INTRODUCTION

In 1968, Fairmont adopted its first Comprehensive Plan to serve as a guide for development of the City. In 1985/86 and again in 1999 the Plan was updated. Because of these changes, the original plan is obsolete. A new plan has been prepared which reflects Fairmont today, and projects Fairmont's future land use trends based on technology, markets, and citizen demands.

In the summer of 2007 the Mayor assembled a cross section of the community to work on not only an update to the Comprehensive Plan but also to review the City's future land use map. This cross section of people included the Planning Commission, City Council liaisons, City staff and twenty-two private citizens.

The goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide direction and broad-based policy to guide the day to day administration of the City Zoning Code. The goal is to insure efficient, orderly and practical growth of the community.

The Plan is intended to look into the future 5-10-15 years, however, the Plan must be adapted and revised to reflect the changing needs of the community, housing and commercial land use demands.

The Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed and updated every five years. Changes in the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Map should be reflected in changes to the Zoning Code and Map.

Consistency between the two should be the administrative body's number one goal. Responsibility for this administration rests with the community Development Department.

HISTORY

The history of Fairmont can be traced back to the days before Minnesota became a state. In 1826, a fort was established which served as an army post and trade center on the site now covered by the Martin County Courthouse. The first permanent settlers were E. Banks Hall and William H. Budd. In June 1857, these men built their homes on lakes that still bear their names. Mr. Budd recorded that in January of that year, twenty men, nine women and twenty-three children lived in the Fairmont area.

Fairmont was platted in October 1857, by the Des Moines and Watonwan Land Company, by whom the name was applied. The City was named for the rolling hills which surrounded the adjacent lakes. The original name was Fair Mount, but this was later changed to Fairmont. Fairmont had the first post office in Martin County, dedicated on October 9, 1858, with William Budd as the first postmaster.

Fort Fairmont was established in 1862, shortly after the Sioux Indian Uprising which terrified settlers throughout southern Minnesota. With the end of the Civil War and subsiding of Indian troubles, Fort Fairmont was abandoned. Closely following the hard times after the Civil War, the "Grasshopper Plague" of 1873-1877 descended on the impoverished farmers, and many were forced to abandon their holdings and leave Martin County. This gloomy picture was brightened by the arrival of English colonists during the same period. They came to develop new methods of growing beans, spent their money lavishly, built a number of beautiful homes and brightened the hillsides with their scarlet foxhunting expeditions.

The Southern Minnesota Railroad was completed to Fairmont in 1878, and marked the beginning of a new period of development for the area. In 1896, the first switchboard and telephones were installed in Fairmont providing services for 35 subscribers. Electricity became available in 1890 from a privately owned plant which provided service from sun up to 10:00 p.m. The City purchased the generating plant in 1902. City water became available in 1897 from Budd Lake, but it was unfiltered. The initial filtration plant was built in 1924.

Industrial development of note began in 1909 when Fairmont Railway Motors was established to make small farm engines. These engines became useful on railway hand cars. Agriculture related industries, such as the Fairmont Canning Company and Stokely-Van Camp added to Fairmont's industrial growth.

From the mixed agriculture-industrial-based economy, Fairmont has grown and prospered into one of the state's leading rural communities. Adding to the steady growth and stability of the Fairmont economy are several leading industries which have settled in the community. Among these are: Fairmont Foods of Minnesota, Avery Weigh Tronix, Harsco Track Technologies, Hancor, 3M, Aerospace Engineering, CHS Inc., and Buffalo Lake Energy.

Fairmont has also situated itself to be a leading regional health care center with the continued growth and expansion of the Fairmont Medical Center – Mayo Health System, Center for Speciality Care, Dulcimer, REM, Goldfinch Estates, and Lakeview Methodist Health Care Facility. Fairmont is restructuring its claim as a retail trade center as well. Many national name retailers have moved to the community and more than 530 different businesses are active in the corporate limits of Fairmont today.

It is these changes, new markets and new technology that require an updated Comprehensive Plan to guide Fairmont forward through the next 5-10-15 years.

SECTION I: THE PLANNING AREA

The Fairmont Planning Area includes the incorporated area of the City. It is planned to begin working cooperatively with the County in the adjacent areas within two (2) miles of the City limits. The planning area occupies approximately eighteen (18)-(20) Square miles (12,000 acres). The area is characterized by rolling plains, lakes and wooded areas. Undeveloped land within Fairmont totals approximately 3,801 acres, 33% of the incorporated area.

Past Planning in Fairmont

Fairmont began its planning efforts by adopting a zoning ordinance in 1934. The ordinance required that a building permit be obtained before construction began and regulated land uses through a two district (commercial/residential) zoning system. Shortly after the end of World War II, it became apparent to a number of concerned citizens that a more sophisticated system for land use planning and regulation was needed. A Planning Commission was formed in 1946 to investigate and implement planning through revised zoning and subdivision controls. A planning consultant, Nord W. Davis, was hired to prepare a land use plan and revised zoning ordinance for Fairmont. The new regulations, based on the zoning principles of the time were adopted in 1950.

Approximately sixteen years later continued growth sparked renewed interest in updating Fairmont's land use controls to reflect changing development trends. With the assistance of a Federal Grant (Section 701), Midwest Planning and Research, Inc., was retained to prepare Fairmont's first Comprehensive Plan in 1966. The document reflected planning not only for land use and thoroughfares, but also for community facilities and the Central Business District. Results from these studies were used to prepare new land use and subdivision regulations. These new ordinances adopted in 1969 reflected a desire to control growth through a hierarchical approach to land use. Again in 1986, the City Code was modified to reflect changing times and technology. The 2007-2008 Comprehensive Plan review is no different. Technology has made market trends more complex. Fairmont's population is also changing and demanding more diverse housing and recreation, for not only different age groups but different cultures as Fairmont becomes a more diverse community.

SECTION I: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

Comprehensive Plan goals are formulated so that community needs, identified through the planning process are addressed and prioritized. These goals provide a listing of community objectives which can be referenced by policy makers when reviewing community development proposals.

In order that the goals listed in this section accurately identify community needs, they must be periodically reviewed. As one item may be addressed by a future community action, another need may appear which merits addition to the list. This review of Comprehensive Plan goals, completed on a five (5) year basis, will keep this Plan current and responsive to community needs.

The community goals as outlined here are the result of a nearly two year planning process.

SECTION I: HOUSING – GOALS

- Provide a mixture of acceptable housing, by type, location, and cost to accommodate the housing needs of a wide range of income levels, age, and family size.

- Encourage implementation of Fairmont's Housing Goals based on the housing study completed in 1996, and updated in 2003. The housing goals should be used as a guide for reviewing development proposals. These goals include:

    - Maintain and add life to existing structures (rehabilitation).
    - Work to continue to provide affordable housing.
    - Elderly housing.

- Identify and assist in implementing programs to encourage and assist in redevelopment and stabilization of housing in targeted residential areas. Continue the 1997, 2001 and 2008 rehabilitation program by neighborhood as funding is available.

- Establish an on-going system for the collection of housing data between the Community Development Department and County Assessor.

- Protect lowlands and flood plain areas from residential development.

- Review successful new development types such as mixed use developments, cluster housing, co-op style housing, as well as new rental housing within established neighborhoods.

- Identify changing housing market trends in terms of lot size and type, i.e. twin homes, condos, multiple unit developments, and shared access developments around the lakes.

- Identify changing market trends for senior housing compatible with surrounding and existing residential development.

- Encourage housing that may be more attractive to young people taking advantage of Fairmont's new and emerging post secondary education.

SECTION I: LAND USE – GOALS

- Provide for orderly and efficient growth of Fairmont as a regional center.

- Continue contiguous growth of developed areas of the City as opposed to "leapfrog", or non-contiguous development. Also provide for city/county/township land use planning in unincorporated areas adjacent to Fairmont in order to discourage random residential growth.

- Maintain land use densities at an optimum level to prevent overloading of public facilities.

- Encourage commercial redevelopment in the downtown and older commercial areas of Fairmont. Create an awareness of developable and available property.

- Encourage commercial and industrial infill and further development in existing industrial parks and areas zoned for commercial and industrial use.

- Identify commercial industrial use for property around the airport to take advantage of that asset.

- Encourage commercial and residential land use in areas where adequate public facilities are accessible, and characteristics are such that commercial development supports area residential development.

- Continue protection of lake shore areas through proper planning and code enforcement.

- Continue to promote pedestrian and bike trails as part of all developments.

- Protect low land, flood plain area from development, particularly residential development.

- Develop an annexation policy to provide direction for city expansion.

- Continue to annex and expand Fairmont's commercial corridor to the north and south along Highway 15.

- Insure that adequate land area is available for post secondary educational opportunities.

- Encourage a thoughtful mix of development for the west side of Lake Sisseton "Day Farm" preserving an undeveloped buffer of 500 feet along the lake shore, allowing minimal or coordinated public and private access points to the lake.

SECTION I: RECREATION – GOALS

- Provide adequate active recreational space for Fairmont residents of all ages particularly for field type sports such as soccer, baseball and volleyball.

- Continue to provide public access to the lakes for general recreation and potential marina development at public-owned lake shore.

- Encourage further development of bike paths within Fairmont's corporate limits. Such paths could be developed as part of a parkway and street system. This system could be stand alone or designated along existing roads.

- Continue efforts to improve the water quality of community lakes to increase their recreational value. Improve existing opportunities to utilize all lakes and access to lakes. Channel connections between lakes should be maintained as a priority.

- Encourage the development and adoption of a comprehensive municipal recreation plan.

- Encourage joint cooperation between the city, county, and school district to provide and maintain adequate recreation facilities for all residents.

- Identify in cooperation with the county potential sites within or close to Fairmont corporate limits that would support camping.

SECTION I: TRANSPORTATION – GOALS

- Maintain or improve existing streets of Fairmont at a level adequate for the safe and steady flow of traffic. Encourage development and improvement of arterial and major streets through Municipal State Aid (MSA) and Federal Aid Urban (T21) funding. Maintain a general thoroughfare plan as outlined in this comprehensive plan.

- Study the feasibility of removing parking on the City's arterial streets to provide for greater safety and efficiency in moving vehicular traffic to and from principal traffic generating areas.

- Encourage the continuation of commercial and industrial rail service to Fairmont.

- Work with state, federal and railroad officials to address rail crossing concerns and overall rail traffic corridor through Fairmont.

    - Automated signalization
    - Potential overpass
    - Overall cooperation

- Continued maintenance and upgrading of airport facilities to provide a positive incentive for community growth and access to the National Air Transportation System.

- Encourage reconstruction of neighborhood street systems and examine methods for project financing.

- Develop north/south transportation routes within the city on the west side of the lakes (Fairlakes Avenue).

- Develop east/west transportation route on the north end of the city (Margaret Street).

- Continue to provide and improve public transportation.

- Implement a long range transportation plan as part of this document.

- Maintain navigational access between lakes to insure full and safe access for boaters from one lake to the next.

SECTION I: PUBLIC UTILITIES – GOALS

- Upgrade the water distribution and treatment system in Fairmont to insure that adequate water pressure and quality is available for existing customers and future development. Continue to collect data to support upgrades and expansion.

- Review problems regarding the wastewater collection system and treatment facility. Implement required improvements in order to meet future residential, commercial and industrial needs. Such improvements should meet government standards for environmental protection.

- Implement the comprehensive storm water drainage plan to meet new (MS 4 Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) standards for Fairmont. Keep financing part of the overall plan.

- Continue to monitor water quality of lakes and evaluate options for maintaining water quality, particularly water coming into the lakes.

- Address yard waste issues as it relates to a city/county cooperative effort.

- Encourage adequate communication utilities to meet current and future market demands for cable television, fiber optics, internet and telephone access impacting neighborhoods and business community.

- Maintain scheduled inspection, maintenance and replacement of bridges throughout Fairmont.

- Encourage coordination and expansion of city services such as water and sanitary sewer to area lake developments on: Wilmont, North Silver, South Silver and Buffalo Lake.

SECTION I: MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS – GOALS

- Encourage cooperative efforts between the city, county and school district to provide adequate facilities for community activities and needs (i.e. senior and youth centers, YMCA).

- Continue maintenance and improvement of municipal buildings as directed by the Capital Improvement Program.

- Increase handicap accessibility in all active municipal buildings.

- Encourage municipal structures within the park system to enhance use and accommodate the needs of the community.

- Encourage future development of docks, boat ramps, and marinas to support lake access and use on city-owned property.

SECTION II: POPULATION DATA

In order to prepare a sound Comprehensive Plan, one of the first variables to be studied is Fairmont's population. An analysis of existing and expected population goes hand in hand with sound planning decisions which affect the future growth and development of a community. Awareness of a community's expected population size and composition aids in determining the future demand for needed public facilities and services. Fairmont's population has been studied to identify possible changes which will affect the demand for public facilities and services, ranging from parks to wastewater treatment facilities.

As with any community, Fairmont's population is affected by changes in birth and mortality rates, and by the movement of people to and from the community. The population of Fairmont increased approximately 7% between 1970 and 1980 to a total population of 11,506. From 1980 to 1990 the population slipped from 11,506 to 11,265 or 2.09% decrease. From 1990-2000 that population slipped again to 10,889 according to the Census Bureau. Local housing trends suggest Fairmont maintaining population rather than declining. A comparison of the population portrays trends which can be used in establishing goals for encouraging community growth.

Population

Fairmont's population trends have been analyzed and projections of future population have been studied to assist in determining community needs.

The following table shows the past population trends by ten year intervals:

TABLE 1: PAST POPULATION TRENDS

Year	Population	Year	Population
1910	2,958	1960	9,745
1920	4,630	1970	10,751
1930	5,521	1980	11,506
1940	6,988	1990	11,265
1950	8,193	2000	10,889

Population Projections

Population projections are based upon past trends in community growth. Fairmont's population increased at a rate of 20% per decade from the end of WWII until 1960. Conversely, rural Martin County's population began to decline following World War II. Both of these trends reflect the rural to urban movement of people during that period.

From 1960 to 1970, Fairmont's population showed an overall growth of 10%. Further review of growth during the 1960's shows that the 10% growth rate is deceiving. In 1965, Fairmont annexed a large portion of Fairmont Township and gained 1414 people. That factor, plus the natural increase of population within Fairmont itself from 1960-1970, should have raised the population of 11,934 residents. In actuality, Fairmont's population in 1970 was 10,751, which reflects a substantial loss of population. This loss can be attributed to out-migration and the maturing "Baby-Boom" generation. Martin County, including Fairmont, from 1960 to 1970, lost 15 out of each 100 residents due to out-migration from the area.

From 1970 to 1980, Fairmont's population increased by 7%, reflecting actual growth in the community through natural increase and in-migration. A review of building permits and development during the 1970's supports that growth rate. Population figures since 1980, however, reflect a stagnation of growth, due to the economic recession in the early 1980's, and a declining birth rate.

In view of the population increases and actual decreases in the past twenty-five years, population projections for the purposes of this Comprehensive Plan are conservative to reflect a guarded to optimistic outlook on future growth.

TABLE 2: POPULATION PROJECTIONS THROUGH 2030 – FAIRMONT

	2000 Census	2005 Estimate	2010 Projection	2015 Projection	2020 Projection	2025 Projection	2030 Projection
Fairmont	10,889	10,729	10,788	10,824	10,880	10,940	10,990

Fairmont's population between 1990 and 2000 shows a 3-4% decline. However, housing data and building permits support a stable population. Smaller family size and aging "Baby Boomers" are contributing to Fairmont's slight decline in population. New projections continue to be very conservative; showing a very flat population over the next 25 years.

Current Population and Demographic Analysis

The 2000 Census population data for Fairmont was 10,889 (Table 3). The 2006 population is down 367 people since the 1990 Census. From 1970 to 1980, Fairmont had experienced a population growth rate of 7 percent. From 1980 to 1990, the City, like

much of Greater Minnesota, experienced a population decrease of approximately 2 percent. This population loss was lower than in many other communities in the State, some of which lost as much as 10 percent of their population during the 1980s. From 1990-2000 many of Minnesota's out state communities grew by an increase of immigrant population. Fairmont has not experienced the influx of immigrants until most recently, in 2006-2007. This trend should continue as housing in surrounding communities with industry, that support an immigrant population, becomes less affordable and less abundant. Fairmont has a good base of affordable housing to help support the influx of this group of people.

Many factors may have contributed to the population decline of the 1990s. Agriculture plays a key role in the overall economy for southcentral Minnesota. The declining number of farms contributed to the loss of area population. The loss of manufacturing jobs could also be looked at as a contributing factor. However, many of those jobs were replaced by health care and service sector jobs. The Fairmont area labor pool is changing to reflect a 25-30 mile radius today. For example, it is estimated that half of Fairmont Medical Center's 700 employees live outside Fairmont. Despite these two changes, Fairmont, with its diversified economic base, is able to emerge with only a small loss in population.

Martin County experienced a more severe loss in population from 1980 through 2000 as smaller, agriculturally oriented towns and townships witnessed an out migration of residents. While the County's rate of loss has slowed considerably since 1990, there is still an anticipated small loss of population through 2007.

TABLE 3: POPULATION TRENDS 1980-2005

	1980 Population	1990 Population	2000 Population	%Change 1990-2000	2005 Estimate	% Change 2000-2005
Fairmont	11,506	11,265	10,889	-.03	10,729	-.01
Martin Co	24,687	22,914	21,802	-.05	20,982	-.04

The 2010 Census data will be the new bench mark coming up. Until then the City must plan based on population being stable.

City staff and the State Demographer are not in agreement on population estimates and projections. The City staff will be working closely with the Census Bureau in the up coming Census to assure the most accurate housing and person count. The 2010 Census will shed a better light on what is actually taking place in the area in terms of population.

The close relationship between economic opportunities and migration patterns indicate that the growing economy in Martin County will contribute to an increase of the city's population, and a significant reduction in the population losses that the county experienced through the '80s and '90s. With the City of Fairmont's continuing efforts to

attract job growth to the city, near term indications are that employment growth will continue to occur.

TABLE 4 POPULATION PROEJCTIONS THROUGH 2035 MARTIN COUNTY								
	2000 Census	2005 Estimate	2010 Projection	2015 Projection	2020 Projection	2025 Projection	2030 Projection	2035 Projection
Martin County	21,802	20,982	20,470	20,140	19,970	19,870	19,620	19,420

TABLE 5 POPULATION PROJECTIONS THROUGH 2030 CITY OF FAIRMONT							
	2000 Census	2005 Estimate	2010 Projection	2015 Projection	2020 Projection	2025 Projection	2030 Projection
Fairmont	10,889	10,729	10,788	10,824	10,880	10,940	10,990

Population Characteristics

Both Fairmont and Martin County have a large population of seniors (age 65+) and near seniors (age 55-64). At the time of the 2000 Census, 21.10 percent of the City's population was 65 years old and over. The 2000 State wide average was less than 13 percent of the population 65 years old and older. As the largest city in the county and the area, Fairmont is an attractive retirement location for seniors with over 200 new housing units built that cater to seniors since the 2000 Census. With its housing options, medical services, retail and service offerings, Fairmont will continue to be a preferred location for area seniors to reside.

TABLE 6 NUMBER OF PERSONS BY AGE – 2000					
	Fairmont		Martin County		Minnesota
Age	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Percent
Youth, 0-19	2,929	26.8	5,980	27.4	29.1
Young Adult, 20-24	450	4.1	841	3.9	6.6
Adult, 25-44	2,702	24.8	5,421	24.9	30.5
Middle Age, 45-54	1,514	13.9	3,112	14.3	13.5
Empty Nest, 55-64	996	9.1	2,112	9.7	8.2
Young Senior, 65-74	972	8.9	1,933	8.9	6.0
Old Senior, 75+	1,326	12.2	2,403	11.0	6.0
TOTAL	10,889	100	21,802	100	100

Martin County also has a large population of seniors. At the time of the 2000 Census, nearly 20 percent of the county's population was 65 years old and over. Fairmont and Martin County can benefit from a senior population through new job creation in health care and services. Seniors bring significant amounts of financial wealth to a community.

From 2000 to 2010, the Demographer's Office has projected small growth in most age groups 40 years old and older, with populations stabilizing in most under 40 age

groups. This is consistent with and continues the economic out migration patterns explained previously.

The State Demographer projects the biggest increase between 2000 and 2005 to occur in the 45 and older age groups. In the 40-54 year old age group (+11%) will be the largest increase, and smaller increases in the 55-64 age group (+6%) and the 75 year old and older group (+5%). A decrease in the 65-74 year old age group (-13%) is projected over the next 5 years. By the year 2005, net increases over 1995 are expected in the 20-24 age group, the 40-54, 55-64, and 75 and older age groups. In most all other age groups there appears to be a push in numbers from 2005 through 2010. After 2010 there is a slight decline in all age groups except there is a projected increase in the 65 and older population.

