

BECKER TOWNSHIP

Comprehensive Plan



April 22, 2014



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Acknowledgments

The Town of Becker gratefully acknowledges the contributions of all who participated in the development of the Comprehensive Plan.

The following lists those who participated in formal committees and workshops. Not included in these lists, but critical to the success of this effort, were the many others who contributed by sharing their expertise and local knowledge through interviews, letters, and e-mails. And of course, the Town of Becker recognizes and is grateful for the people who provided feedback and input at the community workshop and public meetings.

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Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

This plan is an update to the Becker Township's 2007 Comprehensive Plan. It is the policy framework that the Town of Becker will use to guide township leaders in future decision making concerning land use and housing, transportation, parks and trails, and our township's natural resources.

Many of the key guiding principles previously established still hold true for this updated plan, including the community's desire for growth while maintaining a small town feel and a respect for the land and its natural resources.

This plan recognizes and builds on past and existing planning efforts and is based on community input. It will carry out many of the principles that have been working for the Town of Becker while providing new ones based on current issues, future trends, and desires of the community. As with the previous plan, the following statement continues to embody the community's vision for the next 20 years.

Growth with respect for the needs of its residents, a commitment to small-town values, and a sense of stewardship for the land.

Becker Township's 2014 Comprehensive Plan intends to bring that statement to life. The plan is a collection of principles, goals, and strategies that reflect the community's vision in its desire to maintain growth, small-town character, and respect for community land and natural resources.

Over the past decade, as in many communities, the Town of Becker has not experienced the same rate of growth as it had experienced between 1980 and 2000. This has been due, in part, to a residential development slowdown that began last decade. Based on existing development conditions and the desire to release the 2010 census figures, the Town of Becker took the opportunity to update its current plan, which is almost seven years old.

Authority to Plan

Communities prepare and adopt comprehensive plans for legal purposes. They are given the authority to adopt a plan according to Minnesota State Statute 462.353, Subd. 1. The statute enables cities to promote the "public health, safety, and general welfare" of the community. Land use regulations such as zoning ordinances recognize that people in a community live cooperatively and have certain responsibilities to one another. These regulations establish rules that govern how land is developed within a municipality. Land use ordinances and programs must be consistent with the adopted comprehensive plan. This requirement derives from the premise that land use decisions should not be arbitrary but rather should follow an accepted and reasonable concept of how the town should develop or redevelop.

Use of the Plan

Becker Township's Comprehensive Plan presents a vision for the town's future and an agenda for community action. The individual sections outline in more specific terms the goals and strategies to ensure that the Town of Becker retains livability,

grows in a way that supports community values, enhances market strength, and continues to be sustainable.

Work on the Town of Becker’s vision, goals, and strategies does not stop once the comprehensive plan has been adopted by the Joint Planning Board. The plan is a living document to be used for the day-to-day activities of township officials and staff, and should be referenced as needed to justify specific actions. Elected officials, appointed officials, and staff should have easy access to the plan and should explicitly reference it in land use decisions.

Because it is a living document, township officials should periodically review the plan’s priorities, checking with community residents, business owners, and other stakeholders to ensure that the document remains current. Reviews should be conducted regularly and amendments made as necessary between updates, assessing the township’s progress toward the vision and the validity of the vision as community circumstances change and unforeseen events arise.

The plan provides specific recommendations to direct and manage the Town of Becker’s growth and development. Some of the changes will come in the form of reinvestment and redevelopment. With all land use decisions, implementation of these growth and redevelopment recommendations will have different levels of benefit and impact on community members. To realize full potential of the plan, the Town of Becker should use it for the following:

- Guide the **township officials and staff** to assist with a variety of tasks:
 - Communication of the Town of Becker’s vision for its future
 - Development and infrastructure decisions
 - Acquisition and use of land
 - Budgeting capital improvements
 - Establishment of regulatory changes
- Guide residents, businesses, and property owners to assist them in the following:
 - Determining potential property use
 - Understanding possible land use changes in the surrounding area
 - Establishing reasonable land value expectations
 - Understanding future infrastructure improvements
 - Making improvements and investments to their own properties
- Guide **developers** in their property acquisitions, coordinating their development plans with town goals, regulations, and infrastructure plans.
- Assist **neighboring** and **overlapping jurisdictions** in coordinating issues of mutual interest.

Planning Process

The Town of Becker began a planning process in February 2013, jointly led by the Becker Town Board and Joint Planning Board. The Town Planning Commission assumed the Steering Committee role. The committees met monthly between

March and November of 2013. During that time, the Joint Planning Board solicited input from various community members, providing opportunities for the public to be involved in the process. A community survey was also distributed to residents of Becker Township.

The intuitive input gathered from the community was combined with technical research to determine community values and to develop planning principles. The goals and strategies developed reflected those principles.

Organization of the Plan

The Becker Township Comprehensive Plan is presented in eight sections, described as follows:

1. **Introduction**—describes the plan’s purpose and use as well as the township’s authority to plan. It summarizes the methods used to engage the public in major involvement activities.
2. **Guiding Principles**—summarizes the guiding principles that serve as an overall framework for this plan. The principles reflect the expressed needs and desires of the community that were developed through community workshops.
3. **Community Profile**—describes general population characteristics, including age, households, race, ethnicity, income, education, employment characteristics, and future population projections.
4. **Land Use and Housing**—identifies issues related to growth and land use; analyzes the current land use pattern; and recommends a set of development principles, specific goals, and strategies. Provides a summary of existing housing conditions within the Town of Becker and a plan for future development relative to need and demand.
5. **Transportation**—discusses key findings of the current transportation network, evaluates current and future transportation needs, provides a number of guiding principles, and recommends a series of goals and strategies for attaining Becker Township’s transportation vision.
6. **Parks and Trails**—describes existing park and trail system, defines a vision, provides a number of guiding principles, and offers a number of goals and strategies that will provide residents of all ages with a range of active and passive recreational opportunities.
7. **Natural Resources**—summarizes the Town of Becker’s natural resources and establishes goals and strategies for their preservation, protection, restoration, and use.
8. **Implementation**—provides guidance for maintaining accountability; monitoring activities; and developing procedures, regulations, and community involvement in implementing the 2014 Becker Township Comprehensive Plan.

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2.0 Guiding Principles

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Introduction

Purpose

This section summarizes general and specific guiding principles that serve as an overall framework for this Comprehensive Plan.

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles represent the basic goals of this plan and reflect the expressed needs and desires of the citizens of Becker Township that will guide the direction of future development and redevelopment of the community. Along with the plan elements, the following principles will be used as a tool for guiding improvements and future development, evaluating proposals, and furthering the Town of Becker's vision.

Community Image

Becker is a vibrant community located on a major state highway in the south-central portion of Sherburne County, approximately 45 miles northwest of the Twin Cities. Adjacent townships include Clear Lake to the west, Palmer to the northwest, Santiago to the northeast, Orrock to the east, and Big Lake to the southeast. It is within close proximity to a strong regional center and a major metropolitan area. The Town of Becker is also located along the nationally renowned Mississippi River and the Elk River, a significant tributary.

The Town of Becker is a place where the remnants of historical town planning coincide with current development patterns. The integration of these attributes forms a rich and diverse community image and identity. Maintaining a healthy and balanced identity requires the merging of both old and new elements, achieved through a community vision, the preservation of heritage and historical buildings, and the conservation and preservation of natural resources. The following principles will help to enhance the community's image and identity:

- Ensure that new developments reflect elements that add to the local flavor so that the Town of Becker becomes distinct from other Highway 10 towns.
- Study existing development patterns to determine how they contribute to a positive image and how visually prominent but undesirable areas should be upgraded, screened, or eliminated.
- Promote the community's extensive natural resources by attracting only the highest-quality development. Features of the existing landscape and larger patterns of the environment should be considered when looking to enhance the community's image.

Civic Involvement

Engaged citizens provide the spirit and energy needed to sustain a healthy and prosperous community. The following principles will help to maintain the Town of Becker's strong civic involvement process:

- Actively and constructively participate in the process of community development.
- Create strong lines of communications among the township, its residents, and its businesses.

-
- Respect the involvement of a larger segment of its citizenry.
 - Instill the same sense of responsibility and stewardship toward the future as toward the school and other positive aspects of the Town of Becker.

General Growth

Continued growth will necessitate the Town of Becker to look more broadly at planning efforts. The pattern of development created as a result of this plan should do the following:

- Be consistent with the existing positive character of the community.
- Allow for expansion of residential, commercial, and industrial uses.
- Demonstrate logical and efficient extension of utilities to serve developing areas.
- Promote a wise use of energy and natural resources.
- Recognize that certain areas may be redeveloped to make better use of the existing resources.
- Direct growth in ways that consider public expenditures.
- Maintain compatible relationships among land use, transportation, environmental features, community facilities, and utilities.
- Consider the larger community as the Town of Becker grows.
- Coordinate efforts to manage growth.
- During expansion, consider the needs of Becker Township by ensuring the following:
 - Development is mutually beneficial.
 - Annexation, if it occurs, is generally orderly and will be done with a planned growth pattern that minimizes infrastructure and community services.
 - Natural and sensitive features of the larger community are protected.
 - Character of the land is protected.

Land Use

Following are guiding principles that provide a framework for the Town of Becker's community image, housing, commercial and industrial development, and natural resource protection and enhancement:

- Continue to develop a community that reflects the rural character and agricultural history of the town.
- Discourage the larger lot rural platting of township lands in areas easily serviceable by the Town of Becker.
- Accommodate growth through sensitive planning by looking at planning efforts from a more holistic approach.
- Support new development that reflects Becker Township's unique qualities and continues to enhance its image and identity.
- Focus primarily on single-family residential growth.
- Support the preservation of greenways along the Elk River and Mississippi River corridors.

Transportation

The following principles reflect the community's desire to provide a safe, convenient, multimodal, and environmentally responsible transportation system for the Town of Becker:

- Develop a system of streets that is consistent with the existing transportation patterns throughout the community, providing an efficient network of routes that separate traffic according to length of trip, speed, and land accessibility.
- Ensure that locations are better connected, in part to improve the function of the transportation network and also to better serve residential, commercial, and industrial developments. Street patterns should minimize circuitous travel that increases trip length, time, fuel consumption, and emissions.
- Permit flexibility in community design, allowing streets that are compatible with all design objectives of a neighborhood, such as both intimate urban- and village-scaled streetscapes.
- Enhance public transit such as the Northstar Corridor Commuter Rail when the community grows to a scale that can support such services and facilities.

Parks, Recreation, and Trails

The following guiding principles provide a framework for developing and enhancing the Town of Becker's park and trail system:

- Preserve high-quality natural areas and open space that protect wildlife corridors and provide parkland that is an integral part of the community.
- Parklands should not be "leftover," or undevelopable, parcels; rather, they should be buildable for active recreation and of high natural resource quality (landscape displaying biodiversity in both flora and fauna) for passive recreation.
- Parks and natural spaces should be well integrated within the township and should be visible.
- Parks and open space should serve as green space within the community by providing natural "breathing room" from the built environment for people and healthy habitats for urban wildlife.
- Where applicable, develop a high-quality, interconnected trail system that emphasizes harmony with the natural environment while providing recreation and transportation as a means to link parks and open space together.
- Continue to support the City of Becker's park and recreation system to ensure that the township's residents, especially children, have access to active and organized recreational programs.

Natural Resources

The following guiding principles reflect the community's desire to preserve and protect its sensitive natural resources and scenic areas:

- Protect the significant natural and scenic areas of Becker Township, such as the Elk River and Mississippi River Corridors, oak woodlands, grasslands, and prime agricultural lands.

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- Balance the need to develop with the need to protect and conserve significant wildlife habitat, recreational, and agricultural areas.
 - Support the preservation of greenways along the Elk River and Mississippi Corridors.

3.0 Community Profile



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Purpose

The purpose of this section is to provide a summary of background information and relevant demographic and economic information based on 2010 census data. The analysis of this data is important to understanding historical conditions and future development and growth potential for Becker Township.

History and Regional Setting

History

Originally settled in 1855 by Peter Vadneis, the area of what is today Becker Township was part of Big Lake and Clear Lake townships. The immediate area around the modern-day City of Becker was known as Pleasant Valley Station.

Construction along the Great Northern Railway line reached Becker in 1867 and encouraged a boom in settlement.

A significant number of Scandinavian immigrants came to the area and established farms. As an added enticement to settle in the Becker area, the railroad had built “Emigrant House” in the city to provide immigrants with a place to stay until they were able to settle in their own homes.

In 1871, the Township of Becker was finally established. Both the town and the city were named after G. L. Becker, an agent for the railroad.

As agriculture took hold as the primary industry in Becker, the area became known as the “hay capitol” of the county. It wasn’t until after 1900 that more diversified crops became the norm. Since then, potatoes, corn, and strawberries have all been significant crops on the farms of Becker Township.

By the 1960s, with the promotional acumen of Mr. Carroll Johnson, Becker became known throughout the Midwest as an excellent source for strawberries. In the late sixties and early seventies, the annual Strawberry Festival was held, culminating with a beauty pageant and the crowning of “Miss Luscious Red.” Luscious Red was a unique variety of strawberry developed by Carroll Johnson.

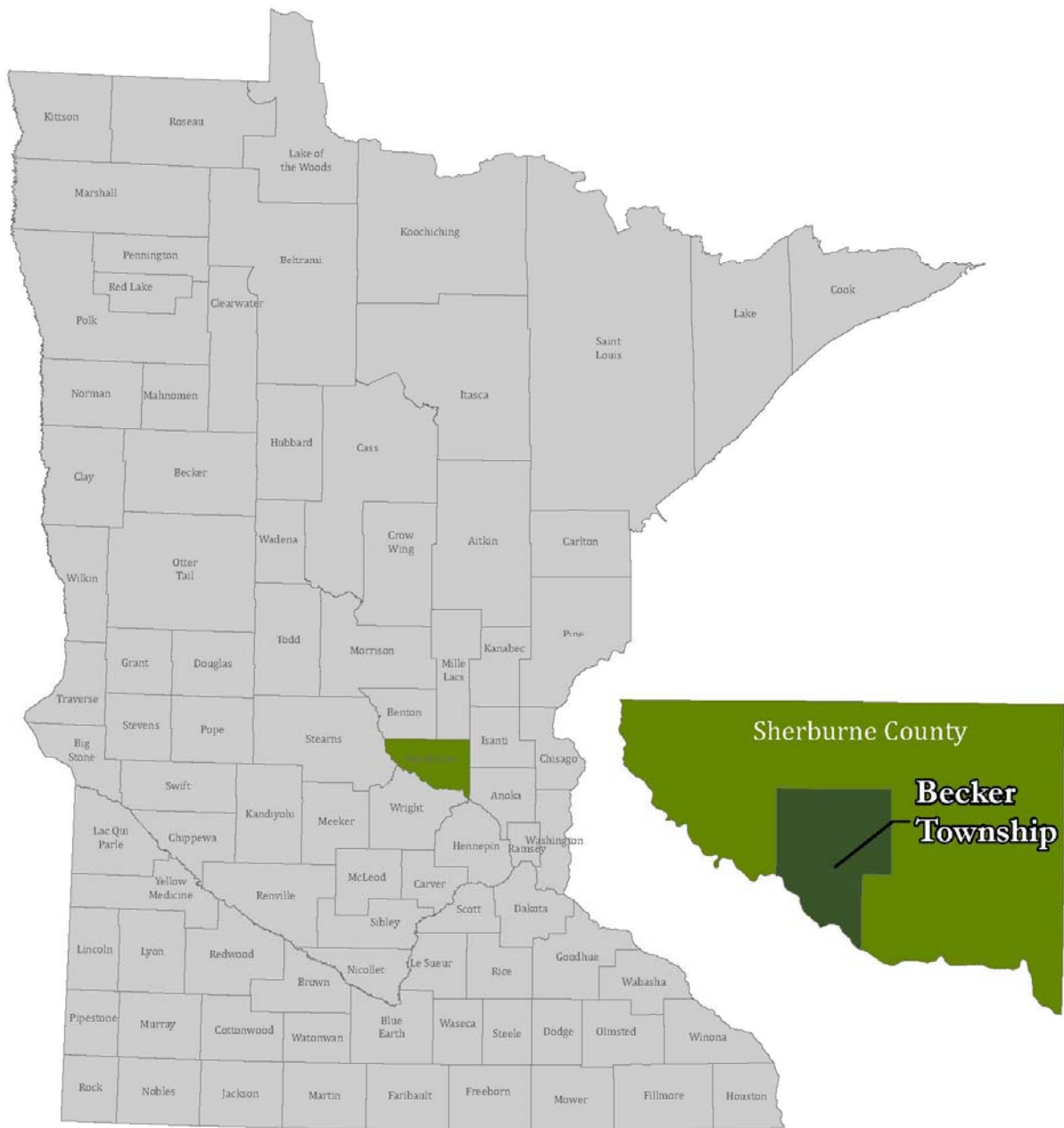
The 1970s was a period of significant growth in the Becker Township area, with Northern States Power constructing the Sherco Power Plant. The opening of the Sherco Plant signaled the beginning of significant growth and an increasing population in Becker.

Regional Setting

Becker Township is located in the south-central portion of Sherburne County, approximately 45 miles northwest of the Twin Cities (Figure 3.1). Adjacent townships include Clear Lake to the west, Palmer to the northwest, Santiago to the northeast, Orrock to the east, and Big Lake to the southeast.

The township and city work closely together on planning for future growth and development around the Town of Becker. An orderly annexation agreement is in place between the two, and a collaborative relationship exists, resulting in the creation of a unique comprehensive community vision.

Figure 3.1—Regional Location Map



The landscape patterns have been molded by glaciers and rivers, with oak savanna originally covering the land. The landscape is rural in character and mostly agricultural in use, with newer residential development occurring north of Highway 10 and west of CSAH 11. The Sand Dunes State Forest and the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge are located within 10 miles of Becker Township. Each contains diverse biological communities that provide a great resource for scenic beauty, education, and recreation. The Mississippi River, while not developed for active recreational purposes, acts as the southern boundary of the township. The Elk River, flowing southeasterly through the township, has been designated as an Environmental Protection Corridor.

