

COMMUNITY Systems

4

The subject of this chapter, community systems, can be described as systems and infrastructure critical to the health, function and appearance of the City.

It is expected that each of the infrastructure systems explored within this chapter will be supplemented with much more detailed master plans using the policy direction we have established as a basic framework. The policy directions respond directly to the vision, guiding principles and community patterns described in the Comprehensive Plan.

A primary theme of this chapter is an assessment of each system's capacity to accommodate, or at the very least, rapidly respond to changes in population, household and economic growth. These systems include:

- ▶ *Health and Wellness*
- ▶ *Parks and Recreation*
- ▶ *Greenways*
- ▶ *Wastewater*
- ▶ *Potable Water*
- ▶ *Storm water*
- ▶ *Streets and Roadways*
- ▶ *Public Facilities and Government Services*

Health and Wellness

Statistically we are an innovator and leader in the health industry and serve a region in Minnesota, Iowa, and beyond for specialties in eye care, infertility, wound care, orthopedics, cancer treatment, and chemical dependency treatment. We are innovators through Express Care, the first hospital-based convenience care clinic in Minnesota. Other wellness innovation regarding health care includes design of buildings to take advantage of the community's assets of lakes and vistas, extensive landscaping and design for a healing environment, and state of the art facilities for dialysis, pain management, physical training and rehabilitation.

Albert Lea's Guiding Principles

- ▶ *Albert Lea is the Land Between the Lakes*
- ▶ *Embrace diversity*
- ▶ *Healthy lakes equal a healthy Albert Lea*
- ▶ *Encourage evolution not revolution*
- ▶ *Experience Albert Lea by walking, biking or paddling*
- ▶ *Encourage new while planning the old*
- ▶ *Restore and re-use our treasures*
- ▶ *Keep edges close*
- ▶ *Enrich public life*
- ▶ *Ask your neighbor*
- ▶ *Make parks the common ground of the community*
- ▶ *Create neighborhoods not housing*
- ▶ *Create new tools to solve old problems*



Our Albert Lea Medical Center (ALMC) had the following statistics for 2007 demonstrating its regional significance:

- 101 lives saved by Helicopter transport from ALMC to Mayo facilities in Rochester;
- 2,660 ambulance transports;
- 466 births;
- 145,861 clinic visits;
- 18,727 urgent care visits;
- 11,430 ER visits;
- 2,801 hospital admissions.

In addition, the community has leaders and regional facilities in dental care and orthodontics. In addition a grocery store and a travel center have walk in health care.

Our community is also recognized for its collaborative efforts toward healthy family and child development including child care and recognized pilot program efforts.

Community health objectives will address the factors that impact the people living in the community and those that visit. Community health is about:

- our environment, above and below the ground,
- our transportation and connectivity and ability to safely move throughout the community through all modes;
- our ability to generate and preserve employment opportunities at wages and benefits to allow families to live in a healthy manner;
- our family education programs that assist families in reaching healthy family choices;
- our protective systems that help families and individuals to enjoy a safe environment, and to be comfortable with safety personnel;
- elements are encouraged in our education system to allow and encourage children to develop and reach goals toward healthy decisions, future work goals, and activities that result in healthy bodies and minds;
- our facilities to treat disease and promote wellness;
- our policies that support healthy living and facilities.

The community recognizes that developing health and wellness within the community will result in a stronger social and economic place, employees will be ready and healthy to work, employers will see the community as a place to locate based on our recognition as a healthy place and the availability of a healthy work force.

Goal: Foster an attitude and environment of complete community health and wellness.

We have a community goal of creating places that encourage and promote a healthy community and promoting a community attitude and approach to life that ensure our wellness.

Policies:

- 8.1 continue to support the development of the medical complex and wellness systems, and the regional impact of these facilities and their innovative programs;*
- 8.2 continue to support programs that encourage healthy living for youth and families such as the City Recreation Department, Family Y, The Rock, Salvation Army, and similar future groups;*
- 8.3 continue to support collaborative activities that bring entities together in support of healthy families, child and adult mental health, behavior issues, alcohol, tobacco and chemical use; and future collaborative opportunities;*
- 8.4 research the spread of disease through the exposure of latent spores and bacteria that may dwell within our underground infrastructure;*
- 8.5 replace our infrastructure as needed to reduce system leakage and back-flow;*
- 8.6 consider all forms of connectivity in the development of streets, pathways, trails, and park systems and include comfort facilities within these systems so that all may enjoy the health benefits of appropriate exercise and transport;*
- 8.7 support our position as a regional health center and continue to encourage innovation in our health and wellness systems;*
- 8.8 recognize, enjoy, and employ our social capital and assets giving worth to our citizens.*

Parks and Recreation

Our City of Albert Lea has parks in just about every neighborhood, offers a host of recreation programs, and operates a recreation department that provides a range of services to much of Freeborn County. We live in a time and place where there is unprecedented access to recreation and leisure time activities. Yet many people do not realize the benefits of recreation or live an active life. What can be done to ensure that Albert Lea's parks, recreation facilities, pathways and programs are meeting current needs and fostering a healthy future?

While most of the every day work - from keeping parks green and clean to providing a wide range of recreation activities - will continue, the framework for a more detailed future park master plan will be guided by the Comprehensive Plan. It will ensure that resources are managed wisely and that parks and recreation services benefit our residents, the community and the environment.

<i>Park Classification</i>	<i>Use</i>	<i>Service Area</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Site</i>
Mini Park	Provides opportunities for recreation close to home. May include overlooks, open lawn, tot lots, tennis courts, basketball courts, or open space	1/4 mile	Less than 1 acres	Easily accessible to neighborhood residents. Safe walking and/or biking access
Neighborhood Park	Provides for recreation close to home. Developed primarily for active recreation such as field games, court games, play equipment, and skating.	1/2 mile radius, free of major barriers such as major highways	1-15 acres (5-10 is optimal)	Easily accessible to neighborhood residents. Safe walking and biking access.
Playfield	Consolidates programmed athletic fields and associated facilities to larger and fewer sites located throughout the community. May be joint use with schools	Strategically located City Wide – usually 1-3 miles	Usually a min of 25 acres with 40-80 being optimal. Existing Playfields are smaller in Albert Lee 7 – 20 acres	Easily accessible to the population it is intended to serve. Safe walking / biking distance as well as convenient auto access
Community Park	Focus is on community based recreation needs as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces	Strategically located City Wide – usually 1-3 miles	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually between 30 and 50 acres	Site should be suited for community use, be easily accessible to the population it is intended to serve. Located near high traffic areas such as schools and major thoroughfares. Safe walking
Special Use Park	Covers a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward a single purpose use. Uses such as gardens, boat launches, swimming pools, beaches, overlooks etc.	Community - wide	Varies	Site specific

Table 4-1 Park Classification Guidelines

We have an assortment of park facilities in our community that can be categorized according to their use, the area in which they serve, their size and site characteristics. These guidelines will help in locating future parks to serve new growth areas.

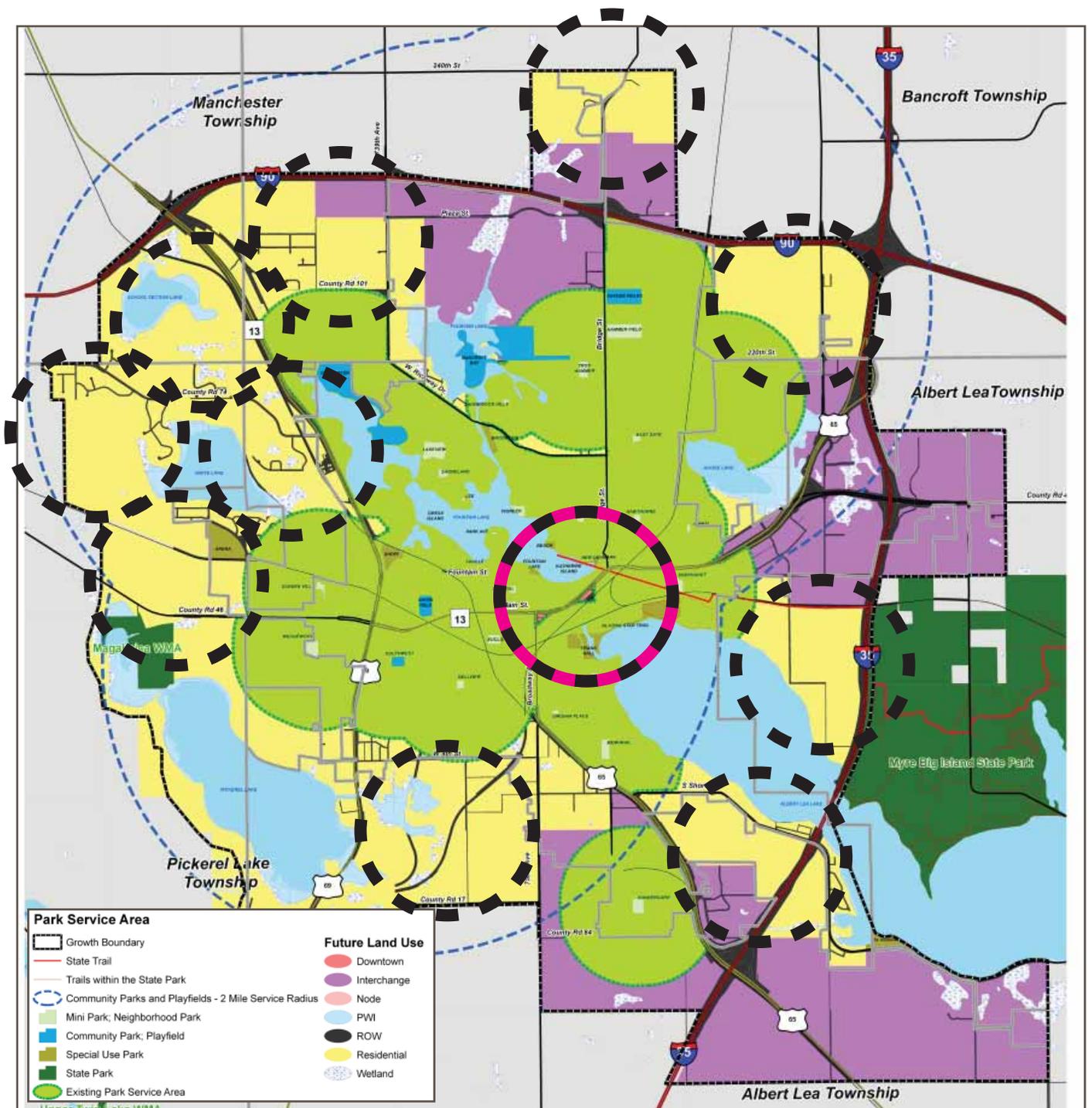


Figure 4-1 Park service coverage and future search areas

We have learned that neighborhood parks are an important part of our quality of life. Future growth areas with traditional or edge residential development should incorporate neighborhood parks so that every home is within comfortable walking distance to a neighborhood park.

Future park search sites are provided as a long term guide for future development. A more comprehensive park system plan will provide greater depth to the future park system needs to serve growth areas. Search areas represented by the circles on the map generally represent a 1/2 mile radius and are drawn to cover those areas expected to see more traditional/edge residential growth. Downtown Albert Lea should also be a focus for future park considerations as we look to increase living opportunities in Downtown.

The Comprehensive Plan provides a framework from which our park system master plan can be prepared.



We must continue our active past times in promoting a healthy living environment.



We enjoy a strong network of local and regional trails in Albert Lea. Future growth must continue this system with the dual purpose of both recreation and mobility.

Goal: Improving Health

We commit to improving health through safe, convenient, and accessible services. Improving community health and providing residents with opportunities to improve their personal health is a core responsibility of Albert Lea Parks and Recreation. This means providing access to the things that keep people of all ages and physical abilities well and happy - fitness and sports, open space and pathways, enjoying the arts, learning new skills, and building community spirit.

