LESUEUR

2040 Comprehensive Plan

DRAFT SEPTEMBER 2016

"Watching T-Ball"
Photo submitted by: Jackie Hammes Fahey

Acknowledgements

City Council

Planning Commission

Members of the Comprehensive Plan Working Group

The working group was formed to serve as the process and content stewards of the comprehensive plan. They represent a broad cross-section of the community and dedicated significant time and energy in helping prepare the plan.

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Executive Summary

Founded in 1852, Le Sueur is a small, agricultural community located in the middle of the beautiful Minnesota River Valley. With a population of just over 4,000, Le Sueur's community is rich with history and small-town character, which act as the foundation of the City's identity.

The Le Sueur Comprehensive Plan seeks to highlight the community's identity and core values in an effort to shape the decisions and actions that will be taken to preserve and enhance the character of the community. This Executive Summary provides a brief overview of the key components of the Le Sueur 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

What is the Le Sueur 2040 Comprehensive Plan?

The Plan is a Guide and a Tool

It can be utilized for:

- Making land use decisions
- Preparing and implementing ordinances
- Preparing capital improvement programs
- Influencing the rate, timing, and location of future growth

The Plan is a Dynamic Document

It will remain flexible in order to respond to changing needs, conditions, and emerging trends

The Plan is Different than a Zoning Ordinance

Comprehensive Plans are:

- Broad in scope
- Visionary
- Principles and Policy oriented
- Guiding documents
- Conceptual and idealistic
- Focused on neighborhood, community or regional scale
- Flexible in interpretation

Zoning Ordinances are:

- Narrow in scope
- More rigid standards
- It's the law
- Detail oriented, specific
- Focus on the district and site level

Community Context

This process analysed census data, previous planning efforts, and existing conditions to gain an understanding of where Le Sueur is currently at. Some highlights from this part of the process include:

- Le Sueur is situated between several major population centers, with over ten metropolitan areas within 200 miles
- Despite a slight drop in 1990, Le Sueur has experienced steady population growth, a trend that is projected to continue in the future
- While there are over 3,000 people employed in the City of Le Sueur, under 30% of the labor force both live and work in the City
- Much of the undeveloped land in the City is located in the Minnesota River floodplain
- The majority of land in Le Sueur is dedicated to single-family residential use

An in depth version of this information was compiled into a stand-alone document: **The Le Sueur Community Factbook**

To access the factbook please follow this link:

Over the project's two phases of community engagement, **over 800 respondents** provided input on what they desired for the future of Le Sueur through both online and in-person activities

Vision

While rooted in the reality of the community's past and present, the vision is an aspirational, living document that seeks to describe how the community will look, feel, and function in the next 20 years. It is an over-arching framework that permeates the plan and informs supporting policy and strategy decisions. The vision for Le Sueur in 2040 is as follows:

The City of Le Sueur in 2040 will be defined by its convenient location, its rural character, its ample opportunities, and its ability to evolve with this ever-changing world, but Le Sueur's true essence lies in its vibrant community; composed of people who are committed to make their City thrive.

Guiding Principles

Supporting the vision, the guiding principles will help define the character, values, and priorities of the Le Sueur community in 2040 by acting as an ongoing measurement tool for the appropriateness and effectiveness of future initiatives and results.

The icons associated with each guiding principle are graphic representations that can be utilized to visually link goals, policies, project ideas, etc. with their associated vision and guiding principles.

Healthy

A community that promotes active living, environmental sustainability, financial health, and a quality built environment

Friendly

A community that is friendly and welcoming and enhances the City's historic, small-town image

Responsive

A City that is open, collaborative, effective, and accountable

Dynamic

A community that is well-connected and diverse

Beautiful

An environment that is naturally, culturally, and physically beautiful

Vibrant

A perfect mix of housing, retail, industry, culture, and infrastructure to make the community thrive

Master Plan

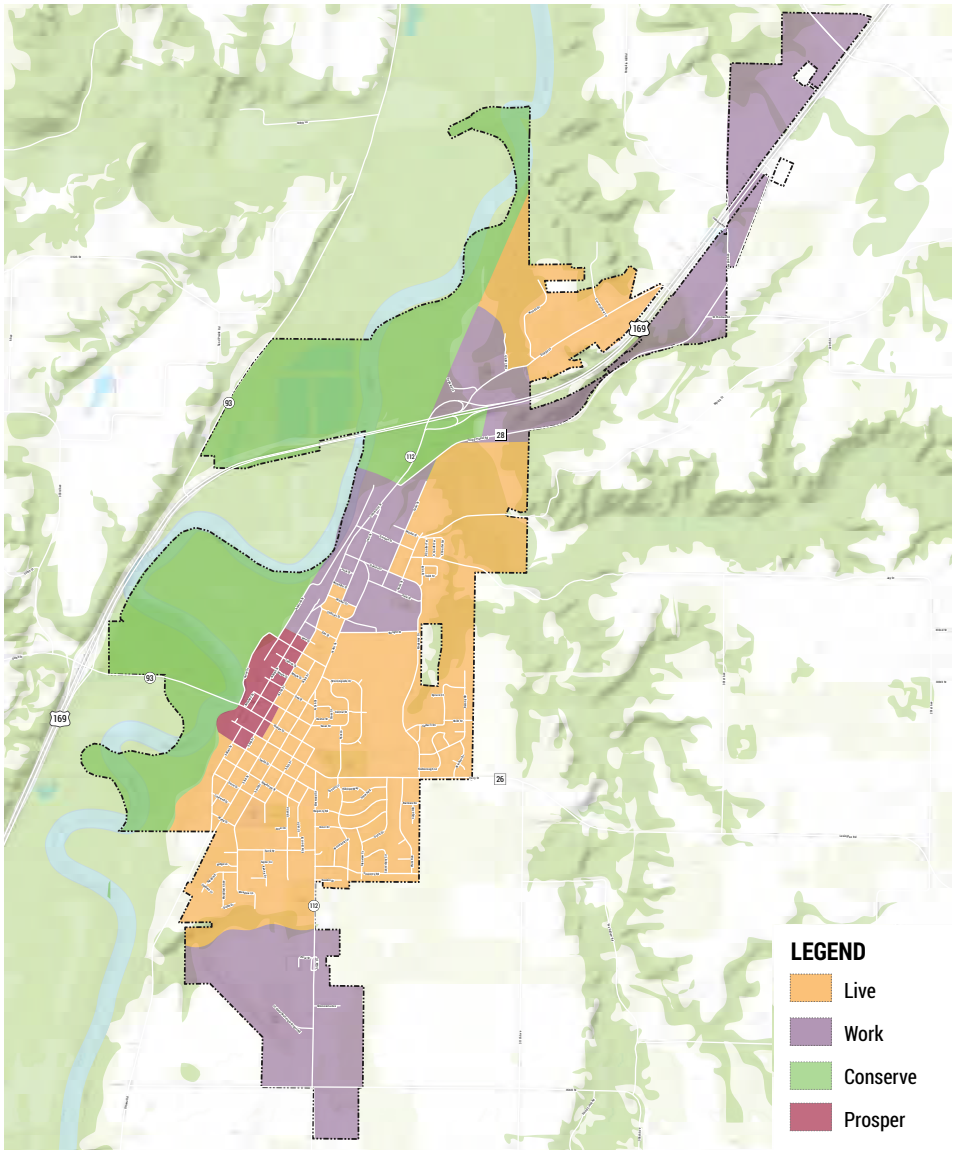
The Master Plan describes a framework for the **future land use**, **infrastructure systems**, **transportation network**, and **parks and recreation** for Le Sueur through:

- Goal and policy statements that serve as a guide for future decision making;
- A future land use map; and,
- Development form and character descriptions for each land use pattern.

The framework was developed with guidance from the public engagement process, past planning efforts, and community planning principles. The goals, policies, and land use categories link back to the community vision and guiding principles outlined in chapter 3. There are **26 goals**; each accompanied by their own series of policies as well as icons representing their associated guiding principles.

In addition to providing goals, policies, and development form and character descriptions, the land use section contains **focus areas**, which identify and describe some of the community's unique areas at a finer grain.

Case studies are integrated throughout the plan to help bring some of the Plan's ideas to life by demonstrating how they have been successfully implemented elsewhere.



Four major land use categories were created to represent the future land use character of Le Sueur: Live, Work, Conserve, and Prosper. Each category contains land use form and character directions that are directly related to the overarching goals and policies.

Live is where Le Sueur's residents call home. In addition to an array of diverse housing options, live contains supportive amenities like churches, schools, and parks.

Work contains Le Sueur's commercial and employment opportunities. From industrial businesses to retail shops, work provides areas for entrepreneurship, innovation, and commerce.

Conserve is defined by Le Sueur's natural amenities. While the goal of conserve is to protect areas of environmental significance, recreational and educational opportunities should be incorporated to promote healthy, active lifestyles.

Prosper is found at the center of commerce, housing, and entertainment; where activity is present at all hours of the day and where Le Sueur's identity is strongest.

Precedent imagery for the proposed land use categories

Implementation

This Plan is a **guide for decision making**, a **marketing tool**, and a **"To Do List."**

Implementation Strategies and associated action steps were developed in order to carry out ideas or policies identified though the planning process and memorialized in the adoption of the plan. Much like the goals and policies, the **strategies** and action steps directly correlate to the vision and guiding principles. The strategies are as follows:

1. Volunteerism and Philanthropy help build ownership of community, strengthens civic engagement, builds relationships and ultimately, contributes to the vibrancy and resilience of the community
2. Partnerships between the public and private sectors helps build new neighborhoods and grow local businesses
3. Official Controls generally refer to the ordinances and regulations that control the physical development of a City (i.e. zoning & subdivision ordinances, building codes, etc.)
4. Capital Improvement Plans manage the capital improvement expenditures critical to maintaining the community's core infrastructure systems
5. A Downtown Master Plan would help guide investment and development in the downtown area by building off past planning efforts
6. Spurring economic development by expanding the commercial and industrial base of the City, as well as offering a diverse range of housing options
7. Providing outdoor recreation to meet the needs of residents and visitors to encourage active living and to create a sense of place and identify for Le Sueur
8. Establish a "Future of the City Forum" to review and update the plan on an annual basis based on changing community needs and desires

With the help of the community, a series of **Project Ideas** have been generated to support implementation of select strategies and action steps in the comprehensive plan. Project Ideas focus on strategies and action steps that: (1) are high-priority actions, (2) may require additional explanation and planning, and (3) may be implemented by groups other than City agencies (community groups, civic organizations, individuals, etc.)

The following presents the project ideas in the **order of priority** based on all of the public input received to date:

- Open Main Street & Redevelop Mall Site
- Downtown Master Plan
- School & Business Partnerships
- Develop Local Trails
- Become a Hub for Regional Trails
- Truck Traffic Planning
- Park at Yard Waste Site
- Become a Leader in Sustainability and Resilience
- Wayfinding Plan & Package
- Branded Technology & Innovation District
- Mayo Park Master Plan

The document can be accessed online by following this link:

http://www.cityoflesueur.com/296/Comprehensive-Plan-Update

If you would like a printed copy, please contact the City at:

612-555-5555 | jenelle@cityoflesueur.com

While intended to guide change, this plan must also remain flexible to respond to changing needs, conditions, and emerging trends.

To remain relevant, key goals and policies should be reviewed regularly. Future community forums are encouraged to ensure the Plan continues to adequately represent the residents of Le Sueur.

01. INTRODUCTION

"Market Fest Le Sueur MN 2015"
Photo submitted by:
Jackie Hammes Fahey

Founded in 1852, Le Sueur is a small, agricultural community located in the middle of the beautiful Minnesota River Valley. With a population of just over 4,000, Le Sueur's community is rich with history and small-town character, which act as the foundation of the City's identity.

Le Sueur is surrounded by agricultural land. As Le Sueur has grown, some agricultural land has slowly been developed to add housing and commerce to the City.

Le Sueur's residents enjoy easy access to Highway 169, connecting them to retail, entertainment, and employment opportunities in major cities like Mankato and Minneapolis. This adjacency works both ways, making Le Sueur a visible destination for visitors travelling along the major thoroughfare.

The Minnesota River, in addition to a multitude of other streams and tributaries, has carved out the beautiful landscape that surrounds the community, creating a sloping landscape that has preserved much of the City's natural areas from cultivation or development.

The Le Sueur Comprehensive Plan seeks to highlight the community's identity and core values in an effort to shape the decisions and actions that will be taken to preserve and enhance the character of the community.

what we heard

> **"We fell in love with the people when introduced to the town**

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VS. ZONING ORDINANCE

Characteristics of a Comprehensive Plan:

» Broad in scope
» Visionary
» Principles and Policy oriented
» It's a guiding document
» Conceptual and idealistic
» Focus is on neighborhood, community or regional scale
» Flexible in its interpretation

Zoning Ordinance:

» Narrow in scope
» More rigid standards
» It's the law
» Detail oriented, specific
» Focus on the district and site level

So which one rules? In many instances, State Statutes make direct references linking a zoning ordinance provision to a community's master plan. Case law over the years has proven that a zoning ordinance in sync with a comprehensive plan is a more defendable ordinance than one that is not in sync or is not based on an approved comprehensive plan.

A review of zoning and subdivision ordinances always follows the updated comprehensive plan, resulting in minor or major modifications, depending on the new directions forged by the comprehensive plan.

A Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is a statement of what the community wants to become. The plan is based on a composition of concepts, patterns and relationships that deal with integrating the social aspects of a community with its physical development. Unlike a zoning ordinance, a comprehensive plan is futuristic in that it guides decisions that have yet to be made. The word "comprehensive" in itself provides meaning to the plan: it deals with the whole community and not just the parts.

The Comprehensive Plan is the blueprint for the future of Le Sueur; guiding the use of every parcel of land (public and private) in the City.

However, land use is only the foundation of the Comprehensive Plan. It creates implications for city investments in infrastructure, facilities and services.

Streets provide the capacity for land development and, in conjunction with sidewalks, trails and bike paths, for movement within Le Sueur. The character of streets and the volume of traffic affect adjacent land uses and the ability to move people. The Comprehensive Plan must balance the transportation and land use aspects of the street system. Consideration of "complete streets" can maximize the value and impact of streets on the community.

Development requires service by municipal sanitary sewer and water systems. Development can only occur within the capacity of the city's sewer and water system. The City seeks to provide a safe water supply at pressures needed to provide adequate fire protection.

Parks are an important component to the quality of life in Le Sueur. To meet the needs of the community, the types and location of parks need to be considered. A system of trails and sidewalks should allow people to move throughout the community on foot and bicycle, thus promoting an active and healthy lifestyle.

The pattern of development and the characteristics of the population influence the nature of public services.

All of these factors create financial implications. Land use creates the value used for property taxation - the primary source of revenue for the City. Many revenues used to build public improvements come directly from new development.

These factors make the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan critically important for Le Sueur.

This Plan is a Guide & a Tool

The plan for Le Sueur will be used as a guide for making land use decisions, preparing and implementing ordinances, preparing capital improvement programs and influencing the rate, timing and location of future growth. All land use decisions faced by the City of Le Sueur will be determined using the goals and policies in this plan. While the City Council will ultimately determine the fate of any proposal, the Planning and Zoning Commission has the authority and responsibility to evaluate all such proposals for their consistency with the intent of the plan and the needs and desires of the people of Le Sueur.

This Plan is Dynamic

While intended to guide change, this plan must also remain flexible to respond to changing needs, conditions and emerging trends. City officials must understand that they are responsible for the future of their community, and they must consider carefully the merits of adjustments to the plan. This is a critical step in the community development process; proposals need to be evaluated against the goals and vision laid out in this plan. Some proposals will fit well, while others may not. Regardless of their overall quality, any ideas that are good and worthy of further consideration could quite possibly lead to changes to the vision or the plan. These proposals will trigger the community planning process.

Contents of the Plan

Le Sueur's Comprehensive Plan includes many components. Woven throughout the plan are goals and policies that promote active and healthy living, complete streets, sustainability, and energy conservation among others. Key elements that can be found in the plan include:

- Community background and history
- Vision and guiding principles
- Natural resource management
- Neighborhoods with a focus on land use, housing, commerce, economic development and infrastructure systems (parks, roads, schools and natural resources)
- Focus areas that define the land use form and character of Le Sueur's unique areas
- A system for parks and open space
- A system for trails and sidewalks
- A street network that emphasizes complete streets and community identity
- Infrastructure systems that connect the development of neighborhoods with potable water, sanitary sewer and public services
- Implementation action steps and project ideas

KEY TERMINOLOGY

Sustainability refers to the ability to continue a defined behavior indefiniately. For example, environmental sustainability is the quality of not being harmful to the environment or depleting natural resources, and thereby supporting long-term ecological balance.

Planning Horizon (2016-2040)

This update of the Comprehensive Plan looks to the year 2040. Considering a future over 20 years away forces the community to broadly consider issues and opportunities facing Le Sueur. Issues are easier to face before they become a problem. Opportunities can be capitalized upon early.

A Comprehensive Plan is not only about encouraging the right actions, but also preventing the wrong ones. A residential subdivision in the wrong place may block the expansion of a needed industrial area or the right-of-way for a critical road corridor. Looking into the future helps to prevent unintended consequences.

Engagement Strategies

Over the course of the planning process, a working group composed of key community members met to provide input and direction. In addition to the working group, two phases of stakeholder engagement were conducted in efforts to involve all residents and members of the community. The first phase was intended to guide the direction of the plan; providing an understanding of the community's needs and desires. The second phase presented the direction to the public, to ensure their initial input was correctly interpreted, and to uncover any new or missing opportunities. Over the course of the project, over 700 points of contact were made with the community.

Phase One

In efforts to engage as many interested community members as possible, several input methods where utilized during this phase, including:

- An online survey in February of 2016, which received 548 responses.
- A visit to the Le Sueur School District on February 9th, 2016, where 2 classrooms were engaged in engagement activities
- A monopoly-style game that was played at a community open house on February 25th, 2016, as well as at various small-group meetings throughout the spring which collected well over 100 in-person responses

Throughout this phase, participants identified the small-town community, the school district, the hospital, and the location as characteristics they love about their City. Participants also identified what they would like to change about Le Sueur, which included the amount and diversity of retail and entertainment options, the configuration of Main Street and the Mall Site, and the opportunities available to youth.

Phase Two

The second phase of engagement involved presenting and collecting input on a vision statement, a set of guiding principles, a land use framework, and a series of project ideas. These were established based on an extensive analysis of existing conditions, trends, and input from phase one. Engagement efforts during phase two included:

- An online survey throughout the month of July, which received almost 100 responses
- A community workshop on June 28th, 2016, and a follow-up focus group meeting with the Rotary Club

Key takeaways from this phase included ensuring that the vision and guiding principles are clear and forward-looking, considering the feasibility of project ideas in their prioritization, and much enthusiasm regarding the redevelopment of the City's Main Street and Mall Site.

02. COMMUNITY CONTEXT

"A Beautiful Summer"
Photo submitted by: Alice Fahey

This chapter of the Le Sueur Comprehensive Plan is intended to take a brief look back at the history of Le Sueur and the major influences that shaped what it has become today. It also takes a snapshot of what Le Sueur is today by providing an inventory of existing conditions using a combination of available data sets (local, regional, and national), on the ground observations, and community sentiment. The pages that follow contain a snapshot of the most relevant pieces of information. A more extensive inventory and data report is available as a separate stand alone document. The community context includes:

- A brief history of Le Sueur,
- Location analysis,
- Key demographic trends,
- Economic trends,
- Existing land use,
- Transportation and infrastructure,
- Natural Resources; and,
- A brief summary of past planning initiatives.

Evolution of Green Giant's iconic logo

Original City Platting

A Brief History of Le Sueur

Named in honor of the French explorer, Pierre Charles Le Sueur, the City of Le Sueur was founded in 1852 on the banks of the Minnesota River, and was one of the first towns to be established in Le Sueur County. The City began as part of a group of three small, competing settlements: Le Sueur, Middle Le Sueur, and Le Sueur City. The Minnesota Legislature united the three settlements in 1867, and the resulting City of Le Sueur was designated as the county seat of Le Sueur County until 1875.

William Worrall Mayo began his medical practice in Le Sueur in 1859, where he treated patients from his home on Main Street. Mayo later moved his practice to Rochester where it became the world-renowned Mayo Clinic, but his home in Le Sueur stands tribute to him as a museum and is one of the several Le Sueur homes on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Another home on the NRHP was owned by Carson H. Cosgrove, who was part of the group of fourteen local merchants that capitalized on the valley's rich soils and the Minnesota River's connection to several larger cities to create the Minnesota Valley Canning Company in 1903. In 1925, the company introduced an unusually large pea that was more tender and sweet than the original variety; they were named "Green Giant Great Big Tender Peas" and the iconic Jolly Green Giant became their icon. Due to the popularity of the Jolly Green Giant advertising campaign, the company changed its name to Green Giant in 1950. Green Giant began investing twice as much in research and development than the average food company to ensure their continued success, which flourished until the company was sold to Pillsbury in 1979. The company's headquarters were moved to Minneapolis immediately, and by 1995 the processing plant was entirely closed, taking 27 full-time and 430 seasonal jobs with it. Presently, only the research center remains operational in the company's hometown.

Location Analysis

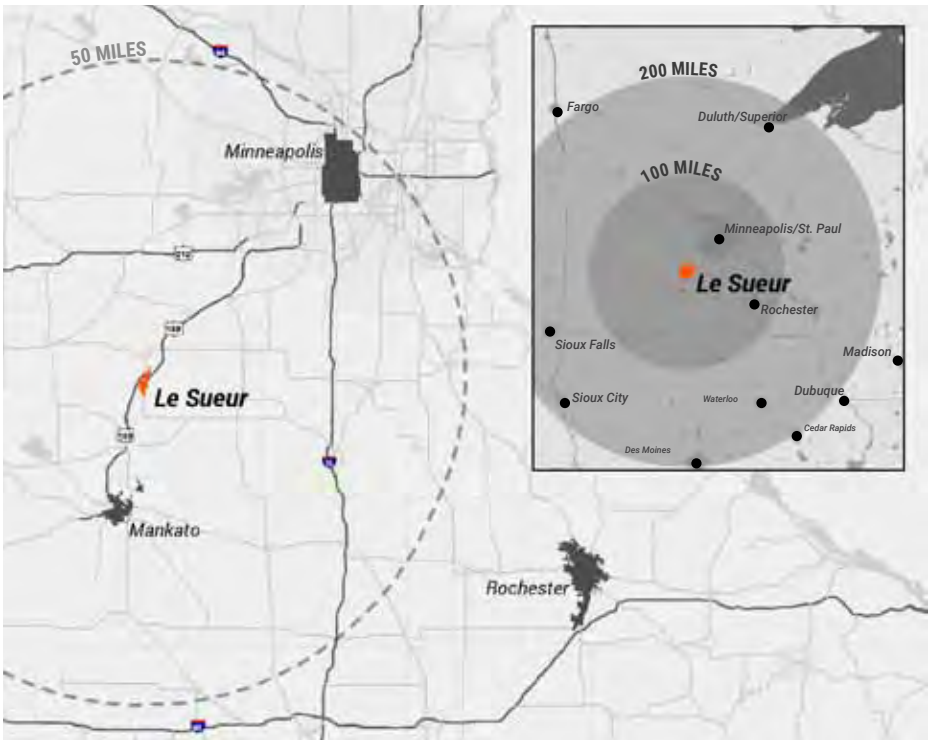
Regional Context

Le Sueur is well situated between several major population centers, with over ten metropolitan areas within 200 miles. The City's adjacency with Minnesota State Highway 169 provides an easy route for residents looking to travel to Mankato, the Twin Cities, and the Interstate Highway System.

Local Context

Le Sueur is considered part of Le Sueur County, but lies on the intersection of Le Sueur and Sibley and has land within both counties. The City shares jurisdictional boundaries with four different townships: Henderson, Lake Prairie, Ottawa, and Tyrone. The nearest city is Henderson, which is about 6 miles north of Le Sueur. St. Peter and Le Center are both within 15 miles of the City, and lie to the south and southeast respectively.

Figure 2.1 Regional Context

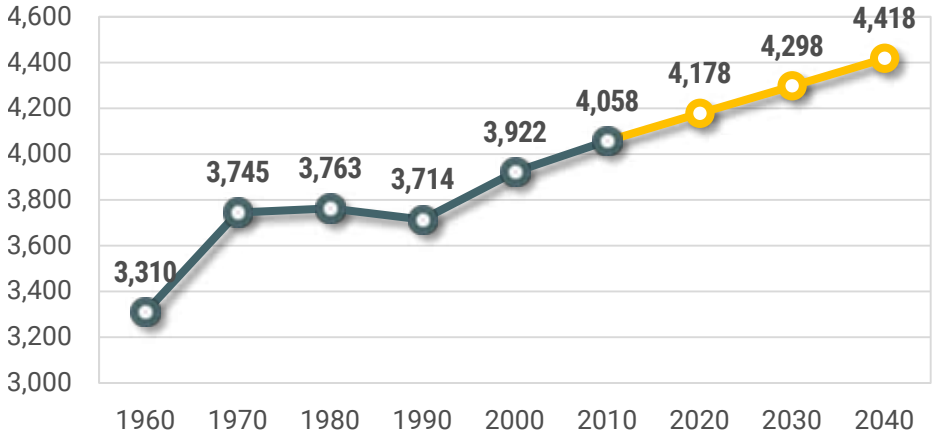


Demographics

Historic Population Growth

Le Sueur's population has experienced continued growth over the past 50 years, as shown in Table 2.1. According to a combination of projections generated by the State Demographer, ESRI, and past planning efforts, it can be assumed that this growth will continue moving forward. It is estimated that Le Sueur will gain about 120 people by 2020, and another 240 people by 2040.

