

City of Courtland

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted: February 5, 2015

*WE ENVISION COURTLAND AS A CITY WITH MANAGED
GROWTH THAT OFFERS A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE FOR
INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES AND BUSINESSES AT AN
AFFORDABLE COST.*

The City of Courtland's Comprehensive Plan was prepared by the City of Courtland and the Minnesota Valley Council of Governments (MVCOG).

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I. INTRODUCTION

Planning Principles

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to address community values while providing for wide latitude of private property decisions consistent with these values. The Plan is intended to lead the City of Courtland to a sustainable development pattern that will accomplish the following objectives:

1. Wisely use the energy resources, urban systems, and land area of the City of Courtland by concentrating urban development and by creating an orderly pattern of development.
2. Encourage practices and technologies that maximize efficiency of resource use and minimize waste.
3. Preserve the natural and cultural resources that provide a “small town” feel for the city.
4. Ensure that growth pays for itself; incorporate long-term costs and benefits into the community decision-making process.
5. Conserve and restore natural resources and protect the ecological systems of the natural environment and economic uses of those resources.
6. Encourage the development of affordable housing and provide for a reasonable range of choice in housing and lifestyles.
7. Encourage the creation of economic opportunities in an equitable fashion for all citizens.
8. Cooperate with local jurisdictions within and adjacent to the City of Courtland in the development and implementation of the Plan.
9. Respond to land use and resource management issues in a flexible and proactive way.

History of Courtland

In the spring of 1855, the first settlers, Jacob Harmon, Mr. Haresine, John Sidel and Jacob Gfeller, arrived in what would become Courtland Township.

In 1856, the village of Red Stone was surveyed on land west of present day Courtland. The settlers constructed a few buildings but the town was never developed. Also in 1856, a post office was established under the name Hilo.

In 1858, the town of Hilo was formally organized. In 1865, Hilo was re-surveyed and renamed Courtland. The first commercial building in town was built in 1872 near the Chicago and North Western Railroad. Ten years later, Courtland established itself as an important trade center for the area. It was not until 1892 that Courtland was officially incorporated as a town.

In the early 1900s, Courtland grew quite rapidly, allowing the city to support a saw mill, feed grinding place, three elevators, cattle yard, Standard Oil bulk station, three saloons, two hotels, two garages, butcher shop, harness shop, creamery, five general stores, depot, schoolhouse, restaurants, photography studio, bank, three service stations, hardware store, barber shop, two blacksmith shops, theatre, two implement dealers, and two car dealers.

In 1920, the road known as the St. Peter and New Ulm Highway became State Highway 7 and in 1929 changed to U.S. Highway 14.

In 1965, Courtland was struck by the Great Flood of 1965. The flood was fueled by six inches of melting snow and untimely spring rains. The Minnesota River crested at 29.07 feet at midnight on April 10, 1965. This was ten feet above the flood stage. The flood inundated Courtland. In 2010, the University of Minnesota ranked this flood as the fifth worst in Minnesota state history.

In 1973, the train tracks were taken out which had been there for over 100 years.

Two years later, in 1975, the town lost all electricity, telephone and water services due to a snow storm that started on a Friday morning and lasted until Sunday. The Highway was opened on Sunday to allow residents that required medical attention to the hospital. Some families took refuge in the old town hall, which was heated by a wood stove.

In 1989, radium was found in the city water supply, requiring the city to find a new source. After drilling six test wells, the city found good water in the southeast corner of town. In 1991, the old water lines were replaced.

(Source: Nicollet County Historical Society, Minnesota Department of Transportation, *Courtland – the early years: 1855-1910* by Sheila Wingate, *Our Home Town – Courtland, Minnesota* compiled by Rosalia Lake Lendt, *City of Courtland: 1892 – 1992* compiled by the Courtland Book Committee, City of Courtland Staff)

Introduction

The Courtland Comprehensive Plan provides direction in making decisions about the community's future growth. The narrative sections and supporting graphics within this plan provide direction for solving existing problems and dealing with future change. Plan implementation involves the conversion of the strategies into measures of action. The implementation section, like the plan itself, is a flexible tool and should be amended or adjusted as conditions warrant.

The Courtland Comprehensive Plan will be implemented in a number of ways. Actual implementation of the plan is accomplished on a daily basis by City personnel and on a regular basis by the decisions that are made by the various commissions and the City Council. Implementation will involve the modification of existing ordinances, the adoption of new ordinances, administrative procedures, directives from the City Council and use of a capital improvements programs.

Why Have a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan is a legal document that states the goals and intentions of a city. It is the city's official statement used to guide development, redevelopment, and preservation of the city. It is used as the basis for planning issues, providing documented proof of intentions and strategies. It sets forth policies, plans, and programs governing land use, transportation, community facilities, and services. Zoning is based on the Comprehensive Plan. Courts often consult the Comprehensive Plan during legal matters on land use. Additionally, Comprehensive Plans lay the framework for growth management, addressing strategies that may help contain urban sprawl.

A number of states require a Comprehensive Plan as a matter of law. Minnesota does not require one, per Minnesota Statute §462.353, but many Minnesota cities have chosen to prepare one to guide their development.

There are two (2) major functions of a Comprehensive Plan. First, a Comprehensive Plan is physical documentation of what a community wants from their city. It states goals, objectives, and a vision of what the community may be. Second, the Plan serves as a guide to decision making in the community, both public and private sectors.

Purpose of a Comprehensive Plan

- To promote the public interest in establishing a more functional, healthy, interesting, and efficient community by serving the interest of the community at large rather than the interests of individuals or special groups within the community, if their interest are at variance with the public interest;
- To treat the entire community as one ecosystem and inject long range consideration into determinations affecting short-range action;
- Prepare for anticipated changes and by such preparations, bring about significant savings in both private and public expenditures;
- Provide a framework for policies and actions leading to the improvement of the physical, financial, and social environments of the city, thereby providing a good place to live and work and a setting conducive for new development;

- Include citizen participation into future planning processes;
- Develop lands wisely so they can serve citizens more effectively and provide public services with less cost, thus creating a more secure tax base; and
- Serve as a legal foundation for zoning and subdivision ordinances.

The Process of the Comprehensive Plan

In 2013 and 2014, the Minnesota Valley Council of Governments worked with the Planning Commission to assist in the update of this plan. The main theme of the meetings was to gather citizen input on the goals and strategies of the City. Citizen input was also gained by a survey where over 100 households participated.

Research was conducted regarding existing conditions in Courtland. Sources include government statistic internet sites, information supplied by the City of Courtland staff, U.S. Census Bureau, Nicollet County Historical Society and Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT).

Roles and Responsibilities

The City of Courtland, like most communities, has defined a series of ongoing tasks and established commissions to specifically focus on each area of emphasis. Each of these commissions has a role in the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. It is important that their efforts coincide with the policy direction that is established by the City Council.

City Council

The City Council is the final authority in the implementation process. The Council has official approval of all plans and ordinances, the authority to earmark funds and the ability to execute funding agreements with state and federal agencies.

The City Council needs to work closely with all of the commissions in implementing the strategies found within this plan. The City Council should seek various funding sources for projects and goals listed within this Plan. These funding sources may include local, state, and federal governments, non-profit groups, and private individuals and organizations.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission plays a key role in all development and redevelopment decisions. It is important that the Commission's role be closely coordinated with the City Council to assure continuity between policies and what they strive to achieve and what is actually allowed by the City's codes and ordinances.

The Planning Commission is the entity with primary responsibility for the preparation of this plan. After adoption of the plan, two areas of emphasis remain. First, it is the role of the Commission to ensure that the framework of codes and ordinances is in conformance with the strategies of the plan. Conformance may require periodic updates of the zoning ordinance. Secondly, on an ongoing basis, it will remain the charge of the Commission to review all development and redevelopment proposals including but not limited to site plans, subdivisions, lot splits, rezoning and variances.

