01
INTRODUCTION

Chapter highlights

- Executive Summary
- Community Context
- Community Engagement

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Albert Lea has been a hub of retail, manufacturing, and transportation, in southern Minnesota since becoming a village in 1870. In 1880, Albert Lea was home to approximately 1,966 residents just one year following its city charter designation from the Minnesota State Legislature. The multiple railroads passing through Albert Lea offered the city a diverse economy from the late 19th century onwards. Rail Road lines such as the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy, the Chicago, Milwaukee and Saint Paul, and the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific offered transportation to grow the local economy especially in the manufacturing, wholesale groceries, sheet metal businesses, houseware, dairy products, meat processing, banking houses, and agricultural supply industries.

The connectivity of Albert Lea allowed the area to thrive economically and utilize the downtown. A retail district was formed along Broadway Avenue from Main Street to Walter Street. The downtown houses office space, banks, retail stores, and an opera house. By 1935, more than 40 wholesale and manufacturing businesses offered nearly 3,000 jobs within Albert Lea. Albert Lea's industries following World War II lead to the creation of one of the nation's first industrial parks. Following World War II, the automobile industry gathered near highway strips and shaped the future of retail development in Albert Lea.

During the 1960s and 1970s, Interstate 35 and Interstate 90 were created in Albert Lea. The interstate system allowed Albert Lea to be the intersection point of two major highways. This development urged Albert Lea to increase city planning efforts beyond the existing charter that was established in 1934. Albert Lea's first comprehensive plan from 1948 was updated in 1972 to include new elements of the interstate system. Albert Lea has since coordinated on growth with Freeborn County to develop a Strategic Action Plan in 2004. Periodic amendments to the comprehensive plan have been made though out history in Albert Lea.

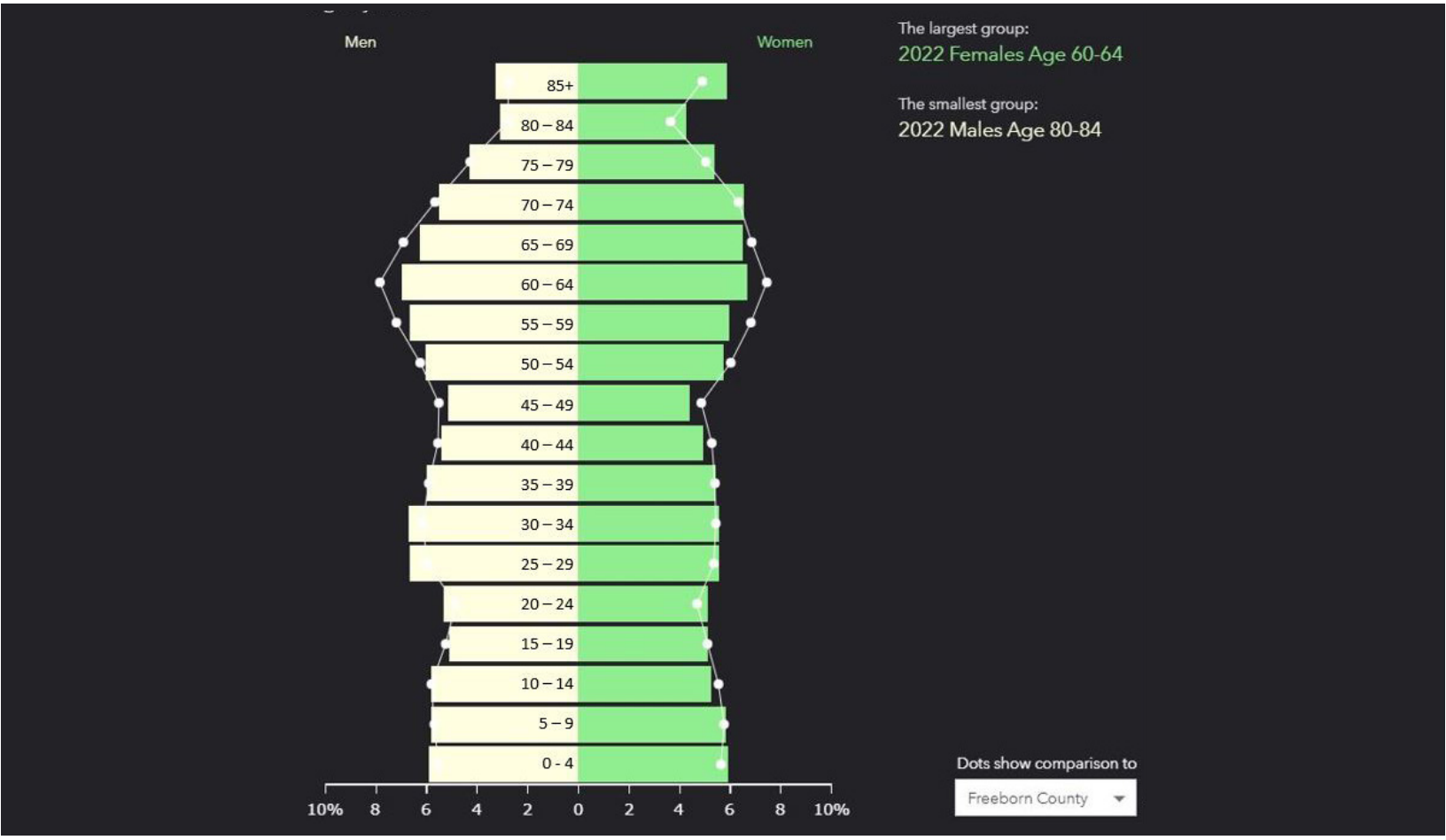
DEMOGRAPHICS

Meticulous planning for a community should include analysis of the demographics of the area. Careful assessment of demographic data can influence the physical development of a community because physical and social elements are closely intertwined. Evaluating demographic data can guide the planning process to recognize current and future needs of a community. Variables such as age, housing type, income, and employment influence the future development of a community.

Age

Figure 1 shows an age pyramid for Albert Lea in comparison to Freeborn County. The largest age group of Albert Lea residents are females aged 60 – 64 while the smallest age group are males aged 80 – 84. The median age in Albert Lea is 44.3 years.

FIGURE 1-1 ALBERT LEA AGE DISTRIBUTION



Housing

Albert Lea currently has 7,895 households. The average household size in Albert Lea is 2.3 occupants and is slightly below the average household size for Freeborn County at 2.32 occupants. Figure 2 shows the make up of home values in Albert Lea with the median home value being $124,045. Figure 3 demonstrates the age of the housing stock; the majority (23 percent) of homes in Albert Lea were built prior to the 1940s. 70.4 percent of Albert Lea residents own their homes rather than rent as shown in Figure 4.

FIGURE 1-2 ALBERT LEA MEDIAN HOME VALUE

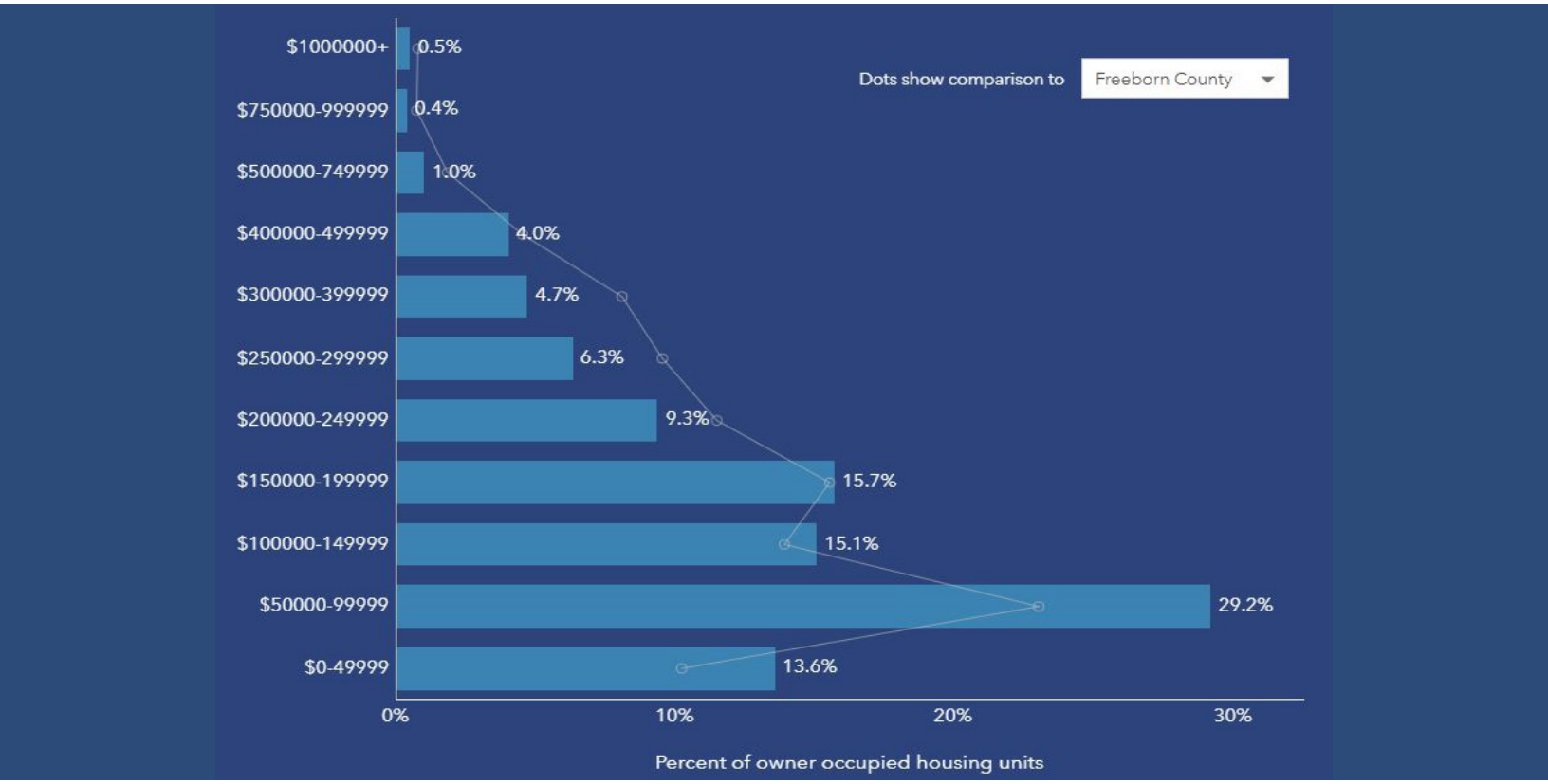
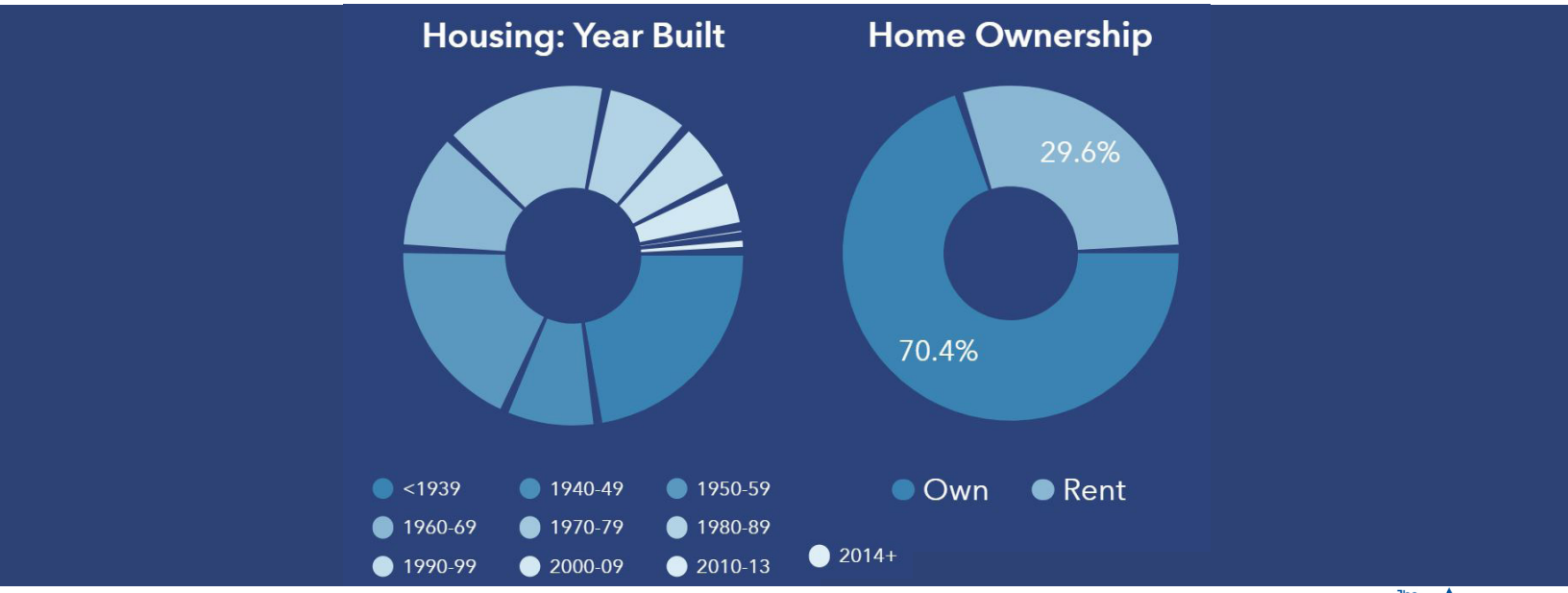


FIGURE 1-3 & 1-4 ALBERT LEA MEDIAN HOME AGE AND OWNERSHIP RATES



Race

74 percent of Albert Lea's population identifies as White, five percent identifies as Asian, two percent identifies as Black or African American, seven percent identify as two or more races and six percent identify as some other race. American Indian/Alaska Native residents make up less than one percent of Albert Lea's population as do Pacific Islander residents.

Income

The Median household income for Albert Lea residents is $55,372. Figure 5 and Figure 6 illustrate the range of incomes for Albert Lea residents.

FIGURE 1-5 ALBERT LEA HOUSEHOLD INCOME

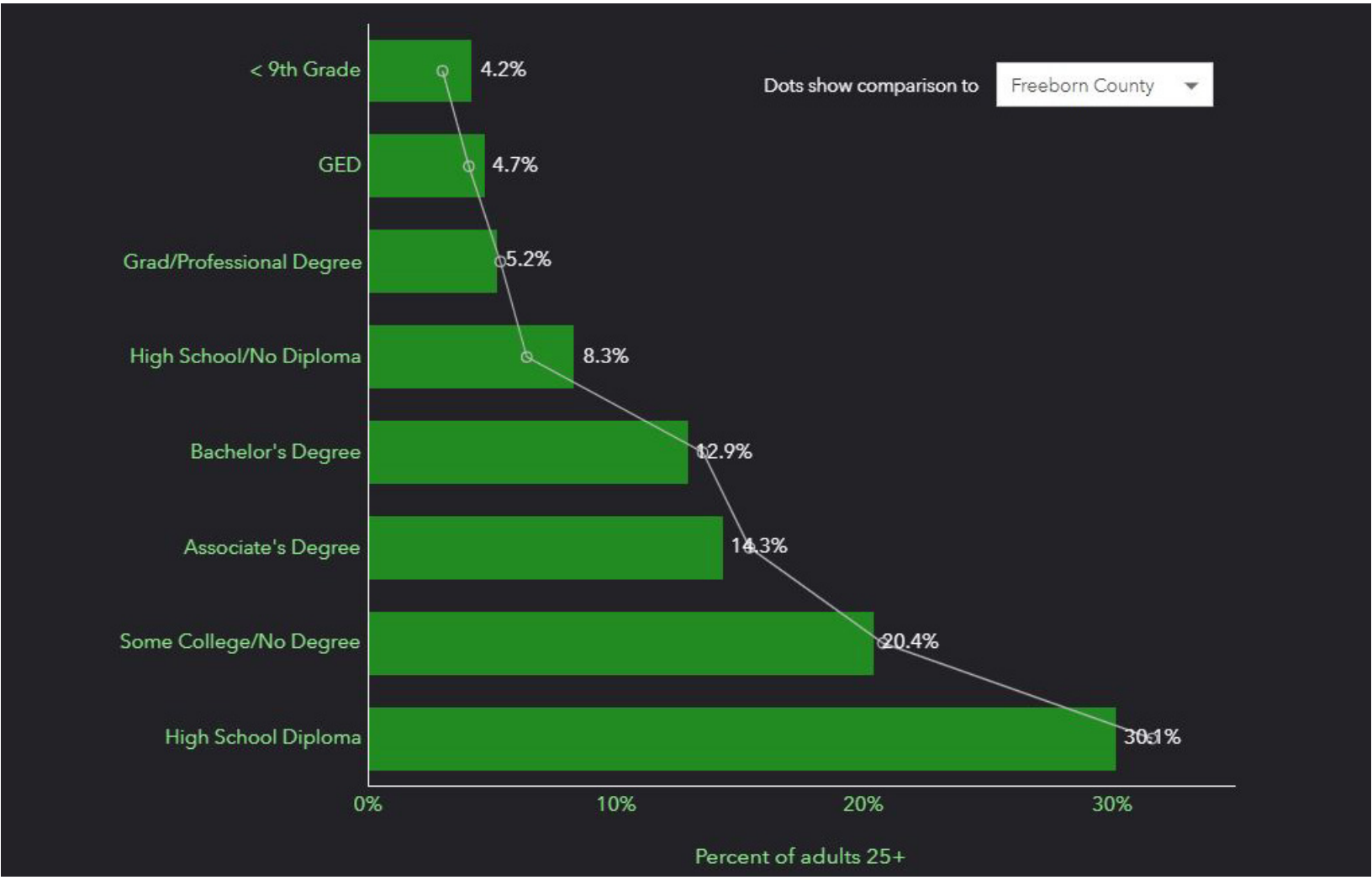
FIGURE 1-6 ALBERT LEA CHANGES TO HOUSEHOLD INCOME

$200,000+	1.6%	-0.9%	
$150,000 - $199,999	3.9%	-1.6%	
$100,000 - $149,999	13.5%	-2.6%	
$75,000 - $99,999	15.7%	-1.8%	
$50,000 - $74,999	21.9%	-0.1%	
$35,000 - $49,999	17.4%	+2.4%	
$25,000 - $34,999	8.9%	+0.9%	
$15,000 - $24,999	8.5%	+1.5%	
<$15,000	8.7%	+2.2%	

Educational Attainment

Approximately 12 percent of Albert Lea residents did not receive a high school diploma, while 35 percent of residents have an educational attainment of high school graduate. 35 percent of residents have an educational attainment of some college, and 18 percent of residents have a bachelor's, graduate, or other professional degree.

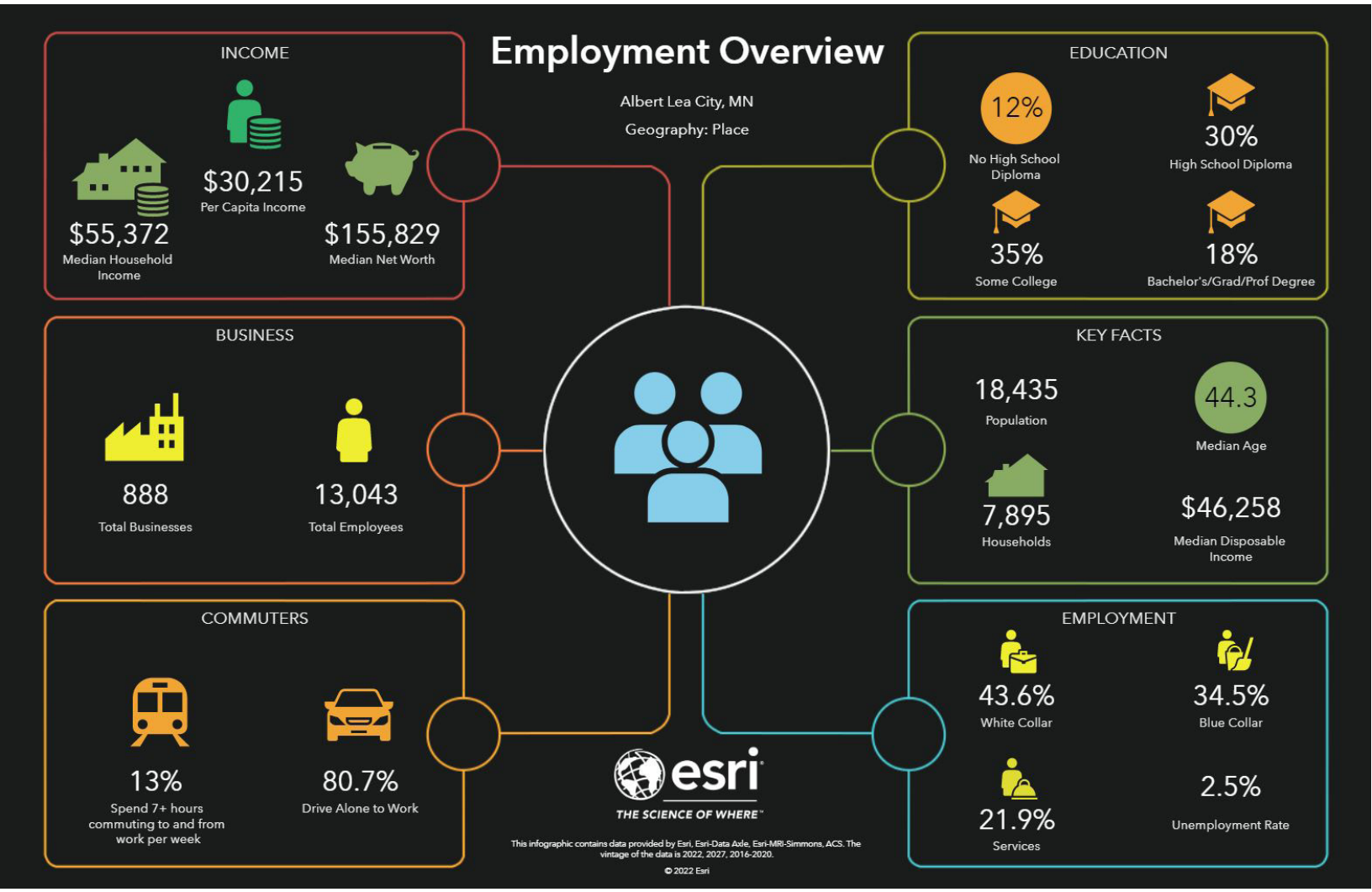
FIGURE 1-7 ALBERT LEA EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



Employment and Labor Force

Albert Lea has a labor force of approximately 888 businesses with 13,043 employees. The production industry is the largest sector of employment in Albert Lea with 13.5 percent of business being production. The second largest sector is transportation with 11.2 percent. 43.6 percent of jobs in Albert Lea are considered white collar, 34.5 percent of jobs are considered blue collar, and 21.9 percent of jobs fall within services. Approximately 2.5 percent of Albert Lea's population is unemployed.

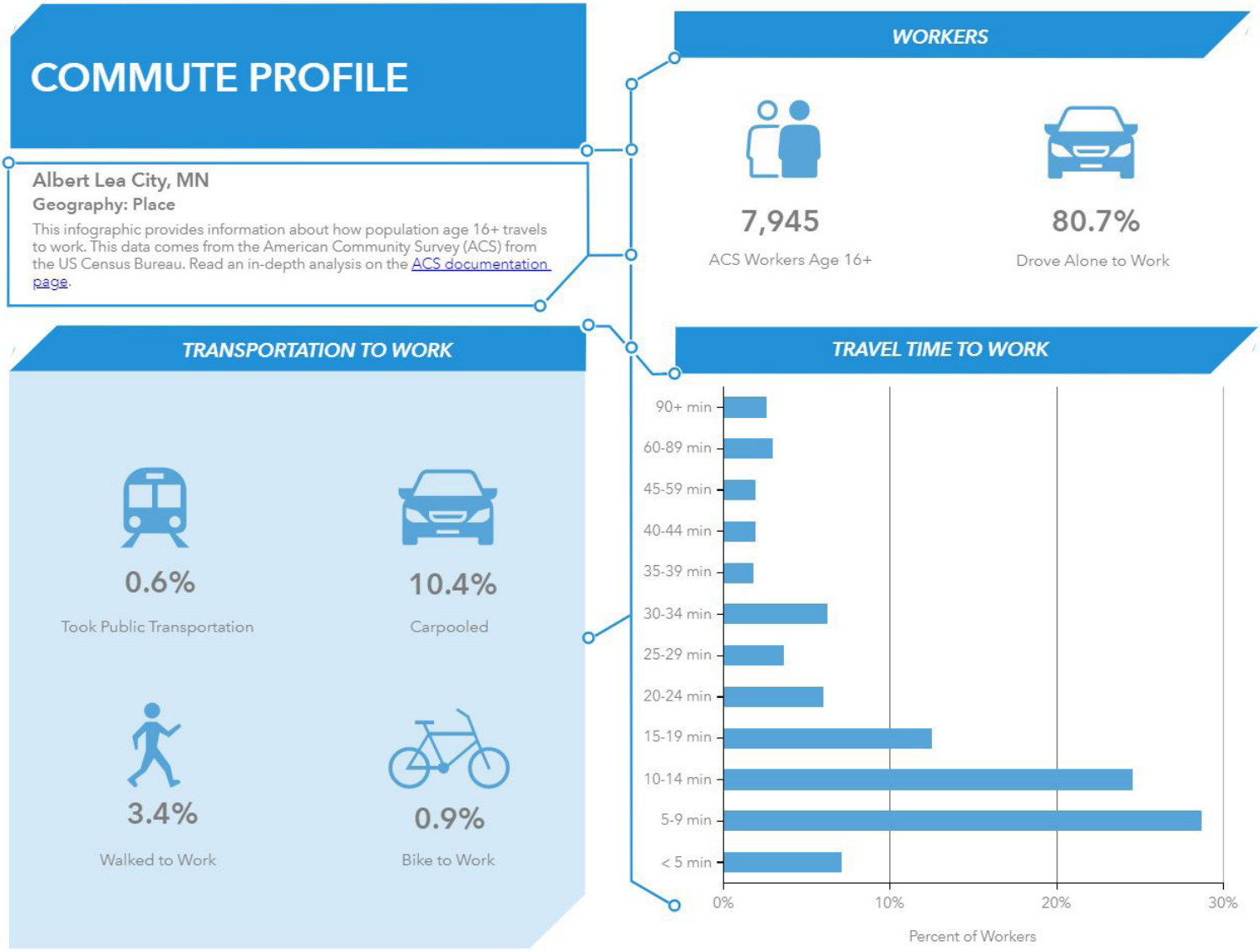
FIGURE 1-8 ALBERT LEA EMPLOYMENT OVERVIEW



Employment and Labor Force

Albert Lea residents tend to commute to work with a vehicle. 80.7 percent of residents drive alone to work. Some residents either carpool (10.4 percent) or walk to work (3.4 percent). Most commutes to work for Albert Lea residents are between five and nine minutes.

FIGURE 1-8 ALBERT LEA COMMUTE PROFILE



This infographic contains data provided by American Community Survey (ACS). The vintage of the data is 2016-2020.

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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Section Overview

- Steering Committee
- Visioning and SWOT
- Goals
- Land Use and Mapping
- Draft Chapters and Implementation
- Survey
- Focus Groups and Events

Steering Committee

The City of Albert Lea held a series of steering committee meetings to gather local knowledge for the 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update. The meetings were held to discuss the direction of the update, assess public input survey results, execute a Stregths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis, and explore goals for Albert Lea. The steering committee provided valuable information about the current state of Albert Lea while discussing how to guide opportunities for growth and development.

Visioning and SWOT

The first steering committee meeting focused on gathering a consensus about Albert Lea through a visioning session and SWOT analysis. Attendees reflected on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) that face Albert Lea in addition to what Albert Lea means to them. The main strengths of Albert Lea, according to the steering committee, included a beautiful and well-maintained built environment, a high-quality school system, and strong local leadership. The weaknesses discussed consisted of limited access to healthcare and social services, a lack of community bonding of all demographics as well as limited winter activities, especially for teens. The main ideas for opportunities were diversifying available jobs and even more recreational activities to take advantage of the landscape. Threats that face Albert lea are the lack of industrial land which limits certain types of expansion and a lack of adequate childcare which restricts families from moving to Albert Lea and accessing job opportunities.

The following table is a summary of how the committee responded when asked the following questions:

What is Albert Lea?	What excites you about Albert Lea?	What challenges is Albert Lea facing?	What is your favorite place in Albert Lea?
• Small, close-knit and involved community • Home and Destination • Major intersection of highway/ interstate • Cost of living & quality of life • History • Big Cultural and Social Events • Nature and Outdoors • Giving, caring, passionate	• Momentum and potential • Festivals and events • History • Working together • Welcoming new residents and visitors • 1st Industrial Park in the United States • Public art	• Lack of housing (incl. options and affordability) • Representation and engagement • Healthcare/ childcare • Economic diversity Workforce shortage Project funding • Young professionals/ family retention • Senior support	• Lakes and natural environment • Downtown/ Broadway • Art center, library, museum • Outdoor activities, trails, parks • Businesses (restaurant, Whimsy, etc.)

The following table is a summary of the SWOT Analysis:

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Town beauty • Care and desire for a better community • Local leadership • Infrastructure • Riverland Community College • Community events • Farmers market • Passion, diversity, jobs • Outdoors/nature • Schools • People	• Outreach and engagement • Indoor winter activities • Need more music events • Food access • Healthcare access/cost • Activities for kids/teens • No homeless shelters or resources • Isolation • Lack of communication/sense of community among neighbors
Opportunites	**Threat**
• Tourism • Workforce training • Industrial growth/economic diversity • Lake/outdoors/parks • Diversity • Collaboration/building on momentum • Developable land • Work from home • Outdoors/nature • Schools • Partnerships	• Location • Lack of available land • Flooding • Unfunded wastewater plant • Lack of housing (options and affordable) • Healthcare/childcare • Aging housing stock • Work from home • Few activities for youth • Negativity

Goals

A second steering committee meeting was held to consider goals for Albert Lea. The goals were related to the main four sections of the comprehensive plan: Built, Social, Economic, and Natural Environment. Goals for the built environment included creating affordable housing, investing in a multimodal transportation system, and maintaining public infrastructure such as the water treatment system. Social environment goals centered on branding for Albert Lea with wayfinding and other signage in addition to additional community events and volunteer opportunities. Economic goals included supporting diverse businesses and various types of restaurants while providing the social infrastructure to support the businesses. The goals for the natural environment were to support green energy and increase access to natural resources such as trails and the lake.

The following table is a summary of the goals discussed during the meeting:

Built	Social	Natural	Economic
• Creating Affordable- and Market-rate Housing • Creating a Multi-Modal System • Expand and Develop New Industrial Park • Expand and Update Recreational Facilities • Keep Ahead with Technology in Infrastructure • Strong Wastewater Treatment System • Support Economic Growth Through Infrastructure Improvements	• Public Art Destination • Signage + Branding • Expand + Diversify Events • Activate and Engage Community Organizations and Volunteers • Reactivate Blue Zones • Information Translation and Platform Engagement • Build a New and Improved "Welcome Wagon" • Support and Connect with Social Services • Attract and Expand Healthcare/ Childcare Options • Build a Community or Rec Center	• Finish Bike Trail • Expand Bike Infrastructure • Sustainability in Waste with recycling and composting programs • Sustainability in Jobs • Responsibly Pursue Green Energy • Care for and Maintain Lakes • Provide Opportunities for Recreation • Explore creating a Tourism Office to Coordinate Attracting Visitors through Signage	• Attract companies and industries with sustainable workforce needs • Support economic expansion through the number of available housing units • Support and provide community-level services • Walk-/Bike-ability • Business Support Programs • Small Business Diversification • Avoid Inefficient Sprawl • Define needs and direction for growth • Branding + Signage

Land Use and Mapping

The third steering committee meeting focused on land use and envisioning change across the community through a mapping exercise. Some of the major land use takeaways included maintaining existing housing stock, building up density near major places and nodes, affordable housing, neighborhood commercial, adaptive reuse of buildings, and reusing former railroad corridors for trails. After the discussion on land use goals, the steering committee was separated into groups and each group was given a map of the city. On trace paper, the groups indicated areas for expansion, revitalization, trails, and preservation. The groups then traded maps and provided a different perspective on each part of the city. A summary of this mapping exercise is included in Appendix A.

Draft Chapters and Implementation

The fourth and fifth steering committee meetings focused on reviewing the draft chapters and implementation matrix worksheets. The fourth steering committee reviewed all the major chapters and goals and sought feedback from the steering committee on the approach and organization. The fifth and final steering committee meeting gave the group a chance to view the implementation chapter information and all the proposed goals and action items. Each item had information on a potential level of effort and tools, along with benchmarks to monitor progress. The steering committee was asked to divide itself into three groups to review two chapters each. Each group member received a set number of dots in green and blue colors to place next to goals, objectives, or action items that interest them the most. Green dots denote a high priority and desire to complete in a short timeframe while blue dots denote a high priority but not an immediate need and could be viewed as a medium- or long-term item. After placing the first round of dots, the group was given a set number of dots to share, which required the group to discuss and agree on placing more dots to create a weighted system beyond just individual decisions. Below is a summary of the results, organized by topic and featuring the top-voted elements for both green and blue dots. Details for each topic may be found in Appendix A.

Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resources

- Green (high priority, short term)
  - Adopt a communal identity through a wayfinding and gateway signage system for parkland and community gateways. (Action Item)
  - Improve the health of the community by providing spaces and activities to suit a variety of needs. (Objective) / Provide more opportunities for complete and walkable streets. (Action Item)
- Blue (high priority, medium-/long-term)
  - Improve the health of the community by providing spaces and activities to suit a variety of needs. (Objective) / Provide more opportunities for complete and walkable streets. (Action Item)
  - Promote healthy activity. (Objective) / Provide attractive opportunities for outdoor play, aimed at inter-generational and omni-skill levels, thereby providing safe spaces for youth after school. (Action Item)

Public Utilities and Facilities

- Green (high priority, short term)
  - Expand existing utility system infrastructure to meet the demands generated by continued development. (Goal)
  - (Tie vote) Maintain and operate public facilities at the highest possible level of service. (Goal) / Foster an environment for lifelong learning, growth, and cooperation. (Goal)
- Blue (high priority, medium-/long-term)
  - Maintain and operate public facilities at the highest possible level of service. (Goal)
  - Monitor, evaluate and improve the condition of each utility system's infrastructure. (Goal)

Economic Development

- Green (high priority, short term)
  - Create a strong economic development system. (Goal) / Attract and retain successful businesses. (Objective)
  - Attract talent, retain residents and increase levels of community engagement. (Goal) / Promote quality of life. (Objective)
- Blue (high priority, medium-/long-term)
  - Strengthen the work-skills pipeline. (Goal)
  - Prioritize activities to ensure the city and county are prepared for business growth opportunities. (Goal)

Housing

- Green (high priority, short term)
  - Expand Housing Choice and Affordability. (Goal)
  - Preserve and Enhance Existing Housing Stock. (Goal)
- Blue (high priority, medium-/long-term)
  - (Tie vote) Expand Housing Choice and Affordability. (Goal) / Preserve and Enhance Existing Housing Stock. (Goal) / Identify and prepare locations for multi-family development. (Action Item)

Transportation

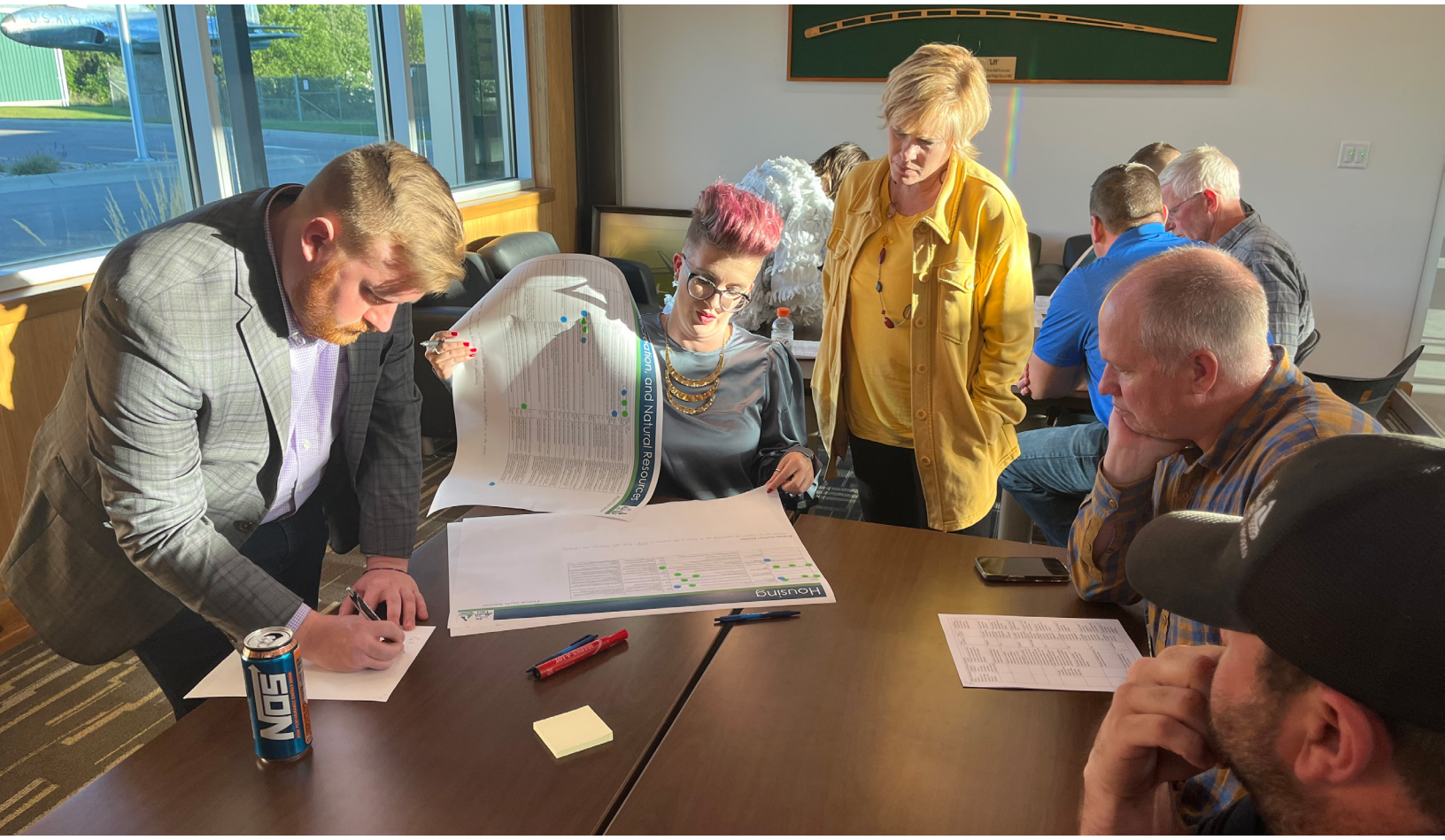
- Green (high priority, short term)
  - Create quick and easy access to the surrounding areas of Albert Lea. (Action Item)
  - Expand bike and pedestrian trails that route from residential uses to destinations such as schools, parks, or commercial corridors. (Action Item)
- Blue (high priority, medium-/long-term)
  - (Tie vote) Identify high- and low-intensity land uses. (Action Item) / Expand bike and pedestrian trails that route from residential uses to destinations such as schools, parks, or commercial corridors. (Action Item) / Create new developments near roads with adequate carrying capacity. (Action Item) / Provide opportunities for various transportation options. (Action Item) / Place lighting in large open spaces. (Action Item) / Create a Bike and Pedestrian Masterplan. (Action Item)

Land Use

- Green (high priority, short term)
  - Encourage the preservation and enhancement of the City's single-family housing stock using city programs that incentivize upkeep and maintenance of private property. (Action item)
  - Plan for appropriate amenities, high-quality design, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and open space in high-growth areas, particularly in the downtown mixed-use district and around neighborhood centers. (Action Item)
- Blue (high priority, medium-/long-term)
  - Support the diversification of housing types throughout the City, including the development of a tiny home park to support housing affordability. (Action Item)
  - (Tie vote) Support small local businesses, particularly in the areas of the City where new development is designated in the comprehensive plan. (Action Item) / Identify locations in the City that could support new and mixed-use development. (Action Item)

Survey

The public input survey was shared with the steering committee to help guide conversations for opportunities. Residents expressed they were attracted by the quality of life, location, cost of living, and close-knit community feel of Albert Lea. Survey results strongly expressed a desire to market Albert Lea programs to attract and support new businesses while leveraging existing strengths. Respondents are excited by outdoor recreation and opportunities for growth, especially downtown. Recreation is a major amenity and is used often. Most people (96%) drive alone as their primary mode of transportation. However, recreational biking and walking are big draws. Challenges & opportunities center on more housing & commercial growth, while growing the local workforce, and combating negative perceptions of the community. Survey details are included in Appendix A.



Focus Groups and Events

ALEDA

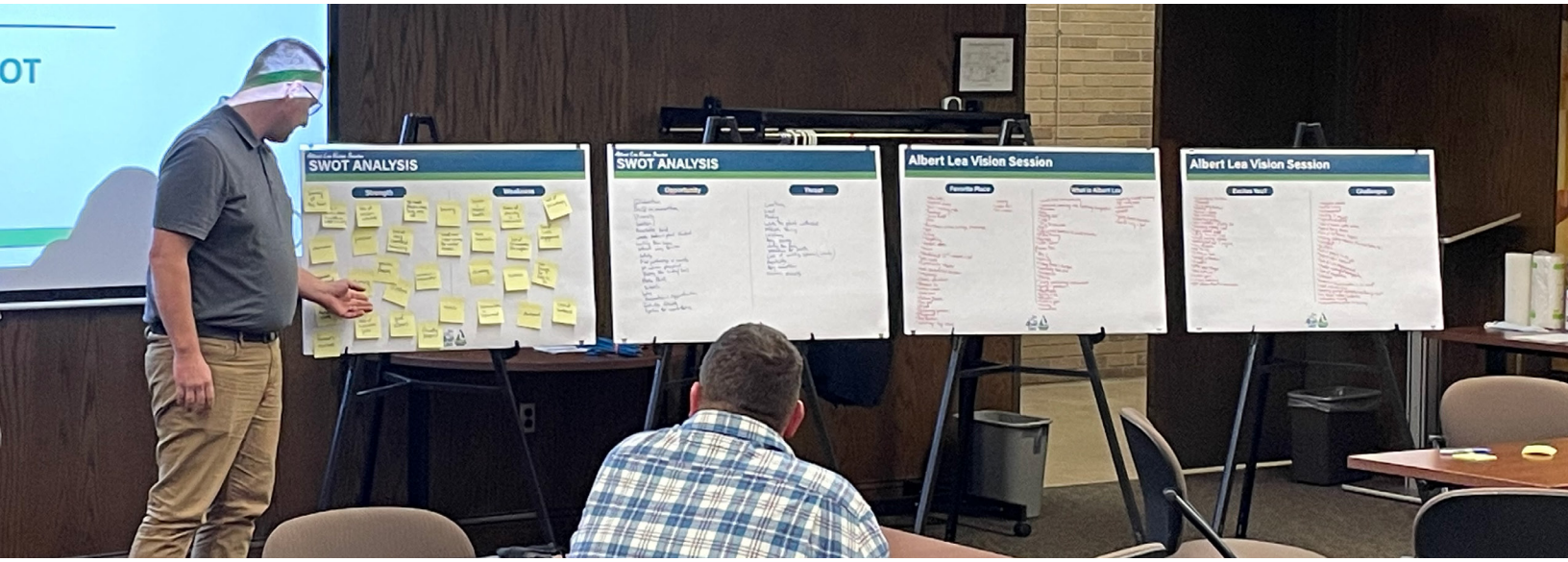
One of the focus groups, the Albert Lea Economic Development Agency (ALEDA), provided insights into city growth and development from an economic point of view. The agency highlighted outdoor amenities, a welcoming community, cost of living, public-private partnerships, growth potential, and transportation access as ways Albert Lea's market attracts industry and economic development. On the inverse, a workforce and housing shortage, natural features like swamps and wetlands, distance to major metro areas, lack of available land and tenant spaces, and competition with Iowa were among some of the reasons why Albert Lea might not attract new housing development. When asked what is Albert Lea's market niche, agency members responded by stating that the city has a clear economic vision, company compatibility with the community, an established workforce, strong agricultural sector, innovation, and a fairly diverse economic base. When it came to a mapping exercise, the EDA focused their discussions around expanding residential opportunities downtown through incentives and city expansion south.

Zion Karen Baptist Church

City staff attended a service at the Zion Karen Baptist Church, 335 W. Clark St., and visited with members afterwards on June 26, 2022, about their housing, transportation, and service needs. Church members placed dots on a city map to show where they live. While initially tending to reside in trailer parks and lower-income neighborhoods, Karen families are now living throughout most of Albert Lea and are investing in home ownership. This distribution indicates a need for services throughout the community, including translation of signs and outreach materials, recreational programming that is culturally-appropriate, and more efforts to include these recent immigrants in community events. As Albert Lea continues to improve its signage and wayfinding, a community approach is needed to be inclusive of different populations and ages.

No families indicated that they live in the neighborhoods where homes have the highest market values, such as Shoreland Heights, perhaps indicating that more affluent neighborhoods are out of reach for these recent immigrants. This absence may indicate a need for higher education and higher-paying occupations for this population.

Karen families expressed a need for more transportation options, with many of them needing to find rides to shop for groceries and run other errands. Some of them lack knowledge of city services, such as library programming and park activities, along with information on licenses for fishing and driving, and nuisance laws such as grass height and pet waste. For the City to implementation this Comprehensive Plan, more outreach is needed.



Cinco de Mayo

City staff set up a booth to engage with children and their parents at the Cinco de Mayo celebration on May 5, 2022, in the North Broadway parking lot. City staff visited with dozens of families about their favorite places in Albert Lea and their ideas for additional amenities.

The Aquatic Center, splash pad, local parks and downtown, including the Albert Lea Public Library, were top favorites. Neighborhood parks have played a positive and important role in creating a sense of community and belonging. For additional amenities, families listed an indoor playground, indoor activities during cold-weather months, grocery stores and other retailers, and more water features at the Aquatic Center.

Comments indicate that it's important for the city to maintain its park system, including neighborhood parks, supervised activities at parks during the summer, and year-round activities at parks including skating rinks in the winter. To maintain the community's high quality of life, the City needs to maintain its recreational amenities such as the City Arena, services like the library, and existing retail base while striving to improve and expand them.

Apartment Complex

City staff visited with residents at Trailside Apartments at 204 East Front St., on Oct. 5, 2022. All the residents said they enjoy living at Trailside, noting that they may have pets, their neighbors are friendly, and they like being able to walk to Frank Hall Park and the Blazing Trail to enjoy the lake views. The conversations identified the following issues and potential solutions:

- Transportation is a major obstacle for these residents. Most do not have their own vehicle, and must depend on family and friends or the SMART bus for rides to essential services, including grocery stores and medical clinics. One caregiver said it's expensive for her to ride the bus with her clients because she has to pay the fee as well as the clients. Potential solutions include no fee or reduced fee for caregivers accompanying clients, especially if the clients are elderly and use a wheelchair.
- On a related transportation note, additional sidewalks in the area would make waking safer and offer connections to more amenities.
- Affordable housing for low-income people is another major issue. It's difficult to find safe and affordable rental housing in Albert Lea. One solution would be to work with landlords to increase their willingness to accept housing vouchers. Another is to continue efforts to remove blight and hazardous structures, and ensure all rental housing meets building codes.
- Many residents expressed a need for more accessible health care.
- Many also expressed an interest for a grocery on the south side of Albert Lea. These residents all need to find a ride to get groceries, whether at Kwik Trip, Hy-Vee or Wal-Mart.
- For the most part, residents feel safe walking in the neighborhood around Trailside Apartments, but concerns were expressed about houses where drug activity is suspected. A potential solution would be an increased presence by Albert Lea Police, such as patrolling or walking the neighborhood around Trailside and perhaps regular visits to the apartment complex to talk with residents and listen to their concerns.

The residents indicated the City should incorporate Trailside and similar apartment complex into its engagement and communication efforts, such as making sure seasonal Fun Guides are mailed to them, sending postcards or flyers with information on how to follow City accounts on social media, considering pop-up recreation or library events, and conducting annual visits or open houses.

02
LAND USE

Chapter highlights

- Overview
- Current Land Use
- Opportunities and Challenges
- Future Land Use
- Growth Areas
- Development Districts
- Zoning
- Goals & Actions

OVERVIEW

Planning for future land use allows a community to guide development in effective, compatible, and efficient ways to promote public safety and economic development. Well-guided land use organizes the city by aligning city-wide resources, promoting equitable development, and ensuring compatibility among nearby uses. The Land Use section of this plan establishes and defines land use classifications to be applied across the City of Albert Lea's jurisdiction. This chapter will also set a framework for the future development and redevelopment of land within the city by outlining a vision for future growth.

The City of Albert Lea is approximately 9,690 acres in size, with a planning area that includes the entirety of the City Limits and ### acres of the surrounding township. Future land use will follow patterns already established in the city. Commercial areas will continue to cluster around the Highway 65 corridor, with an emerging mixed-use development area establishing itself just south of Fountain Lake. Future industrial development will continue to cluster around where Highway 65 meets the Interstate 32 corridor. Industrial land use currently located near Highway 13 will slowly phase out as the area grows in commercial and mixed-use development. Industry instead will be encouraged to grow near the Interstate 90 corridor, on the northern end of the city.

As of 2010, Albert Lea had 18,016 people and 7,774 households. It is estimated that the City's population contracted by 1% between 2010 and 2020 to 17,840, while the number of households decreased by 0.5% to 7,710. Between 2020 and 2030, Albert Lea's population is projected to decline by another 140 people (-1%) and 30 households (-0.4%). Patterns of low-density, medium-density, and high-density residential housing will largely stay the same and will be intermixed with institutional uses, agricultural uses, and parks and open spaces. While the overall population of the City is not expected to increase, the City's largest age cohorts, the 55 to 64 age group (13% of the population) and the 75 and older age group (12% of the population), are anticipated to grow. To prepare for this demographic shift, future single-family residential developments are expected near the city's boundaries while the center city is expected to grow in density of both residential and commercial uses to increase housing choice. The goal of this chapter is to plan for the success of future growth by ensuring compatibility and efficiency of uses.

Section Overview

- Current Land Use
- Opportunities & Challenges
- Future Land Use
- Growth Areas
- Development Districts
- Zoning
- Goals & Objectives

The goals of this chapter deal with the built environment– relating it to the social, economic, and natural environments. Land Use goals introduced below include creating livable neighborhoods, encouraging new development, and expanding city gathering places.

CURRENT LAND USE

Existing land use patterns in Albert Lea are a culmination of historical development, long-term planning effort, and everyday decisions. They tell the story of the city. The current land use map and the current land use table illustrate the city's existing land uses in 2023. The following defines the existing land uses in Albert Lea:

Commercial and Industrial lands form our job base. Commercial uses are generally retail and service-oriented uses including offices which provide day-to-day needs for the community. Industrial uses include the manufacturing of products, storage, distribution centers, and research and design-type facilities.

Private Recreation uses include predominantly open spaces that are privately held and used for recreation-oriented businesses or clubs.

Public Park land on the other hand is land owned by the public and part of the public park and recreation system.

Residential uses are categorized as estate—large lots with on-site private sewer and water systems and low, mid, and high-density housing—all of which have municipal sewer and water services. Density refers to the number of dwelling units per acre. Low density includes detached single-family homes developed between 1 to 4 units per acre of residential land. Mid-density includes a mix of detached homes on smaller lots and attached housing (townhomes, quadhomes, duplexes, triplexes, etc..) typically developed at a density of 4 to 10 units per acre of residential land. High-density housing generally includes attached housing in a vertical or stacked configuration, commonly envisioned as apartments or condominiums. High density is generally in excess of 10 units per acre.

Public and Semi-Public uses include government-owned facilities, school district facilities, and religious or philanthropic institutions that are generally of a non-profit status.

ROW stands for public street/road right-of-way and "utility" refers to power stations or sub-stations.

Vacant or AG are lands with minimal or no structures relative to the amount of land. Essentially these uses are what we used to determine "development capacity" later in the plan. If there is evidence of productive agricultural uses, the land is coded as Ag, otherwise, it is simply vacant land.

Open Water and Wetlands are regional data sets that are provided by the state of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. These data sets include lakes, ponds, and streams that are part of the Protected Waters Inventory (PWI) and National Wetland Inventory (NWI). This data is the "best available" data for identifying undevelopable lands at a Comprehensive Plan level of detail.

FIGURE 2-1 ALBERT LEA CURRENT LAND USE

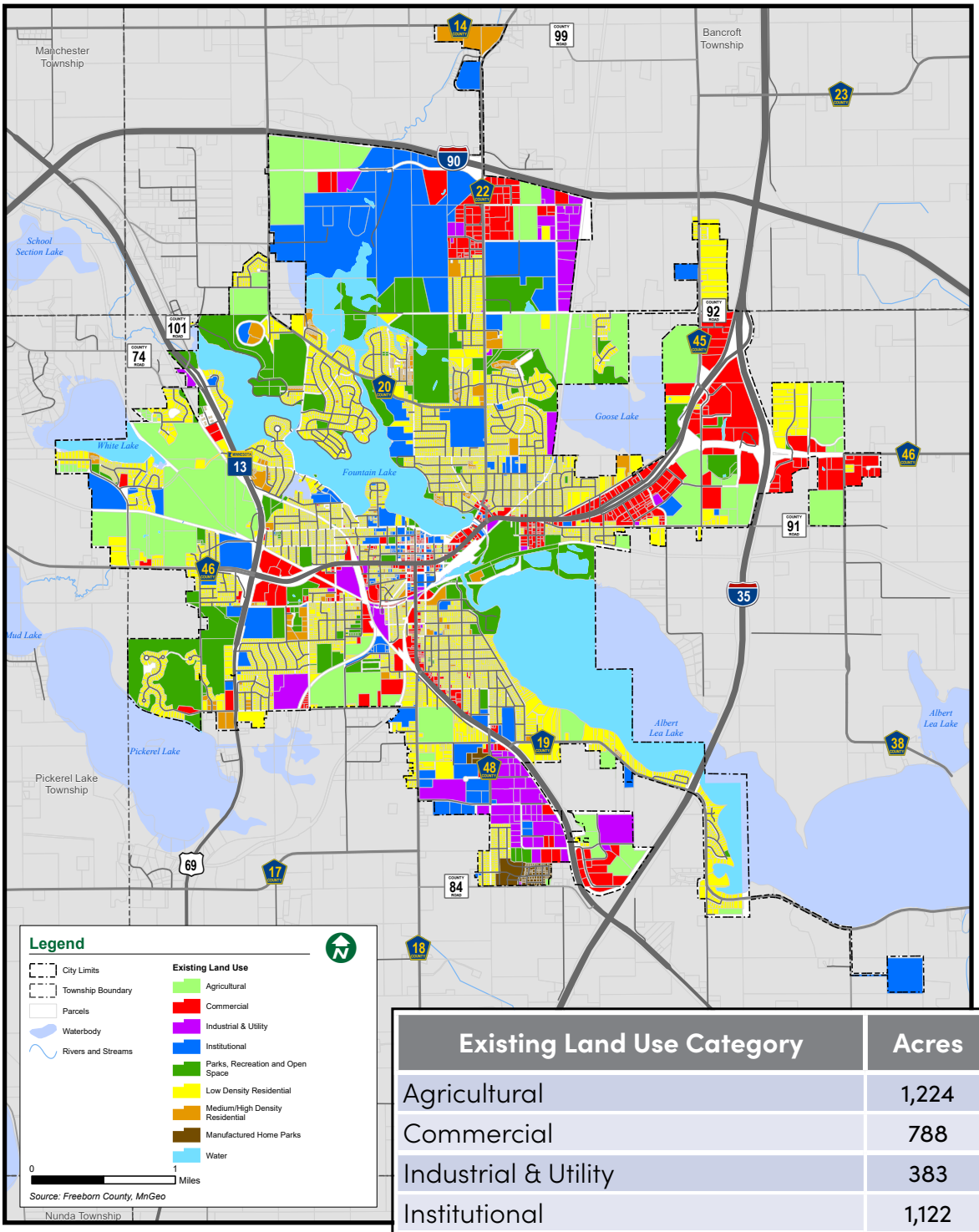


FIGURE 2-2 CURRENT LAND USE ACREAGE

Existing Land Use Category	Acres	Share of City
Agricultural	1,224	14.3%
Commercial	788	9.2%
Industrial & Utility	383	4.5%
Institutional	1,122	13.1%
Low Density Residential	2,070	24.2%
Manufactured Home Parks	43	0.5%
Medium/High Density Residential	205	2.4%
Parks, Recreation and Open Space	998	11.6%
Water	1,736	20.3%
TOTAL	8,569	100%

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

Preserving & Expanding Housing Choice

Although growth is not projected for Albert Lea overall, growth is expected to occur among older adults in the community. To accommodate this demographic change, it will be necessary to invest in aging housing stock throughout the city while also identifying areas for new development of housing at various densities. To keep Albert Lea's quality of life high and cost of living low, the City will support medium- to high-density residential housing near the downtown area as well as around existing commercial nodes in the city.

Commercial Growth

To support the increase in housing units, Albert Lea will encourage mixed-use, neighborhood commercial development downtown and near existing commercial nodes to promote livability and the use of non-motorized transportation. The city will continue to market Albert Lea's economic programs to attract and support new and existing businesses. Future land use will also promote better access to healthcare and social services for residents.

Growing Local Workforce

Popular ideas include diversifying available jobs and even more recreational activities to take advantage of the landscape. Threats that face Albert lea are the lack of industrial land, which limits certain types of expansion, and the lack of adequate childcare, which restricts families from moving to Albert Lea and accessing job opportunities.

Cost of Living

During community engagement activities for this plan, residents expressed they were attracted to Albert Lea by the quality of life and cost of living—two big strengths in our city. A goal of this chapter is to organize land use to promote low-cost housing and commercial and industrial development to maintain a high quality of life while keeping the cost of living low for our residents.

Outdoor Recreation

Albert Lea residents appreciate the existing recreational amenities in the city and see parks and open space as an area to expand. During community engagement activities, residents expressed a desire for more outdoor winter activities. While most people (96%) drive alone as their primary mode of transportation, recreational biking and walking are a strength of the community.

Quality of Life & Blue Zones

According to the comprehensive plan steering committee, the strengths of Albert Lea include a beautiful and well-maintained built environment, a high-quality school system, and a close-knit and engaged community. Each of these strengths contributes to a high quality of life for residents.

In addition to the above, Albert Lea is known for being one of the first Blue Zones communities. Blue Zones are a combination of lifestyle and diet decisions coupled with public and private investment in communities. Such investments increase walkability, access to trails and parks, and establish sustainable systems for growing health equity, stability, and resilience against challenges to personal and societal health.

Blue Zones differs from other programs by finding the intersection between health and economic vitality. With a healthier population, millions of dollars or more can be saved in healthcare costs and businesses save more money in group healthcare plans and through workers taking less sick time. Eating healthier foods encourages spending at grocery stores and restaurants with healthier food options. More time is spent walking, biking, and being active instead of sitting in sedentary positions.

The current trend in economic development includes looking at a city's quality of life. Through having a great quality of life, cities can make a stronger pitch for relocating businesses within city limits and attracting highly-skilled workers. More information on Blue Zones and how the program has positively impacted Albert Lea can be found at www.bluezones.com.

By the end of the pilot project, adopting the Blue Zone model made a significant difference in Albert Lea:

- 90% increase in community satisfaction
- 40% drop in city worker healthcare costs
- 25% increase in property values
- 40% increase in biking and walking
- 3 additional years of life added to the participants' life expectancy
- Moved up from #68 to #45 in Minnesota County Health Rankings

FIGURE 2-3 ALBERT LEA COMMUNITY PROFILE

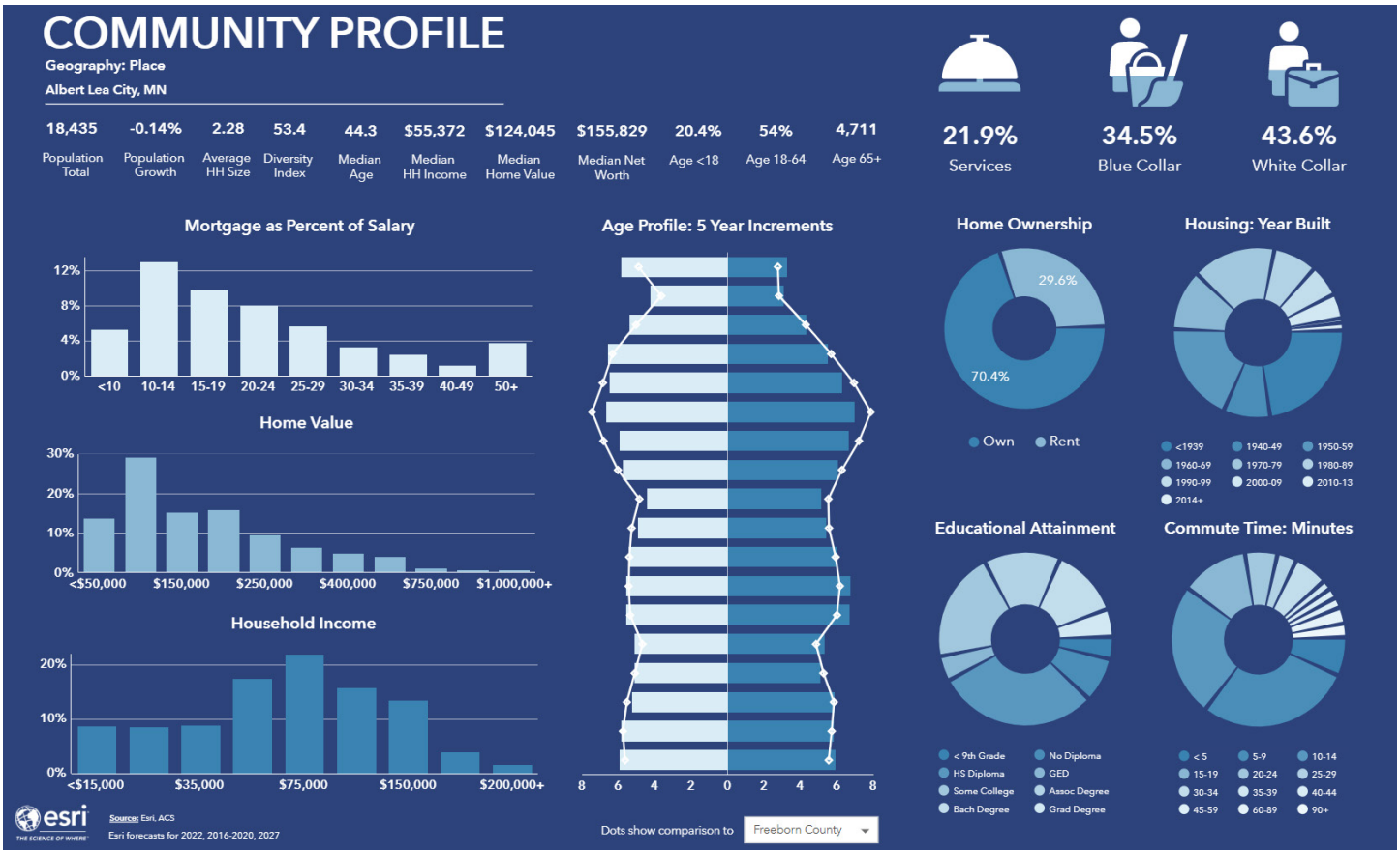
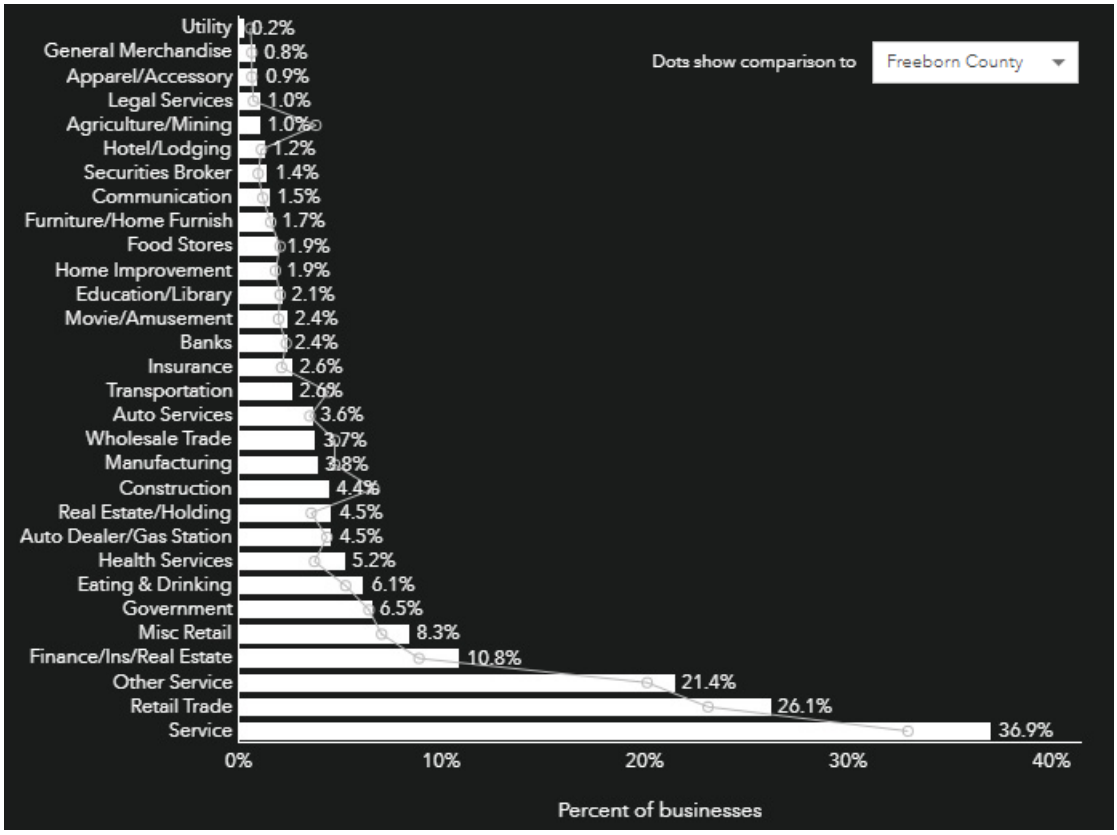


FIGURE 2-4 ALBERT LEA BUSINESS SUMMARY BY SIC (%)



FUTURE LAND USE

FIGURE 2-5 ALBERT LEA FUTURE LAND USE

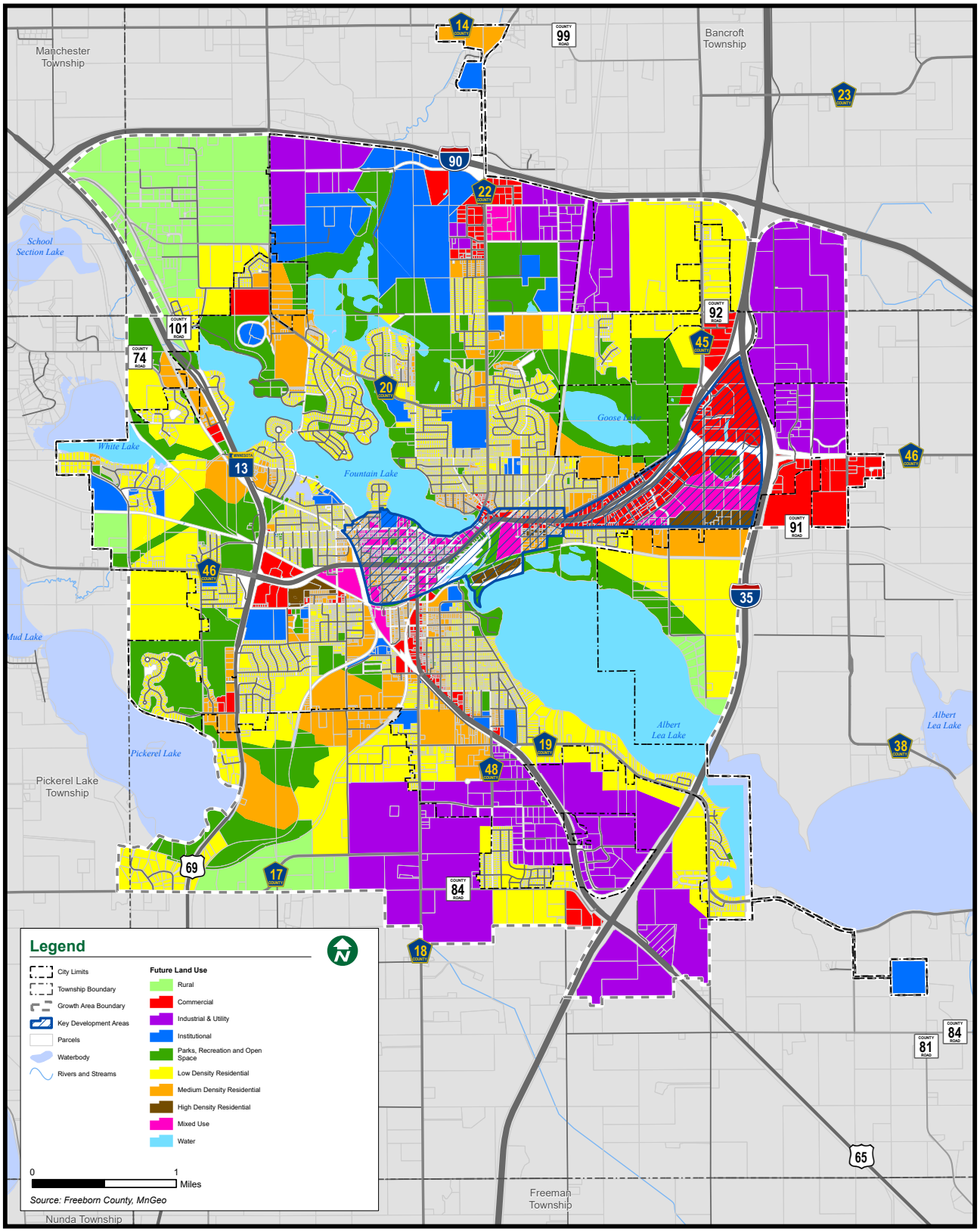


FIGURE 2-6 FUTURE LAND USE ACREAGE

Existing Land Use Category	Acres	Share of City
Commercial	741	5.3%
High Density Residential	77	0.6%
Industrial & Utility	2,442	17.4%
Institutional	786	5.6%
Low Density Residential	3,637	26.0%
Medium Density Residential	1,126	8.0%
Mixed Use	275	2.0%
Parks, Recreation and Open Space	1,866	13.3%
Rural	918	6.6%
Water	2,136	15.3%
TOTAL	14,005	100%

Future land use categories can be described as follows:

Agricultural – More rural in nature with land for agriculture and large-lot single-family homes. Allowable uses include limited agriculture, hobby farms, and large lot single-family homes without public water and sewer service. Single-family homes in this category are allowed at a maximum density of 1 dwelling unit/10 acres.

