



Comprehensive Plan Update

2015

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Appendix B – State Trail Maps

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City of Baxter

Comprehensive Plan Update

Chapter 1 – Introduction



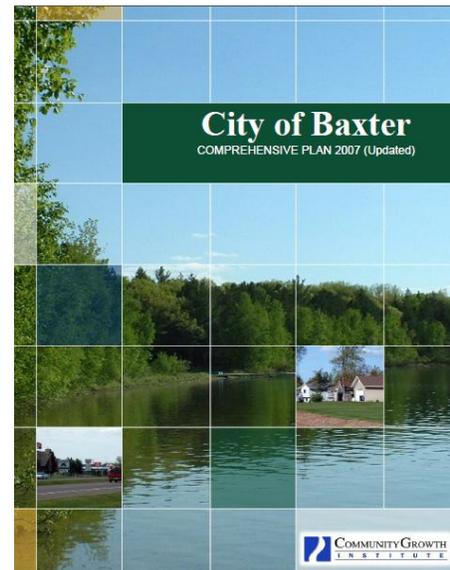
Introduction

The City of Baxter began the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan in June 2013. The Baxter Long Range Planning Commission (LRPC), working with consultants from Stantec, oversaw the process, reviewed information and made recommendations to the City Council on the Plan. The Plan is intended to guide the City's development for the next 20-plus years.

Baxter's Previous Comprehensive Plan

Baxter prepared a comprehensive plan in 2005 that was substantially updated again in 2007. The Plan has sections with policies on:

- Economic Growth
- Utilities & City Services
- Maintenance
- Public Land & Open Space
- Outdoor Recreation
- Climate Fluctuation
- Hazard & Emergency Management
- Groundwater Resource & Environmental Protection
- Residential Development
- Commercial & Industrial Development
- Transportation
- Orderly Growth & Redevelopment
- Long Range Boundary Adjustment
- Public Communication
- Conservation Overlay District Establishment



Role of the Comprehensive Plan

A community or comprehensive plan fulfills at least three roles. It is a:

- Long-range vision, guide and design for the community's future
- Guide for elected officials to use when making decisions
- Legal foundation for rules and regulations adopted by the community – zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, etc.

This Comprehensive Plan Update is organized into the following chapters, corresponding generally to the themes that have emerged from the planning process.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Chapter 2. Managing growth and development

- Existing and future land use
- Growth areas
- Rural development/standards
- Redevelopment sites/infill
- Housing
- Economic development – potential redevelopment and new development
- General infrastructure existing systems and plans and future considerations: water, sewer, storm water

Chapter 3. Traffic and Transportation

- Updated transportation plan (in coordination with City Engineer)
- Identify/discuss necessary transportation improvements
- Intersection study/improvements

Chapter 4. Parks, Trails and Open Space areas

- Park plan (inventory)
- Trail plan – on and off road, bicycle corridors
- Future park and trail needs
- Community facilities (inventory)

Chapter 5. Baxter's Character and Identity

- More specific land use discussion related to gateways, corridors, design standards within land use categories
- Opportunity for mixed use areas

Implementation strategies are included within each chapter.

History

The Brainerd-Baxter area was originally Ojibwe territory and was first noted by Zebulon Pike, an explorer searching for the headwaters of the Mississippi River in late 1805. Europeans didn't settle the area however until the mid-19th-century when a fur and logging community near Fort Ripley (about 15 miles south of Baxter) was established. Accounts of settler-Native American interactions indicate a mixed relationship of trade and occasional fatal conflict.

Both Brainerd and Baxter owe their existence to Northern Pacific Railroad. Brainerd was founded by Northern Pacific Railroad president John Gregory Smith in 1870 as the town to house a locomotive service shop; Baxter became home to a Northern Pacific tie-treating plant fifty years later (1920s).

Baxter was incorporated in 1939, and was named after Luther Baxter, a railroad attorney who served in the Minnesota Legislature and as colonel in the Civil War.



Issues Discussion

At its initial meeting the Long Range Planning Commission (LRPC) discussed and prioritized the main issues Baxter faces. In this SWOT exercise (for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) strengths are the things in the community you like, that add value, or you are proud of now; weaknesses are things you don't like, should be corrected, detract from the community, opportunities are good things that could happen but haven't happened yet; threats are bad things that could happen but haven't happened yet. All issues are listed in *Appendix A – LRPC SWOT Summary*.

Each category has a "word cloud" that shows the most common terms in that list of issues – the larger the word, the more common. This is another way to visualize the terms that were used most often in the process.

Taken together the LRPC issues can be summarized in six main topics:

- Managing growth and development
- Maintaining infrastructure
- Baxter's character and identity
- Traffic and transportation
- Parks, trails and open space (including pedestrian crossings)
- Effective local government

A goal of this Plan is to address the weaknesses and threats raised in the process.

The LRPC saw the key Threats as:

- Aging and deteriorating infrastructure, such as roads, water, sewer, and parks
- Lack of communication with neighboring communities
- Loss of natural resources that make Baxter unique
- Continued slow economic growth
- If there is not strong policy leadership to follow through on plans



Other issues mentioned were disengaged citizens, high cost of development fees, and the high amount of vacant developed lots.

Long Range Planning Commission Meetings

The LRPC held eighteen meetings in the course of the comprehensive planning process between July 2013 and April 2015.

Community Comments

A community meeting on the comprehensive plan was held in October, 2013 where attendees were asked to offer comments on the six main topics that came from the LRPC Issues Discussion above. The most comments were made on the topics of *Traffic & Transportation* and *Parks & Trails*. Commenters noted traffic problems in specific areas, but in both topics there were numerous comments wanting better bike and pedestrian connections in the community. The full comments are included in the Appendix.

Baxter Business Council Discussion

As part of the Baxter comprehensive plan effort city staff and consultants met with the Baxter Business Council (part of the Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce) in December of 2013. The meeting focused on the business climate in Baxter and issues affecting business.

The discussion included a brief introduction to the city’s comprehensive plan process, then participants divided into groups for discussion of issues which were listed and prioritized. A full summary of the discussion is included in the appendix. However, the key topics discussed were as follows:

- Location
- Highway 371
- City Government
- Connect with Larger Community



Adopting and Amending the Comprehensive Plan

When complete, the Comprehensive Plan will be officially adopted by the City Council upon recommendation of the Long Range Planning Commission. Following adoption, the Plan can be amended as follows:

- Ideally the Long Range Planning Commission and City staff would set up an annual review of the Plan to determine if any part of the Plan needs to be reviewed and updated.
- Pertinent section(s) of the Plan can be recommended for review and revision by the City staff, citizens, property owners, the Long Range Planning Commission, other city boards and commissions, the City Council or others, at any time.
- The item is referred to the Long Range Planning Commission for study, who may refer it to City staff for research and analysis.
- Appropriate communication and discussion among affected parties – property owners, business owners, neighbors, etc. – would be managed by the Long Range Planning Commission with assistance from City staff.
- An amendment to the Plan is prepared by City staff.
- A public hearing is scheduled in front of the Long Range Planning Commission with notice given to property owners within 500 feet of the affected area(s). For large-scale amendments affecting significant portions of the City, notice need only be made in the City's official newspaper and on the City website.
- The City Council would hear the recommendation of the Long Range Planning Commission and make a final decision on the Plan amendment.
- If the amendment involves a change in land use then it should be followed with an appropriate rezoning within a reasonable period of time.
- Specific procedures for comprehensive plan amendments are in Title 10-7-2 of the zoning ordinance.

City of Baxter Comprehensive Plan Update Chapter 2- Managing Growth and Development

Introduction

A comprehensive plan is important not only because it helps city decision makers and citizens to articulate a city's vision and direction, but because it is the legal foundation for official regulations like the zoning

ordinance and subdivision ordinance. The U.S. Supreme Court, in ruling on zoning cases that have been appealed all the way through the judicial process, has said they are looking for "a rational basis in a comprehensive plan".

The Land Use Plan illustrates the intended use of land within the City of Baxter and its potential growth areas. Ideally, development in a city follows a simple, straightforward process:

- Discuss vision and goals
- Research and analyze various issues
- Prepare and adopt a Plan
- Adopt zoning codes and other tools to implement the Plan
- Approve projects that follow the Plan and zoning
- Enforce Plan policies, zoning standards and conditions of approval as projects are built

The City's land use plan plays a key role in guiding growth and development, or redevelopment, in Baxter. The Future Land Use Plan identifies the location and intensity of future development and redevelopment in the City. It also establishes a framework in which future development will occur.

This plan is intended to guide future development and growth to achieve the community's objectives for balanced and efficient growth.

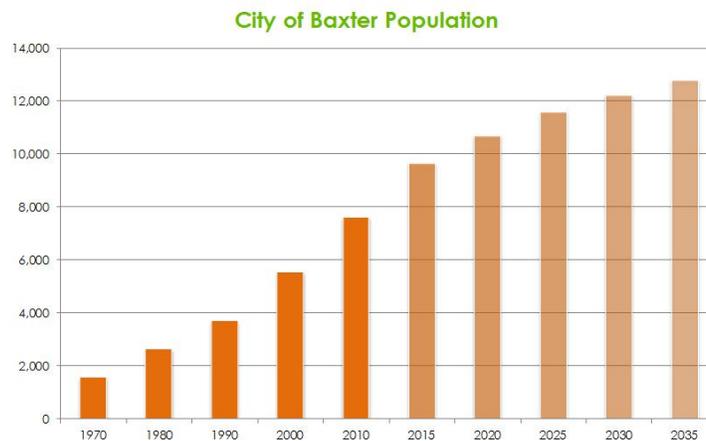


Demographic Trends

Baxter is expected to continue growing significantly for the next twenty-plus years. The graph below shows Baxter’s historic and projected population from 1970 through 2035, according to the Minnesota State Demographer. The graph and table on the next page illustrate historic and projected population in and around Baxter – Crow Wing County, Brainerd, Crow Wing Township and the unorganized territory area.

Crow Wing County is projected to increase by about 29% to over 80,000 by 2035 (more than the State of Minnesota’s 20% increase in the same time period). Brainerd is due to increase less than 8% to about 14,613 population, whereas Baxter with all of its available land, is due to inherit much of Crow Wing County’s increased population, growing by 68% to 12,814, approaching Brainerd’s size. Brainerd is actually projected to decrease slightly in population between 2030 and 2035, according to the State Demographer. If these trends continue, by the middle of the century Baxter would have a larger population than Brainerd.

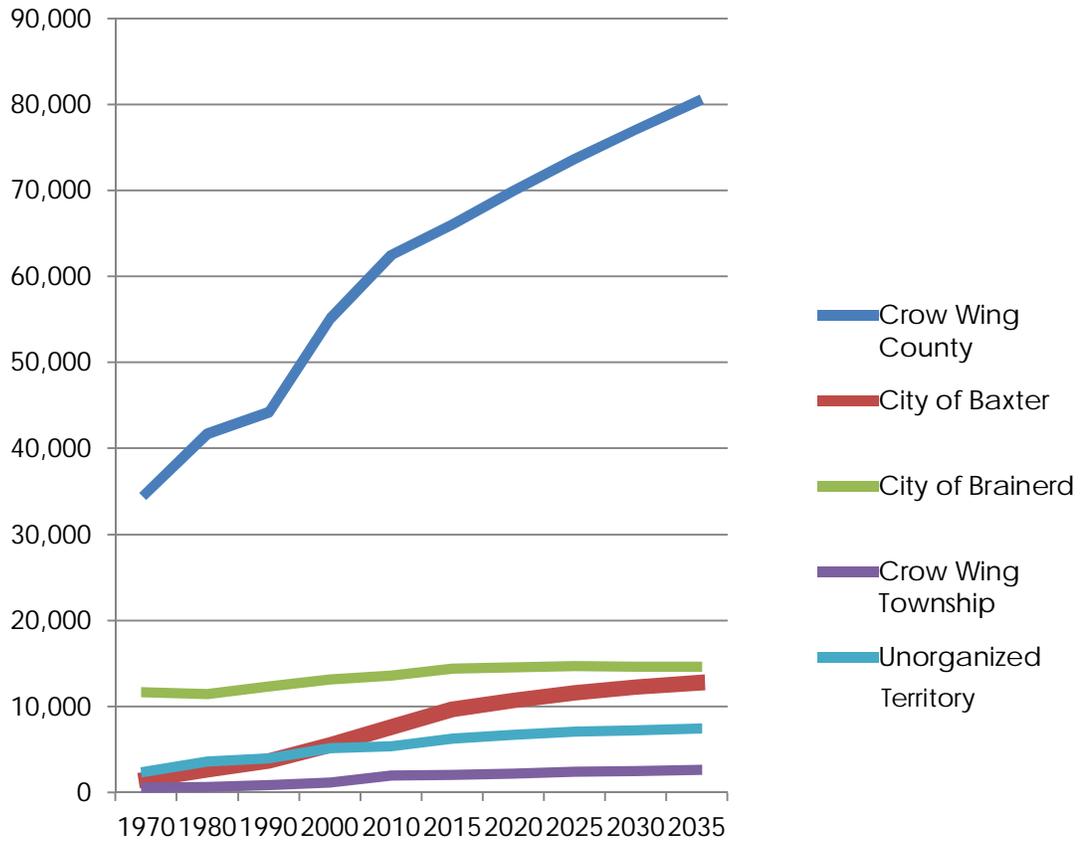
Baxter Population 1970 - 2035 (projected)



Historic and Projected Population 2010-2035 – Minnesota, Baxter & Vicinity

Geography	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
Minnesota	5,278,190	5,537,385	5,772,258	5,987,609	6,182,306	6,363,010
Crow Wing County	62,500	66,067	69,995	73,687	77,114	80,350
City of Baxter	7,610	9,678	10,701	11,607	12,251	12,814
City of Brainerd	13,590	14,406	14,578	14,689	14,661	14,613
Crow Wing Township	1,966	2,051	2,245	2,416	2,536	2,640
Unorganized Territory	5,424	6,321	6,720	7,064	7,285	7,473

Figure 1. Historic and Projected Municipality Populations (1970-2035)



Baxter’s average household size has decreased the last several decades from 3.14 (1990) to 2.87 (2000) to 2.55 (2010) - a rate of about 10% per decade – but the average American household size has been plateauing in the mid two’s since the 1980s. Thus it is likely the rate of average household size decrease will slow. By 2035, at decrease rates of 6% and 3% per decade, the average Baxter household will be about 2.3. Using an estimated 2035 estimated household size of 2.3, we can start with the projected 2035 Baxter population and work backwards to estimate the growth in the number of households in Baxter between now and 2035:

Baxter Households

Projected 2035: 12,814 Baxter residents ÷ 2.3 people/HH = 5,399 households

Current 2010: 3,176 households

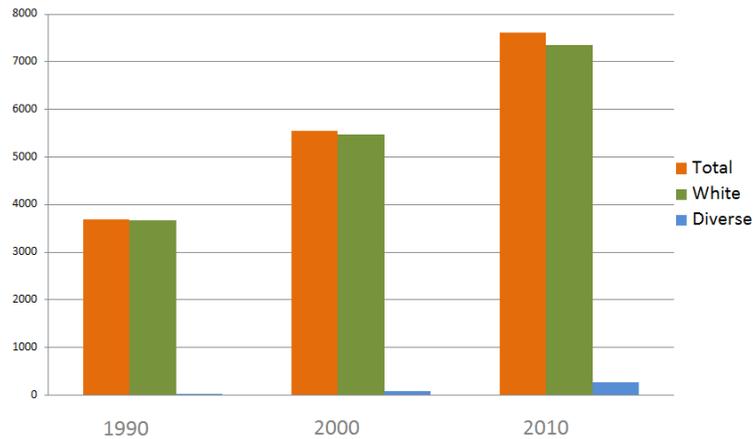
Growth in households 2010-2035: = 2,223 households

This number – about 2,200 households – will be used in this Plan for residential growth in Baxter in the next twenty years and more.

Racial Profile

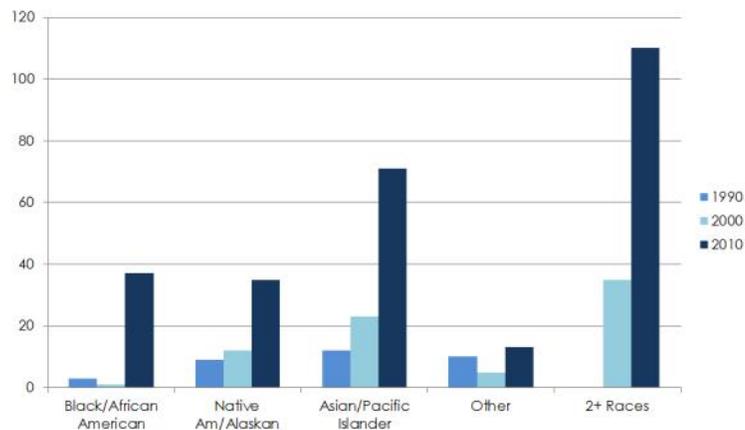
Baxter is and will remain a largely white community for the foreseeable future, but the percent of non-white (diverse) residents is increasing, as illustrated in the chart below. In 1990, less than 1% of Baxter’s residents were non-white; in 2000 the share had risen to 1.4%; and in the 2010 census the proportion grew to 3.5%. Non-white populations, including significant immigrant groups, are growing in the State and nation, and we can expect this to continue in Baxter as well.

Baxter Population – Racial Breakdown



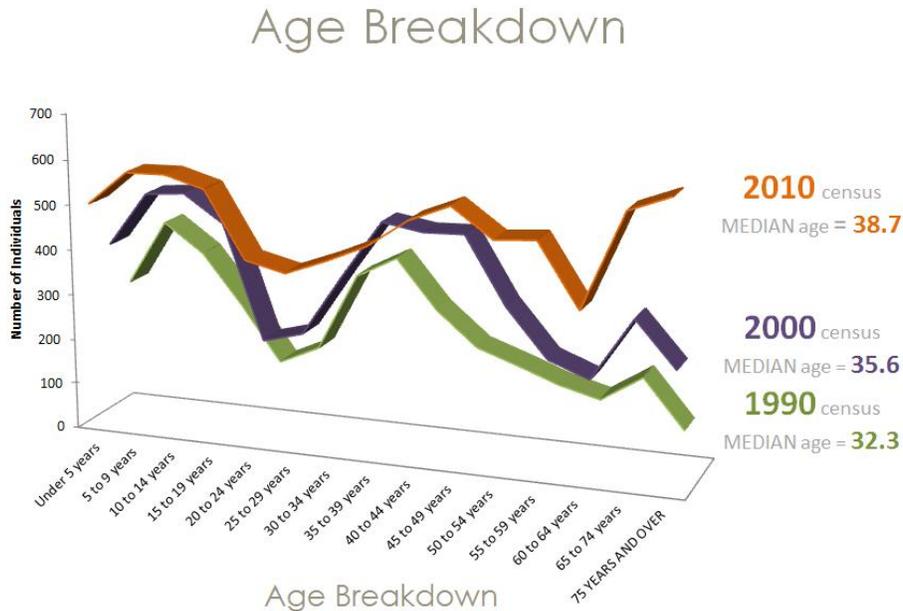
The racial identity of non-white Baxter residents is changing too. Those identifying themselves as two or more races are the largest group, followed by Asian/Pacific Islanders, but the number of Black/African Americans has increased by the largest proportion in the last 20 years.

Racial Identity



Age Characteristics

Baxter’s population has shown interesting shifts in the last two decades. As the graph below shows, the number of young adults (ages 20-39) in the community dropped considerably compared to lower age cohorts – in other words, young people were leaving Baxter as soon as they were old enough to go to college and get a job. But that trend changed significantly in the 2010 census – the dip was not nearly as dramatic, meaning there was more opportunity for jobs and young families in Baxter.

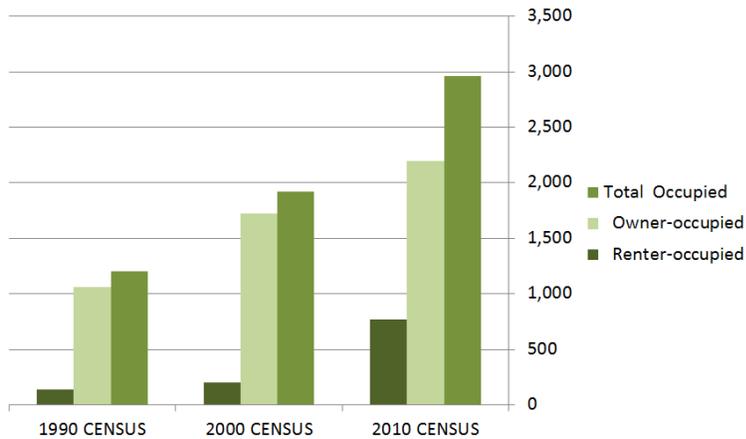


At the other end of the age spectrum, in the 1990 and 2000 Censuses there was a dramatic drop as people aged into their 50s and 60s, with a slight uptick at retirement age – 65 and older. In 2010, there was no significant drop in the aging population and in fact, there is growth in the population 60 and older. This shows Baxter as an attractive place for retirees, but also reflects growing opportunities in housing for the elderly to age in place.

These age trends are seen in median age statistics as well. Comparing the State of Minnesota to Baxter, we see almost identical median age in 1990 and 2000, but Baxter starts to pull away in 2010 – by more than a year over the State’s median:

Median Age			
	1990	2000	2010
Minnesota	32.4	35.4	37.4
Baxter	32.3	35.6	38.7

Where you live

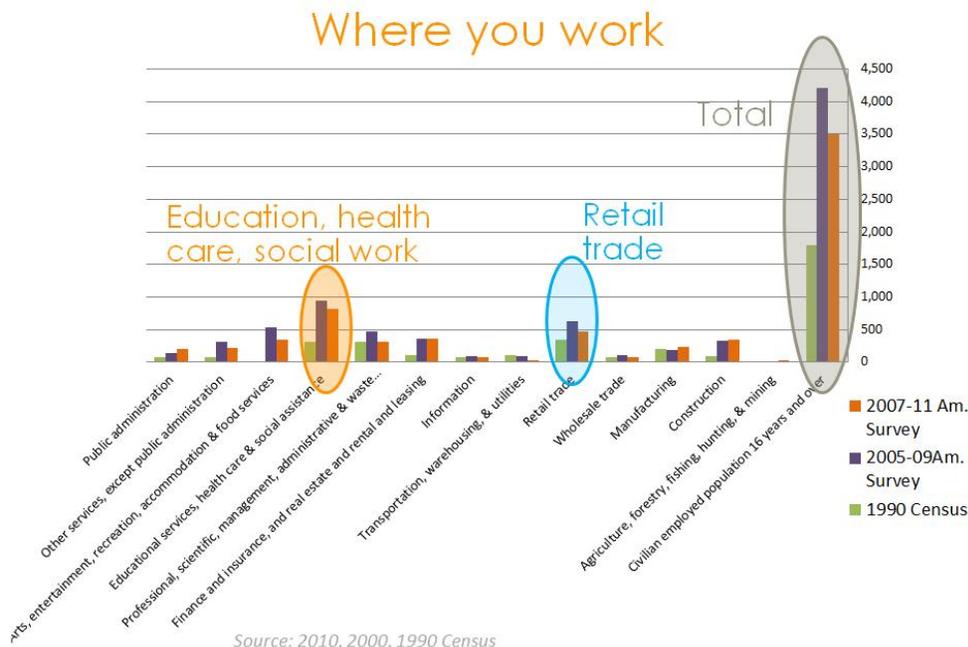


Housing Tenure

The share of renter-occupied vs. owner-occupied housing units has increased in the last decade as well. In 1990 and 2000, about 10% of Baxter’s housing was rented; by 2010, this had increased to over 25%. This likely represents a number of factors – a larger number of young people, more renters during the recession, and a trend to more multi-family vs. single family homes.

Employment

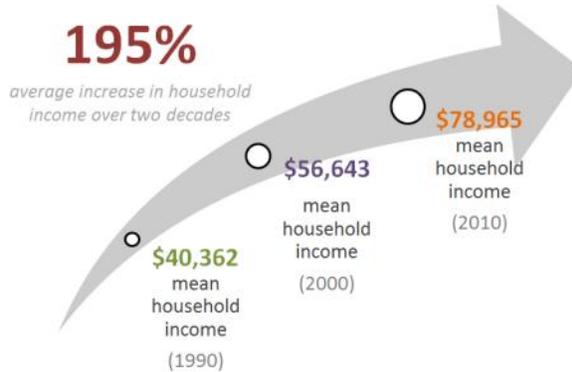
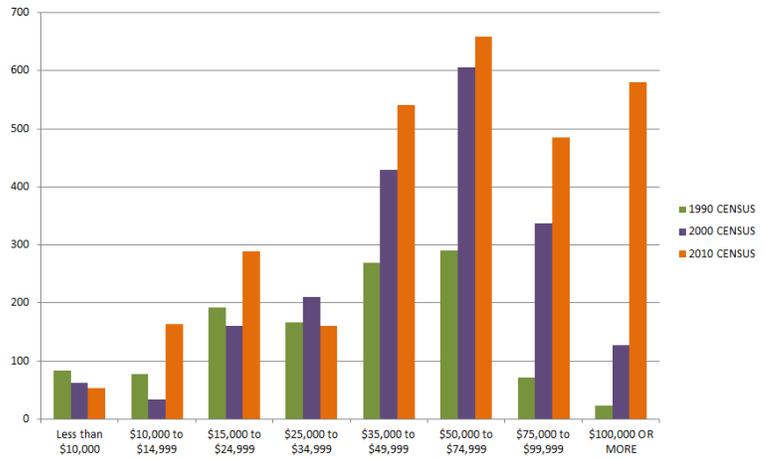
Employment statistics from the last two decades reveal a significant increase in employment in Baxter from the 1990 census to the 2005-2009 American Community Survey, but then a drop in the 2007-2011 Survey, due to the recession, as illustrated in the graph below. Total employment is highlighted (right side of the graph), plus the two largest clusters: education, health care and social work; and retail trade.



Income

Household income in Baxter has risen steadily in the last two decades, almost doubling between 1990 and 2010, from about \$40,000 to almost \$80,000. While these numbers are not adjusted for inflation they still show a significant increase.

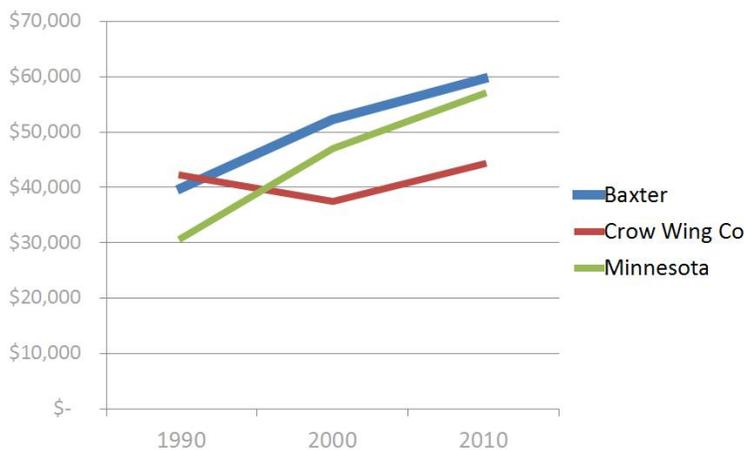
How much you take home



Of special note is the increase at the higher end of the income range: the number of households with over \$100,000 income more than quadrupled between 2000 and 2010.

Baxter has also outpaced Crow Wing County in household income in the same time period as shown in the lower graph on this page. In 1990, the County's median income was slightly higher than Baxter's. Crow Wing County income actually declined 1990-2000, then rose slightly in 2010, getting back to where it had been twenty years earlier. Baxter's median income, meanwhile, has grown steadily and is higher than Minnesota's median, climbing more or less in step with State income growth.

Median HH Income 1990-2010



Residential Land Needs

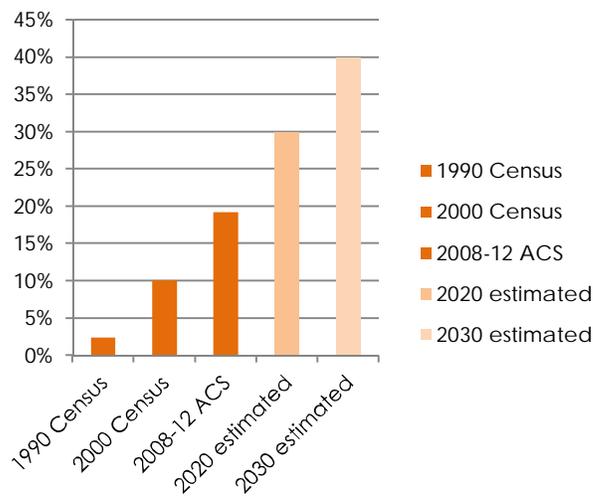
To see how much land will be needed for these 2,200 new households we need to make some assumptions about residential density. Single family homes can be built in a wide range, from large lots of 3-5 acres each, down to lots as small as 15,000 square feet in the R-1 district, which would translate to a net density of about 2.9 units per acre. Multi-family dwellings can be twin homes, townhouses, or apartments ranging in density from as low as 4 units/acre to over 20 units/acre. Within any piece of property being developed there must be accommodation for future road right-of-way, park land, inefficiencies in lot layout and other factors, amounting to 25%-50% of the land. This must be taken into account when we discuss density – is it gross acreage before any of these things are taken out, or net acreage, after street right-of-way, park land and other things are taken care of.