The City of Fairmont, as the largest city and county seat will continue to be an attractive retirement location for Martin County seniors. At the time of the 2000 Census, over 51 percent of the county's 65 year old and over population lived in the City of Fairmont. As seniors in the county age, Fairmont will become a more attractive location with its services, medical facility and housing options. National studies show there are 77 million people born between 1946-1964 that will be thinking about retiring in the next 10-20 years. This group of people have $2.3 trillion in annual spending power with an average of $300,000 to spend on new housing for retirement. Every 1.8 retirees that move to the community creates one new full time job. This is sure to help attract more young professional people to the area.

TABLE 7 COUNTY POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY AGE GROUP 2000-2030

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Youth Age, 0-19	5,980	5,186	4,880	4,770	4,790	4,730	4,560
Young Adult, 20-24	841	1,233	950	860	770	780	800
Adult, 25-44	5,421	4,503	4,300	4,260	4,220	4,170	3,930
Middle Age, 45-54	3,112	3,554	3,280	2,570	2,220	2,090	2,210
Empty Nest, 55-64	2,112	2,495	2,930	3,310	3,130	2,510	2,180
Young Senior, 65-74	1,933	1,746	1,830	2,190	2,600	2,960	2,820
Old Senior, 75+	2,403	2,490	2,290	2,190	2,290	2,630	3,100
TOTAL	21,802	21,206	20,470	20,140	19,900	19,870	19,600

SECTION III: HOUSING

Issues surrounding housing in Fairmont are a very important part of the Comprehensive Plan. A community should strive to provide "life-cycle" housing to meet the needs of residents from young adulthood through the retirement years. Furthermore, the availability of quality housing is one of the factors used by industries considering relocation to a community. Finally, housing is one of the dominant land uses in a city, and represents a relatively large investment of personal capital and savings.

In 2000, the City of Fairmont had 5,036 households according to the State Demographer's estimate. The number of households in the City has increased by .94 percent since the 1990 Census (Table 8). Martin County has experienced household decline at about the same percentage rate as Fairmont grew since 2000. The city's household growth has occurred at a faster rate than its population growth. This is due to the trend both locally and nation wide of decreasing numbers of people per household. As the average number of persons per household declines in the future, household growth should exceed population growth. City staff believes the 2000 Census under counted households; hence the 2010 household counts should reflect a significant increase.

TABLE 8: HOUSEHOLD TRENDS THROUGH 2005

	1990	2000	% change 1990-2000
Fairmont	4,989	5,036	.94
Martin County	9,129	9,067	-.94

Average household size in the city has declined from 2.33 persons per household in 1990, to 2.25 persons per household in 2000 (Table 9). Similarly, Martin County has also experienced a decline in the average number of persons per household. The city's average household size is lower than the county average. In 1990 the county had 2.46 people per household and 2.35 in 2000 just slightly above the city numbers.

TABLE 9: AVERAGE NUMBER OF PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD

	1990	2000	2005
Fairmont	2.33	2.25	2.19
Martin County	2.46	2.35	2.27

The small average household size reflects in part the large percentage of seniors in the population in Fairmont. The most common household type in Fairmont is one person households, followed by married couples without children. County wide, the most common household types are married couples, with and without their own children.

TABLE 10: HOUSEHOLD BY TYPE – 2000						
	Married Couple Family		Female Householder No Husband Present		Non-Family Household	
	w/Own Children	w/Out Own Children	w/Own Children	w/Out Own Children	One Person Household	Non-Family Household
Fairmont	947	1,451	314	123	1,562	176
Martin Co	2,094	3,041	452	205	2,716	306

Fairmont has a higher percentage of renter households than Martin County. Fairmont has 26.2 percent renter households, while the county has 22 percent renter households. It is common for the largest city in the county to have a higher percentage of renters. The population center generally has the largest share of both market rate and subsidized properties. In Fairmont, there is both a large number of subsidized multifamily rental units and market rate units in multifamily buildings and single family/duplex structures. Fairmont's rate of ownership and rental is nearly identical to the state average of 28.2 percent renter households and 71.8 percent owned households.

TABLE 11: HOUSEHOLD BY TENURE – 2000					
	Total Occupied Units	Owner Units	Percent Owned Units	Rented Units	Percent Rented Units
Fairmont	4,702	3,472	73.8	1,230	26.2
Martin Co	9,067	7,014	77.4	2,053	22.6

Household Projections

The State Demographer has also issued household projections. These projections again appear to be overly pessimistic when compared to the most recently released population and household estimates. They are presented as a possible scenario based on trends witnessed between 1980 and 1990. In the opinion of City staff, the projections are lower than what is actually occurring based on the latest data from 2000. City staff also believes building permits and utility billings to do a more accurate estimates of housing counts.

Existing Housing Inventory

Total housing units of 5,036 were existing in 2000 at the time of the Census, 4,702 or 94% were occupied. At the time of the 2000 Census 73.8% of the houses were owner-occupied and 26.2% were renter-occupied.

New housing trends continue to emerge in Fairmont centering on an aging population and offering different owner/renter options.

Table 12 shows new construction activity for single family, duplex and town house units in the city from 1993-2006.

TABLE 12: NEW CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY 1993-2006 FAIRMONT														
	1993	**1994**	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
Single-Family	13	13	9	14	6	11	9	12	8	8	9	7	12	4
Duplex	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Townhome	0	0	2	6	7	4	6	8	2	6	2	4	5	0

Single Family Construction 1993-2006

Over the last 14 years the City has averaged 10 new single family houses per year. In addition, other types of housing units were created including: twin homes numbering approximately 60 units, co-op style housing 36 units, senior living units at Goldfinch Estates-85 units, Ingleside-30 units, Lakeview Methodist-20 units. Fairmont's housing trends are following its population and market demand which will impact future land use and housing density.

House values in Fairmont are generally strong. As indicated previously, a large percentage of the city's single family stock was constructed after 1970. This newer stock combined with a large number of lake shore houses has contributed to the higher house values in the city. Average sale price in 2007 was $111,000.

Most of the people interviewed as part of a housing study believed that home values were steady or increasing slightly. According to local realtors, there has been a lot of activity in the housing market. Houses have been selling well and there continues to be good unit turnover. Home sales on average have been about 217 homes per year over the last six years with a market value increase of 32% and above.

The Martin County Assessor's estimated market values for homesteaded houses were used to generate an average owner occupied house value. Using the assessor's data, the average homesteaded house in Fairmont is valued at $111,000.

Most of the new homes being built have been of an higher average value than what is selling as existing housing stock. The average building permit value of the 60 homes built from 2000-2006 was $207,300 plus the cost of a lot at $18,000-$35,000.

TABLE 13: HOME SALES 2001-2006 FAIRMONT						
Sale Price Range	**CY2001**	**CY2002**	**CY2003**	**CY2004**	**CY2005**	**CY2006**
$5,000-9,999	3	2	0	0	0	0
$10,000-19,999	7	16	4	9	7	3
$20,000-29,999	27	17	15	11	15	9
$30,000-39,999	22	30	15	12	9	9
$40,000-49,999	19	23	24	19	25	18
$50,000-59,999	29	16	18	15	22	17
$60,000-69,999	16	22	26	19	19	18
$70,000-79,999	21	24	14	14	14	17
$80,000-89,999	22	14	14	14	15	12
$90,000-99,999	7	7	15	21	13	10
$100,000-124,999	15	18	14	16	21	23
E125,000-149,999	11	13	15	19	25	16
$150,000-174,999	14	19	9	16	12	8
$175,000-199,999	9	9	9	11	12	4
$200,000-249,999	9	9	15	14	15	16
$250,000-299,999	0	0	0	0	0	6
$300,000-349,999	0	0	0	0	0	4
$350,000 +	0	0	0	0	0	3
Total # sales	231	239	207	210	224	193
Total Sale Price	$18,277,964	$19,411,752	$18,581,377	$20,463,496	$21,140,953	$21,165,190
Mean Average	$79,125	$81,211	$89,765	$97,445	$94,379	$109,664
Median Average	$65,000	$65,000	$70,500	$83,500	$80,000	$84,775
Low sale price	$7,500	$7,750	$12,250	$10,000	$11,000	$10,000
High sale price	$262,000	$380,000	$300,000	$299,900	$315,000	$512,000

Housing Condition

In January 1996 and in 2003, Community Partners Research, Inc. representatives conducted a visual 'windshield' survey of single family/duplex houses in selected neighborhoods. As part of a SCDP grant, city staff conducted a similar windshield survey in 2007. Houses that appear to contain 3 or more residential units were excluded from the survey. Houses were categorized in one of four levels of physical condition: sound, minor repair, major repair and dilapidated as defined below. The visual survey looked at 1,096 single family/duplex structures. The visual survey analyzed only the physical condition of the visible exterior of each structure. Exterior condition is assumed to be a reasonable indicator of the structure's interior quality.

Four condition categories were used in the analysis. Dilapidated was the lowest rating used. Dilapidated houses need major renovation to become decent, safe and sanitary housing. Some dilapidated properties appeared abandoned and may be beyond repair. Some of the dilapidated structures are candidates for demolition and clearance.

Major rehabilitation is defined as a house needing two or more major improvements such as electrical wiring, roof, plumbing, structural, etc. Houses in this condition category may or may not be economically feasible to rehabilitate.

Minor repair houses are judged to be generally in good condition and require less extensive repair, such as one major improvement. Houses in this condition category will generally be good candidates for rehabilitation programs because they are in a salable price range and are economically feasible to repair.

Sound houses are judged to be in good, 'move in' condition. Sound houses may contain minor code violations and still be considered sound.

Windshield Survey Condition Estimate

Seven defined areas north of Blue Earth Avenue were surveyed. The boundaries for these areas were developed by the Martin County Assessor's office. The areas were defined by certain similarities between structures, such as age, type of construction, value, condition, or other criteria. Lake shore properties are excluded from the areas and were not included in the windshield survey. Some of the areas are very small, encompassing no more than 6 blocks. Other areas are much larger. Three areas north of Blue Earth Avenue and west of State Street were not included in the survey. These areas were either industrial or had a larger percentage of newer, good condition houses.

TABLE 14: WINDSHIELD SURVEY CONDITION ESTIMATE 1995

Neighborhood	Sound	Minor Repair	Major Repair	Dilapidated	Total
#1	6(8.5%)	31(43.7%)	32(45.1%)	2(2.8%)	71
#2	8(8.3%)	58(60.4%)	29(30.2%	1(1.0%)	96
#3	56(26.0%)	134(62.3%)	24(11.2%)	1(0.5%)	215
#4	108(31.8%)	188(55.3%)	40(11.8%)	4(1.2%)	340
#5	18(37.5%)	26(54.2%)	4(8.3%	0(0%)	48
#6	19(33.9%)	34(60.7%)	3(5.4%)	0(0%)	56
#7	85(31.5%	175(64.8%)	6(2.2%)	4(1.5%)	270
Total	300(27.4%)	646(58.9%)	138(12.6%)	12(1.1%	1,096

TABLE 15: HOMESTEADED BUILDING VALUES (2007) STRUCTURAL VALUE ONLY		
Value Range	**Number of Structures**	**Percent (%)**
$0-10,000	125	3.6
$10,001-20,000	336	9.8
$20,001-35,000	849	24.7
$35,001-50,000	840	24.4
$50,001-70,000	816	23.7
$70,000+	472	13.7
TOTAL	3,438	99.9

Future Housing Needs

After reviewing data gathered on housing and population trends, it is clear that the need for housing will continue to increase. The type of housing needed will reflect the population composition and household size. Housing affordability will also affect both housing development and redevelopment.

After a review of projected population and household size, it can be conservatively estimated that approximately 150-300 more housing units will be required in Fairmont by the year 2020. That figure will vary, depending upon the economic growth of the community.

The type of housing units needed will depend upon the future population composition of the city. Currently, the analysis shows a need for single family housing and elderly housing of various types to accommodate physical needs. Housing affordability and economic growth will also affect housing type. While single family homes will continue to be constructed, trends point toward smaller homes, condominiums, apartments, and cluster type housing that may or may not include some commercial or retail development as a mixed use development.

The condition of existing housing will also affect future housing needs. Through the use of incentive programs, housing that need rehabilitation can be upgraded.

One of the major concerns of the community during the 2007/2008 update of this Comprehensive Plan was the fact that there was very little land zoned to accept condominiums, complex or multifamily type housing. This seems to be part of a real market need. Since the 1999 Comprehensive Plan update approximately 60 townhouse-twin home type units and one 36 unit co-op housing building were constructed. In some of these cases, areas where the units were built had to be rezoned. Future land use should reflect emerging market trends.

Market forces are driving a need for multiple units on one lot with single ownership or rental. The Comprehensive Plan committee thought it wise for Fairmont to re-evaluate the area appealing to this type of development and adjust the land use. Trends in the 2000s see more and more condominiums, townhouses and twin homes in

very low density residential areas. Mixed use, commercial and retail combined, is also beginning to have a market in Fairmont. The mixed use will support redevelopment making it financially attractive to potential developers. This seems very consistent with the needs of Fairmont and should be pursued through land use planning and zoning.

There appears to be a real need for newer rental units, and multi-level apartments. A need for 30-50 units is not unrealistic based on population projections, growth in the health care industry and the emerging post secondary education population. Updating the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Map should allow this type of unit in more marketable areas. With the creation of Southern Minnesota Educational Campus (SMEC), student housing will also become a need in Fairmont as it is anticipated that this population will grow as the schools become more established.

Lot size should also be addressed as the market for more affordable housing emerges. Also, better over all land utilization and less distance between homes should be taken into consideration for holding costs down on infrastructure side of the development.

Garage-forward designs accommodate narrower lots. 75 and 85 foot lots may be more accommodating to curbing the cost of infrastructure and lot costs in the overall development. Narrower lots that come available due to demolition of substandard housing should be looked at as a way to create new, more affordable housing.

Affordable housing is becoming a more important issue all the time, not only for first time home buyers but elderly residents as well. Promoting neighborhood infill building not only promotes affordable houses but utilizes the land resources available and takes advantage of existing public utilities. Where possible, the city should promote the use of the foreclosed properties, abandoned properties and under developed properties as candidates for city sponsored redevelopment and infill. Fairmont does have a good amount of affordable housing; and implementing a housing rehabilitation program will insure continued good numbers of affordable housing (see Table 16).

TABLE 16: FAIRMONT BASELINE FOR OWNING A HOME AND HOW MANY HAVE BEEN SOLD 2004-2007

Household Income (1-2 Wage Earners)	Price of Home This Household can Afford/Monthly Payment	Number of Houses Sold 2002-2005			
		2004	2005	2006	2007
$7.00	Up to & $39,999 -- $262/307	34	31	31	21
$10.00	$49,999 to $59,999 -- $403/461	34	47	47	35
$13.00	$69,999 to $79,999 -- $549/615	33	33	33	35
$16.00	$80,000 to $89,999 -- $692	14	15	15	12

Assume 8.5% -- 30-year, fixed interest. Most housing programs and conventional home loans allow for up to 29% of the gross household income to be spent on housing. This includes principle, interest, insurance, and taxes. To qualify for a mortgage, no more than 41% of the household's gross income can be spent on total debt of all kinds.

The City of Fairmont has a good number of downtown buildings with second floor apartments, many of which were upgraded with the help of a Small City Development Grant in 2001/2002. Land use and zoning should be reviewed to support rental housing in the downtown area as another way to promote affordable housing. A serious consideration when promoting this type of development is to insure adequate parking. Zoning and land use should reflect the need for parking in the downtown area and may be achieved by the removal of dilapidated or dangerous buildings. The City should continue to support building rehabilitation when financially practical to carry on the efforts from 2001.

In an area of aging population, higher density senior housing is often a requirement. Multilevel senior housing units meeting their clients' needs by being close to shopping, health care facilities and entertainment. Allowing such units in lower density commercial business areas serve two important purposes; provides people with amenities and keeping buildings of similar structure and traffic demands in a common area. "High rise" type senior living may not be in demand in 2007 but looking out ten to twenty years it is very likely the demand will develop. These senior housing units could become part of the City's plan for mixed use development zones.

The City of Fairmont utilizes the Uniform Building Code. It appears to be working well. To promote orderly growth and annexation, the city should begin working with Martin County Environmental Services to promote Building Code adoption in the 2-mile area surrounding the corporate limits. Both the citizens in the county and the city would benefit from uniform construction and inspection standards.

To continue the orderly development of Fairmont and to protect its citizens and housing stock, the building of all residential units should be limited to outside the flood plain.

Management of the city's shoreland is critical to its orderly growth and the protection of the natural landscape and lakes they surround. The city should continue to partner with the DNR and other cities to adopt and enforce a uniform, state-wide shoreland management ordinance.

The lakeshores can be utilized for development if the proper safeguards and precautions are taken to protect both the citizens and the natural resources.

SECTION IV: LAND USE AND ZONING

A review and analysis of past, present and projected trends in land-use provides the basis of comprehensive planning for a community. Through this process Fairmont can decide what type and density of development is appropriate for a specific area. Once this is accomplished zoning districts can be implemented. The regulation and scope of the zoning ordinance should be directed towards producing projected and desirable changes in land use patterns and orderly development. Comprehensive planning will help achieve this goal.

Existing Land Use:

A review of existing land use within a community provides a basis for the study and forecasting of future development and land use. Data, for the purposes of this study was gathered from the existing Fairmont Land Use Map. This map was originally prepared as part of the 1968 Comprehensive Plan, updated in the 80's, again in 1999, and now 2007/2008. It should be updated every five years. Each parcel of developed land on the map was examined and coded according to use. The table on the next page summarizes the results of the review.

The table indicates that undeveloped land is a slightly higher percentage of the land use in Fairmont. Undeveloped land is classified as land containing no urban development. Agricultural and farm building sites have been categorized under undeveloped land. Presently, 4,714 acres or 39% of the total land area in Fairmont is considered undeveloped land, much of which was added to the City through a series of annexations beginning in 1965.

Residential development accounts for approximately 12% (1,430 acres) of the planning area in Fairmont. Public and semi-public land accounts for 12% and street right-of-way covers 8% of the planning area within the city limits.

Land Use Trends:

Recent residential development has occurred in the southeast and far south western portions of the City. Residential development in the northern and eastern portions of the City has continued, but at a slower rate. Two other areas that are being considered recently for residential development are the areas along County Road 39 south of Woodland Avenue to Lake Aires Road and on the north end of the community, north of Margaret Street between the Interstate. A review of available land zoned for residential purposes indicates that sufficient land is available for residential expansion for the next 10-15 years; given projections in number of houses needed each year (approximately 15-30) through the year 2020. However, market trends need to be examined and matched with residential density.

Commercial development has been occurring along Highway 15, which traverses the City north and south. Development has taken place at the north end of the area, adjacent to Interstate 90 and along Highway 15 North ¾ to one mile on the east and west sides of the road. The west side does pose some challenges, but not insurmountable. The area south from Blue Earth Avenue to the City boundary may see slower growth but is identified as a commercial corridor. It is likely that pressure to annex land south and north of present city limits for commercial growth will increase as space within available commercial districts is developed. Meanwhile, commercial growth along former Highway 16, since the opening of I-90 has been slow. Clean up of the dilapidation at the Blue Earth Avenue/Highway 15 intersection with new development has helped to re-establish Blue Earth Avenue as a retail corridor. The next major commercial/industrial park might well be the area around the airport and north of Old 16.

EXISTING LAND USE CITY OF FAIRMONT 1985/present		
Land Use	**Acres**	**Percent Area**
Residential Single Family Two-Family Multi-Family Mobile-Home	1,412/1,430	12%
Commercial	300/384	2%
Industrial Light Heavy	1,263/1,664	14%
Public & Semi-Public Parks & Recreation Schools Cemeteries Airport Golf Course Other	1,300/1,416	12%
Railroad	90	1%
Streets	1,025/1,030	8%
Total Developed Area	5,090/5,960	
Water Bodies Lakes, Streams, Slough	1,306	11%
Undeveloped Land	5,124/4,714	39%
Total Area of City	**11,520/12,028**	**100%**
Annexation	504	

Limited commercial growth has also occurred in areas along Albion Avenue. This area has had and will continue to have increased residential development adjacent to it. The use of land for commercial purposes will likely be restricted to neighborhood business/mixed-use development or businesses that support residential development in close proximity.

Industrial land use has increased in the past twenty years. Land identified as potential new industrial areas continues to be identified, the largest section being the County Road 39 corridor north to the Interstate from County Road 26 and west along CSAH 26 on the north and west of existing industrial park. The area on Blue Earth Avenue by the airport north of Blue Earth Avenue has good potential due in part to rail availability. The airport does pose some height restrictions. City services will need to be extended east along Blue Earth Avenue out to the airport. Services would also need to be extended west along CSAH 26 to open this area up for industrial development.

The older, general industrial corridor of Fairmont continues to retain industrial uses in the community. Existing industry has shown a recent trend toward expanding on available land remaining in the corridor. Fairmont has a policy of developing its existing sites to increase efficiency of public utilities. The City should also as part of this plan look at the areas that are underdeveloped along Interstate 90. Transportation access and visibility will be important for future growth and development. Critical to this commercial/industrial development is adequate transportation corridors, water, sewer, storm sewer and electric utilities. The City will focus its annexation efforts in areas that require public utility extension.

