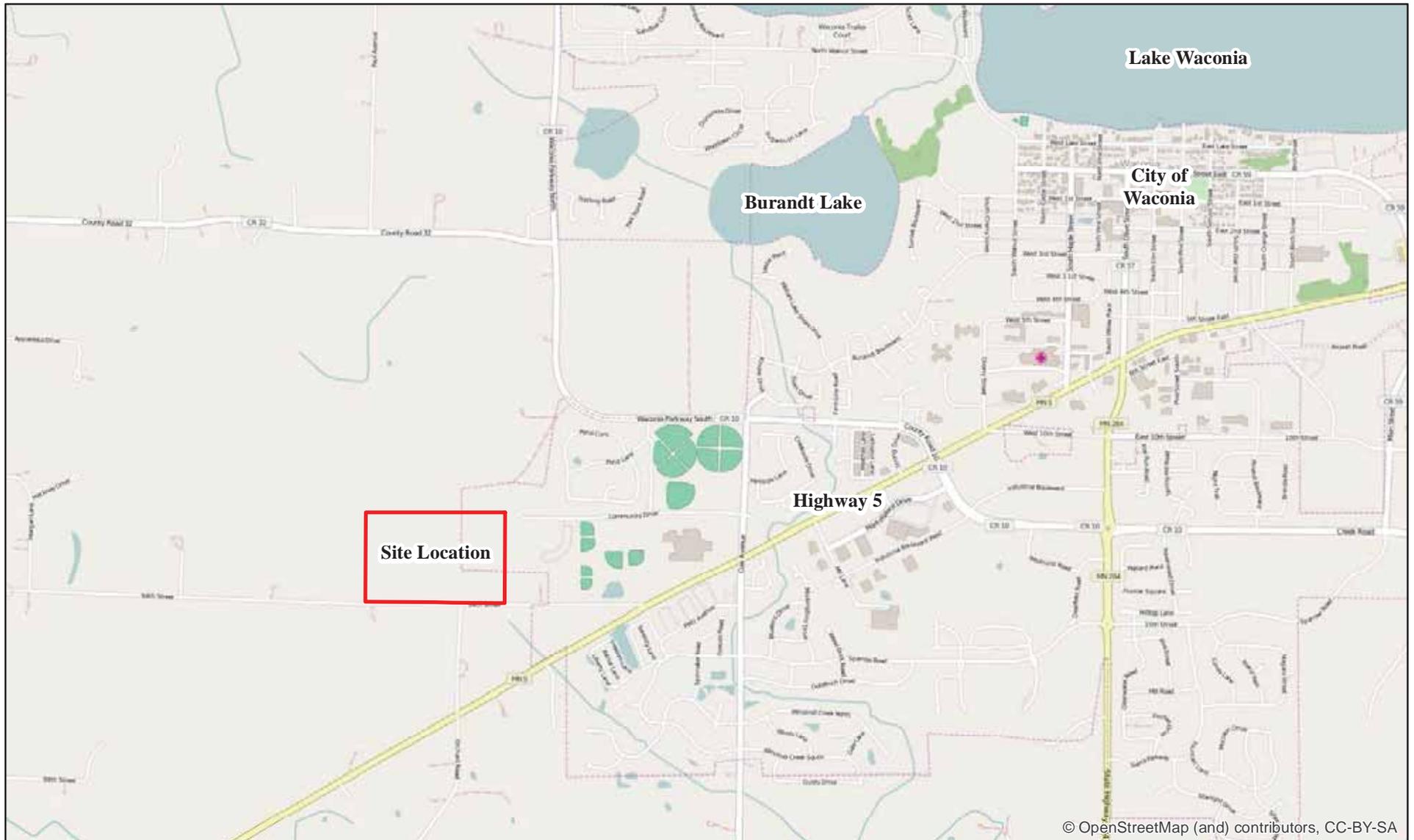
The wetland avoidance design would physically avoid Wetland 2, but Wetland 2 would still be impacted by the adjacent athletic fields and related land uses. The applicant states that impacts to Wetland 2 are unavoidable because it is located in the area proposed for the multi-use (soccer and lacrosse) athletic fields. The size, spacing, orientation, soils, and slope requirements of the multi-purpose athletic fields are set forth in the athletic field design guidelines. The physical layout of fields need to consider safety, convenience and efficiency and provide space to accommodate competitors, spectators, players, coaches, and officials. The wetland impacts are unavoidable because guidance indicates fields should be oriented north-south or northwest-southeast rather than east-west. The wetland avoidance design considers what would happen if one field was pivoted and shifted north, even though such a design would sacrifice safety, efficiency, convenience, space for spectators, and space between fields. Even if Wetland 2 was avoided by pivoting and shifting north one multi-use play field, diversion of Wetland 2's existing tributary drainage area would reduce its watershed by 50%, from 82,100 square feet to 40,670 square feet. This would reduce the watershed-to-wetland ratio of Wetland 2 from 10:1 to 5:1. This incidental diversion would most likely drain this wetland, as it has