Table 2.1 Historic Population



Population Characteristics

Le Sueur's demographic information was obtained from the Decennial Census and the American Community Survey. Figures from 2000 and 2010 were compared to gain an understanding of how the community is changing and what future needs could arise. Highlights from this analysis are as follows:

» Population increased by over 100 residents
  - Growth occurred in the youngest and oldest age cohorts

Table 2.2 Employment Inflow & Outflow

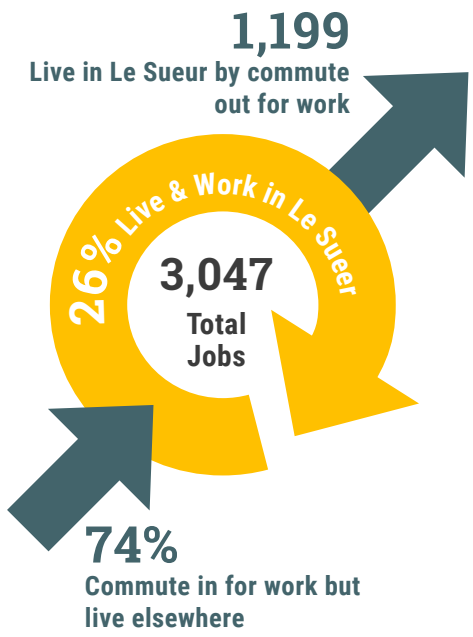
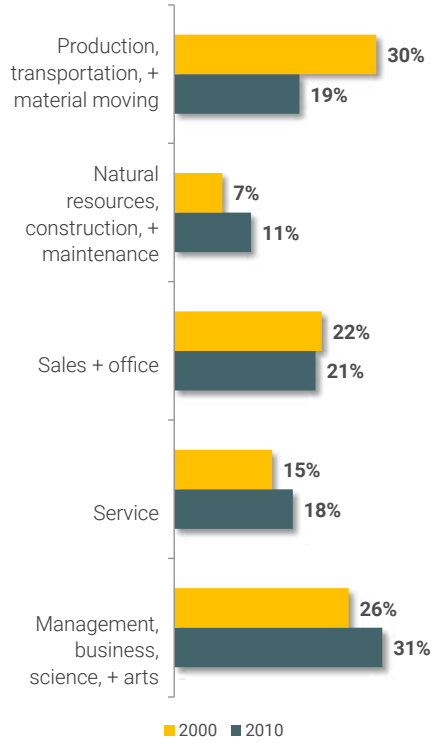


Table 2.3 Occupation Sectors



- The population is predominantly white (85.2%) with almost 12% of residents identifying as Hispanic or Latino
- The number of non-family households grew in relation to family households
- Median income levels increased for both families and households, with the majority of residents reporting in the $50k to $75k range
- Educational attainment increased, with 87% of residents 25 or older holding a high school diploma or higher

Employment Conditions

Jobs in Le Sueur

According to the US Census Bureau, there are 3,063 people employed in the City of Le Sueur. Of these people, 2,194 (72%) are coming to work from outside the city limits. 869 People live and work in the City of Le Sueur, filling 28% of the jobs in the city. Jobs in Le Sueur attract 199 people from St. Peter, 117 from New Prague, and 110 from Mankato. The majority of labor inflow arrives from the south.

Manufacturing represents the largest job sector in the city, with 48.7% of all the jobs in the city (1,493 total). Following up manufacturing, are jobs in education (8.4%), health care (7.3%), management (5.8%) and public administration (4.5%) amoung others.

Labor Force

According to the US Census Bureau, 2,197 residents of Le Sueur are employed in some kind of work. Of those, 39.6% work in the City of Le Sueur. This means that 60.4% of workers from Le Sueur are leaving the city to work. Popular destinations include St. Peter (8.2%) and Mankato (7.3%). Also of note, 25.8% of Le Sueur workers are travelling over 25 miles to the Northeast, presumably to the Twin Cities and suburbs.

Existing Land Use

It is important to understand the development patterns that shaped the City's existing conditions. Figure 2.2 provides a snapshot of the existing land use distribution of Le Sueur's 3,036 acres as of Winter 2015/2016. This land use pattern was determined through an analysis of current tax classification, parcel data, existing zoning designations, ownership data, an evaluation of aerial photos, and limited field observation.

The City of Le Sueur is composed of just under 3,000 acres. While 24% of City land is classified as undeveloped, much of this land is located within the Minnesota River floodway rendering it undevelopable. The City's largest development type is residential, with 20% of the Le Sueur devoted to single family detached housing.

Block Pattern

Traditional development within Le Sueur contains a gridded road and block pattern that is oriented to match the angle of the two original transportation corridors; the railroad and the Minnesota River. Generally, the blocks that conform to the traditional development pattern contain dimensions of 320' wide by 400' long with a central alley running lengthwise.

Figure 2.2 Existing Land Use

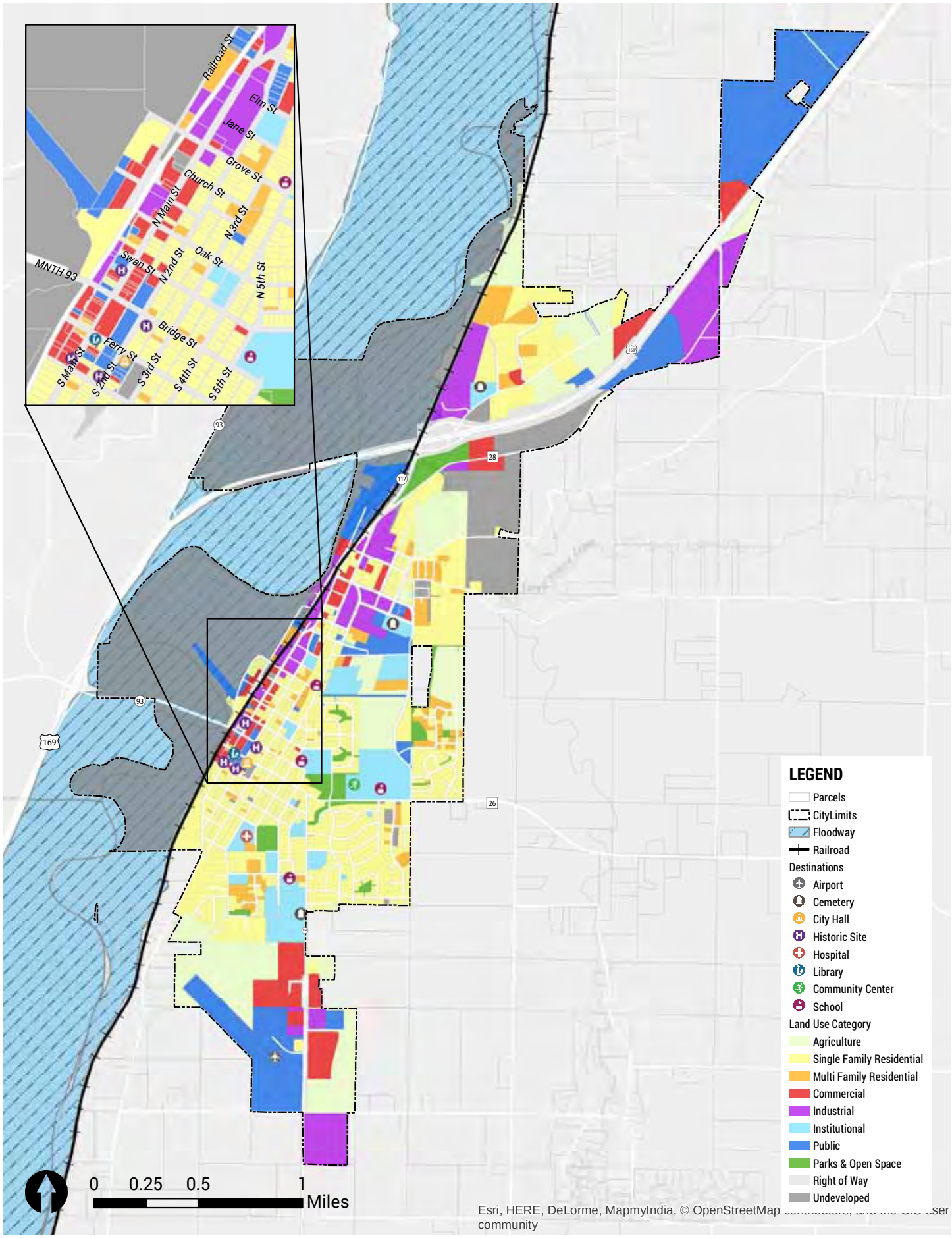
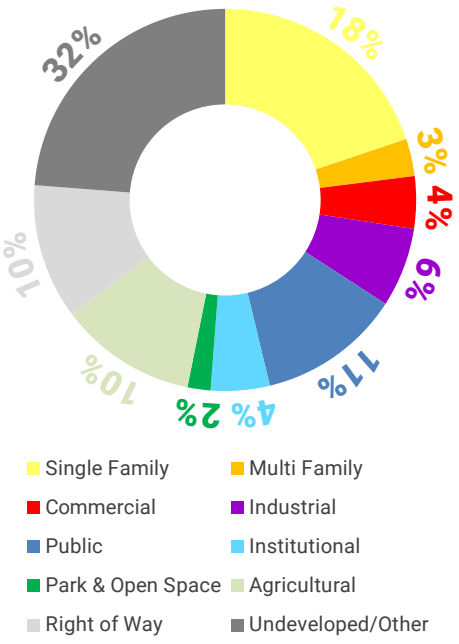


Table 2.4 Existing Land Use Acreage

Use	Acreage
Residential	706
Single-Family	*609*
Multi-Family	*97*
Commercial	136
Industrial	207
Public	371
Institutional	153
Park & Open Space	60
Agricultural	358
Right of Way	350
Total Developed	**2,341**
Undeveloped/Other	**1,106**
Total Land Area	**3,466**

Table 2.5 Percent of Total Land Use



Le Sueur's newer subdivisions contain curvilinear roads that define longer blocks than those found in areas of traditional development. The newer areas do not align with the river/railroad corridor, but instead generally orient to surrounding roads running north to south.

Blocks intended for industrial usage are, in general, much larger than the rest of the City's platting. Larger blocks can more easily accommodate large-scale buildings and the increased truck traffic and loading that is often necessary for industry.

Natural Resources & Environment

Minnesota River

The Minnesota River has been flowing through the valley since long before settlement was occurring at the present day location of Le Sueur. Massive amounts of water cut the Minnesota River Valley, defining much of today's floodplain.

Following the settlement of the City of Le Sueur, the river was used to transport agricultural goods, and hosted riverboat trips from St. Paul to Mankato.

Today the river at Le Sueur is used primarily for recreational purposes.

Geology

The rushing waters of Glacial River Warren helped shape the City of Le Sueur. At the lowest elevation, the Minnesota River continues to run north, providing fishing and boating for residents. Within the valley, especially at it's lower elevations, the floodplain has made development unfeasible, but this means a natural buffer has been left as an asset for the City. Moving up to an intermediate elevation, still within the valley, but beyond the reaches of typical flooding, downtown and the older neighborhoods sit where they have for a hundred years. As the City grew it expanded into, and then up the hill where newer developments have sprouted up, along with the farms that are still producing the food that made Le Sueur famous.

Streams + Tributaries

There are two tributaries that run near Le Sueur to feed into the Minnesota River: Rush River and Le Sueur Creek. The Rush River runs through Rush River County Park and reaches the Minnesota River at the northwestern edge of Le Sueur's boundary. Forest Prairie Creek feeds into Le Sueur Creek just before it crosses Le Sueur's eastern border. Le Sueur Creek then continues through the City until meeting up with the Minnesota River just north of Le Sueur's downtown. These streams have carved out ravines on their path downhill to the Minnesota River.

Woodlands + Habitat

Le Sueur county lies within the southern portion of the Big Woods area. Prior to settlement, the area was primarily covered by hardwood forests with species including sugar maple, black walnut, aspen, white and black ash, and cottonwood. Notable areas that were naturally devoid of woodland included the Le Sueur Prairie and the limestone terrace around Kasota.

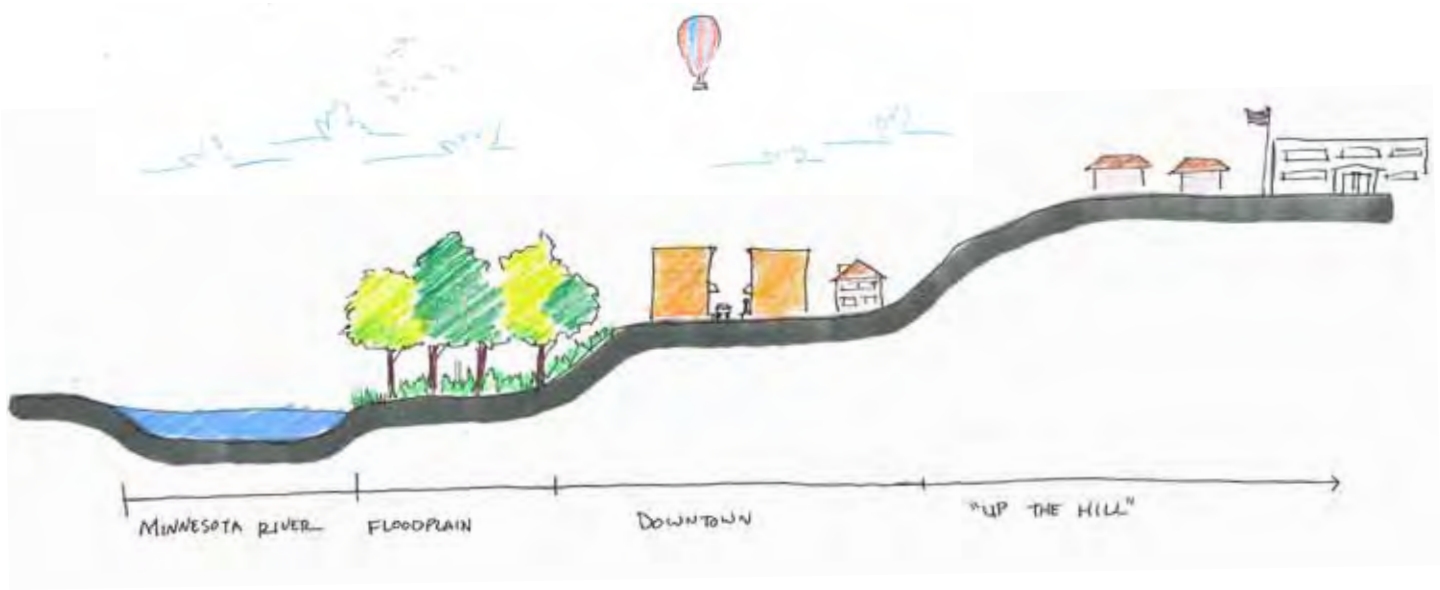
The County's settlement resulted in the clearing of much of these hardwood forests to make room for agriculture and development. The City of Le Sueur's remaining woodlands primarily exist in areas that are within the floodplain or ravines or on steep slopes, due to the unfavorable development conditions. Similarly, various soils that are ill-suited for farming or development have also allowed for the preservation of natural features and habitat.

Agricultural Lands

The City of Le Sueur is characterized by soils of the glacial upland, and is generally composed of a combination of Lester soils, Dorchester soils, and mixed alluvium. Areas that are classified as "not prime farmland" are generally within the floodway or on steep slopes.

The agricultural business is an important component of both Le Sueur's economy and history. Much of the land surrounding Le Sueur is devoted to agricultural uses, which resulted as a response to the Minnesota River Valley's fertile soils, as well as the ease of transportation resulting from the Minnesota River and the railroad and the Green Giant canning industry that was once headquartered in the City. This reliance on agriculture shaped Le Sueur as a rural, farming community; a character that remains evident to this day. Presently, the major crop and livestock species produced in Le Sueur County are corn, soybeans, hogs, beef, poultry, and dairy.

Conceptual diagram of the approximate extent of Glacial River Warren at present day Le Sueur



Truck traffic in the middle of Le Sueur's downtown

Existing Water Tower

Transportation

The City currently applies state roadway design standards in combination with City ordinances for new subdivisions. These state standards follow a federally defined system of "functional classification." The system is based on how particular roadways function in relation to the community and metro area. Functional classification information has limited application to Le Sueur, and is explored more extensively later in the plan.

While the Union Pacific Railroad and the Minnesota River were historically utilized for transportation purposes, they no longer have station stops in Le Sueur.

Infrastructure

Potable Water

The water system in Le Sueur consists of a water treatment plant constructed in 1995, 36 miles of distribution including 4 towers/storage facilities, and 5 wells drawing from the Jordan (3), Franconia (1), and Mount Simon (1) aquifers. The plant currently provides 1 million gallons of water per day and the maximum capacity is 2 million gallons per day. A wellhead protection program went into effect in 2015 to protect groundwater around wells.

Sanitary Sewer

The sanitary sewer system in Le Sueur is made up of the current sewage treatment plant which currently accommodates 1 million gallons per day for both Le Sueur and Henderson, with a capacity of 2 million gallons per day. The treatment plant was built in 2007, replacing the sewage ponds on the west side of the Minnesota River. There are 30 miles worth of collection system and 6 lift stations that facilitate the movement of waste. The system serves the residents of Le Sueur, while most land outside of the city limits is currently on septic systems. After treatment, the cleaned waste water is discharged into the Minnesota River.

One issue in any sewer system, but especially pronounced in older systems is inflow/infiltration. Inflow is the introduction of water to the sanitary sewer system from inappropriate sources, such as sump pumps, roof drains, or cellar drains. Infiltration is the introduction of groundwater to the sanitary sewer system through defective or broken pipes and joints. In both cases, the water entering the system is still generally clean and adding it to sanitary sewer costs the community money to clean water that does not need it.

Past Planning Initiatives

1965 Comprehensive Plan

The 1965 Comprehensive Plan was prepared under the auspices of the Urban Renewal Program and the Housing Act of 1956. It was a nearly two year process funded with assistance from State and Federal grants and led by the Le Sueur Planning Commission. The Planning Commission was created for the purpose of preparing the comprehensive plan, with the assistance of a professional planning consulting firm. The Plan includes two report documents which analyze existing conditions, identify anticipated planning trends, and establish plans for land use, transportation, and community facilities.

1995 IMAGE AND STREETSCAPE MASTER PLAN

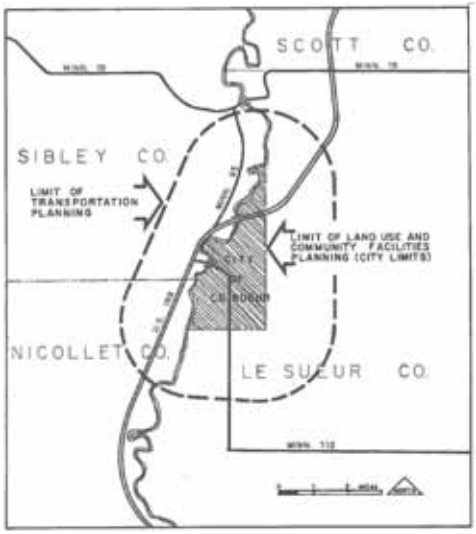
This study identified issues that hampered the image of the city. Focused by the vision of "Country Living, City Style," the plan strives to improve the way visitors and residents experience Le Sueur. This included recommended updates and upgrades to the central business district (CBD) and the entry corridors (the bridge, Commerce Drive/Main Street and Kingsway Drive).

2007 Minnesota Design Team

The Minnesota Design Team is an AIA Minnesota committee that sends a team of multidisciplinary volunteers to rural communities where they provide planning and design services in an effort to improve the communities' built environments. Volunteers bring a diversity of skill sets to the community including Architecture, Planning, Landscape Architecture, Community Organizing, Housing, and Economic Development among others. The MDT's 2007 visit included a pre-visit to set the stage and promote the project, and then a three day workshop that included stakeholder interviews, a public visioning sessions, MDT work-session, and a public presentation culminating the event.

2013 Active Living Plan

The Le Sueur Community Trails and Pedestrian Walkway Committee was created in February of 2013 to advise the City Council where and how Le Sueur could benefit from improved pedestrian pathways after the community's first trails grant was approved along Kingsway Drive. The committee created an Active Living Plan with an overarching goal to "promote development of the built environments that offers the opportunity to integrate physical activity into daily life."



1965 Comprehensive Planning Area

1965 Central Business District Plan

2007 Minnesota Design Team Document Cover

2014 Safe Routes to School Plan

Safe Routes To School (SRTS) is a national program which assists communities and schools districts in enabling and encouraging children to walk and bike to school by making it a safer, healthier, and more appealing transportation option. The planning process completed by the City of Le Sueur consisted of establishing a vision and goals for the process, collecting and analysing information, determining barriers and challenges to walking and biking, determining strategies, and creating an action plan to implement the identified strategies.

2014 Housing Study

Le Sueur's Economic Development Authority (EDA), in collaboration with Community Partners Research, Inc., conducted this Housing Study to provide an inventory and analysis of Le Sueur's existing housing stock and identify future housing needs. The study conducted an in-depth analysis of demographic and economic conditions in the City of Le Sueur, relying on a combination of industry data, site survey work, and technical analysis.

2015 MVHC Community Health Needs Assessment Community Engagement Report

In September-October 2015 Minnesota Valley Health Center (MVHC) convened a group of community members and partners to 1) develop a vision of a healthy community, 2) come to a common understanding of the current health status of their community, and 3) identify key opportunities to help move the community from the current status to the vision.

03. VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

"Lego Club at the Library"
Photo submitted by: Brigid Doherty Tuck

Le Sueur's vision statement and guiding principles are intended to be aspirational, describing the community as it will be rather than how it currently exists

What is a Vision Statement?

Establishing a clear vision for Le Sueur's future is a critical step in the comprehensive planning process. While rooted in the reality of the community's past and present, the vision is a living document that seeks to describe how the community will look, feel, and function over the next 20 years. It is an over-arching framework that permeates the plan and informs supporting policy and strategy decisions.

What are Guiding Principles?

Supporting the vision, the guiding principles will help define the character, values, and priorities of the Le Sueur community by acting as an ongoing measurement tool for the appropriateness and effectiveness of future initiatives and results.

The following are key characteristics of guiding principles:

- Orient the community to the **future**
- Require imagination, recognizing that the direction it sets for the community is **ambitious** and **aspirational**
- Look to **current conditions** and **community traditions** to inform the appropriate future
- Identify what the community **desires** for itself based on shared understandings
- Serve as a tool for **evaluation** of proposals, projects, ideas, and future directions
- Provide an anchor during conflict; a way of finding **common ground** and **shared values**
- Become a basis for **coordination** and **cooperation**
- Offer a source of **energy** and **enthusiasm** for maintaining a commitment to the future of Le Sueur
- Remain a **living document**; integral and vibrant to the community through intentional revisions that are accomplished with the same spirit of community involvement as this original

Vision Statement

The City of Le Sueur in 2040 will be defined by its convenient location, its rural character, its ample opportunities, and its ability to evolve with this ever-changing world, but Le Sueur's true essence lies in its vibrant community; composed of people who are committed to make their City thrive.

Le Sueur is a perfectly located community; offering convenient access to two of Minnesota's major population centers and beyond without compromising its vibrant small-town character. Physically defined by the Minnesota River, the farm fields, and the bluffs, Le Sueur will be a community created by the people who call it home; citizens who are committed to making Le Sueur welcoming, safe, vibrant, and remarkable.

Le Sueur is a community of opportunity. Entrepreneurship and business innovation are founded and continue to flourish, making it an appealing destination for workforce members of a variety of skills and levels. Large corporations and small business owners all contribute and share in this community's success. Le Sueur is a resilient community that has seen and overcome adversity. While achievements of the past built this community, they do not define its future potential.

Le Sueur is an embracing community, where a diversity of residents and visitors alike congregate to celebrate achievements, to serve the present community, and to achieve a vibrant future.

Guiding Principles

Healthy

Le Sueur has historic roots in healthy living, with William W. Mayo and the start of the world-renowned Mayo Health System. These standards for health are maintained today with the Minnesota Valley Health Center. Le Sueur's exceptional parks and recreation system is also emblematic of the community's dedication to active and healthy lifestyles, and should be maintained as a flexible asset that can accommodate users of all ages while responding to changing trends and preferences in recreation. Ensuring high quality and unique health and recreational facilities will not only provide an important amenity for the City, but also promote Le Sueur's identity as a place that values active and healthy living. A healthy community also means good financial health achieved through a balanced property tax base, proactive investment in the maintenance and growth of infrastructure systems, and the responsible use of resources to ensure long term sustainability.

Friendly

Le Sueur's friendly and welcoming environment is maintained through the provision of exceptional and highly valued public services, schools, churches, community groups, and public spaces and infrastructure. Residents, businesses, and civic organizations share in the responsibility to promote the community's image through high quality service and hospitality, as well as broader physical and programmatic improvements. These include youth development, community festivals, and public events; initiatives to support local business and cultural tourism; and pedestrian friendly streets and public spaces that are well-lit, inviting, and active. As the population of Le Sueur grows and changes, it is important for community cohesion, safety, collaboration, and respect for diversity to remain core values of the City.

Responsive

The City strives for openness, collaboration, effectiveness, and accountability. Public investments should demonstrate value to the community, improving the functioning of the city and quality of life for its residents. Residents understand their decisions contribute to the success of the city, whether that is supporting local businesses to grow the local economy, beautifying their house to improve their neighborhood, or driving carefully to ensure the safety of their friends on bike or foot. New development should make the City a better place to be, expanding opportunities for growth and change.

Dynamic

Le Sueur's proximity to Highway 169, a regional airport, and the Minnesota River Valley offers important connections to nearby population centers while making the City an accessible destination for visitors. The City's diverse housing stock provides opportunities for all ages, income levels, and design preferences; an attribute that should be reflected in Le Sueur's employment and commercial offerings. Planned growth and new economic development along the community's edges will allow for a balanced mix of housing and commercial resources that can meet the needs of a changing community. At the same time rehabbing, infilling, and developing vacant and underutilized areas within the City will bring new life to existing neighborhoods. To ensure a resilient and prosperous future, Le Sueur must leverage its existing assets while cultivating creativity, entrepreneurship, business innovation, diversity, healthy and active living, and environmental sustainability.

Beautiful

Nestled between the Minnesota River and the bluffs of the Minnesota River Valley, Le Sueur provides ample opportunities for both residents and visitors to experience natural resources and scenic beauty. Le Sueur takes great pride in its rich local history and culture, with historic assets like the Mayo House; several cultural destinations like the Community Center, Public Library, Golf Course, and Gun Club; and numerous parks and trails. Efforts to improve the development, infrastructure, aesthetic qualities, and connectivity of Le Sueur's downtown business area should be made to strengthen its identity as the heart of the City. Well-traveled thoroughfares should represent the quality and character of Le Sueur. Future investments should build on these efforts and strengthen Le Sueur's identity as a small, historic community that is a draw for new residents, cultural tourism, and outdoor recreation.

Vibrant

Le Sueur is a place known for its entrepreneurial and business innovation, where hard work, service, family, and community are cherished. Moving forward, the City will build on this image by maintaining and enhancing a supportive environment for both new and existing businesses in the community. Beyond economic development, the City will leverage and expand on the strength of its educational and cultural institutions; its parks and recreational facilities and programming; and its technological infrastructure to continue to attract new revenue, residents, and jobs. Le Sueur celebrates creativity and diversity, recognizing that they are essential steps to a vibrant future.

