



CITY OF NEW ULM
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
A Vision for our Future

June 2024

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful for the support and guidance of the following individuals and organizations:

NEW ULM COMMUNITY

We are especially grateful to the thousands of community members who shared their experiences and thoughts during the public outreach and engagement process for this plan.

PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE

A Project Steering Committee (PSC) was involved throughout the entire planning process to ensure the Comprehensive Plan addressed community needs and reflects New Ulm's vision described in this document.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Chapter 1 Purpose and Vision.	5
	Chapter 2 Community Profile	9
	Chapter 3 Community Participation & Engagement	23
	Chapter 4 Land Use	33
	Chapter 5 Housing	55
	Chapter 6 Transportation	77
	Chapter 7 Economic Development	109
	Chapter 8 Parks and Recreation	139
	Chapter 9 Community Facilities and Utilities	165
	Chapter 10 Implementation.	181

Appendices

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CHAPTER 1

PURPOSE AND VISION

1. Purpose and Vision

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The New Ulm Comprehensive Plan is an official statement by the New Ulm City Council that describes the community's shared vision, goals and objectives for future growth and development. The anticipated term of this document is 20 years and it provides the legal foundation for regulatory tools like zoning and subdivision regulations. It addresses both current and long-term needs and provides for a balance between the natural and built environment.

The plan is based on a framework that:

1. Recognizes New Ulm's many existing assets and leverages them as part of the plan's foundation for future success.
2. Listens to, considers, and responds to a range of stakeholder visions for the future.
3. Evaluates market research and demographics to understand past, present, and future conditions.
4. Addresses the specific assets, issues, and opportunities that exist in different parts of the city.
5. Presents implementation strategies in sustainable, incremental steps that offer reasonable improvements and serve as a platform for further actions.

The plan's recommendations provide guidance for the city's priorities, growth, investments, and development over the next twenty years. To best achieve the city's vision, this Plan must be continually referenced, updated, and used on a regular basis. As a guiding tool, the Plan provides a system for measuring progress, direction for decision-making, and a framework for setting priorities in areas that are vital to the successful and efficient functioning of the community. As a guide to development, it is intended to be a flexible and responsive document that can be amended to acknowledge changing conditions and new opportunities.

This and following chapters serve as a framework for the future and present recommendations for policies, systems and actions that are within the purview of the city and its partner agencies, and where the city can lead,

support or convene the work needed to implement the plan's vision. The plan includes chapters that address land use, housing, transportation, economic development, parks and recreation, community facilities and utilities, and implementation. This Plan is intended to assist the city in developing policies, programs, ordinances, capital improvement plans, and budgets that reflect the overall values and priorities of the city. Please note that ideas and concepts might be repeated in multiple chapters.

At a minimum, recommendations and action items presented in this plan should be reviewed and updated every two years. The overall Plan should be updated every ten years to ensure that guidance remains relevant to the actual conditions existing at that time and responsive to citizens' desires and vision.

Statutory authority

According to Minnesota State Statute 462.353, Subd. 1, Minnesota communities have the legal authority to adopt a Comprehensive Plan. The statute enables cities to promote the "public health, safety, and general welfare" of the community.

Goals, Strategies, and Opportunities

Each chapter (stated above) of this Comprehensive Plan includes goals, strategies, and opportunities that support the plan's vision.

- Goals are statements of desired outcomes by a community. They are intended to state the Plan's intent as clearly as possible, so that the city knows what they are working to accomplish.
- Strategies are high-level statements intended to guide city decision-making in a manner that achieves the Comprehensive Plan goals.
- Opportunities are actions that can address a community need or support development.

To achieve the goals and strategies, the plan outlines ongoing, medium-term, and near-term objectives. The ability to accomplish the identified goals and strategies may be impacted by decisions made by others. In some instances, the decision-making process will not permit city participation in these decisions.



A Vision for New Ulm's Future

New Ulm is a thriving and safe community with outstanding historic and recreational assets and a diverse economy. It has welcoming neighborhoods, excellent education systems, and a high quality of life that meets the needs of both current and future residents.

The plan's vision is a statement describing the future of New Ulm after the plan's recommendations are implemented. It was developed from the comments, priorities, and ideas gathered through a transparent community engagement process and refined through work with an appointed Project Steering Committee (PSC).

1. Purpose and Vision

ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan is organized into 10 chapters:

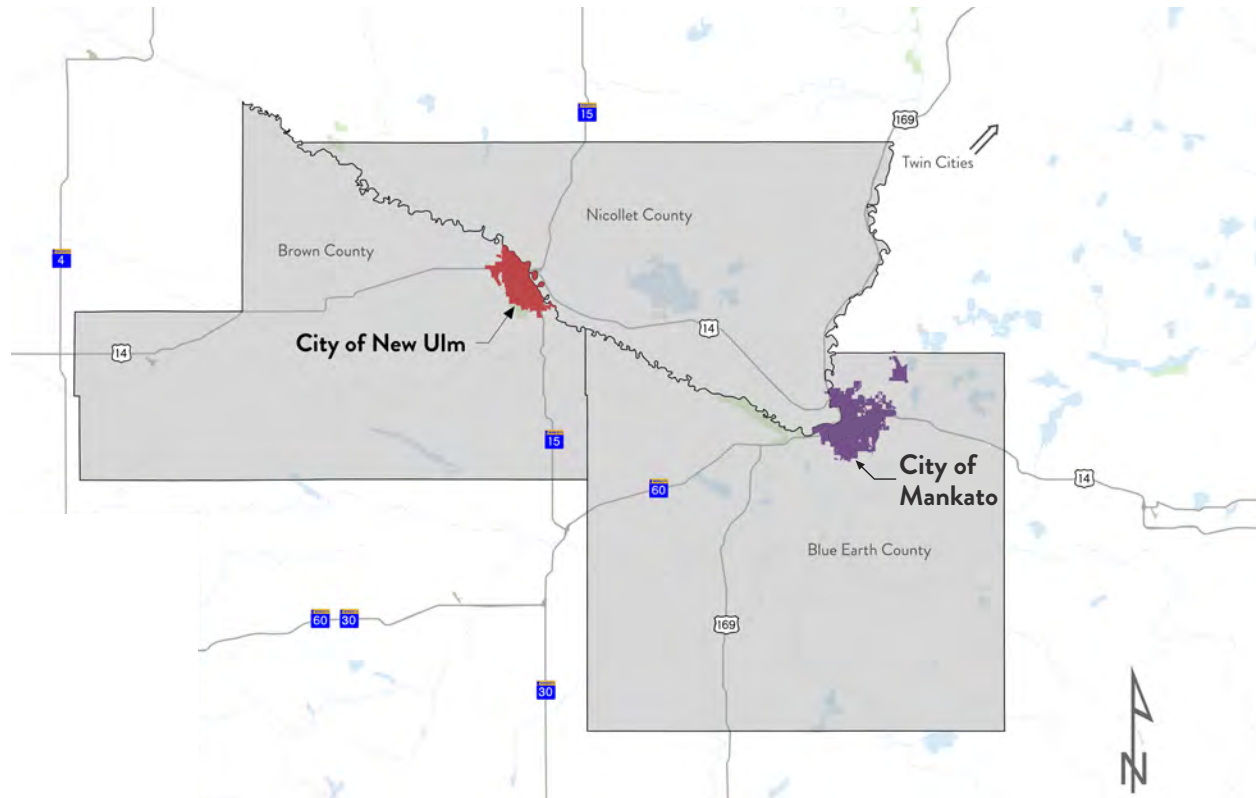
-  **Chapter 1 – Purpose and Vision**, outlines the purpose and role of the Comprehensive Plan, as well as the community vision that guides the Plan.
-  **Chapter 2 – Community Profile**, outlines New Ulm’s rich history, its community overview, and describes its current physical, economic, and social factors.
-  **Chapter 3 – Community Participation & Engagement**, highlights the role of community involvement in the comprehensive planning process, the efforts used to engage New Ulm’s community, and how public input assisted in the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan.
-  **Chapter 4 – Land Use**, identifies issues and opportunities related to growth and land use, analyzes the current land use pattern, and recommends a set of possible development goals and strategies.
-  **Chapter 5 – Housing**, provides a summary of existing housing characteristics, identifies potential demand, and provides goals and strategies for future development relative to need and demand.
-  **Chapter 6 – Transportation**, discusses key findings associated with the current transportation network, including the trail system, evaluates current and future transportation needs, and establishes goals and strategies for attaining a more connected community.
-  **Chapter 7 – Economic Development**, discusses the state of New Ulm’s economy (including employment, areas of specialization, and competitive advantages), and establishes goals and strategies to sustain existing businesses and attract additional economic growth to support a healthy local economy, expand the tax base and create additional jobs.
-  **Chapter 8 – Parks and Recreation**, identifies current park and recreation facilities, recommends a park classification system based on national park and recreation standards, and puts forth a set of goals and strategies to guide future system improvements.
-  **Chapter 9 – Community Facilities and Utilities**, discusses the condition of current facilities and utility systems, including water, sewer, and storm sewer systems. It evaluates current and future needs, and provides goals and strategies to guide the maintenance of existing systems and to address future facility and utility needs.
-  **Chapter 10 – Implementation**, provides procedures and approaches to achieve goals and implement objectives identified in the Comprehensive Plan.



CHAPTER 2

COMMUNITY PROFILE

2. Community Profile



COMMUNITY HISTORY

Prior to the arrival of European settlers, the area now known as New Ulm was inhabited by the Dakota peoples. In 1854, New Ulm was founded by the Chicago Landverein (Land Association) which had been established the year before. The location selected for settlement was at the confluence of the Cottonwood and Minnesota Rivers. The name, New Ulm, was selected because many of the original settlers were from the Province of Wurttemberg, Germany, of which Ulm is the principal city.

In 1856, the Turner Colonization Society of Cincinnati arrived in New Ulm. The two groups merged and in 1857, the town of New Ulm was incorporated by an act of the Legislature. The plat adopted by the German Land Association for the town of New Ulm was done in the spring of 1857 by surveyor Christian Prignitz. The plat is singularly notable for its scale, (almost 400 city blocks), its formal symmetry (Center Street acting as a mid-point between the northern and southern sections and serving as a gateway from the river). The plat included numerous parks and markets mirrored in both

the northern and southern sections, and its system of residential lots and garden plots.

The City of New Ulm sits at the intersection of U.S. Highway 14 and State Trunk Highway 15, approximately 28 miles northwest of Mankato. This location is about 90 miles southwest of the Twin Cities. The City of New Ulm serves as the County seat of Brown County. The city is about 10.3 square miles in size. The city is bordered by Milford Township to the west, Cottonwood Township to the south, Lafayette Township to the northeast, and Courtland Township to the southeast. New Ulm's eastern border is defined by the Minnesota River and its also serves as Brown County's eastern border.

New Ulm is recognized as one of the most historic cities in the State of Minnesota. As a result, or because of this status, New Ulm residents take pride by organizing numerous annual celebrations with emphasis on its history, and German Heritage.



2. Community Profile



Historic photo of Minnesota Street in the early 20th century.



Original Town Plat

New Ulm was officially platted in 1858. The townsite sits on a shelf of land just above the Minnesota River floodplain. Along the eastern edge of this shelf, the railroads, following the level course of the river, connected New Ulm to Mankato and other communities in 1872. Most development in the city is based on the 1858 plat.

The New Ulm founding fathers platted a symmetric grid of streets, blocks and lots, twenty blocks north and twenty blocks south of Center Street and five or six blocks on either side of Broadway. Every block was the same size with either 13 or 14 lots. A block could accommodate an alley, a stable and, eventually, a house in the front. Only along Center, 20th North and 20th South Streets were lots platted to face the east-west streets; all others abutted the north-south streets. The townsite layout was originally expected to accommodate over 70,000 people!

The streets were platted somewhat wide by today's standards, and there was little functional differentiation among streets except for Broadway and the perimeter streets of Front/Water, 20th North and South, Center and Garden/Payne, which served as the principal roadways.

An interesting feature of the plat that reflected the agrarian roots of the settlers and the economy of the times were the hundreds of four-acre parcels adjoining the grid system that could be purchased for family gardens and subsistence farming.

Near the intersection of Center Street and Broadway was the central business district. To the north and south, east and west of this central point, public parks were set aside in a balanced pattern: North and South German Parks, Washington and Lincoln Parks, North and South Market Parks, and North and South Parks. The Hermann Memorial was later created in Hermann Heights Park on the hilltop next to Harman Park, creating a visual landmark to balance the downtown buildings on the eastern side of the community.

This regular pattern of blocks and wide, uninterrupted streets adds character to the city and is part of its historic heritage. The balance and geometry of the original design are attractive and unmistakable. This is due in part to the keen sense of community central to the idealism of New Ulm's founders. Their ideas influenced not only their social interaction, but the physical design of the town as well.

The 1858 plat served nearly the entire community until after World War II when the population and industry began to outgrow the grid system and new development patterns were created in response to the topography and, perhaps, a desire for variety. New development trends generally took place in the platted outlots or property annexed into the city. The generalized pattern of land use and development is illustrated in the future land use map. The symmetry and balance of housing, business and industry are evident in the city's development pattern: There are commercial areas at both the north and south ends of Broadway, industry at either end of town, and housing in the middle.

There are, however, several significant uses that have modified the overall development pattern. On the south side, there is commercial development along South Broadway to the Cottonwood River. The State of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources operates an office south of the river. To the south of Center Street is Martin Luther College, the Family Recreation Center, the New Ulm Middle School, Jefferson Elementary, and Flandrau State Park. To the northwest along 20th North Street and U.S. Highway 14 is commercial development, the New Ulm Airport and the new Senior High School. The city's Industrial Parks are situated to the northwest and industrial development has also continued along North Front Street and North Broadway.

New housing development has primarily been scattered throughout the western side of the city. There have been concentrations situated in the Cottonwood Street and North Highland Avenue areas.



DID YOU KNOW?

New Ulm was officially platted in 1858.

Unlike most other towns established in that era, New Ulm founders had the vision to plan for the city's long-term growth. The city's layout was originally expected to accommodate 70,000 residents.



The original plat was designed as a grid network.

2. Community Profile



Minnesota River



Cottonwood River



Flandrau State Park, photo courtesy of MnDNR

Natural Features Impacting Land Use Development

There are several physical features that will continue to provide strong direction to the future growth of New Ulm.

The Rivers

The Minnesota and Cottonwood Rivers are, of course, the major defining natural elements of the community that have a significant impact on development. This is due to the high cost of extending roads and utilities through the floodplain valleys onto the high land beyond. The city has crossed the Cottonwood River at Cottonwood Street and a moderate amount of residential development has taken place in this area. Continued development will be dependent on the installation of costly utility and street improvements.

The Minnesota River floodplain establishes the east edge of development for the city. Development opportunities to the southwest are limited by the Cottonwood River, its floodplain, and topography.

Flandrau State Park/New Ulm Country Club

The 822-acre Flandrau State Park and the 127 acre New Ulm Country Club restricts development activities in the southwestern corner of the city. The Cottonwood River flows through the State Park.

The Western Hills

There are two rows of hills west of the grid system. The first, just beyond Garden Street, extends from Westridge Road (US 14/TH68) to the Cottonwood River and was on the edge of a wider Minnesota River dating to the end of the glacial period. These hills, rising 80 to 100 feet, are tree-covered and a source of ancient river gravel. The scenic character of these slopes is a great amenity for housing development. The second row of hills is the Cottonwood River bluff line and they create another scenic overlook.

The Minnesota River valley has a more gradual elevation change along North and South German Streets.

Municipal Airport

The city has operated an Airport at its current location since 1945. The primary runway 15/33 is 5,401 feet in length and 100 feet in width. The existing crosswind turf runway 4/22 is scheduled for replacement upon the receipt of sufficient funding. This runway is 2,478 feet in length and 160 feet in width. The new crosswind turf runway 09/27 will be 2,480 in length and 160 feet in width. There is no scheduled date for the change in the crosswind runway location. The Airport's land use safety zones restrict development beyond its borders. In Zone A, no vertical obstructions are allowed except for agriculture, automobile parking lots, and navigation aids. In Zone B, houses and businesses are allowed but the maximum building size is 10,500 square feet per three-acre lot. Building heights may not protrude into an imaginary 40:1 plane rising from the end of the runways.



New Ulm Municipal Airport

The Cemeteries

The city, Catholic, and Lutheran cemeteries are located north of 20th North Street and east of North Garden Street. These three cemeteries total approximately 91 acres and development has bypassed most of this area.

Major Landowners

There are several owners of large tracts of land from Center Street to the northwestern side of the community. These include Martin Luther College (82 acres), New Ulm Senior High School (51 acres), Prairie Land Development (55 acres) and Wech's Hilltop Acres (37 acres).

Wetlands

With the exception of the river floodplains, there are very few wetlands currently within or on the fringe of New Ulm. Thus, wetlands are not a significant development constraint.

As agricultural land is converted to another use, the Wetland Conservation Act is enforced. Currently drained wetlands may need restoration for development to occur.

2. Community Profile

Zoning Implications

Zoning is the method by which local government regulates land use and site-design for the long-term benefit of the public. Application of the land use categories found in the Comprehensive Plan and implementation of the Land Use Plan requires the use of zoning regulations.

New Ulm Zoning Ordinance

The current [New Ulm Zoning Ordinance](#) currently has twenty-three zoning districts (Table 2.1). The ordinance was adopted on April 4, 2022. The preparation of the new ordinance took an extended amount of time and substantial community participation. The approval process also included a new zoning map.

Brown County Zoning Ordinance

Brown County most recently updated their zoning ordinance on April 16, 2024. Brown County has a total of eight zoning districts.

Table 2.1. New Ulm Existing Zoning

Zoning	District
Residential Districts	
R-1	Single Family Residence District
R-1S	Single Family Residence District, Small Lot
R-2	Single and Two Family Residence District
RT-1	Traditional Neighborhood – Single Family Residence District
RT-2	Traditional Neighborhood – Single and Two Family Residence District
R-3	Medium Density Residence District
R-4	High Density Residence District
MH	Manufactured Home Park District
Commercial Districts	
B-1	Limited Business District
B-2	General Business District
B-3	Community Commercial District
B-4	Central Business District
Industrial Districts	
I-1	Planned Industrial District
I-2	General Industrial District
I-3	Limited Industrial District
Special Purpose Districts	
A-OS	Agricultural-Open Space District
INS-E	Institutional -Educational District
INS-M	Institutional – Medical District
INS-O	Institutional – Other District
CM	Commercial Manufacturing District
MU-E	Mixed Use-Emmerson District
MU-T	Mixed Use-Turner District
PUD	Planned Unit Development



COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

The following information addresses New Ulm's population, age distribution, race and ethnicity, income levels, and future trends. Analysis of New Ulm's population characteristics and trends provides a foundation for understanding the city's trajectory and developing realistic and reasonable growth projections informing the plan's recommendations.

Please refer to the individual chapters in this Comprehensive Plan to access more detailed demographic information regarding housing, economic development, land use, and transportation.

Data used is the latest available at the time this plan was prepared, including:

- 2020 Decennial Census counts
- 2021 ACS Estimates, reflecting a five-year (2017-2021) estimated average for population characteristics as developed by the US Census Bureau
- 2022 ACS Estimates, reflecting a five-year (2018-2022) estimated average for population characteristics as developed by the US Census Bureau
- 2020 US Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES) data



Key Insights

- New Ulm's population is growing: the 2020 Census indicated that New Ulm had a population of 14,120. This is a population increase of 598 residents since 2010. This is the city's all-time highest population, and the relatively rapid increase in the last decade (4.3%) shows that the city's economy and housing markets are on solid footing.
- New Ulm is an employment generator: There are more than 9,400 jobs in New Ulm - and about two-thirds of all those jobs are held by people who live elsewhere. Almost 5,500 people commute into the city for work. What could New Ulm do to invite them to move into town instead?
- New Ulm is becoming a more diverse community: Currently, about 7% (one out of every sixteen residents) is non-White. Over the last decade, the city's racial and ethnic profile has seen multiple changes: for example, the number of Hispanic / Latino residents has increased from 185 (2012) to 493 individuals (2022), nearly doubled during this period.

2. Community Profile

Historic Population Trends

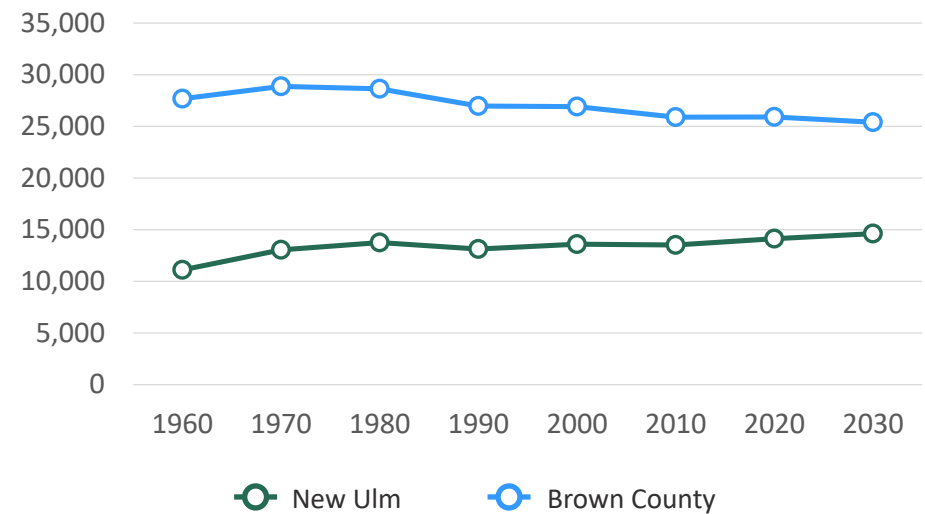
Over the last forty years, the city's population has shown periods of both growth, decline, and stability. New Ulm experienced rapid population growth in the decades of 1960 to 1980. From 1980 to 1990, however, the city's population underwent a period of moderate decline (about 5%), followed by a period of growth (about 4%) from 1990 to 2000. A slight decline of less than 1% occurred in the decade of 2000 to 2010. Brown County's overall population has been in decline since 1970. New Ulm has outperformed the county in terms of population retention and growth. Table 2.2 and Figure 2.1 show population trends in New Ulm and Brown County since 1960.

Table 2.2. Population Trends (1960 - 2020)

Year	New Ulm		Brown County	
	Pop.	% Change from Previous	Pop.	% Change from Previous
1960	11,114	19%	27,676	7%
1970	13,051	17%	28,887	4%
1980	13,755	5%	28,645	-1%
1990	13,132	-5%	26,984	-6%
2000	13,594	4%	26,911	0%
2010	13,522	-1%	25,893	-4%
2020	14,120	4%	25,912	0%
2030*	14,610	4%	25,398	-2%

Source: U.S. Decennial Census and *MN State Demographic Center

Figure 2.1. Population Trends (1960 - 2030)



CURRENT POPULATION AND ECONOMICS

The following information evaluates New Ulm's population, age distribution, race and ethnicity, income levels, and future trends. Assessing population characteristics is helpful in identifying community needs and planning for the City's future. Please note that the data in this section is from 2022 US Census ACS Estimates (not from the 2020 Census Decennial counts), reflecting a five-year (2018-2022) estimated average for population characteristics. As these are estimates and not counts, in some cases the numbers shown reflect a significant margin of error.

Please see the individual chapters in this Comprehensive Plan to learn more about the current demographics regarding housing, economic development, land use, and transportation.

In 2022, New Ulm was home to 14,055 residents, a 4% increase from 2010. Almost half (48.4%) of which are female while 51.6% are male. The median age in New Ulm is 38.9 years. By age group, the highest representation based on age are those between the ages of 35 to 44 years (12.3%), 25 to 34 years (10.9%), 45 to 54 years (10.3%) and 65 to 74 years (10.2%).