Low Density Residential – Single-family detached housing units are typical of newer single-family neighborhoods in Albert Lea. Attached single-family housing units are allowed when residential density is < 6 units. Places of worship and small, neighborhood-scale services may be found along major roads and prominent intersections within low-density neighborhoods.

Medium Density Residential – Includes attached housing units, e.g., townhomes and smaller apartments. Residential Densities: 6 to 12 units/acre. Places of worship and small, neighborhood-scale services may be found along major roads and prominent intersections.

High Density Residential – Typically located near commercial and mixed uses, golf courses, schools, and major city routes. This category allows for multi-story and multi-family housing. Residential Densities: >12 units/acre. Places of worship and small, neighborhood-scale services may be found along major roads and prominent intersections.

Mixed Use – Within key intersections, corridors, and nodes of Albert Lea, and at key locations along both Main Street. Scale and building heights are dependent on the surrounding context but range from 1 - 5 stories in height. This category allows for a mix of residential and commercial uses. This category also allows for higher densities of residential uses (>15 units/acre) with commercial uses such as restaurants, offices, services, and retail. Uses should ideally be vertically mixed, but developments that incorporate a variety of uses spread horizontally can be appropriate towards the edges of the city.

Future land use categories can be described as follows:

Commercial – Includes both large-scale, regional-serving and moderate-scale, local-serving commercial uses. Typically applied to areas with higher levels of accessibility and visibility from adjoining roadways. The site and building design of commercial areas should be compatible with surrounding neighborhoods and residential areas.

Industrial – Allows for design, assembly, finishing, packaging, processing, and storing of products or materials. Also includes facilities for administration, research, assembly, storage, warehousing, and distribution of goods, such as electronics firms, data centers, trucking companies, textile mills, and auto assembly plants. Also allowed are surface structures associated with manufacturing operations including loading devices, trucks, access roads, processing facilities, stockpiles, and storage sheds.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space – City parklands, associated facilities, and land located along protected streams and bodies of water. Includes retention and detention basins and other characteristically natural lands. In areas considered un- or under-developed, the 100-year floodplains, floodways, and wetlands shall also be considered green space.

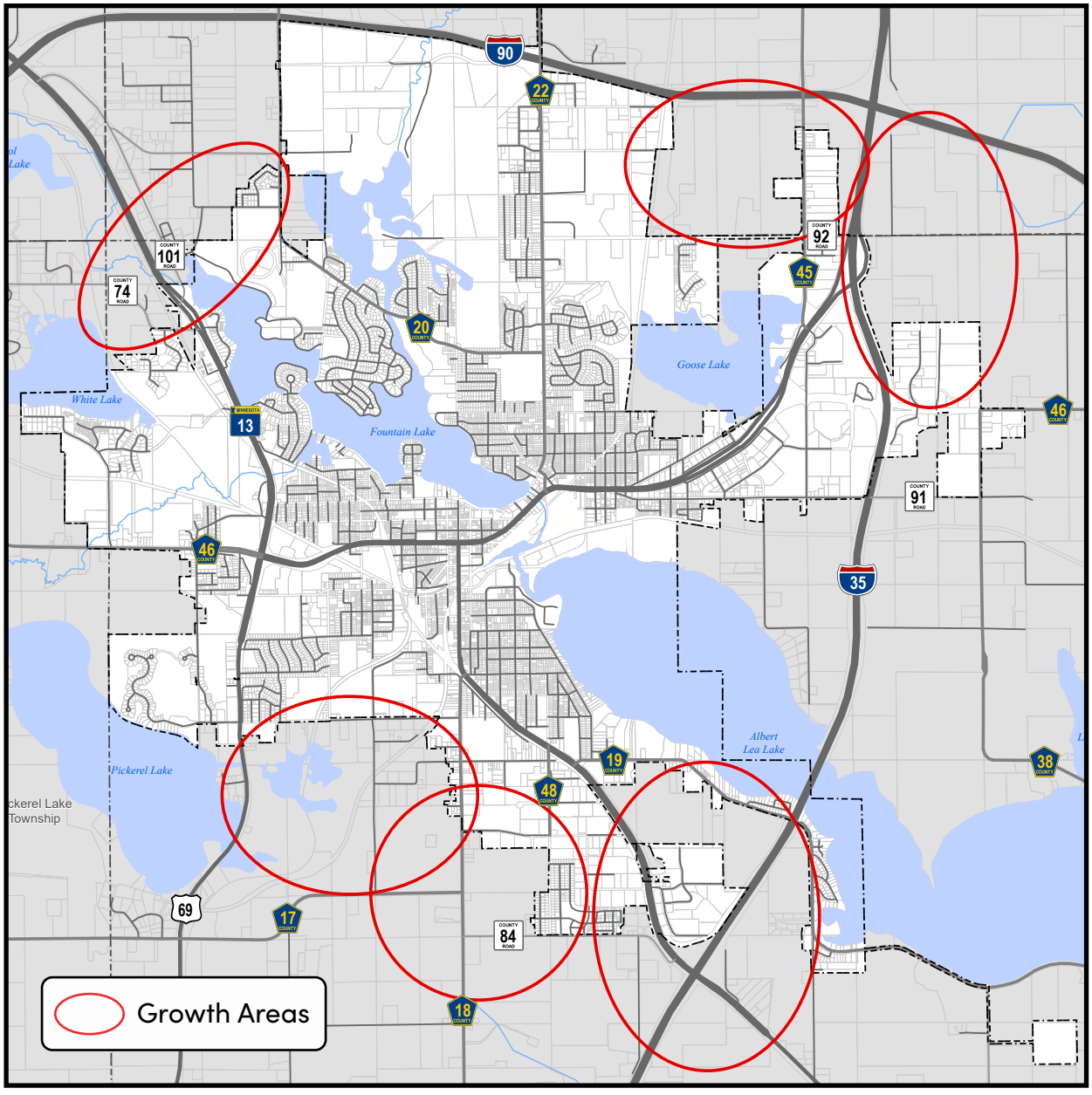
Public and Institutional – Public and semi-public lands including Freeborn County Fairgrounds, city and county government land and facilities, Albert Lea School District land and facilities, and medical hospitals. Includes other uses typically considered under educational, medical, and institutional uses. This use is typically public / semi-public in nature.

GROWTH AREAS

As the City of Albert Lea continues to grow in population, supportive residential, commercial, and industrial centers must be provided. The city has identified several areas for redevelopment and future development. Redevelopment areas were selected based on a combination of the following criteria:

- Guided for higher density residential development or mixed-use development
- Located along a major roadway corridor
- In some cases, the site is currently underutilized, with lower densities of residents and jobs compared to potential development opportunities

It is not anticipated that the City will seek to acquire and/or redevelop all of these sites. Most development will happen via private sector activity, and many of these sites may remain unchanged for the foreseeable future. This exercise just establishes what areas may have the potential to accommodate planned growth.



DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS

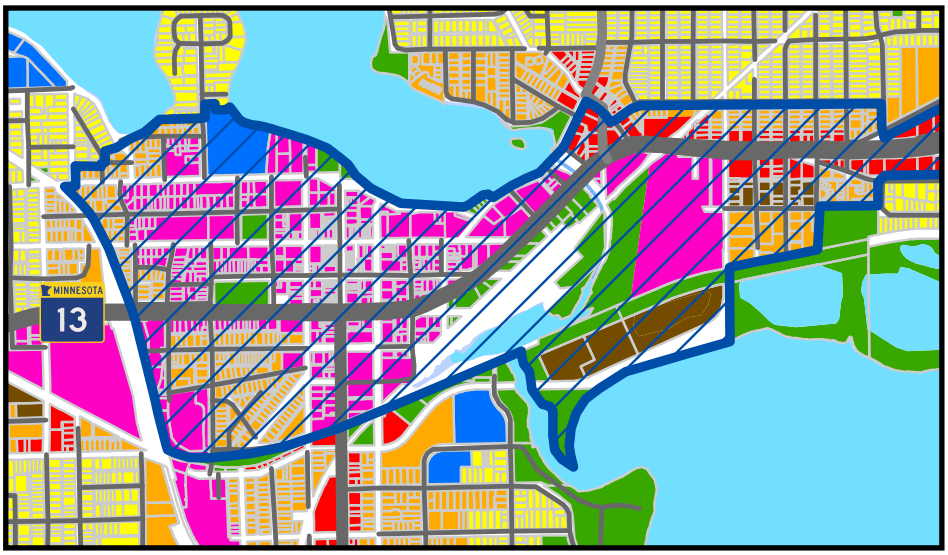
The following Development Districts are areas of the city that require a more detailed approach than one found in a comprehensive plan. Ultimately, a small-area or master planning effort will be needed to make detailed and implementable goals for the two districts: Downtown and Main Street.

Downtown Mixed-Use District

The Plan for Albert Lea's Downtown District is to enhance and preserve the historic character of the area surrounding the intersection of S Broadway Avenue and E Main Street. In addition to this intersection, the surrounding historic neighborhood and mix of uses offer vibrant destinations unique to the City of Albert Lea. The intent of creating this District is to promote and capitalize on opportunities that enhance and improve land use patterns in the District, while the area evolves and develops alongside structures and uses that reinforce the historic charm.

The vitality of the Downtown District is dependent on enough support from nearby households and residents supporting its businesses. Knowing this, the Future Land Use Plan has designated this area as mixed-use to allow for a combination of residential and commercial uses in the district. The plan works to identify areas where increased residential density is compatible with the existing and expected future commercial development, bringing more residents closer to the conveniences and desired destinations of the Downtown District.

The Downtown District historically served as the city's primary area of commerce. During years of growth and expansion, new highway commercial and industrial construction began to occur along Main Street to the east and west of the Downtown District. In an attempt to retain the historic downtown as a destination, the City will work to encourage investment in the Downtown District. This will include updating the zoning code to allow for a more diverse variety of uses, continuing to enforce straight code compliance on building maintenance, and marketing programs designed to encourage maintenance and renovation of historical buildings. Using a variety of tools, Albert Lea plans to retain the Downtown District as a vibrant commercial and residential center far into the future.



Main Street District

The Plan for Albert Lea's Main Street east of Downtown is to connect the corridor with Downtown, integrate with surrounding neighborhoods, support the continued private and public investment in the corridor, and encourage the construction of mixed-use developments. In addition to the above goals, this corridor shall continue to be a major commercial center for the city and region. Due to this distinction and its placement as a major interchange for Interstate 35 and Highway 35, this district will be a gateway, destination, and rest area for those traveling to and around Albert Lea.

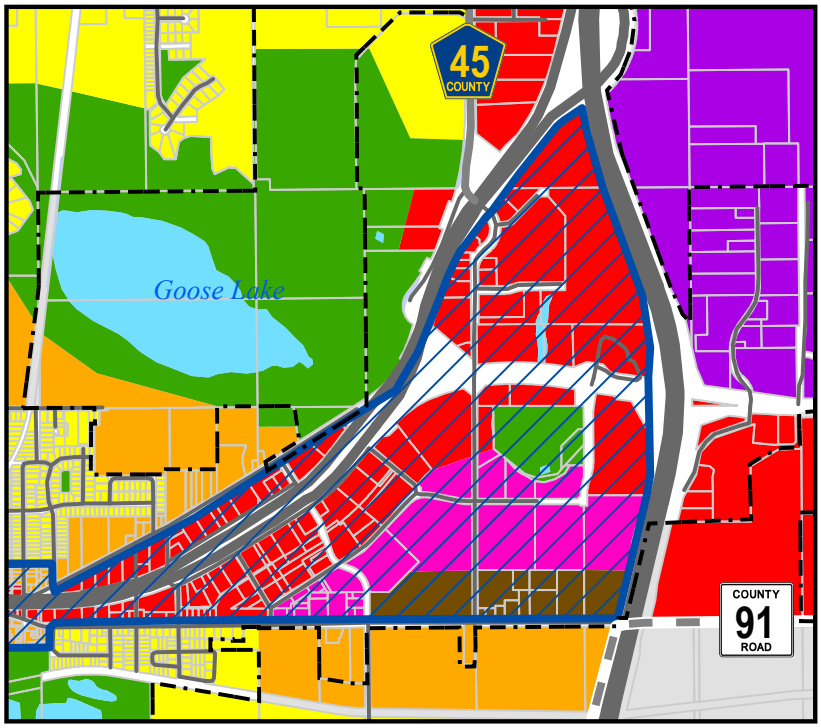
The Main Street District contains property from the bridge crossing the strait near Downtown to Interstate 35. The district also includes nearby neighborhoods and development opportunity sites. The character of this area includes many local and chain retailers, restaurants, and offices. The neighborhoods nearby are modest, largely single-family homes. One end of the district is adjacent to Downtown while the other is anchored by the travel center across the Interstate and the areas between Walmart and Home Depot. Included in the district is the "Blazing Star Site" between the railroad tracks and Main Street across the strait from Downtown.

The "Blazing Star Site" is an opportunity to provide more housing adjacent to Downtown. A mixed-use development here will thrive on traffic along Main Street and take advantage of a location between two major lakes. The ability to walk from the property to Downtown and any number of retail or natural amenities is unmatched compared to other development opportunity sites in Albert Lea.

The opposite end of the district along Interstate 35 and around Walmart and Home Depot is spacious enough for mixed-use retail, office, and residential development. The mixed-use in this area is not intended to be only vertical mixed-use, meaning residential and/or office above retail, as horizontal mixed-use will achieve a similar result of walkability while providing a different set of housing types and affordability from Downtown and adjacent areas. The proximity to the Interstate may attract households wishing to live in Albert Lea while working elsewhere along Interstates 35 or 90 and businesses capitalizing on both the travel center and vehicle counts for Main Street and the Interstate.

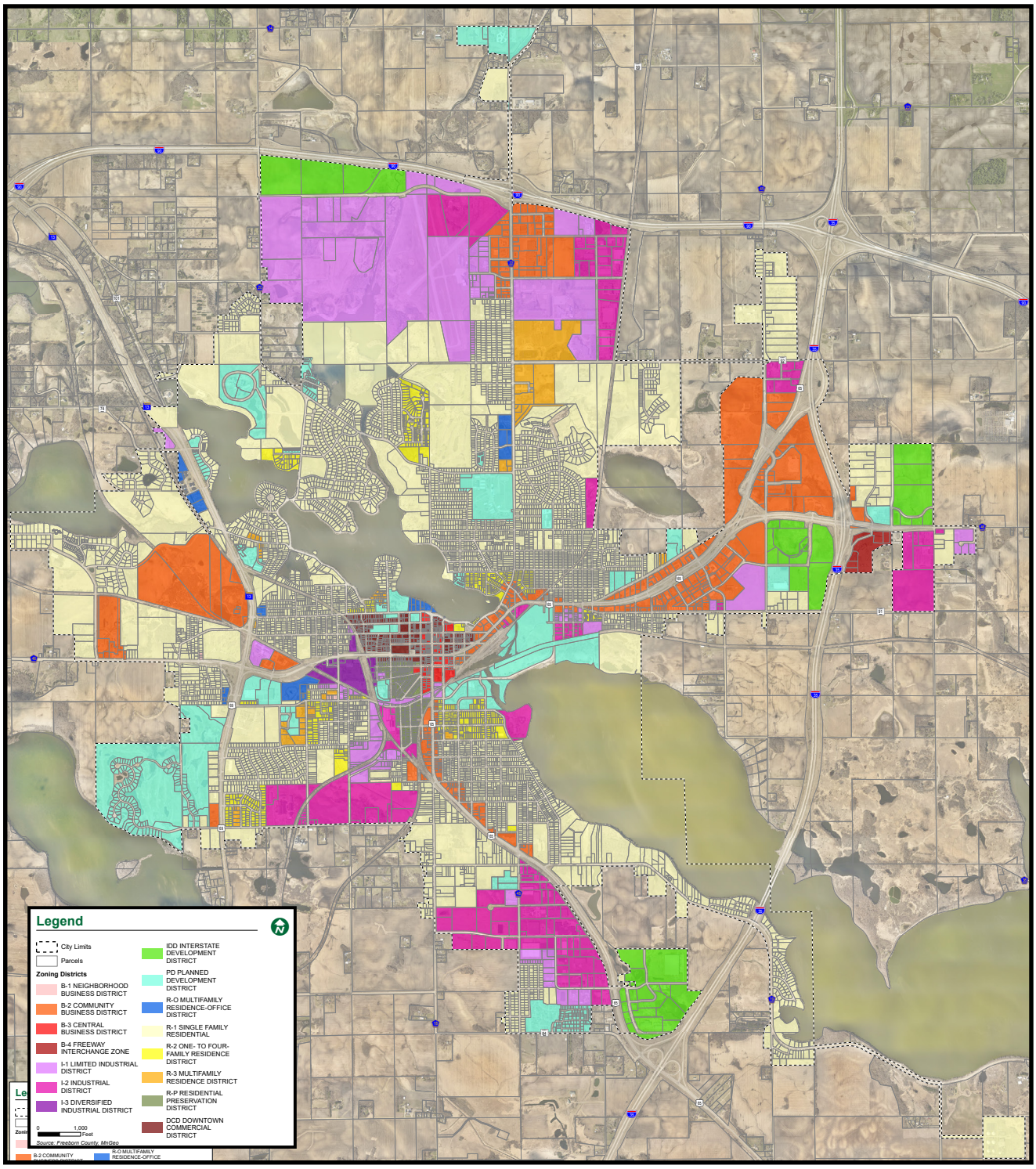
Success in this district will depend on a series of robust and adaptable systems:

- Road and trail systems.
- Wayfinding and signage.
- Utilities and services.
- Access to nature and parkland.
- Access to key retail amenities.
- Range of housing types and affordability.
- Diverse mix of work opportunities.
- Inclusive housing and public spaces.



ZONING

Zoning is a major part of implementing a comprehensive plan. Below you can find the current zoning map for Albert Lea. Changes to the zoning map should follow the goals and policies outlined in this plan, which may form the basis for zoning and subdivision decisions. Where cities run into legal issues is when zoning and subdivision decisions are made without appearing to have a ration basis or are well outside of the city's regulatory authority. A comprehensive plan can help avoid such legal pitfalls. Zoning is further discussed in the Implementation chapter of this plan.



GOALS & ACTIONS

Goal 1: Preserve and Maintain Existing Strengths

Objective 1.1. Help new and long-time residents find or keep their homes.

Action 1.1.1 Encourage the preservation and enhancement of the City's single-family housing stock using city programs that incentivize the upkeep and maintenance of private property.

Action 1.1.2 Encourage Aging in Place by increasing housing choice for seniors living in the community.

Action 1.1.3 Update the City's zoning code to allow for and encourage the adaptive reuse of neglected buildings in all districts, including residential districts.

Objective 1.2 Support natural and planned walkable communities.

Action 1.2.1 Encourage the development of complete neighborhoods where residents have convenient access to healthy food, goods and services, parks, and social offerings by allowing for the development of compatible commercial uses in residential areas.

Action 1.2.2. Support small local businesses, particularly in the areas of the City where new development is designated in the comprehensive plan.

Goal 2: Guide and Encourage New Development

Objective 2.1. Guide development into areas of targeted growth.

Action 2.1.1. Identify locations in the City which could support new and mixed-use development.

Action 2.1.2. Identify locations in the City which could support an industrial expansion area.

Action 2.1.3. Expand and develop the new industrial park by proactively zoning and marketing applicable properties to industrial developers.

Action 2.1.4. Plan for appropriate amenities, high-quality design, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and open space in high-growth areas, particularly in the downtown mixed-use district and around neighborhood centers.

Action 2.1.5. Complete area plans for the Downtown and Main Street Development Districts.

Objective 2.2. Remove barriers to development.

Action 2.2.1. Conduct pre-development work on desired sites to reduce barriers to redevelopment. Activities may include parcel consolidation, market analysis, property and land acquisitions, soil testing and contaminant remediation, and finance and marketing incentive packages.

Action 2.2.2. Increase density allowances in the City's downtown area to encourage higher density, mixed-use development.

Action 2.2.3. Support the diversification of housing types throughout the City, including the development of a tiny home park to support housing affordability.

Objective 2.3. Amend and administer city plans and codes.

Action 2.3.1. Update City zoning code, subdivision ordinance, and Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) to accommodate and facilitate desired new development and land use.

Action 2.3.2. Encourage climate resilient designs incorporating complete streets and environmentally-conscious construction.

Action 2.3.3. Follow through on action items outlined in the City's Climate Action Plan.

Goal 3: Develop Community Identity

Objective 3.1. Welcome and engage new and long-time residents and businesses.

Action 3.1.1. Support community events hosted in public parks and other gathering spaces to help foster a sense of community in Albert Lea.

Action 3.1.2. Collaborate with stakeholders and community groups to identify other ways to develop a sense of community identity in the City.

Action 3.1.3 Identify sites and develop community gathering spaces within the City's neighborhoods that include park amenities and public art.

Action 3.1.4. Encourage creative placemaking throughout the City, particularly in the downtown area.

Objective 3.2. Enhance development through inclusive, healthy, and safe design principles.

Action 3.2.1 Conduct neighborhood-level planning to further identify community character and planning priorities to create more complete, sustainable, and resilient neighborhoods.

Action 3.2.2 Require all subdivisions and other new development to adhere to long-range plans to ensure new development and redevelopment incorporates all the best practices of creating a sense of place and smart growth principles.

Action 3.2.3 Review and update development review procedures and policies to ensure incorporation of descriptions, and associated deliverables, showcasing how proposed open space functions will be fulfilled and how the design achieves each function. City staff will work with the developer to ensure these functions are met.

Action 3.2.4 Enforce codes to maintain the quality, character, viability, value, and livability of all areas of the City and to create, foster, and maintain a rich sense of place.

03 HOUSING

Chapter highlights

- Overview
- Housing Inventory and Analysis
- Opportunities and Challenges
- Goals and Actions

OVERVIEW

A diverse housing stock with access to open space and essential goods and services is vital to a healthy, sustainable, and resilient community. The future growth and success of Albert Lea are dependent on resident access to quality and affordable housing. This section of the comprehensive plan evaluates the City's existing housing stock to identify needs and areas of potential growth.

Albert Lea has a role and responsibility to balance and facilitate the availability of diverse housing for all City residents, in all stages of life. Residential uses currently account for approximately XX% of the City's land area, making it the most abundant land use in Albert Lea. Given the abundance and importance of this use, it is necessary to plan for the future by preserving affordability and expanding housing choice.

Summary of Goals

Few elements of a city have a more direct role in quality of life than housing. The housing goals introduced below strive to increase quality of life in Albert Lea by expanding housing choice and affordability, preserving existing housing stock, and creating vibrant neighborhoods.

HOUSING INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Type of Housing and Household Size

As residents age and transition from one life stage to another, the City aims to provide enough diversity in housing types to allow residents to continue residing with the City—or "age in place". Diversity in housing stock both provides residents with more options to meet their needs as time passes and increases market resiliency for the overall community. Too many homes of one type can result in an imbalanced housing market or create a barrier for residents attempting to relocate within the community as their needs change.

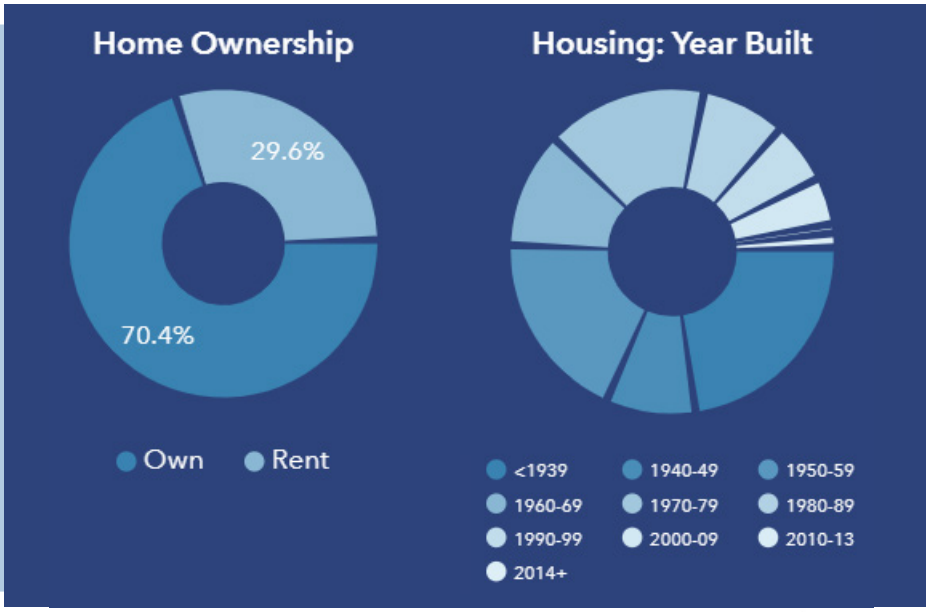
Albert Lea has approximately 8,672 units of housing, 75% of which are single-family detached or single-family attached housing. Table 1 below displays the number and share of housing types in Albert Lea.

Type of Housing	Number of Units	Percentage
Single-family, detached	5,983	69.0%
Single-family, attached	494	5.7%
Duplex	364	4.2%
Three or four units	277	3.2%
Five to nine units	268	3.1%
10 to 19 units	304	3.5%
20 or more units	806	9.3%
Mobile home	173	2.0%

Source: 2020 Census

Aging Housing Stock and Maintenance of Housing

Albert Lea's housing stock is aging. Approximately 1 in 4 housing units (2,058 units) were built before 1940, and over half the housing units were built before 1960. Additionally, 25% of units were built from 1970 to 1980. It is estimated that 80% of the housing units in the City are 40 years or older. For comparison, only 55% of housing in all of Minnesota was built before 1980. While many of the homes built in this period are in good condition, these housing units are at higher risk of becoming substandard or functionally obsolete due to higher and more frequent maintenance costs.



Housing Value and Affordability

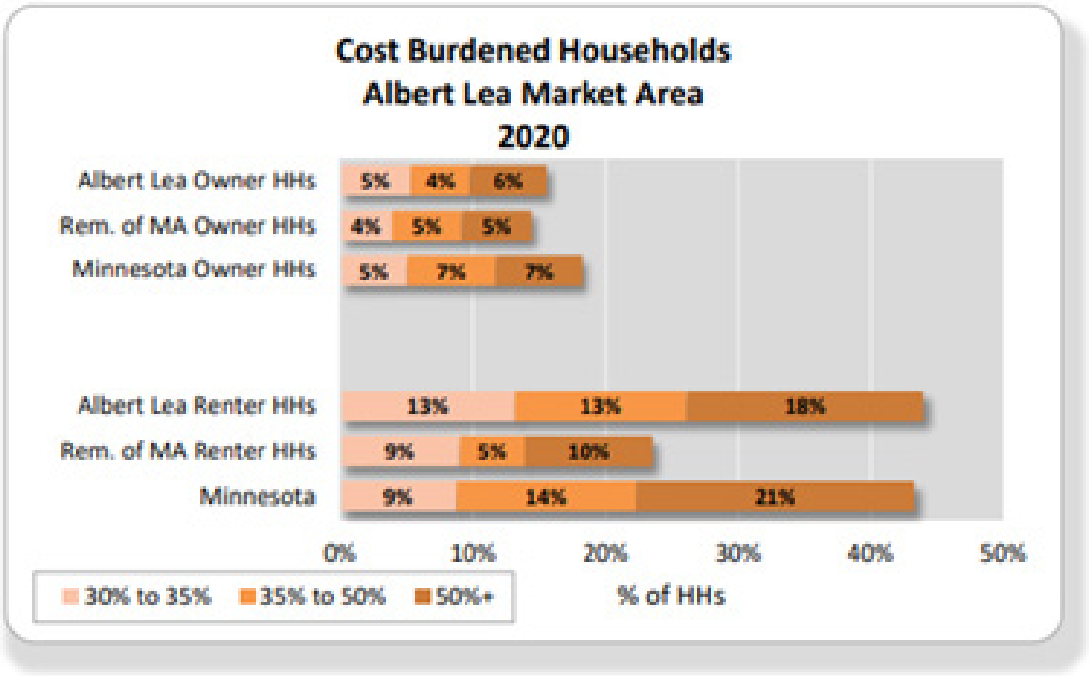
Affordable housing can be defined in a variety of ways. In this Chapter, Albert Lea defines housing as affordable when individuals or households pay no more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs. (Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development or "HUD"). In 2020, the median household income is estimated to be $44,210 in Albert Lea, 44% lower than $63,816 in the Southeast Development Region and 16% lower than Freeborn County ($51,213) overall. With a median income lower than partner jurisdictions, it is more likely that Albert Lea residents lack access to affordable housing and have less disposable income to pay for other goods and services such as clothing, food, child care, transportation, and medical expenses. In addition, those residents with lower incomes have significantly fewer housing choices to meet their family needs.

