



# CITY OF WAITE PARK COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted December 2023



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful for the support and guidance of the following individuals and organizations:

### WAITE PARK COMMUNITY

We are especially grateful to the hundreds of community members who shared their experiences and guidance during the public outreach and engagement process for this plan.

### PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) were involved throughout the entire planning process to ensure the Comprehensive Plan addresses community needs and reflects the vision.

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# CHAPTER 1

## VISION, PURPOSE, AND BACKGROUND



## ***A Vision for the Future***

Waite Park is a welcoming, safe, and diverse community with healthy families. Prosperous businesses and industry provide well-paying jobs and offer useful goods, services, and entertainment options. Abundant recreational opportunities are located in and around the community. We strive to provide an ample supply of strategic housing options that meet the needs of the community and region. Our arts, culture, parks, and open spaces embrace the unique natural amenities of the surrounding granite landscape and the Sauk River. Our entire community is connected to the Waite Park region through an attractive and accessible system of streets, sidewalks, and trails.

## PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

This Comprehensive Plan is a roadmap for Waite Park's future. It outlines where the community wants to go and how it plans to get there. This Plan is based on the input and vision of the Waite Park community, including residents, community leaders, elected officials, city staff, and agency partners. A Planning Advisory Committee (PAC), made up of community members and City staff, were involved throughout the Plan's entire process to ensure that it addressed community needs and reflected the vision.

The Plan uses community input, demographic and market research, and city planning best practices to 1) identify critical needs and challenges, 2) establish a set of goals and policies to address those needs, and 3) present recommendations and action steps to achieve the vision.

Communities are given the legal authority to adopt a Plan according to Minnesota State Statute 462.353, Subd. 1. The statute enables cities to promote the "public health, safety, and general welfare" of the community.

At a minimum, recommendations and action items presented in this Plan should be reviewed and updated every four to five years. The overall Plan should be updated every ten years to ensure it reflects changing conditions and ensures guidance is relevant to the current conditions.

## Goals and Policies

Each chapter (such as transportation, housing, economic development, land use, parks and open spaces) of the Comprehensive Plan includes goals and policies that support the vision statement.

- Goals are statements of desired outcomes by a community. They are intended to state the Plan's intent as clearly as possible, so that we as a city know what we are working to accomplish.
- Policies are high-level statements intended to guide city decision-making in a manner that achieves the Comprehensive Plan goals.

To achieve the goals and policies, the Plan will outline short and medium term actions. The Plan will also be used by city staff and developers to implement those goals and policies for future development. It is used to outline the use of public resources, secure public funding, guide economic development, respond to trends, and inform policy.

## Vision, Purpose, and Background

### ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan is organized into 10 chapters:

- Chapter 1 – Vision, Purpose, and Background**, outlines the purpose and role of the Comprehensive Plan, as well as the community vision that guides the Plan.
- Chapter 2 – Community Profile**, outlines the Waite Park’s history, and describes its current state, economic indicators, challenges, and opportunities.
- Chapter 3 – Land Use**, identifies issues related to growth and land use, analyzes the current land use pattern, and recommends a set of development principles, goals, and policies.
- Chapter 4 – Housing**, provides a summary of existing housing characteristics, identifies potential demand, and provides goals and policies for future development relative to need and demand.
- Chapter 5 – Economic Development**, discusses Waite Park’s economic situation, and develops goals and policies for continuing to sustain and improve economic strength.
- Chapter 6 – Transportation**, discusses key findings of the current transportation network, including the trail system, evaluates current and future transportation needs, and establishes goals and policies for attaining a more connected network.
- Chapter 7 – Public Utilities and Community Facilities**, discusses conditions of current facilities and utility provisions, including the water, sewer, and storm sewer systems. It evaluates current and future needs, and provides a number of goals and policies for Waite Park’s facilities and utilities’ vision.
- Chapter 8 – Parks and Open Spaces**, summarizes current park and recreation facilities, recommends a park classification system based on national park and recreation standards, and puts forth a set of goals and policies to guide future improvements to the system.
- Chapter 9 – Intergovernmental Cooperation**, describes current relationships with neighboring and overlapping governmental jurisdictions, and puts forth a set of goals and policies to guide future collaboration and coordination.
- Chapter 10 – Implementation**, provides guidance for maintaining accountability, monitoring activities, developing procedures and regulations, and community involvement in implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.



# CHAPTER 2

# COMMUNITY PROFILE

## Community Profile

### COMMUNITY HISTORY

The City of Waite Park occupies approximately 7,468 acres in the west side of the St. Cloud metropolitan region. The Sauk River provides most of City's northern boundary while I-94 and the City of St. Joseph define the City's southern and western edges. Waite Park shares its eastern boundary with the City of St. Cloud.

The City of Waite Park was incorporated as a village on March 20, 1883. The City was named after Henry Chester Waite, who was a local landowner, attorney, statesman, and entrepreneur.

The first street to be platted in Waite Park was 3rd Street, also known as Rockville Avenue. Early employment in Waite Park included jobs with Northern Railroad, granite quarries, and various public and commercial opportunities.

### NATURAL FEATURES, PARKS, AND TRAILS

The Sauk River corridor and Transformer quarry provide opportunities for enjoying the outdoors and connecting with the natural world.

The Ledge Amphitheater hosts live performances and events for up to 6,000 visitors.

Waite Park has seven individual park facilities, ranging from the ½-acre Jagiello Park Playground to the 42-acre River's Edge Park with a multitude of facilities including a seasonal splashpad, playground, ball fields, pickle ball courts, winter skating, and hockey, as well as walking trails. Other parks include: Bartz Park, Community Park, Lions Park, Rock Island Park, and Willow Creek Park.

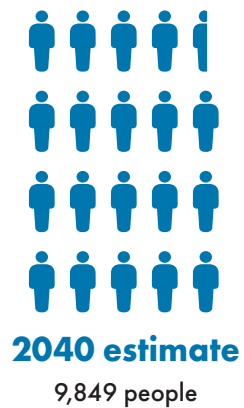
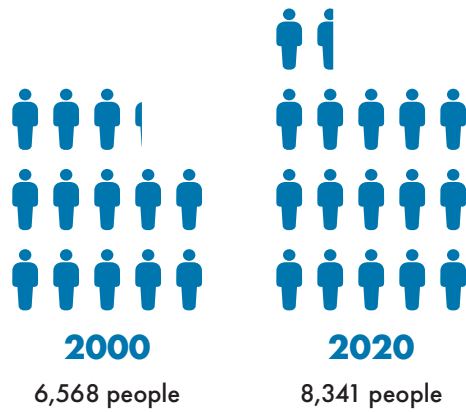
The Healthy Living Trail provides in-town opportunities for walking and rolling with exercise stations and medicinal flower gardens.

The 65-mile Lake Wobegon Trail provides walking and rolling opportunities to connect with numerous central Minnesota communities as well as the Mississippi River.



## Community Profile

### Population Growth



## DEMOGRAPHICS

The following information takes a look at Waite Park’s population, age distribution, race and ethnicity, income levels, and future trends. Assessing population characteristics is helpful in identifying community needs and planning for the City’s future. The U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) was used to identify demographic information for the City of Waite Park and surrounding communities.

Reference individual chapters in this Comprehensive Plan to learn more about the current demographics regarding housing, economic development, land use, and transportation.

### POPULATION GROWTH

Waite Park has experienced steady population growth during the last two decades. The City saw a significant population increase (24.2% growth) between 2010 and 2020, which was faster compared to Stearns County (5.1%) and the St. Cloud Metro Area (5.6%). Growth during the 2020s and 30s is anticipated to continue at a steady pace. The City’s population is expected to grow to 9,849 residents by 2040.

Population Size					
	2000	2010	2020	2030	2040
<b>Waite Park</b>	6,568	6,715	8,341	9,103	9,849
<b>Stearns County</b>	133,166	150,642	158,292	174,622	190,764
<b>St. Cloud Metro Area</b>	167,392	189,093	199,671	219,455	238,942

## AGE DISTRIBUTION

The age distribution of a community’s population helps in assessing the type of housing, employment, recreational, and commercial services needed.

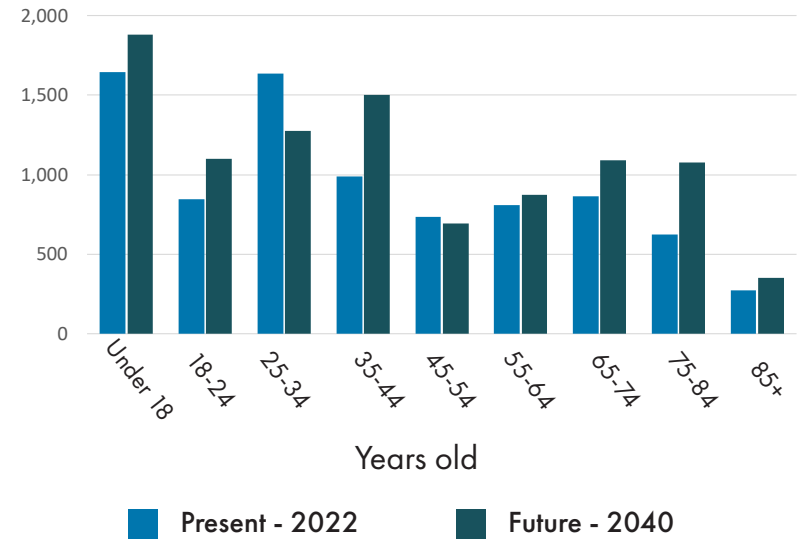
Approximately 50% of Waite Park residents are in their prime working years between the ages of 25 to 65 years. As of 2022, the largest adult age cohort in Waite Park is the 25 to 34 age group, which makes up 19.4% of the population. This also explains the large youth group under 18 years old, which make up 19.5% of the population.

Additionally, as residents enter their middle-age years, particularly those with children, they traditionally prefer lower-density single-family homes.

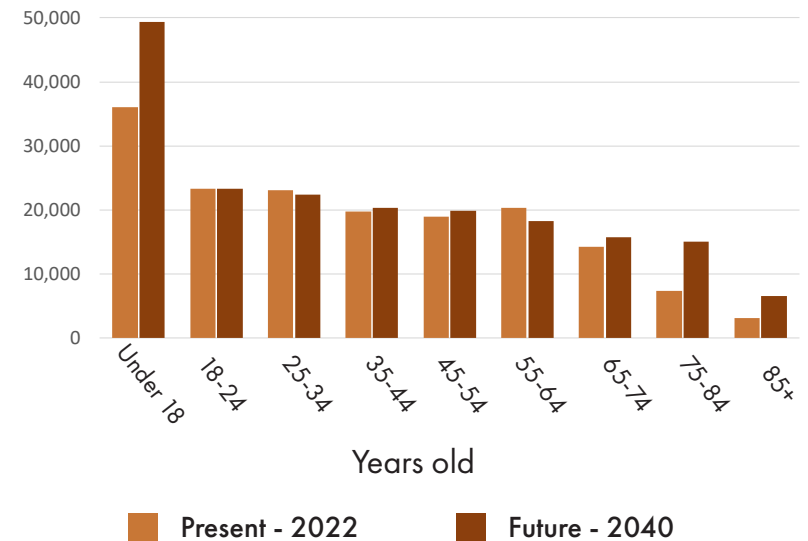
Based on current conditions, it’s anticipated that the senior citizen population will continue to increase significantly. During the 2020s, the 75 to 84 age group is anticipated to expand by 42%. This would result in more Waite Park residents moving out of the workforce, as well as needing different levels of service.

## Age Distribution

### Waite Park



### Stearns County



## Community Profile

### RACE AND ETHNICITY

Over the last decade, the racial and ethnic profile has changed in Waite Park. Waite Park has become more racially and ethnically diverse.

Between 2010 and 2020, the percentage of White residents decreased by almost 22%. The percentage of Black or African American residents increased by 20%, while Hispanic or Latino residents increased by 5%.

Waite Park has seen a continuous arrival of Somali immigrants. This has the potential to lead to alternative market demands for various goods and services, and has a direct effect on labor force, schools, transportation systems, and housing options.

Race and Ethnicity				
	2010		2020	
<b>White Alone</b>	5,531	86.2%	4,809	63.9%
<b>Black or African American Alone</b>	435	6.8%	2,199	29.2%
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native Alone</b>	35	0.55%	40	0.53%
<b>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Alone</b>	1	0.02%	3	0.04%
<b>Asian Alone</b>	240	3.7%	202	2.7%
<b>Some Other Race</b>	10	0.2%	23	0.3%
<b>Two or More Races Alone</b>	161	2.5%	251	3.3%
<b>Hispanic or Latino (Ethnicity not Race)</b>	302	4.5%	814	9.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	6,715		8,341	

### Household Income

In 2022, the median household income is estimated to be \$43,919 in Waite Park, \$65,804 in Stearns County, and \$64,505 in the St. Cloud Metro.

Median Household Income 2022	
<b>Waite Park</b>	\$43,919
<b>Stearns County</b>	\$65,804
<b>St. Cloud Metro Area</b>	\$64,505

When household incomes are less it means that residents have less choice in meeting everyday needs such as housing, goods, services, and transportation. Additionally, residents likely have less disposable income to spend, which directly affects local businesses, particularly those in retail and commercial uses. Fast growing inflation will place additional pressure on lower income households.



## COMMUNITY PLANNING QUESTIONNAIRE

Public outreach is key to developing and implementing a Comprehensive Plan that supports the needs and visions of a community.

The City of Waite Park launched an online survey in January 2022. Community input helps identify existing issues and barriers, as well as opportunities for development and growth. The online survey poses questions regarding the local economy, public utilities and services, outdoor spaces and recreation, transportation, housing, and community character.

**About 200 individuals provided their input in the online survey.**

See individual chapters in this Comprehensive Plan to learn more about community input regarding housing, economic development, land use, and transportation, and parks and open spaces.



### DID YOU KNOW?

Public outreach is key to developing and implementing a Comprehensive Plan that supports the needs and visions of a community.

## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING - PUBLIC INPUT

The following are quotes from the community survey:

**“More family activities and especially for younger children. Neighboring towns are always doing activities.”**

**“The Plan should support improving existing housing options.”**

**“Need to promote the positive aspects of the community, ie. Quarry Park, Baseball/Softball Complex, Sauk River.”**

**“With the Work From Home trend likely to increase, we need to be able to articulate a vision on why a business or individual employee should live in our City when they can now reside almost anywhere.”**

**“As we prepare our community for growth it is important to provide a safe environment for residents and business.”**

## Community Profile

### COMMUNITY CHARACTER - KEY POINTS

The public was asked a series of questions to reflect on the character and values that define the City of Waite Park. Consistent with the feedback mentioned previously, the top word used to describe Waite Park today was “safety.” Likewise, \*safety was the top thing participants mentioned they would like to prioritize.

When participants were asked what they would NOT change about Waite Park, the top two things were: **the small-town character and the parks.**

Looking ten years into the future, **“safe” is the top word the public would like to use when describing Waite Park.**

The following word clouds show the key themes we heard:

**What words best describe Waite Park TODAY?**

A word cloud where the words are arranged in a roughly circular pattern. The words are: GROWING (top), BUSY (top right), FRIENDLY (left), SAFETY (center, largest), SMALL (right), and COMMERCIAL (bottom, largest).

**If you could change one thing about Waite Park, what would it be?**

A word cloud where the words are arranged in a roughly circular pattern. The words are: SAFETY (center, largest), TRAFFIC (right), FAMILY (left), and HOUSING (bottom, largest).

**What would you not change about Waite Park?**

A word cloud where the words are arranged in a roughly circular pattern. The words are: SMALL-TOWN (top, largest), FRIENDLY (left), and PARKS (right, largest).

**In ten years, how would you like to describe Waite Park?**

A word cloud where the words are arranged in a roughly circular pattern. The words are: CLEAN (left), FAMILY (top left), VIBRANT (top right), SAFE (center, largest), BEAUTIFUL (right), and FRIENDLY (bottom, largest).

**In my neighborhood I'd like to see...**

A word cloud where the words are arranged in a roughly circular pattern. The words are: SAFETY (left), LESS TRAFFIC (top right), BETTER MAINTAINED ROADS (bottom left), and PARKS + GREENSPACE (right, largest).

\*\*\*For a city of approximately 8,000 people, Waite Park is home to a high number of regional-serving, big-box retail establishments. It is common for retailers to be the targets of shoplifting. Consequently crime statistics for property crime (which factor rates of theft with size of population) indicate that the City has an overall high rate of crime. It's important to recognize that rates of violent crime (crimes against people) in Waite Park are typically below the national average, which generally makes the City a safe place to live.

## WHO WE HEARD FROM

The following is a summary of who has participated in the online survey.

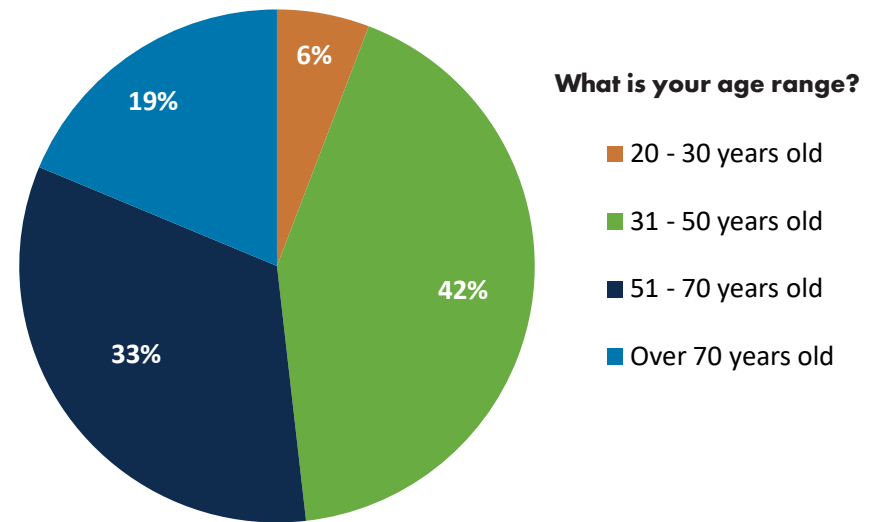
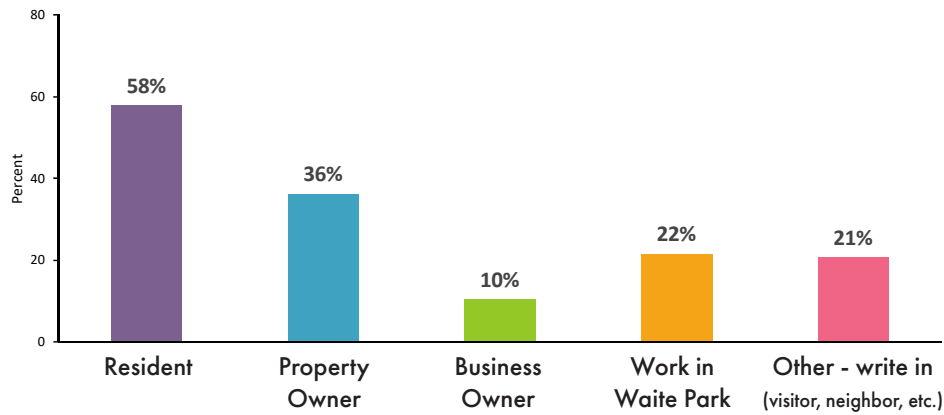


About

# 200

participants

**How would you describe your relationship to Waite Park?**  
Please check all that apply.



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# CHAPTER 3

## LAND USE

## Land Use

### INTRODUCTION

Land use establishes the foundation for the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan. How land within the city is used determines many aspects of the community.

**In addition to establishing specific land use types, this section also establishes the community’s growth strategy and policy framework over the next 20 years.**

The Land Use Plan helps the Planning Commission and City Council respond to individual development and redevelopment requests. It is comprised of text and maps that are intended to guide land use, zoning, and physical development consistent with the City’s vision. Together the land use text and associated Future Land Use Plan (Figure 3.2) describe how land is to be used and how it should function in 2040. It also highlights four potential growth areas that would respond to the community and business needs.

This Plan is implemented through private and public investment in land development, as well as through detailed planning, zoning and subdivision ordinances, public improvements, and public-private-partnerships.

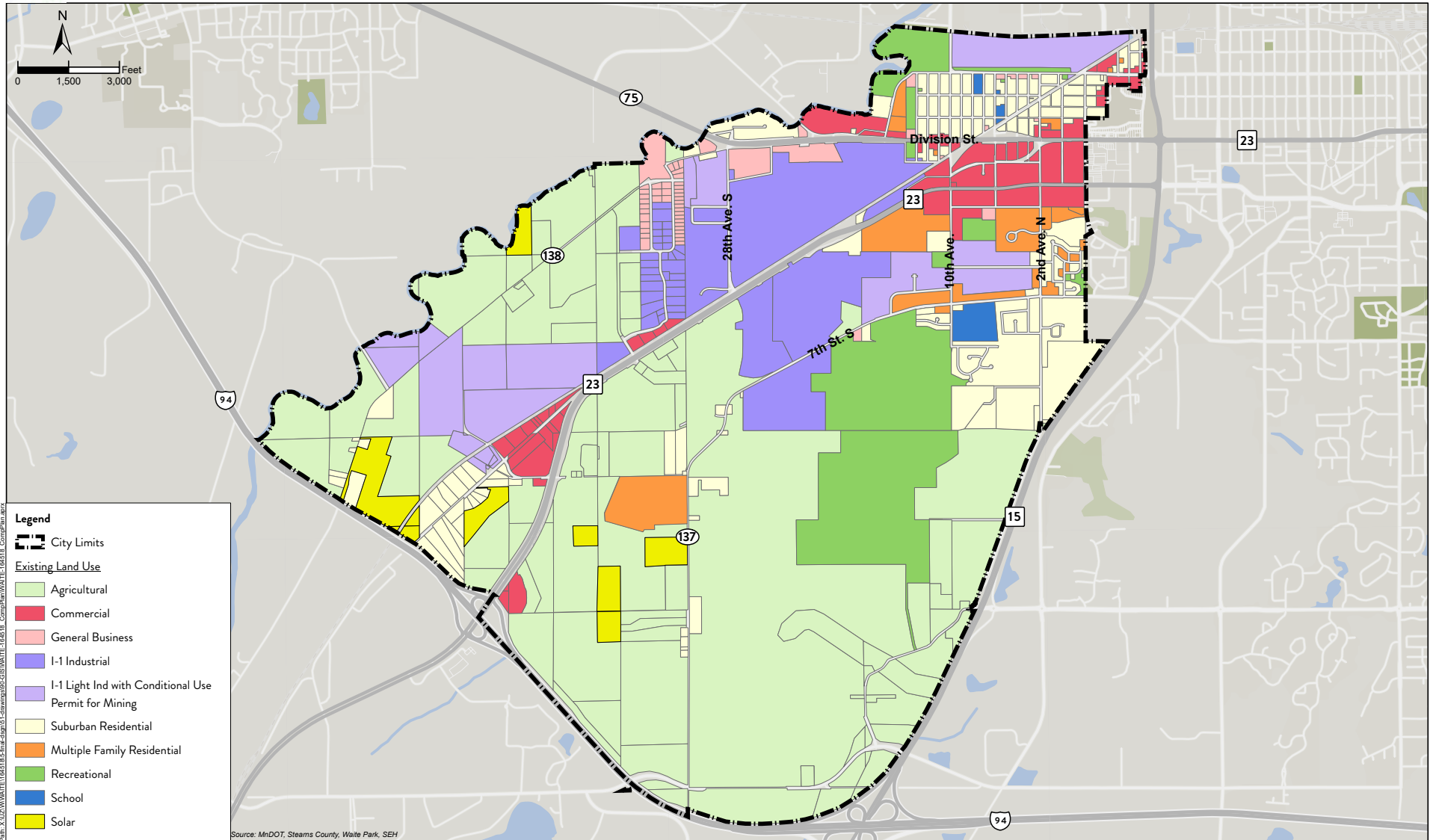


### LAND USE TODAY

As of 2022, half of the land in the city (50%) is agricultural. The next largest land use is I-1 industrial and I-1 light industrial with conditional use permit for mining, which combined make 18%. These are followed by suburban residential (10%) and recreational (9%). Multiple family residential, commercial, solar, general business, and school land uses combined make up about 13% of the city’s land.