Table 2.3. Population & Age Groups

New Ulm		
Population	Count	%
Under 5 years	699	5.00%
5 to 9 years	855	6.10%
10 to 14 years	909	6.50%
15 to 19 years	1,140	8.10%
20 to 24 years	1,115	7.90%
25 to 34 years	1,539	10.90%
35 to 44 years	1,730	12.30%
45 to 54 years	1,444	10.30%
55 to 59 years	743	5.30%
60 to 64 years	1,000	7.10%
65 to 74 years	1,434	10.20%
75 to 84 years	932	6.60%
85 years and over	515	3.70%

Source: US Census ACS 2022 5-year estimates

Table 2.4. 2022 Population and Households

New Ulm		
Population	Count	%
Total population (2022 ACS)	14,055	100%
Children (all persons under 18)	3,044	22%
School age children, teenagers and young adults (ages 5 to 24)	4,019	29%
Adults 25 to 64 years	6,456	47%
Senior adults (persons over 65)	2,847	20%
Number of Households	5,938	100%

Source: US Census ACS 2022 5-year estimates



DID YOU KNOW?

A **household** includes all the people who occupy a housing unit (such as a house or apartment) as their usual place of residence.

Race and Ethnicity

As noted earlier, New Ulm includes a growing diversity of populations. Although the city's population is about 94.3% White, 5.7% (almost one out of every sixteen residents) is non-White. The next largest racial and ethnic groups are people who identify as Hispanic / Latino (3.5%), Two or More Races (1.8%), and Black or African American (1.4%). Over the last decade, New Ulm's ethnic and racial profile has changed - for example, the number of Hispanic / Latino residents has increased from 185 (2012) to 493 individuals (2022), nearly doubled during this period.

Table 2.5. Race and Ethnicity

New Ulm		
Race and Ethnicity	Count	%
White	13,249	94.3%
Black or African American	199	1.4%
American Indian and Alaska Native	55	0.4%
Asian	128	0.9%
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	0	0%
Other race	172	1.2%
Two or more races	252	1.8%
TOTAL	14,055	100%
Hispanic / Latino of any race	493	3.5%

Source: US Census ACS 2022 5-year estimates

2. Community Profile

Income/Poverty

Incomes in New Ulm (Table 2.6) are generally the same as those for Brown County, and lower than Minnesota overall:

- Individual income in New Ulm (\$33,582) is about three-quarters of the overall amount for Minnesota (\$45,021)
- Median household income in New Ulm (\$59,985) is about 89% of the amount in Brown County, and about three quarters of the amount for Minnesota overall (\$82,338)
- Poverty in the city is slightly higher (8.3%) than the county overall (7.7%) but lower than the State (9.6%)
- The percent of children living in poverty (10%) is the same as Brown County, and slightly lower than Minnesota overall (11%)

Table 2.6. Income and Poverty Information (2022)

Information	New Ulm	Brown County
Individual (per capita) income	\$33,582	\$35,340
Median household income	\$59,985	\$67,038
Persons living in poverty	8.3%	7.7%
Children in poverty	10%	10%

Source: US Census ACS 2022 5-year estimates

Employment

New Ulm’s current low unemployment rate (1.9%) indicates a variety of things, such as increased wages and more potential buyers for businesses. It can also lead to a labor shortage and increase expenses for businesses. This is reflective of labor trends throughout the entire country.

Table 2.7. Employment Information

New Ulm	
Population	Count
Civilian labor force	7,482
Employed	7,270
Unemployed	212
Unemployment rate	1.9%

Source: US Census ACS 2022 5-year estimates

Education Attainment

In New Ulm, around 92% of residents (aged 25 and over) have completed high school. Approximately 10.5% of the population hold an associate's degree and 28% have achieved a bachelor's degree or a higher level of education.

Table 2.8. Educational Attainment, 25 Years and Older (2022)

New Ulm		
Population	Count	%
Less than High School	747	8.0%
High school graduate	8,590	92.0%
Some college, no degree	1,838	19.7%
Associate's degree	976	10.5%
Bachelor's degree	1,665	17.8%
Graduate or professional degree	937	10.0%

Source: US Census ACS 2022 5-year estimates



New Ulm High School campus

For residents 25 years and older:

 About **92%** have a **high school diploma or higher** (compared to 93% for Brown County and 94% for Minnesota overall).

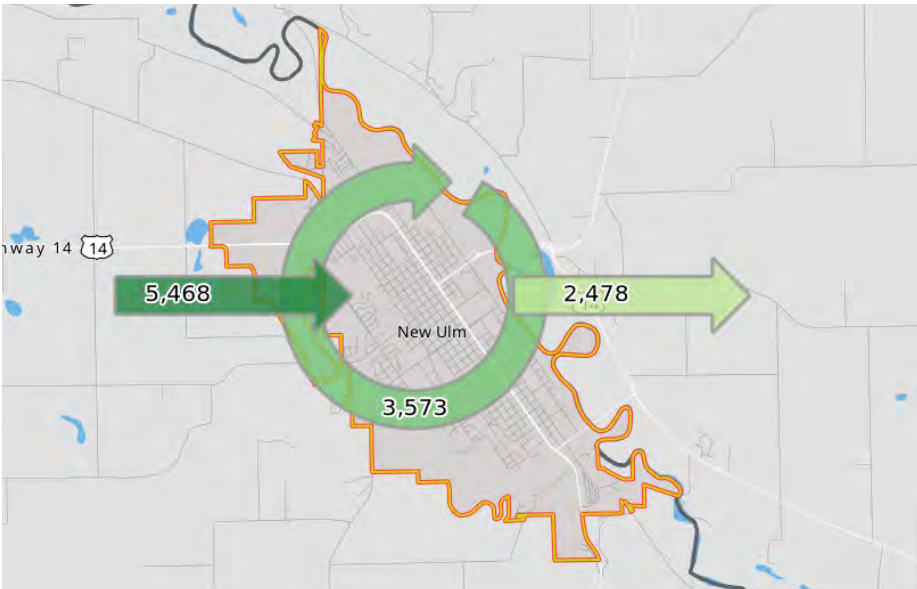
 About **28%** have a **bachelor's degree or higher** (compared to 24% for Brown County and 38% for Minnesota overall).

2. Community Profile

Commuting

According to 2020 Census LEHD data (the most recent available), there are a total of 9,401 jobs in New Ulm.

- About 3,573 of those jobs (about 38%) are held by people who live in New Ulm and work in town.
- Almost 5,468 of those jobs (about 3 out of every 5 jobs) are held by people who commute in from elsewhere to work in New Ulm (this is about one and a half times the number of jobs held by local residents).
- About 2,478 New Ulm residents travel outside of the city for their work.



Where workers travel-in from

Hundreds of workers commute to New Ulm from Sleepy Eye, Mankato, Springfield, and Hutchinson. These commuters spend more than 20 minutes in travel each way as part of their workday. Additional housing options in the city may invite a portion of these workers to move into New Ulm and reduce their commute. Top origins, as well as distance and travel time to work for people working in New Ulm, are shown in Table 2.9.

Table 2.9. Commuting Origins

City	Workers	Distance (miles)	Travel Time (each way, in minutes)
New Ulm	3,573	NA	NA
Sleepy Eye	336	15	20
Mankato	205	29	35
Courtland	169	10	14
Lafayette	117	11	14
North Mankato	117	29	34
Springfield	92	28	35
Hutchinson	86	43	47
Hanska	75	12	16
Winthrop	74	19	21

Source: US Census 2020 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) with data from Google Maps



CHAPTER 3

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT

3. Community Participation & Engagement



HOW WE ENGAGED THE COMMUNITY

Not all Comprehensive Plans are built the same. It was critical for the City of New Ulm to not only assess current conditions, but also capture and incorporate input from community members. The community can be considered experts as they know New Ulm better than anyone else. The public was able to provide their ideas and comments through in-person events and online tools. Community input helped identify existing assets and issues, as well as opportunities for development and growth.

The Comprehensive Plan's recommendations and implementation tools reflect the thousands of community voices that participated throughout the planning process. See individual chapters in this Plan to learn more about community input regarding land use, housing, transportation, economic development, parks and recreation, and community facilities and utilities.



DID YOU KNOW?

Public Outreach is key to developing and implementing a Comprehensive Plan that supports the needs and visions of a community.

ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS



Over
2,400
participants provided input
through the two
online surveys



Over
200
comments
and ideas were received through the
online interactive map



7 Project Steering Committee
meetings were held throughout
the project



Over
100
participants attended in-person
events



Initial Project Steering Committee meeting held in July 2022.



Mapping activity to identify locations of interest.



Kick-off rapid planning workshop introducing potential growth areas.

3. Community Participation & Engagement

TOOLS AND APPROACH

The following outlines some of the methods and tools that were used to engage the community.

Project website



The city hosted a webpage on its website where community members could learn about the project, receive latest updates and information, see upcoming engagement opportunities, review community input from previous events, and sign up to receive email updates.

Community Workshop



At the onset of the project, an in-person Community Workshop was hosted to introduce community members to the plan and invite them to provide their comments.

Social Media

The city's Facebook page was used to provide project announcements, share information about online participation tools, and invite residents to take part in upcoming events. Social media was also used to invite visitors to the project website to view updates and plan drafts.

Interactive Online Map



An online mapping tool allowed the public to identify specific locations where there are assets, issues, important destinations, or opportunities for investments or development.

Project Steering Committee



The work of this plan was managed by a Project Steering Committee (PSC), which included community members, representatives from Cottonwood and Milford Townships, members of the Planning Commission, a City Councilor, and City staff.



A total of seven PSC meeting were held throughout the duration of the project. The PSC was vital in guiding the development of the project and ensuring recommendations addressed needs and reflected community values. Steering Committee members also played a key role in emphasizing the project's importance and promoting engagement events.

Small Area Planning Workshops and Site Tours



Additional to the Comprehensive Plan, the city identified four areas that could see potential growth and development. These areas included the Downtown, Upper Cottonwood, East Airport and New Ulm Northwest/Milford. One of these areas is entirely within the city's current boundaries, while the others are partially or wholly outside.



The community was invited to a series of workshops and site tours to learn about each site and discuss the type of development that could occur in each area. Based on community input and site conditions, a series of concepts and ideas were created to outline potential development strategies for each area.

These workshops also influenced recommendations that were included in the Comprehensive Plan's chapters.

Online Surveys

Community members were invited to provide their comments and ideas through two online surveys. Online surveys made participation easy and convenient. Over 2,400 individuals participated in the online surveys.

NEW ULM COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Your impressions and ideas about New Ulm

Communities grow and change throughout time. The City of New Ulm is developing a new Comprehensive Plan to guide future development and growth and reflects the community's values and goals.

Please enter your answers in the space provided below each question. Click 'submit' at the bottom of the page to finish.

1. What do you **like the most** about living in, working in, or visiting New Ulm?
2. What do you **not like** about living or working in New Ulm? (What are some issues we should address or can be improved?)
3. What do you think can make New Ulm a **better place to live in, work in, or visit?**

The first survey was mailed to each utility customer within the city. It asked the public to identify community assets, issues and challenges, and things that can make New Ulm a better place.

The second survey asked the public to provide more detailed information regarding the current conditions of land use, transportation, housing, economic development, utilities, parks and recreation, and community facilities.

Summaries of both surveys were available on the project website and are included as appendices to this plan.



3. Community Participation & Engagement



DIRECT FROM THE COMMUNITY

This is a brief summary of the key themes we received from community input. The following are some direct quotes highlighting community assets and items that could be improved.

“After living in New Ulm for 51 years - the best things about New Ulm are the friendly people, the wide boulevards & streets, and the beautiful setting in this river valley setting.”

“Greater reinvestment in the downtown core - and incentives for commercial property owners to renew/renovate/restore their buildings.”

“Many of the single-family detached homes for sale were old and in need of repair, or huge and outside of our budget. There wasn’t much in the middle.”

“Thank you for making an effort to gather and incorporate input from New Ulm residents from a wide range of backgrounds!”

“The safe, friendly atmosphere in our town is a tremendous blessing; I felt this especially strongly during the years when my three children were young. It is an exceptional place to raise a family.”

“We need more industry such as businesses like 3M, Kraft and Windings. Places that pay well and offer good benefits. Also it would be nice to have more small businesses on Minnesota Street such as restaurants, arts and crafts, clothing and such.”

“The mall is huge, empty eyesore. It seems like most of the empty buildings are starting to fill-up, which is great to see.”

What we learned from the public

This is a brief summary of the key themes we received from community input.

What people love the most

The top things that New Ulm community members appreciate (Not ranked in any order):

- New Ulm's small town character and atmosphere
- Community heritage and historic preservation
- Community safety
- Family-oriented – a great place to raise a family
- It's a well-maintained and clean community
- Parks, outdoor spaces, and recreation programs
- Events and cultural activities
- Schools and education
- Medical services

What this means for the plan

As New Ulm grows, it will be important to preserve its character, unique history, and assets. As new neighborhoods and community assets are built, those buildings and streetscapes should support and enhance the character that has made New Ulm attractive. Continuing to preserve these assets and maximize their benefits will help retain existing residents, including youth and young professionals, and attract new residents to the community.

What people would like to change

The top issues that community members would like to improve in New Ulm (Not ranked in any order):

- Limited retail and commercial options, especially for clothing
- Limited housing options for different budgets and needs
- Not being open to new ideas or change
- Cost of living is getting more expensive
- Not enough community events
- Unsafe pedestrian and bicycle crossing conditions at busy intersections
- Internet service is limited and unreliable

What this means for the plan

The Comprehensive Plan offers recommendations to address the issues highlighted by the community. Implementing improvements will take time, but small and inexpensive steps can be started quickly.

What people want to grow

People saw many opportunities for improving life in New Ulm. Some of these opportunities include (Not ranked in any order):

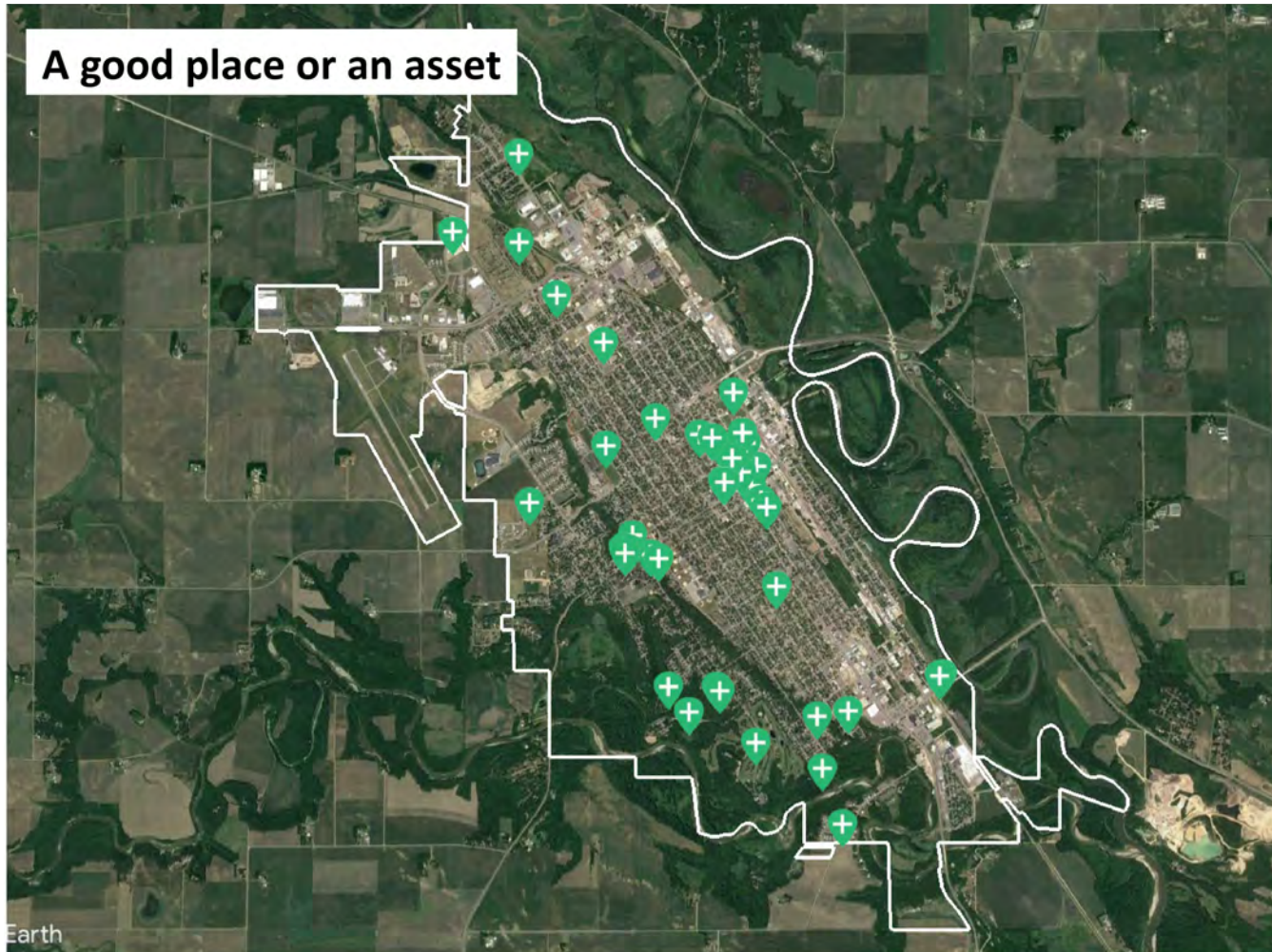
- Improve the city's downtown and make it more attractive
- Increasing the availability and types of housing options
- Improving walking and biking facilities (sidewalks, trails, etc.) throughout the community
- Support local businesses and entrepreneurs
- Attract more retail and commercial businesses that offer clothing options and other essential goods
- Support the growth and expansion of existing industries
- Be more open to new ideas and cultures

What this means for the plan

There are many opportunities for New Ulm to grow and thrive. Community excitement, commitment and momentum will be a key asset for making long-term changes.

3. Community Participation & Engagement

Input from the Online Interactive Map - A Good Place or an Asset

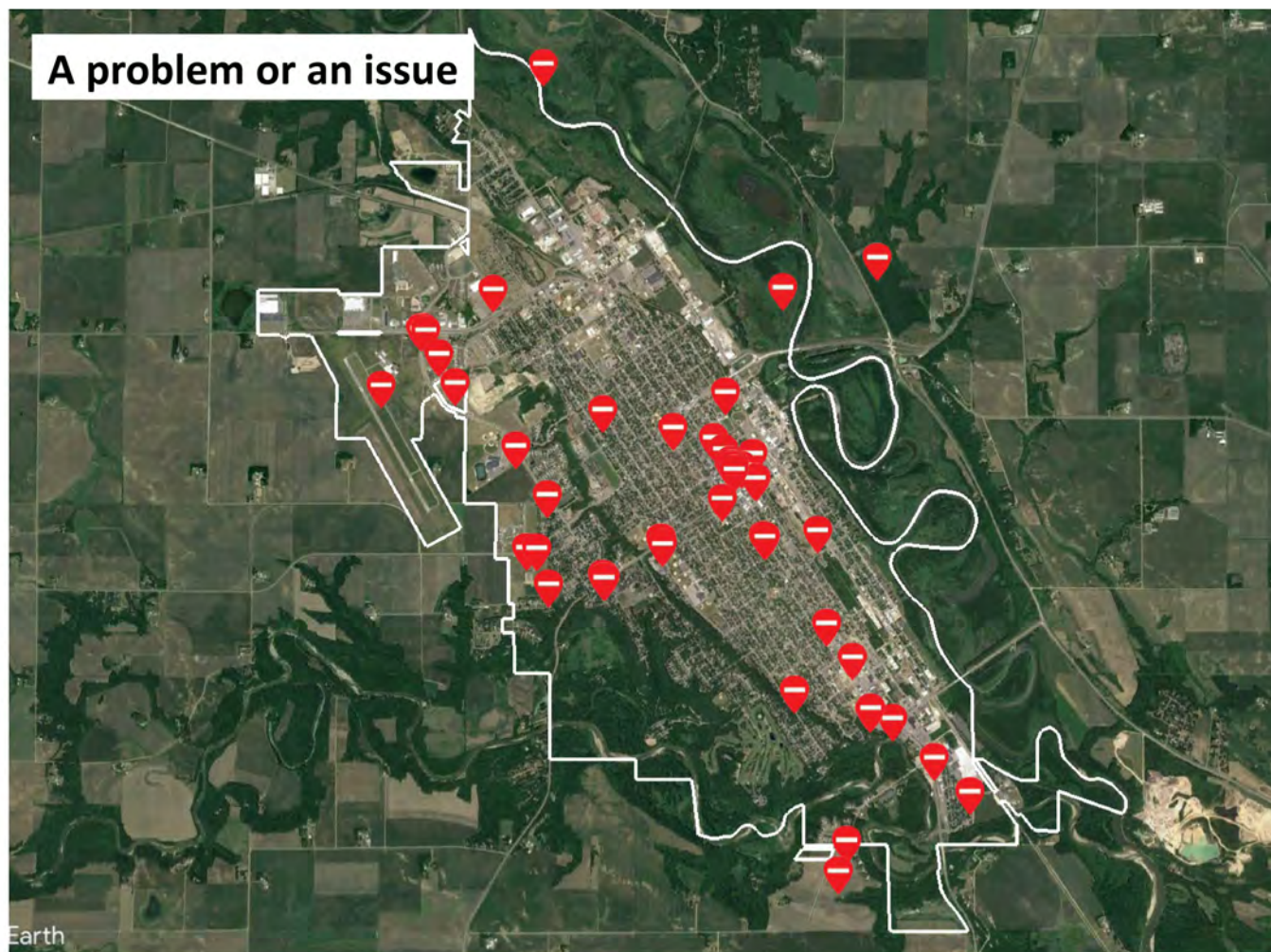


A good place or an asset

This map shows a concentration of locations that were highlighted as community assets by the public:

- Downtown is the heart of New Ulm
- Downtown parks (Johnson Park, Amphitheater, German Park)
- Hermann Heights Park and Monument
- New Ulm Recreation Center
- Flandrau State Park
- Community garden
- New Ulm Public Library

Input from the Online Interactive Map - A Problem or an Issue



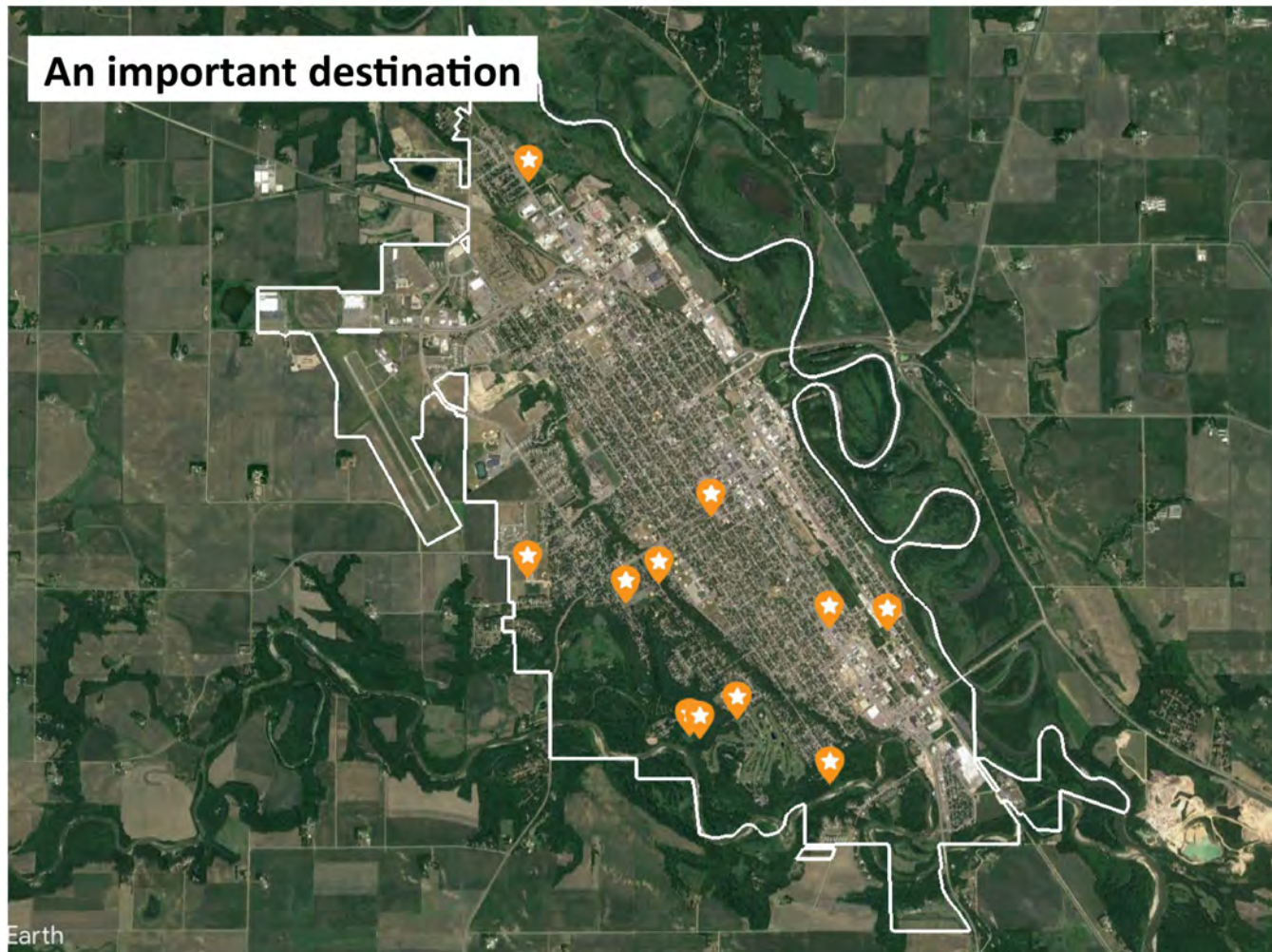
A problem or an issue

This map shows a concentration of locations that were highlighted as areas with issues by the public:

