

A photograph of a paved walkway with large planters containing red flowers, trash cans, and trees in the background. The scene is outdoors, likely near a waterfront, with a body of water visible in the distance. The sky is blue with some clouds. The overall atmosphere is clean and well-maintained.

09

IMPLEMENTATION

Chapter highlights

- Overview
- Official Controls
- Funding Mechanisms
- Area/Subject Plans
- Action Plan
- Implementation Matrix Worksheets
- Public Infrastructure, Facilities, and Services Action Items



OVERVIEW

The Comprehensive plan creates a vision for the City of Albert Lea and guides land use and infrastructure improvements so the city can meet the community's future needs. However, the vision can only be realized if the plan is used. Tools to implement the plan will vary in that some will be reactive such as zoning and subdivision ordinances that guide private developments and others will be proactive, such as the city's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for undertaking public improvement projects.



OFFICIAL CONTROLS

Zoning

City zoning codes regulate land use to promote the health, safety, order, convenience, and general welfare of all citizens. They regulate the location, size, use, and height of buildings, the arrangement of buildings on lots, and the density of population within the city. The city's zoning districts effectively guide development in Albert Lea. The Shoreland, Floodplain and Floodway, and Airport Safety Zone Districts place additional restrictions on the area in addition to the underlying zoning district.

The City of Albert Lea also allows Planned Unit Developments to allow unified site design resulting in the conservation of land and open space through the clustering of buildings and activities.

Subdivision of Land

The Subdivision Ordinance regulates the subdivision and platting of land within the city, providing for the orderly, economic and safe development of land and facilitating the adequate provision for transportation, water, sewage, storm drainage, electric utilities, streets, parks, and other public services and facilities essential to any development. The city regulates the subdivision of land through an application and approval process, including Planning Commission and City Council review. The subdivision of land promotes the public health, safety, and general welfare of the people and helps achieve the vision of this comprehensive plan by providing standards for the development of land.

Ordinance Amendments

The city will evaluate land use controls and consider amendments to eliminate inconsistencies with the comprehensive plan, conform to State and Federal regulations, and support the overarching community goals identified through this plan update.

The city may also want to review the current Zoning Map and Zoning District requirements for compliance with the comprehensive plan. If there are discrepancies, or changes needed to meet the city's goals and objectives, an amendment to the official controls (Zoning and/or Subdivision ordinances) may be appropriate.