Due to the annexation of a portion of St. Joseph Township in 2017, Waite Park’s land area increased by nearly 61%. Nearly three-quarters of the annexation area is agricultural in use, resulting in an increase in this land use from 2005 (37.1%) to 2022 (50%). Another significant land use change since 2005 includes an increase in multifamily residential uses, from 95 acres (1.9%) to 241 acres (3%). Figure 3.1 shows current land use in Waite Park.

Existing Land Use - 2022		
Type of Land Use	Acres	%
Agricultural	3,715	50%
Suburban Residential	746	10%
Multiple Family Residential	241	3%
I-1 Industrial	798	10%
I-1 Light Industrial with Conditional Use Permit for Mining	612	8%
Recreational	705	9%
Commercial	339	5%
Solar	177	2%
General Business	121	2%
School	38	1%





### SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PRINCIPLES

The Land Use framework for Waite Park’s future community growth is built on a set of “sustainable growth” planning principles. These principles focus on creating communities that are economically prosperous, equitable, welcoming, safe, attractive, and accessible. Sustainable growth principles promote the building of communities with life-cycle housing, community-supported businesses that pay living wage jobs, good performing public schools, and multi-generational recreation facilities easily accessible by walking, biking, and driving while also protecting the natural environment.

These principles focus on balancing critical economic, social, and environmental factors in guiding and regulating land development and redevelopment. They aim to optimize previous and future infrastructure investments while setting the stage for orderly, environmentally sensitive growth that can be supported by adequate and acceptable levels of fees and taxes.

Sustainable planning principles, applied to City land use policy, can serve as a catalyst for Waite Park to take advantage of opportunities from which the public will benefit. The principles described below, as well as the goals and policies described in this chapter, establish a framework for guiding Waite Park’s continued evolution and growth.

### Makes Full and Efficient Use of City Services

In order to maximize investments in civic infrastructure such as sewers and streets, growth should be adjacent to existing development, or take maximum advantage of underutilized “infill” areas in the form of redevelopment to produce a connected and financially sustainable city.

### Encourages “Human-Scaled” Design

Contemporary suburban-style development, catering to automobile transportation, typically spreads out over the landscape, and lacks a walkable, human scale. This development pattern is characterized by wide distances between buildings, separated, single-use developments, and commercial facilities with large, separated parking lots that lack safe, pedestrian access.

More compact, accessible patterns of development use land and resources more efficiently while supporting a broader range of transportation options such as walking, cycling, and public transit. Well-planned larger-scale development can make a positive contribution to Waite Park’s economy while also exhibiting the level of detail and human scale of the City’s older traditional neighborhoods. In this way, the City’s character would work in harmony with its residents and its economy.

### Mixes Compatible Land Uses

The concept of single-use zoning grew out of a need to separate living places from major industries to protect the health of residents, and this practice is still good policy in cases around Waite Park’s existing stone and aggregate mining facilities. Mixing different yet compatible uses, such as multifamily housing with shops and services, creates a more sustainable community by leveraging infrastructure investments. The mixing of compatible uses also reduces environmental impacts while increasing convenience by reducing the distances people must travel (typically by car) to conduct their daily lives.

Community plans and land development policies that allow for mixing a range of appropriate uses provide for a broader range of development opportunities. They also provide increased market flexibility, allowing the development community to respond to changing trends and shifts in consumer preference.

### **Creates Housing Opportunities and Choices**

Waite Park has a range of housing needs from aging housing stock and a lack of modern homes to large-scale apartment buildings. Mixing more diverse housing types within interconnected neighborhoods and offering a wider array of ownership and rental price points are needed to meet the City's future housing needs and preferences.

### **Encourages Distinctive Neighborhoods with a Sense of Place**

Newer residential development often occurs as single use subdivisions or in isolated pods of apartment buildings or patio homes. This is largely caused by outdated, single use zoning and subdivision regulations or leapfrog development. Waite Park should promote the building of diverse and walkable neighborhoods, providing a mix of uses and housing types designed in an environmentally conscious manner that reflect community members' preferences.

### **Preserves Open Space and Vital Environmental Areas**

Preserving, protecting, and providing access to undeveloped open spaces and environmentally sensitive areas balances the built and natural environment, provides habitat for plants and animals, passive recreational opportunities, and places of natural beauty. Open spaces, whether for recreation, habitat, or flood control have also been shown to provide measurable financial value to adjacent development and enhance overall community character.

### **Creates Transportation Options**

Many communities have begun to realize the need to provide a wider range of transportation options. A completely auto-dependent city limits access of such groups as young people and older seniors. An increase in the city's physical size should not reduce access. Techniques that increase the ability of all residents to move freely around the City include:

- Better coordination between land use and transportation
- Improved connectivity within the street network
- Multi-modal (or complete) streets that accommodate multiple forms of transportation.

This expands transportation options and increases opportunities for social interaction. Equally important, incorporating physical activity into the daily routine of citizens creates a healthier and more physically fit community, reducing demands on health care and increasing longevity.

### **Achieves Community and Stakeholder Collaboration in Development Decisions**

Waite Park is a great place to live, learn, work, and play any time of the year. City government should stay close to its constituents by using tools and techniques that collect and monitor residents' and business owners' needs. Issues and ideas voiced by the community cannot be adequately considered and acted upon without the collaboration of citizens and their government. Partnerships between neighbors, businesses, foundations, nonprofit organizations, schools, developers, and the City will support and accelerate the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan.

### SHAPING COMMUNITY GROWTH

In addition to the community's vision, other factors influencing the type and location of future development in Waite Park include demographics, real estate trends and markets, capacity of local and regional infrastructure, and the pattern of existing development, i.e., existing land uses.



### Key factors influencing the shape of the Future Land Use Plan include:

- Waite Park has seen strong growth in households over the past decade and the trend is expected to continue with a forecast population of 9,849 people and a household base of 5,446 households by 2040.
- Over the next twenty years, the largest population age groups are forecast to be in the 25 to 34 years and 35 to 44 years, respectively.
- While Waite Park's median household income is expected to rise in the coming decades, it will remain lower than that of households in the St. Cloud Metro Area.
- As Waite Park will continue to play a strong role in providing commercial goods and services within the St. Cloud Metro Area, the growing popularity of the Ledge Amphitheater is increasing demand for dining and lodging.
- Popularity of online commerce will continue to hasten the decline of aging, outmoded commercial developments.
- As Waite Park has become more developed over the past decade, better paying jobs and an increase in workers have come to the City.
- Granite deposits and outcroppings in the undeveloped areas of the city make future development in those areas challenging and costly.
- The 2023 Water System Master Plan establishes a long-term strategy for water system improvements that support orderly community growth.

**These factors suggest:**

- People in Waite Park will be seeking a variety of moderately priced housing products from multifamily to single family, rentals to owner-occupied.
- Future residential land uses should include a mix of densities and not be dominated by any one type of development, be it low-density single-family subdivisions or high-density apartment complexes.
- Ample area should be designated to support future office, light industrial, and commercial employment-related development.
- Areas within proximity to the Ledge Amphitheater should be considered for redevelopment and or development as a mix of commercial, entertainment, and lodging uses to leverage current investment and extend the stay of visitors. This will encourage visitors to spend additional dollars at more local businesses.
- A new 'Mixed Use' land use classification can be applied to existing vacant or declining commercial areas to promote their redevelopment as new activity centers with a mix of shops, restaurants, hotels, plazas, and multi-family housing.
- Future growth can now be closely coordinated with future water system improvements.

The Future Land Use Plan (Figure 3.2) reflects the community vision and addresses needs for future growth.



## Land Use

### FUTURE LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

After a review of existing conditions and potential growth, all areas of the city have been designated as one of the following land use categories.

Future Land Use		
Type of Land Use	Acres	%
Mixed Low Density Residential	637	9%
Mixed Moderate Density Residential	155	2%
Mixed High Density Residential	101	1%
Mixed Use	321	4%
Mixed Commercial	347	5%
Industrial and Mining	635	9%
Office and Light Industrial	1,111	15%
Public/Institutional	112	1%
Park/Open Space	761	10%
Agricultural	3,255	44%



#### Mixed Low Density Residential Neighborhood

Identifies residential development with a mix of single-family detached homes, and two-and-three family homes that are stacked and/or share common walls. These homes will typically include one or two-car garages. These homes will be organized as neighborhoods of varying size.

Depending upon size, neighborhoods will include a public playground or neighborhood park and will be served by an interconnected network of public streets providing sidewalks and/or trails and on-street parking along at least one side of the street. Neighborhoods may also include a small commercial use such as a convenience/gas station, corner store, or childcare center.

Gross density: between 4 – 7 units/acre.



### **Mixed Moderate Density Residential Neighborhood**

Identifies residential development with a mix of housing types including small, or zero-lot-line single family homes, and multi-family homes that share common walls and/or are stacked. These homes will include garages and may also be served by small surface parking lots. These homes will be organized as neighborhoods of varying size.

Depending upon size, neighborhoods will include a public playground or neighborhood park and will be served by an interconnected network of public streets providing sidewalks and/or trails and on-street parking along at least one side of the street. Neighborhoods may also include a small commercial use such as a convenience/gas station, corner store, or childcare center.

Gross density: between 8 - 20 units/acre.



### **Mixed High Density Residential Neighborhood**

Identifies residential development with a mix of multi-family housing types that are stacked and share common walls. These homes will include internal, attached, or detached garages and may also be served by small surface parking lots. These homes will be organized as neighborhoods of varying size.

Depending upon size, neighborhoods will include a private or public playground or neighborhood park and will be served by an interconnected network of public streets providing sidewalks and/or trails and on-street parking along at least one side of the street. Neighborhoods may also include a small commercial use such as a convenience/gas station, corner store, or childcare center.

Gross density: exceeds 20 units/acre.



### **Mixed Use**

Identifies neighborhood areas and development or redevelopment districts intended to provide a mix of commercial, office, residential, public/institutional related uses in a walkable, human scale environment. Areas may include a mix of retail and service commercial, entertainment, eating, drinking, office, lodging, public/institutional, medium to high-density residential, landscaped plazas, public parks and recreation uses.

Mix of uses can be organized vertically and horizontally. These districts or neighborhood areas will be served by an interconnected network of public streets with sidewalks and trails providing safe access through landscaped surface parking lots. The majority of streets will provide on-street parking along at least one side of the street.

Floor area ratios: between 1.0 and 2.0 and densities exceed 20 units/acre.

## Land Use



### Mixed Commercial

Identifies areas established for a mix of primarily commercial uses including retail, personal and professional services, lodging, restaurant/dining, entertainment uses along with limited amounts of high-density residential use.

These areas will be served by an interconnected network of public streets with sidewalks and or trails that provide safe access through landscaped surface parking lots. The majority of streets will provide on-street parking along at least one side of the street.

Floor area ratios: between 0.5 and 2.0



### Industrial and Mining

Identifies areas established for manufacturing, processing, assembly, quarrying and aggregate and mineral mining business. Public and private utilities, i.e., power plants, electrical substations, and information technology/telecommunications relay towers, and telecommunication facilities may also be included.

The location of these businesses is concentrated and separated from other businesses to reduce the disruption and nuisances of industrial uses, i.e., heavy trucks and loud noises. These areas will be served by an interconnected network of public streets with sidewalks and or trails that provide safe access through landscaped surface parking lots.



### Office and Light Industrial

Identifies areas established for offices, office-warehouses, warehousing, information technology facilities, construction yards and shops, and similar businesses that provide wholesale goods and services as well as a limited/minor amount of supportive commercial use. Public and private utilities, i.e., power plants, electrical substations, and information technology/telecommunications relay towers, and telecommunication facilities may also be included.

The location of these businesses are concentrated and separated from other businesses to reduce the disruption and nuisances of industrial uses, i.e., heavy trucks and loud noises. These areas will be served by an interconnected network of public streets with sidewalks and or trails that provide safe access through landscaped surface parking lots.

Floor area ratios: between 0.5 and 3.0



### **Public/Institutional**

Identifies areas established for uses that benefit the public. Includes all publicly owned uses, such as schools, hospitals, city/township buildings, water towers, pumping stations, sewage treatment plants, sanitary sewer facilities as well as public and private utilities, i.e., power plants, electrical substations, and information technology/telecommunications relay towers, and telecommunication facilities.

Also includes private institutional uses, such as hospitals, colleges, private schools, places of worship, cemeteries, etc. These areas will be served by an interconnected network of public streets with sidewalks and or trails that provide safe access through landscaped surface parking lots.



### **Park/Open Space**

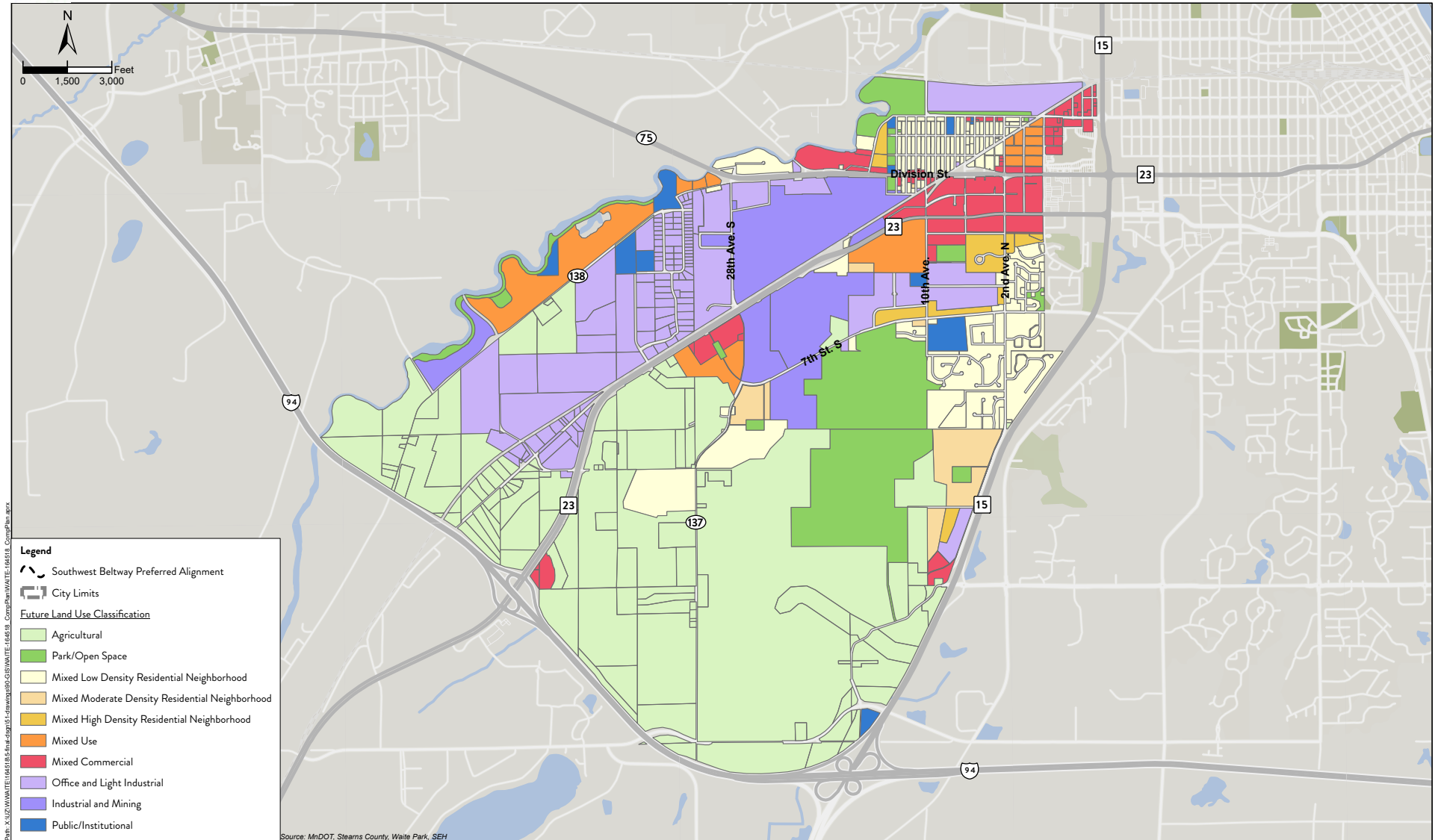
Identifies areas established for official public parks and open spaces. Parks and open spaces are used for recreation, relaxation, and preservation, and access to nature. Uses include active and passive parks, nature/wildlife areas, and other public outdoor recreation and entertainment facilities.

Parks and open spaces will be served by an interconnected network of public streets with sidewalks and or trails that provide safe access through (where appropriate) landscaped surface parking lots.



### **Agricultural**

Identifies areas used for agricultural purposes and related businesses. This also includes related, very low-density housing, and associated untilled and undeveloped lands such as woodlands and wetlands. Public and private utilities, i.e., power plants, electrical substations, and information technology/telecommunications relay towers, and telecommunication facilities may also be included.

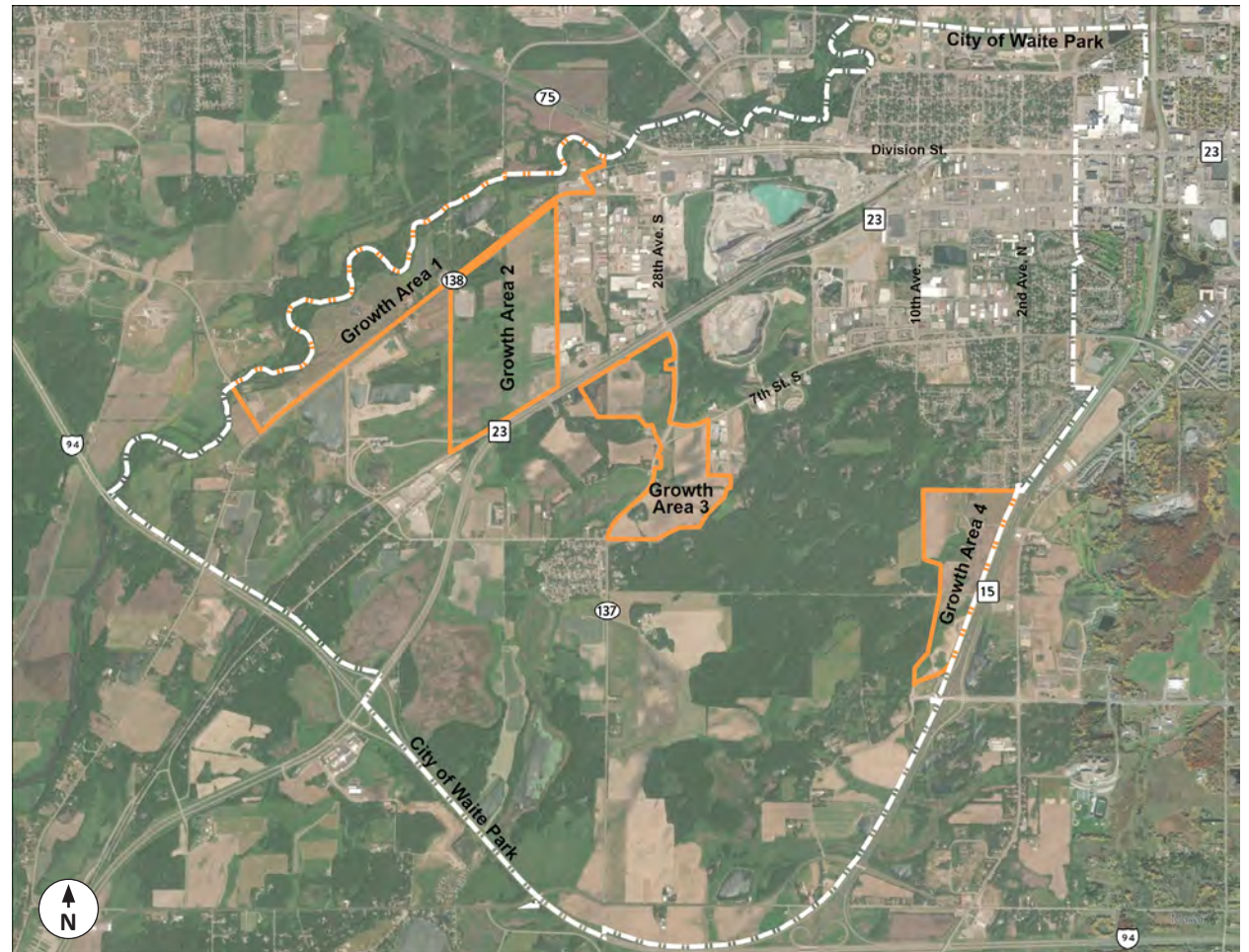


## FUTURE GROWTH AREA OPTIONS

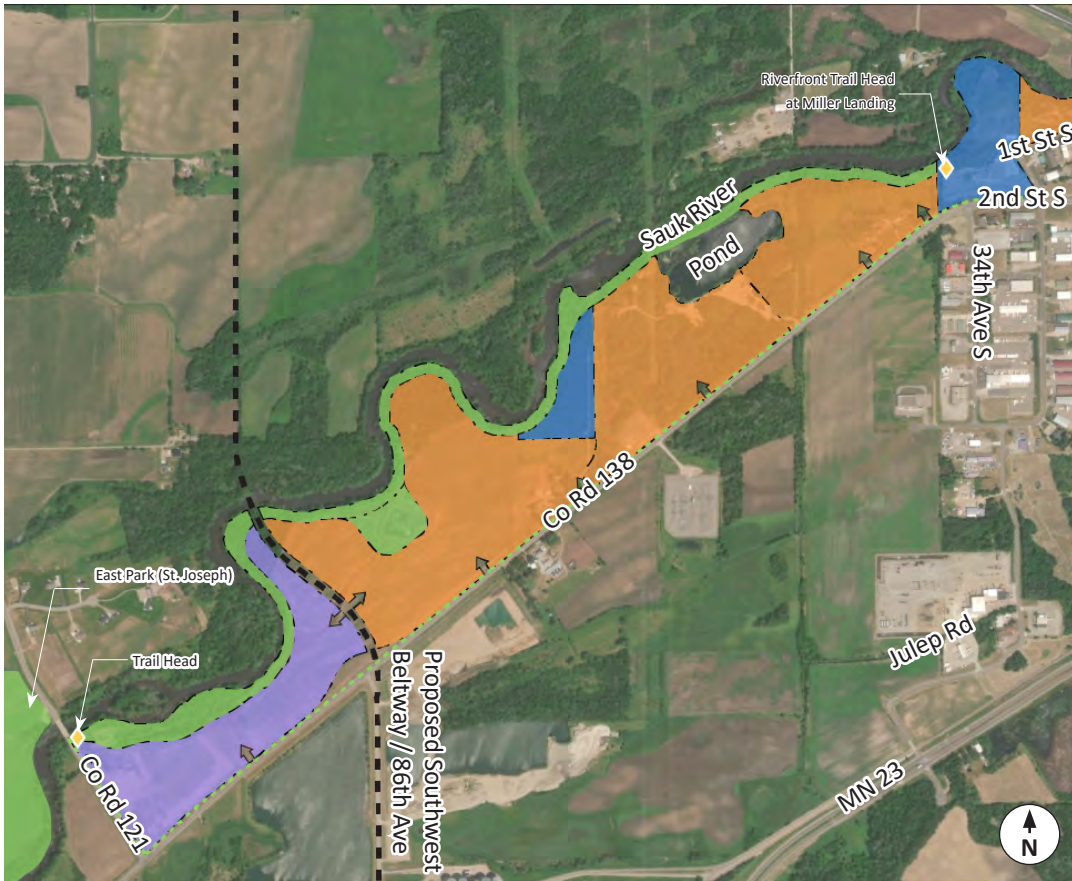
More detailed land use options for future growth are illustrated for four areas within Waite Park (Figure 3.3). These land areas were identified because they share features that support the Plan's goals and policies including:

- Service by extending existing transportation and utility infrastructure
- Adequate land area for accommodating future growth projections
- Moderate to minimal land alteration requirements
- Support a variety/range of land uses
- Potential development projections for each are based on an average density appropriate to each land use category. They also set aside 25% of non-residential land use areas for surface parking.

Figure 3.3. Future Growth Areas



## Land Use



### GROWTH AREA 1

This growth area is located on Waite Park's northern boundary, along the Sauk River. The following are key future land uses:

- Includes a mix of land uses to leverage natural beauty and ecological attributes of the Sauk River.
- Proposes a Sauk River Greenway that expands a protective buffer while providing low-impact public access via trails and overlooks.
- Integrates existing wetlands and former quarry pond into new public open spaces.
- Open spaces, trails, and Sauk River provide recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. This also creates access to adjacent riverfront park and trails in City of St. Joseph.
- Assumes 75% of mixed use areas developed as entertainment and mixed commercial, and 30% developed as multi-family residential.
- Current aggregate mining activities expected to continue to 2040.

#### LEGEND

	Average development potential
 Parks/Open Space	42 acres
 Mixed Use	160 acres, 720 du, 7.8 million gsf
 Public/Institutional (Solar and Stearns County Service Center)	29 acres
 Industrial and mining	46.1 acres
 Proposed Southwest Beltway	
 Proposed Multi-Use Trail	
 Recommended access point	

du = dwelling units per acre

gsf = gross square feet

## GROWTH AREA 2

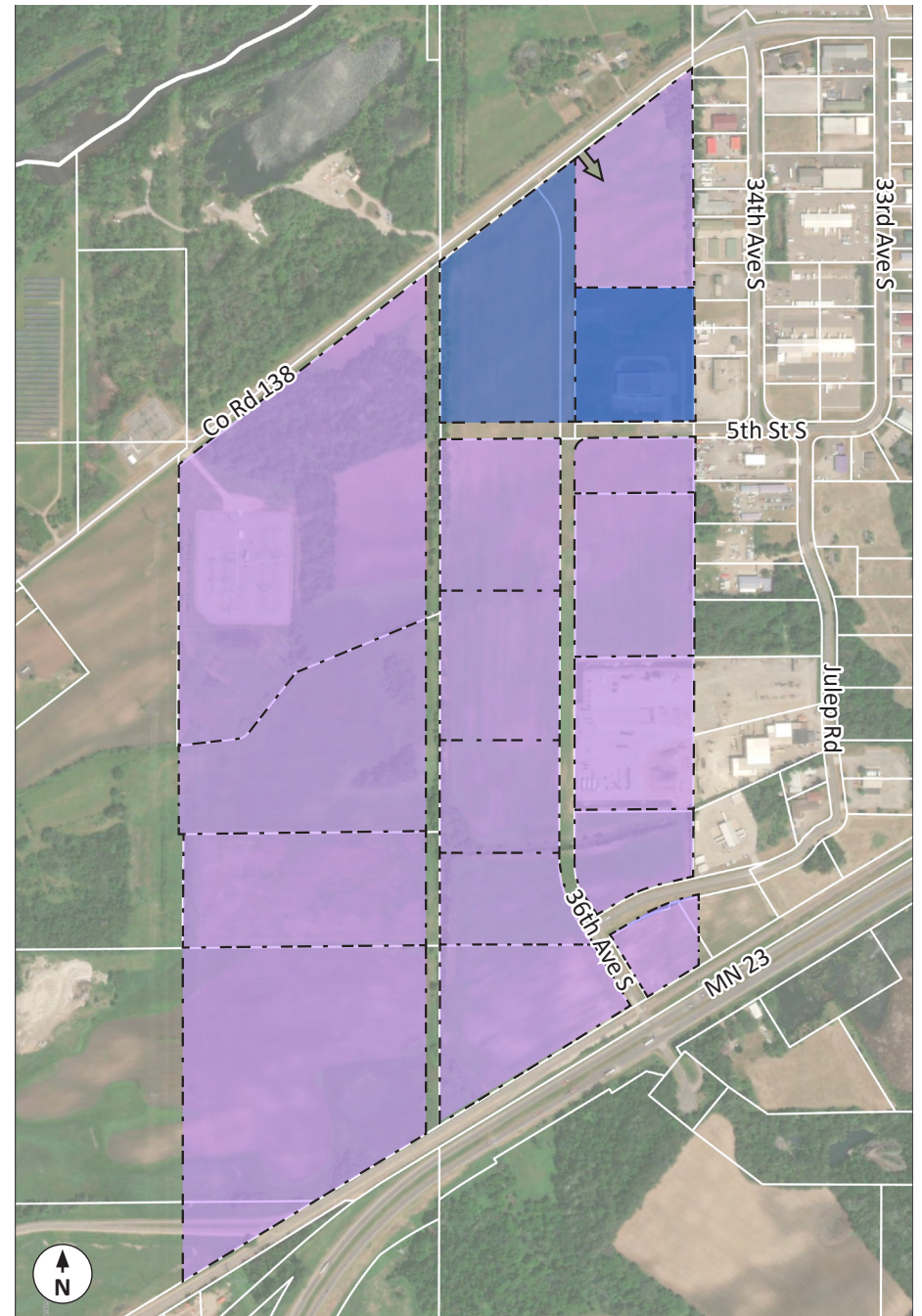
This growth area is located on the north central region of Waite Park between County Road 138 and MN 23. Current land use is primarily agricultural. The following are key future land use characteristics:

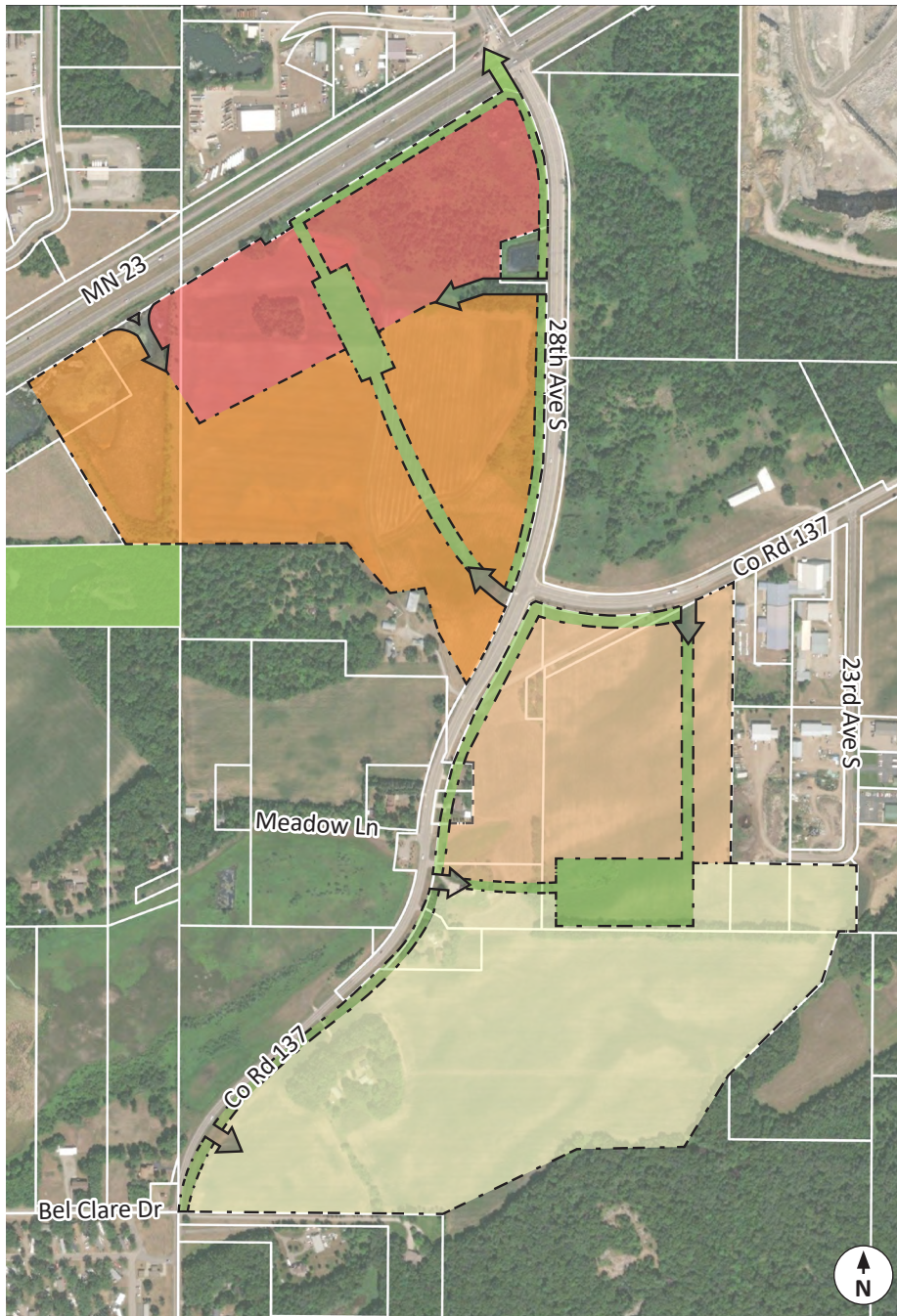
- Provides public access and services for the development of new business.
- Expands employment related to office and light industrial uses.
- Roadways from 36th Avenue S and 5th Street S are classified as 'Production and Processing' street type.<sup>1</sup>

1. A 'Production and Processing' street type provides access in industrial areas. Please reference the transportation chapter for more information.

LEGEND		Average development potential
	Recommended access point	
	Public/institutional	29 acres
	Office and light industrial	215 acres, 12.5 million gsf

du = dwelling units per acre  
gsf = gross square feet











### GROWTH AREA 3

This growth area is situated in the central region of Waite Park, west of Quarry Park. Current land use of this area is primarily agricultural. The following are key future land use characteristics:

- Northern section includes mixed use and commercial uses along Hwy 23 and 28th Avenue S around green parkways and vegetation.
- Southern section includes low and moderate density housing around green parkways and open space feature.
- Extends a multi-use trail along 28th Avenue S.
- Assumes 75% of land area developed as mixed residential.







LEGEND		Average development potential
	Recommended access point	
	Park/open space	5-7 acres
	Mixed low density residential	66 acres, 500 du
	Mixed moderate density residential	30 acres, 418 du
	Mixed commercial	26 acres, 1 million gsf
	Mixed-use	48 acres, 480 du, 1.5 million gsf

du = dwelling units per acre  
gsf = gross square feet

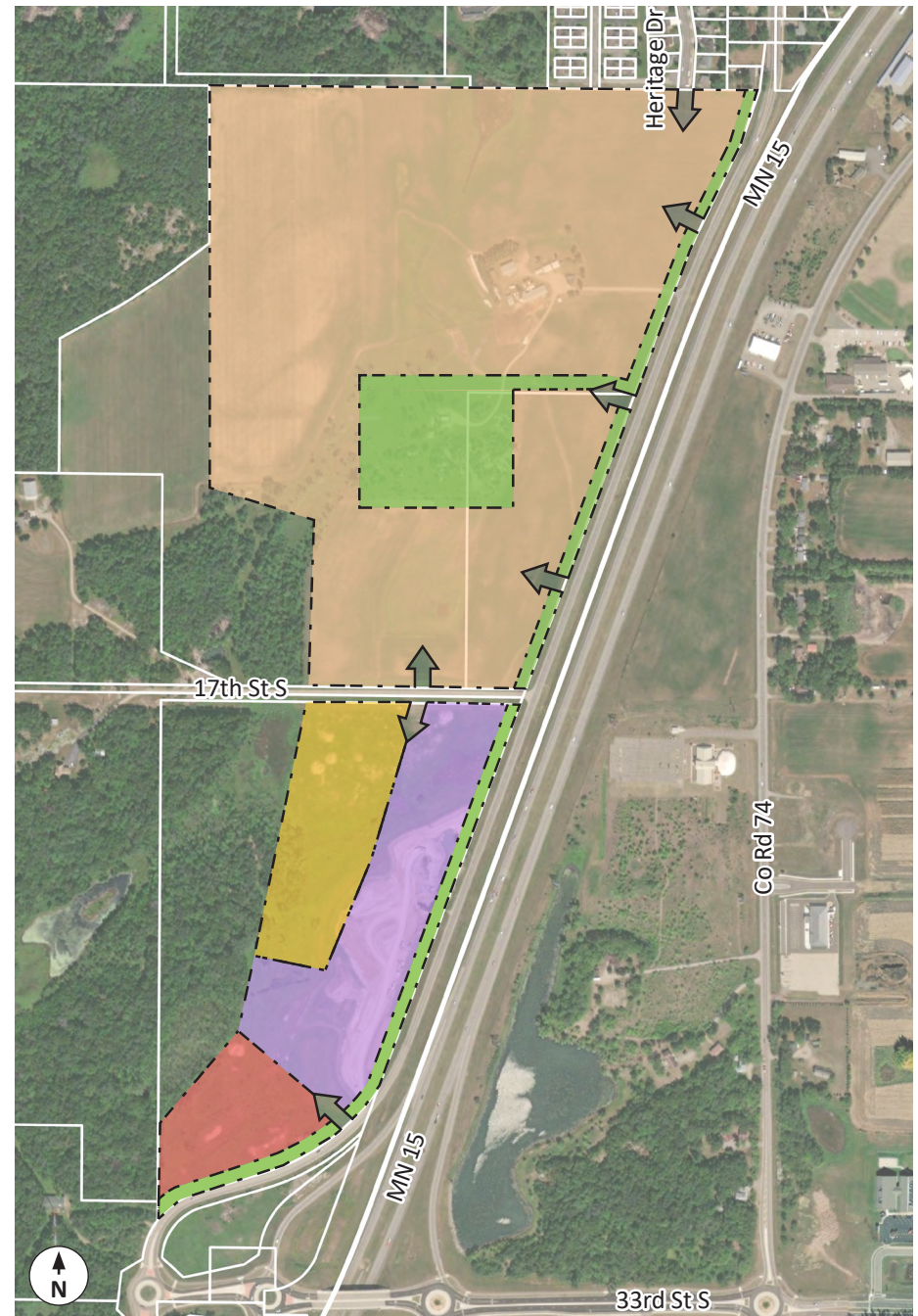
## GROWTH AREA 4

This growth area is located on Waite Park's eastern boundary, east of Quarry Park. Current land use of this area is agricultural. The following are key future land use characteristics:

- Locates new mixed commercial uses within easy access to the 33rd Street interchange, as well as multiple schools (Tech High School, Athlos Academy, and Stride Academy).
- Locates new employment related uses adjacent to mixed high and moderate density residential uses.
- Area connects to Heritage Drive, which creates a second access point to existing residential neighborhood.
- Organizes new mixed moderate density (missing-middle) residential neighborhood around new neighborhood park.
- Suggests new multi-use trail along Granite View Road linking to 2nd Avenue S.
- Incorporates granite outcropping for a new neighborhood park.
- There is a 20 year mining permit immediately west of the roundabout in this area.

LEGEND		Average development potential
	Recommended access point	
	Park/open space	8-10 acres
	Mixed moderate density residential	91 acres, 1,275 du
	Mixed high density residential	11 acres, 300 du
	Mixed commercial	6.7 acres, 273,600 gsf
	Office and light industrial	17 acres, 972,000 gsf

du = dwelling units per acre  
gsf = gross square feet



## Land Use



### GOALS AND POLICIES

#### **Goal 1. Maintain an official Land Use Plan that embodies principles of sustainable growth in identifying a range of land use types and the most appropriate locations for development and redevelopment.**

Policy 1.A. Prepare and adopt a Land Use Plan that designates land use areas and guides development to appropriate areas in order to ensure desirable land use patterns and minimize conflicts.

Policy 1.B. Work with Stearns County and adjacent communities to maintain low residential densities within the one-mile joint boundary to promote the efficient and environmentally sound application of private and public utilities to ensure long-term sustainability and resiliency.

Policy 1.C. Coordinate community growth with Waite Park Public Works Department to systematically plan for the efficient expansion of services.

Policy 1.D. Identify areas of significant natural resource benefit and protect these areas from premature or incompatible development.

#### **Goal 2. Grow in a controlled and orderly manner consistent with the Future Land Use Plan, Comprehensive Plan, and Zoning Ordinance.**

Policy 2.A. Review all applicable ordinances and policies on a routine basis (2-3 years) to ensure that they do not deter desirable, self-supporting development.

Policy 2.B. Continue to work cooperatively with Stearns County, adjacent cities, townships, and property owners to encourage orderly growth.

#### **Goal 3. Plan for the orderly, efficient, and fiscally responsible growth of residential, commercial, and industrial development.**

Policy 3.A. Organize residential uses into cohesive, interconnected neighborhoods, not isolated, free-standing developments, or subdivisions.

Policy 3.B. Locate and design industrial and commercial developments to provide good access and road service, while avoiding the routing of traffic through residential neighborhoods.

Policy 3.C. Require new commercial and industrial developments to have access to adequately designed public roads.

Policy 3.D. Require all commercial and industrial developments to be served by public sewer and water in a timely manner.

Policy 3.E. Buffer commercial and industrial developments from environmentally sensitive areas within the community.

**Goal 4. Where feasible, redevelop and infill underutilized or vacant properties to leverage existing infrastructure investments and strengthen economic vitality and community cohesion.**

Policy 4.A. Encourage compatible infill redevelopment throughout the developed portions of the city, to expand economic development opportunities, reduce blight, and improve tax base.

**Goal 5. Development will improve and strengthen community character, identity, and sense of place.**

Policy 5.A. Work with developers and property owners to establish enhanced and attractive entrances and gateways to the community.

Policy 5.B. Develop and enforce community site-planning and land development standards that promote and support an appealing visual character to the City.

**Goal 6. Natural systems and functions will be identified prior to designating areas for development, and official controls protecting and integrating natural systems into land use decisions will be consistently applied.**

Policy 6.A. Require the management of stormwater runoff in accordance with local and state requirements, as well as drainage needs.

Policy 6.B. Support development patterns that protect and preserve both surface and groundwater resources.

Policy 6.C. Encourage maintaining existing wetlands and natural drainage systems when accommodating community growth and where feasible, reestablishing wetlands and natural drainage systems within redevelopment projects.

Policy 6.D. Require sedimentation and erosion control techniques during development and redevelopment projects and encourage innovative techniques, such as the use of bio-retention, rain gardens, and other low impact best management practices where appropriate.

**Goal 7. Undeveloped property utilized for either recreational opportunities or agriculture will be supported by preserving high-quality open areas most suitable for these uses. Expand city services in a planned, orderly, and cost-effective manner, and guide development to areas most appropriate for the physical conditions they require.**

Policy 7.A. Ensure agriculture practices are a compatible and acceptable use in land use categories such as industrial and low density residential.

Policy 7.B. Continue to craft, monitor, and refine supportive ordinances to effectively regulate agricultural practices within undeveloped and developed areas of the city.

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# CHAPTER 4 HOUSING

## Housing

### INTRODUCTION

Housing plays a critical role in defining a person's quality of life. It determines the character and prosperity of a community.

Having a clear understanding of current housing inventory (quantity and type) along with current and future population projections will assist Waite Park in providing a variety of housing options that meet the needs of current and future residents.



