

2014

Pelican Rapids COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE





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The City of Pelican Rapids has a proud history going back more than 140 years; beginning in 1867 when the representatives of a trading company arrived to establish trading relationships with Native Americans in the area. Several homes and businesses were established over the next few years. The village was platted in 1872 and incorporated in 1883. Pelican Rapids experienced rapid growth in its first few decades reaching a population of more than 1,000 by the 1900 Census.

Over the last 100 years the City has experienced slow and steady population growth. However, its demographic characteristics and economic base have changed considerably. The Comprehensive Plan Update is being completed with the objective of guiding the City in making decisions to meet the challenges of the present, and maintain and build a vibrant community for the future.

Function of a Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan's role is to establish plans and policies which work together to define and encourage the future a city wishes for itself. One well known city planning consulting firm has been quoted as saying that the job of a comprehensive plan is to "help [the community] look before it leaps." A city's comprehensive plan should be consulted frequently as the city makes decisions so that these decisions are consistent with one another and with the overall vision the community has established for itself.

According to the Minnesota State Statutes Section 473.859, a comprehensive plan "shall contain objectives, policies, standards and programs to guide public and private land use, development, redevelopment and preservation for all lands and waters within the jurisdiction of the local government unit through 1990 and may extend through any year thereafter which is evenly divisible by five. Each plan shall specify expected industrial and commercial development, planned population distribution and local public facility capacities upon which the plan is based." Plans may contain additional topics and elements such as economic development and intergovernmental coordination.



Previous Comprehensive Plan

Pelican Rapids' last comprehensive plan was completed in 2004. The 2004 Comprehensive Plan developed from a series of meetings following the completion of community building training by the Blandin Foundation. After the training, many who had participated in the training were strongly motivated to help Pelican Rapids develop and grow in specific ways; eventually leading to a decision to develop the 2004 Comprehensive Plan.

Many ideas and directions from the 2004 Comprehensive Plan have been retained and incorporated into the updated document. The 2004 Comprehensive Plan was intended to be an action-oriented plan which plainly identified "to do" items. The plan provided strong direction for the City to follow and was based on significant community input, including a community vision statement that had been formulated during community meetings.

Community Vision

The community vision includes the following statements:

INTRODUCTION. *The community of Pelican Rapids boasts enormous natural beauty in its sweeping fields, rolling hills, and plentiful pristine lakes. Yet its most enduring beauty is intangible and can be found in the innovative spirit of its citizenry as they improve their lives and invigorate the local economy. Long recognized as a premier living location, Pelican Rapids is the third*

largest city in the county of Otter Tail. Now, as we look forward, and to help provide focus as we continue our progress, we have created this vision of our future:

ECONOMY. *The economy of the community is strongly supported, safe, respected and affordable by all members of the community, governmental agencies and businesses. The community needs are met in an environment that promotes the historical, natural resources, beauty, talents, agricultural, and recreational assets in a responsible, safe and respectful manner that is cognizant of all members of the community. Agriculture, commercial businesses, tourism, lake property owners, rural and city residents, work cooperatively to aggressively promote, research, enhance, maintain, support and develop new and existing opportunities. A vibrant, respected, friendly, and welcoming business environment encourages expansion of existing and development of new, commercial, industrial and agricultural businesses that provide employment opportunities for all levels of income and talents. Investment and reinvestment into our community is recognized, encouraged and supported.*



GOVERNMENT. *Local government is a working collaboration of Township, City, Civic and Lake Associations, and is responsible to and receptive of all members of the community. By maintaining a commitment to the needs and perspective of both residents, and visitors, and by working with various organizations and volunteers to create an environment of trust, cooperation and ownership, it helps develop a strong sense of community pride and a welcoming spirit. It aggressively researches and develops progressive and proactive policies and programs to encourage robust commercial, agricultural, residential and recreational development, simultaneously promoting investment in our community from outside and within. Further, managed polices for preservation and development of natural resources and historical assets assure a continued appreciation for community aesthetics. Cooperative and approachable officials maintain hours providing access and services to all members of the community.*

DIVERSITY. *Community members are proud of their diverse cultural citizenship, recognizing the needs and celebrating the opportunities of this diversity. The community encourages, develops and maintains the leadership, talents, and potential business opportunities, in a cooperative, trusting manner. All citizens enjoy bonds of mutual acceptance and respect.*

AESTHETICS. *Our community is filled with natural beauty, diverse cultures, and friendly citizens who feel safe and display a proud sense of ownership. Our members work to research, develop, enhance and maintain an aesthetically pleasing, inviting and welcoming environment while respecting our natural resources.*

EDUCATION. *Renowned and respected within and outside our community, our education system provides and promotes academic excellence in a safe, respectful, prejudice free, morally strong and drug free environment. It provides affordable, locally available continuing education utilizing all educational systems and methods and is focused on the desires and interests of community members. Staff, parents and students maintain respectful and courteous bonds of communication while working to encourage participation and volunteerism.*

YOUTH. *The community recognizes the value of its youths and provides support for their recreational, educational and social needs by maintaining and enhancing existing facilities and aggressively researching and developing new ones. Through existing and newly developed civic organizations, volunteers, educational and religious sources, the needs of our youths are fulfilled in a safe and respected way.*

RECREATION. *The Pelican Rapids area community researches, develops, maintains and expands year round affordable private and publicly owned recreational facilities, allowing for all interests, ages, genders and cultures to come together in safe and varying complexes.*

PRIDE. *Pride is reflected in every aspect of our community: business, churches, educational systems, civic groups and volunteerism. Our community builds on its successes by working cooperatively and making positive change happen. In every endeavor, a safe, vibrant, cooperative and welcoming community is evidenced by mutually respected new and existing members.*

MEDICAL. *The community researches, maintains, enhances and develops new and existing medical facilities that provide affordable, locally available, 24 hour/7 day a week medical and support services to all members of the community in a knowledgeable, friendly, safe, and respectful manner for all ages.*

HOUSING. *The Community provides housing to meet the needs of all income levels, genders, ages and physical conditions that is safe, inviting and affordable. Enforced policies, support, and financing are readily available.*

ETHICS. *Our community morals are reflected through a safe, respecting, fair and trustful environment among all members.*

COMMUNITY INFORMATION. *The community provides and disseminates complete and organized information for newcomers, current citizens, and both existing and potential new business enterprises that is visible and readily accessible.*

RELIGION. *The religious environment of the community reflects its religious and community needs in a safe, responsive, cooperative and respectful manner.*

CONCLUSION. *With our positive attitude and enduring spirit, the Pelican Rapids area citizens will use this vision statement to help guide us as we build a more vibrant, attractive, open and welcoming community. We will support and develop business, agricultural, educational and recreational opportunities, responsibly using fiscal resources, personnel and information technology assets. We will ensure access to public services, including health care and public safety. Through participation and cooperation we will build a community of which our families can be proud.*

Plan Organization

Because the 2004 Comprehensive Plan provided such a thorough visioning process that is still valid today, this Comprehensive Plan update is primarily a technical update which responds to changes in the community context since the time of the last comprehensive plan. It is divided into seven major sections:

1. **Existing Conditions** summarizes the context of the City of Pelican Rapids in terms of physical and political geography, economic characteristics and demographic characteristics.
2. **Utilities** summarizes the potable water, sewage and storm water management systems in terms of existing conditions and capacities.
3. **Transportation** describes existing conditions and capacities of roads, sidewalks and trails and the airport. The section also describes future improvements and system expansions consistent with the vision, goals and objectives and guiding principles of the plan.
4. **Land Use** describes the existing land use pattern, community facilities and housing resources of Pelican Rapids. Additionally, the section describes future improvements and concepts to incorporate into the City consistent with the vision, goals and objectives and guiding principles of the plan.
5. **Opportunities for Growth and Development** discusses several specific situations and recommendations that will enhance Pelican Rapids' appeal to potential residents and businesses.
6. **Goals and Objectives** establish general purposes and specific statements of interest that set the direction of the City's growth and development.
7. **Implementation** provides a list of action steps which should be taken to help the City accomplish goals and reach its vision.