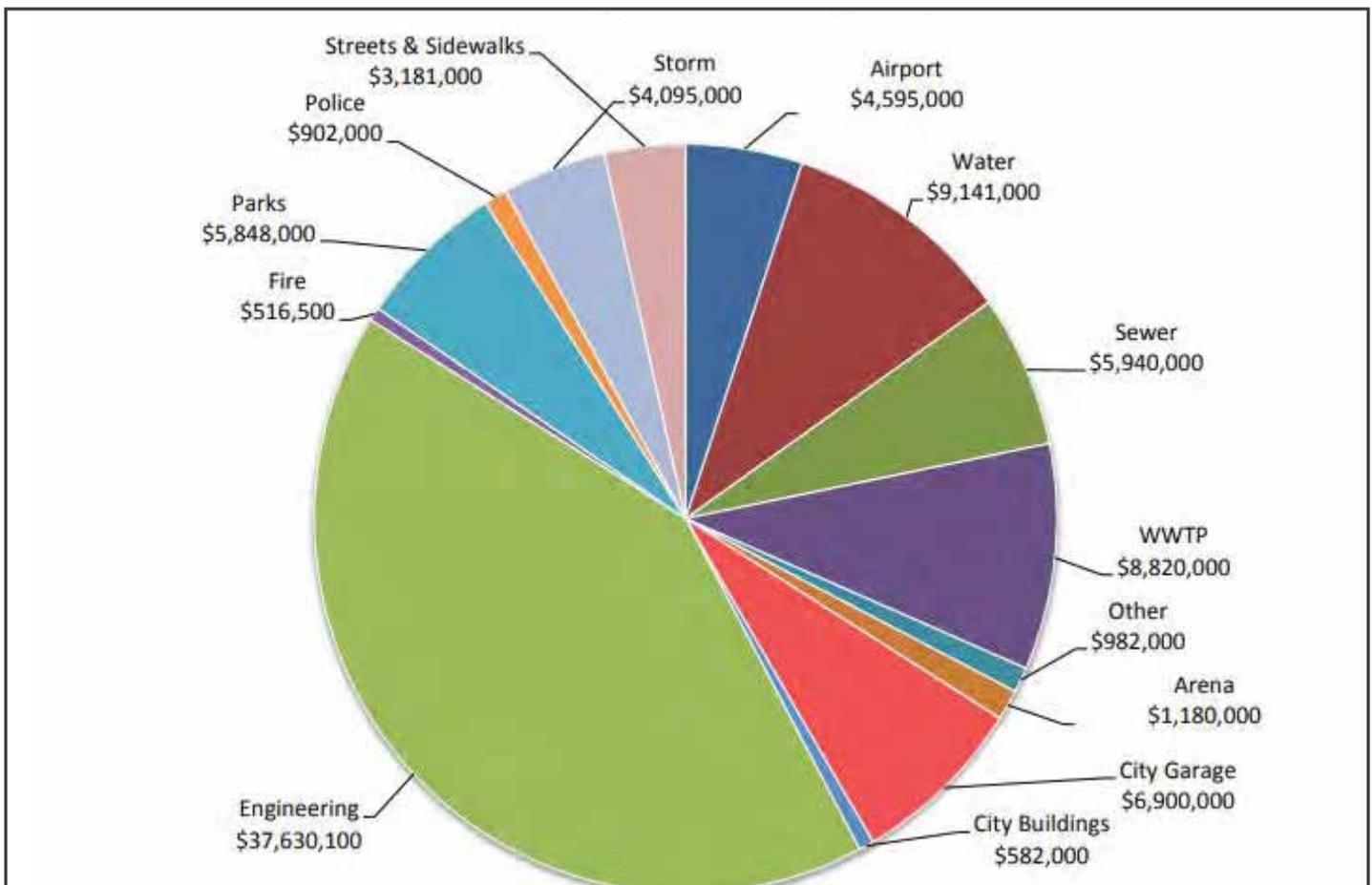
FUNDING MECHANISMS

The construction of public improvements requires a funding source. Several tools can be used to plan for these improvements. Some of these tools are listed in the following paragraphs.

Capital Improvements Program

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a flexible plan based upon long-range physical planning and financial projections, which schedules the major public improvements that may be incurred by the city over the next five years. The flexibility of the CIP is established through annual review, and revision if necessary. The annual review assures that the program will become a continuing part of the budgetary process and that it will be consistent with changing demands as well as changing patterns in cost and financial resources. Funds are appropriated only for the first year of the program, which is then included in the annual budget. The CIP serves as a tool for implementing certain aspects of the city's comprehensive plan; therefore, the program describes the overall objectives of city development, the relationship between projects concerning timing and need, and the city's fiscal capabilities.

FIGURE 9-1 2020 - 2024 CIP EXPENDITURES BY DEPARTMENT



Grants

Grants are an essential tool for local governments to fund projects that contribute to the community. A government grant is a financial award given by the federal, state, or local government to an eligible grantee. Government grants are not expected to be repaid but are usually allocated for specific needs and may go through a competitive application process. The city can pursue grant application opportunities to help implement its vision.

AREA/SUBJECT PLANS & OTHER TOOLS

In addition to the Official Controls and Funding Mechanisms above, the city has one more set of tools to further guide development and investment. These tools are Area and Subject Plans, which are typically small plans that either focus on one system (i.e. parks; utilities) or a specific area (i.e. Downtown; a neighborhood; a park). They are meant to use the goals in this comprehensive plan as a jumping-off point for more detailed work. Area and Subject Plans may include detailed studies (i.e. do existing waterlines in a certain area have adequate capacity for potential development), inventory and analysis (i.e. identifying and categorizing impediments to ADA accessibility), and other necessary sections to better inform the final plan and action items. There are many kinds of these plans, with some examples listed below. Not all the following plans are required, with some considered optional or “nice to have” and not listed in any particular order.