### HOUSING TODAY

#### Number of Households

During the last two decades, the growth in number of households was higher than the overall population growth in Waite Park. Waite Park had a strong household growth between 2010 and 2020, increasing by 12.5%, compared to Stearns County (7.6%) and the St. Cloud Metro Area (7.9%). The proportional increase in new households was high relative to population, suggesting a trend toward shrinking household sizes in the City.

#### **In 2022, there were 3,656 Households in Waite Park.**

Growth is expected to continue at a steady pace during the 2020s. By 2030, Waite Park's population will grow by 9% and number of households will increase by 26%. This growth trend is anticipated to continue into 2040.



## Housing units by type of housing structure

Single family detached housing makes up 37% of the City’s housing units.

Approximately half of Waite Park’s housing units are different types of multi-family housing (53%). Most of the multi-family housing consists of apartment buildings containing 20 or more units.

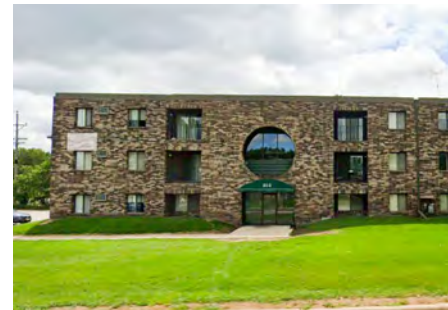
Mobile homes make up 5% of the City’s housing stock. Mobile homes provide an affordable housing option to low-income households. They are also considered a temporary housing option.

Housing Type		
Type	Estimate	%
1 unit, detached	1,430	37%
1 unit, attached	188	5%
2 units	59	2%
3 or 4 units	45	1%
5 to 9 units	170	4%
10 to 19 units	152	4%
20 to 49 units	973	25%
50 or more units	656	17%
Mobile home	177	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,850</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Housing in Waite Park:



Neighborhood in the City’s older residential district



Park Meadows apartment complex on the eastern part of Waite Park



Single family homes in the City’s newer residential neighborhoods



Mobile homes in Bel Clare Estate



Prosper West Apartments on 7th Street

# Housing

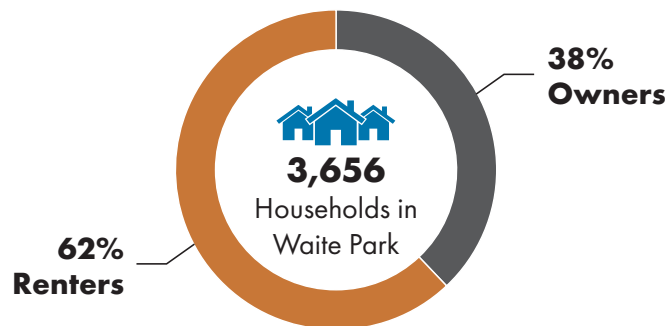
## Homeowners and renters

Home ownership in Waite Park has been significantly lower compared to Stearns County and the St. Cloud Metro Area. In 2022, the homeownership rate in Waite Park was 38%, compared to 68% in both Stearns County and the St. Cloud Metro Area. This can be linked to the large percentage of multi-family housing units in Waite Park. The larger percentage of lower-household incomes and younger population has also impacted the level of homeownership.

Typically, the youngest and oldest households rent their housing in greater proportions than middle-aged households. Nearly 100% of the population under the age of 25 and over 85% of the age 25 to 34 households are renters in Waite Park.

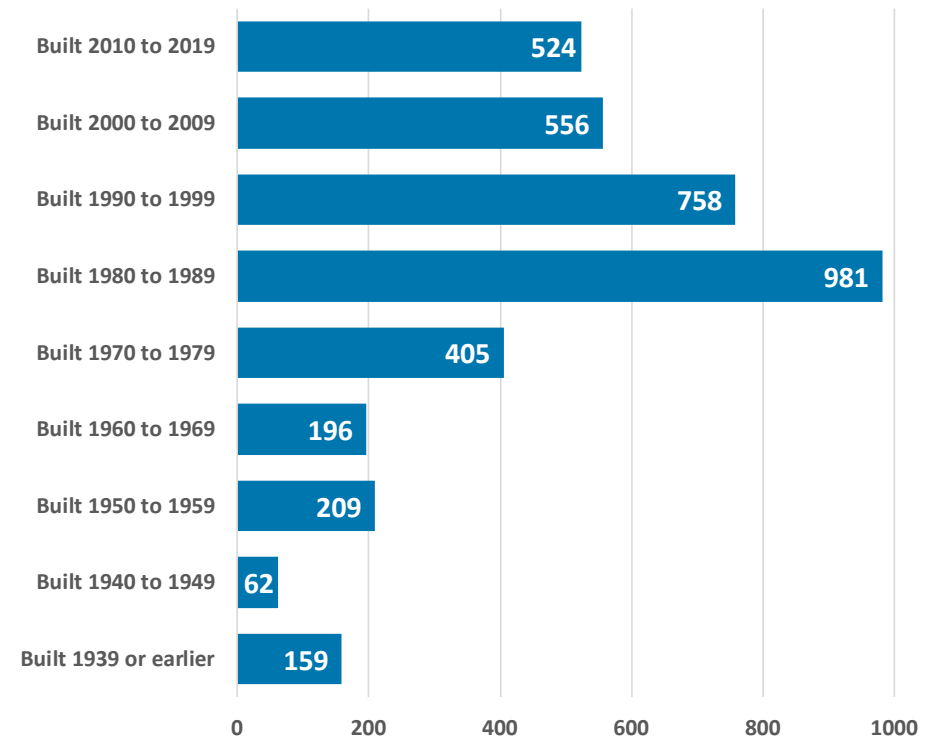
As the housing market has seen property prices rise over the last decade, it has made it more difficult for lower income households and first-time buyers to purchase a home. In 2022, the Waite Park median household income was \$43,919, which was lower than Stearns County (\$65,804) and the St. Cloud Metro Area (\$64,505). Household incomes have also increased as higher paying sectors have entered Waite Park over the past decade. This may increase the homeownership rate, as well as the demand for higher-priced housing in Waite Park.

Home Ownership				
	2010		2022	
	Own	Rent	Own	Rent
Waite Park	45%	55%	38%	62%
Stearns County	72%	28%	68%	32%
St. Cloud Metro Area	71%	29%	68%	32%



## Age of housing stock

Approximately half of Waite Park’s housing stock was built 30 years or more ago (52%). As homes age, they need additional repairs or updated amenities. Homes that are not adequately maintained become less functional and desirable to residents. The aging stock also limits housing options available to residents.



Source: US Census Bureau ACS 2021



## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING - PUBLIC INPUT

Below is a summary of public input regarding availability and affordability of housing in Waite Park, as well as the City’s future needs.

Survey responses indicated that there is a lack of well-maintained housing.

**Only 27% mentioned that there is an adequate supply of housing choices.**

There is a **desire for more single-family homes in Waite Park**, as 60% of participants agreed there is a need. On the contrary, a large section of the respondents (65%) said they do not think there is a need for more multi-family homes (condominiums, apartments).



**60%**  
of respondents

Agreed that there is a need for **more single-family homes.**



**82%**  
of respondents

Agreed that **neighborhoods should include sidewalks and/or trails.**

### Housing needs in Waite Park



**More well-maintained housing options**



**More single-family detached homes**



**More affordable options**

**“Focus on building more single family neighborhoods.”**

**“Some of the older neighborhoods could be improved or maintained better.”**

**“The Plan should support improving existing housing options, not by directly giving funds or tax breaks to the property management companies but by basing incentives on specific improvements and development.”**

**“Less apartments in a row. Spread them out.”**

### FUTURE HOUSING NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Growth is anticipated to continue a steady pace during the next two decades. Over this time, the largest population age groups are forecast to be in the 25 to 34 years and 35 to 44 years, respectively. Strong household growth is also projected due to the Baby Boomer generation entering their older years.

By 2030, Waite Park's population is forecasted to expand by 9.1% (to 9,103 people) and 25.8% among households (to 4,428 households). The trend is anticipated to continue through the 2030s, and by 2040 Waite Park is forecast to have a population of 9,849 people and a household base of 5,446 households.

Given the anticipated growth trends, people in Waite Park will be seeking a variety of moderately priced housing products from multifamily to single family, rentals to owner-occupied.



Mixed use buildings typically include multi-family residential over commercial uses. This can be an attractive option for a wide range of residents, especially single-vehicle households.



### EXPANDING HOUSING OPTIONS

The City plays an important role in making sure there is a variety of housing being built. New housing developments should accommodate different resident needs, including cost, size, and type. As housing expands, residential neighborhoods should include a mix of densities, not be dominated by low-density, single-family subdivisions or by large apartment buildings.

The current configuration of rental housing consists of large buildings with upwards of 50 apartment units. This makes up tends to isolate residents from the broader community. Additionally, Waite Park's Public Safety Department finds that concentrating renter populations in separate, large-building apartment complexes has led to a concentration of calls for assistance which tends to monopolize their attention and strain their capacity.

Additional housing options (affordable and market-rate) can include duplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts, courtyard buildings, small-scale (12-24 unit) apartment buildings, and moderately priced single-family homes. Expanding these options will address the existing demand for more well-maintained housing that fits a wide range of budgets and fulfills the vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

The following are examples of housing types to meet different needs and budgets:



Medium-density townhomes



Small lot single-family homes



Pocket neighborhoods with cottage homes



Low-density duplexes



Medium-density condominiums



High-density mixed use building



### Using CPTED Design Principles to Improve Quality of Life

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles use physical and environmental features to improve the livability, safety, and visual appeal of public spaces. CPTED principles include:



#### **Natural surveillance:**

increase visibility of public space by eliminating hiding spots, keeping clear sight lines, and low landscaping



#### **Access control:**

create sense of space by using curbs and landscaping to direct traffic to a visible area



#### **Maintenance:**

keeping properties and public spaces well-maintained to show that they are cared for



#### **Territorial reinforcement:**

using fencing, signage, landscaping, and lighting to define public spaces

Multi-family housing units should incorporate CPTED principles to increase a sense of safety, minimize pressure on public safety services, and create more attractive neighborhoods.



## STRATEGIES TO REDUCE DEVELOPMENT COSTS

Given the continuing increase in borrowing, land acquisition, and construction prices, it is important to consider and employ strategies to reduce development costs while providing quality housing options for residents. The following strategies can help reduce costs with a minimum amount of public and private subsidy:

- **Selecting sites served by existing infrastructure** - Identify reasonably priced sites that already have access to public utilities and streets.
- **Planning modest-sized lots and compact neighborhoods** – Plan smaller single family lot sizes to reduce land costs and the scale of infrastructure.
- **Planning efficient streets** – Lay out streets efficiently to reduce total length of streets and associated infrastructure and build streets of appropriate widths to accommodate all anticipated uses and traffic volumes.
- **Using cost-effective home designs** – Select home plans that are more economical to build, without harming the housing’s livability and appeal. Home plans can include sizes that fit in modest-sized lots, unfinished expansion spaces, and efficient construction plans. Housing developments should consider building in volume to get a “quantity discount” to lower the cost per home.



Mixing a variety of home types on smaller lots supports affordability

## Housing



### GOALS AND POLICIES

Outlined below are goals and policies that are aimed at guiding the City of Waite Park towards meeting future housing demands for residents across multiple age and income levels. These goals and policies are based on public input and a study of current and future trends.

**Goal 1. Waite Park’s housing supply will include a broad range of housing types and styles, in quantities, sizes, and at costs that meet the community’s current and future needs.**

Policy 1.A. Update official Land Use categories to provide a variety of home types within a range of sizes, mixtures, and densities.

Policy 1.B. Designate sufficient land area on the official Land Use Map for residential uses at a mix of types, sizes, and densities.

Policy 1.C. Periodically update the official Land Use Map based upon updated community growth projections and applicable market trends.

Policy 1.D. Waite Park will partner with local organizations and support affordable housing initiatives to reduce housing insecurity.

**Goal 2. There will be ample opportunities for home ownership and for residents to be a stakeholder in their housing arrangements.**

Policy 2.A. Work collaboratively with industry and business to identify and provide a variety of attractive, good quality housing products to meet the needs of their workforces.

Policy 2.B. Engage the Development Community, including builders, lenders, and landlords to ensure safe, decent, and affordable housing to meet the diverse needs of the community.

**Goal 3. Waite Park’s older residential properties will have options to be upgraded, remodeled, or replaced, strengthening existing neighborhoods and increasing community pride.**

Policy 3.A. Continue to evaluate the condition of existing housing stock to address code violations and eliminate deterioration/blight.

Policy 3.B. Continue to explore funding programs to assist homeowners with repairing, modernizing, and weatherizing their homes.

Policy 3.C. Expand and/or accelerate programs to rehabilitate and/or demolish blighted residential properties.

**Goal 4. Housing in Waite Park will provide opportunities for mixing with other land uses and convenient access to shops, services, recreation, and employment.**

Policy 4.A. Update zoning and subdivision regulations to permit the mixing of different housing types, sizes, and densities within a range of zoning districts.

Policy 4.B. Improve transportation connections, particularly bicycle paths, bike lanes, and pedestrian facilities, between and within existing neighborhoods and other parts of the City and region.

**Goal 5. Create a high-quality environment in all residential neighborhoods.**

Policy 5.A. Encourage the design of new residential areas as walkable neighborhoods providing a mixture of housing types, densities, styles, and a range of ownership and rental price points, instead of isolated, single home type developments and subdivisions.

Policy 5.B. Update land development codes to require inclusion of pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks, shared use paths and/or bike trails as a part of development plans and subdivision designs.

Policy 5.C. Update land development codes to require interconnected street and pedestrian systems and control the use of cul-de-sacs.

Policy 5.D. When medium and high-density rental housing is proposed, require that it be included as a part of a broader residential neighborhood and organized into buildings containing 30 or fewer dwelling units.

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# CHAPTER 5 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Economic Development



Office spaces on 2nd Street S



Commercial area on 6th Avenue S

## INTRODUCTION

The economy plays a central role in maintaining the vitality and quality of life within a community. A healthy economy creates good paying jobs, providing economic opportunities to all citizens. Economic development is more than just businesses. It is also about creating a vibrant community that provides a high quality of life and attracts employees and businesses. It also supports the tax base, providing for schools, police, fire protection, parks and many other community facilities and services.

The purpose of the Economic Development section is to present goals and policies that guide and encourage a strong, sustainable economy. It is important to recognize that the entire Comprehensive Plan should be considered as an economic development tool to showcase Waite Park's assets and vision.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Household Income

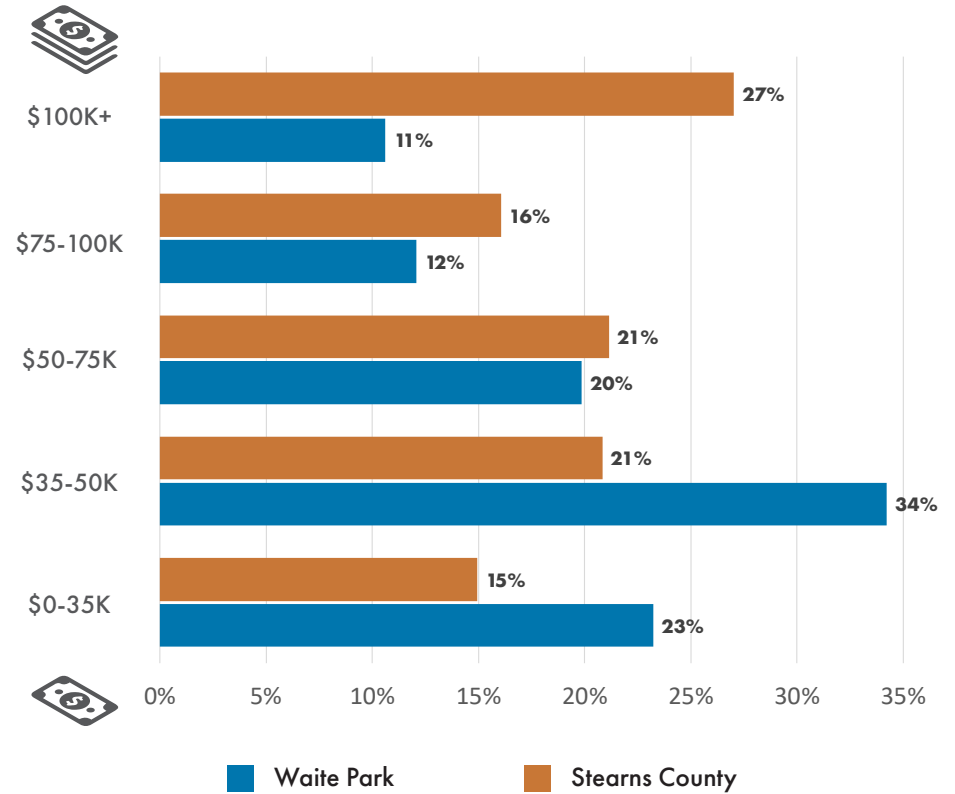
In 2022, the median household income is estimated to be \$43,919 in Waite Park, \$65,804 in Stearns County, and \$64,505 in the St. Cloud Metro.

Median Household Income 2022	
Waite Park	\$43,919
Stearns County	\$65,804
St. Cloud Metro Area	\$64,505

Median household incomes are forecast to increase over the next five years. By 2022, the median income in Waite Park by 9.7%, compared to 10.9% in Stearns County and the St. Cloud Metro Area.

When household incomes are less it means that residents have less choice in meeting everyday needs such as housing, goods, services and transportation. Additionally, residents likely have less disposable income to spend which directly affects local businesses, particularly those in retail and commercial uses. Fast growing inflation will place additional pressure on lower income households.

### Household Income in 2022



## Economic Development



West River Business Park



Manufacturing businesses



Waite Park serves the broader St Cloud metro area with retail shopping options.

## Employment

Employment trends are important to consider since job growth can typically influence household and population growth as people typically desire to live near where they work. Employment numbers in Waite Park have been increasing steadily during the last two decades and are expected to continue to grow.

**In 2021, there were 7,251 jobs in Waite Park. By 2030, Waite Park is forecast to have 9,823 jobs, an increase of 29.4% since 2020.**

Employment - Number of Jobs						
	2000	2010	2020	2021	2030	2040
Waite Park	6,305	6,765	7,589	7,251	9,823	11,649
Stearns County	76,331	77,294	86,708	86,832	93,196	98,466
St. Cloud Metro Area	93,753	93,118	107,623	107,715	112,455	119,395

## Industry

The largest job sector was the Trade, Transportation and Utilities Sector, which employed an estimated 2,500 people (34% of the City’s total employment). This was followed by leisure and hospitality as the second largest job sector in the City. Workers employed in Waite Park’s two largest industry sectors earned an average of \$800 per week.

As Waite Park has become more developed over the past decade there has been an increase in higher paying jobs. In 2010, only one employment sector had an average weekly wage of \$1,000 or more: Public Administration. By 2020, three job sectors had average weekly wages above \$1,000: Construction; Trade, Transportation and Utilities; and Financial Activities. By 2021, there were four sectors with weekly wages above \$1,000 (the same four previously mentioned). As Waite Park becomes more developed it is likely that wages in Waite Park will begin to climb closer to Metro Area averages.

By 2030, Waite Park is forecast to have 9,823 jobs, an increase of 29.4% since 2020. Employment growth during the 2030’s is anticipated to be steady but less aggressive than in the 2020’s.

Top 5 Industries			
	Number of employees	Average weekly wage	% of jobs in the City
Trade, transportation, and utilities	2,492	\$785	34%
Leisure and hospitality	1,169	\$387	16%
Education and health services	926	\$716	13%
Construction	734	\$1,319	10%
Professional and business services	557	\$746	8%

## Commercial Area

The commercial area surrounding MN 23 and Division Street has been an anchor for Waite Park. This area provides a wide range of commercial and retail services. Services include groceries, restaurants, lodging, entertainment, automobile dealerships and repair, professional services, and other essential goods. The commercial services also attract shoppers from nearby communities.

Even though retail jobs make up a large portion of jobs in Waite Park, they tend to offer lower wages. Workers in the retail industry can also have issues with scheduling and securing full-time employment. This limits workers’ options for housing and essential goods that meet their budgets. Lower wage workers are more likely to spend a higher proportion of their income on necessities.

## Mining

The aggregate mining businesses remain strong employers in Waite Park. The City recognizes this is an important industry to maintain into the foreseeable future. There is plentiful supply of mineral resources and jobs in the mining business tend to offer higher wages.

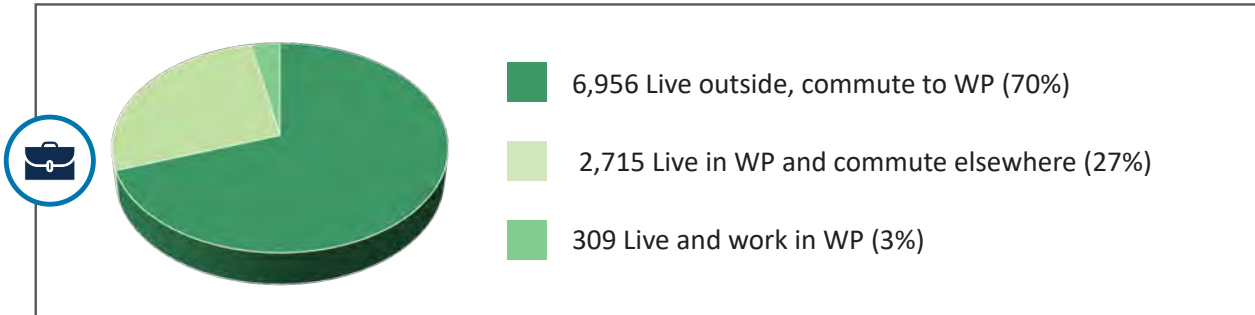


Businesses on Frontage Road N



Mining operations

## Economic Development



### Commuting

Waite Park can be considered an importer of workers. A majority of Waite Park residents work outside of the City.

**About 70% of the workers employed in Waite Park live outside the City.**

The largest proportion of workers in Waite Park commute from St. Cloud (40.7%).

Among workers who commute to Waite Park, 36% have commutes over 25 miles and may be interested in finding housing in Waite Park. Providing additional housing options in the City may invite a portion of these workers to move into town to reduce their commute.



Division Street (County Road 75) provides a direct connection to surrounding communities, such as St. Cloud and St. Joseph



## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING - PUBLIC INPUT

Below is a summary of a community survey that asked participants their opinions about existing barriers and future opportunities for the local economy and development.

When participants were asked about the possibilities of diversifying Waite Park's local economy and expanding development opportunities, about 31% responded it was a high priority, 50% medium priority, and 15% low priority.