- Segments of the City bike loop require maintenance
- Unsafe conditions at North Highland Ave and US 14 intersection
- Unsafe conditions at Highland Ave and Center St
- Unsafe conditions at Center St and Garden St
- Difficult pedestrian crossing conditions at Broadway and 4th South St
- Downtown parking options are difficult during busy times

3. Community Participation & Engagement

Input from the Online Interactive Map - An Important Destination

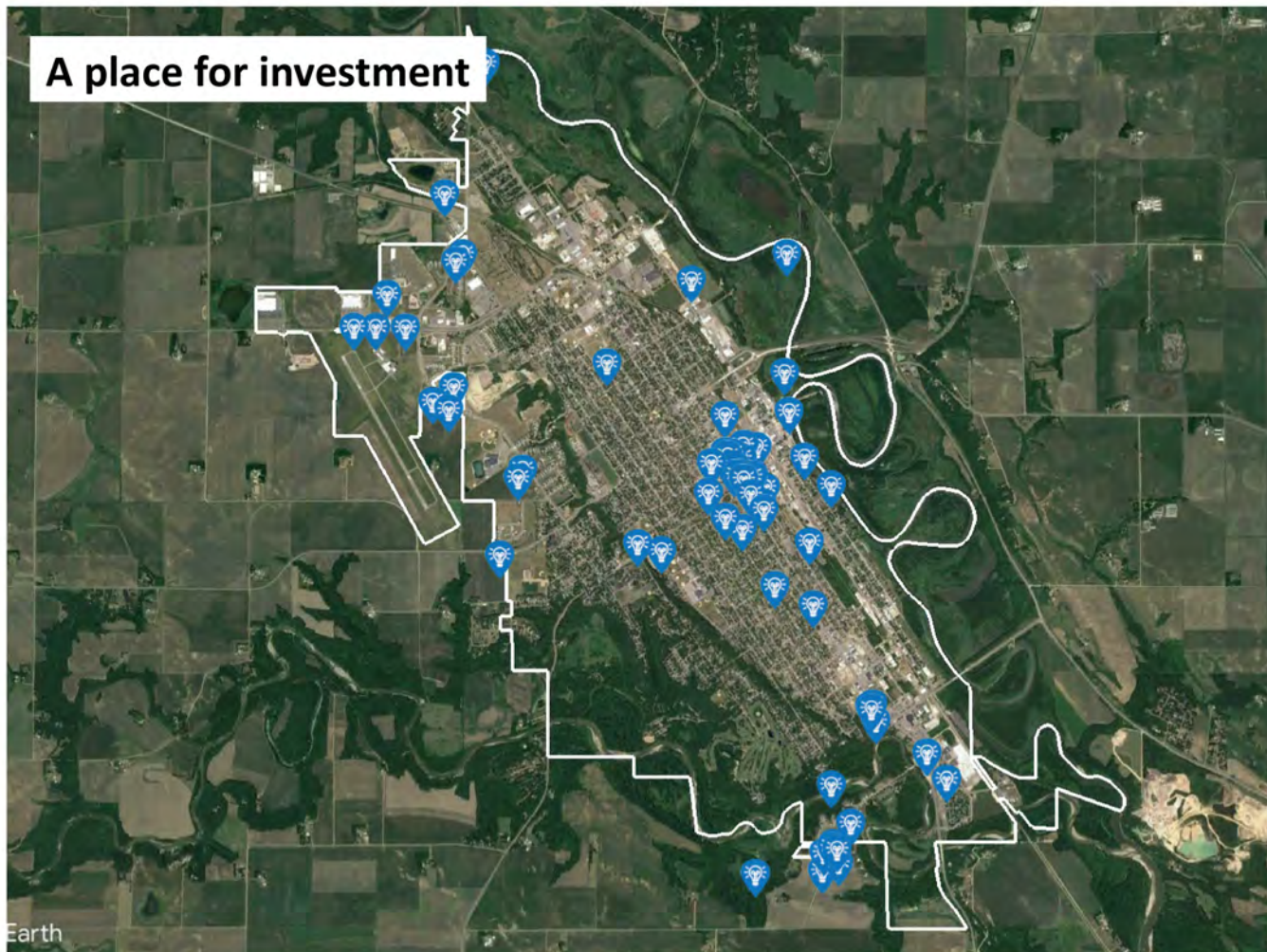


An important destination

This map shows a concentration of locations that were highlighted as important destinations by the public:

- Flandrau State Park and the surrounding trail network
- Martin Luther College
- Schell's Brewery is a tourism destination
- State Street Theater fosters art and culture

Input from the Online Interactive Map - A Place for Investment



A place for investment

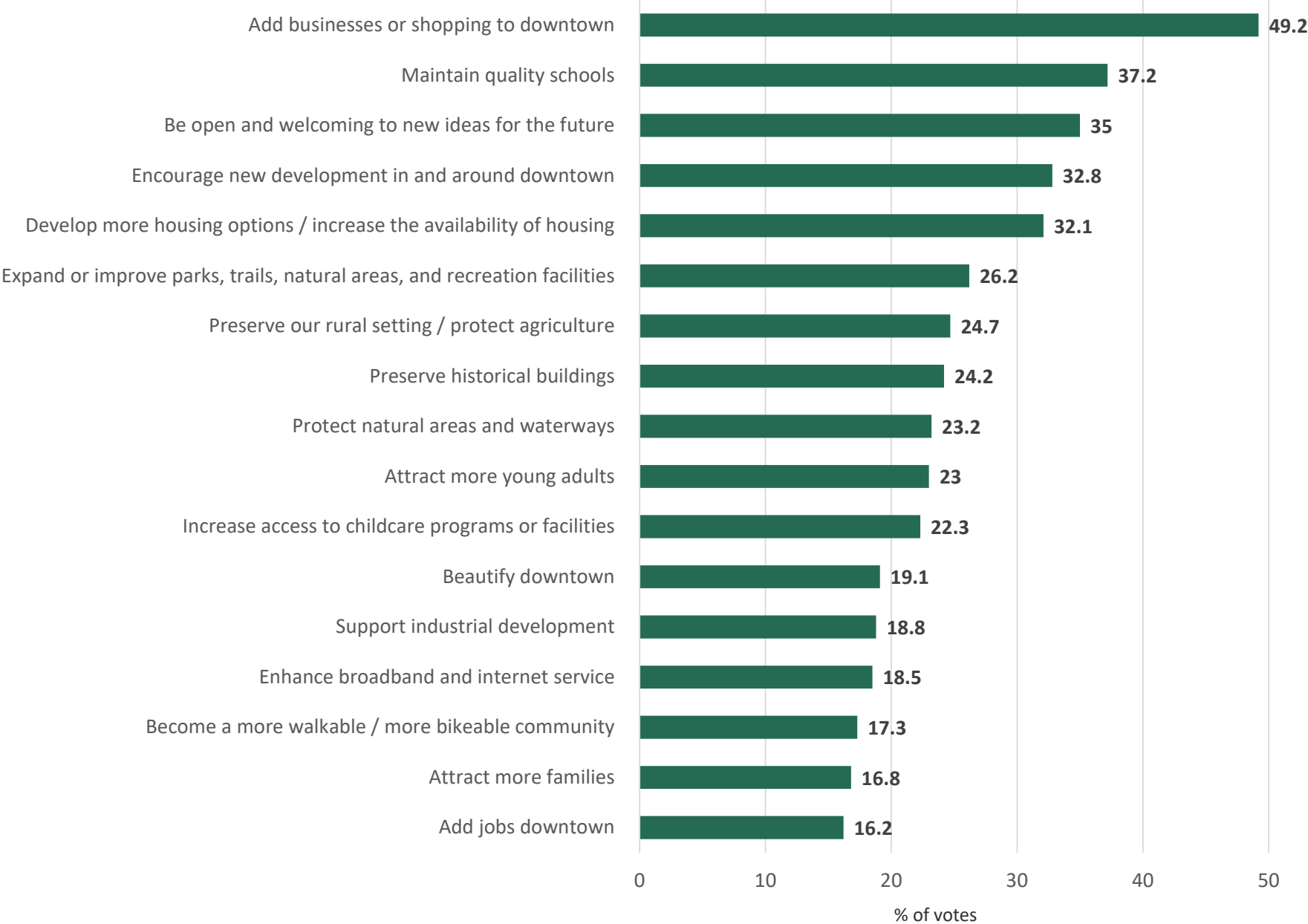
This map shows a concentration of locations that were highlighted as a key place for investment by the public:

- Keep the downtown vibrant and busy by organizing more community events, attract more retail and gathering spaces (restaurants, bars, outdoor seating, etc.), increase housing options, improved walking conditions, and revitalizing vacant buildings
- Build lodging options along US 14
- Development along the Minnesota River
- Build additional housing options throughout the city
- Revitalize vacant Target building
- Pave Township Rd between Cottonwood St and CSAH 13 to provide an additional connection to and from the Cottonwood neighborhood, especially during flooding periods

3. Community Participation & Engagement

Sample of Survey Results

From the online survey #2: What should be the city’s top priorities for the future?





CHAPTER 4

LAND USE

4. Land Use

INTRODUCTION

New Ulm's land use pattern and built environment are largely defined by the relationship to the city's natural landscape, major transportation routes, original area of settlement, and 1858 town plat. The Land Use Plan found in this chapter addressed and incorporated the community's development patterns.

Planning for future land use allows a community to guide development in effective, compatible, and efficient ways. Well-guided land use aligns the city's resources, promotes equitable development, and ensures compatibility among nearby uses. This chapter establishes and defines land use classifications to be applied across the city's jurisdiction. It sets a framework for future development and redevelopment of land, within or adjoining the city, by outlining a vision for future growth. The city is approximately 6,545 acres in size, with a planning area that includes the entirety of the city limits and portions of the surrounding townships of Milford and Cottonwood.

New Ulm's future form will involve strategic redevelopment, infill development within already developed areas, and new development and community expansion. This chapter establishes goals and strategies for the appropriate location and types of development, as well as for the conservation of agricultural land and the natural environment. It will also be used to determine future public investments, make decisions concerning private development proposals, and set priorities for future planning efforts.

This chapter also provides a high-level guide for the legal regulation of land development, which is controlled by the city's zoning ordinance, zoning map and subdivision regulations. The maps found in this chapter will generally guide the location and type of future land use categories within the city. Since the plan is a general guide, the boundaries of the uses as shown in the various maps are approximate and subject to interpretation and adjustment as necessary to conform to actual field conditions.

Land use establishes the foundation for the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan. It helps city staff and the City Council respond to individual development and redevelopment requests. It is comprised of text and maps that are intended to guide land use and physical development consistent with the city's vision. Together the land use text and associated Future Land Use Plan (Figure 4.2) describe how land is to be used and how it should function for the next 20 years. It also highlights four potential growth areas that would serve future community and business needs.

This plan will be implemented through private and public investment in land development, as well as through more detailed planning, zoning and subdivision ordinances, public improvements, and public-private partnerships.



4. Land Use

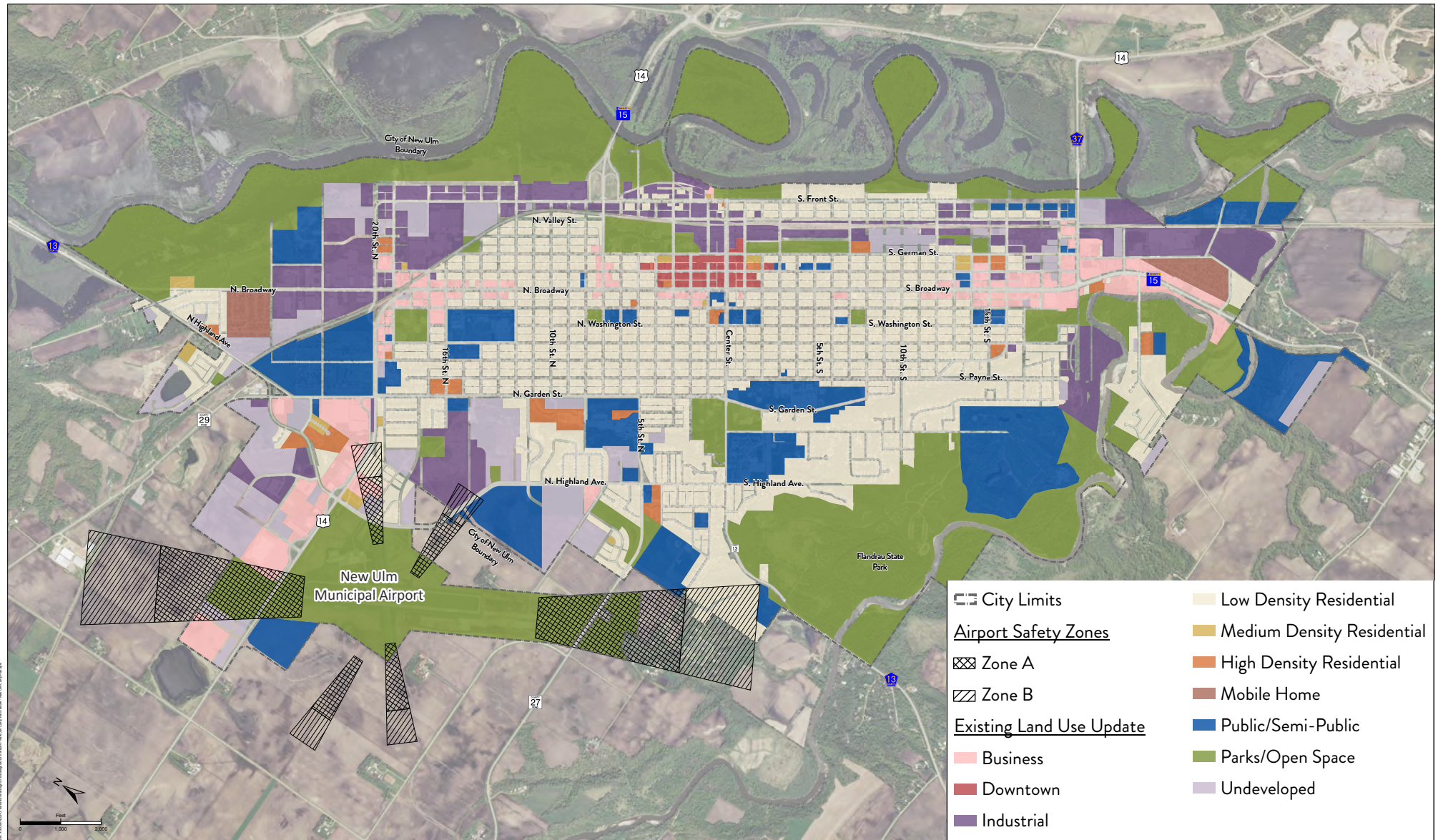
LAND USE TODAY

Through 2023, parks and open spaces make up New Ulm’s largest land use (30.5% of the total land area). This land use type is so large because it includes Flandrau State Park, the New Ulm Country Club, and floodplain areas. Residential land uses, including low, medium, and high density and mobile homes, are the next highest land use type, which make up approximately 22% of the city’s land. Table 4.1 shows the current land use categories and total acreages. Roadways are not included as a land use type but amount to approximately 18.5% of New Ulm’s total land.



Table 4.1. Existing Land Use

Existing Land Use (2023)		
Type of Land Use	Acres	%
Parks/Open Space	1,995	30.50%
Low Density Residential	1,277	19.52%
Public/Semi-Public	711	10.87%
Industrial	516	7.88%
Undeveloped	397	6.08%
Business	262	4.00%
High Density Residential	68	1.04%
Mobile Home	55	0.84%
Downtown	31	0.47%
Medium Density Residential	21	0.32%
Roadways and right-of-way (Not classified as a land use type)	1,209	18.48%
Total	6,541	100%



4. Land Use

SHAPING COMMUNITY GROWTH

Many factors influence the type and location of future development in New Ulm include demographics, real estate trends, markets, capacity of local and regional infrastructure, and the pattern of existing development.

The following information was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau and the [2022 New Ulm Comprehensive Housing Needs Analysis](#).



Key factors influencing the shape of the Future Land Use Plan include:

- New Ulm's population and the number of households both grew by 4% between 2010 and 2020, and the trend is expected to continue with another 3.5% population increase and 4% household increase by 2030.
- In 2022, the New Ulm Economic Development Authority received and adopted a [Comprehensive Housing Needs Analysis](#), completed by Maxfield Research, that projected housing needs through 2030. It provided recommendations on the amount and type of housing that could be built across New Ulm to meet demand from current and future residents. This report indicated that affordable new construction homes have become harder to build. Most builders have been unable to deliver new construction homes for under \$300,000.
- According to the 2022 Housing Needs Analysis, there is significant growth in New Ulm's senior population, especially among seniors ages 65 to 74 (53% of population growth) and 75 and older (14.5% of population growth) from 2010 to 2020. In 2022, homeownership rates among seniors 65 years and older was approximately 77%. High homeownership rates among seniors indicate there could be a lack of senior housing options, or simply that many seniors prefer to live in their home and age in place. The 75 and older age group is projected to grow 19% between 2022 and 2027.
- Popularity of online commerce may negatively affect aging commercial developments.
- There is a continued desire to keep the downtown area a community focal point that reinforces New Ulm's character and serves as one of its economic drivers.

These factors suggest:

- People in New Ulm will be seeking a variety of housing products from multi-family to single family, rentals to owner-occupied. As the city allocates land for residential uses, it can encourage an appropriate mix of housing types to meet demand.
- Based on projections from the Housing Needs Analysis, there will be a continued demand for both market-rate and subsidized rental housing units through 2030.
- As possible, future residential land uses should include a mix of densities and attempt to avoid having one predominant type of residential development. The city can continue to use various funding options, including tax increment funding (TIF), bonds, to encourage a mix of housing types.
- Areas within and in proximity of the city's downtown should be considered for redevelopment and/or development as a mix of residential, commercial, entertainment, and lodging uses. The city should rename its existing "Downtown" land use classification to "Mixed Use Downtown" and continue to promote a mix of shops, restaurants, hotels, offices, institutional uses, plazas, and housing.
- The city identified potential growth areas that could accommodate additional residential land uses as demand increases. The city will continue to explore growth. Some of the sites lack utilities and infrastructure at the moment, and are located outside current city limits.



4. Land Use

FUTURE LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

This Comprehensive Plan establishes a set of future land use categories (Table 4.2) that reflect both the city's current land use patterns and desired development patterns over the next twenty years. Achieving New Ulm's development goals and implementing its growth strategies requires an appropriate balance between all land uses considering changing market conditions, development opportunities, and resident and stakeholder expectations for the city's future.

The total acreage provided in the Land Use Plan is sufficient to prepare for and meet city growth projections. This provides flexibility for the city in considering future development proposals while maintaining a reserve of developable property and preserving adjoining rural areas.

The future land use plan can be amended when circumstances or opportunities warrant a change in the city's development pattern. However, any changes should be consistent with the stated community vision. Changes can only be made by the City Council through the approval of a Comprehensive Plan Amendment. In some cases, future land uses for a property are different from its current use. The transition of these properties from their current use to their future use is expected to occur over time, in response to market demands and decisions made by the property owner.

There are a total of 11 land use categories, described within this chapter. The amount of land designated for each category is summarized in Table 4.2. A detailed description of each land use category follows this information.

Table 4.2. Future Land Use

Future Land Use		
Type of Land Use	Acres	%
Park/Open Space	1,685	25.76%
Low Density Residential	1,398	21.37%
Public/Semi-Public	710	10.86%
Industrial	622	9.52%
Commercial	326	4.99%
Airport & Safety Zones	298	4.56%
High Density Residential	87	1.33%
Medium Density Residential	85	1.30%
Mixed Use Downtown	80	1.22%
Manufactured Home Park	28	0.43%
Undeveloped	14	0.21%
Roadways and Right-of-way (Not classified as a land use type)	1,208	18.46%
TOTAL	6,541	100%



Low Density Residential

Includes single family detached housing, twin homes, and duplexes along with directly related complementary uses. The density range for this category is between one and ten units per acre.



Medium Density Residential

Includes a range of housing types, such as single family detached and attached housing, twin homes, townhomes, duplexes, row-houses, and moderate density multi-family housing consisting of attached and detached housing units. Directly related complementary uses are also permitted. The density range for this category is between one and twelve units per acre.



High Density Residential

Includes higher density multi-family housing including apartment buildings and condominiums with separately divided living units. Directly related complementary uses are also permitted. The density range for this category is between nine and twenty-one units per acre.



Manufactured Home Park

Includes a contiguous parcel of land which has been planned and developed for the placement of mobile/manufactured homes as a residential community. The density range for this category is between one and eight units per acre.



Commercial

Includes a broad variety of retail, sales, office, service, and motor vehicle-oriented uses. They are primarily located along major transportation corridors with higher levels of accessibility and serve regional and local needs. Associated uses may include light-manufacturing, public facilities and institutional uses.



Public / Semi-Public

Includes a range of public, semi-public, and private facilities that provide community services. Primary uses include governmental, utility, educational, religious, social, and healthcare facilities.

4. Land Use



Mixed Use Downtown

Includes a vertical or horizontal mix of functions and uses, including commercial retail sales and service activities, multi-family residential, offices, public institutions, hospitality, parks, entertainment, and other associated uses and activities. Mixed use development may be located in a single building or a larger designated area. This category is intended to feature historic buildings and pedestrian orientation. It serves as an essential link to the heritage and small-town character of the community. Commercial activities will be located at street level and the area will offer a more diverse and unique variety of commercial and residential uses. The density for residential development has a maximum of 29 units per acre.



Industrial

Includes a broad range of businesses primarily oriented to the creation or processing of goods. Business activities include manufacturing, assembly, production, wholesale, research and development of products, technology-based development, packaging, warehousing, storage, distribution, offices, and administrative facilities. These uses should be located in areas that take advantage of access to the regional transportation system and reduce industrial traffic circulation through residential neighborhoods or pedestrian facilities. Associated uses may also be located in industrial areas which have similar operating needs



Parks / Open Space

Includes public and private parks, outdoor recreation uses, general open spaces, and associated facilities and areas. This includes open space that is publicly and privately owned consisting of environmental resources, waterways, steep slopes, historic areas, natural lands, wetlands, and floodplains.