It is estimated that 44% of all renter households (1,051 households) pay more than 30% of their income on housing in Albert Lea, much higher than the surrounding area (24%) and slightly higher than the state of Minnesota (43%). This share decreases as proportionally with income. An estimated 70% of renters with incomes below $35,000 are cost burdened while only 31% of owners with incomes below $50,000 are cost burdened in Albert Lea. Renter household percentages are on par with Minnesota, as 73% of renter households with incomes below $35,000 are cost burdened and substantially higher with 50% of owner households with incomes below $50,000 identifies as cost-burdened.

TABLE HA-3
HOUSING COST BURDEN
ALBERT LEA MARKET AREA
2020

	Albert Lea		Rem. of MA		Freeborn County (MA)		Minnesota
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	Pct.
Owner Households							
All Owner HHs	5,346		4,660		10,006		
Cost Burden 30.0% or greater	831	15.5%	674	14.5%	1,506	15.0%	18.2%
Cost Burden 30.0% to 34.9%	284	5.3%	182	3.9%	466	4.7%	5.0%
Cost Burden 35.0% to 49.9%	240	4.5%	245	5.3%	485	4.8%	6.7%
Cost Burden 50.0% or more	307	5.7%	247	5.3%	555	5.5%	6.6%
Owner HHs w/ incomes <$50,000	2,340		1,476		3,816		
Cost Burden 30.0% or greater	725	31.0%	516	35.0%	1,241	32.5%	49.7%
Renter Households							
All Renter HHs	2,390		654		3,044		
Cost Burden 30.0% or greater	1,051	44.0%	154	23.6%	1,205	39.6%	43.3%
Cost Burden 30.0% to 34.9%	314	13.2%	59	9.0%	373	12.3%	8.8%
Cost Burden 35.0% to 49.9%	310	13.0%	32	4.9%	342	11.2%	13.5%
Cost Burden 50.0% or more	426	17.8%	63	9.7%	490	16.1%	21.0%
Renter HHs w/ incomes <$35,000	1,262		273		1,535		
Cost Burden 30.0% or greater	883	70.0%	151	55.5%	1,034	67.4%	73.8%
2020 Median Contract Rent	$573		$555		$546		$929

Sources: American Community Survey, 2015-2019 estimates; Maxfield Research & Consulting, LLC



Rental Housing

The majority of rental housing in Albert Lea is considered Naturally-Occurring Affordable Housing. An estimated 73% of rental units in Albert Lea have median monthly contract rents ranging from $250 to $749. Only 9% of rental units have rents of more than $1,000. This translates to most existing market rate rental units being affordable at 40% to 50% area median income.

A strong economy and job growth in Albert Lea and the surrounding area will likely generate rental housing demand over the next several years. Albert Lea has a very low rental housing vacancy rate (1.9%) signifying market demand for rental housing. The equilibrium vacancy rate for rental housing is considered 5%, which allows for normal turnover and an adequate supply of alternatives for prospective renters. The vacancy rates in Albert Lea are well below 5% suggesting a strong need for various rental product types.

The development of new general occupancy rental housing would benefit residents of Albert Lea and the community by increasing the variety of housing and providing housing opportunities for a market that currently has limited options available. Additional housing will be a boon to the economy in the area by producing additional tax dollars and support for local businesses. It will also assist in filling vacant employment positions and potentially luring other businesses to the Market Area that are drawn by a strong workforce.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Expanding Housing Choice

To expand housing choice and preserve affordability, Albert Lea will encourage the development of medium- to high-density residential housing in certain areas of the city. While approximately 75% of all Albert Lea's current housing is single-family, leveraging the City's general affordability towards new two-family and multi-family housing could help support new planned growth.

There is evidence of high demand for rental housing in Albert Lea that currently outweighs the supply of rental units. A rental townhome development could attract family households as well as empty-nesters and shallow-subsidy rental housing will draw from a wide variety of population segments, including low-wage workers, single-parent households, and low-income families.

Maintaining Affordability

Demand for affordable housing of all types is growing in Albert Lea. Like many communities in Minnesota, Albert Lea is anticipated to continue needing housing at all densities and below a price point of $300k. This can be achieved through upzoning around existing commercial nodes, planning for smaller lot sizes in new single-family residential developments, and enacting policies that preserve existing affordable housing in the city.

Aging Housing Stock

Albert Lea has a substantial inventory of aging residential building stock. This means there will be continued needs for maintenance, reinvestment, renovation, and (as appropriate) replacement of homes throughout the community. Maintaining the existing housing stock through maintenance and renovation will be necessary to keep Albert Lea's quality of life high while keeping the cost of living low.

Mixed Use Development

The City is aware that much of our younger and older demographic values higher-density housing and proximity to urban services, amenities, and entertainment. To serve this demographic, Albert Lea is planning to designate the downtown area surrounding the intersection of S Broadway Avenue and E Main Street as Mixed-Use. This will be especially important as the largest age cohort in Albert Lea—residents ages 55 to 64—ages into retirement.

Albert Lea currently lacks a zoning designation for mixed-use development at medium- to high-residential densities. Greater understanding and public marketing will be needed to gather support for the required levels of housing density. The City will also need to identify potential locations for mixed-use development and study the housing types that will be viable in the community.

Sustainable Housing

In the Climate Action Plan for Albert Lea, the plan suggests a multitude of policies and tools for climate resiliency. Many of the initiatives proposed in the plan include efforts to improve efficiency for homes and reduce the number of vehicle trips. Suggestions include switching to all-electric heating and cooling, green energy (solar, wind, and geothermal), and complete neighborhoods. More ideas can be found in Albert Lea's Climate Action Plan.

GOALS & ACTIONS

Goal 1: Expand Housing Choice and Affordability

Action 1.1. Identify, prepare, and advertise locations that could support new residential development, particularly multi-family.

Action 1.2. Work with developers to support the construction of medium- to high-density housing in appropriate locations such as in the downtown area and around existing commercial areas.

Action 1.3. Review and update existing, housing regulations, land use policies, and codes to allow for and promote a greater diversity of housing typologies in addition to ensuring the enablement of diverse development, redevelopment, mixed-use development, and infill.

Action 1.4. Revise City Zoning Code, Subdivision Ordinance, and Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) to accommodate and facilitate desired new residential development typologies and supportive land use designations.

Action 1.5. Identify and package economic incentives that could be leveraged to encourage housing at accessible price points viable.

Goal 2: Preserve and Enhance Existing Housing Stock

Action 2.1. Develop and support existing programs that incentivize the maintenance and restoration of aging housing stock.

Action 2.2. Develop and advertise programs to maintain the affordability of existing housing.

Action 2.3. Continue to enforce existing standards for housing and yard maintenance through building codes and other city regulations.

Goal 3: Create Vibrant and Well-Connected Neighborhoods

Action 3.1. Encourage the construction of parks and open spaces in each new residential development within the City.

Action 3.2. Encourage neighborhood groups to organize community events to support neighborhood livability and a sense of community.

Action 3.3. Encourage the use of university design principles in new housing developments to ensure accessibility and barrier-free housing types.

Action 3.4. Protect residential areas from the encroachment of incompatible uses and promote the removal of existing incompatible uses.

Action 3.5. Integrate housing with safe and convenient access to key destinations such as employment nodes, schools, parks and green space, and commercial services.

Action 3.6. Encourage including sustainable and climate resilient design within new and existing development.

04

PUBLIC UTILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND SERVICES

Chapter highlights

- Overview
- Public Utilities
- Public Facilities
- Public Schools
- Goals & Objectives

OVERVIEW

Albert Lea can retain effective public utilities, infrastructure, and services with specific goals for maintenance and development. The public utility system is vital for adequately serving residents and sustaining a high quality of life for the community. Albert Lea's public utilities consist of the water system, wastewater system, stormwater system, public facilities, and public schools. Guidance for public utilities, infrastructure, and services is detailed in the goals and supported by relevant objectives.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

Future land use patterns and rates of development will affect the demand on infrastructure for Albert Lea's utilities. As the population, industry, and commercial services develop and increase, it is important to ensure that demand for these services does not exceed the supply and that the expansion of infrastructure is sufficiently addressed to accommodate future needs. This Comprehensive Plan requires thoughtful consideration of the utility infrastructure within the city. This includes water supply, wastewater treatment, and surface water management.

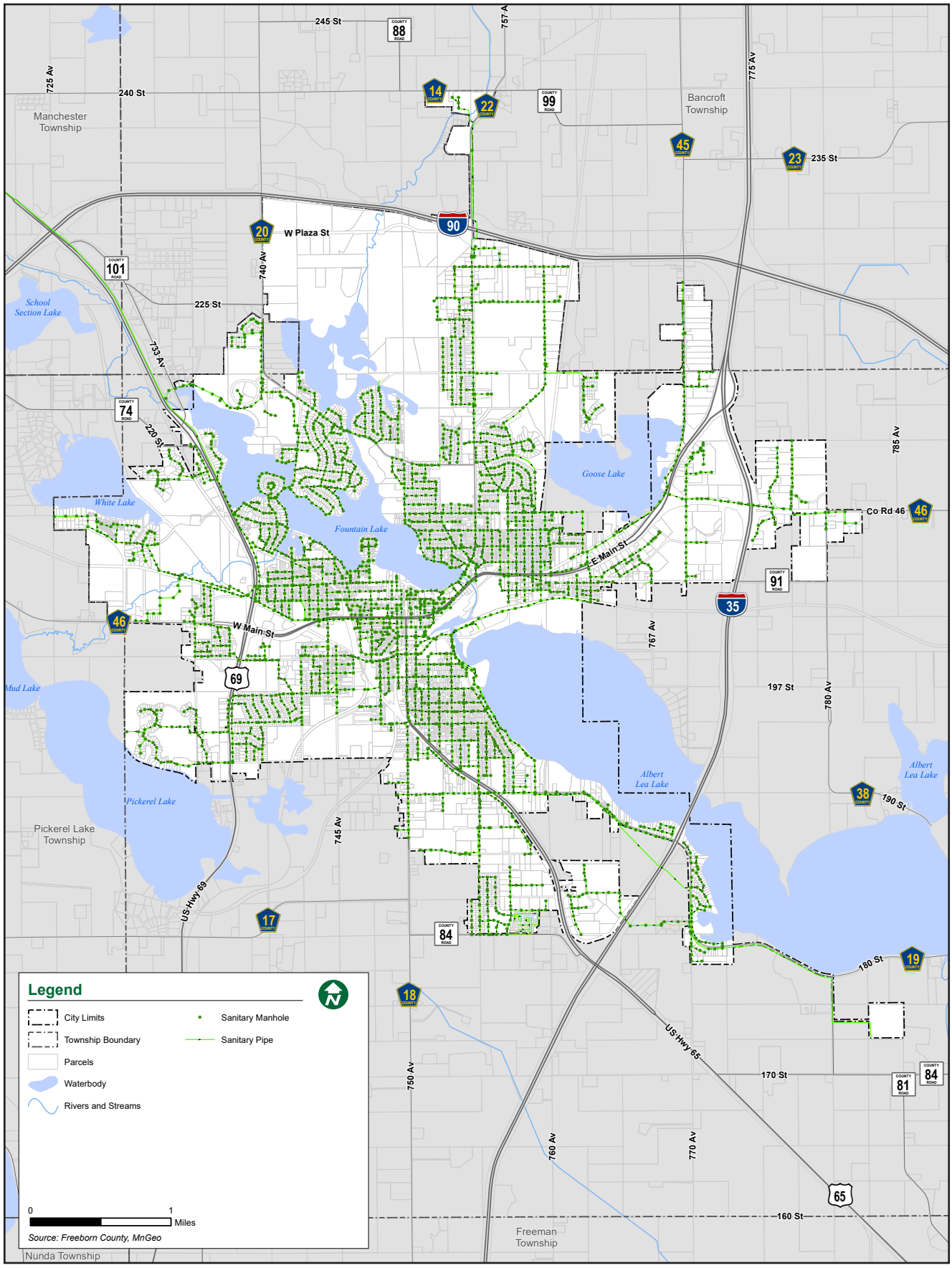
Water System

The current water treatment system consists of three water treatment facilities (WTF) and four 300-foot-deep wells. One well is located at each of the facilities that are referred to as the North, South, and West facility. The fourth well does not have a corresponding filtration treatment facility and only undergoes chlorination and fluoridation. The North and West WTFs are of similar design with capacities of 1,500-gpm. Their treatment process train includes aeration followed by filtration and chlorination. Both plants currently utilize four 16' x 12' gravity sand filters containing 24-inches of sand media. The 1,400-gpm capacity South WTF has the same process train as the North and West, but instead of gravity filters utilizes pressure filters. The South WTF's pressure filtration system is comprised of two pressure filters composed of 12-inches of anthracite on top of 18-inches of sand. All three plants currently utilize chlorine gas and disinfect with chloramines. The municipally owned water distribution system provides service and fire protection to all residents and businesses in the city. The water distribution system consists of over 133 miles of watermain, 1,230 hydrants, and 7,300 water meters. System upgrades are typically completed along with street projects to replace the existing watermain and hydrants with new PVC pipes, fittings, and hydrants. The water distribution system has five water towers that are referred to as Central, East, West, South, and North and have a combined water storage capacity of 2,400,000 gallons.

Wastewater

The wastewater collection system and wastewater treatment facility are critical elements in the City's future development. Wastewater planning evaluates wastewater treatment needs to ensure safe and sanitary treatment standards along with enhanced protection of surface waters, and groundwater aquifers. This municipally owned sanitary sewer system provides service to all residents and businesses in the city. The sanitary sewer system consists of over 127 miles of sanitary sewer, 2,440 sanitary manholes, and 23 lift stations. System upgrades are typically completed along with street projects to replace the clay pipe and block-built manholes with PVC pipe and precast concrete manholes. The wastewater is routed to the main lift station located near Academy Park. The wastewater is screened at this location to remove trash and debris and then pumped approximately 2 miles to the Wastewater Treatment Facility located south of Albert Lea Lake. The wastewater treatment facility was originally constructed in 1981 and has had numerous minor improvements over the last 40+ years. The facility treats an average of 3.8 million gallons per day and discharges treated effluent to the Shell Rock River. The facility has new MPCA permit limits to meet and is also challenged with aging infrastructure requiring significant improvements over the next few years. These improvements totaling $70-$80M are described in the Wastewater Facility Plan dated February 2022 and the subsequent amendments.

FIGURE 4-1 ALBERT LEA SANITARY SYSTEM

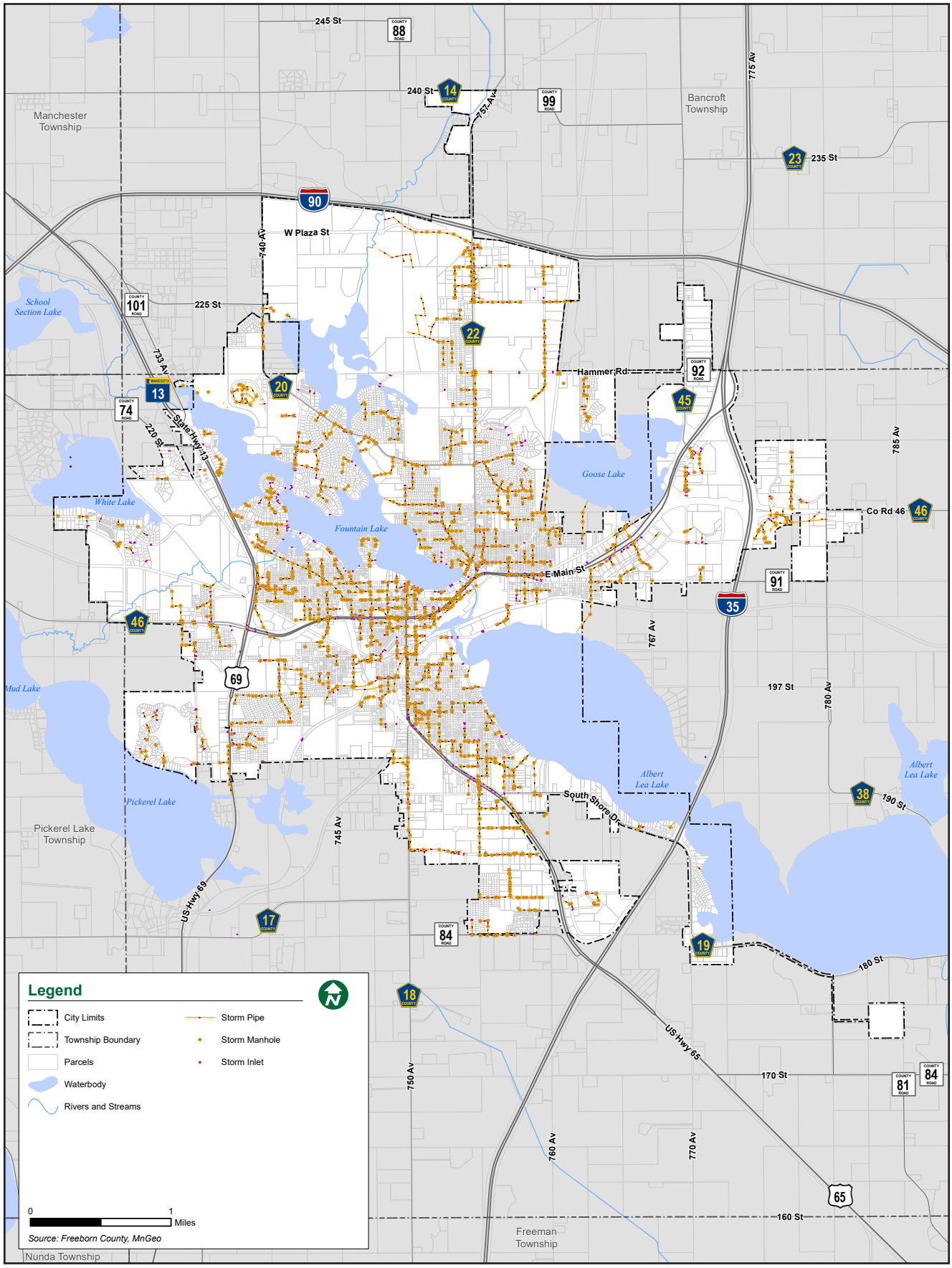


Surface Water

Stormwater systems operate to convey water from developed areas of the City into natural drainage courses, via a network of pipes and structures. The storm sewer system consists of over 57 miles of storm sewer, 1,916 storm sewer inlets, and 4 storm sewer pumping stations. While the system protects land from flooding during storm events, runoff and discharge from developed and agricultural areas can be a contributor to water quality degradation in lakes, rivers, and natural streams.

The MPCA requires that development treat stormwater runoff prior to discharge as part of the National Urban Runoff Program. Every 5 years, Albert Lea must obtain an NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) /SWPPP (Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan) permit to comply with agency regulations.

FIGURE 4-1 ALBERT LEA SANITARY SYSTEM



PUBLIC FACILITIES

The following section outlines the primary goals for public buildings followed by a series of objectives and policies intended to influence future development efforts that align with the community visions in this plan. This section also includes an inventory of public schools.

In early 2015, Albert Lea completed a Facilities Master Plan which assessed public facilities and buildings across Albert Lea. The plan addressed the Municipal Airport, Fire Station, City Arena, Public Works, the Freeborn County Criminal Justice Center, the Bathhouse at the Aquatic Center, City Hall, and. Details on existing buildings included compliance with code, space needs, optimization of facility resources, and a long-term implementation plan.

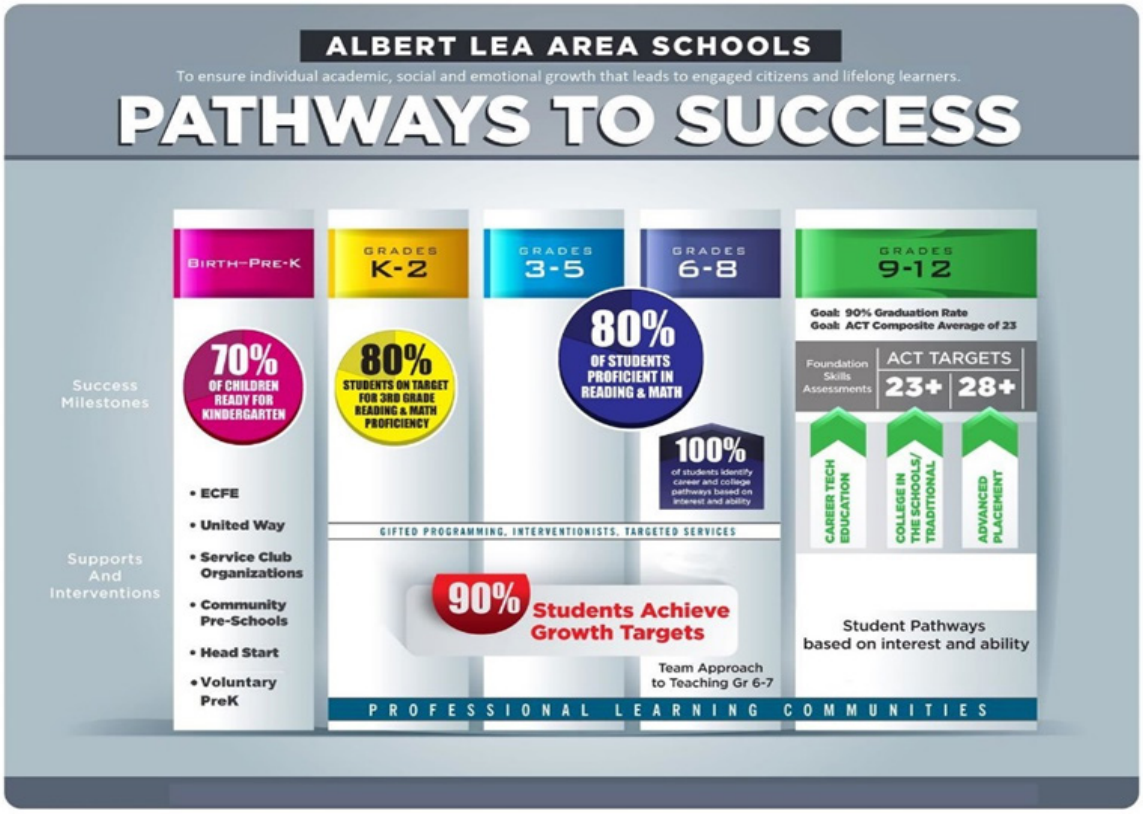
The plan also included proposals for new facilities like an Edgewater Bay Pavilion, a new Fire and Police Station, a new Public Works facility, and a Blazing Star Center for a new City Hall and Library.

ALBERT LEA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The following section outlines the primary goals the city will use in conjunction with the school system. Each goal will utilize objectives and policies to guide collaboration with the School Board and Superintendent. This section is intended to combine the plan's vision with the School District's for pursuing mutually beneficial projects and fostering an environment for learning and civic engagement.

The Mission of Albert Lea School District is: to ensure individual academic, social, and emotional growth that leads to engaged citizens and lifelong learners. In conjunction with the City's Mission statement, this plan seeks to: deliver exceptional services that enhance the quality of life for current and future generations. Additionally, the city and comprehensive plan share a vision statement: The City will create a community that we are proud to call home and others can't wait to visit!

This plan seeks to be in line with both the city and the school district. The school district has a clear graphic depicting "Pathways to Success" with school grade ranges, success milestones, and support programs and organizations.



The goals in this comprehensive plan seek to set up an environment that will allow the school district to carry out its mission of connecting students with professional learning communities and providing pathways for success. Partnering with the school district and Riverland Community College to attract and establish a "tech academy" will achieve the goals set out for grades 9-12. Students will have the ability to get a career in a tech-related field or go to college. Riverland Community College can provide college-level and advanced placement teaching support.

GOALS & ACTIONS

Goal 1: Expand existing utility system infrastructure to meet the demands generated by continued development.

Objective 1.1. Expand utility systems into future growth areas.

Action 1.1.1 Implement the expansion of the stormwater collection, treatment, and outfall system as areas outside the limits of the existing stormwater collection system are developed, with a focus on regional stormwater ponds, where possible.

Action 1.1.2 The stormwater collection, treatment, and outfall system within the future growth areas will be based on the type, location, configuration, and sequence of the future development. The sizes and locations of the final storm sewer and stormwater treatment facilities should be based on detailed engineering studies as more information regarding future development becomes available.

Action 1.1.3 Implement the expansion of the trunk sanitary sewer system as areas outside the limits of the sanitary sewer collection system are developed. Final trunk sanitary sewer sizes, locations, and depths should be based on detailed engineering studies as more information regarding future development becomes available.

Action 1.1.4 Construct new lift stations as areas outside the limits of the existing lift station service areas are developed. Final lift station sizes, locations, and depths should be based on detailed engineering studies as more information regarding future development becomes available.

Action 1.1.5 Implement the expansion of the trunk watermain system as areas outside the limits of the existing water distribution system are developed.

Action 1.1.6 The trunk watermain system within the future growth areas will be based on the type, location, configuration, and sequence of the future development. Final trunk watermain sizes and locations should be based on detailed engineering studies as more information regarding future development becomes available.

Action 1.1.7 Develop a financing strategy for funding the expansion of utility systems into each growth area.

Objective 1.2 Expand the water supply, water treatment, and water storage systems as required to accommodate future development demands.

Action 1.2.1 As future development occurs, detailed engineering studies should be performed to evaluate the capacity of the existing water supply, water treatment, and water storage systems considering new water demands and determining required improvements.

Action 1.2.2 Develop a financing strategy for funding the expansion of the trunk watermain system

Goal 2: Monitor, evaluate and improve the condition of each utility system's infrastructure.

Objective 2.1. Replace aging system infrastructure.

Action 2.1.1 Prepare a study to document the condition of deficient sanitary sewers and collection system lift stations based on age, materials, and deficiencies identified in sewer televising reports.

Action 2.1.2 Utilize the information from the sanitary sewer condition study, in conjunction with the condition information for other infrastructure elements, to develop, expand and prioritize projects to be included in the capital improvements.

Action 2.1.3 Prepare a study to document the condition of deficient storm sewers and ponds based on age, materials, and other known deficiencies.

Action 2.1.4 Utilize the information from the storm sewer condition study, in conjunction with the condition information for other infrastructure elements, to develop, expand and prioritize projects to be included in the capital improvements.

Action 2.1.5 Develop a financing strategy for funding the replacement of the stormwater collection, treatment and outfall system.

Action 2.1.6 Prepare a study to document the condition of deficient water mains based on age, materials, history of breaks, leaks, freezing, and other deficiencies.

Action 2.1.7 Utilize the information from the watermain condition study, in conjunction with the condition information for other infrastructure elements, to develop, expand and prioritize projects to be included in the capital improvements.

Objective 2.2 Monitor the condition of the existing system infrastructure and replace as required.

Action 2.2.1 Monitor changes in drinking water quality standards and identify possible changes to the treatment processes currently utilized by the City's three water treatment facilities.

Action 2.2.2 Monitor the condition of the existing wells and related equipment and continue with regular inspections, maintenance, and miscellaneous equipment replacement as required.

Action 2.2.3 Monitor the condition of the water storage facilities and related equipment and continue with regular inspections, maintenance, and miscellaneous equipment replacement as required.

Action 2.2.4 Monitor changes in wastewater quality standards and identify possible changes to the treatment processes currently utilized by the City's wastewater treatment facility.

Action 2.2.5 Monitor the condition of the City's main lift station near Academy Park and continue with regular inspections, maintenance, and miscellaneous equipment replacement as required.

Objective 2.2 Incorporate BMPs to Meet TMDL Limits.

Action 2.3.1 Implement the recommended retrofitting projects that will help it meet the TMDL requirements, targeting the current phosphorus TMDL and the future turbidity removal needs.

Action 2.3.2 Develop a BMP strategy for undeveloped areas that are based on existing area soils and target the current phosphorus TMDL and future turbidity removal needs.

Goal 3: Maintain and operate public facilities at the highest possible level of service.

Objective 3.1. Continue to assess the condition and needs of facilities.

Action 3.1.1 Use the 2015 Facilities Master Plan as a guideline for future facility investments.

Action 3.1.2 Conduct an updated facility assessment within the next 10 years.

Action 3.1.2 Adopt a plan for staffing and facility needs for the next 10 years.

Action 3.1.3 Develop an implementation plan for updating existing facilities and constructing new ones.

Objective 3.2 Improve the efficiency and climate resilience of existing and new facilities.

Action 3.2.1 Follow through on proposed action items in the City's Climate Action Plan.

Action 3.2.2 Seek out opportunities to invest in climate resilience through city assets.

Goal 4: Construct and maintain a safe environment for children and district staff.

Objective 4.1. Ensure routes to schools are safe for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists.

Action 4.1.1 Seek out information on and assess the need for a Safe Routes to School plan.

Action 4.1.2 Utilize the City's ADA Transition Plan to help prioritize critical upgrade and reconstruction projects near schools.

Action 4.1.3 Seek to build a complete and connected trail and path system from neighborhoods to all schools in Albert Lea.

Goal 5: Foster an environment for lifelong learning, growth, and cooperation.

Objective 5.1. Partner on educational and workforce development opportunities.

Action 5.1.1 Help establish a partnership between the city, school district, and Riverland Community College.

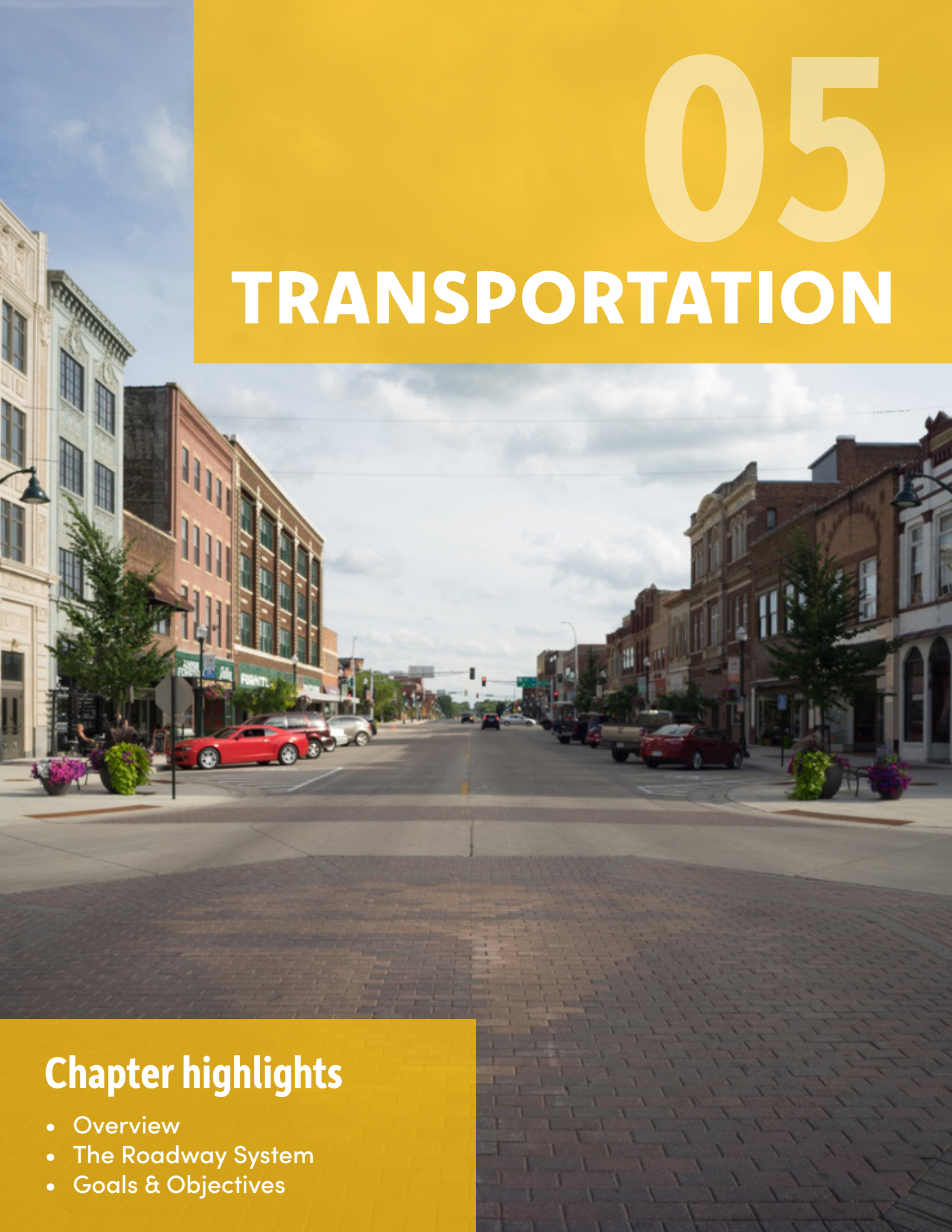
Action 5.1.2 Use the partnership to seek and attract a coding academy (see the Economic Development chapter).

Action 5.1.3 Provide regular and transparent opportunities for the school district, district staff, students, and families to engage with public meetings and city processes to build civic engagement.

Action 5.1.4 Commit to a system of notification between various governmental, public, and semi-public organizations when development, projects, and other events happen.

