

2005

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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Community Identity

Sheryl Winston Smith - 2004

Many people say that St. Peter is a great place to raise a family. This statement has far broader implications than simply raising a family. When people say this, it is a shorthand for many attributes which together make St. Peter a vibrant and vital community. St. Peter is a place that is large enough to offer many amenities yet small enough to remain a small town that is truly a community. St. Peter is a small, historic city located in the scenic Minnesota River Valley and is the county seat of Nicollet County. It has many attributes that are desirable and are also distinct to this city, contributing to the sense of place which makes St. Peter uniquely St. Peter and not just any place.

This section on Community Identity delineates these unique and desirable characteristics and suggests goals which will promote and enhance these attributes.

Historic Identity

St. Peter resonates with history. First settled in 1853, St. Peter is one of the oldest cities in the state. St. Peter was the home of 5 governors. The Traverse des Sioux Treaty was signed in St. Peter, and the site is now marked by the Treaty Site History Center which provides educational displays and houses the Nicollet County Historical Society. Historic Minnesota Square Park reminds townspeople and visitors of the foiled attempt to make St. Peter the state capital. The local newspaper, the St. Peter Herald, has been published since 1884.

The city of St. Peter includes many architecturally and historically notable structures, including the E. P. Bassford designed Nicollet Hotel, the E. St. Julien Cox House, and the newly renovated Nicollet County Courthouse. More than 40 buildings have been designated on the National Register of Historic Places, including residences and the Central Business District, which was placed on the National Register in 2001.

St. Peter also includes historic institutions which continue to play an important role in the community. Gustavus Adolphus College has been an important presence in the city since 1876. The St. Peter Regional Treatment Center was the first psychiatric treatment facility of its kind in the state and currently includes a museum.

Arts and Culture

St. Peter boasts opportunities for arts and culture not seen in most cities of similar size, enhancing the quality of life for residents and bringing people to town as a destination. The St. Peter Arts Center offers classes and displays by local artists. Concerts, plays, and dance recitals are presented throughout the year at Gustavus Adolphus College. The college also houses the Hillstrom Museum of Art.

St. Peter hosts several annual events which are a draw to residents and visitors. The Old Fashioned Fourth of July Celebration lines Minnesota Avenue with spectators every July Fourth to view the floats and bands on parade, culminating in Minnesota Square Park and ending with a twilight fireworks display at the fairgrounds. Every summer, St. Peter is home to the Nicollet County Fair which is located in walking proximity to much of the town. The widely attended annual Rock Bend Folk Festival has been bringing music and crafts to St. Peter for 13 years and fills Minnesota Square Park for a fall weekend.

College Town

St. Peter has been home to Gustavus Adolphus College since 1876, and the college and

the city benefit from one another. The college is the second largest employer in the town, and attracts faculty and students from all over the world. With approximately 2500 students, the college is an important presence in town. The college also offers annual events which draw numerous visitors, including the Nobel Conference and the Christmas in Christ Chapel celebration.

School System

St. Peter is fortunate to retain its own public school district which provides a high quality education for residents on a scale in which individuals are able to thrive. The kindergarten through 12th grade school system is divided into an elementary, intermediate, and junior/senior high school. High school students also take advantage of classes at Gustavus. Many programs are offered through the school system, including family and community education programs, such as the Early Childhood Family Education program.

In addition to the public school system, St. Peter also is home to several private, religious schools. The John Ireland Catholic School offers kindergarten through sixth grade education. The St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran School offers kindergarten through eighth grade education.

Civic Connectedness

Elements of civic connectedness are key threads woven into life in St. Peter. The ability of the city to rebuild following the 1998 tornado has been widely noted. As the city web page notes, "Our small town life is the good life. Walking down the street means greeting friends, neighbors and strangers alike with a smile and a "hello"." St. Peter is a place where the lifestyle offers much for everyone from children to elderly residents. The newly built Community Center is a focal point for community meetings and programs and is centrally located in town, allowing many residents to walk and bike to it and the attached public library. The proud display of flags lining Minnesota Square Park for holidays such as Memorial Day, July Fourth, and Veterans' Day are a visual sign of civic pride. A low rate of crime and general sense of security are also important elements of life in St. Peter.

St. Peter's residential neighborhoods enhance the civic connectedness of the City. The older historic residential neighborhoods benefit from the walkable grid pattern and provide interconnected access to downtown, schools, and parks. Innovative design principles were realized in the creation of Nicollet Meadows which seeks to foster connectedness and a sense of neighborhood in a newer residential area.

Downtown St. Peter and the Central Business District

The Central Business District of St. Peter is the economic heart of downtown. Designated on the National Register of Historic Places, the Central Business District includes a vibrant mix of stores that are essential to everyday life and those that provide specialty items. While it is hard for small town centers to thrive in the automobile-centered age, a vital downtown remains an essential element of community identity. It is notable that downtown St. Peter is nearly fully-occupied at this time. It is also notable that in the era of the automobile, daily errands can be achieved on foot in St. Peter given the proximity of stores, banks, the Post Office, and other key services to one another.

Government and Non-Profit Institutions

St. Peter is distinct in the preponderance of government and non-profit institutions that contribute to the local economy. This includes the Nicollet County government, St. Peter Regional Treatment Center, Scholarship America, the Minnesota School Board Association, and

Gustavus Adolphus College, as well as other smaller institutions.

Public Places and Green Spaces

The parks and green spaces in St. Peter contribute to the quality of life. Minnesota Square Park hosts events large and small and provides a welcoming view as people ride by on Minnesota Avenue. The riverfront park provides views and access to the Minnesota River and is perhaps an underutilized resource in St. Peter. Linnaeus Arboretum on the campus of Gustavus Adolphus College provides plantings and pathways for walking. Numerous other parks and green spaces are venues for picnics and ballgames in St. Peter.

Goals

New projects that are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan should complement and build on the unique and desirable attributes of St. Peter as much as possible. Some goals include:

1. Preserve and enhance the historic and aesthetic attractiveness of St. Peter.
2. Preserve the small town character and quality of life in St. Peter.
3. Maintain and preserve interconnected, walkable neighborhoods.
4. Maintain and strengthen St. Peter as a destination city with a vibrant downtown and historic and cultural opportunities and events.
5. Promote downtown businesses and strive to maintain a healthy central core to the city.
6. Work toward reemphasizing the riverfront as an important natural and scenic feature of the city.

A Vision for St. Peter – An Introduction to the Comprehensive Plan
By Bob Moline - 1995

About 20 years ago a delightful little document was prepared for the Saint Peter Chamber of Commerce titled simply **Saint Peter**. The image of the evolution of Saint Peter conveyed by the piece was that of a story written by both the physical forces of wind, water, and ice that first shaped the place but also by the sequence of cultures that fashioned a landscape out of the physical environment, responding differently to it, trying to make it work locally, then later making connections with the larger scene, tying us to the region, the state, the country and the rest of the planet. Saint Peter ended with this:

“...that’s the story of Saint Peter up to this time. Of course it doesn’t end there. A lot of people here are very concerned about keeping the story good. ...Saint Peter will continue to write its own story. We’re not in a real big hurry, because we know history is on our side. More and more people are looking for “a place in the country.” ...So we’re looking for more writers. If you want to, you can help write the story. Like the river the town was built on, the story will keep on going.”

This fresh comprehensive plan can provide a framework for continuing the story, setting the most general of limits, laying down some rules, ground rules, so to speak. It offers a suggestion here, shows a direction there, and organizes the continuing conversation because in one sense the plan is never “finished.” It serves as a friendly guide; follow it but make adjustments depending on the flow of the shaping forces and events. But the plan is more than an operating manual, a list of procedures. In the same way that the rules of syntax govern the way words are put together to form understandable sentences, this plan should offer a way to achieve a “syntax of city design” allowing us to make sense of the city, making it readable,” coherent, memorable—a place you have a clear mental map of, a place to show your friends.

Dramatic population change has not been the hallmark of agricultural south central Minnesota. Despite a decline of six percent in the total population of Region 9 counties over the last 20 years, many towns and villages have continued to provide goods and services to their trade areas. Although there has been a decline in population in area counties, Nicollet County has increased in size, along with neighboring cities. Within the five-county area including Nicollet County and its neighbors, 28 of the 40 villages grew during the 1970s. In the 1980’s 19 places, about half of them, gained population. In short, we get a mixed impression; though some places are not healthy, other places seem to be doing well and people are finding reasons to stay in the region.

Surely there are forces and events that have caused some places to decline and we acknowledge the fact that all is not well but half of the villages and towns in the five county area have shown remarkable resiliency, indeed vitality in the last 20 years. And, unlike the close-in edges of metropolitan areas, change here of whatever kind has been relatively slow offering us time for reasoned assessment, time to lay out a thoughtful planning process that has allowed for open discussion of a full range of alternative perspectives.

As we move through the last years of the millennium, Saint Peter and its region will continue to change slowly in response to a suite of forces and events, only some of which we can anticipate and in only some of which we can participate.

Major Forces Shaping Saint Peter's Future Growth

As noted above the forces of change work more slowly here than in metropolitan regions but they do operate. Among the forces most likely to exert the greatest influence during the next five years or so are:

- Continuing slow decline in the non-urban population driven by the long term national trend of increasing farm size and declining farm numbers.
- Land economics, including not only the cost of land but also the public and private costs of land development.
- Economic competition in both the agricultural sector including its global aspects and the more local retail and service sectors.
- The rapid expansion and surprising vitality of Mankato as a regional shopping center.
- The increasing mobility of the population that makes even the Twin Cities attractive as a recreation, entertainment, shopping, and professional service center.
- Policy shifts and decisions of state government offices especially MNDOT.
- The stabilizing presence of the Regional Treatment Center, the county government services, and Gustavus Adolphus College.
- Public attitudes that provide the context for local government decision making.

The Vision

To hear the story from some people, the future of towns and cities in this country is sobering, grim, desperate, even hopeless. Nothing seems to work the way it was planned—neither the infrastructure, nor the day-to-day cultural contacts. The late Lewis Mumford, longtime student of America's urban places wrote that cities are supposed to be places of "meeting and mixture" where the cultural and physical geography blend in relationships that offer order, stability, diversity, and harmony. But nowadays few places match Mumford's ideal.

"Eighty percent of everything ever built in America has been built in the last fifty years, and most of it is depressing, brutal, ugly, unhealthy, and spiritually degrading..."

"...for we are presently suffering on a massive scale the social consequences of living in places that are not worth caring about."

From: Kunstler, James (1993) The Geography of Nowhere

"...homes, offices, factories, and shopping malls float in a culturing medium, a 'nonplace

urban realm' that provides the bare functions of a city, while doing away with the vital, not quite disciplined formal and social mix that gives cities life".

From: Sorkin, Michael (1992) Variations on a Theme Park

Do these comments describe present or future Saint Peter? Trying to answer that question could become a fruitful topic of discussion in our homes, places of business, schools, clubs, bars and restaurants. It may be that the small town atmosphere of informality, neighborliness, and helpful sharing gives us a chance to respond more directly to the urban difficulties noted above. It is possible to conclude that, compared to the major cities, our problems may not seem so intractable, and that we do care, care deeply about this place on the river?

The Saint Peter Planning and Zoning Commission discussed the future of Saint Peter in many sessions over the last two years and conducted two lively "Plan-In" workshops where members of the public added their ideas to the mix. A vision of this place, of what Saint Peter means to people, of what the future is likely to hold, of what the Planning and Zoning Commission might suggest to bring about desired changes—a vision is beginning, just beginning to emerge and seems in summary to take the following form.

- Over the last 60 years Saint Peter has grown at an average rate of about 1.6 percent per year, even more slowly since 1970. Saint Peter will continue to grow and we think a little faster than the .65 percent per year during the last 20 years. Such stability is seen as a strength by some but is frustrating to others and these contrasting perceptions will likely form the basis for a continuing conversation.
- Saint Peter will continue its role as an agricultural central place in a matrix of highly productive farmland but its traditional agricultural services will continue to decline in favor of other industries and commercial services.
- The Regional Treatment Center, Nicollet County government, and Gustavus Adolphus College will continue to be the major employers providing a degree of economic stability not enjoyed by similar sized towns in the region.
- The retail sector will find a way to complement the economic magnet of Mankato rather than attempt to compete with it. Indeed, given the easy mobility of most of the population, it is possible to think of the Mankato area as a market for the specialized goods and services yet to be offered in the Saint Peter CBD.
- People will continue to find in Saint Peter a desirable retirement locale, suggesting expansion in services catering to that clientele.
- Increasing numbers of people, frustrated and unhappy with life in the bigger cities, may seek refuge in Saint Peter; our town becomes their "place in the country." No mere commuters, these are people who can create new employment opportunities here and thus bring variety, new perspectives, and fresh energy to our town.

Where Do You Want To Go Today?

An introduction to the comprehensive plan by Todd Prafke, City Administrator - 2004

Where do you want to go today? A question that many ask themselves on a regular basis; it brings up thoughts of going to the store, or neighborhood after a long day at work. It is also a question that has been used as an introduction to a bigger picture thought process. The question is a thought process that involves the future of Saint Peter and as stewards of that future, we ask where?

In the aftermath of the 1998 tornado many previously held ideas and thoughts about our community were brought once more to the forefront, to be weighed against the current reality and our wishes for the next 20 to 30 years. These ideas were challenged based on the hope that the tornado, which brought tremendous devastation, also brought a clean slate, that golden opportunity to rethink the past thoughts and make sure they match our current hopes.

The spring of 1999 brought the Minnesota Design Team (MDT) to town with one central mission. That mission was to help us think, talk and focus on what we want our future to be. The MDT did this through a number of charts over a weekend and brought upwards of 200 people into the discussion to talk, plan and express community values and how they related to the future of Saint Peter.

A number of key points were brought to the forefront including our strong wish to be connected to the past; not only in knowing our history, but in the realization that the design of our community had value and that we could impact the quality of life through the design. That a variety of designs for places to live is better than one or two choices. That our "old town" neighborhoods really held some relevance for living today, including size, shape, pedestrian access, and economies of scaling that, although not enjoyed by everyone, certainly can have a great impact in how one chooses to live.

In the aftermath of the tornado many voiced concern that Saint Peter would see a decline in its habitability for families and that the attractions of larger communities would play a strong role in our decline. In reality we have seen substantial growth. Growth has brought with it concerns over the type of neighborhoods and other developments that will occur. The goal for many has been to manage that growth and all that comes with it by providing alternatives to developers that not only support their financial needs but also the physical needs of the community and those that reside here.

The difference between the comprehensive plan of 10 years ago and this one is that the last plan understood that change here has been relatively slow. This offered us time for reasoned assessment. It gave us time for a process that allowed for a number of different perspectives. Change now will be faster and in bigger groups. We must have our plan laid out further in advance and have the ability to facilitate growth in ways that push the community goals that we enjoy today. Our challenge is to manage growth to a level that is sensible. It is to ensure that we do not suffer from the consequences of building neighborhoods that disconnect us from the community. That our history of neighborhood development stays strong in that we build neighborhoods that are truly a place to live, not just a place to park and sleep. That we build places for work that have their own neighborhood feel. As Bob Moline put it in the last

comprehensive plan introduction, “Saint Peter; our town becomes their ‘place in the county’... these people who can create new employment opportunities here and thus bring variety, new perspective, and fresh energy to our town.”

Our role as a retail center is now diminished by the large retail draw of Mankato and the focus on our downtown is that of a beautiful river community with basic goods and services as well as the service of uncommonly unique shops and food and beverage opportunities. That should not be taken as a white flag of surrender in the retail arena, but rather as knowledge that our niche is secure in providing specific retail opportunities that cannot be found anywhere else.

These may be some of the salient points that might be the basis for our future:

- ◆ Growth has brought new energy and opportunities but it must be managed and should not go forward without limits. We should only grow to a certain point. Now whether that point is a population figure or a line drawn on a map at the next bluff line has yet to be determined. But there is a limit to our growth. Then, as stewards of the community, we must focus on redevelopment within those boundaries.
- ◆ That our economic base is driven by Gustavus Adolphus College and the Regional Treatment Center. Other business ventures including not for profit agencies, are now making up a more significant part of our base. We should facilitate the broadening of that base and provide for organized movement into the future.
- ◆ The retail sector will continue to be a complement to the retail magnet that is Mankato, and our niche will be known as a destination point for those who want that something “special” including the best services.
- ◆ People will not only find Saint Peter a desirable retirement locale because of ample senior housing options and new hospital and clinics, but families will find it alluring because neighborhoods and neighborhood designs provide the surroundings they want in raising their families.
- ◆ Increasing numbers of people will continue to see the benefits of a smaller community with the amenities of larger communities close by and the infrastructure of the best communities already built in.

We are like the river that now is our eastern boundary; we will continue to see changes in our path. We will see the water rise and recede, but change will continue to be the standard that we are defined by. Where do we want to go today? It’s more than just going home or to the store; it’s not about where we want to go today, it’s really about where we want to be tomorrow.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA UPDATE – 2003

The Planning and Zoning Commission has reviewed the Demographic Data and believes that an update of some of the more readily accessible and pertinent data should be made on a regular basis:

- City of Saint Peter estimated population for 2001 was 9,759 and for 2002 was 9,979.
- Saint Peter household estimates for 2001 was 3,019 and for 2002 was 3,071.
- Licensed rental housing units for 2003 are 1,071 in 304 buildings.
- Percentage of single family homes compared to total units built:
 - 2002 – 41%
 - 2003 – 83%

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS

Permit Type	2001		2002		2003	
	# Permits	Value	# Permits	Value	# Permits	Value
New Homes	66	\$7,552,087	51	6,344,548	111	\$13,022,719
New Apartments	1	188,000	12	4,495,123	5	\$1,023,000
Redo / Repair / Add	61	585,061	64	822,709	73	\$672,652
Accessory Bldg.	27	226,443	14	146,567	1	\$8,500
Demo / Moving	8	0	3	0	1	0
Other	71	552,451	48	205,743	58	\$304,084
TOTAL VALUE		\$9,104,042		\$12,014,690		\$15,030,955

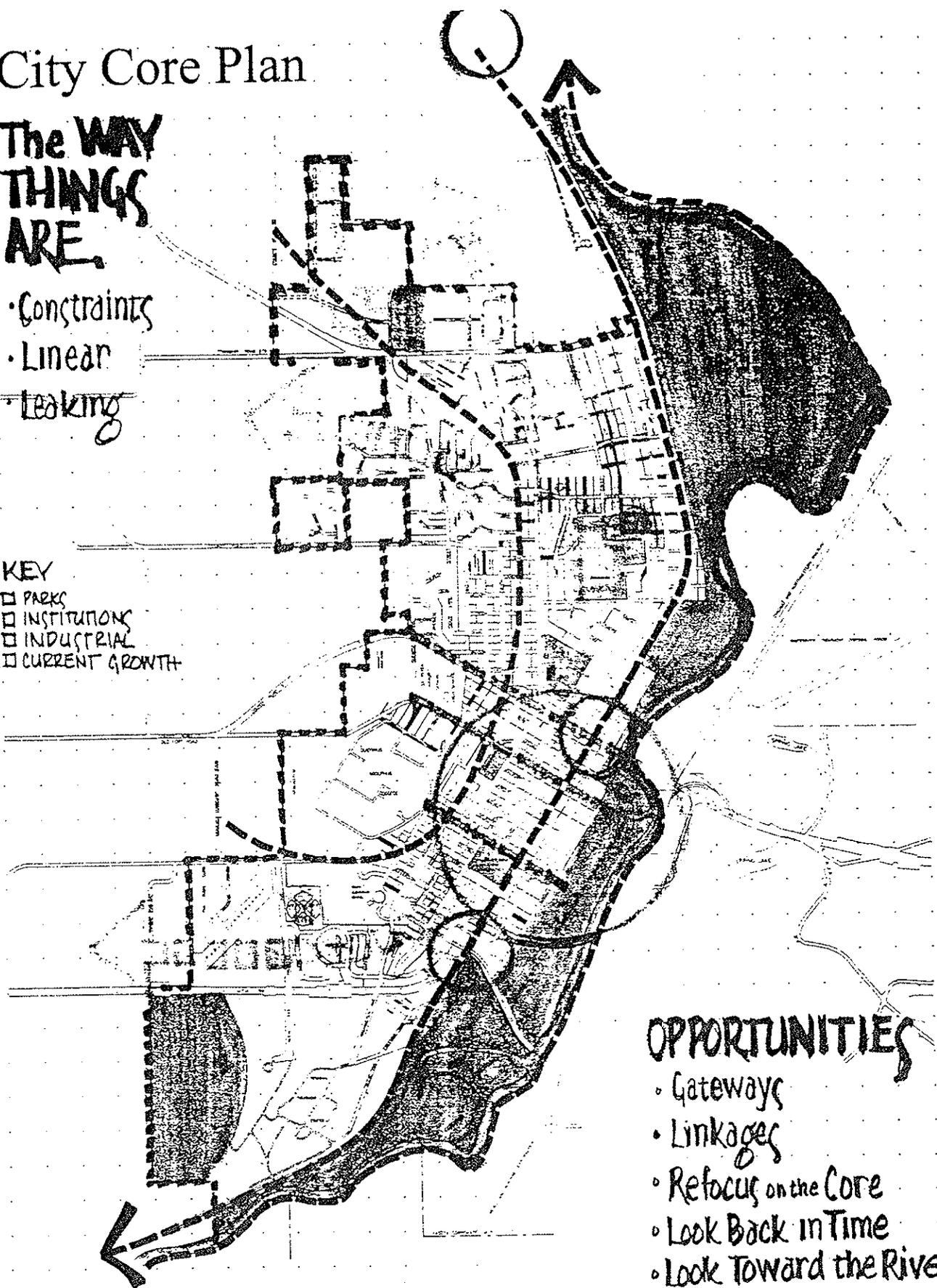
City Core Plan

The WAY THINGS ARE.

- Constraints
- Linear
- Leaking

KEY

- PARKS
- INSTITUTIONS
- INDUSTRIAL
- ◁ CURRENT GROWTH



OPPORTUNITIES

- Gateways
- Linkages
- Refocus on the Core
- Look Back in Time
- Look Toward the River

Saint Peter, Minnesota

Minnesota Design Team

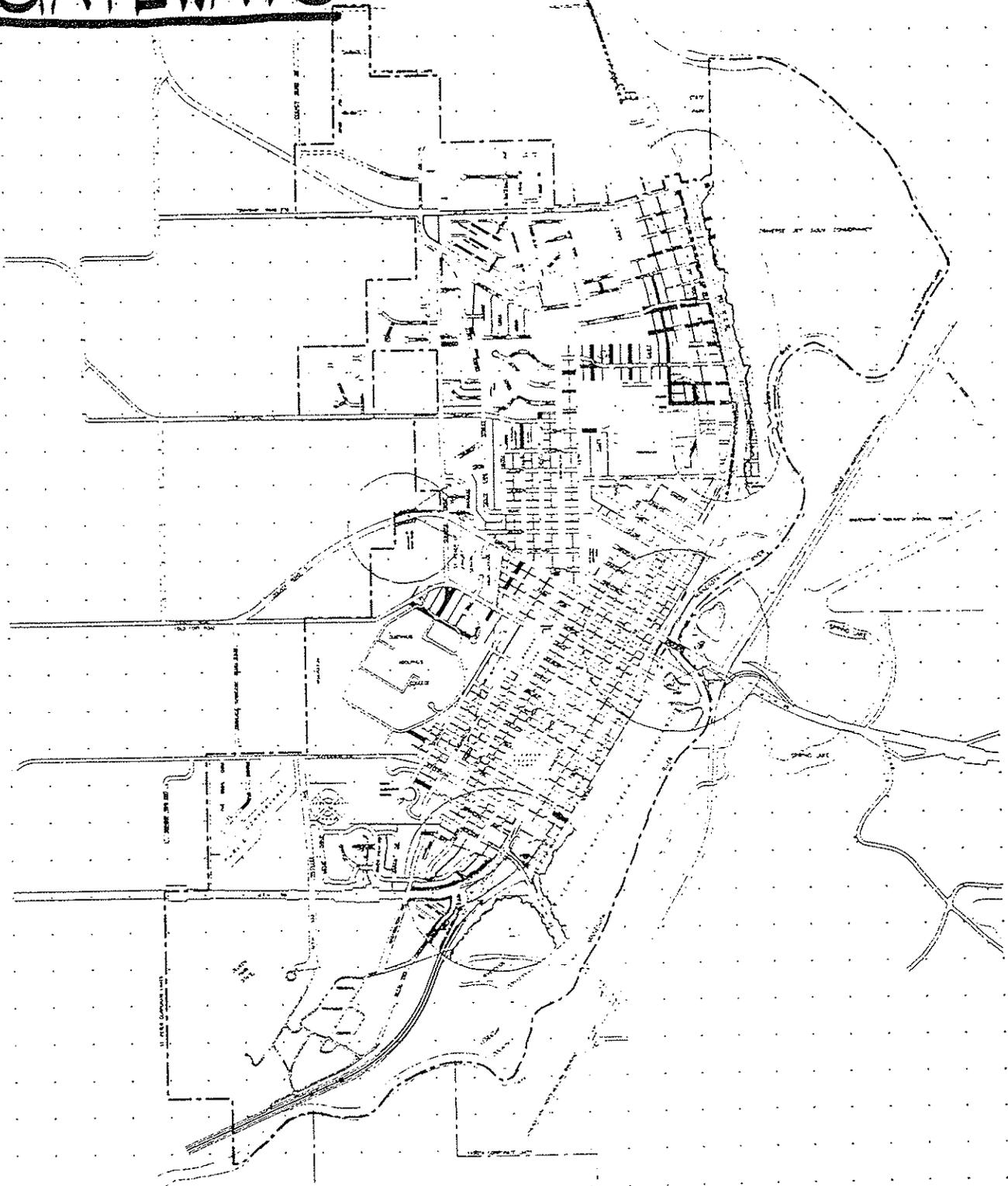
Spring 1999

SCALE 1" = 600'