Citizen Participation

Citizen participation in the local planning process is a key element in the continued implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Open communication should characterize the relationship between City government and local citizens. The expression of public opinion and its subsequent consideration in decision making are essential ingredients in implementing all public policy issues including comprehensive plans.

Citizen participation was a component of the preparation and adoption of this Comprehensive Plan. In addition to the input of the volunteer commissions that contributed to this planning effort, public comments were continually sought at numerous meetings and at formal public hearings.

The implementation of a comprehensive plan requires an even stronger citizen participation effort. The community will need to continually re-evaluate the comprehensive plan to ensure that it accurately portrays public opinion. If the people of Courtland are familiar with the plan and endorse its recommendation, the implementation effort will be more effective.

Administrative Procedures

The City of Courtland has the major role in the future development decisions. The decisions that are made pertaining to residential, commercial and industrial projects have a lasting effect on the appearance and function of the community. Development projects are regulated by a series of codes and ordinances, all structured to ensure that minimum requirements are met. In addition to the regulatory structure, the review process itself is also important. During project reviews, the City and the developer conduct a critique of project details that typically result in a final product that exceeds minimum requirements. Because of the role of the review process, it is important that it is fully understood by the decision makers, the development community and the citizens of Courtland.

In most development decisions, an advisory public hearing is required by the Planning Commission prior to a hearing by the City Council. The advisory public hearing is held at a regular meeting of the Planning Commission. Ten days prior to the hearing, a notice is published in the official newspaper and affected residents are notified of the time and date of the hearing. Public hearings are required for the following:

- Platting
- Conditional Use Permits
- Zoning Amendments
- Planned Unit Developments (PUD)
- Wetland Permit

In addition to the items noted above, variances require review by both the Planning Commission and/or the City Council.

Additional Plan users may include developers, public agencies and their staff including the school board and Nicollet County.

Environmental Protection

The City of Courtland will continue to protect environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, floodplains, and significant wooded areas.

Implementation

Comprehensive planning is a continuing process. This process does not terminate at adoption. It continues through implementation. Implementation is not automatic, but takes a conscious effort, and implementation must be properly timed, consistent with physical conditions, economic opportunities, and the financial capabilities of the City and the private sector. Premature implementation of aspects of the Plan can be disruptive and prevent the desired objective from being achieved in a reasonable period of time. For example, where substantial change in land use is projected, it is important that such change is accomplished in a proper sequence and that it be completed in a reasonable period of time to prevent or minimize adverse conditions during the transition period.

It should be recognized that the Plan does not represent the ideal picture of what the community will look like at any fixed date in the future. It should be categorized as a general guide or general plan, it should not be considered flexible in a sense of meaning that its content is changeable or need not always be followed. To the contrary, the Plan, including the policies, plans and programs, represent a commitment which is the result of a rational, thorough study of the community and the opportunities with the community representing an integration of physical, economic, and social elements into an interrelated, interdependent total Plan. The Plan is amendable if justified and positive results consistent with other Plan content can occur. If there is flexibility in the Plan, it relates to the timing of proposed programs and proper timing of some of the changes, but it is not flexible with respect to policy and Plan content.

Amendments

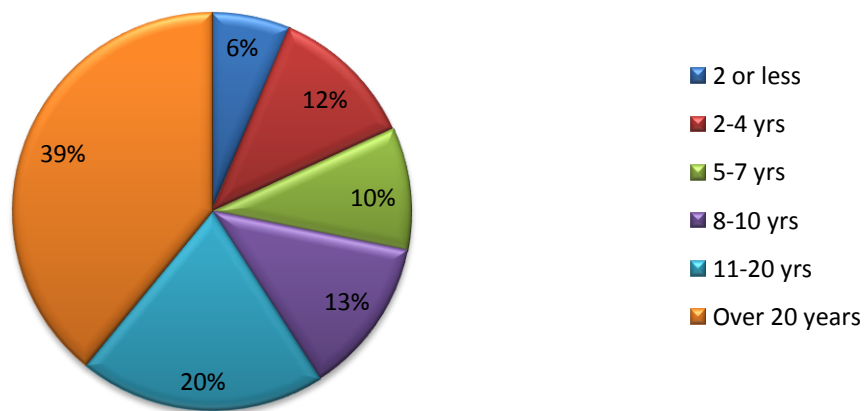
The Plan is an amendable document. Amendments are to be prepared and considered in the same fashion as the original Plan and no amendment can be approved unless a public hearing is held on the proposed amendment with a majority vote received.

II. SURVEY / DEMOGRAPHICS

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

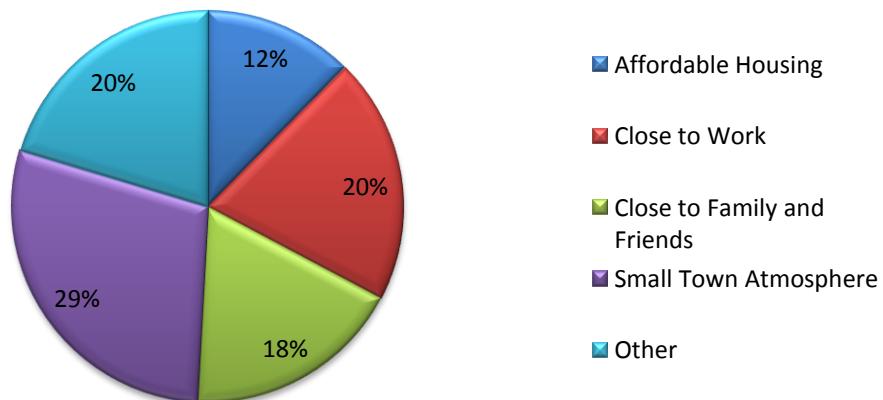
In 2014, a general survey was sent out to the residents of Courtland. A total of 110 households responded, which is approximately 46.4% of households in Courtland. The survey addressed issues such as: how long one has lived in Courtland, why they chose to live here, what would cause them to leave, housing issues such as problems and costs, and employment. Respondents were also asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 4 a number of issues relating to the physical condition of Courtland. The compiled results of the General Survey can be seen in Appendix A.

Figure 1: Years as a Resident of Courtland



(Source: Citizen Survey, 2014)

Figure 2: Reasons Cited to Live in Courtland



(Source: Citizen Survey, 2014)

TABLE 1: COURTLAND COMMUNITY SURVEY INTERPRETATION

Issue	Superior	Good	Average	Poor	Issue	Superior	Good	Average	Poor
Overall Community Appearance	14%	67%	19%	0%	Yr-Round Adult Rec.	6%	45%	31%	19%
Appearance of Public Buildings	11%	60%	28%	1%	Activities for Retired Persons	5%	34%	45%	17%
Appearance of Private Residences	10%	73%	17%	0%	Local Businesses Meeting Residents Needs	4%	49%	41%	5%
Appearance of Commercial Properties	13%	64%	22%	1%	Ability to Attract Business/Industry	6%	34%	49%	11%
Appearance of Public Parks	19%	47%	28%	7%	Youth Employment Opportunities	3%	16%	51%	30%
Schools	19%	63%	12%	6%	Adult Employment Opportunities	3%	15%	53%	28%
Cost of Living	10%	67%	22%	1%	Need for Retail Expansion	13%	43%	35%	9%
Streets	14%	67%	15%	4%	Fire and Rescue	77%	20%	1%	2%
Sidewalks	33%	49%	14%	4%	Zoning Code Enforcement	24%	53%	18%	4%
Overall Quality of Life	33%	60%	6%	1%	Snow Removal	26%	46%	22%	6%
Availability of Day Care	8%	44%	42%	6%	Parks and Recreation	30%	45%	20%	6%
Yr-Round Youth Rec.	9%	43%	37%	11%	Refuse and Recycling	34%	43%	17%	6%

Table 1: Courtland Community Survey (Source: Citizen Survey, 2014)

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Since 1990 Courtland has seen a steady increase in population and households. This coincides with an increase in population and households in Nicollet County.