marginal wetland hydrology under existing conditions. If avoided, the reduced drainage area would likely result in wetland loss and undermine the rationale for wetland avoidance.

COMPENSATORY MITIGATION:

The applicant has proposed to compensate for unavoidable wetland impacts associated with this project, at a 2:1 ratio, via purchase of 3.42 wetland bank credits from a Corps approved Wetland Mitigation Bank.

Drawings: See attached figures labeled as 2015-03354-MMJ, Posting figures 1-8.



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Figure 1 - Site Location

 **KJOLHAUG ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMPANY**
Source: ESRI Streets Basemap

0 2,000 Feet

New Waconia High School (KES 2016-006)
Waconia, Minnesota

Note: Boundaries indicated on this figure are approximate and do not constitute an official survey product.



Figure 2 - Existing Conditions and Surrounding Land Use

 <p>KJOLHAUG ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMPANY Source: MnGeo, ESRI Imagery Basemap</p>		 Project Boundary	<p>New Waconia High School (KES 2016-006) Waconia, Minnesota</p> <p>Note: Boundaries indicated on this figure are approximate and do not constitute an official survey product.</p>
		 Public Watercourse  Public Waters	

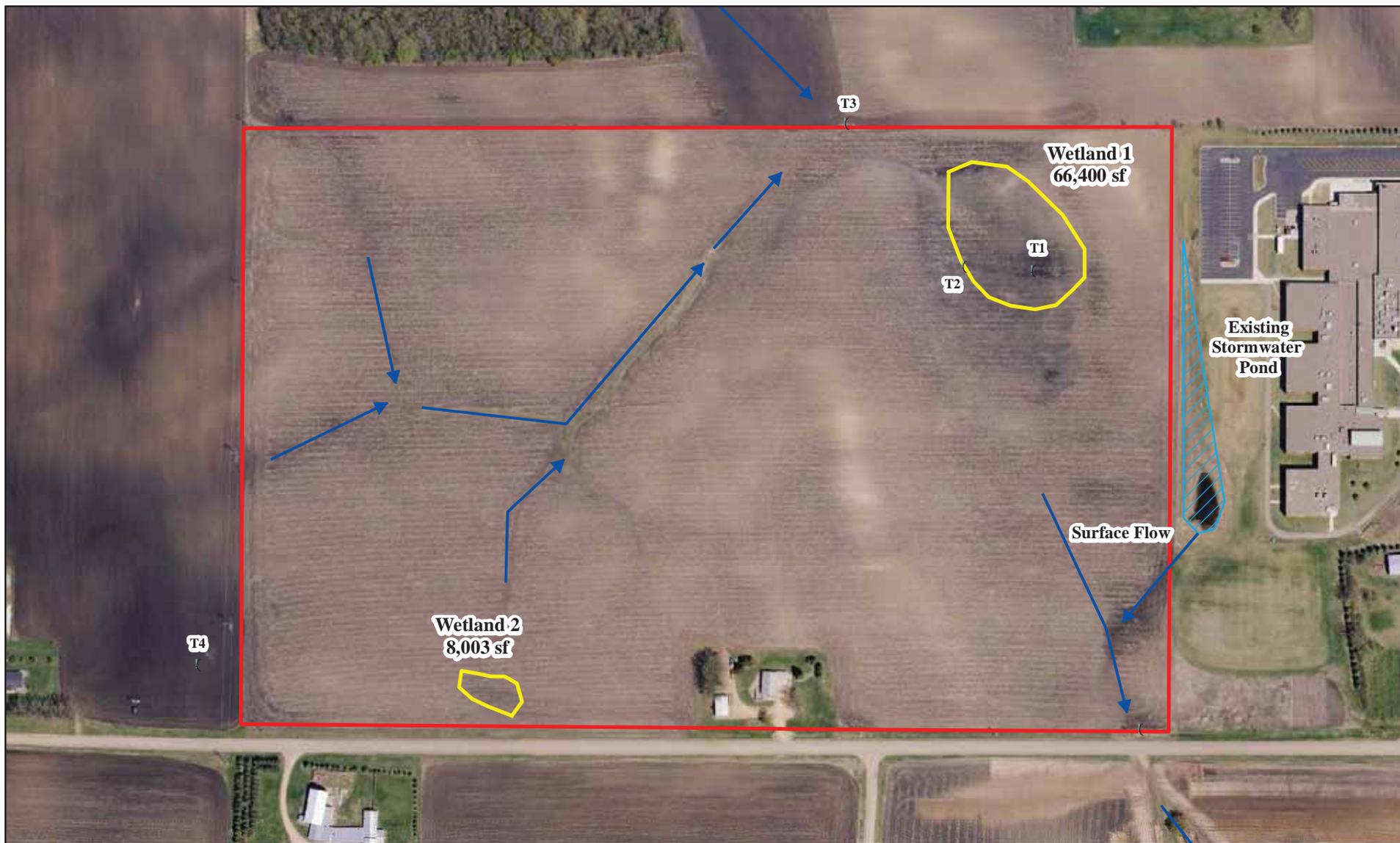


Figure 3 - Delineated Wetland Boundaries

 <p>KJOLHAUG ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMPANY Source: MnGeo, ESRI Imagery Basemap</p>	 <p>0 250 Feet</p>	 Project Boundary	<p>New Waconia High School (KES 2016-006) Waconia, Minnesota</p> <p>Note: Boundaries indicated on this figure are approximate and do not constitute an official survey product.</p>
		 Wetland Boundary	
		 Existing Stormwater Pond	
		 Surface Tile Inlet	
		 Flow Direction	

