BAXTER LONG RANGE
PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA

Monday, September 23, 2013

City Council Chambers, 6:00 P.M.

1. Call to Order – Chair Kevin Donnay

2. Approval of July 22, 2013 Meeting Minutes

3. Comprehensive Plan Update - Phil Carlson, Tina Goodroad

   A. Review Comp Plan process
   B. Review demographics – what's changed in Baxter
   C. Review land use map – input on neighborhoods or communities within Baxter
   D. Review bike trail information
   E. Next steps

4. Adjournment

LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
July 23, 2013

The meeting of the City of Baxter Long Range Planning Commission was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Kevin Donnay.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin Donnay, Cathy Clark, Bob Ryan, Mark Cross Jim Kalkofen, and Council Liaison Todd Holman

MEMBERS ABSENT: Lori Rubin and Rock Ylimeini,

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Gordon Heitke

Approval of Minutes
Motion by Commissioner Ylimeini, second by Commissioner Rubin to approve the minutes of the June 24, 2013 regular meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Planning Services
Phil Carlson and Tina Goodroad of Stantec thanked the Commission for choosing Stantec. Mr. Carlson asked that the Commission to please introduce themselves and explain their role in the Commission.

Mr. Carlson explained the reasons behind planning and how they work together for private businesses and residents. This long range vision/plan is a guide for elected and appointed officials to assist in future development. Mr. Carlson then highlighted the following items that will be discussed throughout the process:

- Plan for growth and infrastructure
- Anticipation of growth
- Demographics and aging population
- Understanding the economic pattern
- Elements of the comprehensive plan
    - Land use and zoning-are there areas to be rezoned or areas of conflict?
    - Transportation-Roadways for residential, including pedestrian/biking and commercial
    - Parks-Where new ones should be located and connecting trails
- Engaging in with the public-Visual Preference-the best way to connect via-email, Facebook, newsletters or meetings

Mr. Carlson turned the floor over to Ms. Goodroad. Ms. Goodroad took the Commission through the comprehensive plan approval. She explained the five phase process as:

1. Kick off meeting with the Commission and staff
2. Visions and Goals Statements
3. Alternative growth/spacing mapping
4. Drafting/Planning chapters (heavy review)
5. Implementation and adoption by City Council

Mr. Carlson explained S.W.O.T which stands for: Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Treats.

He asked the Commission to take a few minutes and think about each topic and write down items under each topic. The Commission findings were as followed:

<u>Strengths (</u>Things you like, are proud of, that enhance the community)
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

<u>Weaknesses (</u>Things you don't like, should be corrected, that detract from the community<u>)</u>
Public - perception that the City is difficult to work with. (City approval process) – 6
Conflicting expectations – between residents & tourists who (expect more) for 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

Opportunity (Good things that could happen but haven't yet)
Connected trail systems – hike, bike, snowmobile, etc. – 6
Guided planning around demographics – 6
Commercial land / store fronts available
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
Rebounding residential Development
Simonson lumber (new site)
To motivate creative / talented citizens

Threats (Bad things that could happen but haven't yet)
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

Adjournment
Motion by Commissioner Clark, second by Commissioner Ryan to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

_____
Gordon Heitke
City Administrator

Memorandum

DATE: September 20, 2013

TO: Baxter Long Range Planning Commission

FROM: Phil Carlson, AICP, Stantec

RE: Draft Background Information

Introduction

The City of Baxter began the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan in June 2013. This background summary report contains information and analysis on various elements in the process, as a foundation for the community and decision makers. Credit for maps and graphics in previous studies not prepared by Stantec is given to the organizations and firms noted in the heading for each study.

A Long Range Planning Commission (LRPC) was appointed to work with consultants from Stantec and to oversee the process, review information and make recommendations to the City Council on the plans. All final decisions rest with the City Council.

A community or comprehensive plan fulfills at last 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.

Issues Discussion

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 LPRC 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)
- Effective local government

The LRPC ranked the key <u>Strengths</u> 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

Other issued noted were strong variety of retail, strong schools, available land for development and expansion of medical services.

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.

Other issues further down the list were things that detract from Baxter: lack of unique sense of place or identity, division of the city by highways, lack of interconnected land use and transportation.

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

Other issues focused on joint projects with regional partners and decision makers, balancing growth with provision of recreation opportunities, and industrial growth with available land.

The PAC 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.

History

The Brainerd-Baxter area was originally Ojibwe territory and was first remarked upon 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 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 on May 25, 1939, having been named after Luther Baxter, a railroad attorney who served both in the Minnesota Legislature and as colonel in the Civil War.

Today a suburb of adjacent Brainerd, Baxter has transitioned from a railroad and agriculture based economy into a tourism and service-industry minded city, located in the famed cultural icon of Minnesota Lake Country. Numerous housing subdivisions have been developed west of Highway 371, a primary housing location for both Baxter's and Brainerd's increasing population (*1970:* 1,556; *1990:* 3,695, & *2010:* 7,619, *2030 projection:*12,812).

Land Use

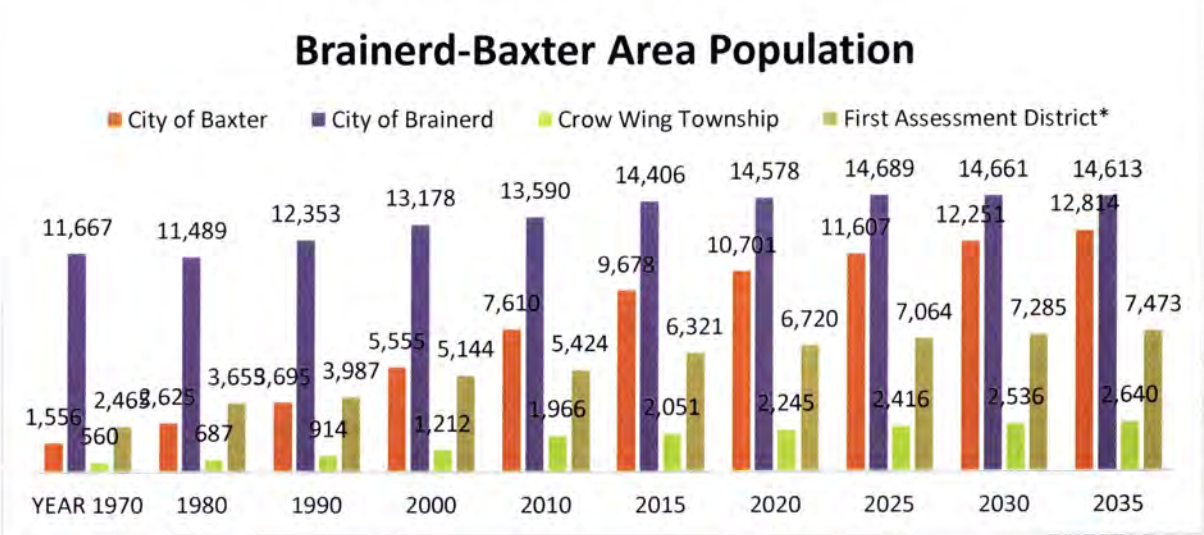
All properties in the city have been classified as to their existing land use – how the land is being used today, not what it is planned or zoned. The existing land use area is illustrated on the attached map.