Table 2: City of Courtland

Year	1990	2000	2010
Population	412	538	611
Households	143	188	237

Table 2: City of Courtland (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010)

Population

In 1990 the population of Courtland, according to the U.S. Census, was 412. In 2000, there was a population increase to 538. The 2010 census showed another population increase to 611. This represents a population increase of 48.3% from 1990 to 2010.

Nicollet County has also seen an increase in their population since 1990. For the 1990, 2000, and 2010 census the population was as follows: 28,076, 29,771, and 32,727 respectively (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). This represents a 16.6% increase.

Households

In addition to population, the City of Courtland has seen a steady increase in the number of households. According to the U.S. Census, the number of households in 1990 in Courtland was 143. In 2000 the number of households rose to 188. The 2010 census found 237 households in the City. This represents a 65.7% increase from 1990 to 2000 (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

III. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS

1. COMMUNITY IDENTITY / CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The goal of Community Identity and Citizen Participation is to develop a community-based planning process with broad citizen participation in order to plan for sustainable development, strong community relationships and to benefit from the insights, knowledge, and support of local residents. It also focuses on maintaining buildings/sites that have particular interest or significance to the community.

Citizen Goals

Goal 1: Encourage and invest in facilities, programs and services that bring people and functions of a community together to make the community a more desirable place to live and visit for adults, kids, families and tourists.

Strategies

- Encourage a variety of experience and opportunity in terms of living, working and social activities.
- Encourage participation, volunteerism and partnerships city sponsored events, from citizens, the business community, and non-profits within the community.
- Partner with the Courtland Recreational Board to provide and maintain a variety of recreational opportunities to exist for different age groups and abilities.
- Ensure a high quality and safe park system that meets the citizen needs and is assessable to all of its community members.

Goal 2: Encourage community interaction.

Strategies

- Determine methods to maximize communication and connections between residents, businesses, non-profits, and governmental entities.
- Maintain and encourage racial, ethnic, economic, cultural and other types of diversity.
- Recognize the legitimate concerns regarding jurisdictional issues by working and cooperating with surrounding communities.

Goal 3: Maintain the rural quality and small town feel of the community.

Strategies

- Promote a greater use and visual relationship between downtown Courtland and Hwy 14.
- Encourage development that preserves open spaces and creates linkages with natural areas.
- Encourage attractive entrances at the gateways of the community.

Goal 4: Investment in public facilities and services should aim to make the community, as well as its citizens, healthy.

Strategies

- Invest in facilities and services that bring people and functions of a community together to make the community a more desirable place to live.

2. LAND USE / ENVIRONMENT

Land Use planning is determining what types of development will occur and establishing a community-based framework as a basis for all decisions and actions related to land use. In addition, current development will impact future generations in many ways by affecting the air, water, and land. In order to ensure these resources for future generations, environmental planning/conservation is crucial.

Existing Conditions

Boundaries

The City of Courtland is located on the South Central edge of Nicollet County. Courtland is a community with the primary land use outside the city limits is agriculture.

Commercial Land Use

The City of Courtland has two business districts. The first is located to the east of County Highway 24. This area contains commercial business (including service and restaurant), government functions and parking. The second district is located to the west of County Highway 24 and south of U.S. Highway 14. This area contains a mix of commercial business and residential units but is primarily residential. The city recreational ball park is also located in this area.

Residential Land Use

Residential zoning is primarily single family. There are limited multiple-family sites throughout the community. There are approximately 247 lots zoned for residential units. There are 5 residential lots vacant.

Table 3: Residential Units by Type

Type	Number	Percentage (%)
Owner-Occupied	203	81
Renter-Occupied	34	13
Vacant	14	6
Total	251	100

Table 3: Residential Units by Type (Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010)

Industrial Land Use

Industry provides the economic base of a community, providing employment and commercial opportunities. The location and type of industry allowed must be considered carefully so there will be no adverse impact on the quality of life for the citizens (noise, air, water pollution, etc.). Most industry requires a location on or near a transportation route such as a highway or rail line to accommodate the movement of goods. Industry is generally separated from commercial and residential land uses.

The City of Courtland has three areas designated for industrial use. The first is located between County Highways 24 and 25; both roads connect to U.S. Highway 14. County Highway 24 also connects Minnesota Highway 68. The second and third areas are considered to be light industry and highway business zones. The second area is located off County Highway 24, south of the ball park. The third area is located off Zieske Road and runs along U.S. Highway 14. Future growth is encouraged to locate in these areas.

Public Land Use and Open Space

Public land includes parks and government facilities. Courtland has 4 areas dedicated to parks and open space. These include:

- *Courtland Recreational Ball Field* – The Recreational Ball Field contains a baseball field, batting cages, concession stands and grandstands.
- *Courtland City Park* – The Courtland City Park contains a volleyball court, playground equipment and a shelter.
- *Courtland City Park #2* – The Courtland City Park #2 is currently under construction.
- *Ice Rink* – The Ice Rink is only available during the winter months. It contains a shelter.

Forested areas and wetlands are expected to be preserved to establish a greenbelt area.

Citizen Goals

Goal 1: Plan land uses and implement standards to minimize land use conflicts.

Strategies

- Follow the Zoning Ordinance that designates land use areas and guides development to appropriate areas to ensure desirable land use patterns and minimize conflicts.
- Require adequate transitions between different land uses through appropriate land use planning and zoning standards.
- Encourage the location of commercial and industrial development in areas that avoid adverse impacts, such as truck traffic, through residential areas.
- Develop design standards for commercial, industrial and multi-family housing developments.

Goal 2: Support development that enhances community character and identity.

Strategies

- Ensure that high quality developments are well planned and connected to existing development through the efficient use of streets utilities and infrastructure.
- Work with property owners to encourage the development of attractive entrances and gateways to the community.
- Support the redevelopment of vacant and abandoned sites.
- Continue and plan for land uses in order to support and enhance Courtland's ability to attract quality development by providing adequate land area with the planned growth areas.
- Promote an integrated open space and recreation system within the community that provides adequate recreational opportunities for all residents and visitors and permanently protects unique scenic and natural areas.

Goal 3: Promote an integrated open space and recreation system within the community that provides adequate recreational opportunities for all residents and visitors.