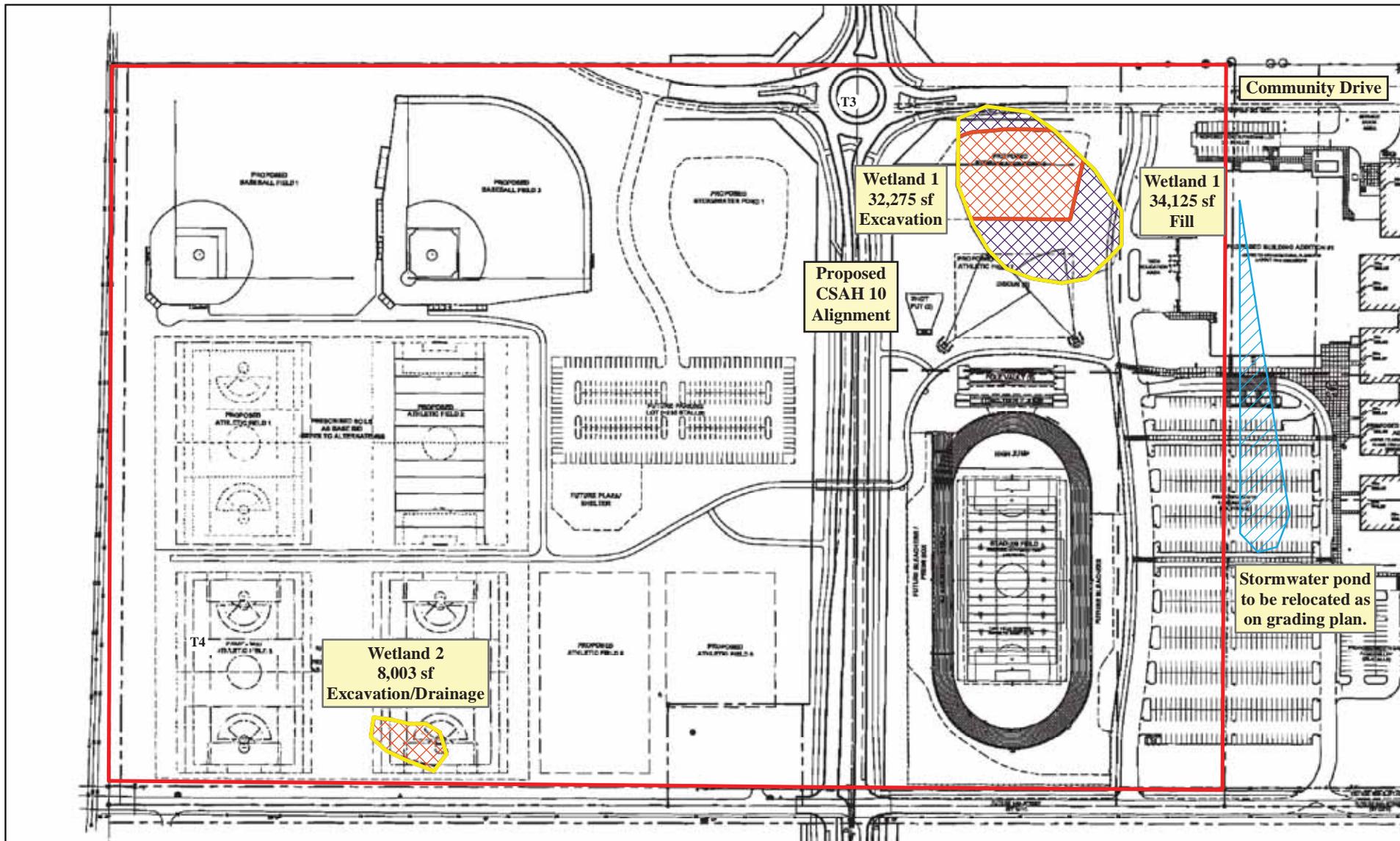


Figure 4 - Proposed Site Plan



KJOLHAUG ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMPANY
Source: MnGeo, ESRI Imagery Basemap

0 250 Feet

- Project Boundary
- Wetland Boundary
- Wetland Excavation
- Wetland Fill
- Existing Stormwater Pond

New Waconia High School (KES 2016-006)
Waconia, Minnesota

Note: Boundaries indicated on this figure are approximate and do not constitute an official survey product.