Demographic Trends

Although highway-oriented commercial development is strongly tied to traffic volumes, the size and forecasted growth of the local market is an equally important factor in determining market demand.

Continued growth in the number of persons and households will form the basis of demand to support new commercial development in the region. Where development occurs to meet that demand will be dependent on factors such as ability of established retail districts to accommodate growth, household incomes of surrounding neighborhoods, and the site characteristics of areas regulated for commercial development (i.e., access, visibility, physical constraints, etc.).

The County of Crow Wing is projected to increase 129% by 2035, which is 8% more than the state's average estimated increase. Brainerd is due to increase only 108%, whereas Baxter with all of its available land, is due to inherit much of Crow Wing County's increased population by growing by 168% to 12,814 to rival Brainerd in size, expected to number 14,613.



Although 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 – 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 ~2.3.

Using this estimated 2035 estimated household size of 2.3, we can use the projected 2035 Baxter population to estimate the number of households with Baxter addresses.

12,814 Baxter residents (2.3 people/household) 5,399 households

Transportation

HIGHWAY/ROADWAY SYSTEM

Baxter is served by two major highways (371 & 210) that crisscross the city (N-S Highway 371 & E-W Highway 210) and draw in tourist from Minnesota Lake Country. A Long-Range Functional Classification Street Map and Long Range Transportation Plan were developed.

The larger Baxter *Transportation Policy* seeks to, "maintain, manage, and improve a safe, efficient, multi-modal, and rail transportation systems," for the area (pp. 23). Twenty-one recommendations are outlined that in various ways value the collaboration with neighboring communities, system optimization, developing and maintaining plans for various aspects of the system, visual and environmental quality, integrating the recreational nature of the community via trails (dovetailing with the City's Outdoor Recreational Policy), adequate and unobtrusive parking, and public transit.

With respect to the City's *Economic Growth Policy* (Comp Plan, 2007, 8), the need for an inclusive transportation plan for the commercial corridors on Highway 371 and 210 is named, with focus stated for bike and pedestrian friendly routes through these areas.

With respect to the City's *Orderly Growth & Redevelopment Policy*, the need for small area plans and or development policies has been stated for the Highways 210 West Corridor and Highway 371 from College Road to the Mississippi River Bridge (Comp Plan 2007, 25).

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Public Transit via bus became a reality in Crow Wing County in 2002 after long planning efforts thanks to Tri-County Community Action Program (http://www.tccaction.com/) and Minnesota Department of Transportation funding assistance. In addition to Express Route Service operating 9am-3pm Monday-Friday, Dial-A-Ride – a customized route service based on individual transit needs involving a phone call – serves the Tri-County area.

BIKE TRANSPORTATION

Multi-modal transportation including biking has been named as a to-do in the City's 2007 Comp Plan update.

The Baxter Biking Community wrote a formal request for on-road safety and design requests to be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan update (2007?). This community wishes that on-road cycle corridors and their associated signage and striping amenities be integrated into the plan update and to coordinate these tools with prospective routes and intersections.

A cursory glance at Google maps identification of designated bike routes (9/18/13) indicates that little progress has been made on this front since 2007.

EXISTING TRAFFIC VOLUMES AND TRAFFIC SAFETY

2011 Daily (Average) and Annual (Total) Vehicle Miles and 2012 Centerline Miles

ROUTE SYSTEM	2011 Daily (Average) Vehicle Miles	2011 Annual (Total) Vehicle Miles	2012 Centerline Miles
03 - MNTH MINNESOTA TRUNK	133,393	48,688,445	9.238
04 - CSAH COUNTY STATE AID	17,215	6,283,475	3.900
05 - MSAS MUNIC. STATE AID	46,873	17,108,645	14.981
07 - CNTY COUNTY	3,524	1,286,260	3.510
10 - MUN MUNICIPAL STREETS	45,496	16,606,040	70.985
MI	2	730	0.441

2011 Daily (Average) and Annual (Total) Vehicle Miles and 2010 Centerline Miles

Route System: Code, Abbreviation, and Name	Functional Class: Code and Name	2011 Centerline Mileage	2011 Lane Mileage
03 - MNTH MINNESOTA TRUNK	14 - OTHER PRNCPL ART URBAN	9.238	35.112
04 - CSAH COUNTY STATE AID	17 - COLLECTOR - URBAN	3.900	7.800
05 - MSAS MUNIC. STATE AID	16 - MINOR ARTERIALS - URBAN	4.622	9.244
05 - MSAS MUNIC. STATE AID	17 - COLLECTOR - URBAN	7.330	14.660
05 - MSAS MUNIC. STATE AID	19 - LOCAL - URBAN	3.029	6.058
07 - CNTY COUNTY	17 - COLLECTOR - URBAN	3.510	7.020
10 - MUN MUNICIPAL STREETS	17 - COLLECTOR - URBAN	2.820	5.640
10 - MUN MUNICIPAL STREETS	19 - LOCAL - URBAN	67.947	136.116
15 - SPRK STATE PARK	19 - LOCAL - URBAN	0.441	0.882

Traffic Count Location at Intersection of Hwy 371 & Hwy 210	**2000 AADT**	**2005 AADT**	**2009 AADT**	**Net Change**
North on Hwy 371	27,000	26,500	21,400	-5,600
South on Hwy 371	20,700	13,000	11,200	-9,500
West on Hwy 210	13,800	15,700	11,400	-2,400
East on Hwy 210	20,000	21,500	25,600	5,600

Vehicle crash data in Minnesota is collected by MnDOT and is categorized by type of crash, severity, time of day, weather, and other contributing factors. Crow Wing County's Automobile Crash Rate is 5,533.9 per 1,000 people, a rate that is above the median for the state.