Population

One of the most important components of a comprehensive plan is a profile of the population within the community and surrounding areas. Both historical data and long-range trends need to be considered. Census data is one of the most valuable tools in creating a community demographic profile. By collecting and analyzing this information, growth and development trends can be identified. Historical and future trends can help provide predictions of future conditions. The demographic information explained in this section will provide a framework for updating the current comprehensive plan by attempting to meet the future needs of Becker Township over the next 20 years. (See Appendix B.)

Population Growth

Table 3.1 compares population growth for the City of Becker, Becker Township, and Sherburne County between 1980 and 2010. In general, there has been a significant population growth in both the Becker Township and the City of Becker since 1980. As of 2010, Becker Township’s population was 4,842, which is an increase of 34.3% since 2000, showing not nearly the rapid growth rate as was experienced over the last 30 years between 1980 and 2010. The greatest population increase in a 10-year period (606.0%) for Becker Township occurred between 1980 and 1990, whereas the greatest growth increase (196.3%) for the City of Becker occurred between 1990 and 2000. Sherburne County’s population grew about 37% between 2000 and 2010. This was somewhat greater than the growth for Becker Township but not as great as that experienced by the City of Becker.

Table 3.1—Population Growth, 1980-2010

	1980	1990	2000	2010	% Change 1980-2010	% Change 2000-2010
Becker Township	412	2,909	3,605	4,842	1075%	34.3%
City of Becker	601	902	2,673	4,538	655.0%	69.8%
Sherburne County	29,908	41,945	64,417	88,499	195%	37.4%

Source: US 2010 Census

Population Projections

Preparing population projections is a critical step in developing accurate land use forecasts. Understanding future population growth patterns for a community, particularly when combined with land utilization estimates, can assist public and private sector planners and developers in determining infrastructure needs and identifying community investment opportunities.

Becker Township is projected to add 898 people (+18.5%) by 2020 and another 823 (+14.4%) by 2030. Sherburne County is projected to add 20,387 (+23%) by 2020 and another 15,528 (+14.3%) by 2030. These projections show a much more modest growth over the next 20 years for both the township and the county than in the decades between 2000 and 2010.

Table 3.2—Population Projections, 2010-2030

	2010	2020	2030	Change 2010-2020	Change 2020-2030
Becker Township	4,842	5,740	6,563	18.5%	14.4%
Sherburne County	88,499	108,886	124,414	23.0%	14.3%

Source: US 2010 Census, Maxfield Research Inc.

Households

The US Census reported 1,496 households in Becker Township. A household refers to all persons who occupy a housing unit. Table 3.3 shows the household growth trends from 1990 to 2010. Households increased for both Becker Township and Sherburne County, with a 36.1% increase in the number of households in the township and a 40% increase in the county.

Table 3.3—Household Growth, 1990-2010

	1990	2000	2010	% Change 2000–10
Becker Township	682	1,099	1,496	36%
Sherburne County	13,643	21,581	30,212	40.0%

Source: US 2010 Census, Maxfield Research Inc.

Table 3.4 shows household projections between 2010 and 2030 for Becker Township and Sherburne County. Households are projected to increase in Becker Township by 27% between 2010 and 2020 and by 21% between 2020 and 2030, while households in Sherburne County are expected to steadily increase by 16.9% between 2010 and 2030.

Table 3.4—Household Projections, 2010-2030

	2010	2020	2030	% Change 2010–20	% Change 2020–30
Becker Township	1,492	1,896	2,296	27.0%	21.0%
Sherburne County	30,212	39,081	48,300	16.9%	16.9%

Source: US 2010 Census, Maxfield Research Inc.

Age and Gender

Age

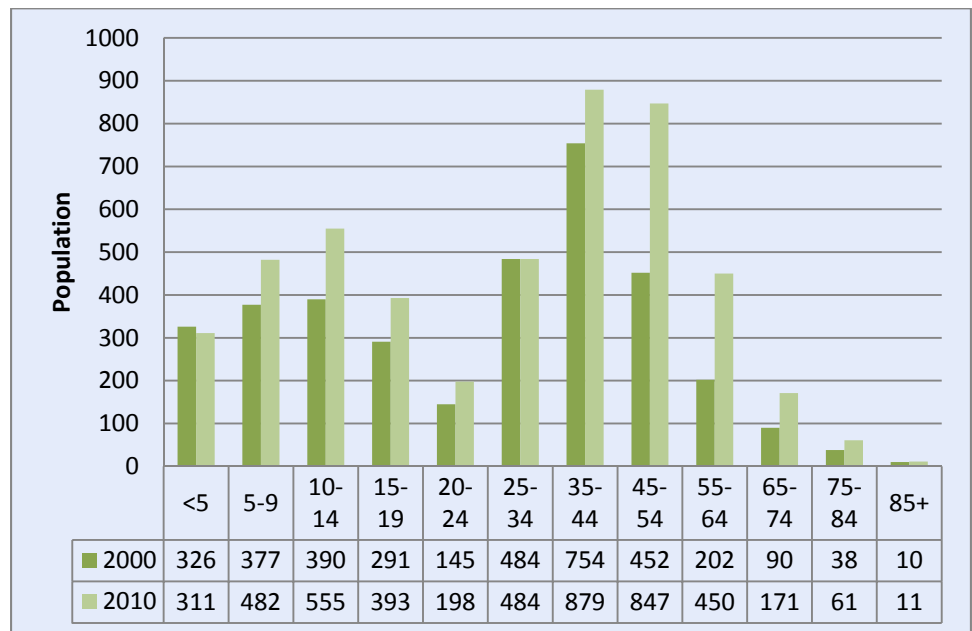
Figure 3.2 shows Becker Township's population by age for years 2000 and 2010. Becker experienced the largest population gains in the 35–44 and 55–64 age groups. The median age group in 2010 was 37.4. This median age is older than the 2010 Becker Township median of 30.7 and Sherburne County median of 35.0.

The 35–44 age groups were the largest segment in both the 2000 and 2010 censuses, with an increase in 2010 by 395 people. The 30- to 49-year-olds are a bit more established in the community, included in the move-up homeowner market, with children enrolled in the school system from kindergarten to 12th grade. However, this age group also tends to be more mobile. Following the 35–44 age groups as having the greatest increase in population between 2000 and 2010 were the 55–64 age groups. Persons between 50 and 64 and young seniors between 65 and 74 tend to be empty nesters and begin to downsize, seeking a variety of housing, options from smaller homes to townhomes and condominiums.

There was no change in the population of 25- to 34-year-olds during the same 10-year period. This group comprises the typical first-home buyer with or without younger children, while the 20- to 24-year-olds are typically renters. The only age group that experienced a decline was children five years old or less by 15.

Seniors 75 and older have a number of planning considerations for the town, including passive recreation opportunities, senior housing, and medical services.

Figure 3.2—Age by Group



Source: US 2010 Census, QT-P1, 2000 Census DP-1

Gender

The total population in 2010 consists of slightly more males than females. Males total 51.4% of the population, while females total 48.6%.

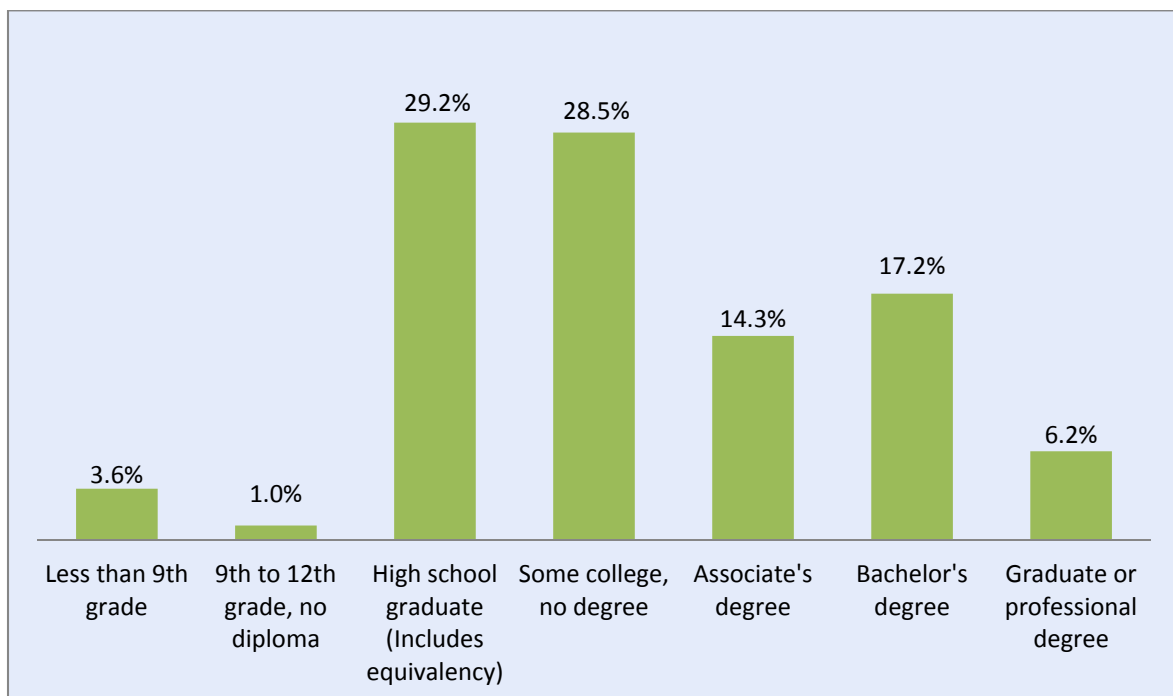
Education

Becker Township is served by the Becker, Big Lake, Foley, Monticello, and St. Cloud School Districts.

Education attainment is an indicator of the level of skills and training the residents of an area have reached and is an important factor in employment.

Figure 3.3 shows that about 95% of the Becker Township residents age 25 and over have at least a high school diploma or equivalent. Approximately 38% of Becker Township's population age 25 and over have graduated from some level of higher education.

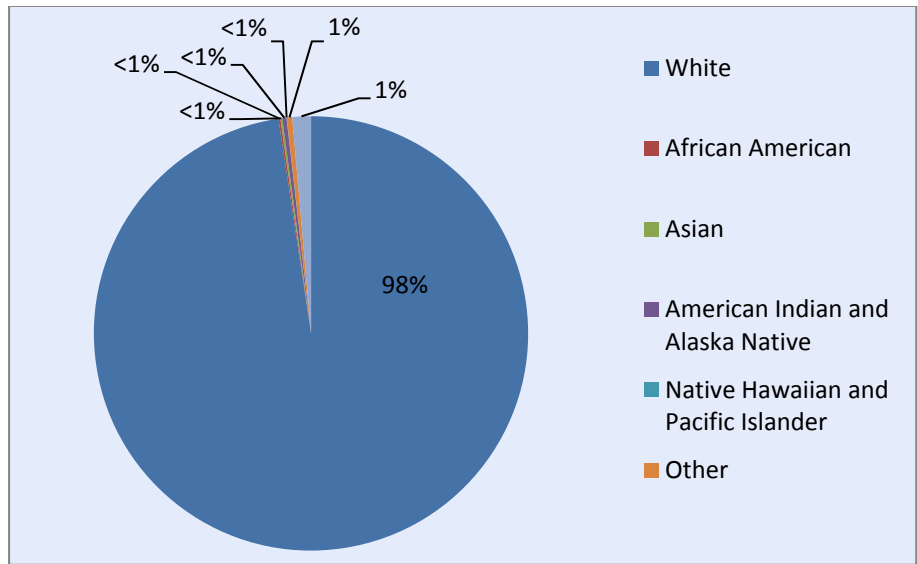
Figure 3.3—Educational Attainment



Cultural Diversity

As reported by the 2010 census, shown in Figure 3.4, Becker Township is predominately white (97.5%). This number is down .8% from that reported in the 2000 census. The second-highest group reported was of two or more races (1.4%). That indicates that the Town of Becker still has primarily a homogenous cultural makeup, with 2.5% of the population reported as minority. Hispanic or Latino comprises about .9% of the population.

Figure 3.4—Becker Township Ethnic and Cultural Diversity 2010

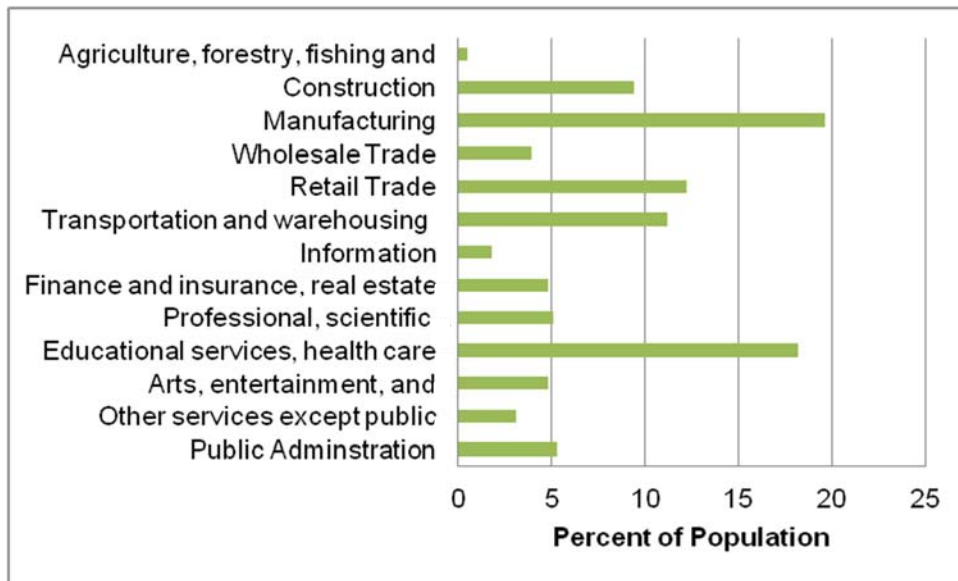


Source: 2010 Census, DP-1

Employment

Type of employment is also considered when analyzing demographic data about a community. Figure 3.5 shows categories of industry for employed persons over the age of 16 in 2010. The largest percentage of workers in Becker Township is employed in manufacturing, followed by educational services, health care, and social assistance. Industries such as agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting show the least employment opportunities.

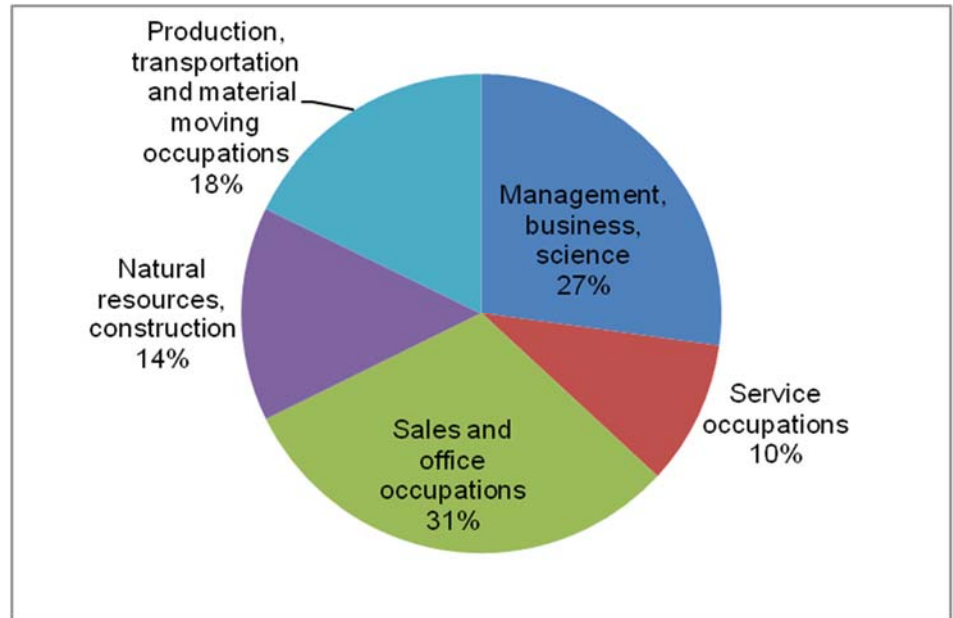
Figure 3.5—Industry of Workers



Occupations

A higher-level review of employment is shown in Figure 3.6. About 58% of those employed are professionals in skilled work environments such as management, sales, or office occupations. Currently, occupations related to sales occupations are showing the least activity.

Figure 3.6—Occupations



Source: US 2010 Census, DP03

Leading Employers

Table 3.5 summarizes the leading employers in the Becker Township area. The three largest employers in Becker Township are TJ Hammer Farms, Holiday Station Stores, and Vonco II.

Table 3.5—Leading Employers in Becker Township

Employer	Full-Time	Part-Time	Total
TJ Hammer Farms	6	20	26
Midwest Bus Parts, Inc.	3	4	7
Dakota Landscape & Design	3	5	8
Vonco II/Veit	11	0	11
Holiday Station	4	7	11
Becker Sod	3	0	3
Element Arms	6	3	9
Discount Pole	4	2	6
Total	40	41	81

Source: City of Becker

Commuting to Work

Table 3.6 summarizes the means by which people commute to work. Of those workers commuting to work, the majority drive alone. This would suggest a need to offer public transit access and continued improvements to the trail and sidewalk system. The mean travel time to work is 32 minutes.

Table 3.6—Means of Commuting to Work

Means	Percent
Car, truck, or van—drove alone	84.4%
Car, truck, or van—carpooled	8.5%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	1.5%
Walked	0%
Other means	0.5%
Worked at home	5.1%
	100%

Source: US 2010 Census, S08.01

Median Household Income

Table 3.7 describes the median household income levels in a given area. If all incomes of all households were listed from lowest to highest, this figure is the income in the middle. In the Becker Township, the median household income in 2010 was \$89,207, which was a 27% increase over the median household income of \$65,089 in 2000. In comparison, the City of Becker had a 2010 median income of \$70,526, and Sherburne County had a median household income of \$71,704.