# 81%

of respondents

Agreed that **diversifying Waite Park's economy and attracting higher paying jobs** should be either a medium or high priority.

What are the top future risks you think Waite Park is most vulnerable to?



**Safety**



**Economic downturn**



**Lack of infrastructure maintenance**

**"Balance commercial and business growth with proper residential growth."**

**"Help residents with curb appeal. Specifically in the older section of the City, 3rd street from the mall to the movie theater."**

**"Change public perception. Highlight the 'good things' our community has."**

**"Developing a Downtown area. Waite Park is quite spread out and having a downtown area could help drive businesses to a central area as they look to open new store fronts."**

## Economic Development

### FUTURE NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

#### Business Retention

Retaining an existing business in a community is typically easier and more economically efficient than attracting a new business. The City should continue to maintain close relations with existing businesses and help address their needs.

The City should collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce or an Economic Development Authority to explore and identify financial resources that can assist existing businesses. Financial resources can include grants, tax incentives or business loans that help businesses expand or make updates, such as the Commercial Rehabilitation Loan Program, Tax Increment Financing (TIF), and Industrial Revenue Bonds. Additional resources can be found at the [League of Minnesota Cities Handbook](#).

#### Mine Reclamation and Redevelopment

Many undeveloped areas within Waite Park contain granite either close to or at the surface which makes development expensive.

The City intends to continue supporting and guiding granite and aggregate mining operations to remove these materials in a manner that prepares these lands for future development as mining activities cease.



Aggregate mining site along Graniteview Road, on the eastern edge of Waite Park.



#### Reestablishing an Economic Development Authority (EDA)

An Economic Development Authority (EDA) is a public entity that is part of the city government. An EDA is responsible for coordinating programs that assist businesses, development projects, and promote economic development activities. Powers and duties of an EDA can include:

- Coordinate strategies to retain existing businesses and attract new businesses to the City.
- Negotiate options to purchase, sell, or lease property, or acquire rights or easements.
- Enter into contracts or become a limited partner in a partnership.
- May operate and maintain a public parking facility, housing facility, or other public facilities to support economic development and the Comprehensive Plan.

The City should consider re-establishing the EDA to identify new development opportunities and promote private and public-private partnership investments in Waite Park.

#### Build in sites with existing infrastructure

The 2023 Water System Master Plan establishes a long-term strategy for water system improvements that support orderly community growth. Use the Plan to identify areas with existing infrastructure to reduce immediate development costs.



### Leverage success of The Ledge Amphitheater

Waite Park recently built and opened The Ledge Amphitheater, an open air, City-owned performance venue. Since The Ledge opened in 2021, the City has expanded its bookings up to 20 concerts/events a season. These include regional and national musical acts. The Ledge provides seating for up 6,000 visitors from MN and adjoining states.

**The Ledge provides an opportunity to showcase other community amenities and increase sales for local businesses.**

As development around The Ledge occurs, streetscape amenities should be incorporated into the public realm to make the area more attractive and accessible. This can include community spaces, decorative pedestrian lighting, public art, benches, wayfinding signs, connections and extensions to regional trails, protected bicycle lanes, and landscaping.



### Expand businesses and services

The facility's success provides opportunities to expand businesses and services that support The Ledge, such as restaurants, lodging, and retail, as well as to recruit additional entertainment business such as nightclubs, a theater/playhouse, and art and craft galleries. In addition to attracting new entertainment businesses, The Ledge could also serve as an anchor for broader multi-day, multi-act music and art festivals showcasing a variety of talent.



## Economic Development



### GOALS AND POLICIES

Outlined below are goals and policies that are aimed at guiding future economic development and supporting the vitality of business in the City of Waite Park. These goals and policies are based on public input and a study of current and future trends.

#### **Goal 1. Waite Park will have a sustainable, diversified economy for businesses and residents to prosper.**

Policy 1.A. Work with Waite Park Chamber of Commerce and others to maintain and share an up-to-date inventory list of available industrial and commercial properties within Waite Park.

Policy 1.B. Encourage the development of locally owned and operated business.

Policy 1.C. Work with Waite Park Chamber of Commerce and others to develop marketing materials and financial incentives policies to assist with business attraction, recruitment, and maintenance.

Policy 1.D. Attract businesses that provide family care services and resources (e.g., childcare, elderly care, etc.) to retain and attract families.

#### **Goal 2. Economic development in Waite Park will leverage and complement the community's unique assets and businesses such as mining and mineral production, retail shops and commerce, and entertainment.**

Policy 2.A. Work collaboratively with existing industrial and business sector leaders and local academic experts to identify new, and complementary business opportunities for locating within Waite Park.

Policy 2.B. Work collaboratively with existing business owners to plan for orderly business expansions within Waite Park.

Policy 2.C. Work collaboratively with Waite Park Chamber of Commerce and entertainment enterprises to expand and promote entertainment offerings and attract visitors.

Policy 2.D. Promote the entertainment sector to increase revenue for existing businesses, such as restaurants, retail stores, and lodging.

Policy 2.E. Attract new businesses and increase revenue for existing businesses that complement and cater to the entertainment and tourism industry.

**Goal 3. Development in Waite Park will include complementary infill, adaptive reuse, and redevelopment of underutilized and vacant commercial properties.**

Policy 3.A. Update zoning and land development regulations to support multi-story, vertically integrated mixed-use buildings in the B2 and B3 commercial zoning districts.

Policy 3.B. Establish regulatory and financial incentives programs to support redevelopment and adaptive reuse of underutilized, blighted, and/or vacant properties.

**Goal 4. Waite Park will provide a high quality of life to attract and retain a diverse, educated, and skilled labor force.**

Policy 4.A. Continue to enhance the visual character of existing and new travel corridors with landscaping, decorative lighting, and up-to-date accessibility features.

Policy 4.B. Continue to expand Waite Park's integrated, accessible, multimodal transportation network.

Policy 4.C. Continue to grow and maintain an attractive, well maintained park, recreation, open space, and trail system.

Policy 4.D. Promote compact, complete, walkable neighborhoods that accommodate work-from-home lifestyles.

Policy 4.E. Coordinate land use, housing policies, and land development regulations to support an adequate supply of good quality workforce housing.

**Goal 5. Economic development in Waite Park will embrace financial, environmental, and social sustainability.**

Policy 5.A. Work with Waite Park Chamber of Commerce and others to actively recruit and support new businesses that provide living wage jobs.

Policy 5.B. Develop and implement a routine training and maintenance program for City staff/building officials in familiarization of best practices in review and permitting of sustainable green development, building design, and construction.

Policy 5.C. Update zoning and land development regulations to support sustainable development including such things as energy sufficiency, rainwater harvesting and reuse, urban heat island reduction, mixed-income housing, required bike parking, etc.

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# CHAPTER 6 TRANSPORTATION

## Transportation

### INTRODUCTION

The transportation network is the backbone of a community. Good network design reduces land consumption, provides greater accessibility through more direct routes, and increases transportation efficiency and reliability. Transportation facilities also connect, and in some cases, separate land uses within a community. Their physical design has a direct impact on quality of life from safety and accessibility to noise and visual character.

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan establishes goals, policies, and recommendations. These will address current and future transportation needs including future growth within Waite Park. This chapter will also serve as a reference for city officials, commissioners, staff, and residents to utilize as they review development proposals, plan capital improvement project budgets, and consider future multimodal transportation system improvement needs.



### WALKING AND BIKING NETWORK

Walking and biking are the most basic forms of transportation. Walking is free and accessible for people through the widest range of ages, incomes, and physical abilities. Biking is an affordable mode of transportation that can provide quick access to nearby goods and services.

The City's pedestrian network includes sidewalks, trails, and crossings. Some residential neighborhoods, especially newer developments, do not include sidewalks. This limits walking access to nearby destinations and transit stops.

Some crossing areas, especially near busy commercial areas with high-speed traffic, pose safety concerns and create difficult conditions for walking. Figure 6.1 shows the existing sidewalk and trail system.

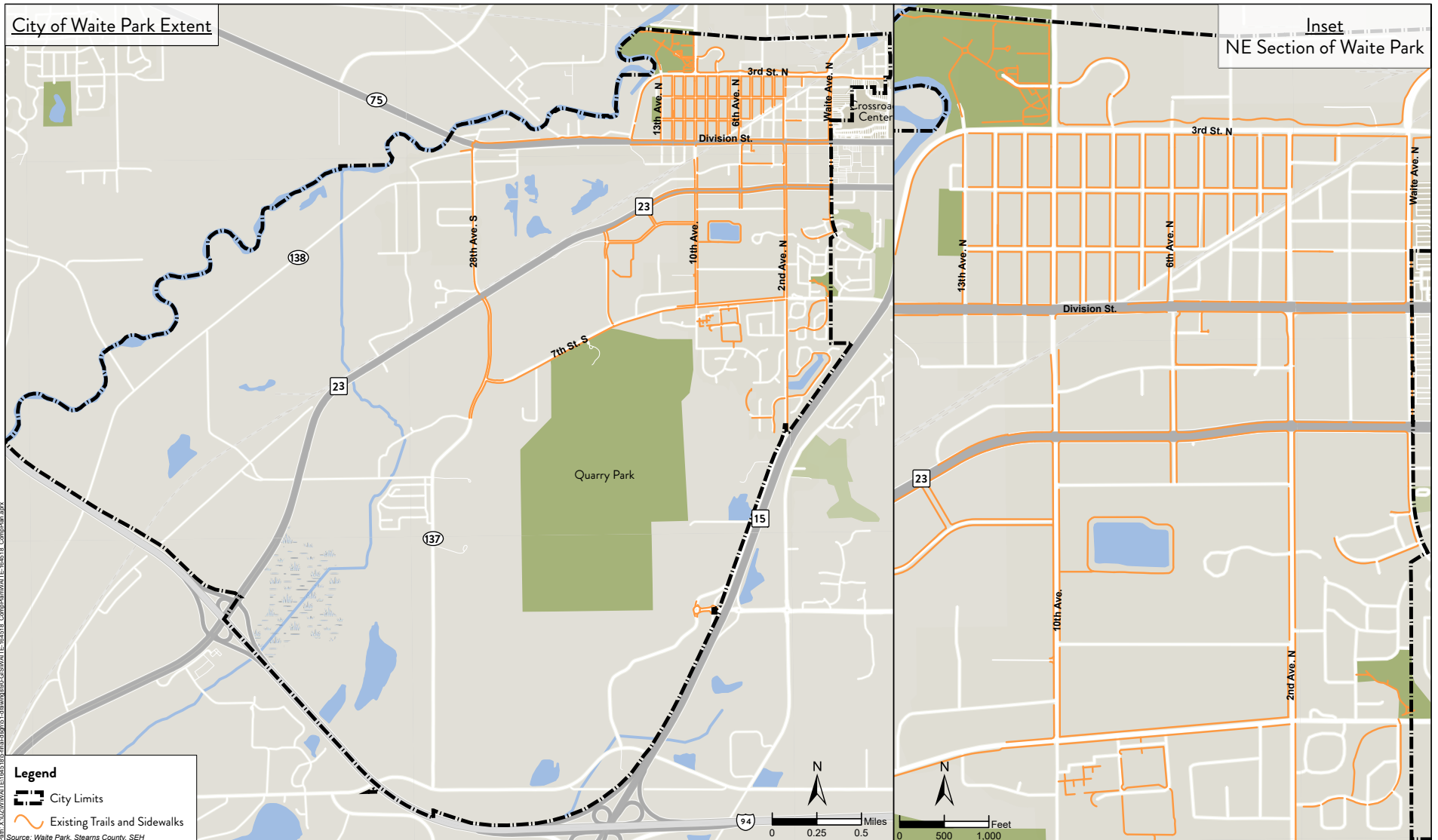
### TRANSIT

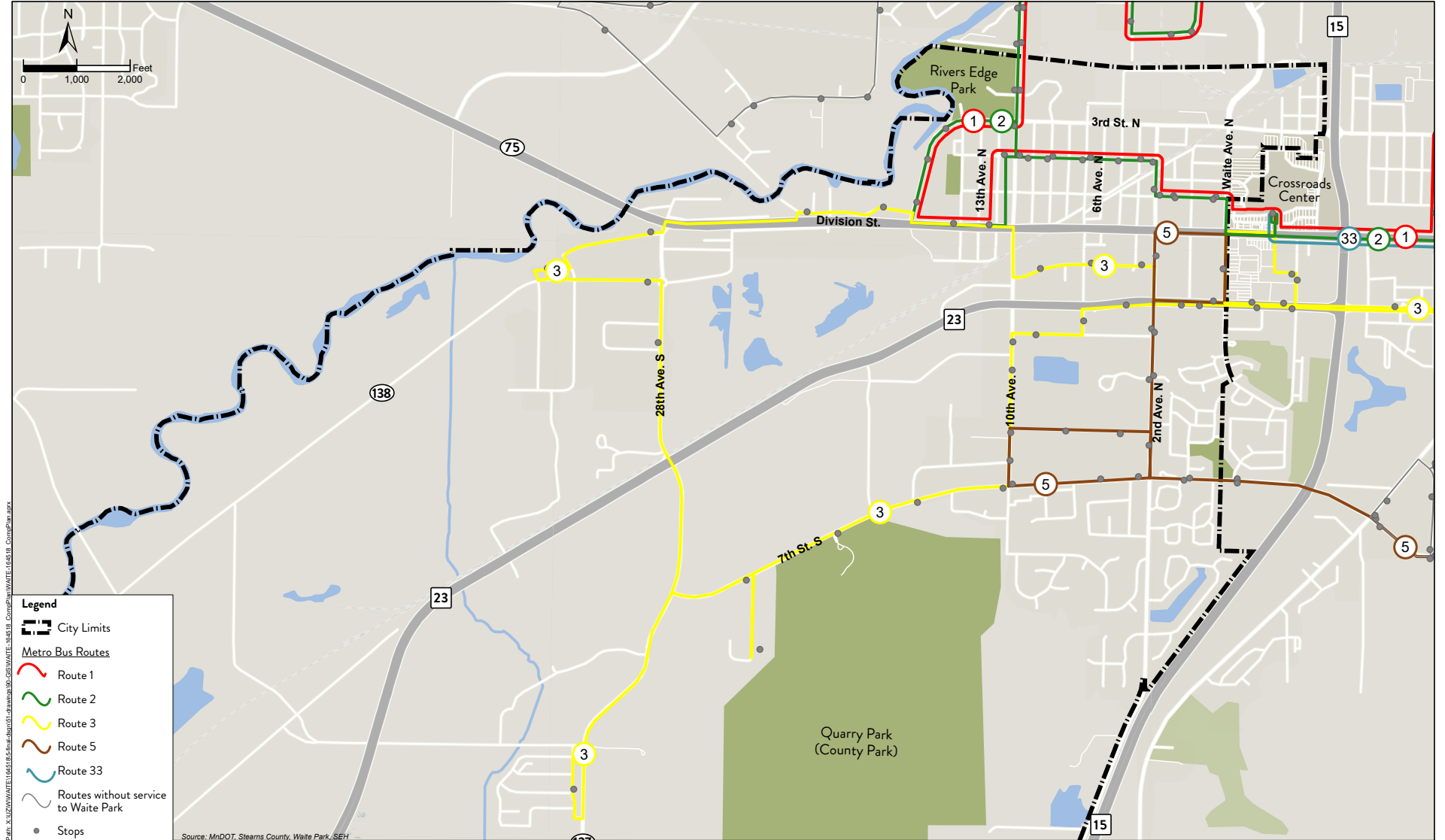
Public transit is an essential mode of transportation for individuals who do not have access to an automobile or who are not able to drive.

Public transit in Waite Park is provided by the St. Cloud Metropolitan Transit Commission (Metro Bus), which operates within Waite Park, St. Cloud, Sartell, and Sauk Rapids. Transit service is available in Waite Park's northeast region, Monday through Sunday. Figure 6.2 shows existing transit lines and stops.

Additional to fixed bus routes, Metro Bus offers Dial-a-Ride service where customers call to schedule their rides; buses pick up and drop off passengers at locations specified by the customers.

Metro Bus also offers connections with Northstar Link and Jefferson Lines bus services at the Metro Bus Transit Center, located in St. Cloud. Waite Park residents are able to access these bus services and travel to the Twin Cities Metro and greater Minnesota.





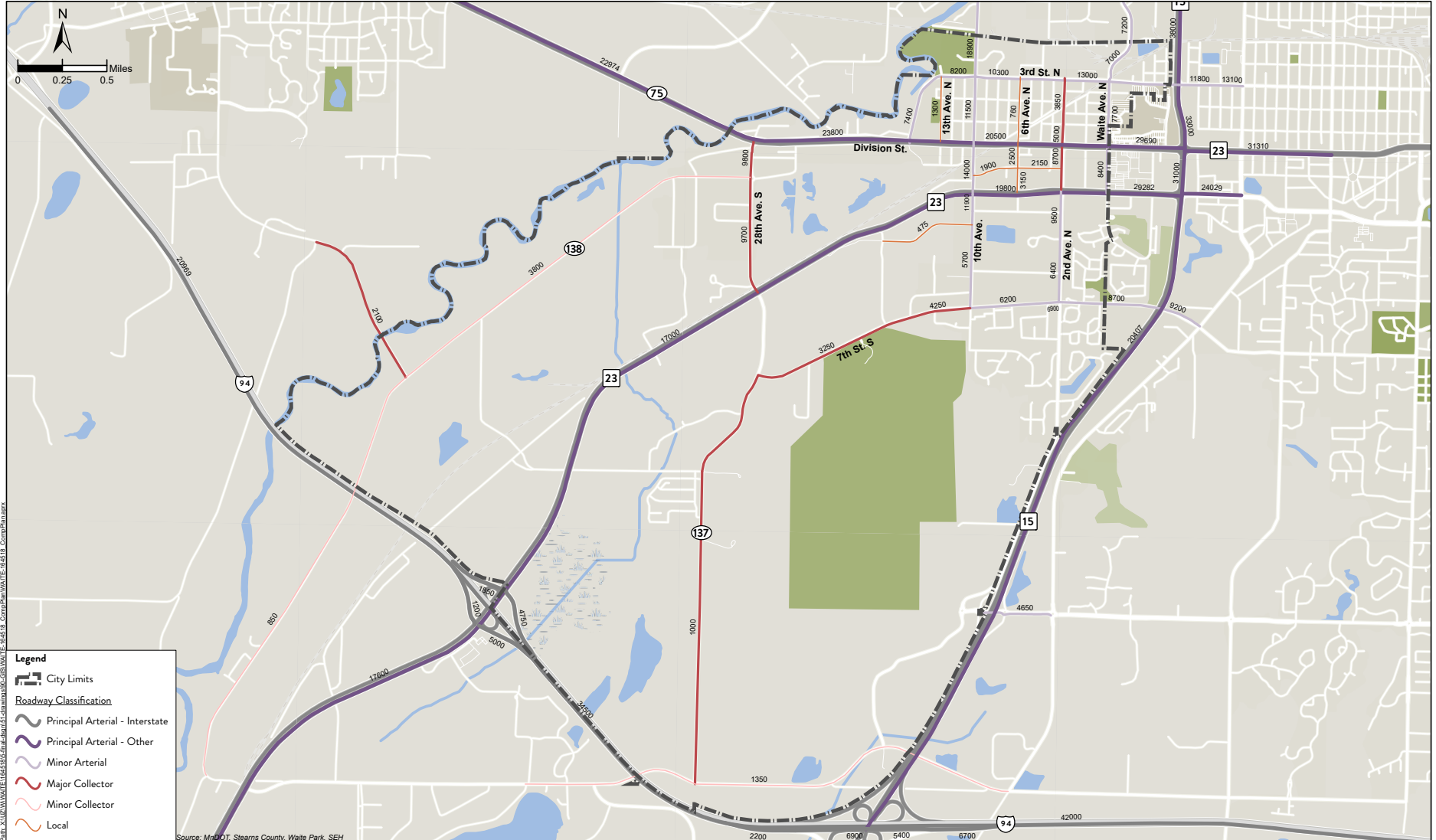
## ROADWAY NETWORK

Functional classification is a system by which roadways are grouped according to the function they are intended to serve. Functional classification assists in determining what role each roadway should perform prior to determining its design features, such as street widths, design speed, and intersection control. However, it is critically important to recognize that there is flexibility in the design of a roadway relative to its functional classification.

Functional classification is also an important consideration in the development of local regulations for land development. As appropriate, the mobility of higher classified roadways should be protected by careful management of site development and access spacing standards. Transportation problems can occur when a street's design and the management of access to the street are inconsistent with the functional and operating demands imposed by the surrounding land uses. Further, safety challenges often arise when the design of a street does not respond appropriately to the context of the adjacent land uses.

Functional classification is not a one-size fits all approach for roadway design. Figure 6.3 shows the Existing Functional Classification for roads in Waite Park.



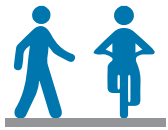




## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING - PUBLIC INPUT

The community was asked about the way they travel, barriers to transportation they experience, and improvements they would like to see.

Driving ranked the top method of transportation used by participants, followed by walking or on wheelchair, biking, and transit.



**50%**  
of respondents

mentioned they would be **more active** if there were **additional sidewalks, trails, and bikeways**



**ONLY 50%**

mentioned they are **comfortable walking** on sidewalks and trails throughout the City

Responses also indicated that there is a need for safer and more accessible bikeways in Waite Park. Only 22% of respondents mentioned they feel safe biking in the City. A small portion of respondents (21%) felt that bikeways connect them to places they want to go.

Participants also highlighted a need to better maintain aging streets and sidewalks.

Approximately 65% of survey participants said that they would like to see more trees, plantings, and benches along the City's streets.