04. MASTER PLAN

Photo contributed by the City of Le Sueur

Overview

This chapter describes a framework for the future land use, infrastructure systems, transportation network, and parks and recreation for Le Sueur. The framework is described through:

1. Goal and policy statements that serve as a guide for future decision making;
2. A future land use map; and,
3. Development form and character descriptions for each land use pattern.

The framework was developed with guidance from the public engagement process, past planning efforts, and community planning principles. The goals, policies, and land use categories link back to the community vision and guiding principles outlined in chapter 3. There are 26 goals; each accompanied by their own series of policies as well as icons representing their associated guiding principles.

Four major land use categories were created to represent the future land use character of Le Sueur: Live, Work, Conserve, and Prosper. Each category contains land use form and character directions that are directly related to the overarching goals and policies.

Live is where Le Sueur's residents call home. In addition to an array of diverse housing options, live contains supportive amenities like churches, schools, and parks.

Work contains Le Sueur's commercial and employment opportunities. From industrial businesses to retail shops, work provides areas for entrepreneurship, innovation, and commerce.

Conserve is defined by Le Sueur's natural amenities. While the goal of conserve is to protect areas of environmental significance, recreational and educational opportunities should be incorporated to promote healthy, active lifestyles.

Prosper is found at the center of commerce, housing, and entertainment; where activity is present at all hours of the day and where Le Sueur's identity is strongest.

KEY TERMINOLOGY

Focus Areas act as a means to identify an area and distinguish land use intent, form, and character at a finer grain.

Land Use

Le Sueur's future land use plan is intended to guide future investment and development towards desired uses, development form, and character. Four land use categories have been identified to represent the varying forms of development in Le Sueur: Live, Work, Conserve, and Prosper. Additionally, this plan takes a district approach at land use, generalizing areas that aspire to encompass a unified character and development form rather than operating on a parcel-by-parcel basis. This is not intended to replace zoning, which will remain attached to each parcel and may vary throughout a continuous district or land use category. However, zoning must, as a whole, support the desired character of an area.

what we heard

> **"I hope our community grows and provides good schools and housing**

Categories

The discussion on the following pages contains general descriptions of each land use category, as well as the intended land use form and character of each identified focus area. Focus Areas were established as a means to identify an area and distinguish land use intent, form, and character at a finer grain.

Live

The most land area in Le Sueur is composed of housing; a pattern that will likely continue over the next 20 years. Expansion of low density, single family housing areas will occur in the eastern and southeastern portion of Le Sueur. Redevelopment and infill of medium to higher density housing should be directed towards areas within and immediately surrounding downtown most proximate to walkable destinations.

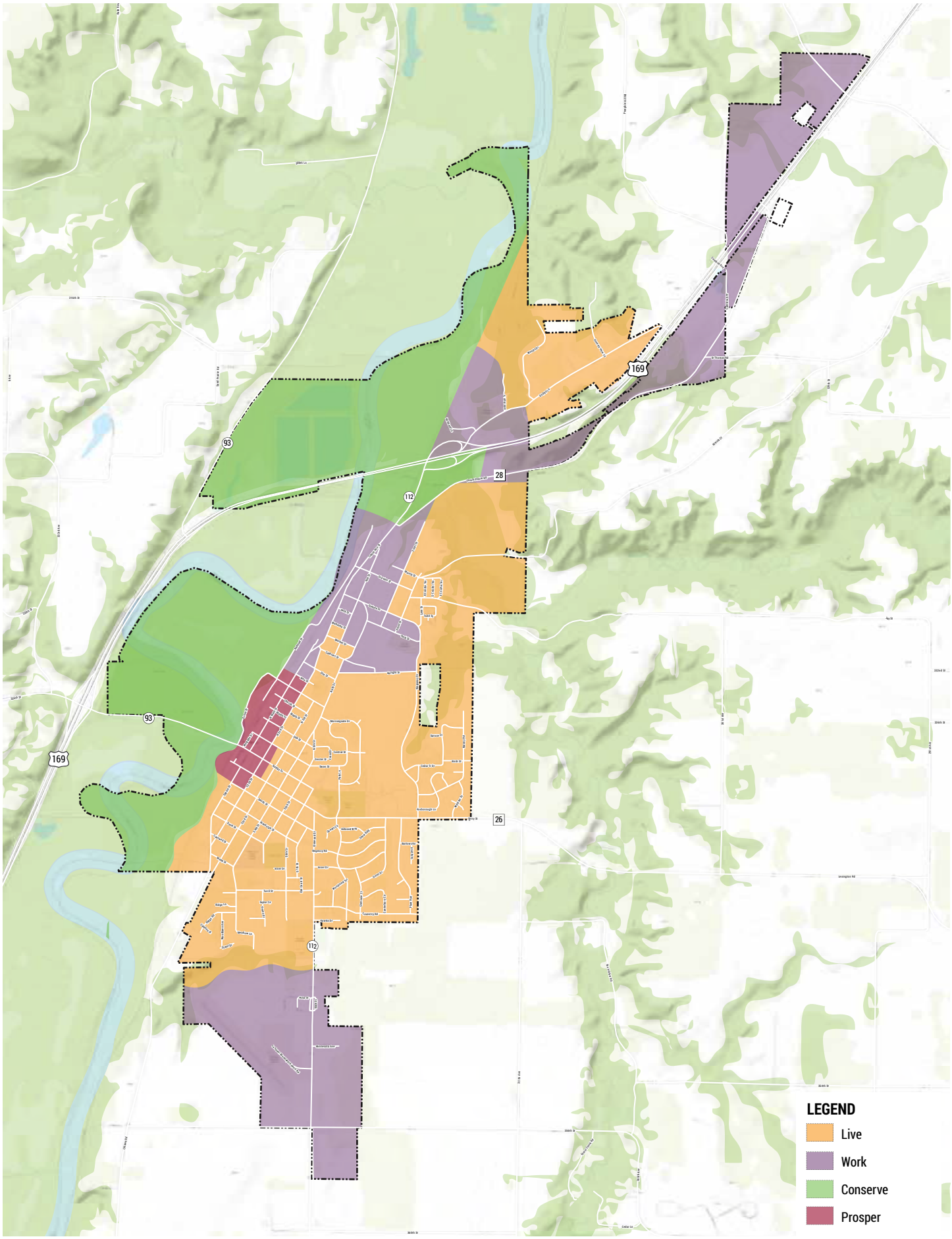
Much of Le Sueur's initial housing was built in and around downtown, making this area rich with historic character. Because of this, the neighborhood's block pattern is smaller lots laid out on a grid; a layout that provides better connectivity than today's more traditional development pattern of curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs.

Land Use Form + Character

- Predominantly single-family residential with some smaller multi-family housing types mixed in. Primarily densities of 3 to 6 units per acre, but closer to downtown, higher densities could be more appropriate with future infill and redevelopment.
- The design of multi-family housing should be articulated to minimize the perception of density and to provide sufficient setbacks or open space/ relief areas between properties. These housing types should be located with direct access to arterial or collector roadways, adjacent to parks, open space, and/or trails, and nearest concentrations of jobs or retail services to promote alternative modes of transportation and create a safe, walkable public realm.
- Locate residential/public parking areas to the rear of buildings where possible and practical, and design with adjacent uses in mind, utilizing landscape or other buffers to minimize impact.
  - A shared driveway or alley should minimize traffic impacts on local streets.
  - Enclosed parking should be clustered and designed to minimize long expanses of unbroken wall area.

Examples of small lot size single family (top), duplex (middle), and rowhouse (bottom)

Figure 4.1 Land Use Categories



CONSERVATION DESIGN

As a small city grows, farmland usually faces pressures from development. Often these rural estate developments have large lots that consume significant tracts of farmland. In addition, wildlife habitat and natural areas are lost because they become too small as they are chopped up between individual lots and are not protected from individual landowner development. Given the spacing between the lots, future utility infrastructure, such as sewer services, requires significant investment.

In an effort to better protect natural areas and increase efficiencies, the development community has begun to use conservation subdivision techniques. Conservation subdivision, also called cluster development, seeks to cluster development areas to retain and protect open spaces such as farmland and natural areas.

The process of creating a conservation subdivision begins with identifying the natural features on the site, including waterways, forest, prairie, and topography. It may also include farmland. These areas are then linked with green strips to create a connected open space system. With the areas to protect identified, the process of locating streets, utilities, and home sites can begin.

The use of conservation design in Le Sueur should be strongly encouraged in those areas that are outside the City boundary that will be relying on private utility systems.

» Non-residential uses such as civic institutions (school and churches) and parks may be allowed with appropriate site design and form:
  - Uses should have access to arterial or collector roadways, but should be local-serving as to not generate a large volume of traffic or required truck access.
  - Parking should be on-street where possible; small side or rear lots; and, screened with landscaping and/or ornamental fencing.
  - Site design should include walkways/access to public sidewalks or trails.
  - Building should be residential in character, with entrances oriented toward the street and 2 story height maximums.
  - Garbage and refuse should be small scale and stored within a building or enclosed structure.

» Encourage the preservation and rehabilitation of historic homes, structures, and sites. Integrate historic interpretation and signage to highlight "hidden" historic sites and tell the story of Le Sueur's neighborhoods.

» Promote a range of housing types and styles on reduced individual lot sizes to maximize public green space.

» Front residential streets with the primary entrances to residences; porches, stoops, and windows rather than garage doors to promote social interaction and eyes on the street.

» Ensure connectivity is accentuated through trails and streetscapes to promote active living and alternative transportation.
  - Provide external connectivity as well as incorporated open space within neighborhood linking surrounding streets and properties to resident gathering places.
  - Maintain street grid, where it exists today, as well as spacing of collector streets to distribute traffic and minimize congestion avoid use of cul-de-sacs in favor of connected street grid.
  - Develop pedestrian and bike facilities on primary corridors and in the vicinity of and connecting to neighborhood destinations (i.e. schools, parks, institutions, retail centers, the Minnesota River, etc.).
  - Ensure that residents have access to a range of high quality park and outdoor recreation options (active and passive park space, motorized and non-motorized trails), and at least one neighborhood park located within a 5-minute (ideal) or 10-minute walk.

» Locate and design stormwater management infrastructure (ponds, swales, planting) in a manner that enhances the public realm; encourage integration of stormwater features in the design of neighborhood parks, public right-of-way, and private property.

» Allow neighborhood designs in new growth on the edge that support limited agricultural uses oriented to providing local consumable foods.

» In new growth areas on the edge, develop future street layouts according to cluster/conservation subdivision development patterns in lieu of traditional development to promote connectivity and minimize environmental impacts.

» Provide flexibility for home businesses and live-work situations (including personal or professional office, studios, workshops, and small-batch production) provided that business use of the property does not negatively impact the residential character of the neighborhood (i.e. noise, odors, traffic).

» Design utilities in the area to enhance the public realm (e.g. bury power lines and screen utilities with public art, landscaping, etc.)

» Locate and design stormwater management infrastructure (ponds, swales, planting) in a manner that enhances the public realm; encourage integration of stormwater features in the design of neighborhood parks, public right-of-way, and private property.

Work

Le Sueur is known for its strong industry, and should continue to strive to be an employment center in the years to come. Areas that fall under the "work" category include places of commerce, industry, and employment. The majority of Le Sueur's Work land use lies on the northern and southern portions of the City.

Industrial areas within this category will generate noise, traffic, odors, and outside storage. Site design and building aesthetics in these areas should aim to mitigate these effects, contributing to the view from public streets and conveying the quality and durable construction of spaces within.

Because Le Sueur contains many thriving industrial sites, parking and truck circulation should be orchestrated on a City level. This is especially true in areas adjacent to high-traffic roadways and residential streets. Sites that require occasional truck movements might explore shared driveways and access areas to minimize impacts on public roadways, as well as reducing unused hard surfaces, effectively decreasing areas that generate stormwater runoff and require snow removal.

Micro-brewery

New building with historic, small-town character

Land Use Form + Character

» Ensure high quality and durable building and site improvements for commercial and industrial development.

» Support a variety of building types and configurations beyond the traditional commercial or industrial building, co-working spaces or workshops with accessory housing units.

» High quality communication technology and infrastructure systems should support commercial and industrial development.

» Allow a diversity of commercial land uses including supportive retail that serves the immediate area or that would not otherwise be a fit in downtown Le Sueur. (the intent is not to pull from downtown, but rather support Le Sueur as a more of a regional draw)

» Develop and enforce signage and landscaping standards for private properties along major streets to enhance overall appearance, improve wayfinding, and reduce visual blight.

- Private signage should be scale appropriate and clearly identifiable to the business name and address.

» Attractive, consistent, and contextually appropriate gateway signage should be placed in visible locations for travels entering Le Sueur to brand the City while directing visitors to downtown and other key community destinations.

- Interpretive signage opportunities should be identified to highlight historic landmarks and other areas influential to Le Sueur's community character.

» Design utilities to enhance the public realm (i.e. buried power lines, screened utilities, etc.)

» Require developments to incorporate features to enhance connectivity for alternative modes of transportation, such as sidewalks, trails, and well-designed parking lots.

what we heard

> **"I hope Le Sueur becomes a charming tourist attraction**

CREATING AN INCUBATOR

Business incubators seek to support the development of entrepreneurial companies from the ideas stage to operation through a variety of support services. Incubators can take a few forms. The classic incubator program operates out of a shared building where tenants have subsidized rent, access to equipment and technical or business support. A niche incubator takes the class incubator program and focuses it on a particular industry. For example, a food based company would benefit from an incubator that had commercial grade kitchen equipment and education about food safety and distribution. Virtual incubators have recently come available which offer social networks to provide mentoring and collaboration without the physical space.

Before undertaking an incubator program, it would be helpful to work with the National Business Incubation Association. Some recommendations from that group in starting an incubator include:

- Study the entrepreneurial climate in the community and make sure you match the services the incubator offers to the needs.
- Be creative – but realistic – make sure the focus has a specific market and the support of business, political, and civic leaders.
- Don't let real estate drive the project – be sure the location will work for clients and has the amenities they need – whether or not it is a building that you need to address (e.g. vacated school).
- Create the incubator program has a model itself with a financial plan, mission, strategic plan, and an effective board of directors.
- Prioritize incubator management time to place the greatest emphasis on client assistance.
- Integrate the incubator program and activities into fabric of the community.

- Outside storage, heavy equipment, and parking lots should be oriented on the site to minimize impacts on adjacent uses that are not of a similar nature, and, where possible, incorporate screening through landscaping and ornamental fencing placement.
- Integrate landscaping, trees, and stormwater features into the design of sites where possible, as well as within formal and informal green spaces along major roadways.
  - Stormwater management should be thought of as an amenity to the site, and not as simply a required improvement.
- Aim to transition sites with more intensive development to sites containing residential uses by developing retail and service businesses with residential character, higher density residential buildings, and landscape buffers or other screening techniques.
- Building fronts facing the public street right of way should be of a higher architectural character.
  - Avoid development of long stretches of blank, inactive building walls along streets by requiring active window spaces that allow views into and out of buildings. Existing building with such facades should incorporate public art or landscaping to break up blank stretches and add visual appeal.
- Locate a technology innovation park to rehabilitate blighted commercial areas while fostering collaborative and productive economic development.

Focus Areas

North 169 Gateway Focus Area

Running along both sides of Highway 169, this area creates an important waypoint between Mankato and the Twin Cities. Capitalizing on the area's visibility and accessibility, future commercial growth will create an enhanced gateway into Le Sueur. Commuter amenities, such as hotels, gas stations, and industrial distribution centers and warehouses, will compliment those found in Le Sueur's downtown; providing accommodations while connecting patrons with the City's various other amenities. Visitors will be drawn in by the easy access to essential transportation amenities, but will stay for the area's proximity to Le Sueur's charming downtown, natural beauty, and regional trail connections.

North Downtown Focus Area

The North Downtown focus area offers a combination of industrial, retail, and service opportunities. The area offers an eclectic mix of small-scale commercial lots and larger industrial users. A major challenge to this areas manufacturing and distribution uses is truck traffic maneuvers accessing individual loading docks off of Commerce Street. Over time as improvements to existing buildings occur, the City should work with property owners to configure redevelopment and expansion in a way that improves truck circulation. This focus area could also be a good location for smaller industrial or manufacturing uses that also offer retail storefronts not unlike the Le Sueur Cheese Company. A micro-brewery with an on-site tap room that brings in food from surrounding local restaurants is another example a unique business destinations that could fit this district.

Figure 4.2 North 169 Gateway Focus Area

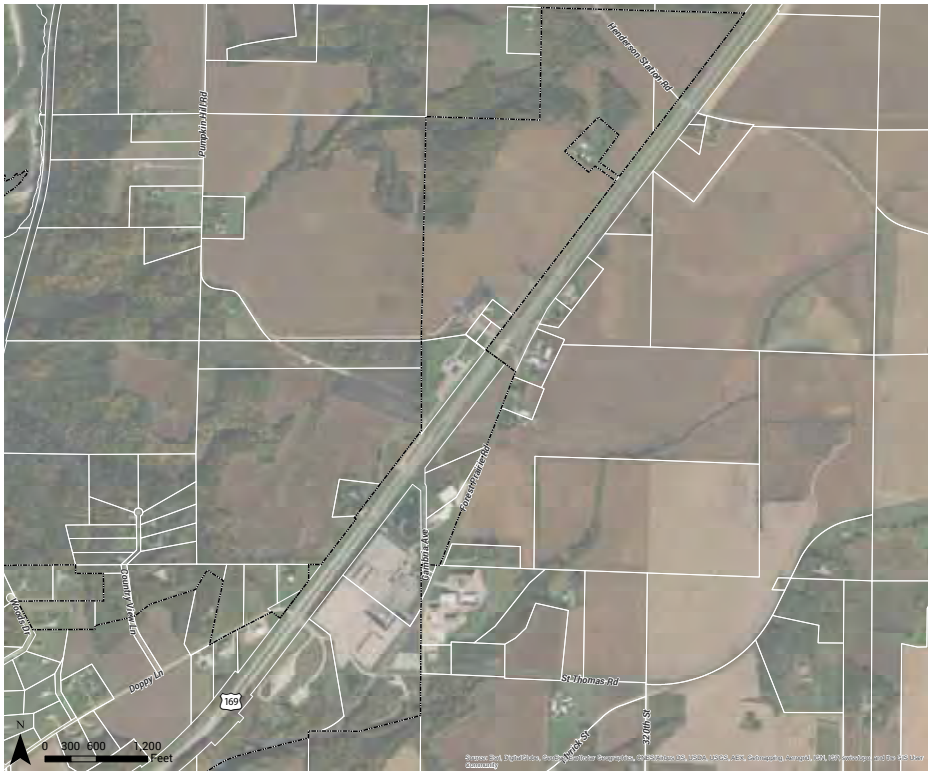


Figure 4.3 North Downtown Focus Area

CASE STUDY

KITCHEN INCUBATORS

Kitchen incubator programs are designed to support the creation of small-scale, food-production businesses. Kitchen incubators are instrumental in the evolution of a local food producer as it reduces the cost barrier of needing a commercial kitchen to meet food safety and production standards. In addition to providing food entrepreneurs with a shared-use commercial kitchen facility, programs may provide training and technical assistance in product development, management, food regulation, marketing, human resources, and other areas relevant to the creation of a successful, independent retail food operation.

A kitchen incubator in Le Sueur could catalyze development of new businesses, leverage connections to local agricultural producers, and create employment opportunities as well as new retail/food destinations in the community. Such a program could be supported through partnerships with local educational institutions, foundations, public agencies (eg. USDA), and local economic development entities.

The Vermont Food and Venture Center in Hardwick, Vermont is a food business incubator with the goal of transforming local agriculture commodities into higher-value market products. In addition to operating a shared-use food processing facility, the Center offers various support services such as business incubation, recipe and process development, packing services, and value-added processing.

Innovation District Focus Area

As an extension of the North Downtown Focus Area, the Innovation District Focus Area is focused on driving productive, inclusive, and sustainable economic development. Spaces in this area will be dedicated to the incubation of unique business ideas, fostering innovation and collaboration all while forwarding the image of Le Sueur as a center for entrepreneurial creative and professional jobs. This area will emphasize the importance of integrating housing, work, and recreation to maintain and enhance the community's quality of life. Highway 169 and downtown Le Sueur are both within close proximity of this district, providing easy accessibility to the rest of Le Sueur and beyond.

Figure 4.4 Innovation District Focus Area

South Commerce Focus Area

As the southernmost entry point to the City, this working landscape contains Le Sueur's municipal airport, and is composed primarily of light industrial and commercial uses. South Commerce is the community's back yard, an area where machinery and outdoor storage can be utilized to enhance business functionality without detracting from Le Sueur's image. Simple improvements to the area's main streetscape (Elmwood Street) will create an enhanced southern gateway to the City; for example, unattractive storage areas can be shielded through strategic tree placement and the addition of signage and wayfinding could better attract visitors to community destinations.

Figure 4.5 South Commerce Focus Area

Conserve

Areas designated as "conserve" are those with natural areas as their defining characteristic. The maintenance and enhancement of ecological functions and wildlife habitat should be a priority within areas under this designation. Recreational uses that are more passive in nature are also encouraged within conserve areas to promote active living and increase the ability for residents and visitors to connect with nature.

Currently, the only area defined as conserve lies along the Minnesota River corridor. However, if growth extends east, new areas could be guided to conserve high quality woodlands and water resources.

Land Use Form + Character

- Site and design trail access as well as a new park along the river's eastern banks to increase the community's connection to this natural amenity and make Le Sueur a local and regional point of interest.
- Incorporate interpretation where possible highlighting the historic and ecological importance of the area.
- Existing development within conserve areas should consider site or building improvements that are sensitive to its passive nature, and avoid practices that act to degrade the quality of the water or the surrounding woodlands.

what we heard

> "I want to see recreation developed along the river

Trail running adjacent to river

Prosper

The Prosper land use category includes commerce (retail and services), civic institutions, employment, and medium to high density housing options. This category supports a pedestrian-scale environment as well as access to entertainment and cultural opportunities. Overall, prosper areas are where the community's identity is most blatantly expressed.

Land Use Form + Character

- Encourage higher density, mixed use buildings (with active street level uses and office or residential above) in the core areas of downtown. Support increased densities on the periphery of downtown as well to help contribute to a supportive critical mass of people needed to prop up downtown.
- Incorporate wayfinding, public art, landscaping, streetscape treatment, etc. that enhances the aesthetics while branding the community and district.
- Active street uses should be encouraged through storefront and public realm design.
- Utilize quality building materials that are complementary to existing historic architectural styles.
- Promote a diversity of vibrant uses that generate and maintain activity in the downtown area throughout the entire day, week, month, and year.
- Encourage building orientations containing height-to-width ratios and placement of door and window openings that are proportional to surrounding buildings where present.
- Buildings and development should be oriented to activate the Main St. streetscape while minimizing impacts to surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- Prioritize buildings fronting streets over parking lots and storage/delivery areas.
- Incorporate building components that retain a pedestrian scale on the street, such as awnings, canopies, and upper story setbacks.
- Avoid development of long stretches of blank, inactive building walls along streets by requiring active window spaces that allow views into and out of buildings.
- Maintain and enhance the downtown street grid to retain the historic, walkable character.

what we heard

"I wish downtown Le Sueur had more arts, shops, and entertainment. A revitalized main street or pedestrian area in place of the mall and a renovated community movie theater would add immensely to the charm and value of downtown Le Sueur.

Downtown Focus Area

Le Sueur's downtown is the community's main destination for residents and visitors alike; with a mix of uses that supports uses at all hours of the day and all seasons of the year. As a hub for restaurants, cafes, retail shops, historic landmarks, and entertainment offerings, downtown supports everything from a daily shopping run to a fun family outing. Lively streets run through the downtown core on Main Street that are safe and friendly for pedestrian traffic, with businesses that spill out onto the sidewalks to market merchandise or provide outdoor restaurant seating. The intersection of multiple regional trails makes downtown a destination for bicyclists looking for a place to relax for the day or to connect to surrounding communities. Arts and culture are prominent features of downtown, with places for events, festivals, and informal community gatherings. Medium to high density housing is seamlessly integrated throughout

CASE STUDY

THE NATIONAL MAIN STREET PROGRAM

The Main Street Four-Point Approach is a community-driven, comprehensive methodology used to revitalize older, traditional business districts throughout the United States. It is a common-sense way to address the variety of issues and problems that face traditional business districts. The underlying premise of the Main Street approach is to encourage economic development within the context of historic preservation in ways appropriate to today's marketplace. The Main Street Approach advocates a return to community self-reliance, local empowerment, and the rebuilding of traditional commercial districts based on their unique assets: distinctive architecture, a pedestrian-friendly environment, personal service, local ownership, and a sense of community.

The Main Street Four-Point Approach is a comprehensive strategy that is tailored to meet local needs and opportunities. It encompasses work in four distinct areas — Design, Economic Restructuring, Promotion, and Organization — that are combined to address all of the commercial district's needs.

Design

Enhancing the physical appearance of the commercial district by rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging compatible infill, and developing sensitive design management systems. An inviting atmosphere, created through attractive window displays, parking areas, building improvements, street furniture, signs, sidewalks, street lights, and landscaping, conveys a positive visual message about the commercial district and what it has to offer.

Organization

Building consensus and cooperation among the many groups and individuals who have a role in the revitalization process.

Promotion

Marketing the traditional commercial district's assets to customers, potential investors, new businesses, local citizens, and visitors. Promotion sells a positive image of the commercial district and encourages consumers and investors to live, work, shop, play and invest in the Main Street district.

Economic Restructuring

Strengthening the district's existing economic base while finding ways to expand it to meet new opportunities. The Main Street program helps sharpen the competitiveness of existing business owners and recruits compatible new businesses and new economic uses to build a commercial district that responds to today's consumers' needs.

KEY TERMINOLOGY

Goals are broad statements that describe a desired outcome or end-state. Goals are often long-term in scope. (e.g. Provide safe, efficient, and economical access to key destinations)

Policies describe the general course of action or way in which programs and activities are conducted to achieve a stated goal or objective. Policies speak to underlying values, context, or principles, and are often place-specific. There may be a range of specific actions/strategies that support the implementation of a given policy. (e.g. Provide a network of complete streets that balance the safety needs for all modes of travel; Provide adequate wayfinding and signage for all modes)

downtown's fabric, offering smaller units and rental opportunities for residents. As a combination of all of community's best attributes, downtown exists as the heart of Le Sueur.

Le Sueur's downtown is generally defined by Railroad Street and the Minnesota River to the west, Smith Street to the south, 3rd Street to the east, and Cathcart Street to the north. Main Street runs north-south through the center of the district, and defines the area's historic, small-town character. Bridge Street runs perpendicular to Main Street, and provides an essential gateway into the City for those crossing into Le Sueur over the Minnesota River.