Table 3.7—Median Household Income

	2000	2010	Percent Change
Becker Township	\$65,089	\$89,207	27%
City of Becker	\$50,714	\$70,526	28%
Sherburne County	\$57,014	\$71,704	20%

Source: US 2010 Census, S1903

4.0 Land Use and Housing



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Purpose

The purpose of the Land Use section is to address future land use patterns. It is based on existing land use; projections for future growth; and input from Becker Township residents, businesses, and property owners. The goals and strategies of this section build on the Town of Becker's vision and guiding principles.

Introduction

What lands should be preserved to protect agricultural activities and provide open space and healthy wildlife habitats for future residents? How can new development provide a range of housing, commercial, and industrial uses while still maintaining the Town of Becker's rural and agricultural character? Addressing questions related to land use patterns plays a significant role in defining community identity. The organization of residential, business, and public uses influences how people choose to live, work, and play in the community. The relationship between these uses helps Becker Township achieve its vision and reinforces the community's desirable traits and quality of life.

Land use, transportation, and park elements are typically the most referenced comprehensive plan sections. However, the land use element is the most visible and often-used element of the plan because it is the foundation for organizing the community into places for people to live, work, play, and enjoy a healthy living environment. It provides guidance to help the Town of Becker plan for future growth and is the basis for guiding the type, intensity, and location of residential, commercial, industrial, and public uses within township limits. The plan provides the direction to realize Becker Township's long-term vision through short-term decisions.

The plan contains a combination of maps, goals, and policies. The first Land Use Plan that the Town of Becker adopted was that of 2007 (see Appendix A). Following is the "Future Land Use Plan," which identifies eight major land use areas and delineates overlay districts for natural resource protection. The plan shows mixed use nodes at key intersections throughout the planning area as well as serviced and unserved future industrial development areas. Accompanying the Land Use Planning Area Map is a set of general development policies for each classification shown in the plan. After having been adopted by the Joint Planning Board, the Land Use Plan has the following clearly defined functions:

- Represents the vision that community leaders have for future development and use of land within the township. That vision is expressed in this section of the comprehensive plan and its accompanying land use goals and strategies.
- Serves as a guide to any change in character of individual properties as they move from one use to another over time.
- Provides a rational basis for establishing and modifying zoning and other land use and development regulations.
- Provides a broad set of strategies that can be used in making public and private decisions on projects that come before the Town and the Joint Planning Board.
- Becomes a valuable tool of communication between citizens and the local government on matters concerning land use and development.

Vision

The intent of this policy statement is to state a desired outcome in general terms. The land use vision was developed by considering key findings related to existing land use patterns and integrating public input generated as part of the community outreach associated with the plan update.

- Becker Township should be a town that promotes the rural, agricultural, and family-oriented character of the community.
- Residential development should enhance the community through neighborhood design, connectivity, and protection of the township's agricultural and natural resources.
- Effort should be made to create and enhance the sense of a thriving and vibrant community by attracting both high-quality commerce and industry.
- A focus should be placed on building quality and aesthetics along major transportation corridors such as Highway 10 through the township.

Guiding Principals

Following are guiding principles that provide a framework for the Town of Becker's community image, housing, commercial and industrial development, and natural resource protection and enhancement:

- Continue to develop a community that reflects the rural character and agricultural history of the town.
- Discourage the larger lot rural platting of township lands in areas easily serviceable by the City of Becker.
- Accommodate growth through sensitive planning by looking at planning efforts more holistically.
- Support new development that reflects Becker Township's unique qualities and continues to enhance its image and identity.
- Focus primarily on single-family residential growth.
- Support the preservation of greenways along the Elk River and Mississippi River corridors.

Existing Conditions

Current Land Use Pattern

In general, Agricultural and General Rural land uses are the primary land uses within the township. Surrounding the Town of Becker, commercial development is located north of Highway 10, and industrial development is located south of Highway 10.

Over the years, low-density residential development has taken a more suburban form, with bent and curving grids, larger lot sizes, and dead-end cul-de-sacs.

Due to high visibility and easy access from Highway 10, commercial land uses typically follow the same linear pattern as does the highway. Commercial development along the north side of Highway 10 generally occurs within Becker's city limits due to the need for city sewer and water service; however, commercial

development within the township occurs along the Highway 10 corridor, concentrating at key intersections such as that at Highway 10 and County Road 11.

Most industrial uses and industrial reserve land remain to the south side of Highway 10. Located in this area is the Xcel Energy–Sherco coal-fired electric generating plant located between the Mississippi River and County Road 11.

Existing Land Use Categories

Becker Township is approximately 34,424.94 acres (53.79 square miles) in size. The planning area includes all wetlands within Becker Township (6,271.79 acres). See Table 4.1 for land use categories and associated acreages.

Currently, General Rural land uses are designated for over 70% of the land within Becker Township and is the primary land use. These uses include limited agriculture, hobby farms, and large lot single-family homes without public water and sewer service. Agricultural land use designations make up 10.64% of the total land in the Town of Becker. Commercial and Neighborhood Commercial use comprises 4.19% of the total commercial land use designation, of which 1,362 acres are utilized for commercial uses while only 79.6 acres are utilized for Neighborhood Commercial uses. Industrial/Heavy Industrial and Industrial Reserve land use designations comprise 11% of the land in Becker; of that, 7.5% is designated as Industrial Reserve.

Public and private open space land use designations comprise 362.4 acres of the land in Becker. Of those acres, 117.8 acres are designated as wild and scenic open space along the Mississippi River, and 244.6 acres are designated as recreational river.

While the term “open space” evokes a number of connotations, it has been broadly defined in this plan to include woodlands, fields, wetlands, stream banks, floodplains, steep slopes, and unique geological formations. Basically, open space is any land that is not occupied by buildings. The importance of the open space system is that it is integrated into the overall community fabric of the town to provide recreation, conservation, aesthetic benefits, and relief from current and future development.

Although not classified as a land use, The Elk River Environmental Protection Corridor has been identified in the Town of Becker’s comprehensive land use plan as a greenway corridor and is proposed to extend through the township as well. The purpose of the overlay is to protect lands adjacent to the Elk River. Within the corridor are areas of wetland, prairie, and woodland resources. All of these are essential to providing high-quality habitat, biological diversity, and scenic beauty.

Existing Land Use Regulation

Zoning, a locally enacted law, protects public health, safety, and welfare under Minnesota State Statute 462.357. It involves dividing an area (i.e., Becker Township) into districts or zones such as Residential, Commercial, Industrial, and other Public Districts. The zoning regulations or codes then dictate which uses are allowed within each district and define parameters to which the use is constructed and/or operated.

Zoning provides for orderly growth by protecting homes and property from harmful and incompatible uses of neighboring properties. The zoning ordinance, along with the comprehensive plan, gives the town legal authority to enforce its land use controls and regulations.

Overall, zoning ordinances should be based on a land use plan to be effective and to protect public interest. The development of the comprehensive plan for Becker Township provides the Planning Commission, Town Board, and Joint Planning Board with a document the community has provided input on, stating desires regarding future land use decisions. The comprehensive plan will also be the basis for any future changes to the Joint Planning Board Zoning Ordinance.

Issues and Ideas

Following is a summary of issues and ideas expressed by the community during the public planning process conducted in 2013–14.

Land use issues regarding future development are diverse and include concerns related to community identity, the visibility of the town to motorists travelling through on main transportation routes, and new commercial and industrial development to add a tax base and jobs for current and future township residents.

- Don't lose the agricultural base of the township.
- Retain private property owner land rights while planning for the future.
- Ensure high-quality development along Highway 10 and other major transportation routes.
- Preserve high-quality natural resources.
- Continue to work toward being one "Becker Community."

Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan (See Figure 4.1) looks at development patterns for 20 years into the future. It represents the direction endorsed by the Town Board and the Joint Planning Board based on what is currently known and desired for the future. The plan describes the future land use designations for the township and its growth areas. Eight unique land use categories have been identified to guide growth in Becker: Agricultural, General Rural, Medium-Density Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Recreational River, Park, and Wild and Scenic River Open Space.

Table 4.1 describes the types of land uses and shows distribution of acres by planned land use categories.

Table 4.1—Land Use Category Acreages and Percentages:

Land Use Category	Description	Acres	Percent
Agricultural	Includes land suitable for agricultural production, both crops and livestock.	3,661.9	10.64%
General Rural	Allowable uses include limited agriculture, hobby farms, and large lot single-family homes without public water and sewer service. Single-family units in the General Rural land use category will be allowed at a maximum density of 1 dwelling unit/2.5 acres.	24,263.3	70.48%
Commercial	Includes both large-scale commercial uses that serve a regional trade area and moderate-scale uses that serve local residents. Typically applies to areas that have a higher level of accessibility and visibility from adjoining roadways. Architecture and site design of commercial areas should be compatible with surrounding neighborhood. Issues such as building size, location on the lot, building materials, screening and other design issues are of particular importance.	1,362.9	3.96%
Neighborhood Commercial	Includes retail sales, offices, and services serving the daily needs of nearby residents and to promote stable and attractive commercial development compatible with neighboring residential uses. The Neighborhood Commercial district will encourage the location of commercial uses at major intersections within residential areas. These areas should be designed to accommodate the auto in a manner that is also friendly to and harmonious with pedestrian and bicycle traffic. The architecture of the structures should be compatible with the neighborhood commercial uses.	79.6	.23%
Industrial	Includes design, assembly, finishing, packaging, and storing of products or materials that have usually been processed at least once. These activities are characterized as “clean” because they produce a relatively small amount of smoke and other effluents, noise, and dust. Includes facilities for administration, research, assembly, storage, warehousing, and distribution of goods. Examples are electronics firms, trucking companies, small textile mills, and auto assembly plants.	1,089.8	3.17%
Industrial Reserve	Includes areas currently in agricultural use that provide expansion opportunities for light and heavy industrial uses as utility and road infrastructure become available.	2,579.0	7.5%

Land Use Category	Description	Acres	Percent
Heavy Industrial	Involves the processing of raw materials such as coal, lumber, etc. or the fabrication and assemblage of parts that are bulky and heavy. Also included in this category are surface structures associated with manufacturing operations: loading devices, trucks, access roads, processing facilities, stock piles, and storage sheds.	158.7	.46%
Wild and Scenic & Recreational River (WSRR) Open Space	Xcel-owned property along the Mississippi River for open space purposes and to serve as a buffer within the Wild and Scenic Recreational River corridor boundary.	362.4	1%
Total		34,424	100%

Although not classified as a land use, the Elk River Environmental Protection Corridor continues to be identified on the future land use plan as a greenway corridor, created as an overlay district. The overlay district protects wetlands, prairie, and woodland resources adjacent to the Elk River. All of these are essential to providing high-quality habitat, biological diversity, and scenic beauty.

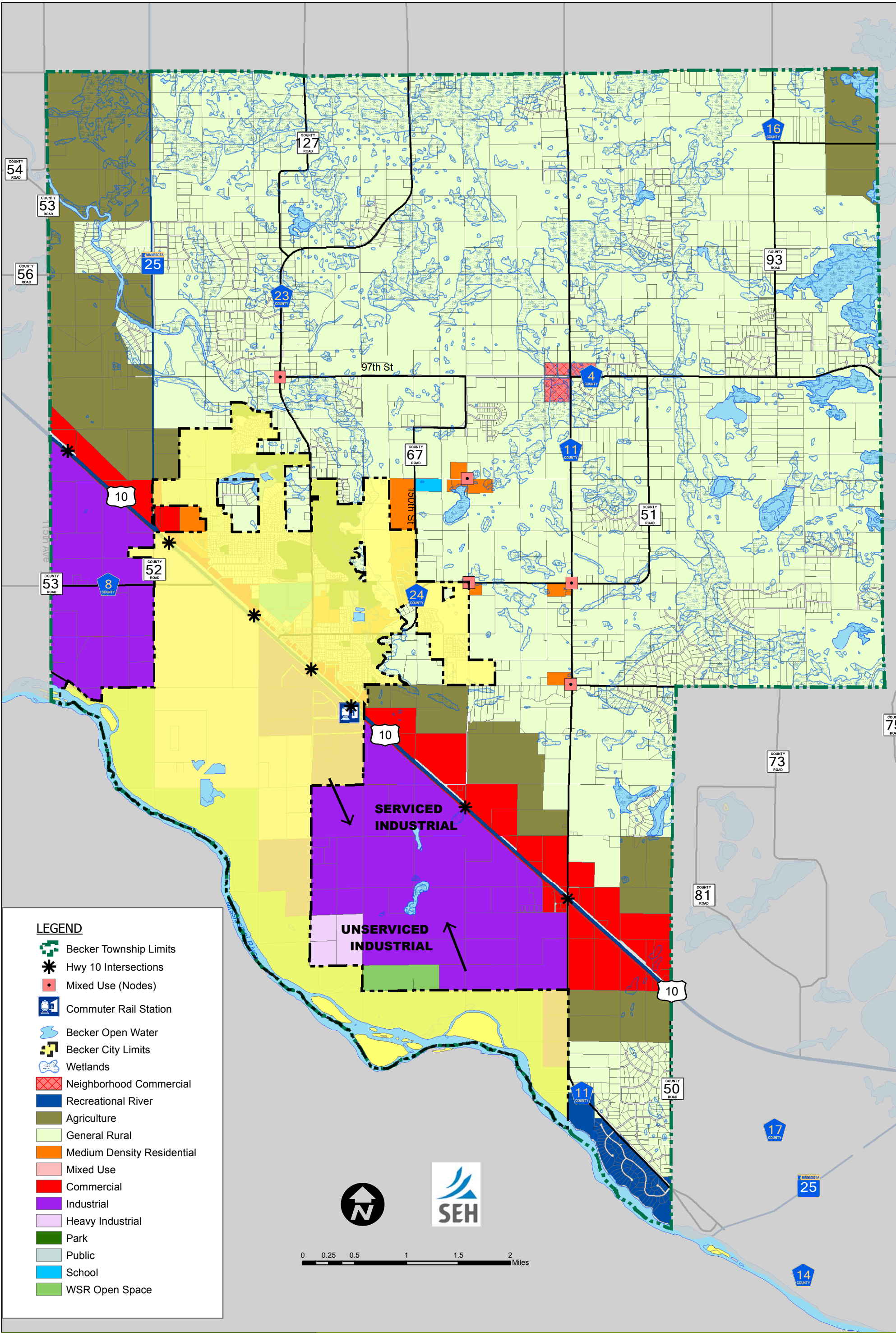
Annexation Agreement

The Town of Becker has an orderly annexation agreement with the City of Becker. The purpose of this agreement is to prevent adjacent cities from acquiring township land through annexation and to allow the town and city to plan jointly for the betterment of the Becker community as a whole. Actual annexations will be a gradual process and occur through agreements between landowners and the town only with Town Board approval.

It is anticipated that growth, particularly residential, will continue to the north and east of the current city boundaries due to recent expansions of infrastructure that will allow development of land in the northeasterly direction.

The plan will be tested by property owners, prospective developers, and government agencies. It will be used as a measure for proposals that challenge its position. Only those changes that are consistent with Town and Joint Planning Board policy and community direction should be considered as reasons for amending the plan.

The Joint Planning Board will need to review the plan regularly, typically on an annual or biannual basis, to ensure that it responds to current conditions and activity. Doing so will ensure that the plan remains a working document and will not become outdated. An outdated plan can create challenges for the Board’s land use authority and obstacles for private property owners.



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Goals and Strategies

Outlined below are land use goals and strategies. The goals set long-range, general aims for the Town of Becker. They represent general statements that outline idealized situations that strive to manage future growth while protecting social, agriculture, economic, and natural resources.

Strategies identify the way programs and activities are conducted to achieve the town's vision, goals, and recommendations outlined in the Becker Township Land Use Plan, representing the official position and action items the Joint Planning Board will follow to implement planned growth as well as protection and conservation of natural resources and open space.

Growth and Land Use Patterns

Goal 1: Provide for sustainable growth that will encourage residential, commercial, and industrial development while protecting and enhancing the community's character and natural resources.

Strategy 1.1—Ensure that residential, business, and industrial bases continue to grow in a balanced manner.

Strategy 1.2—Protect and enhance natural resources such as rivers, lakes, wetlands, woodland, and prairie habitat as growth occurs.

Strategy 1.3—Evaluate land use and capacity every five years to ensure consistency with the comprehensive plan.

Goal 2: Promote efficient land uses and development patterns.

Strategy 2.1—Provide land use patterns that will complement the community's physical characteristics.

Strategy 2.2—Support new residential development patterns that create special places of enduring quality with a variety and pattern echoing the best of Becker's rural character (i.e., unique neighborhoods, not subdivisions).

Strategy 2.3—Require all subdivisions to adhere to long-range plans for streets, trails, parks, and utility corridors to ensure continuity of development patterns and implementation of community priorities.

Strategy 2.4—Encourage innovative land use patterns in areas that contain sensitive or significant natural or cultural resources or where it would benefit the community.

Neighborhoods

Goal 3: Create desirable neighborhoods that reflect community vitality and a positive image to attract new residents.

Strategy 3.1—Recognize the distinct needs of both established and developing neighborhoods in Becker Township.

Strategy 3.2—Encourage character traits that reflect Becker Township's desire to maintain its "rural" image in the design of new residential neighborhoods.

Strategy 3.3—Provide focal points, such as unique natural features, to build a stronger sense of neighborhood and to provide for introducing elements of the larger landscape into each neighborhood.

Strategy 3.4—Encourage the development of new residential neighborhoods to promote the township's unique natural resources and agricultural history.

Strategy 3.5—Protect important landscape features (e.g., woodlands, wetlands, or floodplain) by creating housing opportunities that are compatible with them.

Strategy 3.6—Enforce codes to maintain the quality, character, viability, value, and livability of all neighborhoods.

Goal 4: Create design standards for commercial areas that reflect Becker’s rural character and ensure consistency in building type, orientation, signage, and other features of the development.

Strategy 4.1—Maintain an attractive commercial image along the Highway 10 and other major transportation corridors.