For our purposes in this Plan we will assume single family development at 2 units/acre and multi-family development at 10 units/acre on a gross land area basis.

The share of single family and multi-family development can also vary greatly. In the 1990 U.S.

Census the share of multi-family was only 2.4%; by 2000 it was over 10%; in the 2008-2012 American Community Survey it was 19.2%. Based on these historical trends in Baxter, which are consistent with trends in the State and nationwide, we estimate that by 2030 and beyond about 40% of the dwelling units in Baxter will be multi-family (MF).

Multi-Family Share of Residential Households



City staff estimates there are about 600 vacant single family (SF) lots platted in the City in 2014. This number can be subtracted from the total future need, assuming these lots will be occupied and absorbed as demand requires.

Using these numbers we estimate the land area needed for residential uses by 2035:

$$\begin{array}{r}
 2,200 \text{ new households} \times 60\% \text{ SF} = 1,320 \text{ SF units} \\
 \underline{- 600 \text{ SF lots existing}} \\
 720 \text{ SF units new} \div 2 \text{ un/ac} = 360 \text{ acres}
 \end{array}$$

$$2,200 \text{ new households} \times 40\% \text{ MF} = 880 \text{ MF units} \quad \div 10 \text{ un/ac} = 88 \text{ acres}$$

Housing



Baxter's residential growth will be accommodated where there are vacant acres zoned for single family, medium and high density residential, including the approximately 600 existing vacant platted single family lots noted earlier.



An impact to Baxter's housing needs will be the aging population and how that will translate into the different types of housing demands. The majority of residents now live in owner occupied housing versus rental, which will continue for the foreseeable future even as the share of multi-family housing increases.



As Baxter's economy is heavily retail, affordable housing is and will continue to be a need. Affordable housing is often more easily accommodated through multiple family units (rental or owner-occupied) where attractive for retirees to relocate. As retirees continue to age, their housing needs will change pointing to a need for more independent and assisted living.



Guiding vacant land in a range of residential land use types and densities allows the City to respond to these changing trends and needs in housing. The City's best tool to support the development of affordable and senior housing is having land guided for the higher densities.

The goals of providing a wide variety of housing to meet the needs of all current and future Baxter residents is further discussed in the Goals later in this chapter.

Existing Land Use

By “existing land use” we mean how the land is actually being used, not how it is planned or zoned for future use. In some cases the existing land use may be different from the official zoning for the land. For example, a residential area near a highway may have been planned and zoned for commercial uses, long after the homes were built, but homes still exist there and can stay. Over time, the intent is that the community’s vision – expressed through the land use plan and zoning – will be developed.

Baxter’s existing land use map has a variety of uses including residential, predominately single family, commercial with an extensive and growing corridor along Highway 371, industrial, rural residential and forest or agriculture. Development of some land use types, such as residential, has been slowed by the recession over the past few years leaving opportunity to utilize existing development single family lots. Commercial development has remained constant as a result of Baxter’s location as a hub for visitors and cabin residents frequenting the variety of shopping and restaurants.

The City’s existing land use is defined by the following categories:

Forest/Agriculture – forest, farming and related activities and accessory uses including farmstead or rural residence.

Rural Residential – unsewered single family large lot (5 acres) residential and hobby farm residences.

Single Family Residential – sewerred low density single family development.

Medium Density Residential – dwellings including single family, two- family and/or townhouses.

High Density Residential – dwellings including two-family (duplexes), townhouses and stacked multiple-family residential developments.

Commercial – provision of goods, or services, may also include office, (predominately administrative, professional or clerical services).

Industrial – primarily manufacturing and/or processing of products; could include light or heavy industrial land use or warehouse facilities.

Institutional and Public/Semi-Public – primarily places of worship, governmental, educational or social.

Golf Course – parcels identify for existing or planned golf course facilities.

Parks – facilities for public active and passive recreation activities with improvements such as playfields, playgrounds, beaches, etc.

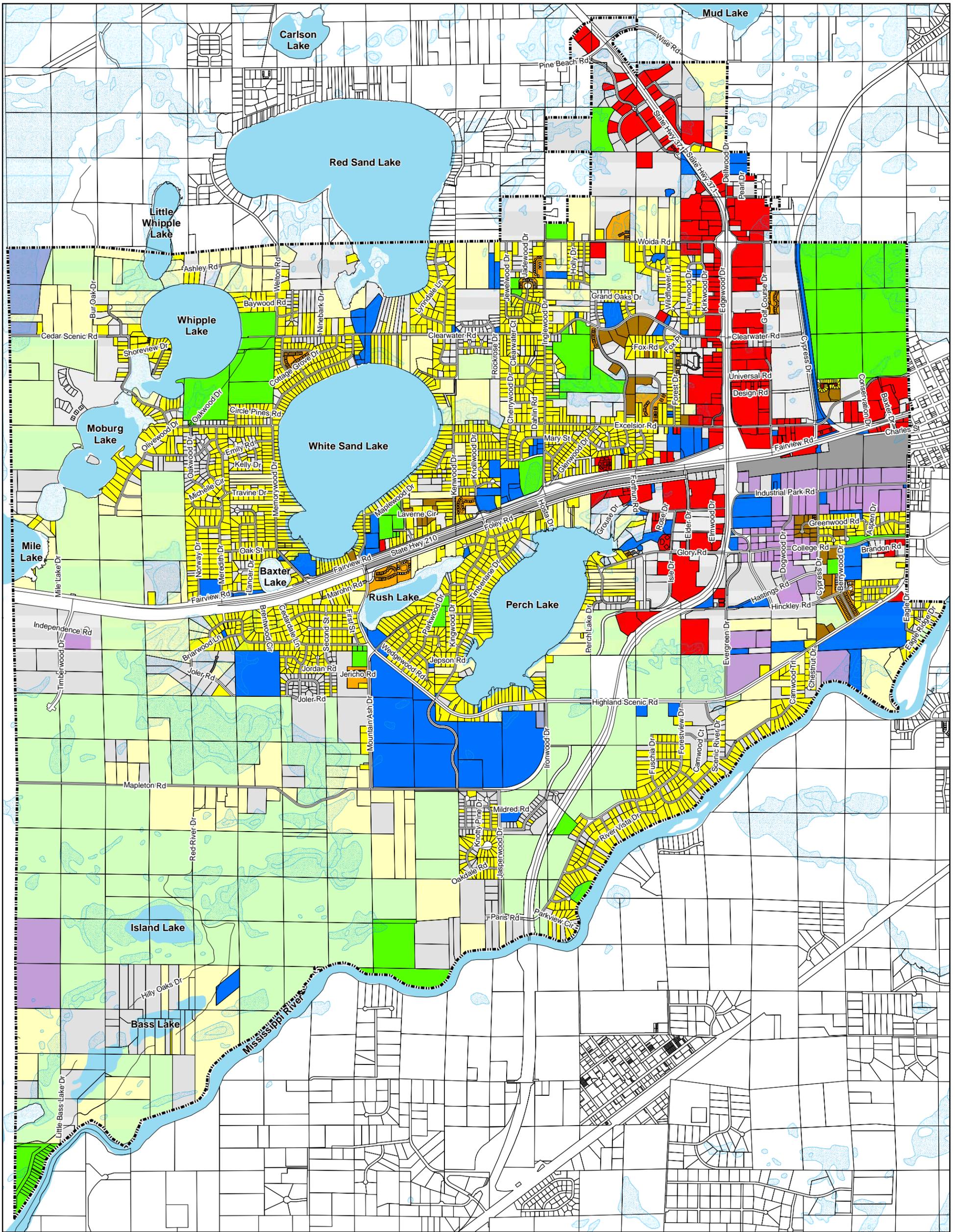
Vacant – undeveloped parcels.

Open Water – permanent open water, rivers, streams, not including periodically flooded areas.

Existing land use and acreages are presented in Table 1 and Figure xx on the following page.

Table 1: Existing Land Use

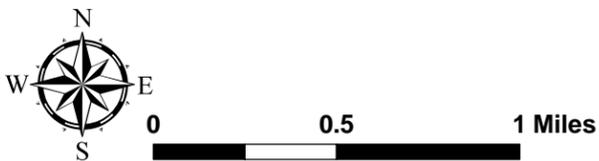
Existing Land Use	Gross Acres	Net (of NWI) Acres	% Gross	% Net
Rural Residential	1,318.30	1,144.86	10.1%	9.7%
Low Density Residential	1,661.38	1,639.37	12.7%	13.8%
Medium Density Residential	84.02	77.24	0.6%	0.7%
High Density Residential	69.59	69.51	0.5%	0.6%
Manufactured Home Park	1.31	1.31	0.0%	0.0%
Commercial	585.67	561.48	4.5%	4.7%
Industrial	316.88	309.47	2.4%	2.6%
Public/Semi-Public	649.79	596.30	5.0%	5.0%
Utilities	55.75	14.04	0.4%	0.1%
Parks	657.98	555.04	5.0%	4.7%
Forest/Agricultural	2,908.10	2,348.95	22.3%	19.8%
Railroad	115.62	114.36	0.9%	1.0%
Road Right-of-Way	1,226.16	1,220.94	9.4%	10.3%
Vacant	2,081.47	1,897.46	16.0%	16.0%
Open Water	1,305.10	1,305.10	10.0%	11.0%
NWI Wetland		1,181.68		
Total City	13,037.11	13,037.11	100.0%	100.0%



Existing Land Use

City of Baxter Comprehensive Plan

- | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Municipal Boundary | Manufactured Home Park | Parks |
| Rural Residential | Commercial | Agricultural |
| Low Density Residential | Industrial | Railroad |
| Medium Density Residential | Public/Semi-Public | Vacant |
| High Density Residential | Utilities | Open Water |
| | | NWI Wetland |



January 30, 2015



Goals

The entire set of City goals for the Comprehensive Plan is included in the Appendix. The following goals and policies from that set are applicable to the discussion of land use and managing growth and development.

Goal 1: Promote a well-planned community balancing land uses and expansion of services.

Key planning themes:

Managing growth and development, community character and identity, maintaining infrastructure

Rationale: A carefully created comprehensive plan will ensure the community's ability to grow in a rational and responsible manner that promotes efficient investment in present and future infrastructure.

Policies:

1. Create a land use plan that defines the types and locations of residential, commercial, industrial and public uses required to meet the community's projected needs, and zone property consistent with the land use plan.
2. Identify growth areas within the city limits and potential urban expansion areas and include these areas in land use planning to guide the orderly and cost effective provision of infrastructure at a rate consistent with anticipated growth.
3. Continue to use the Areawide Urban Alternative Review (AUAR) process to evaluate impacts of new development; ensure updates are prepared to keep plans current.
4. Require efficient use of the land with compact urban development standards in both new development and redevelopment.
5. Identify, prioritize and protect sensitive natural features, such as source water, ground water, wellhead protection, lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, natural open space, local parks and trails as development proceeds. Employ conservation design principles in areas of environmentally sensitive land areas.
6. Provide for commercial and industrial land uses at locations where adequate municipal services are available, that serve market demand, and with access to major roadways, especially State Highways 371 and 210.
7. Create a Hwy 371 Corridor plan that provides guidance and specific plans for land use, infill and redevelopment opportunities, bicycle/pedestrian elements (including safety) and public spaces.

8. Create and enforce building, site/landscaping design and signage standards to insure high quality development that enhances Baxter's identity and character.

Goal 2: Provide a variety of housing types, densities and choices to meet the life cycle housing needs of residents.

Key planning themes:

Managing growth and development, maintaining infrastructure

Rationale: A variety of residential densities supports a range in housing styles for home ownership and rental in attached and detached formats and increases opportunity for meeting life-cycle housing needs.

Policies:

1. Maintain a balance, through land use, in the types and densities of housing units available to meet the housing needs of Baxter.
2. Promote infill residential development in appropriate areas where existing infrastructure may be utilized.
3. Develop standards for conservation design principles that protect Baxter's sensitive or unique land and water features in new residential development.
4. Assess the need for additional workforce and affordable senior housing needs in the community.
5. Promote the improvement of the existing housing stock, and encourage the rehabilitation or redevelopment of substandard housing.

Goal 3: Support, enhance and expand existing businesses and promote new businesses to Baxter.

Key planning theme:

Managing growth and development

Rationale: Existing local businesses understand the issues and advantages to Baxter and the larger Baxter/Brainerd location and most job creation occurs from existing businesses. By working closely with the local business community, the City will be able to understand and respond to changes in the market place quickly and effectively.

Policies:

1. Continue promoting new businesses to help fill niches and to enhance choices within the City.

2. Through land use and financial tools/incentives, create opportunities to meet market demand for industrial, business park, medical service and professional office development to expand the number of livable wage jobs in Baxter.
3. Promote programs and efforts to bring new businesses to Baxter and support improving, maintaining and expanding existing jobs.

Wellhead Protection in Baxter Comprehensive Plan

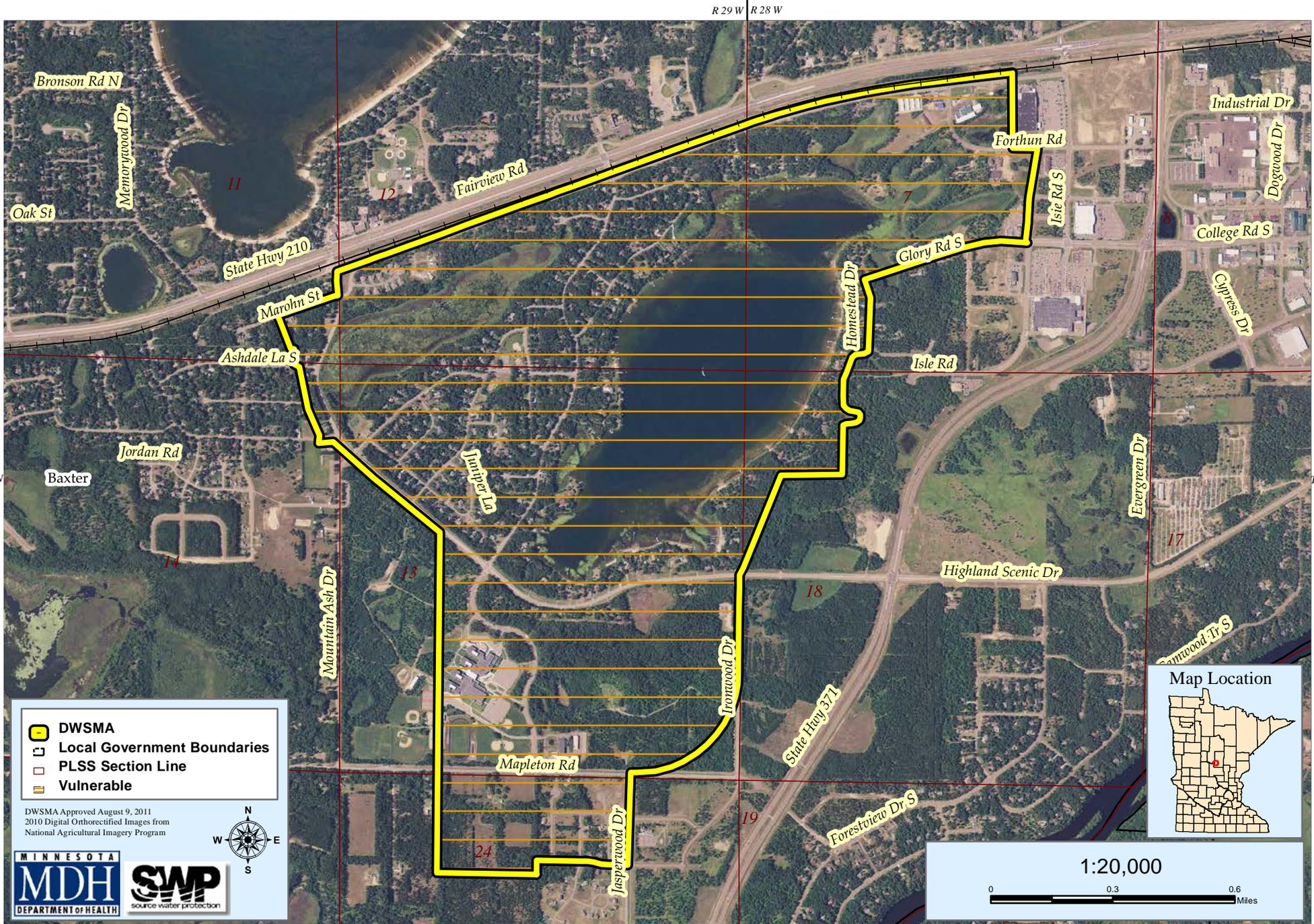
Baxter has completed the process of developing a Wellhead Protection Plan for its drinking water supply wells. Wellhead protection is a way to prevent drinking water from becoming polluted by managing potential sources of contamination in the area which supplies water to public wells. Much can be done to prevent pollution, such as the wise use of land, which is why wellhead protection is included in the comprehensive plan. Public health is protected and the expense of treating polluted water or drilling new wells is avoided through wellhead protection efforts.

The Baxter Wellhead Protection Plan includes establishing a wellhead protection area, assigning a drinking water supply management area (DWSMA), completing a vulnerability assessment, conducting a contaminant source inventory, developing goals and objectives for protection efforts, and preparing a plan of action for wellhead protection implementation. The Wellhead Protection Plan is divided into two documents. The Part I document focuses on the delineating the wellhead protection area and determining the DWSMA and aquifer vulnerability. The DWSMA map is attached, and the DWSMA area is included on the Future Land Use Plan map. The Minnesota Department of Health approved this portion of the plan on August 9, 2011. Part II includes the remaining portions listed above and becomes the plan for implementing and evaluating the wellhead protection efforts into the future. The Department of Health approved the Part II document on December 7, 2012.

The portions of the Baxter Wellhead Protection Plan pertinent to the Baxter Comprehensive Plan are well management, reducing the number of Individual Sewage Treatment Systems (ISTS), managing stormwater, and controlling land use. The management strategies developed in the Baxter Wellhead Protection Plan that are incorporated into the comprehensive plan include:

- Amend ordinances to control large capacity wells within the DWSMA;
- Require residents in the DWSMA to be connected to the municipal sewage treatment system and prevent the construction of any new ISTS;
- Discourage concentrated stormwater infiltration within the DWSMA;
- Amend ordinances to limit new water supply wells and commercial development within the DWSMA; and
- Design land use plans to retain residential use in the DWSMA, as well as the school use and commercial character in the northeast corner of the DWSMA.
- Disallow new well construction within service areas and develop programs to promote well sealing in the DWSMA boundary.

Baxter Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA) MN-00540 - Vulnerable



Future Land Use Categories

Future land use is broken down into various categories as described in the table on the next page. These descriptions and colors correspond to the colors on the Future Land Use Plan map on the page following the table.

The Future Land Use Plan was prepared based on many discussions and meetings with the Long Range Planning Commission, business representatives, and community members. The intent is that all land covered by the Plan will be zoned to comply with this Land Use Plan, and that all future development will follow the Plan and zoning, as infrastructure becomes available to serve these areas. Any changes that are different from this Plan would need to go through both an official amendment to the Land Use Plan and a rezoning.

One of the tools for innovative development is the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process. In Baxter's code PUDs are noted as both a conditional use permit and a rezoning, which can be confusing. It is more typical to have a separate PUD zoning district only and to process PUDs as a rezoning, which gives the City greater discretion in negotiating and approving PUDs to benefit the City and future residents or patrons of the PUD project. The PUD zoning language should be reviewed and revised as part of the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

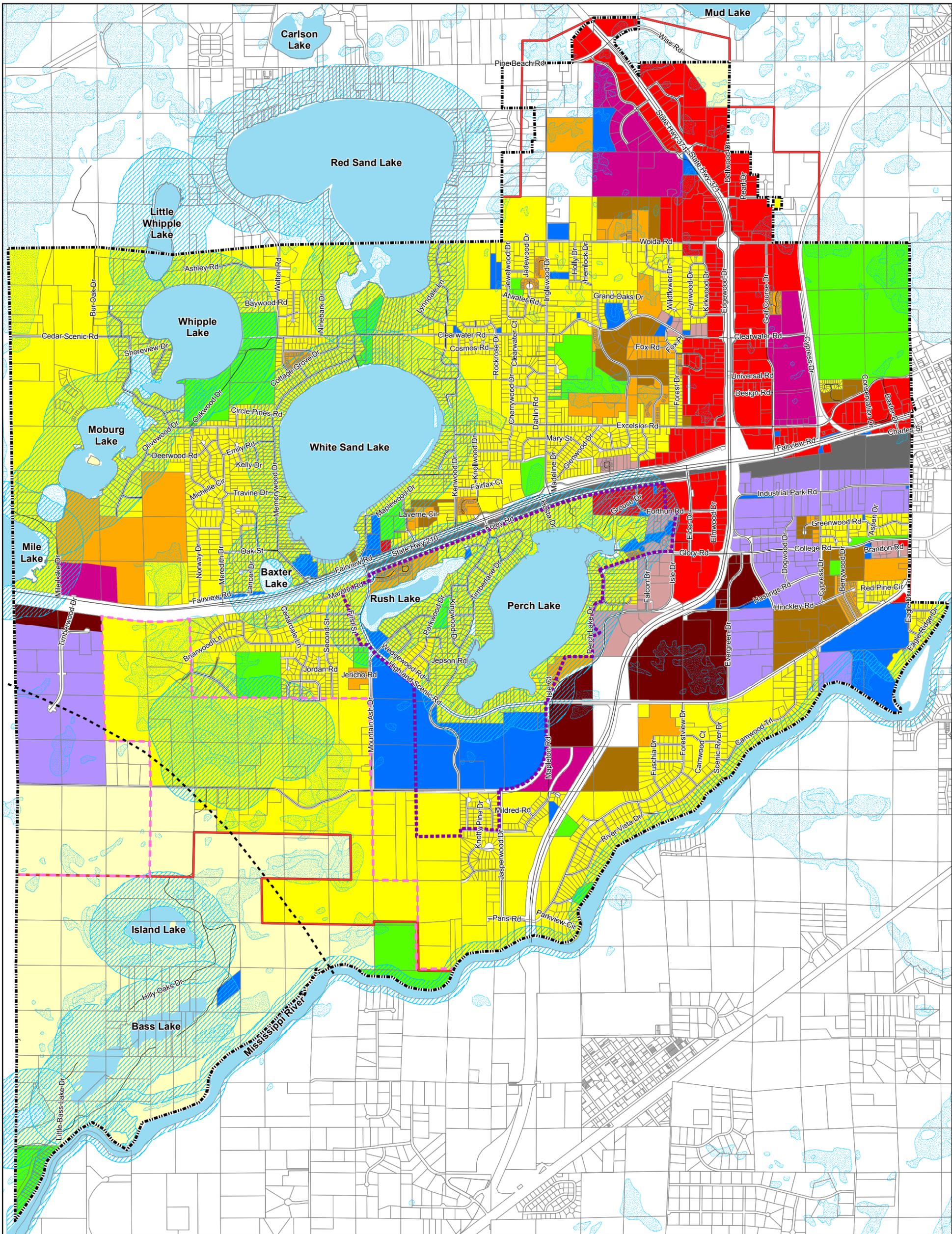
The PUD process could be used for mixed use residential development to consider the mixing of residential uses, including a mix of varying densities.

As The Plan is implemented with potential zoning changes the City Council will also review the impact these changes might have on the potential for adult uses in the City, to insure that there are reasonable avenues of communication for these uses.

The Business Gateway land use designation was discussed at some length and a draft ordinance was prepared to implement this part of the Comprehensive Plan. The intent of this Plan is that the City will adopt a Gateway Ordinance that generally follows the draft ordinance prepared and reviewed by the Long Range Planning Commission at their July 28, 2014 meeting, and found in the appendix of this Plan. The Planned Unit Development (PUD) process may also be used by developers to make requests for customized development plans that provide variations from the strict application of the Gateway Ordinance standards. In consideration of PUD requests, the City must weigh variations from the Business Gateway standards with the overall development plan to determine if the project is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. In addition to properties in the Gateway district, the City shall develop planned and orderly gateway design standards for all properties on each side of Highway 371, south of County Road 48 to the southern boundary of the City, regardless of their land use guiding designation. The City shall also develop planned and orderly gateway design standards for the area on the north side of Highway 210, west of Norway Drive to the western boundary of the City of Baxter.

City of Baxter- Future Land Use Categories

LAND USE CATEGORY		ZONING DISTRICT COMPARISON
Commercial	Local and regional shopping needs for general commercial and highway-oriented businesses such as fast food restaurants, convenience stores, gas stations, big box retail, hotels, and other auto-oriented businesses.	C-1, Neighborhood Commercial and C-2 Regional Commercial
Office Service	Variety of professional office development with compatible service based retail users.	OS, Office Service
Mixed Use	Mix of residential and commercial uses. Typically, mixed-use development will include townhomes, low- and high-rise apartments, retail buildings, and offices. Development can consist of vertical or horizontal mixed use. Residential density shall occur at a maximum of 20 units/acre. Transitions will be considered to be compatible with the average density of abutting property at development edges.	The Planned Unit Development (PUD) process may be used by developers to make requests for mixed use developments.
Business Gateway	The Business Gateway land use is intended to provide for office, light industrial and limited retail uses that create a high quality, attractive “north woods” image at the City’s southeast and west gateways on Highways 371 and 210.	Will need a new Business Gateway zoning district
General Industrial	Industrial related businesses including manufacturing, warehousing, automotive, trucking, wholesaling, and other related industrial uses. Medium and heavy industrial uses.	District has two tiers of design standards.
Rural Residential	Large-lot rural residential in areas that will not be served with municipal sewer and water.	RS-Special Residential
Low Density Residential	Single-family detached (and two-family unit by PUD) residential development at a maximum density of 3 units/acre.	R-1, Low Density residential district
Medium Density Residential	Twin and townhome development, multiplex development, and row-homes at a maximum density of 7 units/acre.	R-2, Medium Density residential district
High Density Residential	Multiple family dwelling structures including townhomes, apartment buildings and condominiums. Development may occur at a maximum density of 20 units/acre (net). Architecture and landscaping is important in high density residential areas to ensure that development is appropriate and consistent with the community’s character.	R-3, High Density residential district
Public/Semi-Public/Institutional	Primarily intended to provide religious, governmental, education and other institutional facilities.	PU, Public Use
Parks	Public park, open space and recreational uses.	CP, Community Park and PU, Public Use
Open Water	Permanently flooded open water, rivers and streams and wetlands.	
Railroad	Railroad tracks and adjacent railroad owned property.	