EXISTING CONDITIONS OF PELICAN RAPIDS

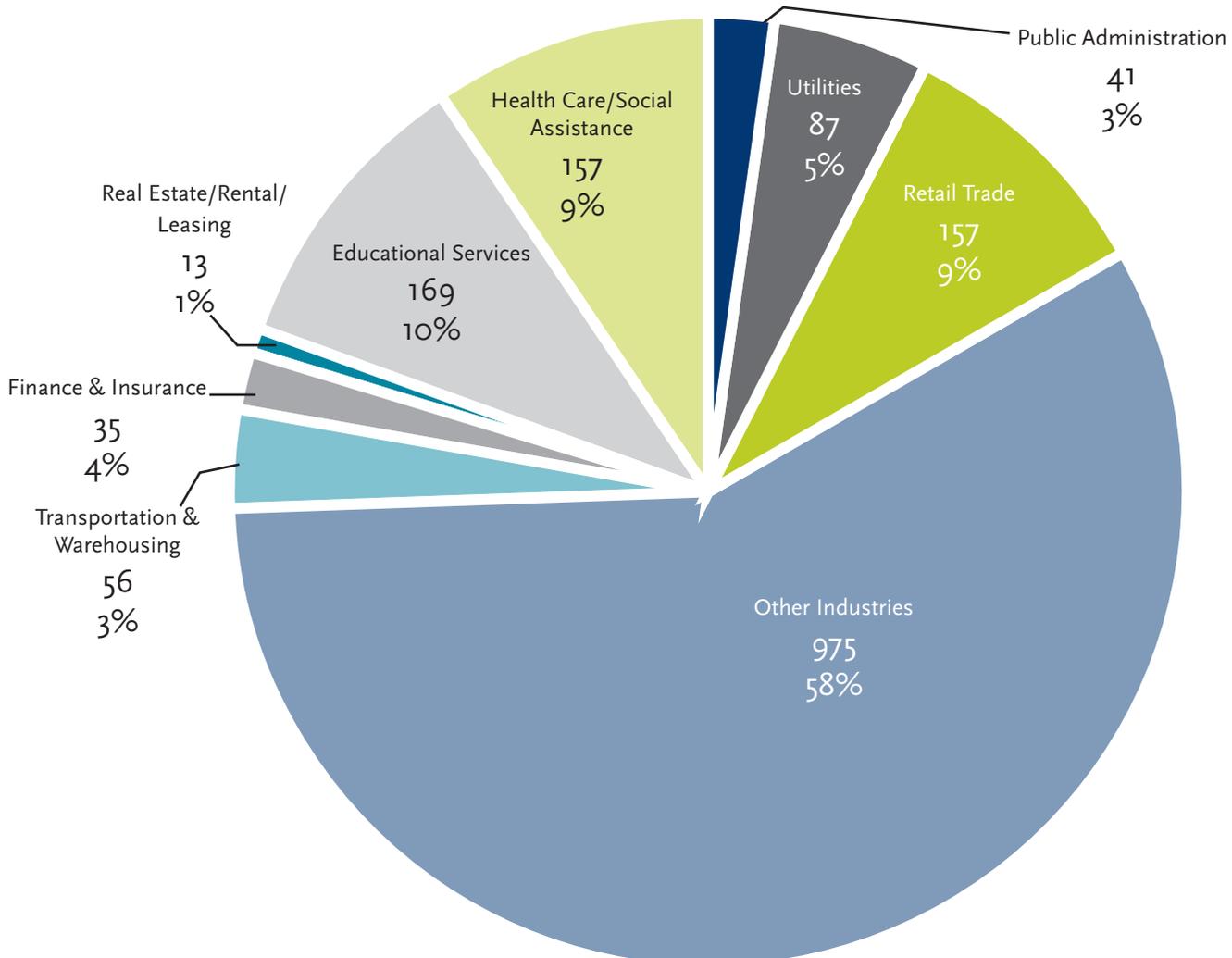
Natural Context

Pelican Rapids is located at the western edge of the Central Lakes region of Minnesota. The terrain is a mix of rolling hills, lakes and streams formed out of the glacial moraine. The City is located on the Pelican River which originates at Little Floyd Lake in Becker County and meanders through a chain of lakes in southern Becker and western Otter Tail Counties before reaching the City of Pelican Rapids. The Pelican River eventually empties into the Otter Tail River near Fergus Falls, MN. The many lakes and forested areas, including the Maplewood State Park, are a prime attraction for tourists and summer residents.

Economy

Pelican Rapids' economic base includes industrial facilities (food processing, manufacturing, etc.) located in the City along with employers such as the Lake Region Electric Coop Headquarters, Pelican Rapids School District, local health care facilities and area farm economy. The 2012 annual average employment in Pelican Rapids was 1,649. Figure 1 illustrates distribution of employment by industry in Pelican Rapids. Other industries represented in Figure 1 include the West Central Turkey plant which has more than 700 employees.

Figure 1: Employment Distribution By Industry in Pelican Rapids, 2012



Business and community leaders often question the population level necessary to provide adequate sales volume for a particular business. A study completed for North Dakota communities may provide some insight into this question. Table 1 illustrates the average population of communities with one or more of various types of businesses. While the study does not define the need to support a particular type of business, it offers approximate population levels which can be a rough benchmark for communities to consider when addressing economic development questions.

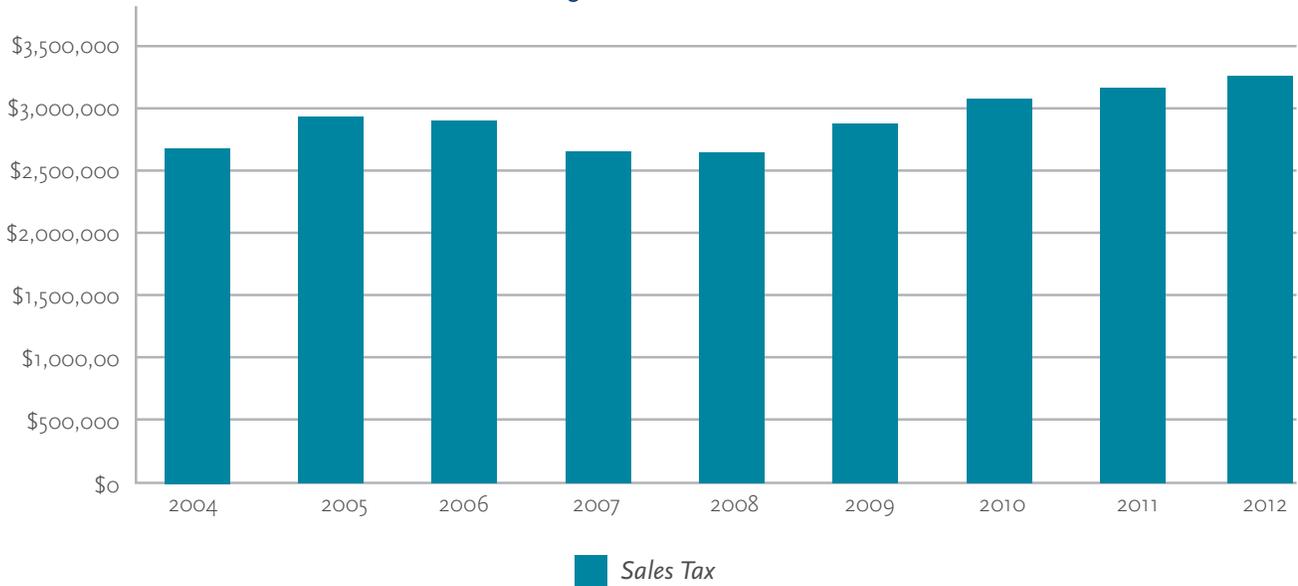


Table 1: Population to Support Business

Business Description	Number of Businesses			
	1	2	3	4
Farm and Garden Machine & Equipment	436	632	768	642
Farm Supply Stores	521	758	835	1,141
Lumber & Other Building Materials	986	1,324	1,797	4,036
Hardware	1,131	2,077		
Department Stores	2,606			
Variety Stores	2,324	5,061		
Grocery Stores	709	2,059	3,303	
Gasoline Service Stations	650	746	1,092	
Family Clothing Stores	1,351			
Home Furniture & Furnishings	1,628	2,781		
Radio, TV & Electronic Stores	1,602	4,712		
Drug Stores	1,065	1,769	6,551	
Sporting Goods & Bicycle Shops	847	1,089	1,859	2,292
Florists	1,287	3,855		
Eating Places	408	439	454	597
Drinking Places	305	428	670	779

Many Pelican Rapids' residents commute to surrounding cities such as Fergus Falls and Detroit Lakes for work. Communities close to larger cities (both Fergus Falls and Detroit Lakes are three to four times the size of Pelican Rapids) have a difficult time providing full potential for retail sales and related jobs due to the draw of retail shopping in larger cities. All such communities have retail sales loss to the larger communities. It can be expected general merchandise retail activity in Pelican Rapids will remain at modest levels. However, several characteristics of the community suggest opportunities to increase the economic base and support existing businesses. Overall taxable sales activity in Pelican Rapids has been climbing in recent years (see Figure 2). Also, the City's share of Otter Tail County total taxable sales has grown from 6 to 8% over the same time period.

Figure 2: Sales Tax



Demographics

As noted in the economy section, Pelican Rapids is relatively close to several larger cities. Table 2 provides a summary of the population size for a number of nearby communities and also shows which cities grew in population between 2000 and 2010.

Table 2: Population Summary between 2000 and 2010

City	2000 Population	2010 Population	Numeric Change	Percentage Change
Fergus Falls	13479	13138	-341	-2.5%
Detroit Lakes	7408	8569	1161	15.7%
Perham	2753	2985	232	8.4%
Pelican Rapids	2374	2464	90	3.8%
Frazee	1384	1350	-34	-2.5%
New York Mills	1164	1199	35	3.0%
Parkers Prairie	986	1011	25	2.5%
Battle Lake	702	875	173	24.6%
Deer Creek	310	322	12	3.9%
Dent	192	192	0	0.0%
Elizabeth	176	173	-3	-1.7%

Figure 3 illustrates Pelican Rapids decennial population since 1900.

Figure 3: Census Population 1900-2010

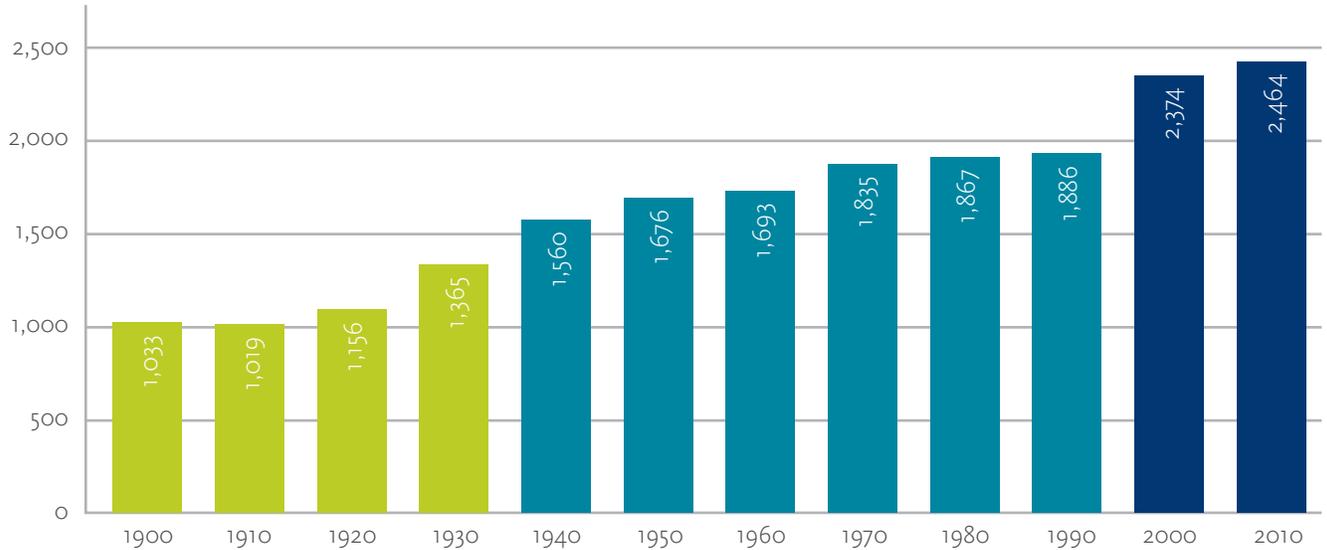


Table 3 summarizes additional population characteristics of the City of Pelican Rapids. Among the most significant is that the City has a relatively multi-cultural community with more than 22% of its population represented by several minorities.