A Changing Baxter

Demographic snapshots 1990-2010

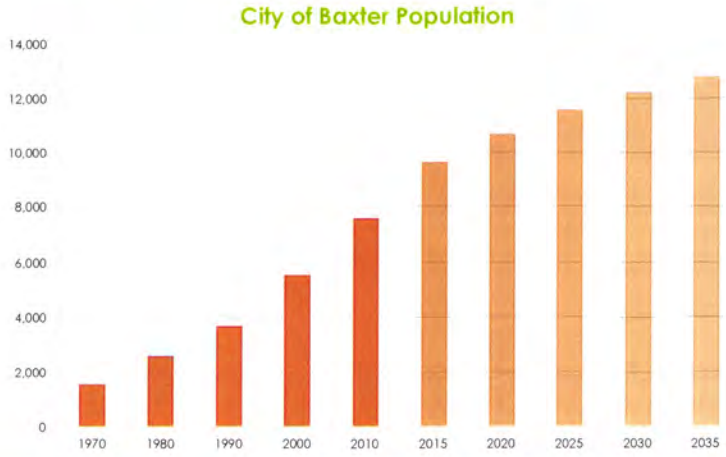
Stantec

Baxter's Numbers

- 7,610
- 39
- 94%
- 3,176
- $59,643
- 4.2%
- 597

Stantec

Population 1970 - 2035



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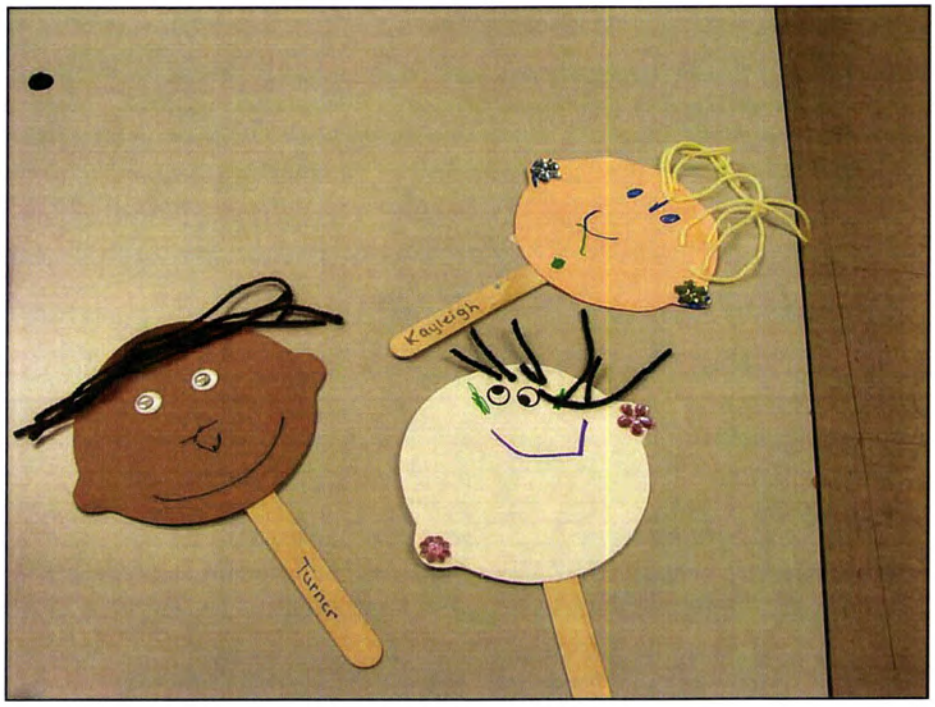
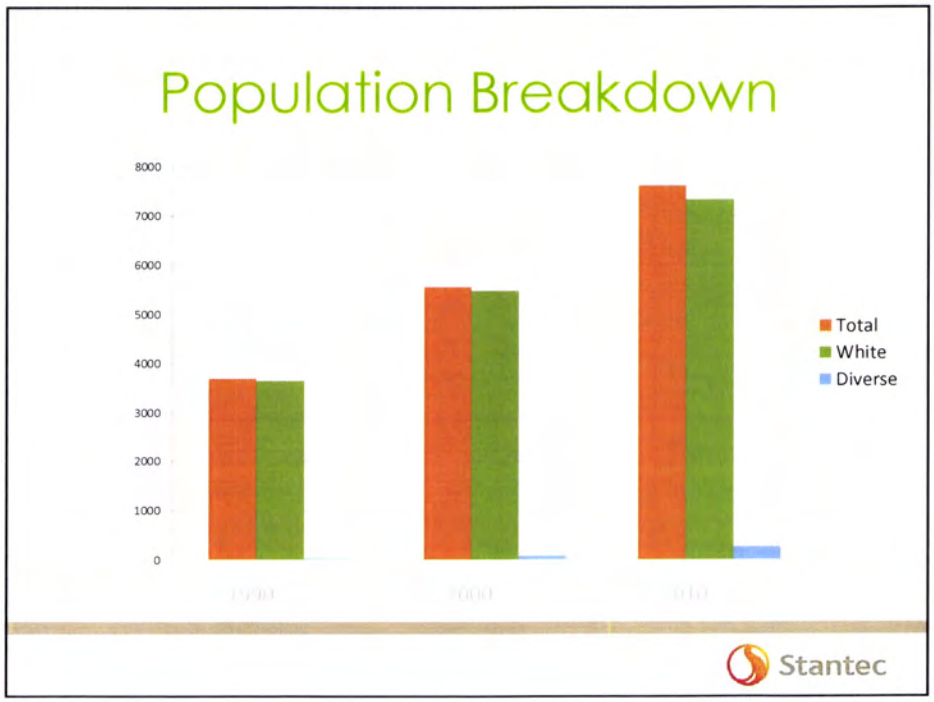
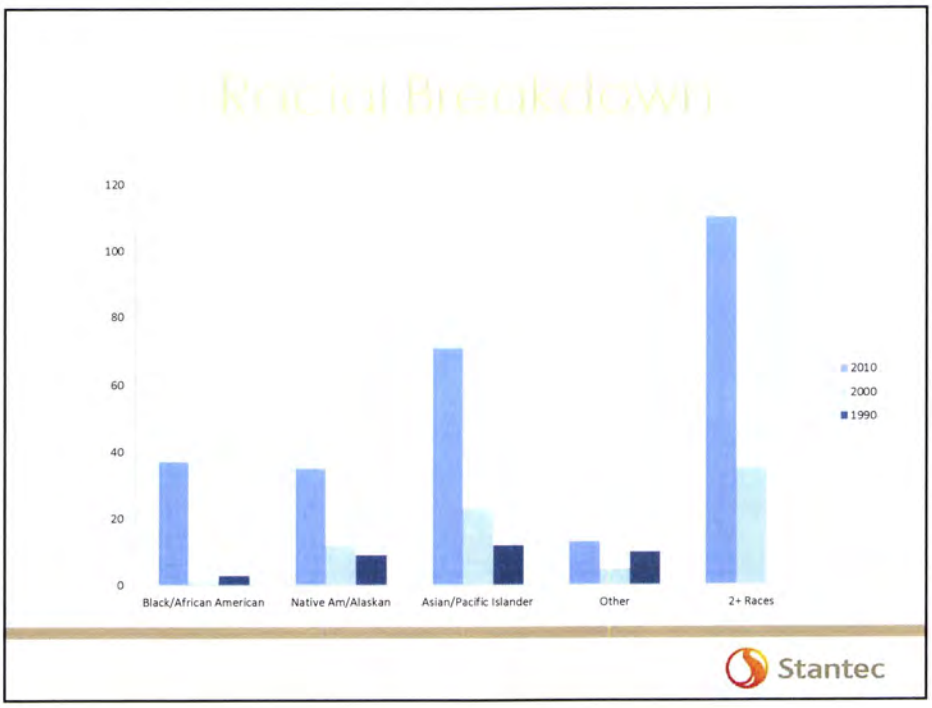
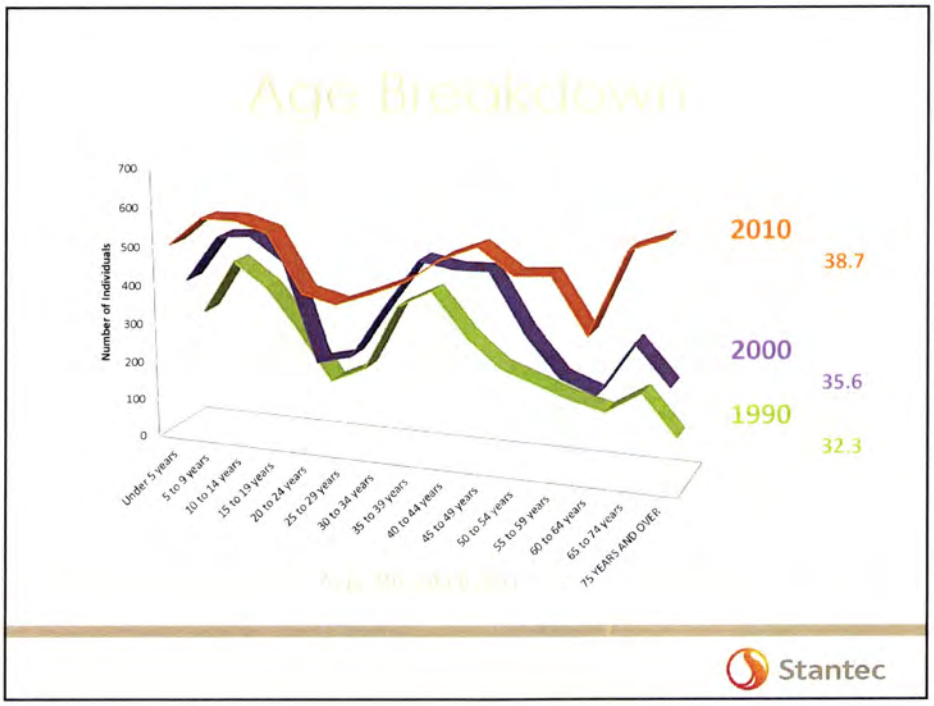