Increasing access to parks and recreation means lessening physical barriers, like improving the walkability of key intersections or neighborhood streets, engaging partners to increase the opportunities for more active living, and constantly striving to increase participation in programs and activities.

Policies:

9.1 Develop park improvements and encourage programs that support active living and wellness for people of all abilities, ages and life-cycles.

- *Build an inclusive approach to active living through outreach, awareness, partnerships, and infrastructure improvements.*
- *Increase the awareness and access to physical activity.*
- *Nurture active kids through programs and facilities.*
- *Integrate active living strategies into new development and redevelopment.*

9.2 Create a community pathway network that connects neighborhoods to destinations for purposes of recreation as well as alternative mobility options.

- *Adopt a Trail and Sidewalk Master Plan.*
- *Build advocacy for trails and walkways.*
- *Plan and build key community trails and connections.*
- *Lessen barriers to walking/biking through pedestrian friendly intersection improvements, bridges, and pathways.*

9.3 Develop strategies for broad participation in planning and improving future park and recreation systems.

- *Increase awareness of programs, activities and facilities. (horse shoes, lacrosse, ultimate Frisbee, dog parks)*
- *Formalize participant and resident feedback and use information to improve quality, marketing, and timing of recreation programs.*
- *Strive to keep programs fresh and accessible.*
- *Add park and trail system maps in parks and city buildings.*

9.4 Ensure safe recreational places

- *Evaluate park visibility and lighting and make improvements.*
- *Expand the (Community Policing) into city parks and open spaces.*

9.5 Promote the arts as active components of park and recreation services and improvements

- *Adopt a public art strategic plan and policies.*

- *Establish an arts advisory group with a dedicated funding source to prepare policies, identify priorities, and initiate projects.*
- *Develop, finance, and implement public art projects for the Blazing Star Landings project as a catalyst or in conjunction with redevelopment of the site.*

Goal: Protecting Natural Resources

We commit to protecting natural resources through sustainable policies and practices that preserve the environment for future generations. Parks and natural areas are the backbone of the city park system and provide important recreation, open space, public gathering space, and natural resource functions. We all have a stake in ensuring that our environment is preserved and enhanced.

Albert Lea is committed to continuing high standards of park and public land management and pursuing a more sustainable approach to maintenance and management. The sustainable approach includes efforts to foster greater environmental stewardship throughout the city and expanding the park and open space system where appropriate.

Policies:

9.6 Maintain a healthy urban forest and park system

- *Preserve, manage, and enhance habitat and vegetation.*
- *Continue the high standards of park and public land maintenance, and management by continued investment in personnel, equipment, methods and community education.*
- *Expand sustainable practices and invasive species management.*
- *Use organic/eco-friendly maintenance supplies and materials.*
- *Utilize contemporary green building techniques in all park projects.*

9.7 Preserve open space through thoughtful application of park dedication and unique site planning techniques that transfer density in return for greater expanses of open space

9.8 Foster environmental stewardship through education and partnerships

- *Support use of best management practices and reduction of chemical use on private property.*
- *Promote native landscaping and greening initiatives.*
- *Continue to promote involvement and participation in community gardens.*
- *Develop and implement a community education and awareness program in partnership with other agencies.*

Goal: Fostering Healthy Youth Development

We commit to fostering healthy youth development through opportunities to learn positive life-long skills. Youth are our future. Parks and recreation play key roles in youth development through offering fun, safe places, learning opportunities, skill development, and socialization. Building healthy attitudes toward



Parks can include a passive design component that lessens maintenance costs and provides for enhancement of our natural resources.



Higbie Gardens.

physical activity and community involvement in our youth will pay long-term dividends as they mature into healthy and productive adults.

Valuing involvement of youth in community activities and program planning fosters youth leadership and develops positive role models. It is vital that our youth have opportunities to participate in recreation activities. This means a balance of program alternatives and activities that meet the wide range of youth interests and abilities. Expanding partnerships and taking a holistic and coordinated approach to providing opportunities for youth is needed to build positive life-long skills.

Policies:

9.9 Encourage youth leadership

- *Expand teen involvement in the community.*
- *Form a youth advisory committee to assist in service level decision-making.*
- *Promote service learning and community involvement.*
- *Redesign community approaches to utilize all youth's unique talents.*

9.10 Facilitate partnerships

- *Consider inter-generational activities.*
- *Identify and build local champions for youth development.*
- *Support development of mentoring networks.*
- *Support youth initiated grant opportunities.*
- *Value and celebrate unique contributions of young people.*

9.11 Encourage play

- *Foster an "everyone plays" approach to recreation programs and activities.*
- *Expand access to recreation programs and "safe places to hang out".*
- *Provide healthy options during out-of-school time.*
- *Develop safe and supportive community opportunities that engage and challenge all youth.*



Future park development might consider the idea of an environmental learning center or classroom to help re-connect our youth with nature.

Goal: Sustaining Fiscal Responsibility

We commit to sustaining fiscal responsibility through sound, cost-effective resource management. Keeping Albert Lea's parks, pathways, open spaces, and recreation facilities operating efficiently requires on-going investment of financial capital. The quality of City recreation services and facilities depends in part on maximizing available funding while seeking alternative funding sources to meet future needs. It also depends on stakeholders and the public valuing parks and recreation services and facilities.

As individuals and as a community, we have a significant investment in parks and recreation facilities. The best ways to protect that investment are to assure that it is well maintained, well used and well loved. This translates into devel-

oping a broad and sustainable base of revenue sources, continuing to expand partnerships for delivery of services and construction of facilities and building advocacy for parks and recreation.

Policies:

9.12 Develop sustainable revenues

- *Expand grassroots parks and recreation advocacy.*
- *Pursue alternative revenue sources such as philanthropic or foundations.*
- *Adopt a cost-recovery policy that balances services we provide with real costs.*

9.13 Expand community partnerships

- *Expand Parks and Recreation's role as a facilitator for agencies, groups and individuals.*
- *Build constituencies and advocacy groups (golf, youth, trails, schools etc.).*
- *Enhance community events in local parks.*
- *Work with area partners for development of a joint facilities (such as the YMCA)*

9.14 Protect and enhance community investment

- *Recognize the value of the investment in parks and recreation.*
- *Continue fiscally responsible maintenance and operation activities.*
- *Assure financial integrity through open, accessible, and accurate processes.*
- *Develop long term facility and equipment replacement plans and budgets.*
- *Protect the city's investment by keeping parks and recreation fresh and vital.*

Goal: Supporting Community Reinvestment

We commit to supporting community reinvestment through parks, open spaces, and facilities. As a regional center in southern Minnesota, the City of Albert Lea is well positioned for continued revitalization and renewal. Renewal will occur through countless private and public actions. The park and recreation system plays a vital role in assuring community and individual quality of life. Parks, recreation, trails, arts, and open spaces are often the catalyst that inspires private investment and builds identity and sense of community.

Albert Lea will work to create strong neighborhoods through parks and programs, fostering reinvestment through arts and gathering places, by connecting the city with pathways, and through community events. The success of those efforts is tied to residents and business owners recognizing and valuing the benefits that parks and recreation brings to the community, organizations, and individuals.

The intent is to continue to invest in parks and recreation with an eye to stimulating private revitalization and neighborhood improvement. Through good work, satisfied residents, and increased emphasis on communications, the benefits of parks and recreation will be fully realized and acknowledged.



Public art can be expressed in a variety of ways, providing identity and functionality.

Policies:

9.15 Strengthen community identity

- Promote the arts in everyday life.
- Create a signature element in each park.
- Add new park identification signs.
- Create community gateways.

9.16 Plan for long term renewal

- Use parks, recreation, and activities as key amenities for revitalization.
- Revitalize neighborhood and community parks with aesthetic and access improvements.
- Continue to fine tune and reinvest in facilities and services to keep the Ice Arena fresh and attractive to residents, visitors, and organizations.
- Improve athletic field quality.

9.17 Communicate the benefit

- Illustrate the economic benefits of parks, open space, and recreation on property values, visitation, and development.
- Emphasize recreation’s role in economic development, building sense of community, strengthening safety, promoting health, protecting natural resources, providing recreation and social experiences, fostering human development, and culture.
- Continue to expand outreach to renters.
- Continue to engage the community through events and celebrations.
- Enhance communications through expanded use of the City’s web site, e-mail, local newspapers, and the city newsletter.



Greenway Systems

Our community is defined by a system of ridges, wetlands and lakes. Through the planning process, we have come to recognize an opportunity to stitch together these features in a way that brings the community together and demonstrates a sincere respect for our natural systems. Many people think of a ‘greenbelt’ as a loop encircling a city that is used as an open space transition from town to countryside. In our case, we have a greenway system that looks more like a spider web with a function of preserving our sensitive resources and enhancing our quality of life. The concept of the Greensward (see concept illustration at left) demonstrates how the greenway system can be integrated into a more urban development pattern providing a development amenity and utilizing open space corridors as a critical part of storm water infrastructure. Euclid Avenue in Albert Lea can serve as an example of an urban greenbelt that serves as a transition between residential and industrial land uses. The Eco Village concept further illustrates greenway opportunities through edge development design patterns incorporating open space and conservation elements.

Goal:

Our key goal relative to establishing a greenway system within our community is to provide a system of connected open spaces and natural features that serve as a community amenity and protect the very resources that define Albert Lea.

Policies:

We establish the following policy direction to help guide future development and public infrastructure investments:

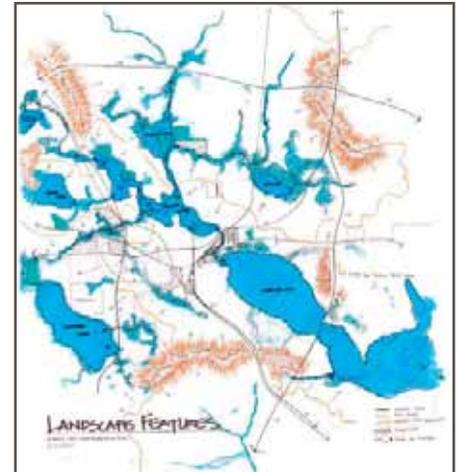
10.1 Greenway connections should be factored into future edge development projects, incorporating areas adjacent lakes and water bodies, streams and drainage ditches, ridgelines, knolls and areas of mature woodlands.

10.2 Redevelopment projects in traditional residential, downtown or interchange districts should re-establish open space systems or “green” systems through the design of infrastructure systems (landscape streets, boulevards, public plazas or pocket parks, storm water features).

10.3 Private development projects near natural systems should be encouraged to utilize green building strategies that emphasize energy conservation and environmental sustainability.

10.4 Strategies for ongoing funding to develop and maintain a greenway system should be explored through a collaboration of private and public sources (both people sources and funding sources).