Airport & Safety Zones

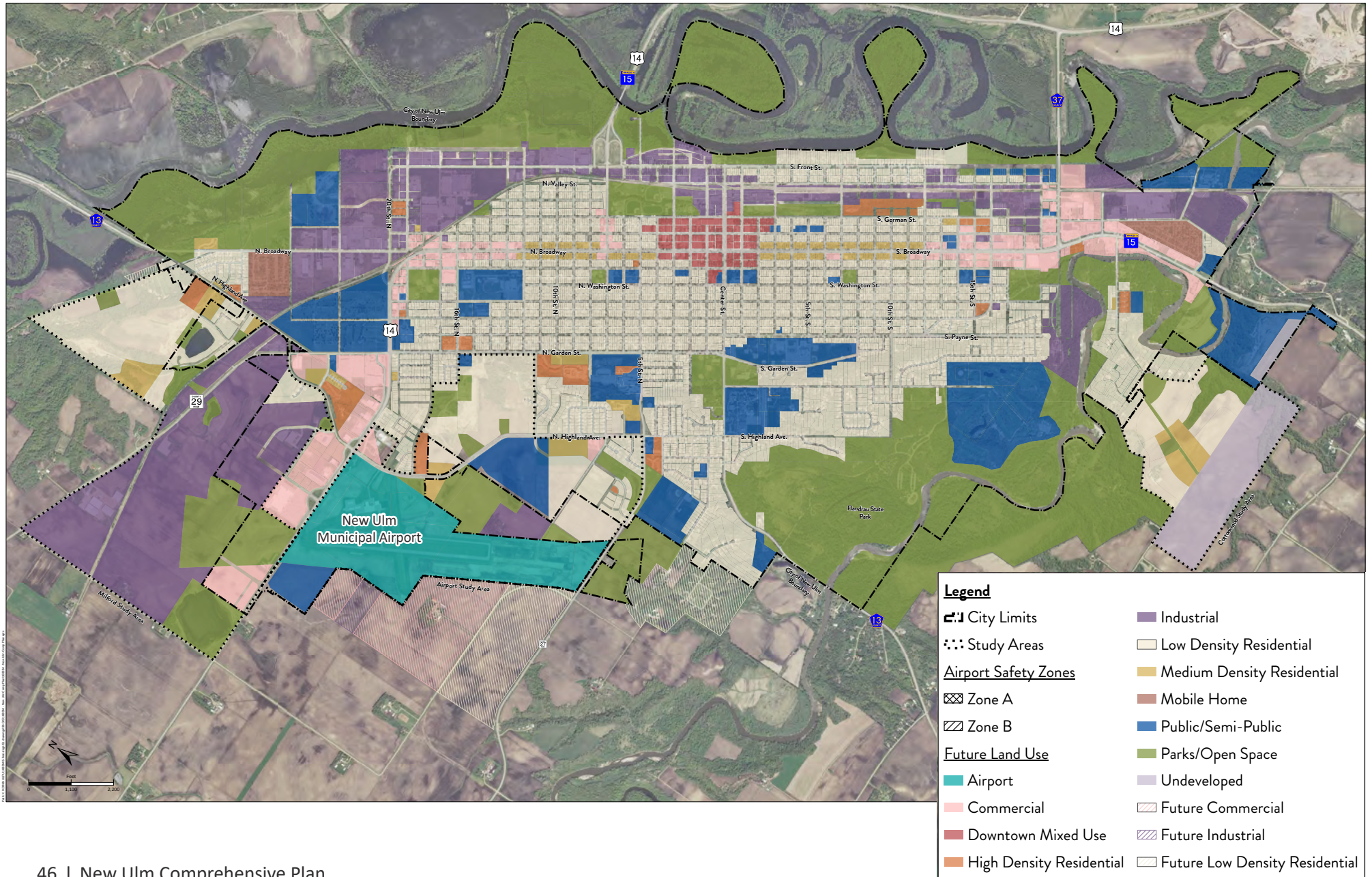
Includes land authorized for the landing and takeoff of aircraft including appurtenant areas used or planned for airport buildings, facilities and the clear and safety zone locations for all three runways. Currently, there are two crosswind runway safety zones. One is associated with the existing crosswind runway. The second is for a proposed new crosswind runway. Following the construction and opening of the new crosswind runway, the existing runway and its safety zones would cease to exist and would be removed from the Land Use Plan.



Undeveloped

Includes land inside and outside of the corporate limits of the city that is generally used for agricultural purposes or is otherwise vacant due to natural conditions. These areas may include limited residential and farm related land uses. These areas do not include floodplains. The purpose of this land use is to prevent the premature development of agricultural areas. It also limits development in areas adjacent to the city in order to provide efficient city services and utilities in the future. These areas represent locations that would be suitable for future city expansion.

4. Land Use



FUTURE NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunity 1: Growth and Land Use Principles

The Land Use Plan is shaped by a variety of factors including:

- The original town plat of 1858.
- Existing natural features.
- Existing built environment.
- Experience implementing the previous Comprehensive Plan.
- Development trends and projections for future growth including population, household, and employment forecasts.
- System plans for transportation, sanitary sewer, water supply, surface water management, electric and natural gas.
- Desire to promote sustainable land use patterns when and where appropriate.
- Current zoning ordinance.
- Vision for New Ulm's future.
- Community input throughout the comprehensive planning process.

The Land Use framework for New Ulm's future community growth is built on a set of community planning principles. These principles focus on the continued development of New Ulm as a community that provides places to live, work, shop, and play (have fun). These principles are intended to make efficient use of existing and future infrastructure, contribute to a strong local economy, preserve natural resources, and contribute to a high quality of life. These principles further articulate the community's desire to maintain its historic development patterns, strong neighborhood qualities, community traditions, small town character and culture, and continued understanding and association with its rural surroundings. These desired outcomes are pursued with the knowledge that the Land Use Plan's principal responsibility is to orient the community to the future.

Development decisions can be influenced by the local real estate market demand for different land use types. Developers need to evaluate the availability and need for specific uses, as well as larger market patterns that may impact project success, including economic conditions, retail demand, and housing stock changes.

The goals and strategies described in this Chapter, establish a framework for guiding New Ulm's future development and growth.

Maximize the Use of Land



New Ulm has developed in a linear configuration due to its location at the confluence of the Minnesota and Cottonwood Rivers. The river basins and their flood plains create significant development obstacles. The New Ulm Airport and its safety zones serve as another development constraint. Property required to accommodate two railroads generated commercial and industrial development but at the same time divided the city. Given these barriers, the city must consider development standards and strategies that allow the effective use of the remaining available and developable land.

Make Full and Efficient Use of City Services

To maximize investment, development should prioritize areas within or adjacent to existing development that already have utilities and infrastructure. Infill or new development opportunities also exist where there are properties that are unused, under-developed, or under-utilized. This approach can create walkable destinations, expand housing stock, provide opportunities for economic growth, protect natural resources, and avoid unnecessary development.

4. Land Use

Create Housing Opportunities and Choices



The health and character of a community may best be measured in its housing stock. New Ulm, as well as other Minnesota communities, will need to provide a balanced supply of quality housing types to meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents. As various demographics grow and change, the city must encourage the expansion of housing choice to better serve all income levels and stages in the life cycle. Besides efforts to increase the quantity and quality of new housing, maintenance of the existing housing stock also needs to be a priority. The expansion of the city's housing supply will help existing and future businesses attract and maintain the employment force they need to operate and grow.

Maintain Distinct Community Character

The community was founded by the Chicago Land Association in 1854. They quickly found themselves in financial difficulty and then joined with the Cincinnati Settlement Association, a group sponsored by the Turners who originated from present day Germany. The Turners attempted to impose their social and political views through the city plat of New Ulm. Their guiding principles were social equality and a cooperative economy. The ideal of social equality was expressed in the plat of New Ulm through:

- Building placement and equal lot sizes across the community;
- Symmetric placement of parks and significant amounts of public land; and
- Street layout.

Downtown

The city should continue to strengthen the vitality, appearance, and dynamics of the downtown area. This can, in part, be accomplished by the consideration of the following factors/issues impacting the Downtown:

- Encourage a mix of downtown uses, including retail, services, entertainment, civic, institutional, offices, and moderate and high density housing.
- Promote its unique and historic features.
- Promote the redevelopment of properties as mixed use to strengthen retail and commercial uses, and to integrate new households and employment opportunities into the area.
- Seek redevelopment and investment opportunities for vacant or underutilized sites, as well as encouraging reinvestment in existing facilities and businesses.
- Continue to maintain and enhance existing public open spaces in the Downtown area. Identify new sites that can serve as unique public spaces to strengthen the Downtown character.
- Encourage the development and location of specialty commercial uses.
- Blend public and private investment to create a diverse and lively mix of businesses.
- Identify opportunities and challenges associated with land use, utilities, parking, design standards, transportation, and access that either enable or limit the Downtown area to become a focal point.
- Establish and fund the renovation and restoration of downtown building facades as well as financial incentives to encourage businesses to locate Downtown.
- Consider the vacation of the east half of a portion of 2nd N Street, between N Minnesota Street and the alley to create a public square in the Downtown area.

Management of Growth

Given the limited amount of land readily available for development purposes, the city needs to maintain a healthy balance between residential, commercial, office, civic/institutional, and park and open space land uses. The city's land use plan should provide an appropriate mix of compatible land uses that meet the city's anticipated future needs. The city should not extend utilities into surrounding townships without annexation.

There will be a need for appropriate transitions between different land uses and an emphasis on creative site design. Development will need to be compatible with existing land uses and avoid the encroachment of incompatible land uses. The effective management of land use will create lasting value.

Open Space, Parks, and Environmental Areas

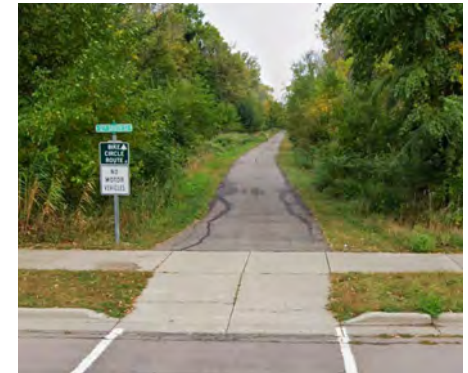


An important part of future land use development within the community involves the need to honor the Turnverein philosophy of the city's original founders, which among other things, strongly believed in physical education activities, particularly gymnastics. This philosophy is best described in the statement a "Sound Mind Sound Body."

The Turner philosophy encourages the city to preserve, protect and provide recreational opportunities in both existing and future parks, open space, and natural areas for use by all of its residents. This commitment balances the built and natural environment, provides habitat, promotes active and passive recreational opportunities, and respects its natural beauty.

In particular, the city should utilize its two rivers for identity purposes and as a destination for recreational and leisure activities. The city should further support its working landscapes and celebrate the value of its natural settings.

Continue Development of Transportation Options



The city will continue transportation initiatives that provide a wide range of multi-modal options. Activities that can increase the ability of all residents to travel include:

- Coordination between land use and transportation where required.
- Maintain connectivity within the transportation network including sidewalks, trails, streets, and bus routes.
- Where appropriate develop multi-modal streets that accommodate multiple forms of transportation.

An expanded transportation system can have the following impacts on the community: 1) improve community mobility; 2) provide economic benefits; 3) reduce air pollution; and 4) provide increased accessibility.

4. Land Use

Achieve Community Stakeholder Collaboration in Development Decisions



New Ulm is a great place to live, learn, work, and play any time of the year. City government should remain close to its constituents by using tools and techniques that collect and evaluate residents and business needs. Addressing the issues and ideas voiced by the community require collaboration between citizens and local government. Partnerships between different groups within the city will support and accelerate the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan.

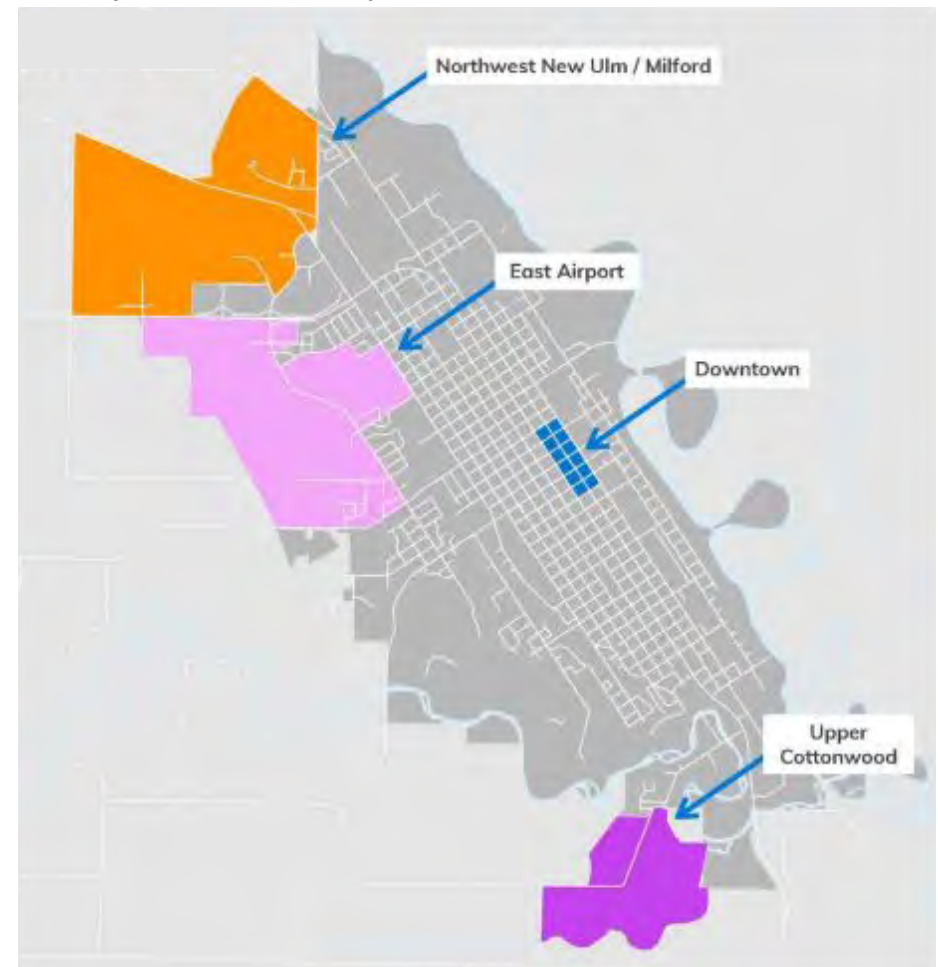
Provide Land Use Flexibility

The real estate market, construction costs, and needs of the community periodically experience shifts. As such, it's important to build some flexibility into the city's land use designations and decisions. Land use policies and decision making should allow for contemporary and flexible regulations for the consideration of new development and redevelopment proposals and concepts. It also would be more responsive to future market conditions and demands.

Opportunity 2: Potential Growth and Development areas

The City of New Ulm identified four potential areas for future growth and development. These four areas differ in the amount and type of current infrastructure present and the type of future development that could be accommodated. These area plans are a separate document from the Comprehensive Plan.

Four Key Growth and Development Areas





GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The following goals and strategies set the development direction for the community and describe the land use expectations that the city hopes to achieve during this planning period of 20 years. The goal of this plan is to create a diverse and self-sustaining plan to allow for creative and innovative planning and development that considers unique natural and historic resources. These goals and strategies are based on public input and a study of current and future trends.

Goal 1: Provide a range of land use types and the most appropriate locations for development and redevelopment.

Strategy 1.1: Maintain a land use plan that designates land use areas and guides development to appropriate locations in order to ensure compact, orderly and desirable land use patterns.

Strategy 1.2: Work with adjacent townships to renew orderly annexation agreements for areas that are located within the city's planned growth areas. Work cooperatively with the adjacent townships, Brown County, and property owners to encourage logical growth and development.

Strategy 1.3: Require the annexation of developed or undeveloped properties located outside the city limits prior to the extension of utility services to those properties by either the city or Public Utilities Commission.

Strategy 1.4: Pursue an equitable distribution of public facilities, services and open spaces across all neighborhoods.

Strategy 1.5: Acknowledge market realities of commercial and industrial development, remove impediments to their development where possible, and be mindful of the reality of limits on retail, service and industrial demand.

Strategy 1.6: Pursue public/private partnerships and target economic investment in residential, commercial and industrial developments that fulfill a demonstrated need and/or achieve established community objectives.

Goal 2: Maintain a distinctive character, unique identity, and physical image of New Ulm.

Strategy 2.1: Invest in creativity and nurture entrepreneurship as a city-wide approach to economic development.

Strategy 2.2: Promote architectural/site aesthetics that are compatible with community standards.

Strategy 2.3: Encourage the maintenance and reinvestment in existing developed property to retain community character and to prevent the creation and spread of blight.

Strategy 2.4: Improve and strengthen community character and sense of place in new development by incorporating elements from the development of the original New Ulm plat, such as grid streets and uniform block size.

Strategy 2.5: Work with developers and property owners to establish enhanced and attractive gateways to the community.

Strategy 2.6: Develop and enforce community site planning and land development standards that promote and support an appealing visual character to the city.

Strategy 2.7: Preserve historic buildings and other physical characteristics that define New Ulm's heritage.

4. Land Use

Goal 3. Plan for the orderly, efficient and fiscally responsible growth of residential, commercial, industrial and other forms of development within the community.

Strategy 3.1: Encourage the development of trail systems and open spaces in new developments with “points of interest” destinations.

Strategy 3.2: Provide inclusive, integrated neighborhoods accommodating a mix of housing types and residential occupancies.

Strategy 3.3: Buffer larger commercial and industrial developments from environmentally sensitive areas, residential neighborhoods and other incompatible land uses within the community.

Strategy 3.4: Continue to guide residential growth in an orderly and compact manner so new developments can be effectively served by public improvements.

Strategy 3.5: Encourage compatible infill development throughout the developed portions of the city, to encourage the efficient use of land, the establishment of a strong tax base and cost-effective provision of city services.

Strategy 3.6: Require adequate transitions between different land uses through appropriate land use planning and zoning standards.

Strategy 3.7: Ensure agricultural practices are compatible with surrounding land uses and are located in appropriate land use districts.

Goal 4. Identify, evaluate, and preserve natural resources and systems prior to designating areas for development.

Strategy 4.1: Identify areas of significant natural resource benefit and protect these areas from premature or incompatible development.

Strategy 4.2: As development/redevelopment occurs, encourage the protection and restoration of bluffs, ravines, prairies, wetlands, water resources and river corridors.

Strategy 4.3: Work with landowners to either obtain property or ensure protection of natural areas with high ecological value.

Strategy 4.4: Use planning, land use regulations, site plan review, and the design of public improvements to act as a responsible steward of the environment and protect waterways, floodplains, wetlands, unique environmental areas, steep slopes, and the wooded hilltops and ridgelines.

Strategy 4.5: Encourage innovative stormwater techniques, such as the use of bio-retention, rain gardens, and other low impact best management practices where appropriate.

Goal 5. Encourage the continuing evolution of Downtown as a vital and sustainable mixture of commercial, residential, and civic uses.

Strategy 5.1: Explore opportunities for creating a public plaza within the Downtown area as a central gathering place for community activities.

Strategy 5.2: Consider expanding parking options in the Downtown area by including new surface lots or parking structures as part of redevelopment projects.

Strategy 5.3: Retain the historic character and identity of the Downtown area.

Strategy 5.4: Allow additional housing in the Downtown area as a means of expanding the market for Downtown businesses and as a source of new investment.

Strategy 5.5: Keep the primary civic functions of the community situated in the Downtown in order to attract people to the area.

Strategy 5.6: Use civic investment and community events to make Downtown the primary gathering place for New Ulm.

Goal 6. Value, preserve, and maintain historic properties, documents and historic sites.

Strategy 6.1: Encourage investment in economic development opportunities involving adaptive reuse of historically important buildings as a means of growing the economy while preserving community identity and the growth of heritage tourism.

Strategy 6.2: Support redevelopment of underutilized parcels that will be consistent with the historic character of the community.

Strategy 6.3: Encourage rehabilitation/restoration of degraded historic properties.

Strategy 6.4: Encourage reuse of historic buildings for destination uses such as arts and culture, entertainment and restaurants.

Strategy 6.5: Encourage historic design standards wherever city, state or federal funds are used in conjunction with residential rehabilitation projects.

Strategy 6.6: Preserve historic buildings and other physical characteristics that define New Ulm's heritage.

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CHAPTER 5 HOUSING

Housing

INTRODUCTION

More than simply shelter, housing plays a critical role in defining a person's quality of life. It also determines the character and prosperity of a community. Housing is one of the principal uses of a city's land area, is an important consumer of city services, and is a key source of local tax capacity. For a community, the availability of a range of housing options is a key consideration for young people's decisions to stay in town, for new residents to consider accepting a new job and moving into that community, and for businesses seeking to relocate or grow.

Understanding the current housing inventory (quantity and type) along with population projections will assist New Ulm in providing a variety of housing options that meet community needs, attract new residents, and fuel economic development.

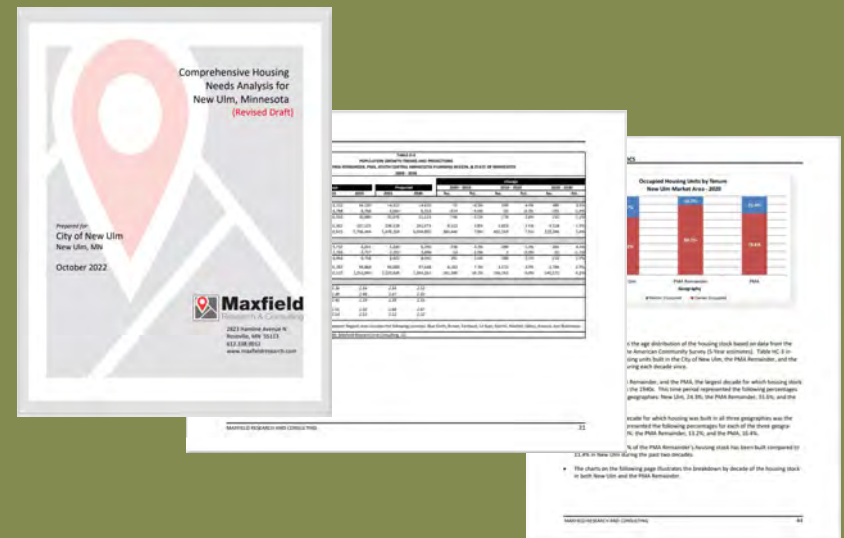


Residential neighborhood in New Ulm



Comprehensive Housing Needs Analysis (2022)

As noted in Chapter 2, the New Ulm Economic Development Authority hired Maxfield Research to prepare a Comprehensive Housing Needs Analysis to evaluate community housing needs through 2030. The Housing Analysis also provided guidelines on how much and the types of housing needed to meet projected demand. Information from the Housing Analysis is referenced in this chapter to support recommendations and opportunities for expanding housing in New Ulm.



HOUSING AND POPULATION TODAY

Population in New Ulm grew historically from 1900 through 1980 and has increased at a moderate rate of 2.6% from 1980 (13,755) to 2020 (14,120). Between 2010 and 2020, New Ulm had a growth rate 4% in population (598 persons) and 5% in households (299 households). Projections through 2030 indicate continued growth in both population (3.5%) and households (4%). Population growth will require additional housing options to meet demands.

Total Number of Housing Units

A housing unit is considered a house, an apartment, a group of rooms, or a single room occupied or intended for occupancy as a place to live.



In 2021, there were
6,227
housing units.

Type of Housing Structure

New Ulm's housing stock provides options for different needs, such as family sizes, budgets, and living arrangements. Providing a variety of housing types is important to retaining existing and attracting new residents.

One-unit detached housing structures, commonly known as single-family homes, made up 74% of the New Ulm's housing units in 2021.