Table 3: Population Characteristics

Race	Count	Percent
White	1,901	77.2%
Black or African American	160	6.5%
American Indian or Alaska Native	52	2.1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	31	1.3%
Asian	95	3.9%
Other	325	13.2%
Total Population	2,464	100%
Relationships	Count	Percent
In Households	2,403	97.5%
Under 18 years	688	27.9%
65 years and over	422	17.1%
In Group Quarters	61	2.5%
Total Population	2,464	100%
Households	Count	Percent
Households with individuals under 18 years	325	36%
Households with individuals 65 years and over	293	32.4%
Householder living alone	298	33%
Average Household Size	2.66	
Average Family Size	3.42	
Total Households	904	100%

School District Demographics

It is important to recognize a significant portion of the population which identifies with Pelican Rapids as their home town live outside the City. One way to define the population is by looking at the school district demographics. For comparison, while there were 2,464 people living in Pelican Rapids at the time of the 2010 Census, there were actually 7,434 people living in the Pelican Rapids School District. Of this number, 1,601 were under the age of 18, and 1,185 were between the ages of 5 and 17, inclusive. There were 783 households out of 3,051 households with individuals under the age of 18 in the Pelican Rapids School District.

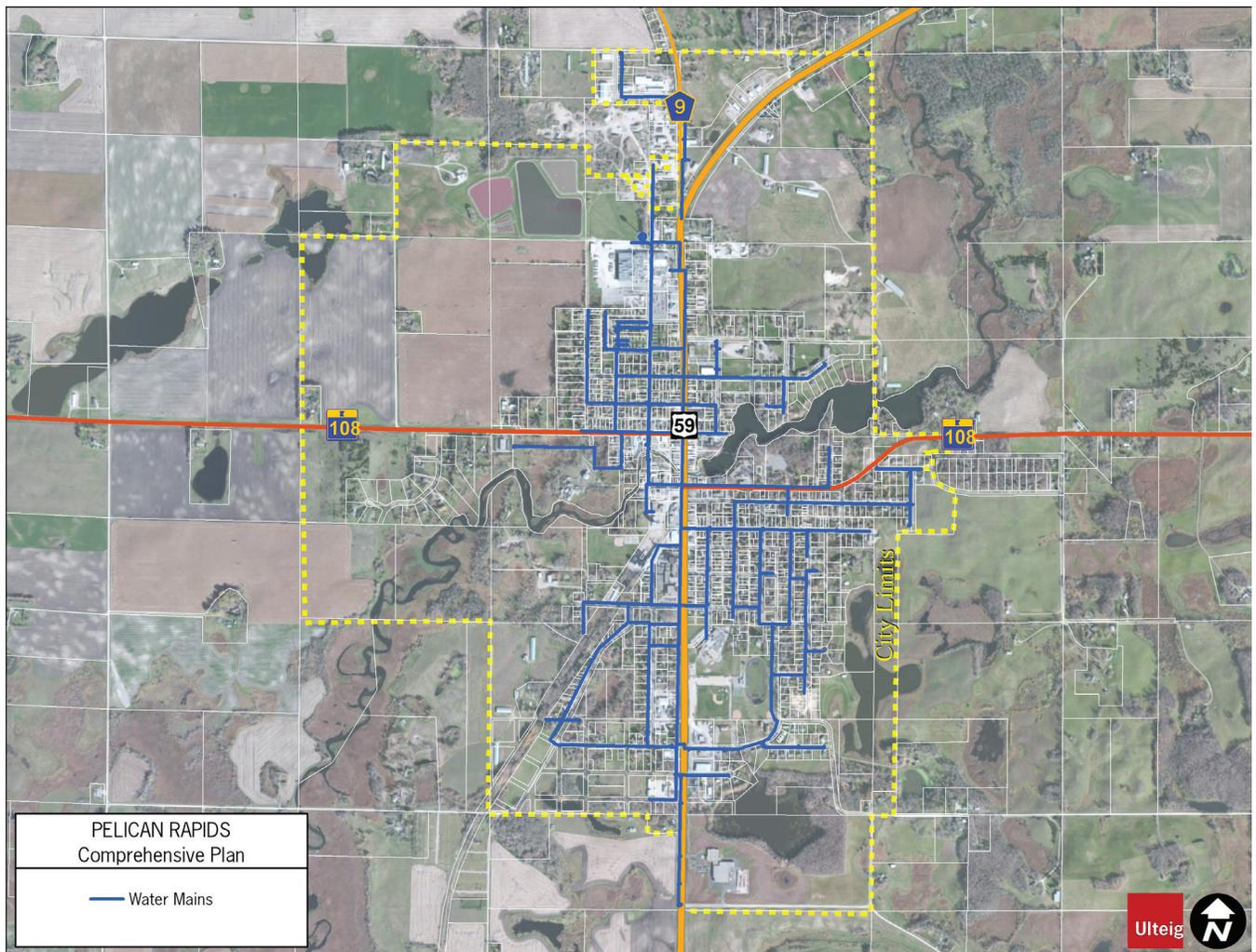
Other Contexts

The context of utility systems, transportation systems and land use will be covered in more detail in the following chapters.



Water systems are composed of sources, treatment, storage and distribution. The City has a plentiful and high quality water supply. Pelican Rapids' water sources are five wells which pump water from two aquifers. Water treatment consists of sand filtration to remove sediments and chemical treatment with chlorine gas to kill bacteria, hydrofluosilicic acid to prevent tooth decay and LPC-DP to prevent copper and lead in pipes from leeching into the water. The water treatment plant can treat 1,200,000 gallons per day. The water treatment plant typically treats about 545,000 gallons per day. The water is stored in a 500,000 gallon water storage tower which supplies good water pressure throughout the community. An additional water storage tank or a pressurized system may be needed if the city grows further in certain areas because the topography would limit the gravity flow water pressure. There are some areas in the city's water distribution system where improvements could be made. These improvements include replacing obsolete and undersized pipe, and looping where the system now has dead ends. The development of a Water Supply System Master Plan is recommended in order to most efficiently address present and future limitations. Figure 4 illustrates the water system of Pelican Rapids.

Figure 4: Pelican Rapids Water System



In 2004, Pelican Rapids embarked on a project to define and protect the City's water source(s). The two part project involved the following activities:

- » Delineating the City's drinking water supply management area (DWSMA)
- » Completing a vulnerability assessment of the wells and aquifer used by the City

- » Approval of initial findings by the Minnesota Department of Health
- » Completing a potential contaminant source inventory
- » Developing a potential contaminant source management strategy
- » Preparing an Emergency/Alternative Water Supply Contingency Plan
- » Preparing a Wellhead Protection Program Evaluation Plan

The result of the activities is a plan that identifies vulnerabilities of Pelican Rapids' drinking water supply to contamination and that provides strategies to address the vulnerabilities. Figure 5 illustrates areas of high, medium and low vulnerability in the DWSMA. In general, some of the Pelican Rapids wells were and some were not considered vulnerable. Wells considered vulnerable are being addressed in the following ways:

- » Closure of some wells
- » Reducing potential contamination to other wells
- » Development of contingency plans
- » Implementing an annual testing system

Sewer systems are composed of collection, treatment and discharge. The city has a wastewater treatment facility located in the western part of the city, and also operates a pretreatment lagoon system just west of the West Central Turkey Plant in the north part of the City. The wastewater treatment facility was built in 1988 with a life expectancy of about 20 years. It is currently undergoing some maintenance and upgrading to provide it with an additional life expectancy of 25 years. The improved wastewater treatment facility will have the capacity to treat up to 771,000 gallons per day. Current utilization of the facility during wet weather conditions averages approximately 660,033 gallons per day. The sewage collection system includes some areas with very old clay tile sewer lines in the southeast and northeast parts of the City. This results in infiltration from groundwater and causes the sewage treatment plant to treat more water than it should. It would be wise to replace this outdated sewage collection pipe whenever feasible to reduce the potential need for additional sewage treatment capacity. The City has two sewer lift stations at the present time. One is at the city garage and serves the industrial park area. The other is at the corner of 2nd Street and 3rd Avenue Northeast. The development of a Sewage System Master Plan is recommended. The Sewage System Master Plan would evaluate the location and extent of existing infiltration problems and also evaluate the potential to extend services without increasing sewage pipe collection size or adding lift stations. Figure 6 illustrates the sanitary sewer system of Pelican Rapids.