Future Land Use

City of Baxter Comprehensive Plan

- Municipal Boundary
- Water Supply Management Area Boundary
- Sewer Service Area Boundary
- Conservation Overlay Boundary
- Three-Mile Camp Ripley Buffer
- Rural Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Commercial
- Business Gateway
- Office Service
- Mixed Use
- General Industrial
- Public/Semi-Public/Institutional
- Parks/Greenway
- Railroad
- Open Water
- NWI Wetland
- Shoreland Overlay District

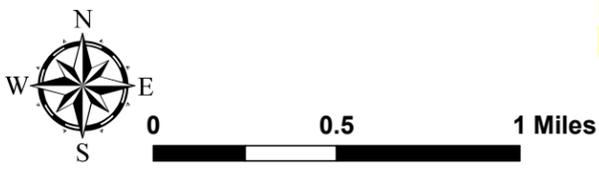
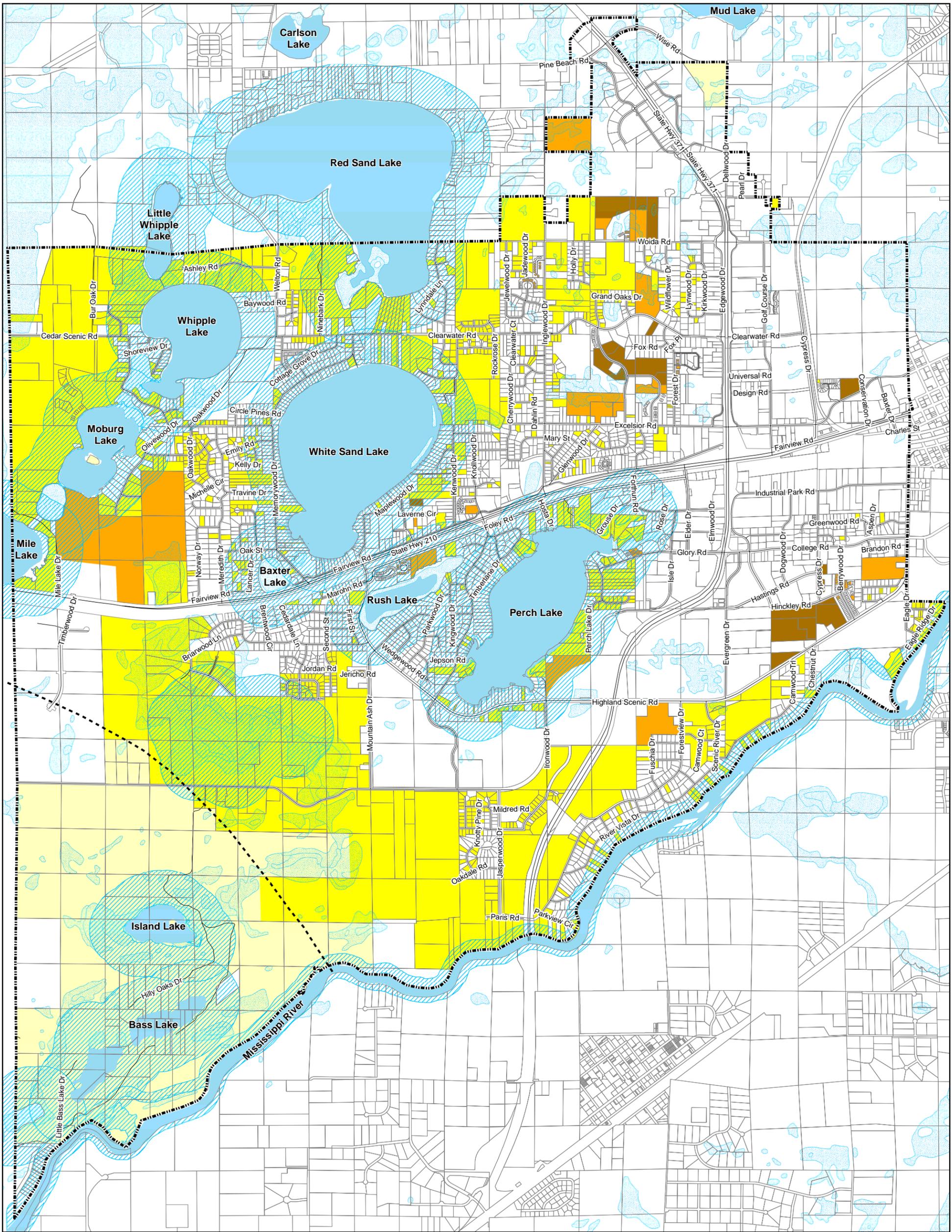


Table 2: Future Land Use

Planned Future Land Use	Gross Acres	Net (of NWI) Acres	% Gross	% Net
Rural Residential	1,696.76	1,419.77	13.0%	10.9%
Single Family Residential	4,751.79	4,205.35	36.4%	32.3%
Medium Density Residential	481.06	437.03	3.7%	3.4%
High Density Residential	200.28	196.40	1.5%	1.5%
Commercial	836.71	785.15	6.4%	6.0%
Business Gateway	305.63	263.11	2.3%	2.0%
Office Service	115.05	113.44	0.9%	0.9%
Mixed Use	219.43	200.39	1.7%	1.5%
General Industrial	582.46	552.72	4.5%	4.2%
Public/Semi-Public/Institutional	490.63	448.53	3.8%	3.4%
Parks	661.27	544.02	5.1%	4.2%
Railroad	115.62	114.36	0.9%	0.9%
Road Right-of-Way	1,275.31	1,270.06	9.8%	9.7%
Open Water	1,305.10	1,305.10	10.0%	10.0%
NWI Wetland	-	1,181.68	-	9.1%
Total City	13,037.11	13,037.11	100.0%	100.0%

Future Land Use

Future land use is tallied by acreage in Table 2 above. Residential growth is a key issue, to see how the City might grow into the available land. In the background information future demand for residential dwellings was calculated at about 2,200 households through 2035. This was broken down above into a need for about 360 additional acres for single family development and about 88 acres for multi-family development. The map on the following page shows all the land in the City on the Existing Land Use Map that is currently Vacant, Forest/Agriculture or Rural Residential – and what its designation is on the Future Land Use map. This shows the land that is potentially available for future residential development.

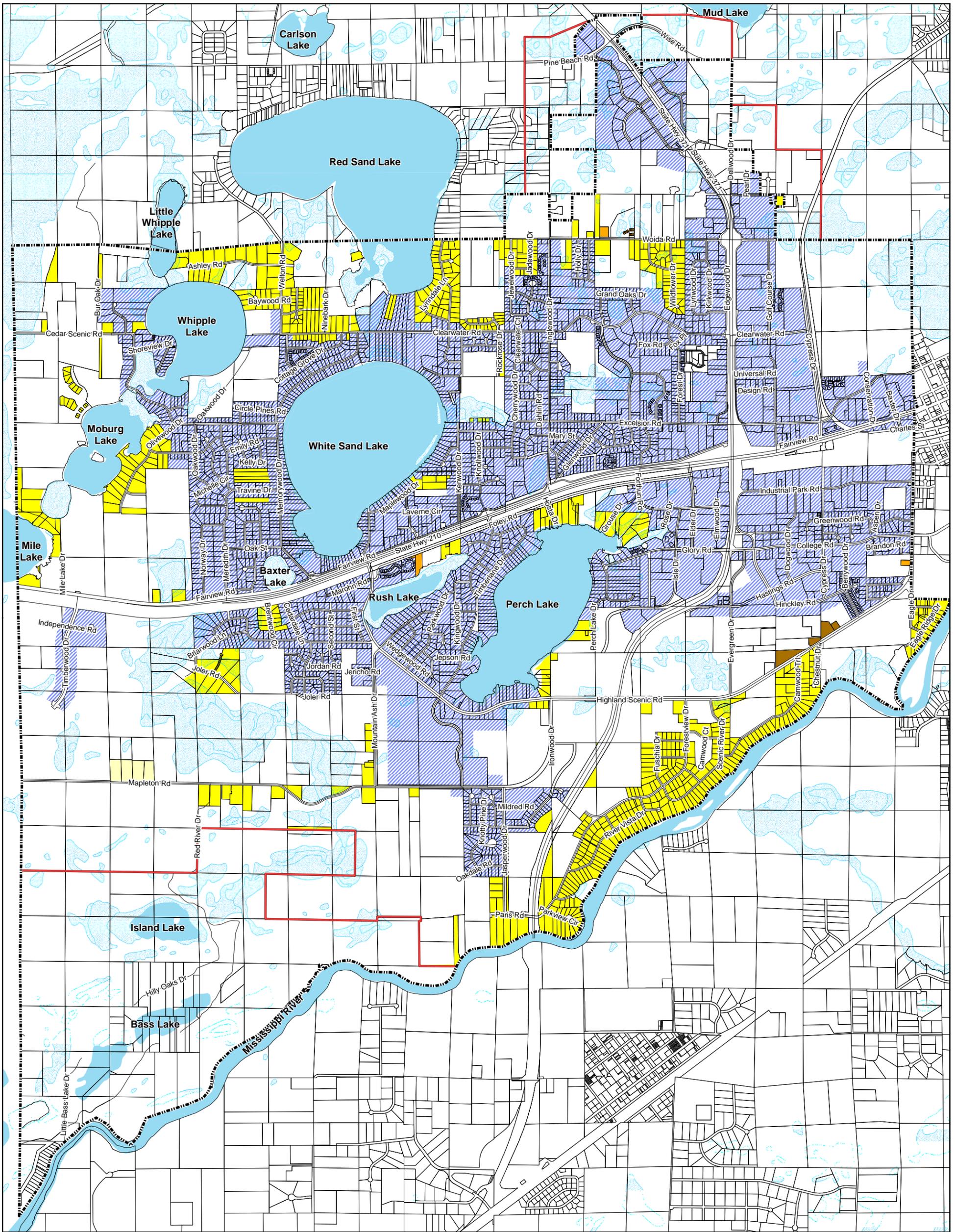


Future Residential Land Use for Existing Vacant, Agricultural or Rural Residential Land

City of Baxter Comprehensive Plan

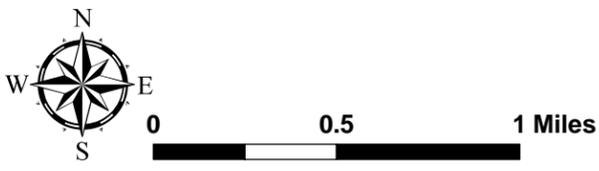
Municipal Boundary	High Density Residential
Rural Residential	Open Water
Low Density Residential	NWI Wetland
Medium Density Residential	Shoreland Overlay District

July 23, 2015



**Planned Future Residential Land Use for Smaller
Parcels (Up to 5 Acres) with no Current Sewer Service
within Sewer Service Area Boundary**

City of Baxter Comprehensive Plan



- Municipal Boundary
- Sewer Service Area Boundary
- Area Currently Served by City Sewer
- Open Water
- NWI Wetland
- Rural Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential

January 30, 2015



Table 3: Residential Land Potentially Available

Planned Future Land Use	Gross Acres	Net Acres
High Density Residential	109.97	106.58
Medium Density Residential	400.14	358.68
Single Family Residential	3,007.82	2,525.96
Rural Residential	1,592.84	1,318.53

The land shown as potentially available on the map on the previous page may include existing homes on lots that are too small for redevelopment to future single family use or properties that will not be available for development for a variety of reasons. But even if we take out a significant number of the properties shown there is still significantly more property available than will be needed in the next 20-plus years.

The map and table above show that:

- There is about 2,500 acres of land guided for future single family development that is potentially available, compared to a need of less than 400 acres.
- There is about 465 acres of land available for Medium Density and High Density Residential combined, compared to a need of less than 100 acres.

Development Approach

The city anticipates gradual urbanization of vacant property over time. In order to provide public services in a cost effective manner, the city recognizes that a first priority is to promote infill development of vacant property within the existing urban area of the city. The Future Land Use/Growth Areas Plan shows areas for future development outside the portions of the city currently served by City sewer and water. The city's secondary priority may be to allow development into the Growth Areas when the development is next to an existing urban area with city services, provided that there is an orderly and efficient staging of public infrastructure. Developments with public improvements that are beyond the urban edge that include a non-sequential and inefficient extension of infrastructure may be considered premature by the City; even with full development commitments to pay for infrastructure.

Residential development must be on lots of a minimum size determined by the City Council in order to be rezoned R-1 or higher from RS Rural Service. If a new home or home development is proposed with well and septic in the Growth Area, it must meet minimum lot size requirements of the zoning district and will require a ghost plat showing how the property could be subdivided in the future to urban density.

Focus Areas

Most land in the city will remain as planned and zoned. Previous discussions and decisions will keep the vast majority of the community moving in the direction that people have come to understand and anticipate. Certain areas of the city are either undeveloped, underdeveloped or in the process of discussion and change and are therefore the subject of the following land use focus areas.

Northeast Area

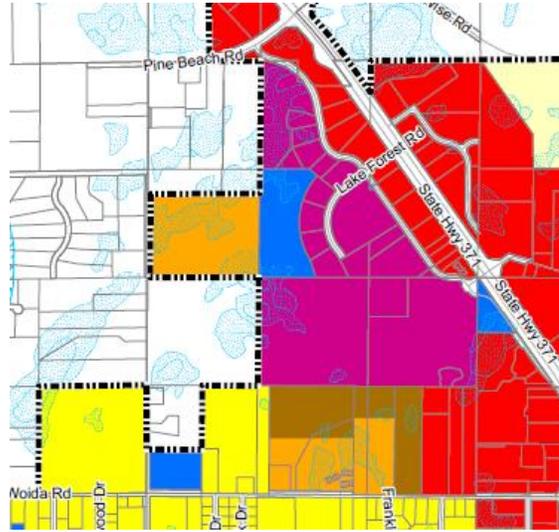
In 2007 an Alternative Urban Areawide Assessment (AUAR) study was prepared for a large area in NE Baxter west of Highway 371, south of Pine Beach Road/CSAH 77 and north of Wolda Road.

A map from the AUAR is included below to the right. This North Baxter AUAR extended commercial uses along Highway 371 and then reduced land intensity with higher density into lower density residential areas extending west towards Inglewood Drive. The plan included areas both within and outside Baxter city limits, and indicated the requested zoning in various areas, including C-1 and C-2 commercial zoning; R-1, R-2 and R-3 residential zoning; and areas of OS, Office Service zoning.

The AUAR, which has a 5-year time limit, has lapsed and the owners are not pursuing development in line with the AUAR. Some ideas in that plan however are incorporated into the current proposed Baxter Land Use Plan for this area, but includes only parcels inside the city limits.



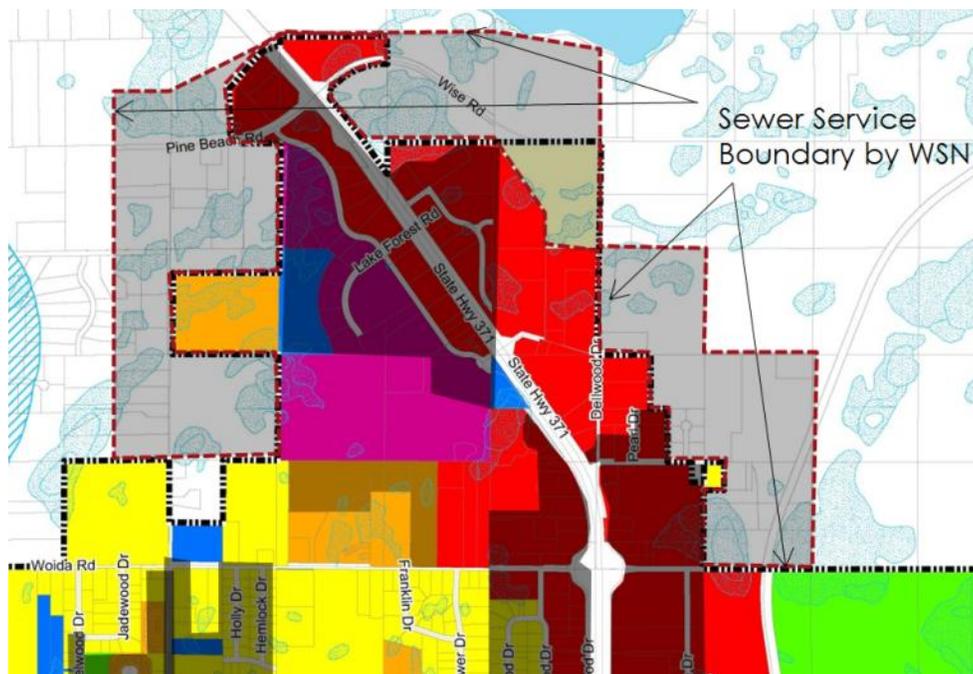
The proposed Land Use Plan (a portion is included to the right for the same areas as AUAR map) shows commercial land uses next to Highway 371, with an area of Mixed Use covering the central portion of the area – intended for a mix of commercial, office, and higher and medium density residential uses. Land uses then transition to residential uses to the west and south.



Sewer Service Boundary – NE Baxter

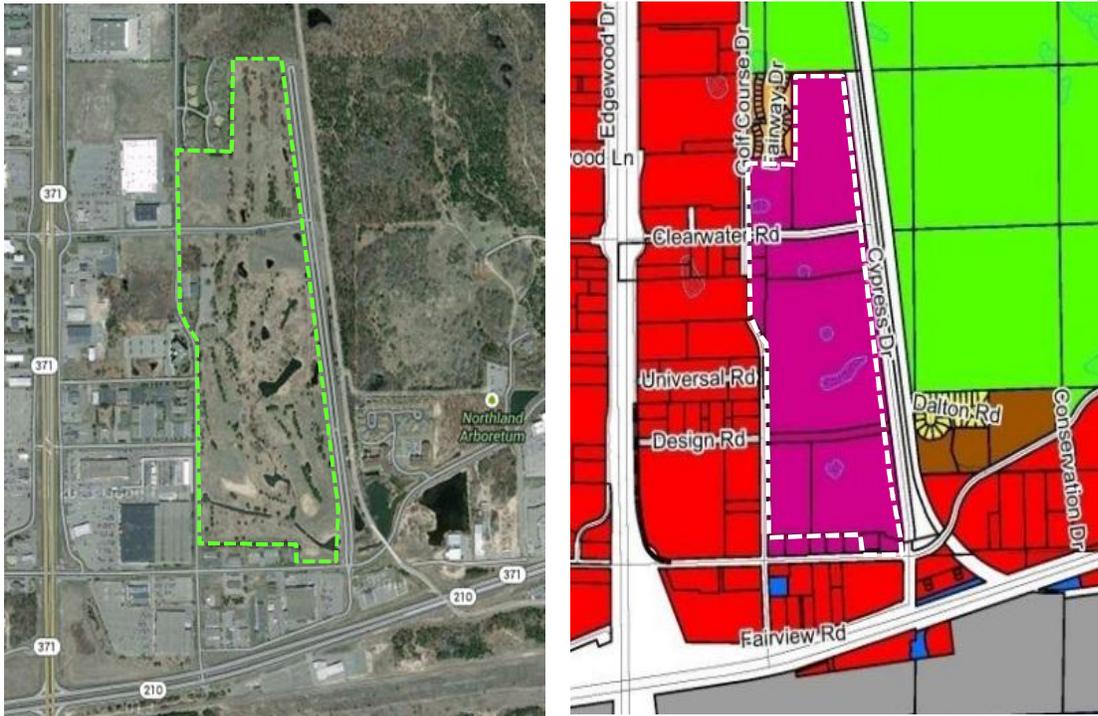
Beyond the northeast corner of Baxter the City's consulting engineer has determined areas that can be feasibly served by city sewer, as shown in the map below, but no plan for their land use is included in this Plan. If and when the City might grow to include those areas a land use and zoning plan would be discussed and adopted.

These areas are outside the current city of Baxter, in unorganized territory, unincorporated part of Crow Wing County. During the planning process City staff and consultants met with Crow Wing County staff to discuss this and other issues. The City will work with Crow Wing County to ensure the county has appropriate zoning in areas that may at some point come into the City.



Former Pine Meadows Golf Course

The former Pine Meadows Golf Course located north of Excelsior Road between Golf Course Drive and Cypress Drive and extending a quarter mile north of Clearwater Road, closed in 2004 and has been sold to a private developer for redevelopment. The property is located in the heart of Baxter's commercial area, just off the intersection of Highways 371 and 210, adjacent to the commercial uses fronting those two highways, but also to higher density residential uses, the Paul Bunyan Trail, and the Northland Arboretum. The property is over 80 acres in size and, as such, it offers great possibilities for redevelopment to a variety of uses.



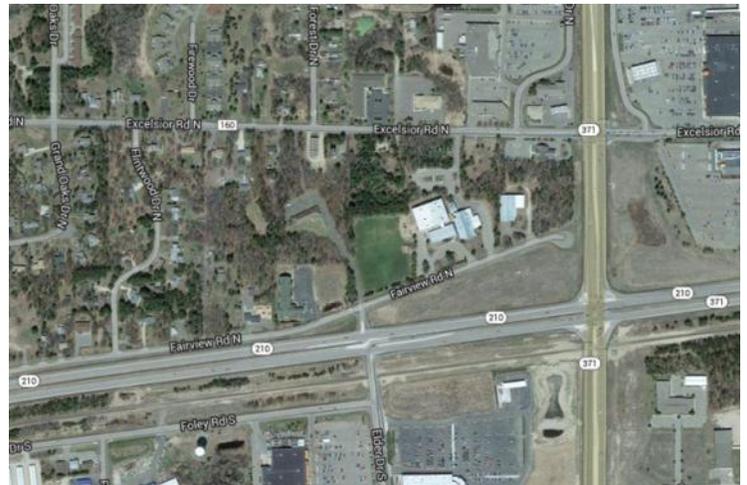
With adjacency to a variety of intense uses, but also access to a major trail and open space, the site is ideal for an intense Mixed Use designation in the Land Use Plan. The Mixed Use designation would define an appropriate combination of commercial, residential and other uses, but would also be sensitive to transitions and buffers at its edges. The intent is to make an attractive, accessible, walkable blend of uses where residents and patrons could take maximum advantage of the location, amenities and connections to other parts of Baxter and beyond.

NW Quadrant – Highways 210 & 371

The existing uses in the NW quadrant of Highways 210 and 371 consist of a mix of commercial and institutional uses, transitioning to residential uses to the west. A portion of the existing land use map is shown to the right, with an aerial photo below.

There is a bank, an industrial building, a church, a hotel and an office building, plus several vacant parcels. The uses on the north side of this area have access to Highway 371 at Excelsior Road, but the uses on the south side of this area have direct access to the frontage road, Fairview Road, and only partial access to Highway 210.

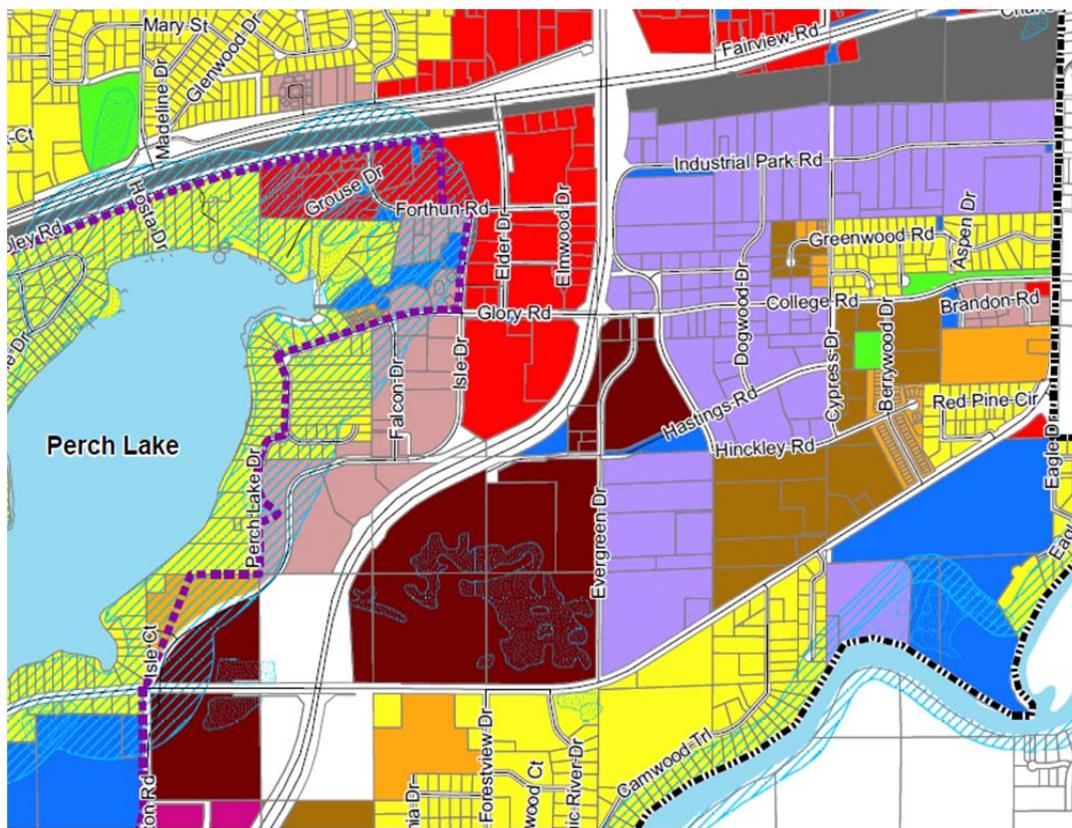
Given its location along Highway 210, guiding most of the area for commercial uses is appropriate, as illustrated in the portion of the Land Use Plan map to the right.



Southeast Baxter Highway 371 Corridor

The property along Highway 371 in southeast Baxter poses a number of important land use issues for the City, involving the character of commercial and industrial areas, design issues in the high visibility corridor, and the transition to residential uses.

In the industrial areas along Industrial Park Road, College Road, Dogwood Drive and Cypress Drive, there has been considerable discussion about how best to address the character of the area, including land use and design issues. The Land Use Plan suggests industrial uses remain in the 30- purple areas – shown on a portion of the map below – but keeping the two-tier architectural standards that are in place now in the Zoning Code.



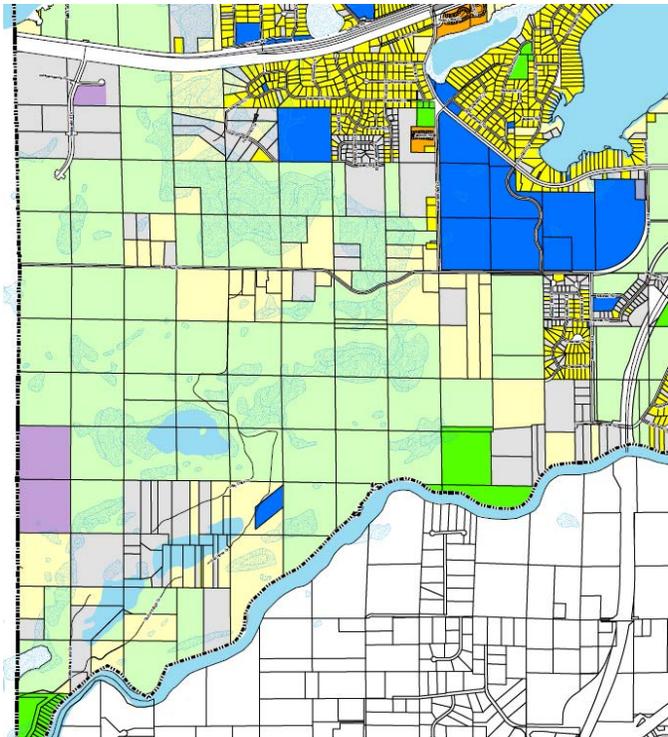
A large portion of the SE Baxter area north of County Road 48 is guided in this Plan to Business Gateway – the deep red area in the map above. This new designation would extend some of the less intense industrial uses allowed in the industrial park, with some commercial uses allowed, but not continue the large-scale intense commercial characterizing the Highway 371 corridor further north. County Road 48 is the first intersection on northbound Highway 371 in Baxter and as such the community wants to maintain a visual character associated more with a business campus than a shopping center.

The Business Gateway designation includes both sides of Highway 371 north of County Road 48. On the east side, this extends east to Evergreen Drive, at which point the guiding reverts to Industrial. On the west side, Business Gateway is guided in the NW quadrant of Highway 371 and County Road 48, but west of the future extension of Isle Drive the guiding is for Medium Density Residential uses, due to its location near Perch Lake.

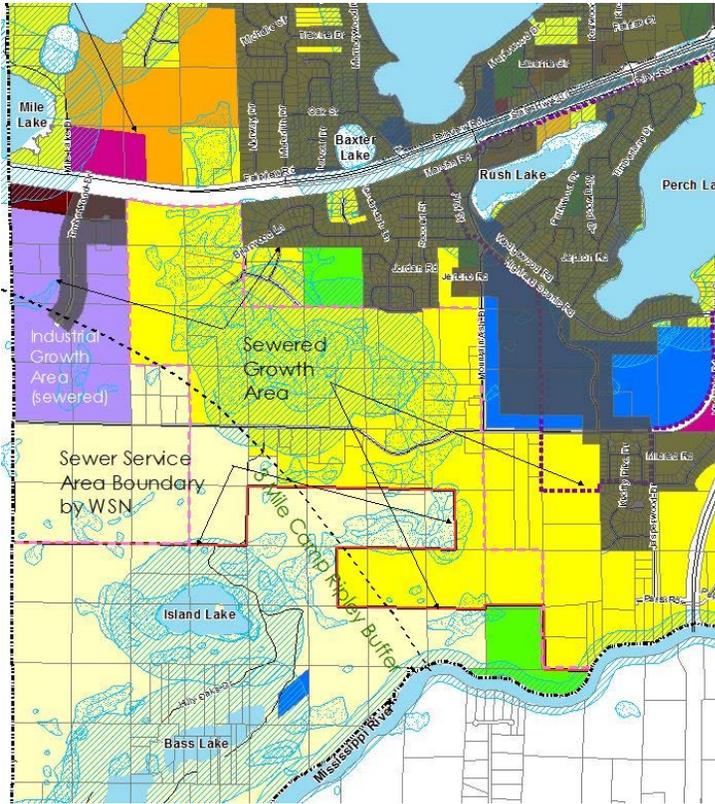
South of County Road 48 on the east side of Highway 371 the Land Use Plan calls for Medium Density Residential. South of County Road 48 on the west side of Highway 371 the Land Use Plan calls Business Gateway with Low Density Residential south of that to the Mississippi River.