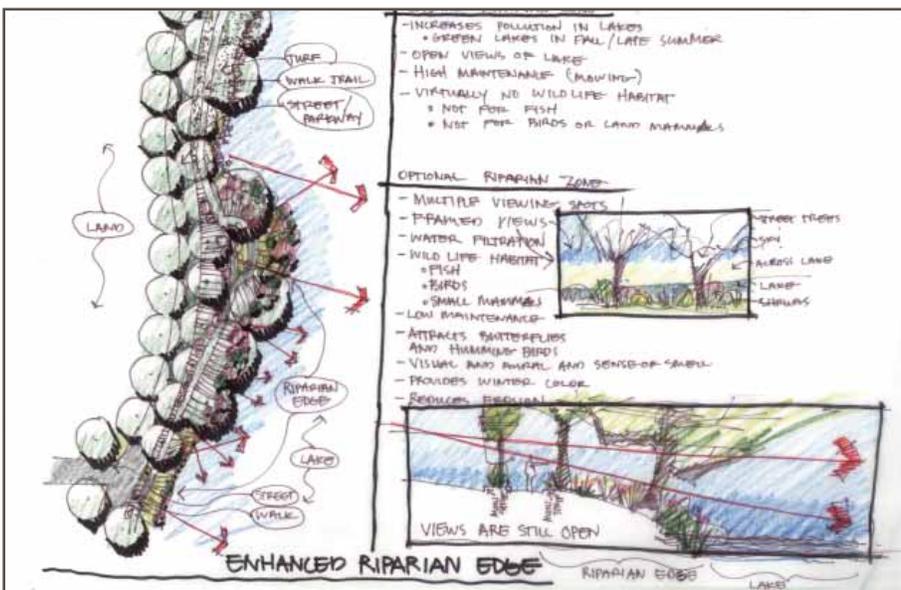
10.5 Creative planning and zoning tools should be developed as a means to preserving lands within a greenway system in a cost efficient and sustaining manner.



Greenways following key natural features form a spiderweb.

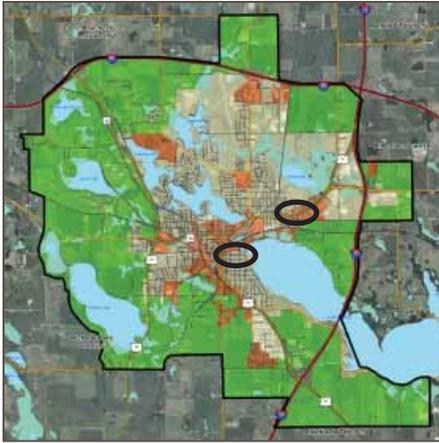


Figure 4-2 Concept for riparian treatments.



We are fortunate that our lakes are preserved for our entire community to enjoy with public frontage sometimes encouraged by having inviting public spaces. Other locations are less obvious. We should explore improving existing public rights of way to complete a paved pedestrian loop around Fountain Lake.

We can learn from past actions, where we have preserved much of the lake front on Fountain Lake as part of the public realm. Future development on lake shore should follow this lead.



Growth Management Strategy

- New Growth
- Preservation, Infill & Maintenance
- Reinvestment and Redevelopment

Two points in the wastewater collection system constrain future development due to insufficient capacity. Future system wide improvements should evaluate these constraints and explore cost affective solutions to remove potential barriers to future economic development opportunities.

Appendix B contains technical analysis of sanitary sewer infrastructure systems and growth projections by area. This appendix also includes an assembly of various sewer studies conducted over the years.

Community Wastewater Systems

Our community wastewater system consists of two key elements: treatment and collection. Both elements are constrained by the amount of volume they were designed to handle. Our current wastewater treatment facility is designed to adequately handle future growth for the foreseeable future. Our collection system, on the other hand, is comprised of a system of force mains and lift stations that pump wastewater in locations where gravity is not in our favor. As a whole, our system is generally sufficient; however, there are two “choke” points (that limit our ability to grow with certain land uses that demand a lot of water usage. These points have been considered in the establishment of the new growth areas and the specific land uses guided within the respective districts.

Our plan for managing growth identifies areas for preservation and maintenance, redevelopment and renovation, and new growth. New growth areas have been evaluated as to the projected development capacity and the ability of the current system to accommodate that capacity. It is our intent to make sure that sanitary sewer services are available to those land areas identified as new growth areas. Growth from redevelopment opportunities, while harder to predict, must be reserved in our capacity analysis. Consistent with our guiding principles, it is our intent to encourage redevelopment and infill within areas that already have infrastructure available to it. The growth management policy supports this effort.

Growth Projections

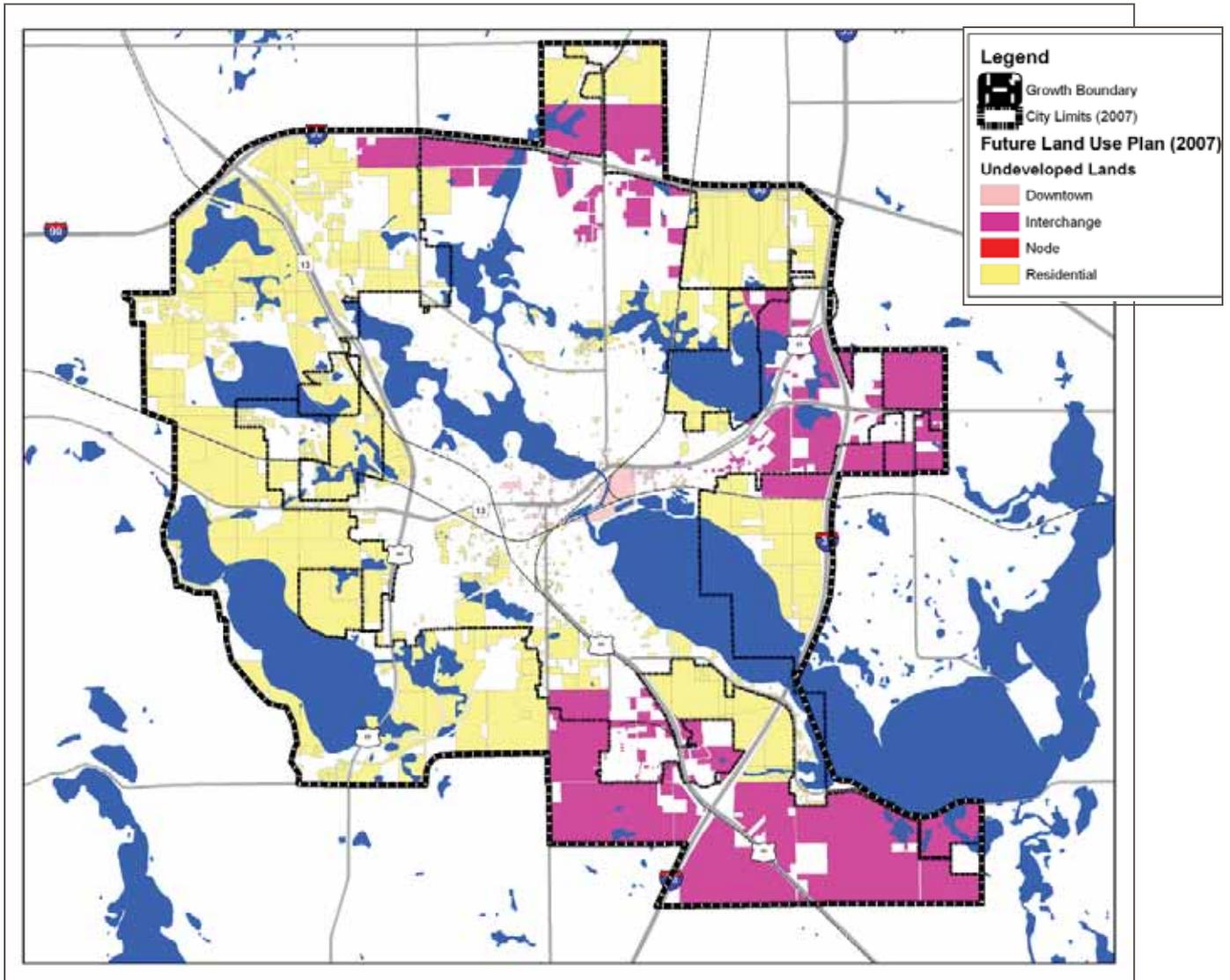
Our infrastructure systems have been developed based on our past comprehensive planning efforts, which envisioned significant growth.

Our updated plan would suggest that we have capacity for well over 20 years of growth within our current city limits if we assume 100 new housing units per year and absorption of approximately 250,000 square feet of commercial/ industrial development per year.

We must consider other factors when projecting growth however. Are undeveloped properties currently for sale? Are parcels of sufficient size and configuration to suite new development? What would it take to serve the property with adequate infrastructure? What will the economy do? The map and table on the following page provide us with a tool to begin assessing our growth on a regular basis. The GIS database will enable us to monitor land absorption and availability and better inform our need to extend our service capacity in order to accommodate needed growth.

Goals and Policies

The following goals and policies were established to provide guidance with



Future Land Use (2030)	Current City Limits		Growth Areas Only		Grand Total	
	Acres	% of Total	Acres	% of Total	Acres	% of Total
Residential	832	51.12%	3,566	65.76%	4,398	62.38%
Downtown	82	5.02%	0	0.00%	82	1.16%
Interchange	714	43.86%	1,857	34.24%	2,570	36.46%
Commerical Node	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Total	1,627	100.00%	5,423	100.00%	7,050	100.00%

Units Projections/Capacity					
Residential Units	2,495	10,699		13,194	
Commercial/Industrial (sq ft)	7,135,833	18,567,709		25,703,542	
<i>Growth Potential</i>					
Population (2.5 person/HH)	6,200	26,700		33,000	
Jobs at 1/1000 average	7,100	18,600		25,700	
Jobs at 1/500 average	14,300	37,100		51,400	

Figure 4-3 and Table 4-2 Development Capacity. Figure 4-4 is a tool for our staff to determine future growth capacity in the City and adequately plan for infrastructure services. The data represented on this map is general and over time as the City implements the plan, will improve in accuracy.

respect to the City's wastewater/sanitary system, including the wastewater treatment facility (WWTF), sanitary collection system (sewers, lift stations, etc.), and private individual sewage treatment systems (ISTS) located in City limits. These goals and policies should be used together with other goals and policies relating other City infrastructure and when developing City ordinances, codes, regulations, master plans, facility plans, feasibility studies, and other related work.

Goal: Provide safe treatment of wastewater.

The City will safely treat collected wastewater/sewage and regulate private ISTS to minimize individual and widespread health risks.

Policies:

11.1 *Treat and monitor collected wastewater/sewage to meet or exceed all regulatory rules, including current permit requirements for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), as established by the State of Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).*

11.2 *Apply ISTS regulations to comply with current MPCA requirements.*

11.3 *Partner and collaborate monitoring and planning efforts with local (Freeborn County, Freeborn County SWCD, and Shell Rock River Watershed District), state (MDH, MPCA, MDA), and federal (USGS, EPA) agencies.*

11.4 *Comply with current edition of Recommended Standards for Wastewater Facilities (Ten States Standards) for water/sewer separation requirements and MDH requirements for setback.*

11.5 *Require all new development within City to connect to public sanitary system. Expansion of system to serve new development in outlying areas without existing public sanitary sewer infrastructure nearby will be considered by City in a fair, equitable, and cost effective manner.*

Goal: Ensure reliable and efficient wastewater collection and treatment

By planning for our future, we will ensure that wastewater/sewage collection will meet current and future water demand. Efficient and sustainable practices will allow more to be done with less, deferring existing infrastructure expansion while keeping down energy costs and user fees.

Policies:

11.6 *Prohibit all discharges and connections to public sanitary system associated with storm water, surface runoff, roof drainage, foundation drainage, sump pumps, cooling water, ground water, and other unpolluted water sources.*

11.7 *Prohibit all discharges and connections to public sanitary system not requiring treatment, or industrial waste not recommended for treatment at a municipal WWTF, as determined by the City or MPCA.*

11.8 *Eliminate any unlicensed connection or discharge to sanitary system.*

11.9 Continue to complete sanitary sewer line inspections and corrections of inflow/infiltration (I/I), especially in areas where the ground water table is high, and repair as deemed necessary.

11.10 Continue to program/schedule sewer cleaning, especially those sewers prone to sedimentation or blockage.

11.11 Manage demand by implementing strategies for efficient or reduced water use (see Public Water Supply System Management Goals and Policies).

11.12 Work with Freeborn County and the Shell Rock River Watershed District to implement a septic system management and education outreach program to promote proper maintenance and care of ISTS.