- **Strategic Plan:** Typically an internal plan for city employees, structures, and organization. These plans are generally shorter term and more specific than the comprehensive plan.
- **Infrastructure Plan:** A plan for expanding roads and utilities. This plan may include utility and transportation studies and ties in with the CIP.
- **Master/Small Area Plan:** A plan for a system or geographical area. Some examples include:
 - Parks Master Plan
 - Trails Master Plan
 - Downtown Master Plan
 - Neighborhood Master Plan
- **Economic Development Plan:** A plan addressing the economic environment of an area, including things like workforce development, business attraction and retention, and other economic considerations. Some economic development plans include market studies.
- ***Climate Action Plan:** A plan addressing the city’s impact on climate change. The City of Albert Lea completed its Climate Action Plan in 2021.
- ***Facilities Plan:** A plan for taking inventory of existing public facilities and suggesting future improvements.
- **Corridor Plan:** A plan typically centered on a major road or other transportation line that is a mix of transportation and land use planning.
- ***ADA Transition Plan:** A plan for reviewing city infrastructure, such as sidewalks and trails, for ADA accessibility. The plan then provides a 20- to 30-year guide for correcting accessibility impediments. Albert Lea completed an ADA Transition Plan in 2021.
- **Safe Routes to School Plan:** A plan promoting bicycling and walking to school. These plans are often funded through the Minnesota Department of Transportation, and may be prepared by the school district.
- **Campus Plan:** A plan for a collection of buildings in an area. They are typically used for an institution or organization planning its building complex or future growth but could be used for establishing a government building complex.
- **Bike and Pedestrian Masterplan:** A plan for safe, connected routes to and from residential neighborhoods, commercial centers, medical facilities, and other destinations across the city.

Items with a “*” denote an existing plan adopted or published by the city.

Amending the Comprehensive Plan

To keep the comprehensive plan current, it will be necessary to make amendments from time to time. However, as the foundational document guiding development, most amendments should occur through a comprehensive effort to address changes to the community over time. The Action Plan, described below, is a tool that can and should be amended more frequently.

ACTION PLAN

Implementing the vision and goals of the comprehensive plan requires an action plan and the coordination and investments of many stakeholders. The Action Plan presents a concise summary of the goals along with specific action steps, organized by chapter. The Action Plan includes:

- **Goal:** A restatement of the specific goal.
- **Objective:** A restatement of the specific objective.
- **Action Step:** Specific action items intended to help meet the goals.
- **Effort:** The level of effort needed to complete the action step.
 - **Low:** A step that can largely be accomplished by the city with identified resources and a limited time line. These are relatively quick wins. While their impact may not be as major as some larger scale efforts, they can help generate positive momentum through short-term wins.
 - Examples: minor ordinance updates, data gathering and tracking, internal working groups, small public improvements, releasing an RFP, grant writing
 - **Medium:** Likely needs a more coordinated effort in terms of staffing, resources and time. Medium-effort actions are more ambitious, but also may have more potential benefit or broader impact.
 - Examples: public-private partnerships, input into others' plans, larger scale public project, memorandum of understanding, cost sharing agreements
 - **High:** A more ambitious goal that likely needs a more concerted and long-term effort. These are a community's reach goals, which can be inspiring but challenging to achieve.
 - Examples: adding new division or staff specialization, major infrastructure project requiring multijurisdictional coordination, cultural change
- **Tools:** This column lists potential tools available to achieve the stated goal, as well as the leader of the effort.
- **Benchmarks:** This column lists performance measurements or other indicators to help determine progress on an action item.

The Action Plan will be updated regularly as part of other city processes, such as annual budgeting or project prioritization sessions. The Implementation Matrix Worksheets are intended to be flexible and adaptable over short periods, so changes to these sections do not require a formal amendment to the comprehensive plan. The goals, however, are high-level, long-term goals. Changes to the specific goals will require an amendment to the overall plan.

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX WORKSHEETS

The Implementation Matrix worksheets illustrate the specific action steps, organized by chapter. The worksheets focus on the immediate priorities defined by the Steering Committee during the planning process.

TABLE 9-1 LAND USE IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal: Preserve and Maintain Existing Strengths.				
Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Help new and long-time residents find or keep their homes.	Encourage the preservation and enhancement of the city's single-family housing stock using city programs that incentivize upkeep and maintenance of private property.	Medium	City Staff; Funding/Grants	Funding secure and process established providing homeowners with capital to do home maintenance.
Support natural and planned walkable communities.	Support small local businesses, particularly in the areas of the city where new development is designated in the comprehensive plan.	Low/ Medium	City Staff; Grants; Small Area Plans; Corridor Plans	Regular meetings are held and findings are implemented into city practices, policies and codes where determined appropriate.
Goal: Guide and Encourage New Development.				
Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Guide development into areas of targeted growth.	Identify locations in the city which could support new and mixed-use development.	Low	City Staff; Small Area Plans;	A first round of suitable developments sites are identified.
	Plan for appropriate amenities, high quality design, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and open space in high growth areas, particularly in the downtown mixed-use district and around neighborhood centers.	Medium	City Staff; Small Area Plans; CIP; ADA Transition Plan; Sidewalk and Pedestrian Plan	Establishment of a CIP and Small Area Plan to plan for and build needed improvements.
Remove barriers to development.	Support a diversification of housing types throughout the city, including the development of a tiny home park to support housing affordability.	Low/ Medium	City Staff; Zoning Code; Future Land Use Map	Increased diversification of built housing types within city limits.