Strategies

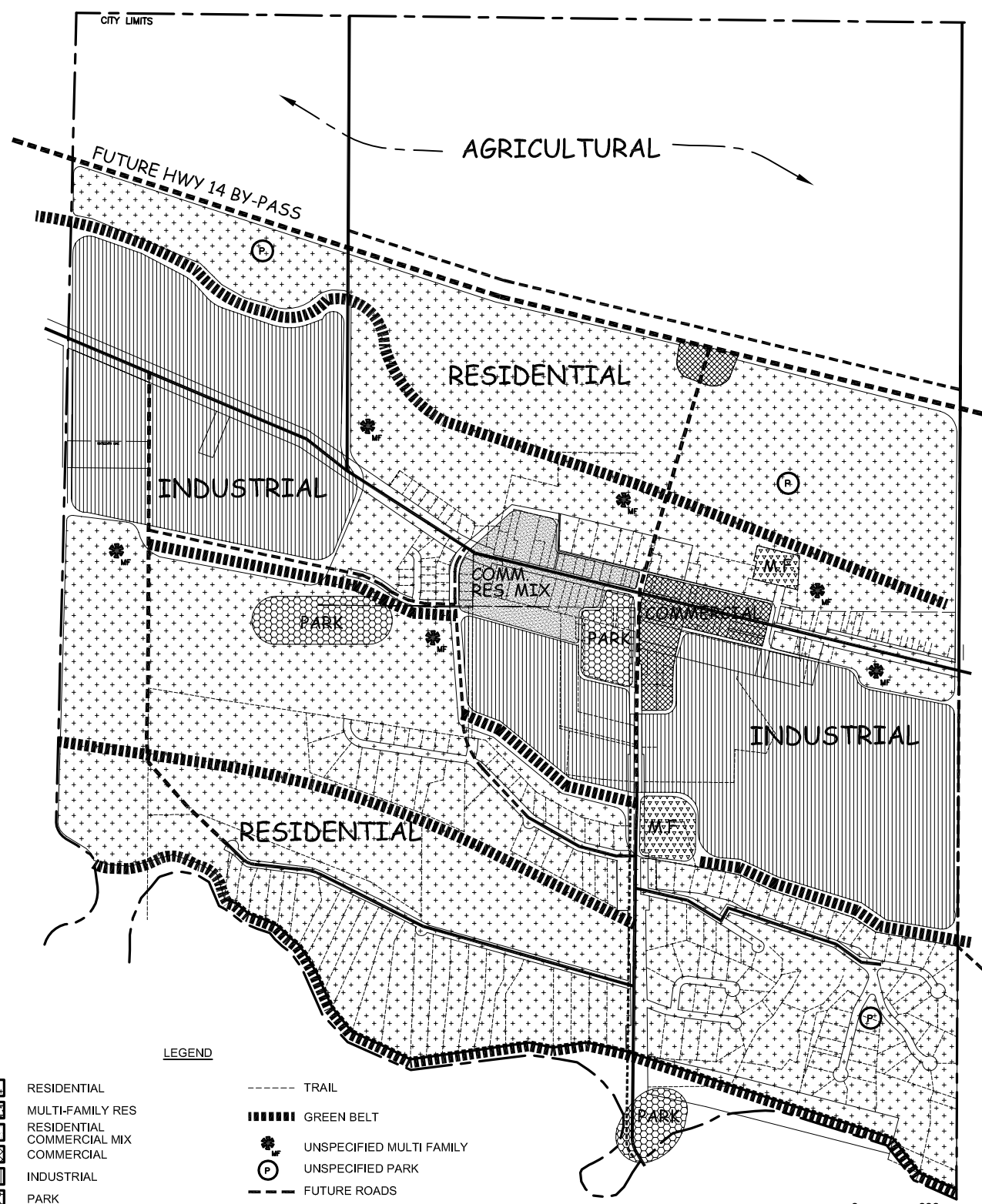
- Ensure that diverse recreational opportunities exist in the community.
- Consider adding trails and greenways to connect natural and recreational areas for citizens and visitors.
- Ensure that new development set aside land for parks and green space.

Goal 4: Achieve a balanced and sustainable use of natural resources in the community to accommodate the economic and non-economic needs of residents, industries and visitors.

Strategies

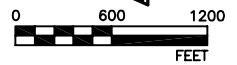
- Protect the quality of drinking water by preventing pollution in wellhead protection areas and watersheds.
- Encourage and preserve the planting of trees along streets and parks.

Future Land Use Plan Map



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| | RESIDENTIAL | | TRAIL |
| | MULTI-FAMILY RES | | GREEN BELT |
| | RESIDENTIAL COMMERCIAL MIX | | UNSPECIFIED MULTI FAMILY |
| | COMMERCIAL | | UNSPECIFIED PARK |
| | INDUSTRIAL | | FUTURE ROADS |
| | PARK | | CITY LIMITS |
| | AGRICULTURAL / OPEN SPACE | | |

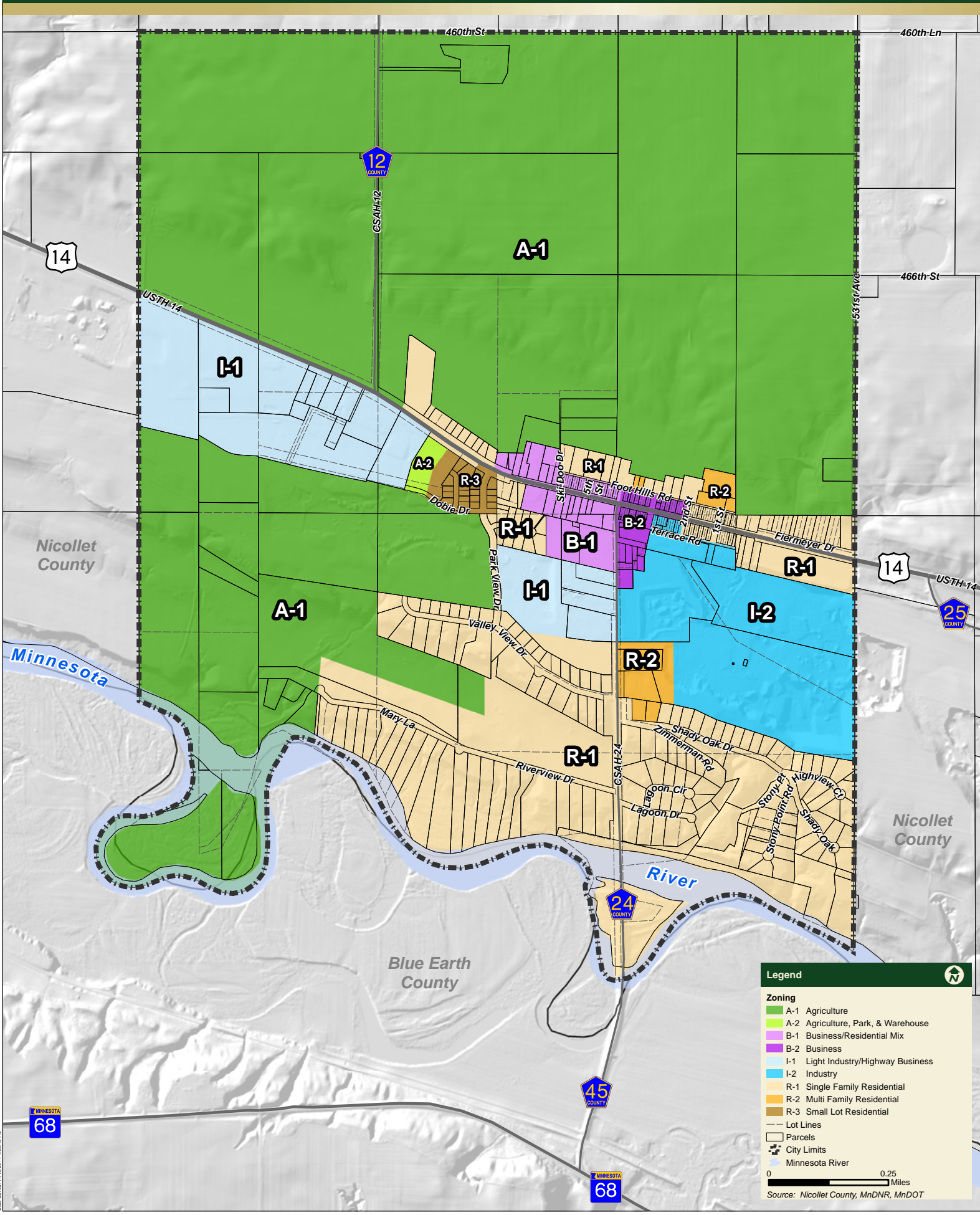


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CITY OF COURTLAND
FUTURE LAND USE PLAN MAP
 MAY, 2006 FIGURE NO. 1

Current Zoning Map



Legend

Zoning

- A-1 Agriculture
- A-2 Agriculture, Park, & Warehouse
- B-1 Business/Residential Mix
- B-2 Business
- I-1 Light Industry/Highway Business
- I-2 Industry
- R-1 Single Family Residential
- R-2 Multi Family Residential
- R-3 Small Lot Residential

- Lot Lines
- Parcels
- City Limits
- Minnesota River

0 0.25 Miles

Source: Nicollet County, MnDNR, MnDOT

Map Document: \\server1\GIS\GCT\MapServer\ESRI\MapServer2014\City_Zoning_0311.mxd
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3. HOUSING

Housing can be divided into two goal categories: a) providing affordable housing stock, and b) maintaining the current housing stock. There are many different approaches and programs a community can use to keep their housing stock in good condition. In addition to affordable housing, the City of Courtland should strive to maintain housing for those in various life stages and those with special housing needs.