Southwest Baxter

The southwest corner of Baxter is the most rural and least developed in the City. There are many reasons for this – it is farther from major highways, large lakes that attract lakeshore homes, and from city sewer and water infrastructure. It has numerous large wetland areas that drain to the Mississippi River which inhibit dense development, and it is closest to the NE edge of Camp Ripley which has requested a buffer, owing to noise and safety concerns. The existing land use in the southwest area is shown on the map to the right. It features mostly Agricultural, some Rural Residential, and small areas of Industrial uses.



The city's consulting engineer has also determined a Sewer Service Areas (SSA) Boundary in southwest Baxter where sewer service could reasonably be provided, as illustrated on the map on the following page. The boundary follows existing parcel lines, which in most cases are quarter-quarter section lines. Due to the topography and wetlands, over two square miles in southwest Baxter are considered outside the Sewer Service Area boundary for the foreseeable future.



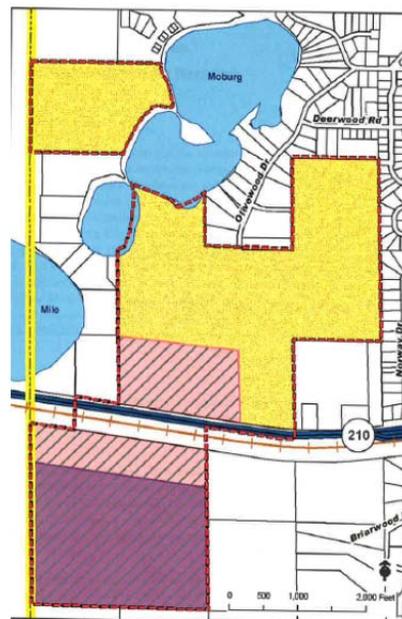
Camp Ripley also hopes to limit development within a 3-mile buffer from the camp, called the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB). The ACUB line is also shown on the map to the left as well. Within this area, the Army has an ongoing effort to buy development rights and urges limited residential development to avoid conflicts with activities at Camp Ripley. The ACUB is intended to limit residential, but not industrial development.

The Land Use Plan in the southwest area shows most of the area as Rural

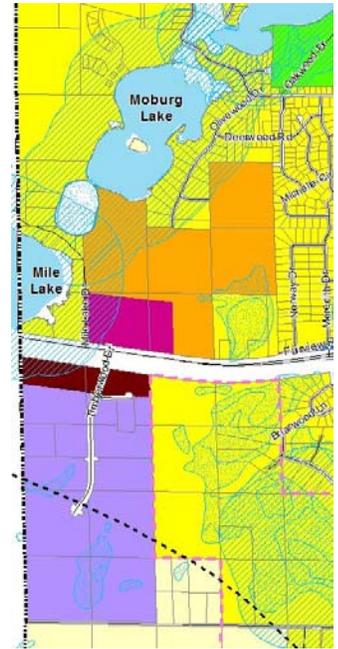
Residential in keeping with its status outside the SSA and inside the ACUB. But the areas within the SSA are shown as future Low Density Residential. In addition in the area closer to Highway 210 at the west edge of the City, an extension of the Industrial land use designation is shown on the Potlatch property. This is discussed further below.

Potlatch West Baxter AUAR

The Potlatch West Baxter AUAR was completed in 2008 and the property owners are considering alternative land uses to better respond to future development. The area includes 465 acres in which they propose a mixture of residential (shown as yellow, Mixed Residential in the map to the right), commercial (shown as pink with slashed lines) and Industrial (shown as purple) located south of Hwy. 210. The intent of the proposed Mixed Residential is to provide greater flexibility in site design and movement of density within the site to better preserve the area's ecologically and aesthetic values.

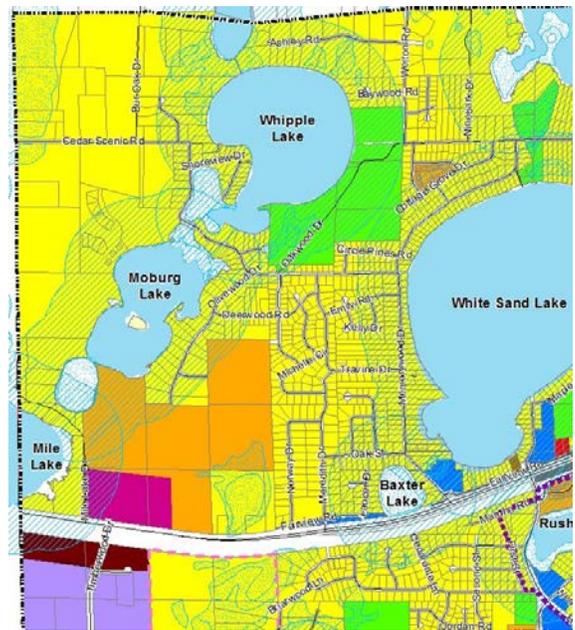


The Baxter proposed Land Use Plan follows closely the Potlatch plan, with a few modifications. In discussions on this area, the LRPC recommended that the basic land use pattern be followed, but that any Commercial uses in this area should not be a repeat of the intense commercial development on north Highway 371. The intent is that there would be a “gateway” designation for these parcels that would require more attractive uses in this visible location, with less prominent parking, less signage, attractive building and landscaping, and other specific standards to be developed in the zoning code for this area. The Industrial designation south of Highway 210 is agreed to and extended further south beyond the Potlatch property to Mapleton Road. These land use designations are illustrated on the map excerpt to the right.

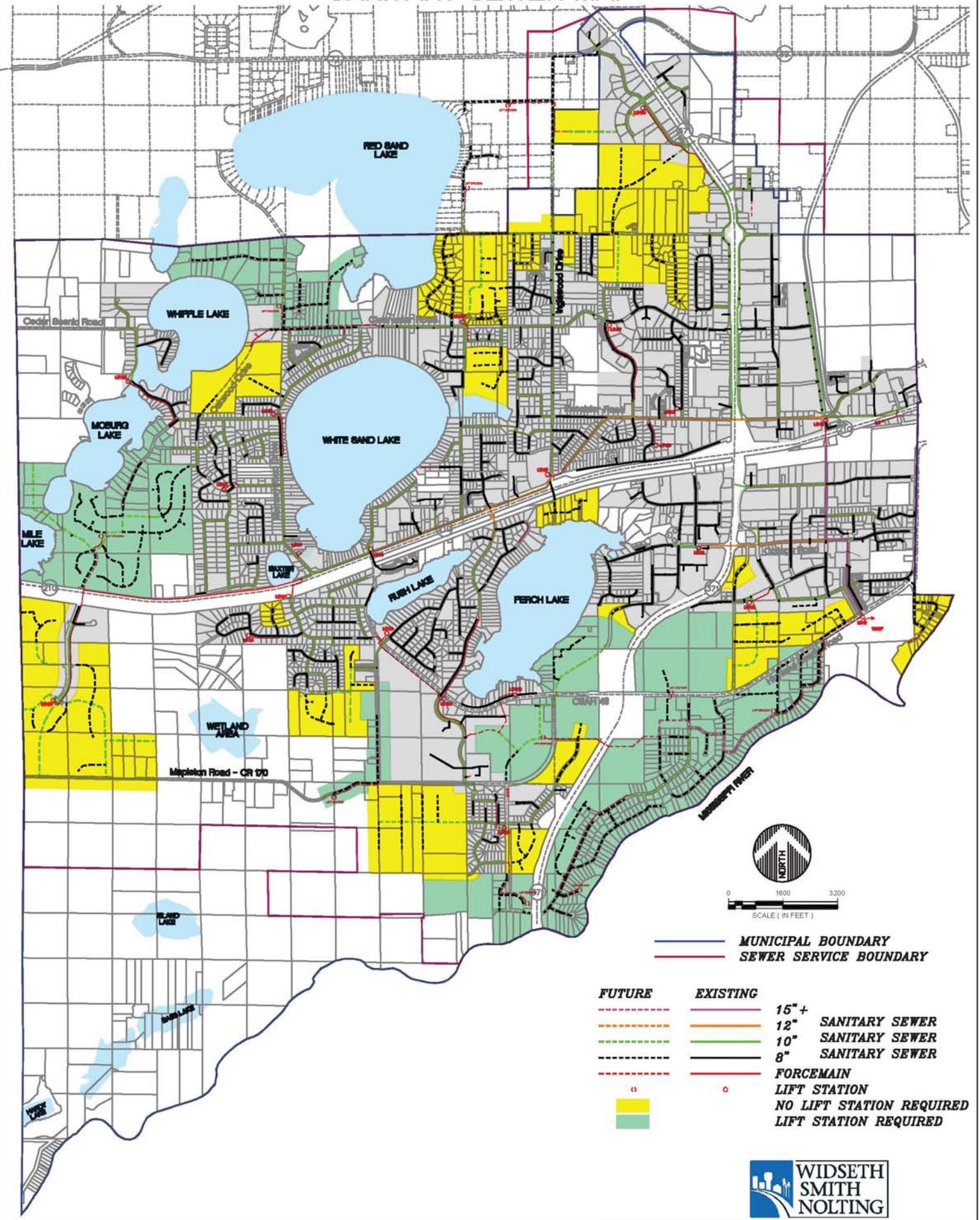


Northwest Baxter

The northwest portion of Baxter is also sparsely developed and mostly not served by City sewer and water. The Sewer Service Area Boundary does extend to the full city limits in the northwest corner of the City, as shown in the map below left. The existing land uses in this part of the City are Forest/Agriculture, Rural Residential, and Vacant. The Future Land Use Map, below right, shows almost the entire northwest corner of Baxter designated at Low Density Residential.



CITY OF BAXTER SANITARY SEWER MAP

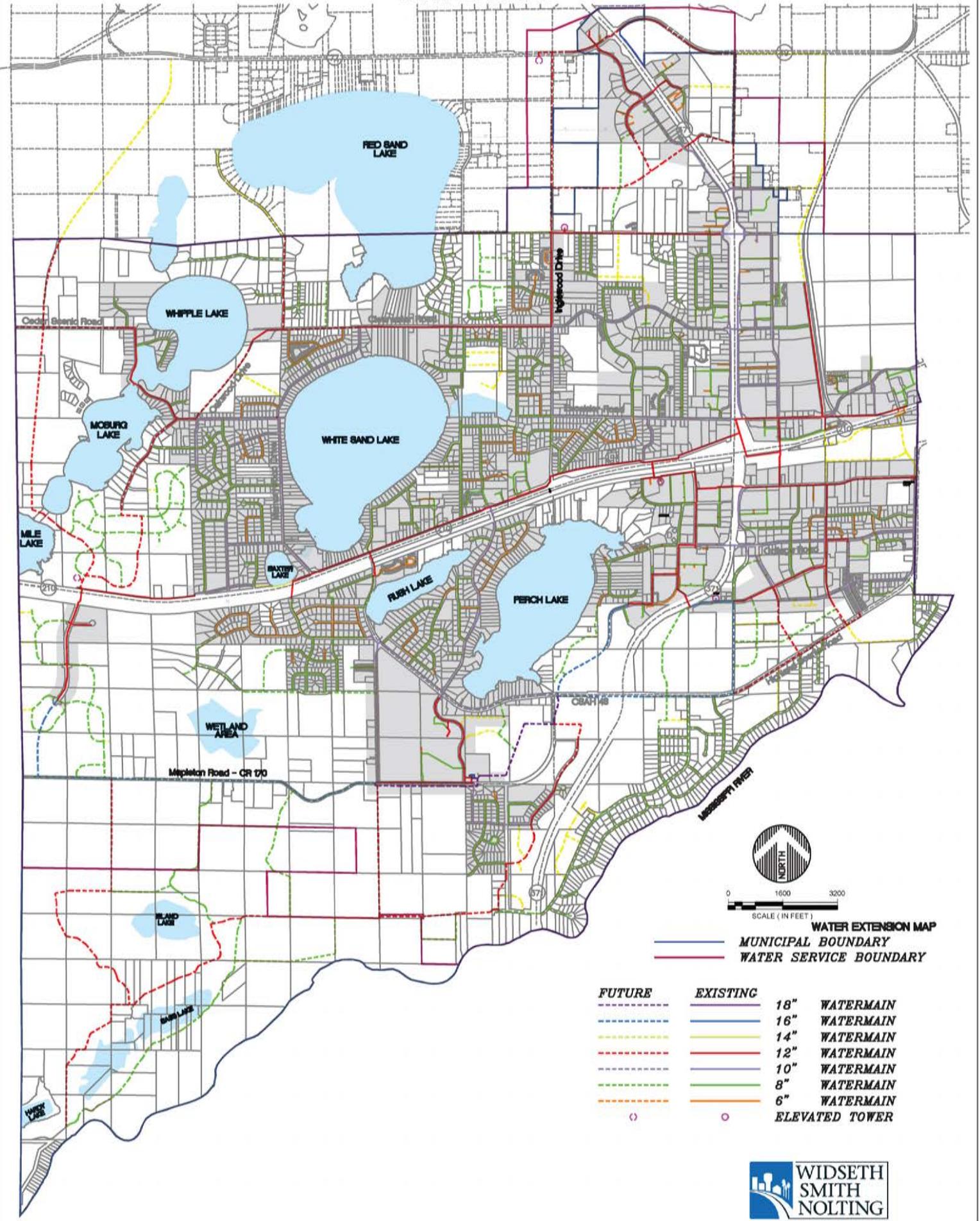


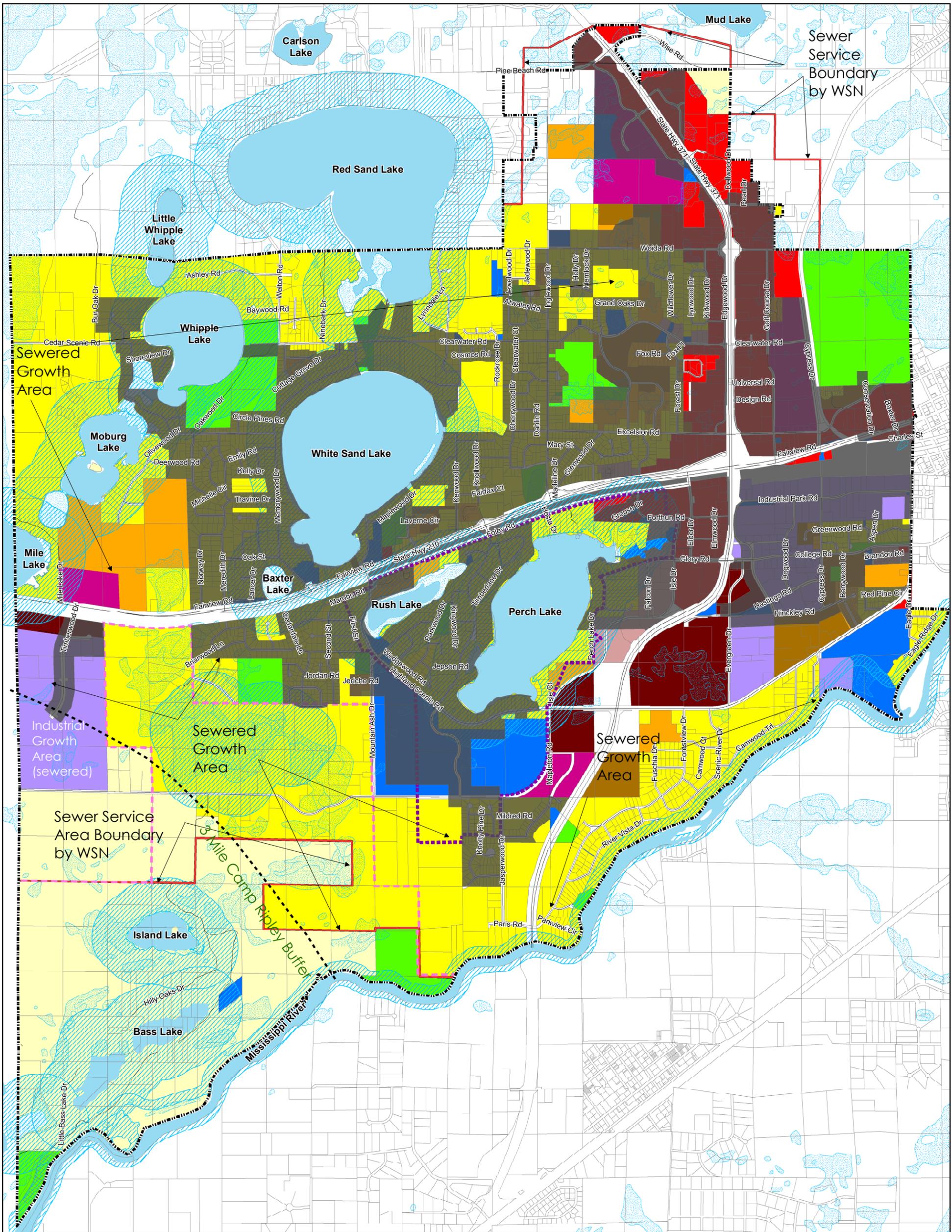
— MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY
 — SEWER SERVICE BOUNDARY

FUTURE	EXISTING	
---	---	15" +
---	---	12" SANITARY SEWER
---	---	10" SANITARY SEWER
---	---	8" SANITARY SEWER
---	---	FORCEMAIN
○	○	LIFT STATION
■		NO LIFT STATION REQUIRED
■		LIFT STATION REQUIRED



CITY OF BAXTER WATER MAP





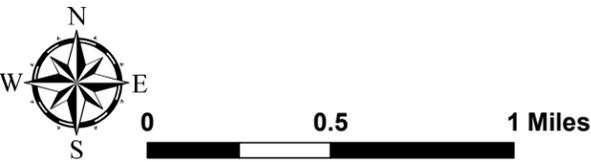
Growth Areas Based on Sewer Service Boundary

City of Baxter Comprehensive Plan

Areas Currently Served by Sewer

- Municipal Boundary
- Water Supply Management Area Boundary
- Sewer Service Area Boundary
- Conservation Overlay Boundary
- Three-Mile Camp Ripley Buffer
- Rural Residential
- Low Density Residential

- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Commercial
- Business Gateway
- Office Service
- Mixed Use
- General Industrial
- Public/Semi-Public/Institutional
- Parks/Greenway
- Railroad
- Open Water
- NWI Wetland
- Shoreland Overlay District



Implementation – Managing Growth & Development

DESCRIPTION	TIMING:	Short	Mid	Long	Ongoing
1. Highway 371 Corridor Plan	Create a Highway 371 corridor plan that provides guidance and plans/design guidelines for land use, infill and redevelopment opportunities, transportation, safe bicycle/pedestrian elements, landscaping and public spaces.				
2. Conservation Design Standards	A) Develop standards for conservation design principles that protect Baxter's sensitive or unique land and water features.				
	B) Develop conservation overlay district standards including but not limited to: 1) Lighter footprint on the land; 2) Cluster development; 3) Smaller roadway requirements; and 4) Other types of conservation design principles.				
3. Zoning Districts	Create new residential zoning districts to replace the F, Commercial Forestry and RS, Special Residential/Cluster districts. Zoning districts expected may include:				
	1) A Rural District - Land expected to stay rural				
	2) An Existing Large Lot, Future Urban Residential District - Land that is rural today but is planned for future urban development. This district should allow well and septic but shall not prevent future urban development with city services. Larger minimum lot size requirements shall be implemented to prevent large lot subdivisions on well and septic that prevent future urban development with city services.				
	3) An Existing Small Lot, Future Urban Residential District - Land that is subdivided on smaller lots with well and septic but is planned for future urban development.				
	4) Study residential single family densities and lot requirements to consider a more compact housing option than the city's standard 15,000-square-foot single family lot option.				
4. Zoning Map Amendments	Review the city's zoning map compared to the Future Land Use Plan and consider zoning map amendments as appropriate for the zoning map to be consistent with the Future Land Use Plan				
5. City Code Review	Review City Code and revise any inconsistencies from the Comprehensive Plan.				
	Review and revise Planned Unit Development zoning code language to create a separate PUD zoning district				
	Review zoning code changes for their impact on the potential for locating adult uses				
6. Natural Resources Inventory	Develop a natural resources inventory of Baxter with a quality ranking system so that priority sites can be recognized. Encourage the preservation of priority sites.				
7. Wetland Study	Develop a wetlands inventory with a quality ranking system so that priority wetlands can be recognized. Consider a wetland buffer ordinance based on the quality of wetland.				

City of Baxter Comprehensive Plan Update Chapter 3 – Transportation

Introduction



Baxter is served by two major State highways, 371 and 210, which cross the community north-south and east-west, respectively. From the standpoint of many visitors and tourists, Baxter is defined by the Highway 371 corridor. To residents and businesspeople there is much more to transportation and Baxter generally, than the two highways. The Transportation chapter will review transportation related goals, analyze basic traffic data, discuss the function of the major roadways in Baxter, and look at the large issue of multiple modes of transportation, including bicycle and pedestrian routes; sidewalks and trails.

The Baxter/Brainerd Lakes area is considered the heart of Minnesota's north woods country tourism industry, and the Highway 371 corridor is the center of commerce for the area.

The full set of Goals for the 2015 Comprehensive Plan is included in the appendix, but two of those goals concern transportation issues:

Goal: Coordinate transportation with land use planning.

Key planning theme:

Traffic and transportation, maintaining infrastructure.

Rationale: The transportation system and land use are closely linked. Each has a direct impact on the other.

Policies:

1. Implement transportation system improvements according to existing (and future) studies that address congestion, improve access and connections and meet forecasted development demand and future traffic impacts.
2. Work with neighboring communities, townships, and counties to develop an efficient, regional transportation system to minimize congestion.

3. Require traffic impact studies for development that will affect collector or arterial roadways.
4. Continue creating a positive image along the city's corridors and gateways through building, site design, and signage standards and the development of gateway features.
5. Identify and implement on-road bicycle corridors along major roadways where feasible.

Goal: Maintain and improve the existing transportation system to provide safe and functional multi-modal roadways.

Key planning theme:
Traffic and transportation

Rationale: The existing roadway system is a vital piece of the city's infrastructure system requiring regular maintenance and management to control congestion, maintain safety and provide a variety of multi-modal opportunities throughout the community.

Policies:

1. Develop and maintain a plan for existing roadway upgrades and maintenance.
2. Continue to require sufficient right-of-way and easements on existing roadways in new development to ensure future traffic needs will be addressed.
3. Integrate pedestrian and bicycle trails (on and off road) where feasible into the design of existing and new roadway facilities that provide links to existing trails and to key destinations such as neighborhoods, parks, schools, commercial areas, and public uses.
4. Design and identify a funding mechanism for construction of a grade separated crossing of Hwy. 371 that provides connection to the Paul Bunyan Trail.
5. Provide safe pedestrian routes and crossings for schools.
6. Maintain (or define) a truck route system to serve industrial uses and minimize impact on other parts of the roadway system.
7. Use traffic management technology to improve the operations and pedestrian safety of the roadway system.

8. Design and install appropriate traffic calming features to minimize speeds and discourage through traffic from intruding on residential areas.

In addition, two policies under other goals have a strong connection to transportation issues.

Policy: Create a corridor plan for Hwy. 371 for commercial, and office development that includes land use, transportation, and design guidelines.

Policy: Create a Hwy. 371 Corridor plan that provides guidance and specific plans for land use, infill and redevelopment opportunities, bicycle/pedestrian elements (including safety) and public spaces.

Traffic and Roadways

Traffic numbers on Highways 371 and 210 have changed in recent years, and they tell a story about an evolving Baxter community. The graph below summarizes average annual daily traffic (AADT) on the two highways in Baxter at four points in time: 2000, 2005, 2007, and 2009. The blue lines track Highway 371 AADT at five points:

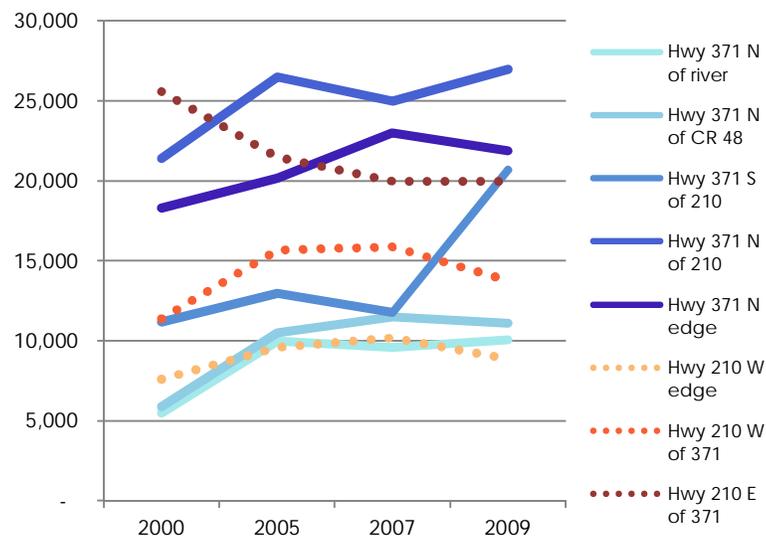
- North of the Mississippi River in southern Baxter
- North of CR 48, also in southern Baxter
- South of the Highway 210 intersection
- North of the Highway 210 intersection
- At the north edge of Baxter

Similarly, the red and orange dotted lines show AADT on Highway 210 at three points:

- At the west edge of Baxter
- West of the Highway 371 intersection
- East of the Highway 371 intersection, toward Brainerd

AADT – Highways 371 & 210, Baxter

The numbers show that traffic has been steady or increased dramatically in places on Highway 371, but has stayed steady or decreased on Highway 210. It is reasonable to assume that some of the decreases in traffic could be due to the recession in 2008-2012, and that traffic will increase in coming years. But the increases



in traffic on Highway 371 south of Highway 210 and at the north edge of the City are likely due to new businesses in both those locations, attracting significant traffic on the highway. This is evidence of an increasingly busy Highway 371 commercial corridor, something residents and businesses discussed often in the conversations on the Comprehensive Plan. The highway is seen as both opportunity and challenge, bringing customers and business, but creating congestion and a barrier to community life.

The AADT numbers are adjusted to take into account seasonal fluctuations and represent an annual average. Summer traffic in Baxter increases significantly and is a major issue in the community, the source of much of the frustration with Highway 371.