05

TRANSPORTATION



Chapter highlights

- Overview
- The Roadway System
- Goals & Objectives

OVERVIEW

The Transportation chapter of the Comprehensive Plan will show existing conditions and guide the City of Albert Lea and existing and future landowners in preparing for future growth and development. This section provides the framework for making decisions about existing and future transportation infrastructure. It will also help establish policies, standards, and guidelines to aid in major transportation projects and policy decisions.

Transportation is a critical element within the Comprehensive Plan. Transportation by various modes is needed for the movement of goods and people, which keeps a community vibrant and economically sound. However, Transportation can also be a source of concern, specifically in the form of traffic safety, volume, dust, noise, and access.

THE ROADWAY SYSTEM

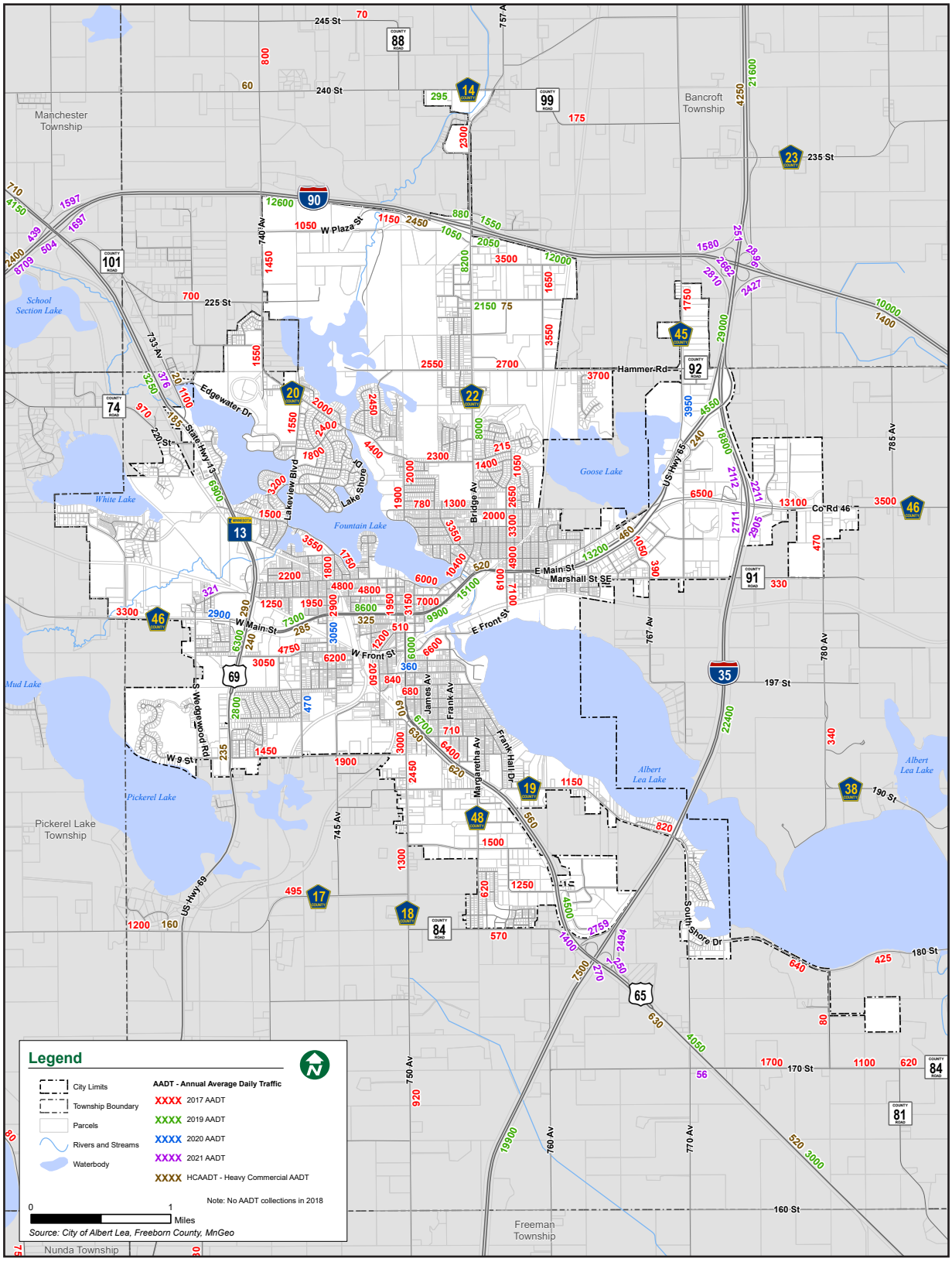
Section Overview

- Current Traffic Volumes
- Roadway Jurisdiction
- Functional Classification
- Safety
- Transit Service
- Non-Motorized Transportation
- Aviation

Current Traffic Volumes

One of the most basic ways to assess a roadway system is to look at the traffic volumes. Figure 5-1 shows the existing traffic volumes on roads in Albert Lea.

FIGURE 5-1 CURRENT TRAFFIC VOLUMES



Current Traffic Volumes

Main Street acts as a major corridor for vehicle trips in Albert Lea. Highway 65 and Highway 69 carry the majority of heavy commercial AADT. Consistent traffic nodes include the exits along Interstate 35 and highway intersections with Main Street. AADT tends to decrease from Main Street moving north and south; the outermost sections of Albert Lea tend to have fewer trips than centrally located sections. Commercial and industrial nodes typically have higher AADTs than the residential areas of the City.

Albert Lea's AADT Map emphasizes the corridors that are used most often by travelers. Identifying the scale of traffic flow can aid Albert Lea in assessing road capacity and road longevity while planning for new roads or road maintenance in the future.

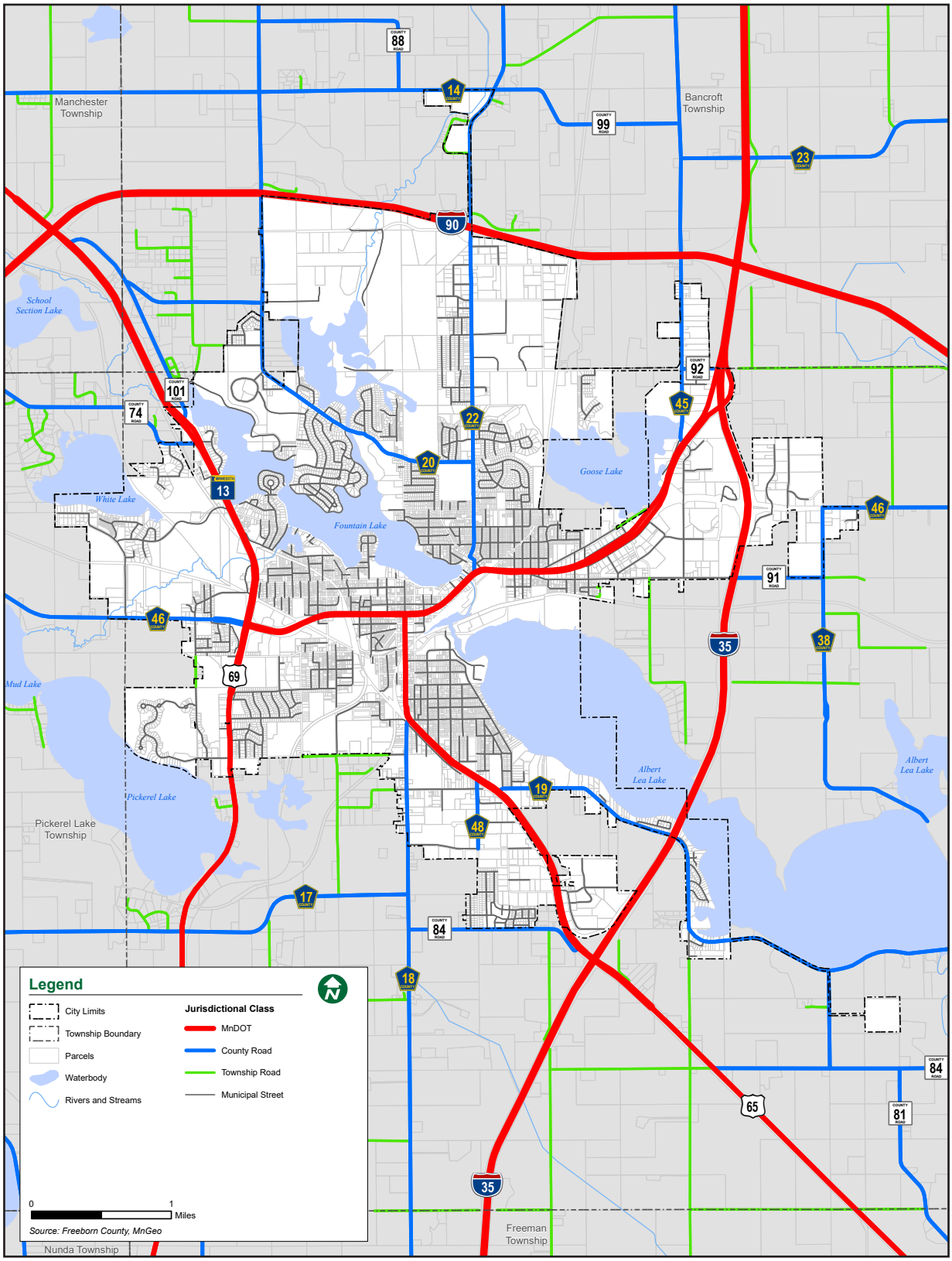
Roadway Jurisdiction

Roadways can be owned by different levels of government and are classified by their ownership. Roadways in Albert Lea fall under one of three jurisdictions: MnDOT, Freeborn County, or the City of Albert Lea.

Generally, roadways with higher mobility functions (such as arterials) should fall under the jurisdiction of a regional level of government. Roadway jurisdiction directly relates to the functional classification of roadways. Recognizing that these roadways serve greater areas resulting in longer trips and higher volumes, the jurisdiction of major roadways, including Principal Arterials and Minor Arterials, should fall under the jurisdiction of the state and county, respectively. Similarly, roadways with more emphasis on local circulation and access (such as collectors and local roads) should fall under the jurisdiction of the local government unit. These roadways serve more localized areas and result in shorter trip lengths and lower volumes.

The jurisdictional map can be seen in Figure 5-2. As described in the previous paragraph, many of the highest-volume roads are owned by MnDOT, while other higher volume roads are under the jurisdiction of Freeborn County. The City of Albert Lea owns most of the local streets throughout the city.

FIGURE 5-2 ROADWAY JURISDICTIONAL MAP



Functional Classification

The functional classification system helps designate how the roadway network handles traffic. Roads are categorized based on how they provide access to the adjacent land uses and whether they are designed more for access or mobility through the system. For example, Interstates have very high mobility but low amounts of access, while local streets have poor mobility but high levels of accessibility. Functional Classification is a cornerstone of transportation planning, allowing roads to be appropriately designed to handle the traffic upon them.

In Albert Lea, there are currently five types of existing roadway classifications as shown in Figure 5-3:

- Interstate Highway
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local Street

Interstate Highways

Interstate highways are the highest classification of roadways in the United States. Interstate highways are built to handle the highest speeds and provide the greatest mobility over long distances. Interstates are limited access, divided highways that link major metro areas across the United States. Roadways in this category are officially designated as such by the Secretary of Transportation.

Two interstates run past Albert Lea: Interstate 90 to the North and Interstate 35 to the East. Interstate 90 runs east to west, connecting to cities including Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and La Crosse, Wisconsin. Interstate 35 runs south to north, connecting Albert Lea to destinations such as the Twin Cities and Des Moines, Iowa.

Minor Arterials

Roadways of this classification typically link urban areas and rural principal arterials to larger towns and other major traffic generators capable of attracting trips over similarly long distances. Minor arterials service medium-length trips, and their emphasis is on mobility as opposed to access in urban areas. They connect with principal arterials, other minor arterials, and collector streets. Connections to local streets should be avoided if possible. Minor arterials are responsible for accommodating thru-trips, as well as trips beginning or ending outside the Albert Lea area. Minor arterial roadways are typically spaced approximately ½ to 1 mile in developed areas and approximately 1 to 2 miles in developing areas.

Major Collectors

Roadways of this classification typically link neighborhoods together within a city or they link neighborhoods to business concentrations. A balance between mobility and access is desired. Major collector street connections are predominant to minor arterials, but they can be connected to any of the other four roadway functional classes. Local access to major collectors should be provided via public streets and individual property access should be avoided. Generally, major collector streets are predominantly responsible for providing circulation within a city. Major collectors are typically spaced approximately ¼ to ¾ mile in developed areas and approximately ½ to 1 mile in developing areas.

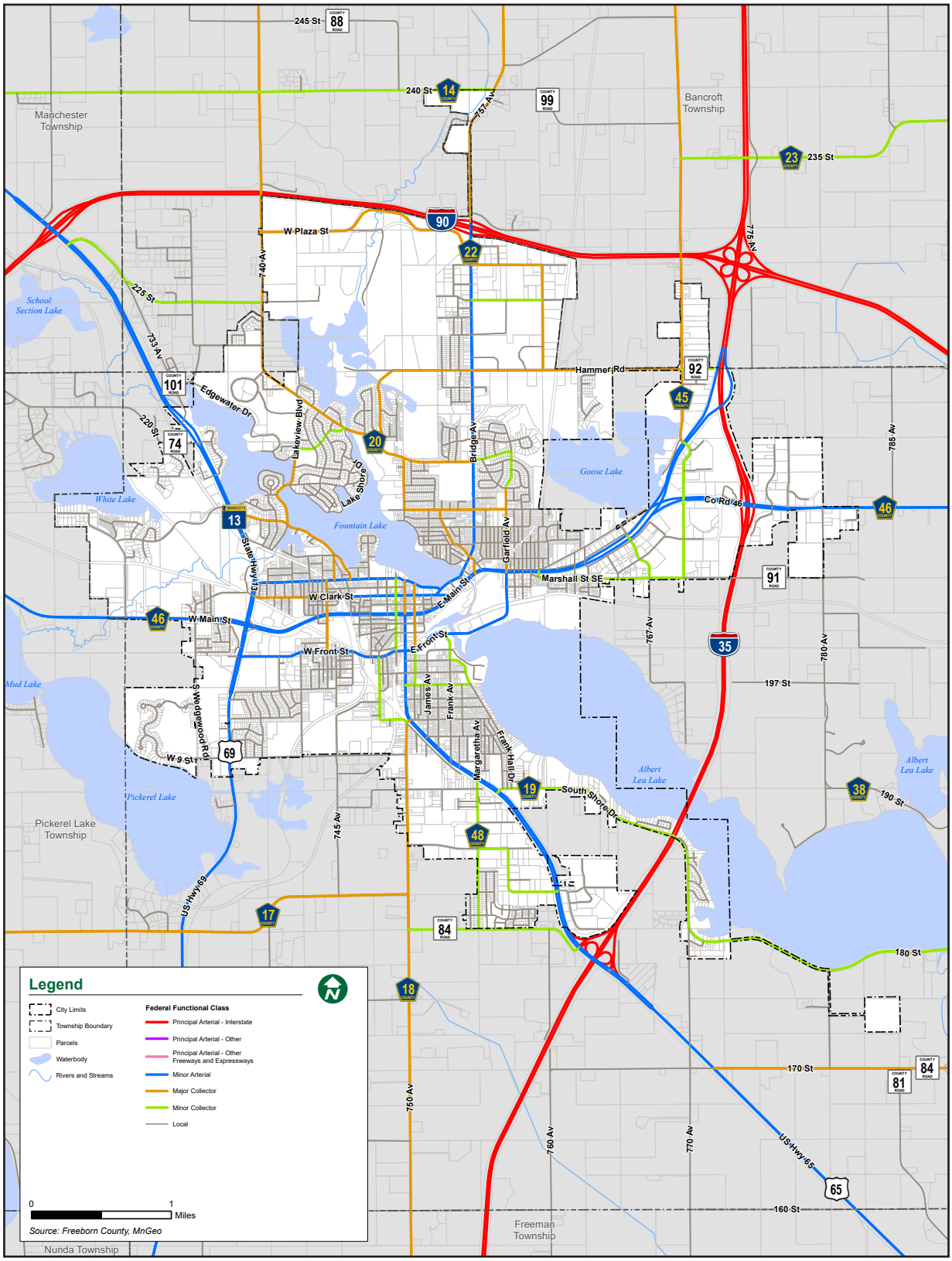
Minor Collectors

Roadways of this classification typically include city streets and rural township roadways, which facilitate the collection of local traffic and convey it to major collectors and minor arterials. Minor collector streets serve short trips at relatively low speeds. Their emphasis is focused on access rather than mobility. Minor collectors are responsible for providing connections between neighborhoods and the major collector/ minor arterial roadways. These roadways should be designed to discourage short-cut trips through the neighborhood by creating jogs or other traffic slowing measures, in the roadway.

Local Streets

Roadways of this classification are those streets not classified as arterial or collector. Like minor collector streets, local streets typically include neighborhood city streets which provide direct access to individual residences and businesses and convey traffic to minor collectors, major collectors, and minor arterials. As with minor collectors, local streets serve short trips at relatively low speeds and their emphasis is increasingly focused on access rather than mobility. Accordingly, local streets do not include through traffic movements. As with many communities, many of the roadways within the City of Albert Lea are classified as local streets.

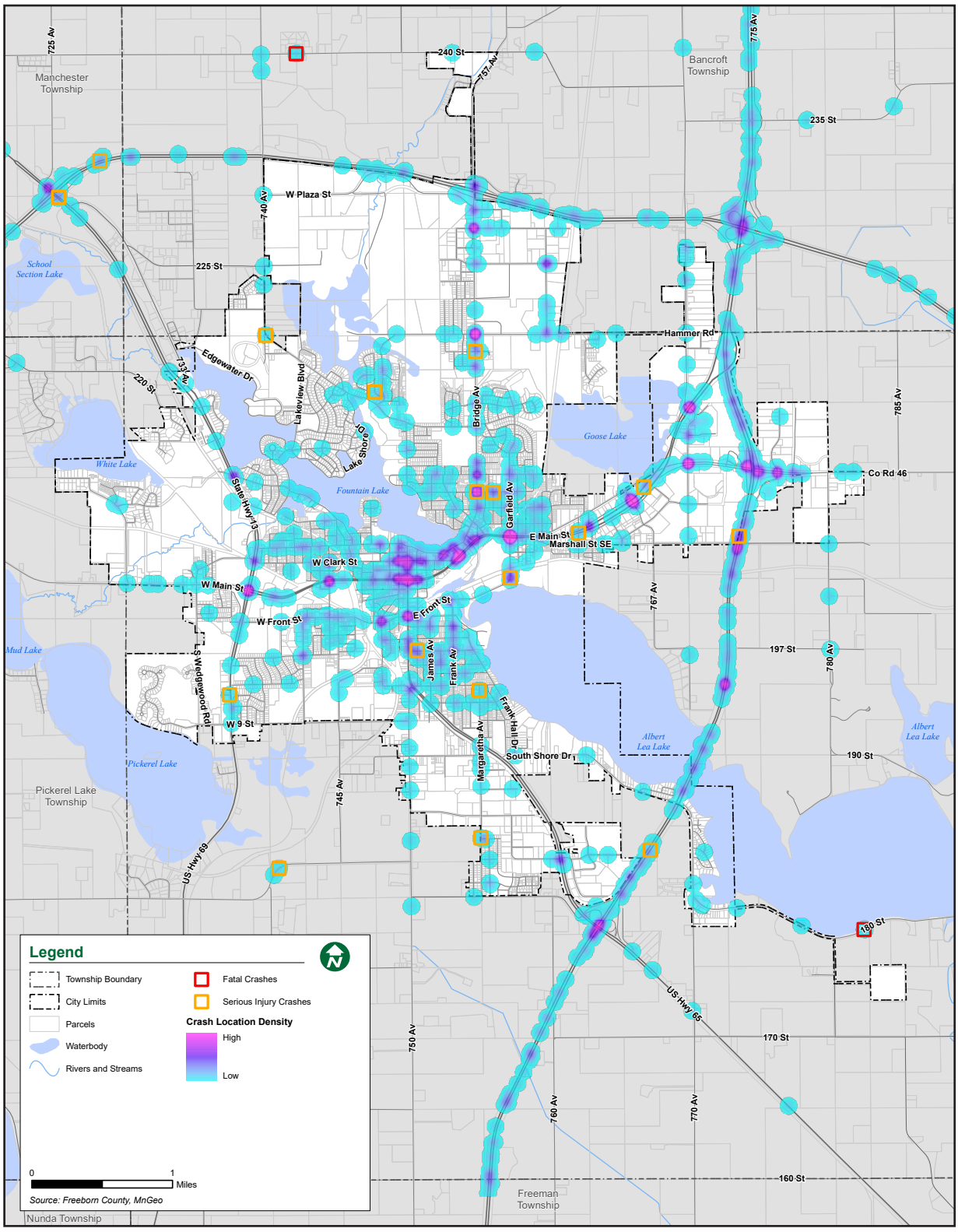
FIGURE 5-3 ROADWAY CLASSIFICATION MAP



Safety

The intersections with the highest number of crashes include the Interstate 35 connections, Main Street and Garfield Avenue, Bridge Avenue and Hammer Road, and Main Street and Broadway Avenue. Main Street and the Interstate 35 corridors include the highest number of crashes, likely due to the capacity and frequency of trips along those corridors.

FIGURE 5-4 FOUR YEAR CRASH SUMMARY (JUNE 2018 - JUNE 2022)



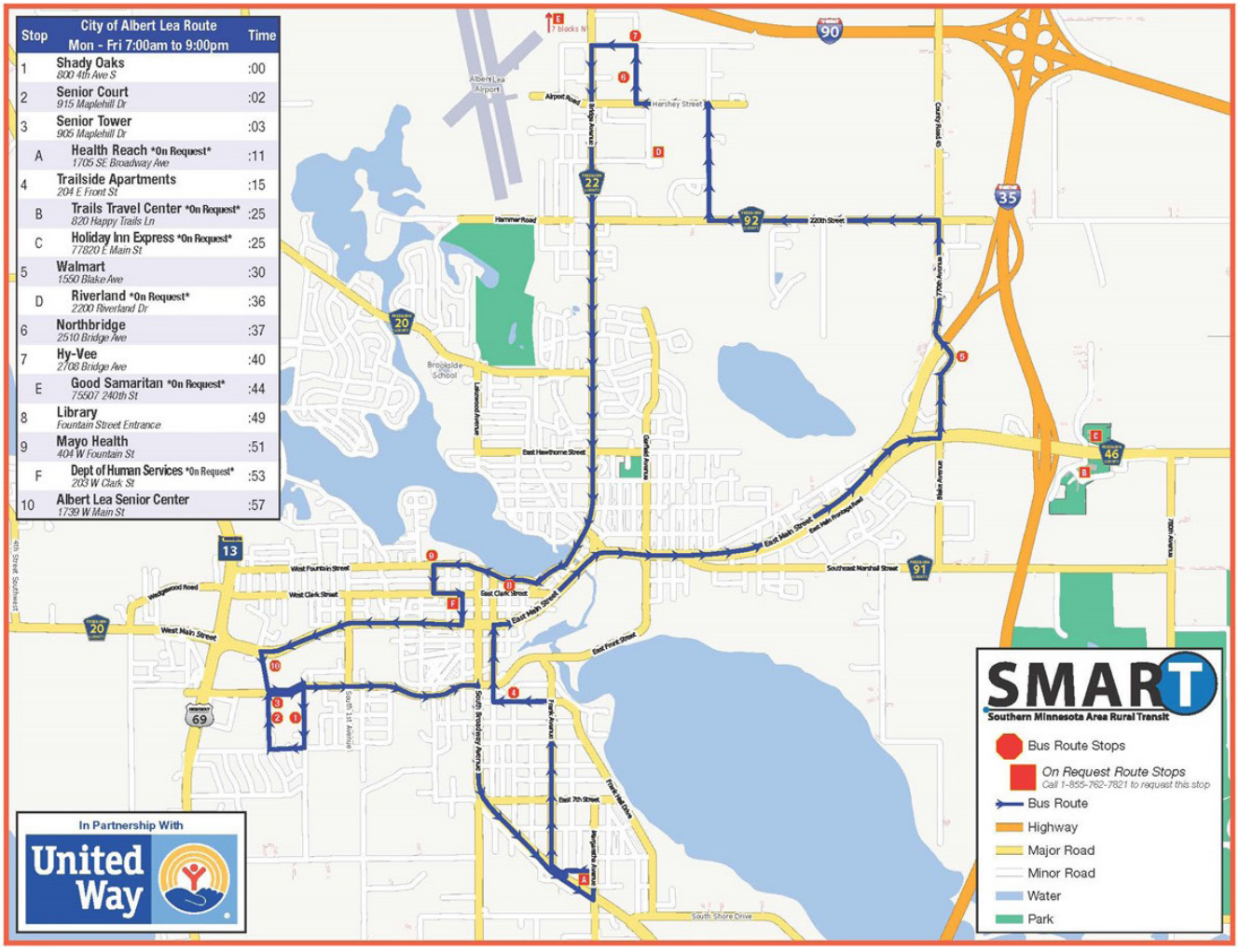
Transit Service

SMART: Southern Minnesota Area Rural Transit

Fixed route transit service in Albert Lea is operated by Southern Minnesota Area Rural Transit (SMART). As of Summer 2022, the bus operates between 7:00 AM and 9:00 PM Monday through Friday. The bus runs in a loop through the city and has 10 fixed stations and 6 by-request stops, which can be requested via a toll-free telephone number. The bus runs once per hour. Figure 5 has a map of the route and the schedule of when the bus picks up at each bus stop.

Demand response service is also available on a first come, first served basis. This service is available between 5:00 AM and 6:00 PM Monday – Friday, as well as from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM on Saturday and from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM on Sunday. While 24-hour advanced notice is encouraged by the agency, reservations may be requested at any time.

FIGURE 5-5 SMART ROUTE MAP



An additional service operated by SMART is the Hospital shuttle between Albert Lea and Austin, Minnesota. This service runs between the Mayo Clinic Health System buildings in Austin and Albert Lea. There are three trips on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and five trips on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The trip takes approximately 30 minutes. This service is not for emergency transportation and does not act as an ambulance.

Non-Motorized Transportation

Designated Bike Lanes

There are two on-street painted bike lanes in Albert Lea, on Broadway Avenue and Front Street. The Broadway Avenue bike lane runs from Main Street in the center of the city to 7th Street South, a distance of 0.8 miles. The Front Street bike lane runs east-west for 1.6 miles between US Highway 69 and Albert Lea Lake, just past Frank Street East. The end of the bike lane coincides with the western edge of the Blazing Star State Trail, allowing for a seamless transition between the two. Both lanes are painted and have on-street pavement marking denoting their use as bike lanes.

Blazing Star State Trail

This trail is paved and runs for 6 miles and runs from Albert Lea Lake to Myre-Big Island State Park. The accessible trail allows for walking, biking, inline staking, and electric wheelchairs. Much of the trail runs through the Myre-Big Island State Park, which has amenities such as hiking trails, picnic areas, and a campground.

Fountain Lake Bike Trail

The Fountain Lake Bike trail is a paved walking and biking path around portions of Fountain Lake. The main sections run along the northeast side of the lake along the shore, running past St. Theodore cemetery, Lakewood Cemetery, and Pioneer Park. While this trail does not encircle the entire lake, some streets including Lake Shore Dr and Lakeview Boulevard are popular biking routes, although these streets do not have official bike lane signage or designation.

Aviation

The Albert Lea Municipal Airport (AEL) is a public airport owned by the City of Albert Lea. Located approximately 2.5 miles north of Downtown Albert Lea, the airport is located just south of Interstate 90. There are two asphalt runways, one 5,000 feet long and the other 2,898 feet long. While no commercial flights arrive at or depart from AEL, private flights are common. The Albert Lea Municipal Airport has Airport Safety Zone Boundaries set forth by the Minnesota Department of Transportation Aeronautics to protect against hazards to air navigation and to limit population and building density in the runway approach areas to protect life and property in case of an accident. These are located beyond each end of both runways. While there is no development in three of the four Airport Safety Zones, the southern Safety Zone from Runway 17/35 does encompass the Green Lea Golf Course, most of the Freeborn County Fairgrounds, and many of the surrounding houses.

The closest airport that has scheduled commercial flights is the Mason City Municipal Airport in Iowa, located 37 miles south of Albert Lea. Larger commercial airports with more regular service accessible from Albert Lea include the Rochester International Airport, 55 miles to the northeast, and the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, 91 miles north of the city.

GOALS & ACTIONS

Goal 1: Maintain and leverage the existing transportation infrastructure for potential development.

Objective 1.1. Plan future development around existing streets and access points.

Albert Lea can leverage the existing street network by anticipating the traffic load for various land uses. Minor collector streets can provide access to less intense uses such as residential, while high intensity uses, such as industrial, can be planned along major streets and highways.

Objective 1.2 Evaluate the quality of roads within Albert Lea.

Assessing the quality of roads within the community can help determine the capacity and longevity of the road based on the intensity of the use. A review of the existing road network can determine which roads may need investment and which roads will support the needs of Albert Lea for the future years.

Objective 1.3 Identify potential connection points within the existing transportation system.

Observing existing land use patterns can help distinguish new road connection points that create quick and easy access to the surrounding areas of Albert Lea.

Goal 2: Enhance the multimodal transportation system.

Objective 2.1. Encourage connective routes for all transportation options.

The expansion of bike and pedestrian trails that route from residential uses to destinations such as schools, parks, or commercial corridors can support connectivity and encourage active transportation options. Active transportation routes could utilize existing low traffic streets while also providing direct paths to destinations to promote safety and efficiency for cyclists and pedestrians.

Objective 2.2 Encourage high intensity uses near high intensity traffic roads.

Road carrying capacity can influence traffic congestion. New developments that are anticipated to create more traffic volume should be planned near roads with adequate carrying capacity and near highly connective nodes within the road network.

Objective 2.3 Incorporate multimodal design into existing and new transportation systems.

Albert Lea's transportation system can be multimodal by providing opportunities for various transportation options through infrastructure and design. Sidewalks, bike trails, and minor streets should create routes around and through Albert Lea. Major streets and train lines should create efficient and direct routes from high capacity origins to high capacity destinations.

Goal 3: Provide a holistic transportation system for residents and visitors.

Objective 2.1. Incorporate Albert Lea branding into wayfinding signs and street design.

Branding can be an effective tool for placemaking and community differentiation. Wayfinding signage can help welcome residents and provide a user-friendly transportation system. Wayfinding signage can also indicate key destinations within Albert Lea.

Objective 2.2 Integrate landscaping and lighting to enhance roadway design.

Various understory and canopy trees can be used to differentiate neighborhoods and commercial corridors. Landscaping and lighting can also be used to enhance large open spaces such as parking lots. A range of visual elements can create aesthetic curb appeal and complement building facades.

Objective 2.3 Create a balance of signage, structural elements, and environmental features.

Signage for businesses and wayfinding should be made easily visible without detracting from structural and natural elements. Visible wayfinding signage can be a key to business promotion and welcoming visitors.

06
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

OVERVIEW

In September 2020, the City of Albert Lea completed a Historic Preservation Chapter before beginning the Comprehensive Plan update process. Albert Lea has a Commercial Historic District which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and protected locally by the City due to its economic and cultural value. The District includes 91 buildings, which are largely preserved through a careful, concentrated, and thoughtful approach to historic preservation. Generations of citizens in Albert Lea, including city staff, officials, boards and committees, and local champions and experts, alongside state and federal support, have stood for, expended resources and time, and contributed towards these 91 historic assets.

In the past 15 years, the City of Albert Lea invested over $2,250,000 into buildings and public improvements within the Commercial Historic District. In 2017, Albert Lea hosted a state-wide historic preservation conference, and in 2019 hosted the Governor's Fishing Opener. The City received funding through the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Legacy Grant to install new wayfinding signage across Downtown Albert Lea.

This completed Historic Preservation Chapter establishes objectives, policies, and actions seeking to build on the recent 15 years of success in the Commercial Historic District by providing a framework for historic preservation planning efforts in Albert Lea for the next 15 years. These objectives, policies, and actions are intended for execution during two proposed working periods – the near (2021-2031) and far (2026-2036) futures.

The full chapter and list of actions can be found in Appendix A of this document.

07

PARKS, RECREATION & NATURAL RESOURCES

Chapter highlights

- Overview
- Unite a Network of Parks, Open Spaces, and Natural Features
- Identify & Protect Natural Resources
- Foster Community Engagement
- Promote Community Reinvestment
- Bring Climate Resiliency to the Table
- Goals & Objectives

OVERVIEW

The City of Albert Lea provides a wide range of parks and recreation programming and supports a Recreation Department which serves both Albert Lea and a portion of Freeborn County. Park spaces range from humble passive options like Dress Island which provides opportunities for impromptu picnics, to destinations like Bancroft Bay Park which draw users from surrounding rural areas. The benefits of healthy living and opportunities for outdoor activity are numerous, though not all are aware of the amenities which surround them. Local recreation centers like the Marion Ross Performing Arts Center and the City Arena expand a cohesive network of opportunities for socialization, activity, and mentorship. Continuing to meet existing community needs and planning for future population increases requires efforts to positively impact its recreational facilities, outdoor spaces, and programs which occur at both. In addition, continuing to expand and further connect these resources is also an important aspect of this process. Projects like the Southwest Greensward and the Eco Village are good examples of taking the next steps in this direction.