Existing Conditions

Preserving the housing stock is an important and crucial goal for the City of Courtland. The housing stock represents the economy, lifestyles, and attitude of the community. The condition of the housing stock is the first element of the community a visitor sees, and provides them with their first impression of the community.

For purposes of this Comprehensive Plan, four (4) housing conditions have been used. Each level uses key criteria for determination of condition. The four levels are:

1. Standard (no visible problems)
2. Substandard Minor (peeling paint, rotting boards, cracked windows, missing shingles, etc.)
3. Substandard Major (missing railings, holes or cracks in steps, missing window panes, wall cracks, many missing shingles, etc.)
4. Dilapidated (housing tilts, foundation sags, collapsed porch, three (3) or more of previously listed criteria, etc.).

In 2014, 86% of the homes in Courtland were considered standard, 12.3% of the homes were considered substandard minor, 1.8% of the homes were considered substandard major, and .4% of the homes were considered dilapidated.

General Indicators

The table below shows the number and housing types in Courtland which has increased significantly in single family units and decreased in both multiple family units and mobile home units from 2000 to 2010.

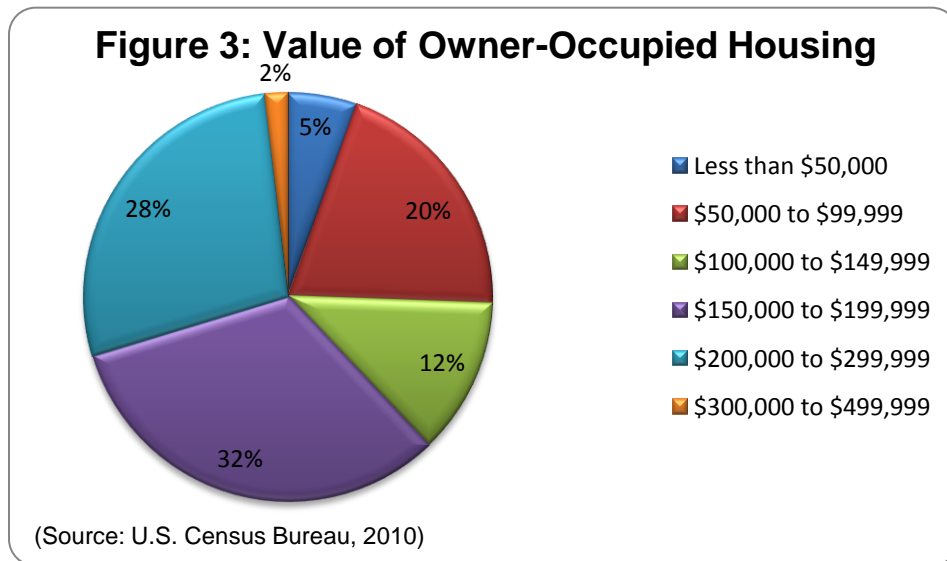
TABLE 4: HOUSING TYPES

Type of Unit	2000	2010
Single Family Units	159	233
Multiple Family Units	26	17
Mobile Home Units	2	0
Total Units	195	250

Table 4: Housing Types (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010)

The composition of Courtland’s housing stock has become more based on single family-units since 2000. Over 93.2% of the city’s housing stock is composed of single family-units. The value of housing units and the value of owner-occupied housing units are illustrated below.

Additionally, Courtland’s median value for owner-occupied housing units is \$167,400 (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).



Housing Stock

Table 5 provides insight to the age of the housing stock. The following table and analysis consider such issues as the age of the community’s housing.

Table 5: Age of Housing

Year Built	Courtland		Nicollet County		Minnesota	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Built 2005 or Later	17	6.8	560	4.4	101,804	4.4
2000 to 2004	27	10.8	1,507	11.7	220,654	9.4
1990 to 1999	43	17.2	1,561	12.2	316,158	13.5
1980 to 1989	3	1.2	1,224	9.5	300,228	12.8
1970 to 1979	61	24.4	2,514	19.6	375,295	16
1960 to 1969	9	3.6	1,162	9.1	233,265	10
1950 to 1959	22	8.8	1,421	11.1	250,356	10.7
1940 to 1949	11	4.4	467	3.6	118,790	5.1
1939 or earlier	57	22.8	2,414	18.8	425,180	18.1
Median	1974		1974		1974	
Total	250	100	12,830	100	2,341,730	100

Table 5: Age of Housing (Source: U.S. Census, 2010)

In 2010, less than half (39.6%) of the City of Courtland’s housing stock was built prior to 1970. Comparatively speaking, Nicollet County had slightly more with 42.6% built before 1970, while the state was slightly higher than both with 43.9%. Additionally, over 22.7% of the city’s housing was built prior to 1940.

From 2000 to 2010, both Courtland and Nicollet County had a slightly higher percentage of new homes built compared to the state as a whole. Courtland had 17.6% of its housing units built from 2000 to 2010, while Nicollet County had 16.1%. The state had slightly less with 13.8% of new housing units in the same time period.

Table 6: New Home Permits and Total Permits

Year	New Home Permits		Total Permits
	Number	Value	Value
2008	4	\$855,000	\$1,090,797
2009	9	\$1,634,000	\$1,755,300
2010	4	\$670,000	\$830,295
2011	3	\$535,000	\$610,704
2012	6	\$1,085,000	\$1,723,311
2013	2	\$508,000	\$1,420,765
Total	28	\$5,287,000	\$7,431,172

Table 6: New Home Permits and Total Permits (Source: City of Courtland Staff)

Rental Housing and Affordability Indicators

Assessing the provision of rental housing and housing affordability are two areas that all communities must address. These interrelated components can help a community determine if the City is providing adequate life cycle housing for those individuals just starting out to seniors looking for a retirement home. Whether young or old, viable communities offer an array of housing alternatives to meet community needs.

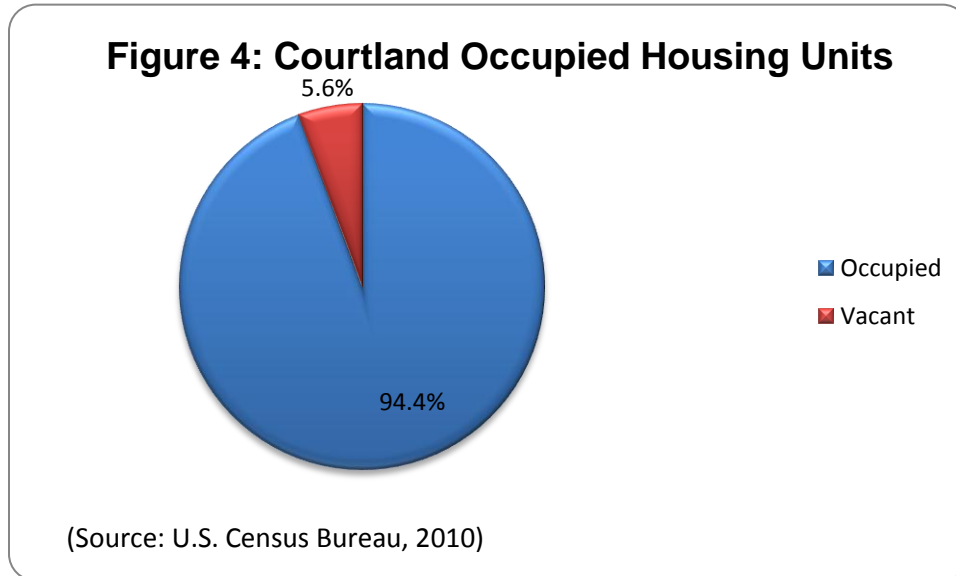
More specifically, the Rental Housing and Affordability Indicators section examines such things as the degree of owner occupied versus rental housing, rent levels, and housing expenditure as a percentage of household income. Taken as a whole, the aforementioned factors offer insight into affordable housing, opportunities for home ownership, and the potential for life cycle housing within the community.