Strategy 4.2—Create design standards that orient commercial buildings in a way that helps to define the streetscape.

Strategy 4.3—Create standards for commercial buildings that focus on quality and a feeling of permanence.

Strategy 4.4—Allow signs that indicate the presence of an individual business only on the same site as the sign—no-off site advertising.

Strategy 4.5—Create standards that allow “pylon”-type signs of a permanent, attractive nature, and encourage joint use of such signs by several businesses, such as multitenant, in close proximity.

Strategy 4.6—Limit other signs to those that are part of the building face; consider the effects of each sign placed, ensuring that it does not interfere or cause detrimental effects on neighboring uses or on the desired character of the community.

Strategy 4.7—Require a significant amount of landscape improvement, of a character appropriate to the surrounding landscape, to prevent the dominance of buildings, cars, and pavement. Develop standards that provide consistent landscape improvements to commercial developments.

Strategy 4.8—Use natural elements to achieve screening rather than walls or fences when appropriate.

Strategy 4.9—Encourage shared parking among the uses within a commercial area.

Strategy 4.10—Spread parking in more than one yard space to lessen visual impact and encourage the establishment of parking spaces closer to the entrance.

Strategy 4.11—Allow development to utilize proof-of-parking options to reduce the initial amount of paving required for development.

Strategy 4.12—Buffer service and utility areas from surrounding streets, surrounding neighborhoods, and pedestrian spaces.

Strategy 4.13—Consider a low-impact design approach to on-site stormwater treatment.

Industrial Development

Goal 5: Maintain a dedicated area south of Highway 10 for industrial uses and expansion.

Strategy 5.1—Maintain an attractive industrial image along the Highway 10 corridor by implementing building design standards and restricting outside storage.

Strategy 5.2—Protect the rural character of the land use surrounding the industrial area as it grows.

Strategy 5.3—Protect the environmental resources of the community, the value of the strong relationship to the Mississippi River, and the sensitive conditions created by the nature of soils in Becker Township.

Strategy 5.4—Segregate uses within the industrial area to hide less attractive activities.

Strategy 5.5—Develop design standards for development of new sites and buildings in industrial areas, including landscaping for screening, enhancement, and maintenance.

Strategy 5.6—Use proof-of-parking as a means of reducing initial and possible long-term hard surface areas.

Strategy 5.7—Consider a low-impact design approach to on-site stormwater treatment.

Strategy 5.8—Focus on attracting businesses that will be committed to the community and that can provide high-quality jobs for people living in the Town of Becker.

Strategy 5.9—Work with the City of Becker and Sherburne County to maintain land for the expansion of industrial uses.

Goal 6: Enhance the town’s streetscape and neighborhood design with appropriate street tree plantings.

Strategy 6.1—Consider boulevard and street tree plantings in new neighborhoods.

Strategy 6.2—Preserve trees that are of significant size or species and provide connected canopies when feasible.

Housing

Purpose

The purpose of the Housing Section is to describe current housing conditions and to plan for future development based on need and demand.

Vision

Becker Township is a community that strives to provide a balanced mix of housing types and prices to meet the needs of current and future residents of varying income levels as they move through different stages of the life cycle.

Introduction

Housing plays an essential role in the vision for the future of Becker Township. Most housing opportunities in Becker are not in long-established neighborhoods; most housing has been built since the 1950s. These neighborhoods have certain features that make them attractive to residents, but the long-term quality of the neighborhood is something that can be addressed by encouraging the creation of a strong sense of neighborhood identity through design.

As Becker Township continues to grow, new residential neighborhoods need to be created without compromising existing standards of the community. By developing new areas based on the accepted character traits of the community while

respecting its natural resources, Becker Township will continue to maintain its desire to be perceived as a rural community.

Many people spend a significant amount of income on shelter, and much effort is invested to transform the space they live in into their personalized home. Residential areas set the tone for community character, quality of life, and citizen morale. Housing markets, development, and reinvestment are influenced by many interconnected economic, social, and political factors. Local policy influences the community’s ability to meet the housing needs of its changing citizenry.

Existing Conditions

Housing Units

According to the 2010 census, Becker Township has a total of 1,544 housing units. This is a 17% increase over the past 10 years. Of the total housing units, 1496 were occupied and 48, or 3.1%, were vacant. This shows that vacancy rates have been improving by about 11.4% since the last census.

Table 4.2—Comparison of Housing Units

	2000	2010
Total Units	1285	1544
Occupied	1099	1496
Vacant	186	48
Vacancy Rate	14.5%	3.1%

Source: US 2010 Census

Table 4.3 shows a comparison of total owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing between 2000 and 2010. Of the total occupied housing units in 2000, 96.4% were owner-occupied while 3.6% were renter-occupied. This is in comparison to 95.7% being owner-occupied while 4.3% were renter-occupied in 2010. These numbers are indicators that most residents of Becker Township continue to be homeowners and even with the turn in the economy the percentage of owner occupied houses has increased only slightly over the past 10 years.

Table 4.3—Comparison of Occupancy of Housing Units

	2000	2010	Change between 2000 and 2010
Total Occupied Units	1,099	1,496	36.1%
Owner-Occupied	1,059	1,432	35.2%
Renter-Occupied	40	64	60.0%

Source: US 2010 Census

The majority of housing units (See Table 4.3) in Becker Township are single-family dwellings (95.7%).

Age and Condition of Housing

Maintenance and preservation of the existing housing supply will continue to be important to the vitality of the community.

Typical of the building boom throughout the 1990s to the early 2000s, reflecting the migration of residents away from urban areas to smaller communities within commuting distance, Becker Township also shows a significant peak in construction of new housing units and then a remarkable dip in the late 2000s due to stalled population growth and economic factors that hit the country as a whole.

The majority of Becker Township’s housing stock has been built within the past 30 years. Census data indicates that approximately 837 housing units have been built since 1990. Because of the relatively new age of housing stock, Becker Township has not been faced with major housing maintenance issues.

Building Permits

Building permits provide an idea of building activity within a community.

Table 4.4 shows the reported new house building activity between 2010 and 2012. The greatest building permit activity occurred during 2011 and 2012.

Table 4.4—Annual New Privately Owned Residential Building Permits That Becker Township, Minnesota, Reported (Sherburne County—141)

Year	Building Permits Issued in
Becker Township (Reported)	
2010	6
2011	10
2012	31
Total	47

Source: US 2010 Census

The township currently has seven residential projects actively being developed. This development will provide the township with a total of 350 lots accommodating single-family houses at full build-out, leaving an excess of 133 lots yet to be developed within the seven projects.

Table 4.5—Town of Becker Current Development Projects

Development Name	Type	Total Number of Planned Lots	Developed Lots
Aspen Ridge	Residential	35	30
Boulder Crossing	Residential	60	4
Bridgeview	Residential	83	73
Peterson Farm	Residential	35	25
Scenic Hills	Residential	44	38
Snake River Estates	Residential	58	15
Turnquist Farms	Residential	35	32
Total		350	217

Source: City of Becker, 2013

Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles reflect the community's desire to provide a diverse range of housing options to all residents:

- Provide available housing to attract homeowners, from young adults to seniors.
- Provide a diversity of single-family homes that contribute to the aesthetics of the community as a whole.
- Provide the means for rehabilitating older, viable housing stock at various locations throughout Becker Township.

Housing Plan

Housing Mix and Types

Providing a balanced mix of housing will satisfy the needs of both existing and future Becker Township residents. With the trend toward an older population within the next 20 years, providing lifestyle housing options—particularly single-unit and rental housing—will be critical to attracting young professionals as well as retaining empty nesters and seniors.

Based on current trends of downsizing and young and retired people moving back to urban areas to be closer to urban amenities with pedestrian versus vehicular options, the Town of Becker will likely see the desire for more flexibility in housing options such as smaller-lot single-family homes.

In addition to providing for traditional housing options, the future plan should provide for housing of various building styles and amenities to attract young families while retaining existing residents, allowing them to age in place.

Goals and Strategies

The following section provides general strategies that will help to ensure that new residential neighborhood development serves existing and future residents of all ages and economic levels.

Goal 1: Provide a balanced housing supply for people at all income levels and unit types that meet the range of life-cycle needs of Becker residents.

Strategy 1.1—Establish a housing pattern that respects the natural environment while striving to meet local housing needs.

Strategy 1.2—Promote unique housing design and variety in new housing developments.

Strategy 1.3—Encourage quality housing stock that is supported by strong identifiable neighborhoods.

Strategy 1.4—Continue to utilize zoning and subdivision ordinances that allow planned unit developments (PUDs) that provide a variety of housing styles.

Strategy 1.5—Maintain zoning and subdivision regulations allowing for the construction of a variety of housing types and price ranges.

Goal 2: Establish a community of well-maintained housing and neighborhoods.

Strategy 2.1—Promote ongoing maintenance of owner-occupied and rental housing units.

Strategy 2.2—Explore opportunities to develop and make available a handbook to guide homeowners in rehabilitating their property.



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Purpose

The purpose of the Transportation Section is to describe the key findings of the current transportation network so as to plan for its future management and expansion. This section evaluates current and future transportation needs and identifies policy objectives and strategies for attaining the transportation vision provided below.

Introduction

One of the guiding principles listed below states the following: “Places will be better connected, in part to improve the function of the street network and also to better serve residential, commercial, and industrial developments.” This principle reflects the community’s desire to provide a safe, convenient, multimodal, and environmentally responsible transportation system for the Town of Becker. It also reflects the desire for transportation investments to support land use and community identity preferences. Furthermore, this section will establish key objectives and strategies for the transportation system for Becker Township.

Vision

The intent of this policy statement is to state a desired outcome in general terms. The transportation vision was developed by considering key findings related to the transportation system and integrating public input generated as part of the community outreach associated with the plan update.

The transportation network within the Town of Becker will facilitate the movement of people, goods, and services within and through the township on a safe, convenient, coordinated, and fiscally responsible network of routes using a balanced multimodal transportation system.

Guiding Principals

- Develop a system of streets that is consistent with the existing transportation patterns throughout the community, providing an efficient network of routes that separate traffic according to length of trip, speed, and land accessibility.
- Ensure that places will be better connected, in part to improve the function of the transportation network and also to better serve residential, commercial, and industrial developments. Street patterns should minimize circuitous travel because it increases trip length, time, fuel consumption, and emissions.
- Local street design should permit flexibility in community design, allowing streets that are compatible with all design objectives of a neighborhood, and should include agricultural considerations in local street design.
- Enhance public transit such as the Northstar Corridor Commuter Rail when the community grows to a scale that can support such services and facilities.

Existing Conditions and Key Findings

This section acknowledges the current trends and highlights the existing transportation conditions and facilities located within and surrounding Becker Township. Information was compiled from a variety of sources such as existing plans, field observations, and input from public meetings. Outlined below is a summary of key findings related to the Town of Becker's existing transportation system.

Transportation has and will continue to play a critical role in the growth and development of the Town of Becker. Transportation facilities both link and, in some cases, separate land uses within the community. The Township's Land Use Plan establishes a vision for how the community anticipates development over the next 20-plus years and is intended to provide a framework to assist in ensuring that the vision is realized. As part of that vision, the Town of Becker recognizes the travel needs of its residents, local businesses, commuters, and others traveling through. Furthermore, the township recognizes its role within the transportation system and that its policies and improvement projects need to encourage and contribute to the orderly development of the Town of Becker, Sherburne County, and the region.

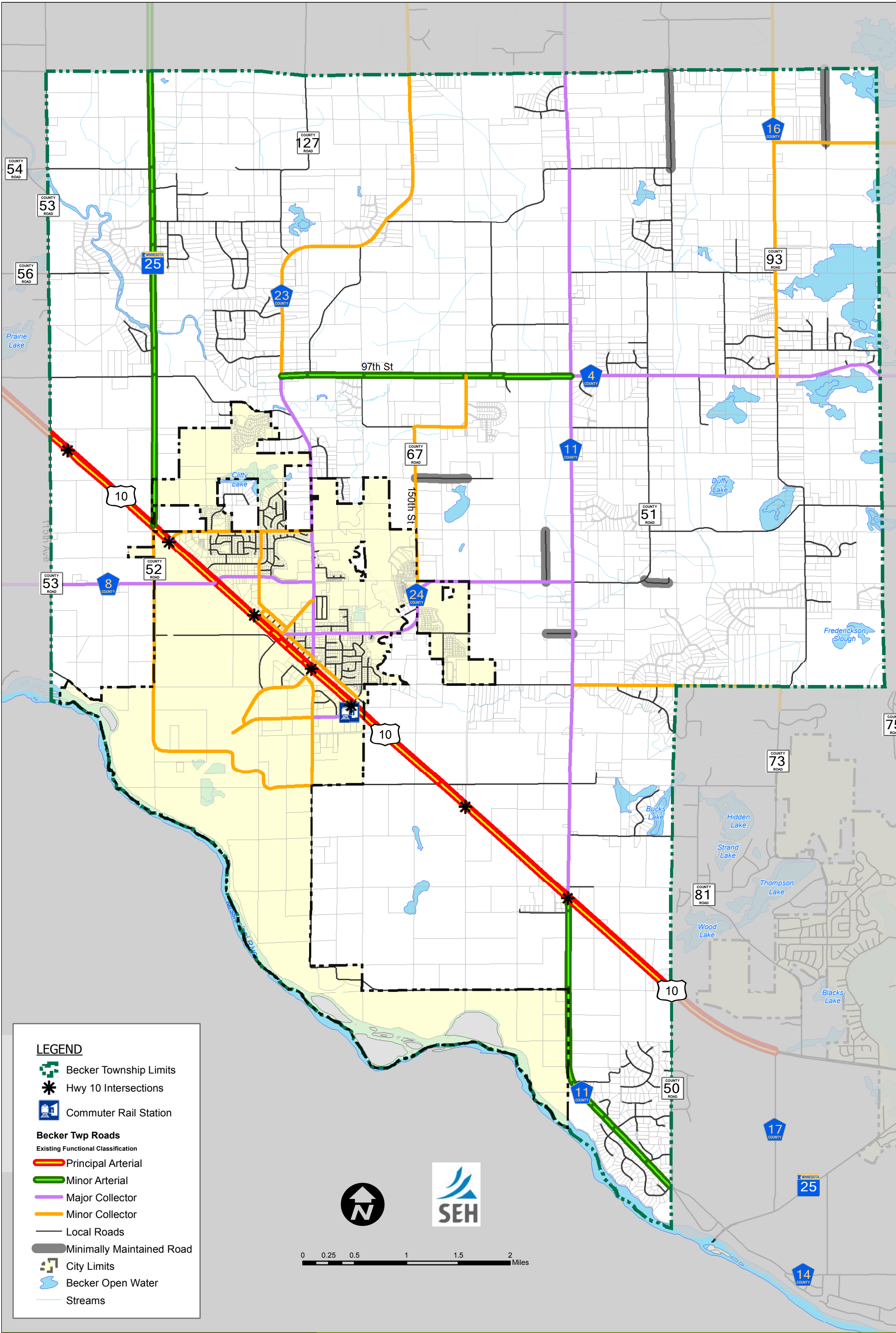
Roadway Functional Classification System

Functional classification is a system by which roadways are grouped according to the function they are intended to serve. Basic to this process is the recognition that most travel involves movement through a network of roadways that function as a network of different types of roads rather than independently. Four basic functional classification categories are typically used for town-level transportation planning: principal arterials, minor arterials, collectors (major and minor), and local streets.

Figure 5.1 shows the current functional classification of all of the roadways within Becker Township. The system includes the state trunk highway system, managed by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT); the County State Aid Highway (CSAH) and County Road system, managed by Sherburne County; and local township roads, managed by Becker Township. In general, the following relationships regarding jurisdictional designations are observed:

- Roadways that serve regional, inter-county, or statewide travel needs are typically owned and maintained by MnDOT.
- Roadways that serve sub-regional needs generally qualify as CSAH or county roads and are owned and maintained by Sherburne County.
- Roadways that primarily serve local transportation needs and property access are owned and maintained by Becker Township.

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Becker Township Comprehensive Plan

Transportation

Existing Functional Classification

Figure 5-1

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Functional classification involves determining what role (level of mobility versus property access) each roadway should perform prior to determining its design features, such as street widths, design speed, and intersection control. Furthermore, functional classification is an important consideration in the development of local regulations for land development. The mobility of higher-classified roadways should be protected by careful management of site development and access spacing standards. Transportation problems commonly occur when a roadway's design and the management of access to the roadway are inconsistent with the functional and operating demands imposed by the surrounding land uses. A definition and the design characteristics of each functional classification category are presented below:

Principal Arterials

Principal arterials typically have the highest-volume capacity and provide the highest level of service at higher speeds for the longest uninterrupted distance. This type of roadway is intended to connect larger cities with one another and link major business centers. The functional emphasis is mobility rather than access. The nature of land uses adjacent to principal arterials is typically of a higher intensity. US Highway 10 is classified as a principal arterial.

Principal Arterial Roadway Characteristics:

- Emphasis on mobility rather than on providing land access.
- High-speed design, with travel speeds of 55 mph or greater in rural areas.
- Serve longer (regional, statewide) trips, typically greater than eight miles.
- Commonly spaced at least 6 to 12 miles apart.

Minor Arterials

Minor arterials are intended to connect important locations inside and outside of Becker Township and Sherburne County. This type of roadway is intended to provide service for trips of moderate length (greater than two miles) at a lower level of mobility than principal arterials. However, minor arterials have a greater focus on mobility than on land access. They generally connect to principal arterials, other minor arterials, or collectors. Minor arterials are of regional importance because they relieve traffic on or substitute for principal arterials when necessary. In the Town of Becker, the only existing classified minor arterial is Trunk Highway 25.

Minor Arterial Roadway Characteristics:

- Emphasis on mobility rather than on providing land access.
- High-speed design with travel speeds of 55 mph or greater in rural areas.
- Serve longer (regional, inter-county) trips, typically greater than 5–8 miles.
- Commonly spaced at least 6 to 12 miles apart.