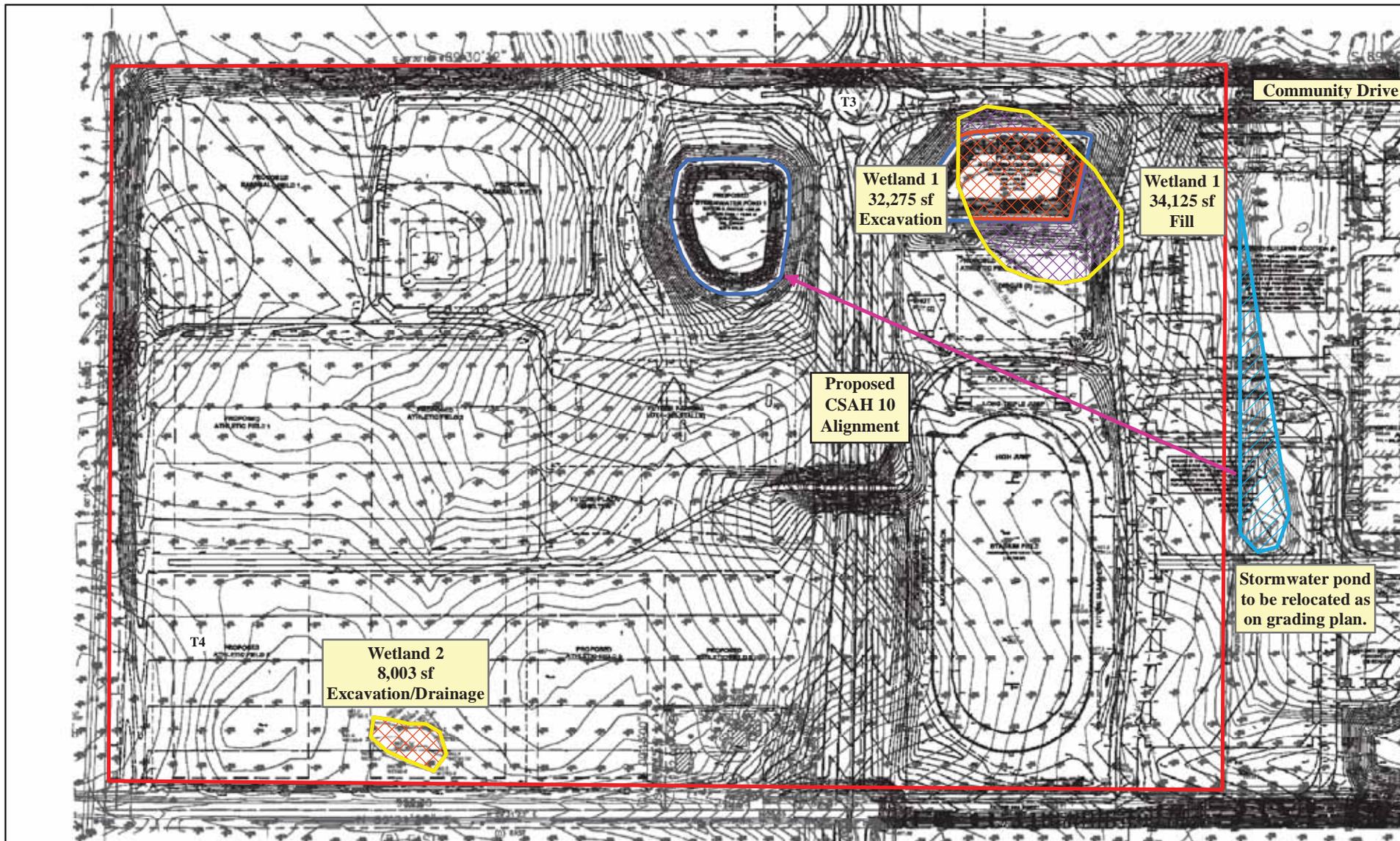


Figure 5 - Proposed Grading Plan



KJOLHAUG ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMPANY
Source: MnGeo, ESRI Imagery Basemap

0 250
Feet

New Waconia High School (KES 2016-006)
Waconia, Minnesota

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Boundary Wetland Boundary Wetland Excavation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wetland Fill Existing Stormwater Pond Proposed Stormwater Pond
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Note: Boundaries indicated on this figure are approximate and do not constitute an official survey product.