DRAWING 1

City Core Plan

GATEWAYS



Saint Peter, Minnesota

Minnesota Design Team

Spring 1999

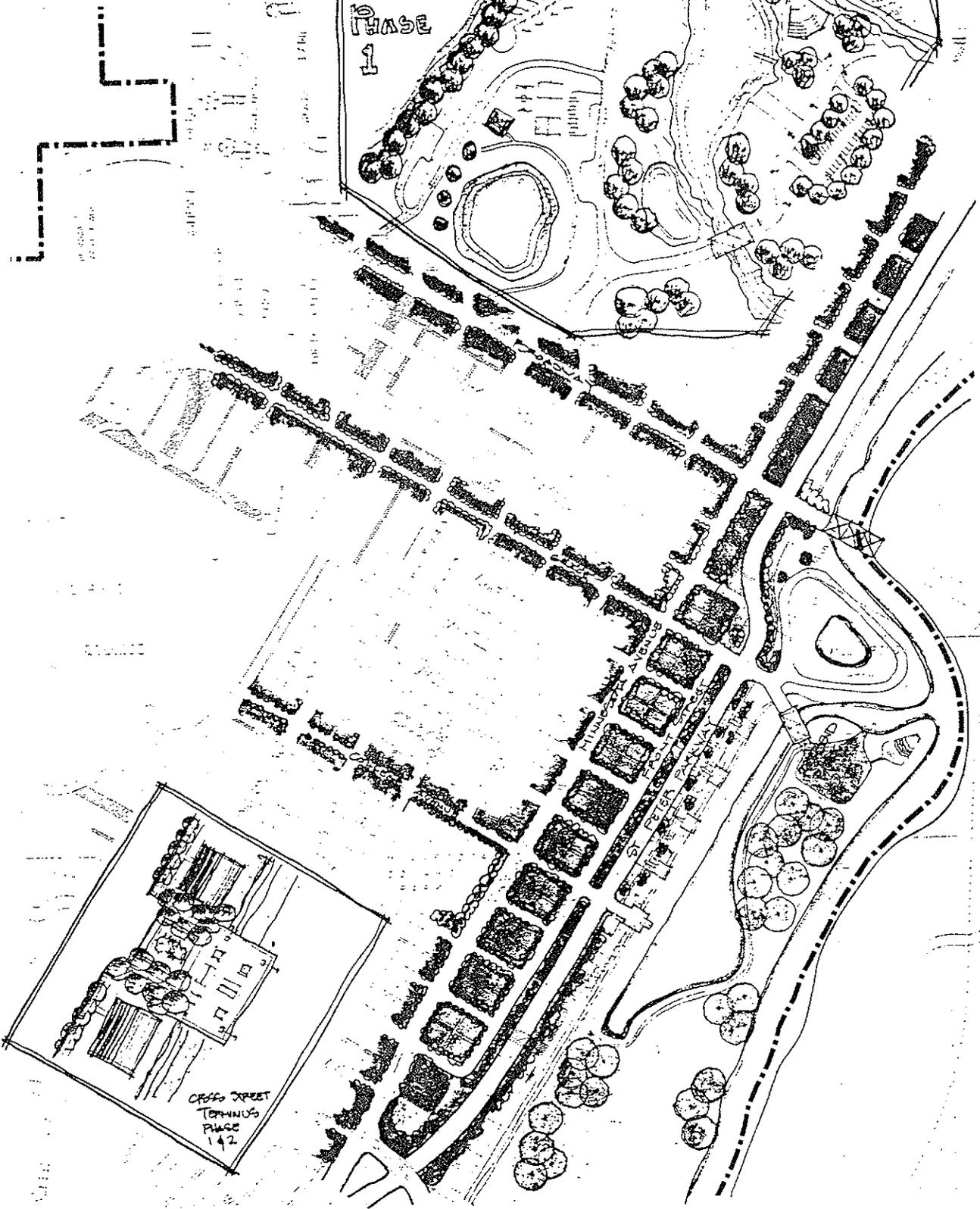
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DRAWING **2**

City Core Plan

RIVER
ACCESS

PHASE
1



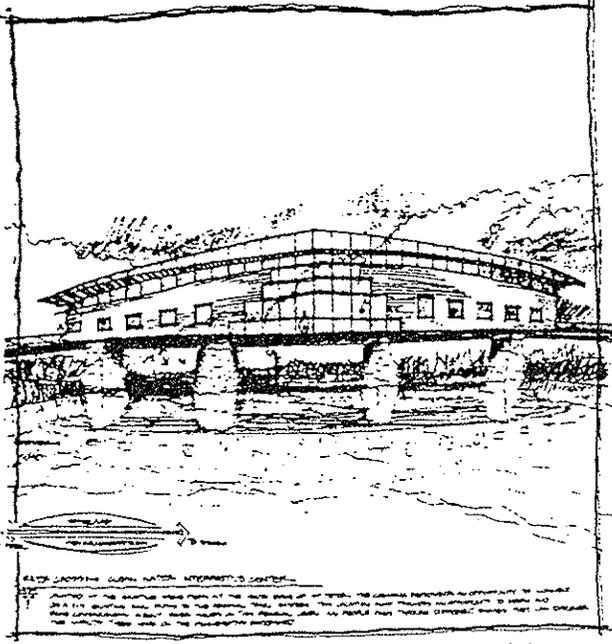
Saint Peter, Minnesota

Minnesota Design Team

Spring 1999

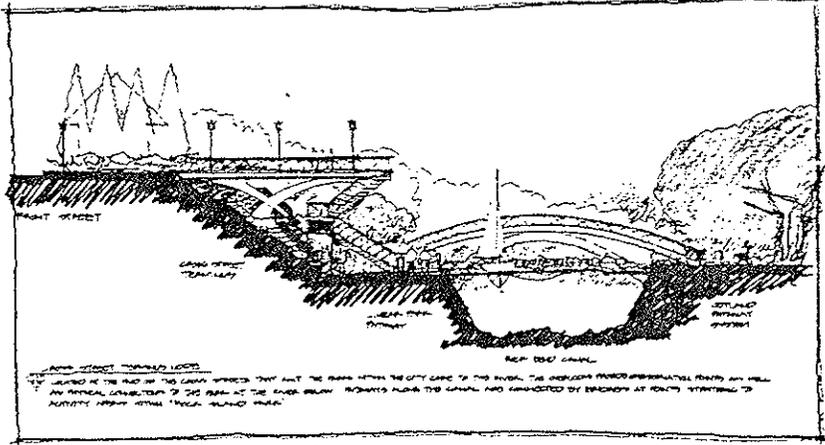
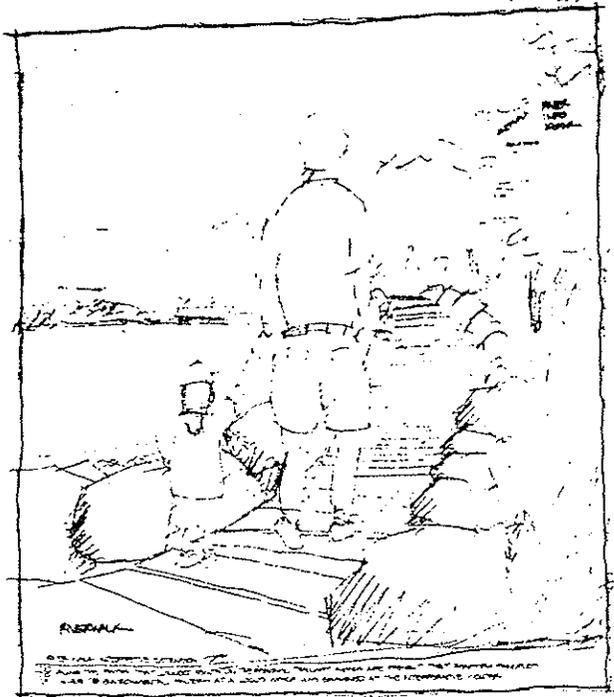
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DRAWING 3



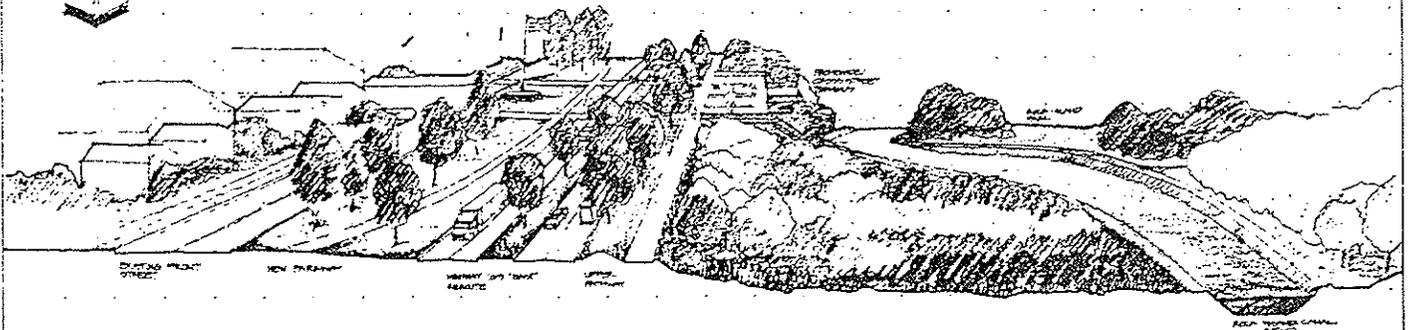
↑ INTERPRETIVE CENTER

→ RIVER BIOME WALK



→ CROSS STREET TERMINUS

↓ HWY 169 PARKWAY



Saint Peter, Minnesota

Minnesota Design Team

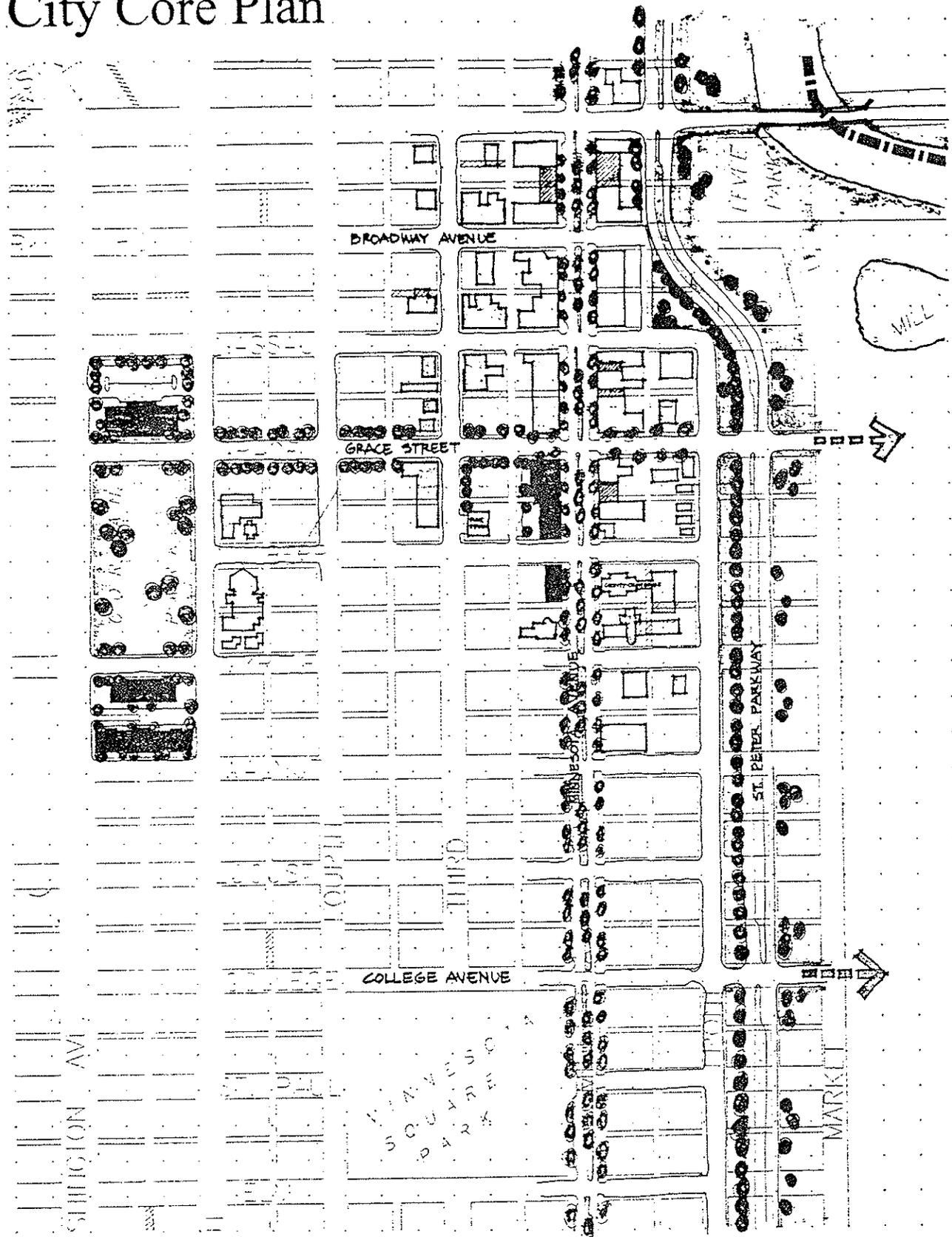
Spring 1999

SCALE

DRAWING



City Core Plan



Saint Peter, Minnesota

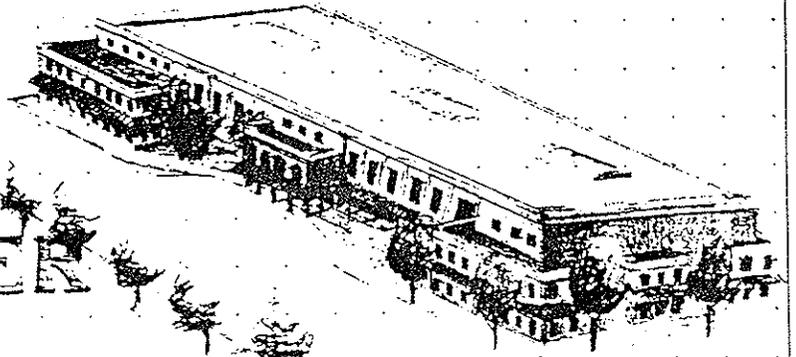
Minnesota Design Team

Spring 1999

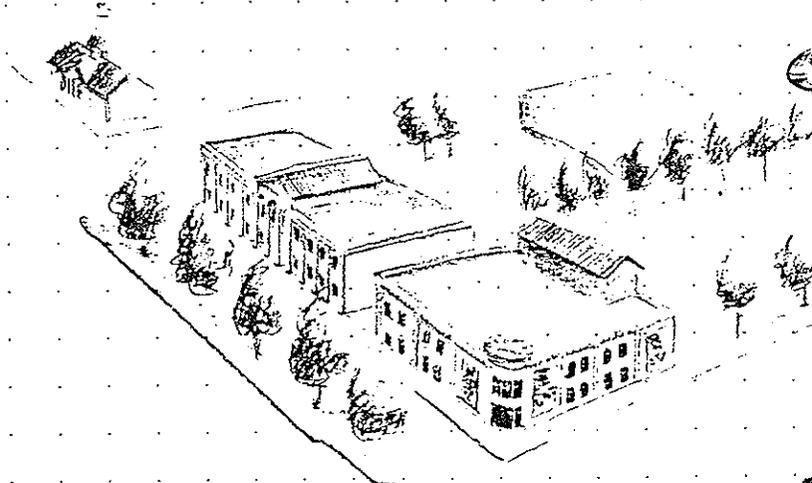
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DRAWING **5**

GORMAN
PARK CENTER



PUBLIC
LIBRARY



CIVIC PLAZA



CITY HALL



Saint Peter, Minnesota

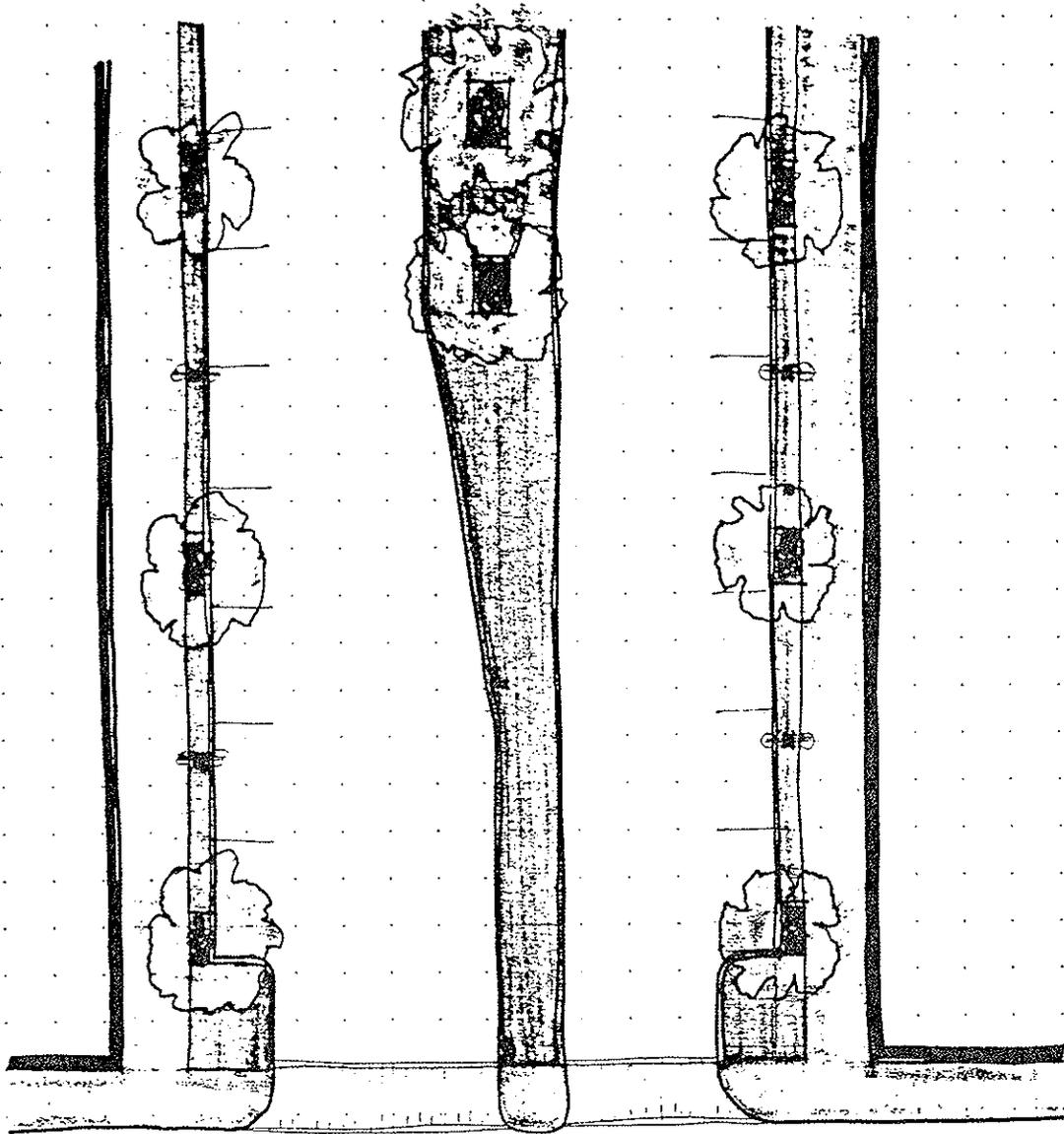
Minnesota Design Team

Spring 1999

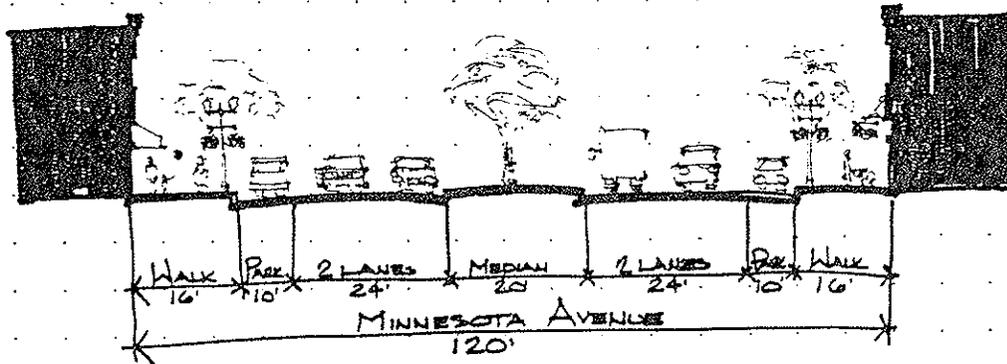
SCALE ?

DRAWING





MINNESOTA AVENUE STREETSCAPE



Saint Peter, Minnesota

Minnesota Design Team

Spring 1999

SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

DRAWING 7

DESIGN REVIEW: NEW INFILL

- Should have same setback as historic buildings
- Should be compatible with the historic buildings -
 - + in scale
 - + in height
 - + in massing
 - + materials

← SETBACK →

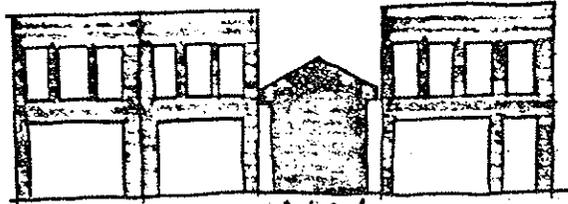


NO!

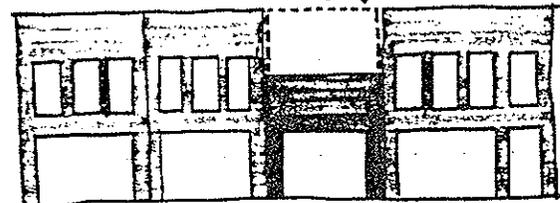


YES!

← HEIGHT & SCALE →



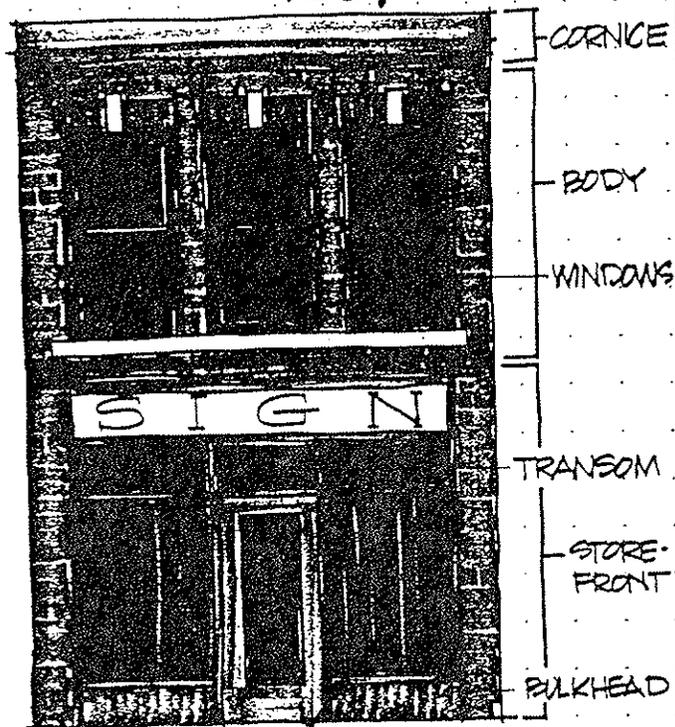
NO!



YES!

DESIGN REVIEW: EXISTING BUILDINGS

- Should respect the basic components of historic commercial bldgs.:
 - + cornice - "cap" of the building
 - + body - compatible windows
 - + storefront - large, open expanse of glass



CORNICE

BODY

WINDOWS

TRANSOM

STOREFRONT

BULKHEAD



Saint Peter, Minnesota

Minnesota Design Team

Spring 1999

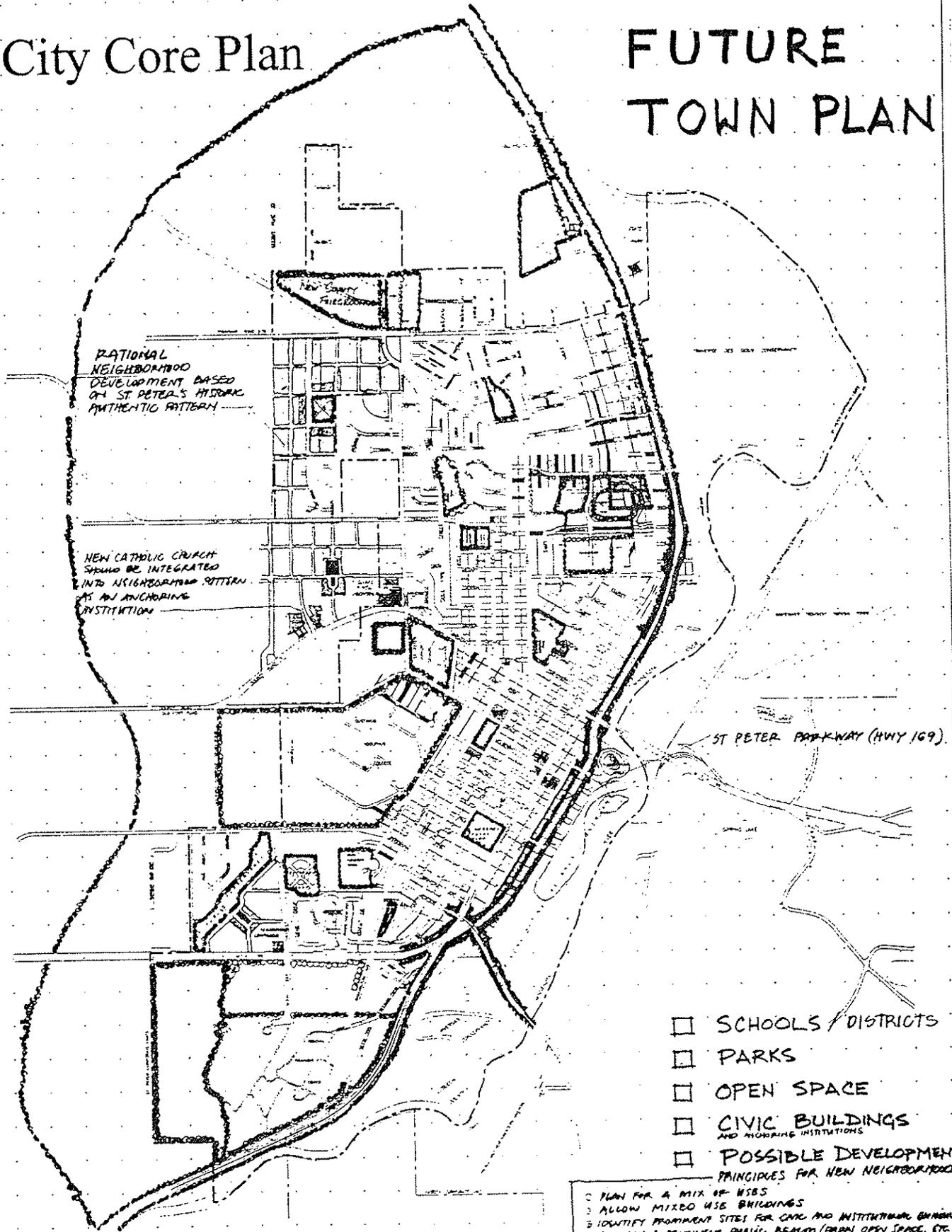
SCALE

DRAWING



City Core Plan

FUTURE TOWN PLAN



Saint Peter, Minnesota

Minnesota Design Team

Spring 1999

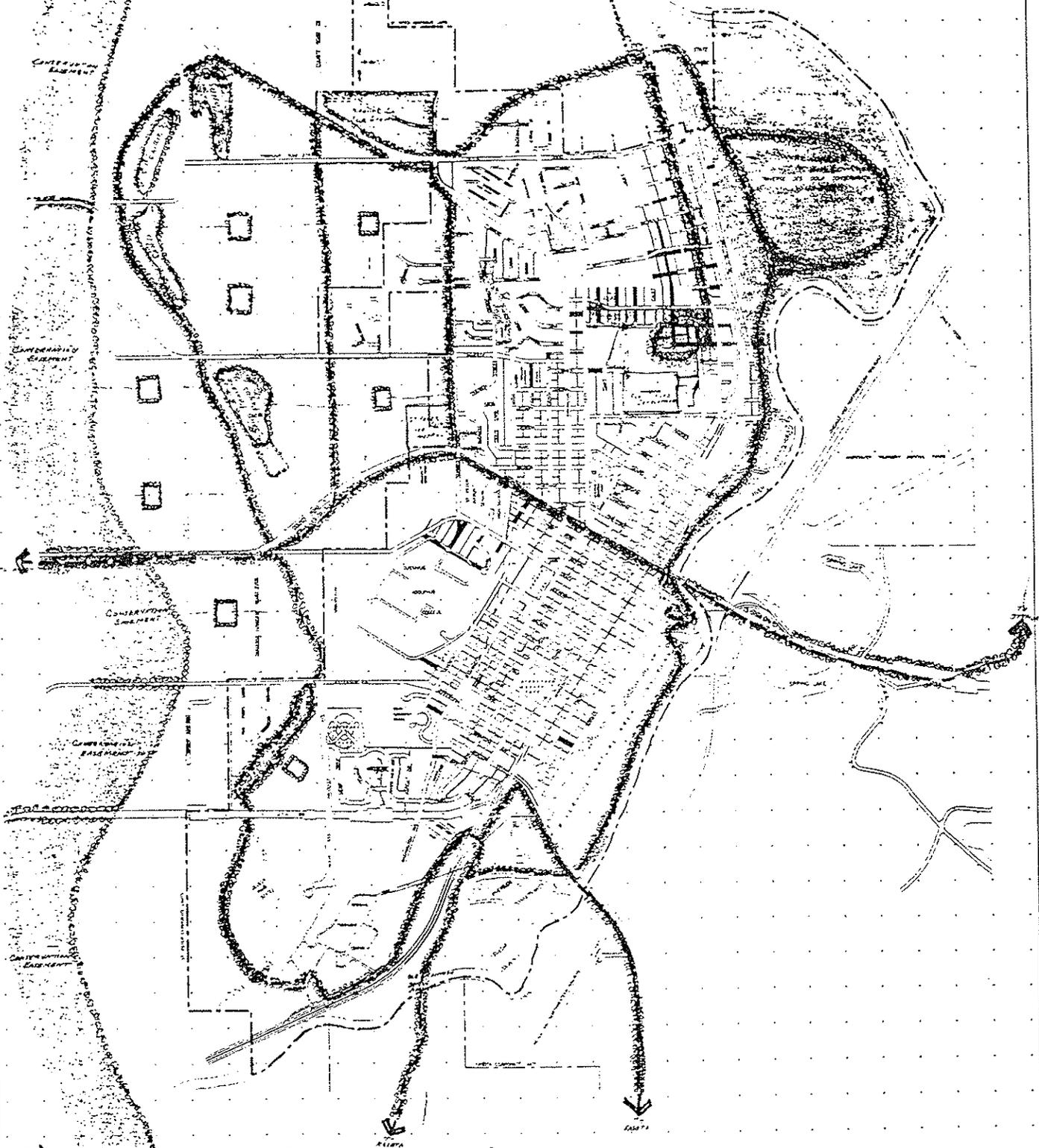
SCALE 1" = 600'

DRAWING



City Core Plan

GREEN SPACE LIMITS TO GROWTH



Saint Peter, Minnesota

Minnesota Design Team

Spring 1999

SCALE 1" = 600'

DRAWING

10

IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

SHORT TERM (1 YR.)