Collectors

Within a functional classification system, there are commonly two types of collector roadways (major and minor), providing a balance between land access and mobility. Major collector roadways are designed to serve shorter trips that occur primarily within the town and to collect and distribute traffic from one part of the community

to another and from neighborhoods to arterial routes and employment centers. These roads are typically part of a CSAH system or a city municipal state aid system. Figure 5.1 shows the major collectors in Becker Township: CSAH 8 (117th Street), CSAH 23 (Sherburne Avenue), CSAH 24 (Central Avenue), CSAH 11, and the portion of Liberty Lane from Highway 10 to Industrial Boulevard.

Minor Collector

These roadways collect and distribute traffic to the major collector and arterial routes. They are generally shorter and less continuous than major collectors but serve to supplement those roadways. Minor collectors can also commonly be part of a municipal state aid system. The town's minor collector system includes, but is not limited to, the following roadways: County Road 67 (150th Avenue), County Road 52 (125th Avenue), Edgewood Street, Bradley Boulevard, Hancock Street, 1st Street, 3rd Street, Industrial Boulevard, Rolling Ridge Road, 2nd Street, Bank Street, 97th Street, and 103rd Street.

Major and Minor Collector Roadway Characteristics:

- Emphasis equally balanced between mobility and providing land access for major collectors and more focused on land access for minor collectors.
- Serving trips that are typically less than five miles.
- Commonly spaced at ½ mile apart in urban areas.
- Travel speeds typically range from 30 to 40 mph in more densely developed urban areas and up to 55 mph in rural areas.

Local Roadways

All other public roadways within the Becker Township are classified as local roadways.

Local Roadway Characteristics:

- Local roads provide the highest level of direct property access and typically carry lower traffic volumes at slower speeds (30 mph or less).
- Typically serve trips that range from one city block in urban areas to several blocks within the community.
- Local roadways are spaced as needed.

As previously mentioned, functional classification provides a means for identifying roadways oriented toward providing mobility for through-trips (principal and minor arterials) versus those that are oriented more toward providing accessibility or land access (collectors and local streets). Figure 5.2 depicts the relationship among land access, mobility, and how the different classifications of roads provide varying degrees of mobility versus land access. Figure 5.3 shows the basic framework and layout of a functional classification system across the landscape.

Figure 5.2—Relationship between Land Access and Mobility

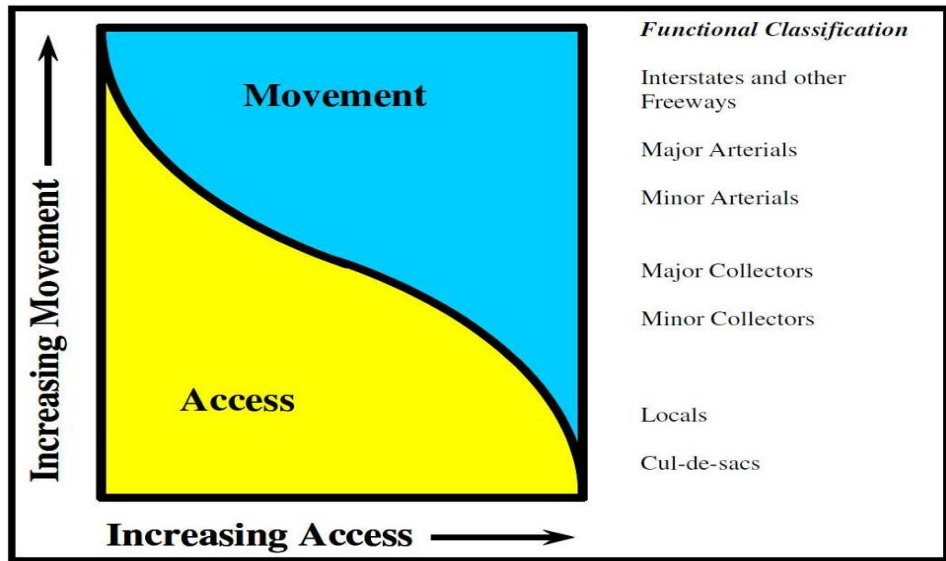


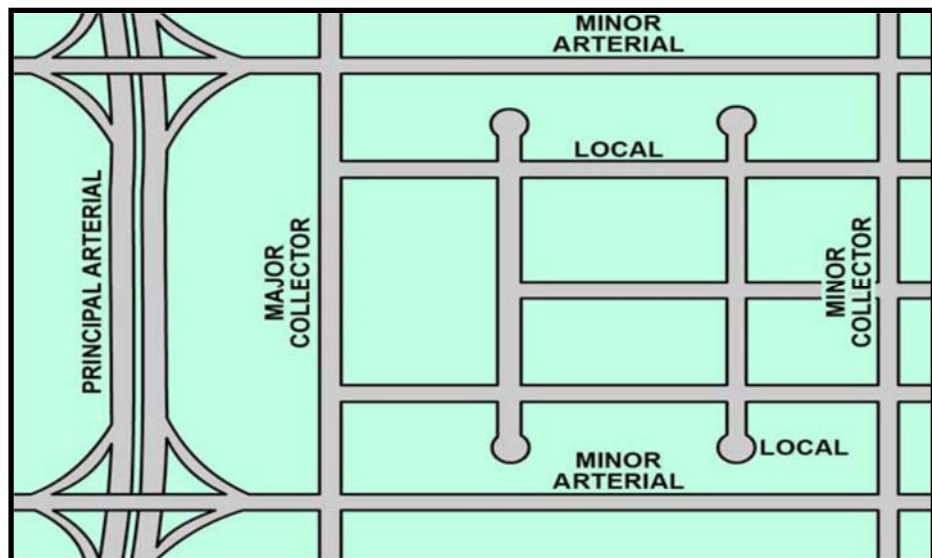
Figure 5.3—Basic Functional Classification System Framework

Roadway Jurisdictional Classification System

Jurisdiction over the system of roadways in Becker Township is shared among three levels of government (state, county, and local). Roadway jurisdiction is an important factor because it affects a number of critical organizational functions and obligations including regulatory, maintenance, construction, and financial commitments. Figure 5.4 depicts the existing transportation system and proposed future jurisdictional transfers as identified by Sherburne County.

Jurisdictional Classification Guidelines

Jurisdictional classification is based on a variety of factors including functional classification, system continuity, access control, type of trips served (length of



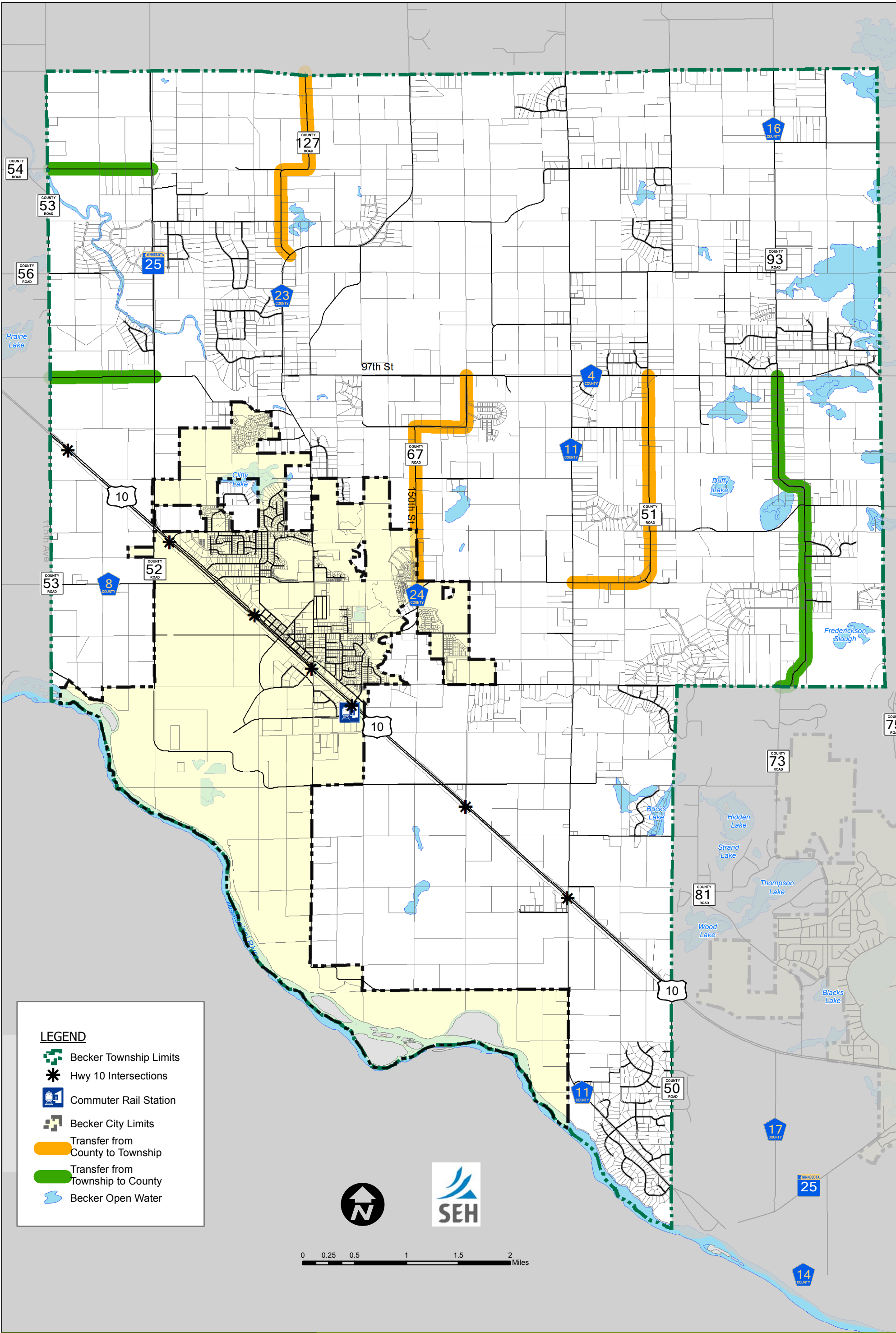
road/length of trip), traffic volumes, special facilities or land uses served, and funding/maintenance issues. Functional classification is a means by which roadways are grouped into classes according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Functional classification will be discussed in a subsequent section.

State Highway System

Generally, state jurisdiction is focused on routes that can be characterized as serving longer trips at higher speeds with regional, inter-county, and/or statewide travel needs. Interstate highways and trunk highways commonly have the highest traffic volumes and accommodate the most truck movements. In addition, they are typically spaced at intervals consistent with population density such that all developed areas of the state are within reasonable distance of a state highway. The functional classification system for roads under the state jurisdiction is normally either principal arterial or minor arterial. The trunk highway system provides vital links for Becker Township to several communities to the north (St. Cloud, Foley) and to the south (Big Lake, Elk River, and the Twin Cities). The 2010 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) Map, prepared by MnDOT, indicates that Highway 10 carried a range of traffic from 15,100 to 18,700 trips through the Becker Township area, with approximately 3,500 trips on Highway 25 just north of Highway 10.

Sherburne County Road System

The county's jurisdictional system consists of both CSAH and county roads. These roads provide connections throughout the county and convenient access to urban areas and state highways. The county system emphasizes higher mobility rather than land access. The functional classification system for roads under the county's jurisdiction is usually minor arterial, major collector, or minor collector. A county roadway system is often spaced at intervals consistent with population density to provide reasonable access to arterial or collector roads. Sherburne CSAH 23, referred to as Sherburne Avenue, provides access directly to Highway 10 and links the Town of Becker to areas to the north. The 2010 AADT along CSAH 23 ranged from 6,100 near the school to 4,550 north of Edgewood Street. Sherburne CSAH 24 (Central Avenue) is an east-west corridor that provides access directly to Highway 10 and connects the Town of Becker to areas to the east. AADT along CSAH 24 ranged from 790 trips near Hancock Street to over 2,100 trips east of CSAH 23. Other roadways under the jurisdiction of Sherburne County include CSAH 8 (117th Street), County Road 52 (125th Avenue), and County Road 67 (150th Avenue).



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Town Roads

The Town of Becker has its own network of local roadways. These township roads are typically closely spaced shorter routes (neighborhood streets) that primarily focus on providing land access and connections between neighborhoods and commercial nodes rather than continuity to outlying rural areas. In some cases Becker Township and other jurisdictions have co-ownership of roads that are located on the town boundary limits. The functional classification of most town roads is minor collector and local roadways.

Existing System Capacity Analysis

Traffic operations data indicates that a road begins to experience noticeable operational problems once traffic approaches approximately 85% of a roadway's design capacity. For a two-lane road, that means operational problems begin to occur when traffic volumes exceed approximately 10,500 trips per day. Table 5.1 shows planning level roadway capacity thresholds that help determine when various types of roadways (number of lanes and typical section) begin to experience unacceptable traffic operations. Roadway level of service (LOS) is commonly used to assign a value to the level of congestion and efficiency on a road or at an intersection. LOS is a measure of delay and operating conditions defined by the Highway Capacity Manual using a grading scale ranging from A to F. Traffic volumes associated with LOS D represent the threshold when traffic is approaching the 85% capacity level of a roadway's design. When a particular roadway reaches traffic volumes associated with LOS D, the jurisdictional agency should begin to plan for capacity improvements for that roadway. This should provide adequate opportunity to plan corrective improvements before operational problems reach LOS E or F.

Table 5.1—Average Daily Traffic (ADT) Planning Level Capacities

Roadway Type	Level of Service (LOS) Based on Average Daily Traffic (ADT) Volumes					
	A	B	C	D*	E	F
Two-lane	<8,000	8,000–9,500	9,250–10,750	10,500–12,000	11,750–13,250	>13,250
Three-lane (center left turn lane)	<9,000	9,000–12,000	11,500–14,500	14,000–17,000	16,500–19,500	>19,500
Four-lane undivided	<12,000	12,000–15,000	14,500–17,500	17,000–20,000	19,500–22,500	>22,500
Four-lane divided (center median)	<19,000	19,000–22,000	21,500–24,500	24,500–27,000	26,500–29,500	>29,500

* ADT associated with LOS D represent traffic volumes approaching 85% of a roadway's design capacity.

A review of existing roadway capacity is important in understanding travel patterns and driver choices because capacity deficiencies result in increased congestion (reduced travel speeds and increased travel times) and causes drivers to seek out alternative routes, which can place additional through traffic on local streets that may not be designed to handle such a function. Property owners along residential streets often recognize the increase in traffic when congestion on the arterial and collector system occurs. An increase in traffic on local streets can

create conflicts with residential land uses that provide a high level of property access and trips that seek routes with a higher mobility need.

According to existing traffic volumes and roadway cross sections (widths, number of lanes, shoulders, turn lanes, etc.) there appears to be no short-term capacity concerns on any roadway corridors found throughout Becker Township.

Existing System Safety Analysis

In addition to capacity issues, roadway safety can be a major concern and should be a priority for all jurisdictional levels. Safety and operational problems result when a roadway or system of roads inhibits the efficient movement of traffic. Sharp curves, offset or inadequate intersection design, inconsistent speed control, and acceleration space can all contribute to safety and operational problems. Other safety concerns can arise due to traffic volumes on a particular roadway or intersection approaching or exceeding the design capacity or to conflicts between slower-moving traffic (e.g., heavy trucks or agricultural equipment) and faster-moving vehicular traffic.

Existing Nonmotorized Transportation

Legitimate nonmotorized transportation users, such as pedestrians and bicyclists, should be able to use the transportation infrastructure safely and without unreasonable delay. Unfortunately, motorized transportation such as passenger cars and commercial vehicles can often dominate the transportation infrastructure due to their disproportionate size and numbers. Astute planning and design of the transportation infrastructure is one component necessary in achieving an integrated motorized and nonmotorized transportation system that is relatively safe and efficient for all users.

Alternative modes of transportation (e.g., transit, rail, aviation) in Becker are currently limited. The existing alternative travel modes can be summarized as follows:

Transit

Transit is an important component to the overall transportation system for youth, seniors, and other residents who cannot or prefer not to drive. It also provides an affordable and environmentally responsible transportation choice for commuters. The River Rider Transit Service is an independent transportation agency that operates both fixed-route and demand-response/dial-a-ride services. River Rider provides daily services throughout Sherburne County and connecting services to/from Wright County. Preliminary planning has occurred for the possibility of extending the Northstar Commuter Rail line from Big Lake to St. Cloud. A future transit station has been identified along the southern edge of the rail corridor and is located in the southeast quadrant of Highway 10 and Liberty Lane. Construction and operation of this segment of the transit line have not been programmed at this time.

Rail

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad operates the rail line that parallels Highway 10 through the Becker Township. According to the MnDOT Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations Office, this line averages 49 freight trains daily at speeds up to 75 mph. As previously stated, this line has been identified

as a future commuter rail corridor between St. Cloud and the Twin Cities. The Northstar Commuter Rail currently stops at the south end of Big Lake.

The Liberty Lane crossing was recently reconstructed to provide the required safety measures to allow for this intersection to be included as a “Quiet Zone” where trains are exempt from horn regulations. Three additional crossings at County Road 52/125th Ave, CSAH 8/Bradley Blvd, and Hancock Street have been reviewed for potential improvements to extend the Quiet Zone throughout the city limits. No crossing improvements have been planned at this time.

A railroad spur line enters the Xcel Energy–Sherco 3 Power Plant. This line averages one train daily at speeds up to 10 mph.

Aviation

Becker does not have a local airport. The closest airport for general passenger aviation and charter service is St. Cloud Regional Airport, which is located approximately 15 miles northwest of Becker (via Highway 10 and CSAH 7/42nd Street).

Transportation Issues

Becker Township’s transportation system currently provides good mobility and access throughout the community with few major problems. However, several transportation issues were raised as part of the community outreach for the comprehensive plan update. A summary of the issues gathered for the comprehensive plan update are listed below, in no particular order:

- There is a need to replace the five miles of missing railroad track between Becker Township and Big Lake to allow future extension of Northstar Commuter Rail Line.
- Additional crossings of the Elk River are needed for developments located along the eastern edge of the community. County Road 24 is the only route to existing and future developments east of the river. These transportation crossings also need to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Concerns have been expressed regarding safety at several intersections. The contributing elements to the perceived unsafe conditions include limited sight distance due to poor geometrics and/or vegetation in the sight corners of a particular intersection.