The City must work with the County to maintain consistent zoning and land use in these critical areas. An annexation plan carefully drafted to include plans for adequate infrastructure is being developed concurrently with this document and is Appendix I of this Plan. Annexation will be driven by the need for municipal services.

The old railroad lines through the central portion of the community should continue to support industrial expansion. Areas adjacent to the industrial area should provide lower density business and neighborhood business activities and higher density residential housing.

Limitations on Land Use:

Fairmont has a substantial amount of vacant land available for development, however not all of it may be suitable for building. The soil type, whether sandy or clay, level or steep, makes a significant difference in constructing buildings, utilities, and roads. Soils and topography must be considered when analyzing land use patterns and land available for development.

Fairmont is located in Soil Conservation District #6 and the soils have been placed in fourteen (14) groups based on their characteristics which affect urban

development. Soil groupings, for the purpose of this report, within Fairmont's corporate limits have been placed in four categories, because of similarities. Further information can be obtained from the Minnesota Soil Conservation Service.

Fairmont Soil Types:

CATEGORY A (Soil Group #1): The soils in this group are very good for all types of urban development, however only a small amount of this group is within the corporate limits located at the southeast corner of the City (see map).

CATEGORY B (Soil Group #4): This is the predominate group of soils in Fairmont and is also very satisfactory for building purposes. The soils have satisfactory strength and stability for foundations. They are subject to frost action but shrinking and swelling is moderate. They are not as suitable for septic tanks as Category A, because they are less permeable and sewage moves more slowly in the sub stream. If the soils are used as fields for septic tanks the fields must be larger than for the soils of Category A. Percolation tests which determine the absorptive ability of the soils are usually advisable on all of these soils in selecting a site for septic tanks, filter fields, or seepage pits. This group is also very good for landscaping including the seeding of grass, laying sod, and planting trees and shrubs (see map).

CATEGORY C (Groups 5, 6, 7 and 8): These four groups which differ primarily in the amount of slope make up the second most predominant type of soils found in the City. Basically, they surround the lake areas as well as the streams which flow into the local lakes. The soils from this group are also good for urban development. Slope varies from 6 to 12 percent in Group 5, to 25 to 35 percent slope in Group 8, thus the degree of slope will to a large extent determine the type of land use. For example, single family homes can be adapted to all groups, however, as the slope increases the soil types becomes less suitable for larger types of land use, such as shopping centers, industrial parks, schools, etc. Construction costs greatly increase as the degree of slope increases, and there is also the danger of down-slope pollution and erosion. The very steep slopes found in Groups 7 and 8 are generally wooded and have close access to lakes and streams which make them very desirable sites for parks, picnic areas and camping grounds. They can also be developed for such recreational uses as hunting, fishing, skiing and tobogganing (see map).

CATEGORY D (Groups 9, 9A and 10): These soils are generally very poorly drained and have a high water table. Unless they are artificially drained they are usually seasonally ponded. Like Category A there are only a small amount of these soils within the corporate limits of Fairmont located northeast of the airport. Due to the high water table in these soils their most logical use is that of a wildlife habitat or for parks and recreational areas.

Future Land Use:

The population of Fairmont is expected to continue to increase moderately through the year 2020. Undeveloped land will be needed for residential, commercial, industrial and recreational uses associated with the increased population. This section is intended to identify desired locations for new growth based on the characteristics of the area and the public services available to those areas.

Residential Land Development:

Approximately 1,430 acres of identified land for residential development in 2007 contain approximately 5,100 housing units with an average of 2.32 persons per unit for single family, owner-occupied and 1.8 per person for rental units. Owner occupied is approximately 73% and rental the remaining 27%. The average size of a residential lot is 10,000 square feet.

The projected population figures and the above information are used to estimate the amount of land required for residential development by the year 2020. Assuming an increase in population by 563 residents, and a current population density of 7.25 persons per acre, an additional 75 acres of unplatted land will be needed for residential development by the year 2020. This is consistent with the projected need of 150-300 single family households in this same time frame.

Sufficient vacant land exists within the corporate boundaries for the projected residential expansion. Land area suitable for future residential development based on soils, topography and infrastructure include the following:

The Highway 15 and Johnson Street area are well situated with major collector streets for traffic flow and infrastructure to support higher density residential housing. This area is also host to commercial activities that support the surrounding residential development. This area can easily support highway and general business use as well.

The Hall Street corridor is another area that could support increased residential development to the east. This area is also host to a major traffic intersection that has adequate commercial type land use that could support additional residential growth. This area should be a blend of general business and higher density residential along the first 500 to 800 feet north and south of Hall Street.

The entire southeast corridor along Albion Avenue east to South Prairie Avenue south to Interlaken Road and Lake Aires Road will contain most of Fairmont's future residential growth. Lake Aires Road and Albion Avenue intersection east of the golf course could support general/retail commercial development.

Other key areas that have adequate infrastructure and transportation services are the areas west of Summit Drive. This area would particularly be benefited by the extension of Fairlakes Avenue, with future residential/annexation south of Woodland Avenue along the west side of County Road 39 to Lake Aires Road.

The area of the George Lake dam to Holland Street is another area suited for residential development of a lower density. Included in this northern residential expansion should be that area along I-90 between County Road 39 and North North Avenue. The existing land use map reflects what can be expected over the next ten to twenty years in terms of residential development.

Municipal utilities will continue to be a driving factor in the affordability of development. Utilizing those areas equipped with services should be the community's priority.

There is a large area of land along Interstate 90 that lies south of I-90, west of Highway 15 to about one half mile east of County Road 39 that has been identified for years as residential. This area is filled with wetlands, low flood plain and limited access from the south. This area should act as open space with the exception of that area adjacent to Highway 15 west to North North Avenue which could support a more general business or highway business type land use to take advantage of the visibility from the Interstate.

Commercial Land Development:

Approximately 384 acres of developed land was in commercial use in 2007/2008. The need for additional commercial land will be based not only on the future population of the City but also on the market area Fairmont serves as a retail trade and service center. This market area encompasses an estimated 15,000 population in a ten mile radius; 33,105 in a 20 mile radius; 100,000+ population in a forty-five mile radius based on year 2020 population estimates.

The expansion of the trade and service area, future consumer buying power, and an increase in the variety of goods and services in Fairmont will affect the growth and need for further commercial development. Current areas suitable for commercial development based on soils, topography and utility placement, include the following:

Commercial area can be expanded in the Highway 15-Johnson Street area, south on both sides of Highway 15 to Hall Street.

Areas for future commercial growth along County Road 39 south of County Road 26 to the intersection of Woodland Avenue.

Blue Earth Avenue should continue to become more commercial through zoning and loses its residential zoning through attrition.

The entire Day Farm area with the extension of Fairlakes Avenue could host a more service type, commercial land use to support a variety of commercial, service and educational activities allowing for 500' buffer between the lake and commercial development.

The old dredge spoil site will support many different types of open space to enhance the compatibility of commercial development. The area south of Lake Avenue should blend south with lower density commercial until about half way to Woodland Avenue where it resumes residential.

Major intersections that are in close proximity to large areas of residential should be viewed as viable low density business areas that support residential living, convenience stores, restaurants, and motor fuel stations. Many developers today are packaging their developments to take on a look of the late 1940-50s when neighborhood stores and the like were popular. Fairmont will be developing a new mixed use zoning district for these areas and 6-7 specific other areas throughout the community. This mixed use zoning will likely be a hybrid of the City's existing Neighborhood Business Zone.

Industrial Land Development:

Currently, 1,664 acres are identified on the existing land use map as industrial. These areas include the industrial rail corridor within the city, and two industrial parks. Existing space outside the city limits will be required to continue industrial expansion.

As with commercial growth, the future population of Fairmont is not the only factor determining industrial growth. Industry location factors, site requirements and infrastructure capacity, all enter into the decision to build a new plant or expand existing facilities. However, industrial expansion does not guarantee population growth because of the increasing mechanization of industry and an available labor force which does not have to be local. Currently, twenty to fifty percent of the labor force in Fairmont's industries do not live within the city limits.

Future areas for industrial development based on soils, topography and infrastructure requirements include: the area south of I-90 to CSAH 26 west one mile past the existing industrial park, some acres would require annexation; the area along Blue Earth Avenue directly across from the airport north to I-90; that area along the railroad corridor through the City to Fourth Street. The area that begins to abut Lake Sisseton and George Lake should develop into neighborhood business/mixed-use and residential through attrition.

Redevelopment along Lake Avenue west of George Lake and the cemetery should be a priority. This area does make a good heavy commercial/light industrial area. This area has good infrastructure in place to support this activity. The spots of residential property should be removed over time through attrition as it does not fit the existing and future land use, specifically the trailer court.

Two areas that need to be changed from industrial future land use to commercial are those areas along Highway 15 south of Center Creek east 1200-1500 feet south to Winnebago Avenue. This area would be on the north and east side of what is now known as the Fairmont Estates trailer park. The second area would be along Blue Earth Avenue on the north side from Hawkins Chevrolet to the airport and north 500 feet.

Recreational Land Development:

Approximately 400+ acres of public recreational land exists within Fairmont's corporate boundaries. Applying the recreational standard of 10 acres per 1000 population, the community appears to have an excess of park lands available. However, included in the estimates of recreational land for the community is Cedar Park (259 acres). In 2007-2008 the community consensus is that the land known as the Day Farm site should be looked at for a number of alternatives uses that would contribute to Fairmont's ability to grow. It is noted that this area was originally acquired for a junior college site and never intended to be simply additional open space. Alternative uses for this property should be explored, and the area identified on the future land use map as general business with the exception of a 500' setback from the lake along its entire distance.

Fairmont should continue to incorporate bike trails throughout the city in all areas to encourage Fairmont as a bike friendly community. Bike/walking trails need to connect neighborhoods and parks and should be considered as part of the transportation infrastructure.

Agricultural Transition Areas:

The Agricultural Transition areas are areas of transition from rural to more urban in character. At the present, these are generally undeveloped areas or where minimal development has occurred. The goal is to facilitate harmonious land uses as the area develops.

Such as, the Agricultural Transition Zone serves two purposes:

1. It acts as a holding zone whereby rational review through the amendment process can take place to zone the area for an actual use in the development stages.

2. It serves to transition small single family lots to larger 5 acre lots. The lots in the Agricultural Transition area also act as the preferred zone for hobby farming and grain production within the city corporate limits.

At the present, the Agricultural Transition area is probably the city's largest single land use. The future land use map under consideration at this time should adjust that downward to some degree. This area will more than likely see most of the requests for zoning amendments in the future. When Agricultural Transition areas are developed they should follow the normal subdivision ordinance as large lot subdivisions are planned. In all cases these areas will be identified as a specific future land use on the Comprehensive land use map. This map governs allowable zoning.

Zoning:

Fairmont has used zoning to guide community development since 1934. Since then, zoning regulations in the community have been totally revised and updated in 1950 and 1968. Our current code was developed as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan in the late 1960's and revised in 1986.

As with any law or regulation it should be periodically revised to reflect changes in society and technology, the Comprehensive Plan and developed Zoning Code should be amended from time to time to meet changing demands.

The landscape is changing in southern Minnesota and rural America in general. Communities that are sophisticated and use technology to their advantage will prosper. Today, not only is our agriculture becoming more efficient reflecting manufacturing technology, manufacturing is becoming more sophisticated. Where smoke stacks once existed are now campus type industrial parks with minimal impact on the environment and community infrastructure

To be competitive for economic growth, a community must be prepared to address growth and the changes that accompany it. Zoning districts should be subject to change as market conditions and technology change demand for land.

Since the revisions in 1986, the adding of a full time Zoning Official, updating the Community Development Plan in 1995 and better community education, granted variances have dropped to less than five per year which is a statement as to how well the Zoning Code and Comprehensive Plan are working.

This Comprehensive Plan and its implementation into zoning should accurately reflect the wishes of the community and ensure the goals outlined in Section I.

SECTION V: RECREATION

Fairmont has approximate 400+ acres of publicly owned park land available for use by residents. The City has taken an active role in creating a wide variety of active and passive recreational facilities. The acquisition and development of Cedar Park (259 acres), the Aquatic Park, soccer fields and skate park are all examples of such efforts. Cedar Creek Park encompasses unspoiled lands which provide a variety of passive recreational activities (hiking, primitive camping, fishing, disc golf, cross country skiing). The soccer fields were old dredge fill and under utilized and now enjoys extensive use from a variety of age groups.

In order to visualize the type of recreational areas and facilities available in Fairmont, the following classifications of park lands have been made.

Class I – Green Acres

These are open passive recreational areas with minimal or no improvements. Such areas are retained for open space purposes. This definition fits the following Fairmont recreational areas:

	Acres
Bird Point	.42
Christianson Park	21.00
Lake George Dam Site	8.52
Methodist Home Green Belt	1.15
Nelson Park	.38
Old Incinerator Site	20.48
Total Acreage	51.95

While these areas are passive now as trends demand they can be developed for the future good of all citizens.

Class II – Neighborhood Parks

These are neighborhood recreational areas with a few facilities (i.e., playgrounds/fishing piers). The service area for such parks is generally limited to a neighborhood area within 6-8 blocks but is open to the general public. A goal is for the City to have all its parks connected by bike trails or trails on low traffic streets. This definition fits the following Fairmont recreational areas:

	Acres
Bird Park	1.36
Brodt Park	.31
Cedar Creek Park	.54
Charlotte Park	2.22
Dorothy Street Park	1.17
East Side Park	.85
East Belle Vue Park	1.24
Holden Park	.47
Sioux Park (10th Street Park)	69
Stroll Park	.08
Total Acreage	9.86

Class III – Area Recreational Facilities

These are active recreational areas designed for single-purpose active recreational use depending upon the season (i.e., softball/ice hockey). This definition fits the following Fairmont recreational areas:

Cardinal Park (Leased)
Winnebago Ball Diamonds
Hockey Arena – Indoor
Hockey/Ice Skating Rinks – Outdoor
Aquatic Park
Soccerfields
Skate/bike Park

Class IV – City or Community Parks

These are both active and passive recreational areas designed to serve the entire community. Typical facilities include: picnic areas, playground equipment, boating docks, walkways and trails, and active sports facilities. The following Fairmont recreational areas fit under this definition:

	Acres
Amber Lake Park	3.02
Gomsrud Park	13.52
Lincoln Park	8.00
Sylvania Park	4.13
Veterans Park	2.24
Wards Park	4.00
Total Acreage	34.91

Class V – Regional Parks

Regional parks may have both passive and active recreational usages. Regional parks serve both community and regional park users. In Fairmont, Cedar Park is considered a City park because of its proximity to the City and it's usage. Fairmont's regional park is further defined as a park that attracts users from beyond the city/county boundaries. Gomsrud can also be classified as a regional park. Cedar Creek Park is home to one of Fairmont's significant trail heads that will eventually connect all parts of the community.

	Acres
Cedar Park	259.57
Gomsrud Park	13.52
Total Acreage	273.09

Adequacy of Park and Recreational Areas

Based on the National Recreation Association standard of ten (10) acres of park land per 1000 people, it appears that Fairmont has an adequate amount of park land. In actuality, 60% of the publicly-owned recreational lands are within one (1) park (Cedar Park). Because this park functions as a passive recreational area, the actual amount of active recreational space within Fairmont's parks are to a degree limited. In order to meet the current demand for active recreational space, the City has leased or purchased two additional areas (Winnebago Ball Diamonds, Cardinal Park) which are developed for such activities (i.e., softball).

Fairmont has sufficient space which could be developed to meet recreational needs. The future acquisition of additional park areas, development and redevelopment of existing facilities, will occur as recreational needs and public usage of park land changes. City of Fairmont has purchased additional area around Winnebago Ball Diamonds and has developed a master plan to develop a regulation softball complex within the next 1-5 years.

Other Recreational Facilities

Besides City parks and recreational facilities, there are a wide range of recreational opportunities for younger Fairmont residents. Cooperative efforts between local governmental bodies have produced great neighborhood playgrounds at the three elementary schools which include:

A. Playground equipment
B. Basketball courts
C. Baseball/softball diamonds
D. Tennis courts
E. Football field

Private recreation facilities are also available in Fairmont. Two golf courses are located within or adjacent to the community. The Yacht Club provides boating/boat storage, and swimming for members. M C Fitness and Anytime Fitness provide basketball, racquetball, tennis and exercise facilities for its members.

Future Recreational Considerations

The review of current park and recreational areas has shown that Fairmont has adequate lands available for community park and recreational purposes. As stated earlier, the development of specific recreational facilities on such lands will depend on the needs of citizens for such facilities. Also current facilities are aging and will need to be replaced. The City has recognized these facts and has prepared improvement plans and capital budgets for park redevelopment.

In the scope of this Comprehensive Plan, and a projected median population of 11,300 for the year 2008-2010, the following long-range recreational needs should be addressed.

Neighborhood Recreational Areas: As new residential developments occur, land may be acquired to insure that the recreational needs of neighborhood residents are satisfied. The City will insure by either new facilities or connection to existing facilities with bike-walk trails, that such parklands would be acquired through dedication at the time of land subdivision. Planning in the subdivision design should make provisions for bike paths, hiking paths or sidewalks that fit dual purposes.

Center Creek Parkway: The idea for a parkway along Center Creek was first proposed in the 1968 Comprehensive Plan and still merits consideration. This bike/walkway would insure that development of land in the flood plain would not occur. Also, a trail for bicycles or hiking could be constructed so that area residents could enjoy the natural areas adjacent to the creek. Land for this project could either be acquired through the use of access easements during subdivision as a park land dedication, or through acquisition from a combination of local, state, and federal funding sources.

Community Bike Paths: Fairmont currently has 5 miles of dedicated bike paths within the community. Using current recreational standards the City would need a minimum of six (6) miles of bikeways. Since development of bike paths requires long-range planning, acquisition of easements and land, this area should be addressed by the Comprehensive Plan. A proposed bikeway will be shown on the Comprehensive Plan Map. A committee of area residents has identified a bike path system through Fairmont. This will be a key ingredient for Fairmont's recreation planning.

Lake Access and Improvement: Fairmont has five (5) lakes within its corporate boundaries. Its citizens have recognized the importance of these lakes and have taken measures to improve the lake quality. The city council, city staff and Lakes Foundation are working on activities like detention basins, rip rap of the city owned property, and detention basins at storm water outlets to help to maintain the progress made by past dredging activity. Equally important as actual water quality is the condition and type of public facilities which are available for citizens to enjoy the lakes. The redevelopment of boat launching facilities, lake channels, and swimming areas all require a substantial commitment of financial resources and time. As part of this Comprehensive Plan, a long-range goal of total redevelopment and improvement of such facilities is appropriate. Through continued Park Board/Department activities and short range capital planning, this goal is obtainable. Upgrade of the channels and bridges at each location is essential for continued use. Channel upgrades will have significant impact on the usability of the lakes.

Future Community Park Complexes: Growth of the community and a trend toward more family activities make park quality important for a community's viability. There are 5 major areas of improvement that will be the goal of this Comprehensive Plan.

1. Improved winter sports activities
    a. Ice skating – additional rinks
    b. Cross country skiing (Cedar Creek Park)
    c. Snowmobiling (Trails)

2. Creation of bike paths throughout the City that connect to significant community features and provide access into the county.

3. Increase activities in terms of summer festivals to attract and promote tourism. Pursue activities and recreational amenities that cater to and attract tourists.

4. Identify an area in the community that can develop into a full sports complex with ball fields, soccer fields, and volley ball and at some point include a community recreation center. This project should be considered long-range and planned to meet growing demand. This complex should be designed with tournament play in mind and could act as a tourism facility as well as providing for local needs. Recreational opportunities created should be focused on regional activities to include the greater Fairmont Area.

5. Identify and assess the need and practicality of a camping type facility within the corporate limits, or in close proximity.

SECTION VI: TRANSPORTATION

Overview of Fairmont Transportation Resources

The City of Fairmont is directly served by the Interstate Highway System and a network of State and County highways that provide excellent access to the surrounding region. Highway access to the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area is available via Interstates 90 and 35 and also by Highways 15, 60 and 169. Access to other Upper Midwest commercial and industrial centers, such as Des Moines, Sioux Falls and Chicago is also available by the same Interstate highways. This high speed and high capacity network affords the community with outstanding freight, business and general transportation connections to serve the community's significant agri-business and other industrial base. The City serves as a hub to a strong network of county and local roads to support and feed the regional network.

Rail service to Fairmont is provided by the Union Pacific and the Canadian Pacific owned IC & E railroads. Freight and grain service is available to almost any national market. Passenger service is not currently provided. Significant regional improvements have been made to both of the rail routes and these lines actively serve businesses within the community.

Air service is available at the Fairmont Municipal Airport with hard surfaced 5,500 and 3,500-foot long runways. Instrument Landing System (ILS) and other navigational aids on the main runway allow use under a wide range of weather conditions, allowing this facility to provide reliable regional service. Daily air service by scheduled carrier under the federal essential air service program was discontinued in 1999, but charter and rental service is available. Corporate business and general aviation are the primary current usage.