- PROMOTE & HOLD MEETINGS ON TOWN MASTER PLAN TO CONTINUE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT/CONSENSUS/APPROVAL OF SHARED VISION
- BUILD NEW RECREATION & LIBRARY/COMM. ED BUILDINGS BY PLAN
- DO MORE COMMUNITY GREENING: TREE & GATEWAY PLANTINGS, PARKING LOT BEAUTIFICATION, COMMUNITY GARDENS, POCKET PARKS, HALLETT POND ENHANCEMENT
- ESTABLISH GATEWAYS WITH SIGNAGE/DESIGN PLAN.
- PROMOTE/PERFORM RIVER CLEAN-UP/BUILD COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS
- MINNESOTA AVE. STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS: IMPLEMENT & FUND DOWNTOWN REDEV. TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS
- DEVELOP STRONGER HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES TAILORED TO ST. PETER
- BUILD COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS: RIVERFRONT & HISTORIC FESTIVALS, ANNUAL COMMUNITY EVENTS, CROSS-AGENCY/INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY PROJECTS.

MID-TERM (2-5 YRS.)

- INSTALL MN. AVENUE STREETScape & GATEWAY IMPROVEMENTS
—BLVD. MEDIAN, ST. LIGHTS, FURNITURE, BANNERS, PLANTS, TREES, SIGNAGE.
- UPDATE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN/CHANGE ZONING ORDINANCE TO FIT PLANS.
(AGRICULTURAL EASEMENT AROUND CITY EDGE.)
- DEVELOP LOOK-OUT, VIEW PLATFORMS AT STREET TERMINUS ALONG RIVER
NODES BETWEEN COLLEGE & GRACE AVENUES.
- EXTEND MULTI-MODAL TRAIL SYSTEM ALONG RIVER AND AROUND CITY
TO CONNECT W/ REGIONAL TRAILS
- ESTABLISH CLEARWATER INTERPRETIVE NATURE CENTER ACROSS RIVER.
- ENHANCE MILL POND PARK & PUBLIC ACCESS TO RIVER.
- PURCHASE LAND TO SUPPORT TOWN CENTER MASTER PLAN—
BUILD NEW THEATRE AND /CITY HALL AND POST OFFICE.
- EXPAND HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARIES
- ENHANCE & CONTINUE RIVER CLEAN-UP.
- EXPLORE FEASIBILITY OF 169 RE-ROUTING.

LONG TERM (5+ YRS.)

- RE-ROUTE HWY 169 TO FRONT AVE. TO CREATE "ST. PETER PARKWAY," IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN ACCESS ACROSS PKWY.
- DEVELOP ROCK BEND RECREATIONAL AREA
- CONTINUE TO MANAGE GROWTH IN NEIGHBORHOOD INCREMENTS



Saint Peter, Minnesota

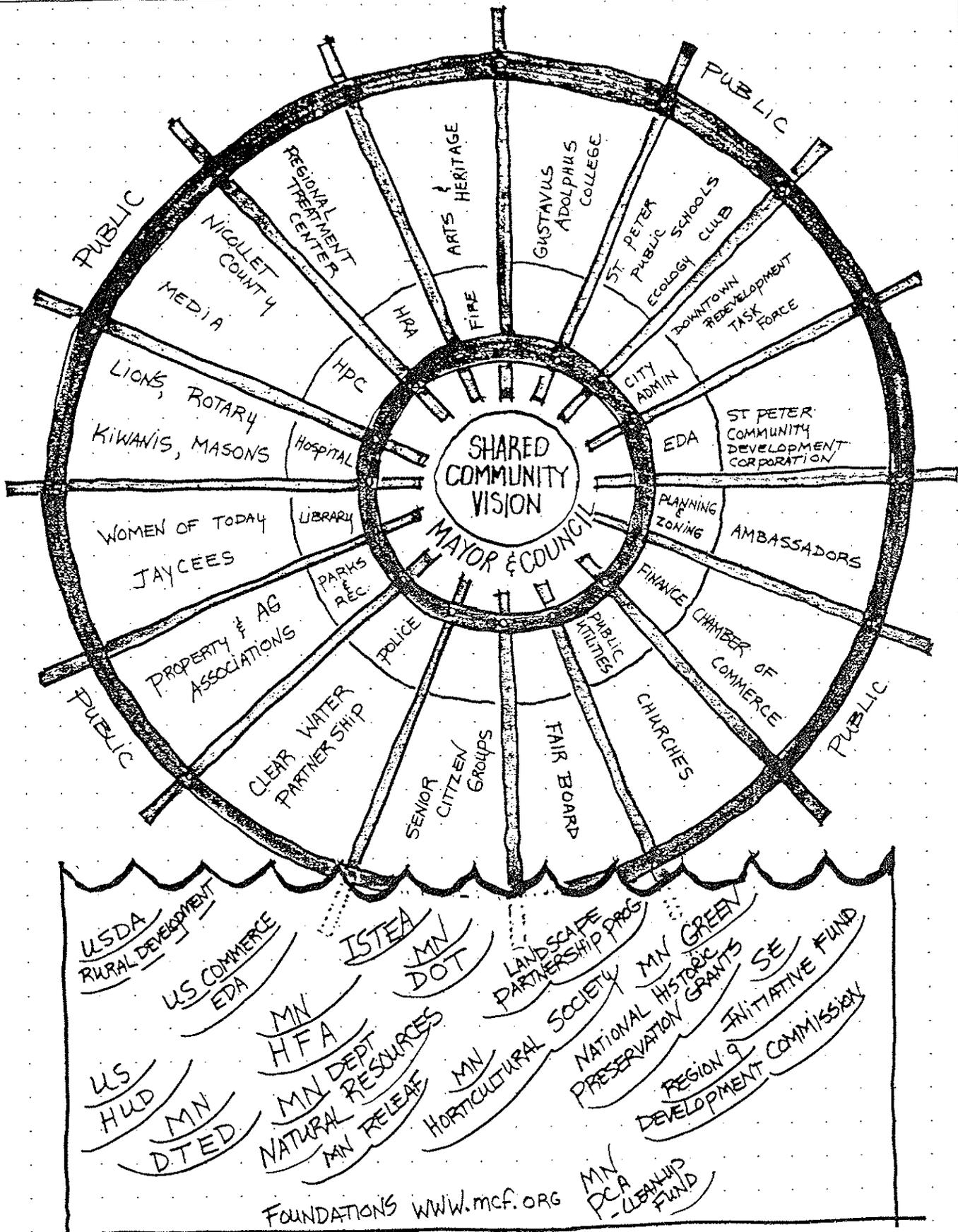
Minnesota Design Team

Spring 1999

SCALE

DRAWING





Saint Peter, Minnesota

Minnesota Design Team

Spring 1999

SCALE
DRAWING 12

LAND USE

Existing Land Use

The existing uses of property within Saint Peter are identified on the map on page 24.

Two predominant uses of land include the Gustavus Adolphus College campus located at the top of the College Avenue hill and the Regional Treatment Center site located on the southern edge of the city.

Future Land Use

The following General Planning Principles were included in the 1995 Comprehensive Development Plan of the City of Saint Peter. The principles are deemed to be at least as relevant in today's growth spurt as they were in 1995.

General Growth Principles

- 1. GROWTH SHOULD BE ORDERLY** – Planning should occur first, and land use decisions such as the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, and street and utility extensions should follow the plan. The City should plan all growth within the service area of the city.
- 2. GROWTH SHOULD BE BALANCED** – Adequate land should be reserved for all suitable land uses. The City should continue to monitor growth and research new development areas to meet those demands.
- 3. GROWTH SHOULD BE ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND** – Land use should be planned so as to minimize damages to the physical and social environment.
- 4. GROWTH SHOULD SEPARATE INCOMPATIBLE USES** – New land uses should not be detrimental to other existing planned uses in the area.
- 5. GROWTH SHOULD BE COORDINATED** – Transportation and utility networks should be planned at the same time and be consistent with land uses. The City should work with Nicollet County to ensure that adopted plans and policies are complementary between jurisdictions. Additionally, the following principles were determined to be applicable given the recent growth and residential development.
- 6. GROWTH SHOULD BE ANTICIPATED** – Through the proper interpretation and analysis of historical, current and projected data, future growth areas can be predicted and properly planned.

Current growth patterns suggest that new development to Saint Peter will occur generally in a westerly direction. The map on page 12 depicts new subdivisions to the City of Saint Peter from post-tornado 1998 through 2003.

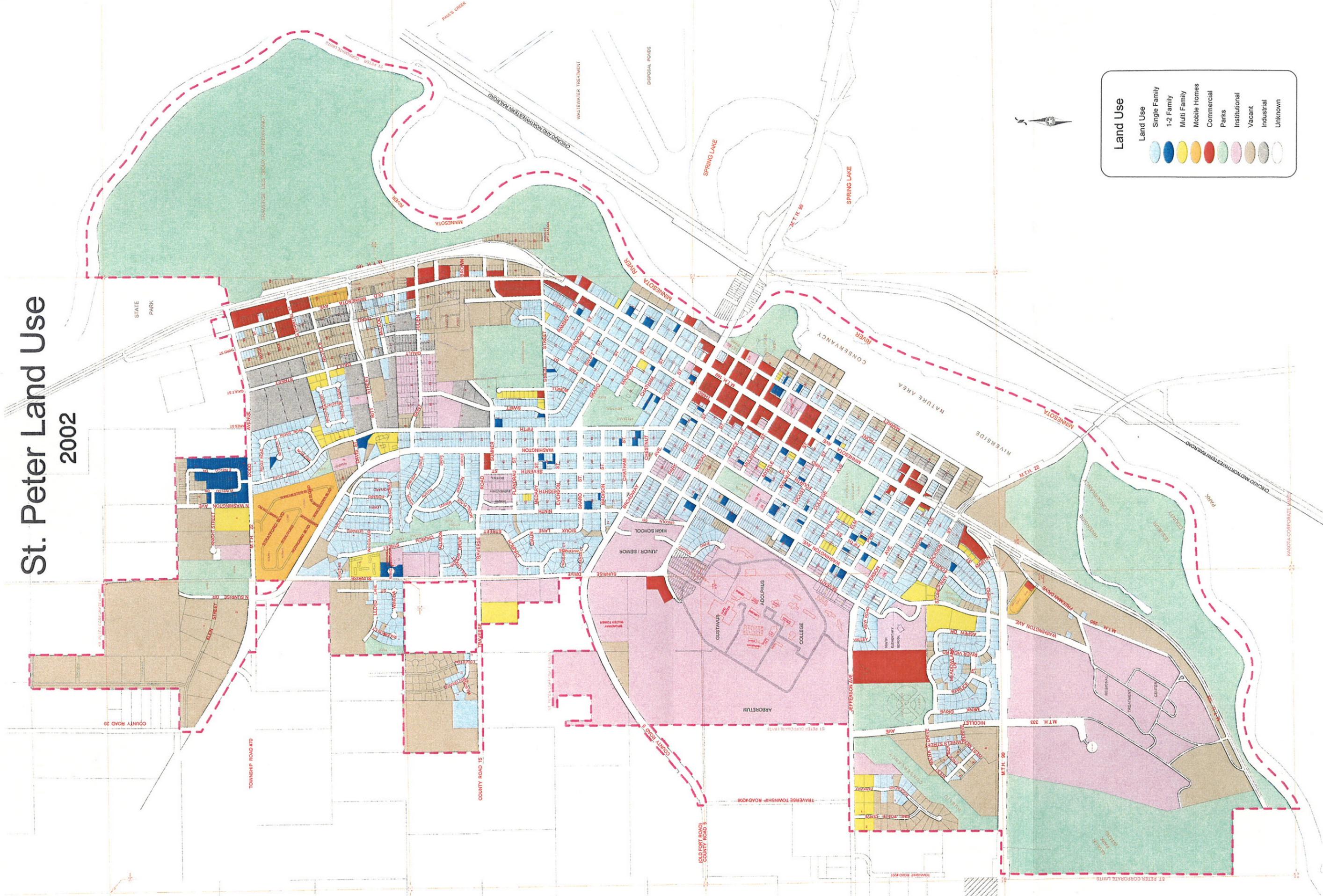
In 1999, the Minnesota Design Team led participating citizens through a series of meetings to identify planning issues of the city. The Future Town Plan resulting from the Design Team visit

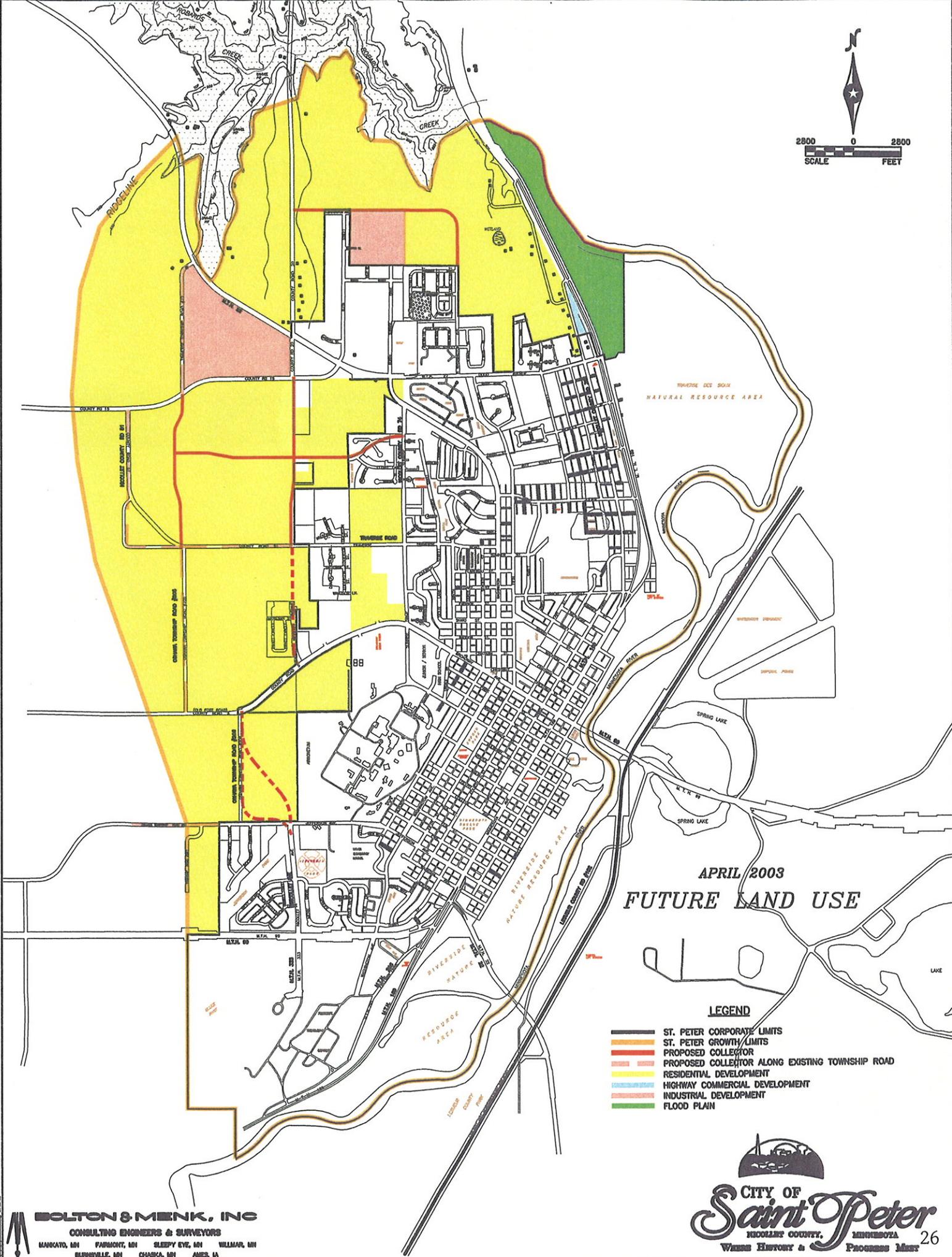
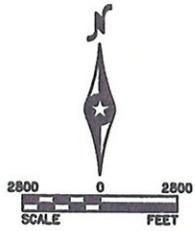
St. Peter Land Use

2002

Land Use

- Land Use
- Single Family
- 1-2 Family
- Multi Family
- Mobile Homes
- Commercial
- Parks
- Institutional
- Vacant
- Industrial
- Unknown

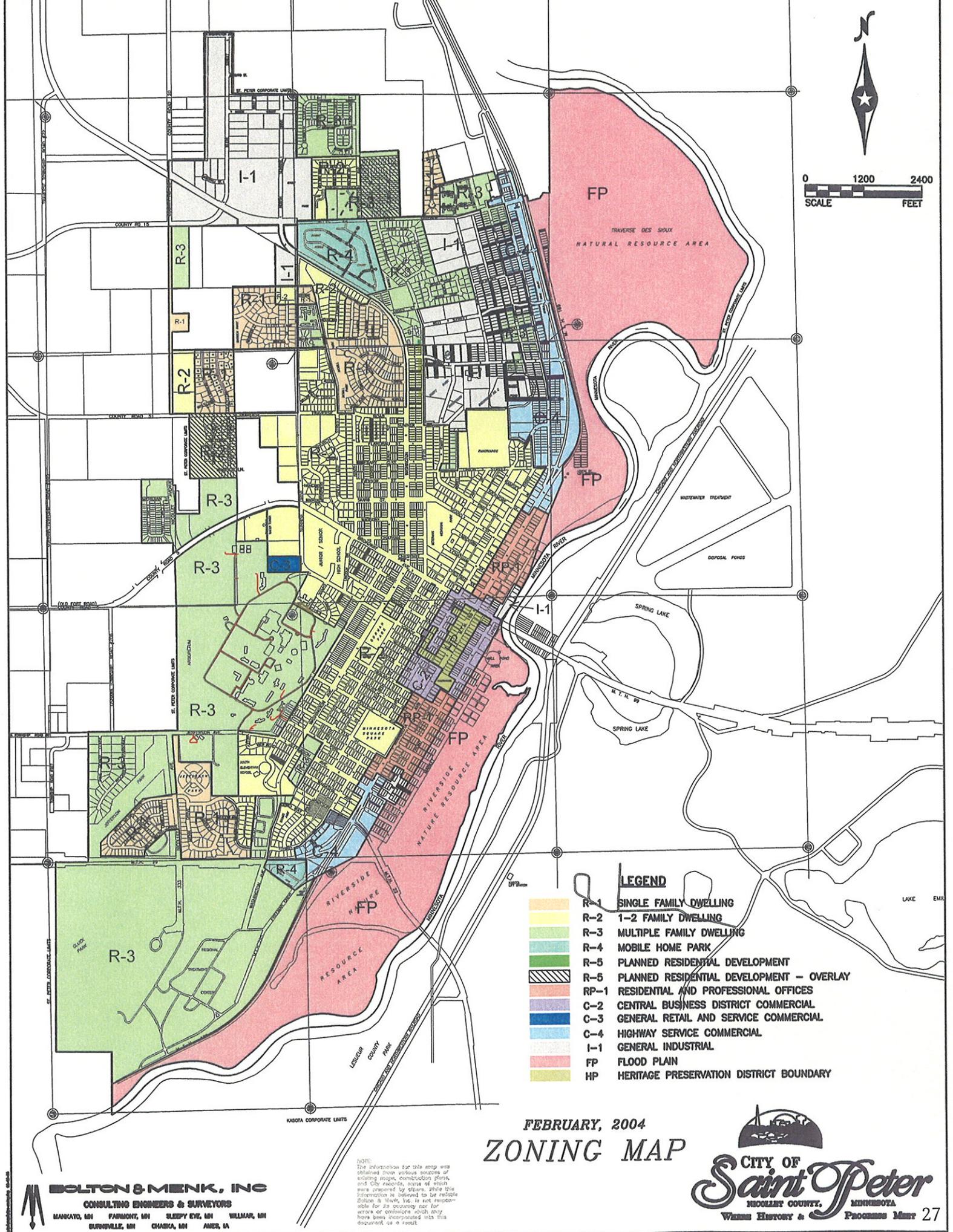
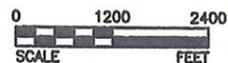




APRIL 2003
FUTURE LAND USE

LEGEND

- ST. PETER CORPORATE LIMITS
- ST. PETER GROWTH LIMITS
- PROPOSED COLLECTOR
- PROPOSED COLLECTOR ALONG EXISTING TOWNSHIP ROAD
- RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
- HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT
- INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT
- FLOOD PLAIN



LEGEND

- R-1 SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING
- R-2 1-2 FAMILY DWELLING
- R-3 MULTIPLE FAMILY DWELLING
- R-4 MOBILE HOME PARK
- R-5 PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
- R-5 PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT - OVERLAY
- RP-1 RESIDENTIAL AND PROFESSIONAL OFFICES
- C-2 CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT COMMERCIAL
- C-3 GENERAL RETAIL AND SERVICE COMMERCIAL
- C-4 HIGHWAY SERVICE COMMERCIAL
- I-1 GENERAL INDUSTRIAL
- FP FLOOD PLAIN
- HP HERITAGE PRESERVATION DISTRICT BOUNDARY

FEBRUARY, 2004
ZONING MAP

NOTE:
The information for this map was obtained from various sources of existing maps, subdivision plans, and other records, none of which were prepared by Bolton & Menk, Inc. While the information is believed to be reliable, Bolton & Menk, Inc. is not responsible for its accuracy nor for errors or omissions which may have been incorporated into this document as a result.

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CITY OF Saint Peter
NOBLEST COUNTY, MINNESOTA
WHERE HISTORY & PROGRESS MEET 27

depicted a generally agreed upon western growth boundary. Participants were of the opinion that growth beyond the western growth boundary would not be wise given the increased costs of installing, maintaining and operating municipal utility services.

The western growth boundary generally follows the geographic feature locally referred to as the "second bluff". The boundary is depicted on the map on page 26. The same map identifies the Roberts Creek and Minnesota River flood plain as northern and eastern growth boundaries respectively.

It is expected that all land within the identified growth boundaries will be developed at some point in the future. The timeline of 100% development is certainly a matter of speculation. However, to plan for new developments which will undoubtedly occur, the future land use of all parcels within the boundaries has been contemplated and identified. The Future Land Use Map is shown on page 26.

Residential Development

The population of Saint Peter increased by approximately 3.5% during the 1990's.

The construction of new single family dwelling units has significantly exceeded the levels experienced during the '80's or the '90's. The value of new residential construction has increased each of the last 6 years.

The investment in residential construction is validation of the fact that Saint Peter is more and more becoming known as an attractive community with numerous amenities enhancing the quality of life for all citizens.