Transportation Plan

To properly plan for future transportation improvements, the first step in the process is to review existing and future land use plans. Utilizing these plans and various transportation planning tools (e.g., access management guidelines, roadway spacing and design guidelines, and transportation issues raised during the data gathering and input process), a recommended Future Roadway System Plan has been developed (Figure 5.5). The plan shows the future system of roadways by functional classification. This conceptual network of roadways is intended to service the anticipated development based off of Becker Township's future land use plan and is merely a general guide for the location and function of future arterial and collector roadways. Therefore, it is important to remember that more detailed corridor planning is needed to determine the exact alignment of a particular roadway. More detailed analysis of items such as subdivision plats, wetland delineations, and other environmental and/or design-related constraints is required prior to selecting the final alignment and design elements for any particular roadway.

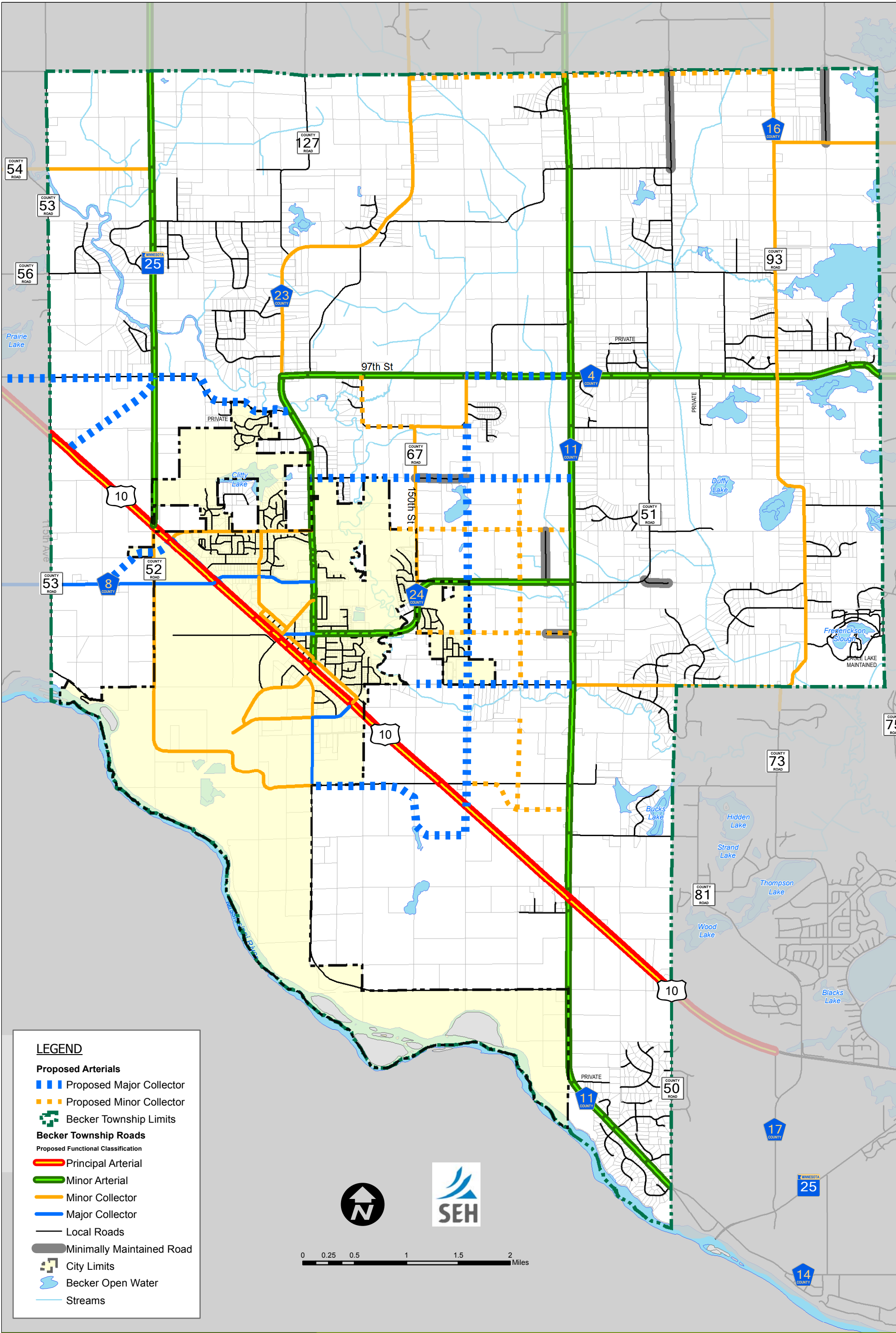
This future roadway system plan can be utilized by the township, landowners, developers, or other interested parties as land develops in the future, and exact alignments can be determined through a more detailed review process. The utilization of the conceptual roadway plan is invaluable to the town as development occurs to ensure that a proper roadway network is built at the time of new and/or redevelopment. Employing these steps when working with developers helps safeguard township funds while ensuring proper roadway networks are built at the time of development. Utilizing this long-range planning process also helps to minimize the amount of land the Town of Becker will need to acquire (or have dedicated) in the future.

Future Roadway Capacity Assessment

As previously stated, the Town of Becker's existing transportation system is well-planned and currently fulfills travel desires of residents, employees, and visitors. However, as development and travel demand increase in the future, issues may arise regarding capacity deficiencies.

Since existing traffic volume information is limited to regional facilities (state highways and Sherburne County roadways), the future traffic volume projections have been prepared based largely on an annual percentage rate increase for state highways (US 10 and TH 25) and a 20-year growth factor for County State Aid Highways.

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LEGEND

Proposed Arterials

- Proposed Major Collector
- Proposed Minor Collector

Becker Township Limits

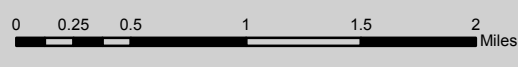
Becker Township Roads

Proposed Functional Classification

- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Minor Collector
- Major Collector
- Local Roads
- Minimally Maintained Road

Other Features

- City Limits
- Becker Open Water
- Streams



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Users consider facilities congested when travel speed is regularly reduced below posted speeds or when long back-ups begin to occur at intersections. Research by the Minnesota Department of Transportation's FIRST response team has confirmed that roadway congestion often leads to increases in crashes, diversion of trips from desired roadways or use of local routes (neighborhood streets) for regional movements, and increases in travel times. Referring back to Table 5.1, we see that by 2030 some town routes will be approaching or exceeding traffic volume thresholds indicating operational deficiencies (LOS D, E or F). This is determined by observing 2030 forecast traffic volumes, existing roadway capacities, and an assessment of traffic demand on roadways in and around the town. The segment of Sherburne CSAH 11 south of Highway 10 is projected to have future traffic volumes (18,000 trips) that would exceed the capacity of the existing two-lane roadway. Therefore, planning (both land use and transportation) and monitoring of traffic conditions will be important to allow for the timely implementation of needed improvements. In addition, a number of isolated intersections may need to have turn lanes or appropriate traffic control devices (e.g., stop sign conditions, traffic signals, roundabouts, etc.) implemented. It is recommended that in the future, if an intersection is experiencing regular delays and/or safety concerns, a control evaluation be conducted to determine if and what type of improvements would best resolve a particular issue for that intersection.

Future Municipal State Aid Streets (MSAS)

Although townships are not recognized as local government units eligible for receiving Municipal State Aid (MSA) funding, Becker Township is nearing the 5,000 population threshold that a qualified LGU would meet to be eligible to receive state aid money for its street system. The township wishes to explore and work toward being recognized as an MSA entity to be eligible for these transportation funds.

The purpose of the state aid program is to provide resources from the Highway Users Tax Distribution Fund to assist local governments with the construction and maintenance of community-interest highways and streets on the state aid system. The goals of the state aid program are to provide users of secondary highways and streets with (a) safe highways and streets, (b) adequate mobility and structural capacity on highways and streets, and (c) an integrated transportation network. State aid funds are collected by the state according to the constitution and law, apportioned among the counties and cities, and used by local governments for aid in the construction, improvement, and maintenance of state aid roadways. The municipalities' share of the Highway Users Tax Distribution Fund for the 2012 apportionment was \$144,682,808. This amount was \$5,601,669, or 4.0%, more than the January 2011 apportionment. The available funds are distributed 50% based on population and 50% based on adjusted construction (money) needs.

According to 2012 population estimates released by the State Demographic Center, Becker Township has a total population of 4,938. Based on past growth rates, the township should anticipate reaching the MSA population threshold of 5,000 in the next 3-5 years. If the town were successful in obtaining MSAS government unit designation, it would have to complete the Certification of Mileage review process, which determines the maximum miles an entity is allowed to designate as MSAS. Working with the MnDOT District 3 state aid staff, the town would determine its MSAS mileage and which streets to place on its MSAS system. The actual number of

miles is based on several factors, including mileage of township streets (improved and unimproved), miles of trunk highway, miles of County and State Aid Highways, county roads, and roadway turn backs located within the township.

Once the designation process was complete, the town's allocation would be divided into construction and maintenance accounts that could be drawn upon to make improvements and/or maintain its MSAS routes.

Future Alternative Modes of Transportation

Travel modes that are alternatives to private use of the automobile are growing in importance in all areas throughout the nation. It is envisioned that the multimodal system in Becker will develop through cooperation and in partnership with the state, Sherburne County, and private partnerships.

Because the multimodal system and facilities serving the residents of Becker are limited, the town shall explore the implementation of a "complete street" policy that would require future transportation improvements to consider all users, including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit uses.

Rail

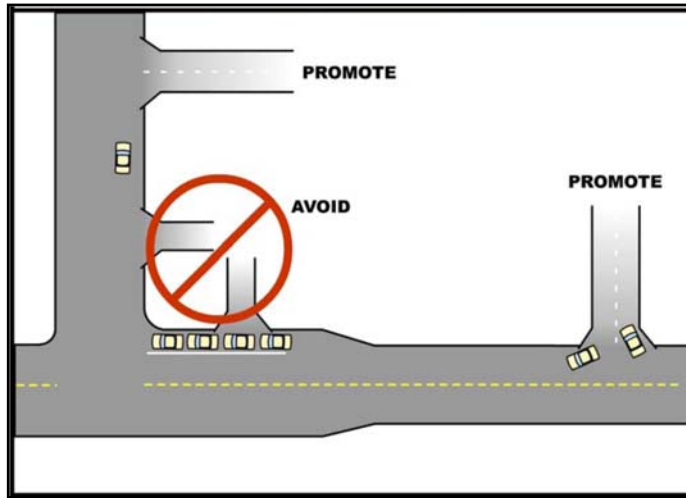
The Town of Becker shall continue to engage in the future planning of the extension of the Northstar Commuter rail corridor and of a possible transit station located in the Town of Becker near the Township boundary.

Other Transportation Planning Tools

Access Management Guidelines

Access management is an effort to maintain the effective flow of traffic on the network so that each roadway can provide its functional duties while accommodating access needs of adjacent land. Successful access management requires cooperation between land development and transportation interests in order to protect the public's investment in roads. There is a direct correlation between the amount of access provided and the ability to move traffic on a roadway. Higher levels of access reduce a roadway's ability to move through-traffic. Therefore, principal and minor arterials that have a high mobility function should have lower levels of access, and local roads that focus less on mobility should be allowed to have higher levels of access to adjacent properties. In addition to the mobility of a roadway, the amount of access can have an effect on the safety of a roadway.

Figure 5.6—Proper Driveway Location

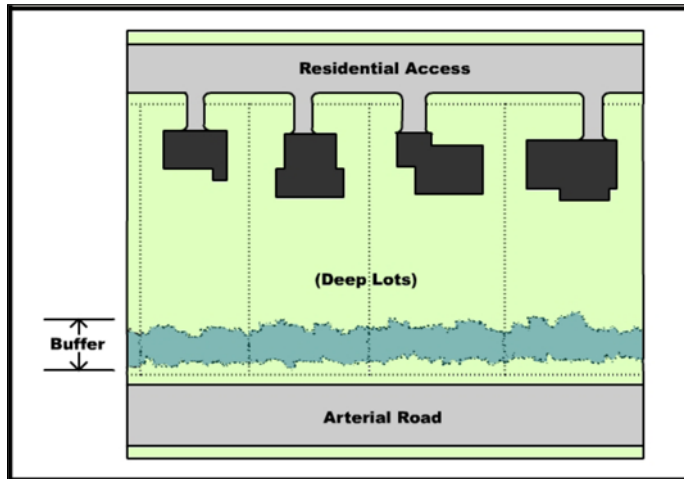


By law, reasonable access must be provided to each parcel that fronts a public roadway unless access rights have been purchased. Therefore, early coordination between land development and roadway access needs to occur. Access is typically managed through local subdivision, zoning regulations, access permits, and development standards. For Becker Township, the adoption of access spacing guidelines is recommended as a strategy to effectively manage existing access and to provide access controls for new developments along higher-functioning roadways. When the Becker Township receives a development proposal that includes access onto a roadway under the jurisdiction of the state or county, the town will

coordinate the review of these proposals with the appropriate agencies. The Township can also participate in the design process with the appropriate agency when roadways are proposed for construction or reconstruction to ensure proper design and location of access points. Figure 5.6 shows an access planning application for a driveway designed to minimize vehicle conflicts, improve safety, and maintain reasonable levels of access to land uses.

Another access management example is the following: when a new subdivision is proposed along an arterial or major collector route, the development proposal should be reviewed in relation to access not only to the lots within that particular development (plat) but also to adjacent properties that may experience land use changes in the future. A focus on providing alternative access to an arterial through a connected local network of roads should be considered. An internal street network should be designed to accommodate and connect to adjacent parcels that may someday experience similar levels of development. The ability to minimize the number of access points (public streets and private drives) to arterial and collector roads that have a functional duty of providing mobility over land access is a primary objective of managing access (see Figure 5.7).

Figure 5.7—Minimize Access to Higher Function Roadways



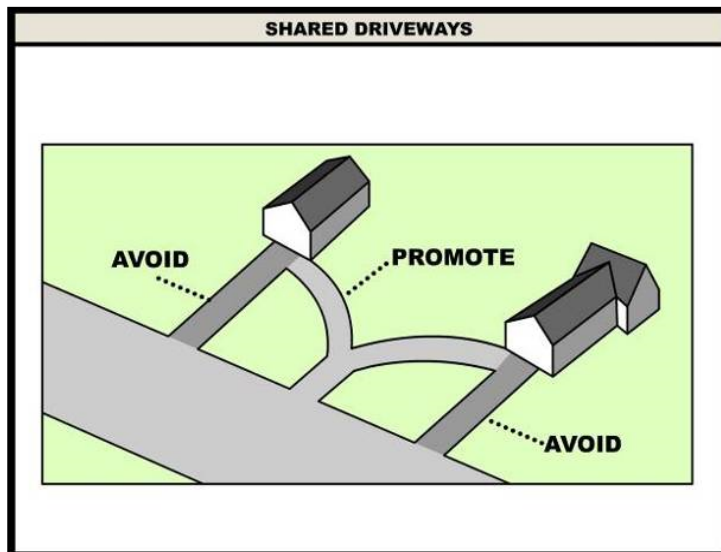
As noted above, access guidelines can be implemented using different methods. Any process should also consider hardship cases that fall outside the guidelines. In existing corridors where substantial development has already occurred, the number of existing access points usually exceeds recommended access guidelines. Unless these areas are undergoing redevelopment, access management must be approached differently. The access management strategy for such areas should entail minimizing new accesses while consolidating/reducing existing accesses as redevelopment occurs. The following suggestions provide alternatives for minimizing access and for

addressing access issues when the guidelines cannot be met.

Shared Access Points or Cross-Access Easements for Adjacent Properties

Cross-access easements are a form of access consolidation that involves agreements between adjacent properties to maintain a joint/shared access point (Figure 5.8). This technique can be challenging to implement in high-density urban areas. However, it can be especially applicable along county highway sections where a number of adjacent residential or commercial lots have already been developed but too few to make construction of a public street feasible. Another example of where this technique could be considered is when there becomes a need to remove/relocate an existing driveway due to proposed improvements along the public roadway.

Figure 5.8—Consolidated/Shared Access Point



Consolidate and Limit the Number of Access Points for Individual Properties

Access consolidation techniques are most applicable in situations where a substantial amount of land development has already occurred. Consolidation simply reduces the number of access points, thereby decreasing the number of potential conflict points. Consolidation is most effective during redevelopment of parcels. The implementation of this technique must be accompanied by good internal vehicle circulation in parking areas. The remedy for poor site design is too often a request for additional access to a roadway. Several developments within the township

currently have multiple access points that may or may not be critical for everyday business operations.

New Developments Shall Obtain Access from an Adjacent Road

When a request for land development is submitted, specific access management techniques can be required prior to granting approval. Interim access can also be granted pending further development in the area that may enable construction of supporting roads to provide alternative access. The township's approval process (i.e., platting and subdivision ordinance) may require dedication of right-of-way to accommodate future construction of a frontage/backage road. Streets in a development should be aligned to provide access to adjacent properties, which helps promote neighborhood connectivity, and provides quick and efficient routes for emergency vehicles and other services (mail, garbage, road maintenance).

Encourage Proper Lot Layout to Minimize Access Points

Promote access points onto local routes instead of onto arterials or collectors. Direct residential access onto arterial or collector routes slows traffic flow and can result in conflicts when traffic levels increase. Access points should be placed on local roads, not on high-speed, high-volume state or county roads. Another technique is to require that new developments located at an intersection (corner lot) obtain access from the secondary (intersecting) roadway rather than from the highway. The access to the local roadway should be designed in a manner that will not adversely affect the safety and operations of the local street and intersection.