Planning and coordination of these major and other minor components of the transportation system as well as multi-modal management of the system in relation to other community resources and activities is an important goal of a well-developed Comprehensive Plan and will be addressed in this Transportation Plan.

Purpose of the Transportation Plan

The purpose of this Transportation Plan is to provide guidance for the City, as well as existing and future landowners for optimum utilization of existing transportation infrastructure and accommodation of future growth and development. As such, this Plan provides the framework for decisions regarding the nature of roadway and other infrastructure improvements necessary to achieve safety, adequate access, mobility, and performance of the existing transportation system and future improvements. This Plan references established policies, standards, and guidelines necessary to implement a system network vision that is coordinated with respect to county, regional, and state plans to enhance quality economic and residential development within and in the vicinity of the City of Fairmont.

Transportation System Principles and Existing System

The transportation system principles and standards included in this Plan create the foundation for developing the transportation system, evaluating its effectiveness, determining future system needs, and implementing strategies to fulfill the goals and objectives identified.

A. Functional Classification

It is recognized that individual roads and streets do not operate independently in any major way. Most travel involves movement through a network of roadways. It becomes necessary to determine how this travel can be channelized within the network in a logical and efficient manner. Functional classification defines the nature of this channelization process by defining the part that any particular road or street should play in serving the flow of trips through a roadway network. Functional classification is the standard process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Functional classification involves determining what functions each roadway should perform prior to determining its design features, such as street widths, speed, and intersection control.

The functional classification system typically consists of four major classes of roadways: Principal Arterials, Minor Arterials, Major Collectors, and Minor Collectors. Remaining roadways are generally considered Local Roads. The characteristics for each functional classification are described in this section and are based on good transportation principles and practice.

The use of roadways and corresponding functional classifications change over time and are periodically reviewed and updated to assist local, state and federal agencies in administering transportation policy. The functional classifications of roadways officially recognized by the Minnesota Department of Transportation in and around the City of Fairmont are illustrated in Figure 1 – Existing Roadway Functional Classification. This information was developed by MnDOT in conjunction with Region 9 as part of the most recent statewide transportation planning effort, and in consultation with the City.

MnDOT has two sets of functional classification definitions, urban and rural, for out-state Minnesota. These urban and rural classifications have different characteristics relative to density and types of land use and travel patterns. MnDOT's urban functional classification definitions currently apply in the incorporated area of Fairmont. Essentially, roadway classifications increase one level within an out-state urban area. Rural definitions currently apply to all permanently rural and/or unincorporated areas around Fairmont outside of the planned urban growth boundary.

The MnDOT classification process for out-state Minnesota is an outgrowth of federal transportation planning guidelines. These guidelines differ somewhat from functional classification of roads in fully metropolitan areas such as the 7–County Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, where functional classification is simplified to one set of designations. The net impact of the MnDOT process is that roadways in communities such as Fairmont may be "over-classified" by about one level as compared to traditional

urban transportation planning practices, particularly for roads classified as minor arterials and major collectors.

Since the long-term development of roadways should be guided by the recommended characteristics for the appropriate functional classification, "over-classification" can lead to roads that are built and improved to higher or more stringent standards than are really appropriate for the actual or planned conditions. Under each of the following descriptions for functional classification, the roadways in Fairmont that generally meet each urban classification are listed and also shown on Figure 2 (along with recommended future corridors). This listing recognizes the difference between the out-state MnDOT classification (as per Figure 1) and an urban classification that is more appropriate to the current conditions. Hence, some of Fairmont's roadways are recognized as operating at a lower urban classification than shown on Figure 1.

B. Principal Arterials

Description: Roadways of this classification typically connect large urban areas to other large urban areas or they connect metro centers to regional business concentrations via a continuous roadway without stub connections. They are designed to accommodate the longest trips. Their emphasis is focused on mobility rather than access, and as such private access should not be allowed or should be limited to the extent necessary to assure full mobility and safety. To the fullest extent possible, they connect only with other Principal Arterials, interstate freeways, and select Minor Arterials and Collector Streets. Principal Arterials are responsible for accommodating thru-trips, as well as trips beginning or ending outside of the Fairmont.

Interstate 90

Interstate 90 serves as the primary east-west principal arterial serving Fairmont and provides direct high capacity and high speed connections to other Upper Midwest regional interstate routes such as I-35, I-29 and I-94 and direct access to similarly connected urban centers such as Sioux Falls, Twin Cities, Des Moines, Rochester and Chicago. This is a four lane divided highway operating as a complete access controlled arterial corridor with local access limited to a folded diamond interchange at State Trunk Highway (TH) No. 15 and a full diamond interchange at County State Aid Highway (CSAH) No. 39.

TH 15/State Street (North Corporate Limits to Johnson Street)

TH 15 (State Street) serves as the primary north-south principal arterial serving Fairmont. It provides two-lane access north to the TH 60 and TH 169 Interregional corridors as well as Mankato and the Twin Cities. Within the City, from north of I-90 at Goemann Road to Adams Avenue, the route is a 4-lane (both divided and undivided) route and from Adams Avenue south to Johnson Street, the route is a two-lane principal arterial. Direct private access to these segments of TH 15 has generally been limited by use of frontage roads, except between 10th Street and Victoria Street. MnDOT has indicated a need to reduce direct access in this latter segment as part of long-term TH 15 planning.

C. Minor Arterials

Description: Roadways of this classification typically link urban areas and rural Principal Arterials to larger towns and other major traffic generators capable of attracting trips over similarly long distances. Minor Arterials service medium length trips, and their emphasis is on mobility as opposed to access in urban areas. They connect with Principal Arterials, other Minor Arterials, and Collector Streets. Connections to Local Streets should be avoided if possible, and private access should not be allowed. Minor Arterials are responsible for accommodating thru-trips, as well as trips beginning or ending outside the Fairmont area.

TH 15/State Street (Johnson Street to South Corporate Limits)

The segment of TH 15 lying south of Johnson Street connecting to Iowa has been classified by MnDOT as a minor arterial based on design and traffic use. A significant segment of existing access to this segment of TH 15 has been limited to connections with collectors at quarter mile intervals or more.

Blue Earth Avenue/Lake Avenue and CSAH 26

Blue Earth Avenue/ Lake Avenue together with CSAH 26 generally functions as the primary east-west arterial through Fairmont. Portions of the route are classified as a Principal Arterial under the MnDOT. Based on use and traffic counts, it is anticipated that the portion between TH 15 and Albion Avenue will continue to provide principal arterial mobility functions to and from the significant portion of the community's transportation system. Remaining sections serve significant through traffic, but primary function is internal circulation between other arterials, collectors, commercial/industrial areas and major traffic generators.

This route was originally constructed as U.S. Highway 16 in the 1930's and was turned back to local government upon completion of Interstate 90 in approximately 1976. Together with CSAH No. 39, the Lake and Blue Earth Avenue serves as a business loop linking the two Interstate 90 interchanges with Fairmont's primary commercial and business districts and also nearby communities.

With the City's five lakes, the City is currently limited to three access points for internal east-west traffic, including Lake Avenue and the bridge between Sisseton Lake and George Lake. This bridge was replaced in 2003 to provide improved access meeting State Aid bridge standards, utility connections and bike/pedestrian access (both along and under the new bridge).

There is extensive direct private commercial driveway access on the Blue Earth Avenue segment of this route. To assure continued mobility and safety with the high traffic counts on this roadway, new accesses should be limited and existing accesses should be managed as redevelopment and development opportunities are presented.

CSAH 39/Bixby Road (I-90 to CSAH 26/Lake Avenue)

CSAH 39 currently functions as a secondary direct access to the community from I-90, providing easy access to and from the west interchange for commuters, farm-to-market and other business traffic. The segment also provides service to several significant, emerging industrial destinations, including an ethanol plant, soybean processing facility, and active industrial park. Most of the commercial/industrial traffic on this route is non-locally generated with Fairmont business destination.

This route is currently operated and maintained by Martin County. Because of increasing heavy commercial truck traffic on this route associated with growing industrial development, pavement improvements were made by the County in 2007 with funding from county, city and industry. Projected increases in agricultural/commercial/industrial truck and general traffic and access to the west I-90 interchange will make this corridor a prime location for related truck and commercial business development. Ultimate development of the corridor will also be dependent on extension of city and other utilities.

D. Major Collectors

Description: Roadways of this classification typically link neighborhoods together within a city or they link neighborhoods to business concentrations. In highly urban areas, they also provide connectivity between major traffic generators. A trip length of less than 5 miles is most common for Major Collector roadways. A balance between mobility and access is desired. Major Collector street connections are predominately to Minor Arterials, but they can be connected to any of the other four roadway functional classes. Local access to Major Collectors should be provided via public streets and individual property access should be avoided. Major Collector streets are predominantly responsible for providing circulation within a city such as Fairmont, and are typically spaced approximately ½ to 1 mile apart in urbanizing areas.

South State Street and Albion Avenue (from TH 15 at Adams Avenue to South Corp. Limits)

This roadway was developed as old TH 15 originally in the 1930's and was replaced by the segment of TH 15 lying south of Adams Avenue in about 1965. South State Street and Albion Avenue were re-constructed as an urban concrete paving turn-back projects in about 1966, with several segments subsequently reconstructed between 1994 and 2007. This roadway serves as the only north-south collector serving developed areas within the south part of the community with traffic counts on parts of the route range up to approximately 150% of those on the parallel parts of TH 15. There is, however, no significant trip generator or inter-community use on South Albion (CSAH 41) lying south of the corporate limits at Lake Aires Road and traffic is primarily limited to rural and low-density lake development property.

With the exception of that part of the route between Oak Beach Drive and Lair road, it was developed to limit direct access to public streets and frontage road access points. A general business area, pre-dating original TH 15 in the excepted segment, is

served by several closely spaced driveway accesses. Remote access for these businesses is impractical, but future planning should consider strategies to reduce the number of private access points.

Albion and North Avenue/Downtown Plaza (from Johnson Street to Winnebago Avenue)

The Albion Avenue and North Avenue segments serve as the major north-south collector in the north portion of the community as well as primary downtown business access along the Downtown Plaza Segment. Additionally, the segment between Woodland Avenue and Blue Earth Avenue provides an arterial function between arterials and the community's commercial areas for those neighborhoods lying west of the lakes.

This route was the original state route in the community, pre-dating TH 15. All portions lying between Woodland and Winnebago Avenue and have been reconstructed since approximately 1988. However, the segment lying south of Woodland Avenue still exists as the original route concrete pavement (with overlay) and alignment. This existing segment presents special challenges in meeting State Aid standards for road widths and geometry.

The portions lying north of the railroad and south of Blue Earth Avenue serve moderate to high-density single-family housing, including numerous lake lots, and private residential driveways access directly onto the route, except where parallel alley access is available along north portions of the route.

The Downtown Plaza segment (between Blue Earth Avenue and Fourth Street) serves the Downtown business district as a north-bound one-way route with double sided angle parking, one of very few in the state. The route was totally reconstructed, with major underground utility replacement, in 2000.

North Avenue/CSAH 41 (North of Winnebago Avenue) to CSAH 32 and CSAH 32

That portion of North Avenue lying north of Winnebago Avenue currently operates as a minor collector and connector to Margaret Street, providing circulation for municipal operations and maintenance traffic.

As additional development in the I-90/TH 15 and Wal-Mart area occurs, the use of that part of North Avenue lying north of Winnebago Avenue continuing onto CSAH 41 to CSAH 32 is expected to change from a largely local road to a collector route. Although both CSAH 41 and CSAH 32 are mostly outside of the corporate limits and under County jurisdiction, increased urban use of both routes should be anticipated. Based on near term traffic counts and use, this segment currently warrants minor collector classification; however, the City and County should closely coordinate long-term management of the segment, including intersection with TH 15 (See Section V.E), to accommodate major collector functionality. The North Avenue bridge over Center Creek was replaced and upgraded to State Aid bridge standards in 2007 by the City.

Woodland Avenue

Woodland Avenue provides the second primary inter-lake east-west access point for the community. This route collects primarily residential traffic from both sides of the lakes, but also serves some through, non-local traffic originating from rural area west of Fairmont. Bird's Bridge on Woodland Avenue, between Budd Lake and Sisseton Lake, was reconstructed in 1983 to State Aide bridge standards.

Lair Road

Lair Road provides a third inter-lake east-west access point between Budd Lake and Hall Lake. This route also collects primarily residential traffic from both sides of the lakes. The entire roadway, with exception of Lair Road Bridge, has been reconstructed since 1989. The west potion (approximately one mile) of the road was converted from gravel to bituminous surfacing in about 2005. This change is expected to increase usage of the remainder of the roadway for rural and some city residents as a preferred route to destinations such as the high school, hospital and State Street business district.

The inter-lake Lair Road Bridge has been determined to be structurally deficient according to State bridge rating criteria and will require replacement in the near future. Because the bridge approach geometry is also deficient, relative to proper sight and stopping distance standards, addressing the wide range of stakeholder (park users, adjoining businesses, boaters, bicyclists, fishing and winter sports enthusiasts, etc.) interests and needs with any improvement will be a challenge.

The West Lair Road bridge over Dutch Creek was replaced and upgraded to State Aid bridge standards in 1991.

Winnebago Avenue (North Avenue to TH 15)

This route serves as a primary east-west collector for north portions of the community. In addition to serving residential neighborhoods, Winnebago Avenue is a key business access route, not only for adjoining business and industrial areas, but as connection point for West State Street Frontage Road and the businesses it served by the frontage road.

CSAH 39/Bixby Road and CSAH 20/Lake Aires Road

These two county roads are located on the west and south corporate limit lines and largely serve to collect traffic from rural areas and deliver to the previously described arterials and other collectors. The routes also provide Fairmont residents and internal traffic generators with alternative access to I-90 and TH 15 with a means to divert around local traffic in the core community.

E. Minor Collector Streets

Description: Roadways of this classification typically include city streets and rural township roadways, which facilitate the collection of local traffic and convey it to Major Collectors and Minor Arterials. Minor Collector streets serve short trips at relatively low speeds. Their emphasis is focused on access rather than mobility. Minor Collectors are

responsible for providing connections between neighborhoods and the Major Collector/Minor Arterial roadways. These roadways can be designed to discourage short-cut trips through the neighborhood by creating jogs in the roadway (i.e. not direct, through routes).

i. Fourth Street (TH 15 to Lake Avenue) – Primary east-west business and residential collector

ii. Prairie Avenue (Johnson Street to Winnebago Avenue) – Primary north-south residential collector

iii. Johnson Street – Primary access to high school and hospital/clinic

iv. Park Street (Albion Avenue to Fourth Street) – Alternate access to Downtown business area

v. Tenth Street – Business and industrial area collector

vi. Margaret Street – Primary truck route for municipal operations to City Public Works facility.

vii. Hall Street – Low volume east-west collector/connector between TH 15 and South Albion

F. Local Streets

Description: Roadways of this classification typically include city streets and rural township roadways, which facilitate the collection of local traffic and convey it to collectors and Minor Arterials. Their emphasis is to provide direct property access.

G. Existing Roadway Summary

Fairmont has a well-developed and functioning system of arterials, collectors and local roads that serve the needs of the community. Based on comments received by the City and during public information meetings for the Comprehensive Plan update, no significant systemic capacity deficiencies have been reported by the public in recent years. Some intersection performance complaints and spot problems, mostly associated with peak hour traffic near schools, have been reported.

MnDOT periodically collects traffic volumes for local State Aid routes, most recently published in 2005, and this information has been reviewed, in general, relative to existing roadway conditions. This review has not identified major capacity deficiencies along our arterial and collector routes, although reduction in level of service is certainly possible at some points during peak traffic conditions such as manufacturer facility shift changes, school start and end times, etc. Peak and hourly variation data is not collected as part of the MnDOT report.

Detailed traffic count studies and traffic capacity analysis were not completed for this Transportation Plan. This type of detailed analysis and evaluation can help to more clearly define specific system problems and is often incorporated into comprehensive Transportation Planning studies. Such detailed studies can also be completed at a later

date for specific sites. For example, studies have been completed for the State/Prairie and TH 15/Johnson Street intersection areas in conjunction with signal justification.

In comparing desired characteristics for each functional classification with conditions on each applicable Fairmont roadway, there are some identifiable deficiencies and needs to maintain and improve safe and efficient traffic conditions for the public. Some of these issues will be discussed in Section V, Existing and Future System Needs.

In summary, where recommended functional characteristics (such as limited driveway access) differ from those on a particular listed route, a goal of the local Transportation Plan and related policies should be to bring, over time, that route into conformance with the primary characteristics of its functional class or to eventually reclassify the route to more appropriately reflect its purpose. The following section on Standards identifies criteria to be considered in route planning and development.

Transportation System Standards

A. Roadway Capacity

Capacities of roadway systems vary based on the roadway's functional classification. General planning practice such as MnDOT guidance and other planning handbooks for urban areas estimate roadway capacity per lane for divided arterials at 700 to 1,000 vehicles per hour and 600 to 900 vehicles per hour for undivided arterials. These values tend to be around 10% of the daily physical roadway capacity.

The following Table 1 - "Roadway Types and Capacities" - identifies various roadway types and the estimated daily capacities that the given roadway can accommodate:

Table 1 – Roadway Types and Capacity

Roadway Type	Daily Capacities
Gravel Roadway	Up to 500
Minor Collector Street	Up to 1,000
Urban 2-Lane	7,500 – 12,000
Urban 3-Lane or 2-Lane Divided	12,000 – 18,000
Urban 4-Lane Undivided	Up to 20,000
Urban 4-Lane Divided	28,000 to 40,000
4-Lane Freeway	Up to 70,000

The capacity of a transportation facility reflects its ability to accommodate a moving stream of people or vehicles. It is a measure of a supply side of transportation facilities. Level of Service (LOS) is a measure of the quality of flow. The concept of LOS uses qualitative measures that characterize operational conditions with a traffic

stream and their perception by motorists. Six LOS are defined for roadways, ranging from A (best) to F (worst).

Based on the capacities noted above, a two lane arterial roadway has a daily capacity of 12,000 to 18,000 vehicles per day, a four-lane divided arterial street has a daily capacity of 28,000 to 40,000 vehicles per day, and a four-lane freeway has a daily capacity of approximately 70,000 vehicles per day. The variability in capacities are directly related to many roadway characteristics including access spacing, traffic control, adjacent land uses, as well as traffic flow characteristics, such as percentage of trucks and number of turning vehicles. The maximum (2005) daily traffic on any Fairmont's arterial roadway (four lane TH 15) is 13,500 vehicles and well below the maximum roadway capacity. However, because LOS is often controlled by peak hour conditions, actual level of service may be reduced during some periods of the day. Because Fairmont's arterials are operating substantially below maximum capacity, any reduction in LOS is likely to be a short-term inconvenience.

Major Collector and Minor Collector streets have physical capacities similar to those of a two-lane arterial street; however, the acceptable level of traffic on a residential street is typically significantly less than the street's physical capacity. The acceptable level of traffic volumes on Major Collectors and Minor Collector streets vary based on housing densities and setbacks, locations of parks and schools, and overall resident perceptions. Typically, traffic levels on Major Collector streets in residential/educational areas are acceptable when they are at or below 50% of the roadway's physical capacity, resulting in an acceptable capacity of 6,000 to 9,000 vehicles per day. Acceptable traffic levels on Minor Collector streets are considerably less. Typically, a daily traffic volume of 1,000 to 1,500 vehicles per day is acceptable on Minor Collector streets in residential areas. It is noted that 2005 daily traffic counts on some Fairmont residential collector routes (Albion, Prairie, Woodland, N. North, Johnson) exceed this comfortable range, resulting in some intersection congestion and waiting during peak traffic periods.