Figure 5: Pelican Rapids Water Supply

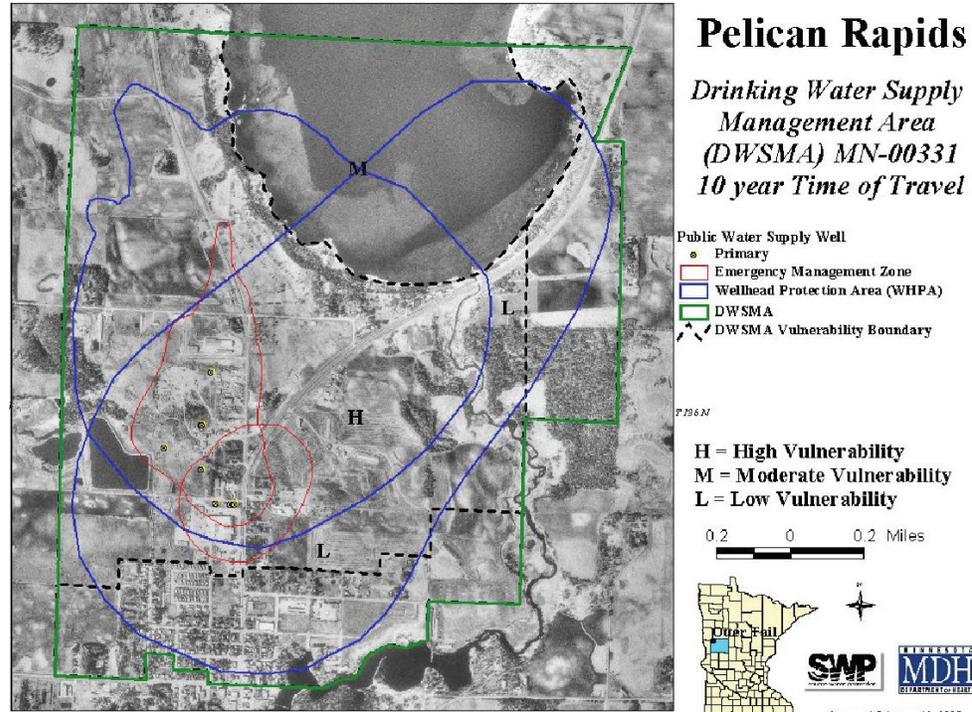
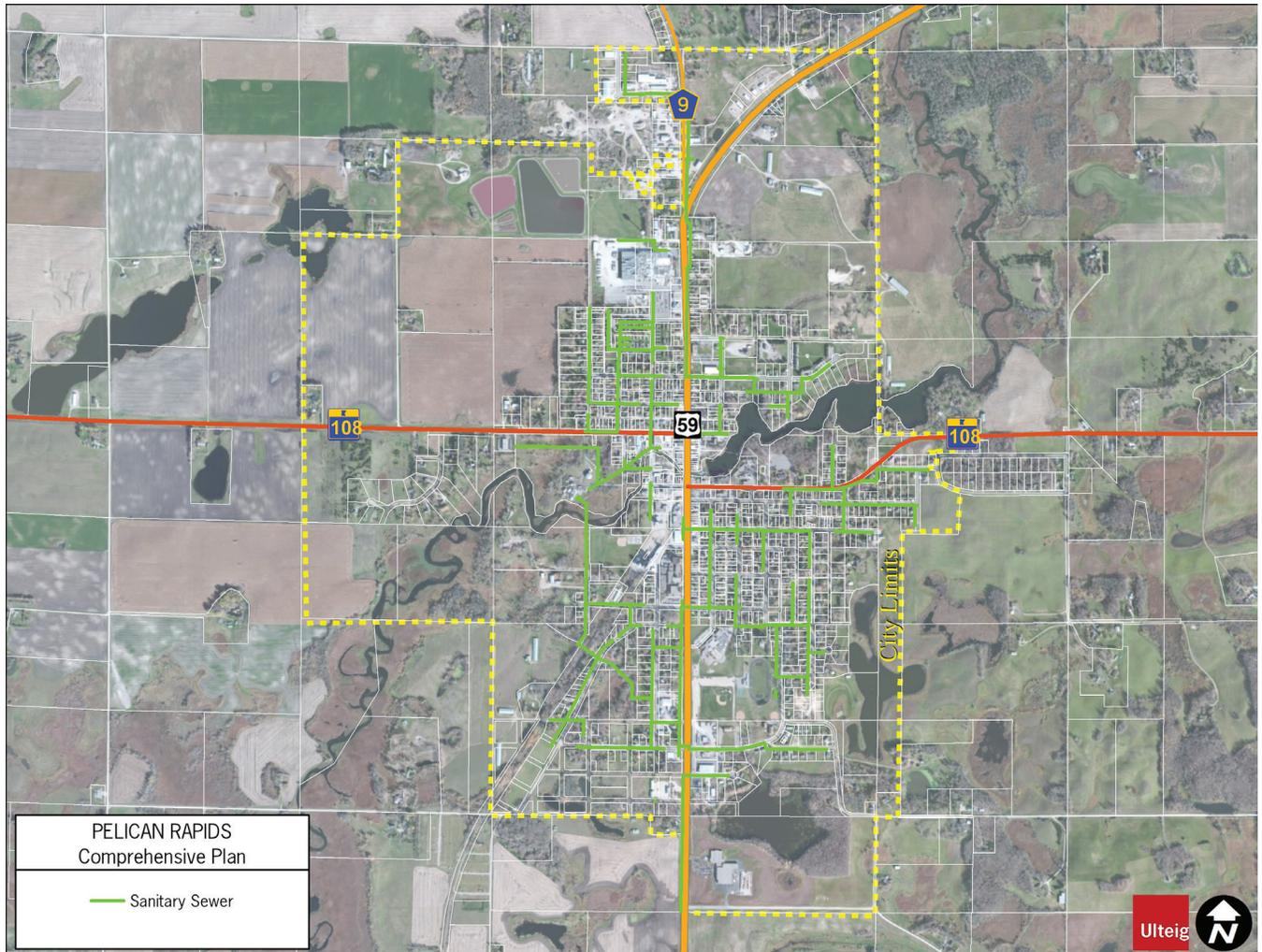


Figure 6: Pelican Rapids Sanitary Sewer System



Stormwater conditions and plans are less defined than Pelican Rapids' water and sewer systems. Managing stormwater in developed areas is required by state and federal governments. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program (SWPPP) applies to all communities in Minnesota. Typically, a community has a master stormwater management plan that defines how runoff will be handled when additional development occurs. Pelican Rapids does not have such a plan. One of the previous comprehensive plan recommendations was to prepare a topographic map to aid in development design and management. This could be a first step toward developing a master stormwater management plan. The previous plan also noted the benefit of delineating wetland area boundaries as a way to help determine appropriate locations for future development. One benefit of developing a stormwater management plan is the ability to define appropriate costs for stormwater management needed by future development, so that those costs are not subsidized by the rest of the city.

Pelican Rapids is a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program, but no special flood hazards in the community have been identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This does not mean that localized flooding cannot occur and result in property damage. It means that the risk of flooding in the community as a whole has been determined to be less than 0.02% in any given year. The dam located in downtown Pelican Rapids has been showing some signs of stress according to MNDNR experts. It is being monitored by City and MNDNR officials.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation systems establish capacity of people, goods and services to move around within a community and to link them to the world outside a community. The systems provide mobility by motor vehicle, bicycle, foot, boat, aircraft and rail. The Transportation section summarizes existing systems and recommends concepts and future improvements to enhance internal and external mobility of Pelican Rapids.

Roads

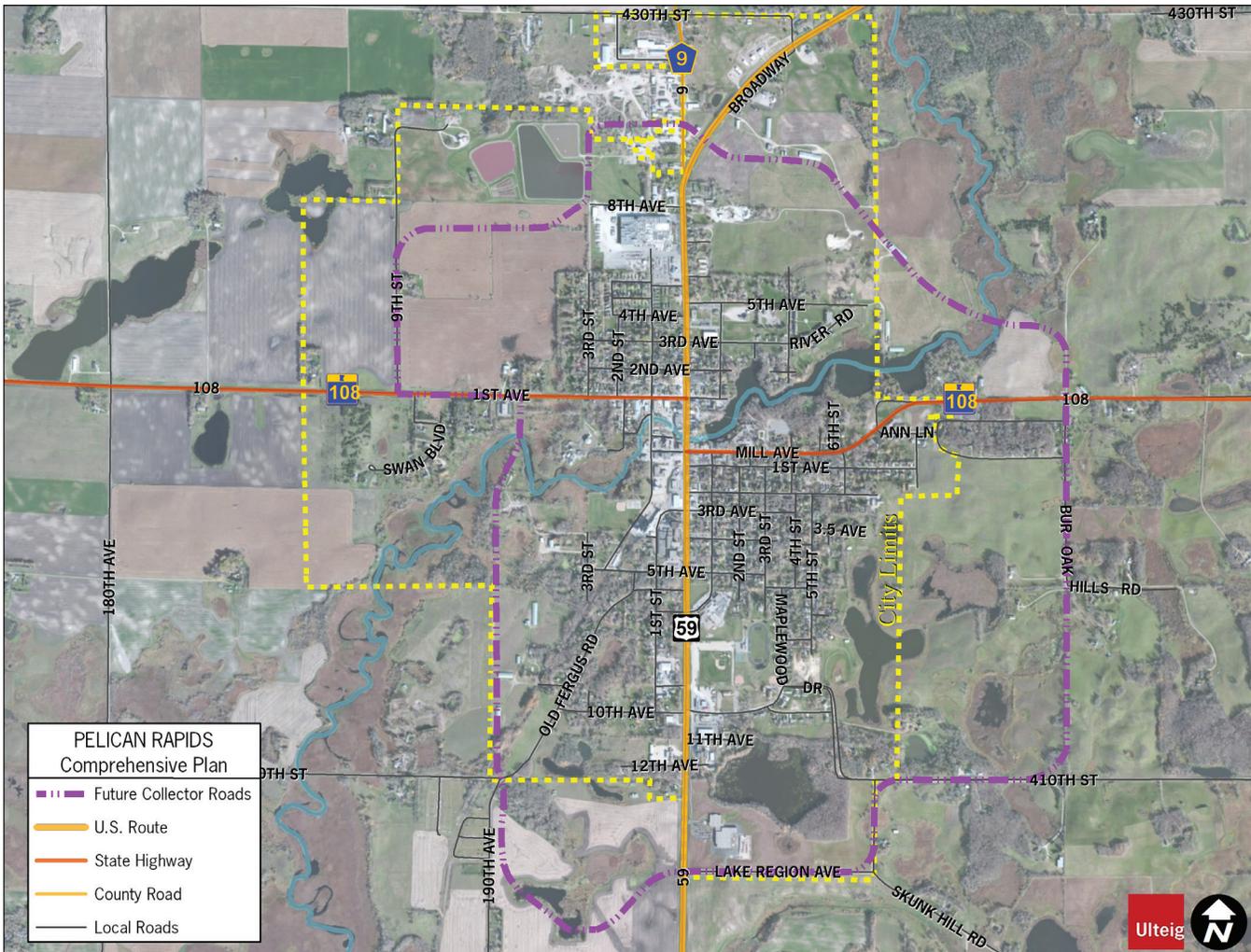
Figure 7 illustrates the primary road network of Pelican Rapids. As noted in the previous comprehensive plan, Pelican Rapids main transportation system is comprised of its municipal street system and two state highways that bisect the community and divide it into quadrants. The two roads (Highways 59 and 108) are the only through roads which run the entire distance north-south and east-west through the city. The Pelican River also bisects the City and because there are only two bridges in the city (both located in the downtown area), it creates a barrier for more distributed traffic flow and forces local traffic to travel downtown before it can get where it wants to go.

Highway 59 is the most heavily traveled roadway in Pelican Rapids. The highway carries approximately 9,100 vehicles per day at its peak location in the City. It is a primary route connecting Interstate 94 to Detroit Lakes and other communities in western Becker County, as well as a significant part of northern Minnesota. Highway 108 carries approximately 2,750 vehicles per day at its peak location in the City. It is a major carrier of traffic between the Fargo-Moorhead area and much of Otter Tail County lake country, and beyond. The traffic through the City includes more than 900 heavy commercial trucks on an average day.