TABLE 9-2 HOUSING IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal: Expand Housing Choice and Affordability.

Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Support new residential development.	Identify and prepare locations for multi-family development.	High	City Staff, Future Land Use Map, Building Code, Related Land Use Policies, Development Partners	Land Use Map is current. Potential areas for multi-family development are indicated on a map. Relationships with multi-family developers are established.
	Update existing housing regulations to allow for a greater diversity of housing typologies.	Medium	City Staff, Future Land Use Map, Building Code, Zoning Code, Related Land Use Policies	Zoning Code, Zoning Map, and Land Use Map are updated to allow and encourage various types of housing.
	Enforce existing standards for housing and yard maintenance.	Medium	City Staff, Zoning Code	Time and resources are dedicated toward Code Enforcement.

TABLE 9-3 PUBLIC FACILITIES IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal: Expand existing utility system infrastructure to meet the demands generated by continued development.				
Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Expand utility systems into future growth areas.	Implement the expansion of the stormwater collection, treatment, and outfall system as areas outside the limits of the existing stormwater collection system are developed, with a focus on regional stormwater ponds, where possible.	Medium	City Staff; Stormwater Plan	Creation of a Stormwater Model.
	Implement the expansion of the trunk sanitary sewer system as areas outside the limits of the sanitary sewer collection system are developed. Final trunk sanitary sewer sizes, locations, and depths should be based on detailed engineering studies as more information regarding future development becomes available.	Medium	City Staff; Sewer Plan	Creation of a Sanitary Sewer Model.
	Implement the expansion of the trunk watermain system as areas outside the limits of the existing water distribution system are developed.	Medium	City Staff; Water Plan	Update and Maintain Water Model.
Goal: Monitor, evaluate and improve the condition of each utility system's infrastructure.				
Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Monitor the condition of existing system infrastructure and replace as required.	Monitor changes in drinking water quality standards and identify possible changes to the treatment processes currently utilized by the city's three water treatment facilities.	Low	City Staff; Water Plan; Public Works	Regularly monitor water system and apply information to an adopted Water Plan.
	Update the WWTP existing infrastructure as laid out in the February 2022 Wastewater Facility Plan to meet state phosphorus discharge requirements.	Medium	City Staff; Public Works	Update the WWTP to meet state requirements.
	Monitor changes in wastewater quality standards and identify possible changes to the treatment processes currently utilized by the city's wastewater treatment facility.	Low	City Staff; Sewer Plan; Public Works	Regularly monitor sewer system and apply information to an adopted Wastewater Plan.
Goal: Maintain and operate public facilities at the highest possible level of service.				
Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Continue to assess the condition and needs of facilities.	Use the 2015 Facilities Master Plan as a guideline for future facility investments.	Medium/High	City Staff; Facilities Master Plan; CIP	Implement the Facilities Master Plan.