Kayleigh
Turner


Population Breakdown
8000
7000
6000
5000
4000
3000
2000
1000
0
Total
White
Diverse
Stantec

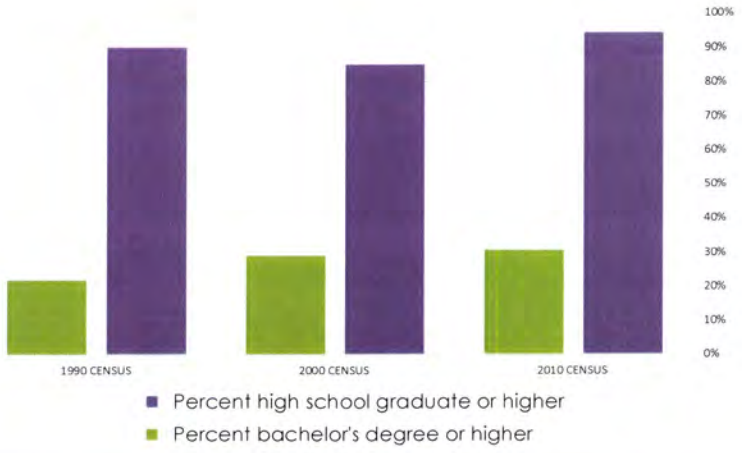

Racial Breakdown
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
Black/African American
Native Am/Alaskan
Asian/Pacific Islander
Other
2+ Races
2010
2000
1990
Stantec

Stantec


Age Breakdown
Number of Individuals
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
Under 5 years
5 to 9 years
10 to 14 years
15 to 19 years
20 to 24 years
25 to 29 years
30 to 34 years
35 to 39 years
40 to 44 years
45 to 49 years
50 to 54 years
55 to 59 years
60 to 64 years
65 to 74 years
75 YEARS AND OVER
2010
38.7
2000
35.6
1990
32.3
Stantec