## Transportation needs in Waite Park



**More safe bikeways**



**Repair aging roadways and sidewalks**



**More trees, benches, and along streets**

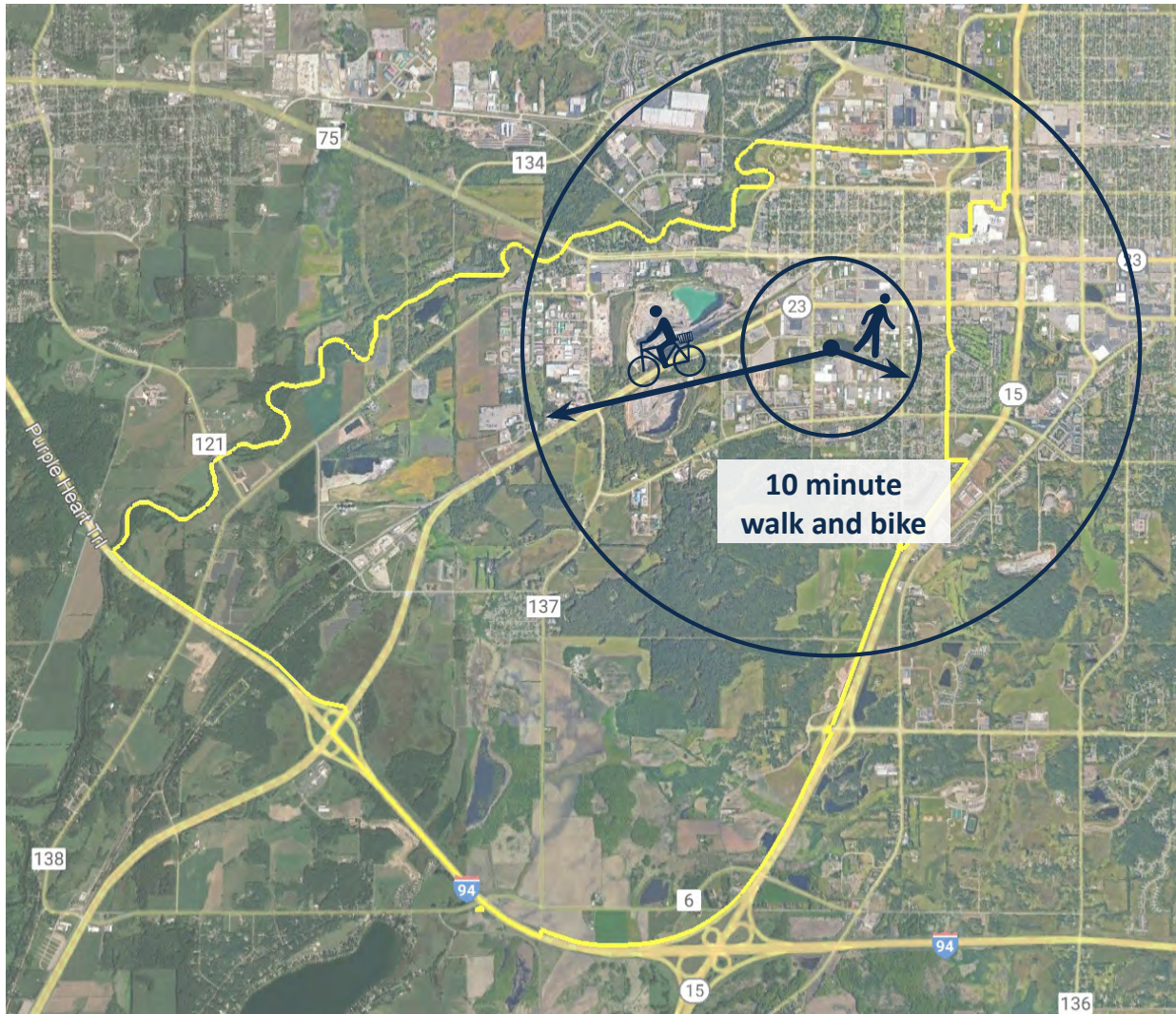
**"Our roads need to be fixed."**

**"Streets and sidewalks could be better maintained and cleaned."**

**"It is very challenging to ride a bicycle in Waite Park. Needs a City Bike Plan and commitment to implement it."**

**"I would like to see a few benches and resting places on our side streets such as 2nd Ave S. Where many of us elderlies could walk to the businesses and rest along the way. More lighting and sense of security while walking. I NEVER feel safe crossing at a crosswalk."**

## Transportation

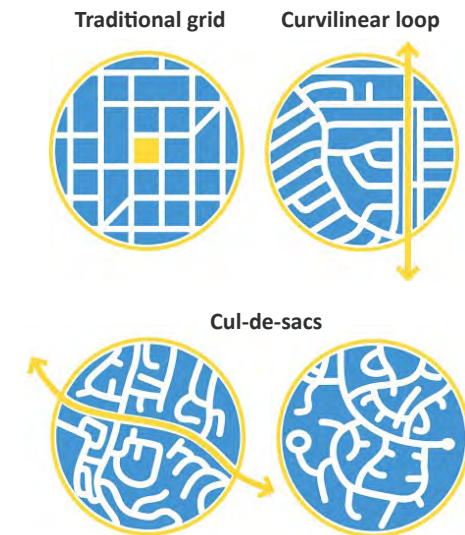


A 10 minute walk or bike trip is an ideal distance to access nearby services, attractions, and other destinations.

## BUILDING A MORE CONNECTED NETWORK

More compact and connected street networks tend to have higher levels of people walking and biking. It also has fewer motor vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as compared to sparser arrangements dominated by arterials with fewer intersecting local streets.

A grid-like street network with a variety of interconnected local, collector, and arterial streets provides more direct and efficient travel connections. Gridded street networks also improve public safety/emergency response times by increasing accessibility.



Source: Graphic by Congress for New Urbanism

## APPLYING COMPLETE STREETS

Complete streets is a planning and design approach that encourages a variety of transportation modes, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and automobiles. Places with higher levels of walking and biking encourage safer places to live.

The City should explore applying a Complete Streets approach to roadways that connect to major community destinations. This approach has been shown to provide a variety of economic benefits for businesses and local economies.

New developments and improvements to existing neighborhoods should also include accessible, safe, and attractive pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure that encourages residents to walk, bike, and use transit.





### ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF INVESTING IN THE WALKING AND BIKING NETWORK

Building a good walking and biking network generates many economic benefits to help strengthen the local economy. Improvements to the network should prioritize connecting residents and visitors to major destinations throughout Waite Park, such as the commercial areas along MN 23 and Division Street, Quarry Park, The Ledge Amphitheater, and River's Edge Park.

#### Increases sales for businesses and creates jobs

- Walkable, bikeable places attract bicycle tourists and other travelers who spend on average \$18-\$80 per day in the community.
- People who walk or bike to businesses spend less per visit but visit more often, resulting in more money spent overall each month compared to customers who arrived by car.
- Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects create 8–12 jobs per \$1 million of spending. By comparison, road infrastructure projects create 7 jobs per \$1 million of expenditures.

#### Increases property values

- In communities across the United States, a one-point increase in Walk Score (which assigns a value to addresses based on walkability) is associated with a \$700-\$3,000 increase in home values.

#### Improves recruitment and retention of talent and workers

- Walkable and bikeable places attract top talent. Companies are relocating to more bikeable areas to better attract well-educated 25- to 30-year-olds.
- Over 75% of Millennials say it is important for their city to offer opportunities to live and work without relying on a car.

Source: [Regional Active Transportation Plan](#) was used to identify economic benefits associated with walking and biking investments.

## STREET TYPES

Street type classification is a system by which streets are grouped according to the existing and future land use they are intended to serve. Basic to this process is the recognition that streets and land uses are linked. While the purpose and function of individual streets is to transport people from one place to the other, without places to go to there isn't a need for a street to take us there. Additionally, the type and development density of various land uses have a close relationship to the type of streets needed to access them safely, conveniently, and enjoyably.

As current streets are updated and new ones are built, they should integrate practices to increase safety and access for people walking and biking. Traffic calming measures should especially be integrated at neighborhood connectors, since they provide access to businesses, public services, parks, and open spaces.

The following section describes street types for streets or roadways in Waite Park (Figure 6.4). It also describes the varying land use contexts within each street type to highlight the relationship between a street's function and the land uses it serves.



### Neighborhood Streets

Local residential streets that provide access to homes, convenience stores, parks and schools. These are low speed roadways (typically 25 mph) and carry low traffic volumes. These are the predominant street type in Waite Park.

Neighborhood streets are not intended for cut through motor vehicle trips.



### Neighborhood Connectors

Medium speed (typically 30-35 mph), predominately residential, medium volume streets (typically 1,500-5,000 average daily traffic) that are occasionally fronted by non-residential uses. These streets provide connections between Neighborhood Streets and Commercial, and are not intended for through traffic and motor vehicle trips greater than one mile.

## Transportation



### Community Connectors

Medium speed (typically 30-40 mph), medium to high volume streets (typically 5,000-15,000 average daily traffic) with a mix of adjacent land uses. These streets have varying levels of walking and bicycling demand, often have transit routes, and provide neighborhood and cross-city connections for multiple modes.



### Mixed-Commercial Streets

Medium speed (typically 30-35 mph), low to medium volume streets (250-2,500 average daily traffic) with a mix of adjacent commercial uses. These streets are typically no longer than one mile. These streets generally have high walking and bicycling demand, transit routes, and provide connections to commercial destinations.



### Commercial Connectors

Medium speed (typically 30-40 mph), medium or high volume streets (typically 5,000-20,000 average daily traffic) located along mixed commercial corridors as identified in the Land Use Plan. These streets generally have high walking and bicycling demand, transit routes, and serve medium distance connections across neighborhoods, to commercial destinations, and often to the regional highway system



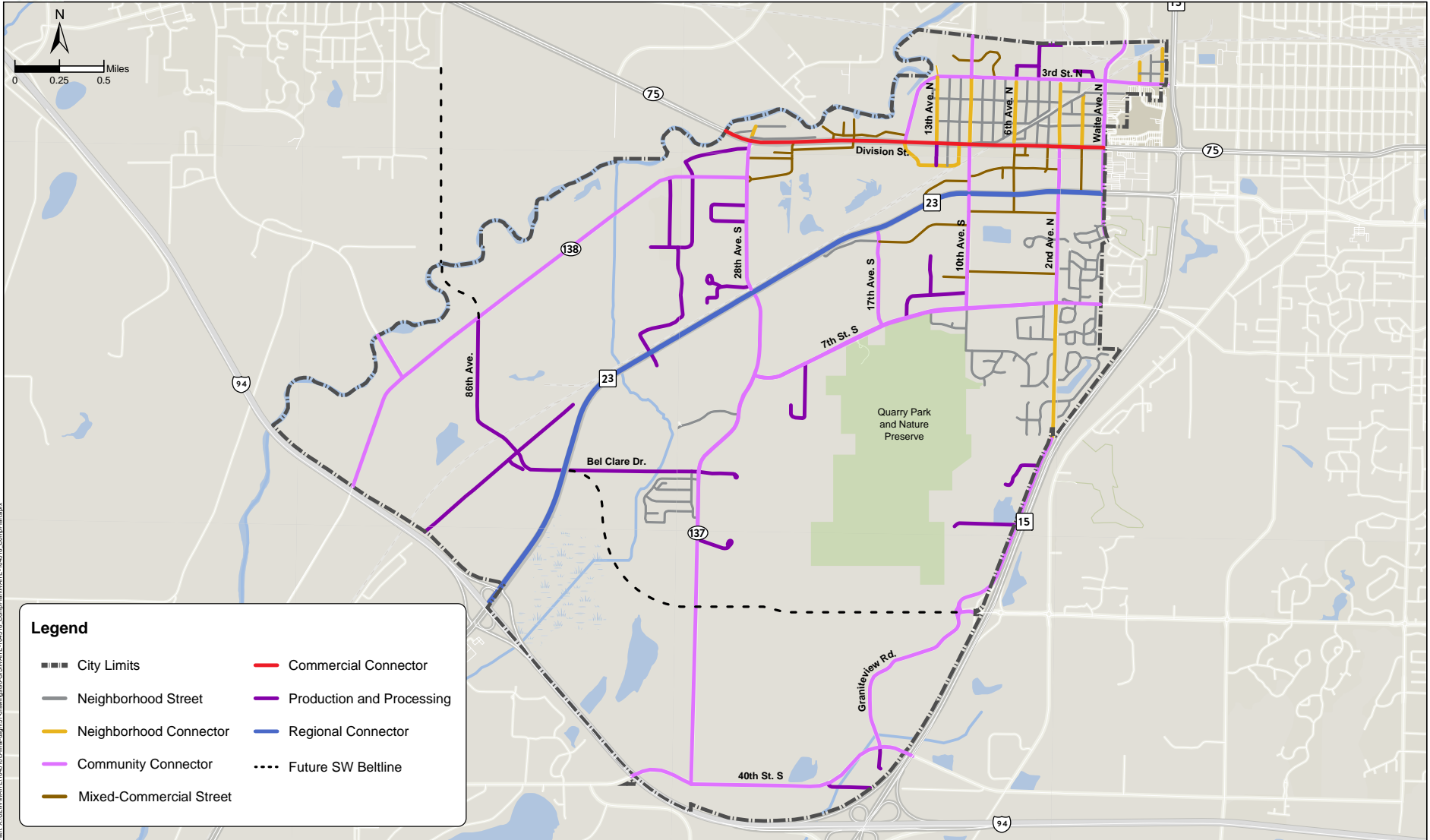
### **Production and Processing streets**

Medium speed (typically 30-40 mph), low volume streets (typically lower than 1,500 average daily traffic) that provide local access in mixed industrial areas as identified in the Land Use Plan. These streets are typically short (2-3 blocks) in length, include sidewalks or multi use trails and are not intended for inter-community or through motor vehicle trips. Production and Processing streets see higher truck and large vehicle activity than other streets in Waite Park.



### **Regional Connectors**

Medium speed (typically 30-40 mph), high volume streets (typically 10,000+ average daily traffic) with wide rights of way that serve a mix of land uses. These streets must often balance providing local access with connections to regional transportation facilities such as state and interstate highways.





## GOALS AND POLICIES

### **Goal 1. Implement the transportation vision, through decision making and strategic funding, which supports an efficient network, the community’s economic vitality, and the land use vision.**

Policy 1.A. Realize necessary transportation system improvements in a cost-effective and timely fashion.

Policy 1.B. Identify new funding sources to improve transportation infrastructure.

Policy 1.C. Require adequate right-of-way dedication for new and/or expanded roadways, including active transportation infrastructure based on the planned function under future conditions.

Policy 1.D. Provide adequate roadway and intersection capacity for all users to accommodate anticipated growth of the community and resulting forecasted vehicular traffic volumes.

Policy 1.E. Partner with agencies (MnDOT, Stearns County, City of St. Cloud, and other adjacent communities) on transportation system improvements throughout the region, including multimodal routes and facilities (when appropriate).

Policy 1.F. Apply related goals and policies identified throughout this Plan to the design of the future Southwest Beltline through Waite Park, where applicable.

### **Goal 2. Plan, develop, and maintain a safe and accessible multimodal transportation system.**

Policy 2.A. Establish a safe and convenient pedestrian network connecting residential, educational, commercial/retail, employment, civic, medical, and recreational destinations throughout the City.

Policy 2.B. Establish trails and on-street routes for the use of bicycles as a year-round mode of transportation.

Policy 2.C. As the community grows, encourage public transit services and facilities to be expanded in a fiscally responsible manner to ensure mobility for all residents and visitors.

## Transportation

### **Goal 3. Apply a Complete Streets approach (that is appropriate and implementable to individual contexts) to best serve the transportation needs of all users. Consider adopting a Complete Streets Policy.**

Policy 3.A. Apply the City of Waite Park Complete Streets Policy to all transportation related projects.

Policy 3.B. Encourage interconnected streets and patterns of development to create more convenient multimodal travel options and foster a sense of place.

Policy 3.C. Maintain and improve multimodal access (where possible) to existing and planned land uses, such as commercial, residential, educational, employment, and recreational destinations.

Policy 3.D. Include sidewalks on all new streets and, if feasible, on road improvement projects.

Policy 3.E. Implement traffic calming measures (where appropriate) to reduce motor-vehicle speeds in residential areas.

Policy 3.F. Limit the use of cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets for accommodating future street connections.

### **Goal 4. Promote a healthy, equitable, and economically vibrant community where all residents have greater mobility choices.**

Policy 4.A. Develop an Active Transportation Plan to guide and encourage expansion of the pedestrian and bicycle network, including both the trail system and an on-street network.

Policy 4.B. Continue to pursue Safe Routes to School initiatives and funding for non-motorized travel by the community's youth.

Policy 4.C. Provide convenient access to parks and natural features, as well as opportunities to support active living and healthy lifestyle activities.

Policy 4.D. Target investments in active transportation (interconnected sidewalks and trails) and transit services in neighborhoods with transportation challenges and near employment centers.

Policy 4.E. Promote walkability through enhanced connectivity including transit access, a diverse mix of land uses, and streetscaping features (including green infrastructure treatments and climate-resilient design).

Policy 4.F. Balance land use and related parking needs to minimize impervious surfaces, storm water runoff, and heat island effect.

Policy 4.G. Support land uses in existing and emerging town centers and primary thoroughfares with an adequate supply of on-street parking.

Policy 4.H. Require a review of shared parking resources to support a "park once" approach as development occurs.

Policy 4.I. Continue to accommodate alternative fuel vehicles (e.g., electric vehicle charging stations) in public parking infrastructure and encourage in private sector parking.

A grayscale photograph of a building's exterior. The building has a curved roofline and a sign that reads "Waite Park" in large, bold, sans-serif letters. Below the sign, there is a window with a vertical louver and a glass door. The building's facade is made of light-colored bricks or blocks. The image is partially obscured by a dark purple overlay on the right side.

**Waite Park**

# **CHAPTER 7**

## **PUBLIC UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES**



### INTRODUCTION

Utilities and community facilities provide the foundation that communities are built upon. Utilities may include sanitary sewer, water, and storm sewer systems, as well as electrical, natural gas, telecommunication systems, and solid waste disposal. Community facilities vary by community but tend to include schools, libraries, community recreation centers, swimming pools, ice arenas, and various health and public safety service facilities.

Utilities and community facilities can be used to guide development and encourage growth, as well as strengthen community identity. The largest portion of a community's budget includes the construction, maintenance, and operation of the utilities and community facilities (public works) along with the roadway and transportation system.

This section contains goals, policies, and recommendations to guide the maintenance and development of utilities and community facilities in the City of Waite Park.

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

The City of Waite Park is comprised of City Administration, Building, Planning and Community Development, Public Works, Fire, and Police services. This section includes an inventory of existing utilities, community facilities, and services. It also looks at potential challenges or needs these facilities may face over the next 20 years.

A **Facility Needs Assessment Report** was completed in 2022. The Report evaluated current conditions and uses of the City Hall, former Public Works site, and Library. It also considered future need of services and potential scenarios where some departments could relocate to the former Public Works site.

## UTILITIES

### Water Supply

The water system is managed and maintained by the Waite Park Public Works. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regulates water usage based on a tiered rate structure.



The City adopted a Wellhead Protection Plan to ensure the current and future safety of the city's drinking water supply.

A Comprehensive Water Supply Plan was completed in 2023 to study in detail the status of the City's water supply system. In general, the city has capacity to serve the areas along TH 23 as well as additional development to the south of CSAH 137.

### Sanitary Sewer and Wastewater Treatment



Wastewater in Waite Park is treated by the St. Cloud Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF), owned and operated by the City of St. Cloud.

### Stormwater Management

The City of Waite Park is committed to maintaining and improving water quality, as well as preserving natural resources. Much of the city lies within the Sauk River Watershed district. Working with the watershed to provide consistent and sustainable stormwater management and treatment is a priority.

Stormwater runoff from Waite Park flows to the Sauk River northwest of the City, to small basins and highway drainageways west of the developed part of town, and partly to the St. Cloud storm sewer system.

Water quality deterioration prompted the US-EPA to mandate the City of Waite Park to comply with Phase II of the Stormwater Management Program. The city is responsible to maintain a Minnesota General National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit for Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s). To comply with the NPDES Permit, the City enforced a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program (SWPPP).

## Public Utilities and Community Facilities

### Electrical System



Electricity services are operated by Xcel Energy and Stearns Electric Association.

Significant electrical capacity exists along County Road 138 with Xcel Energy pushing for large power users in the area. Significant deficiencies related to power supply and distribution have not been identified within Waite Park.

### Natural Gas System

The natural gas system is provided by Xcel Energy.

### Broadband



CenturyLink, Spectrum, Cloudnet, Arvig, and Viasat provide Waite Park residents with local telephone service, cable television, and high-speed internet access. Providing a broad range of broadband services is essential to retaining and attracting both businesses and residents, especially as working from home has become more common.

### Solid Waste and Recycling

Solid waste services are part of the St. Cloud Area Sanitary Sewer District. The city utilizes a single hauler approach with garbage and recycling services included in the property taxes.

### Hazardous Waste



Hazardous waste disposal services are available at the Stearns County Household Hazardous Waste Facility, which is located in Waite Park.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### The Facility Needs Assessment Report (2022)



The Facility Needs Assessment Report (completed 2022) reviewed existing facilities and City government services and staff capacities, including City Administration, Police Department, Fire Department, Senior Center, and Library. The Report also evaluated future growth in each department, as well as how that growth may fit in current facilities.

The Report outlined potential scenarios to accommodate future growth of services and departments.

### Waite Park City Hall



Waite Park's City Hall is located at 19 13th Avenue N. It houses the City's administrative staff, Planning and Community Development, Senior Center, Fire and Police Departments.

Waite Park's City Council, Planning Commission, Park Board, and Civil Service Board also use City Hall for their meetings.

### Waite Park Public Works Building

The Waite Park Public Works Department is responsible for the City streets, parks, trails, water, and sewer. The Public Works building is located at 670 17th Avenue S.



The former public works site is located at 602 3rd Street S. The Facility Needs Assessment Report (2022) recommended potential uses for the former site. Potential uses included relocating the Library and Senior Center, City Administration, Fire Department, or Police Department to this site.

## Public Utilities and Community Facilities

### Police Department



The Waite Park Police Department (WPPD) currently has 20 full-time police officers including three Sergeants, a full time Investigator, and an officer assigned to the Human Trafficking Task Force. The Police Department also counts on a community service officer, Community Outreach Specialist, and additional support staff.



The Department is located at the City Hall building. According to the Facility Needs Assessment Report (2022), the City Hall building cannot support all of the department needs, including squad parking, evidence processing, and storage.

Existing utilized space is maximized to the point that there is no more space for storage or to accommodate current/future needs. With planned staff expansion, additional office, storage, and parking space will be required soon.

This Report discussed scenarios where a department, currently housed in the City Hall Building, may be relocated. Several options were explored, including the old public works site. This change can provide space to accommodate the Police Department's future growth and expansion.

### Fire Department

The Waite Park Fire Department (WFPD) currently has capacity for 30 on-call fire fighters with current staffing levels below optimum. The Fire Station is located at the City Hall building.