This comprehensive plan will serve as a framework for future development, notably a more in-depth park master plan. Through examination of existing amenities and spaces, overarching goals were developed for future development with actionable items set in place to achieve them. The goal of this document is to provide benchmarks to ensure that resources are wisely managed and that development efforts benefit both residents, their community, and the broader environment.

Unite a Network of Parks, Open Spaces, and Natural Features

Albert Lea, as a community, is framed by a series of lakes, low ridges, and waterways located on the edge of prairie and hardwood forests. Together, they form a ring around what could be conceived as the Albert Lea community and form the base upon which we can build our future. We commit to providing a unified network of green space articulating these essential natural features that frame the community. The parks, open spaces, and natural features found throughout Albert Lea provide its residents with several options to interact with the outdoor environment and by extension, each other. Keeping in line with this goal, the features comprising this network must reflect the communities that they serve. Providing opportunities for access by all ages and physical abilities is a key indicator of this goal's success and will require community outreach and engagement.

Formalizing the open space network within Albert Lea will encourage its use and in turn provide positive opportunities for community members. Improved health, sense of place, and community building are but a few positives which arise from the formalization of this network. Another benefit is a more resilient, interconnected series of spaces with greater capacity for carbon sequestration, addressing the heat island effect and providing more flexibility for anticipated wet and dry weather patterns. Continued efforts between both community leaders, their associated city administration, and local partners will yield further benefits as the spaces are developed and used. Through the planning process, we have come to recognize an opportunity to stitch together these features in a way that brings the community together and demonstrates sincere respect for our natural systems.

For instance, the concept of the Southwest Greensward demonstrates how a greenway system can be integrated into a more urban development pattern providing a development amenity and utilizing open space corridors as a critical part of stormwater infrastructure. Euclid Avenue in Albert Lea can serve as an example of an urban greenbelt that serves as a transition between residential and industrial land uses. The Eco Village concept further illustrates greenway opportunities through edge development design patterns incorporating open space and conservation elements.

Identify & Protect Natural Resources

We commit to the protection of natural resources such that they may continue to function, grow, and provide for future generations. The existing parks and natural areas networks serve as the framework for recreation, public space, and their associated ecological systems. The stewardship of these areas is placed on all generations; meaning we all have a part to play in their continued success.

Albert Lea is committed to sustainable maintenance and management practices to uphold the high standards of its public land. Maintaining a sustainable ecosystem requires a concerted effort by both the city through management and by individuals through active participation in community outreach. With all partners actively engaged, environmental stewardship will allow Albert Lea's parks and open spaces to flourish and expand for the benefit of future generations.

Foster Community Engagement

We commit to the protection of natural resources such that they may continue to function, grow, and provide for future generations. The existing parks and natural areas networks serve as the framework for recreation, public space, and their associated ecological systems. The stewardship of these areas is placed on all generations; meaning we all have a part to play in their continued success.

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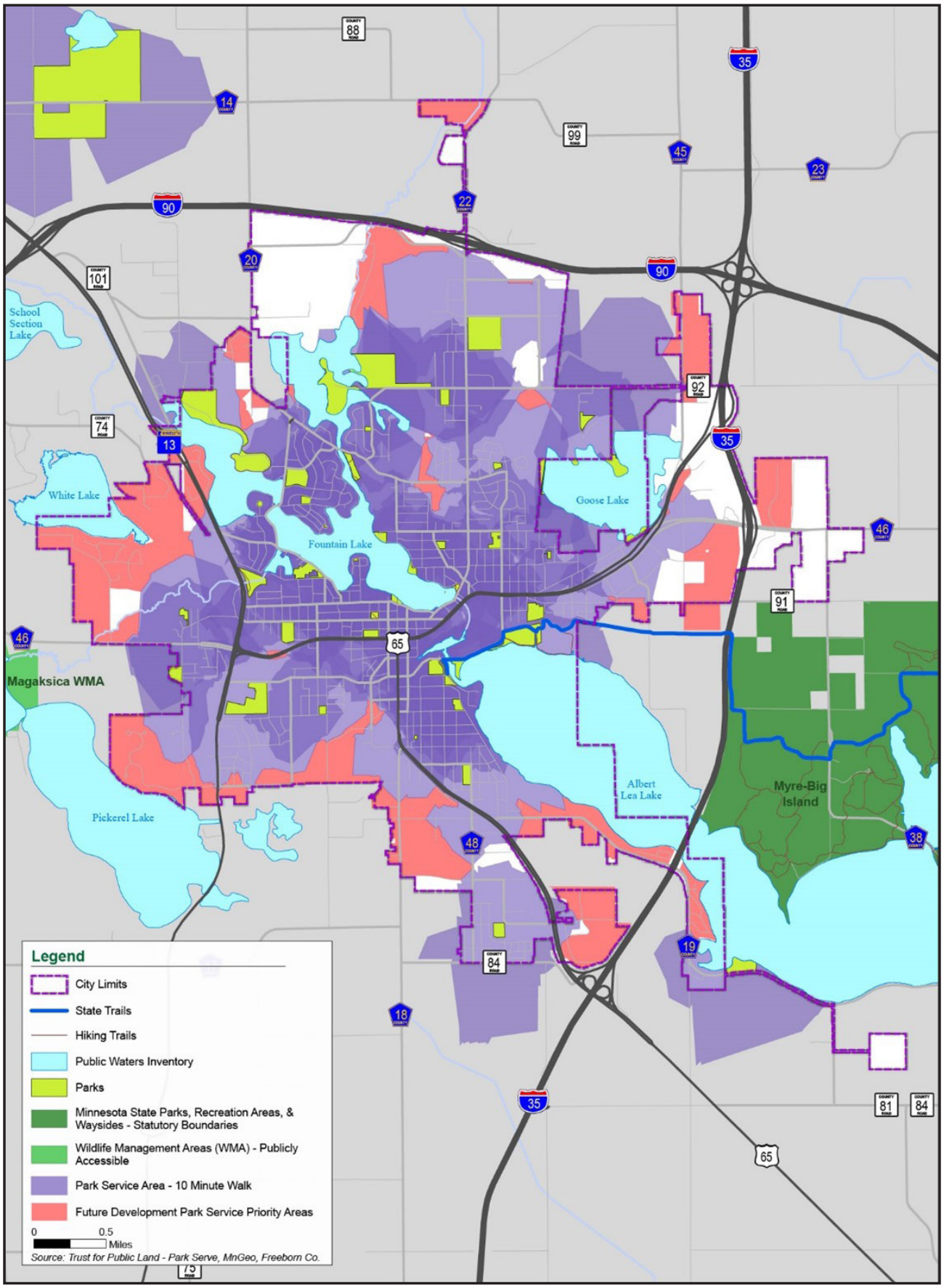
Promote Community Reinvestment

We commit to supporting community reinvestment through our parks, recreation activities, and facilities. Given our central location in southern Minnesota, we are positioned for continued growth and renewal. Growth will come in the form of the continued expansion of our parks and trails network while renewal will occur through the consistent revitalization of our existing amenities by both public and private benefactors. Consistent engagement and efforts will help our community to rally behind the spaces we call home. These efforts are mandatory to establish a grounded sense of place within Albert Lea.

The effects of growing our parks and recreation spaces extend beyond the neighborhoods which they serve. Outside funding and development will be catalyzed through the creation of a strong neighborhood identity via investment within the parks and trails systems. The shared success of the community depends on the active engagement of both the public and private entities which comprise it. Through continued efforts to improve parks and recreation, the community will prosper through existing and future development and investment.

FIGURE 7-1 PARK SERVICE AREA



Bring Climate Resiliency to the Table

In 2021, Albert Lea completed a Climate Action Plan. The plan commits to making challenging transitions in social and economic environments while making targeted investments toward a lower carbon footprint. Reducing carbon footprints and lowering the amount of greenhouse gases produced will help protect Albert Lea's natural environment, vulnerable populations, and economic sector vitality well into the future. The goals established in the Climate Action Plan align with the State of Minnesota's.

This comprehensive plan does not seek to override the Climate Action Plan. Instead, the Climate Action Plan will guide and inform direction regarding all topics in the Comprehensive Plan. Between switching city vehicles to electric or hybrid options to resilient infrastructure design, every major topic in the Comprehensive Plan shall be, in one way or another, linked to climate resiliency and sustainable design.

TABLE 7-1 ALBERT LEA PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

Park Classification	Use	Service Area	Size	Site
Mini Park	Provides opportunities for recreation close to home, such as open lawns, tot lots, tennis courts, basketball courts, or open spaces.	1/4 mile	Less than 1 acre	Easily accessible to neighborhood residents. Safe walking and/or biking access.
Neighborhood Park	Provides opportunities for recreation close to home, such as field games, court games, play equipment, and skating.	1/2 mile radius, free of major barriers such as highways	1-15 acres (5-10 is optimal)	Easily accessible to Neighborhood residents. Safe walking and biking access.
Playfield	Consolidates athletic fields and associated facilities to larger and fewer sites throughout the community, often on school property.	Strategically located City Wide – usually 1-3 miles	Minimum of 25 acres with 40-80 optimal. Existing playfields are smaller (7-20 acres)	Easily accessible to the population it is intended to serve. Safe walking/biking distance with convenient auto access.
Community Park	Focus is on community-based recreational needs as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Strategically located City Wide – usually 1-3 miles	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually between 30 and 50 acres	Site should be suited for community use, easily accessible to all populations, and located near high-traffic areas such as schools and major thoroughfares.
Special Use Park	Parks and recreational facilities oriented toward a single use, such as gardens, boat launches, pools, overlooks, etc.	Community-wide	Varies	Site-specific
Community/ Recreation Facility	Public buildings which provide recreational, cultural, social, and/or educational opportunities to the community.	Community-wide	Varies	Site should be suited for community use, easily accessible to all populations, and located near high-traffic areas such as schools and major thoroughfares.

TABLE 7-2 ALBERT LEA PARKS & AMENITIES

Park/Facility Name	Park/Facility Type	Size	Amenities/Features
Academy Park	Community Park	3.1 acres	Playground, restrooms, baseball/softball diamond, warming house, and ice skating/ hockey rink
Albert Lea City Beach	Special Use Park	1.6 acres	No lifeguard beach and roped-off swim area, picnic tables, bathhouse with restrooms, skate park, sand volleyball court, small public dock, parking lot
City Aquatic Center	Community/ Recreation Facility		bathhouse, pool, zero-depth splash pool, 226 ft waterslide
Bancroft Bay Park	Community Park	74.1 acres	Two picnic shelters, picnic tables, fire rings, restrooms, hiking trails, 18-hole disc golf course
Bellview Park	Neighborhood Park	1.8 acres	Baseball diamond, playground equipment, and picnic tables
Blazing Star Trail	Trail	6 miles	10-ft wide, connects to Myre Big Island State Park, small parking lot, small prairie, planned future connection to Austin, MN
Brookside	Community Park	4.2 acres	Community garden, tennis courts, public boat landing, Brookside Education Center, dog park
Dress Island	Mini Park	0.2 acres	Green space, benches, wooden bridge
East Gate Park	Neighborhood Park	2.2 acres	Playground, full-court basketball, green space
Eberhardt Park	Neighborhood Park	5.1 acres	Playground, small shelter, green space
Edgewater Park	Community Park	62.6 acres	Green space, three picnic shelters with fireplaces, boat landing, band shell, horseshoe courts, playground, baseball/softball diamond, volleyball net, restrooms, picnic tables, horseshoe pits, shoreline, public dock
Food Truck Plaza	Mini Park	0.9 acres	Phase 1 to be constructed in 2023. Currently provides parking and green space. Phase 1 will introduce more formal green space, plaza space, and sidewalk.
Frank Hall Park	Community Park	11.8 acres	Green space, Full-court basketball, three tennis courts, accessible DNR fishing pier, public boat ramp lighted trails, restroom, two picnic shelters with tables, three horseshoe pits, and playground
Fountain Lake Park	Community Park	3.9 acres	Green space, gazebo, children's garden, benches, limestone overlooking lake, children's garden, small public dock
Garden Villa Park	Neighborhood Park	4.1 acres	Open space, some play features
Ginkle Park	Mini Park	0.8 acres	Open space, playground, fenced

Park/Facility Name	Park/Facility Type	Size	Amenities/Features
Hawthorn Park	Neighborhood Park	4.3 acres	Open space, playground, baseball/softball diamond, warming house, ice skating, and hockey
Hayek Park	Playfield	19.1 acres	One lighted baseball diamond, One lighted softball diamond, batting case, playground, half-court basketball court, restrooms, concession stand, broadcast booth, warming house, ice skating, and hockey
Albert Lea Ice Arena	Community/ Recreation Facility		Two ice sheets, bleachers, concession stand, lounge, skate rental
Katherine Island	Mini Park	0.2 acres	Island on Fountain Lake, benches
Lakeview Park	Neighborhood Park	13.1 acres	Playground, full-court basketball, soccer fields, rain garden, restrooms, Two soccer fields, warming house, ice skating
Marion Ross Performing Arts Center	Community/ Recreation Facility		Fully equipped stage, meeting rooms, set rooms, costume rooms, storage
Memorial Park	Neighborhood Park	4.9 acres	Playground, open space, soccer field, shelter
Morin Park	Neighborhood Park	3.2 acres	Two baseball/softball diamonds with backstops and bleachers, playground, lighted full-court basketball
New Denmark	Neighborhood Park	1.1 acres	Green space, park benches, mermaid statute, flower gardens, lake views
Park Avenue Park	Mini Park	0.3 acres	Mature trees, half-court basketball, and some play features
Pioneer Park	Neighborhood Park	3.5 acres	Playground, picnic shelter with restrooms and kitchenette, small gazebo, picnic tables, mature trees, lighted path, gravel parking
Senior Citizens Center	Community/ Recreation Facility	8,000 SQ FT	Game room, commercial kitchen, small conference room, craft room, restrooms, computers, dining room
Shoff Park	Neighborhood Park	12.1 acres	Higbie Gardens, green space, small picnic shelter with picnic tables, gravel parking, path
Shoreland Heights Park	Neighborhood Park	2.3 acres	Green space, playground, chain link backstop
Shorewood Hills Park	Neighborhood Park	0.8 acres	Open space, playground

Park/Facility Name	Park/Facility Type	Size	Amenities/Features
Snyder Fields	Community Park	13.1 acres	Lighted athletic complex, five baseball diamonds, batting cage, concession stand with restrooms, picnic tables, four sand volleyball courts
Sondergaard Park	Neighborhood Park	5.1 acres	Four Baseball/softball diamonds with backstop, full-court basketball, playground, green space, park building
Southwest Park	Neighborhood Park	24.5 acres	Green space, playground, full-court basketball, Six tennis courts, baseball/softball diamond
Troy Hammer Park	Neighborhood Park	4.5 acres	Playground, open space, full-court basketball, baseball/softball diamond with backstop, park maintenance building
Valley Park	Neighborhood Park	1.7 acres	Playground, restrooms, baseball/softball diamond with backstop, full-court basketball, park building
Virginia Place Park	Mini Park	0.8 acres	Playground, half-court basketball
Wedgewood Park	Neighborhood Park	7.1 acres	Open space, playground, sledding hill, chain link backstop

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Unite a Network of Parks, Open Spaces, and Natural Features

Objective 1.1 Develop a more thorough network of accessible green space across the city.

Objective 1.2 Provide amenities tailored to the needs and wants of the community they serve.

Objective 1.3 Improve the health of the community by providing spaces and activities to suit a variety of needs.

Goal 2: Identify & Protect Natural Resources

Objective 2.1 Maintain existing forests and parks at healthy, sustainable levels.

Objective 2.2 Prioritize open space through consistent efforts to expand the park system with new dedications and planning techniques that weigh the positive benefits of open space with the changes in density.

Objective 2.3 Encourage the public to foster environmental stewardship.

Goal 3: Foster Community Engagement

Objective 3.1 Encourage leadership across generations.

Objective 3.2 Create and expand partnerships.

Objective 3.3 Hold inclusivity at the forefront.

Objective 3.4 Promote healthy activity.

Goal 4: Foster Community Engagement

Objective 4.1 Build community identity.

Objective 4.2 Maintain long-term projects.

Objective 4.3 Emphasize the benefits.

Objective 4.4 Establish sustainable revenue streams.

Goal 5: Bring Climate Resiliency to the Table

Objective 5.1 Address climate resiliency in public and private investments.

08

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Chapter highlights

- Overview
- Population & Demographics
- Housing
- Employment & Income
- Natural & Cultural Assets
- Goals & Objectives

OVERVIEW

Albert Lea-Freeborn County is the economically diverse and growing hub of Southern Minnesota that has the potential to further its economic vitality and reveal hidden assets to businesses, residents, and visitors. Recent regional, national, and international affairs have warranted the city's economy to be more diversified, elastic, and resilient to persist singular event fluctuations and sustain smart growth. As other cities compete for the same growth there is an opportunity to discern its efforts from others and focus on specific star market opportunities exclusive to Albert Lea. Strategic renewal of goals and associated actions can help integrate economic growth that fosters lasting prosperity.

The following Goals were developed by the community in the 2020 Albert Lea EDA - Joint Vision & Economic Development Strategic Plan and remain valid pursuits to affect economic growth. While instead the Actions are based on more recent data from 2022, projections for 2027, and emerging local currents. Together the Goals and Actions should be implemented using the Future Land Use Map as a guide.

POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

Key Points

Trending towards stagnant growth with net negative migration, mostly Caucasian, family-type grouping, with largest aging group as females ages 60-64 and Millennials. Advanced education degrees are lower than the surrounding region.

Action

Change zoning to allow for care facilities and childcare, specifically single story housing, located near health facilities and support services. Brand city as family place to attract the young family age group. Attract technical training institutes to adapt high school skills and education to new emerging NAICS employers.

Population Trends and Projections

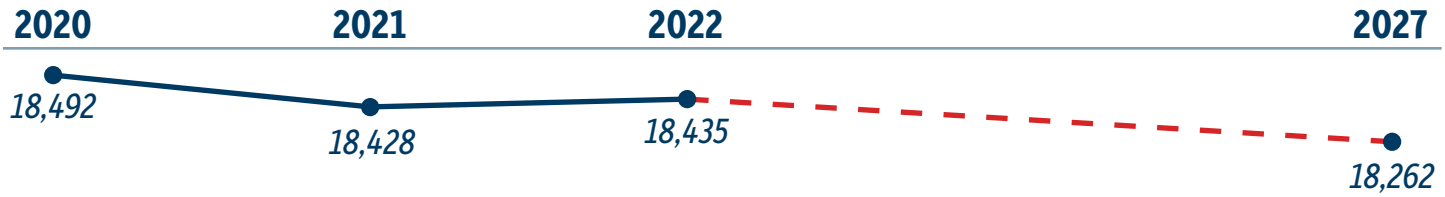
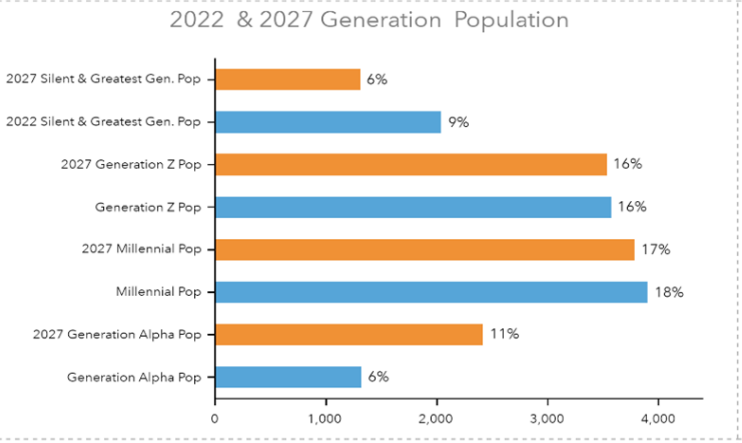


FIGURE 8-1 POPULATION AND RACE/ETHNICITY



Race and Ethnicity

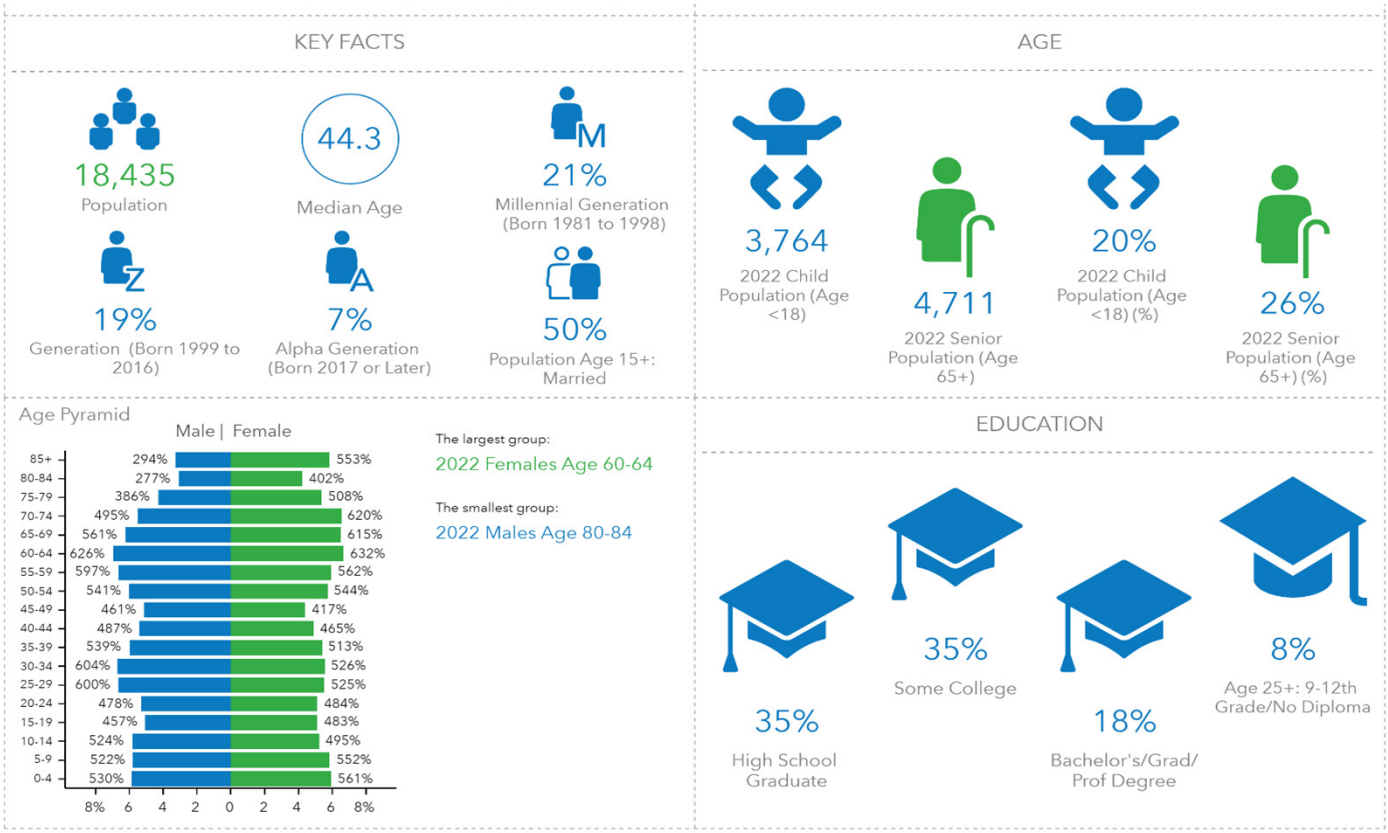
The largest group: White Alone (78.01)

The smallest group: Pacific Islander Alone (0.02)

Indicator ▲	Value	Diff
White Alone	78.01	-5.71
Black Alone	2.33	+0.70
American Indian/Alaska Native Alone	0.64	+0.18
Asian Alone	5.47	+1.71
Pacific Islander Alone	0.02	0
Other Race	5.90	+1.72
Two or More Races	7.63	+1.40
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	14.69	+4.32

Bars show deviation from Freeborn County

FIGURE 8-2 KEY FACTS, AGE, AND EDUCATION



This infographic contains data provided by Esri, Esri and Infogroup. The vintage of the data is 2020, 2024.

© 2020 Esri

HOUSING

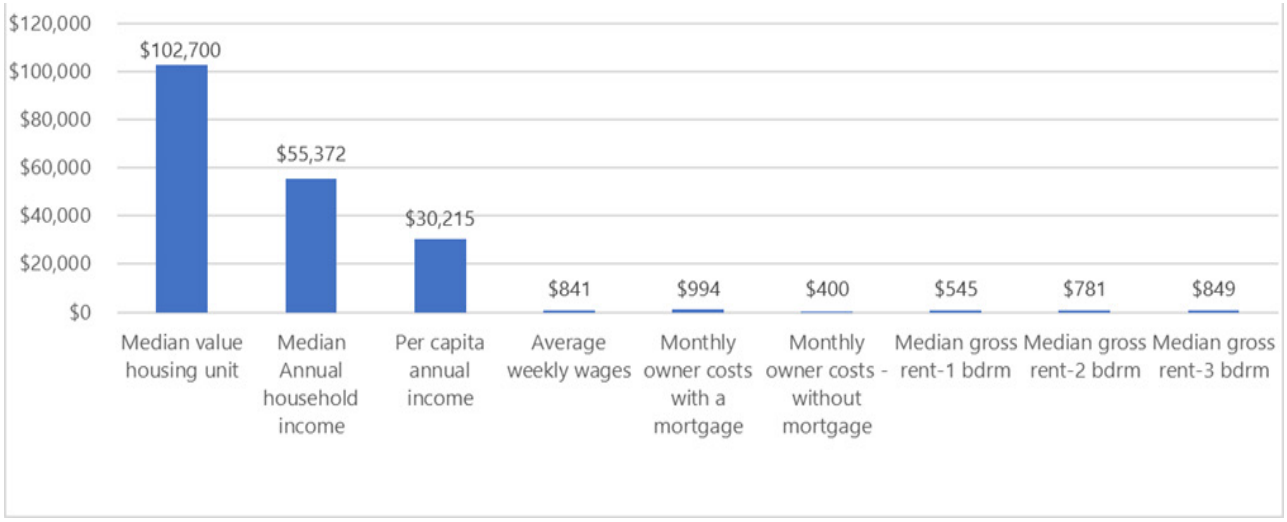
Key Points

Median household incomes support average home mortgages and home ownership is attainable. Average household incomes support rents up to 4-bedroom units. Young couples starting families (age 25-34) are the largest group renting. The housing stock is diminishing and aging (built prior to 1979). Sustainability preferences are on the rise. Albert Lea ranks13th out of 478 places as the lowest cost of living in Minnesota.

Action

Increase construction of single-story attached (older demographic) and detached housing (younger families). Differentiate city marketing to attract new home builders from other cities competing for the same housing construction by seeking specialty sustainable subdivision developers, offering City-owned land via a Land Trust, and offering tax deferments as incentives. Engineer elevation increases for areas prone to flooding to recuperate shoreland areas for development. Market demand for homes in the area and offer low % loans to incentivize remodeling of older stock houses. Brand Albert Lea as a family-friendly place, with safe neighborhoods, good schools, and recreational/ natural amenities.

FIGURE 8-3 INCOME AND HOUSING COSTS



Housing Units Trends and Projections

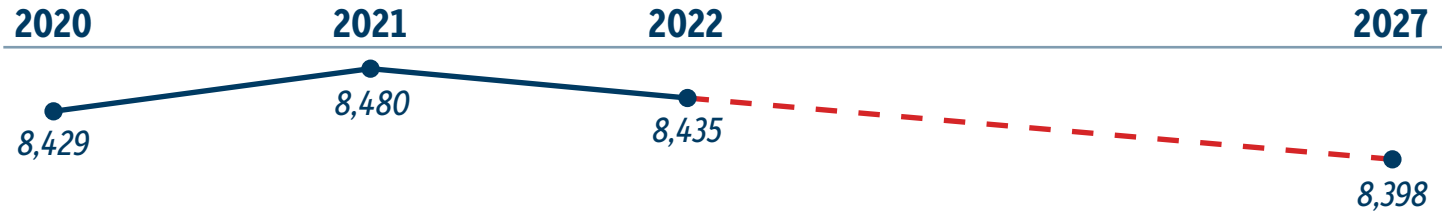
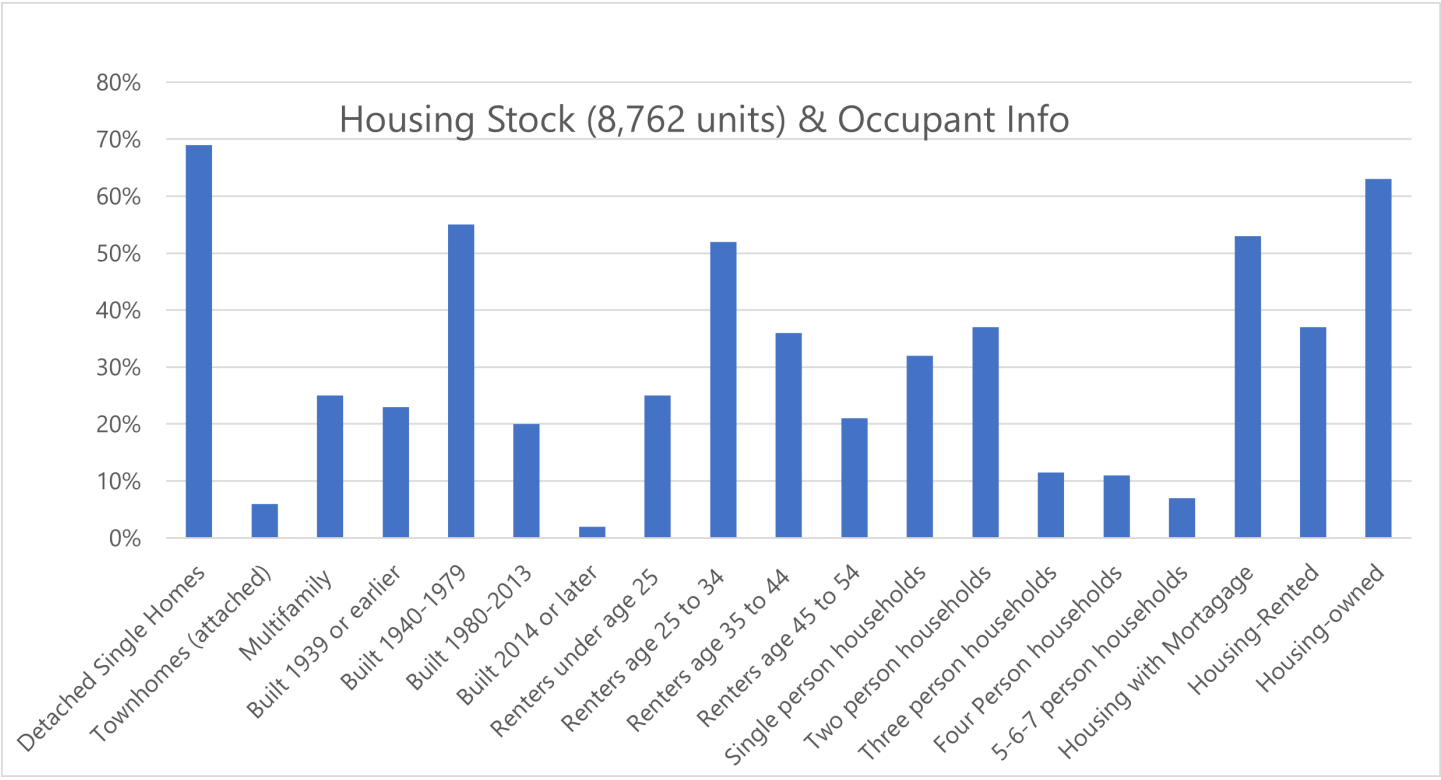


FIGURE 8-4 HOUSING STOCK (8,762 UNITS) AND OCCUPANT INFORMATION

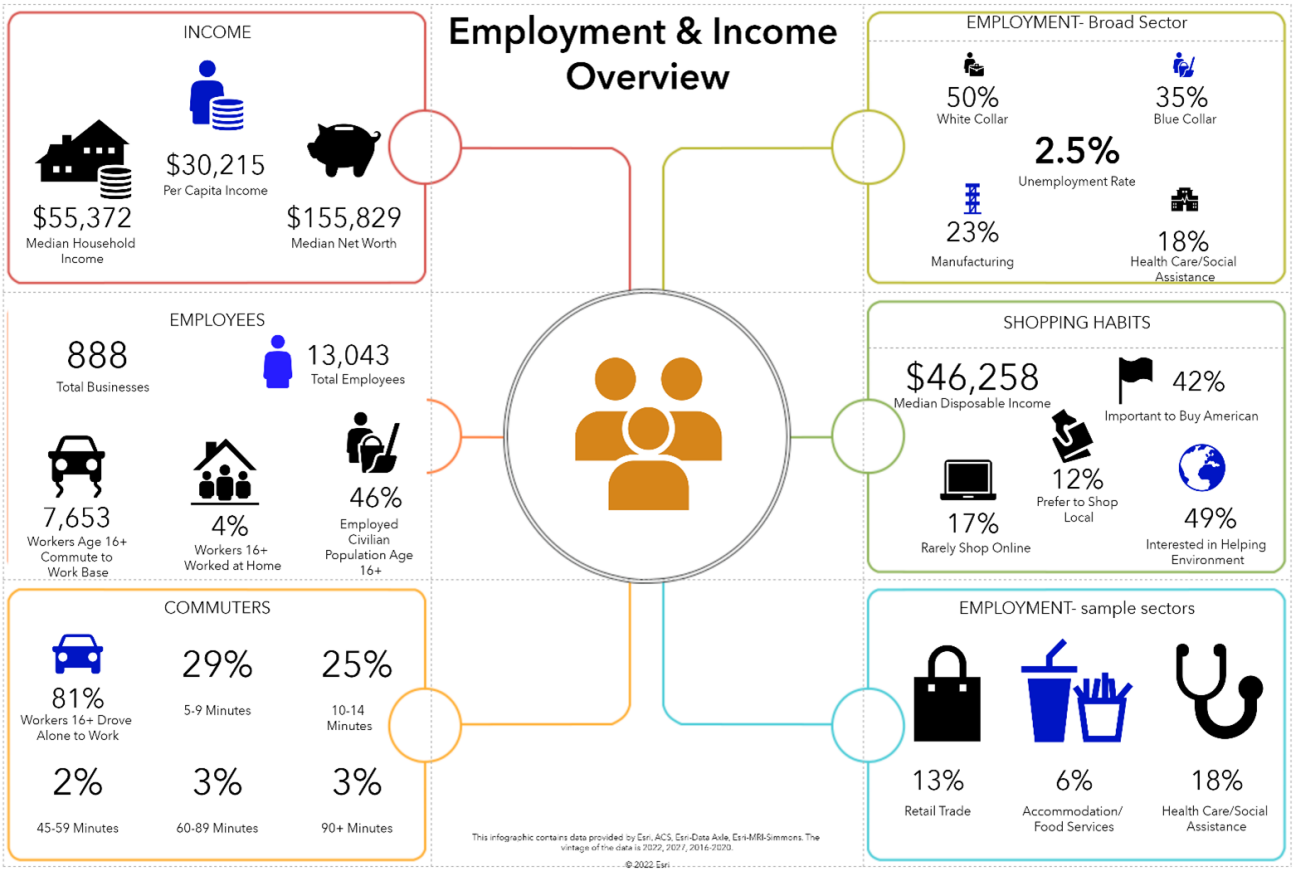


EMPLOYMENT & INCOME

Key Points

Skills are mostly in the manufacturing and service industry, trending towards job sectors that are reactive, thus declining in long term. Advanced education degrees are lower than in the region. The broadband map shows a lack of coverage impeding enterprise. New green industries in demand.