Highway 59 is a part of the Minnesota Trunk Highway system and is on the National Highway System. It has a principal arterial functional classification. This means that Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) will use federal dollars to fund projects on this corridor. The new federal transportation bill (MAP-21) will need to meet certain "ride standards" which have not yet been determined. Additionally, as a part of the Minnesota Trunk Highway system it has been designated as a roadway on which MnDOT will apply its Complete Streets program. This brings the opportunity to make corridor improvements in Pelican Rapids primary commercial district that can promote pedestrian and vehicular circulation, increase safety, enhance the visual qualities of downtown, and also aid in the economic development of Pelican Rapids. Some of these improvements could be accomplished through a comprehensive streetscaping project. The City has the opportunity to prepare now for significant improvements to downtown that could be partially funded by MnDOT as part of future roadway improvement projects. Because it is part of the Trunk Highway system, coordination with MnDOT on potential projects is essential.



Figure 8: Pelican Rapids Major Street Plan



Sidewalks and Trails

The network of sidewalks available to pedestrians in Pelican Rapids is incomplete because there are areas within the city that have streets but do not have sidewalks. Pedestrians in some areas of the City must walk across yards or in streets. One example of a needed pedestrian route is the stretch on the west side of Highway 59 from the West Central Turkey plant down to 2nd Avenue NW. Dedicated multi-use trails or bicycle paths in Pelican Rapids are very limited. One bicycle path runs on the east side of Highway 59 from the Elementary School down to Lake Region Electric.

A Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Study was completed in 2007 that made several recommendations to increase safety of pedestrian travel in Pelican Rapids. A significant recommendation was to improve safety of school children crossing Highway 59. Figure 9 illustrates the recommendations of the SRTS Study. Grant applications have been submitted in the past to obtain funds for the improvements, without success. MnDOT has revised its approach to SRTS programs in line with recently enacted federal transportation program (MAP-21) which includes rolling the old SRTS and Transportation Enhancement programs into a new Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

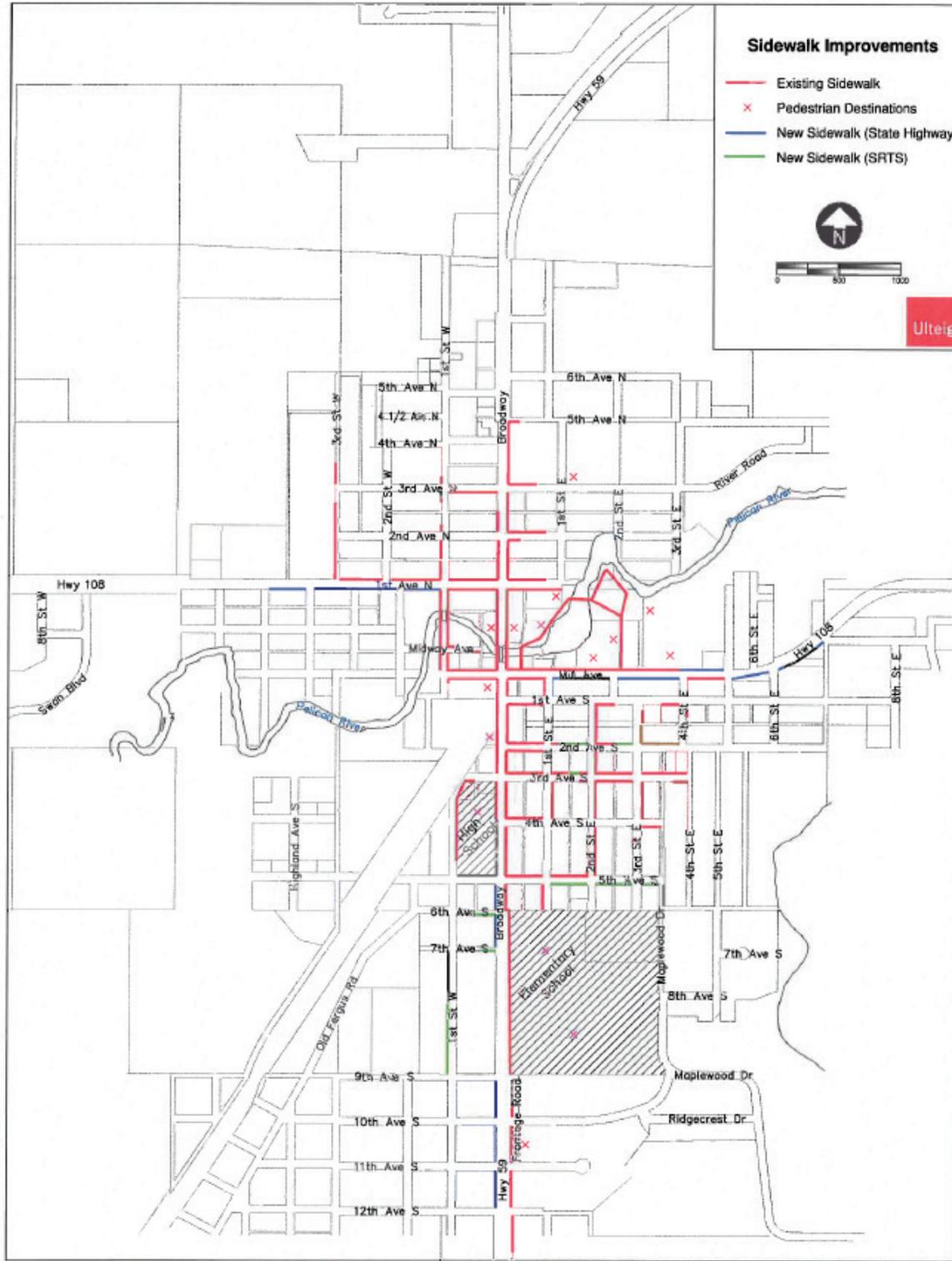
The last comprehensive plan advocated development of a uniform policy for sidewalk installation in Pelican Rapids and the development of a sidewalk inspection/improvement program. The plan also recommended sidewalk installation along arterial and collector roads be a top priority. Current city policy is to maintain sidewalks within a defined “Sidewalk District.” The District was developed in order to address the need to replace and maintain sidewalks in key community areas. There is potential to add additional areas to the sidewalk district to respond to the recommendations of the SRTS Study. This could include sidewalks and crosswalks to support pedestrian safety for school children.

A new multi-use trail for recreational purposes has been discussed several times in recent years. The last comprehensive plan recommended development of a bicycle transportation plan connecting all parts of the city and a proposed trail system along the Pelican River. During community meetings this past year, support was voiced for the concept of a proposed trails system. In 2013 a grant application was submitted to pursue development of an in-town trail system along the River which could extend out to Maplewood State Park. Later in 2013 a new regional trail linking Pelican Rapids to Maplewood State Park and then up to Perham was proposed. The concept has received support from Otter Tail County and Partnership4Health, as well as the two cities.

There is ongoing and growing support for a multi-modal approach to transportation in the United States and in Minnesota. Support comes from many directions such as the sustainable communities and smart growth movements, active living and healthy lifestyle movements and complete streets and walkable community movements. The movements are inter-related and have overlapping concepts. At their core, the movements aim to promote communities with healthier and safer citizens, and more balanced access and mobility to community resources and amenities. MnDOT is developing policies in support of the complete streets concept. Development of policies and implementation practices is currently underway. It will be important for the City to monitor the programs and seek opportunities to obtain financial support for installing sidewalks and/or multi-use trails along collectors and arterials in the community.



Figure 9: SRTS Study Recommendations





Airport

The nearest commercial service airports are about twenty five miles away from Pelican Rapids in both Detroit Lakes and Fergus Falls. Highway 59 connects the City to both communities.

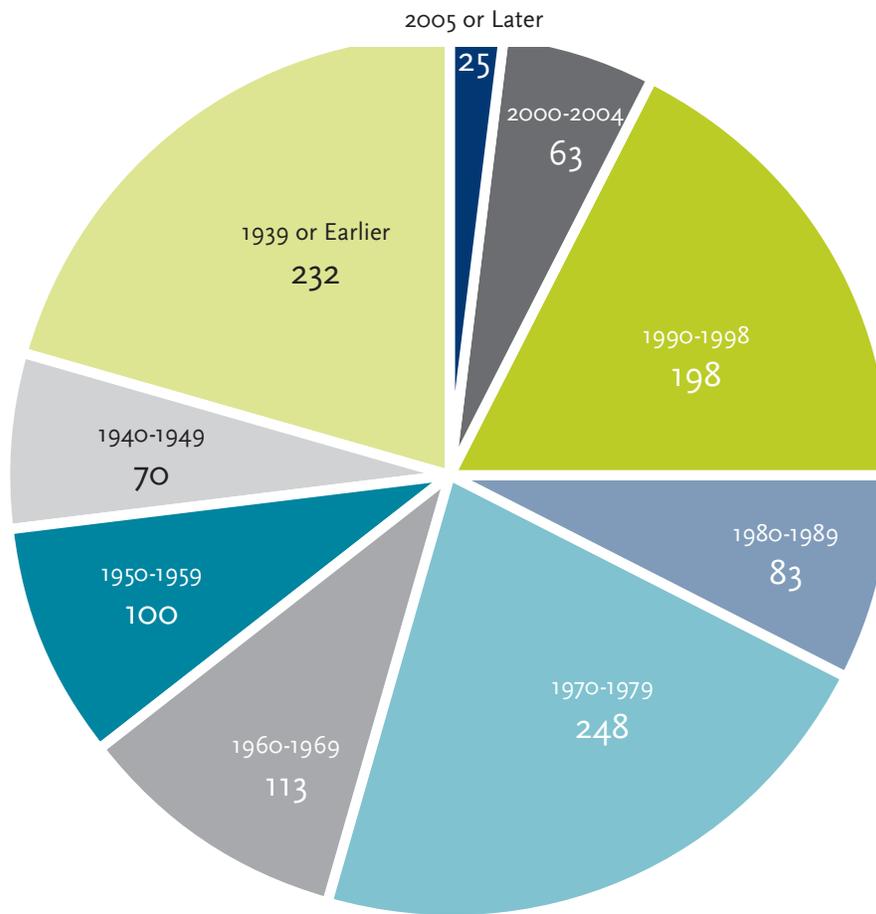
Pelican Rapids owns a general service airport with a grass runway located approximately five miles north of the City along the west side of County Highway 9. The runway is 1,362 feet long and 150 feet wide and lays on a bearing of 15/33 (150 and 330 degrees from true north) at an elevation of 1,389 feet above sea level. The airport is lighted from dusk to dawn. The airport was constructed in the mid 1960s and has had only one significant upgrade since construction. The upgrade involved installation of a new runway lighting system in 2006.