11.13 Investigate innovative solutions when sanitary sewer extensions to new development are not cost effective or require upgrades to existing infrastructure.

11.14 Review periodically the emergency response plan for wastewater operations due to power outages or other disruptive forces. Train personnel for emergency response.

Goal: Manage Infrastructure Proactively

The City will manage the wastewater/sanitary system proactively to ensure long term cost effective operations and to accommodate future growth

Policies:

11.15 Prepare a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) annually.

11.16 Perform a rate study and analysis periodically.

11.17 Develop and maintain a city-wide mapping and computer model to assist with analyzing proposed revisions and expansion of the system.

11.18 Continue with the maintenance program for all infrastructure.

11.19 Investigate all sources of funding for system improvements and expansion.

11.20 Dedicate all monies generated by system development fees, application fees, and usage fees to the operation, maintenance, repair, replacement, and construction of existing and new wastewater/sanitary system infrastructure.

11.21 Use full life cycle costs when planning improvements.

11.22 Require feasibility studies and cost analyses for all major improvements or expansion proposed to the system.

11.23 New development should pay the cost of public infrastructure it requires as outlined in the City of Albert Lea assessment policy.

11.24 Develop clear and explicit requirements for all system planning, design, and construction to minimize both short-term and long-term construction, operation, and maintenance costs.

11.25 Develop and maintain standard specifications and details for public works infrastructure.

11.26 All public and private infrastructure should be designed to accommodate

the level of development planned by the City.

11.27 Integrate improvements with other systems (water, storm water, transportation, etc.) to reduce costs and to reduce inconvenience to residents and businesses.

The City has four municipal wells (3 for daily useage and 1 emergency well):

Central Well--Installed in 1928 with a pumping capacity of 1800 gallons per minute (gpm)

Southside Well-- intalled in 1984 with a pumping capacity of 1500 gpm

Northside Well-- installed in 1961 with a pumping capcacity of 1500 gpm

Westside Well-- installed in 1965 with a pumping capacity of 1500 gpm

Albert Lea's water distribution system is served by a network of 104 plus miles of water main pipe ranging in size from 4 inch to 14 inch in diameter.

For more information on the City Potable Water System see the City of Albert Lea Wellhead Protection Plan on file in the Public Works Department.

Municipal Water Systems

Like our sanitary sewer system, potable water is an essential part of our communities infrastructure. It also is comprised of a series of parts: wells for extracting water from the aquifers, towers or storage tanks for storing reserve capacities and providing pressure, treatment plant to prepare the water for drinking and a distribution system to service improved property. In the implementation of our plan, we will treat the extension of our water system with the same approach to how we might extend our sanitary sewer infrastructure. However, in some instances, we may provide water service outside of our limits when public health issues are at risk.

The following goals and policies were established to provide guidance with respect to the City's public water supply system. These goals and policies should be used together with other goals and policies relating other City infrastructure and when developing City ordinances, codes, regulations, master plans, facility plans, feasibility studies, and other related work.

Goal: Provide safe, clean drinking water.

The City will provide safe, clean drinking water by protecting groundwater aquifers from contamination, treating drinking water, and protecting treated drinking water during distribution in order to minimize individual and widespread health risks.

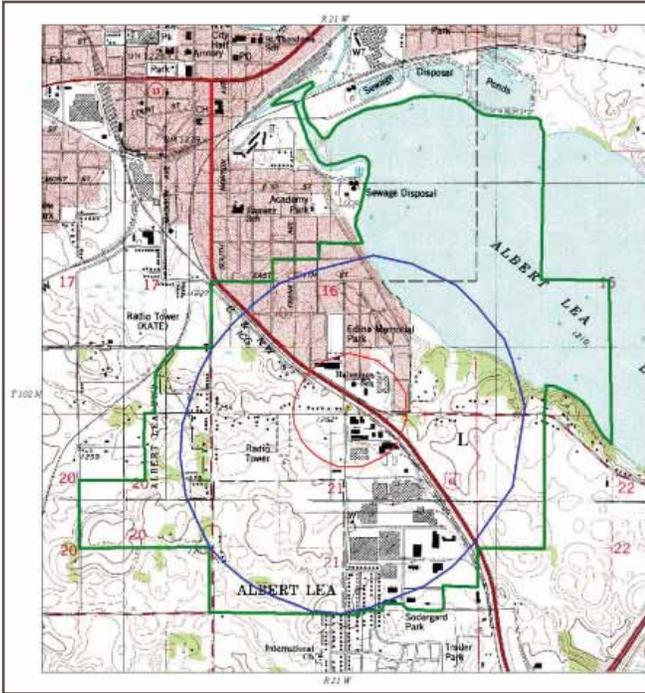
Policies:

12.1 Implement strategies and actions detailed in the current Wellhead Protection (WHP) Plan to create awareness of groundwater protection and prevent future contamination of the aquifer.

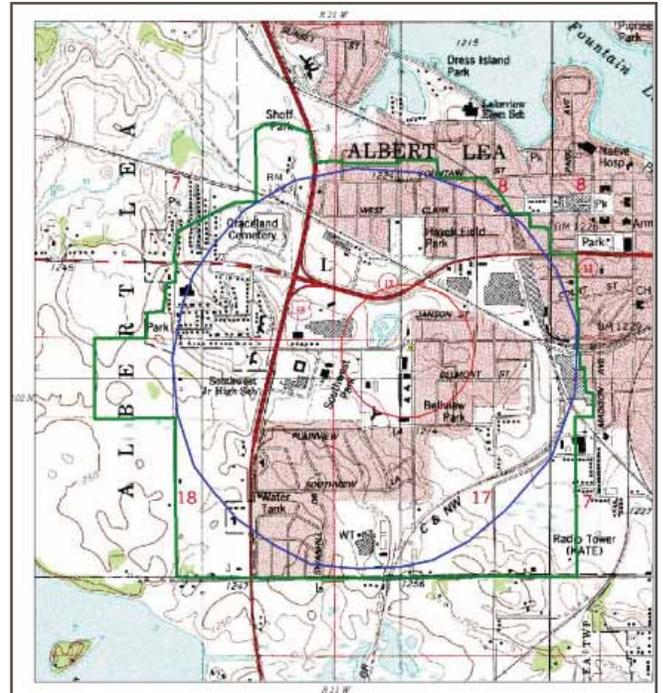
- *Public education and information program*
- *Manage other wells within the Drinking Water Supply Management Areas (DWSMA)*
- *Collect additional data relating to local groundwater issues*
- *Wellhead protection recognition and planning*

12.2 Treat and monitor withdrawn groundwater to meet or exceed all regulatory rules, including current requirements for Health Risk Limits (HRLs) and Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) as established by the State of Minnesota and US EPA, respectively.

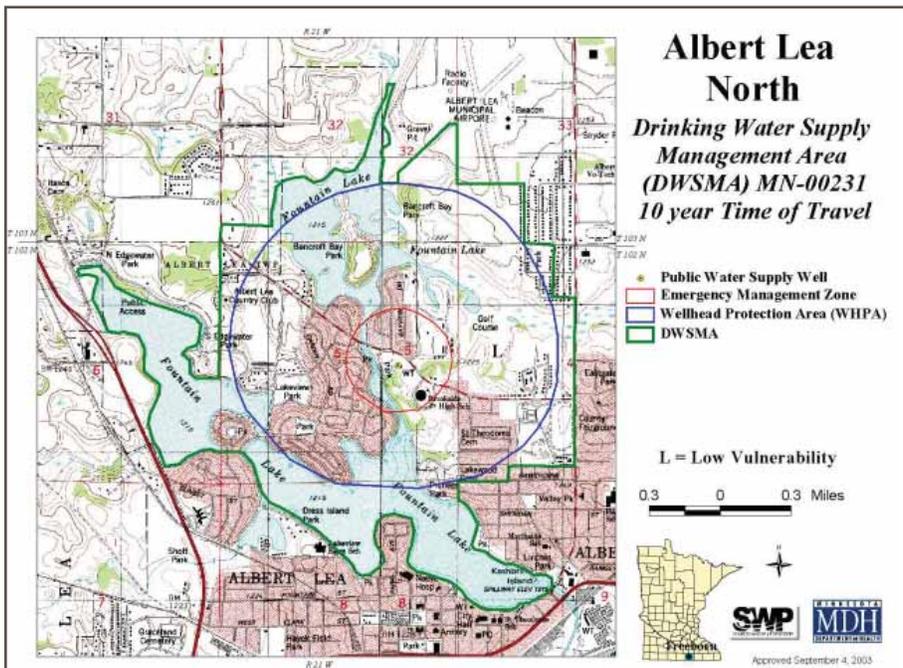
12.3 Partner and collaborate monitoring and planning efforts with local



Well # 5



Well # 9



Well # 8

Figure 4-4 Drinking water supply management area (DWSMA) is the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) approved surface and subsurface area surrounding a public water supply well that completely contains the scientifically calculated wellhead protection area and is managed by the entity identified in a wellhead protection plan. The boundaries of the drinking water supply management area are delineated by identifiable physical features, landmarks or political and administrative boundaries.

We have five elevated water towers:

Central--constructed in 1939 with a capacity of 1 million gallons.

Northside--constructed in 1960 with a capacity of 0.3 million gallons;

Southside--constructed in 1956 with a capacity of 0.3 million gallons;

Westside--constructed in 1960 with a capacity of 0.3 million gallons; and

Eastside--constructed in 2004 with a capacity of .5 million gallons.

Albet Lea has three watertreatment plants each with their own well with a the ability to treat a total fo 6.5 million gallons per day.

The water system has adequate capacity and pressure to serve the City and its near term growth expectations.

Monitoring of water usage and capacities will be a regular activity of the City.

(Freeborn County, Freeborn County SWCD, and Shell Rock River Watershed District), state (MDH, MPCA, MDA), and federal (USGS, EPA) agencies.

12.4 Comply with Recommended Standards Water Works (Ten States Standards) for water/sewer separation requirements and MDH requirements for setback.

Goal: Insure reliable and efficient water supply

The City will ensure that water supply will meet current and future water demand through efficient management activities allowing the region to grow and prosper without compromising the quality of life or environment. Sustainable use of water supplies will allow more to be done with less, deferring existing infrastructure expansion while keeping down energy costs and user fees.

Policies:

12.5 Manage demand by implementing strategies for efficient or reduced water use.

- *Educate public and industry to promote sustainable use of water through newsletters, school visits, business audits, etc.*
- *Require water-conserving fixtures (toilets, faucets, shower heads, etc.) for all new construction and renovations.*
- *Provide incentives for existing residential upgrades to water-conserving fixtures.*
- *Identify/audit top 20% of commercial water users and initiate water conservation improvements.*
- *Replace old fixtures with water-conserving fixtures for all City owned facilities.*
- *Encourage shade trees and alternative landscapes which reduce turf areas for open space requirements on new developments and City owned facilities.*

12.6 Comply with the current Water Supply Contingency Plan during partial or total loss of water supply services.

12.7 Assess opportunities to match water quality to usage requirements

- *Investigate potential commercial and residential use of non-potable water (rain-water, greywater, treated wastewater) for irrigation, toilets, car washing, etc.*
- *Investigate usages for treated wastewater effluent (irrigation, industrial cooling, etc.).*

12.8 Investigate groundwater recharging opportunities associated with treated wastewater and storm water sources.

12.9 Provide fire protection to areas where public water infrastructure exists for safety and maximizing credit for insurance rates.

Goal: Manage infrastructure proactively.

The City will manage the public water supply proactively to ensure long term cost effective operations and to accommodate future growth.