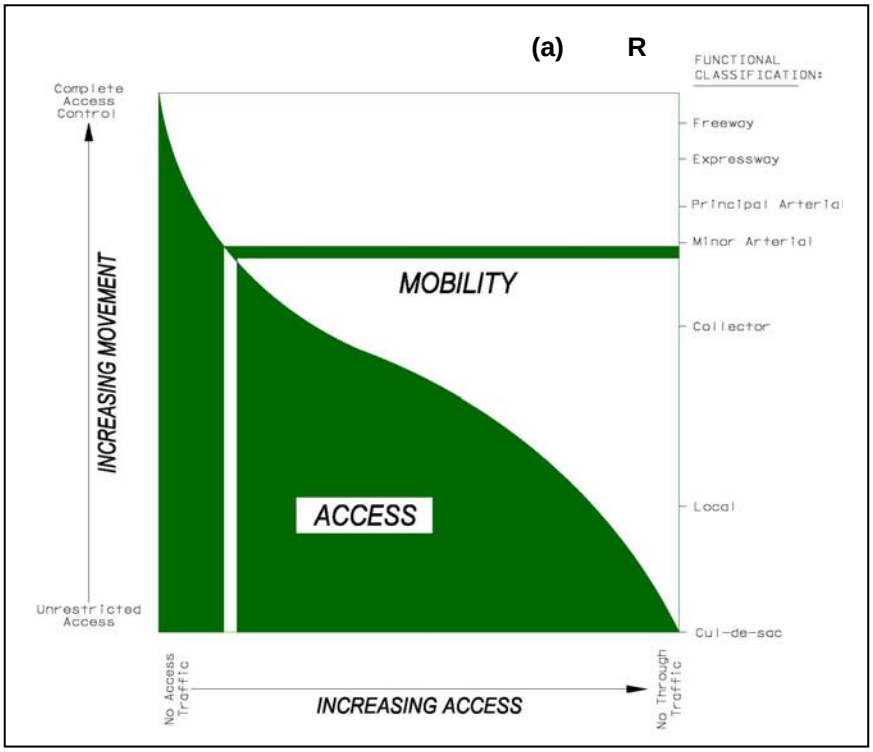
In a community with rapid growth, deteriorating LOS conditions will necessitate development of increased road capacity such as lane widening and other major capacity enhancements. With Fairmont's relatively stable population base, LOS and capacity issues can usually be most cost-effectively addressed with intersection management and other non-structural strategies.

B. Access Management Guidelines

Access management guidelines are developed to maintain traffic flow on the network so each roadway can provide its functional duties, while providing adequate access for private properties to the transportation network. This harmonization of access and mobility is the keystone to effective access management.

Mobility, as defined for this Transportation Plan, is the ability to move people, goods, and services via a transportation system component from one place to another. The degree of mobility depends on a number of factors, including the ability of the roadway system to perform its functional duty, the capacity of the roadway, and the operational level of service on the roadway system.

Access, as applied to the roadway system in Fairmont, is the relationship between local land use and the transportation system. There is an inverse relationship between the amount of access provided and the ability to move through-traffic on a roadway. As higher levels of access are provided, the ability to move traffic is reduced. The graphic below illustrates the relationship between access and mobility.



Each access location (i.e. driveway and/or intersection) creates a potential point of conflict between vehicles moving through an area and vehicles entering and exiting the roadway. These conflicts can result from the slowing effects of merging and weaving that takes place as vehicles accelerate from a stop turning onto the roadway, or deceleration to make a turn to leave the roadway. Even at signalized intersections, the potential for conflicts between vehicles along the route is increased, particularly where higher volume or higher speed routes are required to stop for lower volume routes.

Accordingly, the safe speed of a road, the ability to move traffic on that road, and safe access to cross streets and properties adjacent to the roadway all diminish as the number of access points increase along a specific segment of roadway. Because of these effects, there must be a balance between the level of access provided and the desired function of the roadway.

Access standards and spacing guidelines are recommended as a strategy to effectively manage existing ingress/egress onto City streets and to provide access controls for new development and redevelopment. The proposed access standards (driveway dimensions) are based on Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT)

State-Aid design standards and have generally governed access to Fairmont roadways, both on and off of the State Aid system for many years.

Table 2 – Roadway Access Standards

Driveway Dimensions	Residential	Commercial or Industrial
Driveway Access Width (1)	11' – 22', 16' desired	16' – 32' 32' desired
Minimum Distance Between Driveways	20'	20'
Minimum Corner Clearance from a Collector Street	60'	80'

(1) Widths measured at right-of-way or narrowest part of opening; excludes curb radii and actual curb cut may be somewhat wider. See MnDOT Road Design Manual details.

It should be noted that the City of Fairmont has access authority for those roadways under its jurisdiction. Likewise, Martin County and Mn/DOT have access authority for roadways under their jurisdiction. The County and MnDOT require driveway permits for access to their roadways.

In addition to driveway permitting, MnDOT also controls access to its trunk highway rights-of-way by more rigorous methods, such as acquisition of legal rights to access from adjoining property owners as part of highway construction or improvement planning. For example, MnDOT has controlled access by title restriction on all of TH 15 lying north of the IC & E Railroad and south of Victoria Street. In these controlled segments, access is permitted only at established openings (usually at public streets) and direct driveways onto TH 15 are not permitted.

As part of its access management standards, MnDOT has recognized that direct driveway access onto those portions of TH 15 without title control should also be limited. As the State plans future improvements and upgrades to TH 15, it will be working to significantly reduce direct driveway access onto the highway. As development and redevelopment occur along this "uncontrolled" segment of TH 15/State Street, City planners should anticipate State efforts to reduce or consolidate existing driveways and work closely with developers and the State to minimize new driveway accesses and redirect existing driveway accesses to lower volume city streets.

In reviewing the descriptions for the various functional classifications, it should also be noted that direct driveway access is also discouraged onto Minor Arterials and Major Collector routes. Although, driveway accesses have generally been fairly well managed on Fairmont's arterials and major collectors, as development and redevelopment opportunities occur, local efforts should be made to consolidate, re-direct or eliminate driveways onto high volume routes. Due to the nature of existing development along several of these routes (such as Blue Earth Avenue), elimination of all driveways is probably not feasible and alternative methods (such as lane striping and medians) can be considered to lessen the impact of problematic driveways.

For future collector planning, access spacing will depend on primary land uses served by the collector. Intersecting streets on Minor Collectors in residential areas are recommended to have a minimum spacing of 300 feet. Whenever possible, residential access should be directed to non-continuous intersecting streets rather than onto Minor Collector roadways. Commercial and Industrial properties are encouraged to provide common accesses with adjacent properties when access is located on the Minor Collector system. Cross-traffic between adjacent compatible properties is to be accommodated when feasible. A minimum spacing between accesses of 660 feet on arterials and major collectors in commercial, industrial, or high density residential areas is encouraged for the development of turn lanes and driver decision reaction areas.

C. Geometric Design Standards

Geometric design standards are directly related to a roadway's functional classification and the amount of traffic that the roadway is designed to carry. City of Fairmont has, for several years, based its geometric design standards on Mn/DOT State-Aid standards, as most representative of good transportation practice in Minnesota

Roadway Width: Roadway and travel lane widths are directly associated with a roadway's ability to carry vehicular traffic. On Minor Arterials, Major Collector roadways and Minor Collector streets, a 12' lane is required for each direction of travel. The 24' total travel width is needed to accommodate anticipated two-way traffic volumes without delay. In addition to the travel width, minimum shoulder/parking lane widths (8 to 10 feet) are also required to accommodate parked or stalled vehicles. Roadway widths not meeting the Geometric Design Standards will result in decreased capacity performance of the roadway, particularly in winter conditions, and can impede access by emergency vehicles.

Local roads are normally designed with a width of 36 feet, consisting of two 12-foot lanes with two six- foot parking lanes. Effective lanes widths may drive somewhat narrower, depending upon amount of on-street parking, and totally unimpeded two-way traffic is NOT anticipated with this design width. The City has normally allowed a 32 foot wide section, with parking limited to one side only, for local roadways located in restricted width rights-of-way or where high value trees must be protected. Where parking is not required (either due to adjoining land use or by roadway purpose), lesser widths have been allowed with minimum two-way 12 foot lanes and shoulder areas (three feet each side with curb) or four foot wide paved shoulder.

Low Impact Development (LID) is a design philosophy that seeks to minimize the amount of impervious surface and overall development foot-print to reduce impacts, both quantity and quality of stormwater runoff as well other impacts. There is a major emphasis in LID in reducing pavement width and incorporating vegetative and tree cover. As a regulated MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) community, Fairmont must consider and integrate LID concepts in overall community activities. Acceptance of narrower street widths with corresponding reduced transportation capacity on local routes will likely become one of the recommended and acceptable permit strategies for addressing permits goals in each MS4 community goal. An inconvenience due to reduced capacity will likely be offset in better water quality and reduced costs for stormwater

treatment systems. Although, LID concepts should also be considered on arterial and collector routes, it is unlikely that narrower street widths on higher volume routes will be acceptable and other stormwater management solutions on those routes will be preferred.

Sidewalk/Trail: As a pedestrian safety feature, sidewalks (6 foot wide recommended) will be provided on all reconstructed routes and all new streets. Separate or combined sidewalks/trails (8 to 10 foot wide) are recommended to be adjacent to all Minor Collector, Major Collector, and Minor Arterial roadways within Fairmont to accommodate pedestrian, bicycle, and other non-motorized travel in a safe and comfortable manner. These roadways are expected to carry a significant amount of vehicular traffic and separation of travel modes is necessary. At the discretion of the City, in commercial and industrial areas, the requirements for trails and sidewalks may vary to accommodate additional pedestrian and bicycle traffic or to provide connectivity according to the master trail and sidewalk planning.

In areas where adjacent trails are not possible due to topography or limited existing right-of-way, consideration may be given to on-road trails. If trails are located on higher-volume pavements, dedicated/painted bike lanes may be used if necessary to protect bikers and adequate pavement width can be provided.

Design Speed: The design speed of a roadway is the speed at which the designer intends and plans for roadway to safely accommodate traffic. This design speed is directly related to the roadway's function in the roadway system. The design speed governs the radii of curves, vertical sight and stopping distances, and most other features of the roadway. The focus of Minor Arterial roadways is mobility; therefore these roadways should be designed to accommodate higher travel speeds. Likewise, Minor Collector roadways are more focused on accessibility and should be designed to accommodate lower travel speeds. The function of Major Collectors is balanced between mobility and accessibility; therefore these roadways should be designed accordingly. Table 3 is the recommended design speed for the Fairmont roadway network:

Table 3 – Roadway Design Speed Guidelines

Functional Classification	Design Speed [(1)]
Minor Collector Street	30 mph
Major Collector Roadway	35 – 45 mph
Minor Arterial Roadway	40 – 55 mph

[(1)] At the discretion of the City Engineer for City roadways, with approval by the City Council.

Because of existing conditions, such as driveway and intersection spacing, on some routes, actual posted speeds may need to be substantially less than the design speed guidelines. It would the intent of this plan that all new facilities be designed in accordance with Table 3 and that the physical features of reconstructed existing routes be upgraded to the fullest extent practicable considering limiting conditions of the route.

D. Right-of-Way Width

Right-of-way width is directly related to the roadway's width and its ability to carry vehicular and pedestrian traffic in a safe and efficient manner. Required width of the road includes, not only the finished pavement surfacing, but also curbing, medians, cut and fill areas for the road structure and drainage, road ditches, back-sloping to transition into adjoining property, sidewalks and other appurtenant features. Right-of-way width is also a factor of the space required to accommodate the various public and private, overhead and underground utilities. In many instances the space necessary to accommodate all of the required utilities, particularly deep sewers, may be much wider than the actual roadway width.

The minimum right-of-way width will vary by type of road. For Arterials a minimum width of 80 to 100 feet is recommended. For Major Collectors a minimum width of 66 to 80 feet is required. For Minor Collectors and other local streets a minimum width of 66 feet is required. On marginal access streets, such as frontage roads that directly share drainage or utility zones with adjoining roads or commercial/industrial developments, a minimum width of 50 feet may be acceptable in some circumstances. However, in all cases, additional right-of- way for utilities may be required (either as fully dedicated street or as supplemental utility easements) and may be increased at discretion of City Engineer with approval of Council. Right-of-way needs in each development should be reviewed by City and developer for special conditions and topography as part of the platting process or redevelopment process and prior to plan development. Final building setbacks may need to be adjusted depending on final right-of-way and improvement requirements.

Existing and Future Transportation System Needs

The existing transportation system within the City of Fairmont currently provides sufficient transportation service to the City. However, as part of the Comprehensive Planning process and also as general knowledge to City staff, there are several existing and future issues that should be considered in administration of this Plan and future development of the community. This information is provided as guidance to staff, developers and community leaders in planning.

A. Railroad and Vehicular Interaction

With the additional industrial development in the west industrial area together with a growing emphasis on rail use, over the coming years the community will experience a substantial growth in train traffic on both Union Pacific and the Canadian-owned I.C. & E. Railroad facilities. This rail use will include both moderate to high speed through trains and also rail handling on spur lines throughout the community. In 2008, rail-crossing gates were installed on North Avenue and CSAH 39 (Bixby Road). A gate is planned on Prairie Avenue in approximately 2011. There have been gates at TH 15 for many years. The potential for accidents will increase at all ungated crossings. Consideration should be given to requesting gates at any remaining higher volume crossings, closing low volume crossings, and increasing public awareness regarding rail-crossing safety.

Along with increases in more disruption of traffic due to regular train operations, increased freight handling on spur lines may increase the duration and frequency of disruptions. Although facilities like the Buffalo Lake Ethanol plant are geared up for "unit train" operations that minimize spur activities, other facilities may become more reliant on rail freight. All rail crossings in Fairmont are "at grade" with no rail over/underpasses and traffic disruption by multiple trains creates the prospect of "splitting" access between north and south sides of the city. Strategic planning discussions with both railroads as to optimizing rail-vehicular coordination is advisable as is long-term planning of deployment of emergency services resources.

B. Future Major and Minor Collectors

Although the community has a well-developed and effective transportation system serving existing development, developing and future growth areas will require expansion of the existing collector system. The City's lake geography also necessitates additional collectors to better distribute traffic to the inter-lake crossing routes (Lair Road, Woodland Avenue and Lake Avenue). The following future collectors have been long anticipated to provide adequate support for future development and improved system circulation patterns:

Fairlakes Avenue (From Woodland Avenue to Lake Avenue) – The in-place segment between Woodland and Hengen Street was originally developed as a Major Collector.

Fairlakes Avenue (From Woodland Avenue to Lair Road) – Minor Collector

Prairie Avenue (Complete Connection from East Belle Vue Road to Hall Street) – Minor Collector

Prairie Avenue (From Hall Street to Interlaken Road or Lake Aires Road) –Minor Collector

Indus Street and 10th Street Link – Upon petition of local industry, Indus Street was upgraded in 2006 from gravel to paved truck route. Additional light industrial development along unimproved (gravel) Eighth Street is increasing usage between the Highway 15 frontage road and Indus Street. Ideally, Indus Street should link as a minor industrial/commercial collector to Tenth Street, via an improved Eighth Street/East TH 15 Frontage or future loop along Eighth and re-routed/extended Marcus (between Eighth and Tenth). Based on comments from MnDOT, arising from review of local rail crossings, the State would prefer to see the rail crossing on East TH 15 Frontage eliminated or re-located to a point further away from Highway 15. The future loop and relocated railroad crossing alternate will be dependent on acquiring adequate right-of-way for the north-south segment, stormwater management facility siting and securing railroad concurrence for the crossing relocation; but, this construction would be eligible for State Aid funding based on current designated segments.

Margaret Street (From Existing North Avenue to CSAH 39) - The need for another local inter-lake crossing north of Lake George has also been anticipated since at least 1976. With recent increased development on both ends of Margaret

Street and significant growth in commercial/industrial use of the west I-90 interchange, this becomes the logical connector to divert heavy commercial/industrial traffic away from other core city routes. Construction of this route could also serve as a catalyst for development of adjoining properties. Design function of the route (major or minor collector) will depend on timing and type of development in and near the corridor. It should be noted that routing through the Center and Lily Creek floodplains will be a challenge and likely result in a higher-than-average construction cost for improvements.

Future Eastside Collector – As agricultural areas east of Highway 15 are developed, there will, ultimately, be a need for a minor north-south collector between Blue Earth Avenue (CSAH 26) and Johnson Street to divert through traffic away from the existing residential areas. This function is currently provided, to a limited degree, by Burton Lane but will need to be relocated and extended to better serve future Eastside development patterns. A new north-south collector has been contemplated in planning and routing for the Eastside Sanitary Interceptor and Eastside Storm Sewer projects, but because of uncertainties in development timing, stormwater management siting and topography, no specific collector route has yet been finalized. Ultimate development planning will need to consider the need this collector. Inherent in this concept is the need to ultimately improve that part of Johnson Street lying west of the future north-south collector and also to address, as part of overall community and county planning, the impact of further development in unincorporated areas lying south of Johnson Street on city infrastructure.

The timing and function for each of these collectors will likely be driven by development in each corridor and available funding sources, public and private (developer). However, the City should work with property owners to identify right-of-way corridors and reserve routing that will both meet public transportation goals and accommodate cost-effective private development.

Patriot Drive and Independence Drive Connection

The north Knollwood Drive and Lair Road area has an interesting planning history. Completion of proper transportation connections has been complicated by the number and location of private property interests along the various potential connection routes. Concepts plans have been completed and accepted for development of the areas, including connection of Patriot Drive with Independence Drive. Based on comments received during Comprehensive Plan development, there appears to be significant interest in completing the connection in accordance with accepted concepts. Future development of Fairlakes Avenue in the vicinity of these streets may also improve area traffic circulation.

Main Street/Lake Avenue/First Street Avenue

One of the most unusual intersections in the area is the Main Street – Lake Avenue – First Street intersection lying east of the courthouse. This intersection creates serious traffic management problems due to the number of “legs” of the

intersection, grades of approaching streets and number of potential turning conflicts. Improvement of this segment of Lake Avenue is pending available funding and finalization of courthouse plans for the old "Amoco Station" site. It is likely that the intersection will need to be split, eliminating direct access from either Main or First Street onto Lake Avenue.

CSAH 32/TH 15 Ramps and Goemann Road

As part of the Wal-Mart planning process, a sub-area transportation plan was developed by the City in conjunction with MnDOT, Martin County and the developer. As part of MnDOT requirements, Goemann Road was signalized and located north of the former township road connection. The township road connection to TH 15 was diverted to Goemann Avenue and eliminated. CSAH 32, on the west side of TH 15, is still aligned with the obliterated township road and is north of the north I-90 ramps. As part of future improvements to TH 15, a detailed review of the CSAH 32 intersection will be needed to improve the overall traffic flow at TH 15 and I-90. Demand for intersection improvement may also be driven by future development in the northwest quadrant of the TH15 /I-90 intersection. One alternative is to realign CSAH 32, directly or indirectly, with the signalized intersection at Goemann Road.

C. Stormwater and Wetland Issues

As noted previously development and construction within Fairmont is subject to state and federal MS4 stormwater management obligations. Construction is also subject to wetland protection requirements. Several of the future collectors (Prairie, Margaret) will be subject to known obligations for wetland preservation and/or replacement as will ultimate development of existing roadways (such as Hall Street). All projects will be required to provide facilities (detention basins, sediment collection systems, construction erosion controls, etc.) that will increase total project costs. Although these stormwater management features will result in improved water quality going to Fairmont's lake system, the added costs will need to be considered in the overall comprehensive planning process.

D. Aging Pavement Sections

Several segments of concrete paving on key collector routes that were constructed in the 1960's are now deteriorating due to a phenomenon known as "D-cracking." This condition is common on similarly aged pavements throughout the Midwest and is related to the quality of aggregates used in the concrete during that period. Near-term replacement of these concrete pavement segments are planned, subject to MSAS and local funding, but in the interim, the segments will require substantial patching efforts and costs. Little can be done to prevent ultimate failure due to D-cracking and current Sate concrete pavement design practices and materials reduce the likelihood of this condition.

The City of Fairmont has proactively and aggressively improved its transportation infrastructure with an active capital improvements program since the 1970's. The City

has an effective bituminous preservation program (seal coating, mill/overlay and full depth re-surfacing) that addresses deterioration of those pavements and will effectively extend pavement life. No similar formal concrete pavement rehabilitation and repair program exists. Concrete pavement typically is planned with a 40-year design life, but actual pavement service life can normally exceed much beyond 40 years with periodic maintenance such a joint replacement and spot panel repairs. Although little can be done to restore 1960's-generation segments affected by D-cracking, it is recommended that the City explore rehab methods and funding sources to develop a concrete pavement rehabilitation program that will maximize long-term performance of newer concrete paving segments.

Multi-modal Transportation Options

In addition to Fairmont's extensive roadway system, the community has access to multi-modal transportation facilities that both support and augment the capabilities of the City's roadways.

A. Railroad System

Both the Union Pacific (UP) and the Canadian Pacific-owned IC & E Railroads serve Fairmont with direct service. This rail service is a significant benefit for local industry and an attraction for prospective business development. Freight and grain service is available to almost any national market. The two railroads operate on a common main track through the community and on several sidetracks. Harsco (formerly Fairmont Railway Motors) Corp. Track Technologies acquired part of the old second main track for equipment testing and operations.

Both railroads have made major investments in their area rail facilities to accommodate increased traffic at higher operating speeds. Potential impacts to vehicular traffic are discussed elsewhere in this Plan. Passenger service is not currently provided.

Significant industrial use of rail access has been made by local industry in the area west of CSAH 39 with less intense usage in the remainder of the community. As rail access capacity in the west industrial area is maximized, the community and prospective businesses will need to look to expanding rail access in other areas of the community or adjoining undeveloped areas. Development in some of these areas is limited due to environmental, airport zoning and competing industrial uses. Nonetheless, City staff and area planners should be considering policies and strategies to optimize development along the entire rail corridor in the Fairmont area.