The city-owned site consists of 242 acres. There has been discussion of improvements including asphalt surfacing for the runway and additional hanger construction. The last comprehensive plan recommended the City develop a Capital Improvements Plan and a master plan for the entire property. The airport is under the zoning jurisdiction of Scambler Township. In 2010, the Township amended their zoning ordinance to include an Airport District Zone which limits the uses which can occur on the airport property to aircraft hangers, fuel sales, commercial agriculture and a somewhat ambiguously defined “aviation related use.” The District requirements also limit structures from be built closer than 700 feet of an existing dwelling and 60 feet from airport boundaries. This setback requirement significantly restricts efficient development of additional hangers adjoining the existing hangers. At some point in time, it would be beneficial to work cooperatively with Scambler Township to develop a master plan for additional structures on the airport property.

Housing

The housing stock in Pelican Rapids is distributed over a wide age range. Figure 10 illustrates this distribution by number and proportion. As illustrated, the largest growth in housing stock since before World War II occurred in the 1970s.

Figure 10: Number of Housing Units Built by Time Period



In 2008 a Housing Study was completed for Pelican Rapids by Community Partners Research. The study examined past housing study data from a number of sources to identify the community's projected housing demand. Some of the key analyses and conclusions included:

1. Overall in Pelican Rapids approximately 39% of the single family and duplex residences were considered in sound condition. Another 37% were considered to need minor repairs. Twenty percent (20%) were judged to need major repair and 3% were considered dilapidated.
2. Of the mobile homes in Pelican Rapids, 44% were considered in sound condition, 12% needed minor repairs, 30% needed major repairs and 14% were considered dilapidated.
3. There is a high demand for subsidized housing in Pelican Rapids as evidenced by the 0% vacancy rate. (This pattern continues today.)

4. There is a need to add more market rate rental housing, general occupancy subsidized housing, senior designated market rate housing, senior housing with services and transitional/supportive housing.
5. There is a need to provide all possible support for housing ownership and rehab.
6. There is opportunity to develop single family housing in several categories including high amenity, affordable and manufactured housing.
7. There is a need to acquire and demolish some substandard structures.

Since 2008 there have been significant additions to the housing resources in Pelican Rapids. However, there are still key areas of concern:

1. Housing rehab is still a strong need in the community.
2. There is a housing shortage at the low end of the market.
3. There may be potential for higher density, high amenity housing for certain sub-markets.

Community Facilities

Schools – There has been much discussion in the last few years about changes to the Pelican Rapids Public School facilities. November 2013 vote approved a levy increase which will allow substantial renovation to the high school.

Parks and Recreation – Pelican Rapids has a number of fine parks and recreation facilities. There are five park locations spread throughout the city including two large parks adjacent to the Pelican River and the Mill Pond Dam. There are some major maintenance issues at the outdoor swimming pool. A study to consider the options and their associated costs has been completed and city officials are considering options for a replacement facility.



City Hall – The City's primary administrative offices were moved into the old Lake Region Electric Coop headquarters in the early 2000s. The second floor of the facility is intended to serve as a community events center.

Liquor Store – The city-operated liquor store was moved to its current site that allows much better parking and access in November 2010. It continues to provide a significant income stream for the City.



Library – Pelican Rapids built its first public library in 1987. It was remodeled and expanded in 2002. As the city's ethnic diversity grew in the 1990s, a group of volunteers at the library collaborated with the school system and Lutheran Social Services to develop ways to integrate New Americans into the community. The library has a wide spectrum of programs including multi-cultural ones that serve the Pelican Rapids area.

Land Use Pattern

The City of Pelican Rapids has a fairly typical rural Minnesota land use pattern with a historical downtown business center that was the heart of the City's commerce in its early years. The downtown has many historical buildings that are still structurally sound and in use for commercial purposes. One aspect of Pelican Rapids which is not typical of a rural Minnesota city is the Pelican River and dam. The river has only two vehicle crossings in the entire city. This has the effect of funneling a large portion of the north-south traffic onto the two streets. One crossing is Highway 59. The heavy traffic volumes, limited parking and limited potential for streetscape improvements has stymied typical concepts often used to make downtown business districts inviting and vibrant.

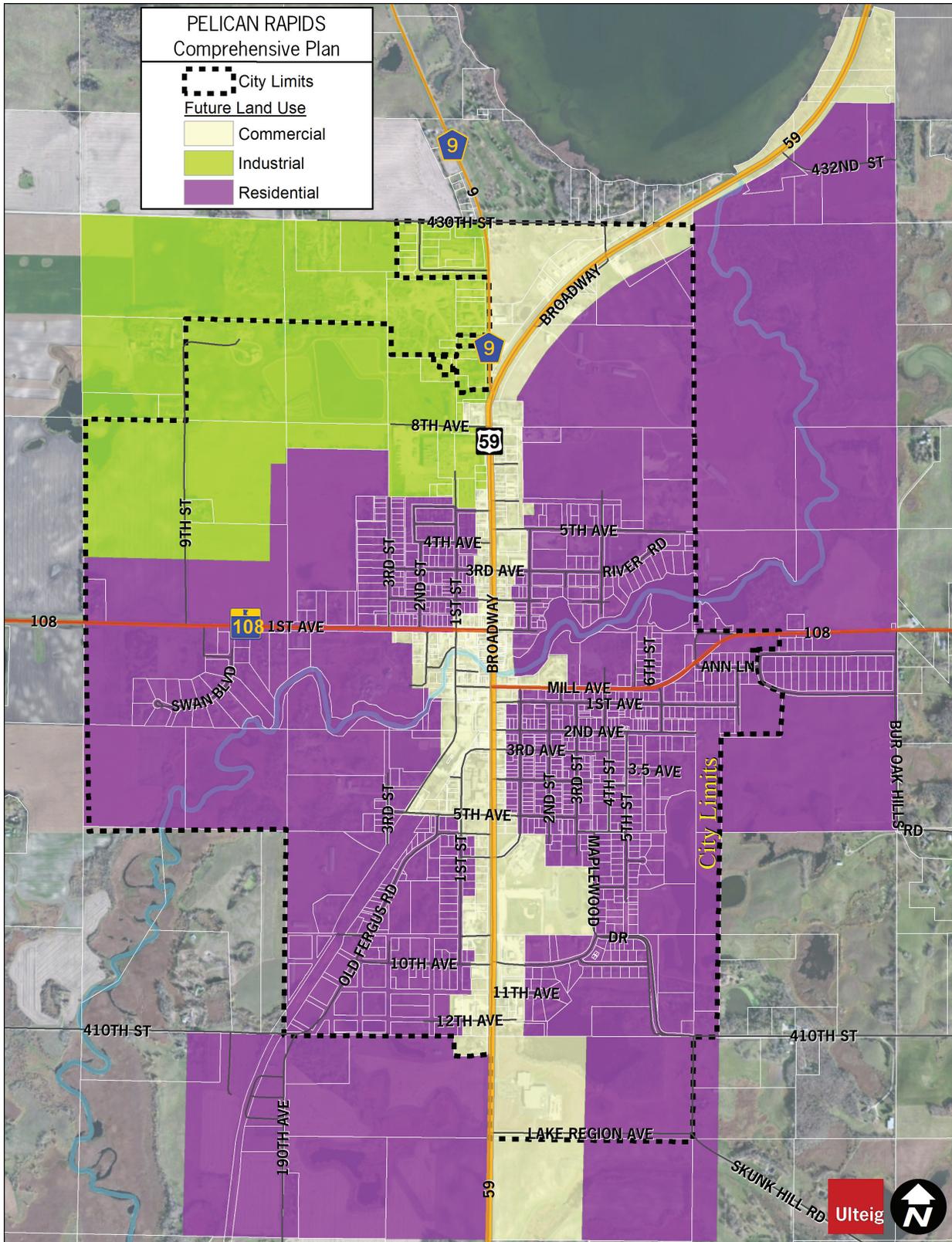


The 2004 Comprehensive Plan recommended a major rezoning effort. This effectively consolidated proposed industrial development in the northwestern corner of the City. This has worked well. The rezoning effort also created a contiguous stretch of commercially zoned land along Highway 59 from the southern edge to the northern edge of the City. This has increased potential for commercial development and redevelopment in areas where sewer and water are already in place. Two places where this seems especially desirable are across from the turkey plant, and a few blocks near the south end of the City.

Rezoning land along Highway 59 has resulted in a number of housing units becoming non-conforming uses in the commercial district. Although the current zoning ordinance allows typical improvements to be made to the residential properties without penalty, the ordinance requires a special use permit approved before any expansion of a non-conforming use residential property. This has created difficult situations for property owners and the city alike. In some cases, sound residential properties have been prevented from making improvements that could increase property value and reasonable enjoyment of the property by current homeowners. In other cases, the current zoning classification may even prevent property owners or buyers from obtaining mortgages from certain lenders. Most of the affected properties abut Broadway. The perspective of the city leaders at the time of rezoning was that the properties would best be changed to commercial uses in the long run. In some cases there has been interest by commercial developers in obtaining some of the residential properties and demolishing the residential structures in order to develop commercial uses on the parcels. Discussion by the Steering Committee for the comprehensive plan update has suggested the issues resulting from the rezoning to commercial need to be resolved. After discussion with the Planning Commission, some additional rezoning is being recommended to better fit the preferred long-term used of property along the Highway 59 corridor. The recommendations have been incorporated into the future land use plan (Figure 11).

The 2004 Comprehensive Plan also discussed future land development and annexation at the fringes of the City, especially for industrial development in the northwestern quadrant and for residential development along the Pelican River in the northeastern quadrant. The proposed future development and annexation areas have been delineated and expanded into the future land use plan illustrated in Figure 11. The future land use plan identifies the general pattern of development. However, land uses at the borders between land use areas should be flexible as long as care is taken to prevent negative impacts on adjacent properties.