Policies:

- 12.10 Prepare a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) annually.
- 12.11 Perform a rate study and analysis periodically. Evaluate the use of seasonal surcharges during high demand months to encourage conservation.
- 12.12 Develop and maintain a city-wide mapping and computer model to assist with analyzing proposed revisions and expansion of the system.
- 12.13 Continue to implement and improve the maintenance program for all existing infrastructure.
- 12.14 Investigate all sources of funding for system improvements and expansion.
- 12.15 Dedicate all monies generated by system development fees, application fees, and usage fees to the operation, maintenance, repair, replacement, and construction of existing and new public water supply system infrastructure.
- 12.16 Use full life cycle costs when planning improvements.
- 12.17 Require feasibility studies and cost analyses for all major improvements or expansion proposed to the system.
- 12.18 New development should pay the cost of public infrastructure it requires as outlined in the City of Albert Lea assessment policy.
- 12.19 Develop clear and explicit requirements for all system planning, design, and construction to minimize both short-term and long-term construction, operation, and maintenance costs.
- 12.20 Develop and maintain standard specifications and details for public works infrastructure.
- 12.21 All public and private infrastructure should be designed to accommodate the level of development planned by the City.
- 12.22 Integrate and coordinate improvements with other infrastructure improvements to reduce costs and inconvenience to residents and businesses.

Storm Water Systems

Storm water systems are a critical part of our community's infrastructure. A good system that controls the volume of rain water runoff to protect from flooding and cleans rain water runoff before it enters our lakes and streams is essential. The following goals and policies were established to provide guidance with respect to the City's storm water management. These goals and policies should be used together with other goals and policies relating to other City infrastructure systems and when developing City ordinances, codes, regulations, zoning, master plans, facility plans and feasibility studies.

Goal: Prevent Flood Damage.

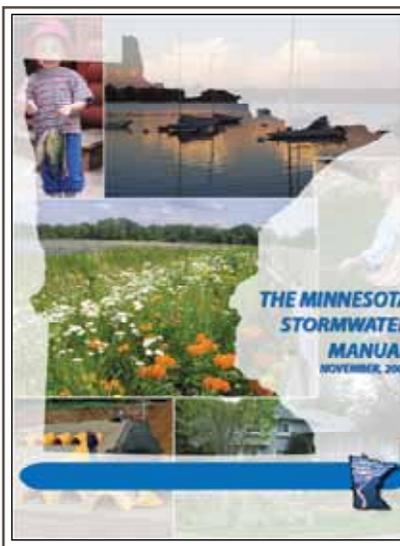
The City will reduce the potential for reoccurring flood damage and address increase flood risk associated with future development.

Albert Lea maintains a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program as a requirement set forth by the federal Clean Water Act of 1971 and subsequent state rules.

Prepared in 2006, the SWPPP is maintained on file at the City Public Works department.



The MPCA recently published the Minnesota Storm water Manual (see cover below) to help communities meet NPDES (national pollutant discharge elimination system) requirements. The above photos illustrate techniques that Albert Lea should explore and promote to protect our water quality.



Policies:

- 13.1 Require post-development flow and volume from storm water runoff to not exceed pre-development (existing) flow and volume for all new developments and redevelopments.
- 13.2 Establish the 100-year storm event as the minimum benchmark for assessing flood control measures and the 10-year storm event as the minimum benchmark for new storm sewer conveyance.
- 13.3 Utilize and preserve natural features for water storage, retention, and conveyance.
- 13.4 Continue maintenance and inspection programs to the public storm water infrastructure that allows the system to operate at its designed capacity. Require privately owned storm water facilities to be routinely maintained and inspected by private owners.
- 13.5 Sustain or improve the City's current rating with FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program.
- 13.6 Continue a review policy for all hydrology and hydraulic calculations for all new development, redevelopment, and modifications, improvements, or expansion of existing infrastructure. Require all calculations to be signed by a professional engineer licensed in the State of Minnesota.

Goal: Prevent Damage to Surface Water Quality.

The City will reduce the potential for reoccurring surface water quality damage to natural resources and avoid further environmental degradation associated with future development.

Policies:

- 13.7 Comply with and keep current the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program (SWPPP) requirements or any superseding documents.
- 13.8 Meet established goals for treatment of total suspended solids (TSS), phosphorus, and other pollutants deemed harmful to local or regional surface waters.
- 13.9 Require treatment of storm water runoff from all new developments or redevelopments prior to discharging from the site.
- 13.10 Encourage treatment of storm water on suitable sites through infiltration and evapotranspiration methods, including rain water gardens, vegetated swales, pervious pavements, underground systems, and green roofs. Filtration methods may be approved by the City Engineer where site constraints limit infiltration.
- 13.11 Accept regional storm water facilities, such as storm water ponds, for larger developments or public works projects where on-site storage and treatment is not practical. All land needed for regional storm water facilities serving private developments will be provided by the benefiting developers.
- 13.12 Require temporary and permanent erosion and sediment control best management practices (BMPs) for new development and redevelopment.

13.13 Address non-point source pollution from storm water runoff into lakes, ponds, rivers, creeks, and streams. Promote accepted BMPs for shorelines and stream banks.

13.14 Continue prohibiting use of lawn fertilizers containing phosphates except in the cases of establishing new lawns.

13.15 Continue maintenance programs for municipal street sweeping and require street sweeping maintenance for private streets and parking lots.

13.16 Develop maintenance and inspection program for City owned storm water treatment facilities. Require privately owned storm water treatment facilities to be routinely maintained and inspected by private owner.

13.17 Develop a program for City staff to address preventing and responding to harmful materials that could discharge into the storm sewer system.

13.18 Continue a review policy for all storm water treatment calculations for all new development, redevelopment, and modifications, improvements, or expansion of existing storm water treatment facilities. Require all calculations to be signed by a professional engineer licensed in the State of Minnesota.

Goal: Manage Watersheds Cooperatively.

The City will partner and collaborate planning, monitoring, and enforcement activities with applicable local (Shell Rock River Watershed District, Freeborn County, Freeborn County SWCD), state (MPCA, MDH, MDNR), and federal (FEMA, USGS, EPA) agencies interested in the same.

Policies:

13.19 Perform the Local Government Unit (LGU) role and work with the watershed districts to ensure all projects conform to regulatory agency requirements.

13.20 Review and clarify the roles and responsibilities of each governing agency and address any redundancies between agency forces or any competing interests.

13.21 Review governing agency guidelines, rules, and requirements and remedy any competing discrepancies.

13.22 Share and compile applicable maps, reports, studies, and other data useful for managing natural resources.

13.23 Manage natural resources from a comprehensive watershed approach, considering human activities that affect water, land/water interaction, aquatic life, recreational activities, and potential impacts to other communities located upstream or downstream.

13.24 Meet regularly with Shell Rock River Watershed District, Freeborn County, MPCA, and other agencies to identify and apply for any available funding for storm water management, including infrastructure improvements, operations, maintenance, monitoring, planning, and enforcement.

State rules allow use of various methods to manage storm water runoff as part of the permitting process including wet sedimentation basins (or NURP Natural Urban Runoff Ponds), infiltration/filtration, regional ponds (wetlands, etc...) and other alternative methods. The wet sedimentation is the most land consumptive method, requiring up to 10% of the land area to meet treatment and storage needs.

The total percentage of watershed area needed for storm water management facilities can range anywhere from 2% to 10% based on the methods used.

See Appendix B for further information on land area needs and assumptions.

Goal: Manage Infrastructure Proactively.

The City will manage storm water infrastructure proactively to ensure long term cost effective operations while meeting or exceeding current and future storm water quantity and quality requirements.

Policies:

13.25 Develop and maintain a city-wide drainage mapping and computer model to analyze proposed revisions and expansion of the system.

13.26 Continue with the maintenance and inspection program for all existing infrastructure.

13.27 Enact a storm water facilities fund and dedicate all monies generated by storm water charges to the operation, maintenance, repair, replacement, and construction of existing and new storm water infrastructure.

13.28 Include provisions to the storm water utility fee that reward individual property owners for expenditures spent toward meeting or exceeding the city goals for storm water management.

13.29 Perform a storm water charge rate study and analysis periodically.

13.30 Prepare a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) annually.

13.31 Use full life cycle costs when planning improvements.

13.32 Require feasibility studies and cost analyses for all major improvements or expansion that are proposed to the system.

13.33 New development should pay the cost of public infrastructure it requires as outlined in the City of Albert Lea assessment policy.

13.34 Develop and maintain clear and explicit requirements for all storm water planning, design, and construction to minimize both short-term and long-term flooding and surface water degradation.

13.35 Develop and maintain standard specifications and details for public works infrastructure.

13.36 All public and private infrastructures should be designed to accommodate the level of development planned by the City.

13.37 Integrate storm water improvements with other systems (water, sanitary, transportation, etc.) to reduce costs and to reduce inconvenience to residents and businesses.

Transportation

Our city of Albert Lea maintains its presence as a regional center for southern Minnesota. We are an importer of jobs. We are home to County offices. We have regional shopping centers. Our recreation and educational system draws from beyond our boundaries. Finally, we are the entertainment and cultural draw for much of southern Minnesota. This regional presence relies on a strong and connected transportation system that extends beyond our boundaries and provides

the necessary infrastructure to support our community.

The growth and development of our community has been heavily shaped by regional transportation systems starting with the railroad corridors in the early stages of Albert Lea and ultimately the interstate highway system, which continues to influence our growth and land use patterns today. However, the regional systems are only one part of our community's transportation system. We must continue to plan for our local system of streets and roadways to enhance mobility options and preserve our quality of life. Our airport provides a regional value to the community in terms of leisure and economic development potential. We continue to support its presence as a key element of our transportation system. As our community grows, and our demographic profile changes, our ability to continue operating a strong and cost effective transit system will only get better.

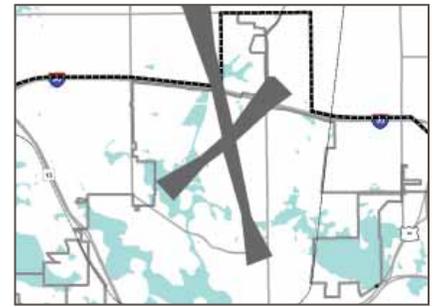
Over the years, as our City has grown, mobility options have remained heavily dependent on the automobile. Growth in mobility has occurred through physical improvements to existing streets and roadway corridors and construction of new streets serving new areas of development. Trends have shown a change in rail freight movement, but future speculation might suggest a re-emergence of rail use for freight and possibly even passenger service. Air taxi is another concept that could become an emerging trend (wave). Air taxi offers cost effective connections to regional airports as an alternative to driving the one or two hours to Rochester, Minneapolis, Des Moines or Sioux Falls. Other trends to be considered when we plan for mobility options include alternative vehicles that are more energy efficient or that provide options for those who maybe cannot walk.

The connection between land use and transportation systems is ever present in our past and will be so in our future. How we shape future land use and redevelopment can have a tremendous impact on our travel behaviors, the capacity of our transportation system, the environment and our quality of life.

This section of our plan will outline a framework for our desired future transportation system. The plan recognizes the existing system in place today, recent planning work that has gone on for key corridors such as Bridge Avenue and the planning work around the Bath Road Interchange, regional plans and policies adopted by MnDOT and Freeborn County and the relationship to land use patterns and development opportunities. The transportation system responds to the larger community vision, guiding principles and community patterns.

Future Roadway System

Our plan includes a system of roadways that provide access to property and allow traffic to move through the community, connecting it to regional destinations. Our plan is described through a roadway network system of principal arterials,



Our airport is an important regional benefit. The above diagram illustrates safety zones which regulate development within take-off and approach zones.



Main Street



County Road 18

A guiding principle is to “experience Albert Lea by walking, biking or paddling”.



Principal Arterial roadways -- Bridge Avenue at top and Main Street at bottom.



Minor Arterial roadway -- West 9th Street.



Local roadway (neighborhood street) -- Court Street.

minor arterials, collectors, local streets and alleys.