Goals + Policies

These goals and policies provide direction for future land use investment, development, redevelopment, and land use decision making within Le Sueur.

Goal L-1

Live

Provide an attractive, high-quality range of housing types and styles throughout the City in order to foster community pride without compromising opportunities for people at all life stages and income levels.

Policies

L-1.1. Support rehabilitation and ongoing maintenance of existing owner-occupied and rental units.

L-1.2. Expand the housing stock to address the unmet needs of potential residents and employees.

L-1.3. Maintain the character and quality of Le Sueur's existing historic housing stock.

L-1.4. Leverage community partners to support housing development and rehabilitation.

L-1.5. Encourage new housing development to meet gaps in the housing market.

L-1.6. Regularly review zoning and subdivision ordinances to ensure maximum opportunities for housing development.

L-1.7. Encourage the use of quality, durable, and sustainable building and landscaping materials to create attractive residential developments.

L-1.8. Expand housing options in and adjacent to downtown Le Sueur.

what we heard

> **"I want to find downsized, affordable living within walking distance of shopping & entertainment**

Goal L-2

Growth in General

Establish redevelopment and future growth in a manner that reflects Le Sueur's historic context, provides a diversity of land uses, is cost effective, enhances the vitality and attractiveness of the community, and maximizes accessibility to local destinations while respecting the natural environment.

Policies

L-2.1. Promote development opportunities to meet future growth needs by prioritizing infill development within the current City boundaries, revitalizing blighted or underdeveloped areas and taking advantage of existing infrastructure capacities.

L-2.2. Ensure redevelopment and infill projects add to the City's housing and business diversity while maintaining the integrity of the community.

L-2.3. Encourage a conservation oriented development pattern in new growth areas that expand beyond existing city limits.

L-2.4. Encourage development of high quality, green, energy-efficient, and durable buildings.

L-2.5. Improve access and linkage between housing, employment, retail, and recreation centers.

L-2.6. Encourage site design that considers surrounding land use and development patterns.

L-2.7. Leverage existing natural features as amenities that provide passive open space areas, trail corridors, and stormwater management opportunities.

what we heard

> **"I hope that Le Sueur will grow and prosper. We need more people and more businesses so we don't always have to leave town for purchases.**

Goal L-3

Work

Support a vibrant mix of local retail, office, and industrial services, and create an attractive environment for new business ventures that will diversity the tax and employment base.

Policies

L-3.1. Create and maintain strong working relationships with local businesses to understand needs and maximize opportunities for growth.

L-3.2. Develop programs and activities to attract, support, and retain businesses and provide technical and/or financial support to those seeking to grow, expand, or branch into new endeavors.

L-3.3. Encourage residents and visitors alike to shop locally.

L-3.4. Balance retail development between local-serving retail and services and niche markets that will distinguish Le Sueur as a regional destination.

L-3.5. Establish and preserve partnerships with local, regional, and state organizations that support economic development activities.

L-3.6. Maintain a comprehensive knowledge of existing jobs and industries in the community while monitoring changes in industry trends related to job growth and wage ranges.

what we heard

> **"Add amenities that will encourage young professional families to settle in our town**

CASE STUDY

LIVE/WORK HOUSING

The housing market has seen a resurgence in live/work housing in recent years. This housing type includes multi-story buildings with ground floor commercial space and upstairs residential units, as well as loft-style apartments with flexible layouts to accommodate an in-home office, studio, or workshop space.

Downtown Le Sueur already offers this type of housing with apartments above ground floor retail and office space. Rehabilitation of existing live/work buildings and development of new units in downtown, may allow the community to appeal to a broader range of residents- from entrepreneurs with start-up businesses, to stay-at-home moms with part-time ventures, to existing small business owners who want the convenience of an upstairs residence.

L-3.7. Invest in the cities existing infrastructure and street system including replacement and ongoing maintenance needs.

L-3.8. Invest in new and modern infrastructure to maintain competitiveness in the state, national, and global market place.

Goal L-4

Work + Prosper

Support the development and attraction of a quality labor force to meet existing business and industry needs as well as a sustained environment of growth.

Policies

L-4.1. Collaborate with educational institutions, economic development agencies, and local businesses to provide programs that address industry workforce needs and gaps and create career and educational pathways for residents of all ages.

L-4.2. Strengthen relationships with alumni organizations from area colleges and universities to promote Le Sueur as a place they might return to live, work, and play.

L-4.3. Invest in amenities like quality housing, parks, trails, and open spaces; community programs, events, and cultural attractions; and other quality goods and services including dining and entertainment venues to enhance the overall quality of live and attractiveness of Le Sueur as a place to live and work.

L-4.4. Collaborate and work with members of Le Sueur's younger generations, as they are a key part of the community's future workforce.

Goal L-5

Prosper

Reinforce the identity of Downtown Le Sueur as a unique center for commerce, culture, and community gathering and support redevelopment and revitalization efforts to forward this ideal.

Policies

L-5.1. Collaborate with local businesses and economic development entities to continue to plan for the growth and redevelopment of downtown Le Sueur.

L-5.2. Promote downtown as a premier location for business development.

L-5.3. Design the public realm (street, sidewalk, public parking areas, plazas, parks) to encourage local businesses and retailers to bring their business outside during community events or high volume shopping days/times.

L-5.4. Encourage rehabilitation and restoration of deteriorating historic properties, particularly those that have a scale appropriate to downtown.

L-5.5. Implement traffic calming techniques to slow traffic speeds within downtown and maintain a pedestrian-friendly environment.

L-5.6. Encourage vertical mixed-use redevelopment or rehabilitation projects with residential and/or office units above street level retail or cultural uses.

L-5.7. Seek to locate community events and gatherings in the downtown area to centralize activity and better express Le Sueur's character.

L-5.8. Implement wayfinding that successfully directs residents and visitors alike while establishing boundaries and branding for the downtown area.

what we heard

> **"I wish downtown Le Sueur was a place people could shop and walk around and be connected**

Goal L-6

Conserve

Preserve and protect Le Sueur's natural environment to improve ecological functioning, especially regarding the water and woodland resources surrounding the City.

Policies

L-6.1. Avoid disrupting existing woodland stands when locating new development.

L-6.2. Reduce the potential for recurring surface water quality damage through point and non-point pollution control within existing and future development and stormwater rate control Best Management Practices.

L-6.3. Utilize sustainable and energy efficient materials in development, redevelopment, and rehabilitation efforts.

L-6.4. Collaborate with county, state, and national agencies to preserve natural resource areas.

what we heard

> **"I hope we improve upon our outdoor spaces**

Sustainability and fiscally responsible use of public resources and quality public services support the vibrancy and long-term economic health of the community.

Infrastructure Systems

Infrastructure is a key element provided by cities to improve the safety, health, functioning, and quality of life for residents and businesses. These systems work best as interconnected networks, and because of this, the City (and in some cases, other public agencies or private companies) provides many of these services at a community-wide scale. It would be impractical for each home and business to have a well reaching down to the aquifer, or to require each home and business to be built on enough land to accommodate a septic system. City-provided services allow for development land patterns of businesses on Main Street and residential neighborhoods. It is the City's responsibility to provide these services efficiently and sustainably. Infrastructure must be maintained, and new investments in infrastructure must consider the impacts to the community's long term health and financial stability.

Infrastructure Categories

Potable Water

Water is a necessity in many ways. Making sure there is adequate water for fire protection is a public safety need of the City's. A well functioning, safe water system is crucial to a city's ability to support residents. Agricultural and industrial users in Le Sueur also have significant water needs that the City meets.

Pollution can be a significant threat to a City's ability to provide water. Implementation and enforcement of the wellhead protection program will protect aquifers from contamination. Distribution infrastructure will protect water from contaminants. These efforts minimize the water related health risks for residents.

Across the country, droughts and water shortages are taking a toll on cities and their capacity to grow and provide basic services. While Minnesota has plentiful water resources, limits on the aquifers are beginning to be seen as they are being drawn down faster than they can replenish. By implementing strategies to conserve water, the City of Le Sueur can be more resilient and less affected by changes and unforeseen circumstances with regards to water.

The water system in Le Sueur consists of a water treatment plant constructed in 1995, 36 miles of distribution including 4 towers/storage facilities, and 5 wells drawing from the Jordan (3), Franconia (1), and Mount Simon (1) aquifers. The plan currently provides 1 million gallons of water per day and the maximum capacity is 2 million gallons per day. A wellhead protection program went into effect in 2015 to protect groundwater around wells.

Planned improvements over the next five years include the replacement of the middle tower in 2019. With an additional 1 million gallons of capacity, the current plant should be able to accommodate any anticipated future growth.

Sanitary Sewer

While perhaps not glamorous, sanitary sewer systems may be the most important thing a city does for the health of the community. Safely moving and treating waste keeps residents from being exposed to a long list of diseases.

In 2005, recognizing the need for an improved wastewater treatment system and the opportunity for cost savings through coordination, the City of Le Sueur entered into a joint powers agreement with the City of Henderson. The agreement set up the Minnesota River Valley Public Utilities Commission

Figure 4.6 Potable Water System

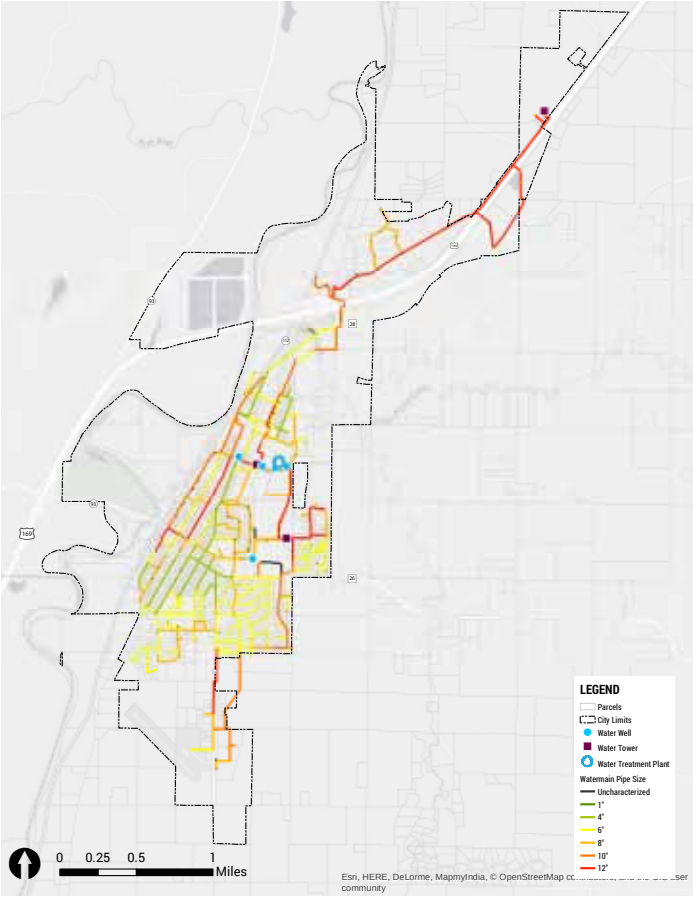
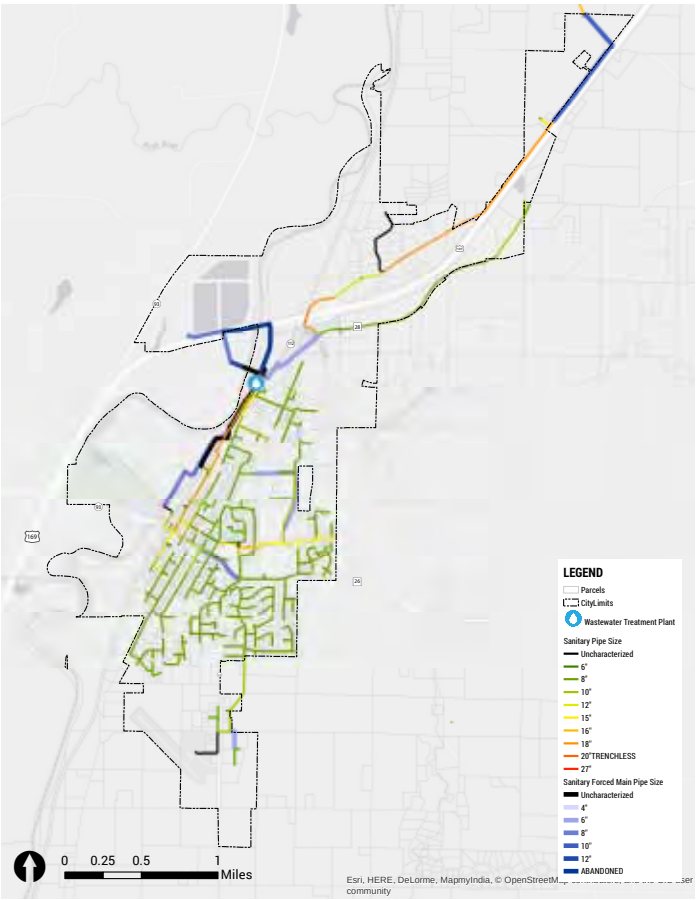


Figure 4.7 Sanitary Sewer System



(MRVPUC), a separate agency, to handle wastewater treatment. The MRVPUC receives funds from Le Sueur and Henderson to operate, based on the amount of wastewater and loadings coming from each community. The Cities then bill individual residents and customers for wastewater usage.

While the MRVPUC is a separate entity from the City of Le Sueur, the sanitary sewer system has quality of life, health, financial, and economic development implications for the community. The Board is comprised of representatives from both Le Sueur and Henderson. The MRVPUC also uses City of Le Sueur employees to operate the facilities and maintain sewer lines.

The sanitary sewer system is made up of the current sewage treatment plant which currently accommodates 1 million gallons per day for both Le Sueur and Henderson, with a capacity of 2 million gallons per day. The treatment plant was built in 2007 to serve both Le Sueur and Henderson. This new facility replaced the sewage ponds on the west side of the Minnesota River. There are 30 miles worth of collection system and 6 lift stations that facilitate the movement of waste. After treatment, the cleaned waste water is discharged into the Minnesota River.

One issue in any sewer system, but especially pronounced in older systems, is inflow/infiltration. Inflow is the introduction of water to the sanitary sewer system from inappropriate sources ,such as sump pumps, roof drains, or cellar drains. Infiltration is the introduction of groundwater to the sanitary sewer system through defective or broken pipes and joints. In both cases, the water entering the system is still generally clean and adding it to the sanitary sewer costs the community money to clean water that does not need it.

Maintaining and repairing the existing system, improving efficiencies, and reducing non-sewage connections will help the sewage system last longer and accommodate additional growth or new users.

CASE STUDY

STORM WATER BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

There are a variety of storm water management techniques that can manage stormwater volumes and flows. These tools help reduce flooding and preserve water quality by treating stormwater at its source. In addition, when sensitively designed, storm water systems can also be a development amenity that increases the overall attractiveness of the community. The following are examples of types of storm water management techniques that should be explored in Le Sueur.

Top row from left to right: a cistern that catches rooftop runoff and reuses storm water for irrigation, public art that functions as storm water management, parking lot storm water treatment drain and garden

Middle row from left to right: stormwater treatment as part of a street boulevard, rain garden outside multi-family housing, parking lot island

Bottom row from left to right: stormwater drain, a street with no curb and drainage swale to treat stormwater.

DRAFT

Stormwater Management

The first goal of the City's stormwater system is to keep stormwater causing damage or creating unsafe conditions. When water is concentrated in certain locations, the impacts can be severe. Flooding in low areas can cause significant damage and prevent many uses of the land. Likewise, water that is concentrated in rivulets, creeks, or rivers will cause the flows to rise and move faster, increasing erosion and undercutting banks.

Dealing with stormwater is typically done utilizing two techniques. The traditional method has been to get stormwater into pipes and move it away from areas where it can cause damage. This system is made up of the curbs, gutters, ditches, and storm drains that can be seen from the street. Below the street, a series of pipes carry water downhill to be released, in Le Sueur's case, into the Minnesota River. This technique also includes other conveyance methods such as drain tile and swales. The second technique is to capture stormwater locally and to allow it to infiltrate into the ground, or in some cases settle before moving into the "pipes" portion of the stormwater system. This cleans the rainwater and helps minimize peak flows during rain events, and reduces erosion issues downstream. Holding stormwater on site may be done with rain gardens, retention ponds, and cisterns.

Both approaches are used in Le Sueur, and both are necessary components of the system to manage stormwater. The City of Le Sueur manages the "pipes" part of the system and requires new development to incorporate stormwater capture techniques. The Le Sueur County Soil and Water Conservation District also assists with the implementation of best management practices (BMPs).

Other Public and Private Utilities

Energy

Electricity Supply

The City's electric supply is provided through the Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (MMPA). There are three substations and improvements are planned for the system in 2016 and 2019.

Renewable Energy Sources

Within the last decade sustainability and climate change have become more relevant and emerging topics to planning. The need to conserve and manage energy costs, as well as public concern over climate change (even at the local level), are the primary drivers for this trend.

Renewable energy is energy generated from natural resources—such as sunlight, wind, rain, and geothermal heat—which are renewable (naturally replenished). Renewable energy technologies range from solar power, wind power, hydroelectricity/micro hydro, biomass and biofuels for transportation.

Wind power is one of the fastest growing energy sources worldwide, and it produces no carbon emissions or pollution. In Minnesota, wind turbines are an increasingly common part of the landscape. **Biomass** use food processing and agricultural wastes to create electricity and solid fuel. Because it produces no waste and causes no carbon emissions, **hydroelectric power** is a sustainable form of energy. **Solar panels** are increasingly popular renewable energy sources.

RENEWABLE ENERGY BENEFITS

The benefits of incorporating renewable energy objectives into Le Sueur's Comprehensive Plan are:

- Energy cost savings and other economic benefits in the form of price stability and certainty
- Incremental revenue growth as a result of attracting and retaining more industry, business, and residents to a more sustainable community

CASE STUDY

REWNEWABLE ENERGY TECHNIQUES

Community Solar Gardens

A community solar garden is a community shared solar array where subscribers are connected to the grid. The subscribers purchase or lease some of the panels in the array and receive a credit on their electric bill for the amount of energy produced by the panels. Community solar gardens allow residents and businesses to take advantage of solar technology without having to install panels, own their home, or worry about shade.

The Brewster Community Solar Garden Cooperative was the first community shared solar project in Massachusetts. The garden is located in a field outside of town located near the Brewster Water Department. The field was formerly used as a sand pit and debris disposal location which made it unsuitable for other development. The success of the Brewster Solar Garden initiative has sparked demand and generated a sister site, the Sippican Community Solar Garden Cooperative to serve nearby towns

For more information, see:
www.brewstercommunitysolargarden.com/2012/10/08/brewster-community-solar-garden%C2%AE-ribbon-cutting/

Community Wind Energy Projects

Community wind projects are owned by the local community. There are many different ownership models. Community wind projects can be owned by a group of individuals, a municipality or a business like a school or hospital. Investing in community wind projects allows the community to expand their renewable energy consumption and stabilize local energy prices while supporting clean energy technology. Projects like Community Wind Energy programs are enticing to the community as it doesn't require the community to modify their current homes, buildings or energy consumption habits.

The City of Rock Port in Missouri was the first 100 percent wind powered community in the United States. The Loess Hills Wind Farm powers the City of Rock Port with the four wind turbines. The turbines are connected directly to the City's high voltage line. The Loess Hills Wind Farm is capable of meeting energy demands for all 1,300 residents and local businesses while still supplying energy to sell to the Missouri Joint Municipal Utilities for use in other areas

For more information, see:
http://www.rockportwind.com/

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They can be isolated private installations serving single uses, or part of larger installations such as solar farms that sends energy back on to the regional grid.

The Le Sueur Electric Utility Department has been providing the City with electric power since the early 1900's, when a 100 horsepower steam engine was installed. In 1992, Le Sueur and seven other cities joined together to form MMPA. Le Sueur electric utility offers rebates to customers who use equipment or make improvements that help preserve energy. As a member of MMPA, Le Sueur is a strong supporter of renewable and sustainable energy.

Le Sueur is home to Hometown BioEnergy (HTBE), an important component of MMPA's commitment towards local, sustainable energy production. The biomass facility, located south of town off of Elmwood Avenue (County Road 112) and south of County Road 115, provides renewable energy to MMPA and its member communities including Le Sueur. The facility uses anaerobic digestion technology to produce biogas from agricultural and food processing wastes which is then used to produce electricity. The facility can also create two valuable by-products—a liquid by-product to be used by local farmers as fertilizer and a dried product that has a number of uses including boiler fuel, soil amendment, and animal bedding. Hometown BioEnergy supports the local community by collecting and processing local wastes to create a renewable source of electricity that flows directly into the Le Sueur power system. The facility was recognized by POWER Magazine as a 2014 Top Renewable Plant. However, the facility and its operators must do a better job of working with the community to manage odors and smells that emanate from the plant operations.

Communications

Communications for residents are currently provided through numerous companies . All developed areas of Le Sueur have access to broadband internet and speeds above 3Mbps. There are surrounding areas in the Le Sueur-Henderson school district that do not have high speed access.

Recycling and Refuse

The City contracts with a private company providing both recycling and trash service for Le Sueur. In addition to typical recyclables handled by Waste Management, the City collects materials such as mercury vapor fluorescent lamps, spiral CFLs, dry cell batteries, and old electronic equipment at the Wastewater Facility.

Small-scale wind and solar roof installations

Street light powered by renewable energy

Le Sueur BioEnergy Plant

Larger-scale solar garden

Goals + Policies

Goal I-1

In collaboration with respective agencies (i.e. MRVPUC, MMPA, etc.), ensure Le Sueur's core infrastructure systems (sanitary sewer, storm sewer, potable water, electricity, and telecommunications) meet the needs of current residences and businesses, and facilitate future growth without compromising the quality of the natural environment.

Policies

I-1.1. Invest in the long term maintenance of the existing transportation system by making scheduled improvements to replace worn or obsolete components.

I-1.2. Provide clean, safe drinking water to all residents by protecting groundwater aquifers from contamination, treating drinking water, and protecting treated drinking water during distribution in order to minimize individual and widespread health risks.

I-1.3. Ensure that water supply will meet current and projected water demand through efficient management activities.

I-1.4. Provide safe, efficient energy opportunities to offset the rising costs of electricity and to minimize economic and environmental impacts.

I-1.5. Investigate opportunities for the integration of renewable energies and work with utilities for partnerships on associated infrastructure development.

Goal I-2

Provide safe and clean drinking water to the City of Le Sueur

Policies

I-2.1. Implement strategies in the new wellhead protection program to protect current well fields with compatible land uses such as parks, recreation, and open space.

I-2.2. Use city communications to create awareness of groundwater protection and contamination prevention.

I-2.3. Test and monitor the water distribution system to ensure the absence of contaminants

Goal I-3

Ensure reliable water supply to meet the demands of growth, the Fire Department, industry, and agriculture.

Policies

I-3.1. Provide upgrades to the water system as needed to ensure reliable water supply in compliance with fire protection standards.

I-3.2. Identify additional well locations to ensure a water sources if needed for additional demand.

I-3.3. Manage demand by supporting water saving strategies for both residential and commercial users (watering policies, efficient fixtures, etc.)

I-3.4. Investigate opportunities for use and re-use of non-potable water (rainwater, graywater, etc.) for appropriate uses.

I-3.5. Support alternative landscaping options that require less water for parks and other city properties.

Goal I-4

Safely and responsibly treat and discharge sewage.

Policies

I-4.1. Treat and test sewage and discharged effluent to meet or exceed all regulations, including current permit requirements for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES).

I-4.2. Regulate the use of septic systems to minimize pollution and health risks.

Goal I-5

Ensure reliable wastewater collection and treatment to meet current and future demand.

Policies

I-5.1. Prohibit discharges and connections to the sanitary sewer system that do not require treatment. This may include stormwater, runoff, cooling water, sump pumps, or other unpolluted sources.

I-5.2. Prohibit discharges and connections to the sanitary sewer system that are not recommended for treatment at the City's sewage plant. This may include industrial wastewater or other sources.

I-5.3. Encourage the use of waste water reduction strategies to manage demand on the sanitary sewage system.

I-5.4. Complete sanitary sewer system inspections and repairs to identify and fix sources of inflow and infiltration (I&I).

I-5.5. Develop and periodically review a crisis response plan for sewage operations to minimize impacts to the City in case of emergencies. Ensure employees are trained for emergency response.

Goal I-6

Safely manage stormwater

Policies

I-6.1. Implement and update a capital improvement and maintenance plan for the stormwater system identifying annual maintenance needs as well as replacement costs.

I-6.2. Develop snow plowing and storage solutions that provide for efficient storage of snow, and the treatment and management of snowmelt.

Goal I-7

Prevent local erosion and flood damage

Policies

I-7.1. Encourage the use of retention ponds, rainwater gardens, and other water storage methods to slow and/or reduce the discharge of water into creeks and rivers.

I-7.2. Require temporary and permanent erosion and sediment control best management practices (BMPs) for construction projects and development

I-7.3. Identify and address locations where flooding occurs. Plan compatible "floodable" uses for these areas.

Goal I-8

Improve surface water quality

The City will work to reduce the impacts of runoff on water quality and damages to natural resources and the environment.

Policies

I-8.1. Encourage the use of retention ponds, vegetated swales, rainwater gardens, and other water storage methods to remove pollutants from stormwater.

I-8.2. Encourage the use of best practices for managing agricultural runoff including the use of buffers, scheduling fertilization and tilling to minimize runoff, and managing livestock waste.

I-8.3. Complete periodic street sweeping to help prevent the conveyance of debris and waste from streets into the stormwater system.

I-8.4. Coordinate with the Le Sueur County Soil and Water Conservation District to encourage and implement BMPs for water quality improvement.

Goal I-9

Recycle household materials

Policies

I-9.1. Coordinate with City contractors to encourage recycling of household goods.

Goal I-10

Safely collect and dispose of waste.

Policies

I-10.1. Coordinate with City contractors to ensure the provision of refuse collection services in Le Sueur.

Goal I-11

Provide safe, efficient energy to residents and businesses in Le Sueur.

Policies

I-11.1. Coordinate with utilities to collocate energy infrastructure in City right-of-way.

I-11.2. Support privatized or other providers of energy to ensure the continued supply of energy in the City.

Goal I-12

Expand internet access to underserved areas around the City of Le Sueur.

Policies

I-12.1. Support Le Sueur County efforts to improve internet access to nearby areas without high speed internet.

I-12.2. Coordinate with utilities to collocate broadband infrastructure in City right-of-way.

Goal I-13

Reduce emissions and costs by increasing energy production through renewable energy sources and reducing energy consumptions.