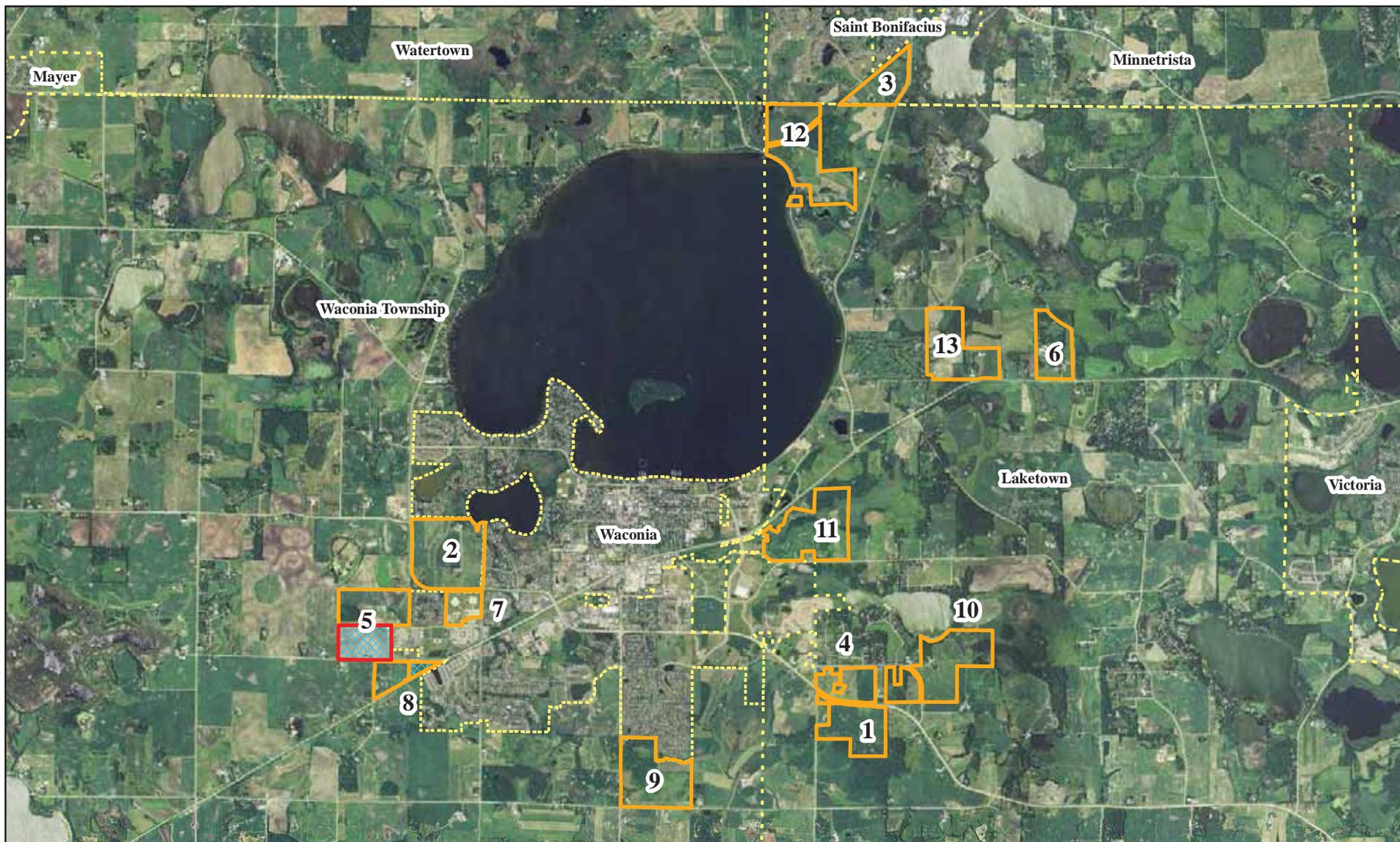


Figure 6 - Alternative Site Locations

 <p>KJOLHAUG ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMPANY Source: MnGeo, ESRI Imagery Basemap</p>	 <p>0 5,250 Feet</p>	 Project Boundary	<p>New Waconia High School (KES 2016-006) Waconia, Minnesota</p> <p>Note: Boundaries indicated on this figure are approximate and do not constitute an official survey product.</p>
		 Alternative Sites	
		 Sites Aquired	
		 Town/Township Boundary	



Figure 8 - Wetland Replacement Bank Location and Environmental Setting

			New Waconia High School (KES 2016-006) Waconia, Minnesota
	KJOLHAUG ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMPANY Source: MnGeo, ESRI Imagery Basemap		
			Note: Boundaries indicated on this figure are approximate and do not constitute an official survey product.