Table 7: Ownership Characteristics

Type	Courtland		Nicollet County	State of Minnesota
	#	%	%	%
Owner Occupied	203	85.7	73.5	73
Renter Occupied	34	14.3	26.5	27
Total	237	100	100	100

Table 7: Ownership Characteristics (Source: U.S. Census, 2010)

Over 85.7% of Courtland’s housing stock was identified as owner-occupied in 2010. Compared to Nicollet County and the state, Courtland has a much smaller percentage of renter occupied units and not owner occupied units than Nicollet County and the state. Courtland’s housing composition is illustrated above.



A comparative examination of gross rents between Courtland, Nicollet County and the State of Minnesota offers negative and positive information about rental affordability in Courtland. Approximately sixty-seven percent (67%) of renters in Courtland paid more than \$650.00 a month in rent in 2010. This is slightly more than the rent paid in Nicollet County that is at 56% and the state at 62%. On the positive side, Courtland’s median rent prices per month were lower than the state’s by 5.1%, but higher than Nicollet County’s by 4.6%. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

Table 8: 2010 Gross Rent

Gross Rent	Courtland		Nicollet County	State of Minnesota
	#	%	%	%
Less than \$549	0	0	28	23
\$550 to \$649	6	22	11	10
\$650 to \$749	15	56	21	13
\$750 +	3	11	35	49
No Cash Rent	3	11	5	5
2010 Median Rent	\$720		\$687	\$759

Table 8 Gross Rent (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010)

Typically, it is assumed that people should pay 25-35% of their income for housing costs. Based on the 2010 U.S. Census data, that majority of rental housing within the city meets this range. Only 11.1% of residents pay over 35% of their income in rent. Over 75% of renters pay less than 25 percent of their income for rent. This indicates a high degree of rental affordability for the community.

Table 9: Housing Expenditure as a Percentage of Household Income in 2010

% of Income	Owner-Occupied		Renter-Occupied		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Less than 20%	48	34	7	25.9	55	32.7
20% to 24%	35	24.8	14	51.9	49	29.2
25% to 29%	27	19.1	0	0	27	16.1
30% to 34%	11	7.8	0	0	11	6.5
35% +	20	14.2	3	11.1	23	13.7
Not Computed	0	0	3	11.1	3	1.8
Total	141	99.9	27	100	168	100

Table 9: Housing Expenditure as a Percentage of Household Income in 2010 (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010)

In regards to affordability, the results for owner-occupied housing are just as encouraging. Only 14.2% of owner-occupied housing units pay more than 35% of household income for housing. Over fifty-eight percent (58.8%) of owner-occupied housing units pay less than 25 percent of their household income for housing expenses. All of the aforementioned indicators translate into a high degree of affordability for the owner-occupied and rental housing expenses.

Citizen Goals

- 1. Ensure affordable and diverse housing stock to meet a wide range of community needs.**

Strategies

- Encourage the appropriate dispersion of housing types throughout the city.
- Encourage multi-family dwellings within the city, to meet the needs of non-home owners, senior and those residents with special needs.
- Encourage building houses in larger volumes to utilize cost effectiveness.

2. Create high-quality environment in all residential neighborhoods.

Strategies

- Enforce necessary ordinances to ensure the continued maintenance of the housing stock.
- Examine zoning and other regulations to ensure they allow the upgrading of older homes, neighborhoods, and small, irregularly shaped lots.
- Consider developing minimum landscaping and design standards, including the use of boulevards, trees plantings, and entrances.
- Explore methods and funding options to encourage the rehabilitation or redevelopment of substandard housing.
- Encourage infill housing where appropriate.

4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development is the expansion and retention of the tax base. It may achieve this expansion and retention through programs that offer businesses financial incentives to move in or stay within the community. Economic development is used to create a sustainable local economy through diversification of the local tax base.

Existing Conditions

Employers

The City of Courtland has five major employers including: America Midwest, G & S Manufacturing, Ground Zero, Hancock Concrete Products, and Lakeville Motor Express (LME).

Table 10: Major Employers

Employer	Employees
G & S Manufacturing	30
Hancock Concrete Products	29
America Midwest	23
Lakeville Motor Express (LME)	23
Ground Zero	20

Table 10: Major Employers (Source: Businesses Listed)

G & S Manufacturing is an Industrial Metal Fabrication Shop that provides fabrication, welding, assembly, protective coatings, and design and drafting capabilities.
(Source: G & S Manufacturing Website)

Hancock Concrete Products manufactures precast concrete box culverts, round and arch pipe, storm and sanitary manholes, utility structures, three-sided bridges, and flat grain storage.
(Source: Hancock Concrete Website)

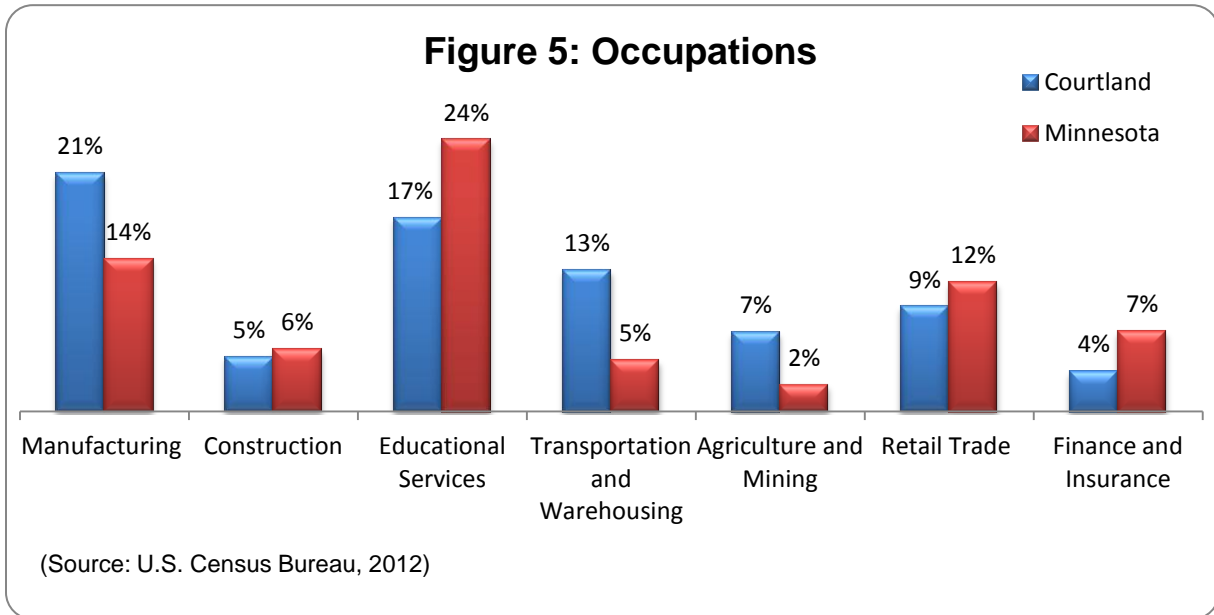
America Midwest is a transportation company made up of owner-operators and contract drivers. It offers services that include trailer transportation and refrigerated transportation.
(Source: America Midwest Website)

LME, Inc., a Midwestern, regional less-than-truckload (LTL) carrier, offers a full range of services including pool distribution, brokerage and logistics. 100% blanket coverage is provided in the states of Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota & Wisconsin. Customers receive immediate access to critical shipment data through our comprehensive Web and EDI-based information systems.
(Source: Lakeville Motor Express Website)

Ground Zero provides Minnesota parking lot striping to major retailers, businesses and contractors in over five upper Midwest states, and provides full parking lot maintenance to customers across the entire southern half of Minnesota.
(Source: Ground Zero Website)