Stantec

Education



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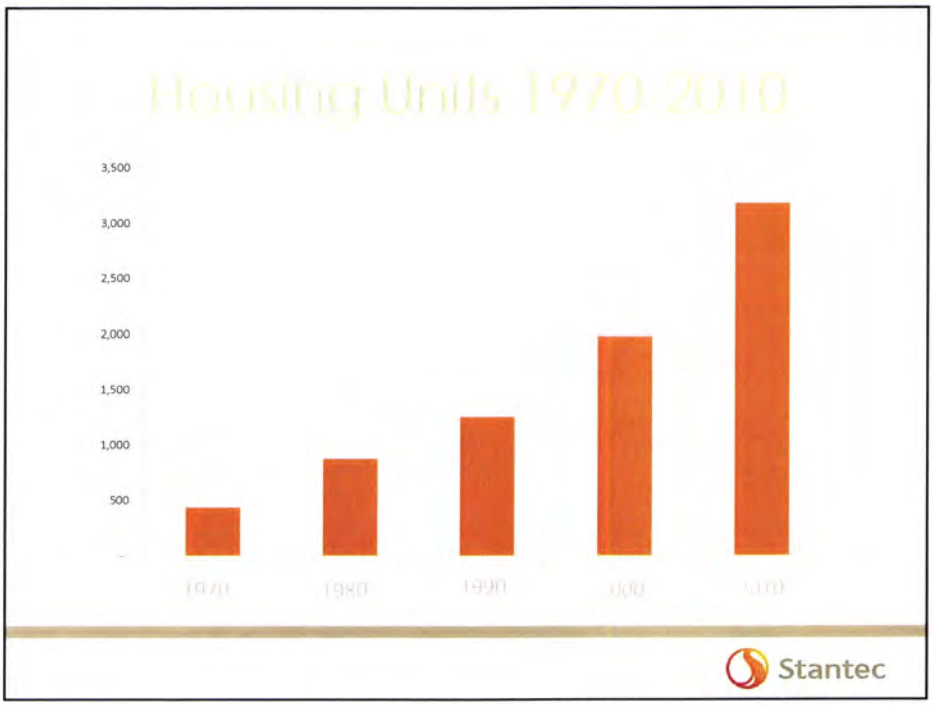
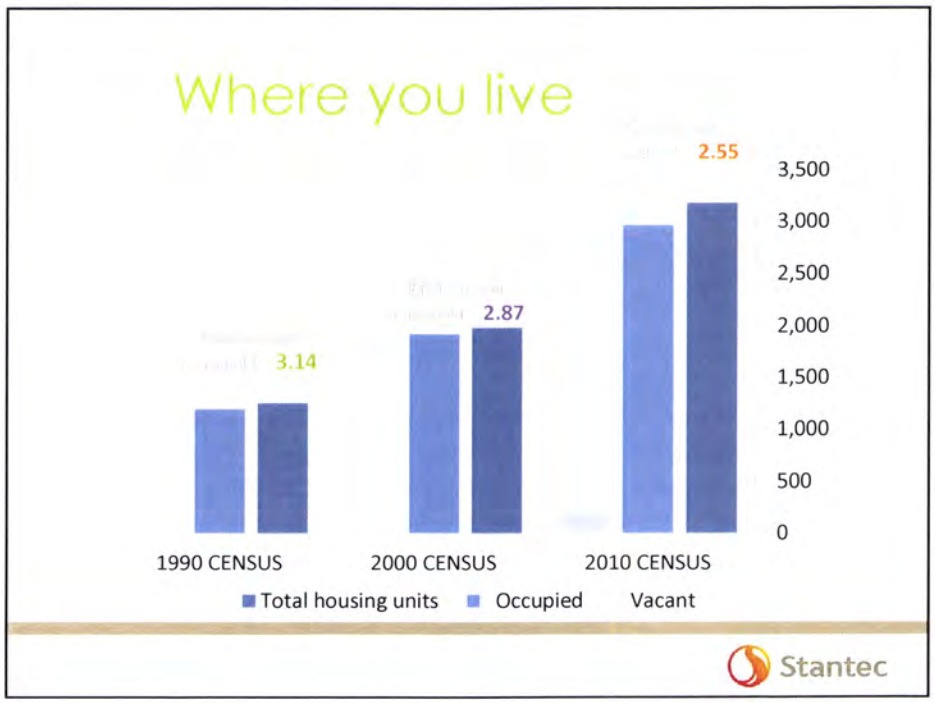
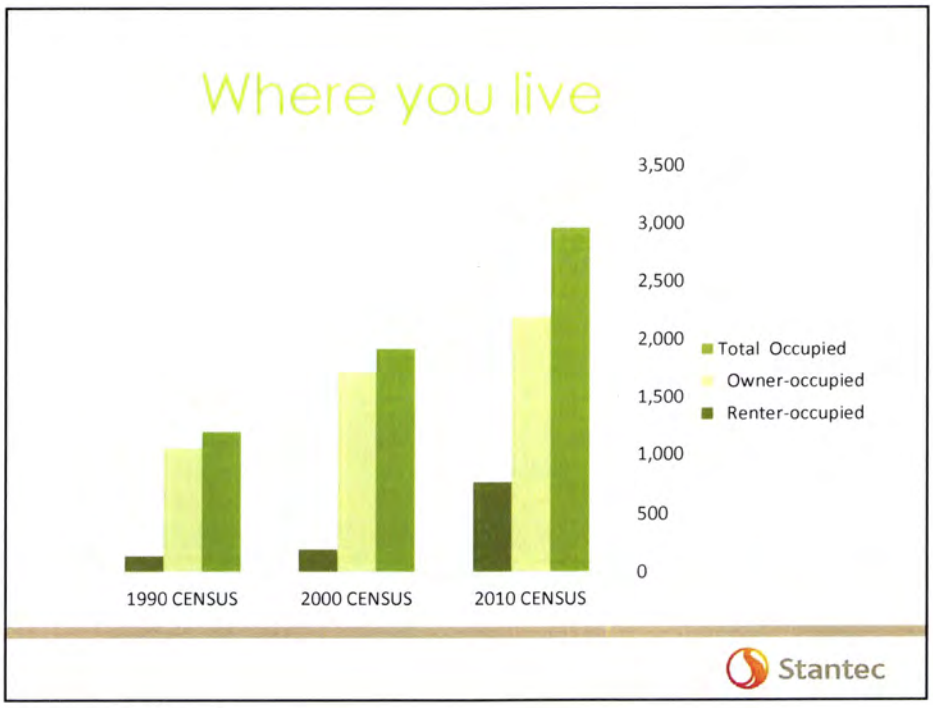
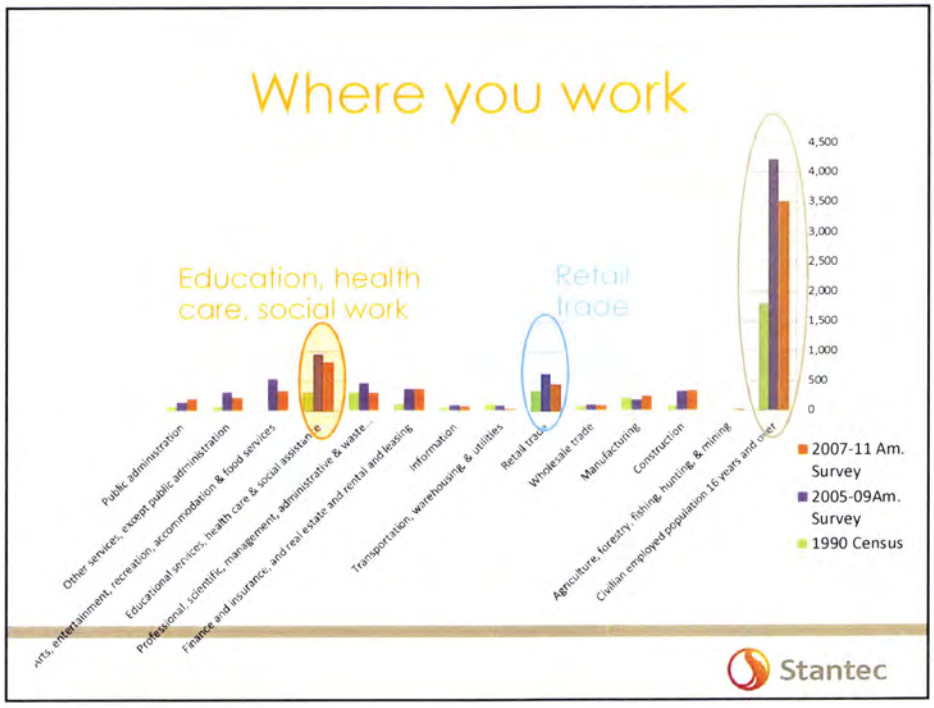
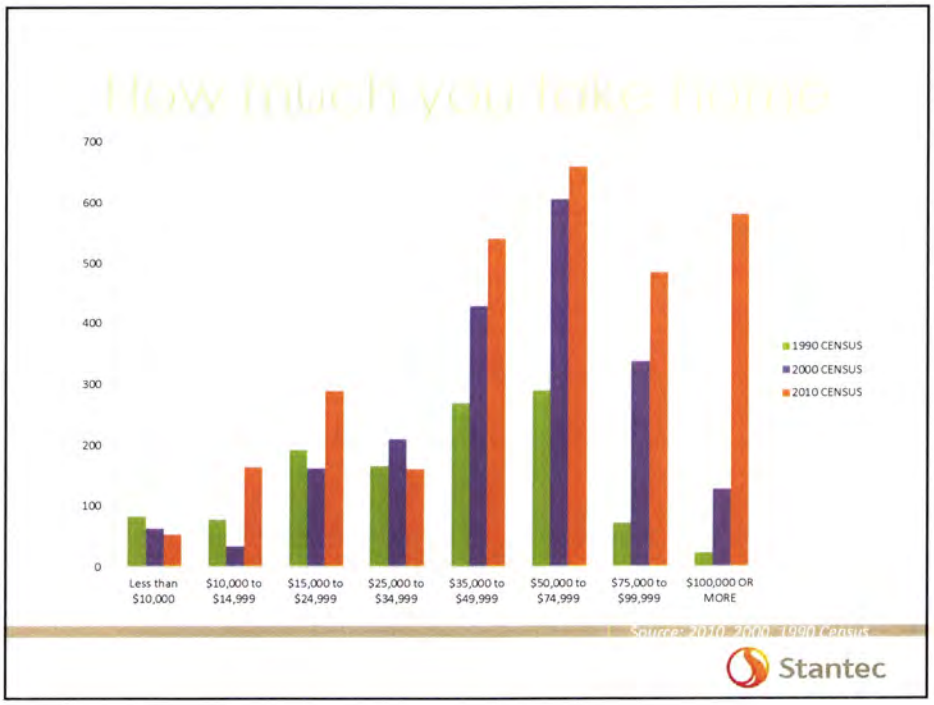