Principal Arterials serve a regional mobility function first and foremost, connecting Albert Lea to other Midwest centers. They will carry the highest traffic volume, are intended for longer trips and have the most strict access controls. Direct access is restricted to connections with other arterial and collector roadways. Generally, these are the interstate corridors (MnDOT designation is an Inter Regional Corridor-IRC) and/or major County and State highways.

Minor Arterials provide traffic more on a sub-regional basis connecting Albert Lea to other regional centers within Freeborn and adjacent Counties. They will carry a higher traffic volume, are intended for longer trips and will have a high level of access control. Generally these roads are State or County Highways.

Collectors provide access from local nodes and neighborhoods to minor arterials. These roads are generally Albert Lea roads but may be under County or Township jurisdiction. These roads will carry a moderate level of traffic.

Local roadways provide access from private property to collector streets. These are our neighborhood streets.

Alleys provide alternative access to property and sometimes privately owned.

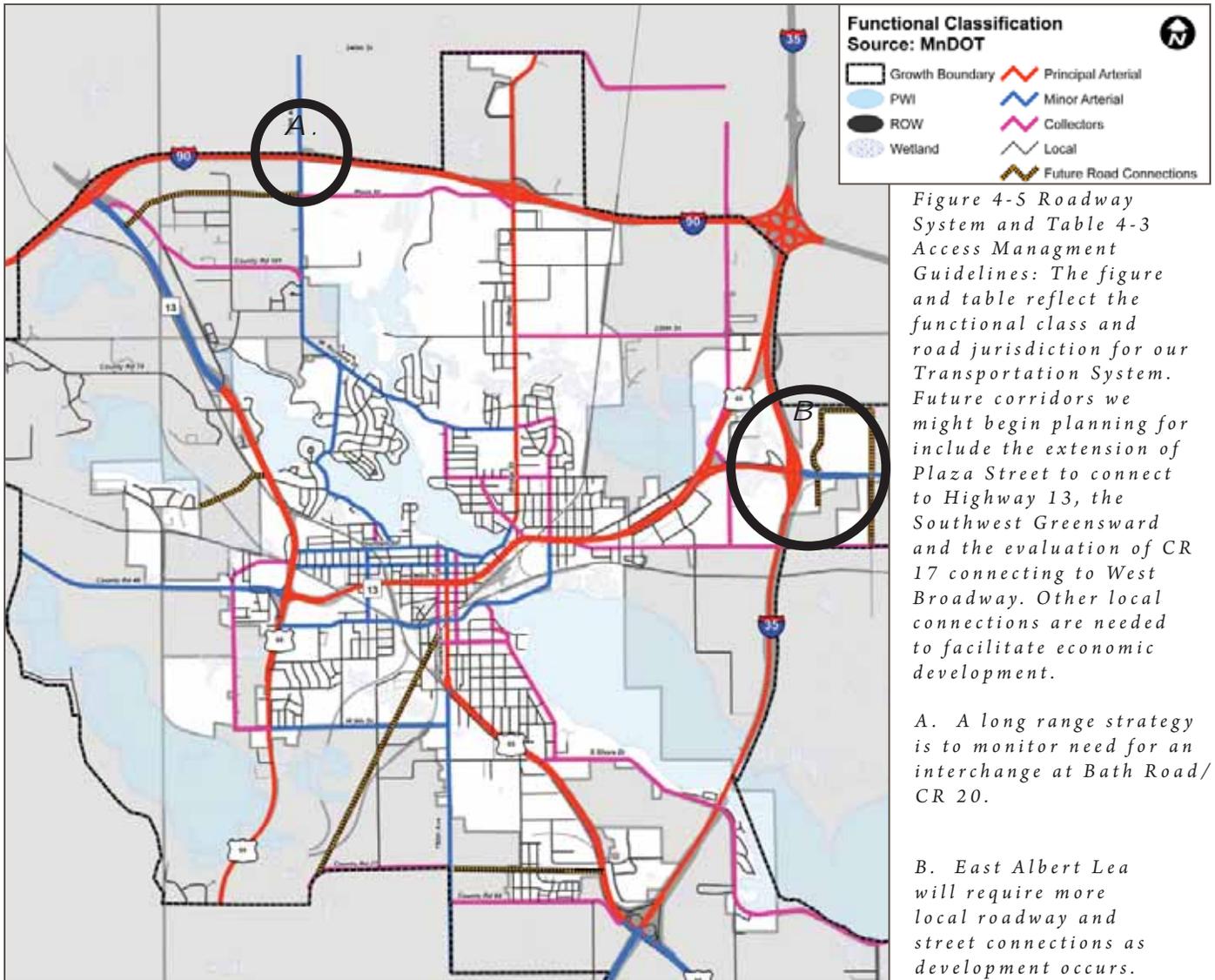
Each network type is further defined by the following key attributes:

Roadway jurisdiction identifies the responsible government agency. Roadways don't stop at our boundaries. They span our community extending into adjacent rural areas. They also serve more than our local needs, providing access to the region and nation. Jurisdictional classification determines what government entity is responsible for development, maintenance and access to the roadway. Jurisdiction includes City, Township, Freeborn County, State (MnDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Access needs to roadways can vary depending on the functional classification of the roadway. Managing access points onto a road benefits the community in many ways. Reducing points of conflict minimizes crashes and allows for more free-flowing traffic. Consolidation of access at controlled intersections reduces delays. Fewer direct access points allow for less pavement and more landscaping or amenities and enhances the pedestrian experience. However, certain commercial land uses depend highly on convenient access to vehicular traffic.

Traffic volumes, generally speaking, help determine a roadways function in the overall system. Volumes are measured for our plan in terms of average daily trips on the road.

Design Character includes such features as right-of-way widths, the number of lanes, width of the lanes, shoulders, on street parking, boulevard treatments and



Functional Class	Route Speed (MPH)	Area or Facility Type	Intersection Spacing		Signal Spacing	Private Access
			Primary Full Movement Intersection (controlled)	Conditional Secondary Intersection (uncontrolled)		
Principal Arterials (not Interstate Highways)	50 - 55	Rural	1 mile	1/2 mile	1 mile	Highly restricted
	40 - 55	Urbanizing	1/2 mile	1/4 mile	1/2 mile	Highly restricted
	< 40	Urban Core	1/8 mile	300 - 600 feet	1/4 mile	Highly restricted
Minor Arterials	50 - 55	Rural	1/2 mile	1/4 mile	1/2 mile	Highly restricted
	40 - 55	Urbanizing	1/4 mile	1/8 mile	1/4 mile	Highly restricted
	< 40	Urban Core	1/8 mile	300 - 600 feet	1/4 mile	Moderately restricted
Collectors	50 - 55	Rural	1/2 mile	1/4 mile	1/2 mile	Moderately restricted
	40 - 55	Urbanizing	1/8 mile	N/A	1/4 mile	Moderately restricted
	< 40	Urban Core	1/8 mile	300 - 600 feet	1/8 mile	Somewhat restricted
Local	50 - 55	Rural	1/2 mile	1/4 mile	1/2 mile	Somewhat restricted
	40 - 55	Urbanizing	1/8 mile	N/A	1/2 mile	Somewhat restricted
	< 40	Urban Core	1/8 mile	300 - 600 feet	1/8 mile	Least restricted

streetscape. Design character can vary greatly, but is directly related to the functional roll of the roadway and the overall character of the district it is within.

Goals and Policies

The goals and policies of our transportation plan for the future embrace the growth management strategy and pattern of districts, corridors and nodes outlined in Chapter Three: Community Patterns. We seek a transportation system that is sustainable which we define through the following goals and policies.

Goal: Manage access to the roadway network

Access management is the planning, design, and implementation of land use and transportation strategies that maintain a safe flow of traffic while accommodating the access needs of adjacent development. Through access management we will reduce traffic congestion, reduce points of conflict with pedestrian systems, reduce crashes, maximize capacity of roadways and support strong and vital business communities. We know that access and visibility is of great concern to businesses, but we also know that too many access points create conflict, crashes, congestion and visual clutter which is detriment to the success and vitality of a business node.

Policy

- 14.1 Control and manage direct access to arterial and collector roadways in new growth areas.*
- 14.2 Over time, correct access problems within existing developed areas as property intensifies in development, redevelops or as roadways are reconstructed.*
- 14.3 Require individual properties to access the arterial roadway system via access to collector or local streets rather than direct access to arterial streets.*
- 14.4 Support redevelopment of property along existing arterial and collector road corridors that seeks to reduce individual direct access points.*
- 14.5 Encourage consolidation of driveways along collector streets.*
- 14.6 Encourage commercial development in a pattern of nodes instead of being stretched along major road corridors.*
- 14.7 Coordinate approvals of local development projects that have potential regional impacts in collaboration with appropriate Township, County and State road agencies.*
- 14.8 Collaborate with Freeborn County in establishing clear and concise access management standards, guidelines and policies that can be uniformly applied to major County Road corridors that are within Albert Lea.*

Goal: System connectivity

Connectivity refers to a system of roads that connect points of interest such as; neighborhoods to schools, shopping centers, business centers, or downtown;

collector and local roads to arterial roads; and neighborhoods to other neighborhoods. Our goal is to offer greater degrees of connectivity such that we have choices in the transportation corridors that move us through and within the community enhancing efficiency and overall safety of our system.

Policy

14.9 *Require new neighborhoods to have multiple ingress and egress points from local streets connecting to collector and arterial street systems.*

14.10 *Minimize the use of cul-de-sacs and dead end streets to places where such a street design protects or preserves significant natural resource elements or topographic features.*

14.11 *Explore new street/roadway improvements on a City wide basis that increase or enhance connectivity within the community as a solution to relieving traffic congestion on existing arterial corridors.*

14.12 *Support efforts for new connections to the interstate highway system where such connections clearly demonstrate a benefit to local and regional connectivity.*

14.13 *Plan beyond a specific development projects boundaries. Roads and trails do not just end a particular project's edges. As development is proposed in new growth areas make sure that the circulation system considers how adjacent property might develop and how a circulation system works for the larger area and connects to the collector and arterial roadway system.*

14.14 *Work with the railroad companies to ensure adequate levels of railroad crossing are available to facilitate connectivity.*

Goal: Alternative mobility options

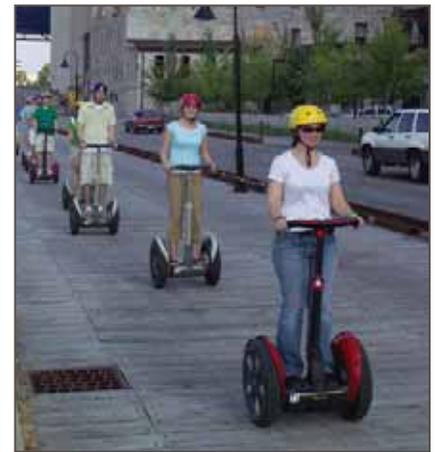
Enhancing connectivity offers choice in a particular route. However, mobility is much more than alternative routes. Our goal for mobility options is to offer a full range of travel modes as well as routes. This includes transit, walking, biking and alternative vehicles that are energy efficient or that serve less mobile populations. We recognize the need to carefully examine the consequences of mixing vehicle traffic with alternative vehicles and that ultimately, sharing the same street and roadway network may simply not be possible.

Policy

14.15 *Encourage site design and building design that strengthens the connection between sidewalks, trails and bus stops such that getting to a building from the public right-of-way is an easy and attractive route.*

14.16 *Incorporate parking areas for bicycles and other alternative vehicles in major public destination areas such as Downtown Albert Lea and local school campuses.*

14.17 *Encourage major employers and shopping areas to incorporate parking and storage for bicycles or other alternative mobility systems in site design.*



While alternative transportation modes will conflict with the vehicle and has potential for creating unintended consequences, as a community we will look for answers that achieve our goals of safety while maximizing opportunity for alternative travel options.