B. Aviation and Air Service

The Fairmont Municipal Airport is located 1.5 miles east of TH 15 on CSAH 26. With the largest runway facility and most technically equipped airport in south central Minnesota, the facility provides General Aviation service for the region. The airport accommodates approximately 7,000 operations (take-offs and landings)

per year (2006 state data), of which approximately 40 percent are locally based-aircraft and 10 percent were multi-engine and jet aircraft. The facility serves a wide range of aircraft, including corporate jet and other aircraft for local businesses. Approximately 16 aircraft are currently based at the airport.

According to information presented in the local Airport Layout Plan (ALP), the existing 5,505-foot long main runway that has a planned expansion to 6,900 feet at the Fairmont Municipal Airport was constructed with a 13-31 (NW-SE) orientation. The existing Runway 13-31 is a bituminous surfaced pavement, 100 feet wide. Existing navigational aids for Runway 13-31 include High Intensity Runway Lighting (HIRL), and four-box Precision Approach Path Indicators (PAPI's). Runway End Indicator Lights (REILS) are located at the arrival end of Runway 13. Runway 31 has Medium Intensity Approach Lighting System (MALSR) associated with its ILS approach. Runway markings for Runway 31 are Precision Instrument, and Non-Precision Instrument for Runway 13. There is also a 3,300-foot long, 75-feet wide bituminous crosswind Runway 02-20 (NNE/SSW). This runway has Medium Intensity Runway Lighting (MIRL), and visual runway markings. The following are the instrument approaches available at the Fairmont Municipal Airport:

- ILS Runway 31
- VOR/DME Runway 13
- VOR/DME Runway 31
- VOR or GPS Runway 13
- VOR or GPS Runway 31
- COPTER ILS Runway 31

Additional navigation aids include a rotating beacon, and a VOR facility on airport property. Fairmont Municipal Airport also has an Automated Weather Observing Station (AWOS) on-site broadcasting information through the VOR facility.

The existing airport is rated as an *Other than Utility* facility with runway pavement rating of 35,000 lbs. SW (single wheel gear) and 40,000 lbs. DW (dual wheel) for Runway 13-31 (prior plan allowance for Runway 13-31 rating at 44,000 lb SW and 60,000 lb DW). The crosswind runway 02-20 has a pavement rating of 25,000 lb SW. This facility serves General Aviation aircraft. It is on the Minnesota State Aviation System Plan as well as the FAA National Integrated Airport System Plan (NPIAS). To maintain the present status on these airport systems, the facility's Airport Layout Plan (ALP) is regularly updated to meet the current Mn/DOT and FAA criteria and maintain eligibility for cost sharing for future improvements.

The most current planning and improvement efforts for the facility will be based on accommodation of BII (current) and CII (ultimate) Class aircraft. Typical aircraft in the BII class are Falcon DA50, Cessna citation II, and Cessna Citation V. The CII classification includes Hawker 800 XP, Challenger 604, Learjet 60, Citation X and Gulfstream II aircraft. The facility can physically accommodate both categories of airplane, but current use is more reflective of BII aircraft and this classification will require somewhat less stringent and less costly land surface area

controls. Ultimately, it is proposed to extend Runway 13-31 to the southeast, at which time sufficient land will be available to upgrade the facility for extensive CII (or larger) aircraft operations.

Long-term runway development planning has included closure or relocation of 220th Street (township controlled road) between CSAH 26 and Johnson Street to facilitate runway safety standards. With the current interim runway classification and future plans to extend Runway 13-31 to the southeast, roadway impacts can be mitigated and airport authorities have agreed to defer road closure and relocation requirements until runway usage changes and classification must be upgraded or until a future runway extension removes any roadway conflict potential.

For many years, the Airport featured scheduled passenger service by air carrier to Midwest air hubs. Passenger service was federally subsidized under the Essential Air Service system subsidy. This subsidy was discontinued in 1999 and scheduled passenger service ended shortly thereafter. Charter service is currently available through the airport's FBO or other services. Under current air industry economics, it is unlikely that scheduled air passenger service will return to Fairmont. However, to the extent financially practicable, it should be a general goal of the community to maintain a high level of airport condition in the event that future local business demand or air industry economic conditions change and warrant re-evaluation of the feasibility of scheduled air carrier service. Local financial commitments at the airport will, of course, need to be balanced with other transportation and community system needs.

Airport airspace is currently protected and managed in accordance with State of Minnesota standards and zoning practices. In order to preserve current airport operations and funding, it is very important that the City conform to state land use requirements and procedures in any airport zoning area. It should be noted that high-occupancy development uses are limited in the first 5,500 feet of the approach area at both ends of Runway 13-31. This land use limitation area extends approximately to the Indus Street and Eighth Street intersection and includes a portion of the UP Railroad. Relative to the use of and potential interest in rail access, as described in the preceding section, some higher occupancy business uses directly adjoining the railroad may be affected by the airport zoning. However, low occupancy uses (such as warehousing) and spur development and operations would normally be acceptable.

There is undeveloped land available at the airport and, this property can be available for certain business and industrial purposes, particularly those having air service and airfreight needs. There is no existing city sanitary sewer service and city water service is limited to domestic consumption only. Development of land-side business enterprises at the Airport will require utility extensions but should be considered as an option for appropriate prospects. Such businesses can significantly support and promote increased utilization of long-term investments at the airport.

C. Sidewalks and Trails

Sidewalks exist through most parts of the established community and were a basic development standard prior to about 1965, except in the lake frontage areas and in some commercial areas. Sidewalks were generally not required as part of subsequent new development, except on certain routes serving routes near schools, parks and commercial areas. As a result, pedestrians must share the roadway with vehicles in much of the newer parts of the community. Although street widths have been planned and increased for this multiple use and traffic volumes on most local roads do not present an unreasonable hazard to pedestrians, the comprehensive planning process found significant public interest in expanding sidewalk availability. The community has periodically reviewed its sidewalk needs and currently sidewalks are recommended on all future new developments and as additions during reconstruction of any existing streets that currently do not have sidewalks (See Section IV).

The City has established a comprehensive network of both off-street bike trails and on-street bike trail routes. The community trail plan includes goals to link neighborhoods, lake areas and parks with a complete trail system. Bike trails have been developed on public property at the Day Farm, Cedar Creek Park and as access to the Aquatic Park. Bituminous trails have been added to recent improvements to South Albion Avenue. Both Minnesota Sate Aid and federal transportation funding can be used to construct trails as multi-modal transportation features. Most recently in 2008, local funding has been leveraged with private contributions to extend the Day Farm trail into the historic Hobo Camp area between Lake George and Sisseton Lake.

While trails are popular amenities and an increasingly important part of the local transportation system, planners need to recognize the challenges and relatively high cost of trail development and design. In particular, acquisition of right-of-way for trails has proven to be very difficult and costly in almost every community. Since use of condemnation is unpopular for facilities largely viewed as recreational, the community will need to be proactive in planning trail corridors and work with affected property owners to educate them on the benefits of trails and improve the possibility for more successful and friendly trail acquisition.

Due to the lack of direct lake frontage for trails, it is likely that on-road trails will continue to be an integral part of the City's trail system. As in areas without sidewalks, street widths selection should consider bike usage, particularly on designated trail routes. Where there is extensive on-street parking, street widths may need to be wider to accommodate safe bike usage. On high volume collector routes, dedicated and painted bike lanes can be considered where there is likely to be on-street parking.

D. Transit Service

All local transit service is operated under County jurisdiction with funding assistance from the State. No City funding or City management is presently

provided. With changing population and community growth, the City should, in coordination with the County, monitor local transit needs as well as legislatively authorized local transit funding sources to assure that alternative transportation is available when warranted and economically feasible.

Potential Transportation Funding Sources

There are a number of various funding mechanisms available to support transportation projects these include the following:

A. MSAS System. The State of Minnesota, through the gas tax and license fees, collects funds to be used to construct and maintain the State's transportation system. Most of the funds collected are distributed for use on the State's Trunk Highway (TH) system, the County State Aid Highway (CSAH) system and the Municipal State Aid Street (MSAS) system. Of the funds available they are distributed 62% TH, 29% CSAH and 9% MSAS. Cities with a population above 5,000 are eligible to receive a portion of the MSAS funding. Funds are allocated based on a mileage "needs" and population formula. Fairmont currently (2008) receives approximately $567,000 annually in state aid funding for use on its 19.7 miles of designated state aid routes ($538,000) and maintenance ($29,000).

B. Federal Funding. Fairmont may apply for federal funds for highways through the Surface Transportation Program of the Federal Highway Trust Fund, through MnDOT's Areas Transportation Partnership (ATP). Solicitation occurs approximately every two years, with federal funding covering 80% of a project's cost. This funding is generally very competitive although there is a reasonable effort to rotate funds through all counties and MSAS cites in the District. In the past, MSAS cities could expect consideration for federal funding at about seven year intervals. With recent funding limitations and greater demand, as well as increasingly tighter project eligibility standards, all projects must be highly competitive with all other District-wide requests. Types of projects funded include highway reconstruction, safety projects, trails which are part of projects, transit and park-and-ride projects. Fairmont received federal funding for the Center Creek and Aquatic park trail in 2003 under federal T21 program enhancements funding. Current federal SAFET-LU program criteria emphasize funding for projects focused on safety improvements.

C. Assessments. Fairmont currently funds approximately one-third of its annual capital improvement program with property assessments administered under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 429. A special assessment policy was developed in 1990 to guide local assessment practices. The assessment process recognizes the special benefit to impacted property owners, measured in increased value of properties due to improved transportation and other infrastructure. Based on operation of the public input portion of the assessment process, the current policy appears to be working satisfactorily. With increasing project costs and improvement needs, assessment practices will need to be continually reviewed to assure that, in addition to funding needs, statutory and other legal obligations are met.

D. Utility Fees. The public utility portion of transportation projects - including sanitary sewer, watermain and storm sewer facilities - has been financed locally using utility fees. This funding source recognizes the importance of the total infrastructure and spreads costs to user based on utility uses. The adequacy of each fund's utility rates is evaluated on an annual basis. Owing to significant needs at the City's wastewater and water treatment facilities, a lesser portion of these fees may become available for use on roadway reconstruction projects or, alternatively, water and sanitary sewer fees may need to be increased to cover those additional needs. Also, with growing statutory and other regulatory stormwater management requirements, it is anticipated that increases will be needed in storm water utility rates to cover those obligations.

E. Property Taxes. A significant portion of the City's transportation costs are financed through general obligation bonding and property taxes to cover principal and interest payments on the bonds. The nature of this component of project funding is to recognize the general city-wide benefit for transportation infrastructure and to distribute a portion of project costs to all property owners in the community, not just those directly benefited by the current work.

F. Mn/DOT Cooperative Funds. The State of Minnesota has funds available to assist with cooperative projects that increase safety and mobility. Solicitations are due in October each year for construction the following year.

G. Minnesota Railroad-Highway Grade Crossing Safety Improvement Program. This program is available to increase the safety at at-grade railroad crossings. Funds may be used for the installation of warning devices, signal installation and upgrades, signs and pavement markings, crossing closures, roadway relocations, lighting, crossing alignments and grade improvements and grade separations.

H. MN Department of Natural Resources Grants. Various federal and state grants are available for the development or reconstruction of trails. Typically grants require a 50% match and illustration that the trail is not only of local importance but also of regional significance. Grant programs through the DNR for trail projects include the Federal Recreational Trail Grant Program, Regional Trail Grant Program, Outdoor Recreation Grant Program, and Local Trail Connections Program.

I. Developers. Developers have been required to fund, as part of the development process, all or most of the cost of new local streets included in new projects and may also portions of arterial and collector roadways attributable to their project.

The City should regularly monitor legislative initiatives such as use of local option sales taxes, transportation utility, transit taxes as well new or as changes in existing transportation funding programs and adapt local funding policies as appropriate best utilize its resources for community improvements.

Example Goals & Strategies for Transportation Plan Implementation

The following goals and strategies outline the a plan for ensuring adequate infrastructure is available to support the growth anticipated within the urban growth boundary, as well as potential funding sources for completing necessary improvements.

A. Goals

The transportation goals and implementation strategies identified have been developed to meet the needs of the land uses associated with the build-out of the urban growth boundary.

Comprehensive Transportation Planning – Approach transportation in a comprehensive manner by giving attention to all modes and related facilities through linking transit and land use and by combining or concentrating various land use activities to reduce the need for transportation facilities.

Transportation System – Create/provide a safe, cost effective, and efficient transportation system that is adequate for vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, and truck transportation for the movement of people and goods and services in the community.

Local Streets – Local streets should be laid out to permit efficient plat layout while being compatible with the area's topography, adjacent roadways, municipal utility plans and environmental constraints.

Collector Streets – The location of collector streets promotes orderly development. As development plans are presented to the City, future collector streets should be designed to provide continuity and prudent access to other collector streets and arterials and adhere to the recommended access management criteria identified in Section IV.

Transportation Improvement & Expansion – Improve and expand the existing transportation system as necessary to meet current and future transportation needs.

Maintain Existing Infrastructure – Preserve and maintain the existing transportation infrastructure to protect the significant investment, to increase its efficiency, and delay the need for improvement or expansion by use of a Capital Improvement Plan.

Municipal Services – As the street system continues to expand and age, street maintenance will become increasingly important issues. Additional street construction may either increase contracted labor expenses or necessitate an expansion of the City's services provided by the municipal public works department.

Transportation & Economic Development – Create or encourage a transportation system that contributes to the economic vitality of the community by connecting people to work, shopping, and other activity generators/attractions and supports growth of commercial and industrial uses.

Regional Transportation Planning – Cooperate on a regional level in planning and development of a transportation system, including coordination among multiple jurisdictions, public and private stakeholders, transit providers and agencies at all government levels, while serving the functional needs of all.

County Capital Improvement Plan – The City should continue to work with the County elected and appointed officials to include County Road reconstruction projects affecting the City on the County's Capital Improvement Plan to address area and City needs

Transportation Funding – Pursue a balanced approach to financing transportation and other community needs at the local level based on current availability of services and facilities and maintenance of existing infrastructure.

Roadway Project Coordination – Continue to coordinate future road construction and reconstruction projects with all utility service providers to ensure efficient repair/replacement and avoid duplicate costs.

Capital Improvement Plan – Develop a Capital Improvement Plan that contains elements for new construction and reconstruction of the roadway system, with scheduled maintenance included in annual budgets. Street maintenance should include routine patching, crack filling, and storm sewer management needs. Continue existing schedule for roadway maintenance (e.g. regular seal coating, mill/overlay, resurfacing and concrete rehabilitation) and reconstruction to enhance or upgrade existing routes, incorporating also pedestrian/bike access, stormwater management, LID elements, etc.

Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance Update – Update the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances consistent with the Transportation Plan.

Right-of-Way Dedication – Require right-of-way dedication along state, county, and local roads to meet future capacity and usage needs.

Minor Collector Review – review concept plans for plat and development proposals to evaluate the location and consideration of Collector roadways so as to not overburden local streets.

Development Driven Improvements – Work with developers to construct requested or needed improvements in conjunction with development projects.

Non-Development Driven Improvements – Non-development driven improvements should be prioritized and programmed in the Capital Improvement Program.

Assessment Policy – Periodically review and revise local assessment policy with specific consideration of Collector and Arterial roadways to establish expectations and ensure consistent application.

Developer Agreements – Continue to utilize developer agreements as a tool to ensure improvements are constructed as agreed upon in the platting or development process.

Traffic Impact Study Policy – Establish a policy outlining when a traffic impact study should be conducted, including acceptable information to be contained within the study.

B. Strategies

Various strategies can be utilized to ensure proper transportation improvements are made to provide and protect the infrastructure investment. Astute land use planning and subdivision plat review are key to ensuring the long-term roadway network vision is developed and future traffic issues are avoided. To accomplish this, each development proposal (e.g. redevelopment of a single parcel, plat review, change of use, expansion of a business or operation, etc.) should be evaluated for consistency with the following policies/standards:

1. Work with property owners / developers to remove / relocate existing driveway and field approaches off non-local roads.
2. Provide road and trail connectivity between adjacent parcels.
3. Review/require access spacing that is consistent with the transportation plan.
4. Connect residential and non-residential areas.
5. Require turn and bypass lanes on non-local roads impacted by new development, including those that are not immediately adjacent.
6. Require off-site improvements, including those in other jurisdictions, where the existing transportation network will be directly impacted by new development, including where the development is not immediately adjacent. This could include but is not limited to paving roads, repairing surfaces, fixing sub-standard drainage, improving sight distances, etc.
7. Require the dedication of rights-of-way for all required future transportation improvements identified in the transportation plan including trails, roads, bridges, transit facilities, drainage, utilities, and any other related improvement requiring use of a corridor/location.
8. Require the equitable participation in the construction of collector and arterial roads.
9. Review probable neighborhood traffic patterns, areas where excessive speed is possible, and the potential for pedestrian conflicts.
10. Require all local roads to be constructed to property lines, or the corresponding amounts of money be escrowed, where stub streets are proposed to adjacent properties, but are not immediately warranted.
11. Require fees, construction participation, and/or cost participation proportionately to future required infrastructure such as overpasses, interchanges, and other Local/County responsibilities as afforded by law and justifiable.

12. Require traffic impact studies, including the analysis of intersections to determine the need for and contribution to intersection improvements.

13. Incorporate into local ordinances land use and access strategies of the relative to MnDOT's long-term plans and vision for TH 15 and I-90.

SECTION VII: PUBLIC UTILITIES

Public utilities are studied in a Comprehensive Plan to determine any problem areas, to provide planning for adequate facilities before development in growth areas, and to prevent future problems.

Water

Fairmont's Municipal Water System uses Budd Lake as its primary raw water source. The treatment facility, constructed in 1926, with additions done in the 1950s and 1960s is located next to Budd Lake. It is a conventional lime-soda ash softening water plant that softens the water from 260-350 ppm of hardness down to 80 to 90 ppm hardness. The water treatment facility has three sand filters to remove the turbidity from the water to meet the Safe Drinking Water Standards of 0.3 NTU or less. Chlorine and ammonia are added to the water to produce chloro-amines for disinfection of the water and to provide a chlorine residual between 2.5 ppm and 3.5 ppm in the distribution system. Water storage of 5.3 million gallons is available, with 3.3 million gallons of ground storage and 2 million gallons of elevated tank storage. Water distribution occurs through 82 miles of water mains with pipe size ranging from 4 inch to 20 in size.

Water System Analysis

The current water treatment facility has a designed capacity of 4.5 million gallons per day, but it can only be operated at a capacity of 2.8 million gallons per day because at higher operational rates the water treatment facility exceeds the Safe Drinking Water Standard for turbidity of 0.30 NTU. Annually, the City uses approximately 550 to 610 million gallons of water for an average daily consumption of 1.5 to 1.8 million gallons per day with a peak demand day of 3.16 million gallons. Water quality problems related to taste and odor occur occasionally and is mitigated by the use of aeration in Budd Lake and with chemical addition at the water treatment facility.

At the writing of this Comprehensive Plan, the Public Utilities Commission and City Council are involved with a consultant to do a facility plan on the water treatment facility to evaluate the facility's limitations and to determine what upgrades are needed to meet these limitations and to meet the new Surface Water Treatment Rules and future water demands.

Sanitary Sewage System

Fairmont is served by a wastewater treatment facility (WWTF) located adjacent to Center Creek on the City's northern boundary. The wastewater treatment processes are: Liquid Treatment Train of fine bar screen, grit removal, primary clarifiers with chemical addition for phosphorus removal, activated sludge aeration basins, final clarifiers and uv

disinfection. Solids Treatment Train of waste activated sludge holding tank, sludge blend tank, anaerobic digestion, belt filter press and sludge dryer. In 2004, construction was started to upgrade the WWTF to meet new MPCA discharge permit limits and to increase the WWTF loading capacity for organics and flow. The upgraded WWTF went into operation 2006. It has a wet weather sustained capacity of 3.9 million gallons per day and a maximum day of 7.57 million gallons per day. The organic loading was increased from 4900 pounds per day to 7600 pounds per day to provide for future growth. The sanitary collection system consists of 74 miles of pipe, with main sizes from 8-inch to 30-inch in size. Because of Fairmont's varying topography, the system has 29 lift stations.

System Analysis

Since 1990 the City has made a concerted effort to reduce infiltration/inflow (I&I) in the sanitary sewer collection system. As a result, the bypassing of untreated wastewater has been reduced greatly but not completely eliminated. The City continues to address its I&I problem each year with its improvement projects with the hope of some day eliminating any by-passing of untreated wastewater.

Storm Sewer

The City has a storm sewer drainage system consisting of overland flow and a series of pipes many of which ultimately drain into the chain of five lakes. The City is also surrounded by a county and judicial drainage system which provides a total watershed of more than 23,600 acres which drain into the lakes.

A master drainage plan for the entire community has been developed utilizing a 10-year frequency storm design. The plan provides for proper planning of new and replacement projects in conjunction with the street reconstruction program. It identifies the location and sizing of storm water detention and storm water treatment facilities to improve water quality and minimize localized flooding. Funding for storm sewer improvements comes from the storm water utility charges assessed against all developed properties within the City. The ability of the current rate structure to cover anticipated storm sewer construction costs should be reviewed periodically to assure adequate funding for needed improvements.