The Fire Department portion of the City Hall building struggles to meet current operational needs. The building cannot support future expansion of the department based on the City's projected growth. As mentioned previously, the Facility Needs Assessment Report (2022) discussed scenarios where a department may be relocated to the former Public Works site. This change may provide adequate space to accommodate the Fire Department's current and future needs.

## Senior Center

The Senior Center opened in 2012 and is located at the basement of Waite Park's City Hall. It is a community space that provides a variety of recreational activities and events for the senior population.

## Post Office

The City of Waite Park Post Office is located at 254 2nd Avenue S.

## Library



The Library is part of the Great River Regional Library System. The library is located at 253 N. 5th Avenue. It provides a collection of print and digital books, music, magazines, and newspapers. It offers a wide range of programs for adults and children. The library also includes an outdoor reading garden with vegetation and furniture.

The Facility Needs Assessment Report (2022) mentioned that the Library's space struggles to meet current needs and will have to be expanded to meet future community needs. The current

facility also struggles to support technology demands. The City should consider acquiring adjacent property or fully relocate library operations to a larger site, such as the former Public Works site.

## Recreational and Entertainment Areas

### The Ledge Amphitheater



The City of Waite Park owns and maintains the recently constructed The Ledge Amphitheater. The Ledge is an open air community amphitheater with 6,000 seats. It hosts major acts and community events, and attracts thousands of visitors every year.

## River's Edge Park



The City owns River's Edge Park, which has a splash pad, pickleball courts, disc golf course, outdoor fitness court, ice skating and hockey rinks, trail, and a baseball complex.



## Public Utilities and Community Facilities



### Education

The City of Waite Park has both public and private primary and middle schools. Junior and high school students living in Waite Park continue their secondary education in the St. Cloud Area School District. Waite Park is located within St. Cloud Area School District 742.

The following are kindergarten to high school education options:

#### **St. Cloud Math and Science Academy (Public)**

Kindergarten - 5th grade  
136 Division St. Waite Park, MN

#### **Holly Innocents School, Catholic (Private)**

Kindergarten - 12th grade  
1705 CR-137, Waite Park, MN

#### **Discovery Community School, St. Cloud Area School District (Public)**

Kindergarten - 5th grade  
700 7th St. S., Waite Park, MN

#### **Junior high and high schools are provided in St. Cloud:**

McKinley Alternative Learning Center, St. Cloud Area School District

Tech High School, St. Cloud Area School District

North Junior High, St. Cloud Area School District

Apollo High School, St. Cloud Area School District

#### **There are multiple opportunities for higher education within the St. Cloud Metro:**

St. Cloud State University – City of St. Cloud (Public)

St. Cloud Technical and Community College – City of St. Cloud (Public)

Rasmussen University – City of St. Cloud (Private)

College of St. Benedict – City of St. Joseph (Private)

St. John's University – City of Collegeville (Private)



## GOALS AND POLICIES

### **Goal 1. Provide City utilities to meet the needs of all residents in a safe, sustainable, and resilient manner.**

Policy 1.A. Develop goals, targets, procedures, and metrics for enhancing the sustainability of City infrastructure.

Policy 1.B. Develop goals and procedures for communicating progress in meeting sustainability targets with the community.

Policy 1.C. Coordinate utility upgrades and expansions with economic development, multimodal transportation, and parks initiatives.

Policy 1.D. Prioritize infill and redevelopment of existing urbanized areas to maximize use of the existing water and sewer infrastructure systems.

Policy 1.E. Continue to implement the city's Wellhead Protection program to ensure safe drinking water.

### **Goal 2. Improve upon inflow and infiltration (I&I) in the sanitary sewer system.**

Policy 2.A. Continue improvements and upgrades to sanitary sewer mains by lining or replacement, including lines that are not located under roadways.

Policy 2.B. Create a policy for improvement to sanitary services to minimize I&I.

Policy 2.C. Promote education of the public and enforce building codes to curb and prevent illicit connections.

### **Goal 3. Avoid environmentally sensitive areas when extending and constructing utilities and community facilities. Develop utilities with concern for aesthetic appearance and integration with surrounding environments.**

Policy 3.A. Place overhead utilities underground when feasible.

Policy 3.B. Establish proper buffer zones between overhead utilities, substation, and treatment facilities and residential and commercial uses.

Policy 3.C. Require consolidation of utility boxes for more efficient service and maintenance.

### **Goal 4. Continue to provide services and facilities necessary to improve the quality of life of Waite Park's residents, property owners, businesses, and visitors.**

Policy 4.A. The City's Capital Improvement Plan should include funding for renovation of community facility buildings and construction of new buildings in the urban areas.

## Public Utilities and Community Facilities

**Goal 5. Coordinate infrastructure improvements, such as street reconstructions, with sewer, water, power, and streetscaping to leverage and maximize the benefits from ecological services.**

Policy 5.A. Encourage creative stormwater management strategies to reduce surface runoff and implement low impact development techniques when constructing new growth areas or improving existing infrastructure.

**Goal 6. Strengthen a distinct and recognizable sense of place that leverages Waite Park's unique granite laden landscape through use of decorative streetscaping, arts, and culture.**

**Goal 7. Continue to work collaboratively with private sector donors to integrate resources for community-wide benefits.**

**Goal 8. Continue to work collaboratively with the private sector to develop entertainment venues that create active and engaging events to attract and retain Waite Park residents.**



# CHAPTER 8 PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

## Parks and Open Spaces



## INTRODUCTION

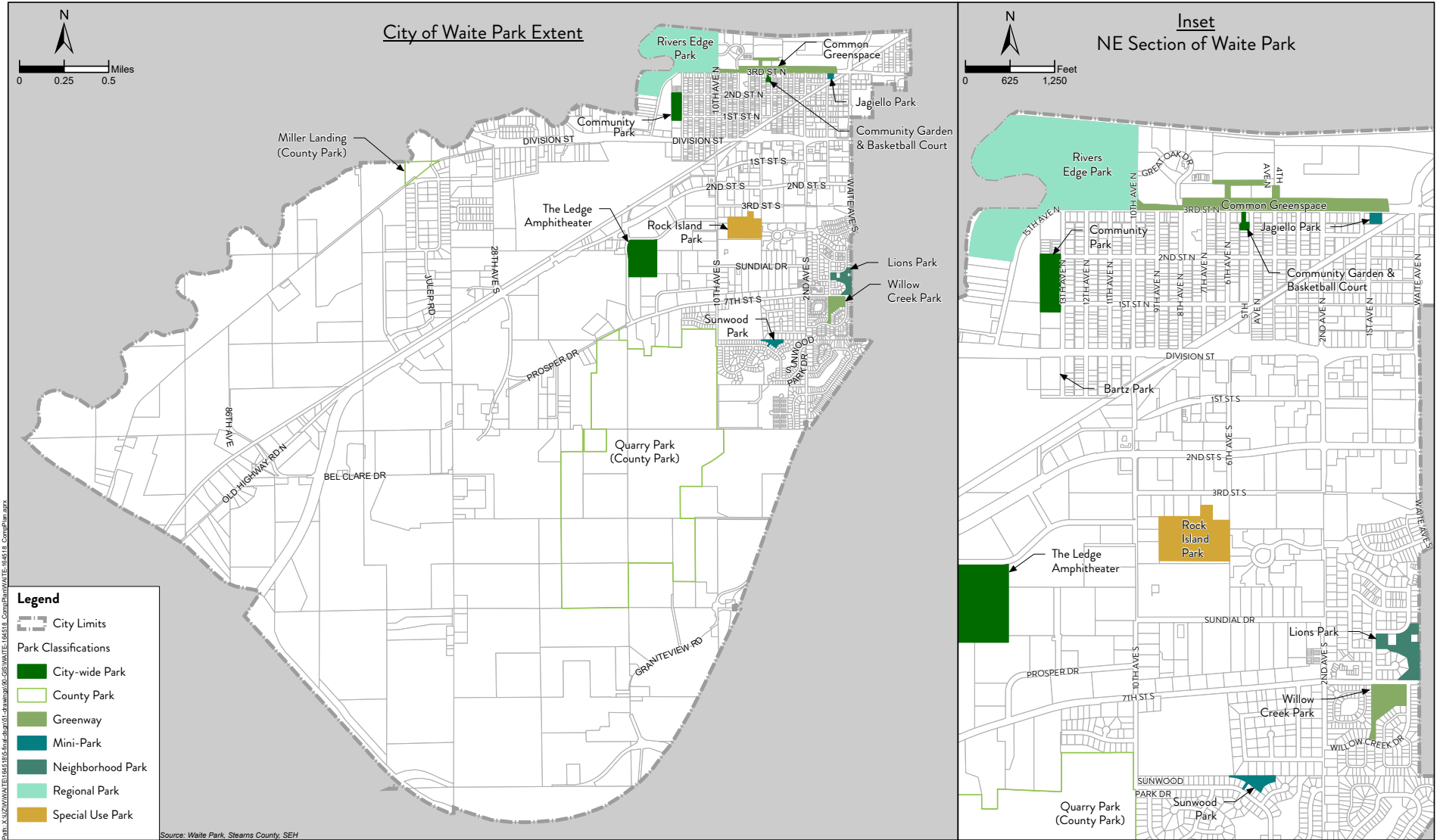
Parks, open spaces, and recreational programming play an important role in the social, economic, and physical well-being of Waite Park residents. They provide access to recreational opportunities, increase property values, benefit the local economy, provide environmental benefits, provide opportunities for residents to remain active and healthy, and strengthen a sense of place and community.

## PARK SYSTEM TODAY

The City owns and operates eight parks within the City limits (Figure 8.1). In addition, there are other open space facilities available:

Quarry Park and Miller Landing are county-owned parks and open spaces within Waite Park.

Parks Today		
Park Name	Classification	Acreage
Common Greenspace	Greenway	11 acres
Community Park	City-wide park	7.2 acres
The Ledge Amphitheater	City-wide park	20.6 acres
Library Community Garden and Basketball Court	City-wide park	0.4 acres
Jagiello Park	Playground/mini-park	0.6 acre
Lions Park	Neighborhood park	4.6 acres
River's Edge Park	Regional park	42.1 acres
Rock Island Park	Special-use park	16.1 acres
Willow Creek Park	Greenway	5.7 acres



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Source: Waite Park, Stearns County, SEH

## Parks and Open Spaces

### PARK CLASSIFICATION

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) developed park and trail system standards-based guidelines for communities to use as they develop their park systems. The following is a list of park classifications for parks in Waite Park today. It is important to note that these standards are general guidelines.

#### City-wide Park

Description: Provides a wide range of activities for all age groups or may have facilities for specific recreation activities.

Location Criteria: These parks should be at locations that are easily accessible via different modes of transportation.

Size Criteria: Facility size varies depending on activities offered at park.



#### Playground/Mini-Park

Description: Smallest park classification that is used to address limited or unique recreational needs.

Location Criteria: < ¼ mile distance in residential setting

Size Criteria: 2,500 sq. ft. to 1 acre in size but can be up to 5 acres.

#### Neighborhood Park

Description: Basic unit of park system that serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Typically developed to provide both active and passive recreation opportunities for residents of all age groups living in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Location Criteria: ¼ mile to ½ mile service area radius

Size Criteria: 2-10 acres (Sizes may be determined as needed to accommodate desired uses)



### Special Use Park

Description: Covers a broad range of parks and recreational facilities oriented toward a single purpose use such as historical, cultural, or social sites.

Location Criteria: Location is primarily based on recreation need, community interest, facility type, and availability of land. The site should be easily accessible from major transportation routes and traffic light locations where possible.

Size Criteria: Facility space requirements should determine size of park.

### Open Space

Description: Open space, broadly defined, includes woodlands, fields, wetlands, stream banks, floodplains, steep slopes, and unique geological formations – unbuilt areas. Open Space provides protection for scenic areas and endangered habitats. It also continues to provide land for local food production and can help shape the form of urban growth by providing “breathing room.”

### Regional Park

Description: Covers a broad range of parks and recreational facilities. Parks also attract visitors from adjacent communities.

Location Criteria: Location is primarily based on recreation need, community interest, facility type, and availability of land. The site should be easily accessible from major transportation routes and traffic light locations where possible.

Size Criteria: Facility space requirements should determine size of park.

## Parks and Open Spaces

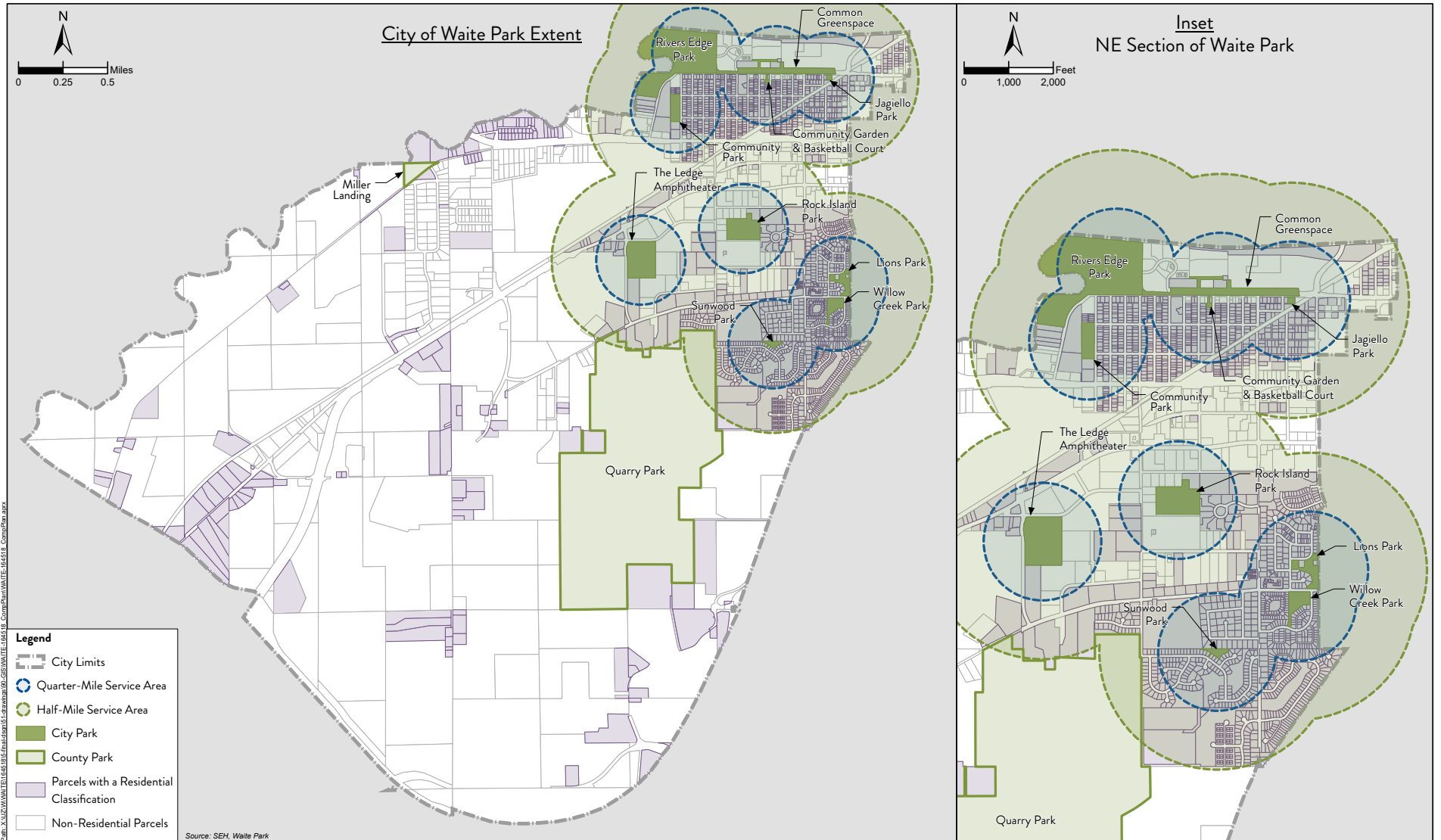


### GAPS IN PARKS ACCESS

Providing access to parks and spaces for outdoor recreation plays a large role in maintaining happy residents and property values. Generally, a five minute (1/4 mile) walk distance to parks is desired. There are residential areas in the southern and western parts of Waite Park that lack this access to parks.

Figure 8.2 shows a five-and ten-minute walking radius from each City-owned park. Seeing where existing parks are located helps plan future facilities and open spaces.

Additionally, a Comprehensive Park and Open Space Master Plan can evaluate current recreation facilities and programming, as well as identify improvements and updates needed at each individual park.



## Parks and Open Spaces



### WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING - PUBLIC INPUT

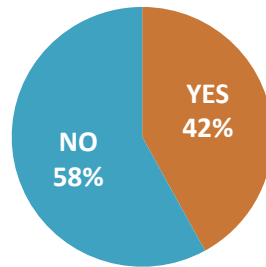
Below is a summary of public input received regarding the City's parks, recreational programs, and open spaces.

# 65%

of respondents

Agreed that current city parks and nature areas meet their needs for outdoor recreation, and that city parks are well maintained.

Are there specific park amenities or features you would like to see in the future?



What are the top park/recreation amenities you would like to see?



Trails for pedestrians and bicyclists



Vegetation (trees, flowers, etc.)

\*Other popular amenities included a dog park, pool or aquatic facility.

**"A south side, full-service, community park is needed."**

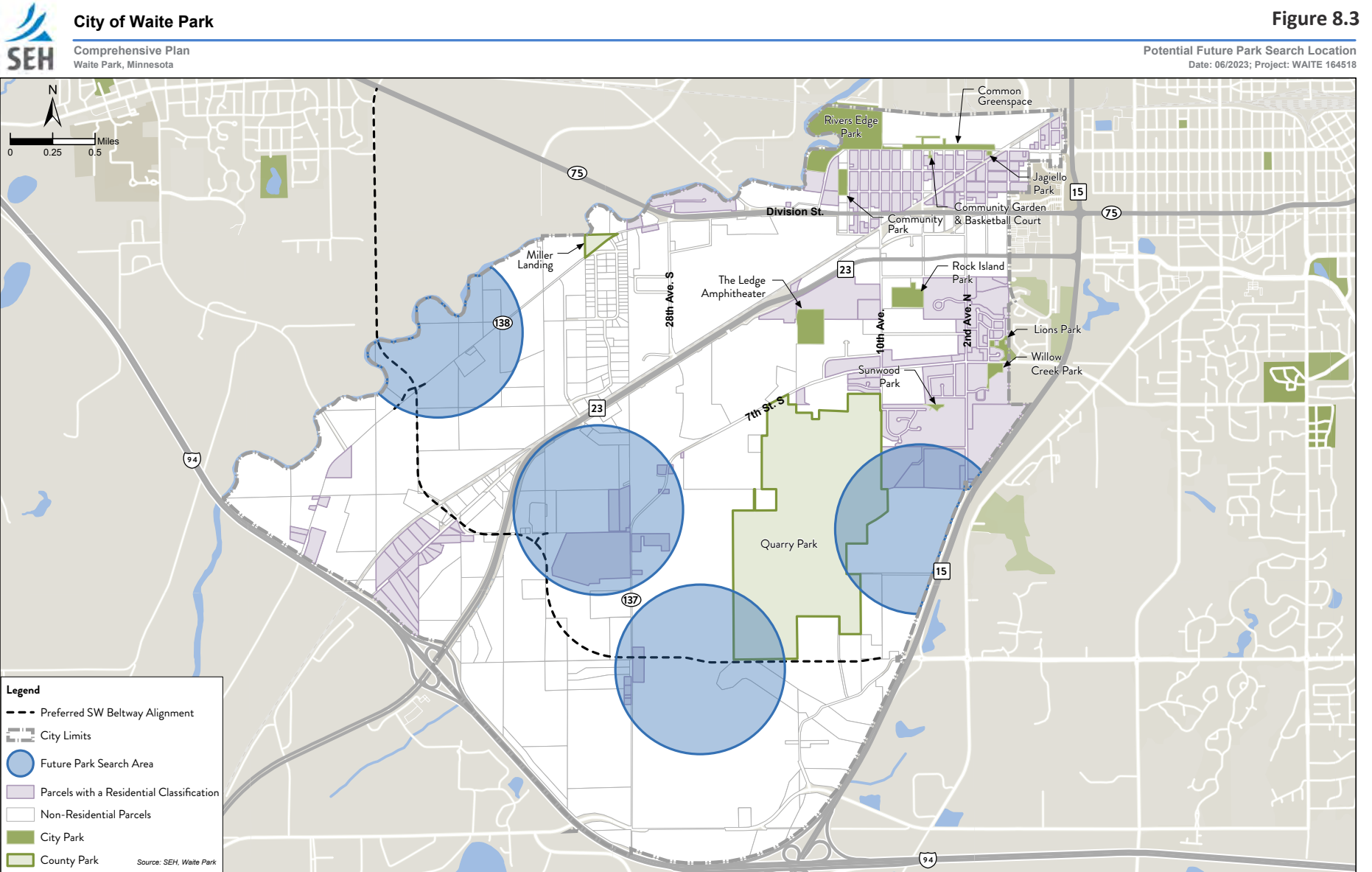
**"I love all the parks!"**

**"Better accessibly. It's difficult to get to parks because of 4 lane streets. Both schools on the north side no longer have a playground for children."**

**"I like Quarry park and other well maintained recreational areas."**

## A NEW COMMUNITY-SCALE PARK

Residential areas in the City’s southwestern region currently lack access to parks. A new community-scale park is being considered to serve this area. Figure 8.3 shows potential locations for a future park.



## Parks and Open Spaces

### PARKS AND RECREATIONAL AMENITIES

Enhanced amenities at parks and open spaces make neighborhoods more attractive and welcoming. The following are amenities that can expand activities at existing and future parks and open spaces.



Pergolas and seating along walkways strengthen livability and neighborhood identity.



Rain gardens reduce flooding and increase green areas while remaining low maintenance. This can be a great opportunity to reduce asphalt on parking lots.



Sport courts offer opportunities for physical activity and socialization.



Landscaped open space provides multiple options for organized recreation and exercise.



A new community-scale park could feature a unique all-ages and all-abilities playground.



## GOALS AND POLICIES

### **Goal 1. Provide access to parks and open spaces for all people to play, exercise, connect with nature, and strengthen community well-being.**

Policy 1.A. Maintain a comprehensive park and open space master plan to guide current and future maintenance, operations, improvements, and growth to meet the community's needs.

Policy 1.B. Prepare a comprehensive trails master plan to guide current and future maintenance, operations, improvements, and growth to meet the community's active transportation needs.