Housing Units 1970-2010
3,500
3,000
2,500
2,000
1,500
1,000
500
1970
1980
1990
2000
2010
Stantec

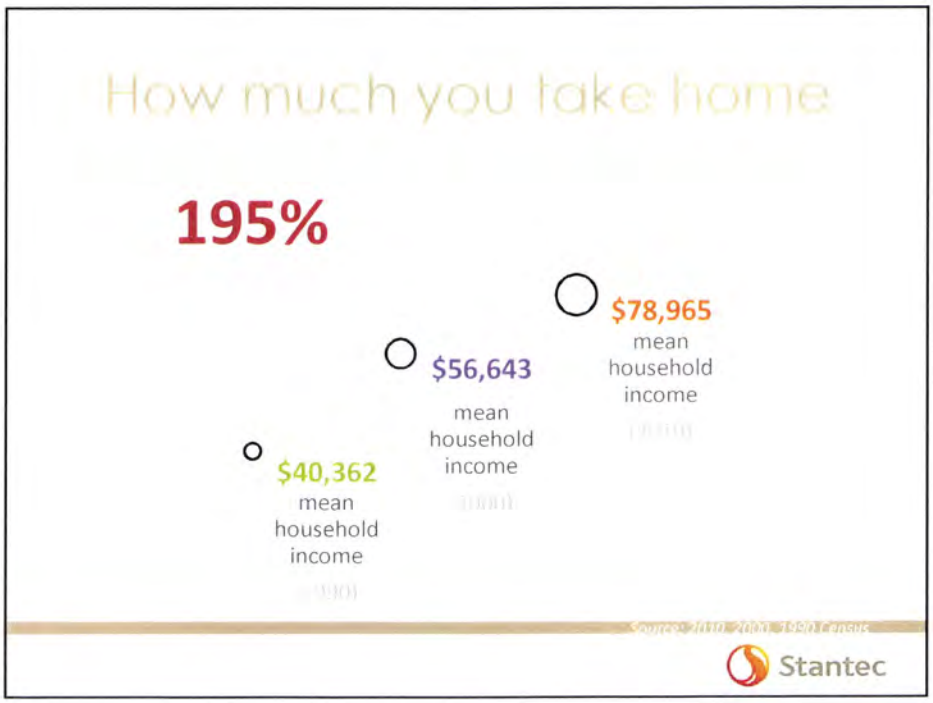

Where you live
2.55
2.87
3.14
3,500
3,000
2,500
2,000
1,500
1,000
500
0
1990 CENSUS
2000 CENSUS
2010 CENSUS
Total housing units
Occupied
Vacant
Stantec


Where you live
3,500
3,000
2,500
2,000
1,500
1,000
500
0
Total Occupied
Owner-occupied
Renter-occupied
1990 CENSUS
2000 CENSUS
2010 CENSUS
Stantec


Where you work
Education, health care, social work
Retail trade
4,500
4,000
3,500
3,000
2,500
2,000
1,500
1,000
500
0
Public administration
Other services, except public administration
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation & food services
Educational services, health care & social assistance
Professional, scientific, management, administrative & waste...
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing
Information
Transportation, warehousing, & utilities
Retail trade
Wholesale trade
Manufacturing
Construction
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, & mining
Civilian employed population 16 years and over
2007-11 Am. Survey
2005-09Am. Survey
1990 Census
Stantec

Stantec


How much you take home
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
Less than $10,000
$10,000 to $14,999
$15,000 to $24,999
$25,000 to $34,999
$35,000 to $49,999
$50,000 to $74,999
$75,000 to $99,999
$100,000 OR MORE
1990 CENSUS
2000 CENSUS
2010 CENSUS
Source: 2010, 2000, 1990 Census
Stantec