Parallel Corridors to Highway 371

Due to the seasonal fluctuations of traffic on Highway 371, Baxter's transportation plan promotes the improvement of existing and proposed parallel corridors to Highway 371. Improvements to parallel corridor roadways will increase traffic efficiency in Baxter by offering alternative roadways that would be chosen/preferred by local traffic over Highway 371. With roadway improvements, the following roadways would serve as parallel corridors to Highway 371:

West of Highway 371

- Future Isle Drive
- Forthun Road
- Foley Road
- Inglewood Drive
- Fairview Road
- Edgewood Drive

East of Highway 371

- Future Cypress Drive
- Dellwood Drive

Future Roadway Classification

The roadways in Baxter are classified according to a functional classification system based on a hierarchy of major roadways. The attached map, Future Roadway Classification, shows the roadways in Baxter and their classification, including planned future roadways. The major roadways and their classifications are as follows: (Note that some roadways do not carry the designation for their full length in Baxter)

Principal Arterial:

- MN Highway 371
- MN Highway 210

Minor Arterial:

- Ingelwood Drive
- Excelsior Road
- College Road
- *Highland Scenic Drive/CSAH 48 (future connection, south of Hwy 210)*
- *Cypress Drive (future)*

Urban Collector:

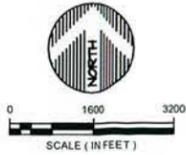
- Pine Beach Road
- Woida Road
- Clearwater Road
- Edgewood Drive (west Highway 371 frontage road)
- Dellwood Drive (east Highway 371 frontage road)

- Golf Course Drive
- Memorywood Drive
- Industrial Park Road
- Highland Scenic Road/CSAH 48
- Knollwood Drive
- Mountain Ash Drive
- Mapleton Road/CR 170
- Ironwood Drive/CR 170
- *Cypress Drive (future)*
- *Isle Drive (future)*
- *Elder Drive (future)*
- *Forthun Road (future)*
- *Foley Road (future)*
- *Timberwood Drive (future)*
- *Mile Lake Drive (future)*

Rural Minor Collector:

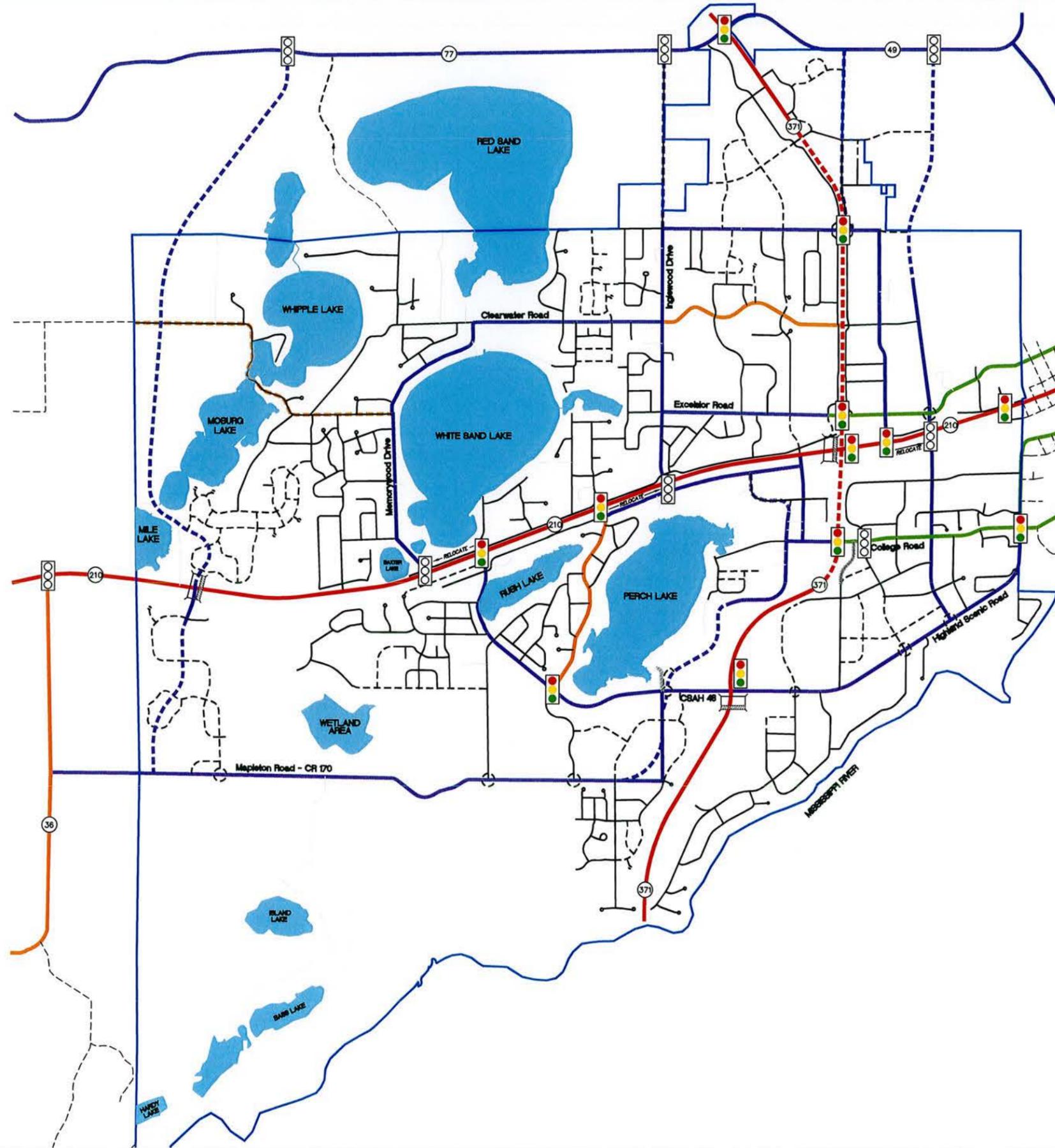
- *Cedar Scenic Road (future)*

CITY OF BAXTER LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION AND FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION STREET MAP



MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY

- | FUTURE | EXISTING | |
|--------|----------|---|
| | | PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL |
| | | MINOR ARTERIAL |
| | | MAJOR COLLECTOR |
| | | MINOR COLLECTOR |
| | | LOCAL |
| | | SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION |
| | | SEPARATED GRADE CROSSING WITH NON-MOTORIZED TRAIL |



Access Management

Access management is a principle of providing adequate access from roadways to other roadways and properties, while maintaining traffic flow and safety on higher level roadways. Access management guidelines protect the public investment in the roadway system and provide guidance for private property developers. Generally, lower volume roadways can provide access at more frequent locations and higher volume roadways need to restrict access to much longer intervals. Minimum guidelines for access control will be established by the City Council in consultation with City staff, but the following table represents a typical industry standard.

Type of Access	Principal Arterial	Minor Arterial	Major Collector	Minor Collector	Local Street
<i>Residential Driveways</i>	No direct access	No direct access	1/8 Mile	1/8 Mile	Min. 30 Feet
<i>Commercial Driveways</i>	No direct access	Based on Speed, Traffic Volume, Site Distance, etc. (1/4 -1/8 Mile)	Based on Speed, Traffic Volume, Site Distance, etc. (1/8-1/16 Mile)	Based on Speed, Traffic Volume, Site Distance, etc. (1/8-1/16 Mile)	Based on Speed, Traffic Volume, Site Distance, etc. (Min. 100Feet)
<i>Low volume (Local) Streets</i>	1/4 Mile	1/8 Mile	1/8 Mile	1/8 Mile	1/16 Mile
<i>Minor Collector Streets</i>	1/2 Mile	1/2 Mile	1/4 Mile	1/4 Mile	1/8 Mile
<i>Major Collector Streets</i>	1/2 Mile	1/4 Mile	1/4 Mile	1/4 Mile	1/8 Mile

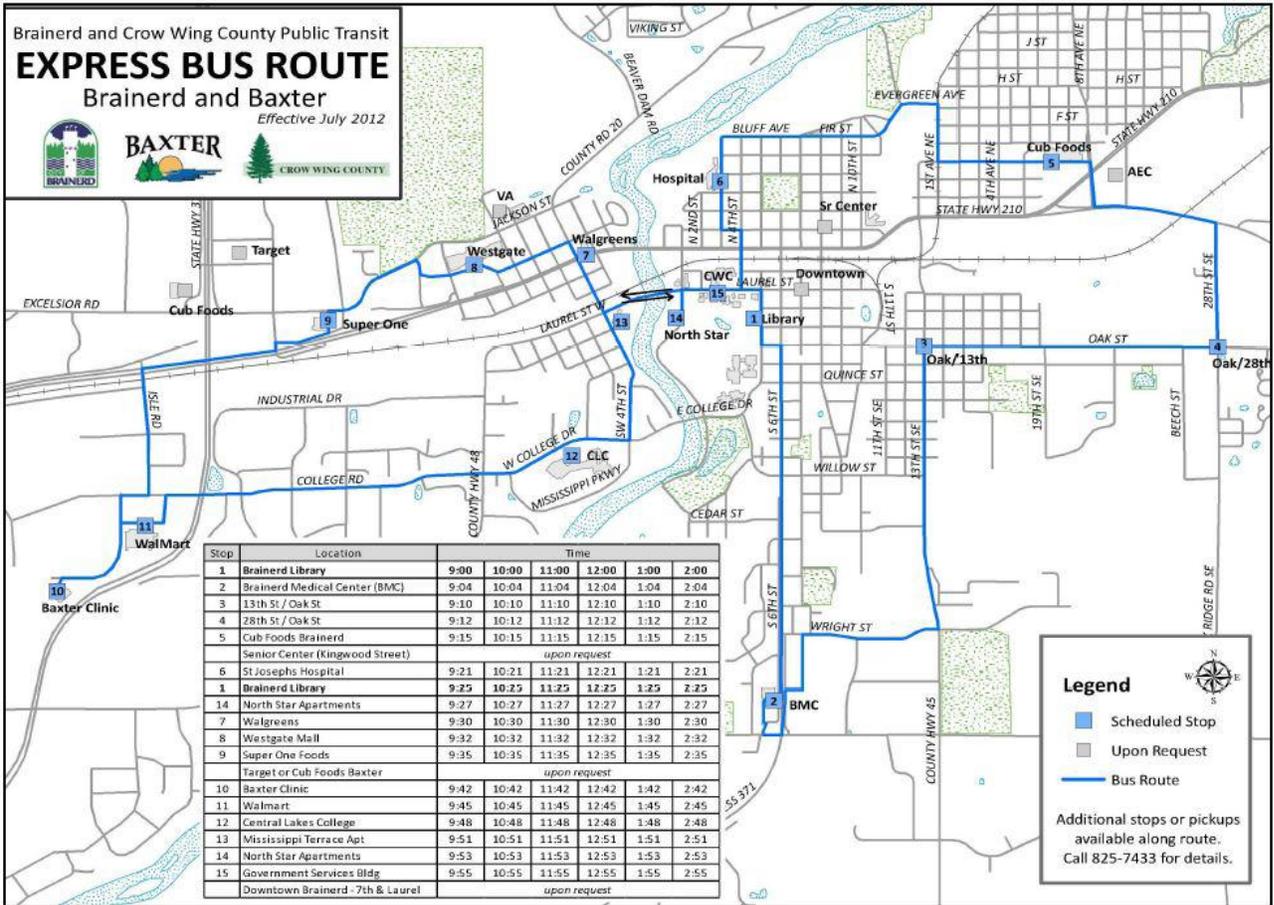
Trail Connections

The Parks, Trails and Open Space chapter has a full discussion of trail planning and connections in Baxter. Bike lanes and trails are becoming an integral part of the transportation system and not just a recreational tool. The goal is to provide safe, efficient connections to important destinations and neighborhoods through an integrated system. Not only are trails functional from a transportation standpoint, but they contribute to an active lifestyle and healthier communities.

Baxter currently has an infrastructure system of trails and bike lanes throughout the city. The vast majority of trails are located in roadway right-of-way or parallel to the street. In future planning, advocating for off-road trail systems or pedestrian paths that are parallel to the street will enhance the community. These types of trails are used more extensively and can be less expensive to build and maintain, as they require less material than an on road bike lane.

Public Transit

Baxter is served by Brainerd and Crow Wing County Public Transit, offering express bus and dial-a-ride service in Brainerd and Baxter. The Express route and schedule are below. dial-a-ride service is by request within the two cities.



Regional Transportation Services

The Brainerd and Crow Wing County Public Transit noted above and the Crow Wing County Airport, located six miles northeast of Baxter, are regional transportation services serving more than just Baxter. The airport provides for both private general aircraft and commercial air service through SkyWest, a partner with Delta Airlines providing regularly scheduled service to MSP airport in Minneapolis.

Implementation - Transportation

DESCRIPTION	TIMING:	Short	Mid	Long	Ongoing
1. Capital Improvements Program	Implement a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to manage existing and future transportation needs. Five-year CIP updated annually.				
2. Neighboring Jurisdictions	Work with neighboring communities, townships, counties, the state and federal government as appropriate to develop an efficient regional transportation system to minimize congestion.				
3. Access Management	Review the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to update access management standards to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the characteristics of Baxter.				
4. Truck Routes	Define a truck route system to serve industrial uses and to minimize impact on other parts of the roadway system.				
5. Highway 371 Parallel Corridor Plan	Continue to develop a Highway 371 - Parallel Corridor Plan to improve traffic efficiency in Baxter.				
6. Roadway Evaluation Database	Continue to improve the city's roadway database, including level of service, functional classification, traffic counts, and status of roadways consistent with Municipal State Aid terminology and other governmental agencies.				
7. On-road bicycle corridors	Identify and implement on-road bicycle corridors along major roadways where feasible.				

City of Baxter Comprehensive Plan Update Chapter 4 – Parks, Trails and Open Space

Introduction

The City of Baxter has acknowledged the importance of providing park, trail, and open space opportunities that enhance the quality of life for its residents and visitors. Parks and trails are essential in promoting community wellness, connecting the individual to ecological value and stewardship, promoting cultural understanding, and fostering economic viability.



The City has reflected these principles through the goals listed below to continue the successes of park development and offer a framework for future growth and renovation.

Parks give communities an essential identity and appeal. Well-maintained, accessible parks and recreation facilities are key elements of strong, safe, family-friendly communities. The park system provides places for learning, fun, and relaxation no matter what the age or ability.

Parks play a key role in preserving water and air quality, providing visual relief, and protecting wildlife. People learn about ecological processes and interrelationships firsthand in parks and open space. Parks and trails offer an attractive quality for new residents, visitors, and prospective developers. Community gatherings and youth events are held in the park system that brings people together to create a sense of belonging. Civic identity and pride result from a well-maintained, diverse park, trail, and open space system. Open space preservation also promotes communities to grow in a sustainable manner that limits unplanned and incompatible land use growth.

The following goals and policies related to parks, trails and open space are from the full set of Goals that are included in the appendix to this Plan.

Goal: Continue to provide for the park, recreation, trail and open space needs of the Baxter community.

Key planning theme: *Parks, trails and open space, maintaining infrastructure*

Rationale: Areas for active and passive recreation and open space enjoyment are essential to maintaining the character of Baxter and to quality of life. Given Baxter's location in the Heart of the Lakes region, the City of Baxter places a strong emphasis on providing a quality parks, trails and open space system for residents and visitors to the community.

1. Update the existing Baxter Park and Recreation Plan to meet current and future park, trail, and open space needs:
 - a. Define current and future needs for passive and active parks, trails and open spaces to provide a full range of recreational opportunities
 - b. Determine current and future community and event facility space needs (including potential shared facilities with the school district)
 - c. Determine the need for additional or improved maintenance facilities
 - d. Determine adequate fees are acquired to meet park and trail development needs.
 - e. Work with neighboring cities, townships, counties, DNR, State of Minnesota, Federal, military and other relevant agencies to develop a coordinated and connected local and regional park/trail system.



2. Acquire sufficient park and open space to meet current and future needs.
 - a. Define acquisition search areas based on a prioritized master plan.
 - b. Pursue public and private funding opportunities for land acquisition for preserving open space within the city.
 - c. Maintain current parks, beaches, trails and recreational areas to highest standards for Baxter residents and visitors to enjoy.

3. Update the existing trail plans to connect parks, community facilities, shopping, school and regional trail systems.
 - a. Identify gaps in existing trail system within existing parks and open spaces as well as missing connections between destinations and commercial areas to create full loop trails benefiting all neighborhoods in Baxter.
 - b. Create designated on-road cycling lanes with signage, and striping on major roadways.
 - c. Require sidewalks and/or trails in new development and redevelopment projects where feasible.
 - d. Create opportunities for safe designated snowmobile trails with access to the Paul Bunyan Trail.
 - e. Design and identify a funding mechanism for construction of a bike and pedestrian bridge over or under Highway 371 that provides connection to the Paul Bunyan Trail.
 - f. Continue to engage in the planning and development of the Northland Arboretum and support its recreational and environmental benefits to the community.



Park Planning

Baxter benefits from having a variety of parks within its boundaries ranging from neighborhood parks such as Loren Thompson and Southdale Parks to community parks such as Whipple Beach and Oscar Kristofferson Parks. Other recreation, park and natural areas within the city limits and nearby include the Northland Arboretum and the numerous lakes and biking and walking trails that provide important passive and active recreation to residents. Baxter’s park system includes nine parks with the amenities summarized in the table below.

Park Name	Park Classification	Basketball Court	Ball Fields	Batting Cages	Canoe Access	Drinking Fountain	Fishing Pier	Hockey Rink	Kitchen Facilities	Benches	Playground	Parking	Public Beach	Soccer Fields	Tennis Courts	Trails	Restrooms (incl. portable)	Volleyball Court	Warming house	Pavilion	Boat Landing
Berrywood Park	Neighborhood																				
Loren Thompson Park	Neighborhood																				
Mississippi Overlook Park	Passive-open space																				
Oscar Kristofferson Park	Community Park																				
Riverview Park	Passive-open space																				
Southdale Park	Neighborhood																				
Whipple Beach Recr. Area	Community Park																				
Winkler Park Land	Neighborhood																				
Jewelwood	Neighborhood (Planned)																				

Park Classifications

Baxter’s parks can be classified according to their use and function. This section defines those classifications and typical standards for parks and trails. These can be used as the city explores upgrades to existing parks or development of new parks. Standards are designed to assure that residents have convenient access to parks and that the community has a range of active and passive recreation to meet current and future needs.

Active - Community Parks: These parks provide for more community-scale recreational activities with a wider variety of facilities such as tennis courts, ball fields, swimming, and ice skating rinks.

Active - Neighborhood Parks: These parks provide residents with places for active recreation close to home and designed to provide day to day recreation facilities for residents within 1/2 to 3/4 mile or a 10- to 15-minute walk from home. Neighborhood parks usually range in size from 7-10 acres and may include playgrounds, picnic areas, basketball court, trails and connection to the trail system. Other playfields may be provided.

Active – Trails: Baxter has an existing infrastructure of trails and bike lanes throughout the city. Most are located in roadway right-of-ways and parallel to

the local street. Active trails are paved surfaced trails used for biking, rollerblading, strollers, jogging, and walking.

Passive - Open Space: Open Space areas have been designated throughout the City in order to preserve significant natural features such as wetlands, wildlife habitat, and wooded areas. This land use is not utilized for recreational purposes but provides aesthetic beauty and protects important natural systems that benefit the City in numerous ways.

Passive – Trails: Nature preserves and wooded areas have passive trails that are less invasive on the surrounding environment. These soft surface trails utilize natural materials such as wood chips or mulch that typically need to be maintained each year. These trails include:

- Cragun’s Nature Learning Trail (Fitquest)
- Mississippi River Overlook Park trail



State and National Connections

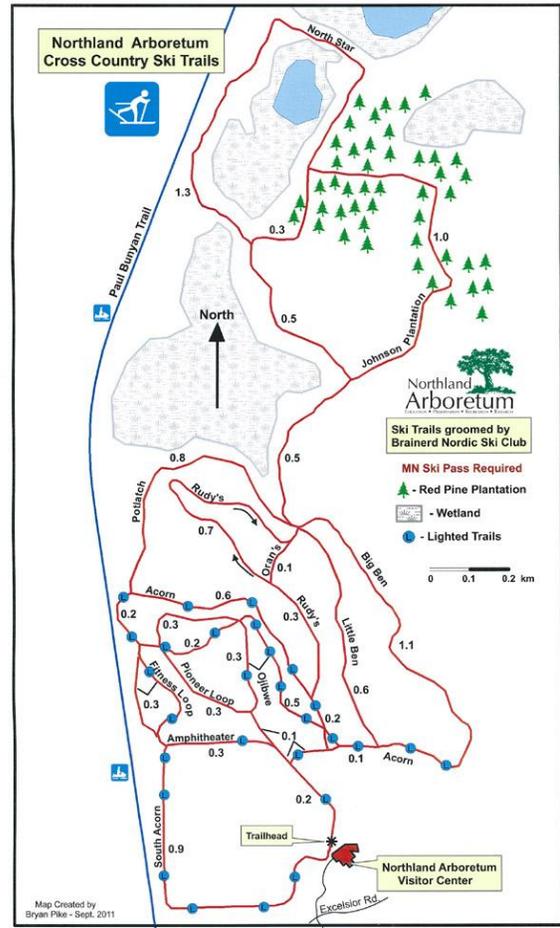
Baxter is a link in a state and national system of trails – the Mississippi River Trail, the Paul Bunyan State Trail, the authorized Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail, and the planned extension of the Cuyuna Lakes Trail.

The Mississippi River Trail (MRT – see map to the left), courses the Mississippi River, from its headwaters in Itasca, Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico, offering approximately 3,000 miles of on-road bikeways and pedestrian and bicycle pathways for the recreational enjoyment, health, conservation and tourism development of river communities, river states, and the nation.

Northland Arboretum

The Northland Arboretum encompasses over 500 acres at east edge of Baxter, both within and outside Baxter city limits. The Arboretum is a member-supported, non-profit organization created with the closure of the Brainerd Landfill in 1972. The Nature Conservancy owns nearly 200 acres within the arboretum boundaries, one of Minnesota's primary examples of Jack Pine Savanna. Areas of interest at the Arboretum include several demonstration gardens, the Monet Bridge and Pond, the DNR Landscaping for Wildlife project, the Secret Garden and many flower beds maintained by volunteers. The Arboretum also provides year-round recreational opportunities with twenty kilometers of hiking and cross-country ski trails.

The Arboretum functions as an intercommunity center of activity on many levels and connects to State and local trail corridors. It is an integral part of the City's stormwater management. The City of Baxter is committed to the sustainability of the Arboretum and engaging in planning, developing, preserving and enhancing the facility.



Future Parks

A map of future park needs is found on the attached map on page 4-9. The map illustrates areas that are served within a half-mile radius of existing parks. The City may use this to identify areas where additional park facilities could be provided. As evident from the map, the majority of developed areas of Baxter are served by parks using this half-mile radius except for undeveloped areas of southwest Baxter.

In addition, maps for several city parks are attached after the Implementation section with generalized plans for their expansion or improvement. These are:

- Riverview Park
- Oscar Kristofferson Park
- Southdale Park & Soccer Complex
- Loren Thompson Park
- Berrywood Park
- Whipple Beach Recreational Area

Park Funding

The City requires land dedication or cash in lieu of land at the time land is platted in the amount of 10 % (gross) for residential and 5% for commercial/industrial or PUD. Cash is determined by an annual fee schedule. The City will decide whether to accept land or cash, and whether the land is acceptable for its needs. The cash dedication is meant to provide funds for further development and improvement of the park system. Other funding or partnership options exist to help meet local park, trail and recreation needs including the following:

- Public and private partnerships such as sharing the development of facilities with churches and schools
- Sales or property tax for specific facilities
- State or Federal grants
- Association/ park user fees

Trail Planning

Communities across the country have worked hard to improve their quality of life through developing trail systems – connecting individual trail segments to form larger recreation and transportation networks. Creating more trail connections among existing trails multiplies their effect and usage. Trails provide opportunities for people of all ages to walk to local destinations, bike to work, exercise, meet neighbors, observe local wildlife, and experience the outdoors with their families in an efficient and safe manner.

A newer trend in trail planning has emerged that engages transportation engineers, water resource specialists, ecologists, planners, and open space advocates. Today, trails have become part of greenway corridors that provide wildlife habitat and movement corridors, open space vistas, water treatment benefits, opportunities to interpret local history and culture, among other benefits. In future planning, advocating for off-road and on-road trail systems or pedestrian paths that are parallel to the street will enhance the community.

In both regional and local surveys, when given a choice, the majority of people would choose to walk or hike through a natural setting rather than along a busy roadway. Again, focusing on developing trails in these types of settings rather than along a busy roadway should be a high priority for the City of Baxter.

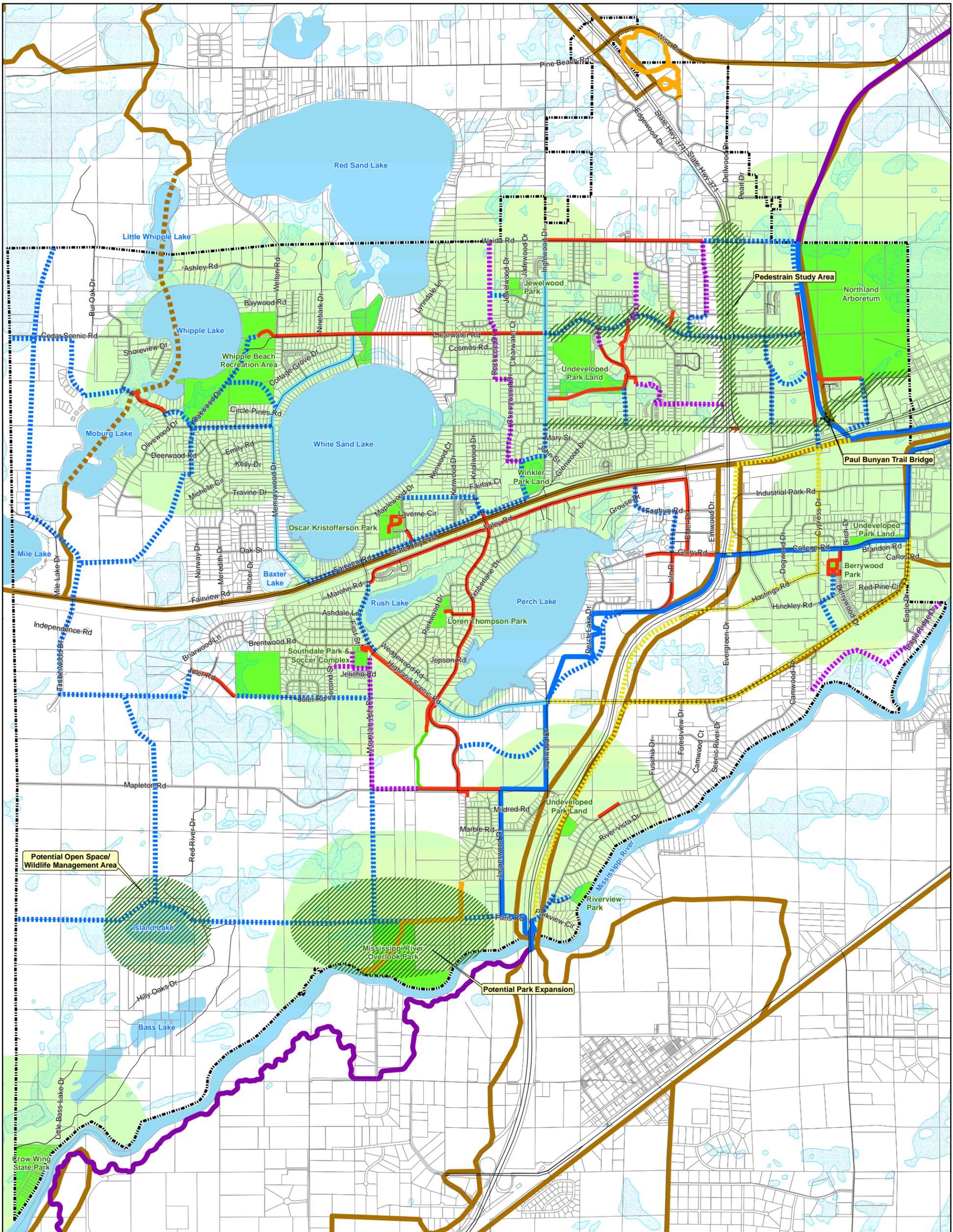
Baxter can begin to promote a systems approach to trail development utilizing parks and open space whenever possible instead of on-road connections. The City can also be strategic in planning connections that link to other communities and destinations such as schools, parks, natural areas, and retail. As redevelopment occurs throughout the City, Baxter can use trails and greenways to impact this development and continue making off-road scenic trail connections.

The Parks & Trails map on page 4-9 shows existing and proposed trails. The proposed trail segments were mapped based on input from the community and Parks and Trails Commission. This map includes future segments and defines the type of trail necessary for each segment. The map also illustrates bike corridors which are on-road, signed corridors aimed at providing bicycle commuting routes along major roads reaching all destinations in Baxter.

The Paul Bunyan Trail is an extensive trail originating in Baxter that stretches to north of Bemidji. This trail is located on the abandoned Burlington Northern Railroad right-of-way. This regional trail is a big asset to Baxter and serves as a great local as well as tourist attraction. A southern leg of the Paul Bunyan Trail was constructed in 2014 from Crow Wing State Park connecting to the south side of Baxter at the Highway 371 Mississippi River bridge.



A goal of the City of Baxter is to improve the location of the Paul Bunyan Trail in the southern part of Baxter from Highway 210 south to the Highway 371 bridge. It is also the City's priority to consider Clearwater Road as a future multi-modal corridor to connect the Paul Bunyan Trail/Northland Arboretum with Whipple Beach and areas west beyond Baxter.