Increased population requires the construction of additional residential dwellings and the accompanying utilization of current vacant lands. With or without increased land use for commercial or industrial development, the corporate limits of Saint Peter may need to be adjusted to provide for new residential construction.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic Data Overview

Sources of Data

The following pages contain demographic data obtained from a variety of local, state and national sources. For population and household data, the primary source is the U.S. Census Bureau and information released from the 2000 Census. However, at the time this update was prepared, the 2000 Census had not yet released some of the detailed demographic tables, including income and housing costs data. For current income estimates, the source is Claritas, Inc., an Arlington, VA based data reporting service.

Market Area Definition

The larger, surrounding Market Area defined for the City of St. Peter in this Update is consistent with the Market Area boundaries used in the 1999 Study. The Market Area includes the jurisdictions of the City of St. Peter, the City of Kasota and the City of Cleveland, and the Townships of Oshawa, Traverse, Lake Prairie, Granby, New Sweden, Cleveland, Kasota, and Ottawa. All of these jurisdictions are in Nicollet County or Le Sueur County. The Market Area definition was developed with the assistance of City staff in 1999. In addition to the Market Area data presented, many of the demographic data tables also provide information for Nicollet County as a whole, to present a larger geographical reference for St. Peter and the Market Area.

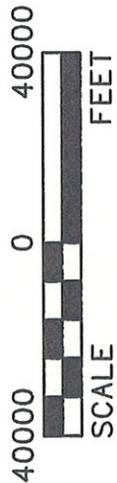
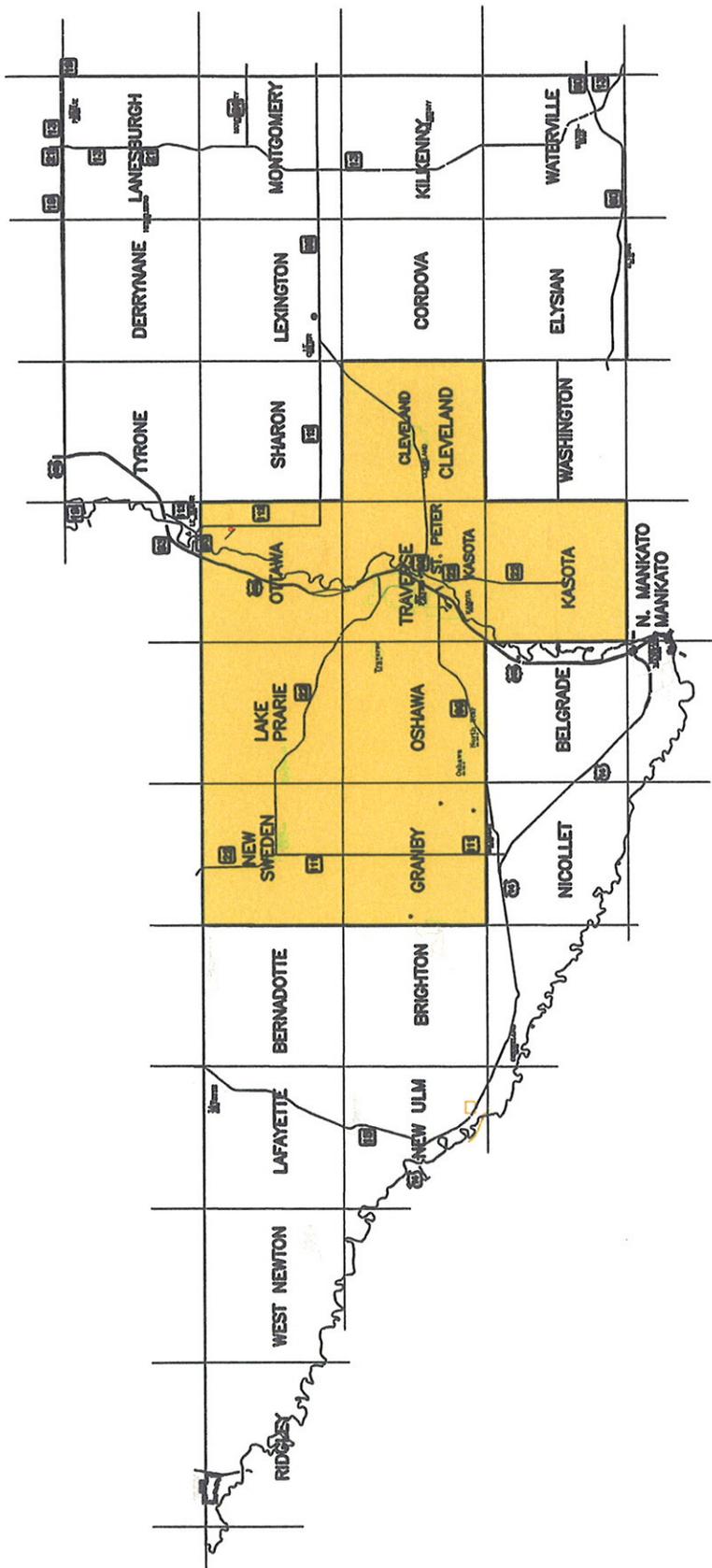
It should be recognized that the market for housing in St. Peter will be impacted by Mankato/North Mankato, the regional center for the area located approximately 11 miles south of St. Peter. The Mankato area has been growing in recent years, and is projected to continue to grow in the near future. Although the demographic tables that follow do not provide information for Mankato/North Mankato, demographic and housing information collected from these Cities has been reviewed when making recommendations for housing activities in St. Peter.

Population Estimates and Trends

	1980 Population	1990 Population	% Change 1980-1990	2000 Population	% Change 1990-2000
St. Peter	9,056	9,421	4.03%	9,747	3.46%
Market Area	15,024	15,112	0.59%	15,621	3.37%
Nicollet County	26,929	28,076	4.26%	29,771	6.04%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

- St. Peter has shown consistent population growth in recent decades. From 1980 to 1990, the City's population increased approximately 4%. Between 1990 and 2000, the City's population increased nearly 3.5%.



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**CITY OF SAINT PETER
TRADE AREA**

FEB., 2004

FIGURE NO. 1

- Although it is difficult to accurately document, the best available estimates indicate that the City's population count did experience a set-back because of the 1998 tornado disaster. The Minnesota State Demographer's 1997 population estimate for the City was 9,797 people. The 2000 Census reported 9,747 in St. Peter, 50 people less than the pre-disaster estimate.
- After experiencing almost no growth in the 1980s, the surrounding Market Area has grown between 1990 and 2000. The 2000 Census reported that the Market Area added 509 people, although 64% of this growth occurred in the City of St. Peter.
- In their county population estimates, the Census Bureau identifies the sources of population gains and losses. The Census Bureau's 1999 population estimate for Nicollet County attributes nearly all of the County's population gain in the 1990s to births exceeding deaths. Although they estimate that some international in-migration has occurred, this was more than off-set by domestic out-migration from the County. In their 2001 release, the Census Bureau estimates that the County has added 335 people since 1990, with 155 people added through domestic in-migration, 154 people added through natural increase (births-deaths) and 31 people added through international in-migration.
- We have also obtained population estimates from Claritas, Inc., a private company providing demographic data. The Claritas estimates and projections used in this Update were produced prior to the release of any 2000 Census data. The Claritas 2001 population estimate for St. Peter is 9,661, which is lower than the population reported in the 2000 Census. The Claritas estimates also appear to reflect losses from the tornado. In 1998 (pre-disaster) Claritas had estimated the City's population to be 9,730 people.
- The Claritas 2001 population estimate for the Market Area is 15,757, which is up 136 people from the 2000 Census, and consistent with the Census Bureau's 2001 estimate for all of Nicollet County.

Population Projections

The following table presents possible population level projections using three different sources. The 10 year growth trend is based on the rate of change between 1990 and 2000, using the 1990 Census and the 2000 Census, and projects this rate of growth forward between 2000 and 2006. The 20 year growth trend uses the same methodology, but calculates an annual growth rate from 1980 to 2000. The third projection is provided by Claritas, Inc., a private company that provides demographic data.

Table 2 Population Projections Through 2006				
	2000 Population	2006 Projection from 10 year growth trends	2006 Projection from 20 year growth trends	2006 Claritas Projection
St. Peter	9,747	9,949	9,970	9,858
Market Area	15,621	15,937	15,807	16,060
Nicollet Co.	29,771	30,849	30,714	N/A

Source: Community Partners Research, Inc.; Claritas, Inc.

- Population projections for St. Peter are very consistent, whether calculated from 10-year or 20-year growth trends. These two projection methods anticipate that the City will add between 202 and 223 people between 2000 and 2006.
- The population projection from Claritas, Inc., is slightly lower for the City. Claritas starts from their base year (2001) estimate of 9,661, and projects that the City's population will be 9,858 people in 2006. The net increase of 197 people is very similar to the projections calculated from growth trends.
- In the 1999 Housing Study we had included projections based on growth trends and from Claritas that were calculated before the impact of the disaster. At that time, we had projected that the City's population level could be as high as 10,041 people by the year 2003. The newest projections, which factor in the post-disaster data, show a lower anticipated population level by 2006 than we had once projected for 2003. It is possible that these newest projections are overly conservative, and the tornado impact is very temporary. We consider it to be very possible that faster population growth may occur.
- Projections for the Market Area do vary depending on the time period reviewed. Calculations based on the most recent 10 years of growth result in a higher projected population level than calculations that also incorporate 1980s trends. These two methods anticipate that the Market Area will add between 186 and 316 people between 2000 and 2006. The projections at the lower end of this range imply that some of the jurisdictions excluding St. Peter could potentially lose population over the next 6 years.

Population By Age

The following table compares the City and Market Area populations by age in 1990 and 2000, along with the percentage changes. While this table examines the changes over the last 10 years, the table on the following page compares the City and Market Area with the State of Minnesota for population by age.

Age	City of St. Peter			Market Area			Nicollet County		
	1990	2000	% Change	1990	2000	% Change	1990	2000	% Change
0-19	2,745	3,019	10.0%	4,641	4,727	1.9%	8,781	9,059	3.2%
20-24	1,777	1,888	6.2%	2,059	2,172	5.5%	3,076	3,183	3.5%
25-34	1,227	902	-26.5%	2,133	1,472	-31.0%	4,410	3,504	-20.5%
35-44	1,159	1,178	1.6%	2,078	2,222	6.9%	4,164	4,503	8.1%
45-54	713	1,015	42.4%	1,261	2,030	61.0%	2,496	4,036	61.7%
55-64	624	594	-4.8%	1,139	1,171	2.8%	2,050	2,261	10.3%
65-74	507	510	0.6%	898	927	3.2%	1,601	1,685	5.2%
75-84	457	402	-12.0%	651	609	-6.5%	1,097	1,099	0.2%
85+	212	239	12.7%	252	291	15.5%	401	441	10.0%
Total	9,421	9,747	3.5%	15,112	15,621	3.4%	28,076	29,771	6.0%

Source: U.S. Census; Community Partners Research, Inc.

- Although most of the age ranges defined above added people between 1990 and 2000, the City of St. Peter did experience population decreases in certain age groups. The largest percent and numeric decline occurred among people age 25 to 34 years old, where a decrease of more than 26% occurred. Other age groups experiencing population declines were 75 to 84 years old, down by 12%, and 55 to 64 years old, down by nearly 5%.
- The largest numeric and percentage increase for the City, market Area and County occurred in the age range between 45 and 64 years old. In the City, this age group increased by more than 42%. The next largest percentage increase occurred among older seniors, age 85 and older. Percentage growth in this age range approached 13% in the City.

Population By Age - Comparison to Minnesota

The following table compares the City of St. Peter and the Market Area populations by age in 2000 to State-wide age distribution patterns.

Age	St. Peter		Market Area		Minnesota
	2000	Percent	2000	Percent	2000 Percent
0-19	3,019	31.0%	4,727	30.4%	29.1%
20-24	1,888	19.4%	2,172	10.7%	6.6%
25-34	902	9.2%	1,472	9.4%	13.7%
35-44	1,178	12.1%	2,222	14.2%	16.8%
45-54	1,015	10.4%	2,030	13.0%	13.5%
55-64	594	6.1%	1,171	7.5%	8.2%
65-74	510	5.2%	927	5.9%	6.0%
75-84	402	4.1%	609	3.9%	4.3%
85+	239	2.5%	291	1.9%	1.7%
Total	9,747	100%	15,621	100%	100%

Source: U.S. Census; Community Partners Research, Inc.

- Population by age percentages for the City of St. Peter are impacted by the large student population at Gustavus Adolphus College. Over 19% of the City's total population is in the age range between 20 and 24 years old. State-wide, less than 7% of the population is in this age group.
- The population by age distribution for the entire Market Area is relatively similar to State-wide averages, except for the above-average student population. The Market Area does have a lower than normal percentage of the population in the age range between 25 and 34 years old. This age range decreased in population by 31% between the 1990 and 2000 Census.

Household Estimates and Trends

	1980 Households	1990 Households	% Change 1980-1990	2000 Households	% Change 1990-2000
St. Peter	2,583	2,767	7.12%	2,978	7.63%
Market Area	4,476	4,730	5.67%	5,143	8.73%
Nicollet County	8,580	9,478	10.47%	10,642	12.28%

Source: U.S. Census; Minnesota State Demographer

- Similar to population growth, St. Peter has experienced very steady household growth in recent decades. In the 1980s, the City's household count increased by more than 7.1%. Between 1990 and 2000, the City's household level was up by more than 7.6%.
- As reported in the population section, there is some evidence that the 1998 tornado resulted in some loss of households. The State Demographer's pre-disaster household estimate was 3,090 households. The 2000 Census reported 2,978 households in the City.
- Household growth has been occurring in the Market Area at a slightly faster pace since 1990. The 2000 Census reported that the Market Area household level had increased by more than 8.7% since 1990.
- Household formation has been occurring at a faster rate than population growth in recent decades due to a steady decrease in average household size. This has been due to household composition changes, such as more single parent families, more senior households due to longer life spans, etc.
- The 2001 household estimate from Claritas indicates that there are 3,053 households in St. Peter. This is slightly higher than the household count reported in the 2000 Census. Claritas estimates that there are 5,170 households in the Market Area in 2001. This estimate is 27 households above the 2000 Census count.

Average Household Size

The following table provides U.S. Census Bureau information on average household size. We have also provided projections for the City and the Market Area from Claritas, Inc., which were prepared prior to the release of any 2000 Census data.

Table 6 Average Number of Persons Per Household 1980-2006				
	1980 Census	1990 Census	2000 Census	2006 Projected Claritas
St. Peter	2.54	2.48	2.46	2.41
Market Area	2.79	2.65	2.55	2.60
Nicollet County	2.84	2.69	2.48	N/A

Source: U.S. Census; Claritas, Inc.

- Average household size in St. Peter has continued to decrease in recent decades. The City's average household size has declined from 2.54 persons in 1980 to 2.46 persons in 2000.
- The projection from Claritas anticipates that the City's average household size will continue to decrease in the near future. Claritas projects an average household size of 2.41 in 2006, down from their estimate of 2.43 persons per household in 2001.

- Average household size has also decreased in the larger Market Area, from 2.79 persons per household in 1980 to 2.55 persons in 2000.
- Although the Claritas projection for 2006 appears to indicate an expected increase in average household size for the Market Area, they start from a 2001 estimate of 2.61 persons per household, and expect this to decrease slightly to 2.60 persons by 2006. Claritas' estimates are based on a smaller group quarters estimate than was reported in the Census, which causes their average household sizes to be larger than actual.

Household Projections

The following table presents possible household level projections using three different sources. The 10 year growth trend is based on the rate of change between 1990 and 2000 using the U.S. Census, and projects this rate of growth forward between 2000 and 2006. The 20 year growth trend uses the same methodology, but calculates an annual growth rate from 1980 to 2000. The third projection is provided by Claritas, Inc., a private company that provides projection data.

Table 7 Household Projections Through 2006				
	2000 Household Census	2006 Projection from 10 year growth trends	2006 Projection from 20 year growth trends	2006 Claritas Projection
St. Peter	2,978	3,114	3,115	3,155
Market Area	5,143	5,412	5,373	5,315
Nicollet County	10,642	11,426	11,409	N/A

Source: U.S. Census; Community Partners Research, Inc.; Claritas, Inc.

- As reported in the section on population projections, the City of St. Peter has had a very consistent growth rate over the last two decades. As a result, projections based on 10 year patterns are almost identical to projections based on 20 year patterns. These two calculations expect the City to add 136 or 137 households between 2000 and 2006. On an annual basis, this equates to an average of approximately 23 new households per year.
- The Claritas projection for St. Peter expects a slightly slower rate of household growth. Claritas projects that the City's household count will increase from 3,053 households in 2001 to 3,155 households in 2006. This is an annual average of approximately 20 new households per year.
- In the 1999 Housing Study we had included projections based on recent growth trends and from Claritas that were calculated before the impact of the disaster. At that time, we had projected that the City's household level could be as high as 3,315 households by the year 2003. The newest projections, which factor in the post-disaster data, show a lower

anticipated population level by 2006 than we had once projected for 2003. It is possible that these newest projections are overly conservative, and the tornado impact is very temporary. We consider it to be very possible that faster population growth may occur. The projections in the 1999 Study had anticipated average annual household growth as high as 45 new households per year, nearly double the most recent projections.

- Comparing housing starts to household growth in St. Peter is difficult because of the re-construction that has occurred following the 1998 tornado. However, in 2000 there were 29 housing starts, and in 2001 there were 72 housing starts, for a 2 year average of 50 to 51 new units per year. This would be slightly above the pre-tornado growth trend of approximately 45 new households per year.

Households By Age of Householder

The following table compares the St. Peter and the Market Area households by age of householder in 1990 and 2000, along with the percentage changes.

Table 8 Households by Age - 1990 – 2000						
Age	City of St. Peter			Market Area		
	1990	2000	% Change	1990	2000	% Change
15-24	240	345	43.8%	300	397	32.3%
25-34	540	437	-19.1%	962	687	-28.6%
35-44	575	611	6.3%	1,067	1,153	8.1%
45-54	354	545	54.0%	647	1,109	71.4%
55-64	355	334	-5.9%	638	652	2.2%
65-74	304	322	5.9%	558	581	4.1%
75-84	399	384	-3.8%	415	393	-5.3%
85+	113	130	15.0%	143	171	19.6%
Total	2,767	2,978	7.6%	4,730	5,143	8.7%

Source: U.S. Census; Community Partners Research, Inc.

- Consistent with the population by age figures provided earlier, the City of St. Peter lost households in three defined age ranges between 1990 and 2000. The largest decreases occurred among households in the 25 to 34 year old age range. Other age ranges that lost households were the 55 to 64 year old range, and the 75 to 84 year old range.
- The largest increase occurred among the 45 to 54 year old age group, representing much

of the “baby boom” generation. The next largest percentage increase occurred among younger households, age 15 to 24 years old, and may reflect some increase in college students living in housing other than dormitories.

- For the entire Market Area the patterns were somewhat similar. There was a larger percentage increase among the 45 to 54 year olds, and the number of households in the 55 to 64 year old range increased slightly despite the losses in St. Peter.

Household Characteristics

The following table presents data on household characteristics from the 2000 Census. Data has been presented as percentages of the total households to allow for comparative analysis between the City, the Market Areas and State.

Table 9 Households by Type – 2000								
	Married Couple Family		Male Householder No Wife Present		Female Householder No Husband Present		Non-Family Household	
	With Related Children	W/O Related Children	With Related Children	W/O Related Children	With Related Children	W/O Related Children	1 Person Household	Non-Family Household
St. Peter	22.5%	26.3%	2.2%	1.1%	7.3%	2.5%	28.7%	9.4%
Market Area	25.5%	31.1%	2.1%	1.3%	5.5%	2.7%	24.6%	7.2%
Nicollet Co.	27.7%	29.8%	2.0%	1.3%	5.7%	2.2%	24.0%	7.3%
Minnesota	25.2%	28.5%	2.0%	1.6%	5.9%	3.0%	26.9%	6.9%

Source: 2000 Census; Community Partners Research, Inc.

- St. Peter has an above average percentage of non-family households and 1 person households when compared to the State of Minnesota. This may be due in part to a student population living off-campus.
- The City’s percentage of married couples with children is lower than the Market Area, County or State percentage.
- For the entire Market Area, there is an above average percentage of married couples, both with and without children.

Households by Tenure

Table 10 Households by Tenure – 2000					
	Occupied Units	Owner-Occupied Units	% Owner Units	Renter-Occupied Units	% Rented Units
St. Peter	2,978	2,053	68.9%	925	31.1%
Market Area	5,143	3,966	77.1%	1,177	22.9%
Nicollet Co.	10,642	8,065	75.8%	2,577	24.2%
Minnesota	-	-	74.6%	-	25.4%

Source: 2000 Census

- According to the 2000 Census, nearly 69% of St. Peter’s households live in owner-occupied housing. The City’s renter rate, just over 31%, is higher than the State-wide rate of 25.4%.
- For the Market Area, the rate of owner-occupancy is greater than 77%. Excluding St. Peter from the remainder of the Market Area, the rate of home ownership exceeds 88%.

Table 11 Household Changes by Tenure - 1990 to 2000						
	Owned Units			Rented Units		
	Occupied Units 1990	Occupied Units 2000	Change in Owner Occupied	Occupied Units 1990	Occupied Units 2000	Change in Renter Occupied
St. Peter	1,856	2,053	197	911	925	14
Market Area	3,535	3,966	431	1,195	1,177	-18
Nicollet Co.	6,905	8,065	1,160	2,573	2,577	4

Source: U.S. Census

- Between 1990 and 2000, St. Peter added 197 owner-occupied households and 14 renter households. This increased the percentage of owner-occupancy from 67.1% in 1990 to 68.9% in 2000.
- There was a net loss of 18 renter households for the Market Area. For all of Nicollet County there was also a loss of renter households when St. Peter is excluded.

Income Data

Income data from the 2000 Census is not scheduled for release until summer of 2002. Income data has been presented from a 2001 estimate of income calculated by Claritas, Inc., a national data reporting company. Income includes total money received in the stated calendar year by all household members 15 years old and over. The first table provides a median income estimate for all households, while the second table provides a median income estimate for all families that have more than one related individual living in the same household.

Table 12 Estimated Household Income - 1989 to 2001			
	Household Income		
	1989 Median	2001 Median	% Change
St. Peter	\$26,377	\$37,217	41.1%
Market Area	\$28,594	\$43,263	51.3%

Source: 1990 Census; Claritas, Inc.

Table 13 Estimated Family Income - 1989 to 2001			
	Family Income		
	1989 Median	2001 Median	% Change
St. Peter	\$36,275	\$53,321	47.0%
Market Area	\$35,773	\$54,681	52.9%

Source: 1990 Census; Claritas, Inc.

- Using the commonly accepted standard that 30% of gross income can be applied to housing expenses without experiencing a cost burden, a median income household in the City of St. Peter could afford approximately \$930 per month for ownership or rental, and a median income family could afford \$1,333 per month.
- The Market Area's median household income translates into a monthly housing affordability payment of \$1,082. Using the mortgage affordability calculator of the National Association of Realtors, a household earning the Market Area's median household income of \$43,263 can afford to purchase a house at approximately \$63,694. This assumes relatively low fixed debt, \$5,000 available for a down payment/closing costs, and a 30 year fixed rate mortgage at 7.25%. If the household has \$8,000 available for down payment/closing costs, the affordability level increases to \$101,911. A median income family, with identical terms but having higher fixed debt and \$10,000 for a down payment/closing costs can afford a \$127,389 house.
- Household income estimates for 2001 indicate that approximately 43% of Market Area households have incomes above \$50,000. Households in this income range will generally have incomes sufficient for the costs associated with new home construction.

EMPLOYMENT / ECONOMY

Employment and Local Economic Trends Analysis

While many factors influence the need for housing, employment opportunities represent a predominant demand generator. Without jobs and corresponding wages, the means to afford housing is severely limited.

Employment opportunities may be provided by a broad range of private and public business sectors. Jobs may be available in manufacturing, commercial services, agriculture, public administration, and other industries. The type of employment, wage level, and working conditions will each influence the kind of housing that is needed and at what level of affordability.

The strength of the area economy has had a significant impact on the steady growth that has occurred in St. Peter in the 1980s and 1990s. The City has a number of large employers, including the following, each with 100 or more employees:

● St. Peter Regional Treatment Center	950 employees
● Gustavus Adolphus College	621 employees
● St. Peter Public Schools	245 employees
● St. Peter Community Hospital	230 employees
● Nicollet County Government	175 employees
● Econofoods Grocery	130 employees
● Alumacraft Boat Company	115 employees

Work Force and Unemployment Rates

Employment information is only available at the County level or for large cities. Unless otherwise noted, all data in the following tables presents information for all of Nicollet County. Data in the following tables have been obtained from the Minnesota Department of Economic Security.

Table 23 Nicollet County Labor Force 1990-2001						
Year	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate	Unemployment Rate - MN	Unemployment Rate - US
1990	15,675	15,055	620	4.0%	4.9%	5.6%
1991	15,959	15,399	560	3.5%	5.1%	6.8%
1992	16,201	15,646	555	3.4%	5.2%	7.5%
1993	16,988	16,408	580	3.4%	5.1%	6.9%
1994	17,959	17,488	472	2.6%	4.0%	6.1%
1995	17,975	17,453	523	2.9%	3.7%	5.6%
1996	17,883	17,341	542	3.0%	4.0%	5.4%
1997	17,965	17,540	426	2.4%	3.3%	4.9%
1998	18,515	18,211	303	1.6%	2.5%	4.5%
1999	18,173	17,826	347	1.9%	2.8%	4.2%
2000	18,730	18,313	417	2.2%	3.3%	4.0%
2001	19,200	18,708	492	2.6%	3.7%	4.8%

Source: Minnesota Department of Economic Security

- Nicollet County has experienced a significant, steady increase in the employed workforce and the labor force from 1990 to 2001. During this time, the available County labor force has increased by more than 22%, and the unemployment rate has dropped from 4.0% in 1990 to 2.6% in 2001. For each year since 1990, the County's unemployment rate has been below both the State and national average.
- In 1998, the County's unemployment rate reached a low of 1.6%, before rising to 2.6% in 2001.

Employment by Industry

The following table identifies the make up of the employed workforce by industry. It is important to note that County data in these tables reflect information obtained from employers covered under the Minnesota unemployment compensation tax law. Approximately 97 percent of the total nonagricultural wage and salary employment in Minnesota is included in the data. Major groups excluded from the data are self-employed workers and farms with four or less employees in a 20 week period. The most recent year of data by industry detail is for 2000.

Table 24 Nicollet County Employment by Industry Detail - 1990-2000

Industry	1990	2000	Numeric Change 1990-2000	% Change 1990-2000
Total All Industry	10,194	14,159	3,965	38.9%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	80	282	202	252.5%
Construction	188	272	84	44.7%
Manufacturing	4,454	5,758	1,304	29.3%
Transportation, Public Utilities	227	341	114	50.2%
Wholesale Trade	337	783	446	132.3%
Retail Trade	1,132	1,577	445	39.3%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	221	497	276	124.9%
Services	1,572	2,341	769	48.9%
Government	1,983	2,291	308	15.5%

Source: Research and Statistics Office, Minnesota Department of Economic Security

- Between 1990 and 2000, Nicollet County experienced net employment growth in all major industry sectors including manufacturing, services, government, and retail trade, the four largest sectors. Growth was especially strong in services, the County's second largest employment sector. Services sector employment increased by nearly 49%.