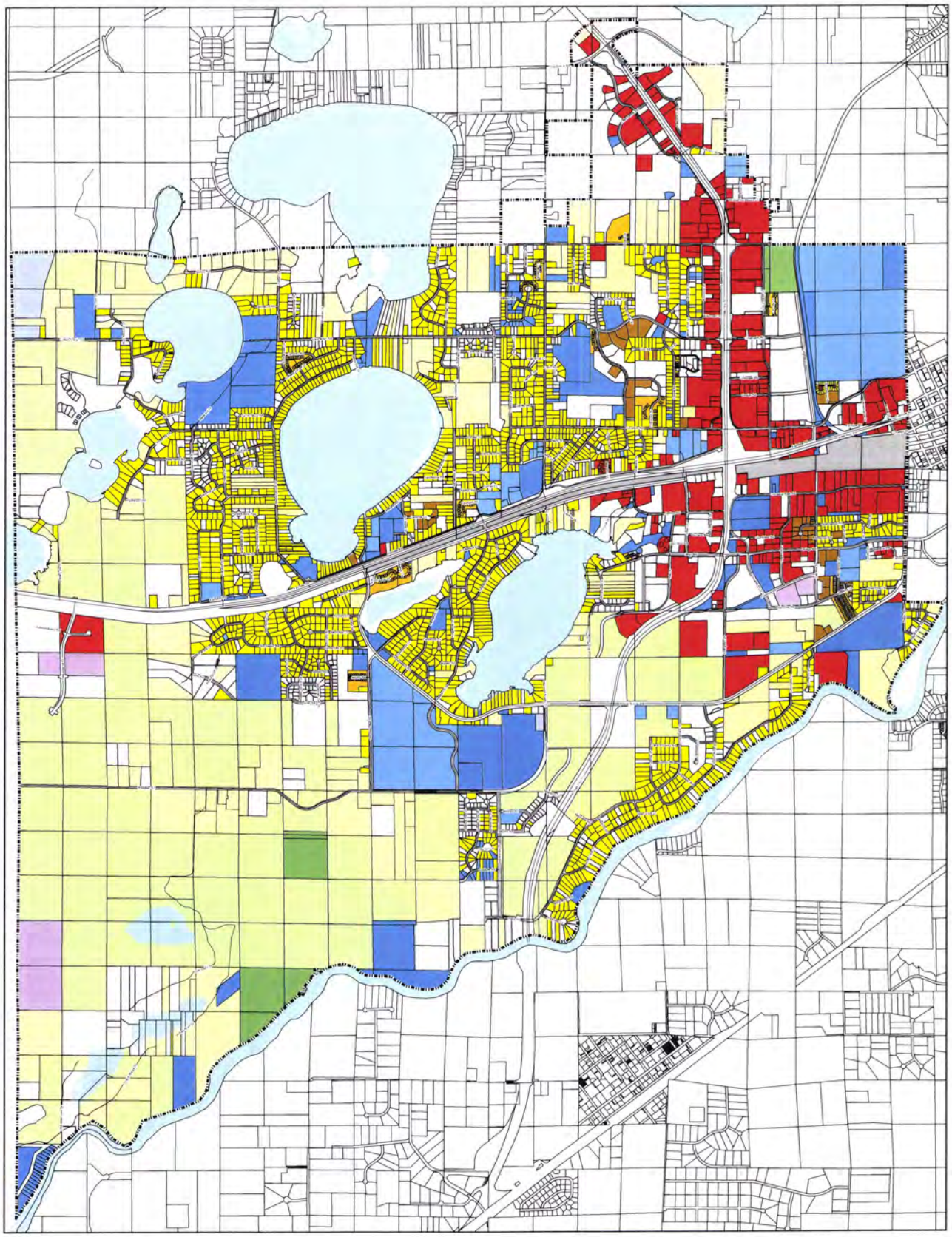

How much you take home
195%
$78,965
mean
household
income
$56,643
mean
household
income
$40,362
mean
household
income
Source: 2010, 2000, 1990 Census
Stantec

Median HH Income 1990-2010

Stantec

Questions?

Stantec



Existing Land Use

City of Baxter Comprehensive Plan

- MunicipalBoundary
- Rural Residential
- Single Family Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Manufactured Home Park
- Apartments
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Public/Semi-Public
- Utilities
- Forest
- Agricultural
- Railroad
- Vacant
- Open Water