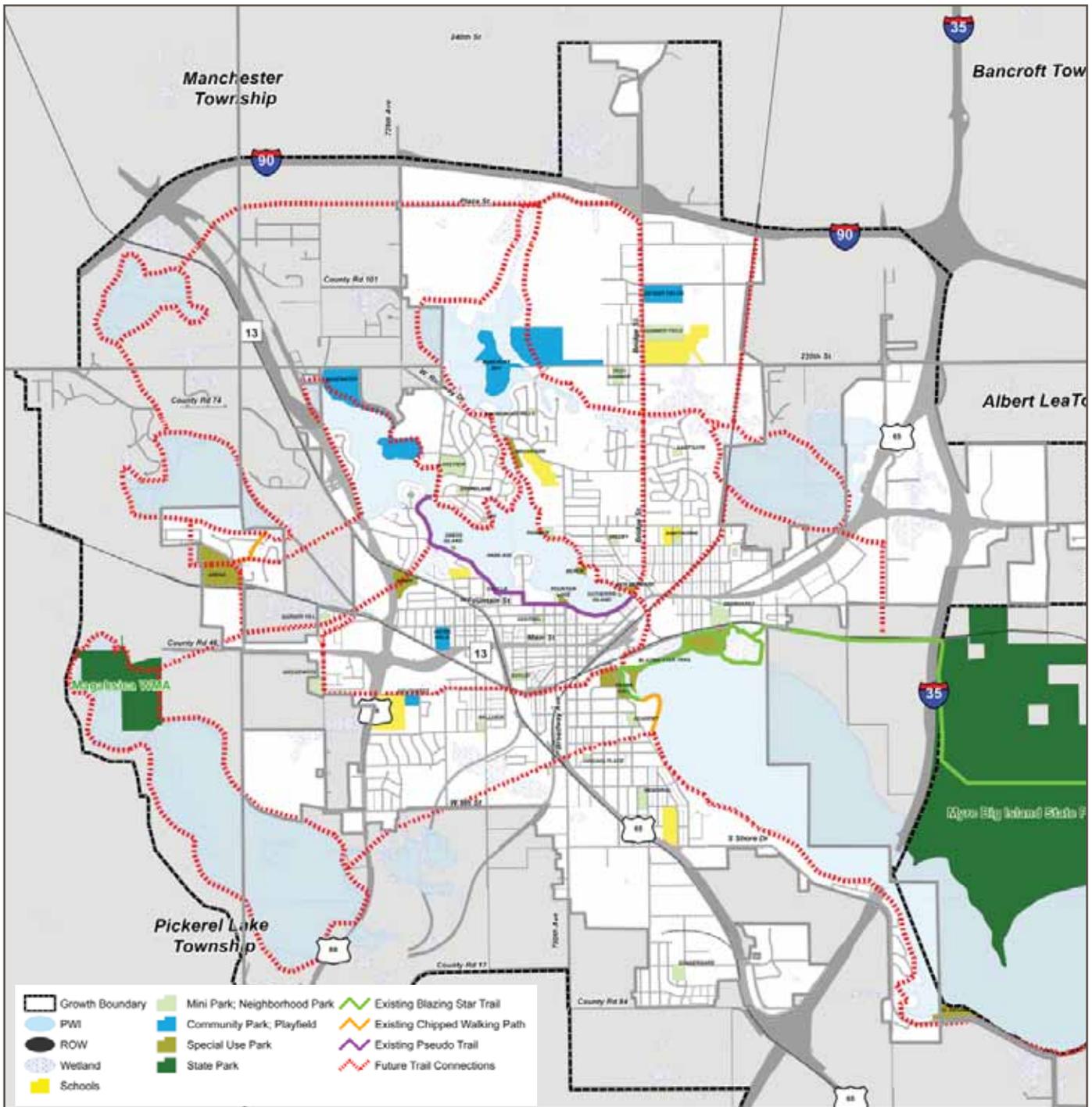


Figure 4.6 Trail Plan: Mobility and connectivity are important principles to our City. A strong network of trails, sidewalks and walkable streets promote a healthy lifestyle and active living. Our trail plan builds off of work completed by the City Planning, Parks and Engineering staff and reinforced by the Minnesota Design Team visit. The intent is to create a shared use path that would accommodate biking, walking, running, skating and wheelchaair users and fullfill needs for both commuting and recreation. Future trail connections would be off street where possible and designed with a width of a minimum of 10 feet bituminious surface. A memorandum outlining the improvements and a phasing strategy was prepared by City Staff on December 5, 2002 and should be updated to reflect future implementation strategies including phasing and funding approaches. Trails that cross private property should be negotiated at time of development with the property owners.

14.18 As roadway improvements are planned, incorporate off street multi-use trails and sidewalks along all major road corridors (arterials and collectors) that lead to key destinations such as downtown Albert Lea, shopping centers, schools and churches.

14.19 Require sidewalks to be built in new subdivision on all roads that are greater than 500 feet in length and provide connections between neighborhoods, to neighborhood or community parks, shopping areas, churches or regional trail systems. Sidewalks should be encouraged on both sides of the street. Neighborhood sidewalks should be designed to minimize driveway conflicts through alternative site design strategies such as consolidating driveways or using alleys such as in older parts of Albert Lea.

14.20 Support a policy of maintaining sidewalks that includes property owner responsibility for clearing sidewalks along local streets and City plowing along trail corridors, collector and arterial streets.

14.21 As local roadways get reconstructed or as roads are constructed in new growth areas evaluate design alternatives that include considerations for alternative vehicles that travel at lower speeds than typical automobiles. This may include electric golf carts or vehicles, motorized scooters/wheel chairs, or other innovative technology.

14.22 Sidewalk design in Downtown Albert Lea should support the needs of downtown merchants to occasionally bring the business out to the street, while preserving the ability for safe and convenient movement of people with various mobility challenges.

Goal: A safe roadway system

A roadway system that is safe is of extreme importance for the health and well being of our community. Our goal is minimize traffic crashes and minimize property damage and personal injury that result from unsafe roadway systems.

Policy

Work with State and County agencies in determining the optimal speed limits for major road corridors in conjunction with the stated function and desired design character of the roadway.

14.23 Support a way finding system to clearly guide and direct travelers who are new to the community and are seeking a particular destination.

14.24 Ensure sign ordinances provide a balance between displaying appropriate business names and address information while minimizing distractions and clutter.

14.25 Monitor traffic patterns and incidents on a regular basis to be able to respond to changing travel behaviors and traffic movements.

14.26 Support and enforce the policies related to access management, connectivity, mobility options, and traffic management as a means to enhance safety of the roadway system.

Goal: Traffic management

When we think of traffic management, we think of more than just the roadway design or the traffic signal devices. We think of the adjacent land uses and the traffic generators of our community that contribute to the traffic. Our goals for traffic management are to ensure smooth traffic flow that saves our community time, energy and money.

Policy

14.27 *Plan land uses within commercial nodes in a manner that seeks to balance various trip generation characteristics across a range of peak generation periods (i.e. avoid allowing too many uses with the same peak traffic generation characteristics from locating in the same proximity.)*

14.28 *Explore alternative intersection design configurations when roads are reconstructed or as roads are constructed in new growth areas in order to minimize the environmental impacts while maximizing traffic flow and safety operations.*

14.29 *Design roadways (number of lanes, widths, etc...) and intersections based on a reasonable level of assumed traffic volumes.*

14.30 *Support and enforce policies related to access management, connectivity and mobility options as a means to enhance traffic management by making arterial corridors the most attractive and convenient route for longer trips at higher speeds.*

Goal: Cost effectiveness

Funding of roadway improvements is a costly endeavor. Our goal is to invest in the maintenance and reconstruction of our existing roadway infrastructure and to ensure that new road corridors and intersections are planned ahead and right-of-way is preserved until they are needed through the development process.

Policy

14.31 *Support dedication of funds for street maintenance and reconstruction on an annual basis, consistent with a street reconstruction plan and consistent with needs for upgrading existing infrastructure systems that can be aligned with street improvements.*

14.32 *Require development in new growth areas to cover the costs for transportation improvements that otherwise would not have been necessary. Funding participation from the city or other agencies should only be considered for enhancements to the system that are demonstrated to be of a broader community benefit such as wayfinding or gateway signage treatments or public health/safety measures.*

14.33 *Collaborate with regional agencies to secure regional and federal funding for roadway projects that have a regional benefit.*

14.34 Consider establishing a revolving and sustainable funding mechanism for long term maintenance and enhancement of the transportation system.

14.35 Collaborate with regional agencies on maintenance and planning issues for roadways on or beyond the edges of Albert Lea.

Goal: Environmental responsibility

Transportation systems have a heavy impact on the environment through vehicle emissions increased by the amount of miles we travel and congestion and through the amount of pavement dedicated to transportation. Our goal is to plan and construct our transportation system in a manner that minimizes the impact on the environment.

Policy

14.36 Support and enforce the policies related to access management, traffic management, connectivity and mobility options as a means to reduce traffic congestion, reduce reliance on the automobile for trips and reduce the amount of hard surface dedicated to transportation systems.

14.37 Work with the watershed district to research and implement alternative pavement techniques and storm water management strategies that contribute to enhancing and preserving water quality.

14.38 Explore traffic management strategies and street design techniques that minimize the amount of pavement while not diminishing the ability to provide emergency services and not decreasing roadway safety.

Goal: Design and aesthetics...enhance the experience

Traveling through and within our community, whether on foot, bicycle or vehicle, should be more than just moving from destination to destination. Part of what makes our community special, are assets it offers such as the lakes, great parks, strong neighborhoods and downtown. Our goal for our transportation system is to create an experience in addition to the functional aspects of roads, trails, bikeways and sidewalks.

Policy

14.39 Establish and a 'wayfinding' system that identifies key locations for unique signage that promotes community destinations (Downtown Albert Lea—Ice Arena—Lakes—shopping centers—business campus-etc.)

14.40 Encourage commercial property along major arterial corridors to have an attractive and high amenity site design that address the corridor. This can be done through architectural enhancements and/or key site design amenities such as public art, attractive signage or environmental features.

14.41 Discourage vast blank parking areas between the street and the business. Where a parking configuration in the front of a structure is the most optimal site design pattern, minimize the parking and encourage landscaping that enhances curb appeal without obstructing business identification.



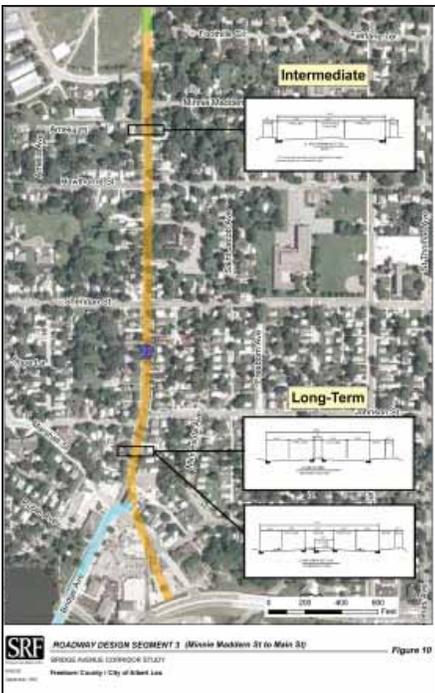
Landscaping and boulevard trees provide for a more aesthetic street appearance and a more safe pedestrian environment.

14.42 *Establish a landscape and streetscape palette for public and private streetscape/landscaping. Such a palette can offer flexibility while ensuring consistency between public and private streetscape/landscape enhancements.*

Roadway Projects

Over the years, we have recognized changes occurring to our travel behaviors and patterns, and we have looked ahead at future transportation needs. Our study efforts and planning have resulted in some positive directions that our Comprehensive Plan embraces.