Solid Waste

The community needs to work in cooperation with the County and the State to insure the best practices occur in terms of solid waste removal. Options for yard waste collection and removal continue to be an issue for the community. Many private alternatives exist. Education should be a key component of the solid waste plan.

Electricity

Fairmont has a municipally owned electric power plant, and is a member of the Southern Minnesota municipal Power Agency (SMMPA). SMMPA membership provides for all electric power to the community, regardless of the producer as long as its origin is from SMMPA. This arrangement helps stabilize power rates and makes extra electrical power available during peak usage hours. Future improvements and increase in capacity within Fairmont's distribution system will occur as demand increases.

The Fairmont Power Plant is currently under a "life of unit" contract to SMMPA. All costs of operating and maintaining the Power Plant are paid by SMMPA. SMMPA is also responsible for determining when the plan will operate and at what output electricity will be produced. This contract has been in effect since 1992 and works well for the City. SMMPA has notified the City Council that it plans to discontinue its contract for the operation of the plant at Fairmont in December 2009 with the exception of two diesel units.

District Heating (Steam)

Discontinued in 2008.

Natural Gas

Natural gas is distributed to all parts of the city by Minnesota Energy. The company has a branch office in Fairmont. The gas delivered to the community has a BTU value of 1,000 BTU/Cu.Ft. Through existing and future systems natural gas is expected to be available to help Fairmont's continuing growth. Fairmont is situated within four miles of both the Northern Border Pipeline and Northern Natural Gas. Access and availability to the community to access this pipeline could provide for increased economic development.

Telecommunications

This is quickly becoming a more important utility all the time including the Internet, Cable TV, Interactive TV, and telephone service. Fairmont needs to situate the community to take advantage of fiber optics and other technology that will keep us on a technological cutting edge. Telephone service in 2008 is provided by Frontier Communications of Burnsville, Minnesota. The company serves approximately 10,000 customers in the Fairmont area. Estimated capacities are an additional 10,000 lines.

The City of Fairmont believes it important to continue to expand its infrastructure and public utilities and to encourage private utilities to expand to accommodate growth and economic development.

SECTION VIII: MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

City Offices

City offices were moved to a new City Hall at 100 Downtown Plaza in 1987. All part of a sustainable downtown redevelopment plan, the City Hall incorporates City offices, meeting rooms and City Council Chambers in one building. First floor space accommodates administration, utility collections, accounting, computer and finance activities. The second floor houses engineering, public works, community development and legal departments. The building is adequate for the needs of the City at this time.

Fire Hall

Fairmont's Fire Department currently occupies a building located at 216 E. Fourth Street. Besides storage for equipment and vehicles, the facility has a meeting room, kitchen, and sleeping facilities for six (6) persons. A new addition was completed in 1996 adding an additional 4,000 square feet. The Fire Hall is also occupied by the emergency response team (Gold Cross).

The recent municipal facility study indicates the present facilities, from a staff size prospective are adequate for at least the next ten (10) years.

Any future relocation of firefighting facilities should be guided by the need to provide quick response time to all areas of the City. The extension of residential development to southern and southwestern Fairmont has increased the response time for emergency vehicles.

Senior Citizens Center

The Senior Citizens Center is currently in an old store front building at 414 Downtown Plaza. Current activities include card games, crafts, and a once-a-month potluck meal. The facilities' location in the downtown area allows access for senior citizens who live in the community, but do not have a vehicle for transportation.

The building itself is in poor physical condition. In order for the structure to remain usable as a Senior Center major repairs are needed. It may be more cost effective to move these activities to another facility. The City needs to review alternatives for the Senior Center. Any decision should be based on the need to provide a viable facility with realization of the costs associated with such services. This facility should be incorporated into any plans for a community center.

Municipal Liquor Store

The City currently operates a municipal liquor store at 314 N. Park Street. The facility is beginning to show its age and is not efficient for storage and display of merchandise. At its goal setting in 2007 the City Council voted to construct a new facility in 2009. Design and location decisions to begin in mid 2008.

Swimming Pool

The City built a large outdoor aquatic facility in 1999. It serves more than 40,000 guests each year. It has become a highlight for Fairmont summer fun and a regional draw. Long term plans for any type of community center should include discussion about an indoor pool facility.

Ice Arena and Martin County Fair Facility

The building was constructed in 1985 in cooperation between the Martin County Fair Board and the City of Fairmont. Each has use of the building for a portion of the year. To best utilize the building would be to establish other activities at the site all year long. An upgrade of the facility including handicap accessibility, additional locker rooms for girls' sports as well as additional room to accommodate tournament play were completed in 1998. This is another facility that should be looked at as becoming part of an overall community center.

Law Enforcement Center and Martin County Library

These facilities represent cooperate efforts between the City and Martin County to provide necessary community and county facilities at a reasonable cost to tax payers.

The Law Enforcement Center is housed in the Martin County Security Building. Through a joint agreement with the County and Sheriff's department, the City leases 22,285 square feet for the police department. A complete study of the facility was done in 2006-2007 to determine the needs in the future for law enforcement as well as a new jail for the County. Currently, there are some department of correction deficiencies in the building and many inmates are transported to facilities outside the county. New facility development is a complicated issue and is addressed in its own separate jail, law enforcement center court services study.

The Martin County Library was constructed on the site of the former City library. It is used almost exclusively for library and reading needs of city and county residents. The basement meeting room is also used by various organizations for meeting purposes. The library has undergone significant remodeling in 1998. Restrooms were made handicap accessible and the resource area made more efficient to better utilize 2000s technology.

Municipal Building Analysis

Since the first Comprehensive Plan and the first and second updates in 1986, and 1999, significant changes have been made in municipal buildings. In 1986 the old City Hall and Youth Center were razed. City Hall now occupies a renovated bank building that meets its current and future space demands.

The City also has adequate space at its shop area. In 1997 a new Animal Humane Society building was constructed. A new liquor store is scheduled for construction in 2009 to better serve the public.

The Senior Citizens Center should be reviewed and studied for upgrading and a possible new location. With an aging senior population this could be a significant gathering area for a specific portion of the population.

The City will continue to review its space needs and building needs to best serve the public. Based on community input and discussion in the planning process, the City continues to look into the feasibility of a community multi-use facility. This facility could potentially house a number of activities such as senior center, gymnasiums, indoor pool, etc.

APPENDIX I: ANNEXATION PLAN

January, 2006

Minnesota Statutes layout five basic questions city councils and city staff must evaluate and study before moving forward with an annexation. These questions are the basis for staff's analysis.

1. How will annexation affect the residents, landowners and property in the area to be annexed?

The City is looking at two areas; both are adjacent to the Interstate interchanges. Exit 102 or Fairmont's east exit is primarily commercial in nature and is host to a new super Wal Mart. The 24 acres the Wal Mart will occupy are annexed already. The proposed annexation will affect one single family residential property and approximately 120 acres of agricultural property. There are four property owners; three have indicated an interest in developing and selling property for commercial purposes. This area is identified in the Comprehensive Plan as commercial.

Exit 99 or Fairmont's west exit is primarily industrial. This area hosts Fairmont's industrial park (annexed and part of city) CHS, Inc. (annexed in 1999) and a Biofuel Energy a 100 million gallon ethanol facility. There will be one residential property annexed. This area is primarily agricultural but has the potential to be developed for heavy industrial or heavy commercial. The area is identified in the Comprehensive Plan as industrial.

There are only two single family residences affected. Other residents close to the annexation lines could petition for and potentially benefit from City water and sewer. These extensions will be made when development occurs that can carry the cost of such extensions. It is likely that residents along North North Avenue and County Road 135 would benefit immediately from the City's plan to extend a water main that will loop the City's water system north and south of I-90. These two areas of annexation are being evaluated because of their potential and the need for the City to complete formal planning concerning water, sewer and transportation corridors. There has been significant interest in both areas from developers.

Further discussion with each township and public hearings could possibly initiate the petition from residential land owners adjacent to the annexation line for incorporation and services. There are potentially six residential property owners that are close enough it would be practical to consider them as part of the annexation.

General land owners could benefit from the ability to offer City water and sewer to potential developers. Being part of the city would provide for better communication regarding transportation planning and other long range planning required for orderly growth in the area. It is important to have a master plan for development that everyone has a stake in developing. With the addition of Wal Mart it is expected that other retailers will follow and it is highly likely that 30 to 60 acres could develop in the next 2

to five years after the Wal Mart opens. At the same time at Exit 99, the development of a large ethanol plant will also initiate additional growth in the same time period. Continuing to annex individual parcels by ordinance does not serve everyone's best interest in long range community planning. Most land owners will be most concerned as to what will happen to their property tax valuation and cost burden. Based on a 2006 evaluation by Jim Hallstrom, County Assessor the property tax implications are outlined in Attachment #1.

The highest and best use of the property in the planning/annexation area will be identified; given its location and proximity to public utilities, transportation and natural corridors for growth.

2. What additional costs will the City incur when providing City services to the annexed area?

Each area is in a different phase of development. City policy requires that the land owners and developers who will benefit from the utility extensions pay for the cost, though there are some practical extensions to the City's utility system that are required from an operational and overall community growth standpoint. It is anticipated this would be the City's sole responsibility to complete and pay the cost. For example, looping the City's water main so that the new commercial area north of the interstate has redundancy in its serviceability. Some of these costs may be recaptured over time. It is anticipated that this extension will cost approximately $750,000 to $1 million. Sanitary and water extensions north along County Road 39 to the interchange will also be required before development can begin at a practical cost to developers and land owners. Cost estimates for this extension is $950,000. Staff believes it makes better planning sense not only from the standpoint of initiating development, but completing the project all at once versus small extensions that are parcel specific.

Overall, infrastructure costs not developer driven and paid for could be up to $2 to 2.5 Million.

3. How much revenue can and will the City obtain through taxes and other charges levied against the annexed area?

Staff recommends allowing development to drive utility extension. As such, the developer would pay the initial cost with the City covering the cost of over sizing for future development or creating the infrastructure skeleton necessary to support branch lines. In doing so, the City can estimate the immediate impact of revenue versus expenses. For example, water main looping will cost approximately $750,000 to $1 million. The Wal Mart project alone will have an estimated market value of $6.5 million, the second highest in the city, and have estimated tax responsibility of $47,000 annually to just the City with a total local tax liability of $139,030.56. It is anticipated that within 2 to 5 years, $2 to 10 million in new valuation will occur in the area of Exit 102. This is

estimated to happen on two outlots owned by Wal Mart and the addition of a complimenting big box retail center next to Wal Mart's north border.

At Exit 99, the proposed ethanol facility is estimated to have a taxable market value of $25 million, the highest of any entity in the corporate limits and have a property tax liability of $500,000 to $650,000 locally and a total City, County, State liability of $945,000 annually. Much of the infrastructure to service the ethanol facility is in place. New infrastructure needs will come as a result of other businesses locating in and around the facility. The CHS, Inc. facility and the ethanol plant will generate an estimated 900 trucks a day to their locations that encompass over 400 acres. It is likely a truck fueling facility of some sort will want to locate in close proximity to the area. With these two facilities, Weigh Tronix, Hancor, Westin Automotive, Dutch Creek Custom, Omega Nutrition and the businesses along County Road 39 will employ well over 700 employees. At some point businesses that will serve these employees will move to the area as well. This industrial corridor will become more attractive to potential businesses looking for easy access on and off I-90 and County Road 26.

Revenues over the long term will offset the cost of the City's initial investment in infrastructure. Once again, having this area within the City's corporate limits add to the area's marketability.

4. What is the present status of land available in the area and the outlook for future development?

These two areas are almost certain to develop by 25 to 50% over the next 3 years. The area surrounding Exit 102 will more than likely develop at a faster rate as it is retail and light commercial and has a larger market than the heavy commercial, industrial character of the Exit 99 area. Exit 102 has approximately 160 acres available while Exit 99 has 400 acres; 200+ acres of which will be the new Biofuel Energy ethanol plant. The City has annexed this area to assure its orderly growth and to incorporate it into the City's long range infrastructure and transportation plans. This area also is eligible for Job Opportunity Building Zone acres.

5. What impact, if any, will annexation have on the development area?

The impact on the development area will be positive. It will add to the areas marketability. Potential investors and companies will know City services are available from infrastructure to police and fire, to building and zoning codes. This should increase the value of the property. The next step after annexation will be to work with owners to develop plats and long range plans for individual parcel development.

Probably the single most important factor will be the control and enforcement of the Uniform Building Code and zoning code, from both a community standpoint and from the developer's position. No building inspection exists in this area now.

Annexation in these two areas provides new land for the City to grow and attract industry and business. Fairmont's commercial corridor is almost built out with the exception of approximately 50 acres just south and east of the Interstate and Highway 15. Of the Fairmont Industrial Park, only about 40 acres exist that are of high quality development property, the rest is old lake bottom.

This annexation plan provides for an orderly expansion of the City's borders and infrastructure. The land in question meets the statutory requirements for annexation. It adjoins/abuts existing City limits. The land is about to become suburban in nature. At this time there are no public water and sanitary sewer facilities, nor is the area protected by the Uniform Building Code. Annexation is necessary to protect the public health and safety. This plan eliminates leapfrog development of the commercial area. Fairmont has witnessed some residential leapfrog development to the south of town along old Highway 15 and north around Buffalo Lake where individual septics and water wells have been utilized rather than City systems. This has been cause for concern around some of the county lakes. Preventing the leapfrog affect in a commercial/industrial land use is particularly important; especially when the City has sewer and water capacity to serve the area.

This annexation does not impact another city.

Staff believes the best way to approach annexation of these areas is based on State Statute that allows for "orderly annexation."

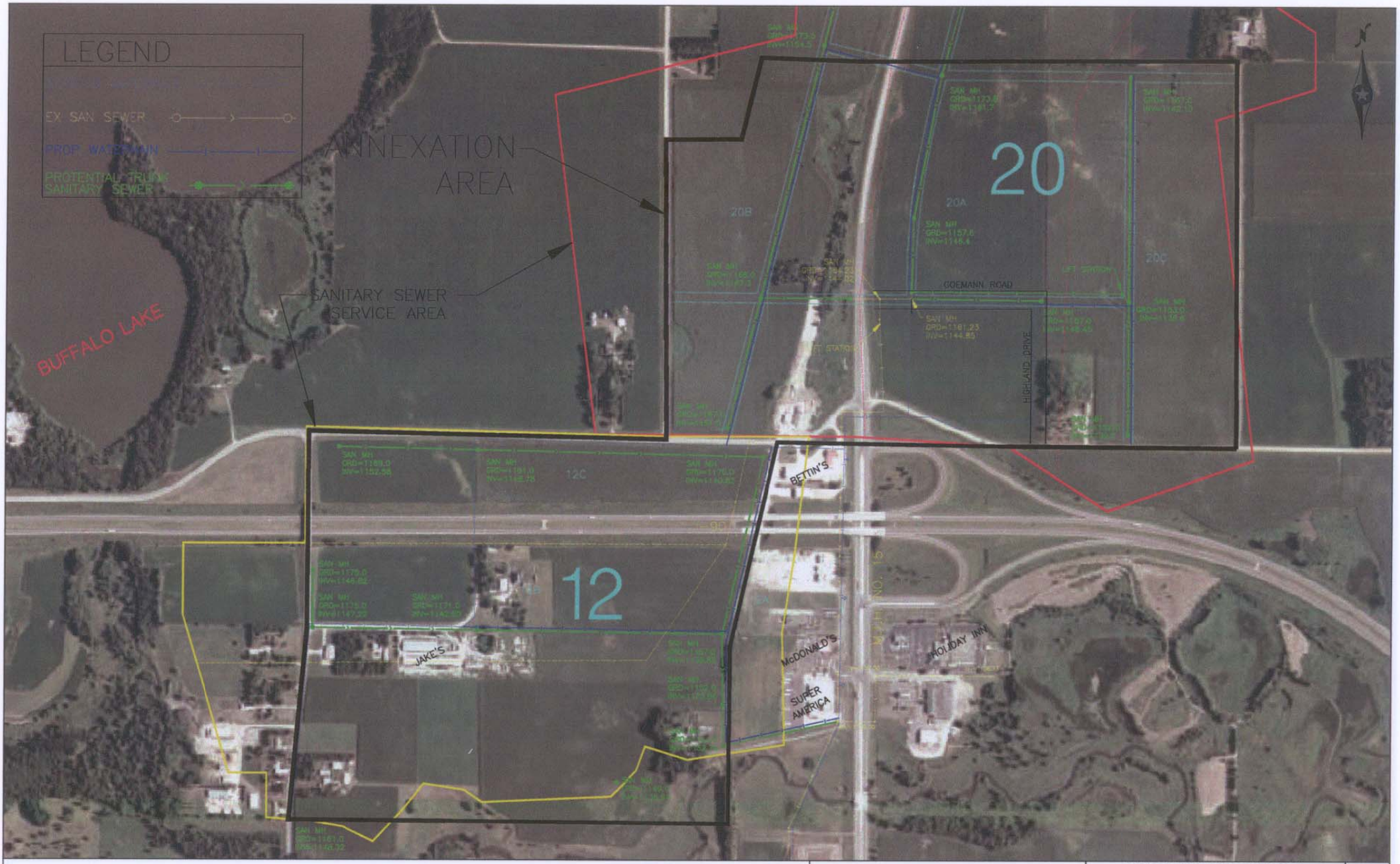
The maps designate what staff believes to be Fairmont's urban growth corridors. These are consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan. As such, the Mayor, City Council, and Planning Commission are working as a committee to review the plan and begin negotiations with the townships impacted. There are four townships impacted: Fraser and Rutland to the north, Fairmont and Rolling Green on the south and west.

State Statutes require that a joint resolution be passed by those townships impacted. Under such a joint resolution, the City of Fairmont and the townships ask Minnesota Planning to make the following findings:

a. The area proposed for annexation is, or is about to become urban suburban in character and the annexing city is capable of providing needed services in a reasonable time,
b. The existing township government lacks the capacity or that form of government is not adequate to provide such services,
c. Annexation is in the best interest of the area,
d. The governing bodies want to turnover zoning and subdivision control to the City of Fairmont.

Market values/potential revenue as a result of development, see Attachment #2.

Years 2-10 will be developer driven with the City contributing for over sizing and potential water main looping where necessary. Staff anticipates Exit 99 to develop at a much slower rate but could have huge financial impact in the future as minimal infrastructure exists beyond the fairgrounds.



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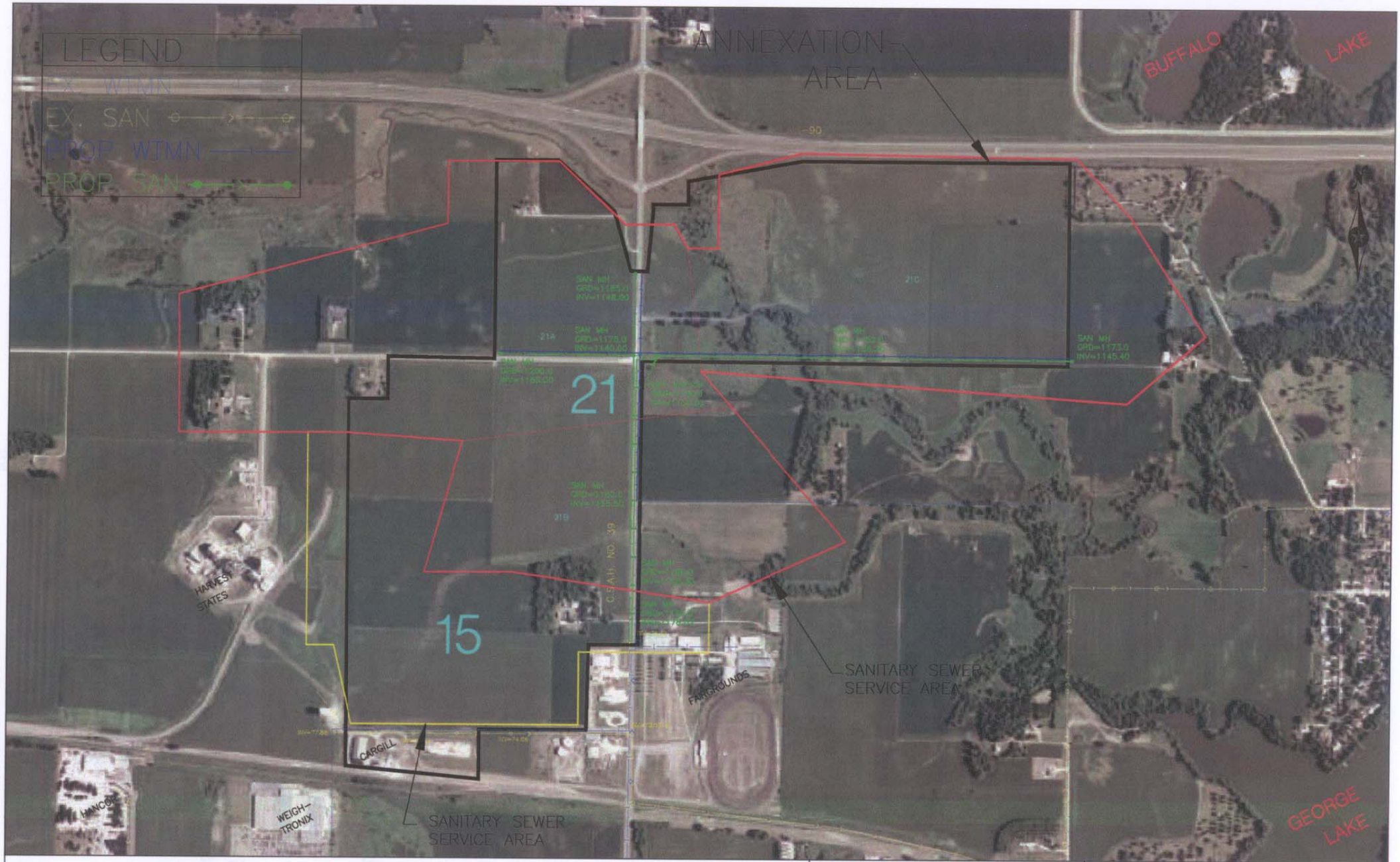
BOLTON & MENK, INC.
Consulting Engineers & Surveyors
MANKATO, MN FAIRMONT, MN SLEEPY EYE, MN WILLMAR, MN
BURNSVILLE, MN CHASKA, MN AMES, IA

CITY OF FAIRMONT, MINNESOTA
NORTH ANNEXATION AREA STUDY – 2005
ANNEXATION AREA A

SHEET 1 OF 2



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CITY OF FAIRMONT, MINNESOTA
NORTH ANNEXATION AREA STUDY – 2005
ANNEXATION AREA B

SHEET 2 OF 2

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APPENDIX II: ANNEXATION PLAN

May, 2008

Minnesota Statutes layout five (5) basic questions city councils and city staff must evaluate and study before moving forward with an annexation. These questions are the basis for staff's analysis.