Policies

I-13.1. Promote energy conservation or sustainability practices.

I-13.2. Continue offering rebates for technology upgrades, appliance upgrades, operations or other sustainability practices that result in more efficient energy usage and lower consumption.

I-13.3. Consider energy efficient vehicles as the City fleet is replaced.

I-13.4. Allow for smaller scale wind or solar energy installations that are designed to co-exist within the context of the surrounding neighborhood weather it is residential or commercial.

I-13.5. Consider strategies and techniques for retrofitting city-owned infrastructure or technology that improve energy efficiency. Pursue and participate in State and Federal incentive programs and research programs focused on energy efficiency building improvements.

I-13.6. Support and encourage landscape improvements that preserve water and reduce energy consumption.

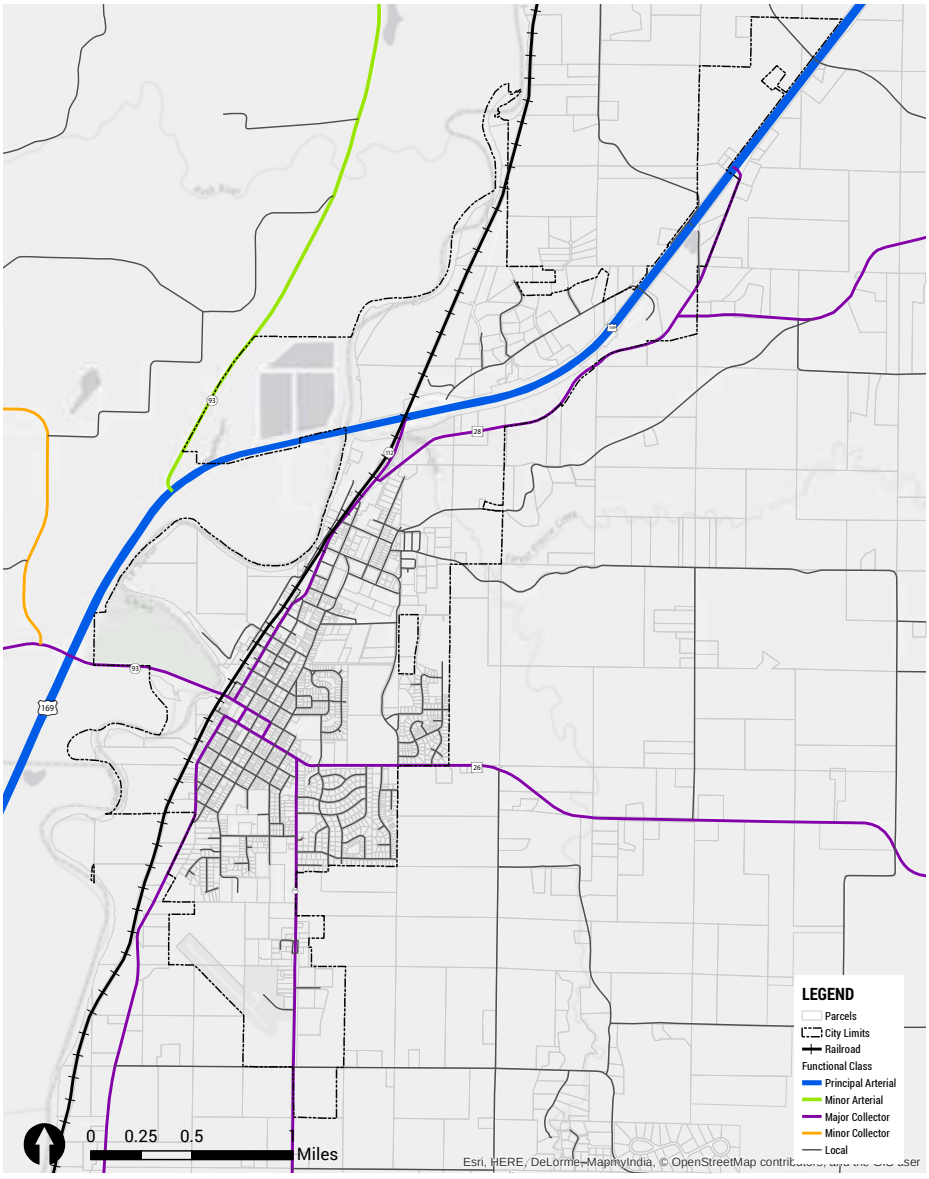
Each red dot indicates an unsafe traffic area which were identified by community members throughout the public engagement process

Transportation

The growth and development of Le Sueur has been heavily shaped by regional transportation systems starting with the Minnesota River and railroad corridor in the early stages of Le Sueur and ultimately Highway 169, which is the greatest influence on growth and land use patterns today. However, the regional systems are only one part of our community's transportation system. Le Sueur must continue to plan for our local system of streets and roadways to enhance mobility options and preserve our quality of life. The airport provides a regional value to the community in terms of leisure and economic development potential. Le Sueur continues to support its presence as an element of the transportation system. A community of Le Sueur's size is not often able to support transit, yet Le Sueur manages to operate a route based system and on call service that connects residents to key destinations.

The comprehensive plan recognizes the existing transportation system in place today and identifies key areas of attention relative to long term improvement particularly as they pertain to traffic control and safety.

Figure 4.8 Functional Road Classifications



DRAFT

Future Roadway System

The plan includes a system of roadways that provide access to property and allow traffic to move through the community, connecting it to regional destinations. The plan is described through a roadway network system of principal arterials, minor arterials, collectors, and local streets.

Principal Arterials serve a regional mobility function first and foremost, connecting Le Sueur to regional destinations such as the Twin Cities Metro area or Mankato. They will carry the highest traffic volume, are intended for longer trips and have the most strict access controls. Direct access is restricted to connections with other arterial and collector roadways. Highway 169 is the only principal arterial in Le Sueur.

Collectors provide access from local nodes and neighborhoods to minor arterials. These roads are generally county or state roads in Le Sueur but may sometimes be under the City's jurisdiction. These roads will carry a moderate level of traffic. Managing access on collector streets is an important objective due to the longer trip generating characteristics of these roads. State Highway 112 (Commerce/Main/Bridge/2nd /Ferry/Elmwood); CSAH 26 (Ferry/Lexington); South Main Street/CSAH 36; Forest Prairie Road (CSAH 28); and Sibley County Road 8.

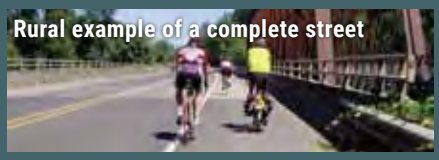
Local roadways provide access from private property to collector streets. These are Le Sueur's neighborhood streets.

Roadway jurisdiction identifies the responsible government agency. Roadways don't stop at corporate boundaries. They span the community extending into adjacent rural areas. They also serve more than local needs, providing access to the region and ultimately the nation. Jurisdictional classification determines what government entity is responsible for development, maintenance and access to the roadway. Jurisdiction includes City, Le Sueur County, State (MnDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHA).

Access needs to roadways can vary depending on the functional classification of the roadway. Managing access points onto a road benefits the community in many ways. Reducing points of conflict minimizes accidents and allows for more free-flowing traffic. Consolidation of access at controlled intersections reduces delays. Fewer direct access points allow for less pavement and more landscaping or amenities and enhances the pedestrian experience. However, certain commercial land uses depend highly on convenient access to vehicular traffic.

Le Sueur seeks a transportation system that is sustainable which is defined through the following goals and policies.

CASE STUDY


Rural example of a complete street

Downtown example of a complete street

COMPLETE STREETS

Complete Streets is a design approach to make streets safe and efficient for all modes of transportation, including cars and trucks, but also pedestrians, bicycles, and transit. Past engineering practices have emphasized the importance of the automobile, often at the expense of other users. Complete streets maintain functionality for cars and trucks, but provide a safer, more enjoyable experience for pedestrians, bikes, and transit users as well as adjacent business owners and residents.

Complete streets come in many types from a rural roadway connecting towns to a City's Main Street. A rural road may only need wider shoulders and paint to make walking and bicycling safe, while an urban street may include wider sidewalks, separated bike lanes, and curb cuts for wheelchair access. The context and demands placed on a road will shape the appearance and design of a complete street, but they must function for all users.

Benefits of Complete Streets

- Safer
- Active Living/Healthier
- Increased access to business
- Improve transportation options for seniors, children and everyone in between
- Foster strong communities

For more information, see: www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets

Goals + Policies

Goal T-1

Manage access to the roadway network

Access management is the planning, design, and implementation of land use and transportation strategies that maintain a safe flow of traffic while accommodating the access needs of adjacent development. Through access management, high accident areas or areas where traffic is most heavy can be made safer and more efficient. Access and visibility is of great concern to businesses, but too many access points create conflict, accidents, congestion and visual clutter which is detriment to the success and vitality of a business and a community as a whole.

Policies

T-1.1. Control and manage direct access to arterial and collector roadways in new growth areas such as north Highway 169.

T-1.2. Over time, correct access problems within existing developed areas as property intensifies in development, redevelops or as roadways are reconstructed.

T-1.3. Require individual properties to access the arterial roadway system via access to collector or local streets rather than direct access to arterial streets.

T-1.4. Support redevelopment of property along existing collector road corridors that seeks to reduce individual direct access points.

T-1.5. Encourage consolidation of driveways along collector streets.

T-1.6. Coordinate approvals of local development projects that have potential regional impacts in collaboration with appropriate Township, County and State road agencies.

T-1.7. Collaborate with Le Sueur County and MnDOT in establishing clear and concise access management standards, guidelines and policies that can be uniformly applied to major corridors that are within Le Sueur.

Goal T-2

System connectivity

Connectivity refers to a system of roads that connect points of interest such as; neighborhoods to schools, business centers, or downtown; collector and local roads to arterial roads; and neighborhoods to other neighborhoods. Le Sueur's goal is to offer greater degrees of connectivity such that we have choices in the transportation corridors that move us through and within the community. This goal particularly applies to longer term growth on Le Sueur's edges.

Policies

T-2.1. Require new neighborhoods to have multiple ingress and egress points from local streets connecting to collector and arterial street systems.

T-2.2. Minimize the use of cul-de-sacs and dead end streets to places where such a street design protects or preserves significant natural resource elements or topographic features.

T-2.3. Explore new street/roadway improvements on a City wide basis that increase or enhance connectivity within the community as a solution to relieving traffic congestion on existing collector corridors.

T-2.4. Plan beyond a specific development projects boundaries. Roads and trails do not just end a particular project's edges. As development is proposed in new growth areas make sure that the circulation system considers how adjacent property might develop and how a circulation system works for the larger area and connects to the collector and arterial roadway system.

T-2.5. Work with the railroad companies to ensure adequate levels of railroad crossing are available to facilitate connectivity.

Goal T-3

Alternative mobility options

Le Sueur's goal for mobility options is to offer a full range of travel modes as well as routes. This includes transit, walking, biking and alternative vehicles that are energy efficient or that serve less mobile populations.

Policies

T-3.1. Encourage site design and building design that strengthens the connection between sidewalks and trails (both existing and planned) such that getting to a building from the public right-of-way is an easy and attractive route.

T-3.2. Incorporate parking areas for bicycles and other alternative vehicles in major public destination areas such as Downtown Le Sueur, major businesses, and local school campuses.

T-3.3. As roadway improvements are planned, incorporate off street multi-use trails and sidewalks along all major road corridors (collectors) that lead to key destinations such as downtown Le Sueur, schools, churches, or recreation destinations.

T-3.4. Require sidewalks to be built in new subdivision on all roads that are greater than 500 feet in length and provide connections between neighborhoods, to neighborhood or community parks, schools or other destinations. Sidewalks should be encouraged on both sides of the street. Support a policy of maintaining sidewalks that includes property owner responsibility for clearing sidewalks along local streets and City plowing along trail corridors, collector and arterial streets.

T-3.5. As local roadways get reconstructed or as roads are constructed in new growth areas evaluate design alternatives that include incorporating on-street accommodations for alternative vehicles that travel at lower speeds than typical automobiles. This may include electric golf carts or vehicles, motorized scooters/wheel chairs, or other innovative technology.

T-3.6. Sidewalk design in Downtown Le Sueur should support the needs of downtown merchants to occasionally bring the business out to the street, while preserving the ability for safe and convenient movement of people with various mobility challenges.

T-3.7. Support the continued management and growth of the municipal airport and Le Sueur Transit service.

Goal T-4

A safe roadway system

A roadway system that is safe is of extreme importance for the health and wellbeing of our community. Le Sueur's goal is minimize traffic accidents and minimize property damage that result from unsafe roadway systems.

Policies

T-4.1. Work with State and County agencies in determining the optimal speed limits for major road corridors in conjunction with the stated function and desired design character of the roadway.

T-4.2. Support a way finding system to clearly guide and direct travelers who are new to the community and are seeking a particular destination.

T-4.3. Ensure sign ordinances provide a balance between displaying appropriate business names and address information while minimizing distractions and clutter.

T-4.4. Monitor traffic patterns and incidents on a regular basis to be able to respond to changing travel behaviors and traffic movements.

T-4.5. Support and enforce the policies related to access management, connectivity, mobility options, and traffic management as a means to enhance safety of the roadway system.

T-4.6. Continually work with major employers and the trucking industry to make sure that truck traffic is able to move through the community in a safe and efficient way.

what we heard

> **"I drive a truck and it's terrible trying to get through town**

Goal T-5

Cost effectiveness

Funding of roadway improvements is a costly endeavor. Le Sueur's goal is to invest in the maintenance and reconstruction of the existing roadway infrastructure and to ensure that new road corridors and intersections are planned for both short term and long term needs.

Policies

T-5.1. Support dedication of funds for street maintenance and reconstruction on an annual basis, consistent with a street reconstruction plan and consistent with needs for upgrading existing infrastructure systems that can be aligned with street improvements.

T-5.2. Collaborate with regional agencies to secure regional and federal funding for roadway projects that have a regional benefit.

T-5.3. Explore alternative design configurations and materials in road reconstruction or new construction in order maximize economic sustainability and to minimize the environmental impacts while maintaining acceptable traffic flow and ensuring safe operations.

Goal T-6

Design and aesthetics…enhance the experience

Traveling through and within the community, whether on foot, bicycle or vehicle, should be more than just moving from destination to destination. Le Sueur's goal for the transportation system is to ensure attractive and memorable street corridors.

Policies

T-6.1. Improve Le Sueur's gateways by incorporating improved signage consistent with the community's character, as well as landscape improvements that utilize native plantings.

T-6.2. Establish and a 'wayfinding' system that identifies key locations for unique signage that promotes community destinations (Downtown Le Sueur—Schools – Minnesota River Access—Regional Trail heads—historic land marks.)

T-6.3. Encourage commercial property along arterial and collector corridors to have an attractive and high amenity site design that address the corridor. This can be done through architectural enhancements and/or key site design amenities such as public art, attractive signage or environmental features.

T-6.4. Discourage vast blank parking areas between the street and the business. Where a parking configuration in the front of a structure is the most optimal site design pattern, require an orchard parking approach (heavily landscaped—parking area is broken up with tree islands).

T-6.5. Establish a landscape and streetscape palette for public and private streetscape/landscaping. Such a palette can offer flexibility while ensuring consistency between public and private streetscape/landscape enhancements.

Parks, Recreation, & Open Space

Parks are an important part of life in Le Sueur. They encourage active and healthy living, community and family connections, and a greater appreciation of the natural environment. Parks can define the identity of a neighborhood or community and increase property values. Environmental features and open space shape the perceptions of visitors and allow residents to experience nature.

The guiding principles at the beginning of this plan help to validate the importance of parks in Le Sueur. Parks show off the natural beauty of the City. They provide opportunities to improve health. Their ecological functioning can create a vibrant, dynamic place. Parks provide public spaces to meet and welcome neighbors. Most importantly, they enhance the quality of life in Le Sueur.

Parks

Le Sueur City Parks

Parks in Le Sueur serve many different purposes. Residents wouldn't go to Fountain Park to play football or take the boat to Bruce Frank Field. All kinds of different parks are necessary to meet the diverse recreation needs of a city. Over its history, Le Sueur has developed different parks to meet these needs.

Mini-Parks

Mini Parks provide green space and landscaping in the urban environment. They are typically used for passive recreation such as eating lunch, sitting, or enjoying flowers or a fountain. In Le Sueur, they welcome people to the City, whether that is Fountain Park and Mother Louise Park downtown, or the giant on the north end of town.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood Parks are the parks intended to serve the day to day needs of neighborhoods. While people from across the City may use them from time to time, they are really intended to be accessible to nearby residents.

Community Parks

Community Parks are the gathering and recreation places for the City. They may have specific uses incorporated into the larger park, but meet a multitude of needs overall. Community Parks consolidate a lot of programming into one park location, including things that do not need to be duplicated in other parks.

Special Use Parks

Special use parks have a single, primary use. In Le Sueur this is the baseball field and the community center.

Figure 4.9 Park Classifications

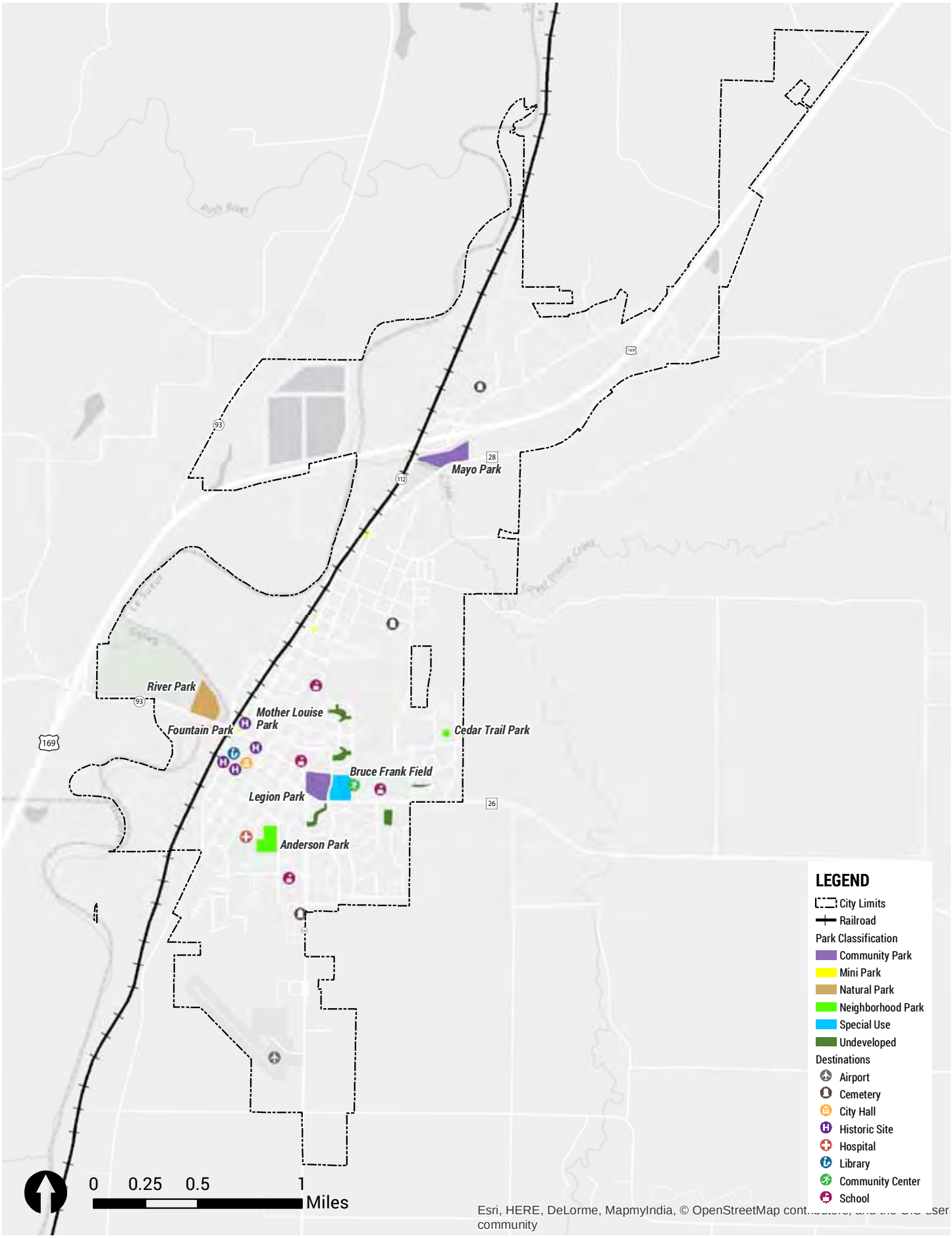


Table 4.1 Park Classifications

Type	Use	Service Area	Typical Amenities	Le Sueur Parks
Mini Parks	Mini parks are small pieces of land that serve as passive parks, spots of respite and rest, and attractive landscaping.	Neighbor-hoods or districts.	Monuments, benches, gateways, signage, landscaping	Pierre Le Sueur Park (Fountain Park) Mother Louise Park Jolly Green Giant Wayside Main St x Commerce St x Cathcart St Gateway
Neighborhood Parks	The primary recreation facility to meet the day-to-day needs of neighborhoods. Provide active recreation and gathering space for families or groups of neighbors.	Neighbor-hoods (1/4 Mile-1/2 Mile)	Playgrounds Open field space Basketball hoops	Dr. Joe E. Anderson Park Cedar Trail Park
Community Parks	Facilities serving the entire community with access to natural and programmed areas. These parks may also serve regional visitors, although not as the primary function.	City-wide	Gathering space, picnic shelters, athletic fields, other large format recreation (disc golf, community gardens, etc)	Mayo Park American Legion Park
Special Use Parks	Parks or facilities serving a single use activity such as athletics (solely), historic interpretation, exercise, education, etc. Special Use Parks and Facilities are focused on providing services at a community wide level, and may attract outside visitors as well.	City-wide	Varied based on special use	Le Sueur Special Use Parks: Bruce Frank Field Le Sueur Special Use Facilities: Community Center
Natural Parks	Areas focused on the provision of natural environments, passive recreation, and ecological education.	City-wide and regional	Habitat, nature access, trails, educational interpretation	River Park
Undeveloped Parks	The City of Le Sueur also retains pieces of land that have been dedicated as parkland, but not developed. In instances where parks are not accessible, or the community would benefit from connections, these should be developed as parks and trails.			

Natural Parks

Natural Parks are parks that provide access to environmental areas and other features such as woods, rivers, and prairie. Currently River Park is the only natural park. If the City grows into some of the green corridors, or develops a park along in the river, these would likely be natural parks as well.

Undeveloped Parkland

Through the development process, land has been dedicated to the City for park uses. The size and location of these parcels lends themselves to neighborhood parks. Currently much of this land is undeveloped. At this point, the City is not looking to develop new neighborhood park and access is adequate. There may be an opportunity to turn land over to the neighbors if the parkland is not going to be used, and reduce the maintenance requirements that are currently on the City.

TRENDS

Recreational trends change over time as a result of demographic, social, economic, and cultural changes. Changes in recreation trends affect park and recreation facility needs. A number of significant park and recreational trends are likely to have an impact on the City of Le Sueur:

Trails tend to be the most popular recreation facility of all age groups. Walking, running, biking, and in-line skating occur on paved trails. People of all ages and abilities use trails. Natural surface trails are also popular with walkers, hikers, nature enthusiasts, and cross country skiers. There is a potential to greatly expand both the local and regional trail network in Le Sueur.

As the population becomes more diverse, there tends to be a **greater diversity of park users**. Use of parks and services differ by ethnic and cultural groups.

The **active living** movement is gaining momentum. The rates of obesity are increasing across all age groups and with it the associated health risks, such as high blood pressure and diabetes. As a result, there has been an increased awareness of the benefits of exercise, walking and biking. Active living includes dedicated exercise, and simply incorporating movement into everyday activities, such as walking rather than driving to the store. The City of Le Sueur has an active living plan that promotes the development of a network that allows all people to incorporate activity into daily life. There is still much work to be done, but the community is moving in a good direction.

Economic trends include rising health care costs, anti-tax sentiments, increasing fuel and material costs, and expectations of higher efficiencies may affect the resources available to provide park and recreation improvement and upkeep.

Demand for **indoor recreation** facilities. Many cities desire quality indoor recreation facilities and community gathering places, which Le Sueur is fortunate to be able to provide at the community center. This is an important asset for the community.

Non-traditional recreation and individual sports, such as skateboarding, in-line skating, BMX biking, geocaching, and disc golf, are also increasing in popularity.

Requests for **support facilities** at large recreational facilities are growing – i.e., restrooms, concessions stands, batting cages, playgrounds, etc.

Time constraints on families are impacting recreational choices. People are looking for an efficient close-to-home use of recreation time. Due to time constraints, program offerings that are shorter in duration tend to be more popular.

Youth sports participants starting to focus on one sport for the entire year resulting in a rise in training programs and a **split between elite and recreational teams**.