Wages by Industry

The following table shows the growth of average annual wages by employment sector between 1990 and 2000, the last full year of data.

Table 25 Nicollet County Annual Wages by Industry Detail			
Industry	1990 Average Annual Wages	2000 Average Annual Wages	% Change 1990-2000
Total All Industry	\$17,501	\$25,972	48.4%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	\$18,463	\$23,558	27.6%
Construction	\$16,766	\$27,600	64.6%
Manufacturing	\$17,851	\$27,528	54.2%
Transportation, Public Utilities	\$19,925	\$26,874	34.9%
Wholesale Trade	\$20,543	\$26,709	30.0%
Retail Trade	\$7,853	\$12,535	59.6%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	\$18,500	\$24,329	31.5%
Services	\$16,168	\$25,198	55.9%
Government	\$22,405	\$31,978	42.7%

Source: Research and Statistics Office, Minnesota Department of Economic Security

- Between 1990 and 2000, average annual wages for all employees increased by more than 48%.
- The average annual wage for all industry in 2000 was \$25,972.
- The County's largest employment sector, Manufacturing, paid average annual wages above the overall average for all industry. Retail trade, the County's fourth largest employment sector, paid annual wages at less than half of the overall average.
- The largest percentage gains in wages occurred in the Construction and Retail Trade sectors.

Employment Projections

The State of Minnesota has developed employment projections for each region of the State. The projections presented here are for Southwest Minnesota between 1998 and 2008. Information is presented for Nicollet County in 1998, Southwest Minnesota in 1998, and projected percentage changes in the region by 2008.

Industry	Nicollet County 1998		Southwest Minnesota 1998		Southwest MN Percentage Change 1998-2008
	Estimated Employment	Percentage	Estimated Employment	Percentage	
Total All Industry	13,626	100%	209,993	100%	10%
Agriculture, Forestry	N/A	N/A	20,288	9.7%	-13%
Mining	N/A	N/A	416	0.2%	7%
Construction	275	2.0%	7,552	3.6%	0%
Manufacturing	5,832	42.8%	40,462	19.3%	11%
Transportation, Public Utilities	245	1.8%	6,714	3.2%	17%
Wholesale Trade	622	4.6%	10,768	5.1%	7%
Retail Trade	1,539	11.3%	30,803	14.7%	10%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	382	2.8%	6,488	3.1%	12%
Services	2,262	16.6%	56,041	26.7%	19%
Government	2,194	16.1%	13,616	6.5%	10%
Self-Employed, Unpaid Family Workers - Non Agriculture	N/A	N/A	16,845	8.0%	7%

Source: Research and Statistics Office, Minnesota Department of Economic Security

- The State projects that by 2008, the largest percentage employment gains in Southwest Minnesota will occur in the Services, Finance/Insurance/Real Estate and Manufacturing sectors.
- Two of these growth sectors, Manufacturing and Services, represent the two largest employment sectors in Nicollet County.
- The only employment sector expected to lose jobs by 2008 is Ag, Forestry & Fishing.

ST. PETER
HOUSING STUDY
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Existing Housing Inventory

The following tables identifies the estimated status of the City's existing housing stock, including unit losses from the tornado disaster in March 1998, and the subsequent reconstruction activity.

Table 14 St. Peter Estimated Housing Units By Structure Type - 2001					
	Pre-Disaster Units	Units Lost to Disaster	Construction 1998-2001	Unit Gains and Losses	Estimated Units 2001
1 Unit Detached	1,920	152	232	+80	2,000
1 Unit Attached	52	0	36	+36	88
2 Units	183	44	10	-34	149
3-4 Units	148	0	0	0	148
5+ Units	588	0	134	+134	722
Mobile Home	253	0	0	0	253
Total	3,144	196	412	216	3,360

Source: 1990 Census; Building Permits; C-40 Construction Reports; City Records

- Based on the data available on housing unit demolition and new building permit issuance, it would appear that St. Peter has had a net gain of approximately 216 new housing units to the community since the tornado.

- From 1990 to 1997, the City averaged just over 40 new housing starts per year, so the net gain of 216 new units between 1998 and 2001 represents approximately 54 housing units per year.

Rental Registration Data

The City of St. Peter has a rental housing registration program that pre-dates the 1998 tornado. The number of registered rental housing units helps to track both the unit losses caused by the disaster, and the impact of subsequent reconstruction efforts.

Table 15 Licensed Rental Housing Units - 1996 to 2002						
1996 Licensed Rental Units	1997 Licensed Rental Units	1998 Licensed Rental Units	1999 Licensed Rental Units	2000 Licensed Rental Units	2001 Licensed Rental Units	2002 Licensed Rental Units
911	905	861	774	891	963	937

- In 1990, the Census Bureau reported 961 rental housing units that were either occupied or vacant. The rental registration data show that there was a gradual decrease in the number of rental housing units through 1998.
- Since nearly all rental units were registered prior to the tornado disaster, the decrease in rental units between 1998 and 1999 provides the best indication of disaster related unit loss. Between 1998 and 1999, there was a decrease of 87 rental units, and 72 rental properties. This would suggest that nearly all of the lost rental housing was in single unit or two unit rental property.
- Despite the construction of new multifamily rental projects since 1990, the City's rental licensing program shows that currently there are still 24 fewer rental units than the Census Bureau reported in 1990. This may be due in part to units lost to the tornado, units that have been removed from the inventory because of the licensing requirement, or units that have failed to apply for a license.
- The 2000 Census reported 994 rental units in the City, both occupied and vacant. In 2000, the City's rental registration program identified only 891 rental units, or a difference of 103 units. It is not known why this difference in units exists. It is possible that the Census Bureau recorded some vacant housing units as rental housing, which would help to explain the 69 vacancies that they found. It is also possible that some of the difference may have been due to newly constructed units in 2000 that were not registered in the City until 2001, but that the Census recorded as vacant.

Census Housing Vacancy

The 2000 Census provided information on the occupancy/vacancy status at the time the Census was taken.

Table 16 Seasonal Use and Vacant Housing Units - 2000							
	Total Units	Total Vacant Units	Seasonal Use Vacant	Vacant For Rent	Vacant For Sale	Sold/Rented but Not Occupied	Other Vacant
St. Peter	3,129	151	7	69	36	22	17
Market Area	5,510	367	164	77	47	32	47
Nicollet Co.	11,240	598	39	247	97	56	159

Source: 2000 Census

- The Census reported that there were 69 vacant rental units and 36 vacant houses for sale in St. Peter. This equates to a vacancy rate of 6.9% for rental housing and 1.7% for owner-occupied housing. State-wide, the 2000 vacancy rate was 4.1% for rental housing and 0.9% for owned housing according to the Census.
- The reason for the relatively high rental housing vacancy rate is not known. A number of new rental projects have been constructed in St. Peter since 1998, and it is possible that some of the vacant units reflect new housing that was in its initial occupancy phase.
- The vacant housing units in St. Peter represent most of the available units in the Market Area. Excluding St. Peter, the remainder of the Market Area had a rental housing vacancy rate of 2.8% and an owner-occupancy vacancy rate of 0.4%.

Home Values

Table 17 Estimated Owner Occupied House Value - 2002	
	2002 Median Home Value Estimate
St. Peter	\$116,235

Source: 1990 Census; Community Partners Research, Inc.; Nicollet County Assessor

- Data on median owner-occupied home values is from the Nicollet County Assessor's Office. Data was reviewed on 1,981 homesteaded houses. This data may include two and three-unit structures where the owner occupies one of the units in the building.
- The median value in the Assessor's data was \$110,700, which represents the estimated market value in January 2002. Estimated market values are supposed to be within 95% of actual market value, and generally lag slightly behind true sales values. To adjust this value, we have increased this median value by 5%, bringing the current estimated median home value to \$116,235.
- County estimated market value data has also been used to analyze the number of

homesteaded houses in the City that fall into defined value ranges. The first value range compares house values to \$77,540, the threshold value established first time home buyer assistance programs through the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency. The second value range identifies the number and percentage of houses compared to \$101,911, the approximate purchase amount that is considered affordable at the Market Area median household income level of \$43,263, with \$8,000 available for down payment and closing costs.

Value Range	Number of Homesteaded Houses	Percent of Homesteaded Houses
\$0 - \$77,540 Under FTHB Limit	260	13.1%
\$77,541+ Above FTHB Limit	1,721	86.9%
\$0 - \$101,911 Affordable at median household income	537	27.1%
\$101,911+ Above affordable threshold	1,444	72.9%

Source: Nicollet County Assessor; Community Partners Research, Inc.

- Based on home value estimates generated from County estimated market values, only 13% of houses are valued below the purchase price limits for State first-time home buyer programs, and only 27% of houses are considered to be affordable at the Market Area median household income level.

Home Sales

The previous page examined all owner-occupied houses in the City as an indicator of ownership affordability. This section examines those houses that have been sold within a recent 12 month time period. It is important to note that the number of houses that have sold may not represent a statistically accurate sampling of all houses in the City. However, this sample does provide some insight into those units that are turning-over in the City.

	Number of Good Sales	Median Sale Price
St. Peter	116	\$117,250

Source: Community Partners Research, Inc.; Nicollet County Assessor

- In the 12 month period ending September 31, 2001, there were 116 improved residential sales of single family houses in St. Peter that were considered to be “arms length” transactions, according to the County Assessor. Sales that are not “arms length” include, but are not limited to, sales between relatives, forced sales and foreclosures, and estate transfers that are not available on the open market. Only the “arms length” transactions have been reviewed for this study.
- The median sales price for the residential sales reviewed was \$117,250. The 1999 Housing Study reviewed sales activity for a 12 month period ending May 31, 1999. The median sale price in that 12 month period was \$92,500.

Value Range	Number of Residential Sales	Percent of Residential Sales
\$0 - \$77,540 Under FTHB Limit	14	12.1%
\$77,541+ Above FTHB Limit	102	87.9%
\$0 - \$101,911 Affordable at median household income	33	28.4%
\$101,911+ Above affordable threshold	83	71.6%

Source: Nicollet County Assessor; Community Partners Research, Inc.

Note: This table reflects “qualified” sales as determined by the County Assessor. Sales for less than fair market value have not been included.

- Sales data show that only 28% of recent sales occurred in a price range that is considered affordable at the Market Area median household income level.

County-wide Home Sales - Historical Data

The Minnesota Demographer’s Office has compiled County-level data on median home sales prices over the last 17 years to analyze price trends for single family houses. This data is only available for all of Nicollet County. The median sales price has been obtained from sales ratio reports submitted by the Nicollet County Assessor’s Office to the Minnesota Department of Revenue. It is important to note that houses sold in a given year may not be a statistically valid sample of all home values in the County. However, this annual sample does provide insight into home values over a number of years and information on those units that are turning-over in the County.

Table 21 Median Value of Residential Sales - 1984/85 to 1999/2000							
	Median Sale Price					Percent Change 1990-2000	Percent Change 1998/99- 1999/2000
	1984-1985	1989-1990	1995-1996	1998-1999	1999-2000		
Nicollet County	\$56,000	\$62,000	\$84,000	\$105,000	\$110,950	79%	5.7%
Minnesota	\$64,000	\$70,000	\$87,500	\$112,500	\$124,500	77.9%	10.7%

Source: Minnesota State Demographer; Community Partners Research, Inc.

- The median home sales price in Nicollet County has increased at a rapid rate over the last decade. From the 12 month period ending October 1, 1990 to the 12 month period ending October 1, 2000, the median sales price increased by 79%. This percentage increase was slightly above the State-wide increase of approximately 78% during the same time period.
- For the 1999-2000 sales period, the County had the 15th highest value of 87 counties reviewed for median home sale price.
- The median income data for Nicollet County provided earlier in this Study estimate that the median household income level and the median family income level have increased by approximately 51% between 1989 and 2001. In this same time period the median home sales price has increased by nearly 79%.

Rental Housing

The City of St. Peter has a rental property registration program which allows for accurate, current data on the housing stock. Detailed information on construction activity and tenure rates has been provided in the preceding pages. This section will summarize the findings of the rental housing survey.

Rental Housing Survey

As part of this housing study, a telephone survey was conducted of rental buildings in the City. The survey includes a representative sample of apartment buildings with eight or more units.

The listing of rental properties was obtained from the City of St. Peter. The telephone survey was conducted in April and May, 2002. The survey includes virtually all of the large multifamily buildings in St. Peter.

A total of 640 rental units in 21 buildings were surveyed. This represents over 68% of the total rental units in the City of St. Peter.

Market Rate Summary

Information was obtained on 257 market rate rental units in 10 buildings. The units are in all types of buildings including small rental buildings, mixed use buildings and large complexes. We have included student housing and senior housing with services in the Market Rate section. The bedroom mix of the 257 rental units is as follows:

- * 12 (5%) efficiency units
- * 109 (42%) one bedroom
- * 3 (1%) one bedroom and den
- * 123 (48%) two bedroom
- * 10 (4%) three bedroom

Occupancy/Vacancy

There were almost no vacancies reported in the market rate survey. Only four buildings reported vacancies, with a total of ten vacant units. However, the property owner in one building indicated that a total of five units were vacant because they were being remodeled. Thus, there were actually only five vacant units reported. The five vacant units represent only 1.9% of the units surveyed. Several of the buildings reported waiting lists for occupancy. The Wilds of San Prairie reported they are currently full, however, they have a very high turnover rate and they usually have several vacancies.

Rental Rates

Rental rates varied greatly. Some of the units include the primary utility payments with the rent, while in other cases, the tenant pays the major utilities in addition to rent. Due to inconsistencies in the collection and reporting of data, the following rent ranges reflect reported rents, and are not necessarily gross rents. We also did not include the Wilds of San Prairie or Heritage Meadows as their monthly rent reflects a variety of services offered to the tenants.

- * Efficiencies - \$185-\$200 Median approximately \$192
- * 1 bedroom - \$485-\$600 Median approximately \$525
- * 2 bedroom - \$525-\$800 Median approximately \$575
- * 3 bedroom - \$570-\$850 Median approximately \$675

Additionally, 87 rental units that were surveyed charge rent per person. This is done in rental units occupied by college students and owned by Gustavus Adolphus. The rent per person is \$2,770 and two of the three college owned buildings have an additional surcharge of \$770.

Subsidized Summary

St. Peter has eight subsidized rental projects providing rental opportunities for lower income people. Many of these units serve very low income people and charge rent based on 30% of the tenant's household income. Of the subsidized rental units, 115 are for senior occupancy (which may also include handicapped and disabled tenants), and 189 are for general occupancy. Combined, there are 304 subsidized rental units.

The subsidized rental projects range in size from 16 units to 71 units. The bedroom mix breakdown is as follows:

- * 14 (5%) efficiencies
- * 149 (49%) one bedroom
- * 91 (30%) two bedroom
- * 50 (16%) three bedroom

Occupancy/Vacancy

Our survey found 29 vacancies in five developments. This is an overall vacancy rate of 9.5%. Four of the developments reported that they historically have been full or have had a very low vacancy rate. The only development that has a chronic high vacancy rate is Parkview Manor, which had 20 vacancies at the time our survey was conducted.

Tax Credit Summary

Currently, St. Peter has one Tax Credit project, a 32-unit town home development. This project has 12 two-bedroom units, and 20 three-bedroom units. Contract rents are \$478 for the two-bedrooms, and \$555 for the three-bedrooms. The rents include utilities. The manager reported that the development is totally occupied.

Findings and Recommendation

Key Statistics

The first number represents the City of St. Peter/the second number, when provided, is for the Market Area which includes the City of St. Peter, City of Kasota and the City of Cleveland, and the Townships of Oshawa, Traverse, Lake Prairie, Granby, New Sweden, Cleveland, Kasota, and Ottawa. All of these jurisdictions are in Nicollet County or Le Sueur County.

2000 Population = 9,747/15,621

2000 Households = 2,978/5,143

Projected household growth 2001 to 2006 = 225 to 275 households

2000 tenure rates = approximately 69% owner, 31% renter

1990 tenure rates = 67% owner, 33% renter

Median value of recent sales = \$117,250

2001 Median Household Income = \$37,217/\$43,263

2001 Average number of persons per household = 2.43

Monthly rent payment ability (City median income household) = \$930

Affordable rent payment ability (50% of City median income) = \$465

Affordable Ownership (Market Area median income household) = \$101,911

Growth Projections

The City of St. Peter has experienced continued household growth in recent decades. In the 1980s, the City's household level increased by more than 7%. From 1990 to 2000, the City's household level has increased by 7.6%, or 211 households, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. In both the 1990s and the 1980s, the City's household growth rate has been substantial but not as great as the surrounding Market Area and Nicollet County as a whole.

In March 1998, the City experienced a devastating tornado that leveled a number of houses and commercial buildings. Substantial sections of the City, including the downtown area, sustained significant damage. However, rebuilding efforts have proceeded quickly, and in terms of housing units, available data suggests that units constructed since the tornado or currently under construction, will more than replace housing units lost in the disaster. Further, our inventory of rental housing units found a low vacancy rate for market rate rental units, and home prices have been escalating due to strong demand. This information suggests that very little permanent population loss has occurred as a result of the disaster. However, we have determined that if the tornado had not occurred, St. Peter's rate of growth during the 1990s would have been greater than the 7.6% growth the City has experienced.

Based on historical growth patterns, the City of St. Peter will add 23 households per year during the five year period from 2002 through 2006. However, we are estimating a growth of 45 to 55 households per year for the following reasons:

- The tornado had a negative impact on the City of St. Peter's growth during the 1990s, thus, if the tornado had not occurred St. Peter's historical rate of growth would be higher.
- As a result of the tornado, the City of St. Peter has received state and federal funds to finance several housing development programs that have enhanced St. Peter as an attractive city for households. The funds have also provided a competitive advantage over other cities.
- Several developers have developed housing projects and/or are planning housing developments that provide innovative housing options for households at competitive prices.
- The City of St. Peter is proactive and actively involved in assisting with housing development.
- St. Peter has developed a reputation as a very desirable community to live in and serves as a model for other communities.
- Nicollet Meadows, a City owned subdivision, has been very successful and two additional subdivisions are in the planning process.

Based on a household growth of 45 to 55 households per year, a total of 225-275 new housing units will be needed over the next five years to support the household growth. Of this total, we are estimating that 35% or 79-96 units will be rental units and 147 to 179 units will be owner occupied units. The percentage of rental units of 35% is higher than the historical percentage of rental units in St. Peter, however, during the 1990s the net gain for rental units has been very low.

A large majority of the household growth that has been occurring is among households age 45 to 54 years old, reflecting the movement of the "baby boom" generation through the aging cycle. Households in these age ranges tend to be predominantly home owners and form the large majority of the trade-up housing market, reflecting the higher incomes they enjoy in their peak earning years. The significant growth in this age ranges will primarily demand owner-occupied housing production.

With a large number of City and Market Area households in the age ranges between 45 and 54 years old, we see demand for home ownership opportunities, including first time buyers, trade up buyers, and low maintenance ownership options such as town houses or other attached housing units.

Despite the strong demographic preference for home ownership, we do not, as stated earlier, want to minimize the importance of rental housing in the St. Peter market. Available data from the City's rental registration program indicates that there was no net gain in the number of rental units in St. Peter during the 1990s. While some of this reflects preference for ownership, we believe that a more important factor in the reduction of rental units is the damage loss caused by the tornado, and other unit losses that may have occurred due to obsolescence, or an unwillingness of some owners to keep marginal properties in the rental inventory following the adoption of a City rental licensing program earlier in the decade.

Between 1990 and 2000, there was very limited growth among the number of senior citizen households in the Market Area, with the exception of older seniors, age 85 and older. Over the next few years, the leading edge of the baby boom generation will move into the 55 to 64 year old age range. Despite limited household growth among empty-nesters and seniors, households in these age range tend to rent or look for other alternative housing options to meet their life-cycle housing needs as they age. With the increasing popularity of alternative ownership housing such as town houses, cooperatively owned units, congregate rental housing and assisted living, senior households that no longer wish to own a single family home now have desirable options besides rental housing. Increasing market acceptance of life-cycle housing options should generate some additional demand for these alternatives to single family homes.

The age range that has experienced household level declines in recent years is the 25 to 34 year old range. Households in this age range rent with much greater frequency than middle age households. Households in this age ranges also tend to represent a majority of the first-time home buyers, as they will often move from rental to ownership in these age ranges.

These demographic trends will be incorporated into the recommendations that follow.

Based on the research that was conducted for this Study, and the analysis of available information, we have identified the following strengths that will help the City as it addresses its housing needs, and barriers that will limit or hinder certain housing activities. Following this discussion, specific strategies and recommendations for action are provided.

Strengths For Housing Development

The following strengths of the community were identified in the 1999 Study through statistical data, local interviews, previous research and on-site review of the local housing stock. Our research in 2002 has determined that these strengths still exist in the City of St. Peter.

- **Historical Pattern of Household growth for both the City and Market Area** - Over the last two decades, both the City and the surrounding Market Area have had sustained household growth. Both the City and the Market Area are projected to continue growing in the foreseeable future. Despite the tornado that occurred in March 1998, the City has had significant population and household growth since the tornado.
- **Strong Local Economy and Employment Base** - The unemployment rate in Nicollet County is low. For each year in the 1990s, the County's unemployment rate has been lower than the Minnesota rate, and Minnesota has been well below the national rate. Job are in St. Peter or in neighboring North Mankato. The City has lost one of its largest employers, however, it is projected that the employees will be absorbed into the City's diversified work force.
- **Good Quality Employment Opportunities** - The City's two largest employers, the St. Peter Regional Treatment Center and Gustavus Adolphus College, are stable employers, with no anticipated decreases in the employment level. The County has also seen strong growth in the manufacturing sector in the 1990s. Manufacturing jobs, on average, pay higher average weekly wages than most other employment sectors.

- **Location near Larger Metropolitan Areas** - St. Peter is located close to Mankato, the area regional center. The City is also within reasonable driving distance of the southwest edge of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. This location has had an impact on the growth patterns of the City, and creates additional market opportunities for the City.
- **Strong Disaster Recovery Effort** - The City has made great progress in recovering from the tornado disaster in 1998. Despite the extent of the damage, the City's recovery efforts moved quickly and efficiently. The best available information indicates that no long-term population loss has occurred, other than temporary displacement while repair/rebuilding efforts have been underway. In other disaster areas in Minnesota, as much as 10% of the population has left following disasters. The low rate of loss indicates strong loyalty to the community.
- **Financial Resources for Recovery** - As part of the disaster response, state and federal funds have been provided to St. Peter for recovery efforts. This assistance has helped with housing development projects, public infrastructure repair and replacement, and other community projects. City officials have described the City's public utilities as state of the art after repair/replacement was completed.
- **Interested Developers** - A number of different housing developers are working in the City or are prepared to work in the City. There is a broad array of development projects underway or in the planning stages.
- **Natural Amenities and Historic Appearance** - Located in the Minnesota River Valley, St. Peter is in an attractive, natural location. The City also has a number of attractive, historic buildings that have been preserved and restored.
- **Gustavus Adolphus College** - In addition to being a major employer, the presence of a four year college adds other amenities to the community including cultural, arts, sports and other academic events.
- **Strong City Leadership and Staff** - The recovery efforts in St. Peter have been well managed and planned. The City, its elected officials, staff and community leaders have done an excellent job of leading the City through the rebuilding effort. The City has shown a willingness to be involved to accomplish necessary projects.
- **Increasingly diverse housing stock** - The City has a good mix of housing options, including a large number of rental housing units for both lower income and market rate households. An increasing amount of new construction is providing housing types not previously available in the City, including town houses, twin homes, congregate senior housing and assisted living.
- **Adequate land for development** - The City has adequate land available for both residential and commercial/industrial development. Although it is a result of structures

lost to the tornado, the City has some redevelopment sites not normally available in an older community, close to the central core of the City.

Barriers or Limitations to Housing Activities

Our research in 1999 and 2002 also identified the following barriers, or limitations that hinder or prevent certain housing activities in the City of St. Peter.

- **Competition with the surrounding market area** - While the location near Mankato and the southern part of the Twin Cities Area is generally an asset, the City also competes with these areas for development opportunities. The Mankato area is more than three times larger than St. Peter, and is home to most of the larger retail opportunities and other services.
- **Moderate incomes limit housing choices** - Income estimates for St. Peter indicate that the median household income for the City is lower than the Market Area or the County-wide median. The Market Area's estimated median household income for 2001 is \$43,263, translates into an approximately ownership affordability level of \$101,911. While this affordability level matches up relatively well with prices for existing housing in the City, the costs associated with new housing construction are prohibitively high for most households in the City. With very limited availability of lower priced, existing units for sale, or existing apartments for rent, household growth will be dependent on the production of new housing units, which will have higher costs, and in some cases may need to be subsidized to be affordable for moderate income buyers.
- **Limited housing availability** - Although the existing stock of both owner and renter housing is generally affordable, available units are in short supply. There has been significant growth in the area's labor force, and low unemployment rates as new jobs have been created. This means that new workers coming to the area have either been forced to commute or have found housing units outside of St. Peter. New arrivals to the area that are forced to live in neighboring communities due to housing availability will often establish ties to that community, and may be less likely to eventually move to St. Peter.
- **Worker Shortages** - The Nicollet County unemployment rate is less than the Minnesota average. There are anecdotal reports that area employers would add new jobs, but they do not believe that there is an adequate supply of workers in the area. The shortage of housing options and workers may be resulting in lost growth opportunities for the City.
- **Disaster Aftermath** - Also the City has made great strides in its recovery effort, the tornado has had a significant impact on the local community. While all indications are that full recovery is nearly completed, the disaster has taken a toll on the community, both financially and emotionally.

Recommendations

In formulating the recommendations for St. Peter in 1999 and in 2002, four major objectives were considered:

- **Preservation and Improvement of the Existing Housing Stock** - St. Peter's most valuable asset is its existing housing stock. The housing stock includes over 3,000 housing units valued at hundreds of millions of dollars. The existing housing stock provides real estate taxes to maintain governmental operations and maintain the existing quality of life. The existing housing stock will always provide most of the affordable housing opportunities. This existing stock must be preserved to assure affordable housing opportunities for St. Peter, now and into the future.
- **Promote Home Ownership** - Home ownership is the preferred option for the majority of households. Home ownership also assists in creating stability and a commitment to the community. St. Peter is an attractive community that draws people from the surrounding area who wish to live in the City. Most of these people are looking for good quality ownership options. Changing demographic patterns will create additional demand for ownership options in the foreseeable future.
- **Develop Life Cycle or Appropriate Housing** - It is vital for a community the size of St. Peter to provide housing opportunities for all ages and household types. These housing opportunities enable a community to thrive, promote economic development and allow households to live in the community throughout their lives. St. Peter has long been a preferred location for senior housing. The expanding variety of housing choices will make the community even more desirable for seniors as their housing needs change with increasing age.
- **Promote New Construction** - New construction provides housing opportunities, stimulates the economy and upgrades the community's housing stock. Both new owner occupied single family homes and rental units are needed to provide households in St. Peter with housing options and to assure a healthy housing stock. Continued growth of the City will be dependent upon on-going housing unit creation.