1. How will annexation affect the residents, landowners and property in the area to be annexed?

The city is looking at three areas for potential annexation over the next 1-10 years. The first area is at the city's northwest corner, west of County Road 39 and primarily north of County Road 26. This area would allow for Fairmont to expand its industrial park area. This property would abut CHS, Inc.'s western property line and west 2,300 feet and south 5,100 feet. Rail line, gas main and water and sanitary sewer are all in close proximity to this area. Two, and potentially a third, single family residential structures could be impacted. However, each of these structures are in close enough proximity to the industrial area now that they are being impacted by the external impacts of noise, lighting and traffic as a result of existing industrial land use. Since 1973, this area has been shaped into Fairmont's industrial area. Most recently, 1998 and 2006 a large soybean crushing facility was built on 202 acres of property and in 2006 a 100 million gallon ethanol plant was built on 250 acres of property. The interstate interchange and the upgrade to County Road 39 allow this area to be served by a higher volume of truck traffic without burdening other transportation corridors throughout Fairmont

Landowners in the area will be most concerned as to what will happen to their property tax valuation.

City staff believes the highest and best use for this property is industrial. Residential structures in the area would become legal nonconforming uses eventually being abandoned and sold as industrial parcels.

The second area is a 500 foot strip of land that abuts County Road 39 beginning on the south side of County Road 26 and extending south to Lake Aires Road. This area has been identified as attractive for large lot subdivisions and would create a good buffer between more standard single family development and large area production agriculture.

There are approximately eight (8) residences along this area. All are large lot acreage type single family structures and would meet the proposed future land use for this area.

The third area is a potential area of commercial and multi family residential. This area is at the southeast corner of Highway 15 and Johnson Street. This area is in close proximity to existing commercial and higher density residential development. There is a real likelihood that Fairmont's commercial corridor will continue to grow south along Highway 15. This area is across the highway from the high school and medical center. On the north side of Johnson Street there is an existing multi family residential facility.

This area is the next logical area for new development in this part of Fairmont. HyVee, Shopko, and other commercial development are in close proximity. City services are at the intersection of Highway 15 and Johnson Street and can be easily extended to serve this area.

2. What additional cost will the city incur when providing services to the annexed area?

These three areas will develop at different paces. New development will drive the expansion of utilities and will be at the developer's expense. City's direct cost could be insuring the water lines are looped for efficient operation and maintenance. Sanitary sewer lift stations would be cost shared with the developer so that they could be sized for future development. Infrastructure cost, not paid by the developer could be $150,000-$500,000. The northwest industrial area could be at a higher cost because of the heavy requirements or potential incentives necessary to attract large industry.

3. How much revenue can and will the city obtain through taxes and other changes levied against annexed areas?

Staff recommends allowing development to drive utility extension. As such, the developer would pay the initial cost with the city covering the cost of over sizing for future development or creating the infrastructure skeleton necessary to support branch lines. Each area has a different type of development and potential revenue stream. The industrial area holds the highest potential for new city revenue. With CHS, Biofuel Energy, Avery Weigh Tronix and other industrial companies it is likely that commercial support services will develop in the area in the next 5-10 years, i.e. fueling stations, convenient stores and/or suppliers. Revenues over the long term will offset the cost of the city's initial investment in infrastructure. Once again, having this area within the city's corporate limits add to the area's marketability.

The commercial multi family residential area on the southeast corner of Johnson Street will likely develop with more of a commercial feel, i.e. strip centers, grocery stores. The multi family residential development will or could occur in the same time frame. Fairmont is in need of an additional 24 to 30 units of market rate rental properties. Having these adjacent to the hospital will be a real enhancement. Each would provide significant revenue streams that would quickly cover the relatively low cost of expanding the infrastructure.

The large lot residential area along County Road 39 would have the least revenue enhancement for the city, but provides for a natural density change that could help prevent future land use conflict. This area is on a much longer development time line of 7-15 years. Annexation will ensure compatibility of land use and building code enforcement; cost of infrastructure will be by the development. City services will allow these large lot areas to be smaller in size by not having to meet well and septic setback requirements. Annexation insures minimal private system in the city limits or in close proximity.

4. What is the present status of land available in the area and the outlook for future development?

Once again, these three areas are very different. The industrial area is important to identify and bring into the city and begin planning for so that it can be used to attract new industry to the community. Fairmont is in need of additional industrial land available within the city corporate limits. This area is long range 5-10 years, but some immediate planning and ownership control should be considered by the city to insure orderly growth capacity for industrial development and to insure an inventory of land is available for business expansion. The area south and east along Highway 15 is more likely to develop in the short term, 1-3 years. This is one of the few areas on Fairmont's southern corridor that is available for development. Having this area in the city is important to insure orderly growth. The large lot residential area along County Road 39 on the west side will be slow and offers those interested in large lots with city amenities a real opportunity. This area allows access to open development without driving nonpaved roads that is attractive to many people.

5. What impact, if any, will annexation have on the development area?

The impact on the development area will be positive. It will add to the area's marketability. Potential investors and companies will know city services are available from infrastructure to police and fire, to building and zoning codes. This should increase the value of the property. The next step after annexation will be to work with owners to develop plats and long range plans for individual parcel development.

Probably the single most important factor will be the control and enforcement of the Uniform Building Code and zoning code, from both a community standpoint and from the developer's position. No building inspection exists in these areas now.

Annexation in these three areas provides new land for the city to grow and attract industry and business. Fairmont's commercial corridor is almost built out with the exception of that north of Interstate 90.

In Fairmont's industrial park, only about 40 acres exist that are of high quality development property, the rest is old lake bottom with some soon to become a wetland bank.

This annexation plan provides for an orderly expansion of the city's borders and infrastructure. The land in question meets the statutory requirements for annexation. It adjoins/abuts existing city limits. The land is about to become suburban in nature. At this time there are no public water and sanitary sewer facilities, nor is the area protected by the Uniform Building Code. Annexation is necessary to protect the public health and safety. This plan eliminates leapfrog development of the commercial area. Fairmont has witnessed some residential leapfrog development to the south of town along old Highway 15 and north around Buffalo Lake where individual septics and water wells have been

utilized rather than city systems. This has been cause for concern around some of the county lakes. Preventing the leapfrog affect in a commercial/industrial and residential land use is particularly important; especially when the City has sewer and water capacity to serve the area.

This annexation does not impact another city. Staff believes the best way to approach annexation of these areas is based on State Statute that allows for "orderly annexation."

The annexation maps designate what staff believes to be Fairmont's urban growth corridors. These are consistent with the city's Comprehensive Plan, in fact the annexation plan is being developed as part of the Comprehensive Plan update and will be an appendix. As such, the Mayor, City Council, and Planning Commission are working as a committee to review the plan and begin negotiations with the townships impacted. There are two townships impacted: Fairmont and Rolling Green.

State Statutes require that a joint resolution be passed by those townships impacted. Under such a joint resolution, the City of Fairmont and the townships ask Minnesota Planning to make the following findings:

a. The area proposed for annexation is, or is about to become urban suburban in character and the annexing city is capable of providing needed services in a reasonable time,
b. The existing township government lacks the capacity or that form of government is not adequate to provide such services,
c. Annexation is in the best interest of the area,
d. The governing bodies want to turnover zoning and subdivision control to the City of Fairmont.

Market value/potential review based on county assessor formulas, see Appendix 1.

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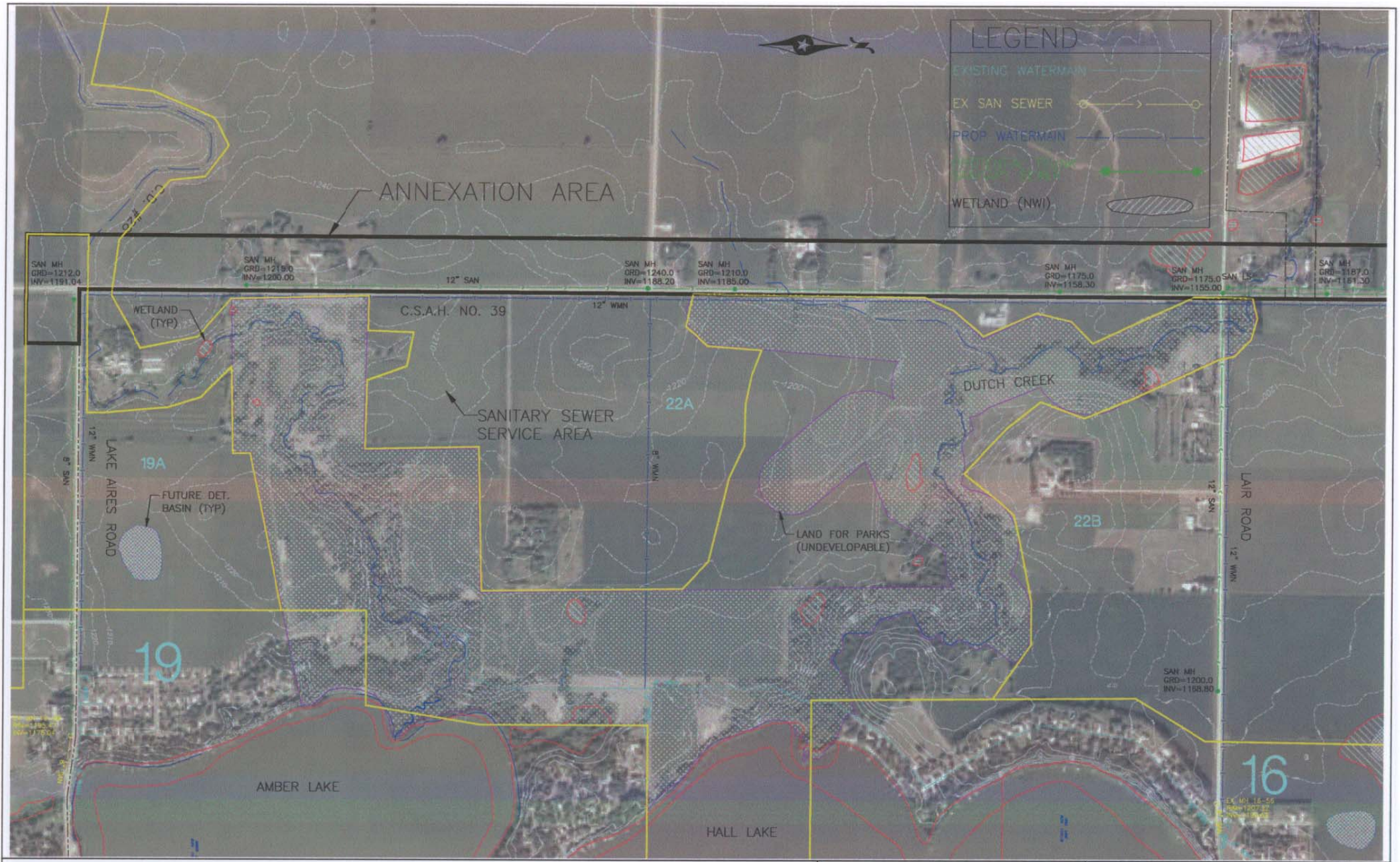
BURNSVILLE, MN CHASKA, MN RAMSEY, MN AMES, IA

CITY OF FAIRMONT, MN
ANNEXATION STUDY – 2008
ANNEXATION AREA C

SHEET 1 OF 4



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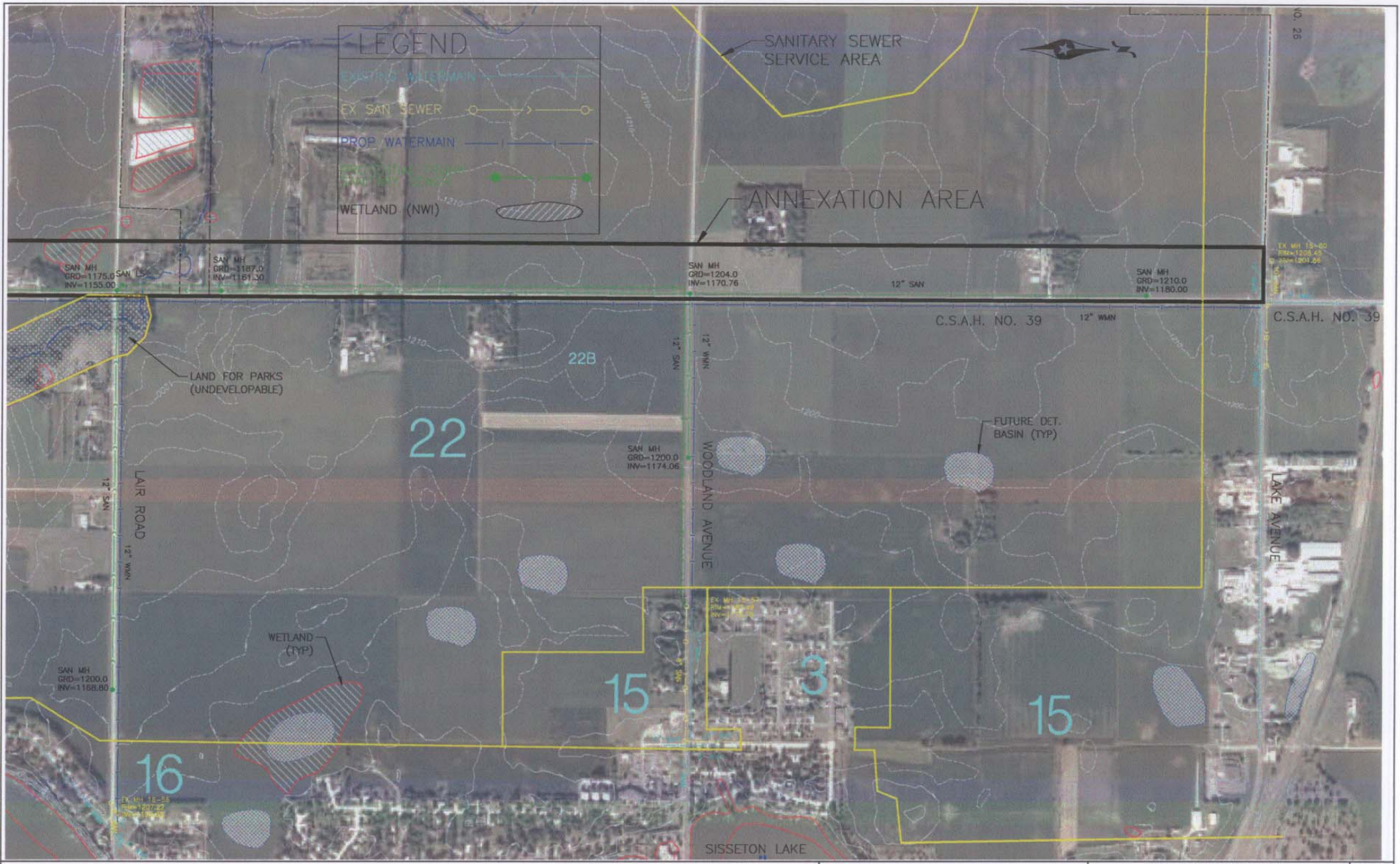
SHEET 2 OF 4



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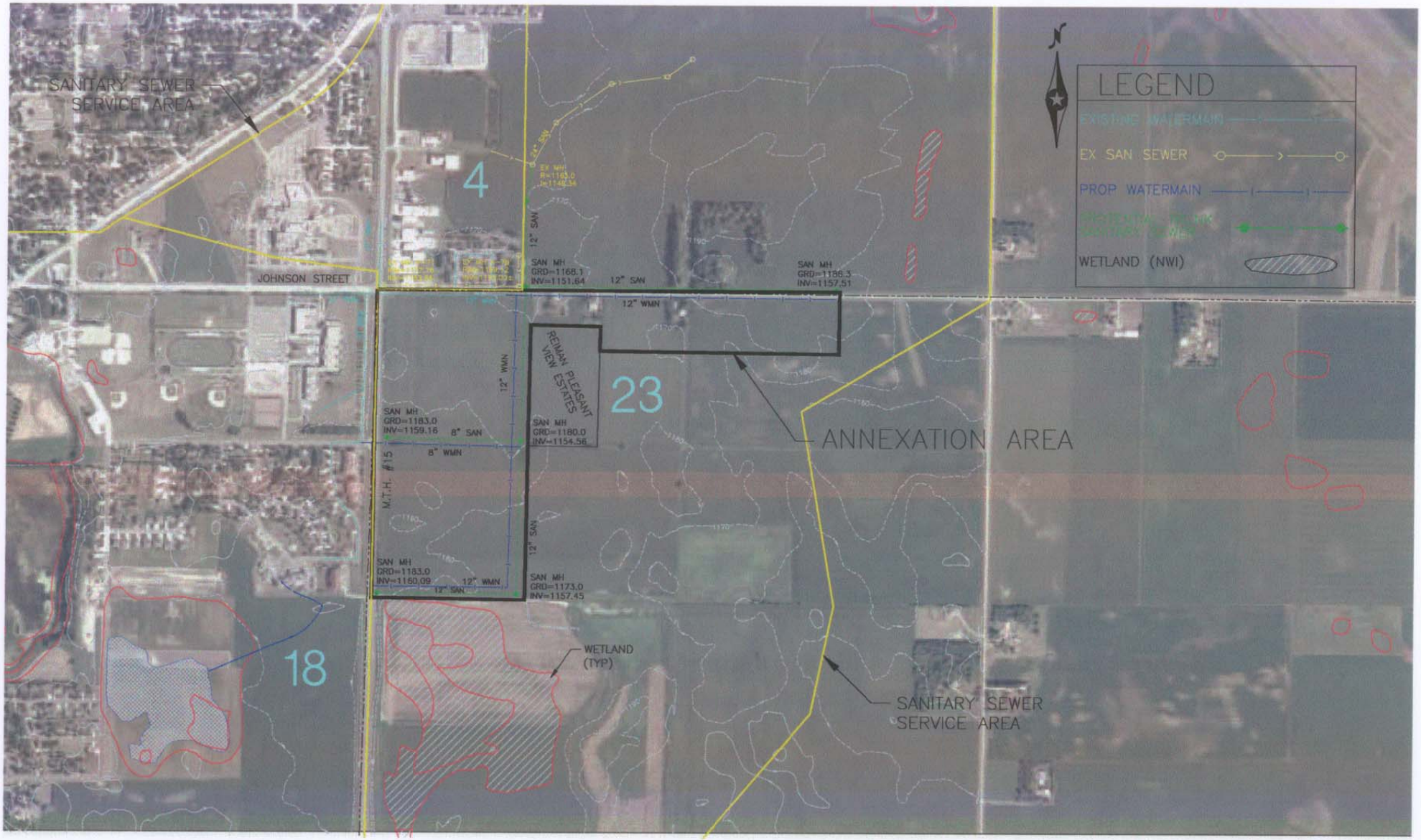
SHEET 3 OF 4



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