About 20% of New Ulm's housing units are different types of multi-family housing with two or more units. Many of the multi-family housing structures consists of apartment buildings containing 20 or more units.

Mobile homes make up 2.4% of the city's housing stock. Mobile homes provide an affordable housing option for lower-income households. They are also considered a temporary housing option. Housing types are shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. Housing Types (2021)

New Ulm		
Type	Number	%
Total housing units	6,277	100.0%
1-unit, detached	4,657	74.3%
1-unit, attached	171	2.7%
2 units	251	4.0%
3 or 4 units	164	2.6%
5 to 9 units	165	2.6%
10 to 19 units	80	1.3%
20 or more units	636	10.1%
Mobile home	153	2.4%

Data source: US Census ACS 2021 5-year estimates



DID YOU KNOW?

The Difference between a *Household* and *Housing Unit*

A 'housing unit' refers to the physical housing structure, while a 'household' refers to the person, group, or family that lives in a housing unit.

Housing

Housing in New Ulm:



Downtown building with housing on upper levels



Housing along Broadway (US 14)



Garden Terrace Apartments



Single family homes in the city’s newer residential neighborhoods



Neighborhood on the city’s western side



Linderhof Park Apartments in the northern part of New Ulm

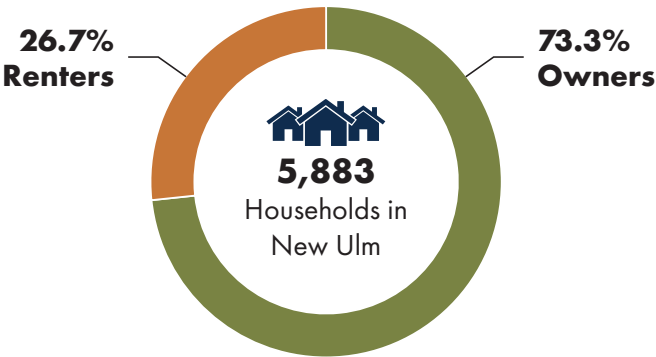
Homeowners and Renters

A total of 5,883 units were occupied in New Ulm in 2021, about 73% were occupied by owners, similar to the Minnesota rate of 73% and slightly lower than Brown County’s rate of 78%. About 27% of occupied housing units in New Ulm are occupied by renters. A housing unit that is occupied is referred to as a “household.”

Table 5.2. Home Owners and Renters

New Ulm		
Type	Number	%
Total households	5,883	100%
Owned	4,314	73.3%
Rented	1,569	26.7%

Data source: US Census ACS 2021 5-year estimates



Housing Occupancy - Home Sales and Rental Vacancy

In 2021, about 94% of the 6,277 housing units were occupied in New Ulm. The vacancy rate in the city (6%) is lower than Brown County (8%) and Minnesota (9%). It's important to note that a portion of the housing units listed as vacant in this definition may not otherwise be available for occupation - they may be vacant and not listed in the market for sale or rent. The real vacancy rate for housing units intended for sale or rent is therefore likely lower. Occupied and vacant housing units are shown in Table 5.3.

On average, 181 homes were sold annually in New Ulm since 2013. This represents a sale of about 4 percent of the owned homes annually. This is considered low compared to a nationwide average of 6 to 8 percent. Annual sales of homes increased significantly between 2017 and 2021 due to the historically low interest rates. Current higher interest rates have slowed down the sale of homes and may impact future home sales.

According to the [Housing Analysis](#), the overall rental vacancy rate in New Ulm was 0.8%. Rental vacancy rates are low across all rental prices and there is high demand for additional units at all income levels. Currently, there is little to no availability for families seeking rental housing in the community. Roughly 80% of rental housing in New Ulm was built prior to 2000, and of those 50% were prior to 1990.

This indicates that people who may be interested in moving into the community will have a difficult time finding the housing they need - both for homeownership and for rental purposes.

Industry standards indicate that a healthy rental housing vacancy rate (where there is enough availability so people have choices in where they live, but not so much availability that landlords have trouble finding tenants) is 5 to 7 percent. New Ulm's low rental vacancies (0.8%) indicate a strong need to expand housing options that meet a wide range of needs.

Table 5.3. Occupied vs Vacant Housing Units

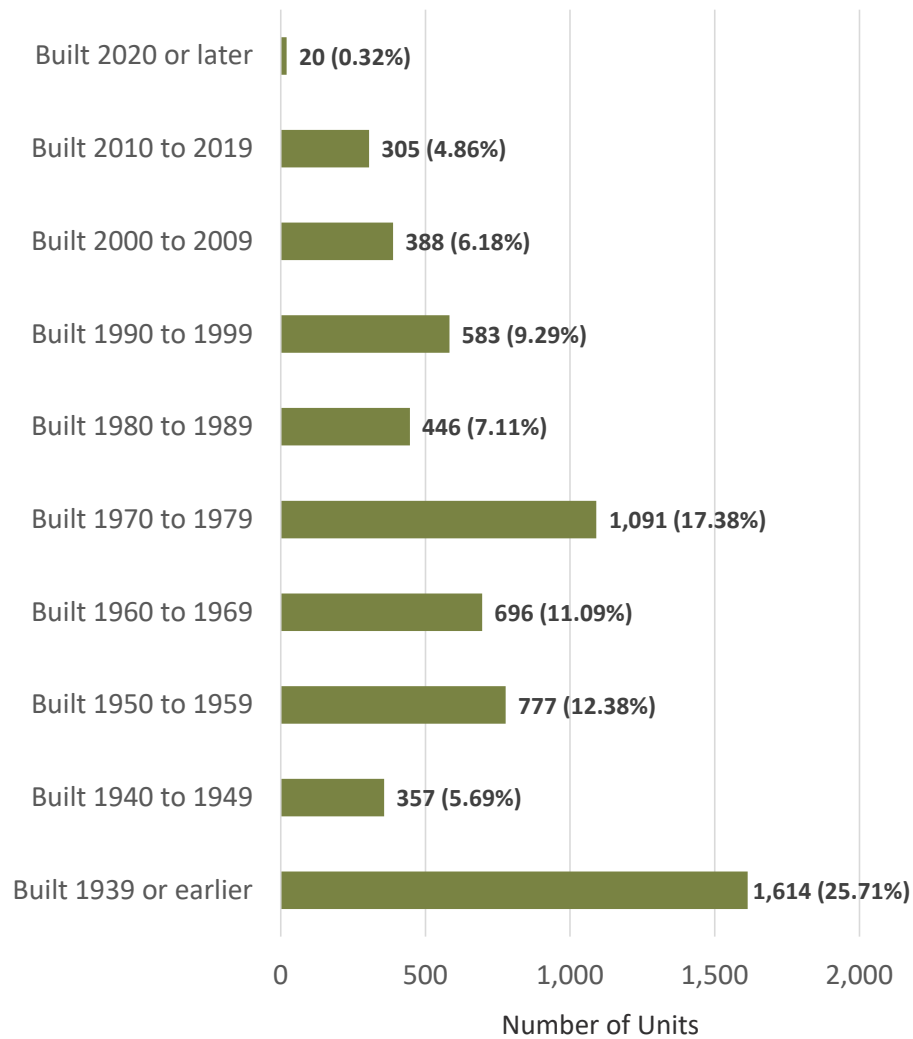
New Ulm		
Type	Number	%
Total housing units	6,277	100%
Occupied	5,883	93.72%
Vacant	394	6.28%

Data source: US Census ACS 2021 5-year estimates



Housing

Figure 5.1. Age of Housing Stock



Data source: US Census ACS 2021 5-year estimates

Age of Housing Stock

About 44% of existing housing units in New Ulm were built before 1960 (sixty years ago), and 25% was built before 1940. As homes age, they need additional repairs or updated amenities. Homes that are not adequately maintained become less functional and desirable to the public. Figure 5.1 shows the age of housing stock in New Ulm.

The types of housing options available (size, type, and location) may differ from current needs, and may not match the needs of age or demographic groups who may be looking for housing in the city. The existing housing stock can serve the needs and budget of many entry-level home buyers.

The aging stock when not properly maintained or updated, may not meet housing needs of prospective residents, which further limits housing options.



WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING - PUBLIC INPUT

Below is a summary of public input regarding the availability and affordability of housing in New Ulm, as well as the city's future needs.

Over 2,044 participants provided input in the online survey.

Community input showed that there is a desire for affordable housing options, multi-family homes, and entry-level single-family homes. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines affordable housing as housing which does not cost a household more than 30% of its monthly or annual income.

The public also ranked increasing a variety of housing options as a top strategy for making New Ulm a more attractive place for young adults and new residents.



Housing needs in New Ulm



More multi-family housing options

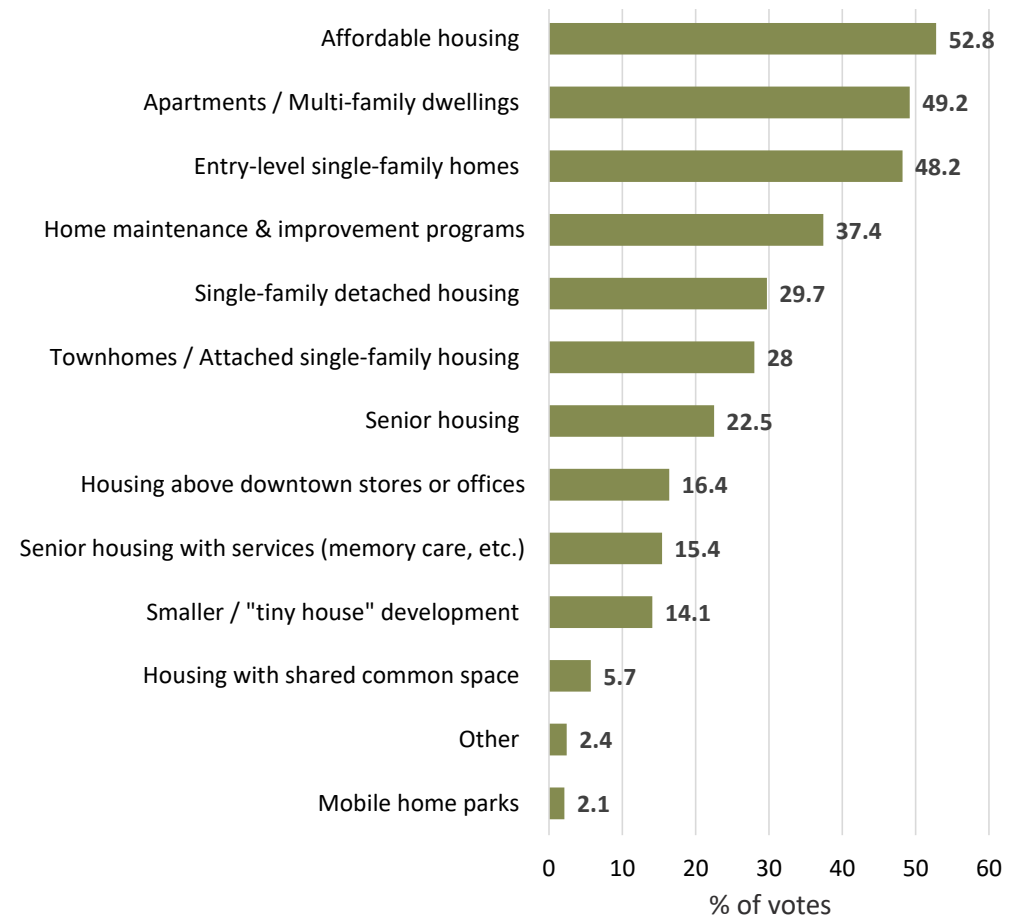


More entry-level single-family homes



More affordable options

Which types of housing are most needed in New Ulm?



Housing

Direct from the public:

"We enjoy walking through the neighborhoods and parks... Keep promoting all that you already have in place."

"New Ulm needs additional senior living opportunities such as additional market-rate apartments and rental townhomes. Additional single-family, single level homes and townhomes for sale."

"Very little housing available that is on one floor and convenient for an aging population."

Affordable housing for the middle class is a necessity to keep and get people to the area. There are limited options unless you are lower income.

"I will be looking for a twin home, patio home etc. soon and I will have to move from New Ulm because there are so few (if any) available in New Ulm."

"The market, houses are older and now market price coupled with [interest] rates limits ability to remodel."

"Many of the single family detached homes were old and in need of repair but cheap, or huge and outside of budget. There wasn't much in the middle."

"New Ulm needs more affordable rental homes for young families."

"Affordable housing will be the most important factor for attracting both new businesses and younger demographics to the area. Right now it's nearly impossible for a first time home buyer to get a house, and apartment costs are also discouraging. New housing and redoing downtown to include more apartments or condos, or renovating the old Marktplatz Mall into housing is a good idea."

"My family relocated from another state-- there were only (extremely limited) rental options available to us. We bought our house from someone we knew, otherwise, we likely would not have been successful in finding a home that we loved."

"As for housing, New Ulm lacks in housing for people who want to move here. I would like to see more housing opportunities, apartments etc."

FUTURE HOUSING NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Growth in New Ulm is anticipated to continue during the next decade. Over this time, the largest population age group is forecasted to be in the senior population, 65 years and older. As mentioned previously, by 2030 New Ulm's population is forecasted to grow 3.5% (to 14,610 people) and 4% among households (to 6,295 households). Given the anticipated growth trends and community needs, people in New Ulm will be seeking a variety of priced housing products from multifamily to single family, rentals to owner-occupied.



Cottonwood residential area



Recommendations from the 2022 Comprehensive Housing Needs Analysis

The [2022 Comprehensive Housing Needs Analysis](#) evaluated community demographics and the current housing stock, and provided a set of recommendations to meet community needs. The following is a summary from the Housing Needs Analysis:

Conditions that Shape Housing Today

- Almost 3 out of 5 jobs (60%) in New Ulm were held by people who commute from outside the city. Some of these workers may elect to move into town and reduce their commute if there were housing options that met their needs. Many of these individuals live in nearby smaller communities with lower cost housing options.
- About 3 out of 4 homes (72%) in New Ulm are owned.
- The greatest percentage of homes in New Ulm were built prior to 1940, which comprises nearly 24% of the entire housing stock. Older homes require additional repairs and updates that can be expensive. Older housing stock is often more affordable than building new and therefore ideal for first time homebuyers.
- The rental vacancy rate, including market-rate, affordable, and subsidized housing, in New Ulm was 0.8%, which is significantly lower than the industry standard of 5 to 7 percent. The industry standard rate indicates a rental market that has a variety of housing choices with competitive rates.
- The median price of homes for sale (\$290,000) would require a higher income than what New Ulm's 2022 median household income (\$72,819) can afford. Higher interest rates can place additional pressure on potential buyers' budgets.
- In New Ulm, about 37% of renter households and 12% of owner householders are estimated to be paying more than 30% of their income for housing costs.
- The majority of rental properties are older, about 80% of units built prior to 2000 and 50% prior to 1990. Due to the age of the existing rental supply, all of the units are priced at or below the rental guidelines for affordable housing, which helps satisfy demand from households that income-qualify for financially assisted housing.
- Homeownership rates among seniors is approximately 77% in 2022. High homeownership rates among seniors indicate there could be lack of senior housing options, or simply that many seniors prefer to live in their home and age in place. This can limit the amount of homes that enter the housing market.
- New Ulm's fastest growing population is the senior population, 65 years or older. This indicates a growing demand for a range of senior housing types, including ownership and rental options.
- The cost to build new single-family housing has increased significantly over the past decade and since the Great Recession of 2008 in all markets across the country. Most builders have been unable to deliver new construction homes for less than \$300,000. New construction typically caters to move-up or executive buyers. Entry-level homes are classified as homes priced under \$200,000. Financially, it will be very difficult to develop new-single family housing under \$200,000 even with public assistance. As a result, the existing housing stock is often the target housing type for entry-level or first-time home buyers. For those reasons, it will be important to build options for current residents of existing entry-level homes who are ready to transition to move-up single-family homes, twin homes, rental housing, and senior housing.
- The New Ulm projected general occupancy demand between 2022 and 2030 is 364 units.
- The New Ulm projected senior demand for 2022 to 2027 is 440 units.

Future Housing Needs

Based on that evaluation, the Housing Analysis provided the following recommendations to meet current and future housing demands through 2030 (for rental and ownership):

Single-family housing:

- Additional types of housing options are needed to retain current residents and attract new ones, including rental and ownership options.
- Demand for single-family housing remains strong in New Ulm.
 - » Most of the new single-family housing being constructed are “move-up” homes that cost \$250,000 or more; in part because of the high construction costs along with additional infrastructure costs in developing new subdivisions. “Move-up” homes typically refer to larger or more expensive homes purchased after living in a starter home.
 - » High construction and material costs make it challenging for builders to deliver new single-family homes for less than \$300,000. Most entry-level buyers are forced to look at the existing housing for sale market, which continues to be extremely limited.
 - » As mentioned previously, it will be important to increase the move-up housing stock to provide options for current entry-level home owners who are ready to transition to a more expensive home. This will help open the entry-level housing market for entry-level or first-time home buyers.
- There is a growing demand for a variety of housing types, including townhouses and twin homes.
 - » This market will target empty-nesters and retirees seeking to downsize from their single-family homes.
 - » Housing developments targeting the older population should be one-level to provide accessibility.
 - » These housing types can generally provide a more affordable option than purchasing new single-family homes for younger households.

Rental housing:

- There is a strong demand for a wider range of rental housing options.
 - » New rental housing can be developed immediately and will continue to be in demand through this decade especially if continued job availability and new job growth is attracted to New Ulm. New housing types can include apartment developments and townhomes.
 - » The low vacancy rate at recently constructed market-rate apartments indicates a strong demand for rental housing. The Housing Analysis recommends apartments that offer one-bedroom units, one-bedroom plus den units, and two-bedroom units.
- Additional rental options could also accommodate the growing senior population. Rental options can include cooperative, active adult, independent living, assisted living, and memory care housing. Expanding rental options for seniors will help them transition out of single-family homes that can be opened to the larger population.



Example of new construction being built

Housing



Opportunity 1: Expand housing options

The city plays a role in making sure there is a variety of housing being built. New housing developments should accommodate different resident needs, including cost, size, type, and rental and ownership options. As housing expands, residential neighborhoods should include a mix of densities, not be dominated by low-density, single-family subdivisions or by large apartment buildings. Promoting a variety of housing can address a variety of issues, such as lack of rental and ownership options, affordability, and ease of entry into ownership.

Some of the types of housing identified by the 2022 Housing Needs Analysis, as well as those being built in small communities across Minnesota include:

- “Missing Middle” housing: Introducing additional duplex, triplex, and small-building apartment options are a way of increasing the number of living units within established neighborhoods while respecting the character of neighborhoods.
- Townhomes, twin homes, or detached villas: These housing options can be attractive especially to empty-nesters, young seniors, or entry level buyers. According to the Housing Needs Analysis, there is a limited amount of this type available in New Ulm. The Cottages at Orchard Hills is an example of the demand for this housing type among the growing senior population.
- Accessory housing units can provide additional separate living units within an existing single-family lot or structure.

Expanding the variety of housing can address the existing and growing demand for more well-maintained options that fit a wide range of budgets and fulfill community needs and the vision of the Comprehensive Plan.

It can position the city to attract new residents - including from the pool of almost 5,500 workers who commute into New Ulm for work every day. Providing the necessary housing will also help retain existing employers and attract new ones to employers that cannot attract and/or retain workers due to the lack of housing options today.

It is important to note that the private development of housing is also dependent on market forces that are not within the city’s control. The city does not have the ability to dictate the market, but it can play a role in advocating and highlighting the current and future community needs to developers. The city can serve as an advocate by presenting the data found in the Housing Analysis and offer financial incentives to attract developers.



Example of new townhomes built in a residential neighborhood

The following are examples of housing types to meet different needs and budgets:



Medium-density townhomes



Small lot single-family homes



Pocket neighborhoods with cottage homes



Low-density duplexes



Medium-density condominiums



High-density mixed use building



Example of indoor rehabilitation



Opportunity 2: Rehabilitation of existing housing

Improving the condition of existing housing is an important priority for renters, owners, and city leaders, especially as the for-sale and rental market has become tighter. It is important to preserve the existing housing stock to prevent creating an even tighter housing market, as well as keeping an attractive community image.

Community input also highlighted housing rehabilitation and improving blighted homes a top housing priority. The city's [Economic Development Authority \(EDA\)](#) should continue to provide housing rehabilitation programs to help property owners make improvements, updates, and repairs, such as the Multi-Family Rental and Get it Ready Rehabilitation Loan Programs. This plan also recommends expansion of existing programs and partnerships (including [USDA Rural Development](#) and [MN Housing](#)) to increase the availability of rehabilitation programs and funds.

Opportunity 3: Accessory Dwelling Units

An accessory dwelling unit (“ADU”), also known as a “carriage house” or a “granny flat,” is an additional unit of housing - with its own cooking, sleeping, and bathroom facilities - located on the same lot as a single- or two-family home.

An ADU can be housed within a separate structure (typical for a carriage house), or within the primary structure on the lot (as in a duplex). Allowing the construction of ADUs on owner-occupied lots, and with appropriate siting and architectural controls, can accomplish several goals:

- Increase rental housing opportunities by providing an increased number of apartments available.
- Increase homeownership opportunities by providing potential homeowners with an additional source of income that lowers their effective mortgage payments.
- Bring more residents to a community, helping support existing and potential businesses.
- Provide attractive housing options for area residents who no longer need a full-sized home but would like to continue to live in their neighborhoods.
- Provide additional space for personal activities, such as a work-from-home office or art studio.

For these reasons, ADUs are strongly supported by organizations working to increase housing options like the [Family Housing Fund](#) and [AARP](#). This plan recommends allowing the development of ADUs in owner-occupied lots in New Ulm in some residential zoning districts. The city currently allows this type of conversion as a permitted use. These types of dwelling units are required to comply with appropriate utility standards.



Example of an ADU built above a garage



Different types of ADUs. Photo courtesy of AARP



Mixing a variety of home types on smaller lots supports affordability and provides homes that meet a range of incomes. The images above are examples of residential developments that offer a mix of housing types.

Opportunity 4: Strategies to reduce development costs

Most of the new single-family housing has been focused on or catered to the move-up and higher-price buyer market. This is in part because of the high construction costs and additional infrastructure costs associated with developing new subdivisions. Because of the price of new housing, most entry level buyers must look at the existing housing resale market, which over the past few years and during this study has had limited properties available for sale.

Given the continuing increase in interest rates, land acquisition, and construction prices, it is important to consider and employ strategies to reduce development costs while providing quality housing options for residents. Continuing to use the following strategies can help reduce costs with a minimum amount of public and private subsidy:

- **Selecting sites served by existing infrastructure** - Identify reasonably priced sites that already have access to public utilities and streets.
- **Planning modest-sized lots and compact neighborhoods** – Plan smaller single family lot sizes to reduce land costs and the scale of infrastructure.
- **Planning efficient streets** – Continue to lay out streets efficiently to reduce total length of streets and associated infrastructure and build streets to accommodate all anticipated uses and traffic volumes.



Opportunity 5: Using CPTED Design Principles to Improve Quality of Life

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles use physical and environmental features to improve the livability, safety and visual appeal of public spaces. CPTED principles include:



Natural surveillance:

increase visibility of public space by eliminating hiding spots, keeping clear sight lines, and low landscaping



Access control:

create sense of space by using curbs and landscaping to direct traffic to a visible area



Maintenance:

keeping properties and public spaces well-maintained to show that they are cared for



Territorial reinforcement:

using fencing, signage, landscaping, and lighting to define public spaces

The city should work with new housing developers, especially multi-family, to incorporate CPTED principles in their sites. These principles can also be applied when constructing new or updating existing public spaces. This will improve a sense of community, safety, and visual appeal for neighborhoods.