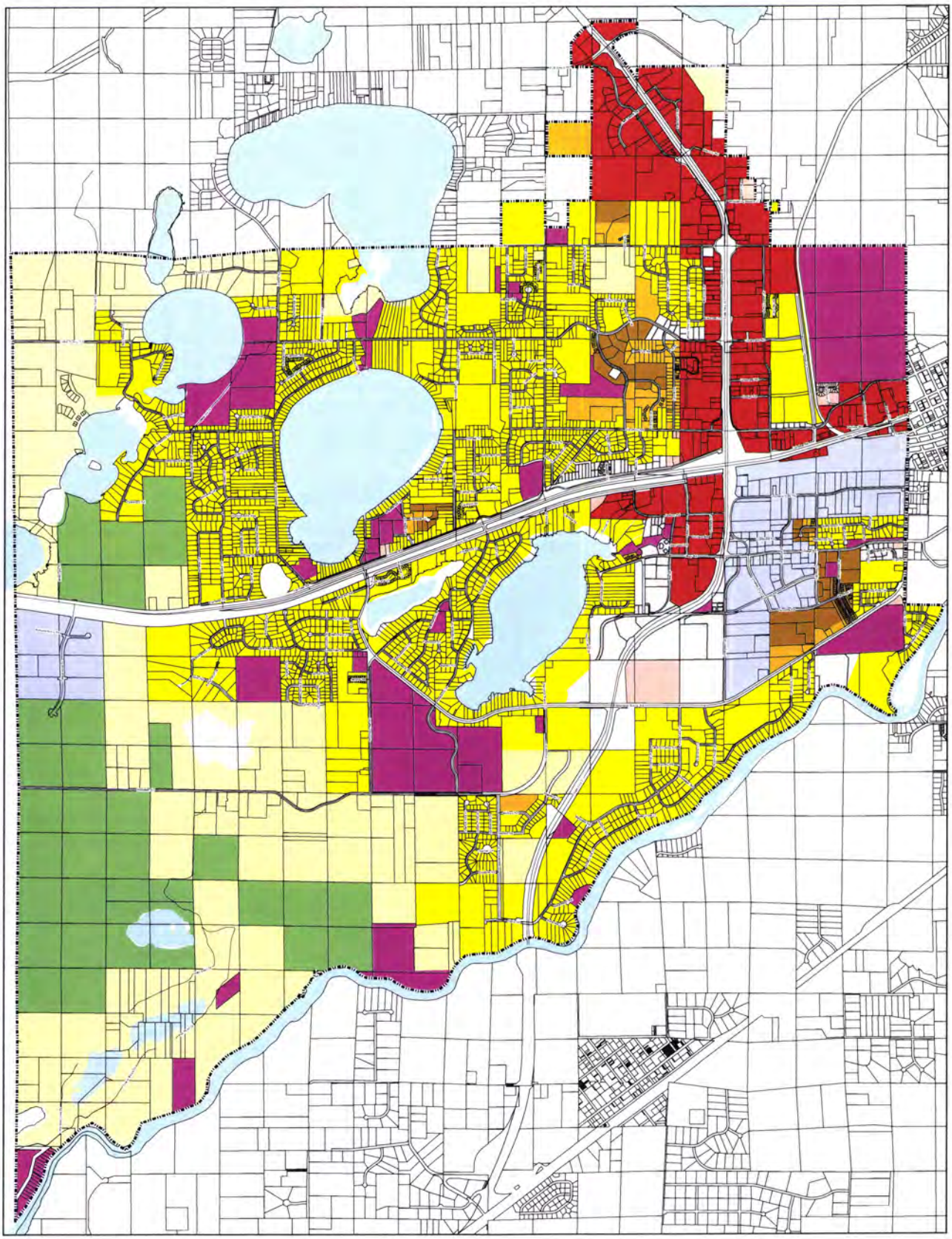
N W E S

0 0.5 1 Miles

September 20, 2013

Stantec

V:\1938\active\193802416\GIS\Projects\Existing Land Use.mxd



Zoning Districts

City of Baxter Comprehensive Plan

- MunicipalBoundary
- RS - Special Residential/Cluster
- R1 - Low Density Residential
- R2 - Medium Density residential
- R3 - High Density Residential
- C1 - Neighborhood Commercial
- C2 - Regional Commercial
- I - Industrial Office
- PB - Public Benefit
- OS - Office Service
- F - Commercial Forestry

N W E S

0 0.5 1 Miles

September 20, 2013

Stantec

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Dear Mr. Heitke:

It has come to the attention of a group of local on-road cyclists that the City of Baxter is opening its Comprehensive Plan document for a periodic update. As frequent users of the Baxter roads, we wish to submit on-road safety and design requests in the hope that the City of Baxter can incorporate them into the plan. Please consider the following:

Bicycle use is not restricted to designated trails or sidewalks. Bicycles are considered legal vehicles by state statute, and are permitted and often directed to use surface streets following the rules applicable to motor vehicles. We believe that safe bicycling can be enhanced through the planning process, and inclusion in long term planning is the most efficient way to accomplish this.

Bicycle commuting and bicycle tourism are both activities on the rise in our community. Future planning can increase safety through designation of safe on street routes and designing intersections with lane configuration that accommodate all legal vehicles. Residents and visitors will benefit from safe travel to parks, schools and commercial enterprises. At the present Baxter has not developed on-road cycle corridors and their associated signage and striping amenities.

Given that Baxter borders other local governmental units with similar planning needs, consideration to coordinating prospective routes and intersections should be identified in a comprehensive plan. MNDOT, Crow Wing County and the city of Baxter all develop and redesign intersections from time to time. As Baxter has not formally adopted an on-road route plan that includes cyclists, there are not prompts for the local road authorities to include critical safety amenities for cyclists and motorized vehicles. If Baxter could develop and adopt an on-road cycle corridor plan, these critical intersections would be identified well in advance of construction or reconstruction.

Our group of area road bicycle users has identified a network of area roads that could be used a framework in the establishment of a regional plan. The attached map is a draft proposal, but it does try to tie existing routes with future needs. Please consider including the needs of on road bicyclists in your future plans.

Ray Griffin
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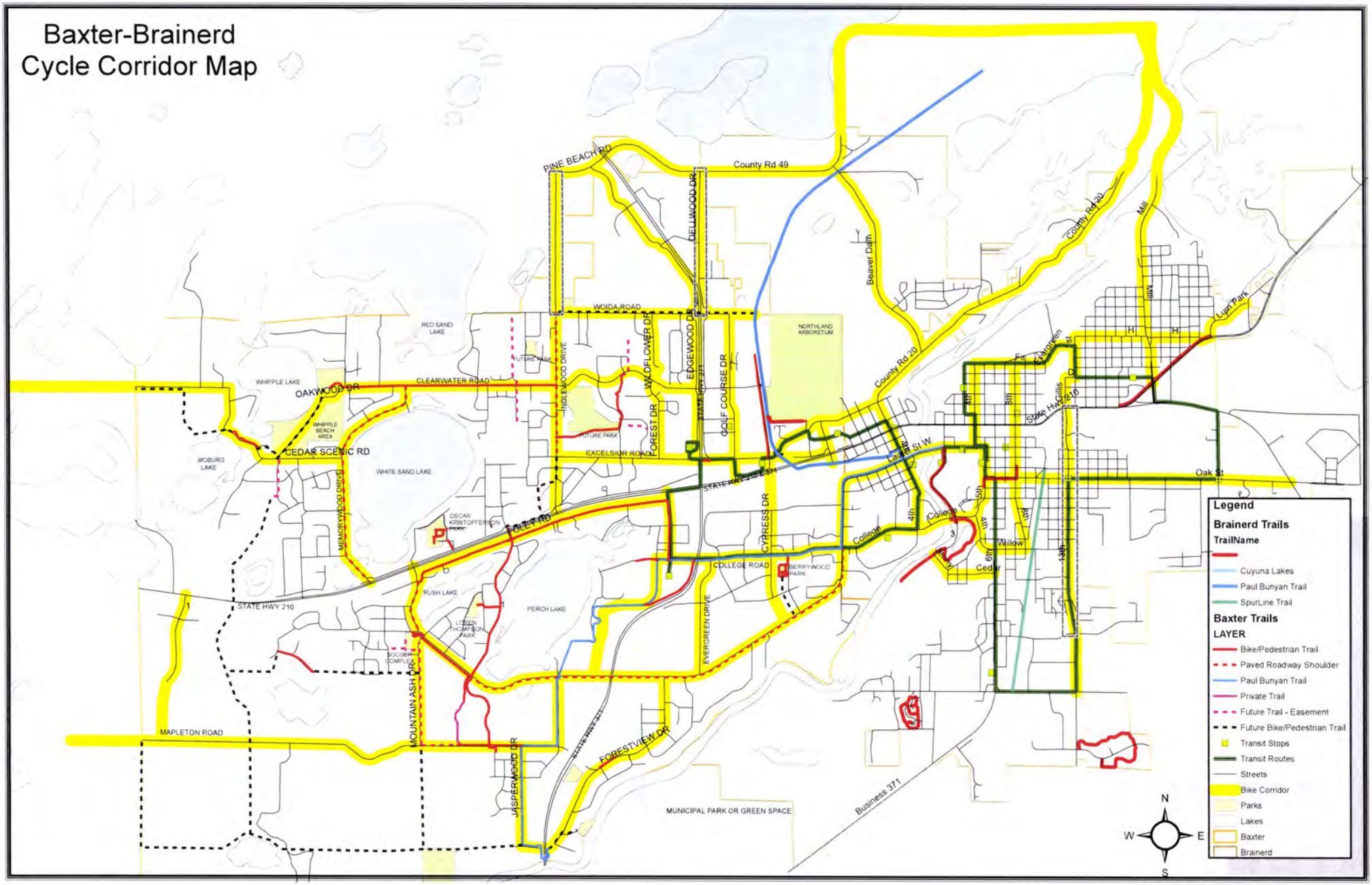
Baxter-Brainerd Cycle Corridor Map