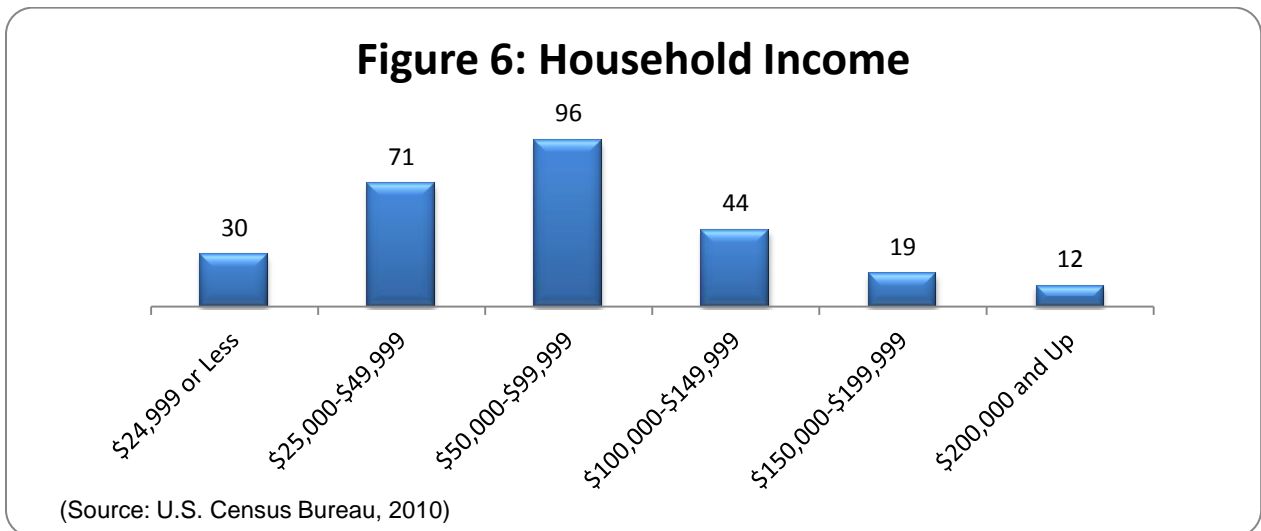
Occupations

Courtland has a diverse employment base that employs people of all ages in different industries. The graph below shows the percentage employed by occupation. Manufacturing, educational services, and transportation services account for the most common occupations in Courtland.



Household Income

The figure below shows the household incomes in 2010 of the residents of Courtland. As the table shows, Courtland has approximately 96 (35%) of households making between \$50,000 and \$99,999 a year. Seventy-one (71) or 26% of households are making \$25,000 and \$49,999 annually. (Source: United States Census Bureau)



Citizen Goals

- 1. Future development efforts should be targeted at encouraging growth and expansion of commercial establishments that address and provide convenience to local residents.**

Strategies

- Strive to expand the capability of the city to meet the business needs of local, regional and visiting customers.
- Continue to promote Courtland's high quality of life as a means to attract new development.

- 2. Support the development of a strong, diversified, and growing economic base and create a favorable climate for economic development and ongoing business activities.**

Strategies

- Promote and encourage quality business and environmentally friendly development in the city through the support and cooperation of the city council, business organizations and community leaders.
- Actively promote development and redevelopment within the community, including financial incentives with particular emphasis on attracting, and supporting businesses that provide livable-wage jobs.
- Promote aesthetically pleasing development and redevelopment in highly visible areas of the city.
- Emphasize tax base expansion and job creation in economic development efforts by the city.

- 3. Support the expansion of commercial and industrial development.**

Strategies

- Encourage the use of Federal, State, local, and other financial resources to promote reinvestment and the rehabilitation of Downtown.

5. CAPITAL FACILITIES

Capital Facilities are everyday items a city needs to function in a safe, sanitary, and efficient level. This includes infrastructure such as sewer, water and wastewater treatment, as well as, other facilities that make a community viable. These facilities may include open space, parks, and schools.

Existing Conditions

Streets

Streets in Courtland are mixed between a grid-like pattern and cul-de-sacs. It is an important and valuable element in the appearance of the community. The advantages of the street grid pattern are that it spreads the traffic flow and allows for easy movement to neighboring blocks, indirectly promoting socialization.

The vast majority of streets are paved and Courtland will continue to make improvements to the street system, as needed.

Water

The importance of water in our lives cannot be overestimated. Water in all its forms and manifestations have a profound impact on everyone’s lives. The uses to which we put water are too numerous to list, but some major ones include: drinking water, washing and cooling a home, process water for industrial plants, transportation and recreation.

Courtland’s water originates from the Quaternary Buried Artesian aquifers. The water system for Courtland is supplied by two wells. The primary well has a pumping capacity of 145 gallons per minute while the secondary has the pumping capacity of 90 gallons per minute.

Water is stored in a 50,000 gallon water tower. A complete water distribution system covers the community with the necessary fire hydrants for fire protection. In addition, water lines can be easily extended to developed areas.

Table 11: Courtland’s City Wells

Well Number	Year Installed	Depth	Aquifer
Well 00154609 (primary)	1989	101	Quaternary Buried Artesian
Well 00154631 (secondary)	1989	104	Quaternary Buried Artesian

Table 11: Courtland’s City Wells (Source: Courtland City Staff)

Wastewater

Courtland’s wastewater collection system is a city-wide sanitary sewer service constructed in 1998. Any residence or business within 500 feet of the collection system is required to connect to the sanitary sewer. The system pumps the wastewater by a force main to New Ulm for treatment.

Utilities

Electric power services are provided by Xcel Energy.

Garbage Collection

Garbage collection is provided by LJP Waste and Recycle. Garbage and recycling is collected once a week.

Police and Fire Protection

Courtland is covered by Nicollet County Sheriff's Department for calls within city limits. Communication is based out of a dispatch office at the Nicollet County Sheriff's Office.

The Courtland Fire Department serves the community of Courtland, the Courtland Township, Cambria Township and sections within Brighton Township. The Department currently has 22 members who are under the direction of the Fire Chief. In addition to the responsibility of fire safety, the Courtland Fire Department has a rescue squad that acts as the first responder to emergencies within the area.

Citizen Goals

1. Explore the possibility of providing additional utility options.

Strategies:

- Explore the possibility providing natural gas hookups to residents and businesses.

2. Provide key city facilities that reflect the community's values and needs, and support the functioning of those who serve the public.

Strategies:

- The city should look to prioritize which facilities will be renovated and/or need to be replaced at some point in the future.
- Explore the possibility of adopting a Capital Improvement Plan.

3. Provide recreational opportunities and facilities designed to meet the needs of all age groups.

Strategies:

- An equitable distribution of parks and open space shall be maintained throughout the community, ensuring that sufficient and adequate facilities are available and tailored to suit community needs.
- An adequate balance between active and passive recreational areas throughout the community should be provided.
- Open spaces and parks shall be developed to take maximum advantage of natural community.

4. Maintain an efficient, adequate and safe drinking water system that meets the long-term needs of community residents, industries and visitors.

Strategies:

- Expand the capacity of the current water supply system.
- Ensure that new developments in urban growth areas connect to the existing drinking water system.
- Analyze current fee structure, such as connection fees, to ensure that new development cover the marginal cost of their connection.
- Encourage conservation of water.

5. Maintain a safe and efficient wastewater collection and treatment system that meets the long-term needs of community residents, industries and visitors.

Strategies:

- Encourage development in areas that can be currently served by sewer systems with adequate capacity.

6. Transportation

The transportation section of the Courtland Comprehensive Plan is designed to guide the community through the ongoing process of creating and maintaining a safe, orderly, efficient, and fiscally-responsible transportation network which serves all Courtland residents in the best possible manner. Although, Courtland is not expected to experience growth and development levels so high as to be problematic in the future, proactive transportation planning will help negate any unforeseen transportation issues that may arise, and assists in enabling a greater overall quality of life.