Opportunity 6: Expand Housing in Downtown

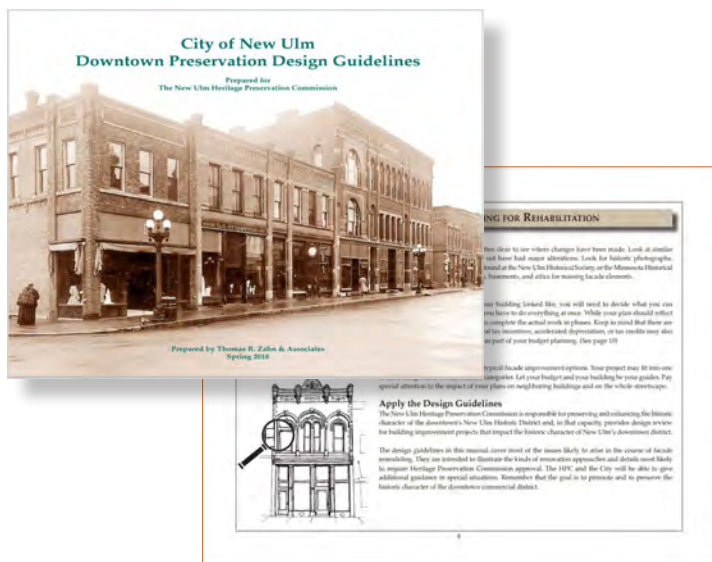
Downtown is a key part of New Ulm, it helps the city's identity and provides key assets, amenities, and attractions for current and prospective residents. It offers a walkable and convenient network with connections to local businesses, community spaces, recreation, and parks. Housing in downtown is the best way to ensure having people downtown. Expanding housing options in downtown New Ulm will further increase the community's overall vitality, as more residents will support local businesses and generate activity throughout the day. This provides additional residential options for young professionals, seniors, and families, especially with such a tight housing market.

The city can provide design guidelines to ensure new development reflects the historic downtown character and the surrounding area. In addition to building new housing, historic downtown buildings can be rehabilitated for residential use as housing units can be added on upper floors, if financially feasible.

Rehabilitate Historic Buildings

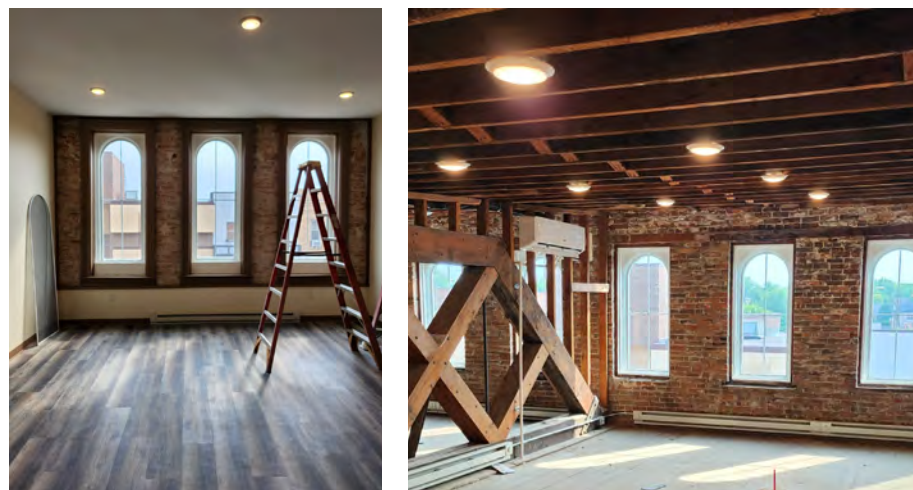
The city should incentivize downtown property owners to rehabilitate upper floors to be converted into housing. The city's [Economic Development Authority \(EDA\)](#) currently offers various loans to help businesses make building improvements. These can be expanded to allow financing for creating housing on upper floors. The city should also explore private and public financial programs that incentivize building rehabilitation for upper-floor housing, such as [Minnesota's Small Cities Development Programs](#), Tax Increment Financing (TIF), and Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit. The city's recently completed [Downtown Preservation Guidelines \(2018\)](#) offer a thorough and thoughtful resource for next steps.

Recently the city reduced its off street parking requirements for new residential units. This will reduce barriers for residential development in the downtown.



Identify Current Downtown Housing Assets

The city can play a role in identifying downtown buildings with vacant upper floors, their condition, and the level of effort required to make them habitable. This allows the city to encourage the rehabilitation of buildings that may require fewer updates and can play a role as a catalyst for surrounding development.



Photos of upper floors in New Ulm's Downtown

Revisit Building Codes and Regulations

Rehabilitating historic buildings to modern building codes can be cost-prohibitive to many property owners. The City of New Ulm has adopted the Guideline for the Rehabilitation of Existing Buildings (GRAB) code to allow for more flexibility in building rehabilitation. Reviewing building codes can sometimes identify ways to make rehabilitation more financially accessible while still achieving appropriate safety levels.

Housing



An example of smaller homes that require less maintenance can be an attractive option for seniors or empty-nesters



There are multiple senior living options currently in New Ulm

Opportunity 7: Meet the housing needs of older adults

The aging of the baby boomer generation (ages 58 to 76 in 2022) is impacting the composition of New Ulm's population. Younger seniors (ages 65 to 74) are projected to grow by 13% over the next five years. The 75 and older age group is also projected to grow over the next five years (11%, or 168 people). The growth of this older population will result in demand for alternative, age-appropriate housing arrangements; both for-sale and rental housing types. Empty-nesters and retirees typically seek to downsize from their single-family homes.

For example, it will be important to provide options for housing units that are smaller and easier to maintain than traditional single-family homes. It will also be important to develop housing that offers related health and assistance services, including meals, housekeeping, transportation, and health care options.



GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Outlined below are goals and strategies that are aimed at guiding the City of New Ulm towards meeting future housing demands for residents across multiple age and income levels. These goals and strategies are based on public input and a study of current and future trends.

Goal 1: Adopt an integrated framework for planning and developing housing within the community.

Strategy 1.1: Promote the development of a variety of housing types, including elder facilities, workforce housing options, multi-family, life cycle, cooperative, townhouse and accessory housing options.

Strategy 1.2: Develop a realistic housing plan with goals and timelines.

Strategy 1.3: Acquire and rehabilitate or demolish dilapidated buildings.

Strategy 1.4: Update the city's Housing Study every five years.

Strategy 1.5: Support residential infill projects.

Goal 2: Increase the quantity and diversity of housing types that meet the community's current and future needs.

Strategy 2.1: Form a public/private association to develop and execute a plan to create affordable and market rate rental units to expand the housing supply.

Strategy 2.2: Identify and promote sites that could attract development of new market rate rental housing.

Strategy 2.3: Identify and promote methods for reducing residential lot costs to increase housing production.

Strategy 2.4: Promote and advance a range of housing types by size, type and price within each zoning district.

Strategy 2.5: Attract developers to build the types of housing projects the city is seeking and addresses community needs. Create marketing information that communicates the city's vision for new housing areas.

Strategy 2.6: Provide family-friendly neighborhoods with affordable, attractive, and available housing.

Strategy 2.7: Locate high density development at appropriate locations throughout the city provided they are compatible with adjacent land uses and the existing and planned street systems.

Housing

Goal 3: Preserve the character of existing neighborhoods that give New Ulm a sense of place.

Strategy 3.1: Regularly review existing ordinances which reduce blight and improve housing conditions.

Strategy 3.2: Protect the historic New Ulm grid pattern and use it in or extend it into the development of new neighborhoods to maintain a sense of place throughout the community.

Strategy 3.3: Establish standards and incentives guiding infill and new housing to match the character of the existing neighborhood.

Strategy 3.4: Preserve historically significant properties within the city.

Strategy 3.5: Require sidewalks on both sides of newly constructed residential streets.

Strategy 3.6: Ensure that housing developments are accessible to community resources such as jobs, retail districts, walking, biking and transit networks.

Strategy 3.7: Protect neighborhoods from incompatible land uses through effective zoning and city code requirements.

Goal 4. Create a system for maintaining, protecting, and renovating the existing housing stock.

Strategy 4.1: The city's future is heavily dependent on New Ulm's appeal as a residential location. The condition of the existing housing stock is a major factor in determining the city's long-term viability. Establish programs that extend the life of existing housing.

Strategy 4.2: Create a community consortium focused on the reinvigoration of existing homes for low to moderate income homeowners.

Strategy 4.3: Continue to fund and operate housing programs that assist property owners with repairing, modernizing and weatherization activities.

Strategy 4.4: Adopt standards to ensure that new housing developments are constructed to be energy efficient and environmentally friendly.

Goal 5. Support the planning and construction of affordable housing options.

Strategy 5.1: Proactively encourage the reuse and renovation of unused institutional and vacant buildings, upper floors, and underutilized properties that are compatible with residential uses.

Strategy 5.2: Support the development of new smaller detached homes.

Strategy 5.3: Develop an ordinance addressing the number of short-term rentals in neighborhoods throughout New Ulm.

Strategy 5.4: Continue to allow accessory dwelling units as residential housing in appropriate locations.

Strategy 5.5: Support and use available programs to assist first time homebuyers and to attract potential residents.

Strategy 5.6: Focus on expanding the amount of local resources available to address homelessness and support permanent affordable housing.



CHAPTER 6

TRANSPORTATION



INTRODUCTION

The transportation network is the backbone of a community. Transportation in New Ulm includes different modes, methods, and types of facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, freight, aviation, and vehicles. This chapter provides direction for City staff, as well as existing and future stakeholders, in preparing for future growth and development.

It further establishes a framework for making decisions about existing and future transportation infrastructure. The planning process views transportation in terms of the movement of people and goods, and integrates transportation components into a system that will efficiently meet the mobility needs of New Ulm's residents, businesses, industries, and the traveling public through 2044.

Transportation facilities also connect, and in some cases separate land uses within a community. Their physical design has a direct impact on quality of life from safety and accessibility to noise, volume, and visual character.

The historic grid layout and character of city streets in New Ulm have been fundamental in shaping its development. The street system has and will continue to play a key role in the form and function of the community.

This chapter begins with an overview of New Ulm's existing transportation system. It then looks at public feedback received during the community engagement process to identify opportunities and challenges within the transportation system. This response, combined with population, development and other associated information and projections for the city over the next 20 years, form the basis for the plan. This chapter further establishes goals and strategies to aid in transportation projects and policy decisions. These will address the planning and implementation of current and future transportation needs within New Ulm.

TRANSPORTATION TODAY

Roadway Network: Motor Vehicles

This section addresses current traffic counts, jurisdictional alignment, the functional classification system, future major street locations, potential congestion concerns, and the impact that it has on future street system issues and potential enhancements relative to street type. The area's transportation system has resulted in the dominance of automobiles and trucks as the preferred option for people and goods alike.

The City's streets are characterized by a grid pattern with a limited number of curvilinear streets. The street pattern dates to the town plat of 1858. This street pattern has been used as the location for state highways and a county road system. These, in turn, provide suitable access to regional cities and facilities.

Concerns with the current roadway systems in New Ulm are safety and vehicular movements. Safety is relevant to all users of the system including pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. The City wants to continue making an efficient network in a safe manner by extending systematic improvements.

Existing Traffic Volumes

One of the most basic ways to assess a given roadway is to look at its traffic volumes. Existing traffic volumes (from 2021 and 2022) on roadways within New Ulm are provided on Figure 6.1. This measurement tells how busy a roadway is, identifies the corridors that have the highest traffic volume, and allows an assessment of road capacity and longevity. This measurement also assists in planning for new roads and their maintenance.

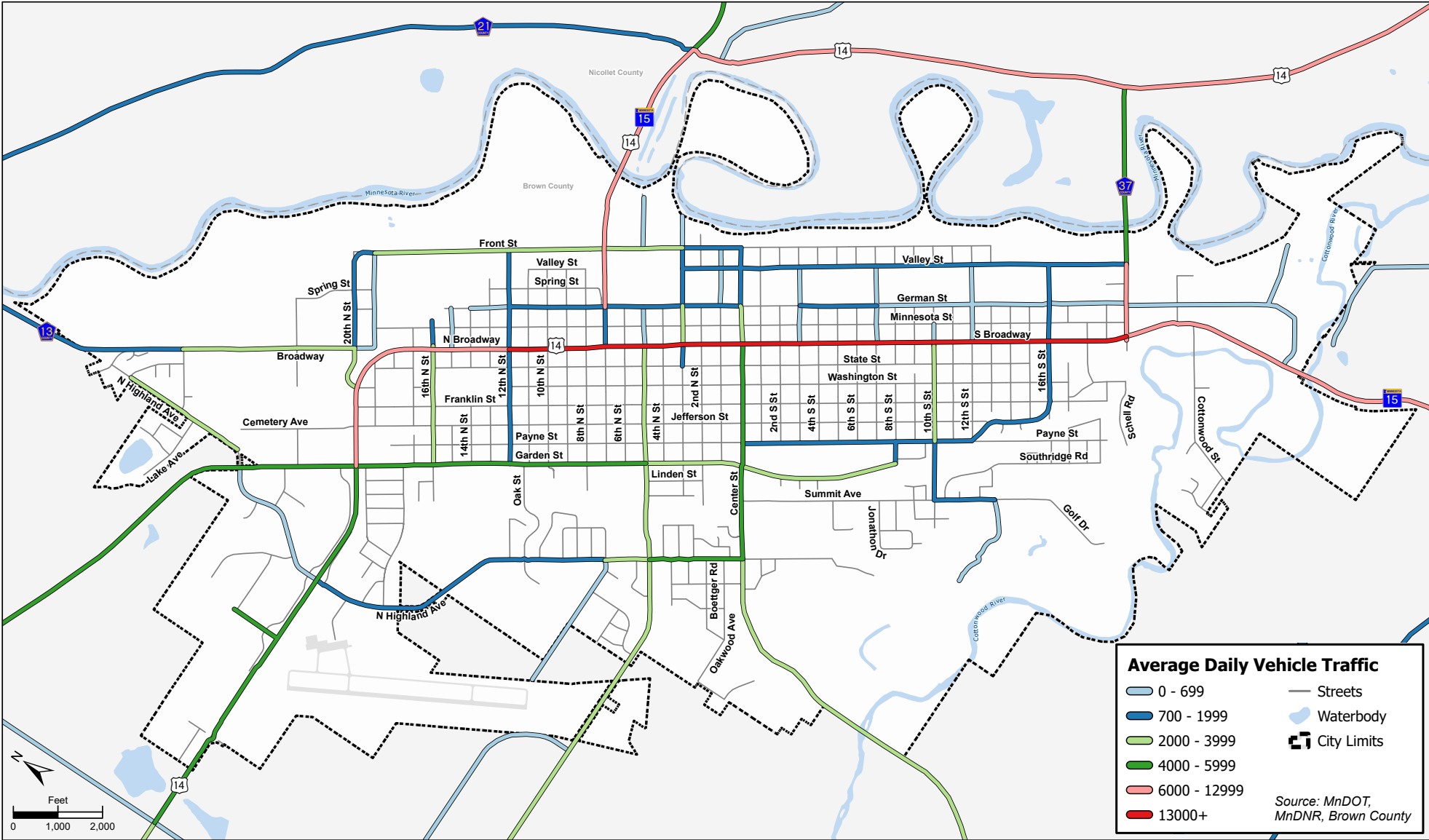
The City's highest traffic counts are found on North and South Broadway in the center of New Ulm. Counts are reduced by approximately a half on the highway portion of 7th N Street. Other high traffic counts are present on Center Street, 20th S Street, N Garden Street, and N Highland Avenue.





Figure 6.1

Existing Traffic Volumes 1992-2022



Safety

Ensuring safe travel is a top priority for the City and is in part accomplished through improvements and maintenance of transportation facilities. The Minnesota Crash Mapping Analysis Tool (MnCMAT2) is a database of crash data that identifies the location, severity, and attributes associated with crashes throughout the State. The most current dataset (2019-2023) was analyzed to identify those locations within New Ulm that experience the highest number of crashes.

Figure 6.2 shows the frequency of crashes within the community. In general, crashes were evenly distributed throughout the community. A majority of the accidents account for five or less incidents per intersection. However, there were several intersections with higher crash incidences concentrated in

a limited number of locations. The five intersection locations identified with the highest frequency of crashes between 2019 and 2023 are illustrated in Figure 6.2 and listed in Table 6.1.

The top two intersections with the most crashes are the intersection of US Highway 14 and N Garden Street (22 incidents), and US Highway 14 and N Highland Avenue (17 incidents). These intersections have higher traffic volumes as well as higher posted speed limits. A roundabout will be constructed at the intersection of US Highway 14 and North Highland Avenue in 2024 to address current safety issues. Within the past five years, the city has experienced two fatalities. There were no fatalities as a result of crashes in the top five intersections. Most of the crashes involved property damage only.

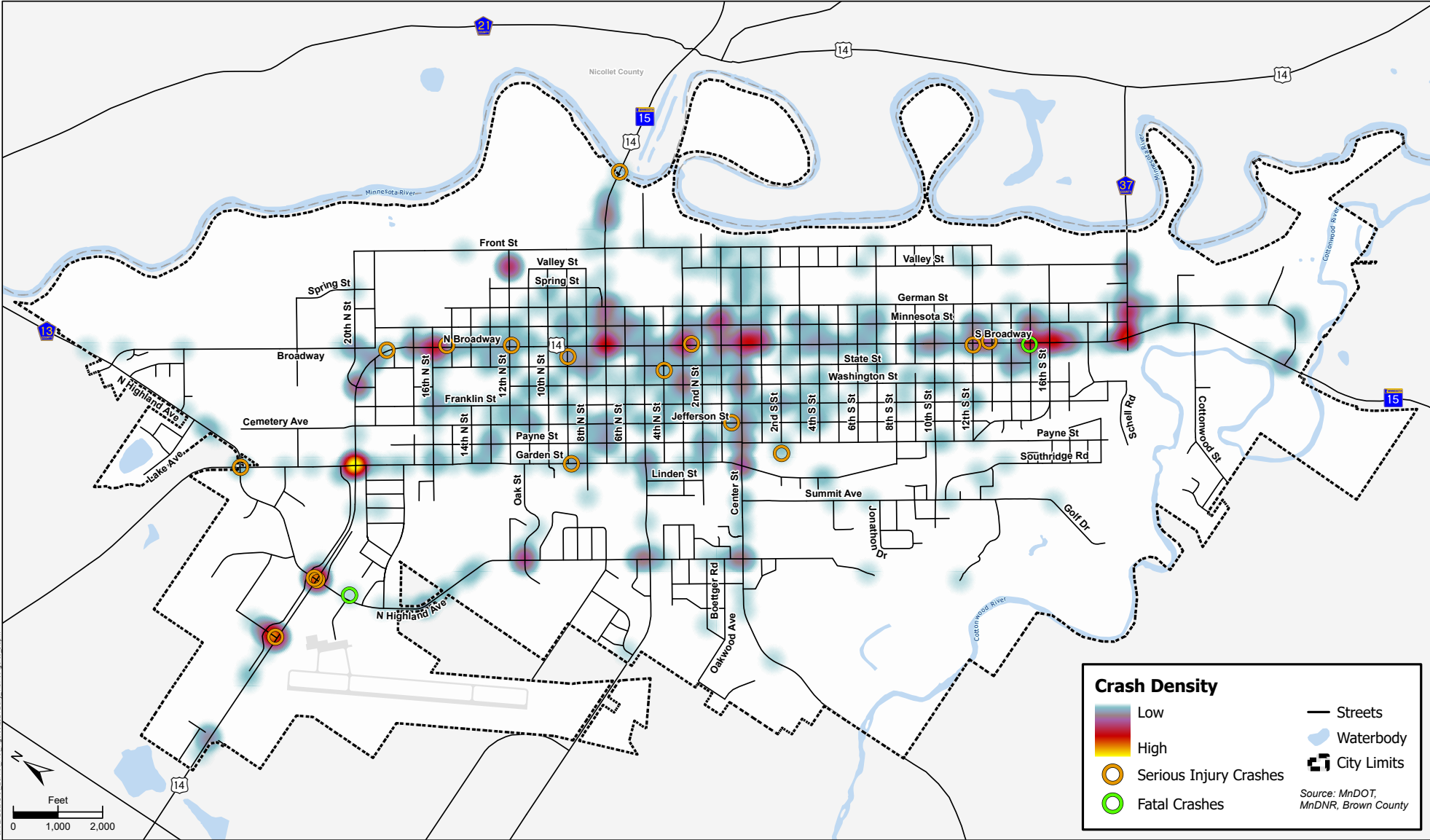
Table 6.1. Top 5 City of New Ulm Crash Sites by Frequency (2019-2023)

New Ulm							
Rank	Intersection Location	Fatal Crash	Severe Injury	Minor Injury	Possible Injury	Property Damage Only	Total Amount of Incidents
#1	US Highway 14 and County State Aid Highway 29 (North Garden Street)	0	0	3	5	14	22
#2	US Highway 14 and North Highland Avenue	0	2	1	1	13	17
#3	US Highway 14 and Jacobs Street	0	1	4	2	7	14
#4	US Highway 15 and 20th South Street	0	0	3	0	11	14
#5	US Highway 14 (North Broadway) and US Highway 15 (7th North Street)	0	0	0	5	8	13



Figure 6.2

Crash Sites by Frequency 2019-2023



Jurisdictional Classification

Roadways are classified based on which level of government owns and has jurisdiction over them. Typically, roadways with higher traffic volumes and mobility functions fall under the jurisdiction of state or federal levels of government. Roadways that serve greater areas resulting in longer trips and somewhat higher traffic volumes fall under the jurisdiction of a county. Roadways with more emphasis on local circulation and access are under the jurisdiction of the local government.

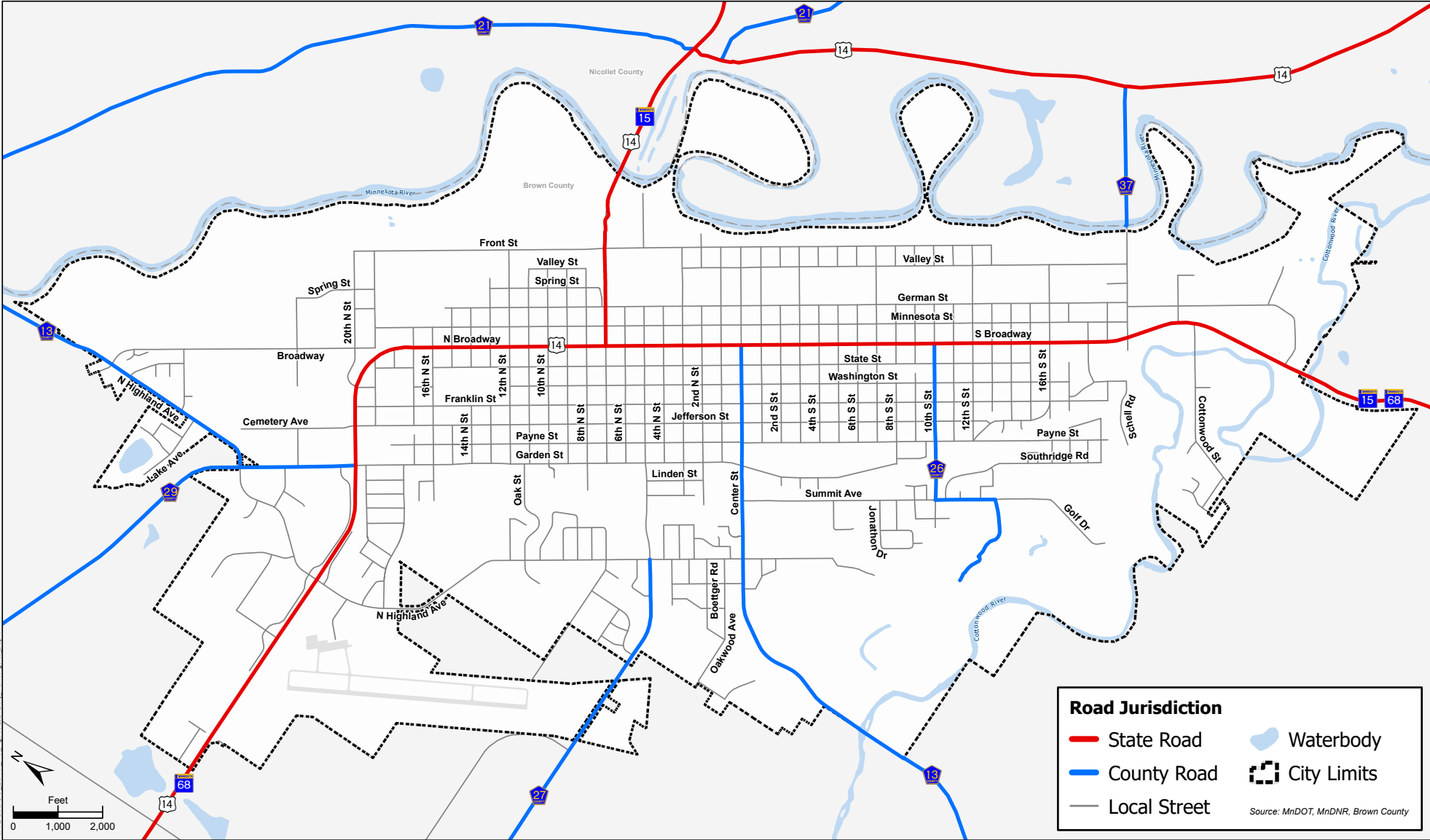
The jurisdictional map is found in Figure 6.3. Most of the highest volume roads are owned by the Minnesota Department of Transportation, while other mid-volume roads are the responsibility of Brown County. The City of New Ulm owns and manages most of the local streets in the city.