Right-of-Way Preservation

There are many different techniques available to protect roadway corridors for future improvements. The basic approaches can be summarized as follows:

- *Land acquisition (purchase of easements, title purchase, and eminent domain)* Land acquisition is an approach typically applied when specific improvements are imminent. The applicability of acquisition is linked to the availability of funding.
- *Landowner agreements (development agreement, transferable development rights)* Landowner agreements are often limited in effectiveness when dealing with a large project area. By definition, these agreements are applied on a parcel-by-parcel basis and are most effective when dealing with larger land holdings.
- *Land use regulations (development exactions, ordinance setbacks, official mapping, and subdivision regulations)* Land use regulation techniques are facilitated through the comprehensive planning and zoning process. Certain regulations such as setbacks can be applied, while others such as official maps are typically developed for individual corridors and require a more substantial level of corridor definition.
- *Access management (limiting property access)* Access management principles should be considered during all transportation planning activities. To be successful, it is important that the guidelines be applied consistently and uniformly at the time development and platting occurs.

In summary, the applicability of these right-of-way preservation options depends on many factors, including available funding, the immediacy of development, and the timing of the need for a transportation improvement.

Goals and Strategies

Outlined below are transportation goals and strategies. The goals indicate a specific policy direction and help organize strategies, while the strategies are detailed action items that are necessary to initiate or complete a goal, such as a program, policy, and/or project.

Goal 1: Effectively manage the transportation needs of Becker Township and the surrounding area for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Strategy 1.1—Maintain and, where possible, improve access to businesses that enable successful business practices, while also managing safe traffic operations.

Strategy 1.2—As the community grows, expand public transit services and facilities in a fiscally responsible manner to ensure mobility for all residents and visitors.

Strategy 1.3—Require connectivity of collector or local streets (including their pedestrian facilities) between residential developments and other land uses for developing areas.

Goal 2: Facilitate the movement of people, goods, and services within and through the township on a safe, convenient, and coordinated network of routes using a variety of transportation modes.

Strategy 2.1—Establish a complete roadway network based on balancing the principles of sustainable place making and roadway functional classification.

Strategy 2.2—Establish and maintain a complete transportation system for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians, balancing safety and fiscal resources.

Strategy 2.3—Monitor roadway/intersection multimodal capacity and provide timely and adequate improvements to accommodate anticipated growth of the community and resulting traffic volumes.

Strategy 2.4—Work with area businesses to obtain improved rail service to/from the Burlington Northern Santa Fe rail line.

Strategy 2.5—Support the continued development of east-west collector roadways and installation of frontage/backage roads for commercial and industrial developments along arterial roadways.

Strategy 2.6—Establish and maintain a complete transportation system for agricultural traffic.

Goal 3: Balance transportation needs with Land Use Principles

Strategy 3.1—Minimize the number of private access points to minor arterial and major collector roadways as part of the development review process.

Strategy 3.2—Require that access points (roadway intersections and private driveways) be adequately spaced along arterial and major collector roadways to minimize traffic conflicts.

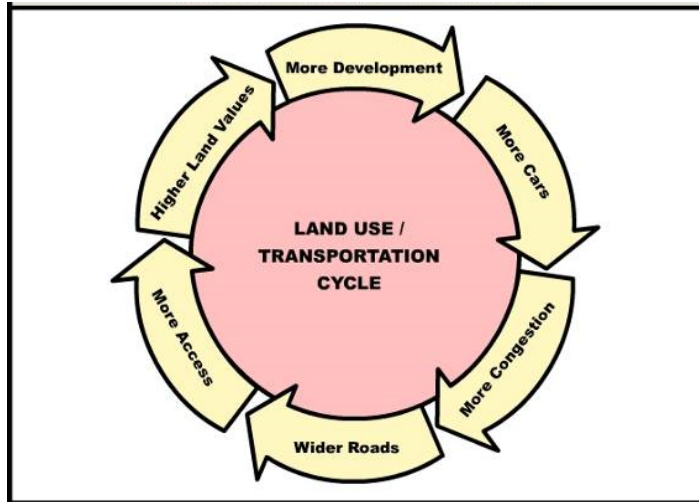
Strategy 3.3—Require adequate access and interconnectivity between local and collector streets to distribute rather than concentrate traffic.

Strategy 3.4—Balance the transportation system needs with the potential impacts and effects on natural features of the community (e.g., Elk River Environmental Protection Corridor).

Strategy 3.5—Provide convenient access to natural features and opportunities to support active living and healthy lifestyle activities.

Strategy 3.6—Consider multimodal traffic impact studies for larger scale developments.

Figure 5.9—Land Use and Transportation Cycle



Goal 4: Implement the transportation vision through strategic funding as well as objective and definitive decision making with the collaboration of jurisdictions (MnDOT, Sherburne County, Town of Becker, and surrounding townships).

Strategy 4.1 Investigate how Becker Township can become eligible for municipal state aid street (MSAS) funds.

Strategy 4.2—The Town of Becker would then empower township staff to pursue state and federal transportation funding and evaluate nontraditional transportation-funding mechanisms.

Strategy 4.3—Implement an assessment program that ensures large volume and size transportation users are funding road maintenance and improvements in proportion to their use and impact on the town’s transportation system.

Strategy 4.4—Plan for and preserve future opportunities for necessary transportation system improvements, including multimodal routes and facilities.

Strategy 4.5—Require adequate right-of-way dedication for new and/or expanded roadways based on the planned function under future conditions.

Strategy 4.6—Realize necessary transportation system improvements in a cost-effective and timely fashion.

Strategy 4.7—Continue to implement a street rehabilitation program throughout the community.

Strategy 4.8—Encourage business owners, residents, and community groups to be active participants in seeking funding by contacting local, state, and federal decision makers in support of transportation funding.

6.0 Parks and Trails



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Purpose

The purpose of the Parks and Trails Section is to describe the existing park and trail system in Becker and plan for its future.

The Parks and Trails element combines natural resources preservation with the provision of open space and recreational facilities for the community. A detailed inventory of existing natural resources and possible recreation areas are identified in Figures 7.1 and 7.2, respectively.

As Becker Township grows in population and areas of the township are developed, preservation of high-quality natural resources and provision of park facilities will be necessary. The town also relies on and provides funding to the City of Becker for regional and local park and recreation systems and programs that benefit township residents, especially children.

The Town of Becker's open spaces have the potential to provide the community with a wide range of recreational opportunities, maintain property values, and preserve valuable wildlife habitat and scenic landscapes. Open space provides scenic opportunities and a way to preserve the small-town character of Becker Township. Open space primarily refers to undeveloped areas within the fabric of township development. It includes sensitive areas, natural plant communities, shore lands, wetlands, water bodies, wildlife management and water fowl production areas, wildlife refuges, and so on.

The park and trail system also fosters a positive image of the Town of Becker's commitment to providing a natural environment and recreation system that helps define the community's quality of life. A well-developed park, trails, and open space plan promotes a sense of community where residents are engaged with neighbors.

Research has shown the importance of staying active, socially engaged, and physically fit. This is especially significant as Americans are becoming an aging population who, both young and old, are experiencing health-related issues associated with lack of exercise, such as obesity. In addition, there has been a growing tendency toward singular entertainment and non-direct communication with easier access to the Internet.

Recreation programs provide a community tool to address these issues by doing the following:

- Providing opportunities to socialize with other members of the community
- Providing health-related benefits
- Stimulating local economy
- Providing healthy rather than destructive pastime opportunities for youth

Existing Conditions

Park System

Sherburne County Oak Savanna Land Preserve: Sherburne County has approximately 200 acres of open space (Sherburne County Oak Savanna) located in the heart of Becker Township. The Oak Savanna Land Preserve (City of Becker)

was acquired in 1997 as a gift from Willard and Margaret Cox. The site offers a variety of rare natural plant communities, original sand dune blowouts from the 1940s, and quality wildlife habitat. Currently there are several miles of trail maintained for multiple users including trails designated for hiking, cross country skiing, and horseback riding. The park is considered Sherburne County's first regional-type park.

Becker City Park: Adjacent to the Oak Savanna Land Preserve is the Becker City Park. Becker City Park serves as a regional destination facility offering environmental education, recreation, and open space views. Within the regional park is the Sherburne History Center, which includes a museum, library/archives, community meeting rooms, and a gift shop.

Bridgeview Park Reserve: Bridgeview Park Reserve (29 acres) is located along the Mississippi River in both Becker Township and Big Lake Township and features scenic river vistas, natural plant communities, and a mowed trail system. The land was acquired in 1998 through a Natural and Scenic Area State Grant. The primary goal of the park is to protect the ecological features of the site while providing educational and recreational opportunities for its users.

Xcel Energy Buffer Property: Hunting and hiking is allowed by permit on land owned by Xcel Energy along the Mississippi River. The primary purpose of this open space land is to serve as buffer space along the river and as protection for the company's electrical generating plants.

Snuffy's Landing: Located within the Becker city limits but accessed via township and county roads, Snuffy's landing is a 17-acre natural park along the Mississippi River. The park offers a DNR boat landing to the river as well as parking areas and an overlook of the Mississippi River.

Trail System

Approximately 2,420 feet of 10-foot-wide bituminous trail was installed on the northwest side of 180th Avenue from the intersection of 121st Street to the Snake River in Snake River Estates. The trail was approved by Sherburne County as part of the plat process and installed by the developer at the time the development was constructed in 2006.

Table 6.1—Current Park Inventory and Classifications

Park	Classification	Location	Acres
Sherburne	Special Use Park	Northeast corner of Becker Township	402 within Becker Twp
Sherburne	Special Use Park	Center of Becker Township on northwest side of City of Becker	200
Bridgeview	Community Park	Along Mississippi River near Bridgeview Development	29
Becker	Community Park	Center of Becker Township adjacent to Oak Savanna Land Preserve	110
Snuffy's	Special Use Park	12812 115th Avenue along Mississippi River northwest of Xcel's Sherco Power Plant	17
Xcel	Private Facility	Generating Plant Buffer Property along Mississippi River	Approx. 1500
Snake	Local Trail	Along 180th Avenue in Snake River Estate	Approx. 2,420 ft. paved; 1.25 mi. gravel

Source: Becker Township Planning and Engineering Staff

Vision

The Town of Becker parks and trails will preserve high-quality natural resources and provide residents of all ages and capabilities with a range of active and passive recreational opportunities that promote health, social outreach, and a general sense of well-being.

Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles provide a framework for developing and enhancing the Town of Becker's park and trail system:

- Preserve high-quality natural areas and open space that protect wildlife corridors and provide parkland that is an integral part of the community.
- Parkland should not be "leftover," or undevelopable parcels but rather should be buildable for active recreation and of high natural resource quality (landscape displaying biodiversity in both flora and fauna) for passive recreation.
- Parks and natural spaces should be well integrated within the township and should be visible from other uses.
- Parks and open space should serve as green space within the community, providing natural "breathing room" from the built environment for people and healthy habitats for urban wildlife.
- Where applicable, develop a high-quality, interconnected trail system that emphasizes harmony with the natural environment while providing recreation and transportation as a means to link parks and open space together.
- Continue to support the City of Becker's park and recreation system to ensure that the township residents, especially children, have access to active and organized recreational programs.

Park Plan

The park plan is based on a number of factors, including community input and standards recommended by the National Recreation and Park Association.

Park Standards and Guidelines

The following section presents park and trail system classifications based on

- National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)
- American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration—Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Guidelines
- Planning and Urban Design Standards (American Planning Association, 2006)
- Metropolitan Council’s regional-level classifications
- State of Minnesota, Department of Natural Resources, 2007, Trail Planning, Design, and Development Guidelines, Trails, and Waterways Division.

These standards serve as general spatial and functional guidelines only; it is important that the Town of Becker adopt these standards for local use. The following is a list of the proposed park and trail classifications, including the level of service (LOS) application most relevant to Becker’s needs.

Community Park

Description: Larger in size and serves a broader purpose than a neighborhood park with the purpose of providing recreational opportunities for several neighborhoods or larger sections of the community. Typically developed to provide both active and passive recreation opportunities for larger groups while preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.

Location Criteria: Should serve two or more neighborhoods within a ½-mile to 3.0-mile radius.

Size Criteria: 30–50 acres (*Size may be determined as needed to accommodate desired uses*)

Site Selection Guidelines: Site should be easily accessible from entire service area, should be centrally located, and should have strong connection to other park areas. Site development should provide for both active and passive recreation opportunities. The landscape of the site should possess predevelopment aesthetic value and not be a leftover outlot or located within a 100-year flood plain. When possible, the site should be located adjacent to natural resource areas and greenways. These areas tend to provide landscapes with greater biodiversity, enhancing the passive recreational experience.

Development Guidelines: While the community park should be designed to accommodate both active and passive recreational opportunities, programming should remain, for the most part, limited. Appropriate active park elements would include larger play areas with creative play equipment for a range of ages, court games, informal ball fields for youth play, tennis, volleyball and shuffleboard courts, horseshoe pits, ice skating, swimming pools and beaches, archery ranges, and disc golf. Parking lots should be provided to accommodate use, and limited lighting should be provided for facility illumination, security, and safety.

Based on a the Natural Park Standard of providing 10 acres of parkland and open space per 1,000 people using the current 2010 census population of 4,538, Becker Township would exceed the guideline by 129.62 acres. It is important to note, however, that while the total parkland acres in the system (excluding open space) exceeds national guidelines, the ratio alone does not imply that the community is being provided with an adequate range of park types or classifications and recreation facilities.

Schools and Private Facilities

It is important to recognize the contribution of schools and private facilities to the recreational resources provided to county residents. They often provide the following recreational facilities: athletic fields and courses, in-door swimming pools, golf courses, horseback-riding facilities, marinas, day camps, and ski areas. Open space is also provided to the community by privately owned entities such as corporations, employee associations, and nonprofit agencies.

Special Use Park

The term “special use parks” covers a broad range of parks and recreational facilities oriented toward a single purpose, such as historical, cultural, or social sites. These sites may offer local historical, educational, or cultural recreational opportunities. Examples of this type of park include historic downtowns, performing arts parks and facilities, arboretums, public gardens, indoor theater, churches, and public buildings. Other examples include community and senior centers, community theatres, hockey arenas, golf courses, aquatic parks, tennis centers, softball complexes, and sports stadiums. Community centers, however, are typically located in neighborhoods or community parks.

Greenways

Greenways are publicly or privately owned open space corridors that typically follow natural land or water features and are primarily managed to protect or enhance natural resources. They also link park components to create a cohesive park, recreation, and open space system that emphasizes the natural environment. Greenways allow for safe, uninterrupted pedestrian movement between parks throughout a community. They can enhance property values while helping to achieve the conservation corridor and walkability strategies of this plan.

Greenway locations are primarily based on availability of land and should be encouraged as park dedication in the subdivision process. Greenways are typically 25 feet wide within a subdivision and 50 feet minimum with 200 feet optimal space where space allows.

Trail Plan

Trail Service Level

The service level of a trail refers to the capacity of the trail or trail system to meet the needs and expectations of a given population or user group within a defined geographical area. The following describes the hierarchy of six service levels. The service level within a trail system increases as user groups become broader, more specialized, and/or more resource dependent. Also included in this section is a description of private trails.

State Trails

State trails are typically destination trails and serve a statewide population. Travel time to a trailhead is often one to four hours. State trails are a minimum of 20 miles long and traverse high-quality natural resource and scenic landscapes. Abandoned railroad corridors are often developed to accommodate state trails with connections to state parks or regional, county, or local attractions.

Regional Trails

Regional trails serve multiple cities and/or counties in greater Minnesota. It takes about 30 minutes or more to travel to a trailhead. Typically, the trail must be long enough for at least an hour of nonmotorized recreational travel, which is about five miles of walking or 20 miles of bicycling. Given the highest priority are those trails showing scenic qualities and a diversity of natural resource attributes. High priority is given to connections between state trails and urban centers, parks, and other trail systems. Regional trails should provide a multimodal surface.

County Trails

County trails differ from local trails in that they are typically located within county parks. Lengths can vary considerably. They are frequently designed for specific uses (i.e., mountain biking, skiing, interpretive trails, etc.).

Local Trails

Local trails provide “close-to-home” opportunities (typically within a five-minute drive or 10-minute walk) and often have direct access from neighborhoods. Trail linkages to county, regional, and state trails are desirable. Local trails have the following characteristics:

- Mostly nonmotorized.
- Lengths vary from ¼ mile to numerous miles of interconnected trails within a site or between communities.
- Most often cities and townships have jurisdiction and funding responsibilities for local trails.

Blue Trails

Blue trails are dedicated stretches of rivers or waterways that enjoy special clean water protection and are destinations for boating, canoeing, fishing, and other outdoor recreation. They provide opportunities for people to discover rivers and waterways and help connect urban and rural communities to the outdoors. Blue trails also provide the following:

- Healthy recreation and educational opportunities for people of all ages.
- Connections for people to access special protected areas such as wildlife refuges, parks, and forests.
- Opportunities to build partnerships and support for natural resource conservation.

Private Trails

Private trails are those that traverse private land as part of larger trail system. The most common are grant-in-aid snowmobile trails, which traverse private land

through agreements secured by local snowmobile clubs and are important to maintaining the network for snowmobiles in the state.

Trail Classifications and Guidelines

Trails serve a number of functions, including commuter corridors linking business and retail centers, parks and natural areas, schools and neighborhoods, and communities. Trails support the principles of walkability to “create a healthy community that makes active living a routine part of daily life.” Planning for an inter-connected trail system enables residents to choose another mode of transportation to experience the natural and cultural resources or to travel to a favorite recreation destination within the Town of Becker.

The following are trail classifications and guidelines consistent with the service levels described in the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Trail and Planning, Design, and Development Guidelines (2007) and are relevant for the planning of a county-level trail system. The trails are categorized according to type of use, surfacing, location, or season and include Share-Used Paved Trails, Natural Surface Trails, On-Road Bikeways, and Winter Use Trails. The use of this classification system will provide a clearly defined framework for future development of Becker’s trail system.

Share-Use Trails

Classification: Neighborhood trail, city trail, county trail, regional trail, and state trail.