Existing Conditions

Arterials

Arterials are designed to accommodate medium to long trip lengths and generally connect communities and their respective concentrations of businesses together. While arterials can be sub-classified into what are known as principal and minor arterials, most of the roads in the Courtland area can be regarded as minor arterials, which carry approximately 1,000 to 10,000 vehicles per day. The consideration of arterials as part of the comprehensive planning process is important because new residential development is likely to occur in close proximity to these roads. This can be attributed to the ease of access they afford to the community and to surrounding areas.

Courtland has two significant arterial highways passing through the community. County Highway 24 runs north and south and connects Minnesota Highway 68 to U.S. Highway 14. U.S. Highway 14 is a major East-West route connecting New Ulm, Courtland and Mankato.

Current Minnesota Department of Transportation plans show the relocation of U.S. Highway 14 to be moved north of the city. This will cut down on the through traffic that travels on U.S. Highway 14 (Main St.) through Courtland.

Collectors

Collector streets generally accommodate traffic movement between residential areas to other areas within the community or to minor arterials. Collectors usually accommodate a much lower volume of traffic than arterials do. The following has been identified as major collector street in Courtland:

Courtland has one collector street. County Highway 12 runs north and south and connects County Highway 11 and 21 to U.S. Highway 14.

Local Streets

Roads that have not been previously identified as either arterials or collectors are designated as local streets. Local streets, for the purposes of the plan, generally facilitate traffic movement within limited areas of the community, which are most often residential in nature.

General

As a combined system of arterials, collectors, and local streets, all of the current roadways within Courtland work to serve inter-community traffic as well as traffic which may simply be passing through the community. As a matter of planning, areas which are utilized most should be considered as being priorities in transportation planning efforts. In an effort to identify these areas which see the highest amount of traffic volumes, a study was conducted by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) which provides average recorded daily traffic volumes on the identified arterial and collector roads in Courtland. These traffic volumes should be considered in transportation-related planning efforts which may alter traffic flow in any way, as well as with all other forms of planning for Courtland which may be closely linked to the transportation system. The average daily traffic volumes of Courtland from 2011 are reported in the table below.

Table 12: Traffic Volumes

Street Name	Start Point	End Point	Traffic Count
County HWY 24 (4 th St.)	South City Limits	Lagoon Dr.	960
County HWY 24 (4 th St.)	Lagoon Dr.	Railroad St.	1,850
U.S. HWY 14 (Main St.)	MN HWY 99	County HWY 24 (4 th St.)	6,800
U.S. HWY 14 (Main St.)	County HWY 24 (4 th St.)	County HWY 12 (541 st Ave.)	7,800
U.S. HWY 14 (Main St.)	County HWY 12 (541 st Ave.)	County HWY 37	7,800
County HWY 12 (541 st Ave.)	U.S. HWY 14 (Main St.)	County HWY 21	510

Table 12: Traffic Volumes (Source: MNDOT, 2011)

Citizen Goals

- 1. Provide a balanced transportation system, giving attention to all modes and related activities including automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation.**

Strategies:

- The mobility needs of all persons in the planning and development of the transportation system shall be considered.
- The highway system shall complement and facilitate local movements provided by local streets and pedestrian facilities. Maintain a line of communication with local, county, and state highway officials in order to ensure that planned improvements are consistent with the goals and objectives of the community.

- Support the development of state bike trails from New Ulm to Mankato that would connect with Courtland.
 - Create bike trails and walking paths that connect the parks with other areas of the city.
- 2. Upgrading existing substandard streets to meet current design standards, while incorporating the necessary traffic control devices for safe and efficient movement of people and goods.**

Strategies

- All components of the transportation system shall be maintained and developed to the highest standards to insure against detrimental impact upon community growth.
 - Ensure proper visibility, design and control of all intersections and trail crossings shall be required. Improve street lighting to develop increased street safety.
- 3. Support the development of an integrated transportation network that encourages the development of land use and economic development policies of the city and the region. Support transportation policy that is sensitive to environmental concerns. Promote safe and efficient transportation movements. Maintaining fiscal responsibility.**

Strategies

- The city should support regional efforts to improve connections to surrounding communities, including the Highway 14 corridor.
- The city should encourage trails and/or sidewalks along all collector or arterial roads and where appropriate.

APPENDIX A

A survey was sent to each household in early 2014. One hundred ten (110) responded or 46.2%.

Gender

Male	59
Female	51

Rent or Own

Own	105
Rent	4

How long have you lived in Courtland?

Less than 2 years	7
2-4 years	13
5-7 years	11
8-10 years	14
11-20 years	22
Over 20 years	43

Why live in Courland?

Always lived in Courtland	21
Close to work	46
Rental Apt. Availability	1
Job in Courtland	7
Schools	8
Close to Family and Friends	41
Affordable Housing	28
Small City Atmosphere	65
Recreational Opportunity	9

Why leave Courtland?

Not Considering	80
Job Relocation	8
Lack of housing style	3
Lack of affordable housing	0
Lack of good schools	0
Lack of business services	5
Lack of medical services	3
Move closer to job	6
Lack of rec. opportunities	8

How long do you plan to live in Courtland?

1 yr or less	1
2-5 yrs	9
6-10 yrs	12
11-15 yrs	6
16-20 yrs	6
Not considering leaving	72

Indicate the distance from the City of Courtland to where you work?

0-10 miles	63
11-20 miles	12
21-40 miles	14
41-70 miles	0
71+	2

What type of retail service is needed in Courtland?

Car Wash	54
Fast Food	20
Grocery Store	20
Automotive Repair	20
Hair Dresser	8

What are your thoughts on housing in Courtland?

No problems	65
Poor quality housing	2
Not enough housing	7
Shortage of apartment rentals	13
No homes to "move-up" to	2
Housing too expensive	2
Shortage of elderly housing opportunities	18
Shortage of single family homes	4
Limited housing types	8

Rate the following conditions:	Very Poor					Superior		
Overall Community	1	0	2	2	3	70	4	15
Public Buildings	1	1	2	30	3	64	4	11
Private Residences	1	0	2	18	3	77	4	10
Commercial Properties	1	1	2	23	3	69	4	14
Public Parks	1	7	2	30	3	50	4	20

Rate the following attributes:	Very Poor					Superior		
Schools	1	5	2	11	3	56	4	17
Cost of Living	1	1	2	21	3	65	4	10
Streets	1	4	2	15	3	68	4	14
Sidewalks	1	4	2	14	3	50	4	33
Overall Quality of Life	1	1	2	6	3	61	4	34

Rate the following issues:	Very Poor					Superior		
Availability of day care services	1	4	2	30	3	31	4	6
Year-round youth rec. programs	1	9	2	29	3	34	4	7
Year-round adult rec. programs	1	16	2	26	3	38	4	5
Activities for retired persons	1	14	2	38	3	29	4	4
Local businesses meeting residents needs	1	5	2	38	3	46	4	4
Ability to attract businesses/industry	1	10	2	46	3	32	4	6
Youth employment opportunities	1	26	2	45	3	14	4	3
Adult employment opportunities	1	25	2	47	3	13	4	3
Need for retail expansion	1	7	2	29	3	35	4	11

Rate the following City service:	Very Poor					Superior		
Fire and Rescue	1	2	2	1	3	22	4	83
Zoning Code Enforcement	1	4	2	17	3	49	4	22
Snow Removal	1	6	2	24	3	49	4	28
Parks and Recreation	1	6	2	21	3	48	4	32
Refuse and Recycling	1	6	2	18	3	45	4	35

Rate your opinion on the following:	Needed	Not Needed	Unsure
Population Growth	43	35	25
Land Use Planning	50	16	33
More Recreation Facilities	53	26	23
Commercial Development	57	20	22
Industrial Development	50	28	23
The Addition of Natural gas as a City service	44	32	27