Figure 6.3

2024 Roadway Jurisdiction Map



Functional Classification

Functional classification is a system by which roadways are grouped according to the existing and future land uses they are intended to serve. Functional classification assists in determining what role roadways perform and how it will be designed, including street widths, speed, and intersection control. It is important to recognize that there is flexibility in the design of a roadway relative to its functional classification.

Functional classification is also an important consideration in the development of local regulations for land development. Basic to this process is the recognition that streets and land uses are linked. As appropriate, the mobility of higher classified roadways should be protected by careful management of site development and access spacing standards. Transportation problems can occur when a street's design and the management of access to the street are inconsistent with the functional and operating demands imposed by the surrounding land uses. Safety challenges occur when the design of a roadway cannot accommodate the adjacent land uses.

When existing roadways are updated or new ones are built, they should integrate modern safety and accessibility practices for pedestrians and bicyclists. Traffic calming measures should be included with neighborhood streets since they provide access to businesses, public services, parks, and open spaces. In New Ulm, there are currently five types of roadway classifications (Figure 6.4).

Major Arterial

Major arterial streets represent regional transportation corridors. These streets are federal and state highways that connect New Ulm with other cities. As these roadways move through New Ulm, they take on both regional and local characteristics. As regional highways, they seek to move traffic efficiently and safely in and out of the city. Within New Ulm, these roadways serve local functions of movement between major destinations. The Major Arterials are also a source of access for commercial development in New Ulm.

Minor Arterial

Minor arterials are segments of the county highway system in New Ulm. These roadways also connect New Ulm with the surrounding region. Within New Ulm, Minor Arterials connect larger areas of the city. The safe and efficient movement of vehicles is the most important function of these streets.

Major Collector

Major collector streets are responsible for providing circulation within the City. These roadways link neighborhoods together and provide access to commercial districts within New Ulm. A balance between mobility and access is desired.

Minor Collector

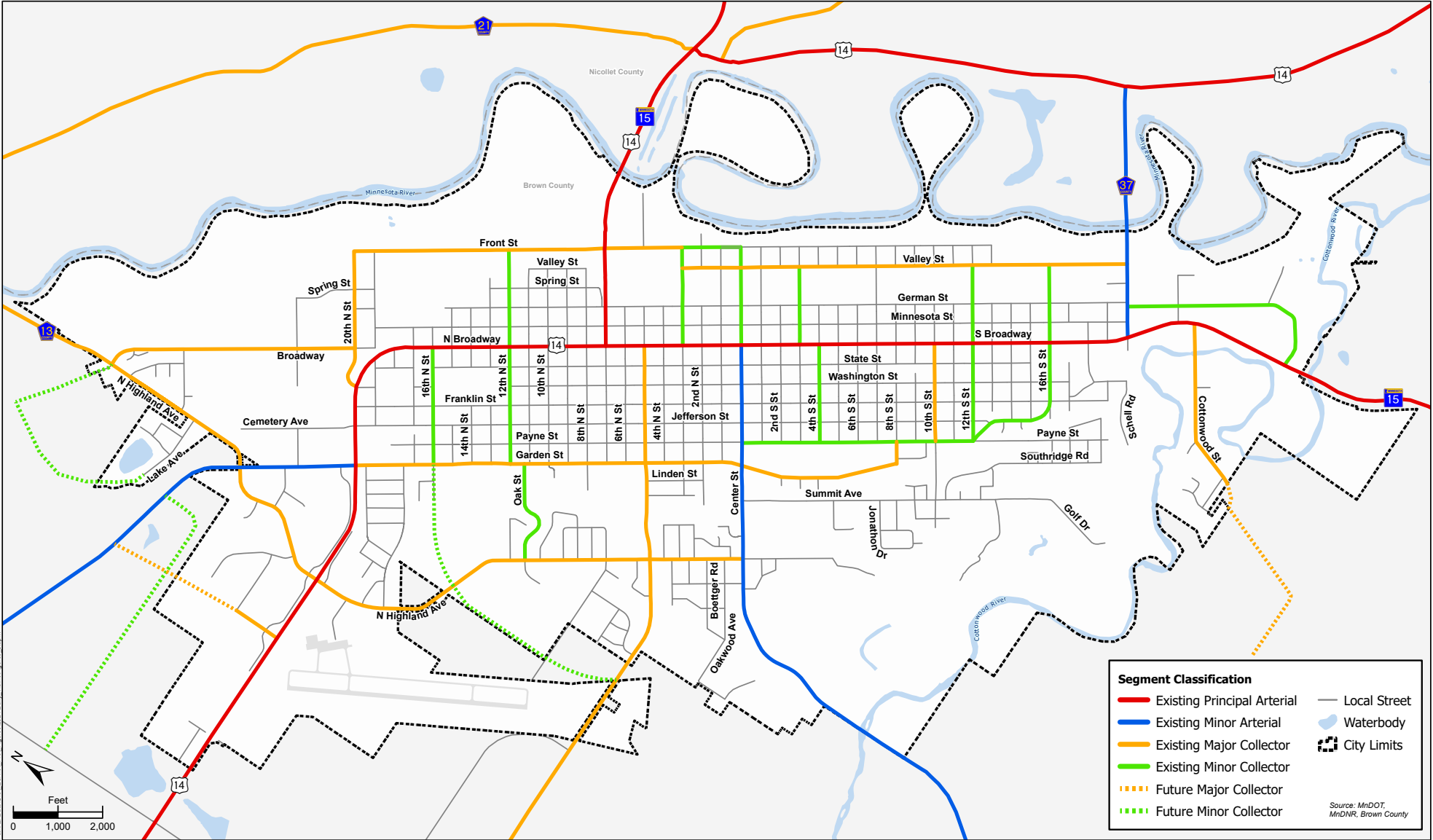
Minor collectors typically include city streets and rural township roadways, which facilitate the collection of local traffic from neighborhoods, and connect it to major collectors and minor arterials. Minor collector streets serve short trips at relatively low speeds. These roadways should be designed to discourage short-cut trips through a neighborhood.

Local

Similar to minor collector streets, local streets typically include neighborhood city streets which provide direct access to residences and businesses, and connect traffic to minor collectors, major collectors, and minor arterials. Local streets serve short trips at relatively low speeds and their purpose is increasingly focused on providing access rather than mobility. Local streets do not include through traffic movements.



Figure 6-4
2024 Roadway Functional Classification Map



Future Street Networks

The expansion of the local road system generally occurs with new development. As development occurs, the city must evaluate the need for future road connections and extensions to ensure the community's connectivity. The goal is to enhance the efficiency and safety of the overall system. These improvements will likely require the installation of other utility and infrastructure systems within the right-of-way.

Figure 6.4 identifies areas of need and general alignments that will help complete the City's roadway system. These roads and alignments will be constructed as needed in the future. Rights-of-way for interior local streets will generally be dedicated through the platting process, no right-of-way preservation is needed. Right-of-way will need to be preserved for any new collector road. The reservation of right-of-way areas is the first step in the establishment of the city's transportation network for streets.

Canadian Pacific/Kansas City Railroad

Rail service is available to New Ulm via the Canadian Pacific/Kansas City (CPKC). MnDOT classifies CP Railroad as a Class I railroad. Class I railroads account for the most rail miles and have the highest operating revenues of the 3 railroad class systems in the state. During 2021, 7 trains per day operated on this line according to MnDOT train counts. There are currently two private spur lines serving industrial users within the City of New Ulm.

Railroad Crossings

Street systems also cross rail lines and this requires a different type of improvement. The railroad is a participant in this process and in most instances will assume responsibility for the construction work. The financial cost of the work may be shared or it can be the City's sole responsibility.

Currently, there are only two unrestricted railroad crossing points in New Ulm. Those are located at the Highway 14/15 bridge at 7th N Street and the underpass at 12th N Street. If the City experiences increased rail service in the future, this situation will likely create movement, safety, and noise issues. Improvements will need to be evaluated as railroad traffic increases in New Ulm.

Alleys

Alleys were one of the defining characteristics of the 1858 town plat of New Ulm. At the time, alleys were a European design feature brought by German immigrants as part of New Ulm's settlement. Alleys have the following positive impacts:

- Serve as a drainage and utility corridor.
- Provide additional building access for emergency services (e.g., fire and police).
- Allow for the removal of garbage and recycling.
- Provide a location for garages and rear yard parking allowing less cars on the street
- Provide additional outdoor storage space.
- Enhance safety as sidewalk and pedestrians are separated from the access requirements of vehicles using garage or driveway entrances from the street.
- Less attractive functions are placed at the rear of the property which improves the appearance of the street.
- Allow for the platting of narrower lots, greater density, less disjointed frontage and greater walkability.



Transportation

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Non-Motorized transportation is comprised of walking, biking, and rolling (includes wheelchairs, cycle rickshaws, skates, skateboards, scooters, and hand carts). It further includes equestrian and horse drawn vehicles. This type of transportation facilitates recreation and mobility activities. The City is committed to continuing to improve safety and mobility for a wide range of non-motorized travel methods. The active transportation network is shown on Figure 6.5.

Pedestrian Network

Walking is the most basic form of transportation – it is free and accessible for the widest range of ages, incomes, and physical abilities. It is also a foundation of individual health and well-being. The City's pedestrian network provides access to public services and park and recreation facilities, as well as institutional, commercial and employment locations. New Ulm has a robust pedestrian network, which includes sidewalks, trails, and crosswalks. There are a total 117 miles of sidewalk located throughout New Ulm. The sidewalk network provides access to nearly every corner of New Ulm.

The City's Subdivision Ordinance requires the following:

All sidewalk installations shall be constructed in accordance with engineering specifications approved by the City Council. Unless specifically waived by the City Council, sidewalks shall be installed adjacent to all streets in newly-platted subdivisions concurrently with curb and gutter improvements.

There are a few residential areas without sidewalks and a limited number of gaps within the City's existing sidewalk system. Sidewalk network gaps exist in some areas and could be completed as directed by the City Council. Filling gaps within the existing sidewalk systems should be a high priority.

City sidewalks are cleared of snow and ice by the adjacent property owners during winter months.



Trails

Trail systems and corridors serve as a source of community identity and as an attractive amenity for current and future residents. Trails provide opportunities for users to recreate throughout the community in both the built and natural environment. A robust trail and sidewalk system creates recreational opportunities, builds community through interaction, decreases dependence on automobiles, and enhances the quality of life for New Ulm residents.

The City of New Ulm has a paved recreational trail approximately 9 miles in length that extends from the northernmost point of the community to 20th South Street. The trail provides access to residential, commercial, and industrial areas in the community.

Flandrau State Park, partially located within the city limits of New Ulm, has 8 miles of unpaved hiking trails, 6 miles of groomed cross country ski trails, and 2 miles of snowshoe trails in a natural setting in the Cottonwood River Valley. These trail systems are available to users year-round.

New Ulm is located between the Minnesota and Cottonwood Rivers, their associated floodplains, and bluff lands. Future trail development and expansion should be focused on these natural environments and the community's connection to them.

A future trail that connects the two river floodplains can offer recreational opportunities for hiking, wildlife viewing, and fishing that are unique to this area. Floodplain trails involve minimal development costs but can be flooded or inaccessible at certain times of the year. Future bluff land trails can include mountain biking and more strenuous hiking in hardwood forests and prairielands. The City should prioritize future connections of these natural environments to city parks, Flandrau State Park, residential areas, and other points of community interest such as Schells Brewery and the Downtown.

There are additional opportunities to connect existing and future trails to regional trail networks along US Highway 14 to Mankato, or County Road 21 in Nicollet County.

The City is committed to reviewing and pursuing any proposed trail enhancements or expansions throughout New Ulm via City-led projects or partnerships with private or public organizations. Trail development and connection should include large, looped trail options with signage and wayfinding.

Additionally, trail opportunities should be explored during any the consideration of new residential development near the bluffs or rivers is being considered. The City intends to develop a Trail Plan through the proposed Parks and Recreation Master Plan.



Transportation

Bicycle Network

Bicycle facilities provide non-motorized connections and travel. Given New Ulm's size, bicycling provides practical connections to everyday needs. Additionally, bicycle tourism has become increasingly popular in many communities and offers a low-impact way to enjoy area attractions and support local businesses. The City has 6.5 miles of shared-use trails and 24 miles of on-street bike routes. As motorized traffic volumes grow, biking is an alternative travel mode that can ease pressure on roads.

Major categories of bicycle facilities in New Ulm include:

Shared-Use Trails

A shared-use trail (SUT) provides a shared space for people walking and biking that is separate from motor vehicle traffic. These trails may have a range of amenities, including signage, parking, benches, and wayfinding. They may be located along roadways or in their own dedicated right-of-way. They are frequently located along higher volume and speed corridors where on-street bicycling would be less safe. In New Ulm, these trails are maintained by the City and typically connect local destinations and regional roadways.

Conventional On-Street Bike Lanes

On-street bike lanes are located on roads with higher traffic volumes and speeds in excess of 20 miles per hour. These bike lanes may be defined by barriers, stripping, pavement markings, and/or signage. These lanes provide a designated space for bicyclists. Increasing the buffer space that separates bicyclists and vehicles increase safety and a sense of comfort.

The City of New Ulm was designated as a Bronze Level Bicycle Friendly Community in 2017 and again in 2021.

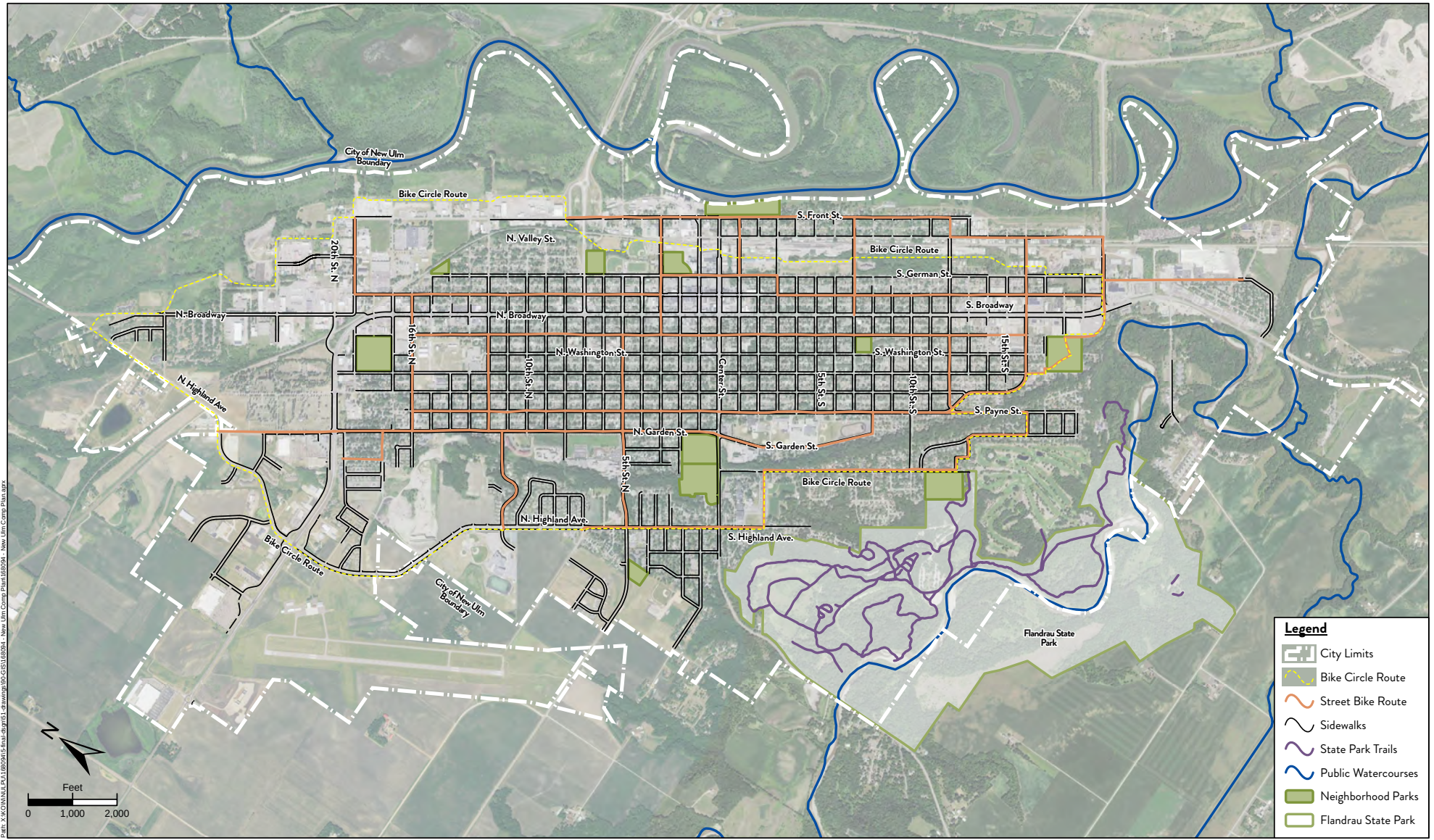


DID YOU KNOW?

New Ulm is a Bikeable Community.

The League of American Bicyclists issued a Bronze designation for the City of New Ulm in 2021.





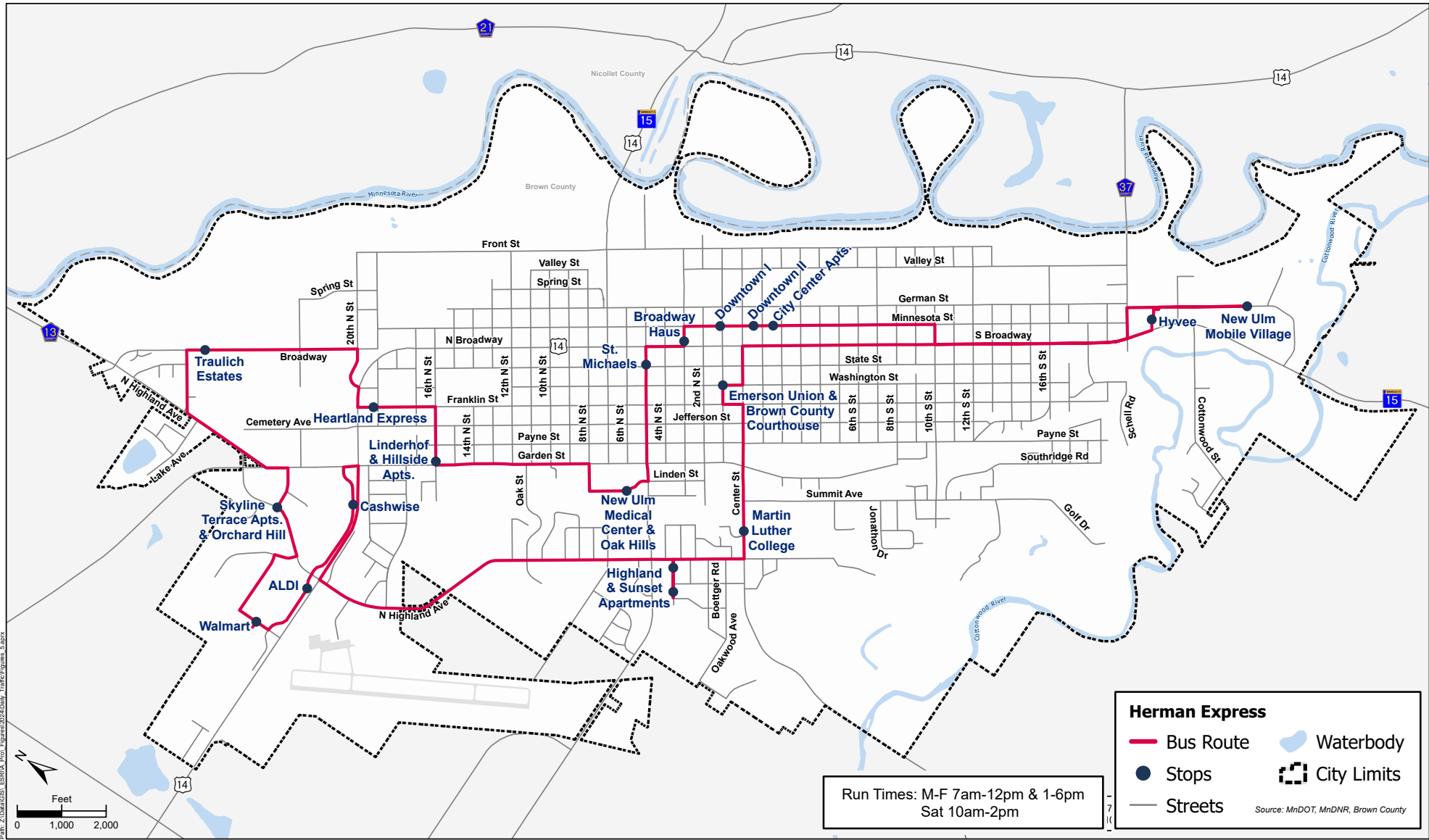
Transportation

Transit System

Public transit is an essential mode of transportation for individuals who do not have access to an automobile or who are not able to drive. Transit in New Ulm is provided by Brown County Human Services in Partnership with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). There are three different transit systems that serve New Ulm, including:

- **The Brown County Heartland Express** started operation in 1993. Besides New Ulm, this transportation system provides a demand response service throughout Brown County including the cities of Sleepy Eye, Springfield, Evan, Cobden, Comfrey and Hanska. A morning and afternoon deviated route transit service is provided between New Ulm and Springfield. The demand response service is provided on weekdays and Saturdays.
- **The Hermann Express** started in October 2022, is a bus service that travels on a set path with 17 stops within New Ulm (See Figure 6.6). It may also go off route 1 to 2 blocks upon request. Stops include the downtown, New Ulm Medical Center, Martin Luther College, apartment buildings and grocery stores. The bus serves each stop once an hour and operates on weekdays and Saturdays.
- **True Transit** is operated by VINE Faith in Action of Mankato. This service is available in Blue Earth, Nicollet and Le Sueur counties and the City of New Ulm. This is a dial-a-ride service that operates Monday through Friday. It started operation in the City of New Ulm in 2018.





Transportation

Active Transportation Action Plan

The New Ulm City Council approved an [Active Transportation Action Plan \(ATAP\)](#) at its November 7, 2023 meeting. The Heart of New Ulm, in conjunction with the City of New Ulm, received a grant in June 2022 to retain a consultant to work on the development of an ATAP. The ATAP serves as a living guide that establishes priorities to guide future investments in making walking and bicycling safer and more accessible along with identifying priority routes within the city that are most in need of improvements.