It is very difficult to meet all four objectives as the balance of the four objectives is very sensitive. An overly aggressive or overly passive approach to any of the four objectives can cause problems in achieving the other objectives. For example, overbuilding new rental housing units could lead to vacancy problems in older, less marketable units in the community, causing these units to deteriorate in quality. The recommendations of this section attempt to provide a balanced approach to addressing the housing needs of St. Peter, and the surrounding area.

Summary of Recommendations

We have reviewed the recommendations contained in the 1999 Study and we have commented on progress made to date. We have also modified these recommendations, when appropriate, given new information from the 2000 Census and other data sources. The original 1999 findings/recommendations for St. Peter were formulated through the analysis

of the information provided earlier in these sections and include recommendations grouped in the following categories:

- < Rental Housing Development
- < Home Ownership and New Construction
- < Other Housing Issues

We have also added three new recommendations and modified several other recommendations. The recommendations for each category are as follows:

Rental Housing

1. Develop 30 to 36 additional market rate rental units/2002 recommendation is 74 to 91 units
2. Develop 24 to 30 additional Tax Credit units/2002 recommendation is to develop 36 or 46 tax credit or moderate income units
3. Monitor the availability of and need for future subsidized rental units/work of preservation of existing subsidized housing
4. Monitor the need for additional senior housing with services
5. Monitor Gustavus Adolphus' progress in addressing student housing needs
6. New Recommendation: Hospital renovation and development of the block adjacent to the new Community Center

Home Ownership and New Construction

7. Utilize and promote all programs that assist with home ownership
8. Initiative employer involvement in home ownership programs
9. Monitor the need for future lot development
10. Promote/Assist with affordable new housing construction/subdivision development/2002 recommendation is to continue with Phase II and Phase III subdivisions
11. Promote town house, twin home and other life-cycle housing development
12. Support construction of high cost housing

Other Housing Issues

13. Develop spot housing rehabilitation programs as needed
14. Promote rental rehabilitation programs
15. Utilize the rental registration program to assist rental property owners with tax issues/ other programs

16. New Recommendation: Continue to work with local, State, federal and non-profit agencies to achieve housing goals
17. New Recommendation: Continue to revolve and leverage State and federal funds to finance housing projects

Rental Housing Recommendations

1. Support the Development of 30 to 36 additional market rate rental units/2002 Recommendation is 74 to 91 units.

1999 Findings: Our analysis of the local rental housing stock indicated a net loss of rental housing units in St. Peter in the 1990s. In 1996, there were 911 licensed rental units in the City and 811 licensed rental units in 1999. A significant amount of new rental unit production was underway in 1999. One of the projects was a market rate townhouse development of 40 units.

The rental housing survey found a very low vacancy rate among market rate units surveyed in 1999. Excluding units that were intentionally vacant for remodeling, we found only three vacant market rate units, for a 1.3% vacancy rate. Two of these units were in a multifamily building, and the manager indicated that vacancies were not typical in this property. A vacancy rate survey conducted by City staff prior to the tornado found an equally low vacancy rate at that time, so the rental situation does not appear to have been impacted by the disaster.

Our 1999 rental unit recommendation to accommodate future growth and to replace units that had been lost to the inventory was the construction of a 30 to 36 unit, good quality market rate project to meet near-term demand through the projection period to the year 2003. This recommended project was in addition to the 40 unit townhouse market rate project that was under construction in 1999. We believed there were a number of households with higher incomes that would look to rent their housing if good quality rental units were available.

2002 Findings: Aspen Court, the 40 unit town house market rate rental project, was developed and has been very successful. Aspen Court is fully occupied and has attracted households from communities in the St. Peter area. Aspen Court has been successful because its amenities are superior to most market rate projects and the rent structure is competitive.

No other large market rate general occupancy rental projects have been constructed since the 1999 Housing Study. According to building permit records, a total of 14 rental units were constructed in smaller structures in 2000 and 2001. The recommendation was for 30 to 36 units, thus, there is still a need for 16 to 22 units through 2003.

Our 2002 Rental Housing Survey found a low market rate vacancy rate of 1.9%. This vacancy rate is higher than the 1.3% vacancy rate from the 1999 survey, however, it is still low and we found only five vacant units out of the 178 market rate units we surveyed. Additionally, the property managers indicated they generally have full occupancy.

Our analysis based on household growth indicates a need for an additional 58-69 market rate rental units through the year 2006 in addition to the unmet need of 16 to 22 units from the 1999 Study. Thus, the total market rate unit need through the year 2006 is 74 to 91 units.

Three market rate rental projects are currently in the planning stage in the City of St. Peter. The first project is a 44 unit town house development similar to the Aspen Court project. The project will be phased over two years and there will be a total of ten buildings. The townhouses will be two and three bedroom units with attached garages. The project will be located adjacent to the Nicollet Meadows development.

The second project is a 36 unit project. The project will include two 18 unit, two story walk buildings and will be constructed in two phases. The units will include balconies, fireplaces and detached garages. The proposed rents will range from \$650 to \$885.

The third project is a mixed income project that will include 31 tax credit units and 27 market rate units. The project will be developed by the Southwest Minnesota Partnership and will be located on the block adjacent to the new Community Center. The complex will include underground parking and will provide amenities that are attractive to the senior market.

All three projects warrant support for the following reasons:

- Two of the projects will be constructed in phases, thus, the developers will only proceed with additional phases if there is a market demand.
- The projects will serve different markets as one project is more of a traditional apartment project, one project is a town house development and one project will cater to the older tenants as it will be located next to the downtown and will have underground parking.
- The developments will provide rental households with additional choices and options.
- The developers have proven track records and have developed successful projects.

However, we strongly encourage the developers to adhere to the phase concept and to finance their projects in a manner that will provide the flexibility to develop the phases over an extended period of time. Also, the total number of units for the three projects is greater than the number of units we are recommending. It is our opinion that the City cannot absorb all three market rate projects immediately. A determination will have to be made as to how to phase the three projects into the City's rental inventory in a manner that adheres to the unit recommendation.

Recommendation: In conclusion, we recommend the construction of 74 to 91 market rate general occupancy rental units in the City of St. Peter through 2006.

2. Develop 24 to 30 additional tax credit units/2002 recommendation is to develop 36 to 46 tax credit or moderate income units

1999 Findings: Low income housing tax credits are one of the few federal incentives still available for the production of rental housing. The City's first tax credit project, Vista View Townhomes, was nearing completion of construction. According to the property managers, initial lease-up was ahead of expectations, with 7 of 32 available units leased in mid-July 1999,

and 5 applicants pending. Unit rents were \$450 plus electricity for a two bedroom unit and \$525 plus electric for a three bedroom unit.

The developer of the first project was planning to apply for tax credits to build a second, similar-sized project, on an adjacent location. Unit rents and bedroom configuration were assumed to be similar to the first project.

We recommended 24 to 30 Tax Credit units in addition to the 32 units that were under construction in 1999. We advised that the first Tax Credit project should be fully occupied before work begins on a second project and the first project should be closely monitored to assure unit absorption continues as planned.

2002 Findings: The 32 unit Vista View Tax Credit project was completed in 1999 and the project has been very successful. Currently, the project is fully occupied and the property manager stated that the project is almost always at full occupancy.

The developer of the Vista View Project was planning a second Tax Credit Project, however, he has not proceeded with a project.

The Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership is proposing the construction of 20 low and moderate income units adjacent to the Nicollet Meadows subdivision. Seven units will be designated for low and moderate income households and 13 units will be designated for moderate income households. The project is not a Tax Credit project, but will have a rent structure and income limits similar to the Tax Credit Program, and will be financed with a MHFA first mortgage and through the MARIF Program. The rents will be very affordable and will range from \$338 to \$665 for a two bedroom unit and from \$376 to \$720 for a three bedroom unit. The Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership is also proposing to construct 31 tax credit units on the block adjacent to the Community Center, as discussed in the previous recommendation.

In addition to the 24 to 30 Tax Credit units that were recommended in 1999, our analysis indicates an additional need for 12 to 16 units through 2006, thus, there is an overall need for 36 to 46 Tax Credit or similar moderate rent units over the next five years. This need is based on the condition that a portion of these units are constructed for low income households.

Low income tax credits are one of the few federal incentives still available for the production of affordable rental housing. Although it is nearly impossible to construct deep subsidy rental units that allow tenant rent to be based on income, tax credits provide a shallow subsidy that allows for units to rent at below-market rates.

The major drawback to the use of tax credits is that the units will have income limits for occupancy. For tax credit projects that serve households at 60% of median family income, the 2002 income limits are as follows:

- 1 person household - \$26,460
- 2 person household - \$30,240
- 3 person household - \$34,020
- 4 person household - \$37,800

- 5 person household - \$40,800
- 6 person household - \$43,860
- 7 person household - \$46,860
- 8 person household - \$49,920

The maximum gross rents in 2002 for households at 60% of median are:

- One bedroom unit - \$708
- Two bedroom unit - \$850
- Three bedroom unit - \$982

Recommendation: We recommend the development of 36 to 46 general occupancy tax credit or moderate income rental units. At least 50% of these units should be for households that are 50% of median income or less. To accomplish this, the City of St. Peter will probably need to provide subsidies such as TIF and/or land donations.

Recommended Unit Mix, Sizes, Rents			
Unit Type	No. of Units	Size (Sq. Ft.)	Rent
2 bedroom	20-26	1,000-1,100	\$60-\$700
3 bedroom	16-20	1,150-1,300	\$700-\$800
TOTAL	36-46		

The recommended rents are quoted in 2002 dollars.

3. Monitor the availability of and the need for future subsidized rental units/work on preservation of existing subsidized housing

1999 Findings: The City of St. Peter has a good supply of subsidized housing units serving both seniors and families. The rental unit inventory completed for this Study found 8 subsidized projects with 304 units of subsidized housing in the City. Approximately 62% of the units are for general occupancy with the remaining 38% of units designated for senior/handicapped/disabled occupancy. In addition to the subsidized developments, the Multi-County HRA also provides tenant-based Section 8 Existing rent assistance to area households. This assistance is portable with the tenant, so there is no designated allocation for St. Peter. Most of the subsidized housing options charge rent based on 30% of the tenant's household income.

With the lack of deep subsidy production programs from the federal government it will be very difficult to produce new units with rent based on income. An alternative and/or supplement to the construction of subsidized rental units would be for the HRA to obtain additional Section 8 Certificates and/or Vouchers. Section 8 Certificates and Vouchers enable low income households to live in private sector rental units while utilizing a federal rent subsidy. Section 8 Existing assistance is often preferred by tenant households, since the tenant based assistance allows the household to move to the unit of their choice. Based on the latest information, there may be some new incremental Section 8 Rent Assistance included in the current HUD budget proposal for the next fiscal year.

Producing deep subsidy rental housing is extremely difficult with the lack of production programs from the federal government. Those production programs that are available, including tax credits and assistance from the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, are largely oriented to producing housing for moderate income families.

While it may not be possible to add to the supply of subsidized units in St. Peter, it will be extremely important that the City preserve its existing stock of subsidized rental housing. Many of the subsidized buildings around Minnesota have reached an age where subsidy contracts are scheduled to expire, or where the owner has the ability to pre-pay the mortgage and convert to market rate. One project in St. Peter, Fairview Apartments, was identified as a potential loss from the subsidized inventory. However, efforts were underway to preserve these units as affordable housing. Two bedroom rents at this building ranged from \$328 to \$391 per month.

2002 Findings: The 1999 Findings are still valid in 2002. The City of St. Peter has a good supply of subsidized housing for families and seniors. Section 8 Vouchers and the Low Income Tax Credit Program are two opportunities to provide rental units to low income households at affordable rents.

The Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership's project will provide affordable rental housing including seven units for very low income households.

The Fairview Apartment project is still a subsidized project, thus, the efforts to preserve the project as subsidized housing was successful.

Our rental housing survey found 29 vacancies in the subsidized units, which is a 9.5% vacancy rate. Twenty vacancies exist in Parkview Manor, which is designated for senior/handicapped/disabled occupancy. This project has had persistent vacancy problems over the years. Excluding Parkview Manor, the subsidized housing vacancy rate is 3.9%.

Recommendation: Since the City will be unable to replace lost units with equally affordable housing, it will be very important to preserve the existing subsidized units. In other communities where subsidized units have been at risk, the HRA or a local non-profit group has often needed to become involved to purchase the building and preserve the affordable units. If a subsidized unit becomes a risk to the City, the City should initiate options to attempt to retain this project as affordable housing.

While we do not see additional demand for or resources to produce a significant number of deep subsidy rental housing, we would recommend that the City monitor the situation with the existing units. Nearly 10% of the occupied housing units in St. Peter are subsidized, which is a high percentage of units. However, a change in economic conditions could lead to increased demand from area households for units with rent based on income.

Additionally, we recommend that the City of St. Peter support the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership's 20 unit project which includes seven units designated for very low income households. Also, there have been preliminary discussions to sell Parkview Manor, the public housing high rise, for student housing. If this plan proceeds, the units lost from the senior high rise should be replaced with a project that reflects the housing needs, unit amenities and rent subsidies that the low income seniors in the St. Peter area need.

4. Monitor the need for additional senior housing with services

1999 Findings: Before the tornado, the only senior housing with services in St. Peter was the Good Samaritan Nursing Home. Since the tornado, two construction projects were started, and a third was discussed. The two projects under construction provided 42 units of assisted living and 28 units of congregate housing, respectively. The 28 congregate units, while developed as independent living, are affiliated with the Good Samaritan Nursing Home and largely appeal to more frail seniors who are looking for a good quality independent living option that offers a noon meal, light housekeeping and other possible services in the future.

While St. Peter is an attractive location for senior housing, the City and the Market Area does not have an overly large senior population. The percentage of seniors, and in particular older seniors age 75 and older, is comparable to or slightly lower than the State-wide average. While some growth is projected in this segment of the population over the five year projection period, the number of additional households is not overly large, and does not represent a substantial increase in demand for units.

There was a possibility that Parkview Manor, the senior public housing project that has been experiencing vacancy problems, may offer assisted living options in the future. While the facility had decided against the concept at that time, other public housing high rises around the State have successfully instituted assisted living units.

2002 Findings: The two senior housing with services projects that were under construction in 1999 have been completed and are successful.

Heritage Meadows, the 28 unit congregate housing project, had a slow absorption rate when it first opened but has had a high occupancy rate for the past year. The Wilds of San Prairie is a 42 unit assisted living project. This project also is fully occupied.

Since 1999, Parkview Manor has opted to provide services to its tenants and is providing a variety of services to many of its tenants.

Good Samaritan is considering the concept of constructing a new nursing home adjacent to the new hospital. The existing nursing home would then become available for housing. Good Samaritan is conducting its own study to determine the best use and type of housing for the existing nursing home.

Recommendation: With 70 units of senior housing with services recently constructed and with Parkview Manor now offering services, we believe the near-term need for housing is adequately met. We recommend that the City continue to monitor the need for future senior housing with services. Also, we recommend that the City support Good Samaritan with its future project if their study determines a housing reuse of its existing facility.

5. Monitor Gustavus Adolphus' progress in providing student housing

1999 Findings: The student population at Gustavus Adolphus College places demands on the local rental market. College officials estimated that between 400 to 450 students were living off

campus in 1999. However, the College has a goal to bring more students back onto the campus in the next few years. Three recent projects, initiated in part by the need for units after the tornado, have added to the College's inventory of campus housing. The most recent of these projects, which was in the planning stage in 1999, would add an international house which would provide a living opportunity for up to 80 students.

2002 Findings: The International House has been constructed since 1999 and houses 80 students. The House includes 32 two-person units, 3 four-person units and 2 two-person units.

A concept that has been discussed to address student housing needs is to sell Parkview Manor to the College and construct new senior rental units to replace the Parkview Manor units. Parkview Manor has had vacancy problems and new units with state of the art amenities would improve occupancy and provide a better living environment for seniors. This concept has many obstacles but it is a concept that deserves further research and consideration.

Recommendation: Gustavus Adolphus College and the private sector have successfully met the housing needs of college students over the years. We recommend the City of St. Peter continue to support the College and the private sector with its efforts to address college student housing needs.

We also recommend the City of St. Peter research the Parkview Manor concept to determine its feasibility.

6. New Recommendation: Hospital renovation and development on the block adjacent to the new Community Center

2002 Findings: A new hospital will be constructed in the City of St. Peter, thus, the existing hospital will be available for reuse. A Mankato developer with expertise in renovating buildings for housing, has expressed an interest in renovating the building for housing.

The hospital is located in an excellent location near the College, downtown and the new Community Center.

The block adjacent to the new Community Center is vacant and ideally located for housing development. The Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership has expressed interest in developing the site as has been discussed in previous recommendations.

Recommendation: We recommend the continued planning of both sites for housing. The block adjacent to the Community Center would be an ideal site for senior designated housing, however, it could also be the site for other housing options identified in this Study. The Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership is planning a 58 unit project on the site.

The old hospital site could also address several housing needs including market rate senior or general occupancy market rate housing or it could also qualify as a tax credit project. A Mankato developer has expressed interest in renovating the hospital into rental units.

We recommend that the City of St. Peter continue to support the developers' efforts to provide housing on these two sites.

Home Ownership and New Housing Construction

7. Utilize and promote all programs that assist with home ownership

1999 Findings: Affordable home ownership was a major issue facing St. Peter. Home ownership is generally the preferred housing option for most households and most communities. Home ownership provides for community stability, improves housing quality and strengthens the tax base. The demographic make-up, with a large projected increase in middle-age households, in Nicollet County and the St. Peter area is conducive to the promotion of home ownership opportunities. There are a number of strategies and programs that can be used to promote home ownership in St. Peter.

First time home buyer assistance and home ownership training programs can help the community address affordable housing issues. However, home value estimates based on recent sales indicate that only a small percentage of houses are price eligible for these assistance programs. While the number of households that can be helped by these programs is somewhat limited, for marginal home buyers, the availability of these programs can mean the difference between becoming home owners or remaining as renters.

Home ownership counseling and training programs also play a significant role in helping marginal buyers achieve home ownership. If Home Stretch and other home ownership programs have not been presented recently in St. Peter, it may be appropriate to offer this training program in cooperation with promotional efforts by the City's larger employers.

While these individual home ownership assistance programs may not generate a large volume of new ownership activity, the combination of below market mortgage money, home ownership and credit counseling, and entry cost assistance may be the mix of incentives that moves a potential home buyer into home ownership.

2002 Findings: Home ownership continues to be a high priority in the City of St. Peter. As in 1999, home ownership programs provide the opportunity for moderate income households to own a home.

The City of St. Peter has utilized home ownership programs since 1999, especially for new construction and the Nicollet Meadows Project.

Recommendation: Private and nonprofit programs should continue to be encouraged to provide home ownership opportunities. Mortgage programs should continue to be developed that include all households and not just first time home buyers to encourage trade-up housing activity. Potential funding sources for home ownership programs include Rural Development, the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, FANNIE MAE and the Greater Minnesota Housing Fund.

The community should continue to explore the possibility of obtaining specific program set-asides from some of the mortgage programs offered through the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency. Specific set-asides will offer multiple advantages, including a dedicated pool of funds, the opportunity for higher participation limits for income and purchase price, and the flexibility for more local design and control.

8. Initiate employer involvement in home ownership programs

1999 Findings: The St. Peter area is an area employment center with a broad diversity of employment opportunities. Employment in St. Peter is increasing, and the connection between economic development and housing availability is becoming an increasingly important issue as low area unemployment rates dictate the need to attract new workers to the community. Some local employers have indicated that they would add workers if an adequate, available labor force existed in the area. In 1998, the Nicollet County unemployment rate was less than 2%.

Although many of the jobs created may have good wages for the area, many jobs do not pay wages sufficient for workers to buy or improve their housing. Housing for new employees is a concern for employers. Several employers around the state are beginning to accept more responsibility and a more significant role in assisting employees with their housing needs.

2002 Findings: We are not aware of any organized, sustained employer involvement in housing.

Recommendation: We recommend an effort to involve employers as partners in addressing St. Peter's housing needs. The Phase II Nicollet Meadows subdivision development would be an ideal opportunity for employer involvement in housing. Funding sources such as MHFA, the Greater Minnesota Fund and FANNIE MAE have finance programs that include employers. Additionally, the funding agencies often view funding applications favorably that include employers in the problem solving process.

Following are several options available through FANNIE MAE that an employer may use as a framework in addressing employee housing needs. There are also other examples of locally designed employer participation models that have been created to meet local needs.

- **Grant** - The employer provides a cash payment to the employee either to cover a portion of the down payment or closing costs or a permanent interest-rate buy down on the employee's first mortgage.
- **Direct, fully repayable loan** - The employer provides a loan directly to the employee. The loan may be used only for closing costs or to supplement the employee's required 5 percent down payment.
- **Forgivable loan** - The employer makes a loan directly to the employee and agrees to forgive some or all of the principal and interest at a specified rate over a specified period of employment. The loan may be used only for closing costs or to supplement the employee's required 5 percent down payment.
- **Deferred-payment loan** - The employer makes a loan directly to the employee and defers payment of the principal until the end of the stated term. Interest payments may be made over the life of the loan, may be deferred, or may be both deferred and contingent upon circumstances specified by the employer. For example, the employer may structure a secured loan as a shared-appreciation loan, with the interest rate established as the lesser of an imputed rate or as a specified share of appreciation.

- **Monthly payment grant or loan** - The employer provides assistance that reduces the employee's monthly housing expenses to a fixed percent of the employee's gross monthly household income, not to exceed 28 percentage. If the assistance is a loan, repayment begins when monthly housing expenses fall below the established percent of household income. Because of the ongoing nature of this assistance, the employer must provide FANNIE MAE with an acceptable letter of credit (or other acceptable collateral as determined by FANNIE MAE) to cover future obligations. To verify that an employer has an acceptable letter of credit (or other acceptable collateral) or for more information on what an employer must do to establish an acceptable letter of credit (or other acceptable collateral), lenders should call their lead FANNIE MAE regional office.
- **Guarantee of lender-financed loan** - The lender provides a secured or an unsecured loan to the employee based upon the employer's guarantee of any losses. An employer also may reduce the employee's interest rate on the lender's loan with a permanent buy down.

9. Monitor the need for future lot development

1999 Findings: The City of St. Peter has had consistent new construction of single family homes in recent years. From 1990 to 1997, building permits were issued for an average of nearly 22 single family housing starts (attached and detached) per year. Following the tornado, the level of new construction has increased, although some of this construction occurred on replacement lots, rather than in new subdivisions.

The availability of lots was not identified in our research as a critical issue for the City. The City Officials indicated that there were lots currently available, and that a significant amount of land exists in the City that is suitable for residential development. However, we recommend that the City monitor the supply of available lots on the market and in the development pipeline to assure that an adequate number of sites are available to facilitate new housing construction.

2002 Findings: Over the next five years we are projecting the construction of 31-38 new single family housing units (attached and detached) per year.

Lots continue to be developed by private developers and the City of St. Peter has developed a 38 lot subdivision with plans for two additional 38 lot subdivisions.

Recommendation: Some communities use a standard that a 2 year supply of lots should be available based on annual lot usage. Based on this standard, the City should have approximately 95 residential lots available to meet the expected demand. The availability of lots should be monitored to make sure that an adequate supply of both single family and attached housing lots remains available to accommodate anticipated growth. The City of St. Peter should also continue with the planning of two additional 38 lot subdivisions.

The City should also monitor parcels available for multifamily development to assure land continues to be available for multifamily development.

10. Promote/Assist with Affordable New Housing Construction/Subdivision Development - 2002 Recommendation is to Continue with Phase II and Phase III Subdivisions

1999 Findings: Some communities have found it appropriate to become actively involved in affordable new housing development, in both land preparation and actual housing construction. While the private sector has been highly successful in developing town houses and higher priced single family homes, the private sector is having difficulty addressing the need for the construction of new moderately priced homes for moderate income households.

Some local builders have been working hard to produce new single family houses for less than \$100,000. This was dependent, however, on the availability of lower cost lots. With the supply of low priced lots nearly depleted, it is probable that most new construction houses will sell for more than \$100,000.

St. Peter has been active in the past in developing affordable subdivisions. During our interviews, a number of people mentioned the City's previous efforts as a successful attempt to lower home ownership costs.

We recommended in 1999 that the City explore creative and innovative ways to promote affordable, new single family housing development.

2002 Findings: The City of St. Peter has developed an affordable 38 lot subdivision, Nicollet Meadows. The City has financed the subdivision from a variety of funding sources including tax increment financing, DTED, the Greater Minnesota Housing Fund, etc.

Income eligible households can buy a lot at a reduced price. Houses are being constructed by developers, the St. Peter EDA, the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership, Habitat for Humanity, individual households, etc. The homes are affordable and are in the \$100,000 to \$150,000 range.

The subdivision is developed utilizing the Greater Minnesota Housing Fund model with smaller streets and lots and with alleys servicing the rear of each lot.

All of the 38 lots are reserved or sold and the Nicollet Meadows Project has been very successful. In fact, the Project is considered a model for other communities.

The City of St. Peter is planning a second phase subdivision which will be a 38 lot subdivision adjacent to the Phase I subdivision. A third 38 lot subdivision is also in the planning phase and will be located at the airport site.

Recommendation: The City of St. Peter should continue with the planning and development of the Phase II 38 lot subdivision. The Phase I Development has been very successful and a Phase II Development will also be successful if the City of St. Peter continues with the same development formula as Phase I. The Phase II Development must include the following:

- Lots must be priced at a reduced price.

- The subdivision must be located in an attractive area.
- A variety of homes should be constructed to prevent the subdivision as being labeled as a subdivision for low priced homes.
- The subdivision should be advertised to attract households from surrounding communities and from the metro area.
- A variety of home ownership programs should be available for households (down payment assistance, low interest mortgages, etc.).
- Several agencies and developers should continue to be involved in constructing homes.
- Project financing should continue to come from a variety of funding sources.
- St. Peter should continue to promote the subdivision as a “model” subdivision.
- Eligibility guidelines should be reviewed and amended as necessary to qualify as many households as possible.

The City of St. Peter should plan for a 36 to 42 month period for the total development of the Phase II Subdivision.