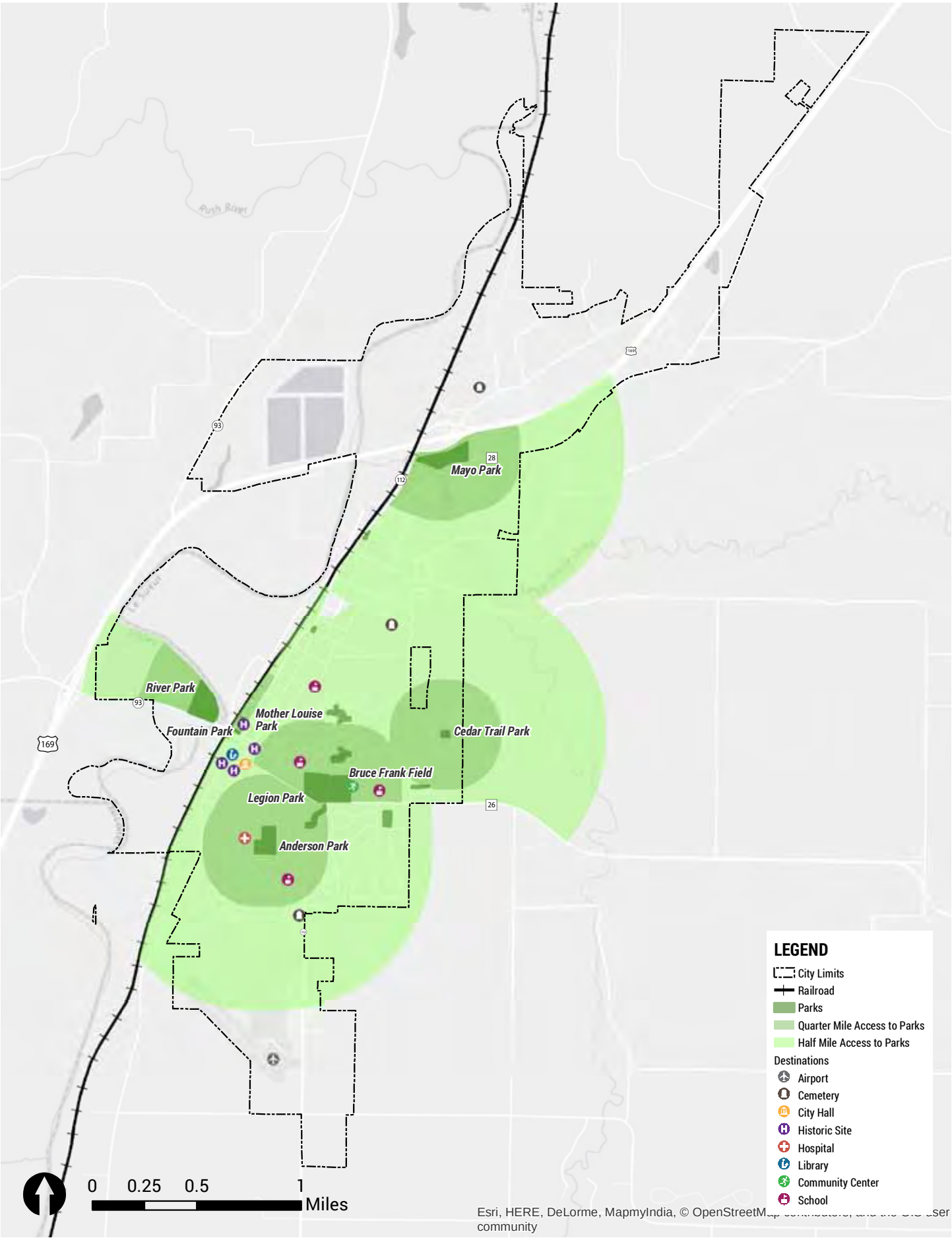
More leisure time, especially among youth, is spent enjoying a multitude of **media, technology, and entertainment** options that compete with traditional recreation opportunities. The rise of mobile devices also means that some technologies can be incorporated with active living and outdoor recreation. This includes everything from listening to music to augmented reality games.

Nature deficit - A growing number of people are increasingly alienated from the natural world.

Participation in **adult and senior programs** and sports has increased, in part due to the aging of the population. Adult programming is less focused on adult leagues and more on programs that are flexible such as fitness programs, running/jogging, bicycling, and yoga.

Off-leash dog areas are very popular in many communities.

Figure 4.10 City Park Access



Access to City Parks

Nearly every resident in Le Sueur lives within 1/2 a mile of a city park which is the standard established by the National Recreation and Parks Association as a walkable distance. Many of the original southern residences are within a quarter mile of a park which is a preferred distance.

Regional Parks and Recreation

Rush River County Park

Sibley County operates Rush River County Park between Henderson and Le Sueur. Activities and amenities include trails, swimming, playground, picnic areas, camping, and a designated horse area.

Ney Nature Center

The Ney Nature Center is a Le Sueur County Park north of the City of Le Sueur. With 466 acres, the vision of the nature center is to "inspire appreciation and respect for nature." The center offers hiking trails, bird watching, educational programming, day camps, cross country skiing, and geocaching.

Minnesota Valley State Recreation Area

Starting about 10 miles to the north, the Minnesota Valley State Recreation Area sits in stretches along the Minnesota River from Belle Plaine to Shakopee. The area is over 5,000 acres and

Privately operated recreation

Golf Course

The Le Sueur Country Club lies to the southwest of the City, boasting 18 holes and a maximum distance of 6365 yards. Memberships are available for the country club, but the course can be used by the general public.

Caribou Gun Club

Caribou Gun Club and Hunting Preserve offers memberships and public firearm based recreation. Trap, sporting clays, and a rifle/pistol range are all available, as well as pheasant hunting in the Caribou Hunting Preserve.

CASE STUDY

MINNESOTA VALLEY STATE RECREATION AREA

The Minnesota Valley State Recreation Area is a set of preserves and natural areas along the Minnesota River from Shakopee to Belle Plaine.

The area is largely located in undevelopable floodplain, but the park uses are all designed to be compatible with the reality of rising and falling waters. Users understand that there are times when the recreation area is not accessible due to flooding, but in return visitors at other times of the year are granted riverfront access, hikes through floodplain forests, glimpses of unique wildlife, and historic landscapes.

Uses within the Minnesota Valley State Recreation Area

- Trails (Paved and Natural Surface)
- Camping
- Hunting
- Mountain Biking
- Fishing
- Wildlife Observation
- Horseback Riding
- Cross Country Skiing
- Snowmobiling
- Nature Education
- Snowshoeing
- Dogsledding
- Picnics

For more information, see: http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_parks/minnesota_valley/index.html

BICYCLE USERS

Comfort with bicycle facilities depends on a number of variables, including transportation needs, recreation demands, fitness, and age. A goal of the community is to provide an overall system that functions for all users.

Bicycle users typically fall into three basic categories:

Advanced or experienced riders- These riders operate their bicycles as they would a motor vehicle. They ride for speed and convenience, seeking direct access to destinations with a minimum of detours or delay. Frequently, they use a bicycle as a primary means of commuting from home to job. They are typically comfortable riding with motor vehicles traffic but require sufficient operating space on the roadway to eliminate the need for either themselves or a passing motor vehicle to shift position. On busier streets, many advanced or experience riders will still prefer bike lanes or wide paved shoulders.

Basic or less confident adult riders- This category uses bicycles for recreation, fitness, and transportation. Basic riders are comfortable riding on neighborhood streets and off-street trails. On busier streets, they prefer designated facilities such as off-street trails or striped bike lanes.

Children- Children use trails for recreation, play, and for travel within neighborhoods and to community destinations such as schools and parks. Residential streets with low motor vehicle speeds and off-street trails are preferred by this group, and their parents. Although less desirable, on-street bikeways with clear pavement markings will also be used by older children.

Trails

Regional Trail Hub

Two regional trails are planned to come together in Le Sueur:

- The Minnesota Valley State Trail will run from Fort Snelling State Park to Le Sueur (connecting at Mayo Park) and eventually on to Mankato
- The Minnesota River State Trail will run from Big Stone State Park in west central Minnesota to Le Sueur.

These trail projects are in the planning stages and no specific routes have been defined.

The City can be an advocate of the regional trail projects. The City can also work to make a strong hub by planning for where the trails come into Le Sueur and link up. The city can help define the route, wayside rest, trail head areas and associated amenities, and potential interpretive amenities in collaboration with the DNR.

Purpose of Regional Trails

Regional trails are designed to connect cities by providing recreational trails along natural, historical, and cultural areas. The planned trails will bring visitors to Le Sueur and provide community members with recreational and exercise activities.

Design of Regional Trails

These trails are typically off road, although portions may be along the sides of roads until the trail network is improved or when located in urban environments. These trails should be paved for maximum usability, but crushed limestone may be a suitable substitute. Given their relatively flat grade, many regional trails follow old rail corridors as they connect cities and towns. Regional trails benefit from a natural environment and are low impact in a flood zone. To the extent possible, the Minnesota River valley and woodlands could provide a beautiful setting for regional trails to Le Sueur. Regional trails should be accessible to communities by local trails or with parking lots at trailheads.

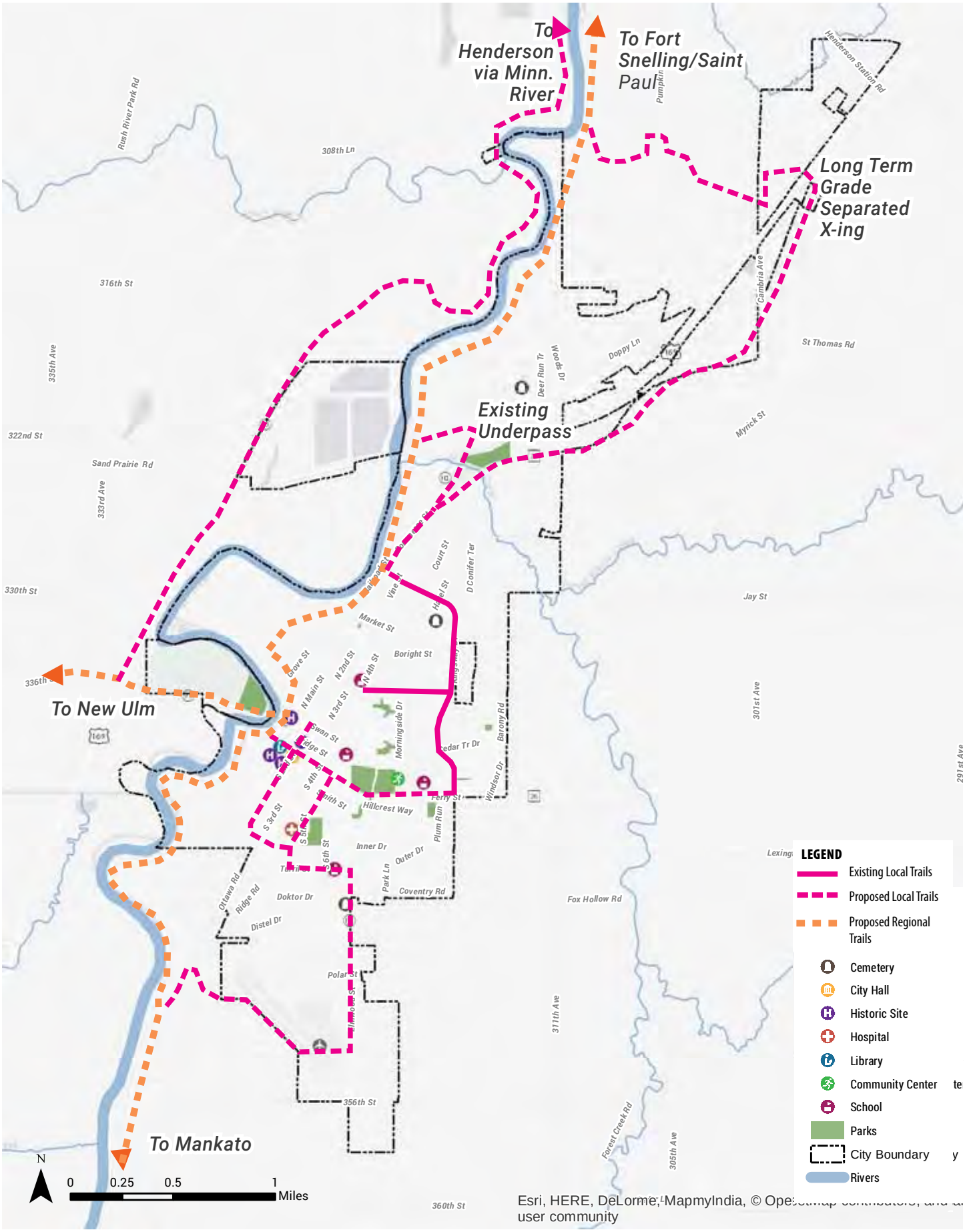
Local Trail Loops

Trails and sidewalks are basic building blocks that allow for active living and active transportation throughout the community. The City is undergoing a sidewalk upgrade process which is having positive effects on the walkability of the area. This is especially valuable for those with mobility challenges such as the elderly and disabled.

In addition to the sidewalk efforts, the City should work to improve trail and bikeway connections linking existing trails and key destinations. It would also establish a list of capital investments, cost estimates, funding strategies and a phasing plan for how it gets built. An improved trail system will make a stronger connection point to the greater regional system, and help promote Le Sueur as a destination along the regional trail network.

Improving the trail network strengthen recreational opportunities, economic opportunities, and overall quality of life.

Figure 4.11 Trail Plan



Example of an off-street trail

Example of an on-street trail

Purpose of Off Street Local Trails

Off street trails are intended to connect neighborhoods with destinations such as schools, downtown, and employment areas. They should also serve as the connecting link between neighborhoods and regional trails.

Design of Off Street Local Trails

Off-street local trails are often (but not always) designed as part of the road right of way system, but separated by curbs or vegetation. They are typically bituminous or concrete. New development should include right of way for trails on at least one side of collector and arterial roads.

Purpose of On Street Bike Routes

On street bike facilities should function for all users, but are generally aimed at experienced bike riders who are comfortable riding with or next to motor vehicle traffic. On street facilities give bicyclists a safe space on the road for commuting and exercise.

Design of On Street Bike Routes

On street bike routes typically take one of two forms:

Bike Lanes

Bike lanes provide a marked area along higher traffic volume streets that connect key destinations within the community. The signage and marking along these streets is important in encouraging bicycle ridership and improve safety.

Bike Boulevards

Bike boulevards are lower traffic volume streets that are signed and/or designated as bike routes. These streets also are intended to connect key destinations within the community and other trail corridors. Signage and road markings should make drivers and bicyclists aware that the road should be shared.

Additional Infrastructure

On roads that are designated bicycle routes, other infrastructure and design considerations can enhance safety and the rider experience. These need to be tailored to each unique situation and could include:

- Speed bumps
- Round-a-bouts
- Chicanes (curves in a road to slow traffic)
- Curb bump outs/edge islands
- Center islands
- High visibility crossings
- Refuge medians
- Signage, lights, warning beacons, signals at crossings
- Landscaping for traffic calming
- Lower speeds

Table 4.2 Possible Singage Types

Sign Example	Sign Type	Role	Placement
	Trail Kiosk	Route maps and additional information about destinations such as nearby businesses or history.	At trailheads
	Directional Sign	Identify turns, route destination choices and distance.	Route intersections and decision points along trail and bikeway.
	Route Sign	Identify route name and major destination.	Every 1/2 mile along on-road bike routes and at major intersections.
	Bike lane pavement markings	Identify on-road bike routes, sharrows or climbing lanes in addition to route signs.	Pavement

Integration Into River Bottoms and Edge Greenways

As the trail network expands, the river bottoms and edge greenways are a great location for recreational trails to be located. While the river bottoms do flood, properly constructed trails can withstand short term inundation. Trails in these natural areas will allow residents and visitors the opportunity to experience the Minnesota River and other natural features of the area, which is highly desired by residents and will be a defining feature for visitors.

Trail Signage & Wayfinding

Wayfinding is the way in which people orient themselves and navigate from place to place and is a vital component of an effective bicycle and walkway system. People need to be able to easily understand and navigate bikeways and walkways in order to conveniently and safely get to their destination.

Wayfinding signs for pedestrians and bicyclists typically show destination, direction and distance. Signs are placed where routes change or there is a change of direction and periodically along the route. For cyclists, pavement markings can be easier to see and can be used to supplement signage and alert motorist to the presence of cyclists.

Previous Planning Efforts

The Comprehensive Plan's approach to trails builds on findings from previous planning efforts in the community:

Le Sueur Safe Routes to School

Key goals addressed by trail planning:

- Improve connectivity and quality of sidewalk network.
- Improve roadway crossings safety.

- Educate students and community members about bicycle and pedestrian safety.
- Increase student's physical activity and reduce childhood obesity of Le Sueur students.

Le Sueur Active Living Plan

Key goals addressed by trail planning:

- Create a pedestrian friendly community for people of all ages
- Encourage cooperation between key players in the community such as the county, the schools, the city, the business community, etc.
- Focus on economic development and increasing the quality of life
- Increase the percentage of residents who have a healthy lifestyle

Minnesota Valley Health Care - Health Needs Assessment

Key goals addressed by trail planning:

- Improve walkability
- Create opportunities for exercise
- Recreational opportunities for all age groups
- Focusing on physical activity

Goals + Policies

Goal P-1

Promote active living by improving the community's connections to natural areas and through the maintenance and expansion of an environmentally and economically sustainable park, recreation, and trail system.

Policies

P-1.1. Ensure every member of the Le Sueur community has equitable, safe, walkable access to a park or natural area.

P-1.2. Take advantage of future regional trail connections to establish Le Sueur as a hub for active living and outdoor recreation, expanding on local culture and making the City a regional draw.

P-1.3. Connect neighborhoods to local destinations, schools and institutions, parks and recreation facilities, and the regional trail network.

P-1.4. Reconstruct sidewalks and trails that are in disrepair and install new sidewalks and trails to eliminate gaps in the system. Conduct these efforts in combination with road reconstruction/repair projects when possible.

P-1.5. Ensure all parks, park buildings, and trails are safe, convenient, and accessible for all residents.

P-1.6. Explore opportunities to integrate art within the parks and recreation system.

P-1.7. Reconnect the Minnesota River to the City as an important recreational amenity without degrading habitat or water quality.

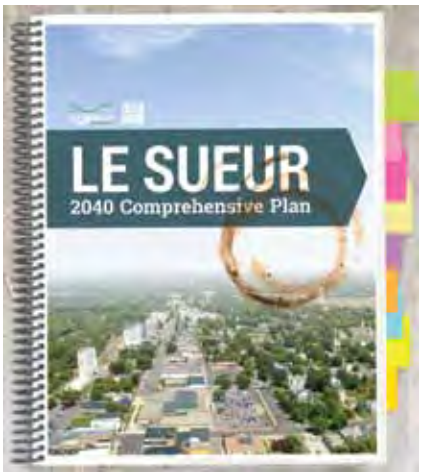
P-1.8. Incorporate natural features and areas into the parks system when possible and applicable.

05. IMPLEMENTATION

Photo provided by the City of Le Sueur

The Le Sueur Comprehensive Plan provides the policy framework to guide physical change in the community over the next 20 years. The effectiveness of the plan to guide development and public investment decisions depends to a large extent on clearly identifying actions and initiatives to implement the ideas outlined in the plan.

Implementation of the plan will occur in several ways.



The Plan as a Guide to Decisions Making

The plan will be used on a daily basis by the City in the day to day operations of local government. City Staff will reference plan policies and goals to support elected and appointed officials in carrying out their responsibilities in making key decisions relative to public investments, growth, and redevelopment. Requests for land use applications and development projects will be evaluated based on consistency with the plan. After year one, the plan should be most noted by its torn edges, protruding sticky notes and coffee stains, evidence of extensive use of the plan.

Elected and appointed officials will use the plan to justify hard decisions related to land use development, zoning requests, annexation, growth, redevelopment, economic development, and public infrastructure investment.

The Le Sueur Economic Development Authority, in collaboration with developers, brokers, realtors and investors, will use the plan to help formulate strategies for new development projects or investing in existing development and to help with risk assessment.

Boards, commissions, civic groups, or other community groups will use the plan to help in establishing annual work programs and priorities, working off the plans "to do list."

The Plan as a Marketing Tool

The ideas represented in Le Sueur's comprehensive plan emphasize a number of strategies that require coordinated efforts by the community to attract, grow, and further develop ideas. As an adopted policy plan the Comprehensive Plan can help solidify the support, commitment and collaboration needed to mobilize the community. The plan should be referenced, celebrated and promoted to the Le Sueur community and the region seeking to invest or re-invest in the city. In essence, the plan becomes the document that is provided to prospective businesses, residents or investors or potential grantors/philanthropists.

The Plan as a "To Do List"

We all have our "to do lists" at home stuck on the fridge or bulletin board. In fact some have many to do lists. The Comprehensive Plan is the City of Le Sueur's to do list and should be a resource for city departments, boards and commissions as they establish annual goals and work programs. Successful implementation of the comprehensive plan results in checking off some of the projects on the list. As items get checked off the list, it is an indicator that the plan should be revisited and refreshed.

KEY TERMINOLOGY

Strategies are actions, programs, and practices that support one or more of the plan's goals and policies. Strategies address the "who, what, when, where, and how" of reaching a goal, and may involve multiple sub-strategies.

Action Steps are physical initiatives that directly correlate to the vision and guiding principles and are intended to carry out an idea or policy identified through the planning process and memorialized in the adoption of the plan.

Implementation Strategies & Action Steps

Action steps are physical initiatives that are intended to carry out an idea or policy identified through the planning process and memorialized in the adoption of the plan. The action steps directly correlate to the vision and guiding principles. Action steps will result in both tangible and intangible outcomes. For example, one action step may be to provide a service that enhances quality of life. Providing a service might not result in a physical product or result but is implementing a policy of the plan. On the other hand, an action step that is focused on growing a business or industry might result in a new development or new jobs, both tangible outcomes.

In the case of action steps, the plan identifies an initiative or action, an entity or person responsible for the action or initiative, a time frame for completion, a general statement of cost to understand the magnitude of the action or initiative and a means to measure the action or initiative's effectiveness in moving towards the plan objectives/goals.

Strategy 1 Volunteerism/Philanthropy

Volunteerism is important within small towns across America. It is of critical importance to Le Sueur and it helps preserve some of the small town identity that many desire to maintain. Volunteerism helps build ownership of community, strengthens civic engagement, builds relationships and ultimately, contributes to the vibrancy and resilience of the community. It can be very rewarding when it is supported by a shared vision created by an entire community. The new comprehensive plan has been prepared with many opportunities for the public to participate in a dialogue. As implementation occurs, the dialogue must continue and participation in that dialogue must continue to grow. Changing times require Le Sueur to continuously plan for the future and be able to adapt to change and seize opportunities as they emerge.

A key strategy for growing volunteer participation is to open up more opportunities for community members to volunteer their services, expertise and time in the pursuit of carrying out the vision, guiding principles, and comprehensive plan ideas.

Action Steps

1.1. Establish a coordinator of volunteer activities

1.2. Provide a means to align and connect community members strengths, skills, passions and assets with the appropriate implementation strategy, project or idea

1.3. Establish specific targets and goals for volunteerism (i.e. number of new volunteers participating, total estimated volunteer hours logged, projects completed, projects initiated, etc…)

1.4. Strive for a diversity of volunteers (age, gender, income, etc…). Partner with the Le Sueur Henderson Schools, local employers, civic groups, etc.

1.5. Establish a recognition and appreciation program that annually celebrates accomplishments and recognizes contributions, even the small ones.

1.6. Create/advocate for matching contributions from local organizations that seek to benefit by the volunteer activities and efforts

Strategy 2 Partnerships

Implementation of the comprehensive plan requires partnerships between the public and private sectors. Private sector builds new neighborhoods and grows business; they provide the supply. The community helps shape that neighborhood and is the demand. Neighborhoods don't form overnight. Collaboration with property owners, developers and investors will be required to see neighborhoods come together in a connected fashion even when challenged by barriers such as topography or Highway 169. The plan recognizes the need to focus on the core of the community. The historic downtown area and its fringe areas will require collaboration among the public and businesses particularly in areas where common goals are challenged by competing operational characteristics such as truck traffic through the downtown. Forming new partnerships and strengthening existing partnerships is a critical strategy in realizing the vision.

Action Steps

2.1. Partner with landowners who control parcels most suitable for new development in the future to provide a coordinated marketing and development plan that reduces development barriers and maximizes consistency with the City's vision and guiding principles. (see North 169 Growth Focus area discussion)

2.2. Continue partnering with the School District to provide recreational programming for all ages of the Le Sueur community.

2.3. Partner with major businesses in downtown to strategize land use transition and redevelopment impacts and ultimately an identity for downtown. (see downtown master planning idea)

2.4. Partner with local/regional produce farmers to provide a more substantial and permanent place for the farmers market, integrated with future downtown master planning.

VOLUNTEERISM/ PHILANTHROPY SUMMARY

Responsible Entity

City Council/Administration/Civic Groups

Timing

Immediate – and ongoing

Cost Implications

Will require staff time to initiate/start up – minimal budget impacts

Funding Sources

General fund, grant resources, philanthropy

Key measurements

Create a volunteer database and record total volunteers, new volunteers added on an annual basis, total volunteer hours logged and measured on an annual basis. An important measurement is also to be able to measure the diversity in the volunteer base, particularly new residents vs. long term residents and age of volunteers (kids, young adults, families, retirees, seniors.)

PARTNERSHIPS SUMMARY

Responsible Entity

City Council/Administration/Partners

Timing

Immediate – then ongoing

Cost Implications

Will require staff time to coordinate – minimal budget impacts

Funding Sources

General fund, grant resources, philanthropy

Key measurements

Number of partnerships created – number of projects initiated – number of projects completed.

2.5. Partner with local business leaders to explore new business ventures and economic development/growth opportunities. (see Innovation/Technology District idea)

2.6. Partner with the School District to develop new retail/business opportunities in Le Sueur (see school district business partnership idea)

Partnerships can take many forms. A first step is defining the objective of the partnership and establishing a desirable outcome such as a specific development project, coordination of an event or delivery of a particular service. A second step in forming the partnership is to understand the organizational structure and the roles of each partner. This would include the financial commitments, decision making structure and staffing responsibilities. Lastly, and probably most important, is identifying a passionate leader who coordinates and facilitates activities of the partnership, mediates potential challenges and advocates for the desired outcome.

OFFICIAL CONTROLS SUMMARY

Responsible Entity

Planning Commission/Staff

Timing

Year 1-2

Cost Implications

Will require staff time to coordinate and consultant time to do work – budget range $15K to $25K

Funding Sources

General fund

Key measurements

N/A (ongoing measurements include number of applications denied in year, number of variances requested, granted or denied)

Strategy 3 Official Controls

Official controls are key tools for implementing the Comprehensive Plan. Official controls generally refer to the ordinances and regulations that control the physical development of a city such as a zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, building codes and official maps. These controls need to be consistent with the comprehensive plan. The Comprehensive Plan provides the broad policy framework and basis for the more detailed zoning ordinance. The following topic areas need to be addressed and updated:

- A full review of the zoning code as it pertains to state laws that need to be integrated with local zoning laws
- Incorporation of renewable energy standards and uses such as wind, solar, or geothermal. Where should they be allowed and what form? What standards should be applied and what is the process for getting approvals?
- Revisit the uses and design standards of the B-1 (central business district) and B-2 (fringe downtown) district. This should be done as part of the downtown master planning effort
- Are there certain land uses such as micro-breweries, wineries, or other emerging uses that should be considered in certain districts?

Action Steps

3.1. Conduct a thorough review of the zoning and subdivision ordinance confirming purpose and objective statements, use regulations and bulk standards.

3.2. Revise the zoning and subdivision ordinance to incorporate updates.

3.3. Adopt a new and updated zoning map

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLANS SUMMARY

Responsible Entity

City Council/Administration

Timing

Ongoing

Cost Implications

Staff time – minimal budget impacts (to prepare the CIP)

Funding Sources

General fund

Key measurements

New projects identified and funded – projects completed – dollar value of completed projects/investments

Strategy 4 Capital Improvement Plans

The City of Le Sueur uses a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to manage capital improvement expenditures. CIP planning is critical to maintaining the community's core infrastructure systems such as streets, sidewalks, trails, wastewater system, potable water system and stormwater infrastructure. The CIP focuses on maintaining infrastructure systems as well as growing new systems. As future growth and development occurs, the CIP plan should be maintained as a valuable planning and budgeting tool.