Future and Existing Parks and Trails System

City of Baxter Comprehensive Plan

- Paul Bunyan State Trail - Baxter Segment
- Paul Bunyan State Trail Crow Wing County Segment
- - - Paul Bunyan State Trail Safety Re-Route Options
- Bike/Pedestrian Trail
- Wood Chip Trail
- Paved Roadway Shoulder
- Private Trail
- - - Future Bike/Pedestrian Trail
- - - Future Trail - Easement
- Snowmobile Trail
- - - Snowmobile Trail on Water Body
- Municipal Boundary
- Parks
- Half-Mile Park Service Areas



July 23, 2015



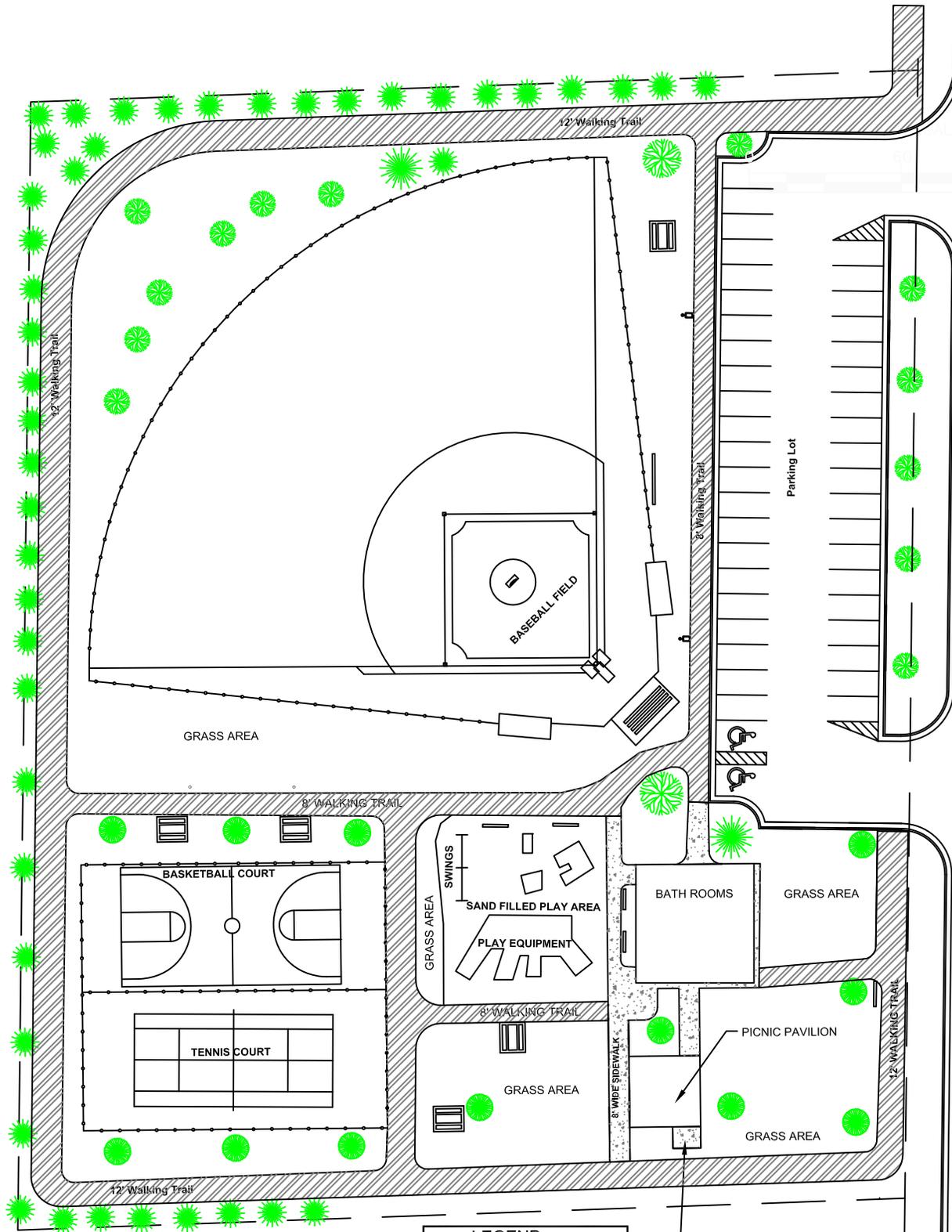
Implementation – Parks, Trails and Open Space

DESCRIPTION	TIMING:	Short	Mid	Long	Ongoing
New Parks/Park Expansions					
1. New Parks/ Expansions	New parks/expansions shall be planned through annual Capital Improvements Program (CIP)				
2. Jewelwood	Develop small park with benches & playground. Keep mostly natural & save trees. Remove minimal trees. On street parking. Future phase may include trails, restroom and an off street parking area.				
3. Mississippi Overlook Park Expansion	Create parking, improve access.				
	Construct trail connection to Foresview Middle School and park trails, including possible Park Ski Trails as one of a number of different types of trails in the Park				
	Expand to preserve additional river frontage				
Existing Park Improvements					
1. Maintain Existing Parks	Maintain the quality of existing parks through annual Capital Improvements Program (CIP)				
2. Oscar Kristofferson:	Trails				
	Parking lots				
	Basketball courts - Construct new courts				
	Volleyball courts - Upgrade courts to current regulations				
	Horseshoes - Construct new pits				
	Field Number 4 (Requires relocation of Warming House, Recreation Rink and Hockey Rink)				
	Develop Relocation Plan for Warming House, Recreation Rink and Hockey Rink				
	Concession Stand/Press Box - Construct new building				
	Tennis Courts - Reconstruction (safety)				
	Score Boards with Wireless Remotes - One score board for each baseball field (budgeted for 2015)				
	Remove old/existing Concession Building (located northeast of tennis courts)				
	Practice Field - Construct New Dugouts				
	Evaluate and complete Park Accessibility Study to determine what improvements are needed				
	Develop Joint Powers Agreement Between Baxter and School District				
	Evaluate Pavilions - Determine if structure should be repaired or replaced (safety)				

DESCRIPTION	TIMING:	Short	Mid	Long	Ongoing
Existing Park Improvements					
3. Loren Thompson	Ice skating trail				
	Evaluate Pavilion - Determine if structure should be repaired or replaced (safety)				
	Evaluate Park and Kitchen Accessibility Study to determine what improvements are needed				
	Park and Kitchen Accessibility - Complete Accessibility Improvements				
4. Whipple Beach:	ADA observation area (budgeted 2015)				
	Accessible playground (if needed)				
	Zero entry ADA water access				
	Trail - Construct trail connection from pavilion to the playground				
	Trail - Construct perimeter trail around the park				
	Parking Lot Expansion				
	Upgrade Parking Lot Lights to LED				
	Reevaluate disc golf plans				
6. Riverview	Build out 2015				
7. Southdale	Currently built out				
	Evaluate Park Accessibility - Study to determine what improvements are needed				
8. Berrywood	Land Acquisition for Pavilion/Park Buffer				
	Evaluate Park Accessibility - Study to determine what improvements are needed				

DESCRIPTION	TIMING:	Short	Mid	Long	Ongoing
Trails					
1. Maintain Existing Trails	Maintain the quality of existing trails through annual Capital Improvements Program (CIP)				
2. Pedestrian Studies					
A. Highway 371 Trail Crossing	Complete a feasibility study to determine the location, type of crossing and cost.				
	Develop a Highway 371 trail crossing.				
	Construct east/west trail connections out from the 371 crossing location, including Clearwater Road as the extension to Whipple Beach and east beyond Baxter				
B. Edgewood Drive	Excelsior Rd. to Woida Rd. - Prepare a feasibility study for a sidewalk corridor considering Commercial/ Residential (backage trail) connectivity & trail system connectivity.				
C. Dellwood Drive	Universal Rd. to Woida Rd. - Prepare a feasibility study for a sidewalk corridor. Study should consider Commercial/Residential (backage trail) connectivity and trail system connectivity.				
D. Excelsior Road	Inglewood Dr. to Cypress Dr. - Prepare a feasibility study for a sidewalk/trail corridor considering connection of ped ramps at the Excelsior Rd/ Paul Bunyan Trail Bridge.				
E. Clearwater Road	Inglewood Dr. to Cypress Dr. - Prepare a feasibility study for a sidewalk/trail corridor. If Clearwater is the optimal 371 Trail Crossing, then the study should consider a complete street design for this segment of Clearwater Rd				
3. Paul Bunyan Trail Re-route	Study land south of 210 to determine the optimal safety re-route for the Paul Bunyan Trail.				
	Relocate trail route south of Highway 210				
4. Snowmobile/ATV	Develop safe trail routes in connection with other agencies and local users clubs				
5. Golf Course Trails	Golf Course Dr. and through Golf Course Property at approximately Design Rd.				
6. Fairview Trail	Inglewood Dr. to Memorywood Dr.				
7. Safe Trail Crossing	Excelsior Rd. & Conservation Dr. (approved)				
8. Oakwood	Whipple Beach to Cedar Scenic Rd.				
9. Cedar Scenic	Oakwood Drive to Memorywood Drive				
10. County Land Trails (Whipple Area)	Oakwood Dr. to Memorywood Dr. through Crow Wing County forest property				
	Oakwood Dr. through Crow Wing County forest to Brownsville Circle to Cedar Scenic Rd.				
11. Jewelwood	Jewelwood Park to Clearwater Rd. and Woida Road				
12. Forestview/MOP Park	Mountain Ash Dr. & Mapleton Rd. & from corner of Mountain Ash/Mapleton to MOP Park				
13. Multi-modal planning and design	Study and develop city policies for planning and design of multi-modal facilities in the City, including sidewalks and/or trails along public streets and private property				

BERRYWOOD PARK



Berrywood Dr. S.

LEGEND				
	PICNIC TABLE			
	LIGHT			
	TRASH RECEPTACLE			
	TREES			
	FUTURE EXPANSIONS			

WHIPPLE BEACH
14441 OAKWOOD DRIVE
BAXTER, MN
APPROVED PARK TOTAL BUILD OUT 3-2-2010

DATE: 04-24-2015
SCALE: AS SHOWN
DRAWN BY: DWS
CHECKED BY:

DATE	REV#	REVISIONS DESCRIPTION	BY

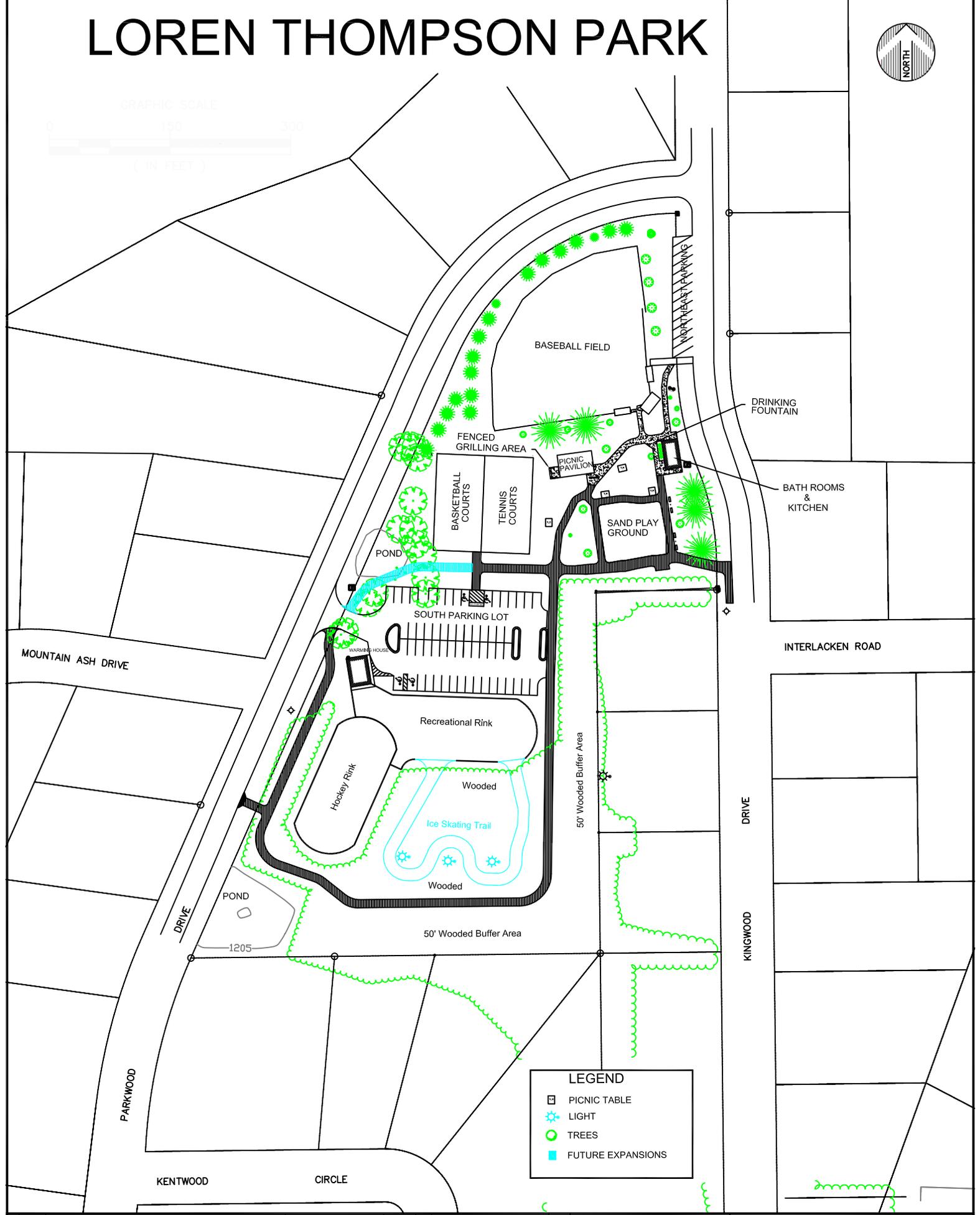


P. O. BOX 2626
13190 MEMORYWOOD DRIVE
BAXTER, MN
WWW.BAXTERMN.GOV

LOREN THOMPSON PARK



GRAPHIC SCALE



LEGEND

- PICNIC TABLE
- LIGHT
- TREES
- FUTURE EXPANSIONS

LOREN THOMPSON PARK
 13015 KINGWOOD DRIVE
 BAXTER, MN
 APPROVED PARK TOTAL BUILD OUT 10-20-2009

DATE	REV#	REVISIONS DESCRIPTION	BY
05-4-2015			
AS SHOWN			
DWS			

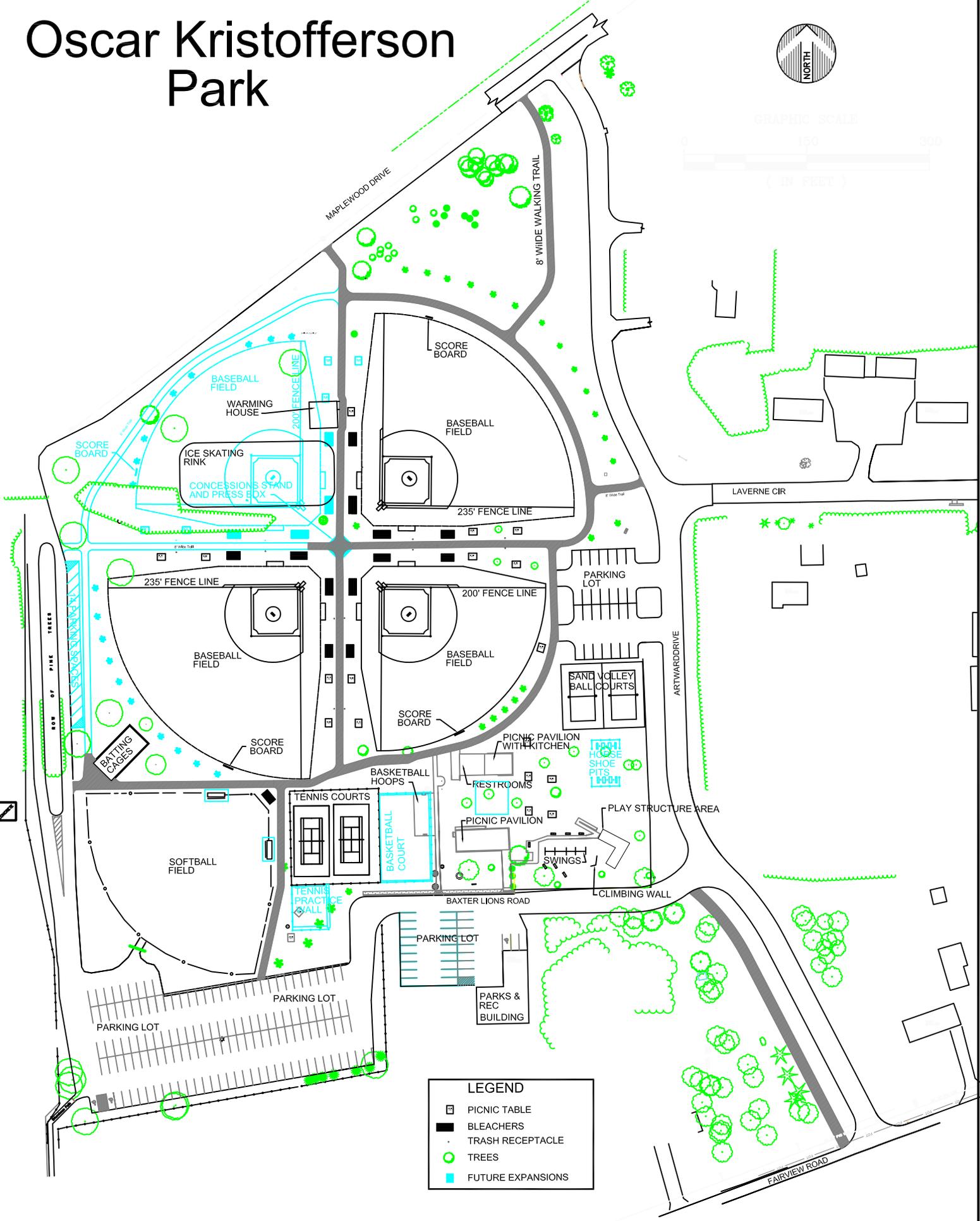


P. O. BOX 2626
 13190 MEMORYWOOD DRIVE
 BAXTER, MN
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Oscar Kristofferson Park



GRAPHIC SCALE



LEGEND

-  PICNIC TABLE
-  BLEACHERS
-  TRASH RECEPTACLE
-  TREES
-  FUTURE EXPANSIONS

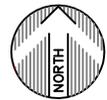
OSCAR KRISTOFFERSON PARK
5672 BAXTER LIONS ROAD
BAXTER, MN
APPROVED PARK TOTAL BUILD OUT 4-1-2008

DATE:	04-24-2015	DATE:	REV#	REVISIONS DESCRIPTION	BY
SCALE:	AS SHOWN				
DRAWN BY:	DWS				
CHECKED BY:					

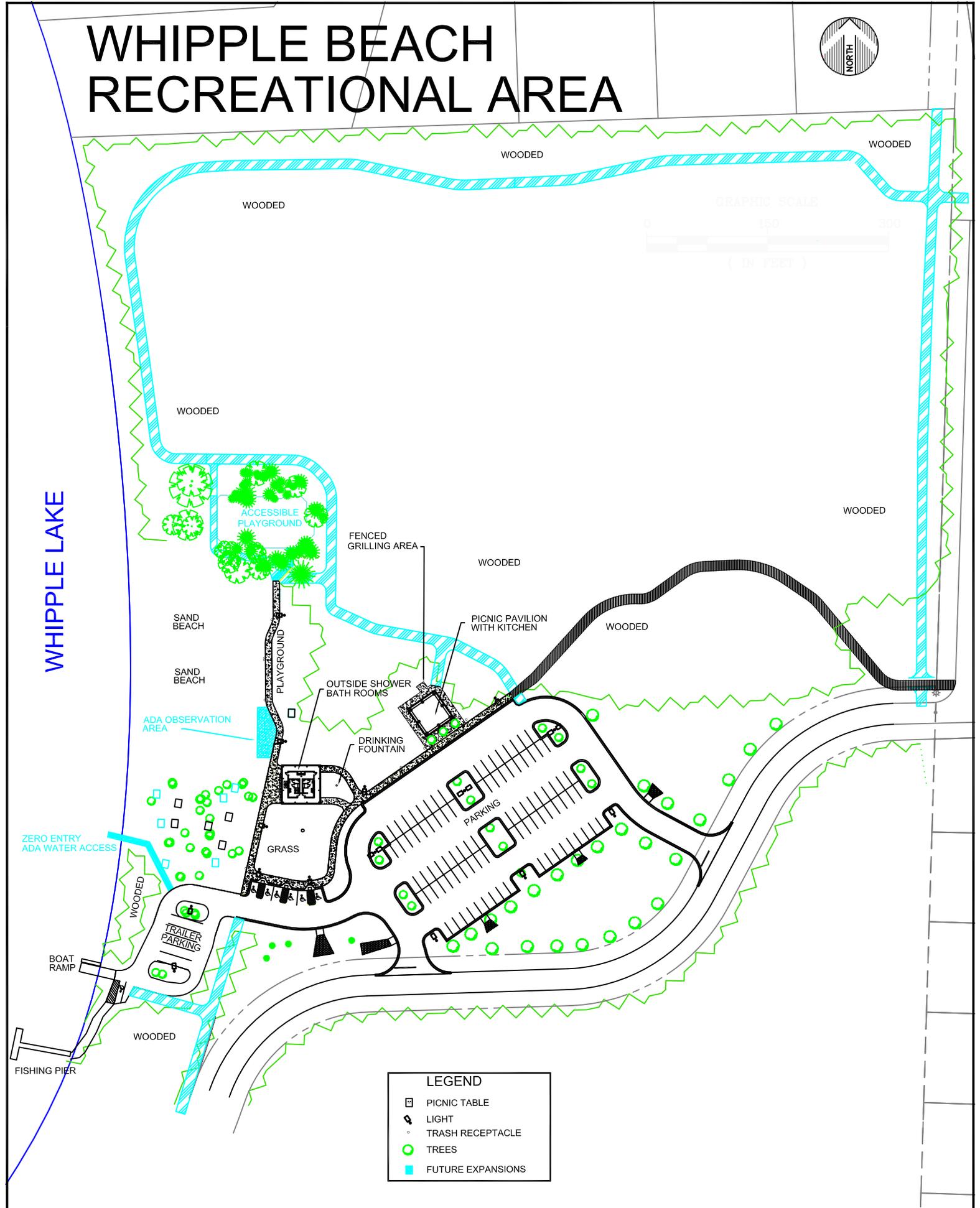


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WHIPPLE BEACH RECREATIONAL AREA



WHIPPLE LAKE



LEGEND	
	PICNIC TABLE
	LIGHT
	TRASH RECEPTACLE
	TREES
	FUTURE EXPANSIONS

WHIPPLE BEACH
 14441 OAKWOOD DRIVE
 BAXTER, MN
 APPROVED PARK TOTAL BUILD OUT 3-2-2010

DATE: 04-24-2015
 SCALE: AS SHOWN
 DRAWN BY: DWS
 CHECKED BY:

DATE	REV#	REVISIONS DESCRIPTION	BY

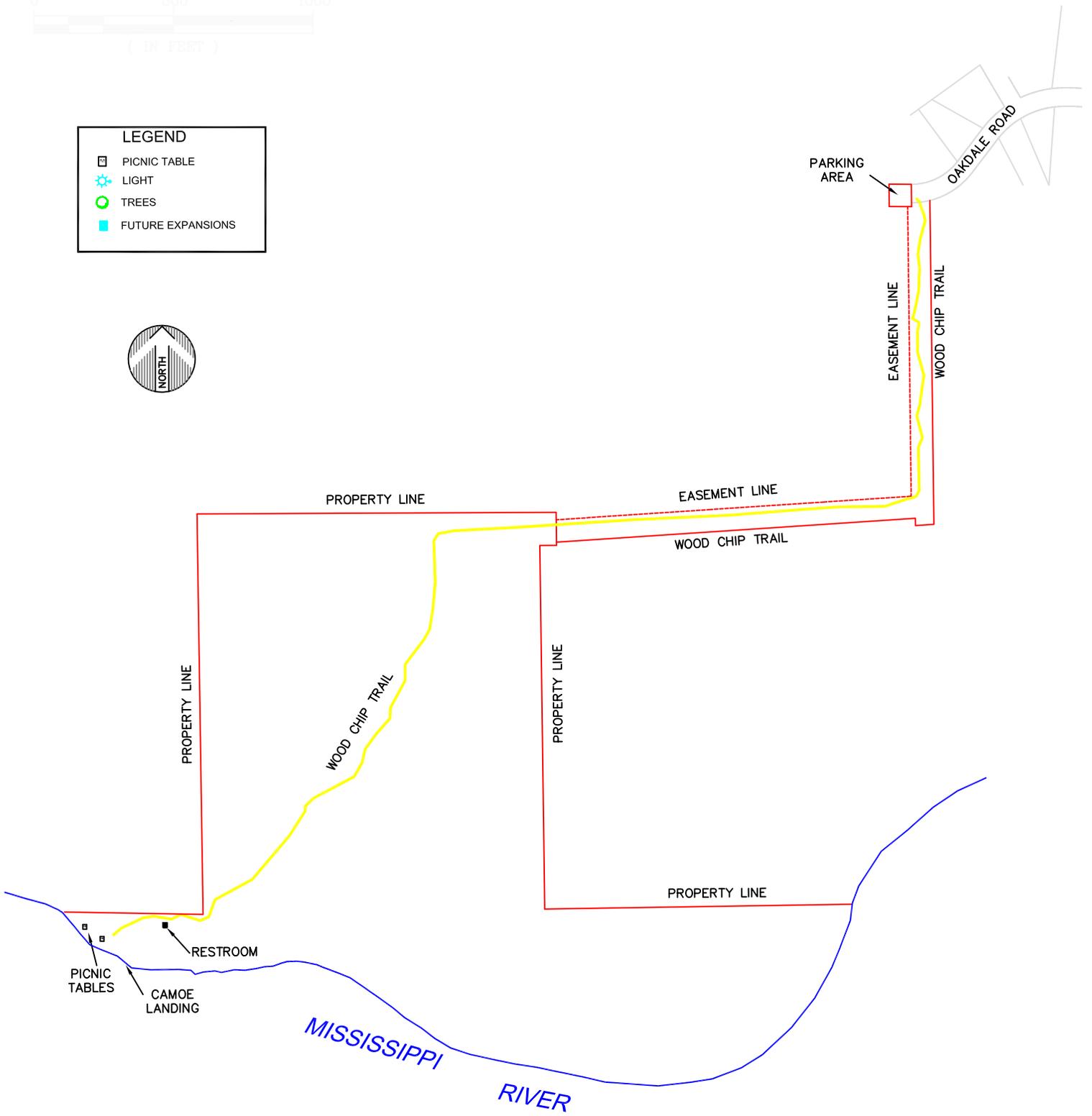


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MISSISSIPPI RIVER OVERLOOK PARK



LEGEND	
	PICNIC TABLE
	LIGHT
	TREES
	FUTURE EXPANSIONS

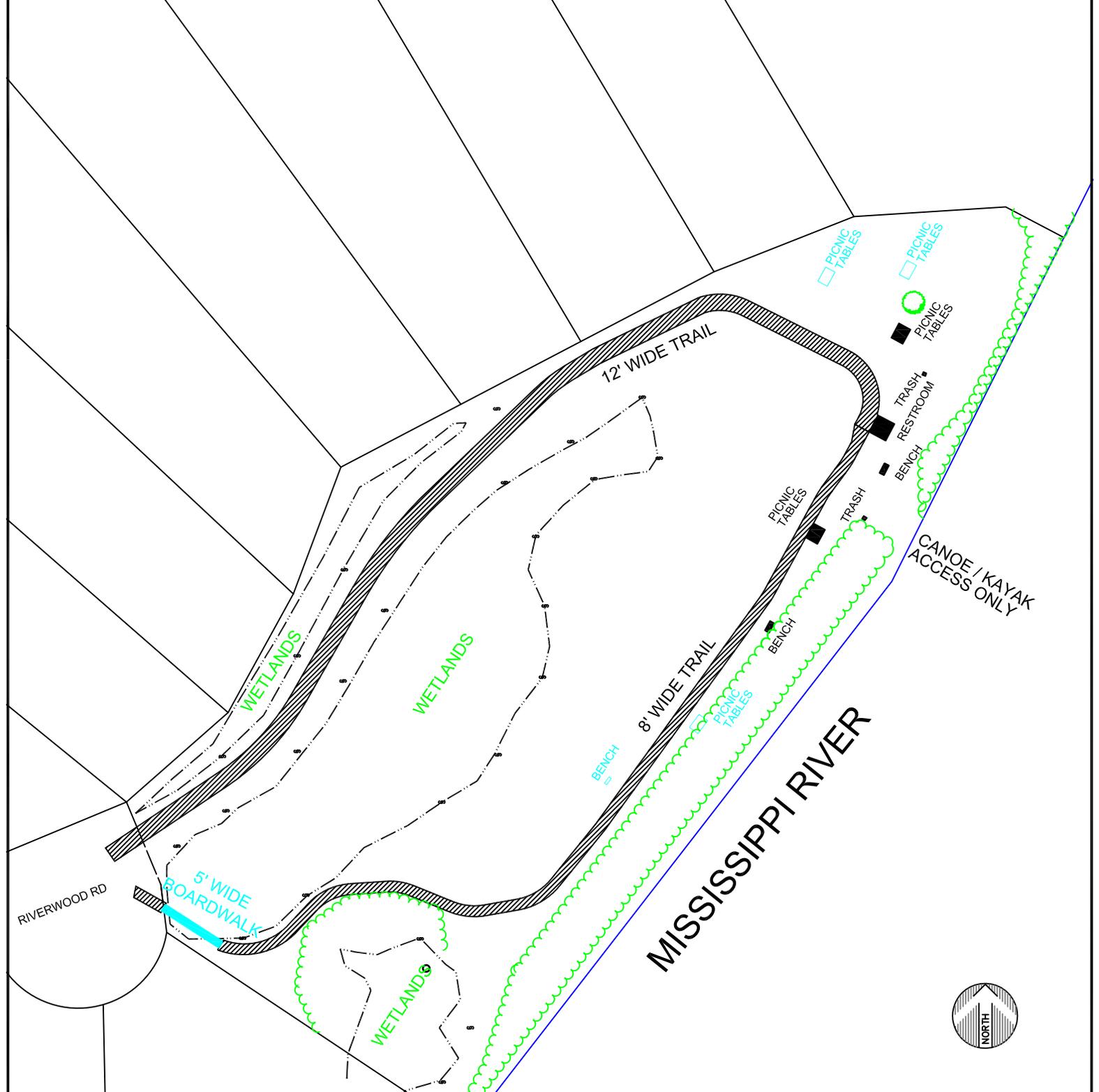


MISSISSIPPI RIVER OVERLOOK PARK
OAKDALE ROAD
BAXTER, MN

DATE:	06-22-2015	DATE	REV#	REVISIONS DESCRIPTION	BY
SCALE:	AS SHOWN				
DRAWN BY:	DWS				
CHECKED BY:					