FIGURE 8-5



Action

The following are recommendations focus on sectors1 that are stars and opportunities for existing skills and businesses to transform, update to current market needs, and differentiate themselves from surrounding area potentials. Focus on the top 3 recommended star sectors for economic growth shown in Figure 5:

- Food Processing (NAICS 3112, 3119): this is a good fit for Albert Lea and the region. There are already several large players in the region and there is a strong agricultural base. Especially with crops such as corn, peas, beans, and soy.
- Equipment and Component Manufacturing (NAICS 3329, 3326, 3344): this sector is reactive, and to grow, it will require transitioning and adapting to more sustainable/ clean manufacturing of components related to solar, wind, or battery fabrication.
- Computer Services (NAICS 5415, 5182), Research and Development (5417): computer systems and design, data centers, hosting, quantum computing, augmented reality, artificial intelligence, and coding can use existing factory skills with minimal training (8-week course) and support R&D in manufacturing. This can transition jobs to higher, in-demand wages and respond to emergent environmental market demands.

Employment Trends

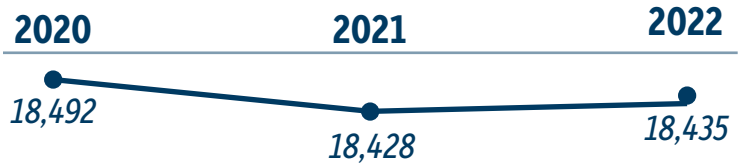
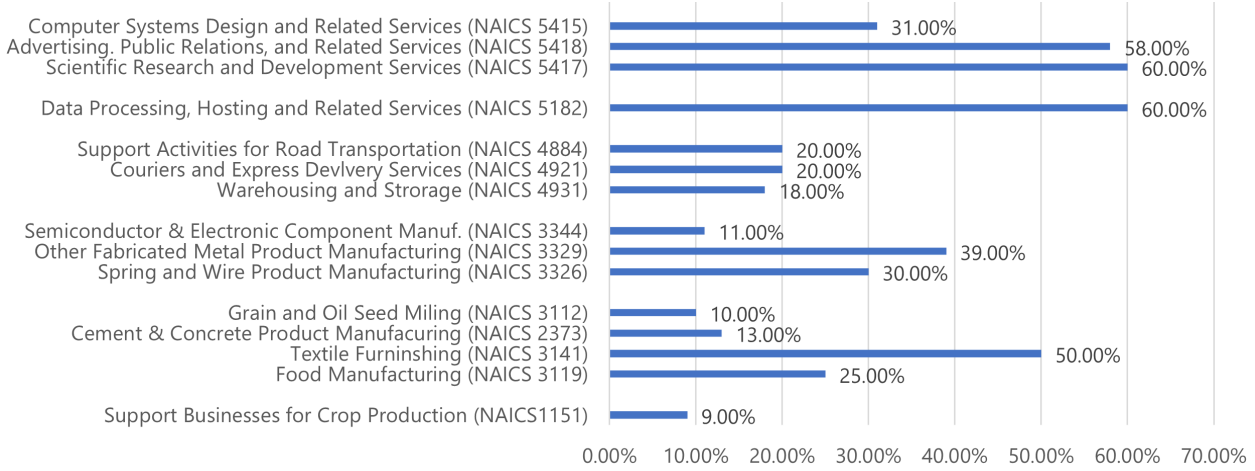


FIGURE 8-6 GREATEST GROWTH POTENTIAL INDUSTRY SECTORS



Source: Grow Alberta Lea EDA- Community and Economic Development Strategic Plan 2020

Action

It is important to identify receding and reactive sectors (existing skills that do not have long-term viability) and focus on star/opportunity sectors to foster growth and satisfy market changes. Data on emerging demand and untapped potential in existing labor skills are optimally aligned to transition to cleaner and more environmentally conscious industries. Animal and crop production was identified as a reactive industry. Yet, rising interest in plant-based diets shows a specialty market demand for local, organic produce and products which can be accommodated by existing food processing systems. There is potential for adapting current agricultural activities to specialty markets which offer less competition and higher compensation.

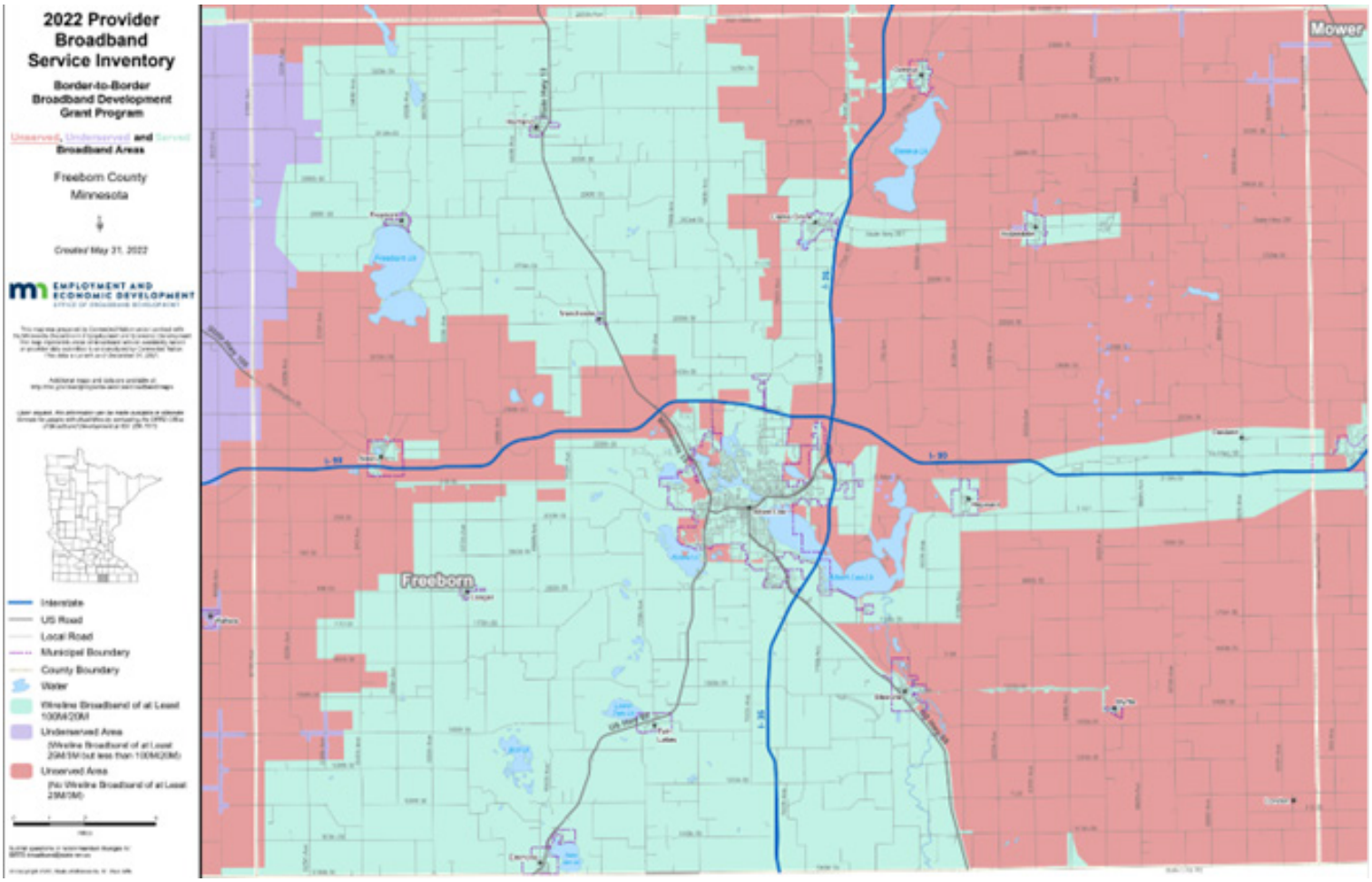
The emerging opportunity sector is in Computer design, data centers, and software platforms. Focus efforts on re-training programs that transition manufacturing and service labor force sectors to green industries (solar, wind, battery, components) and computer (coding) services. Attract Coding academy programs to convert declining manufacturing skills into high-demand, high-tech skills with relatively little training time (usually 8 weeks in a coding academy). Strengthen the pipeline from education to local businesses to support R&D to guarantee innovation in the base economy. There is a unique opportunity to use computer skills to provide an augmented reality platform for visitors and tourists to experience Albert Lea in a gamified way (differentiating from other tourist attraction tools).

Further incentivize the creative and adaptive reuse of buildings that are currently not used and may even be obsolete to new hosts. Facilitate apprenticeship and other collaborations between educational institutes and local businesses, creating a campus in areas that are zoned for complimentary mixed uses. Consider working with the Hospital (Mayo Health Clinics) to relocate to an alternative site to recapture waterfront real estate for higher use like a mixed-use or business Incubator; providing a test kitchen, maker spaces, and a place for local angel investor sessions could further unlock local talent potential and overcome traditional start-up obstacles while promoting a “Keep it local” movement. To accommodate industrial uses, Albert Lea must invest in its water and wastewater infrastructure more aggressively. Possible funding through recent federal and state infrastructure grants and structuring of reimbursement agreements in private/public partnerships may help accelerate these efforts.

Broadband Coverage

Per the 2022 Provider Broadband service inventory map below there are areas inside the city limits that are underserved by broadband, greatly impeding development. Broadband should be prioritized and integrated into the City's infrastructure planning, to sustain growth and innovation.

FIGURE 8-7 ALBERT LEA BROADBAND COVERAGE



Commute Patterns

Resolving broadband coverage would benefit the city of Albert Lea by retaining those commuting outside its boundaries, increasing daytime spending, and attracting remote workers to relocate to the city based on quality of life.

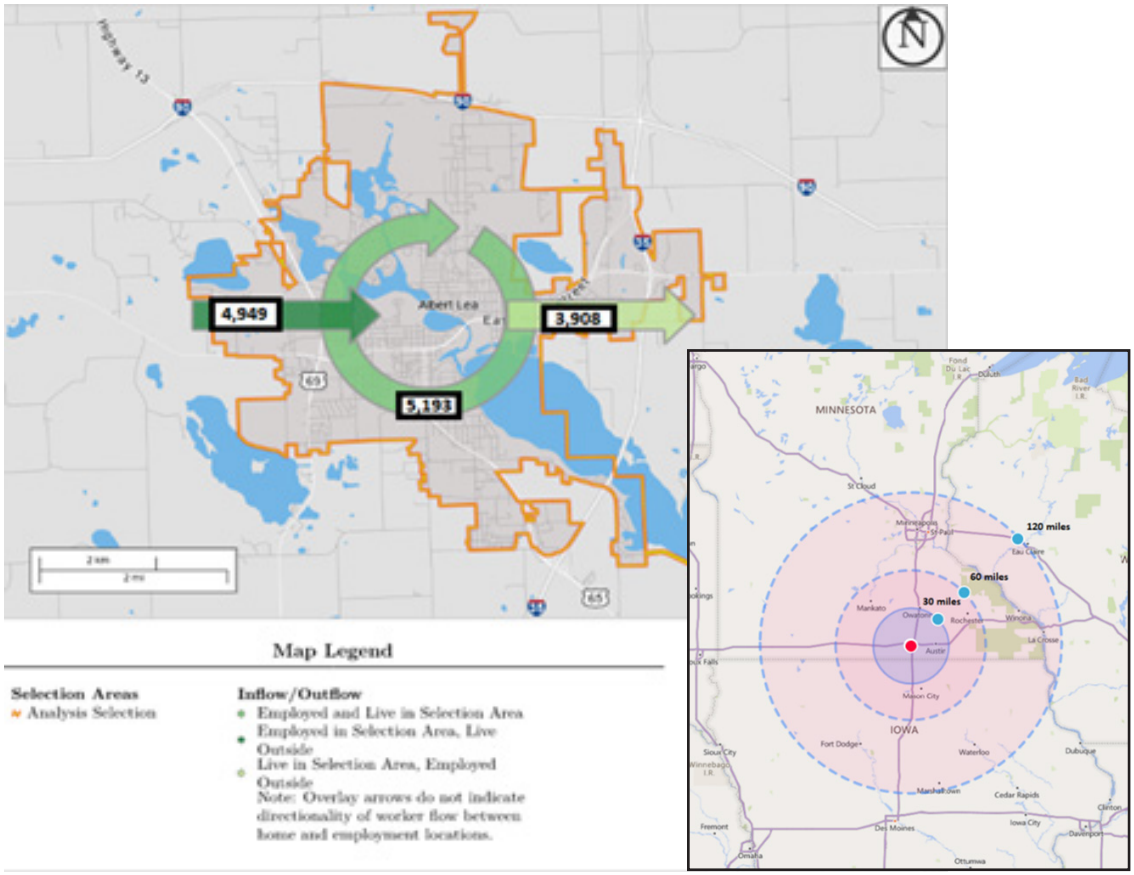
NATURAL AND CULTURAL ASSETS

The City of Albert Lea is rich in natural assets. It offers a host of recreation programs and provides a range of services for much of Freeborn County. The natural resources present in Albert Lea, like Myre-Big Island State Park, its greenways, wet lowlands, oak savanna, and grasslands which in turn attract hundreds of waterfowl during migration have major tourism potential. In addition, its golf courses, trails, shoreland, and 13 lakes could become an Eco-Tourism destination for activities involving wildlife, trails, biking, kayaking, hiking, camping, golfing, fishing, swimming, water sports, as well as boat or nature tours.

Promote Eco and Sports Tourism

Extend existing trails to adjacent trail systems and work with the Rails to Trails program to develop local trail loops that link to regional ones; reach out to sports associations (fishing, water skiing, boating) and environmental organizations to host events. There is also an opportunity to provide educational tours and environmental classes. A gap analysis reveals several watercraft businesses in the area, but no marina. Consider developing a marina with contemporary water-focused amenities, even though required dredging may require further environmental approvals.

FIGURE 8-8 ALBERT LEA COMMUTE PATTERNS



Developing an elevated boardwalk along the water shoreline that is linked to the trails system and/or educational areas could create an eco-tourism/active lifestyle destination that also promotes patronage of the local businesses. An example of this would be a trail path from Innovation campus to downtown restaurants.

Promote Healthy Lifestyles

We live in a time when there is unprecedented demand for recreation and leisure time activities. Albert Lea is part of the AARP Blue Zones- Vitality Project and could host AARP and other Health/Wellness initiatives.

Promote History

Albert Lea Monument, Freeborn County Historical Museum, Library & Village: connect with film, fashion, and fair organizations to promote its historic village for movie sets, photo shoots, historical re-enactments, fairs, and signature events.

Promote Arts

Marion Ross Performing Arts Center- promote local shows to greater MN area residents, package show tickets with dinner at local restaurants. Surrounding area residents will travel to Albert Lea, especially if events are themed by epoch or are genre specific such as comedy night, Shakespeare, folk dance...etc.

Social Media comments from visitors indicate a need to revitalize the downtown and shoreline, but also to utilize more contemporary platforms to brand the city. The development of digital Apps could broadcast Albert Lea's endeavors to a wider audience if marketed correctly; for example, Apps that provide self-guided tours of natural and cultural amenities, digital advertising to promote events to targeted demographic, and strategically locating billboards along highways could further help actualize Albert Lea's Economic Development Goals.

These practical recommendations are made to capitalize on existing qualities, transform them into competitive advantages and ultimately revitalize the city of Albert Lea. Any investment, program, or project should be aligned with selected goals and actions and carefully planned and vetted through fiscal accountability measures (such as the Strong Towns Model) before being initiated.

GOALS & ACTIONS

Goal 1: Create a strong economic development system.

Action 1.1. Leverage stakeholder organizations. Albert Lea can build out a database of local demand and supply by updating the existing skills inventory and existing needs information. Tools can be used based on the existing information to support small and local businesses.

Action 1.2 Attract and retain successful businesses. Efforts should be focused on attracting emerging stars or opportunity sectors per ALEDA 2020 Target Industry Study. Businesses can be attracted and retained by creating a shared branding messaging campaign.

Goal 2: Help connect schools/higher education and employers to strengthen the talent Pipeline.

Action 2.1. Establish a continuous pipeline from educational institutes to local employers: establish an Innovation campus at the north end of Albert Lea near the Mall and Schools to link K-12, college, and vocational programs with local business needs (use inventory from Goal 1, Action 1). Request local businesses to provide job shadowing, apprenticeships, or job-related interactions to showcase non-four-year degree work to offer alternative tracks, tech training, and jobs not requiring education beyond high school.

Action 2.2. Seek regional industry partnerships (identified as star or opportunity sectors 1) that may not be located in Albert Lea yet, to bring training programs that would support skills needed to attract emerging sectors such as computer services, software coding academies that could re-train local talent and further support research and development (R&D).

Action 2.3. Create a Zoning overlay or Area Plan for the Innovation Campus that facilitates land entitlements for compatible uses.

Goal 3: Enhance and promote quality of life amenities to help attract talent, retain residents and increase levels of community engagement .

Action 3.1. Create a land trust whereby local property owners may donate land and receive tax right off, then offer land free of charge (including city-owned) to distinguish the city from other competing regions and help attract industry partners; tap into local enterprise and talent - seek community partners to fund or offer creative adaptation of unused spaces/buildings to create flexible spaces and accommodate start-up or entrepreneur incubators that offer relevant training and development; Develop a local crowdfunding program to fund local start-ups. Develop events related to these spaces and programs that promote community support of local emerging businesses.

Action 3.2. Expand and diversify the City's tax base by providing a mixed-use zoning overlay that allows a greater mix of compatible land uses and better accommodates potential businesses and densities such as commercial and residential development downtown, as well as industrial near the airport, railroad, and highway corridors in the north, south, and east. Develop Performance standards for these overlays to ensure the mix of uses maintains appropriate (noise, lighting, aesthetic, unifying criteria. Find banking, grassroots, and financial partners that can offer low-interest construction loans and grant incentives for updating the reuse of buildings. Beautify entrances to the city and brand wayfinding.

Action 3.3. Allow more home businesses and set zoning criteria to minimize negative impacts on nearby properties. Consider the annexation of contingent parcels that have the potential for land uses to be served by city services.

Action 3.4. Capitalize on natural resources and become a destination for Eco-tourism. Leverage parks, trails, and water assets to solicit sports associations to locate events in Albert Lea. Extend trails to nearby systems to create an inter-regional loop. Further develop water amenities.

Goal 4: Prioritize activities to ensure the county is prepared for business growth opportunities.

Action 4.1. Seek broadband companies and request that they provide coverage or service in Albert Lea's underserved areas.

Action 4.2. Climate change and recent local data show emerging demand for environmental, sustainable services and products: Craft training programs to allow the manufacturing workforce to transition to environmentally clean and high-tech industries such as organic/plant-based emerging food processing, R&D, as well as manufacturing of solar/wind/battery components and computer coding to support high tech manufacturing transformation.

Action 4.3. Work with computer coding skills to create Apps to promote the city's trails, events, and businesses in an innovative way- consider even gamifying the experience with Apps and augmented reality

09 IMPLEMENTATION

Chapter highlights

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

OVERVIEW

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

OFFICIAL CONTROLS

Zoning

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

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

Subdivision of Land

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

Ordinance Amendments

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

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

FUNDING MECHANISMS

The construction of public improvements requires a funding source. Several tools can be used to plan for these improvements.

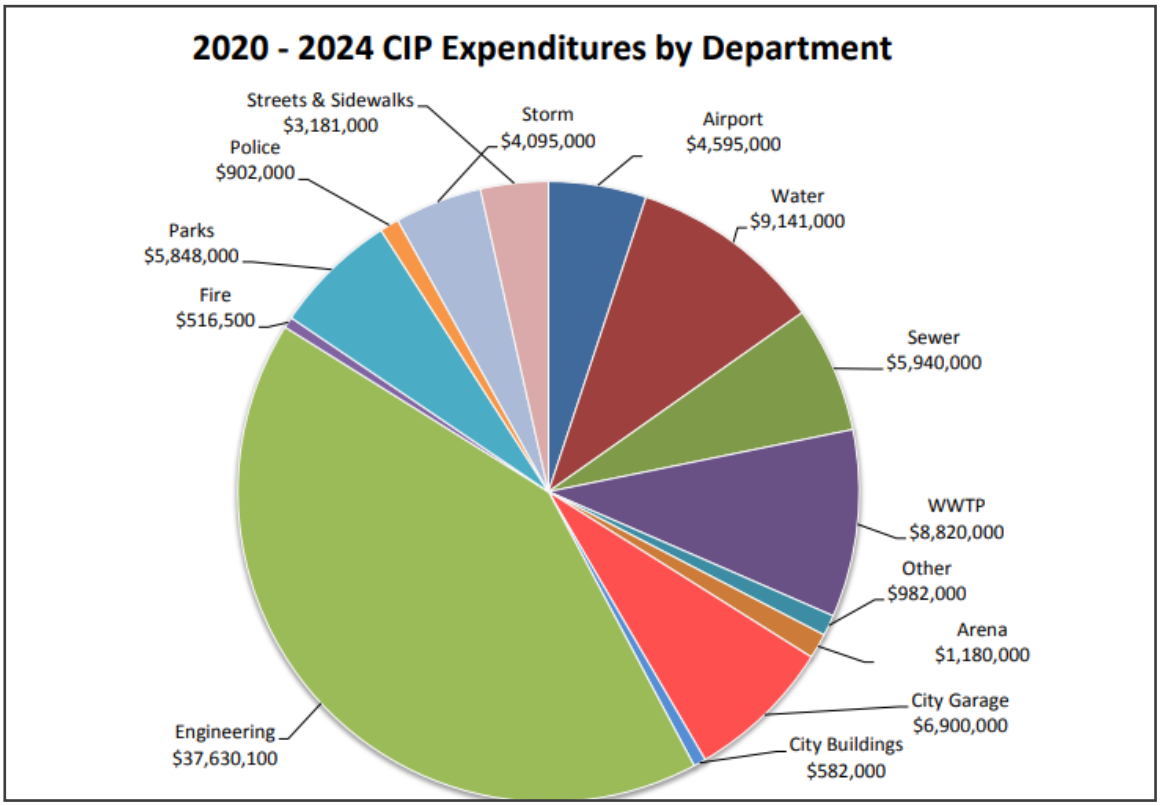
Capital Improvements Program

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

The full Capital Improvement Plan is available at Albert Lea City Hall. It is also included as an appendix to the Comprehensive Plan (see Appendix A). Specific implementation strategies for water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure are also described in those chapters.

Grants

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



AREA/SUBJECT PLANS & OTHER TOOLS

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

- ***Strategic Plan:*** Typically an internal plan for city employees, structures, and organization. In other states and areas, Strategic Plans and Comprehensive Plans are interchangeable.
- ***Infrastructure Plan:*** A plan for expanding roads and utilities. This plan may include utility and transportation studies and ties in with the CIP.
- ***Master/Small Area Plan:*** A plan for a system or geographical area. Some examples include:
    - Parks Master Plan
    - Trails Master Plan
    - Downtown Master Plan
    - Neighborhood Master Plan
- ***Economic Development Plan:*** A plan addressing the economic environment of an area, including things like workforce development, business attraction and retention, and other economic considerations.
- ****Climate Action Plan:*** A plan addressing the City's impact on climate change.
- ****Facilities Plan:*** A plan for taking inventory of existing public facilities and suggesting future improvements.
- ***Corridor Plan:*** A plan typically centered on a major road or other transportation lines that is a mix of transportation and land use planning.
- ****ADA Transition Plan:*** A plan for reviewing City infrastructure, such as sidewalks and trails, for ADA accessibility. The plan then provides a 20- to 30-year guide for correcting accessibility impediments.
- ***Safe Routes to School Plan:*** A plan for safe, connected routes to and from school.
- ***Campus Plan:*** A plan for a collection of buildings in an area. They are typically used for an institution or organization planning their building complex or future growth but could be used for establishing a government building complex.
- ***Bike and Pedestrian Masterplan:*** A plan for safe, connected routes to and from homes, neighborhoods, commercial centers, medical facilities, and other destinations across the City.

Items with a "" denote an existing plan adopted or published by the City.*

Amending the Comprehensive Plan

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

ACTION PLAN

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

- ***Goal:*** A restatement of the specific goal.
- ***Objective:*** A restatement of the specific objective.
- ***Action Step:*** Specific action items intended to help meet the goals.
- ***Priority:*** In some cases, the site is currently underutilized, with lower densities of residents and jobs compared to potential development opportunities
- ***Tools:*** This column lists potential tools available to achieve the stated goal.
- ***Benchmarks:*** This column lists performance measurements or other indicators to help determine progress on an action item.

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

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX WORKSHEETS

As the City of Albert Lea continues to grow in population, supportive residential, commercial, and industrial centers must be provided. The city has identified several areas for redevelopment and future development. For suggestions by the Steering Committee on where to start regarding action items, please see the Public Engagement section at the beginning of this document or Appendix A.

TABLE 9-1 LAND USE IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Preserve and Maintain Existing Strengths		Encourage the preservation and enhancement of the City's single-family housing stock using city programs that incentivize upkeep and maintenance of private property.	Medium	City Staff; Funding/ Grants	Funding secure and process established providing homeowners with capital to do home maintenance
	Help new and long-time residents find or keep their homes.	Encourage Aging in Place by increasing housing choices for seniors living in the community.	Low	City Staff; Zoning Code; Land Development Requirements and Procedures	Increased diversification of built housing types within city limits
		Update the City's zoning code to allow for and encourage the adaptive reuse of neglected buildings in all districts, including residential districts.	Low/ Medium	City Staff; Graphic Illustrations and Concepts; Land Development Requires and Procedures	Zoning code amended, and updated, as needed.
	Support natural and planned walkable communities.	Support small local businesses, particularly in the areas of the City where new development is designated in the comprehensive plan.	Low/ Medium	City Staff; Grants; Small Area Plans; Corridor Plans	Regular meetings are held and findings are implemented into City practices, policies and codes where determined appropriate

TABLE 9-1 LAND USE IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Preserve and Maintain Existing Strengths	Support natural and planned walkable communities.	Encourage the development of complete neighborhoods where residents have convenient access to healthy food, goods and services, parks, and social offerings by allowing for the development of compatible commercial uses in residential areas.	Low	City Staff; City Officials; Zoning Code; Subdivision Ordinance; Land Development Requirements and Procedures; Small Area Plans	Development of mixed-use (horizontal or vertical) projects within city limits
Guide and Encourage New Development	Guide development into areas of targeted growth.	Identify locations in the City which could support new and mixed-use development.	Low	City Staff; Small Area Plans;	A first round of suitable developments sites are identified
		Identify locations in the City which could support an industrial expansion area.	Low	City Staff; Small Area Plans	A first round of suitable developments sites are identified
		Expand and develop the new industrial park by proactively zoning and marketing applicable properties to industrial developers.	Low/ Medium	City Staff; Small Area Plans; CIP; Zoning Code	New industrial park area is either under development or going through development review
		Plan for appropriate amenities, high quality design, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and open space in high growth areas, particularly in the downtown mixed-use district and around neighborhood centers.	Medium	City Staff; Small Area Plans; CIP; ADA Transition Plan; Sidewalk and Pedestrian Plan	Establishment of a CIP and Small Area Plan to plan for and build needed improvements
		Complete area plans for the Downtown and Main Street Development Districts.	High	City Staff; Small Area Plans	Area plans are completed and adopted as city policy by City Council

TABLE 9-1 LAND USE IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Guide and Encourage New Development	Remove barriers to development.	Conduct pre-development work on desired sites to reduce barriers to redevelopment. Activities may include: parcel consolidation, market analysis, property and land acquisitions, soil testing and contaminant remediation, finance and marketing incentive packages.	High	City Staff; GIS Analytical Data and Tools; Other Market Demographic and Economic Data and Analytical Tools; Related Infrastructure Plans	A first round of suitable developments sites are identified
		Increase density allowances in the City's downtown area to encourage higher density, mixed-use development.	Low	City Staff; Zoning Code	Zoning code amended, and updated, as needed.
		Support a diversification of housing types throughout the City, including the development of a tiny home park to support housing affordability.	Low/ Medium	City Staff; Zoning Code; Future Land Use Map	Increased diversification of built housing types within city limits
	Amend and administer city plans and codes.	Update City zoning code, subdivision ordinance, and Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) to accommodate and facilitate desired new development and land use.	Medium	City Staff; Zoning Code; Subdivision Ordinance; CIP	Zoning code and subdivision ordinance amended, and updated, as needed. CIP plan reviewed annually.
		Encourage climate resilient designs incorporating complete streets and environmentally-conscious construction.	Low	City Staff; Public Works; Parks and Recreation	Public Works and Park and Recreation adopt guidelines for incorporating climate resilient designs into public spaces and infrastructure
		Follow through on action items outlined in the City's Climate Action Plan.	Medium/ High	Climate Action Plan	The city monitors and collects data showing a decrease in carbon footprint

TABLE 9-1 LAND USE IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Develop Community Identity	Welcome and engage new and long-time residents and businesses.	Support community events hosted in public parks and other gathering spaces to help foster a sense of community in Albert Lea.	Medium	City and Community Leaders; Parks and Recreation; Community Engagement & Enrichment	Neighborhood- and city-wide events are held in public space across Albert Lea
		Collaborate with stakeholders and community groups to identify other ways to develop a sense of community identity in the City.	Low/ Medium	City and Community Leaders; Parks and Recreation; Community Engagement & Enrichment	Regular meetings are held and findings are implemented into City practices, policies and codes where determined appropriate
		Identify sites and develop community gathering spaces within the City's neighborhoods that include park amenities and public art.	Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation; Community Engagement & Enrichment; Local Artists	Locations are identified with help of community leaders. Amenities and art are constructed in accordance with findings from regular meetings with stakeholders and neighborhood needs.
		Encourage creative placemaking throughout the City, particularly in the downtown area.	Low/ Medium	City Staff; Community Leaders; Parks and Recreation; Community Engagement & Enrichment; Local Artists	Adoption of placemaking practices into City practices, policies and codes where determined appropriate
	Enhance development through inclusive, healthy, and safe design principles.	Conduct neighborhood-level planning to further identify community character and planning priorities to create more complete, sustainable, and resilient neighborhoods.	High	City Staff; Community Engagement & Enrichment; Small Area Plans	Policies, guidelines, or plans completed and adopted.