Figure 11: Pelican Rapids Future Land Use Plan



OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

In light of the current economic climate in Minnesota and the United States, smaller communities like Pelican Rapids need to be very careful in their choices for development and investment. This section discusses several opportunities and recommends a number of concepts which are aimed at maximizing opportunities which may occur.

Economic Development Opportunities

The 2004 Comprehensive Plan called for action that would change Pelican Rapids from “a sleepy little town that is losing their downtown to an alive and growing community that has an active business district.” It proposed many actions that aimed to bring this vision about. In order to accomplish that vision, economic development is an essential activity for the City of Pelican Rapids to pursue. Several large employers provide a solid base for the local economy. However, several characteristics of the community suggest opportunities to increase the economic base and support existing businesses. The primary goal of economic development activities should be retaining existing businesses and helping them grow. In order to enhance development opportunities it is recommended that careful consideration be given to economic gardening principles and investments made in local second tier businesses. Additionally, economic development activities should aim to encourage new businesses that are rooted in the unique characteristics of Pelican Rapids or that are corollary to existing businesses. One program that has worked well to foster economic development is the Main Street Program. The program has a four-faceted approach which may help Pelican Rapids in several ways.

Utilities Opportunities

The City of Pelican Rapids has sufficient capacity in its water and sewer systems to handle significant growth. With the sewer treatment plant upgrades being done in 2013, both water and sewer treatment facilities are in good shape for the next three decades. However, aging water distribution and sewage collection lines may result in the need for replacement. It is most efficient to do sewer and water main replacements at the same time major street repairs are done.

Trails and Recreation Opportunities

The City is currently pursuing grants in conjunction with other regional entities to promote and develop a regional trails system. This has been a very useful tool for tourism in other parts of central Minnesota, and is highly recommended.

The cost and benefit of major improvements to the public swimming pool are currently being weighed by the City. It is recommended that these improvements are considered in light of the anticipated city revenues to ensure it does not keep other priorities from being accomplished. It has the value of adding to the recreational facilities available in Pelican Rapids and increasing the City's recreation/tourism business.



Land Use Opportunities

While many aspects of community stabilization and growth are not under the control of local government, land development policies and ordinances are under local control. The last comprehensive plan provided strong direction for land use management by establishing a future land use plan that was easy to understand and implement. Clearly defining industrial development to the northwestern quadrant of the city worked well and it is recommended that the pattern be maintained. At some point in time it would be good to annex several parcels which are in this quadrant of the City in order to promote continuity and create additional



areas for industrial development or redevelopment. Part of the last comprehensive plan's implementation process was to place nearly all the land adjoining the Highway 59 corridor into a commercial zone. This change provided a clear understanding of anticipated future land use. But it also placed some residential properties in the position of being non-conforming uses, and reduced the flexibility for future development along the corridor. Whatever land uses are along the Highway 59 and 108 corridors, streetscaping projects could enhance Pelican Rapids' image to its citizens and the traveling public and should be considered.

Because 2008 Housing Study identified the need for additional housing in several market segments, and the availability of low income housing is especially limited, the City should encourage and promote the development of additional housing within the City. This includes taking advantage of opportunities to increase density by replacing dilapidated structures with new multi-family dwelling units which are consistent with surrounding residential character. Infill development (both residential and commercial) should be encouraged because it does not require extension of additional water and sewer lines, and roads, with their attendant capital and maintenance costs. New residential development adjoining the City should be allowed only when it will be annexed into the City, and the costs of extending infrastructure and roads are born by the development.

Renewable Energy Development Opportunities

As part of Pelican Rapids strategy to provide more affordable options for community development and increased flexibility in its development patterns, this plan provides information on potential opportunities for the city to encourage and support renewable energy use. Renewable energy sources such as solar and wind energy at a local level have small cost to the city while providing significant dividends to its citizens and businesses. Active interest in establishing renewable energy sources has been expressed by the Lake Region Electrical Cooperative for their new facility at the south end of the City.

Solar energy is receiving significant support from the Minnesota Legislature. In 2013 several new policies and initiatives were set with the intention of increasing the development of distributed generation in Minnesota. This includes a solar energy standard, a community shared solar program, support for cooperatively owned "solar gardens," incentive programs for solar system utilization, several studies, and a Property Assessed Clean Energy financing program for local government efficiency and renewable energy measures. One incentive program is intended to encourage consumers to install photovoltaic and solar thermal systems using elements made in Minnesota. This program will provide incentives worth up to \$15 million annually.

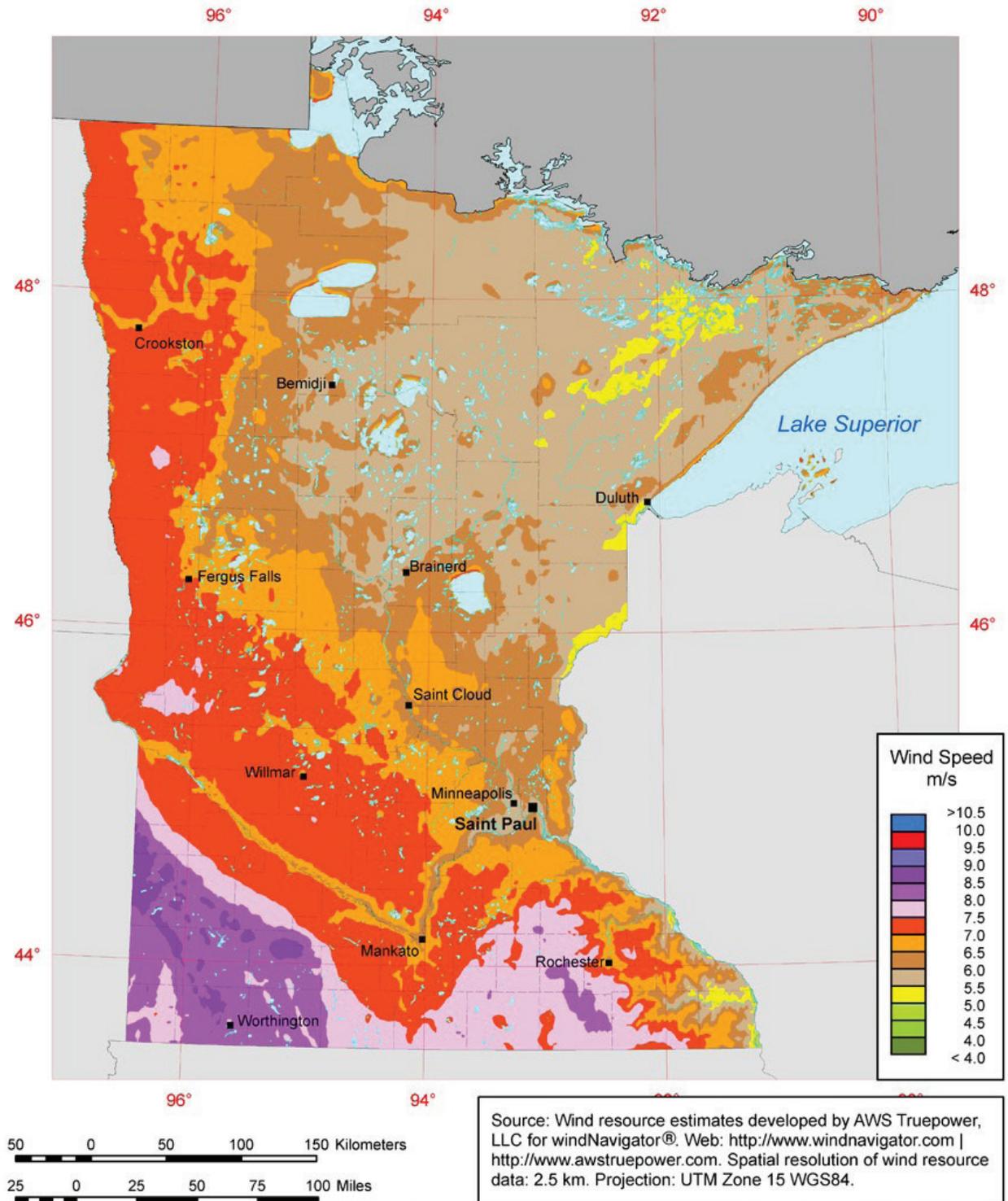
Wind energy is also a relevant option for renewable energy development in Minnesota. In addition to large wind energy farms being constructed at several locations in Minnesota, there is interest in the development of "small wind" power production as well. Xcel Energy recently recommended a \$1.1 million grant for the installation of 50 wind turbines in Stearns, Meeker and Benton Counties. These small 10-kilowatt turbines would be installed in rural areas and could potentially be used in clusters by rural communities to service their power needs and even sell energy back to local utilities. According to the company Wind Power America, wind turbines need wind speeds from 9 to 28 miles per hour for energy production. The area around Pelican Rapids typically has wind speeds from 10 to 15 miles per hour (see Figure 12).

Geothermal energy is another option for the Pelican Rapids community. There are a wide variety of geothermal system designs and operations. Geothermal systems have the potential for significant savings in energy costs and for reducing reliance on fossil fuels like oil and natural gas. However, some of the systems also have potential for adverse environmental effects if installed or operated improperly or if they use inappropriate materials. There is a significant amount of information available from private and public sources on advantages and disadvantages of using geothermal energy. Although the value and impacts of geothermal heat pumps (GHPs) across the three Minnesota climate zones may vary based on installation details, it may generally be expected that 70% of energy needs can be obtained free from ground looped systems. Minnesota has a number of rebate and loan programs supporting installation of geothermal systems. Additional federal incentives exist for certain geothermal system installations. Pelican Rapids has the opportunity to enhance its attractiveness to residents and businesses by being a geothermal friendly community through policies and community education.



A final renewable energy option for Pelican Rapids is hydroelectric power. The lowhead dam on the Pelican River was first built to take advantage of potential for hydroelectric power. Larry Leverson, an engineer and former resident of Pelican Rapids, initiated an investigation in 2009 into using the dam for hydroelectric power again. A 1980 preliminary analysis on hydropower production feasibility in Minnesota suggested the Pelican River dam might be a viable site. The Ohio company that built the previous hydroturbine for the dam was still in business and the company's CEO visited Pelican Rapids to discuss the potential to install another turbine. Meetings were also held with the MNDNR, Ottertail Power, Lake Region Electric Cooperative and local legislators to explore the potential. Additional studies on the generating capacity and financial aspects of the site will be needed before any decision can be made to pursue installation of a new hydroturbine in Pelican Rapids.