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RIVERVIEW PARK



LEGEND				
	PICNIC TABLE			
	SIGNS			
	TREES			
	FUTURE EXPANSIONS			



RIVERVIEW PARK
6621 RIVERWOOD ROAD
BAXTER, MN
APPROVED PARK TOTAL BUILD OUT 11-05-2013

DATE	REV	REVISIONS DESCRIPTION	BY
06-22-2015			

DATE: 06-22-2015
SCALE: AS SHOWN
DRAWN BY: DWS
CHECKED BY:

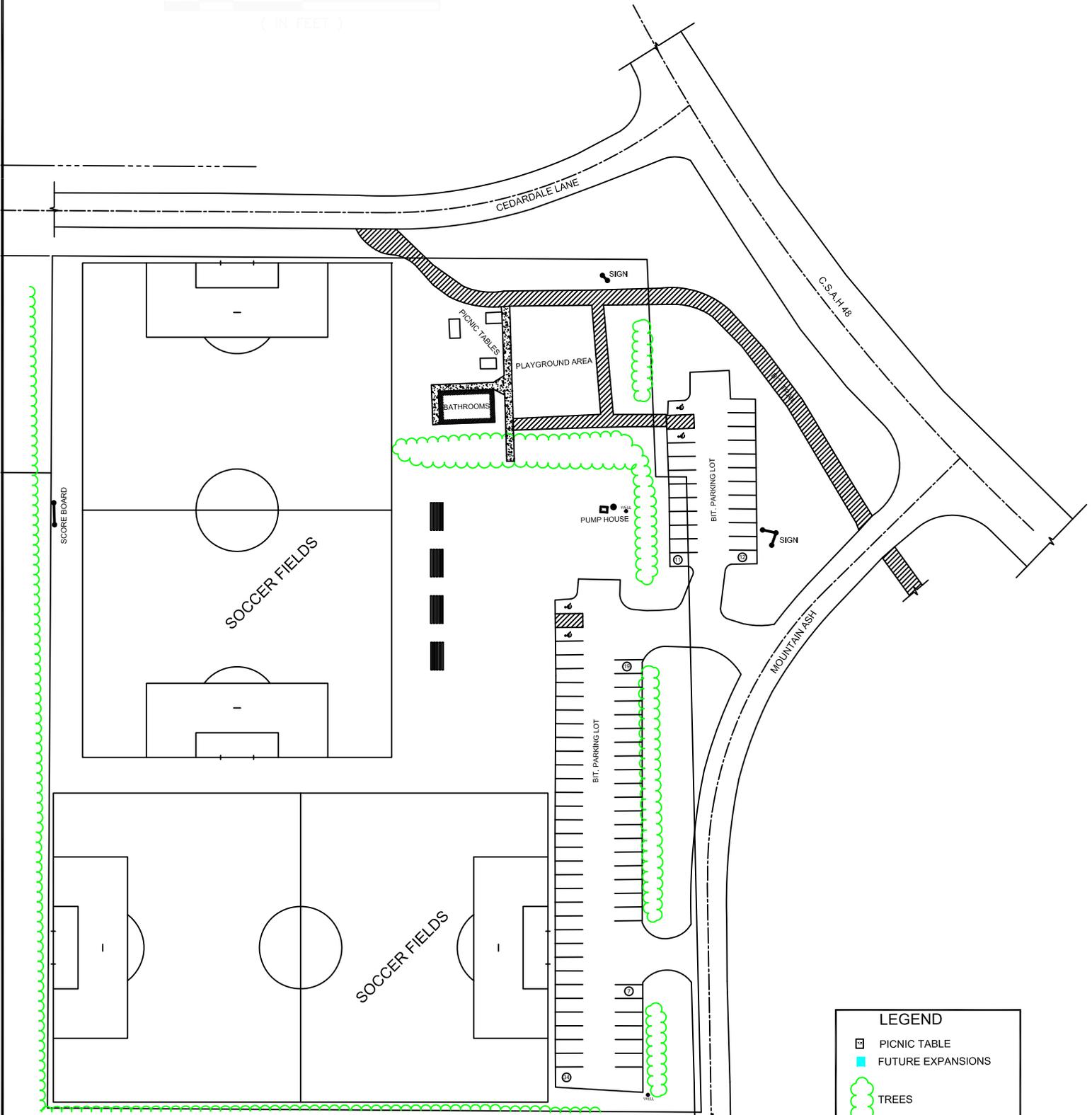


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SOUTHDALE PARK



GRAPHIC SCALE



LEGEND

-  PICNIC TABLE
-  FUTURE EXPANSIONS
-  TREES

SOUTHDALE PARK
12599 MOUNTAIN ASH DRIVE
BAXTER, MN

DATE:	05-4-2015	DATE	REV#	REVISIONS DESCRIPTION	BY
SCALE:	AS SHOWN				
DRAWN BY:	DWS				
CHECKED BY:					



P. O. BOX 2626
13190 MEMORYWOOD DRIVE
BAXTER, MN
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City of Baxter Comprehensive Plan Update Chapter 5 – Character & Identity/ Maintaining Infrastructure

Introduction

Residents and visitors appreciate the appearance and aesthetic quality of Baxter. Maintaining infrastructure is often closely tied to this character and identity. Early in the Comp Plan process, the LRPC discussed the image of Baxter and the need to take care of its most visible gateways and corridors. The full set of Goals for the Comprehensive Plan is included in the appendix, but the following goals relate directly to character and identity.

Goal: Promote new development and redevelopment of existing corridors to enhance Baxter's character and identity.

Key planning themes:

Traffic and transportation, community character and identity, maintaining infrastructure

Rationale: Baxter's corridors and redevelopment sites are important to the growth of the city's tax base and local jobs while also providing unique settings and opportunities to enhance business and the community's identity.

Policies:

1. Study and inventory land uses within key corridors including State Highways 371 and 210; former Pine Meadows Golf Course, North Baxter AUAR area, vacant parcels south of College Road and scattered infill sites to determine appropriate land uses and redevelopment sites that support and expand the economic vitality of the corridors.
2. Strengthen and enforce building, site design and signage standards to insure high quality development that enhances Baxter's identity and character.
3. Implement a streetscaping and lighting plan for major roadways.



Goal: Ensure that the City's aesthetic character for residents, visitors and business patrons is enhanced through high quality development and infrastructure and the visual attractiveness of key corridors.

Key planning themes:

Community Character and Identity, maintaining infrastructure

Rationale: Physical character and identity affects quality of life and business success. At entrances and key corridors in Baxter, it is important to create an attractive setting.

Policies:

1. Establish a community image theme steeped in Baxter's heritage with participation of residents, business owners and property owners.
2. Develop and enforce a plan to keep the City's gateways attractive by maintaining and enhancing signage, landscaping, or other features at key City entrances.
3. Include improved signage in beautification efforts to direct residents and visitors to lakes/ beaches, river, parks, recreational activity areas, landmarks, and shopping.
4. Encourage business owners to use and increase landscaping and other design aesthetics to beautify their buildings, entrances and parking lots. Create buffer standards to provide natural screening separation between commercial/industrial uses and residential.
5. Promote compliance with building and zoning codes through effective enforcement strategies and direction with property and/or building owners.

In addition, there are other policies in this Plan that relate to Baxter's character and identify:

Policy: Identify, prioritize and protect sensitive natural features, such as the lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, natural open space and local parks, as development proceeds. Employ conservation design principles in environmentally sensitive land areas.

Policy: Create and enforce building, site/landscaping design and signage standards to insure high quality development that enhances Baxter's identity and character.

Focus Areas

Community character and identity issues cut across many uses and locations in Baxter, but five areas have been discussed as warranting attention, due to the opportunity for significant development or redevelopment, noted on the map to the right:



North Baxter. This area includes most of what was the North Baxter AUAR, but those previous plans are no longer being pursued. The area is guided Mixed Use and represents a significant addition to the commercial/residential mix of the City, which could alter the character of that area.

Former Golf Course Site. The former Pine Meadows Golf Course, now owned by Good Samaritan Homes, offers an 80-acre opportunity for new intense development in Baxter. It is also guided Mixed Use on the Future Land Use Plan. Design and aesthetic issues will be important in its development. The intent is to create an attractive, integrated, pedestrian-friendly development with access to retail services and the Paul Bunyan State Trail.

This site has been identified in the Whiskey Creek Subwatershed Study as a primary site for regional ponding. The city will work with the property owner to develop a plan. The ponding should be used as a site amenity in addition to its benefit to the watershed and Mississippi River. The site offers an opportunity for a gathering space, restaurant, interpretive center, and residential uses planned as an integrated whole.

Industrial Park. There is currently a two-tier system of design standards in the Baxter zoning code in the Industrial District. There was discussion about creating a new Industrial zoning district for these higher profile areas but ultimately it was decided to keep the existing two-tier standards.

South Highway 371 Business Gateway. In southeast Baxter along Highway 371 either side of the intersection with CSAH 48 there is considerable vacant land, much of it currently zoned Office Service and C-1 Neighborhood Commercial. A request was made to zone it C-2, which would allow the largest and most intense auto-oriented commercial uses in the City, similar to what is developed on the north segment of Highway 371. The LRPC recommended that the character of this area be different from north 371 and the Land Use Plan proposes a new land use here – Business Gateway – which would allow office, light industrial and some commercial uses in keeping with a business campus setting.

West Highway 210 Gateway – Potlatch. At the city’s west edge on Highway 210 the Land Use Plan guides the frontage as Business Gateway, due to similar concern for character and aesthetics as the other Business Gateway areas on Highway 371. The Gateway standards are intended to protect and enhance the character of the corridor.

Implementation Steps

This Plan offers the following practical implementation steps to create a more beautiful Baxter for its residents and visitors alike:

- Public Character/Public Realm
- Civic Engagement
- Green Character
- Design Character

These facets of the built environment each have an effect on the character and aesthetic quality of the city and embrace both public and private responsibilities.

Public Character/Public Realm

The public realm can strongly influence the city’s character and aesthetics. The public realm consists of the city’s streets, sidewalks, parks, trails, plazas, urban spaces and gateways. The public realm includes a large portion of Baxter’s land area and represents a substantial public investment. The design of these elements plays a major role in defining the character of Baxter, and the overall aesthetic quality of the neighborhoods and city overall.

The public realm also includes examples in the city that are important contributors to the city’s overall character. These are important due to their role in the city, their visibility and their role in the everyday life of residents.

Major commercial corridors and gateways play a contributing role in the City’s character. Having well-defined edges and gateways into a city are important because they communicate the city’s image and create a clear sense of arrival and departure. Baxter’s edges and entryways are defined by roadways and as such demand attention to design and aesthetics. Baxter’s major commercial corridors are highly visible – highways 371 and 210 are not only the major gateways to the city, they are the commercial corridors connecting shopping, business, schools, surrounding communities, and the larger Minnesota region. The character of these corridors can benefit from improved architectural standards for new development, refined signage standards, and gateways signage and landscaping features welcoming visitors to Baxter from all directions.

Civic Engagement

In order to improve the city's overall identity and character on many levels, the City will create a commission to explore ways to communicate, with specific engagement strategies including different ways that the City will communicate to its citizens and ways that people can communicate back to the City.

Green Character

A city's green character is defined by its natural, open space and park and recreational elements. There is an opportunity to enhance these elements in Baxter. There is renewed interest in the city for planned greenways and their uses as active recreation areas and trail linkages along with their primary role as flood control.

Parks, trails and open spaces are essential components of the infrastructure of the City. The parks, trails, and recreation areas are just as important as transportation, water and sewer systems. The Park and Trail Plan lays out a network for an expanded park and trail system that will grow as the city expands providing quality park and recreation needs for existing and future residents of Baxter.

Design Character

Residents of Baxter are interested in quality of life, including the quality of design that surrounds their lives. High quality design and materials create lasting value for property owners and the community. The zoning code and other regulatory tools will be prepared upon completion of this plan to implement the ideas presented here. Design standards are one such tool to carry out the city's vision. Design standards influence the public realm (streets, sidewalks, plazas, streetscaping) and private (building architecture). Design standards apply to more than just the building architecture but to the site, street, parking, amenities, signage, open space and stormwater treatment. Each land use and subsequent zoning district is unique so the standards will be created to respond to the needs of that district.

Guiding Design Principles that should be considered for all districts:

- Create a compact and diverse critical mass of activity
- Create an identifiable symbol for the City.
- Create a focus for civic and cultural activities
- Define a framework of open spaces and linkages
- Balance the need to move vehicles safely with aesthetics and the needs of pedestrians and bicycles
- Promote high quality architecture

Design Guideline Elements

Streetscapes - usually include streets, sidewalks, street furniture, lighting and decorative elements to lighting. It might include provision for outdoor seating and other elements that attract people and activity.



Street Types - Treat Streets as Part of the Open Space System, not as Barriers.

- Accommodate Alternative Forms of Transportation
- Define a Hierarchy of Treatments for Approach Routes
- Commercial and Residential Streets
- Balance Vehicular and Pedestrian Needs



Entrance Monuments - gateways to the community are important locations for entry monuments.

Parking - Need and Design - depending on the district or area parking needs and location may be an important consideration. Are there opportunities for shared parking or a need for a ramp to serve multiple uses? Design of parking lots is also critical to minimize the presence of parked vehicles. Appropriately screening the areas, use of landscape islands to break up the expanse of parking areas can improve the appearance of parking lots.



Setbacks - depending on the location, setbacks or build to lines can be an important tool in creating a more traditional or compact mixed use design. Allowing setbacks to be tighter and buildings constructed up to the sidewalk reinforces the pedestrian scale of the design.



Building Architecture and Design - it is essential to encourage high quality architecture. Promote visual interest through proper alignment, proportion, and materials. Place buildings to reinforce streetscapes and open spaces. Design requirements may differ between districts or areas. High quality design can be required of any use in any location.



Signage - building signage provides a great way to be creative and distinctive. Signs are also an important architectural element for any business. However, since signs influence the overall character and appearance of the streetscape, they should be designed to complement the architecture. Signs that are overhanging or projecting signs are very pedestrian friendly.



Open Space - Public Spaces and Amenities - often pockets of open space within developments or redevelopment areas can be used for public gathering areas to relax, enjoy the outdoors or even hold small gatherings. These areas should be designed to support this goal with minimal amenities as necessary.



Stormwater Treatment - there are many innovations for new storm water treatment that provide design amenities. Many of these include improved ponds or rain gardens. These can be used in multiple locations and types of developments.



Maintaining infrastructure

The issue of maintaining infrastructure in the community is closely tied in many ways to the character and identity of the community. The following goals and policies relate directly to maintaining infrastructure and are included in the full set of Goals in the appendix to this Plan.

Goal 6: Maintain existing infrastructure and cost effectively manage expansion of municipal utilities and services to meet demand.

Key planning theme: Maintaining infrastructure

Rationale: The municipal utilities and city facilities are a vital piece of the city's services to residents as well as their impact on the city's ability to grow and meet demand cost efficiently and effectively.

Policies:

1. Maintain the City-wide Capital Improvement Plan and map for water and sewer expansion so residents and businesses can set reasonable expectations for future services.
2. Continue to require that all commercial, industrial, office, and mixed use development is connected to City sewer and water services.
3. Require all new residential developments to be connected to City sewer and water services.
4. Promote energy efficient and sustainable design best management practices in all developments.
5. Plan for completion of water and sewer connections in developed areas.
6. Create wellhead and water recharge area protection standards to ensure protection of water resources.

Policy: Promote the improvement of the existing housing stock, and encourage the rehabilitation or redevelopment of substandard housing.

Implementation – Character & Identity/Maintaining Infrastructure

DESCRIPTION	TIMING:	Short	Mid	Long	Ongoing
1. Capital Improvements Program	Implement a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to manage existing and future infrastructure needs . Five-year CIP updated annually.				
2. Storm Water Management Plan	Develop a storm water management plan for Baxter. The plan should include a 20-year maintenance plan.				
3. Streetscaping Plan	Develop a streetscaping plan for major roadways in the city.				
4. Community Image Theme	Establish a community image theme based on Baxter's heritage with participation of residents, business owners and property owners.				
5. Well Head Protection Plan	Implement the existing well head protection plan using the Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA) to protect the city's source and ground water				
6. Water Resources	Encourage low impact development to reduce impervious surface and provide natural areas near lakes, rivers, and wetlands.				
7. Community Engagement	The City will create a commission to explore ways to communicate, with specific engagement strategies including different ways that the City will communicate to its citizens and ways that people can communicate back to the City.				

City of Baxter

Comprehensive Plan Update

Appendix A – LRPC SWOT Summary

Baxter Comprehensive Plan Update
LRPC Meeting – SWOT Analysis
July 22, 2013



The Baxter Land Use & Transportation Plan kicked off with the first meeting of the Long Range Planning Commission (LRPC) on July 22, 2013. The LRPC is an eight-member committee working with the consultants to review information and offer recommendations on the Plan throughout the year-long process anticipated to develop the Plan.

At the kickoff meeting the LRPC heard from representatives of Stantec, the St. Paul consultants leading the project. The consultants outlined the basic purpose of the Plan, the schedule, and roles and responsibilities. They asked the LRPC to discuss the key things affecting Baxter in an exercise to prioritize the main issues they see Baxter facing. All issues are listed below.

In this exercise, called a SWOT analysis (for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) strengths are the things in the community you like, that add value, or you are proud of that exist today; weaknesses are things you don't like, should be corrected, detract from the community, opportunities are good things that could happen but haven't happened yet; threats are bad things that could happen but haven't happened yet.

In the list below each issue that was brought up in the discussion is included, followed by the number of "votes" given it by the LRPC members when they prioritized their top priorities in each group. This is not a scientific process or a sample cross section of the community, but it does indicate what was most important to the eight people assembled at that meeting.

Each category also has a "word cloud" that shows the most common terms in that list of issues – the larger the word, the more common. This is another way to visualize the terms that were used most often in the process.

Taken together the issues identified by the LRPC can be summarized in six main topics:

- Managing growth and development
- Maintaining infrastructure
- Baxter's character and identity
- Traffic and transportation
- Parks, trails and open space (including pedestrian crossings)
- Supportive and productive local government

The LRPC ranked the key Strengths as:

- Baxter’s location and proximity to surrounding natural amenities
- Trail system
- Unique and wide variety of residential neighborhoods
- Easy access into Baxter (regionally)
- Regional hub for retail and tourism



The LRPC saw the key Weaknesses as:

- Public perception of the City (difficult processes and procedures)
- Conflicting expectations between residents and tourists as related to customer service and types of services, retail offerings, etc.
- Age and condition of infrastructure including roads, sewer and water systems
- Lack of a safe pedestrian crossing over Highway 371 that can provide connection to the Paul Bunyan Trail.
- Lack of head of household jobs.



The LRPC saw the key Opportunities as:

- Creation of a connected trail system including hiking, biking and snowmobile.
- Planning for growth based on demographics
- Get ahead of growth with planning and visioning
- Rebuilding the local economy



The LRPC saw the key Threats as:

- Aging and deteriorating infrastructure, such as roads, , water, sewer, and parks
- Breakdown in communication with neighboring communities
- Loss of natural resources that make Baxter unique
- Continued economic stagnation
- Lack of strong policy leadership to follow through on plans



Other issues mentioned were disengaged citizens, high cost of development fees, and the high amount of vacant developed lots.

STRENGTHS

Location to natural amenities – 7

Trail system – 4

Uniqueness of neighborhoods (space, big lots, variety) – 3

Easy regional access – 3

Tourism – 3

Strong community support for school bonding, sales tax – 3

Regional retail hub and variety of retail – 3

Schools – 2

Industrial land available – 2

Medical services – 1

Stable commercial and industrial land – 1

Dedicated workers/employees

Strong average household income

Christian community

Nice, clean neighborhoods

Airport

Businesses “step up a notch” to meet customer expectations

Parks

Good variety of restaurants

Sense of place

Values

Retirement facilities

Active citizen groups

Citizen pride

Cost of living

Low crime

WEAKNESSES

Public - perception that the City is difficult to work with. (City approval process) – 6
Conflicting expectations – between residents & tourists who expect more customer service and types of services, (i.e. restaurants service / hi-speed internet) retail, amenities - 5
Condition of infrastructure – 4
Pedestrian trail crossing of Hwy. 371 (connect to Paul Bunyan trail) - 4
Lack of industrial/manufacture head of household jobs – 4
Sense of place (“Baxterization” of 371) (“Anyplace USA”) lack of City Center – 2
Hwy. 371 and 210 divides the City – 2
Lack of walkability / bikeability – 2
Lack of inter-connected planning land use, transportation, etc. – 2
Lack of identity – 1
Water / sewer not available everywhere
Fast, uncontrolled growth
Difficult to “listen” to Baxter
How to hear from the community
Lack of “whole system” buy in with Comp Plan
Baxter has become too commercial
City is spread out
Seasonal traffic jams
Mix of residential neighborhoods and appearance (hodge/podge)
Consistency in following rules/policies

OPPORTUNITIES

Connected trail systems – hike, bike, snowmobile, etc. – 6
Guided planning around demographics – 6
Get ahead of growth with Planning & Visioning – 4
Incorporate natural resources into development
Rebuilding our economy – guide to decision making – 3
Joint projects with regional neighbors – 2
Major partners (decision makers) are here – system planning – i.e. MnDOT – 2
Balance growth with provision of recreational facilities (i.e. destination recreation) – 2
Industrial growth with existing vacant industrial land – 2
Emerging transit system – part of larger transportation system – 1
City to become better partner to citizens – 1
Attract innovative / technology entrepreneur’s – 1
Expansion of medical facilities /services – 1
Mississippi – trails along river, Park area - 1
Commercial land / store fronts available
Rebounding residential Development
Simonson lumber (new site)
To motivate creative / talented citizens

THREATS

Deteriorating / aging infrastructure – 7
Breakdown of communication with neighbors – 5
Loss of Natural Resources – 5
Economic stagnation – 3
Policy leadership not sticking to plans – 3
Disenchanted disengaged citizens – 2
High cost of development related fees – 2
500 empty S.F. lots with water and sewer – 2
Coping with rising number of Retirees – 1
Impact of state and federal laws and mandates – 1
Possible changing ethnic demographics and how City responds
Surrounding units of government
Higher taxes, higher gas prices
Unsafe pedestrian / trail systems
Emergency response – RR, etc. plus wellhead protection
Diminished tax base
Create plans that don't get implemented
Another downturn in the economy
High dependence on tourism and retail



January 8, 2014

Gordon Heitke, Josh Doty, City of Baxter

Page 2 of 3

Baxter Business Council Discussion, December 18, 2013

1) *Location*

The participants understand the importance of Baxter's location in the region and its importance in key regional business segments: retail, tourism, health care, industrial, etc. Location is a given, the result of natural features (lakes and woods) and manmade infrastructure (Highway 371). Taking full advantage of the opportunities offered by Baxter's location is the job of all segments of the community: business, government, non-profits, and individuals.

2) *Highway 371*

Highway 371 is the transportation and business artery of the Baxter region. It is seen as both a blessing and a curse: its traffic ensures a steady stream of customers and patrons, and it creates congestion and a barrier to connections across the community. Improvements to Highway 371 could have significant benefits to business and the community as a whole.

3) *City government*

There was considerable discussion of the impact of local government attitude, regulations and processes on business. Participants were eager to have clear, consistent dealings with the city and cooperation on development projects. The cost and scope of regulations were a concern, but participants also noted that recent changes in city staff were a welcome, positive change from past experience.

4) *Connect with larger community*

Participants wanted to see the Baxter/Brainerd/Crow Wing County/Lakes area as one community working together, rather than competing entities.

Issues

The list below notes all issues that were mentioned, with the top several in bold type, indicating the highest priorities of the group, and the number of votes for each.

Strengths – Things that enhance business, add value, that you are proud of in Baxter

- **Location – hub in MN for retail, medical - 13**
- **City staff change positive! - 8**
- **Opportunity to connect with Brainerd- 8**
- **Hwy 371 corridor – traffic - 6**
- Natural features – waterways - 4
- Growth in medical services - 4
- Strong seasonal economy - 4
- Trail system - 4
- Utilities – new infrastructure - 4
- Overall vision - 3
- Variety of retail



January 8, 2014

Gordon Heitke, Josh Doty, City of Baxter

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Baxter Business Council Discussion, December 18, 2013

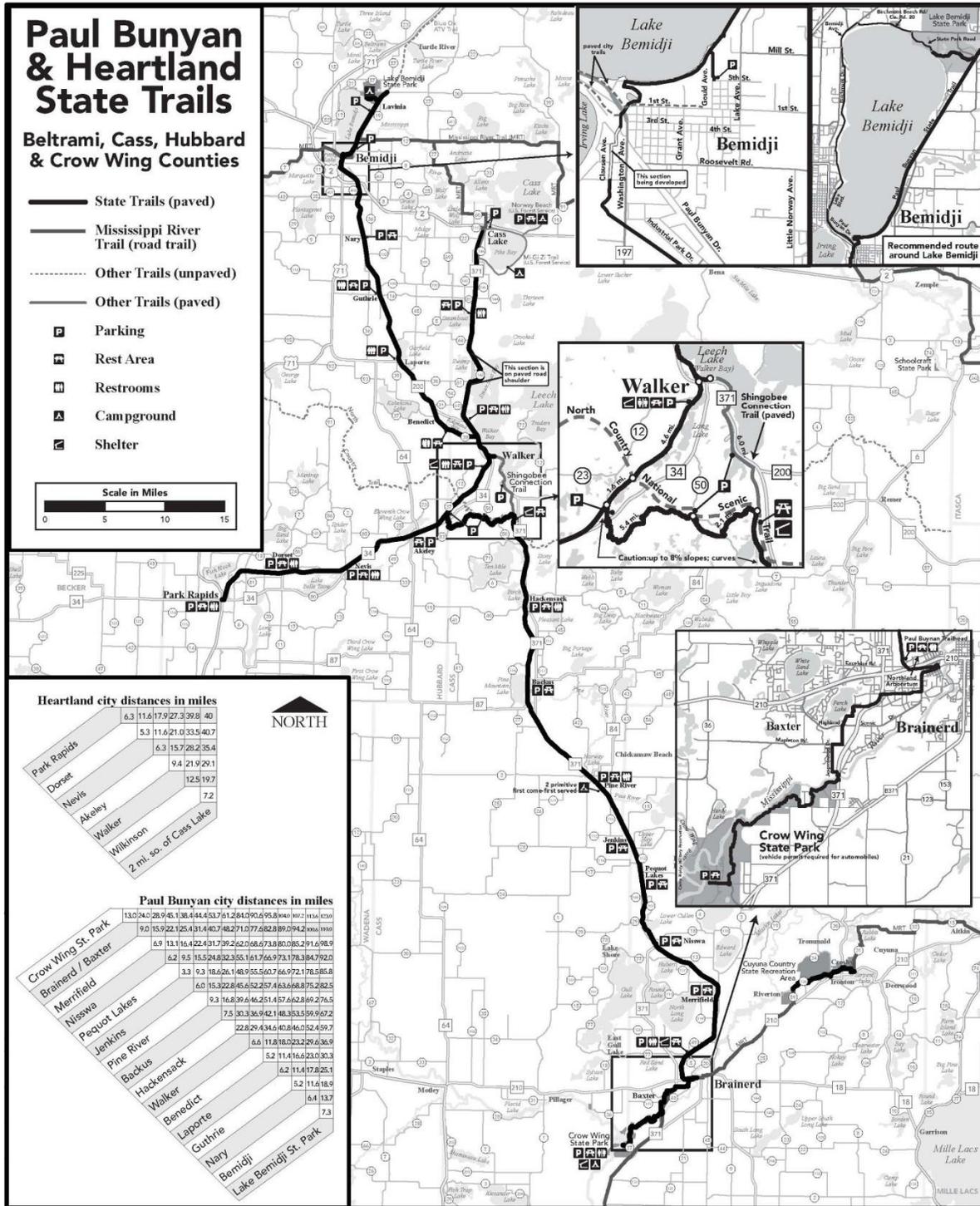
Opportunities for Improvement – Things in Baxter that detract from business, that hurt business, that you are not proud of