Uses: Walking, jogging, bicycling, and in-line skating (in-line skating accommodated only when asphalt paved).

Service Levels: Trails occur at local, county, regional, and state service levels.

Natural Surface Trails

Classification: Hiking trail, equestrian trail, mountain biking trail, off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail, forest access routes and roads, shared-use nature trails

Uses: User groups are consistent with classifications; Shared-use trails can be nonmotorized or motorized, but typically not both.

Service Levels: Hiking trails occur at local, county, regional, and state service levels, Equestrian and mountain biking trails are common at county, regional, and state level; OHV trails are almost always at state or county level; and local-access trails typically traverse larger tracts of land at federal, state, or county level.

On-Road Bikeways

Classification: Bike route, bike lane

Uses: Bicyclists are primary users, and in-line skaters are secondary users.

Service Levels: Bikeways are common are local, county, regional, and state service levels; they augment but do not replace shared-use paved trails.

Winter-Use Trails

Classification: Cross-country ski trail, snowshoeing trail, winter hiking trail, dog sledding trail, skijoring trail, and snowmobile trail.

Uses: User groups are consistent with classifications.

Service Levels: Groomed cross-country ski trails and winter hiking trails are common at county, regional, and state service levels. Dog sledding and skijoring trails are most common at regional and state levels, and snowmobile trails are typically at the county, state, or private level.

For a greater discussion of trails, refer to the State of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 2007, Trail Planning, Design, and Development Guidelines, Trails and Waterways Division, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN.

Goals and Strategies

Outlined below are goals and strategies for the park, recreation, and trail system. Goals provide general statements intended to be attained through implementation of strategies. Strategies, in turn are detailed actions necessary to initiate or actualize a proposed goal.

Goal 1: Provide a sufficient amount of public land to meet the recreational needs of existing and future residents.

Strategy 1.1—Identify land appropriate for natural resource preservation and/or restoration.

Goal 2: Provide adequate and equitable funding for the acquisition, improvement, development, and maintenance of park and trail system components.

Strategy 2.1—Pursue grants from regional, state, and federal agencies to obtain funding for park and open space planning, acquisition, and administration.

Strategy 2.2—Continue to establish funds for future park and trail acquisitions and capital investments through the use of parkland dedications with new residential development in the township.

Strategy 2.3—Explore the use of township parkland money, both in township and county funds, to partner in financing capital park and trail projects within neighboring jurisdictions.

Goal 3: Ensure that private development will adhere to Becker Township standards for parks, trails, and/or open space preservation by requiring that any new development for parks, trails, and open space follows the requirements of the Joint Planning Board Zoning and Subdivision regulations.

Strategy 3.1—Maintain zoning and subdivision regulations that provide for and encourage the continued development of parks, trails, and preservation of open space.

Strategy 3.2—Maintain zoning regulations that protect the natural and aesthetic views and atmosphere of trails and park spaces from adjacent land uses.

Strategy 3.3—Apply official controls, such as parkland dedication requirements, to ensure that appropriate and developable parkland is provided with new development. Whenever possible, the land dedication should reflect the adopted park, recreation, and trail plan.

Strategy 3.4—Evaluate the quality and usability of land for parks, trails, and open space being proposed for parkland dedication by a developer.

Goal 4: Protect open space within the system to preserve sensitive wildlife habitat, protect aesthetic views, and provide interconnecting greenways throughout the community.

Strategy 4.1—Evaluate open spaces to determine passive or active recreation potential, preservation, or restoration potential as “natural areas.”

Strategy 4.2—Maintain and develop natural corridors to foster ecosystem continuity and provide connections to parks and open space.

Strategy 4.3—Work cooperatively with adjacent communities and other public agencies to develop an integrated open space system.

Strategy 4.4—Protect and manage publicly owned open space areas within the Town of Becker.

Goal 5: Develop and Adopt a Parks, Trails, and Open Space System Plan.

Strategy 5.1—Review the plan annually and update every five years.

Strategy 5.2—Conduct needs assessment every 10 years as a basis for development and update of the plan.

Strategy 5.3—Consider all public and private recreational opportunities for school facilities, the City of Becker, Sherburne County, and federal agencies in the planning of the town’s Park, Trail, and Open Space System Plan.

Strategy 5.4—Coordinate efforts with local, state, and federal agencies and local stakeholders to develop the park, trail, and open space system plan.



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7.0 Natural Resources



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Purpose

The purpose of the Natural Resources section is to summarize Becker Township's natural resources and to establish goals and strategies for their preservation, protection, enhancement, and use.

Introduction

Becker Township's natural resources contribute to the quality of life enjoyed by its residents. While much of the land within the township has been cleared for agriculture and urban development, many areas along the rivers, streams, and wetlands still have remnants of native vegetation (see Figures 7.1 and 7.2, respectively).

Land near the Mississippi River, west of the town, has been mostly cultivated except for Xcel Energy's land, which currently serves as open space along the river. Areas along the Elk River have not been so extensively cleared and are characterized by marshes, wetlands, and large stands of deciduous trees, with oaks as the dominant species. Remnants of windbreaks that were planted across Becker in the 1920s to help prevent wind erosion of the sandy soils can still be found.

Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles reflect the community's desire to preserve and protect its sensitive natural resources and scenic areas:

- Protect the significant natural and scenic areas of Becker Township, such as the Elk River and Mississippi River Corridors, oak woodlands, grasslands, and prime agricultural lands.
- Balance the need to develop with the need to protect and conserve significant wildlife habitat, recreational, and agricultural areas.
- Support the preservation of greenways along the Elk River and Mississippi corridors.

Vision

Becker Township should be a community where natural resources are protected and maintained to preserve key wildlife habitats and visual quality.

Existing Conditions

Ecosystem and Wildlife

Becker Township, as part of Sherburne County, is located within the Anoka Sandplain, which is a subsection of the Eastern Broadleaf Forest. Historically, the area was originally oak savanna, primarily composed of bur and white oaks with a ground layer predominately of big and little bluestem grasses. With agriculture, urban and rural development, and the cessation of natural fires, the oak savanna has evolved into patches of more dense woodlands. The native savanna and the conifer windbreaks have historically helped to define Becker's character.

Wildlife in Becker Township is concentrated along the Elk and Mississippi Rivers, around wetland and bottomland areas, and within oak woodlands. Windbreaks have also provided some habitat and connectivity value. Preservation of these habitats is critical to providing areas for community wildlife. Typically found in the

Eastern Broadleaf Forest subsection are birds such as sand hill cranes, trumpeter swans, bald eagles, bobolinks, larks, and sparrows, along with other small migratory songbirds. Other important wildlife include badgers, blanding's turtles, and gopher snakes.

General Topography

The physical geography of Becker Township consists of lakes and streams in the northeastern two-thirds of the township and agricultural land in the southwestern one-third of the township, roughly divided by Trunk Highway 10. Coupled with a relatively flat topography, land characteristics combine to create a landscape with extensive wet areas and marshland surrounding most streams.

Water Resources

Public water bodies, including many natural environment lakes, rivers, creeks, and wetlands, are located in Becker Township. The Mississippi River in Becker Township is part of the Minnesota Wild and Scenic River System, a system that was created as part of the Minnesota Wild and Scenic River Act in 1973. The purpose of the Act was to create a statewide system to preserve and protect Minnesota Rivers with outstanding natural, scenic, scientific, historic, cultural, and recreational value.

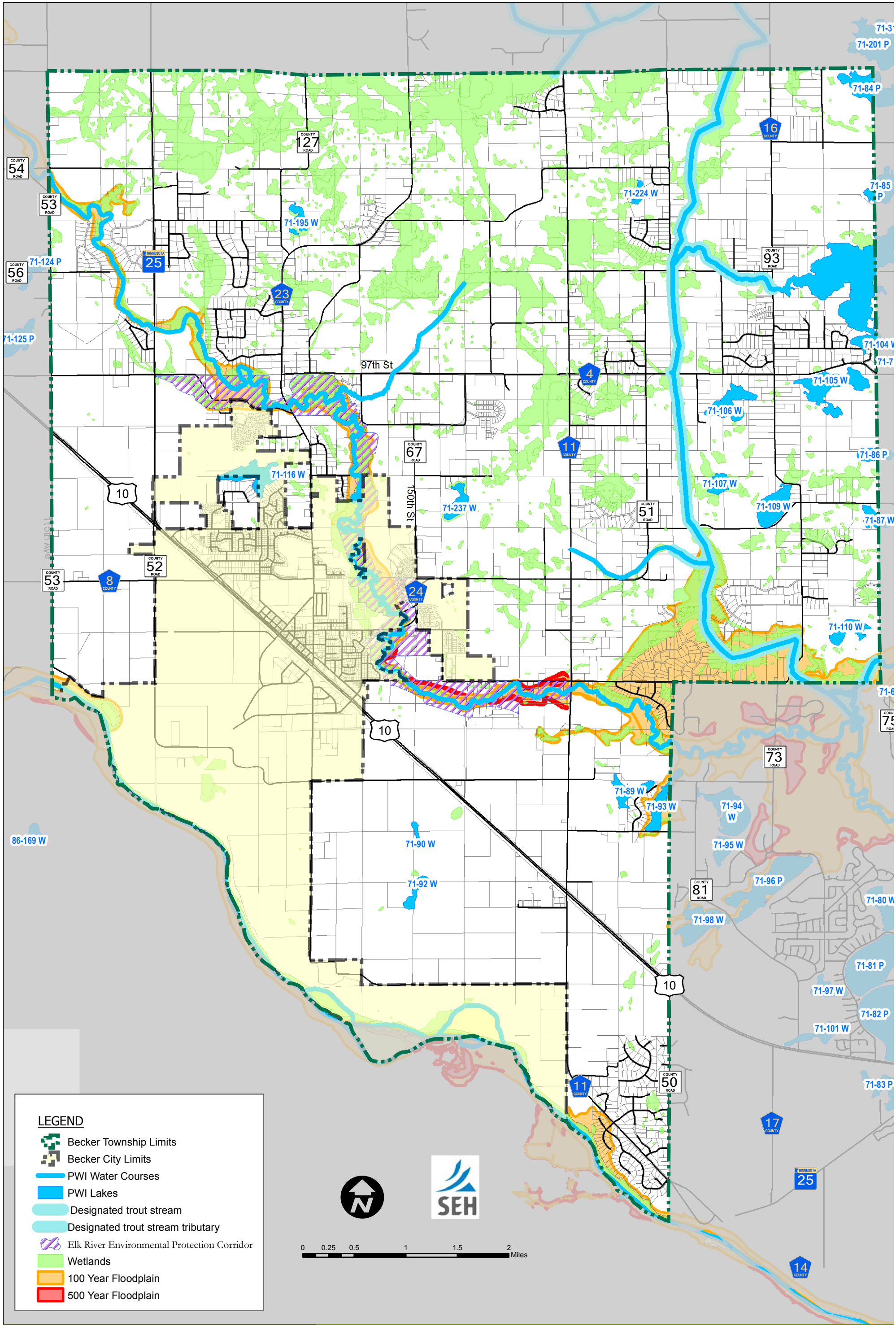
The segment of the Mississippi River that flows through Becker is classified as a recreational river. This designation extends from the county line at the Clearwater River (between Stearns and Wright counties and State Highway 24 in Sherburne County) to the northwestern boundaries of the City of Anoka and the City of Champlin.

According to the classification, recreational rivers are defined as those rivers that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past and that may have adjacent lands which are considerably developed, but that are still capable of being managed so as to further the purposes of this act.

Wetlands

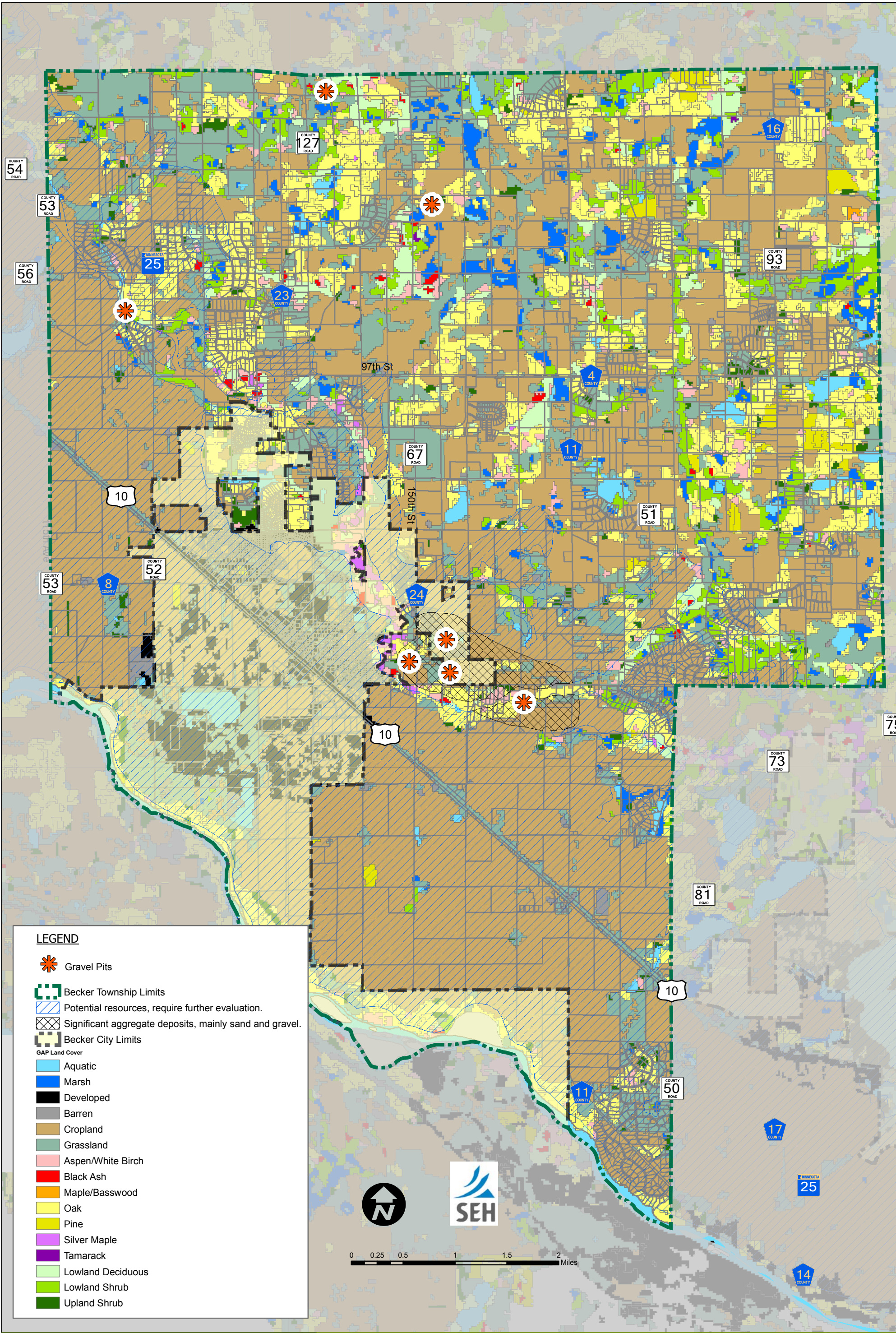
Wetlands provide a number of important functions in rural developing communities, such as removing sediments and nutrients from runoff water. Through a combination of filtration and percolation, wetlands are particularly effective at filtering out the fine sediments that most degrade water quality. By providing stormwater storage, wetlands help prevent flooding and related erosion. Wildlife, including migratory waterfowl, use wetlands as their habitat. Near lakes, wetlands may serve as breeding grounds for fish. As an edge environment between land and water, wetlands offer unique opportunities for education and research.

There are approximately 6,271.79 acres of wetlands in Becker Township. They are located primarily along the northeastern portions of Becker Township.



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8.0 Implementation

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Table 8.1—Implementation Action Items

Plan Element	Action Item	Priority	Short-Term (1–5 Years)	Medium-Term (5–10 Years)	Ongoing
Land Use and Housing					
	Update the Comprehensive Zoning and Subdivision ordinances to conform with policy statements found within the 2014 Comprehensive Plan.	High			
	Review the Comprehensive Plan annually to identify areas in need of amendment, and report to the Joint Planning Board.	Medium			
	Evaluate land use and capacity every five years with the comprehensive plan to determine development expansion needs.	Medium			
	Continue to coordinate growth and annexation strategies with the City of Becker.	High			
	Continue to work regularly with the development community to ensure that local housing needs are being met without burdening the existing township residents.	Medium			
	Develop design guidelines for residential development and housing to ensure that Becker reflects the kind of image the community desires.	High			
Transportation					
	Work to have the Town of Becker identified as a Municipal State Aid–eligible local government unit.	High			
	Continue to evaluate and plan for improvements to the town's overall street network.	High			
	Create an assessment policy to ensure that large-volume and high-weight users are paying their proportionate share of town road maintenance and improvement.	High			

	Require adequate right-of-way dedication and street construction for new and/or expanded roadways based on the planned function under current and proposed conditions.	High			
Parks and Trails					
	Develop and adopt a more detailed Park and Open Space System Plan that would more clearly identify natural areas within the township to preserve as parkland.	High			
	Pursue grants from regional, state, and federal agencies to obtain funding for park, trail, and open space planning, acquisition, and administration.	Medium			
	Review and update zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure that private development will adhere to town standards for parks, trails, and open space.	Medium			
	Continue to work with the City of Becker to ensure that the township residents benefit from city park and recreation programs.	High			
Natural Resources					
	Establish zoning and subdivision ordinances to ensure that natural resources are identified, preserved, and protected with new development.	High			
	Maintain open communication networks with townships, cities, counties, the State of Minnesota, and other government agencies to encourage ongoing dialogue regarding natural resources issues.	Medium			
	Encourage the development of conservation and preservation tools such as conservation easements, PUDs, and similar programs that may help to facilitate the preservation of areas that are of environmental and ecological significance, specifically open space areas along the Elk, Snake, and Mississippi Rivers.	Medium			

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