TABLE 9-4 TRANSPORTATION IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal: Maintain and leverage the existing transportation infrastructure for potential development.				
Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Identify potential connection points within the existing transportation system.	Create quick and easy access to the surrounding areas of Albert Lea.	High	Zoning Code, Subdivision Ordinance	Developments provide adequate access from origin to destination.
Goal: Enhance the multimodal and connective transportation system.				
Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Encourage connective routes for all transportation options.	Expand bike and pedestrian trails that route from residential uses to destinations such as schools, parks, or commercial corridors.	High	City Staff, Zoning Code, Subdivision Ordinance, Future Land Use Map	Frequent destinations are accessible for cyclists, pedestrians, and vehicle passengers. Parking for destinations is equipped with multimodal parking spaces.
Encourage high intensity uses in close proximity to high intensity traffic roads.	Create new developments near roads with adequate carrying capacity.	High	City Staff, Developing Partners, Future Land Use Map, Road Network database	New developments are reviewed with road carrying capacity in mind. New developments do not adversely impact traffic.
Incorporate multimodal design into existing and new transportation systems.	Provide opportunities for various transportation options.	Medium	City Staff, Future Land Use Map, Related Infrastructure Plans	Roads favor all modes of transportation equally.
Goal: Provide a wholistic aesthetic transportation system for residents and visitors.				
Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Integrate landscaping and lighting to enhance roadway design.	Place lighting in large open spaces.	Low	City Staff, Landscaping Materials, Design Software	A landscaping and lighting plan is developed. Streetscapes and parking lots are well lit with downward facing lights.
Goal: Support climate resilient infrastructure.				
Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Reduce car usage for local trips in Albert Lea.	Identify locations for biking and walking commutes.	Medium	City Staff, Future Land Use Map, GIS Analytical Tools	Bike parking is identified on a map. Travel routes from origin to destination less than 15 minutes are identified on a map.

TABLE 9-5 HISTORIC PRESERVATION IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

from Appendix B

Goal: Continue to preserve and rehabilitate the Albert Lea Commercial Historic District.	
Objective	Action
Build upon past success and continuing momentum for downtown revitalization.	Maintain and potentially expand the existing Broadway Ridge and South Broadway façade improvement grant program.
Educate building owners, tenants, and the broader public about the benefits of downtown revitalization.	Maintain and potentially expand passive education opportunities.
Educate building owners, tenants, and the broader public about the local historic preservation process; local, state, and federal programs; and funding opportunities.	Utilize available active education opportunities.
Increase the diversity of uses for downtown buildings, including encouraging housing uses at upper levels.	Ensure that heritage preservation oversight is integrated into other city processes.
Goal: Lay the groundwork for future historic preservation activities in Albert Lea outside of the commercial historic district.	
Objective	Action
Build upon the existing momentum for heritage preservation that has been generated by the revitalization of the Commercial Historic District to set the city up for its next complement of preservation efforts.	<p>Utilize programs like the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Grant (Legacy Grant) program and Certified Local Government grants to apply for funding for preservation planning projects.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Partner with existing collaborators such as the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office and Minnesota Main Street program to continue bringing education opportunities to Albert Lea city staff, Heritage Preservation Commissioners, and the general public.</p>

TABLE 9-6 PARKS, RECREATION, AND NATURAL RESOURCES IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal: Unite a Network of Parks, Open Spaces, and Natural Features.				
Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Develop a more thorough network of accessible green spaces across the city.	Adopt a communal identity through a wayfinding and gateway signage system for parkland and community gateways.	Low/ Medium	City Staff	Implementation of a wayfinding and gateway signage system.
Improve health of the community by providing spaces and activities to suit a variety of needs.	Provide more opportunities for complete and walkable streets.	Medium	City Staff; Public Works; Parks and Recreation	Adopt best practices and policies for street design.
Goal: Foster Community Engagement.				
Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Promote healthy activity.	Provide attractive opportunities for outdoor play, aimed at inter-generational and omni-skill level, thereby providing safe spaces for youth after school.	Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation	Expand the variety and amount of outdoor play options.

TABLE 9-7 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal: Create a strong economic development system.

Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Attract and retain successful businesses.	Focus efforts on attracting emerging stars or opportunity sectors per ALEDA 2020 Target Industry Screening.	High	City Staff, EDA, Branding	Emerging stars and opportunity sectors are identified. Emerging stars and opportunity sectors are established in the city of Albert Lea.

Goal: Strengthen the work-skills pipeline.

Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Establish a continuous pipeline from educational institutes to local employers.	Request local businesses to provide job shadowing, apprenticeships, or job-related interactions.	Low	City Staff, EDA, Local Businesses, Schools	Relationships with local businesses are established. Local businesses offer shadowing of various industries and skill levels.

Goal: Attract talent, retain residents and increase levels of community engagement.

Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Promote quality of life.	Allow more home businesses and set zoning criteria to minimize negative impacts to nearby properties.	Low	City Staff, Zoning Code	Home business or home occupation standards are updated. Standards include permitted indoor and outdoor use of a home, traffic requirements, and permitted hours of operation.
	Capitalize on natural resources and become a destination for Eco-tourism.	Low	City Staff, GIS Analytical Tools, Branding	Natural resources are identified on a map. Natural resources are included in the branding campaign.
	Extend trails to nearby systems to create an inter-regional loop.	High	City Staff, GIS Analytical Tools, Future Land Use Map	Trails offer an accessible alternative to vehicular travel. Trails run through and around all of Albert Lea.