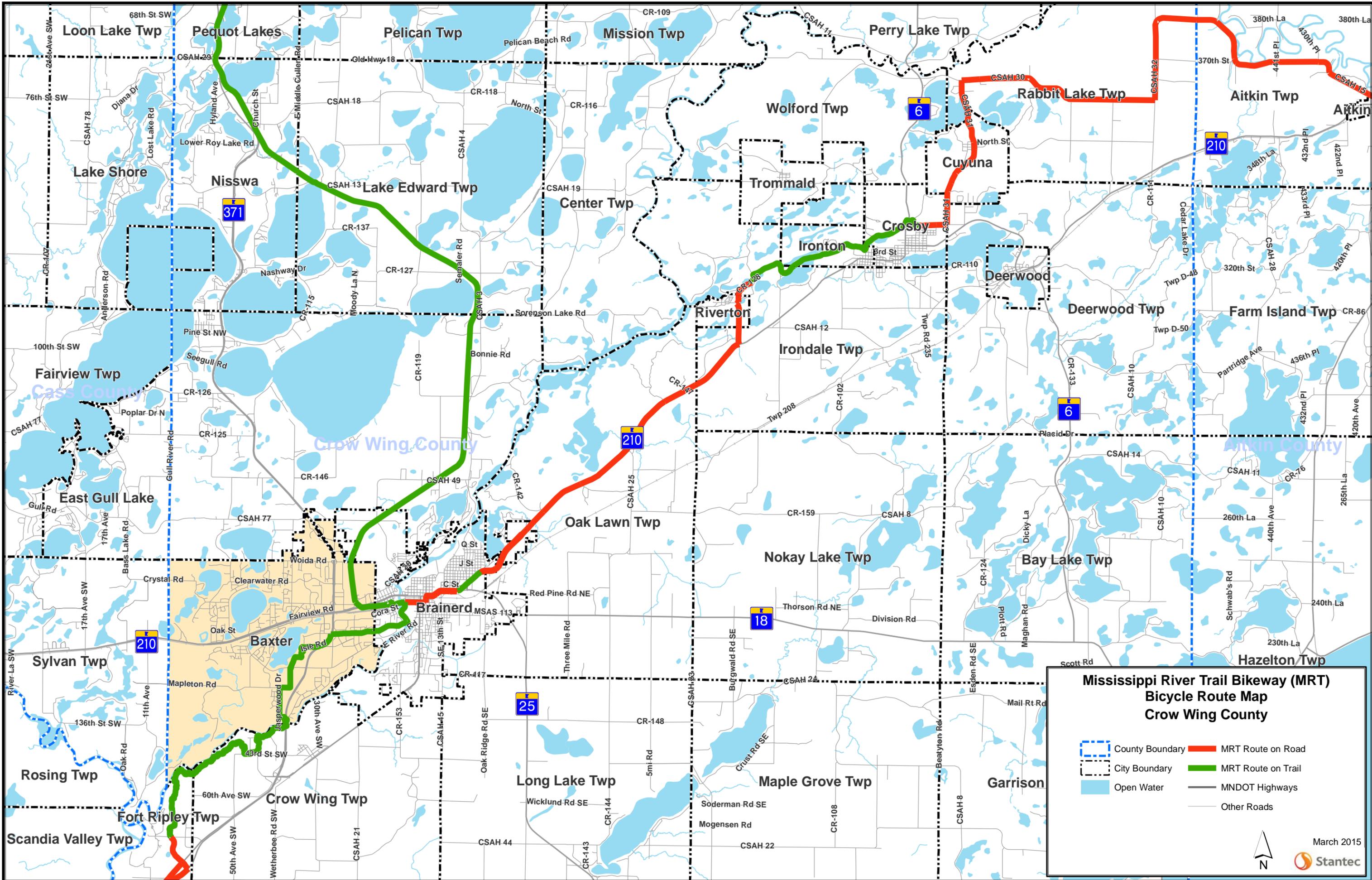
- **Communication – need it upfront before project is set - 12**
- **Scope of regulation for new business – landscaping, architecture – streamlining - 10**
- **“Rational” implementation - 9**
- **Transportation – improve flow – Hwy 371 is a divide - 5**
- **“Sprawl” – Hwy 371 strip 600’ deep - 5**
- Cost of redevelopment of existing properties - 3
- Balance business viability with beautification of city - 3
- Balance – business vs. residential (cost of infrastructure) - 3
- Improve competitiveness compared with others (easier to do business elsewhere) – cost process, burden of requirements - 2
- Franchise standards – in conflict - 2
- Investigate area wide assessments vs. development driven - 2
- Not year-round economy - 2
- Neighborhoods – retail –drivability, walkability
- East-West roadway needed

Future – Look out 10 years from now – What does Baxter need to accomplish to position itself as a community that supports and promotes commerce? (All responses, not ranked in any order)

- Clarity of requirements and vision
- Commitment to making Baxter best in class
- Focus on job & income growth (support BLAEDC)
- Complete list of requirements up front
- Willingness to continue connecting, etc.
- Competitive re: costs (like – size communities)
- Communication - & flexibility
- Balance - business & natural community/environment
- Traffic – investment in infrastructure
- Support chamber
- Develop new industrial and business areas
- Fairness – residential vs. business
- Infill – opportunity for growth
- Commission structure for non-resident businesses
- Take a leadership role in the area and build mutually beneficial alliances.
- Take a view of “Baxter Lakes Area”. i.e. Strong BLAEDC association, City of Brainerd, Crow Wing County
- Create a culture of service within the city operations. Not “NO”, but how do we make it work or make it better.
- Make positive, forward thinking moves now for what is seen as necessary for the future in transportation and infrastructure that fit the vision. Defined phases in plan with triggers or time frame implementation.

City of Baxter Comprehensive Plan Update Appendix B – State Trail Maps





**Mississippi River Trail Bikeway (MRT)
Bicycle Route Map
Crow Wing County**

	County Boundary		MRT Route on Road
	City Boundary		MRT Route on Trail
	Open Water		MNDOT Highways
			Other Roads

March 2015


City of Baxter

Comprehensive Plan Update

Appendix C – Plan Goals and Policies

Chapter 2 - Managing Growth and Development

Goal 1: Promote a well-planned community balancing land uses and expansion of services.

Key planning themes:

Managing growth and development, community character and identity, maintaining infrastructure

Rationale: A carefully created comprehensive plan will ensure the community's ability to grow in a rational and responsible manner that promotes efficient investment in present and future infrastructure.

Policies:

1. Create a land use plan that defines the types and locations of residential, commercial, industrial and public uses required to meet the community's projected needs, and zone property consistent with the land use plan.
2. Identify growth areas within the city limits and potential urban expansion areas and include these areas in land use planning to guide the orderly and cost effective provision of infrastructure at a rate consistent with anticipated growth.
3. Continue to use the Areawide Urban Alternative Review (AUAR) process to evaluate impacts of new development; ensure updates are prepared to keep plans current.
4. Require efficient use of the land with compact urban development standards in both new development and redevelopment.
5. Identify, prioritize and protect sensitive natural features, such as source water, ground water, wellhead protection, lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, natural open space, local parks and trails as development proceeds. Employ conservation design principles in areas of environmentally sensitive land areas.
6. Provide for commercial and industrial land uses at locations where adequate municipal services are available, that serve market demand, and with access to major roadways, especially State Highways 371 and 210.
7. Create a Hwy 371 Corridor plan that provides guidance and specific plans for land use, infill and redevelopment opportunities, bicycle/pedestrian elements (including safety) and public spaces.

8. Create and enforce building, site/landscaping design and signage standards to insure high quality development that enhances Baxter's identity and character.

Goal 2: Provide a variety of housing types, densities and choices to meet the life cycle housing needs of residents.

Key planning themes:

Managing growth and development, maintaining infrastructure

Rationale: A variety of residential densities supports a range in housing styles for home ownership and rental in attached and detached formats and increases opportunity for meeting life-cycle housing needs.

Policies:

1. Maintain a balance, through land use, in the types and densities of housing units available to meet the housing needs of Baxter.
2. Promote infill residential development in appropriate areas where existing infrastructure may be utilized.
3. Develop standards for conservation design principles that protect Baxter's sensitive or unique land and water features in new residential development.
4. Assess the need for additional workforce and affordable senior housing needs in the community.
5. Promote the improvement of the existing housing stock, and encourage the rehabilitation or redevelopment of substandard housing.

Goal 3: Support, enhance and expand existing businesses and promote new businesses to Baxter.

Key planning theme:

Managing growth and development

Rationale: Existing local businesses understand the issues and advantages to Baxter and the larger Baxter/Brainerd location and most job creation occurs from existing businesses. By working closely with the local business community, the City will be able to understand and respond to changes in the market place quickly and effectively.

Policies:

1. Continue promoting new businesses to help fill niches and to enhance choices within the City.
2. Through land use and financial tools/incentives, create opportunities to meet market demand for industrial, business park, medical service and professional office development to expand the number of livable wage jobs in Baxter.

3. Promote programs and efforts to bring new businesses to Baxter and support improving, maintaining and expanding existing jobs.

Chapter 3 - Transportation

Goal: Coordinate transportation with land use planning.

Key planning theme:

Traffic and transportation, maintaining infrastructure.

Rationale: The transportation system and land use are closely linked. Each has a direct impact on the other.

Policies:

1. Implement transportation system improvements according to existing (and future) studies that address congestion, improve access and connections and meet forecasted development demand and future traffic impacts.
2. Work with neighboring communities, townships, and counties to develop an efficient, regional transportation system to minimize congestion.
3. Require traffic impact studies for development that will affect collector or arterial roadways.
4. Continue creating a positive image along the city's corridors and gateways through building, site design, and signage standards and the development of gateway features.
5. Identify and implement on-road bicycle corridors along major roadways where feasible.

Goal: Maintain and improve the existing transportation system to provide safe and functional multi-modal roadways.

Key planning theme:

Traffic and transportation

Rationale: The existing roadway system is a vital piece of the city's infrastructure system requiring regular maintenance and management to control congestion, maintain safety and provide a variety of multi-modal opportunities throughout the community.

Policies:

1. Develop and maintain a plan for existing roadway upgrades and maintenance.
2. Continue to require sufficient right-of-way and easements on existing roadways in new development to ensure future traffic needs will be addressed.

3. Integrate pedestrian and bicycle trails (on and off road) where feasible into the design of existing and new roadway facilities that provide links to existing trails and to key destinations such as neighborhoods, parks, schools, commercial areas, and public uses.
4. Design and identify a funding mechanism for construction of a grade separated crossing of Hwy. 371 that provides connection to the Paul Bunyan Trail.
5. Provide safe pedestrian routes and crossings for schools.
6. Maintain (or define) a truck route system to serve industrial uses and minimize impact on other parts of the roadway system.
7. Use traffic management technology to improve the operations and pedestrian safety of the roadway system.
8. Design and install appropriate traffic calming features to minimize speeds and discourage through traffic from intruding on residential areas.

In addition, two policies under other goals have a strong connection to transportation issues.

Policy: Create a corridor plan for Hwy. 371 for commercial, and office development that includes land use, transportation, and design guidelines.

Policy: Create a Hwy. 371 Corridor plan that provides guidance and specific plans for land use, infill and redevelopment opportunities, bicycle/pedestrian elements (including safety) and public spaces.

Chapter 4 – Parks, Trails and Open Space

Goal: Continue to provide for the park, recreation, trail and open space needs of the Baxter community.

Key planning theme: Parks, trails and open space, maintaining infrastructure

Rationale: Areas for active and passive recreation and open space enjoyment are essential to maintaining the character of Baxter and to quality of life. Given Baxter's location in the Heart of the Lakes region, the City of Baxter places a strong emphasis on providing a quality parks, trails and open space system for residents and visitors to the community.

1. Update the existing Baxter Park and Recreation Plan to meet current and future park, trail, and open space needs:
 - a. Define current and future needs for passive and active parks, trails and open spaces to provide a full range of recreational opportunities
 - b. Determine current and future community and event facility space needs (including potential shared facilities with the school district)
 - c. Determine the need for additional or improved maintenance facilities
 - d. Determine adequate fees are acquired to meet park and trail development needs.

- e. Work with neighboring cities, townships, counties, DNR, State of Minnesota, Federal, military and other relevant agencies to develop a coordinated and connected local and regional park/trail system.
2. Acquire sufficient park and open space to meet current and future needs.
 - a. Define acquisition search areas based on a prioritized master plan.
 - b. Pursue public and private funding opportunities for land acquisition for preserving open space within the city.
 - c. Maintain current parks, beaches, trails and recreational areas to highest standards for Baxter residents and visitors to enjoy.
 3. Update the existing trail plans to connect parks, community facilities, shopping, school and regional trail systems.
 - a. Identify gaps in existing trail system within existing parks and open spaces as well as missing connections between destinations and commercial areas to create full loop trails benefiting all neighborhoods in Baxter.
 - b. Create designated on-road cycling lanes with signage, and striping on major roadways.
 - c. Require sidewalks and/or trails in new development and redevelopment projects where feasible.
 - d. Create opportunities for safe designated snowmobile trails with access to the Paul Bunyan Trail.
 - e. Design and identify a funding mechanism for construction of a bike and pedestrian bridge over or under Highway 371 that provides connection to the Paul Bunyan Trail.
 - f. Continue to engage in the planning and development of the Northland Arboretum and support its recreational and environmental benefits to the community.

Chapter 5 - Character & Identity/ Maintaining Infrastructure

Goal: Promote new development and redevelopment of existing corridors to enhance Baxter's character and identity.

Key planning themes:

Traffic and transportation, community character and identity, maintaining infrastructure

Rationale: Baxter's corridors and redevelopment sites are important to the growth of the city's tax base and local jobs while also providing unique settings and opportunities to enhance business and the community's identity.

Policies:

1. Study and inventory land uses within key corridors including State Highways 371 and 210; former Pine Meadows Golf Course, North Baxter AUAR area, vacant parcels south of College Road and scattered infill sites to determine appropriate land uses and redevelopment sites that support and expand the economic vitality of the corridors.

2. Strengthen and enforce building, site design and signage standards to insure high quality development that enhances Baxter's identity and character.
3. Implement a streetscaping and lighting plan for major roadways.

Goal: Ensure that the City's aesthetic character for residents, visitors and business patrons is enhanced through high quality development and infrastructure and the visual attractiveness of key corridors.

Key planning themes:

Community Character and Identity, maintaining infrastructure

Rationale: Physical character and identity affects quality of life and business success. At entrances and key corridors in Baxter, it is important to create an attractive setting.

Policies:

1. Establish a community image theme steeped in Baxter's heritage with participation of residents, business owners and property owners.
2. Develop and enforce a plan to keep the City's gateways attractive by maintaining and enhancing signage, landscaping, or other features at key City entrances.
3. Include improved signage in beautification efforts to direct residents and visitors to lakes/beaches, river, parks, recreational activity areas, landmarks, and shopping.
4. Encourage business owners to use and increase landscaping and other design aesthetics to beautify their buildings, entrances and parking lots. Create buffer standards to provide natural screening separation between commercial/industrial uses and residential.
5. Promote compliance with building and zoning codes through effective enforcement strategies and direction with property and/or building owners.

In addition, there are other policies in this Plan that relate to Baxter's character and identify:

Policy: Identify, prioritize and protect sensitive natural features, such as the lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, natural open space and local parks, as development proceeds. Employ conservation design principles in environmentally sensitive land areas.

Policy: Create and enforce building, site/landscaping design and signage standards to insure high quality development that enhances Baxter's identity and character.

City of Baxter Comprehensive Plan Update Appendix D – BG BUSINESS GATEWAY DISTRICT

10-3X-1: PERMITTED USES:

The following uses with a ground floor footprint of thirty thousand (30,000) square feet or less:

Bakeries; retail.

Banks, savings loans, credit unions and the like (without drive-through). Barbershops, beauty shops; other personal service uses.

Civic buildings such as city halls, fire stations and the like (without outside storage). Clinics including multispecialty outpatient clinic.

Convenience stores (without motor fuel stations).

Copy/printing services (excluding printing presses and publishing facilities). Drugstores and pharmacies (without drive-through).

Dry cleaning and laundry pick ups, self-service laundromats, incidental pressing, tailoring, repair and the like (without dry cleaning processing).

Essential services.

Fitness centers and fitness related studios such as karate, yoga, dance and the like

Florists, hobby, craft or variety stores and the

like. Hardware stores.

Restaurants (without drive-through).

Studios; art related.

Retail goods and services of a similar nature, as determined by the zoning administrator.

The following uses conducted in a building no greater than one hundred twenty five thousand (125,000) gross square feet:

Offices and complementary service uses of a general nature

Laboratories and research facilities.

Manufacturing or assembly of products that produce no exterior noise glare, fumes, byproducts or wastes or creates other objectionable impact on the environment.

Radio and television stations or studios.

10-3X-2: ACCESSORY USES:

Accessory uses incidental and customary to uses allowed in section 10-3X-1, "Permitted Uses", of this article shall not occupy more than thirty percent (30%) of the gross floor area of the principal building.

Accessory structures as regulated by section [10-5-11](#), "Accessory Structures", of this title.

Adult use, accessory pursuant to [title 3, chapter 4](#) of this code.

Off street parking, loading and service entrances as regulated in sections [10-5-2](#), "Off Street Parking", and [10-5-3](#), "Loading Spaces", of this title.

Signs as regulated by section [10-5-1](#), "Signs", of this title.

Wireless communication towers as accessory to a permitted principal use subject to [title 9, chapter 4](#) and section [9-4-3](#) of this code. (Ord. 2013-20, 11-19-2013)

10-3X-3: CONDITIONAL USES:

The following are conditional uses, subject to the conditions outlined in section [10-7-4](#) of this title conditional use permit and the specific standards and criteria that may be cited for a specific use:

Adult use, principal, pursuant to [title 3, chapter 4](#) of this code.

Daycare facility provided:

- A. Unless exempted by the zoning administrator, where an outdoor play area of a daycare facility abuts any commercial or industrial use or zone, or public right of way, the daycare facility shall provide screening along the shared boundary of such uses, zones or public rights of way. All of the required fencing and screening shall comply with section [10-4-4](#), "Visual Standards", of this title.
- B. There shall be adequate off street parking which shall be located separately from any outdoor play area. Parking areas shall be screened from view of surrounding and adjoining residential uses in compliance with section [10-5-2](#), "Off Street Parking", of this title.

- C. When a daycare facility is an accessory use within a structure containing another principal use, parking for each use shall be calculated separately for determining the total off street parking spaces required. An exception to this requirement may be granted by the zoning administrator in instances where no increase in off street parking demand will result.
- D. Off street loading space in compliance with section [10-5-3](#), "Loading Spaces", of this title.
- E. All signing and informational or visual communication devices shall be in compliance with section [10-5-1](#), "Signs", of this title.
- F. The structure and operation shall be in compliance with state of Minnesota department of human services regulations and shall be licensed accordingly.

Funeral homes and mortuaries.

Multi-business signs, as regulated in section [10-5-1](#), "Signs", of this title.

Planned unit development (PUD) pursuant to [chapter 6](#) of this title.

Wireless communication towers as accessory to a permitted principal use subject to [title 9, chapter 4](#) of this code. (Ord. 2013-20, 11-19-2013)

10-3X-4: INTERIM USES:

The following are interim uses, subject to the conditions outlined in [chapter 7](#), interim uses and the specific standards and criteria that may be cited for a specific use:

Buildings temporarily located for purposes of construction on the premises for a period not to exceed time necessary to complete said construction.

- A. All building and safety codes are met.

10-3X-5: LOT AREA, HEIGHT, LOT WIDTH AND YARD REQUIREMENTS:

- A. Area Requirements: The following requirements shall be met in the BG district. New development shall only be allowed when a full range of municipal services and facilities are available to serve the site. Properties may be subject to special requirements as noted in article L, "SL Shore Land Overlay District", of this chapter.

	With Public Sewer And Water
Minimum lot size	20,000 square feet
Minimum lot width	100 feet interior 120 feet corner
Minimum principal structure setbacks:	
Front yard	30 feet
Abutting or Facing Principal Arterial Roadway	100 feet
Side yard	10 feet interior 30 feet abutting corner
Rear yard	30 feet
Minimum accessory structures setback	10 feet 100 feet abutting Principal Arterial
Maximum building height	45 feet
Maximum lot coverage	50 percent
Maximum impervious surface (other than shoreland overlay district)	88 percent
Maximum impervious surface (shoreland overlay district)	25 percent

- B. Fence, Screen Required: Wherever a BG district abuts or is across the street from an R district, a fence or compact evergreen screen is required pursuant to section [10-4-4](#), "Visual Standards", of this title. (Ord. 2013-20, 11-19-2013)
- C. Parking in front yard abutting Principal Arterial roadway. No parking is allowed within the first 50 feet of the front yard abutting or facing a Principal Arterial Roadway. Such yard area shall be landscaped with approved ground cover, shrubbery or trees.
- D. Landscaping along Principal Arterial. Clusters of overstory trees amounting to at least 25% of the site frontage shall be provided in the front yard abutting or facing a Principal Arterial roadway. Where there are existing mature trees, these can be counted in the calculation, otherwise new trees will be provided in a landscaped plan of materials approved by this Title.

Maintaining Infrastructure:

- The parks (taken care of)
- Traffic light in the Baxter Square/Mall area in the northern part. (service road) – (not taken care of)
- Needs a traffic light (371 at Lake Forest Road)
- Continue to coordinate with the City of Brainerd and East Gull Lake on establishing a fire station west of Brainerd to better serve that area.
- Road repair needed (Hwy 210 east of 371?)
- Repair Excelsior Road! Needed! Right left sides of 371.
- Roads are bad
- Take care of existing River Vista. Late with sewer and water (along Mississippi River east of 371)
- Extend City bus more routes, more hours
- Fire station needed
- Franchise fees should not charge businesses a disproportionate share
- Road improvement here... (210 and Timberwood Drive)
- Some roads in need of repair. Take care of the important, necessary things before “fluff”
- Better connection in between roads, less dead ends! (south of 210, west of Highland Scenic Road)

Baxter’s Character & Identity:

- All of it (Feel most comfortable)
- Some residential homes need to be cleaned up. Yards, etc.
- Love Whipple Beach park, well done!
- Love Baxter – Memorywood area
- Like Clearwater Road area!
- Develop more – overall. Leave residential feel of Baxter. Keep businesses along 371
- Baxter’s identity are its’ beautiful lakes, parks and trail system, and lovely residential neighborhoods.
- Staying the course on installing the sanitary sewer system is what has kept a reasonably high water quality on DNR lakes.
- Consider allowing rabbits, chickens depending on lot sizes.
- Love the rustic park on Mississippi
- Love the bridge crossing the Mississippi
- Apartments, rental units need to be kept up – can get to be a problem if too many around
- Lots of aging jade pine – need to consider if most of it comes down for development, the rest will be down soon. Advance planning and/or conservation design planning needed to maintain forested character. Also, buffer between 371 and development needed.
- Good police force
- Un-kept properties – junk! Detract (near Highland Scenic Road)

Traffic & Transportation:

- Summer/holidays at the 371/210 intersection and from the junction 371/CSAH 48 up to CR 77 (worst traffic)
- Can get around well
- Continuity and safe routes to the schools
- Excelsior Road from 371 No. to Country Club Road (needs to be improved). Also Woida Road from 371 No. to Country Club Road
- 210 & 371 Junction (worst traffic)
- City bus needs to extend hours
- Shovel snow better
- Can get around great
- Greenwood Road works well
- Sidewalks and/or trails along every major road. Roads deteriorating onto people's property, must fix!
- Inglewood traffic lights
- Poor traffic flow – especially lunch hour (intersection of Woida Road and Edgewood Drive)
- Maybe improve highway system at 371 – 210 junction because of traffic
- Dangerous intersection. Needs stop light (210 and Memorywood Drive)
- Add pedestrian crossing for school (Highland Scenic Road - Forestview Middle School) or at (Mountain Ash Drive and Highland Scenic Road)
- Do Isle Drive thru!
- Bus congestion after school stops traffic. (Possible double turn lane on 210 going northward)
- Traffic here at the 5-6 pm time area (intersection of 210 and 371)
- Dangerous – lots of accidents (intersection of 210 and 371 and at 371 and Excelsior Road intersection)
- Bus congestion after school stops traffic. (Possible double turn lane
- Easy getting around in Baxter
- We need more “neighborhoods” – easy access to grocery stores, hardware, etc. for us as we age. We need a car to do any shopping currently.
- Light at Inglewood rather than Knollwood
- Bike access/pedestrian access in commercial areas
- When will planned roadway for Wildflower come about? Looking forward to it
- Needs a traffic light (371 at Pine Beach Road or Lake Forest Road?)
- Isle Drive connection is needed
- Bring Isle Drive through (to the south connecting to Highland Scenic Road)
- C-1 (SE corner at Highland Scenic Road and east of Ironwood Drive)
- R-3 (south of the C-1 above and to the east)
- Make Public (south of Mapleton Road and west of Knollwood Dr)
- Roads are bad
- Fix roundabouts there are a lot of car crashes

Parks, Trails and Open Space:

- Loren Thompson Park (go to relax)
- Whipple Lake Park (go to relax)
- One over 371 or under (need trail/sidewalks/paths)
- Loren Thompson Park, or parks, lakes (go to relax)
- Community Center/Public Pool needed
- Love to swim and fish
- Nice bike area. Love the beach
- Fun to hang with friends
- More walking and biking trail
- More snowmobile trails anywhere in Baxter
- Connect trails (snowmobile) to Paul Bunyon Trail
- Please continue with Woida Road planning! Live on Wildflower
- Get bike from residential to business safely
- Don't overdo on parks and trails. We need roads and bridges redone.
- Signs and GPS on the trails – no idea where you are now... especially for visitors
- Riverview – make loop in trail – use old golf course bridge to cross wetland
- Add a boat access
- Consider connecting cross country trails at Forest View to new park area
- No bike access to this great park – Oscar Kristofferson Park
- Great park – well used beach (Whipple Beach Area)
- Safe crossing at elementary school (Maplewood Drive)
- Leave the trail planning – conducive to people choosing Baxter
- Fairview area needs trail – very unsafe
- Pedestrian crossing or school crossing at Parkwood or Mountain Ash Drive
- Good park, great location! Maybe make the park bigger (Loren Thompson Park)
- Better pedestrian sidewalks for the school (Forestview Middle School)
- Room for trail through 371 park to 371 to south
- Arboretum has so much more potential
- Bike crossing (over 371 between Woida Road and Excelsior Road)
- Park area (East of Golf Course Drive and south of Woida Road)
- Can we promote bicycles on routes with less cars instead of those with a lot of cars?
- We need a trail here (through Whipple Beach Area)
- Need a trail (along Cedar Scenic Road, south of Whipple Beach Area)
- Cedar Scenic Road very dangerous to walk/bike
- Trail markers and map
- We need more trails! - around here (along river)
- Bike friendly access across 371 to Paul Bunyon Trail (2 yes votes)
- Build trails around all blocks
- We need to fix some trails and make new trail so we can move around easier
- Fairview frontage road needs trail
- That is a good idea (planned north-south trail extending south from Mountain Ash Drive from between Mapleton Road south to approximately where Paris Road might intersect if it went through)

Effective Local Government:

- We have a very good council!
- Very good reputation
- Also, we have a wonderful police department
- Make schools better
- For development – a checklist of what needs to happen, upfront, timeline, etc.
- Continue to work with the Chamber Baxter Biz Council
- Support BLAEDC if manufacturing is your focus!
- New website is good! More links to planning docs & city/commission info (timely, not months after fact) need.
- Consider more access to city meetings through media – TV, radio – for busy Baxter residents
- Keep up the good work
- We have a reputation of over regulation. Is this changing with new Plan?
- New planner is great – Gordon is too.
- Public Transportation needed
- Streamline new business approval process. 18 months from 1st contract to final approval is too long.
- Maybe make the meetings more “public” and at better times. Then more people can attend. Good job!
- Area contractor will not work in Baxter because of permit fees to high!

Affordable Housing:

The City of Baxter has done an excellent job in establishing and maintaining high property values in the City. I can understand that many people would like to live in Baxter, but that property values are too high.

The answer to “Affordable Housing” in this area is spelled “Brainerd”.

Leaf Disposal: (This is a minor, minor issue)

- We are encouraged to enhance the beauty and value of our properties by planting trees. But now we have a burning ban. I full understand the ban.

I would like the City to establish one or two leaf composting sites. As we have had in the past, as a convenience to those who have to have their leaves. This agreement/contract with Hengel is a good start. But when Hengel is not available, it’s a long way to the county landfill.

Individual Property Owners Dealing with City Government:

- There is a perception that the City can be difficult to deal with regarding building permits, remodeling, and like issues. This may be true, HOWEVER

I want the City to be firm in enforcing quality construction. I want our neighborhoods to have initial quality construction, and building addition and property use matters addressed to maintain our City in a first-rate manner.

To date, the City has done an excellent job in this area- - Keep up the good work.

Additional Comments:

- We have wonderful retail here and we will surely get more in the future.
- Doing great - maybe "advertise" about the meetings