Bridge Avenue: In November of 2005 we conducted a corridor study for Bridge Avenue from E Clark Street to I-90. The study identified a number of issues relating to access, speeds and safety, volumes, truck traffic and growth pressures. The focus of the study was to maintain the safe and efficient movement of people through the corridor. Ultimately, the recommendation from the study outlined a series of short term, intermediate term and long term improvements. The long term plan for the roadway is to reconfigure Bridge Avenue from Marshall to I-90 as a 4 lane-divided section with turn lanes at key intersections. The long term plan also recommended realignment of the southerly portion of Bridge Street to connect directly with East Main Street generally following the Marshall Street Corridor. Access management strategies were also established that if implemented can enhance the capacity of the corridor and help achieve the focus of the study. Since the study was completed, City and County staff have continued to explore implementation of active strategies, consistent with the recommendations of the Bridge Avenue Study, that balance the mobility objectives of the corridor with private property owners desire to preserve access.



The southerly segment of the recommended improvements to Bridge Ave. Source: Bridge Avenue Corridor Study. November 2005.

East Main Street: Since 2004 we have evaluated long term traffic patterns and development implications along East Main Street generally between I-35 and CSAH 38. This evaluation included long term projections of future commercial and industrial development within the Interchange District. This area continues to be evaluated as new development occurs. However, the ultimate plan for this roadway segment includes signals at the intersections of East Main Street with the on and off ramps of I-35, a signal at CSAH 38 and a signal at quarter mile spacing between the on/off ramp of I-35 and CSAH 38 to facilitate access for future development. Additional through lanes and turn lanes would be required to adequately handle traffic if this area were to fully develop. The City, County and State agencies will closely monitor development within this area and plan for improvements based on this study recommendations and future study efforts.

Our Plan For Bridge Avenue

Bridge Avenue currently functions as a two lane roadway with dedicated turn lanes at some key intersections such as at Hammer Road.

As the key corridor connecting I-90 and the growing commercial areas to Downtown Albert Lea, we recognize that its ability to function in the long run as it does today is limited.

We initiated a study in 2005. This study recommended that the corridor ultimately becomes a four lane street (five lanes at intersections with one lane being a dedicated turn lane) that can accommodate future growth in traffic and prevent future traffic problems which will undoubtedly impact the quality of life and vitality of businesses in the corridor.

The good news is that we are somewhat ahead of the game. The traffic study projected approximately 12 million square feet of commercial development potential over the next 20 years (to 2025). If that were to occur, we definitely would have a problem; however, a more realistic scenario spreads that development out over a longer time frame.

Implementation of the plan for Bridge Avenue will take time and must take into consideration impacts on those properties that will need to be acquired.

Learning the benefits of implementing access management improvements needs to be an educational



process. Such improvements can lengthen the life of the corridor and lessen the need for pre-mature roadway improvements.

In July of 2006, City and County engineering staff outlined an implementation plan for the corridor. The plan identified properties that would require acquisition for right-of-way based on minimizing impacts and maximizing potential redevelopment opportunities.

As our guiding principle suggests, “encourage new while planning the old” we need to look closely at how our efforts to prevent future traffic problems along Bridge Avenue can be combined with planning for redevelopment.

An opportunity exists through redevelopment to enhance the character of Bridge Avenue and positively contribute to adjacent neighborhoods.



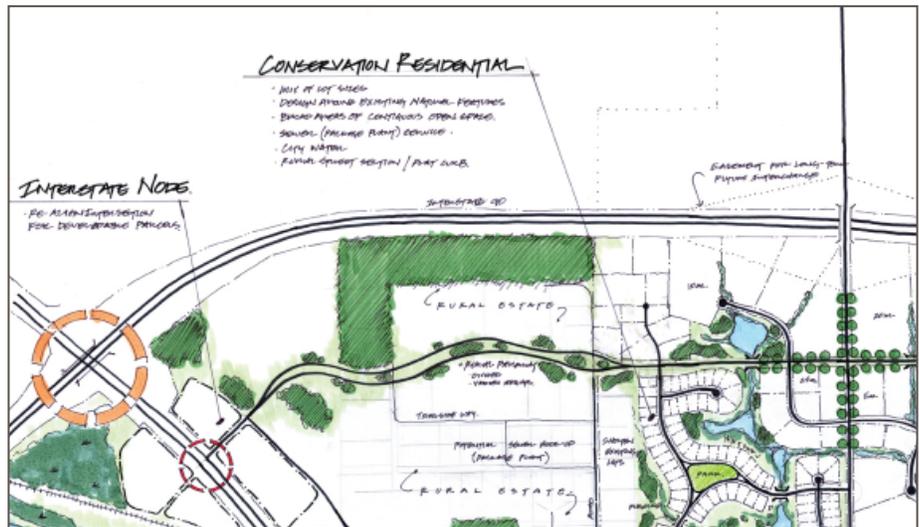
Above are two examples of a four lane roadway that might characterize Bridge Avenue after redevelopment occurs. This development character is most reflective of the segment of Bridge Avenue south of the fairgrounds. Key features include building setback options, landscaping treatments and street furniture. Both alternatives reflect access management strategies that consolidate access to side streets or one access per block.



A parkway like appearance of the Plaza Street extension in the EcoVillage would include characteristics such as illustrated above: landscaping and broad setbacks preserving a more rural character of what otherwise is a commercial/industrial collector.

Bath Road/CSAH 20--Plaza Extension: We have also evaluated the possibility of future access to I-90 at Bath Road (also known as CSAH 20.) A new interchange at this location would possibly facilitate new economic development opportunities. It may also relieve some traffic pressure off of Bridge Avenue; however, connectivity to downtown Albert Lea, a primary destination point, from this location is circuitous at best and may generate more traffic issues than benefit. The long term prospect for an interchange at Bath Road should be preserved. However, our priorities for major transportation improvements and investments should remain focused on existing transportation corridors that need improvements. The extension of Plaza Street west of Bath Road to connect with Highway 13 is suggested to facilitate future economic development along the I-90 corridor by improving access to the area.

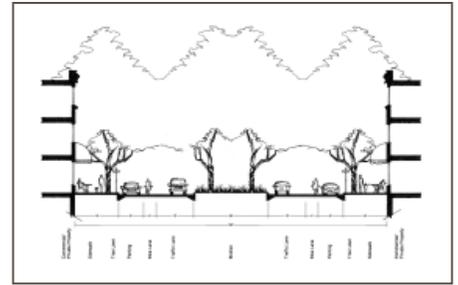
As part of the planning process, we have identified a theme for the area around the Bath Road and I-90 crossing that takes advantage of the areas assets. This Eco-Village theme includes the extension of Plaza Street to the west of Bath Road, ultimately connecting to State Highway 13. This road would serve as a backage road for future commercial/industrial development and would serve as an east west collector road keeping local trips off the freeway system.



The concept for the extension of Plaza Street west from Bath Road to Highway 13 includes a street that is sensitive to the topographic challenges of the area. The illustration demonstrates a parkway type road character with right-of-way varying from 100 to 200 feet in places. The center boulevard allows for potential storm water management and a landscape character consistent with the rural character and EcoVillage theme.

South Greensward: Through the planning process we have identified an opportunity to make a stronger connection to the southwest part of our community. The concept for this area includes a parkway like road connection that serves as a neighborhood/community amenity, that offers an experience, provides alternative mobility options and serves as a collector road that would connect Front Street to CSAH 17. Future alignment of this corridor would need to be identified through a more detailed master planning effort but could follow portions of existing roads as well as extending through undeveloped land areas.

Also as part of this effort was the notion of extending Front Street east through the Blazing Star Landing site connecting ultimately to Prospect Avenue. This corridor would serve as collector street connecting the west and east sides of our City with downtown Albert Lea and the Blazing Star Landing.



On the northern portion of the greensward, street character should reflect a more built up urban environment consistent with the image and appeal of downtown Albert Lea.



The character of the southwest greensward is more residential in nature as it moves to the south. Homes should front on the parkway and access should be provided via alleys.





Freeborn County Government Center.

Public Facilities and Government Services

As our plan envisions growing, we need to continue to plan for our ability to service our community effectively. Public facilities include a number of city and county government buildings.

City Hall, Freeborn County Government Center, and the public Library.

Our plan for these facilities is to maintain their existence within Downtown Albert Lea. Our plans for redevelopment and public improvements should embrace the notion of these facilities as core government services that are destination oriented. Their presence in downtown helps draw the community together and contributes to the overall success and vitality of downtown. We have a recent track record of investing in our government services center and are proud of what we have to offer. Services in downtown Albert Lea include police, fire, county and city administration, human services (Freeborn County Department of Health and Human Services), public library and health care.

Our City Hall currently meets our needs for administrative staffing. Options exist to grow within our current walls to accommodate growth of our community and to maintain adequate staffing needs.

Police and Fire

Our ability to grow as a community is dependent on our ability to provide adequate and resourceful emergency service and public safety. Currently our police and fire are located in downtown, as is the Freeborn County Sheriff. We work corroboratively with the County in providing emergency services to adjacent areas of the community and to freeway users. We need to explore our corporate limits to ensure that we continue to have the proper authority to respond rapidly to emergencies on I-90 and I-35 and to respond to our neighboring communities who don't have such infrastructure. Our transportation system must include a well connected street system to enable rapid response from our station as well as the ability of our volunteers to get to the station when called upon.

As we grow, we need to monitor our ability and effectiveness to serve our community with one fire station and with current staffing. We might begin exploring in earnest expansion needs that would include training facilities better equipped to support the broader community's training needs.

Our GIS system equips us with a wealth of information to be able to inform our decision makers about future growth and development pressures. We will use this information corroboratively with planning staff to prepare our long range plans for police and fire.

Our plan for long term growth looks at squaring off our boundaries to clarify our service areas for emergency needs.

Our plan recognizes long term growth opportunities and establishes as an implementation mechanism the need to monitor development and service needs.



Our Police Department recently started a community policing program where our officers reach out directly to neighborhoods. This program will help us become better acquainted with our neighbors.

Albert Lea Police is located in the Law Enforcement Center with the Freeborn County Sheriff's office. Our Fire Department is located in City Center.

Public Works

As we prepare to grow we must also be equipped to house and store the public works equipment necessary to maintain our community. We should look to collaborate with County, MnDOT and other public agencies in locating a regional public works facility that provides for efficient access to the community and can blend in with the surrounding neighborhood. Like any facility of this nature, we have a lot of storage of equipment and other less than attractive uses. Our facility should set an example for other similar type uses.

Our current city garage is overcapacity and is an immediate need. Opportunities should be explored to relocate the City Garage facility to a location suitable for consolidating our equipment and adequately storing our materials and supplies. We should plan on a growth scenario that allows us to grow consistent with our comprehensive plan.

Schools

Our school system is an important component to our future growth. As we continue to grow our population, we should work directly with the school district to develop a land use pattern that ensures a balanced mix of housing in our neighborhoods. The composition of our population changes over time. Without a life-cycle housing supply (housing that meets the needs of residents regardless of their stage in life), our neighborhood schools may not be able to survive this change and thus become inefficient to operate.

Creative solutions to these problems need to be explored. Our guiding principle suggests that we may need "new tools to solve old problems." Advocacy at the state legislature is an important aspect of this approach to ensure local control in how our schools are run.

Our local schools provide opportunities for us to embrace diversity and to get to know our neighbors. They are critical to maintaining strong neighborhoods, providing a good quality of life, and attracting and sustaining an educated populace.

Our plan will support the existence of our neighborhood schools through a land use policy and zoning tools that maintain strong neighborhoods. Our schools depend greatly on what we project for our population and household growth. By establishing a system to more closely monitor land absorption, and community growth we can begin to get a better handle on our future growth potential. We realize we must work together to plan our future community.



Lakeview Elementary School.

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