The City of St. Peter should continue to plan Phase III but should not consider actual development until Phase II is considered a success. Utilizing the formula for the development of Phase I the City of St. Peter can develop affordable subdivisions indefinitely. Please note that this recommendation is based on the Phase I development concept and if the City varies from its successful formula, future success may be jeopardized.

11. Promote town house, twin home and other life-cycle housing development

1999 Findings: St. Peter has been experiencing an increasing amount of attached housing development in recent years. There has also been discussion of additional attached housing options, including patio homes, twin homes and similar units associated with other senior housing projects. In some other regional centers in Minnesota, attached housing has made up between 10% and 30% of recent construction activity.

This type of development provides options for empty nesters and seniors to move out of their single family homes, thus making homes available for families. Because of the St. Peter area’s size and regional attraction, it is important for the community to offer a range of life-cycle housing options.

Demographic projections indicate that some of the target populations for attached housing options are expected to remain relatively stable over the five year projection period. Although there is little projected growth in the prime target market, it is likely that demand for attached housing units will remain strong as the product gains additional market acceptance among an increasing percentage of households in the prime target market, and among other households, such as single professionals and single parent families.

2002 Findings: Town house development continues to be a significant percentage of the new single family development in St. Peter. There are several town house developments in St. Peter offering a variety of styles and price ranges.

Currently, the City of St. Peter is considering financial participation in a new patio home development which will have a 1st Phase of 22 units.

We are projecting that 31 to 38 new single family owner occupied units will be constructed annually in St. Peter over the next five years. We are projecting that 25% of these units will be town homes, thus, approximately 8 to 10 town homes will be constructed annually.

Recommendation: The public sector's role should be limited as the private sector is aggressively meeting this housing need. The City should assure that adequate land is available for development and that zoning allows for attached housing construction in desirable areas.

There is a market need for the proposed patio home development as, although the development is considered a town house development because it will have common ground and an association, the development is unique in that the patio homes will not be attached. Also, the patio homes will be on the lower end of the price range, thus, the patio home development provides another alternative for St. Peter households.

We do caution that it is our opinion that the Phase I - 22 unit development will take 36 to 42 months to sell out, thus, the financing plan should be based on this time frame.

12. Support construction of high cost housing

1999 Findings: Higher priced housing promotes trade-up housing activity which results in good quality, more moderately priced houses coming available for moderate income buyers. Additionally, home building activity provides a significant boost to the area economy.

The private sector is prepared to address this segment of the market and there is a limited public sector role. The City may have some role in providing services to areas of the City where high quality lots can be developed.

Our analysis of projected demographic trends indicates that good demand for trade-up housing should continue for the foreseeable future. Demographic age group projections for the five year projection period indicate that households in the age range between 45 and 59 years old will account for most of the household growth over the next five years. Households in these age ranges are important for higher priced housing as these households are typically in their peak earning years and have the highest median household income of any age groups.

It is important to note that demand for higher priced houses will be dependent on consumer confidence. Changes to the local economy or fears of home devaluation can have an impact on peoples' willingness to trade-up to more expensive housing.

2002 Findings: The 1999 Findings are still valid in 2002.

Recommendation: The public sector's role should be limited as the private sector is aggressively meeting this housing need. The City should assure that adequate land is available for development and that appropriate zoning and services are available to desirable areas for higher cost housing development.

Other Housing Issues

13. Develop "spot" housing rehabilitation programs as needed

1999 Findings: St. Peter has a tremendous asset in its existing housing stock. Existing units, both now and into the future, will represent the large majority of the affordable housing opportunities. Existing units generally sell at a discount to their replacement value. Units that are not maintained and improved may slip into disrepair and be lost from the housing stock. Efforts and investment in housing rehabilitation activities will be critical to offering affordable housing opportunities.

Because of the path of the tornado, much of the City's older housing stock sustained some degree of storm damage. This has resulted in a substantial amount of repair and rehabilitation activity in many of the City's older neighborhoods. As a result, no housing condition analysis was conducted as part of this Study. However, there are pockets of substandard housing that exist in St. Peter, including some of the neighborhoods closest to the river.

2002 Findings: There has been limited housing rehabilitation since 1999 that is not tornado damage related. The City has prioritized new construction and focused on creating new housing units.

Recommendation: While a concentrated rehabilitation program still does not appear necessary for any large area in St. Peter, the City should continue to promote housing rehabilitation resources that are available for spot treatment of housing rehabilitation needs.

14. Promote rental rehabilitation programs

1999 Findings: As with owner-occupied housing, much of the rental housing stock has had forced rehabilitation as a result of tornado damage. Our research found that many of the City's rental units, particularly small rental properties, are older housing. The 1990 Census listed nearly 27% of the rental stock as pre-1940 construction. Due simply to their age, many of these units currently need or will need substantial renovation or rehabilitation. It is often not possible to raise rents to amortize costly improvements such as furnace replacement, roofing and siding, and therefore, to prevent a negative cash flow, the improvements are not undertaken. Public programs to promote rental rehabilitation can make improvement activity more cost-effective for property owners.

There are also indications that the number of rental housing units may have been reduced after the City's rental licensing program was instituted. While these were probably units that were in very poor condition, the availability of rental rehabilitation programs can be offered to rental property owners that need repairs to bring their unit up to code.

2002 Findings: Rental rehabilitation has been limited since the 1999 Study. Most of the rehabilitation has actually been renovation and repairs that were necessary as a result of the tornado.

Recommendation: We recommend that the City continue to promote and utilize available rental rehabilitation programs to improve the quality of the existing rental housing stock. If adequate need exists, it may be possible to fund a concentrated program through the Small Cities Development Program available through the Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic Development.

15. Work with rental property owners on tax issues/other programs

1999 Findings: The Minnesota property tax structure for rental housing is often identified as a barrier to both new construction and the provision of affordable rental units. Recent legislative changes related to rental property tax reductions may represent an opportunity for the City to work cooperatively with rental property owners to assist them in lowering their property tax burden.

2002 Findings: The Legislature has taken steps to phase out the current property tax reduction option for lower income rental properties. In its place, the State has lowered the property tax rate on all rental housing. While the 4d rate will still be available for the next few years, the usefulness of promoting this opportunity may have passed.

Recommendation: This recommendation may no longer be applicable, based on current property tax policy. Some advocacy groups for low income housing are asking the legislature to restore preferential tax rates for properties that can certify that they serve primarily low income people, but at this time, the 4d class rate is scheduled for elimination.

16. New Recommendation: Continue to work with local, state, federal and non-profit agencies to achieve housing goals

2002 Findings: As a result of the tornado, the City of St. Peter has strengthened existing relationships and created new constructive relationships with many local, state, federal and non-profit agencies. Partnerships have been developed to address St. Peter's post-tornado housing needs.

St. Peter is considered a model for disaster recovery and housing development. When a City is successful in achieving its goals, agencies have a desire to continue their involvement in the community.

Recommendation: The City should continue to foster its positive relationships and good will with the various agencies to assure agency involvement and financial assistance in addressing St. Peter's housing needs on an on-going basis.

17. New Recommendation: Continue to revolve and leverage state and federal funds to finance housing projects

2002 Findings: The City of St. Peter was provided with state and federal funds to address its housing needs as a result of the tornado. Many of these funding sources would not have been available if the natural disaster did not occur.

Recommendation: The City of St. Peter should continue to develop innovative methods to leverage and revolve funds that were provided on a one-time basis but that can be leveraged and revolved to address St. Peter's housing needs on an on-going basis.

TRANSPORTATION

ACTION MODEL

JUNE 1999

In 1999, the City of Saint Peter began preparing a transportation plan. The process of plan development followed the Transportation Action Model (TAM) that was conceptualized by a national consortium led by Eileen Stommes of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The TAM sought to merge technical information with a decision making process to assist in long-term transportation planning.

The TAM process was designed to be a consensus building exercise regarding local transportation issues. Building consensus is extremely important in that the Saint Peter community has wrestled with significant transportation issues relating to U.S. Highway 169 for over fifty years. Participants in the TAM process remember discussions regarding this issue dating back to 1949. Plans very similar to those proposed in 1999 were created in 1963 but were never implemented. The lack of local consensus had lead to no action being taken.

U.S. Highway 169

Most transportation issues identified during the TAM process related to the location of U.S. Highway 169 which runs north and south through the downtown central business district.

A May 10, 2001 Minnesota Department of Transportation traffic count indicted that there were 16,181 vehicles passing through the Nassau Street intersection of Highway 169. Such high traffic volumes create numerous challenges in balancing the need to move persons and goods efficiently while providing for a functional, pedestrian friendly downtown business district.

The 1999 TAM identified the following conflicts regarding the location of Highway 169 through the central business district.

Heavy Truck Traffic:

A 1994 report on Highway 169 traffic indicated that approximately 13% of all vehicles traveling the corridor through Saint Peter were heavy commercial carriers. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the vibration caused by heavy truck traffic is contributing to the deterioration of the foundations of the commercial buildings within the downtown business district. Additionally, given the increased stopping distances of such vehicles, it is believed that pedestrian circulation within the downtown, in spite of the signalized intersections, is jeopardized.

Noise:

The excessive noise generated by Highway 169 traffic does not create an inviting atmosphere for the patrons of downtown businesses. Even on the second floor of enclosed commercial buildings, conversations are often disrupted due to the noise generated by the vehicles at street level. Sidewalk conversations or café dining opportunities are severely hampered or at times impossible because of the continuous traffic.

Pedestrian Circulation:

Pedestrian traffic within the downtown district is significantly hindered due to vehicular conflicts. Due to the speed and volume of traffic, pedestrian crossing at controlled intersection of Highway 169 must be undertaken with caution. At uncontrolled intersections, in spite of laws giving the right-of-way to pedestrians within marked crosswalks, crossing the street is extremely dangerous and foolhardy. As the population continues to age and mobility of residents diminishes, further conflict is anticipated.

U.S. Highway 169 – Action Steps:

The 1999 Transportation Plan resulting from the TAM process identified proposed remedies to reduce conflicts caused by the Highway 169 traffic. The City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission and city staff have endorsed the re-establishment of medians within the highway right-of-way and ultimately the construction of a downtown bypass of Highway 169.

Medians:

The installation of pedestrian islands and medians within the downtown area was identified as an interim aid to alleviate pedestrian / vehicular conflicts. The medians would presumably create a psychological “squeezing” of the highway corridor to help calm highway traffic and reduce vehicle speeds through the central business district. Reducing the speed of traffic through the downtown area would enhance the pedestrian circulation of business patrons seeking to cross the expansive highway right-of-way.

Historically accurate median installation would also support the redevelopment of the Saint Peter Historical District as identified by the Minnesota Historical Society and National Register of Historic Places. Properly designed medians would allow for an aesthetically pleasing setting with appropriate plantings and/or streetscape of a more human scale.

Near-East Bypass:

It is expected that the most effective method of alleviating circulation, development and noise conflicts created by the traffic on Highway 169 would be to provide for a bypass of the downtown business district. The City of Saint Peter has expressed a clear preference for a highway bypass utilizing the existing Front Street right-of-way. The new bypass would connect to existing TH 169 at Traverse des Sioux Park on the north of town and at the interchange of Jackson Street near the south end of the community.

In spite of the existing conflicts and the desire of the City of Saint Peter, a Highway 169 bypass of downtown Saint Peter is not currently included in any plan adopted by the Minnesota Department of Transportation. However, a preliminary technical memorandum prepared by SRF Consulting Group, Inc. has identified numerous potential impacts of a bypass at the City’s preferred location identified impacts include the following:



CITY OF
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NICOLLET COUNTY, MINNESOTA
WHERE HISTORY & PROGRESS MEET



PROPOSED M.T.H. 169 BYPASS
AERIAL PHOTO HAS AN ASSIGNED DATE OF 1990

Cultural Resources: The Saint Peter Commercial Historic District along Minnesota Avenue (TH 169) between Broadway Avenue and Grace Street is located within the “area of potential effect” of a near-east bypass. The District includes 37 contributing buildings as determined by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

SHPO also has identified five archaeological sites on the northern end of Saint Peter that could potentially be negatively impacted by a highway realignment of a bypass. These sites are expected to contain Native American mound groupings. Additional investigation and consultation with Native American tribes associated with the project area would need to be undertaken. State law prohibits any disturbance of Native American burial mounds.

Parkland Disturbance: A proposed near-east bypass would also be expected to impact both Levee Park and the Riverside Area Nature Conservancy. Given the fact that Land and Water Conservation Fund assistance was used to acquire and develop Riverside Park, a conversion plan would need to be submitted and approved before any land could be converted to non-park use.

Shoreland / Floodplain: The southern portion of the proposed bypass is located within both the 100 and 500 year floodplain. A floodplain assessment and hydraulic analysis would be required to demonstrate that no increase in the base flood elevation would result from the project. Assuming that there is an increase in flood elevation, the appropriate Federal, State and Local agencies must be notified and permits granted for the project to proceed. Additionally, special care must be taken to prevent sedimentation and erosion resulting from the construction and utilization of the proposed bypass.

Collector Street System:

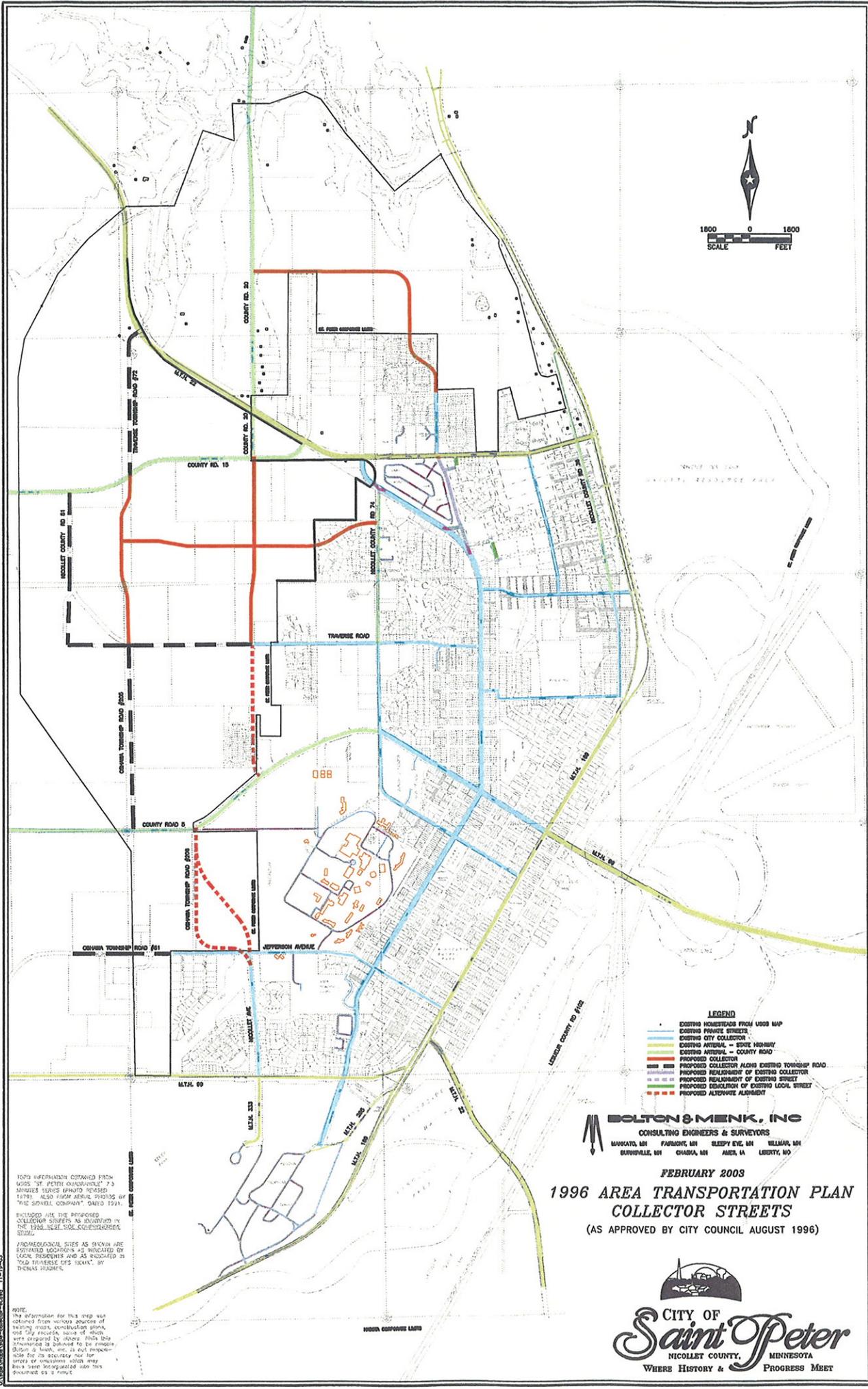
In 1996, the Area Transportation Plan identified the proposed location of new collector streets designed to serve undeveloped properties outside of the existing corporate limits of Saint Peter. The designated collector street locations are depicted on page 85.

In 2004, the County Road #20 is to be extended southward from Highway #22 on the north end of town to Traverse Road (County Road #15). It is anticipated that upon construction, the new roadway will serve new residential developments to the northwest of Saint Peter.

Collector streets are designed and constructed to carry higher volumes of traffic compared to the streets located within residential subdivisions. Anticipated volumes on collector street are in excess of 5,000 vehicles per day. Engineering of collector streets allows posted speed limits of 35 – 45 miles per hour. Ideally, intersections on collector street are spaced at approximately one-quarter mile intervals and private drives serving individual residences are prohibited. Collector streets are designed to provide interconnectivity between neighborhoods and established districts such as the central business district.

Trails System:

A multimodal, comprehensive trail system has been planned for Saint Peter. The functional and recreational movement of pedestrians and bicyclists were considered.



1970 INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM
 1975 "ST. PETER QUADRANT" 7.3
 MINNESOTA STATE PLANNING BOARD
 1978 - ALSO FROM AERIAL PHOTOS OF
 "THE SIGNAL COMPANY" DATED 1971.
 BULGARD AND THE PROPOSED
 COLLECTOR STREETS AS SHOWN IN
 THE 1996 AREA TRANSPORTATION PLAN
 AND PROFESSIONAL SITES AS SHOWN ARE
 ESTIMATED LOCATIONS AS INDICATED BY
 LOCAL RESIDENTS AND AS SHOWN IN
 "ST. PETER QUADRANT" 7.3, ST.
 THOMAS BROTHERS.

NOTE:
 The information for this map was
 obtained from various sources of
 aerial maps, reconnaissance photos,
 and city records, none of which
 were prepared by anyone who has
 been trained in the use of the
 instrument. It is believed to be
 accurate to the extent that it may
 be used for its intended purpose
 and for no other purpose unless
 specifically stated otherwise.
 It is not intended to be used
 for any other purpose unless
 specifically stated otherwise.

- LEGEND**
- EXISTING HOMEHEADS FROM USGS MAP
 - EXISTING PRIVATE STREETS
 - EXISTING CITY COLLECTOR
 - EXISTING ARTERIAL - STATE HIGHWAY
 - EXISTING ARTERIAL - COUNTY ROAD
 - PROPOSED COLLECTOR
 - PROPOSED COLLECTOR ALONG EXISTING TOWNSHIP ROAD
 - PROPOSED REALIGNMENT OF EXISTING COLLECTOR
 - PROPOSED REALIGNMENT OF EXISTING STREET
 - PROPOSED REALIGNMENT OF EXISTING LOCAL STREET
 - PROPOSED ALTERNATE ALIGNMENT

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 BURDICKVILLE, MN CHASKA, MN AMES, IA LIBERTY, MO

FEBRUARY 2003
1996 AREA TRANSPORTATION PLAN
COLLECTOR STREETS
 (AS APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL AUGUST 1996)



Sidewalks:

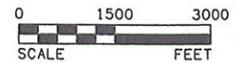
Pedestrian circulation is enhanced through the installation of sidewalks within and between developments. To alleviate potential conflicts, sidewalks are intended solely for pedestrian use. All sidewalks are to be constructed to meet handicapped accessibility standards to allow for the safe movement of persons with mobility impairments.

Current city policy requires the installation of sidewalks on both sides of collector streets (see page 88). Sidewalks are also desirable to interconnect major public facilities such as schools, parks and/or medical facilities.

Bicycle Trails:

The existing Trail Master Plan for the City of Saint Peter provides for a trail system that would circumnavigate the majority of the community. The desired trail system would provide right-of-way acquisition and trail construction that would complete a loop of the entire community. The May, 2001 Trail Plan of Saint Peter is depicted on page 87.

The TAM Committee recommended the construction of a trail system that would provide connectivity between Saint Peter and existing regional trail systems. Specific priority was expressed to provide a linkage between Saint Peter and the Sakatah Trail which extends from Mankato to Faribault.



To Ottawa

Prairie

River Valley Overlook on Ottawa Road

Trout Ponds

Recommended Future State Trail Following Ottawa Rd.

River Valley Overlook On Bluff

LEGEND

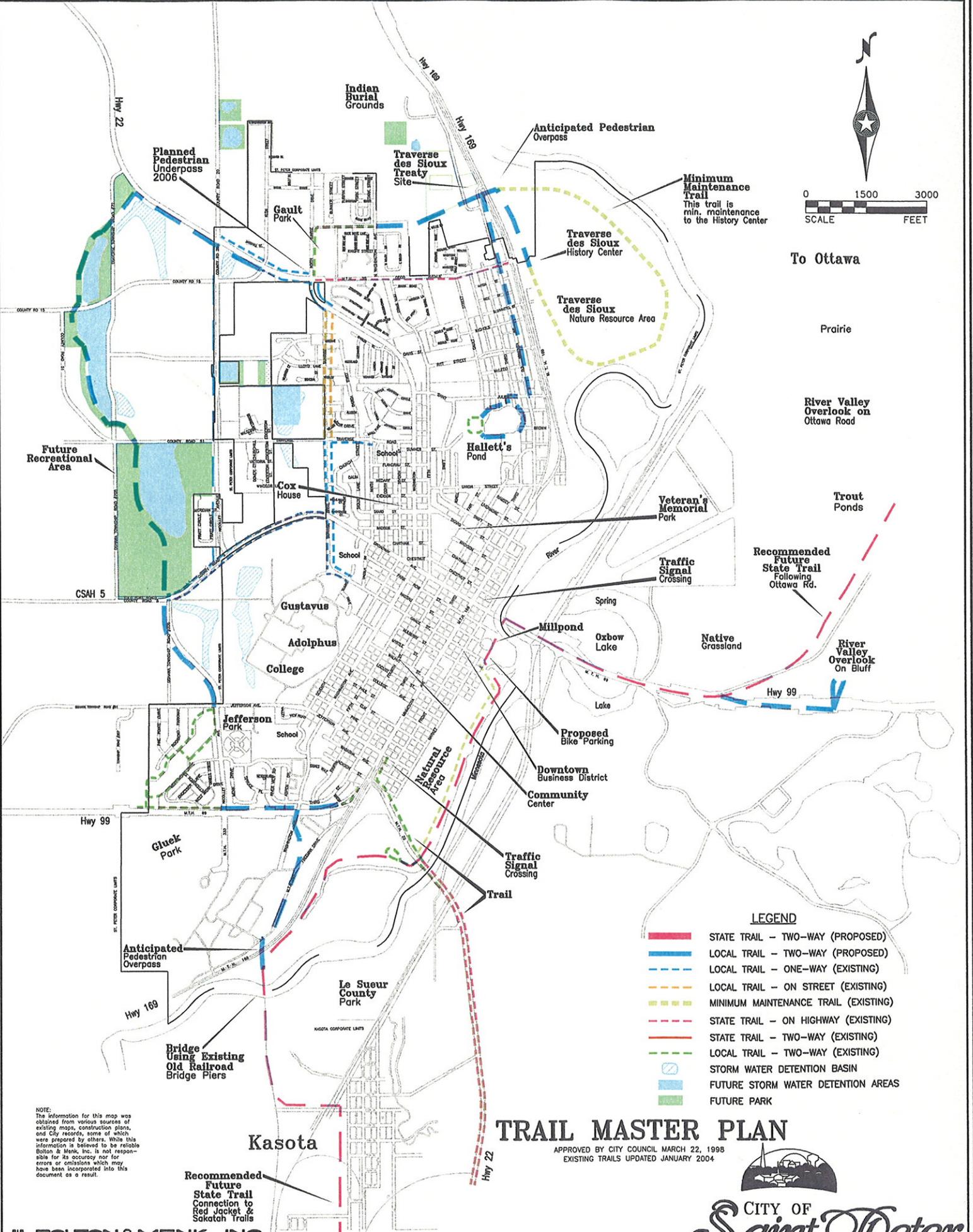
- STATE TRAIL - TWO-WAY (PROPOSED)
- LOCAL TRAIL - TWO-WAY (PROPOSED)
- LOCAL TRAIL - ONE-WAY (EXISTING)
- LOCAL TRAIL - ON STREET (EXISTING)
- MINIMUM MAINTENANCE TRAIL (EXISTING)
- STATE TRAIL - ON HIGHWAY (EXISTING)
- STATE TRAIL - TWO-WAY (EXISTING)
- LOCAL TRAIL - TWO-WAY (EXISTING)
- STORM WATER DETENTION BASIN
- FUTURE STORM WATER DETENTION AREAS
- FUTURE PARK

TRAIL MASTER PLAN

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL MARCH 22, 1998
EXISTING TRAILS UPDATED JANUARY 2004



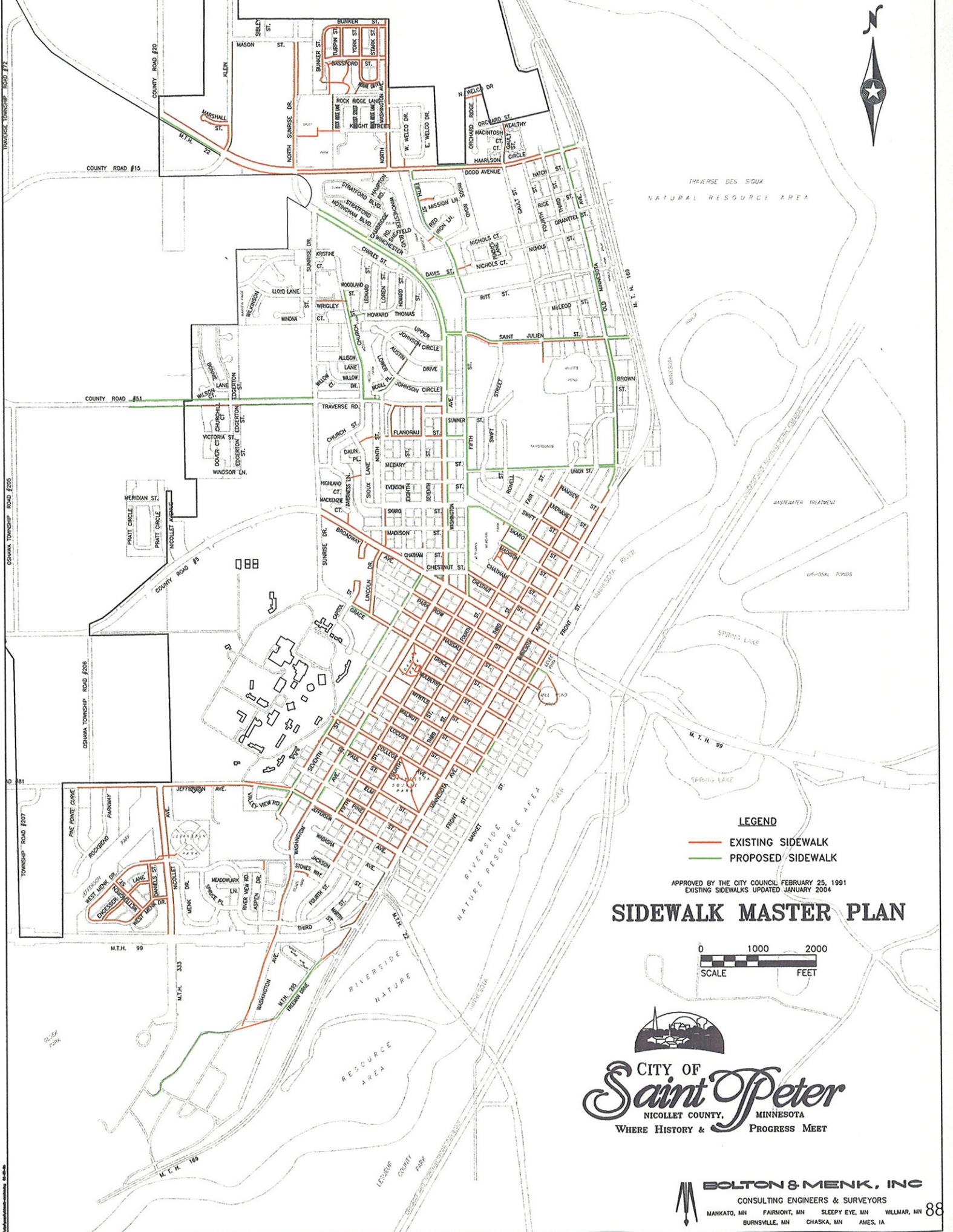
CITY OF Saint Peter
NICOLLET COUNTY, MINNESOTA
WHERE HISTORY & PROGRESS MEET



NOTE:
The information for this map was obtained from various sources of existing maps, construction plans, and City records, some of which were prepared by others. While this information is believed to be reliable Bolton & Menk, Inc. is not responsible for its accuracy nor for errors or omissions which may have been incorporated into this document as a result.