Action Step

4.1. Update the CIP to include 3 year, 5 year and long term CIP projects such as trail corridors/improvements, park improvements, trunk/main infrastructure replacement/maintenance, street maintenance and reconstruction, and major traffic/roadway improvements that help manage traffic flow through downtown Le Sueur. The CIP can also include planning and engineering design services that ultimately lead to capital improvements.

Future Special Studies

Strategy 5 Downtown Master Plan

Downtown Master Planning is highly recognized as the focal point of need for Le Sueur. The downtown carries significant historical roots and significant momentum exists to plan for the future of downtown Le Sueur. The plan is not starting from scratch, but rather building off the envision Le Sueur process facilitated through the Minnesota Design Team (MDT) process in 2007. A downtown master plan would provide the following directions:

- Build a stronger understanding of how the mall site can be reconfigured to re-open Main Street to vehicle traffic while maintaining an optimal use for the mall site that contributes to the vibrancy and resiliency of downtown.
- Identifying opportunities for investments in public improvements that strengthen connections to adjacent neighborhoods and enhance the pedestrian environment (walkability and bikability) and generally define the cost implications of the improvements.
- Identifying locations for organized civic events, activities and gathering places that bring more people into downtown for entertainment, cultural and social opportunities and devise a strategy for establishing such spaces/places (can Giant Days be brought back downtown?)
- Evaluate redevelopment and reuse needs and demonstrate opportunities for new development aligned with creation of new downtown housing opportunities, new office opportunities, niche retail/services and civic attractions (museum, other???)
- Devise a strategy and plan for how redevelopment can occur including public financial incentives/assistance
- Ensure a coordinated parking and wayfinding strategy that enables smooth traffic flow and circulation in downtown and a complete street element to street design
- Provide design direction relative to scale and massing of new development so that it can retain the small town, traditional downtown character desired by Le Sueur
- Recommend streetscape and signage that defines the downtown district

Action Step

5.1. Complete a Downtown Master Plan

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN SUMMARY

Responsible Entity

City Council/EDA/Chamber

Timing

Near term – 1-3 years

Cost Implications

Will require staff time to coordinate and consultants (planners, designers, engineering (traffic), market, finance) to conduct planning process – $50K to $75K

Funding Sources

General fund, grant resources, TIF

Key measurements

Goals addressed in the comprehensive plan, events, new development

ECONOMICDEVELOPMENT& HOUSING SUMMARY

Responsible Entity

EDA/Le Sueur Chamber

Timing

Ongoing

Cost Implications

Will require staff time to coordinate and conduct

Funding Sources

General fund/EDA

Key measurements

Number of goals address in the comprehensive plan/job growth/ business growth/programs

Co-working and other entrepreneurial support spaces provide places for remote workers, innovators, and entrepreneurs to work, share ideas, and create.

Economic Development & Housing

Strategy 6

Expanding the commercial and industrial base of the City is an ongoing effort. Identifying new, effective strategies for Le Sueur will most likely come in response to the needs articulated by existing and prospective businesses. Thus, listening and establishing relationships with existing businesses, and even business prospects, is the best initial step. Housing is a vital part of economic development. Offering a diverse supply of quality housing is important to attracting a strong and qualified labor force. The City of Le Sueur Housing Study completed in 2014 contains a number of recommendations, some of which are highlighted within as key priorities. Initiatives which do and can benefit economic development efforts include:

Action Steps

6.1. Support and Enhance Educational Institutions - Schools are perhaps the most prominent asset within the community of Le Sueur. Schools are a primary factor in a family's location decision. In order to attract entrepreneurs and business interests, the city must continue to maintain high quality school facilities and educational programming.

- 6.1.1. At minimum, conduct an annual meeting between school board and city council to ensure open communication
- 6.1.2. Continue and explore new city-school cost sharing and seek opportunities to supplement school activities with city facilities when possible such as through the community education program
- 6.1.3. Attract young families that will support the school system
- 6.1.4. Consider impacts on school planning and engage district administration in master planning processes that can bring new energies (tax base, employees, student growth)

6.2. Increase connectivity to regional centers- Creating access to amenities and work opportunities in Mankato or the Twin Cities will make Le Sueur an attractive place to live for those who are less mobile due to age, socioeconomic status, physical disability, or those who want to limit car usage. Safe transportation for children to recreational facilities not available in Le Sueur would enhance the quality of life for families in Le Sueur.

- 6.2.1. Work with local property/building owners and the EDA to create a co-working space or telecommuting space where residents who work regional centers can share conference rooms or technology or have a place to work and collaborate with other professionals.
- 6.2.2. Seek grant opportunities through MN DOT or regional transit providers to expand bus services/transit opportunities and plan future neighborhoods with long term transit service in mind
- 6.2.3. Develop a forum for residents to seek ride-share opportunities
- 6.2.4. Explore business spin offs or startups that build off of the identity and image of major regional businesses but are more interested in the quality of life offered by a smaller, bedroom community.

6.3. Facilitate Planned Housing Development - Housing development is an important component in economic development. Housing can define the character of a community, and is often a primary factor in people's location

decision. Housing development can affect property values throughout the city and aid or hinder other economic development. Le Sueur must ensure that a diverse and abundant supply of housing at all price ranges will make this community an attractive place to locate for individuals and families with diverse socioeconomic characteristics.

6.3.1. Assist with the development of senior housing/assisted living so individuals have the option of staying in Le Sueur throughout their life or living close to family members.

6.3.2. Market available property to potential home builders

6.3.3. Facilitate connectivity between future housing and current and future commercial/retail

6.3.4. Create a diverse housing stock with affordable housing options to ensure that Le Sueur workers can also afford to live in Le Sueur.

6.3.5. Promote housing opportunities in and near downtown to support community vibrancy and resiliency of downtown.

6.3.6. Collaborate with property owners and developers who wish to develop new neighborhoods on the edge to make sure adequate public services are provided.

6.3.7. Continue to promote housing rehab and maintenance of existing neighborhoods through zero or low interest loan programs.

6.3.8. Work with the local and regional chambers of commerce to host an annual trade show that links home owners to vendors, remodelers, builders, landscapers, lenders, designers, etc. This could include collaboration with other nearby towns.

6.4. Encourages Appropriate Commercial Development –Commercial development provides goods and services to local residents, eases the tax burden on residents for city services, and creates employment opportunities within the local workforce. Increasing the local workforce will have secondary and tertiary benefits for local commercial and retail businesses as these workers spend money within the local economy.

6.4.1. Establish objective measures to evaluate development projects that seek financial assistance. These might include number of new jobs, type of jobs created, potential tax benefits, possible externalities (spin off growth, support of local businesses), as well as secondary and tertiary economic benefits.

6.4.2. Facilitate marketing of available industrial/commercial property and buildings.

6.4.3. Offer competitive tax/fee benefits for industrial projects that display long-term benefits for the community

6.4.4. Collaborate with businesses to meet service needs

6.4.5. Continuously explore emerging retail consumer behavior and trends to understand what retail form and markets are best suited for the community

6.4.6. Create continuity among businesses that complement each other

6.5. Encourage Entrepreneurship and Business Retention – Part of being a great place to live is fostering an environment that encourages entrepreneurship and supports long standing businesses. The following key strategies are in support of business development and retention:

6.5.1. Assist business development services such as financial planning, marketing, and market research

6.5.2. Maintain the revolving loan fund to assist with small capital investments and, gap financing

6.5.3. Ensure that business has adequate work space to expand within the community

6.5.4. Partner with the Le Sueur Chamber of Commerce to identify and address business needs relating to public services

6.5.5. Survey current businesses to gauge satisfaction with city services

6.6. Encourage consumption of local goods and services - Due to the great percentage of residents that commute into Mankato or the Twin Cities, where retail is plentiful and convenient, business in Le Sueur suffers. Le Sueur businesses and the city should work to have businesses capture consumption of goods and services by Le Sueur residents.

6.6.1. Develop a public relations/marketing campaign to create awareness

6.6.2. Ensure that new development has convenient access to commercial business

6.6.3. Create greater access and higher visibility from Highway 169 through wayfinding and programming

TRAILS & PARKS SUMMARY

Responsible Entity:

Staff, MNDNR, Partners (Conservation groups, property owners, bicycle/snowmobile/ athletics clubs)

Timing

Evaluation beginning immediately with construction of trail within 10 years

River park development beginning within 5 years

Cost Implications

Staff time at the beginning, more significant for acquisition and construction

Funding Sources

General fund, philanthropy, park dedication, grant resources (GMRPT, FRTP, others)

Key measurements

Miles of trail constructed

Acres of parkland along the Minnesota River

Trails & Parks

Strategy 7

Providing outdoor recreation to meet the needs of residents and visitors helps create a sense of place and identity for Le Sueur. Parks and trails are places for people to get outside, meet up, and practice active living. Attractive outdoor spaces are what people remember about a place they visit and can help determine where they choose to live. Through the public engagement process for this plan, trails were identified as the most desired amenity for outdoor recreation. Connections to the Minnesota River and River Valley were also identified as key elements in the future of Le Sueur.

Parks also require scarce financial and labor resources. Feedback suggested that the City work with the existing parks, rather than developing new parks, especially neighborhood parks. However, connecting to the river with park space, especially low development park space, is an opportunity that should not be foregone.

Action Steps

Parks:

7.1. Evaluate potential for natural park along the Minnesota River Valley, starting with the yard waste site feasibility study

7.2. Develop a Master Plan for Mayo Park

7.3. Evaluate current undeveloped land holdings for putting land back into private ownership

7.4. Update the park dedication policy

7.5. Budget for maintenance of existing parks

Trails:

7.6. Determine current status of extensions of the Minnesota Valley State Trail (Fort Snelling to Le Sueur)

7.7. Identify opportunities in the 2015 master plan for the Minnesota River State Trail (Franklin to Le Sueur)

7.8. Coordinate with the DNR to promote and advocate for extension of trails to Le Sueur.

7.9. Pursue Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission designation and funding for trail land acquisition and construction.

7.10. Pursue Federal Recreational Trail Program Grants to develop new trail.

7.11. Implement policy that incorporates trails when roads are reconstructed or constructed new.

7.12. Evaluate public owned land for local trail connections.

Establish a "Future of the City Forum"

Strategy 8

Establish a "Future of the City Forum" or similar event to review the plan on an annual basis and facilitate a community dialogue about what has worked well and what has maybe not worked so well. This evaluation should lead to identifying a need for amendments or updating the "to do list" on an annual or every other year basis. This can occur through regular survey mechanisms or through a process designed to "take the pulse of the community" and celebrate community accomplishments.

Action Steps

8.1. Schedule a recurring "Future of the City Forum" to occur December of each year after plan adoption.

8.2. Prepare a report template that can be appended gradually over the year documenting issues with plan implementation, actions completed or new actions that should be added. This report template serves as the working agenda for the annual meeting.

"FUTURE OF THE CITY FORUM" SUMMARY

Responsible Entity

Planning Commission/ Staff

Timing

Year 1 – then ongoing

Cost Implications

Will require staff time to initiate/start up – minimal budget impacts

Funding Sources

General fund, philanthropy

Key measurements

Number of total participants in the community dialogue – number of new participants in the dialogue (use 600 as a benchmark based on 2016 Comprehensive Plan update process)

Figure 5.12 Project Review Process

STRATEGY/PROJECT IDEA EVALUATION PHASE

Strategy/Project Idea Proposal Generation

- Proposal may come from City Council, public, stakeholders, or staff
- Proposals should include: description of strategy or project idea, facilities affected, need, benefits, costs, funding sources, timeframe, permits, market study (if applicable/needed), permits needed, availability to the public, and description of how meets criteria set forth in decision checklist

Baseline Evaluation by Staff

- Test proposal against the Comprehensive Plan and its goals and policies
- Depending on the scope of the proposal, decision can be made by staff or introduced to the City Council or relevant board/commission.

Decision Principle Checklist

- Does the proposal serve an unmet need
- Is the proposal economically sustainable in the short and long term?
- Is the proposal environmentally sustainable in the short and long term?
- Have life cycle and operational costs been adequately addressed?
- Have partnership and volunteer opportunities for the proposal been sufficiently evaluated?
- Will the proposal be a catalyst for private sector investment?
- Will the proposal build community awareness?
- Does it contribute to the making the community welcoming?
- Will the proposal advance outreach, communication, and community building with all of Le Sueur?
- Does the proposal improve efficiency of services?
- Will the proposal support healthy living and choices?
- Will the proposal encourage community gathering?
- Does the proposal inspire community pride?
- Does the proposal fulfill other city goals or policies?
- Does the proposal address a geographic or programming need identified in the Comprehensive planning process?

City Council Review

- Review focus if the proposal has merit, how it relates to polices and broad based fiscal implications
- Depending on scope of the proposal, decision can be made here

PLANNING PHASE

Planning

- Concept refinement
- Preliminary plan
- Final plan
- Program timetable

Prioritization

- Strategy or Project Idea is prioritized based on policy decisions, public needs, and other initiatives

Funding Allocation

- Funding for all aspects of the strategy/project idea are approved and annual operations and maintenance and staffing costs are addressed
- Council Action: authorize funding

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Implementation

- Construction documents
- Construction
- Program delivery
- Method for measuring success is defined

Operation of Facility or Programs

- Facility or program is now serving the public need
- Board Action: authorize development and operation, award contracts
- Reporting provided to Board

Project Ideas

With the help of the community, a series of project ideas have been generated to help illustrate ways in which the vision and guiding principles can be advanced. These project ideas were reviewed by the community through both in person meetings/discussions as well as an online survey. Over 100 members of the community partook in the review and evaluation of the project ideas. Each project idea contains the following:

- **A Project Description:** This describes the project idea through words, photos, or diagrams in enough detail to understand what it is. If the project fit a certain location it was defined on a map or it might be noted that it applies city wide.
- **Guiding Principles:** The Guiding Principles help define the character, values, and priorities of the Le Sueur community by acting as an ongoing measurement tool for the appropriateness and effectiveness of future initiatives and results. The icons are used to identify with the key guiding principle that is or are most relevant to the project. They include:

Healthy **Friendly** **Responsive** **Dynamic** **Beautiful** **Vibrant**

- **Responsible Entity:** Each project identified a possible entity responsible for seeing the project gets implemented. It may be multiple entities. They may be public or private, or it could be joint public private effort.
- **Project Priority:** Different projects might have different levels of priority. Some might be based on "need" while others on "desire" or perceived benefit. They may be great ideas, but when compared to other ideas and projects, they are less of a priority. Participants defined their desired priority for each idea by choosing **LOW**, **MEDIUM**, or **HIGH**.
- **Project Costs:** Each project idea was given a relative financial magnitude as follows:
  - **$** Minimal Funds Required, limited to planning and programming
  - **$$** More substantial funds required such as: Substantial planning and design; minor capital investments (for construction of improvements such as trails, parking areas, stormwater, or landscape/streetscape; on-going operations and maintenance costs.
  - **$$$** Significant investment required such as: substantial planning, permitting, and design; acquisition of land; major capital investments (for construction of improvements such as new or renovated buildings, new or replaced streets, associated infrastructure, and public amenities); on-going operations and maintenance costs which are extraordinary or new (i.e. not replacing or increasing existing obligations).
- **Project Duration:** Some projects are **short term** such as completing a master plan or constructing a physical improvement. Other projects with more complex planning and design needs, more financial needs, land acquisition, or staged construction are more **long term.** Some programmatic projects are **on-going** so long as funding is available and there is benefit.

PROJECT REVIEW PROCESS

One of the most challenging tasks for a City Council is knowing when to support a potential project or idea. The project review process outlined on the prior page, provides a sample outline for a systematic review of new ideas. This type of review ensures that new project ideas are in line with the community's vision, principles and goals. It also ensures that adequate consideration is given to funding (both capital and ongoing maintenance), staffing resources, and long term sustainability.

KEY TERMINOLOGY

Project Ideas have been developed to support implementation of select strategies and action steps in the comprehensive plan. Project Ideas focus on strategies and action steps that: (1) are high-priority actions, (2) may require additional explanation and planning, and (3) may be implemented by groups other than City agencies (community groups, civic organizations, individuals, etc.)

- **Funding sources** are limited but could be creative. They might include: public funds (taxes), private investments, philanthropic, grants, or loans or any combination. More detailed planning is often needed to define a funding source, but ideas are provided for starters.
- **Connected Actions:** Recognizing that some projects might be inter-related, participants identified those projects that are most connected or related.

The review process suggests that all of the projects identified are good ideas; however, some of the projects are higher priority than others and some require a greater degree of feasibility study to make sure that the idea is worth pursuing further, such as making any improvements to park areas that are in flood plain areas. The following presents the project ideas in the order of priority based on all public input received to date:

- Open Main Street & Redevelop Mall Site
- Downtown Master Plan
- School & Business Partnerships
- Develop Local Trails
- Become a Hub for Regional Trails
- Truck Traffic Planning
- Park at Yard Waste Site
- Become a Leader in Sustainability and Resilience
- Wayfinding Plan & Package
- Branded Technology & Innovation District
- Mayo Park Master Plan

The engagement process provided an opportunity for community members to suggest other project ideas than the ones initially listed. While these ideas were not fully vetted by the consultant team nor through the engagement process, they are worthy of noting for future community discussion, dialogue, and planning. The following ideas were suggested:

- Historic Brass Sculptures – this idea is essentially using public art and historic interpretation to create interesting icons around the community promoting community pride, intrigue, and "buzz".
- On a similar theme, the idea of remaking or strengthening the Historical Society and museum was suggested.
- Additional references were made to bringing retail and businesses to the community and downtown specifically
- A sports complex with multi-sport facilities north of the high school was mentioned
- Redevelopment of the former Green Giant facilities that are no longer in use. Several ideas were generated for this site.
- Multiple references were made to fostering new development in the North Highway 169 area including thinking beyond commercial uses to residential growth.

Description

Re-configuration of Main Street at the mall block to re-open to traffic. Accommodate pedestrian and bicycle traffic in addition to vehicular to enhance downtown connectivity. Wider sidewalks not only enhance pedestrian safety, but allow adjacent uses to spill business out onto the street. Include street features like benches, lighting, and bike parking. Consider street designs that allow it to transition to pedestrian-only for festivals and events.

The current mall site is aging, does not efficiently utilize its lot space, and is struggling economically. Moving forward, redevelopment for this site should be considered, aiming to revitalize the area as a destination for retail, culture, and community events and gatherings.

Guiding Principles			
Location	*Main St. between Bridge St. & Ferry St., Mall Site*		
Responsible Entity	*City of Le Sueur, Stakeholders (property & business owners, developers), County, MnDOT*		
Priority	Low	Medium	**High**
Project Cost	$	$$	**$$$**
Project Duration	Short Term	**Long Term**	Ongoing
Funding Sources	*General Fund, Grant Resources, TIF, Private Investment*		

Description

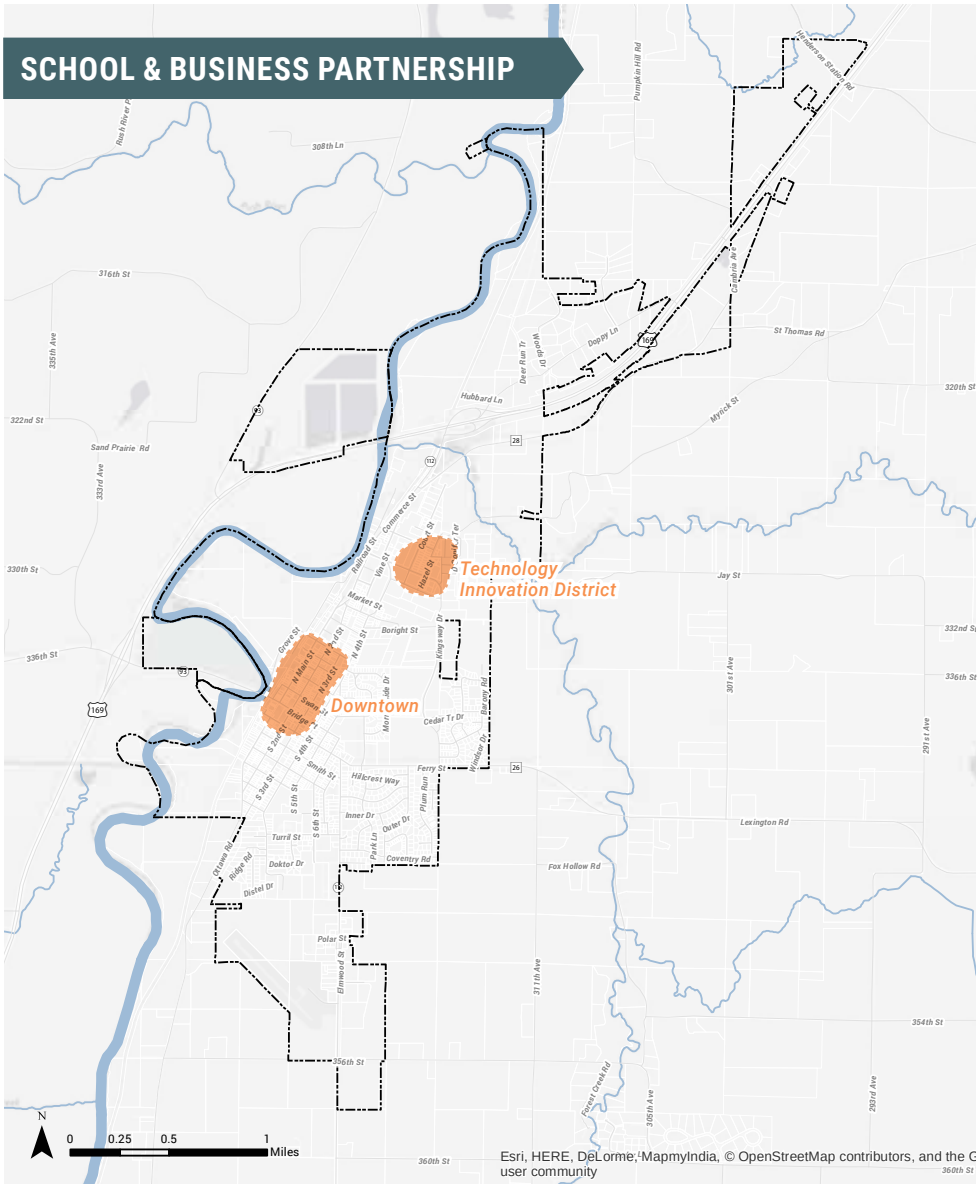
Prepare a master plan to guide redevelopment in the downtown area of Le Sueur.

A master plan would define public and desired private improvements for the downtown area. It could include public realm improvements such as connections to the river, and streetscaping. Design guidelines for private redevelopment would direct the form of new buildings and renovations. The plan would also include strategies for redeveloping properties along Main Street and throughout the downtown. These strategies could include public financing, partnerships, and investments in infrastructure such as new roads.

Planning will help the City and stakeholders proceed with redevelopment in an informed and thoughtful way to improve downtown as a destination in Le Sueur.

Guiding Principles			
Location	*Main St. between Bridge St. & Ferry St., Mall Site*		
Responsible Entity	*City of Le Sueur, Stakeholders (property & business owners, developers), County, MnDOT*		
Priority	Low	Medium	**High**
Project Cost	$	$$	**$$$**
Project Duration	Short Term	**Long Term**	Ongoing
Funding Sources	*General Fund, Grant Resources, TIF, Private Investment*		

SCHOOL & BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP

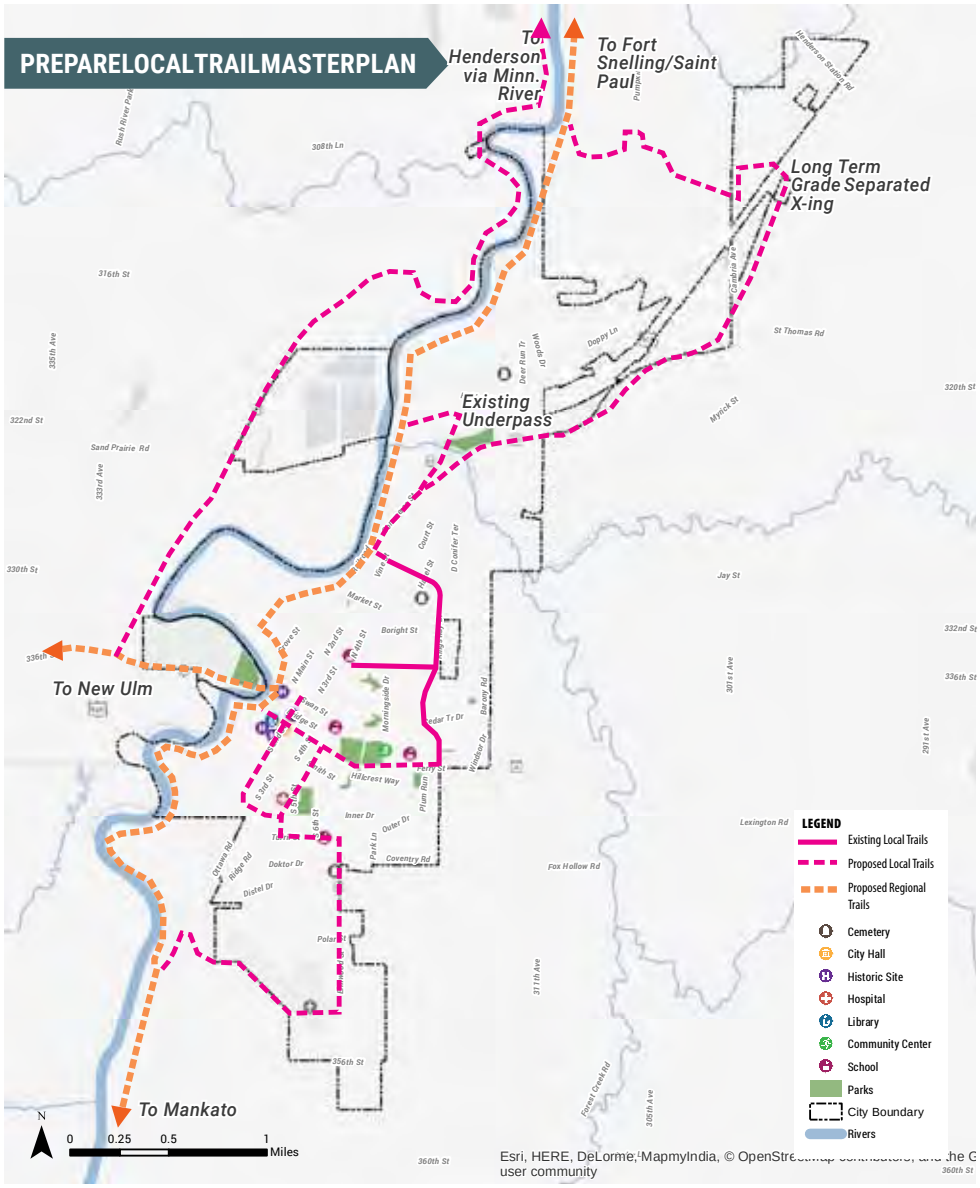


Description

Develop partnerships between the school district and local businesses to help young entrepreneurs. Real world experiences, in the form of internships, mentoring, scholarships, etc., expose students to the growing need for technical and professional talent in their own community while enhancing their education. This could take the form of a hands-on business class at the high school, internships, and/or pop-up business opportunities for high schoolers.