Policy 1.C. Make investments in park facilities and programs to reduce health disparities by providing access to open space and recreational activities for all Waite Park residents, especially marginalized populations.

Policy 1.D. Provide access to parks and open spaces by walking, rolling, and biking when siting and designing new park facilities or improving existing ones.

Policy 1.E. Continue to develop an interconnected citywide trail system that provides safe and accessible street crossings to support active, healthy lifestyles.

Policy 1.F. Establish partnerships with public and private organizations to supplement programming that supports residents' needs and interests.

Policy 1.G. Provide welcoming and accessible recreation facilities and programs for people with disabilities and their families.

Policy 1.H. Engage youth with activities and sports that help them remain active and healthy and acquire skills that will lead to productive lives.

Policy 1.I. Maintain communications between the City and its residents to promote recreational programming and facility development.

Policy 1.J. Integrate parks and open spaces into new neighborhood development to strengthen a sense of place and community.

### **Goal 2. Use parks, recreation programs, and open spaces to encourage residents to live an active lifestyle.**

Policy 2.A. Make Waite Park a place where all residents feel they can be active in family, community, and neighborhood life, and create a sense of belonging among all community members.

Policy 2.B. Provide recreation and social programs that allow older adults to remain healthy and actively involved in their community.

## Parks and Open Spaces

### **Goal 3. Protect, conserve, and sensitively utilize Waite Park's unique natural resources to sustain a healthy and balanced environment.**

Policy 3.A. Waite Park conserves, protects, and sensitively utilizes public natural resources for passive recreation, habitat, and scenic enjoyment.

Policy 3.B. Continue to use environmentally sensitive park planning and land use best practices to protect, preserve, and enhance the City's unique natural resources such as mature woodlands, wetlands, and other hydrologic systems.

Policy 3.C. Utilize the latest science and environmental design practices in the development and enhancement of existing and new parks and open spaces.

Policy 3.D. Continue to collaborate and educate private landowners on how to protect and maintain natural resources on their property.

Policy 3.E. Provide spaces and opportunities for passive recreation and connecting with nature.

### **Goal 4. Manage parks and open spaces in a manner that supports Waite Park's financial sustainability.**

Policy 4.A. Update the 2008 Park System Plan to refine the community's vision, document system improvements, evaluate past goals and policies, and establish new goals, policies, and implementation recommendations that meet current and future needs.

Policy 4.B. Consider ways to promote and support parks and open spaces as part of a broader City-wide economic development strategy.

Policy 4.C. Continue to develop, administer, and maintain a park, recreation and open space system that provides high-quality facilities that fulfill the evolving interests and needs of the community.

Policy 4.D. Strengthen Waite Park's identity and sense of place by using its parks and open spaces to leverage and celebrate its unique culture and natural attributes.

Policy 4.E. Maintain the long-term viability of park and recreation facilities by regularly addressing major maintenance needs.

Policy 4.F. Work with the Park Board, Chamber of Commerce, and other agencies and groups (such as Stearns County, neighboring communities, Waite Park City Council) to promote its parks and open spaces (including Quarry Regional County Park, Community Park, Sauk River, River's Edge Park, The Ledge Amphitheater) to attract visitors and create revenue for local businesses.

Policy 4.G. Continue to pursue grants from regional, state, and federal agencies to assist in the enhancement and growth of the park and open space system.

Policy 4.H. Explore unique ideas and opportunities such as private-public partnerships and sponsorships to leverage and capitalize on the City's unique environmental assets in the development and operations of park, recreation, entertainment, and open space facilities.

Policy 4.I. The City Council, Planning Commission, and Park Board shall meet jointly at least once a year to discuss and collaborate on park, recreation, and open space related issues and opportunities.

Policy 4.J. Update the inventory of remnant open space parcels in the City. Continue to dispose of City remnant parcels that do not serve park and recreation purposes and needs.



# CHAPTER 9 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

## Intergovernmental Cooperation

### INTRODUCTION

Intergovernmental cooperation is an important tool needed to operate in an efficient and cost-effective manner, as well as to control and promote change and growth in an orderly fashion for the City of Waite Park and adjacent units of government. This plan element establishes goals and related policies for guiding future intergovernmental activities.

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

The City of Waite Park operates as a [statutory plan A city](#). This is a weak-mayor form of government, with the mayor and four City Council members all elected at-large. All members have equal voting power and its governing authority is derived from the State Legislature. The council appoints a City administrator-clerk-treasurer to oversee the operations of the City.

Waite Park lies within the eastern reaches of Stearns County. Cities adjacent to Waite Park include St. Cloud, St. Joseph, and Sartell.

Waite Park is located in Minnesota's 6th congressional district, MN Senate District 14, and House District 14A.

Federal, State, regional agencies, and local units of government cooperate with the City of Waite Park on a range of economic, transportation, recreation, and social service initiatives and programs.



### INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Waite Park maintains several intergovernmental agreements and relationships including:

- Solid waste services are part of the St. Cloud Area Sanitary Sewer District
- Hazardous waste disposal services with Stearns County
- Minnesota Department of Transportation District 3
- St. Cloud Area School District



## GOALS AND POLICIES

### **Goal 1. Continue to work cooperatively and maintain excellent relations with all governmental units in and around the region.**

Policy 1.A. Frequently communicate with other government officials (staff, elected and appointed officials) both formally (on committees, etc.) and informally (telephone calls, emails, etc.).

Policy 1.B. Coordinate with adjacent and/or relevant units of government on planning efforts (e.g., comprehensive, land use, transportation, and natural resource protection), regulations, and specific land use decisions.

Policy 1.C. Where practical, share information, equipment, resources, facilities, technology, services, and possibly revenue that have cross-jurisdictional use.

Policy 1.D. Evaluate existing intergovernmental cooperation efforts on an annual basis and determine the need to maintain, improve, expand, or dissolve existing agreements.

### **Goal 2. Continue to cooperate and coordinate multimodal transportation system improvements with MnDOT, Stearns County, and St. Cloud Metropolitan Transit Commission.**

Policy 2.A. Continue working to ensure that Waite Park's long-term, multimodal transportation policies and plans are reflected in MnDOT's Capital Improvement Plans.

Policy 2.B. Continue to collaborate with St. Cloud Metropolitan Transit Commission to expand service to better serve night and weekend workers and downtown patrons and visitors.

Policy 2.C. Integrate transit facility infrastructure into transportation improvement projects where appropriate.

Policy 2.D. Continue to expand access and connectivity to regional multi use trails for year-round use.

### **Goal 3. Involve the St. Cloud Area School District in long range planning efforts and in reviewing current development proposals.**

Policy 3.A. Establish a formal, routine communications process with school district to facilitate timely information exchange.

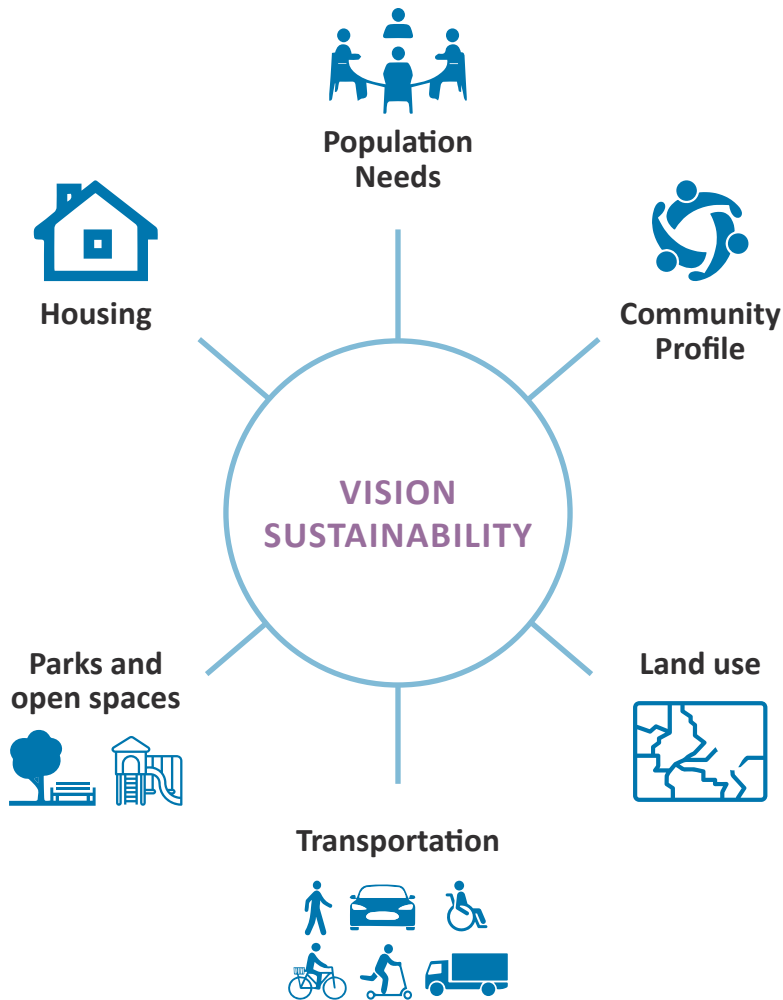
Policy 3.B. Review effectiveness of communications and collaboration efforts on an annual basis.

### **Goal 4. Collaborate and cooperate with area government agencies to improve Waite Park's quality of life.**

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# CHAPTER 10 IMPLEMENTATION



## INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Plan as a general goal and policy guide to resource conservation and land development in Waite Park has little meaning if it is not carried out with well-defined implementing programs and specific action items. Completion of the Plan is by no means an end in itself; rather it is the beginning of a new planning cycle.

Implementing programs need to be developed to achieve the intent of a sustainable Plan. These programs can take many forms. The City presently has several land use control mechanisms such as zoning and subdivision ordinances that control land use activities to assure compatibility with the Comprehensive Plan. It is also necessary that these programs be maintained so that conflicts do not exist between the Plan and the implementing ordinances.

## ZONING ORDINANCE

Zoning is the primary regulatory tool used by governmental units to implement planning policies. It consists of the Official Zoning Map and the supporting ordinance text.

The purpose of a Zoning Ordinance is to promote the public health, safety, comfort, and general welfare of the people of Waite Park. The Ordinance regulates and restricts the location of buildings proposed for specific uses, the height and bulk of buildings, provides for minimum sanitation standards, and regulates and determines the areas of yards and housing density.

Within a Land Use Plan designation, there may be several zones that will accomplish the intent of that designation. For example, an area designated in the Plan for residential may be zoned any one of several zones that permits residential development. The particular zone will be based upon the type of conditions in that area and how they apply to the development policies of the Plan.

Any zoning proposal, whether on a large area basis or an individual property, must be determined to be consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Where a conflict exists between the Plan and existing zoning, the Plan directives should prevail. In cases where the Comprehensive Plan is not followed, the findings of fact for the zoning proposed should explain the reasons for not following the Comprehensive Plan.

The Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map are amended from time to time to reflect new policies adopted by the City. The City should review its existing Zoning Ordinance and Map for inconsistencies with the adopted Comprehensive Plan Update, and create a schedule for amending the zoning documents to reconcile divergences or amending the Comprehensive Plan. An important first step is to compare the current zoning map with the adopted Land Use Map and reconcile discrepancies. There may be valid reasons why the two documents are not identical, but these reasons should be clear.

## SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE

The other most widely used land use control mechanism is the subdivision or land division control ordinance. The purpose of the ordinance is to safeguard the best interest of the City, the homeowner, and the developer, encourage well planned subdivisions by the establishment of design and construction criteria; to improve land records by establishing standards for surveys and plats; and protect the environmentally sensitive areas of the City.



### DID YOU KNOW?

*Land use* influences how land is used based on its characteristics, such as residential, commercial, or industrial.

*Zoning* defines how an area can be used and developed. Zoning is regulated through city ordinances. Based on Minnesota state statute, zoning must be consistent with a City's adopted comprehensive plan.

## Implementation

### CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP)

A Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is a capital expenditure plan for a community's infrastructure including: streets/sidewalks/alleys; water and sewer systems, park and trail system, and public buildings. The program outlines major projects the City plans to undertake in the next 5-10 years and how they may be financed. The CIP is updated every year for the five year period. The approval process for the CIP should include a review by the City Council to ensure consistency of the projects with other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

The image displays three overlapping spreadsheets from a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for the City of Waite Park. The top spreadsheet is titled 'CIP of Waite Park' and shows a detailed project schedule with columns for project name, location, start year, end year, and funding source. The middle spreadsheet shows a similar view with a different set of projects. The bottom spreadsheet is titled 'Program other funding is available' and shows a list of projects with their respective funding sources and amounts. The spreadsheets are color-coded with green, yellow, and orange highlights.

Bond rating agencies pay particular attention to the CIP, using it to assess how well the City plans and finances capital improvements needed to keep pace with growth and to maintain existing infrastructure. These needs are based on established standards in the Comprehensive Plan, on other City planning documents, and on estimates of population growth and implications of this growth on the City's infrastructure.

The manner in which the City funds capital improvements allows the City to control the timing of development. Because urban development requires City infrastructure, the City can control the timing of development by identifying when the City plans to make the necessary infrastructure improvements for development to occur.

The major categories of expenditure that should be identified in the CIP include, but are not limited to:

- New public facilities
- Capital improvements to existing facilities
- Street maintenance and reconstruction
- Utility installation and reconstruction
- Parks, play equipment, and trails

A capital expenditure plan should be prepared that communicates efforts to:

- Ensure that community priorities are reflected.
- Provide a consolidated financial picture of anticipated expenditures and outline recommended funding strategies to underwrite capital investments.
- Document and communicate capital improvement processes for City improvement projects to promote consistency and public understanding of the public improvement process.
- Effectively plan for public improvements that support community needs in the areas of housing, transportation, recreation, public safety, and public utilities, with corresponding growth in the City's tax base.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION



The City should continue to encourage opportunities for citizen participation at all levels of the planning and development processes through appointed citizen commissions and boards, and attendance and participation at public meetings. The City should continue to disseminate information through the City's website (<https://www.ci.waitepark.mn.us/>), brochures, and press release distribution to area newspapers.

## INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Another critical Plan implementation program is Waite Park's cooperation with the townships, special interest groups, and the County. Planning issues often have regional implications that affect several jurisdictions. To carry out not only the City Comprehensive Plan but also to aid other jurisdictions to accomplish their goals and policies, coordination agreements and cooperative decisions must be made.

In adopting agreements and recognizing regional and other jurisdictions' plans, the City is committed to the vital coordination that is necessary to accomplish effective planning for the area.

## Incentives

Considering the metaphor of the carrot and the stick, incentives represent the carrot while zoning and subdivision regulations represent the stick. Incentives are often useful when new, innovative concepts are being promoted or the private development community is reluctant to take the first step and needs some encouragement. They can include a range of techniques and programs including:

- Streamlining development reviews
- Reducing or waiving fees
- Participating in Public-Private Partnerships (3-P's)
- Establishing and administering grant programs

## Action Items

A community's final step in the comprehensive planning process is to set priorities for strategies associated with the specific Plan elements to achieve its vision and goals. Just as many distinct policies can speak to a given goal, a community can select a range of strategies or action items—consistent with its policies—to achieve any of its goals. Reaching an understanding of which should be given the highest priority is a key step a community should take to implement the Plan.

Table 10.1 provides a summarized list of major action items to implement policy recommendations in each element of the Plan. The action items have been assigned a priority rating of high to moderate, with a completion timeline in terms of a short or medium time frame that the City should undertake to implement the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The recommended action items may require substantial cooperation with others, including other governmental units, property owners, land developers, and builders. In addition, other local and City government priorities may affect the completion of these action items within the time frames presented.



### MAINTAINING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

To ensure the Plan remains a dynamic and living document, the City should implement an on-going planning process that uses the Plan to develop annual improvement programs. Simultaneously, the Plan should be reviewed and evaluated to ensure that its goals, policies, and programs continue to reflect changing community needs and attitudes.

The most important method of implementing the Waite Park Comprehensive Plan is to use the Plan as part of the day-to-day planning routine by committed elected and appointed officials, City staff members, and citizens. The Plan should be referenced in planning studies and planning staff reports and used when considering each new development, redevelopment, and incentive, with the intent of achieving the vision and goals set forth in the Plan.

Circumstances will continue to change in the future as the City grows and evolves. Consequently Waite Park's Comprehensive Plan will need to be revised to remain current. Needed refinements and changes should be carefully noted and thoroughly considered as part of an annual review process.

### Annual Plan Amendment Process

While major updates are typically made at five- or ten-year intervals, instituting a program of annual amendments provides an opportunity for relatively minor Plan updates and revisions such as changed conditions—in future land use designations, implementation actions, and review of the Plan for consistency with ordinances and regulations.

A Plan amendment should be prepared and distributed as an addendum to the adopted Comprehensive Plan. Identification of the potential Plan amendments should be an on-going process by the Planning Commission and City staff throughout the year.

Citizens, property owners, land developers, community organizations, and other government entities can also submit requests for Plan amendments. Proposed Plan amendments should be reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission.

Plan amendments should be adopted in a manner similar to the Plan itself, including public hearings, citizen input, and consideration of actions by both the Planning Commission and City Council. **Plan amendments should be adopted by resolution.**

## Implementation Responsibility

The responsibilities for the actual initiation and monitoring of the goals and implementation action items of the Comprehensive Plan lie with the following groups:

### Citizens

The City's citizens should continue to be involved in the implementation and maintenance of the Comprehensive Plan. They are responsible for bringing their concerns and issues to City staff.

### City Council

The City Council should receive and act upon recommendations in accordance with the vision, goals, and policies of the Plan. It is imperative that the City Council provide overall policy guidance and consider issues and changes when they are consistent with the stated purpose of the Comprehensive Plan.

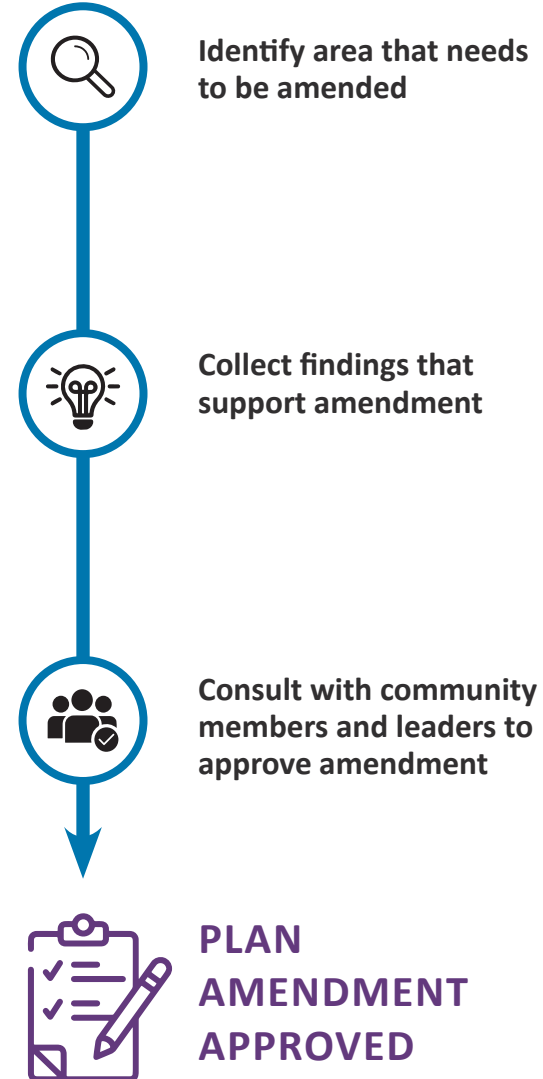
### Planning Commission

The Planning Commission should use the Comprehensive Plan as a tool for decision making for growth, development, and redevelopment to assure the projects, proposals and policies are in accordance with the Plan. On an annual basis, the Commission should submit an annual report of the activities and achievements as well as recommendations for future planning initiatives.

### City Staff

City Staff should review all development issues associated with zoning and subdivision of land for compliance with stated goals and policies and land use map. Staff should also monitor planning activities to aid in the need for revisions and updates.

## PROCESS TO AMEND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



## Implementation

**Table 10.1. Implementation Matrix**

Implementation Priorities and Action Steps				
Plan Element	Action Item	Priority*	Champion or “Primary Responsible Party”	Comments
Land Use	Update Zoning and Subdivision Codes to support the Comprehensive Plan’s Land Use goals and policies.	High	Community Development Director	2024 projected
	Review and update Comprehensive Plan on five year intervals.	Medium	Community Development Director	Ongoing
Housing	Encourage the development of market-rate low to medium density housing that meets the needs of current and new residents.	High	Community Development Director	Ongoing
Economic Development	Restart the City’s Economic Development Authority (EDA).	High	Community Development Director	2023 projected
	Attract 1-2 major employers with higher-paying wages.	High	Community Development Director	Ongoing
	Establish and implement a market-responsive, community supported Plan for expanding entertainment options within new or existing developments.	High	City Administrator	None
	Explore options for redevelopment in former Waite Avenue Redevelopment Master Plan area.	Medium	Community Development Director	None
	Encourage redevelopment of vacant and/or under performing large format (big-box) commercial facilities as new, walkable, mixed use places.	High	Community Development Director	One property of particular concern near-term
Transportation	Establish a Complete Streets Policy.	High	Public Works Director	None
	Establish and implement a multi-modal transportation plan that enhances safety and connects residents and businesses.	High	City Engineer	None
	Create and implement a beautification plan for the City that improves the physical appearance of new or redevelopment areas and the right-of-way of streets and highways.	High	Public Works Supervisor	None
	Prepare an Active Transportation/Sidewalks and Trails Master Plan.	Medium	City Engineer	None

Implementation Priorities and Action Steps				
Plan Element	Action Item	Priority*	Champion or “Primary Responsible Party”	Comments
Utilities and Community Facilities	Adopt and begin implementing recommendations of the Water System Master Plan.	High	Public Works Director	Ongoing
	Continue coordinating utility upgrades with street expansions and reconstructions.	High	City Engineer	Ongoing
	Prepare an assessment for and construct a new Public Safety Facility.	High	Police Chief	2023 to 2024
Parks and Open Spaces	Update the Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan.	High	Public Works Supervisor	None
	Resume planning and implementation of a new community - scale park to serve southwest area of the city.	High	Public Works Supervisor	None
Intergovernmental Cooperation	Collaborate with regional transportation partners to ensure the design of the future Southwest Beltway supports Waite Park’s goals and policies.	Medium	City Engineer	None

- \*High priority = 1 to 3 years
- Medium priority = 4 to 7 years