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Limestone Prairie

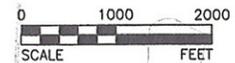


LEGEND

- EXISTING SIDEWALK
- PROPOSED SIDEWALK

APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL FEBRUARY 25, 1991
EXISTING SIDEWALKS UPDATED JANUARY 2004

SIDEWALK MASTER PLAN



CITY OF
Saint Peter
 NICOLET COUNTY, MINNESOTA
 WHERE HISTORY & PROGRESS MEET



BOLTON & MENK, INC
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 BURNSVILLE, MN CHASKA, MN AMES, IA

PARKS

TO: Planning & Zoning Commission

DATE: July 29, 2004

FROM: Lewis G. Giesking
Director of Public Works

Jane Timmerman
Director of Recreation & Leisure Services

RE: Parks Master Plan – Executive Summary

A parks master plan was last prepared in 1997, a trail master plan was adopted March 22, 1998 and a sidewalk master plan was adopted February 1991. Since that time two new parks have been established - Warren Park (Neighborhood Park) and Gault Park (Outdoor Sports Complex) and trails and sidewalks have become an important part of the park system. A tornado in March 1998 caused severe damage to park facilities, throughout the park system. These facilities were reconstructed using 1997 Parks Master Plan as the guide. The City Council, in 1999, established a growth boundary for the city which would double the area of the city. It is time to reevaluate the existing parks system and facilities and to determine the park system and facilities necessary to serve citizens in a fully developed city within the established growth boundaries.

The Standards for Public Recreation Facilities used as a guide for city park development were established for the city in 1977. The standards were reviewed and have been adjusted in titles for park types and service areas to comply with current national and state standards. These new standards were recommended by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and adopted by the City Council on September 30, 2002, and were used by the Board to plan a park system to meet the city's needs and desires within the growth boundaries.

The city has 93.84 acres of general use city parks and 715 acres of land preserved as natural resource areas with current replacement value of \$9,400,000.00. The existing parks were evaluated for: 1) compliance with federal and state standards; 2) meeting changing citizen expectations; and 3) meeting the needs of a growing population. Improvements are set out in priority categories: A) improvements to be funded through annual budgets; B) lesser priority items to be funded by city funds; C) lower priority items to be funded from other sources such as donations, grants or other sources.

The master plan proposes a system of four new neighborhood parks and an additional community park/sports complex park for the undeveloped area west and north of the city, all to be interconnected with a greenway, trail system. The area of parks and types of parks were determined based on anticipated population (20,000), when the entire area within the growth boundary is developed. This plan is not based on a specific time frame due to uncertainty in growth pattern. Establishing the size and location of future parks allows for the city to set aside land as it becomes available or as development occurs, and coordinate park development with the development of the new storm water detention basins.

Other unique needs were addressed. Three specialty parks are identified as desirable: skateboard park, BMX park and a park for dog exercise. A new indoor recreation center is recommended to be located northwest of the high school. The Hallett's Pond area is recommended to be designated as a park and additional city owned land along the river is recommended to be added to the Traverse des Sioux Natural Resource area.

Natural Resource areas are abundant in the Saint Peter area and seventeen additional areas are identified for city support for preservation, development or expansion for the future. Some of these areas already are being preserved and/or maintained by the Regional Treatment Center, Department of Natural Resources, or Gustavus Adolphus College

1. Bluff Park (west of Saint Peter – Christensen)
 - o An area of the bluff west of the sand plain should be set aside to preserve an area of the bluff ecosystem and to provide an overlook of the Saint Peter Area.
2. Native Grasslands (Flood plain at the intersection of Hwy 99 and Ottawa Road)
 - o Native Grasslands in the flood plain, located east of the river and north of the Ottawa Road. A large area of natural grasses is slowly being lost as the natural cycle of fires has been stopped, allowing trees to appear in the midst of the grass.

3. Oakleaf Lake
 - Oakleaf Lake is located three miles west of Saint Peter on State Highway 99. It is a designated wetland with a shallow body of water.
4. Jesse James Caves
 - The “Jesse James” caves are located two miles south of Saint Peter on Highway 169. They are voids in the exposed limestone on the west side of the highway.
5. Spring Lake
 - An area east of the river and south of Highway 99, commonly known as “Spring Lake” is a unique ox bow on the river. It is spring fed and a fishing area.
6. River Flood Plain (Expand Riverside and or Traverse des Sioux Park)
 - All of the river flood plain could be protected as a wildlife area. The entire floodplain is a unique area for recreation and wildlife. There are other “natural features” in the immediate Saint Peter area that should be protected.
7. Trout Ponds
 - The Department of Natural Resources owns the trout ponds and fen area. They stock the pond and maintain the area.
8. Paul’s Creek (designated Trout stream)
 - Paul’s Creek is a short creek that extends from the Minnesota River past the Trout ponds and nature grass lands into the bluffs east of the river. This creek is designated a trout stream and should be protected as public property.
9. Highway 23 Overlook
 - The Ottawa Bluffs located northeast of Saint Peter one and one-half miles rises two hundred and fifty feet from the river bottom to the top of the bluff. The Ottawa Road is cut into the bluff about fifty feet above the flood plain. This area would provide an overlook of the area in which Saint Peter is located.
10. Neighborhood Parks
 - A series of neighborhood parks is planned for the west growth area of Saint Peter, to be located adjacent to or part of natural depressions. These depressions are planned to be a part of a storm water drainage system for this sand plain area of the city.
11. Gravel Pits (Near Kasota)
 - The gravel pits near Kasota are currently active; however, as the pits end their useful economic life, consideration should be given to the transformation of the gravel pits to recreation areas.
12. Robards Creek (Wild side area)
 - Robards Creek is located on the north edge of the growth boundary of Saint Peter. It is a relatively short creek that connects to the Minnesota River. It is characterized by steep side slopes cut through the River Bluffs and is heavily wooded. Some development is already intruding into this area. The area is noted locally as harboring an array of wildlife including deer, wild turkeys, and coyotes. The creek watershed includes much of the “sand plain” just west of Saint Peter.
13. Ottawa Quarries
 - The Ottawa Quarries at the north end of the “bowl”, next to Ottawa, are a manmade feature created by the removal of a unique white silica sand. The excavated area fills with water and will be a future recreation and wildlife area.
14. Gluek Park – expansion
 - Gluek Park has been established west of the Saint Peter Regional Treatment Center, at the south end of the city, preserving a ravine area with handicapped accessible walkways. Although called a “Park” the area has not ever been officially designated as a park to be preserved by either the city or the state. The land was given to the state for use of the Regional Treatment Center as a retreat site for patients. However, the area is unique and should be preserved as a park, unrelated to the status of the Regional Treatment Center. The “park” should be expanded to follow the ravine to the river.
15. Artesian Well (Mill Pond) (In park – should it be developed?)
 - The city has an “artesian” well or spring which feeds the Mill Pond east of city hall. This well/spring has not been changed in years and currently is a pipe out of the ground, which in years past, provided a place for people to collect drinking water. It should be specifically identified and preserved.

16. Lake Emily

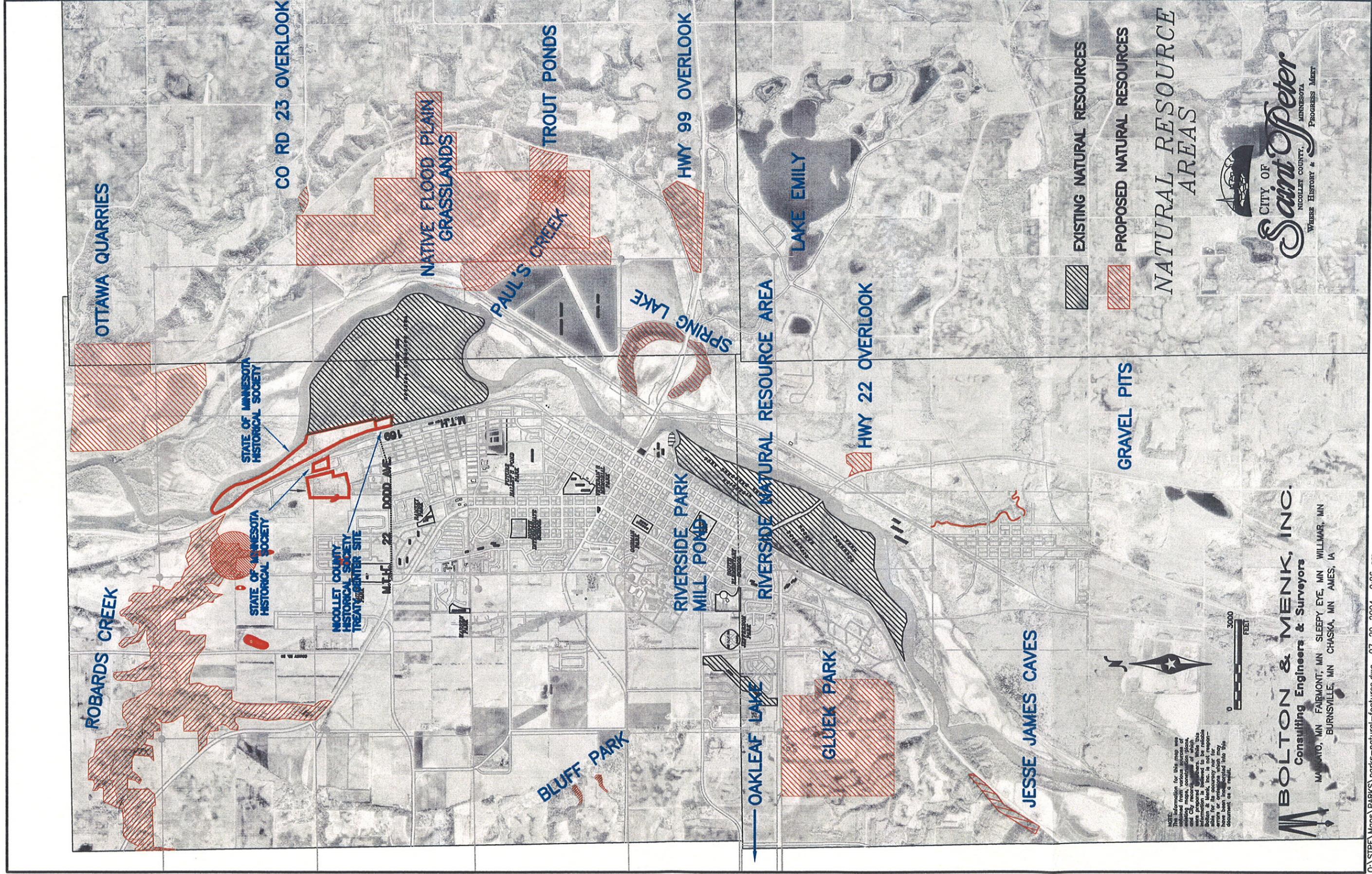
- Lake Emily is located one and one half miles east of Saint Peter. It is a deep lake that can provide recreation opportunities to the citizens of Saint Peter. The city should promote the maintenance of public access to the lake.

17. Linnaeus Arboretum

- Linnaeus Arboretum is a unique feature being developed on the Gustavus Adolphus College campus. It is a 140 acre development that contains areas reflecting the type of plants from all areas of the state.

This Parks Master Plan will be the basis for updating the trail master plan, sidewalk master plan and developing a ten-year funding plan to begin the implementation of this master plan. The master plan will alert current land owners of the city's future park needs and provide developers a guideline for planning new development. The plan will also be a basis for the costs to be charged to developers to fund the expansion of the park system.

LGG/JLT/vwt



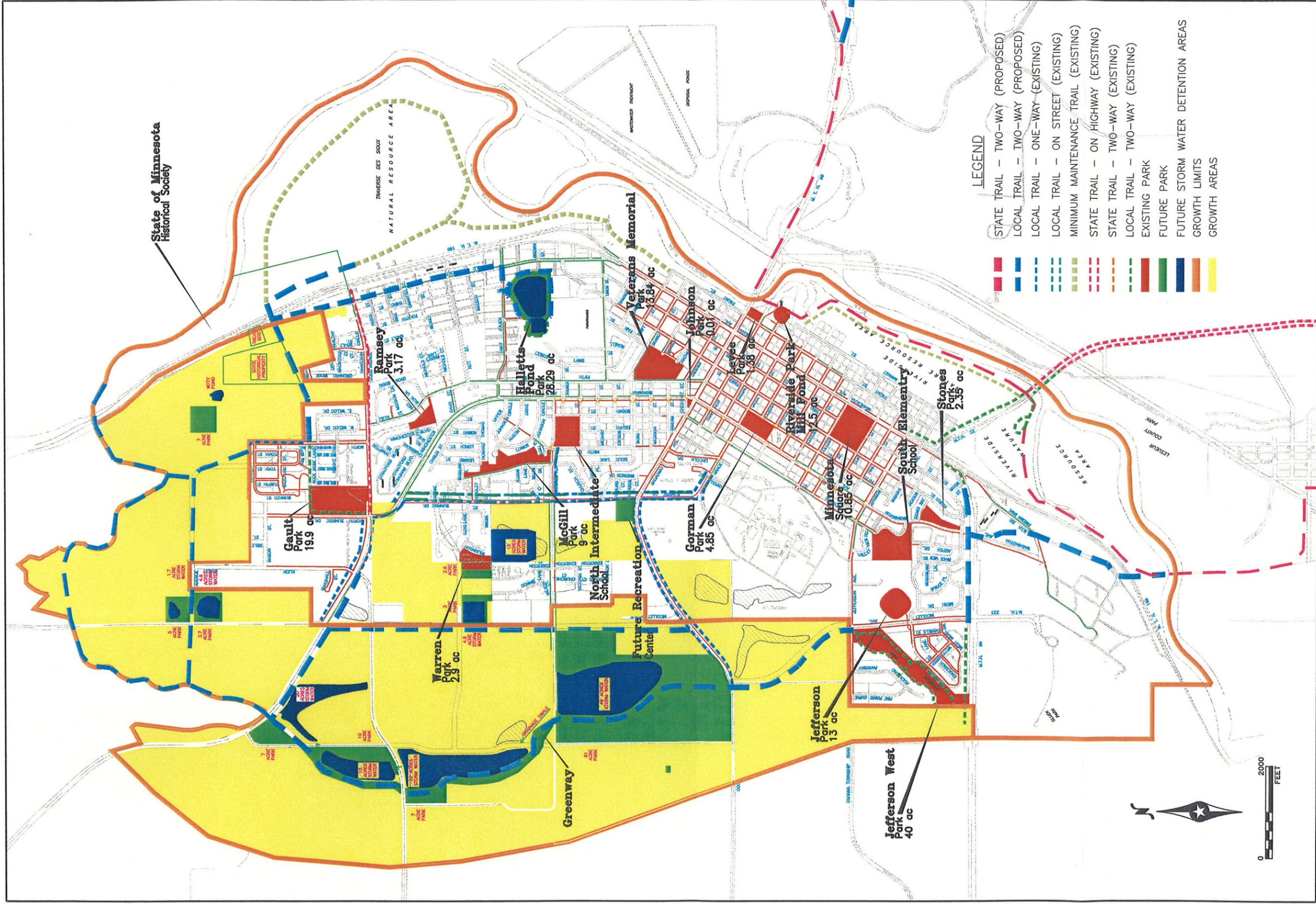
NOTE: The information for this map was obtained from various sources of public records, including aerial photography and city records. While this information was used to the best of our ability, Bolton & Menk, Inc. is not responsible for its accuracy nor for any errors that may have been introduced into this document as a result.

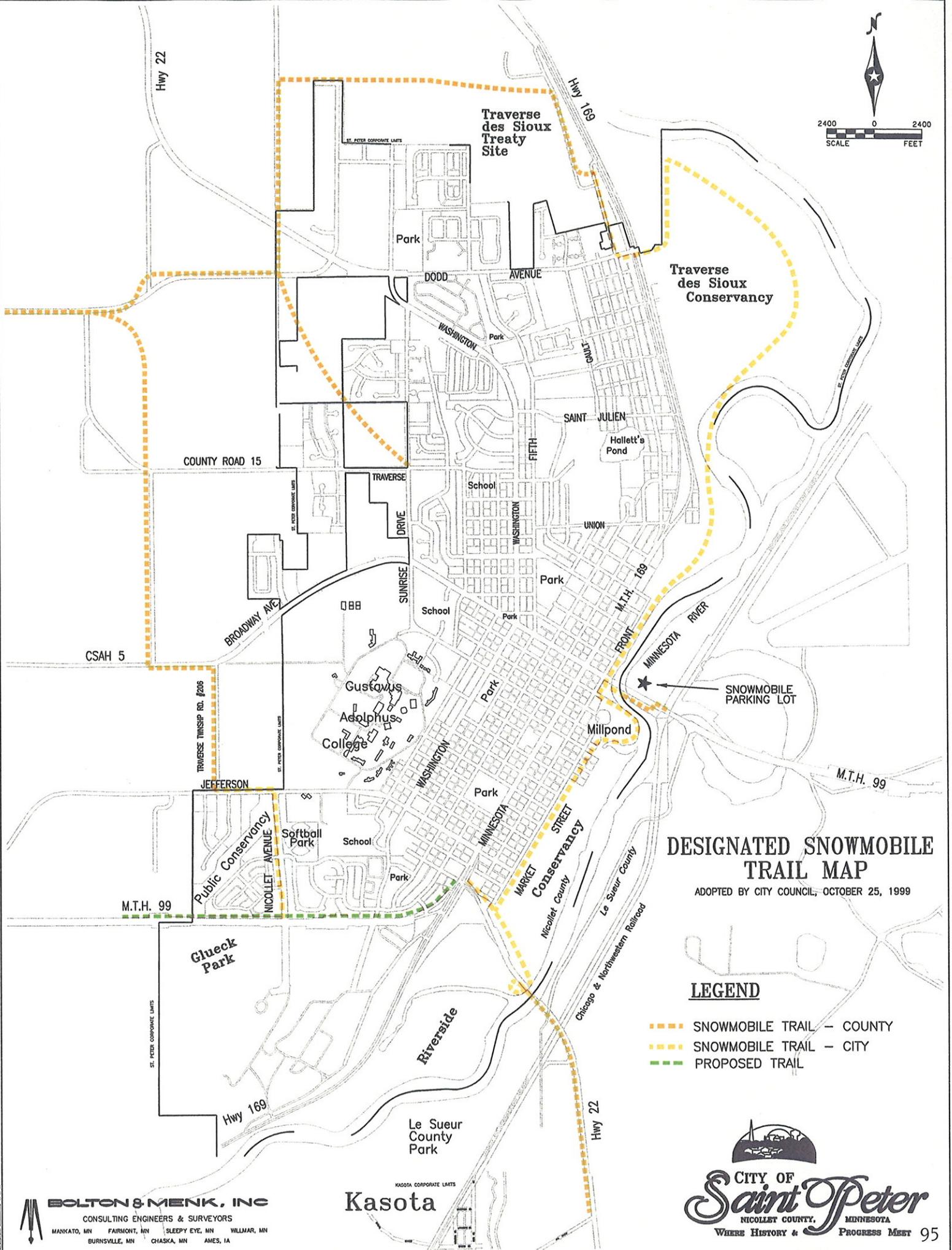
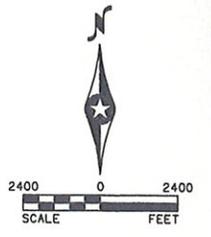


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EXISTING NATURAL RESOURCES
 PROPOSED NATURAL RESOURCES
NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS





DESIGNATED SNOWMOBILE TRAIL MAP
 ADOPTED BY CITY COUNCIL, OCTOBER 25, 1999

LEGEND

- SNOWMOBILE TRAIL - COUNTY
- SNOWMOBILE TRAIL - CITY
- PROPOSED TRAIL

GOALS & POLICIES

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS & POLICIES

GOALS:

1. The existing housing stock should be preserved and enhanced
2. Adequate land should be reserved for the various types of housing balanced with commercial and industrial needs. (Single family, Multi-family and Manufactured Housing).
3. Land uses that are incompatible with residential uses should be separated from residential uses.
4. Residential uses should be placed on land suitable for that purpose and free from flooding, noise, excessive traffic and other hazards.
5. When planning new residential developments inclusion of schools, parks, playgrounds, convenience shopping, and other uses which serve residential areas should be considered.
6. Residential growth should proceed at a manageable and sustainable pace, balanced with school, utility, and public service capacity.

POLICIES:

1. The zoning ordinance and future land use map should delineate areas suitable for the various types of residential development.
2. High-traffic volume streets should be designed to skirt residential neighborhoods rather than pass through them.
3. New residential growth should be planned in an orderly fashion adjacent to existing developed areas; leapfrogging of developments should be avoided.
4. Parks and playgrounds should be contemplated in the Parks Master Plan when planning new residential developments.
5. Subdivision streets and utilities should be in place before new residential building is allowed.
6. Mobile homes should be placed in Mobile home parks. Life-safety design standards should be adopted to protect the welfare of mobile home park residents as well as to allow emergency serviceability to the mobile home development.
7. The taxable value of existing residential units should be maintained.

8. To assist in creating community stability and citizen commitment, the City should promote home ownership opportunities for area residents as supported in the 2002 Housing Study.
9. The City should seek to ensure that appropriate housing options are available for all ages, economic and household types.
10. Safe, affordable and desirable rental housing opportunities should be provided. Rental housing options should exist for households of any income and size. A variety of rental housing types should be available to households of any income and size.
11. Zoning and subdivision regulations should encourage and allow for appropriate multi-family housing opportunities within traditional single-family neighborhoods or districts. Inclusionary land use practices within residential districts provide for the efficient and effective provision of utility and public services.
12. Residential neighborhoods should be designed to provide safe and relatively direct pedestrian interconnections between public facilities and between neighborhoods as provided for in the sidewalk master plan.
13. The City should encourage higher density development closer to the core of the community with less dense development allowed near the growth boundaries.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND POLICIES

GOALS:

1. Development opportunities should be encouraged within existing commercial districts. Sufficient land should be reserved for the various types of commercial development balanced with residential and industrial needs.
2. Efforts should be made to promote and protect the architectural and structural integrity and vitality of the historic commercial district.
3. Commercial facilities should not interfere with the smooth flow of traffic.
4. Commercial facilities should be of a size and scale compatible with nearby uses.

POLICIES:

1. The zoning ordinance and map should provide adequate areas for various categories and densities of commercial uses.

2. Large commercial facilities should be placed on high traffic streets. In locations where commercial uses adjoin other districts, landscaping should be used as a buffer between zoning districts.
3. Efforts should be made to encourage shared parking and other amenities.
4. New commercial facilities should be required to provide off-street parking and loading facilities when appropriate.
5. Convenience commercial facilities should be of the proper size and scale to fit into the neighborhoods they serve.
6. Historic structures within the Central Commercial District should be preserved in a manner consistent with the standards adopted by the Department of Interior. Public / private investment opportunities should exist to encourage the appropriate renovation, rehabilitation or repair of historic commercial properties within Saint Peter.
7. The safe and efficient movement of pedestrian traffic must be provided within the Central Business District to ensure the viability and profitability of existing and future commercial enterprises. Excessive traffic volumes and the predominance of large commercial vehicles must not be allowed to endanger the health and safety of pedestrians.
8. The City should actively recruit commercial development opportunities within the Central Business District.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND POLICIES

GOALS:

1. Adequate land should be reserved for the various types of industrial development balanced with residential and commercial development.
2. Industrial development should be separated from incompatible uses.
3. New Industrial activity should be located so as to minimize detrimental effects on nearby property uses or the environment of the city.
4. Industrial land should be appropriately placed and appropriately serviced by utilities for the businesses located there.
5. The City should encourage the opportunity for non-motorized travel to industrial developments.

POLICIES:

1. The zoning ordinance and map should show adequate land for both light and heavy industrial uses.
2. Construction standards should be used to minimize any detriment to nearby uses.
3. Industrial areas should be located on or near highways so industrial traffic is not routed through residential areas.
4. New industrial facilities should be required to provide adequate off-street parking and loading areas.
5. Industrial areas should have lots of many sizes, including some very large lots.
6. Industrial areas should have adequate utilities and heavy-duty roads planned and, if possible, installed prior to industrial expansion.
7. The City should encourage industrial development through the provision of financial assistance when such assistance is deemed necessary and appropriate. The City should actively recruit industrial development opportunities. The City should provide for the installation of required municipal services within new industrial developments.