Examples might include a coffee shop/cafe, e-business, or retail not currently provided in the City.

Guiding Principles			
Location	*Downtown store fronts, other business locations*		
Responsible Entity	*Le Sueur-Henderson School District, Chamber of Commerce, Business Owners*		
Priority	Low	Medium	**High**
Project Cost	**$**	$$	$$$
Project Duration	**Short Term**	Long Term	Ongoing
Funding Sources	*Philanthropy, Grant Resources*		

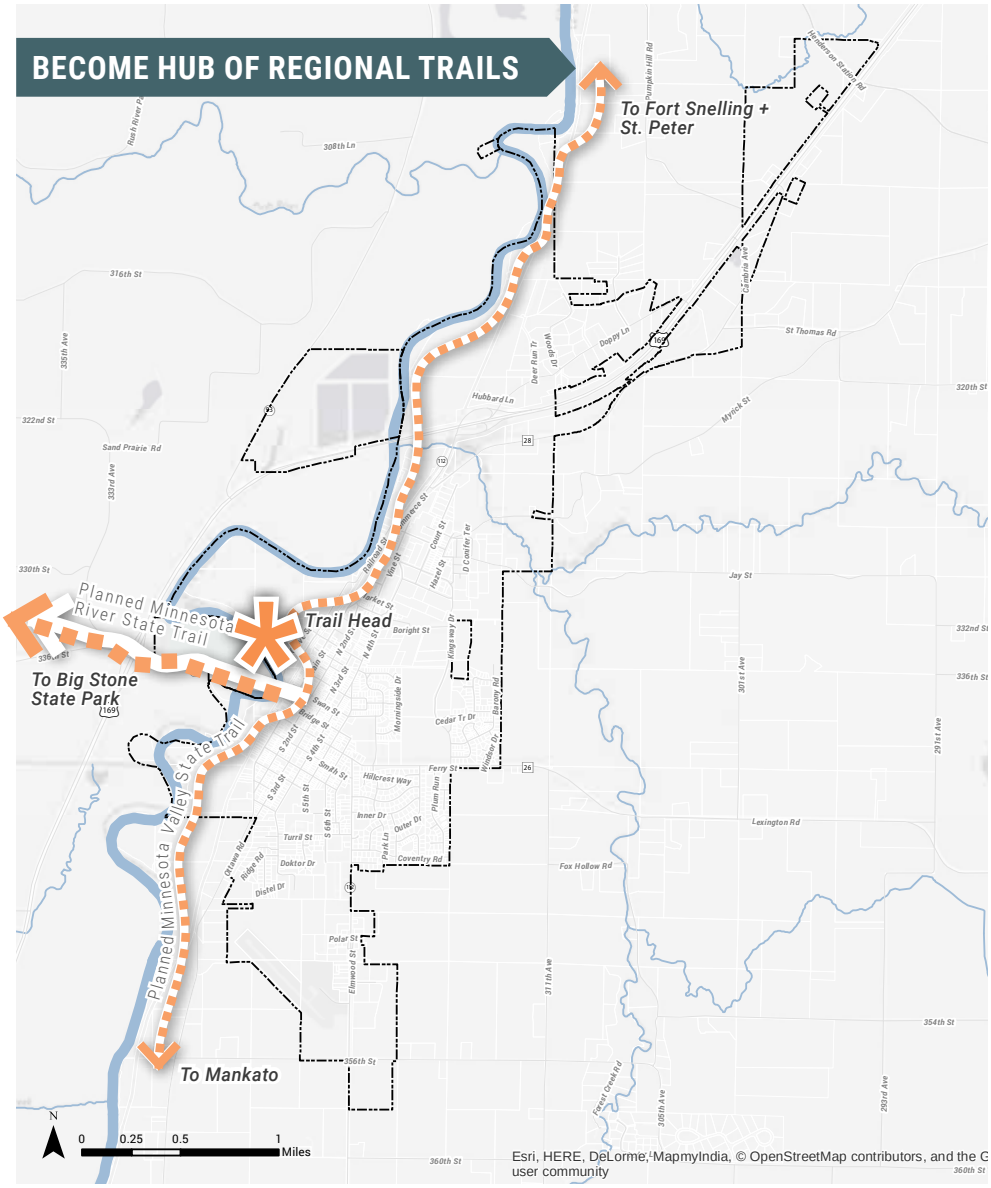


Description

Prepare a local trail master plan that guides the creation of a recreation, cultural, historical, and economic resource based trail network. A master plan would define trail improvements linking existing trails with key destinations. It would also establish a list of capital investments, cost estimates, funding strategies and a phasing plan for how it gets built. Such a system can also strengthen the connection point to the greater regional system, making Le Sueur a destination along the regional trail network.

The plan would strengthen recreational opportunities, economic opportunities, and overall quality of life improvements.

Guiding Principles			
Location	*Kingsway Blvd., Downtown, Historic Landmarks, River, Schools*		
Responsible Entity	*City of Le Sueur, County, School District, Chamber of Commerce, Bike & Trail Committee, Greater Minnesota Regional Park & Trails Commission*		
Priority	Low	Medium	**High**
Project Cost	$	**$$**	$$$
Project Duration	Short Term	**Long Term**	Ongoing
Funding Sources	*Grant Resources, General Fund*		

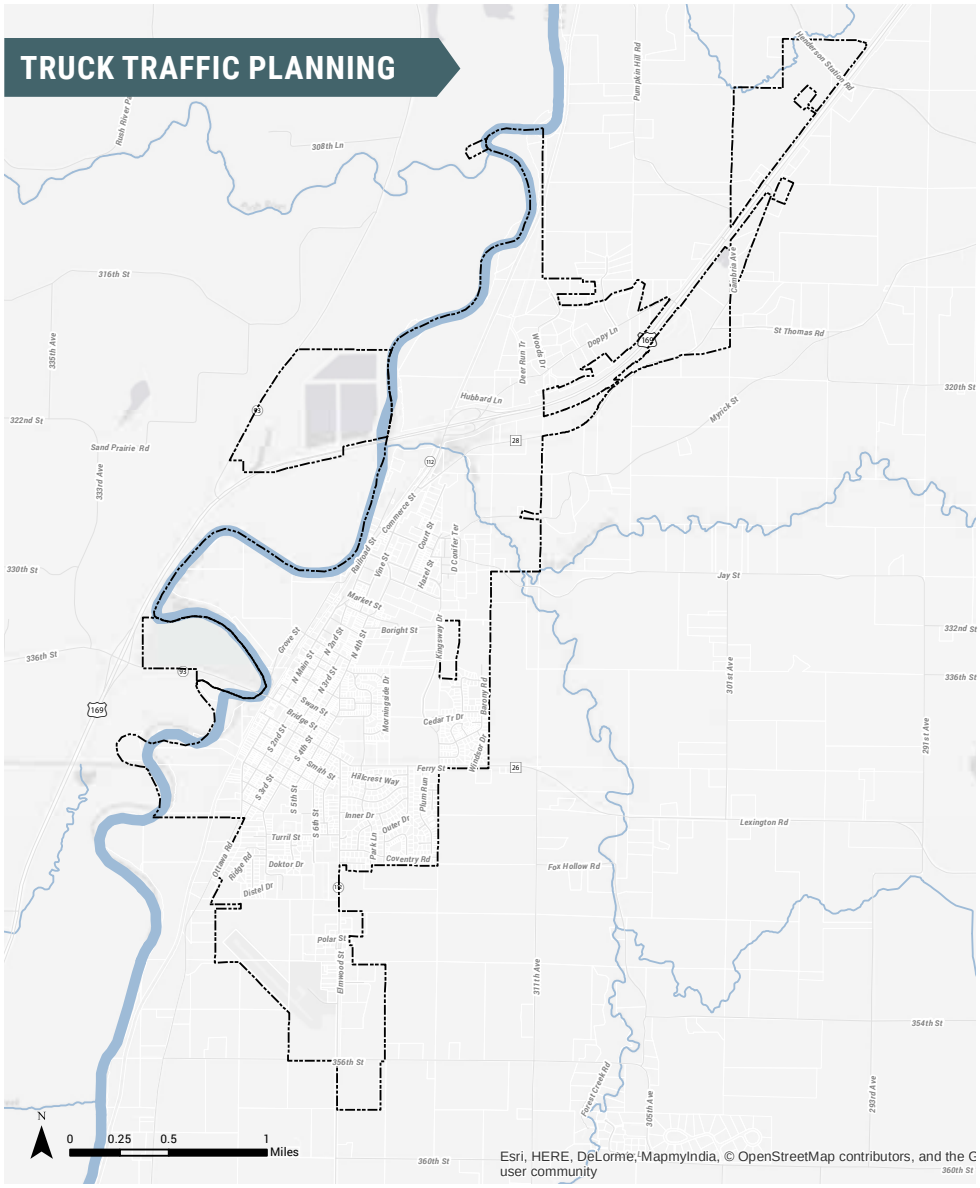


Description

There are two regional trails that are in the planning stages to come together at Le Sueur. The Minnesota Valley State Trail will run from Fort Snelling State Park to Le Sueur (connecting at Mayo Park) and eventually on to Mankato. The Minnesota River State Trail will run from Big Stone State Park in west central Minnesota to Le Sueur. These trail projects are in the planning stages and no specific routes have been defined.

The City can be an advocate of the regional trail projects. The City can also work to make a strong hub by planning for where the trails come into Le Sueur and link up. By establishing a master plan the city can help define the route, wayside rest, trail head areas and associated amenities, and potential interpretive amenities in collaboration with the DNR.

Guiding Principles			
Location	*City Wide & Beyond*		
Responsible Entity	*City of Le Sueur, DNR, County, Greater Minnesota Regional Park & Trails Commission*		
Priority	Low	Medium	**High**
Project Cost	$	**$$**	$$$
Project Duration	Short Term	**Long Term**	Ongoing
Funding Sources	*Grant Resources, General Fund*		



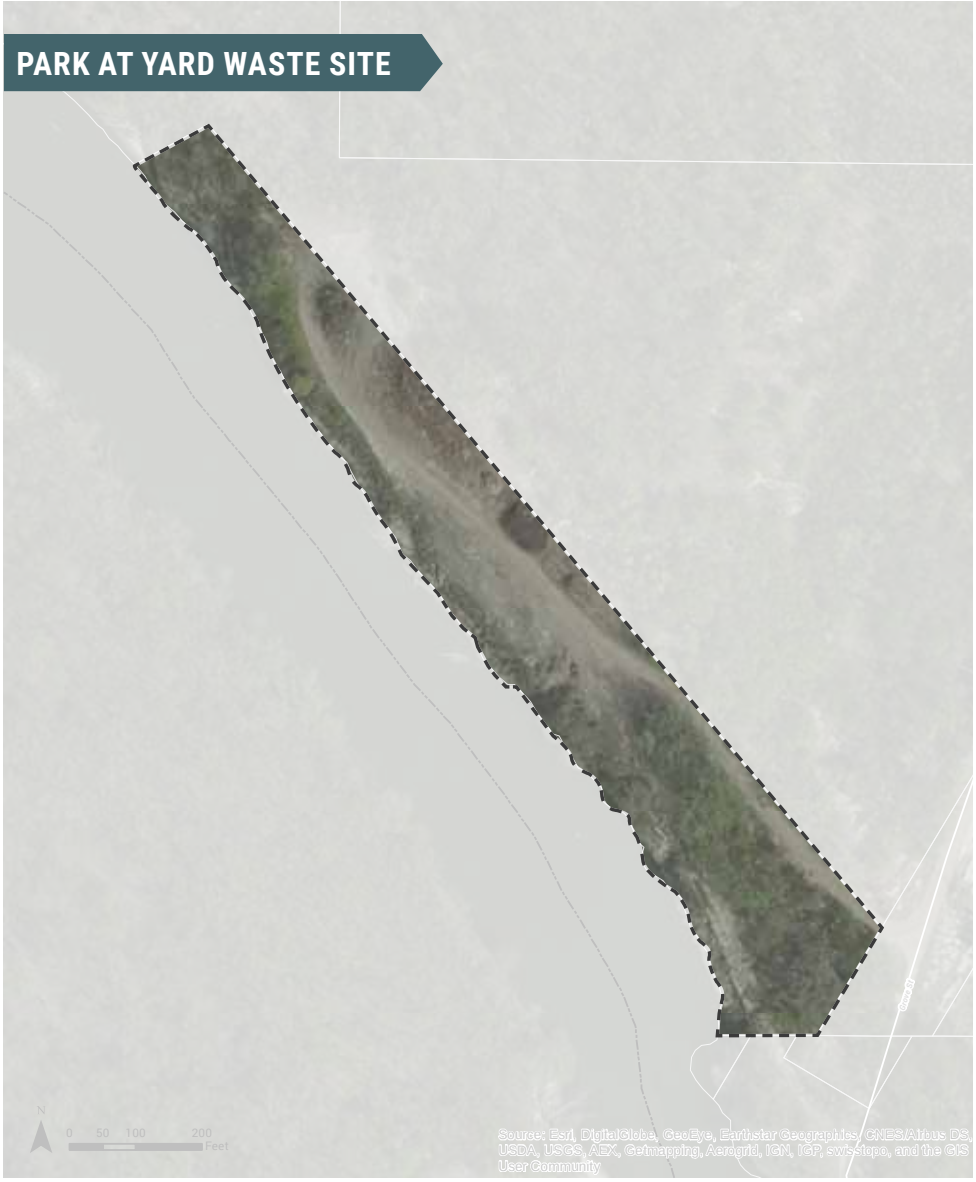
Description

Develop dedicated truck routes and standards/guidelines for timing of operations to minimize the impacts of trucks on Main Street and other key roads in the City. Explore solutions to enable Trucks and Pedestrians to coexist, like:

- Delivery timing
- Truck circulation
- Addressing infrastructure issues (i.e. low clearance bridge)

Explore opportunities to couple truck route development with redevelopment projects, like locating truck access to the rear of new buildings on high-traffic streets.

Guiding Principles			
Location	*City Wide*		
Responsible Entity	*City of Le Sueur, MnDOT, Trucking Companies, Businesses Reliant on Trucking*		
Priority	Low	**Medium**	High
Project Cost	**$**	$$	$$$
Project Duration	**Short Term**	Long Term	Ongoing
Funding Sources	*In-Kind Business, General Fund, MnDOT, Counties*		



Description

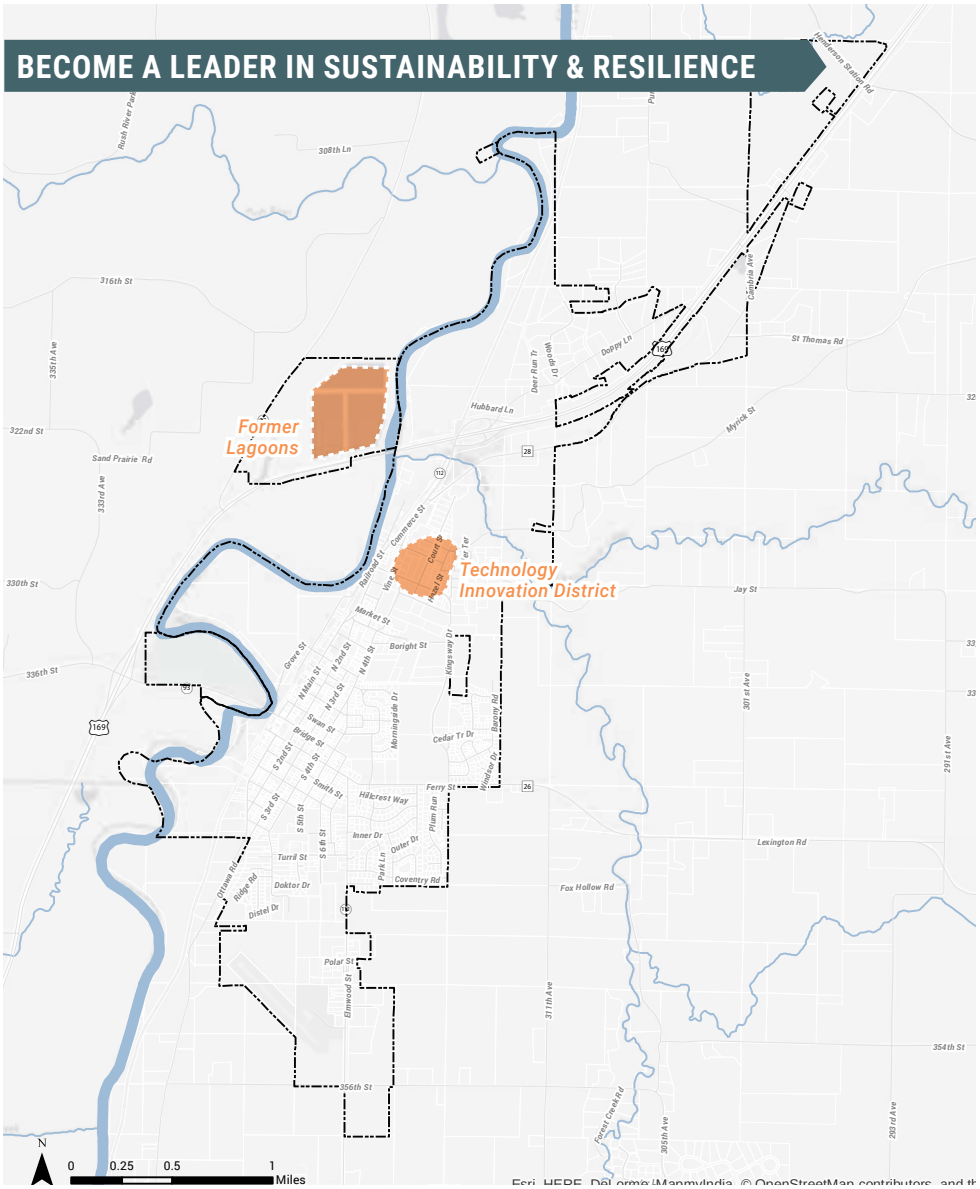
Develop a park at the City owned property along the Minnesota River, and Northwest of downtown that currently houses the yard waste site. Relocate yard waste site to less pristine/valued area.

Include opportunities to utilize the river as a recreational resource, like canoe and kayak rental, a fishing pier, or an overlook.

Restore and maintain the site's environmental resources to provide access to natural areas and improve the wildlife habitat and ecological functioning. Provide historical interpretation or environmental learning opportunities.

Connect the park to local and regional trail systems to enhance connectivity and make it a destination.

Guiding Principles			
Location	*Waste Yard Site*		
Responsible Entity	*City of Le Sueur, Public/Private Outfitters*		
Priority	**Low**	Medium	High
Project Cost	$	**$$**	$$$
Project Duration	Short Term	**Long Term**	Ongoing
Funding Sources	*Grant Resources, General Fund, Park Dedication*		



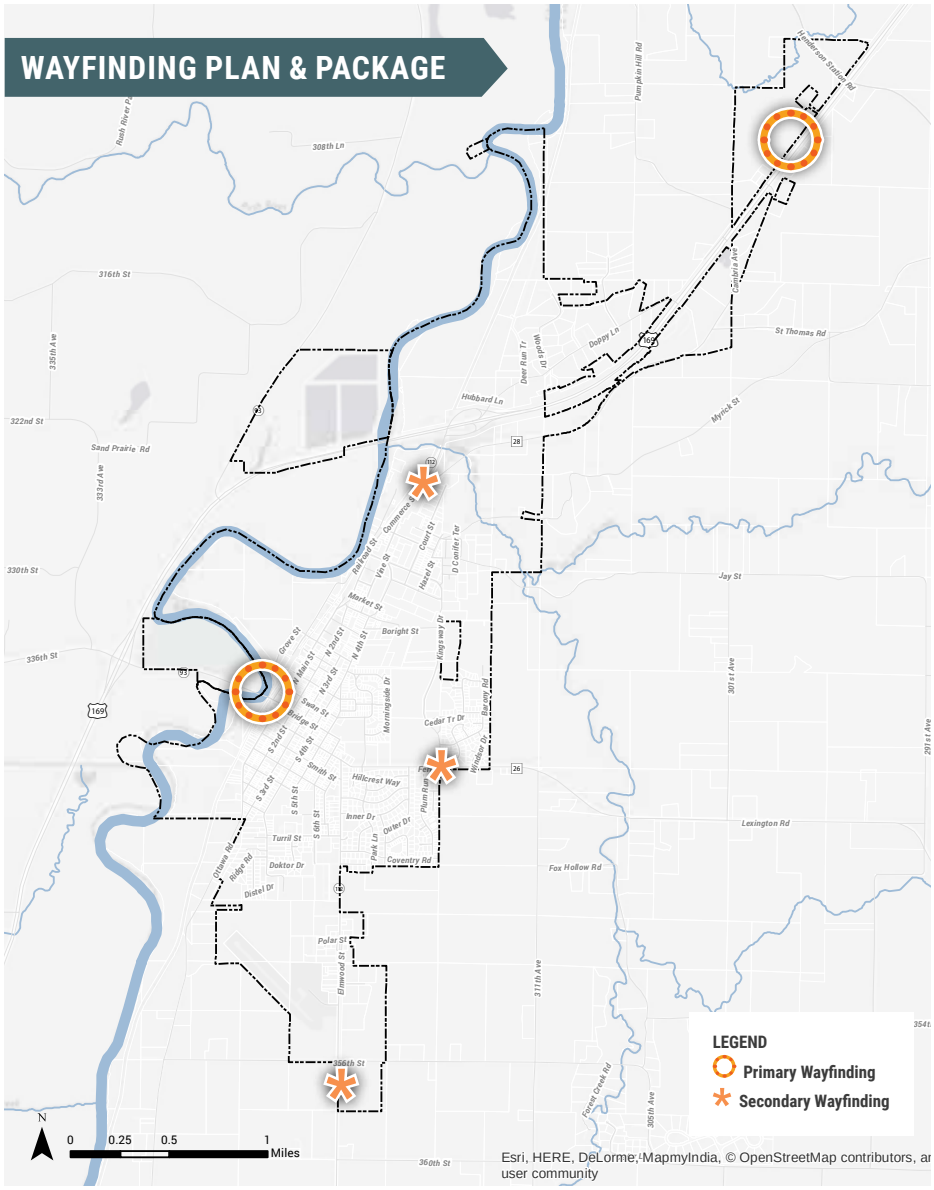
Description

Work to make the Le Sueur community a leader in sustainability and resilience. Energy efficiency is one component of sustainability and resilience. The design of our community (land uses, transportation systems, and building form) has a significant impact on the amount of energy we consume. A walkable environment, an urban forest (street trees or shade trees), how buildings orient to the sun, or the efficient use of lands and buildings can be improved through good urban design. Economic development strategies can be connected to attracting and promoting corporations that are leaders in energy efficiency or green building.

This project idea is to integrate alternative renewable energy improvements into public and private development projects such as solar panels, solar farms, small scale wind turbines, geothermal, or other renewable energy sources. Additionally, this project idea would promote the City becoming part of the Minnesota GreenStep Cities, a voluntary challenge, assistance and recognition program to help cities achieve their sustainability and quality-of-life goals.

Guiding Principles			
Location	*City Wide, Former Lagoon Site (solar farm), Renewable Energy Research/ Technology Center*		
Responsible Entity	*City of Le Sueur, Le Sueur-Henderson School District, Private Industries/ Investors, MNPA*		
Priority	Low	**Medium**	High
Project Cost	$	**$$**	$$$
Project Duration	Short Term	**Long Term**	Ongoing
Funding Sources	*Grant Resources, DOE, Private Investment, MNPA*		

WAYFINDING PLAN & PACKAGE



Description

Develop a palate of signs to improve people's ability to find, come to, and move through the community of Le Sueur.

Primary signage, like entry monuments and informational kiosks, should be located around the downtown area and at other high traffic entry points, while secondary signage, like directional signs, should be located at lower traffic entry points.

A variety of singage types should be distributed throughout the City, including entry monuments and signage, directional signage, and informational and interpretive kiosks. Throughout this signage, important landmarks and destinations should be highlighted, as well as historic and district information.

Guiding Principles			
Location	*City Wide*		
Responsible Entity	*City of Le Sueur, Business Owners, MnDOT, County*		
Priority	Low	**Medium**	High
Project Cost	$	**$$**	$$$
Project Duration	**Short Term**	Long Term	Ongoing
Funding Sources	*Grant Resources, General Fund, Chamber of Commerce*		

Description

Building off of current technology businesses and facilities, the City should develop a "Technology Innovation District" based on grouping technology focused businesses and startups. Provisions of some infrastructure related to internet speeds, security, etc. may be required.

First step would include a master plan that establishes the district brand and identity, market strategy, and public improvements needed. Additional steps will include placing major business professionals on a board to voluntarily mentor and control grant monies to applicants. These leaders would need to represent a wide range of significant business sectors.

Guiding Principles			
Location	*Centered around 4th St. between Division St. & Cathcart St.*		
Responsible Entity	*City of Le Sueur, Chamber of Commerce, Business Owners, Developers/Brokers*		
Priority	**Low**	Medium	High
Project Cost	**$**	$$	$$$
Project Duration	**Short Term**	Long Term	Ongoing
Funding Sources	*Grant Resources, DEED, EDA, Philanthropy*		

Description

Prepare a master plan for Mayo Park. The plan should guide future development and investments, address flooding issues, think about connectivity to other destinations, and potential for events and other programming, and factor in on-going operations/maintenance costs and sustainability.

Guiding Principles			
Location	*Mayo Park*		
Responsible Entity	*City of Le Sueur*		
Priority	Low	**Medium**	High
Project Cost	**$**	$$	$$$
Project Duration	**Short Term**	Long Term	Ongoing
Funding Sources	*Grant Resources, Park Dedication, DNR, General Fund*		