Goal: Prioritize activities to ensure the city and county are prepared for business growth opportunities.

Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Leverage existing infrastructure and skills.	Seek broadband companies and request that they provide coverage or service in Albert Lea underserved areas.	Medium	City Staff, Research, Partnerships with Broadband Companies	Broadband companies have been identified. Relationships with broadband companies are developed. Albert Lea has sought coverage from the broadband companies.

Public Infrastructure, Facilities, and Services Action Items

The following section outlines more specific action items for the public infrastructure, facilities, and services intended to influence future development efforts that align with the community visions in this plan.

Action Item 1: Update and Maintain a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Cost: In house

The CIP takes into consideration the implementation of policies and programs previously established by the City Council to identify projects, costs, and potential schedules. The schedule allows the public to become aware of the long-range municipal needs and provides a mechanism for the coordination of projects both with one another and with the city's long-range comprehensive plan. THE CIP allows the city to construct improvements in accordance with predetermined priorities that help stabilize tax rates while revealing the source and extent of funds needed in future years. The city currently has a five-year CIP in place and would recommend reviewing and amending the plan annually.



Action Item 2: Create City-Wide System Models

Cost: Sanitary \$60,000-\$100,000; Storm \$60,000-\$100,000; Watermain \$10,000-\$30,000

As the community grows, the infrastructure needs to be expanded to accommodate the growth. With growth, we must be mindful of the pressure and strain it puts on the in place and aging infrastructure system. The development of city-wide system models would include the full inventory of the existing watermain, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer as well as consideration for future infrastructure. A water model exists but needs to be updated and maintained. The models will assist with identifying potential projects within the existing system and providing a plan for future improvements in the expansion areas.

Action Item 3: Develop a Stormwater Utility Fee

Cost: \$50,000-\$75,000

A stormwater utility offers financial management options that can assist the city in implementing the program to maintain and improve its water resources. The stormwater utility fee collects funds from every developed property to support the creation of a stormwater management program. Each developed parcel is charged a fee based on its size, land use, and amount of impervious area. The fee is proportional to a property's contribution to stormwater runoff and impact on water quality. A storm water utility fee was adopted in 2005 but was subsequently canceled in 2006.

Public Infrastructure, Facilities, and Services Action Items

Action Item 4: Extend Trunk Utilities into Future Growth Areas

Cost: Sanitary Truck Sewer \$150-170/lineal foot; Watermain \$190-210/lineal foot; Lift Station \$400,000

Implement the expansion of the trunk sanitary sewer system and watermain as areas outside the limits of the sanitary sewer collection system and water distribution system are developed. Construct new lift stations as areas outside the limits of the existing lift station service areas are developed. Final trunk main sizes, locations, lift station placement, and depths should be based on the infrastructure master plan and detailed engineering studies as more information regarding future development becomes available.

Action Item 5: Proactively Manage Infrastructure

Cost: Sanitary Sewer \$150-170/lineal foot; Watermain \$190-210/lineal foot; Street \$460-520/lineal foot

Complete 12" watermain looping around the City. Locations to upsize to 12" watermain are as follows: Front Street – TH 69 to 4th Avenue and Frank Avenue to Madison Avenue; Marshall Street – East of Morningside Drive to St Peter Avenue and Main Street to Bridge Avenue; Main Street – St Peter Avenue to Marshall Street; Garfield Avenue – Eberhardt Street to Main Street and Richway Drive to Allan Drive; Hammer Road – Bridge Avenue to Hansen; Bridge Avenue – Hammer Road to Plaza Street; Richway Drive – Lake Shore Drive to Wilby Road; and Plaza Street – 740th Avenue to the east 1400 feet. Complete watermain looping to improve fire flows at locations as follows: Sunset Street/Meadow Lane intersection to Westwood Drive/Ashley Court intersection; Hills Lane – Highland Avenue to Harmony Avenue; and 18 ½ Street/Forest Avenue intersection to Crossroads Boulevard. Replace the bottle necks in the sanitary sewer which are constraints for future development. These lines are as follows: 10" sanitary sewer along Stevens Street between Wayside Road and Prospect Avenue and 15" sanitary sewer on East Main Street extending from TH 65 to I-35.