TABLE 9-1 LAND USE IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Develop Community Identity		Require all subdivisions and other new development to adhere to long-range plans to ensure new development and redevelopment incorporates all the best practices of creating a sense of place and smart growth principles.	Medium	City Staff; Long-Range Plans; Future Land Use Maps; Zoning Code;	The Zoning Code and Subdivision Ordinance is are revised, and kept current, to reflect desired and appropriate changes. Plans and Future Land Use Map are also kept current. City staff ensures adherence.
	Enhance development through inclusive, healthy, and safe design principles.	Review and update development review procedures and policies to ensure incorporation of descriptions, and associated deliverables, showcasing how proposed open space functions will be fulfilled and how the design achieves each function. City staff will work with the developer to ensure these functions are met.	Medium	City Staff; City Officials; Zoning Code; Subdivision Ordinance; Land Development Requirements & Procedures; Small Area Plans	The Zoning Code, Land Development Procedures, Subdivision Ordinance and other applicable City Code policies and procedures are updated to reflect desired changes. Requirements are evaluated regularly to determine effectiveness.
		Enforce codes to maintain the quality, character, viability, value and livability of all areas of the City and to create, foster and maintain a rich sense of place.	Low	City Staff	The Zoning Code, Land Development Procedures, and other applicable City Code policies and procedures are updated to reflect desired changes. Requirements are evaluated regularly to determine effectiveness.

TABLE 9-2 HOUSING IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Expand Housing Choice and Affordability	Support new residential development	Identify and prepare locations for multi-family development	High	City Staff, Future Land Use Map, Building Code, Related Land Use Policies, Development Partners	Land Use Map is current. Potential areas for multi-family development are indicated on a map. Relationships with multi-family developers are established.
		Update existing housing regulations to allow for a greater diversity of housing typologies	Medium	City Staff, Future Land Use Map, Building Code, Zoning Code, Related Land Use Policies	Zoning Code, Zoning Map, and Land Use Map are updated to allow and encourage various types of housing.
	Balance economic interests of Albert Lea and residents	Utilize a Capital Improvement Plan to accommodate desired facilities	High	City Staff, CIP, Market Analysis	A Capital Improvement Plan is developed and implemented.
		Identify and package economic incentives that could be leveraged to encourage housing at accessible price points viable	Medium	City Staff, CIP, Housing Study, Future Land Use Map	Development policies are updated. Policies should include required affordable housing percentages based on the AMI.
Preserve and Enhance Existing Housing Stock	Restore aging housing stock	Incentivize maintenance of housing	Low	City Staff, Zoning Code, Housing Policies	Development policies are updated. Policies should include maintenance incentives for facades, lawn care, and structural improvements.
		Enforce existing standards for housing and yard maintenance	Medium	City Staff, Zoning Code	Time and resources are dedicated toward Code Enforcement.
	Preserve housing affordability	Develop and advertise programs to maintain the affordability of existing housing	High	City Staff, Housing Policies, Development Partners	Affordable Housing policies are advertised with Albert Lea branding.

TABLE 9-2 HOUSING IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Create vibrant and well-connected neighborhoods	Provide adequate access to amenities	Identify key destinations such as employment nodes, schools, parks and green space, and commercial services	Low	City Staff, Ftuture Land Use Map, GIS Analytical Tools	Employment nodes, schools, parks and green space, and commercial services are identified on a map.
		Construct parks and open spaces in each new residential development	High	City Staff, Zoning Code, Subdivision Ordinance	Park dedication is included with new development proposals.
		Use universal design principles in new housing developments	Medium	City Staff, Design Guidelines Manual	Residential design standards are developed and enforced.
	Encourage a sense of community	Identify neighborhood seams and barriers	Low	City Staff, GIS Analytical Tools	Seams and barriers are identified on a map.
		Create events within each neighborhood	High	City Staff, Neighborhood Volunteers, Calendar	Neighborhood events are placed on the Albert Lea city calendar.
		Establish neighborhood groups for residents to connect with one another	Medium	City Staff, Neighborhood Volunteers	Neighborhood jurisdictions are identified. Neighborhood leaders or boards are established.

TABLE 9-3 PUBLIC FACILITIES IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Expand existing utility system infrastructure to meet the demands generated by continued development	Expand utility systems into future growth areas	Implement the expansion of the stormwater collection, treatment, and outfall system as areas outside the limits of the existing system are developed, with a focus on regional stormwater ponds, where possible.	Medium	City Staff; Stormwater Plan	Adoption of a Stormwater Plan
		The stormwater system within the future growth areas will be based on the type, location, configuration, and sequence of the future development. The sizes and location of the final facilities should be based on detailed engineering studies as more information regarding future development becomes available.	Medium	City Staff; Stormwater Plan	Implementation of a Stormwater Plan within identified growth areas
		Implement the expansion of the trunk sanitary sewer system as areas outside the limits of the sanitary sewer collection system are developed. Final trunk sanitary sewer sizes, locations, and depths should be based on detailed engineering studies as more information regarding future development becomes available.	Medium	City Staff; Sewer Plan	Adoption of a Sewer Plan
		Construct new lift stations as areas outside the limits of the existing service areas are developed. Final lift station sizes, locations, and depths should be based on detailed engineering studies as more information becomes available.	Medium	City Staff; Sewer Plan	Implementation of a Sewer Plan within identified growth areas
		Implement the expansion of the trunk watermain system as areas outside the limits of the existing water distribution system are developed.	Medium	City Staff; Water Plan	Implementation of a Water Plan within identified growth areas
		The trunk watermain system within the future growth areas will be based on the type, location, configuration and sequence of the future development. Final trunk watermain sizes and locations should be based on detailed engineering studies as more information becomes available.	Medium	City Staff; Water Plan	Adoption of a Water Plan
		Develop a financing strategy for funding the expansion of utility systems into each growth area.	Low	City Staff; CIP; Water Plan; Sewer Plan; Storm water Plan	Incorporation of utility plans into CIP annually

TABLE 9-3 PUBLIC FACILITIES IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Expand existing utility system infrastructure	Expand the water supply, water treatment, and water storage systems as required to accommodate future development demands.	As future development occurs, detailed engineering studies should be performed to evaluate the capacity of the existing water supply, water treatment, and water storage systems considering new water demands and to determine required improvements.	Medium	City Staff; Water Plan	Completion of utility studies through adoption of utility plans
		Develop a financing strategy for funding the expansion of the trunk watermain system.	Low	City Staff; Water Plan; CIP	Incorporation of Water Plan into CIP annually
Monitor, evaluate and improve the condition of each utility system's infrastructure.		Prepare a study to document the condition of deficient sanitary sewers and collection system lift stations based on age, materials and deficiencies identified in sewer televising reports.	Medium	City Staff; Sewer Plan	Conduct a sewer study alongside adopting a Sewer Plan
		Utilize the information from the sanitary sewer condition study, in conjunction with the condition information for other infrastructure elements, to develop, expand and prioritize projects to be included in the capital improvements.	Medium	City Staff; Sewer Plan; CIP	Adoption of a Sewer Plan using information from the sewer study
	Replace aging system infrastructure.	Prepare a study to document the condition of deficient storm sewers and ponds based on age, materials, and other known deficiencies.	Medium	City Staff; Stormwater Plan	Conduct a study the adopt a Stormwater Plan
		Utilize the information from the storm sewer condition study, in conjunction with the condition information for other infrastructure elements, to develop, expand and prioritize projects to be included in the capital improvements.	Medium	City Staff; Stormwater Plan; CIP	Adoption of a Stormwater Plan using information from the stormwater study
		Develop a financing strategy for funding the replacement of the stormwater collection, treatment and outfall system.	Low	City Staff; Stormwater Plan; CIP	
		Prepare a study to document the condition of deficient watermains based on age, materials and history of breaks, leaks, freezing and other deficiencies.	Medium	City Staff; Water Plan	Conduct a water study alongside adopting a Water Plan
		Utilize information from the watermain condition study, with condition information for other infrastructure elements, to develop, expand, and prioritize projects to be included in the capital improvements.	Medium	City Staff; Water Plan; CIP	Adoption of a Water Plan using information from the water study

TABLE 9-3 PUBLIC FACILITIES IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Monitor, evaluate and improve the condition of each utility system's infrastructure.		Monitor changes in drinking water quality standards and identify possible changes to the treatment processes currently utilized by the City's three water treatment facilities.	Low	City Staff; Water Plan; Public Works	Regularly monitor water system and apply information to an adopted Water Plan
		Monitor the condition of the existing wells and related equipment and continue with regular inspections, maintenance and miscellaneous equipment replacement as required.	Low	City Staff; Water Plan; Public Works	Regularly monitor water system and apply information to an adopted Water Plan for inclusion in an annual CIP or maintenance plan
	Monitor the condition of existing system infrastructure and replace as required.	Monitor the condition of the water storage facilities and related equipment and continue with regular inspections, maintenance and miscellaneous equipment replacement as required.	Low	City Staff; Water Plan; Public Works	Regularly monitor water system and apply information to an adopted Water Plan for inclusion in an annual CIP or maintenance plan
		Monitor changes in wastewater quality standards and identify possible changes to the treatment processes currently utilized by the City's wastewater treatment facility.	Low	City Staff; Sewer Plan; Public Works	Regularly monitor sewer system and apply information to an adopted Water Plan
		Monitor the condition of the City's main lift station near Academy Park, continue with regular inspections, maintenance, and miscellaneous equipment replacement as required.	Low	City Staff; Sewer Plan; Public Works	Regularly monitor sewer system and apply information to an adopted Water Plan for inclusion in an annual CIP or maintenance plan
	Incorporate BMPs to Meet TMDL Limits.	Implement the recommended retrofitting projects that will help it meet the TMDL requirements, targeting the current phosphorus TMDL and the future turbidity removal needs.	Medium	City Staff; Public Works	Completion of projects meeting TMDL requirements
		Develop a BMP strategy for undeveloped areas that are based on existing area soils and targets the current phosphorus TMDL and the future turbidity removal needs.	Low	City Staff; Public Works	Development of a BMP strategy

TABLE 9-3 PUBLIC FACILITIES IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Maintain and operate public facilities at the highest possible level of service.	Continue to assess the condition and needs of facilities.	Use the 2015 Facilities Master Plan as a guideline for future facility investments.	Medium/ High	City Staff; Facilities Master Plan; CIP	Implement the Facilities Master Plan
		Conduct an updated facility assessment within the next 10 years.	Medium	City Staff; Public Works	Conduct an updated facility assessment by 2030
		Adopt a plan for staffing and facility needs for the next 10 years.	Low	City Staff; City Administration; Public Works	Adopt a plan for staffing and facility needs by 2030
		Develop an implementation plan for updating existing facilities and constructing new ones.	Medium	City Staff; Facilities Master Plan; CIP	Complete a year-by-year plan for implementing the Facilities Management Plan
	Improve the efficiency and climate resilience of existing and new facilities	Follow through on proposed action items in the City's Climate Action Plan.	High	City Staff; City Officials; Climate Action Plan; CIP	Implement the Climate Action Plan
		Seek out opportunities to invest in climate resilience through city assets.	Medium	City Staff; Climate Action Plan; CIP	Achieve a lower impact to the environment through investing in sustainable alternatives for city assets
Construct and maintain a safe environment for children and district staff.	Ensure routes to schools are safe for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists.	Seek out information on and assess the need for a Safe Routes to School plan.	Low	City Staff; CIP; MnDOT; Grant; Albert Lea Schools	Assess the need for an SRTS plan
		Utilize the City's ADA Transition Plan to help prioritize critical upgrade and reconstruction projects near schools.	Medium	City Staff; CIP; Public Works; Parks and Recreation	Implement the ADA Transition Plan and prioritize improvements near schools
		Seek to build a complete and connected trail and path system from neighborhoods to all schools in Albert Lea.	Medium/ High	City Staff; Parks and Recreation; CIP; Public Works	Constructs trails from all neighborhoods to Albert Lea schools

TABLE 9-3 PUBLIC FACILITIES IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Foster an environment for lifelong learning, growth, and cooperation.	Partner on educational and workforce development opportunities.	Help establish a partnership between the city, ALEDA, school district, and Riverland Community College.	Medium	City Staff; ALEDA; Albert Lea Schools; Riverland Community College	Establish a partnership for workforce development between the city, local schools, and ALEDA
		Use the partnership to seek and attract a coding academy (see the Economic Development chapter).	High	City Staff; ALEDA; Albert Lea Schools; Riverland Community College	Successfully attract and establish a coding academy in Northbridge Mall
		Provide regular and transparent opportunities for the school district, district staff, students, and families to engage with public meetings and city processes to build civic engagement.	Low	City Staff; Albert Lea Schools	Adopt a policy for notifying Albert Lea schools and School Board about events and decisions impacting them
		Commit to a system of notification between various governmental, public, and semi-public organizations when development, projects, and other events happen.	Low	City Staff	Adopt a policy for notifying impacted organizations

TABLE 9-4 TRANSPORTATION IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Maintain and leverage the existing transportation infrastructure for potential development	Plan future development around existing streets and access points	Identify existing connective street nodes within Albert Lea	Low	City Staff, Land Use	Land Use Map is current. Potential areas for multi-family development are indicated on a map. Relationships with multi-family developers are established.
		Map, GIS Analytical	Medium	City Staff, Future Land Use Map, Building Code, Zoning Code, Related Land Use Policies	Zoning Code, Zoning Map, and Land Use Map are updated to allow and encourage various types of housing.
	Evaluate the quality of roads within Albert Lea	Observe road quality for local and arterial streets	Low	City Staff, GIS Analytical Tools	Road quality determined by good, fair, or poor. Road quality is stored and updated in a Road Network database.
		Determine the capacity and longevity of the road	Medium	City Staff, Road Analysis, Road Network Database	The Road Network database includes carrying capacity, year estimates for road reconstruction, and a maintenance schedule.
		Identity roads which will need investment	Low	City Staff, Road Network database	The Road Network database is updated regularly to identify road needs.
	Identify potential connection points within the existing transportation system	Distinguish new road connection points	Medium	City Staff, GIS Analytical Tools	Developments are reviewed for road connectivity and ease of various transportation options.
		Create quick and easy access to the surrounding areas of Albert Lea	High	Zoning Code, Subdivision Ordinance	Developments provide adequate access from origin to destination.

TABLE 9-4 TRANSPORTATION IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Enhance the multimodal and connective transportation system	Encourage connective routes for all transportation options	Expand bike and pedestrian trails that route from residential uses to destinations such as schools, parks, or commercial corridors	High	City Staff, Zoning Code, Subdivision Ordinance, Future Land Use Map	Frequent destinations are accessible for cyclists, pedestrians, and vehicle passengers. Parking for destinations is equipped with multimodal parking spaces.
		Incorporate connective and active transportation options	Medium	City Staff, Local Businesses, Future Land Use Map	Existing and new transportation infrastructure incorporates bike and pedestrian trails.
		Indicate bike lanes and pedestrian areas with signage and streetscaping	Medium	City Staff, Future Land Use Map	Road paint differentiates vehicle and bike lanes. Signs are posted along bike routes. Signs are included at all pedestrian crossings.
	Encourage high intensity uses in close proximity to high intensity traffic roads	Create new developments near roads with adequate carrying capacity	High	City Staff, Developing Partners, Future Land Use Map, Road Network database	New developments are reviewed with road carrying capacity in mind. New developments do not adversely impact traffic.
		Construct parks and open spaces in each new residential development	High	City Staff, Zoning Code, Subdivision Ordinance	Park dedication is included with new development proposals.
	Incorporate multimodal design into existing and new transportation systems	Provide opportunities for various transportation options	Medium	City Staff, Future Land Use Map, Related Infrastructure Plans	Roads favor all modes of transportation equally.
		Create routes around and through Albert Lea	High	City Staff, County Staff, Future Land Use Map, Related In-frastructure Plans	Vehicle, bike, and pedestrian routes provide routes from origins, typically residential, to destinations, typically commercial or industrial.

TABLE 9-4 TRANSPORTATION IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Enhance the multimodal and connective transportation system	Incorporate multimodal design into existing and new transportation systems	Create efficient and direct routes from high-capacity origins to high-capacity destinations	High	City Staff, Future Land Use Map, Road Network database	Traffic from high capacity origins to high capacity destinations is uncongested.
		Seek to establish or support a transit system, from home to medical and other necessary amenities, for underserved and vulnerable populations	High	City Staff, County Staff, MnDOT, Infrastructure Plans, CIP	Creation of a transit organization or system with regular or on-call transportation service to and from important destinations in the city and region
Provide a wholistic aesthetic transportation system for residents and visitors	Incorporate Albert Lea branding into wayfinding signs and street design	Identify branding elements to incorporate in the transportation system	Medium	City Staff	A logo, slogan, and color palette are used in the transportation system.
		Create a user-friendly wayfinding sign system	Medium	City Staff, Design Software	Signage directs toward key destinations in Albert Lea. Signage is easily viewable.
		Identify key locations for wayfinding signs	Low	City Staff, Future Land Use Map, Road Network database	Key Albert Lea destinations, such as the lake, the library, and the schools, are identified.
	Integrate landscaping and lighting to enhance roadway design	Incorporate various understory and canopy trees	High	City Staff, Landscaping Materials, Design Software	A landscaping plan is developed. Streetscapes are planted with various trees and vegetation.
		Place lighting in large open spaces	High	City Staff, Landscaping Materials, Design Software	A landscaping and lighting plan is developed. Streetscapes and parking lots are well lit with downward facing lights.

TABLE 9-4 TRANSPORTATION IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Provide a wholistic aesthetic transportation system for residents and visitors	Integrate landscaping and lighting to enhance roadway design	Identify complimentary landscaping elements to building facades	Low	City Staff, Landscaping and Soil Analysis	Partnership with the Soil and Water Conservation District is established. Plant recommendations of the District are incorporated into Albert Lea's streetscape.
	Create a balance of signage, structural elements, and environmental features	Revisit sign ordinance to promote businesses with signage	Medium	City Staff, Zoning Code	Sign ordinance is up to date to encourage business and destination signs.
		Use signage to promote key destinations in Albert Lea	Medium	City Staff, Zoning Code, Future Land Use Map, Branding	Key Albert Lea destinations are incorporated into the wayfinding signage system.
Support climate resilient infrastructure	Reduce car usage for local trips in Albert Lea	Identify locations for biking and walking commutes	Medium	City Staff, Future Land Use Map, GIS Analytical Tools	Bike parking is identified on a map. Travel routes from origin to destination less than 15 minutes are identified on a map.
		Create a Bike and Pedestrian Masterplan	High	City Staff, Future Land Use Map, GIS Analytical Tools	Bike and Pedestrian Masterplan is adopted.
		Coordinate with EDA to identify possible vehicle alternatives for employees	Medium	City Staff, EDA, Future Land Use Map	Ongoing relationship with EDA. Rates of cyclists and pedestrians for work commutes increased.
	Encourage EV usage for residents	Determine current and future demand for EV charging stations	Medium	City Staff, Future Land Use Map, Road Network Database	Analysis of current EV use is concluded. Research of future demand is established.
		Identify areas for electric charging in public parking facilities	Medium	City Staff, Future Land Use Map, Road Network Database	Potential EV charging station locations are identified on a map.

TABLE 9-5 PARKS & REC IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Unite a Network of Parks, Open Spaces, and Natural Features	Develop a more thorough network of accessible green spaces across the city	Adopt a communal identity through a wayfinding and gateway signage system for parkland and community gateways	Low/ Medium	City Staff	Implementation of a wayfinding and gateway signage system
		Construct and preserve a diverse and healthy tree canopy on public lands	Medium	City Staff; Public Works; Parks and Recreation	Increase in tree canopy across public land
		Maintain an inclusive approach towards development through community outreach, partnerships, and open communication	Low	City Staff; Community Engagement and Enrichment	Hold regular meetings with stakeholders and community leaders
		Adopt a Trail and Sidewalk Master Plan, for a connected, safe, and user-friendly way to traverse the community	Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation; Public Works	Adopt a Trail and Sidewalk Master Plan
		Continue developing actional development projects, like the Southwest Greenward and Eco Village concepts	Medium/ High	City Staff; Public Works; Parks and Recreation	Completion of the concepts in Albert Lea city limits
	Provide amenities tailored to the needs and wants of the community they serve	Strive to build and maintain communication and trust between the City Administration and residents regarding current conditions and future considerations	Low	City Staff; Parks and Recreation; Community Engagement & Enrichment	Hold regular meetings with stakeholders and community leaders
		Encourage community participation through data collection (online and in person)	Low	City Staff; Parks and Recreation; Community Engagement & Enrichment	Conduct regular community engagement efforts
		Structure outreach to provide opportunities for all voices	Low	City Staff; Parks and Recreation; Community Engagement & Enrichment	Conduct regular community engagement efforts in underrepresented communities
		Invest in improvements equitably addressing the needs of all users	Low/ Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation	Utilize feedback from regular community engagement meetings

TABLE 9-5 PARKS & REC IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Unite a Network of Parks, Open Spaces, and Natural Features	Improve health of the community by providing spaces and activities to suit a variety of needs	Provide more opportunities for complete and walkable streets	Medium	City Staff; Public Works; Parks and Recreation	Adopt best practices and policies for street design
		Increase the awareness and access to physical activity through various efforts like outdoor fitness circuits/ bodyweight workout signage	Low	City Staff; Parks and Recreation	Establish and sign a circuit for encouraging physical activity
		Nurture active kids through programs and facilities	Low/ Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation	Improve or expand youth programs or activities
		Build an inclusive approach to active living through outreach, awareness, partnerships, and infrastructure improvements	Low/ Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation; Community Engagement & Enrichment	Hold regular meetings with community leaders and city staff to improve active living options
Identify & Protect Natural Resources	Maintain existing forests and parks at healthy, sustainable levels	Enact habitat management to preserve and improve existing natural areas and enhance opportunities for growth	Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation	Improve and manage natural areas
		Invest in personnel, associated equipment, and management standards to maintain high levels of resource maintenance	Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation	Have staff with the knowledge and equipment to carefully maintain natural areas
		Evaluate parks, open space and natural resource improvements within the context of resilient design and employ resilient design principles during design and construction	Low	City Staff; Parks and Recreation	Include resilient design principles in future improvements to parks
		Note existing open spaces and natural features which form greenways as a community amenity, strive to connect lone areas into the greater green space network	Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation	Identify future public green space and natural amenities, creating a complete and connected parks system
		Expand the integration of “green” systems within the urban space (i.e. pocket parks, landscaped streets, boulevards, and plazas)	Low/ Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation; Public Works	Create areas of green and open space in urban or suburban areas
		Use organic/eco-friendly maintenance supplies and materials	Low	City Staff; Parks and Recreation	Useco-friendly maintenance supplies and materials

TABLE 9-5 PARKS & REC IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Identify & Protect Natural Resources	Prioritize open space through efforts to expand the park system with new dedications that weigh benefits of open space with density	Maintain a dialogue with developers and designers extolling positive benefits associated with open spaces	Low	City Staff; Parks and Recreation; Community Engagement & Enrichment	Hold a regular meeting between developers and builders with city staff and officials about open spaces
		Hold newly developed spaces equally accountable for green initiatives as existing open spaces	Low	City Staff; Subdivision Ordinance; Zoning Code	Develop and enforce green space requirements imposed on development
	Encourage the public to foster environmental stewardship	Promote local initiatives for native landscaping, pollinator-friendly landscaping, and climate resilient practices	Low	City Staff; Parks and Recreation; Community Engagement and Enrichment	Establish a program encouraging climate resilient and native-friendly practices
		Foster establishment and involvement in community gardens.	Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation; Community Engagement and Enrichment	Grow and support the community garden program
		Partner with other agencies to create and deploy community education plans	Medium	City Staff; Community Engagement and Enrichment	Support agencies educating people on environmental stewardship
		Foster youth leadership and an "everyone plays" approach to recreation programs and activities	Low/ Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation	Identify and mentor youth into leadership roles by encouraging everyone can play
Foster Community Engagement	Encourage leadership across generations	Promote ambassadors from underrepresented communities	Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation; Community Engagement and Enrichment	Identify and engage community leaders in various communities within Albert Lea
		Establish ongoing lines of communication between community leaders and city officials	Medium	City Staff; Community Engagement and Enrichment	Hold regular meetings between city officials and community leaders

TABLE 9-5 PARKS & REC IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Foster Community Engagement	Create and expand partnerships	Identify and empower community leaders across age and ability levels through mentorship programs	Medium	City Staff; Community Engagement and Enrichment	Identify and engage community leaders in various communities within Albert Lea
		Assist with youth-led grant initiatives	Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation; Community Engagement and Enrichment	Identify and support youth-led initiatives through grant writing and mentorship
		Expand Parks and Recreation's role as a facilitator for agencies, groups and individuals -- creating constituencies and advocacy groups	Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation; Community Engagement and Enrichment	Adapt Parks and Recreation for facilitating groups with various interests, while offering grant writing and other support
		Work with area partners for development of joint facilities (such as the YMCA)	Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation	Construct facilities with other organizations for public and private use
	Hold inclusivity at the forefront	When considering public spaces, maintain an inclusive approach to the community's abilities, wants, and needs	Low	City Staff; Parks and Recreation; Community Engagement and Enrichment	Use information gained in community engagement to inform future improvements
		Engage with members of all age groups to gather comprehensive perspectives and desires for open spaces	Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation; Community Engagement and Enrichment	Hold continued public engagement with different communities
		Provide multiple avenues of engagement including town halls, surveys, pop-up charettes, and virtual offerings to allow a majority of voices to be heard	Medium	City Staff; Community Engagement and Enrichment	Provide continued, multiple avenues of engagement
	Promote healthy activity	Provide attractive opportunities for outdoor play, aimed at inter-generational and omni-skill level, thereby providing safe spaces for youth after school	Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation	Expand the variety and amount of outdoor play options
		Utilize existing and proposed recreational programs to foster a healthy, inviting environment in open spaces	Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation	Expand the number of engaged people through recreational programs

TABLE 9-5 PARKS & REC IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Foster Community Engagement	Promote healthy activity	Integrate active living strategies into new development and redevelopment	Low/ Medium	City Staff	Require active living opportunities with developments
		Evaluate park visibility and lighting and make improvements while expanding police presence	Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation; Community Engagement and Enrichment; Police	Improve the safety perception of park space
Promote Community Reinvestment	Build community identity	Promote sense of place through unique element offerings	High	City Staff; Parks and Recreation	Construct unique art or amenities in each park
		Create a signature element in each park by integrating art into public spaces	High	City Staff; Parks and Recreation	Have unique art, contextual to the neighborhood or park, in each public space
	Maintain long term projects	Leverage existing parks, recreation, and activity spaces as jumping off points for revitalization	Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation	Improve parks based on equitable and targeted impacts
		Continue to invest in neighborhood and community parks through inclusive additions and aesthetic improvements	Low/ Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation	Improve parks based on equitable and targeted impacts
		Note existing facilities and seek to maintain their attractiveness to residents, organizations, and visitors	Low	City Staff; Parks and Recreation	Ensure adequate maintenance is completed, as needed, for city facilities
		Improve athletic field quality	Low/ Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation	Improve the quality of athletic fields through aesthetic and functional upgrades
	Emphasize the benefit	Provide documented benefits associated with parks, open space and recreation; including higher property values, overall visitation, and increased development interest	Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation	Publish or adopt a document on tangible and in-tangible the benefits of parks
		Continue community outreach efforts utilizing multiple avenues of communication	Low	City Staff; Parks and Recreation; Community Engagement and Enrichment	Engage the community using a variety of online and in-person avenue

TABLE 9-5 PARKS & REC IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Promote Community Reinvestment	Emphasize the benefit	Emphasize synergistic growth associated with recreation in economic development, sense of community, safety, promotion of health, natural resource protection, and social cohesion	Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation; Community Engagement and Enrichment	Incorporate sustainable growth policies into new development and infill
		Continue to engage the community through events and celebrations	Low	City Staff; Community Engagement and Enrichment	Have city representation for community engagement at major events
	Establish sustainable revenue streams	Expand grassroots parks and recreation advocacy	Medium	City Staff; Parks and Recreation; Community Engagement and Enrichment	Help establish a grassroots advocacy
		Investigate opportunities for philanthropic or foundation-based funding	Low	City Staff; Parks and Recreation	Find and secure additional funding through
Bring Climate Resiliency to the Table	Address climate resiliency in public and private investments	Implement the tools and goals in the Climate Action Plan	High	City Staff	Implement the Climate Action Plan
		Integrate climate resiliency policies into various parts of local government	Medium	City Staff	Implement the Climate Action Plan in city policies
		Support efforts in educating the public on the connected nature of carbon footprints and greenhouses gases to important natural features, public health, and an adaptable economy	Low	City Staff; Community Engagement and Enrichment	Provide support to programs that educate the public

TABLE 9-6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Create strong economic development system	Leverage stakeholder organizations	Update the existing skills inventory and existing business needs database	Medium	City Staff, EDA, Business Database	Database is updated on a regular basis.
		Build a local and centralized database of labor demand + supply	Medium	City Staff, EDA, Business Database	Database of labor demand + supply is completed and updated regularly.
		Identify tools to support small and local businesses	Medium	City Staff, EDA	Relationships with small and local businesses are established. Supportive tools for businesses are readily available.
	Attract and retain successful businesses	Focus efforts on attracting emerging stars or opportunity sectors per ALEDA 2020 Target Industry Screening	High	City Staff, EDA, Branding	Emerging stars and opportunity sectors are identified. Emerging stars and opportunity sectors are established in the city of Albert Lea
		Create a shared branding and messaging campaign to seek out target businesses regionally, nationally and internationally	High	City Staff, Research, Branding Tools such as Logos and Color Palettes	Target businesses are identified. Branding and messaging campaign includes tactics to draw businesses.
Strengthen the work-skills pipeline	Establish a continuous pipeline from educational institutes to local employers	Request local businesses to provide job shadowing, apprenticeships, or job-related interactions	Low	City Staff, EDA, Local Businesses, Schools	Relationships with local businesses are established. Local businesses offer shadowing of various industries and skill levels.
		Seek regional industry partnerships	Medium	City Staff, Research	Regional industry partners are identified. Partnerships are established and mutually beneficial.
	Plan land uses for all levels of education	Establish an Innovation campus at the north end of Albert Lea near the Mall and Schools	High	City Staff, Future Land Use Map, Schools	An Innovation campus is planned, prepared, and established.
		Create a Zoning overlay or Area Plan for the Innovation Campus that facilitates land entitlements for compatible uses	High	City Staff, Future Land Use Map, Zoning Code	An Area Plan or Zoning Overlay for the Innovation campus is incorporated into the Zoning Code.

TABLE 9-6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Attract talent, retain residents and increase levels of community engagement	Promote quality of life	Allow more home businesses and set zoning criteria to minimize negative impacts to nearby properties	Low	City Staff, Zoning Code	Home occupation standards are updated. Standards include permitted indoor and outdoor use of a home, traffic requirements, and permitted hours of operation.
		Capitalize on natural resources and become a destination for Eco-tourism	Low	City Staff, GIS Analytical Tools, Branding	Natural resources are identified on a map. Natural resources are included in the branding campaign.
		Extend trails to nearby systems to create an inter-regional loop	High	City Staff, GIS Analytical Tools, Future Land Use Map	Trails offer an accessible alternative to vehicular travel. Trails run through and around all of Albert Lea.
	Create unique economic procedures to attract and retain residents	Create a land trust whereby local property owners may donate land and receive tax right off	Medium	City Staff, Zoning Code, Updated Land Use Policies	Land Use policies are updated to include land trust guidelines.
		Seek community partners to fund or offer creative adaptation of unused spaces/ buildings to create flexible spaces	Medium	City Staff, Zoning Code, Community Partners, Mixed Use Zoning	Community partners are established. Unused spaces are identified. A match is found for each unused space.
		Develop events related to flexible spaces and programs that promote community support of local emerging businesses	Medium	City Staff, Flexible Spaces, EDA, Local Businesses, Calendar	Flexible space events are included on Albert Lea's city calendar of events. Local businesses have expressed desires for various events for promotion.
		Find banking, grass roots and financial partners that can offer low interest loans and grant incentives for the re-use of buildings	Medium	City Staff, EDA, Building Code, Design Guideline Standards	Research of banking, grass roots, and financial partners has been conducted. Relationships with the partners are strengthened. Construction loans and grant incentives have been requested.
	Leverage land use tactics	Provide a mixed-use zoning overlay	Medium	City Staff, Zoning Code, Future Land Use Map	Potential areas for mixed use spaces are identified. Mixed use policies have been updated to include adaptive reuse of sites.
		Develop Performance standards for these overlays	High	City Staff, Zoning Code	Performance standards have been developed.

TABLE 9-6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

Goal	Objective	Action	Effort	Tools	Benchmarks
Prioritize activities to ensure the city and county are prepared for business growth opportunities	Leverage existing infrastructure and skills	Seek broadband companies and request that they provide coverage or service in Albert Lea underserved areas	Medium	City Staff, Research, Partnerships with Broadband Companies	Broadband companies have been identified. Relationships with broadband companies are developed. Albert Lea has sought coverage from the broadband companies.
		Create apps to promote city's trails, events and businesses	High	City Staff, App Development Software, Branding	An all inclusive app has been developed to promote Albert Lea. The app is advertised with city branding.
	Promote development of new skills	Craft training programs to allow manufacturing workforce to transition to environmentally clean and high-tech industries	High	City Staff, EDA, Partnerships with Local Businesses and Schools	Education tools are identified. Benefits of environmentally clean and high-tech industries are clearly defined.
		Seek opportunities for high tech manufacturing	Low	City Staff, Research	Research has been conducted on high tech manufacturing businesses seeking expansion. Communication with identified businesses is established.

Public Infrastructure, Facilities, and Services Action Items

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

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

Cost: In house

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

Action Item 2: Create an Infrastructure Master Plan

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

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

Action Item 3: Develop a Stormwater Utility Fee

Cost: $50,000-$75,000

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

Action Item 4: Extend Trunk Utilities into Future Growth Areas

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

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