Figure 12: Minnesota – Annual Average Wind Speed at 80 Meters



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Goals and Objectives Section provides statements which define the strategy of Pelican Rapids to achieve its vision and manage its future development. They are divided into the following categories:

- » Economic Development
- » Utilities
- » Transportation
- » Land Use
- » Parks

Goals are broad statements of purpose that define a community's vision or hope. Objectives are more focused statements of intent which support and, when accomplished, help to attain a goal. The following goals and objectives should be reviewed each time the City makes decisions which affect its future to ensure there is consistent movement in the same direction.

Economic Development

Goal 1

Provide a favorable business climate in Pelican Rapids. This includes the continuation of local efforts for the promotion, retention and expansion of local business and industry as well as the attraction of additional businesses to diversify the employment base.

Objectives

- a. Public-private partnerships – continue the positive public-private partnership between the City, Economic Development Authority (EDA), Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and the Chamber of Commerce
- b. Fully utilize the leadership and resources of the City, EDA, EDC and Chamber of Commerce organizations; To obtain business leads, new jobs, and assistance with financial programs. To promote and develop business activity and community improvements.
- c. Establish and maintain a business/industry visitation and retention program and a business/industry appreciation program
- d. Agri-business industries and service – encourage and support the local agri-business industries and services for their job base and value-added economic base, as a means of keeping the farming community a strong part of the Pelican Rapids economic base
- e. Downtown Retail – develop and support programs to maintain a viable downtown retail and service district
- f. Commercial sprawl – monitor commercial development trends and assess impacts on the city commercial development
- g. TIF Financing – thoroughly evaluate the application of tax increment financing in each situation for financial feasibility and projected future city budget impacts
- h. Marketing – Active City government participation in a community marketing program, including participation in the Chamber of Commerce and the EDC
- i. Environmental Quality – apply an environmental review to economic development proposals to identify environmental and quality of life issues to assure the best possible development and fewest adverse effects
- j. Good Transportation – maintain an active interest in the state transportation improvements program to assure safe and efficient transportation services for the Pelican Rapids economy and for the commuting activity to the Fergus Falls, Detroit Lakes and Fargo areas. City Administrator should meet with regional transportation authorities on a regular basis to keep abreast of what is happening in the overall region and its effect on Pelican Rapids.
- k. Hotel – work toward the development of a hotel facility as a service to the business community and Pelican Rapids area in general

- I. Streetscaping – encourage and support strategic improvements to the streetscape of Pelican Rapids’ major corridors

Utilities

Goal 1

Provide sufficient water and sanitary sewer systems capacity to meet projected community growth demands

Objectives

- a. Plan, design and program water and sanitary sewer facilities in accord with projected growth demands
- b. Periodically evaluate water and sewer needs
- c. Implement and maintain recommended best land management practices for long term protection of the drinking water supply, including the wellhead protection plan.
- d. Maintain a minimum pumping capacity of at least 2,020 gpm in the city's well system.

Goal 2

Provide financial support for water and sewer system maintenance and expansion as needed to support community growth demands

Objectives

- a. Develop a capital improvements plan which addresses water and wastewater needs and update the capital improvements plan every year as part of the budget process
- b. Place in the proposed annual budget the funds needed to implement water and sanitary sewer needs as identified for a given budget year

Transportation

Goal 1

Provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods throughout the community, while minimizing the impact of the circulation system on residential areas

Objectives

- a. Require that all new streets meet engineering and planning standards for location, design and aesthetics.
- b. Develop a capital improvements program which addresses transportation systems needs and update the capital improvements plan every year as part of the budget process.
- c. Cul-de-sac streets should be restricted and used only in absolutely necessary situations, as may be required by topographic limitations.
- d. Develop and maintain a sidewalk inspection and improvement program and place in the proposed capital improvement program.
- e. Monitor state DOT programs for any improvements to Highway 59 and 108 and get involved early with any state plans to insure that the City of Pelican Rapids’ interests are provided for, and that land use plans along the highway are adequately serviced by state plans.
- f. Provide for safe and continuous bicycle and pedestrian travel throughout the community connecting new residential neighborhoods into the rest of the community.
- g. Plan to connect Pelican Rapids to a regional walking/biking trail system.
- h. Continue to support the city-owned airport and pursue more hangar space at the airport.

Land Use

Goal 1

Provide for a constructive mix of uses but also protect against incompatibilities and conflicting activity impacts

Goal 2

Maintain a safe and functional relationship between land use activities and transportation systems

Objectives

- a. Review and revise the zoning and subdivision ordinances to maintain consistency with the land use plan, as often as needed.
- b. Zoning districts shall have compatible land uses and standards which assure environmental and neighborhood compatibility
- c. Facilitate annexation regarding developments needing city services. Establish a collaborative relationship with the Township on all such matters and seek compatibility between township plans and City plans while meeting development needs.
- d. Condition all development proposals on compliance with the City's master street plan. This plan shall show continuation of streets for the best access for all 911 vehicles.
- e. Encourage the use of available development capacity in the sewage treatment plant gravity service area and in existing lift station service areas as a means of minimizing the number of lift stations and as a means of minimizing housing sprawl with the unnecessary cost of maintaining an excessive street and utility system. The City shall encourage that the City be filled in from the center of the City to the outskirts.
- f. Consult the information in the county soils survey in evaluating development proposals.
- g. Incorporate conservation, environmental, and historic preservation values into city land use decisions
- h. Protect the fringe area around the city's industrial uses to avoid potentially incompatible uses such as single family housing.
- i. Support the development of higher income, smaller housing units, based on demographic projections of the State of Minnesota Administration Department and those presented in this Plan. The recommendation is that more two, four and six unit housing be provided for in the community to tap the potential of the older, retirement age housing market (upscale condominium market, especially along the Pelican River on the northeast corner of town).
- j. Encourage and support strategic improvements to the streetscape of Pelican Rapids' major corridors.

Parks

Goal 1

Make the City a park and river oriented space where people can stop and enjoy the beauty of the community

Goal 2

Soften the community through the use of green spaces and trees

The previous sections of the Comprehensive Plan have reviewed existing conditions, identified key factors relating to the opportunities for growth and development in Pelican Rapids, and defined goals and objectives to guide development. This section describes key activities necessary to implement the vision, goals and objectives set forth in this Comprehensive Plan Update. It is divided into four topic areas:

- » Economic Development
- » Utilities
- » Transportation
- » Land Use and Parks

Economic Development

1. ACTION - Retirement Housing – Develop a strategy for accommodating the projected increase in retirement housing and related services, the need for which will accelerate near the end of the decade and remain a significant economic market for approximately 20 years.
2. ACTION - Update zoning and subdivision ordinances – eliminate provisions in zoning and subdivision ordinances which inhibit business growth and add provisions which create flexibility in the location and development standards for business. Add provisions to the ordinances to protect zoning from mixed use that does not protect the value of existing real estate. The provisions should consider mobile homes, manufactured homes, pole buildings, halfway release homes and salvage/junk yards.
3. ACTION - Tax Base Growth – develop tax base expansion goals in line with funding requirements for public services, and as a means of moderating tax rates.
4. ACTION - Downtown Growth – identify potential infill sites in and on the fringe of the downtown area that could facilitate new or expanded downtown businesses and parking needs
5. ACTION - Downtown Improvements – identify downtown public works improvements and beautification measures to keep the area appealing for customers
6. ACTION - Initiate an economic development summit of local business and community leaders with the purpose of developing a collaborative strategy to encourage local businesses and explore the development of new businesses.

Utilities

1. ACTION - Determine the sewer and water limiting factors to development and find ways to overcome them
2. ACTION - Acquire topographic mapping of the city
3. ACTION - Delineate the wetland(s)
4. ACTION - Conduct a sanitary sewer inspection, televising and repair program (known as an I and I program)
5. ACTION - Prepare master plans for the water and wastewater systems
6. ACTION - Provide backup power using a generator at the water treatment plant
7. ACTION - Provide backup power using a generator at the wastewater treatment facility
8. ACTION - Funds should be set aside for these capital expenditures and an ongoing program of replacement should be established as part of a Capital Improvements Plan

9. ACTION - Evaluate opportunities to reduce future local street construction and reconstruction costs by reducing the size of street cross-sections
10. ACTION - Develop a City wide storm water management plan

Transportation

1. ACTION - Develop noted standards and place in city's ordinance
2. ACTION - Develop street cross-section design standards and construction standards for the local, collector, and arterial street classifications.
3. ACTION - Develop a major street plan

Land Use and Parks

1. ACTION - Identify land parcels within the city's developed area where a variety of "infilling" uses can take advantage of existing city infrastructure and increase the property tax yield from such parcels.
2. ACTION - Review and revise existing city ordinances and policies as needed to promote infill development.
3. ACTION - Adjust existing zoning designations in the commercially zoned area to promote infill development and encourage investment in the City
4. ACTION - Review and revise existing city programs and policies as needed to support the development of additional housing supply.
5. ACTION - Produce a Central Business District development and enhancement plan
6. ACTION - Examine the opportunities for extraterritorial land development jurisdiction
7. ACTION - Work to establish extraterritorial subdivision authority outside city limits to manage and promote appropriate growth patterns.
8. ACTION - Update the city sign ordinance and consider limiting the number, size, and location of signs and billboards.
9. ACTION - Investigate right-to-farm provisions for the city code
10. ACTION - Establish standards which achieve a safe and functional relationship between land activities and the street and highway system
11. ACTION - Develop a long range parks and open space plan. This plan should be developed by the City park board in enough detail so the City Council can see what the Board plans on accomplishing in the next five years. This plan should be updated every year.
12. ACTION - Review and revise existing city ordinances and policies as needed to promote infill development.
13. ACTION - Review and revise existing city programs and policies as needed to support the development of additional housing supply.
14. ACTION - Work to establish extraterritorial subdivision authority outside city limits to manage and promote appropriate growth patterns.
15. ACTION - Adopt an updated official zoning map which is consistent with the future land use map and other recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan as illustrated in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Recommended Updated Official Zoning Map