The ATAP will work in conjunction with this Comprehensive Plan, the current [City Complete Streets Policy](#) and the [American with Disabilities Act Transition Plan](#). The plan includes sections exploring the City's transportation network as it exists today, building this network and identifying future network goals, design references and suggestions on how to encourage community participation in walking and biking activities.





Airport

The New Ulm Municipal Airport (ULM) is owned by the City of New Ulm and managed by North Star Aviation, Inc. The airport offers full fixed base operator (FBO) services including maintenance and repair of aircraft. The airport is located on New Ulm's northwest side, located at 1617 US Highway 14 West. According to a recent Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) study, the Airport has an annual economic impact of more than \$5 million.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation designates the Airport as a Key System Airport in the state's transportation system. There are 30 Key Airports in the state, which serve most type of aircraft, including business jets, and help connect communities to regional and global markets. The Airport has two existing runways: primary Runway 15/33 and crosswind Runway 4/22. The primary runway is 5,401 feet long and 100 feet wide. The turf crosswind runway is 2,478 feet long and 160 feet wide. The existing turf Runway 4/22 was originally built in 1948 and has been in service ever since.

The purpose and alignment of the crosswind runway no longer serves the community's best interests, as it conflicts with existing and planned

development northeast of the Airport. The City has identified a preferred alignment for a relocated crosswind runway in a true east-west configuration. A Runway 9/27 alignment would not only provide better wind coverage than the existing crosswind runway but would also reduce the impact of required land acquisition by aligning with existing property lines and extending over agricultural land which is not planned for future development. This alignment would improve the Airport's overall wind coverage to over 98%, which is excellent for a general aviation airport. The City is currently working to secure funding for this improvement. In the meantime, the City has approved the location of the appropriate safety zones for this crosswind runway.

The airport also includes five hangars that are available to lease. Two are box hangars and three are T-hangars with a total of 18 available spaces. The hangar spaces are all available for lease.

Two courtesy cars are also available for complementary use by visitors.

Transportation



WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING - PUBLIC INPUT

The community was asked about the way they travel, barriers to their transportation and mobility, and improvements they would like to see. A safe, efficient and connected transportation system for all modes is a priority for New Ulm residents. Community members enjoy having access to local parks, trails, open spaces, and recreational facilities.



68%
of respondents

Mentioned that **improving safety at intersections where crashes occur often** should be a top transportation goal for the future.



61%
of respondents

Mentioned that schools should be prioritized when improving walking and biking conditions.

Top Transportation Goals for the Future



Improve safety at intersections where crashes often occur



Maintain existing infrastructure before constructing new facilities



Make New Ulm more walkable and pedestrian-friendly

“Traffic speeds on Broadway are way too fast. Too many vehicles don’t yield to pedestrians in crosswalks.”

“Add more trails. Improve and expand bike/ped options & safety. Add sidewalks where ever they don’t presently exist.”

“Maintaining infrastructure is important. My impression is that city departments and city management is on top of this.”

“I would love to see a vibrant active downtown, as I live in walking distance.”



TRANSPORTATION OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunity 1: Build a more connected network

A transportation system is never fully developed and is continually evolving. The purpose of the system is to provide access and facilitate the movement of people and goods efficiently, safely, cost-effectively, and comfortably to desired destinations while, at the same time, seeking to improve community livability, the environment and minimize associated negative impacts. Transportation infrastructure plays different roles in its support of a variety of vehicles in a manner that minimizes conflict with each other and the surrounding land uses.

More compact and connected street networks tend to generate higher levels of people walking and biking. This arrangement has healthier outcomes and provides an effective and flexible transportation framework. They also make the best use of existing infrastructure that leads to an efficient pattern of growth.

New Ulm's historic grid-like street network is ideal for efficient travel via multiple modes of transportation. It includes a variety of interconnected local, collector and arterial streets that provide more direct and efficient travel connections. Gridded street networks also improve public safety / emergency response times by increasing accessibility. In some locations, the City has successfully continued the original grid pattern. If feasible, new developments should tie into and incorporate the city's grid network to create neighborhoods that effectively and safely accommodate vehicular traffic and also provide walkable and bikeable neighborhoods.

The following sections are recommendations and best practices to improve mobility for all transportation users in New Ulm.

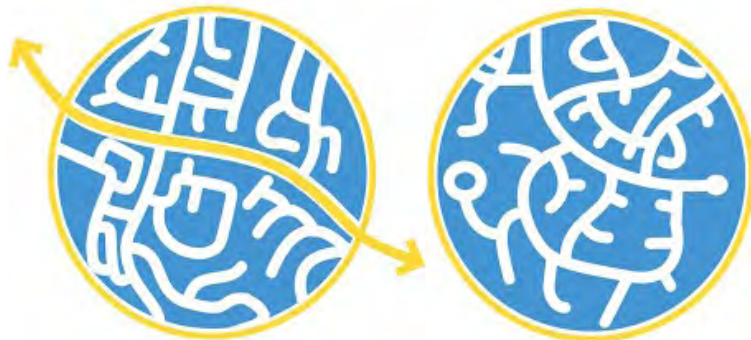
Traditional grid



Curvilinear loop



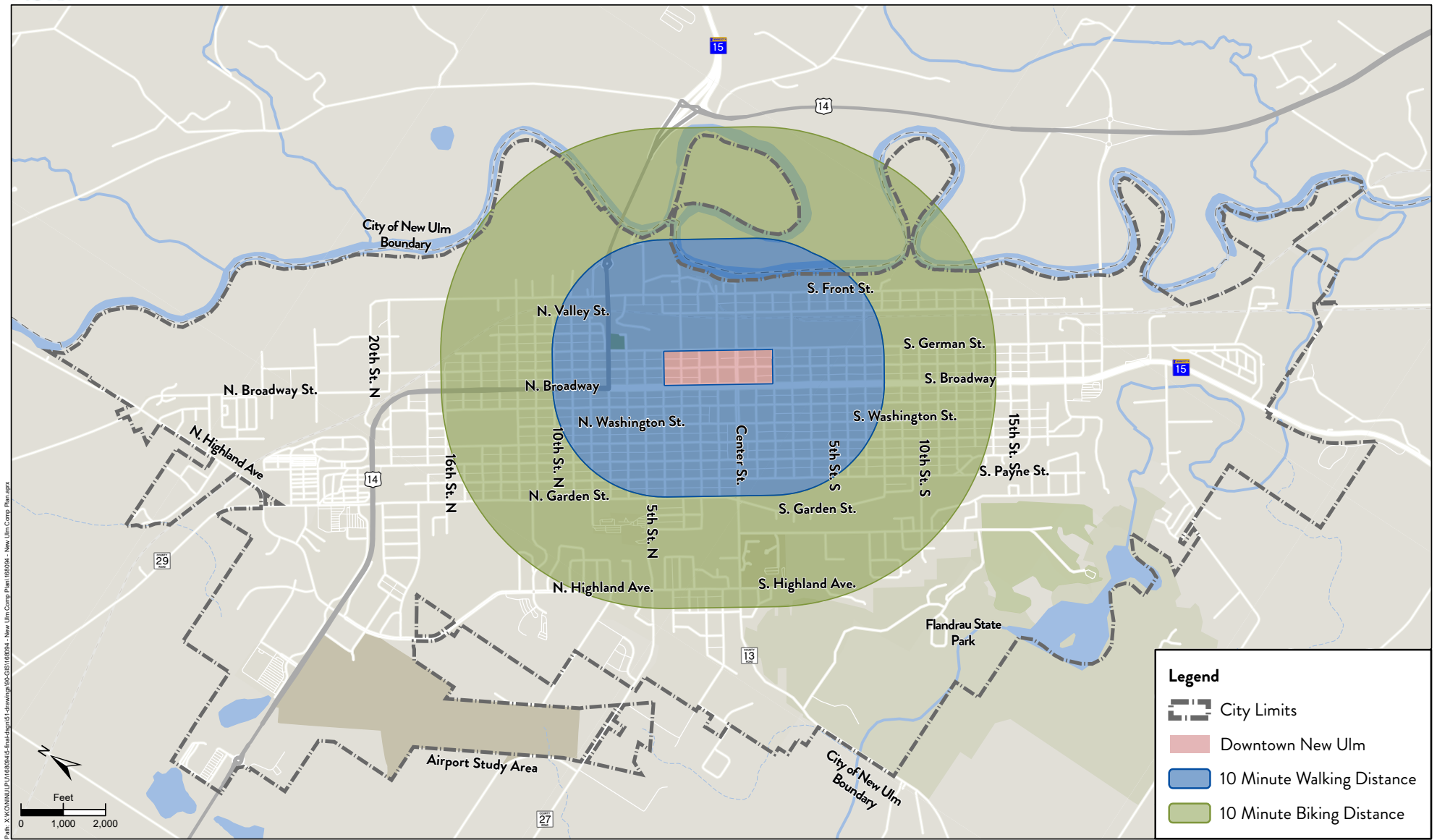
Cul-de-sacs



Source: Graphic by Congress for New Urbanism



Ten Minute Walking and Biking Distance from Downtown



A 10-minute walk or bike trip is an ideal distance to access nearby services, attractions, and other destinations. This map shows New Ulm's downtown as an example.

Safe and Accessible Pedestrian Crossings

In New Ulm, some places are not always easy to walk since low-quality infrastructure and connections across roadways can limit pedestrian mobility. Public input highlighted certain crossing areas, especially near busy areas with high-speed traffic, that may create safety concerns and difficult conditions for walking.

Some of the intersections highlighted by the public and mentioned in the Active Transportation Plan included: Center Street and Garden Street intersection near New Ulm Middle School (5-8), Jefferson Elementary (1-4) and St. Paul Lutheran Elementary (K-8) and the New Ulm Family Recreation Center; Center Street and Highland Avenue intersection near Martin Luther College and the Hermann Monument; and US Highway 14 and North Highland Avenue intersection that connects to a commercial area (this area is scheduled for the construction of a roundabout in 2024). The current infrastructure in the remaining two intersections should be improved to create safer and more accessible crossings at these locations. It is important to note that cost, topography and building locations may impact the feasibility and type of improvements that can be made.

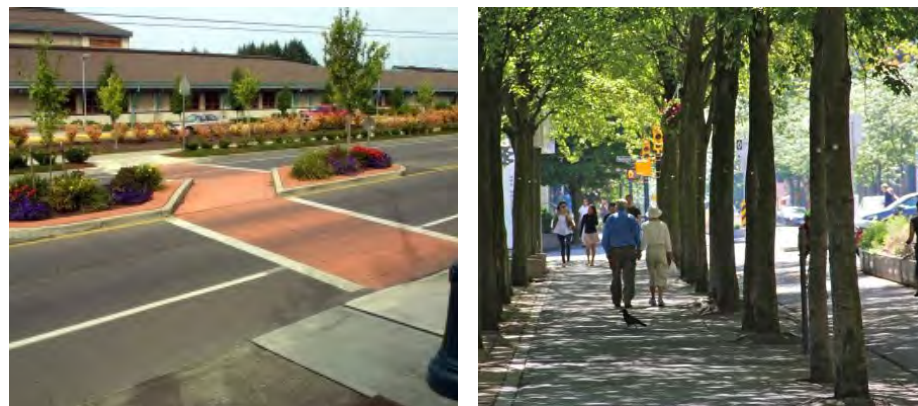


Example of marked crosswalk to improve visibility of pedestrians in a commercial area

Complete Streets

The [New Ulm Complete Streets Policy](#) was adopted by the City in October, 2016. It serves as a planning and design approach to provide safe facilities for a variety of transportation modes, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and automobiles. Complete streets consider the needs of people of all ages and abilities. This approach also provides a variety of economic benefits for businesses and local economies; places with better access to walking and biking facilities are also more desirable places to live.

The City should continue applying a Complete Streets approach to future roadway improvements. A more detailed approach should be taken with those that connect to major community destinations. New developments and improvements to existing neighborhoods should include accessible, safe, and attractive pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure where appropriate and cost effective. These efforts should continue to support ongoing Safe Routes to School Programming.



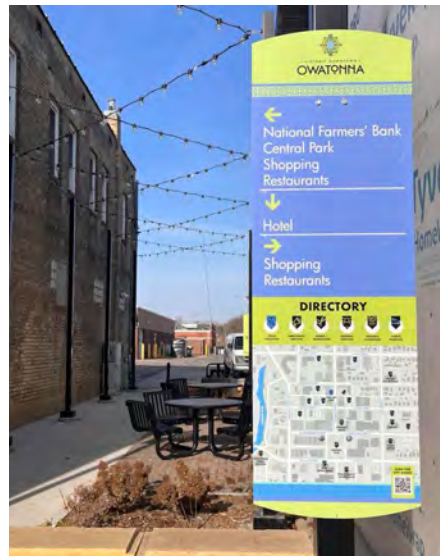
Examples of Complete Streets amenities. Photo on the left shows a mid-block crossing refuge. Photo on the right shows a pedestrian route with trees.

Transportation

Wayfinding

A user-friendly wayfinding system is a key component of successful pedestrian and bicycle networks. A wayfinding system can be deployed quickly and inexpensively.

Wayfinding elements include signs, markings, maps, and informational kiosks. They help make a network easier to understand and encourage residents and visitors to use existing walking and biking facilities to connect to local destinations, including the downtown, businesses, and parks. Signage can also be used to brand the city's system and communicate its attractiveness to residents and travelers.



Examples of wayfinding signs used in other Minnesota communities

Barriers

The City's existing and planned pedestrian and bicycle system will consist of on-street bike lanes, off-street multi-use trails, and sidewalks. The city is working to establish a safe, convenient, and inter-connected network to meet the needs of individuals and families living or working within the community.

As this network is implemented, it will provide quality connections to more destinations in and around the city. The successful installation of this network, however, will be dependent upon the city's ability to effectively address a variety of different physical and psychological issues, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Steep street grades that discourage their use.
- Difficult topographic conditions.
- Significant right-of-way widths.
- Excessive traffic speed.
- High traffic volumes.
- Lack of sidewalks.
- Combination of difficult roadway conditions.
- Minnesota and Cottonwood River and their floodplains.
- Lack of controlled intersections.
- CPKC Railway Company facilities and track

Pedestrian and bicycle system improvements will inevitably need to deal with one or more of the above-mentioned barriers. State and federal funding opportunities will need to be considered with all projects to address the additional costs associated with crossing the barriers. To achieve desired safety standards and to construct suitable crossing facilities will require the City's foremost attention and financial commitment. The barriers themselves will also be subject to changes in the future. This will require the City to both monitor the nature of these changes and to make necessary adjustments to comply with the required safety standards and to facilitate the continued use of the crossings with little or no adverse impact.



ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF INVESTING IN THE WALKING AND BIKING NETWORK

Research has shown that building a good walking and biking network generates many economic benefits to help strengthen the local economy. Improvements to the network should prioritize connecting residents and visitors to major destinations throughout New Ulm, such as the downtown area and the north and south commercial areas along US 14.

Increases sales for businesses and creates jobs

- Walkable, bikeable places attract bicycle tourists and other travelers who spend on average \$18-\$80 per day in the community.¹
- People who walk or bike to businesses may spend less per visit but visit more often, resulting in more money spent overall each month compared to customers who arrived by car.²
- Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects create 8–12 jobs per \$1 million of spending. By comparison, road infrastructure projects create 7 jobs per \$1 million of expenditures.³

Increases property values

- In communities across the United States, a one-point increase in Walk Score was associated with a \$700 - \$3,000 increase in home values.⁴ The Walk score assigns a value to areas based on type of transportation facilities (e.g., sidewalks, trails, etc.) present and distance to local amenities.

Improves recruitment and retention of talent and workers

- Walkable and bikeable places attract top talent. Companies are relocating to more bikeable areas to better attract well-educated 25- to 30-year-olds.
- Over 75% of Millennials say it is important for their city to offer opportunities to live and work without relying on a car.⁵

1. Economic Benefits of Active Transportation. <https://www.nctcog.org/trans/plan/bikeped/resources/ebat>

2. Business Cycles: Catering to the bicycling market. <https://www.trb.org/Publications/Blurbs/167474.aspx>

3. Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure: A National Study of Employment Impacts. <https://peri.umass.edu/publication/item/427-pedestrian-and-bicycle-infrastructure-a-national-study-of-employment-impacts>

4. How Walkability Raises Home Values in U.S. Cities. https://nacto.org/docs/usdg/walking_the_walk_cortright.pdf

5. Access to Public Transportation a Top Criterion for Millennials When Deciding Where to Live. <https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/news/access-public-transportation-top/>



Opportunity 2: Emerging Trends in Transportation

While this chapter assumes that existing travel patterns and technology will continue, there are several emerging trends that may impact how people travel in the future. These trends are at different development stages and there remains much uncertainty as to specific outcomes, the possible timeframe for their use, and their potential introduction into the New Ulm area. It does, however, appear likely that one or more of these trends will occur within the timeframe of this Plan.

It is important for New Ulm to monitor trends that influence the use and condition of the transportation system and to adapt strategies, initiate appropriate actions, and make investments in a timely manner. Key transportation trends and challenges that could influence how people and goods move within and through New Ulm over the next 20 years are summarized below:

Connected Vehicles

Connected vehicles provide connectivity between the driver, other cars on the road, infrastructure such as traffic signals and street lighting, wireless devices and the “cloud”. These technologies can improve vehicle safety, efficiency, commute times and promote continuous real-time connectivity.

This technology is evolving rapidly, and several items are already in use in today’s vehicles.

Autonomous Vehicles

Autonomous vehicles are fully automated or “self-driving” vehicles that operate without direct driver input to control the steering, acceleration, and braking. These vehicles are designed so that the driver is not expected to constantly monitor the roadway while operating in self-driving mode. This technology is also evolving rapidly and could result in significant benefits, including safer roads, improved mobility services, reduced congestion, improved fuel efficiency, reduced energy consumption, cleaner environment, better land use, positive societal impacts, and better quality of life. The primary barriers to implementation include higher vehicle costs, licensing, liability and litigation, security, and privacy.

These vehicles are expected to completely change transportation as we know it. However, there are widespread views on when and how this technology will impact current travel conditions, particularly outside of central cities. It is clear though that in time they will affect land use and development, infrastructure, safety regulations and the transit system.

Intelligent Transportation Systems

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) is a national program focused on the application of information and communication technologies to management of the transportation system. These technologies are placed at the roadside and connected to traffic management centers enabling information to be collected and communicated on road conditions. It allows traffic system managers and road users to make more informed decisions. Outcomes include reduced congestion, improved safety and greater environmental sustainability.

ITS technologies are targeted at infrastructure, vehicles and travelers as well as integrated applications among them, to enable the development of an intelligent transportation system. This technology is intended to optimize existing and developing innovative technologies for further deployment to realize the benefits of a fully connected and information rich transportation system.

Mobility as a Service

Mobility as a Service (MaaS) refers to a comprehensive and integrated approach that places public transit offerings and ridesharing services together on one platform. MaaS would allow people to access all of their transportation options at once. Options could include public transit, ridesharing, bike-sharing, car rental, and more. It is designed to optimize travel experiences, enhance convenience, and reduce the dependency on personal vehicles, ultimately contributing to more sustainable and efficient urban mobility solutions. The use of such a service by New Ulm residents given its size and location, may not initially seem appropriate. However, with the aging of the community in the future, the need for this service may be necessary and appropriate.

Emerging Maintenance Techniques

There are new maintenance techniques that can extend the lifecycle of an asset. For example, new approaches for roadway surfaces can provide longer service life and higher traffic volume thresholds, resulting in more stable road maintenance costs. Cost reduction of life cycle extension strategies which save money, or extend surface life, can directly benefit preservation needs, and minimize any identified financial gap.

Asset Management Tracking of assets and their condition will provide a stronger outlook on lifecycle costs and replacement schedules. This will help establish funding plans and identify future funding gaps or shortfalls.

Much of the existing infrastructure within New Ulm and the surrounding area was built decades ago, when there was a rapid buildout of transportation infrastructure. Substantial funding will be required to maintain, upgrade and replace this infrastructure. This need is complicated by the fact that transportation funding has not kept up with this demand and the effects of inflation on material and labor costs. This is a constraint for government at all levels.

Drones

Drones are small or medium-sized unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). They're unique in that they can drive remotely and autonomously, and they're capable of maintaining a controlled, sustained level of flight. The drone system combines robotics with aeronautics. They can be powered by an electric, jet, or combustion motor. They also can carry GPS, radar control, infrared and high-resolution cameras.

As of 2024, there were 855,860 registered drones in the United States by the Federal Aviation Administration. Drones are allowed for both recreational and commercial purposes, subject to FAA and local regulations. Drones have the ability to reach places humans cannot access easily.

Some of the ways drones will shape the future include: 1) Delivering packages; 2) Infrastructure inspection and maintenance; 3) Precision agricultural inspections and monitoring; 4) Marketing; and 5) Emergency response and public safety. These applications are evolving at an rapid rate and are expected to improve and provide a wider range of capabilities in the future.

Cities will need to plan for activities not just on the ground but also in the air. Several issues surround the use of drones, including safety, noise, nuisances, personal intrusion, and privacy. The City will need to account for their legal limits and restrictions and have a solid understanding of its role in protecting the public realm by possibly designating when and where drones can operate.

Transportation

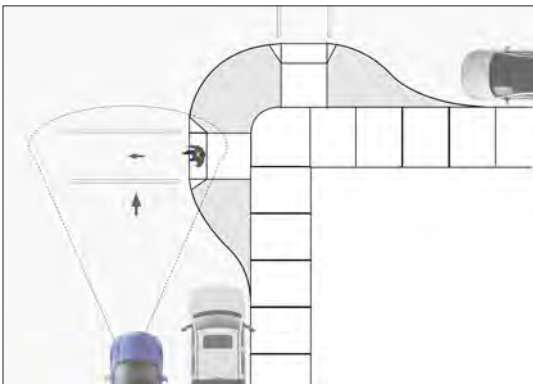
Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations

The New Ulm Public Utilities Commission has installed EV charging stations in the City Hall parking lot and the City-owned parking lot at the corner of 2nd North and German Streets, across from German Park.

As electric vehicles become more popular, it is important for the City to identify more locations where charging stations can be added, such as the downtown, schools, civic buildings, or other commercial areas. Several local auto dealerships have or are in the process of installing EV charging stations. The stations can help boost local businesses by bringing visitors to their locations. Public input highlighted instances where travelers stopped in New Ulm primarily to access the EV charging stations and visited surrounding businesses while they waited. The City can also install EV charging stations in locations where it wants to attract additional visitor traffic.



EV charging stations located at the City's parking lot along 2nd St N.



Bumpouts increase visibility for people crossing.

Opportunity 3: Downtown Access

Downtown New Ulm is a walkable destination and a regional draw. Improving walking and biking access both *within* and *to and from* downtown will pay dividends for visitors and for the city overall. The following considerations can help make downtown mobility more attractive and accessible, and increase access via multiple modes:

- Making sure that walking facilities allow for year-round access for people of all ages and abilities is a key consideration. Maintenance (including snow removal) is an important component of success.
- Comfortable crossings and travel through intersections for people walking and biking are important. Maintain existing bump-outs to help shorten crossing distances and/or decorative crosswalks to increase the visibility of the crossing areas.
- A network of connected and inviting bicycle facilities to the downtown will be important to provide access to the downtown area.
- Accommodating outdoor seating does not just benefit businesses. It also makes sidewalks and business fronts more attractive and inviting for people walking and biking.
- Adding a tree canopy along the downtown sidewalks adds shade on warm days and helps block wind during winter months for people walking.
- The City should continue to find opportunities for community art that makes walkways more vibrant.

Transportation



Opportunity 4: Intermodal Hub

New Ulm has an attractive location that connects to broader markets, such as Mankato, Rochester, and the Twin Cities. The City can maximize the economic benefits of having access to the airport, rail, and highways. The City should explore developing an industrial transportation hub to attract new industries and employment opportunities. Companies can access these transportation modes to move their products in much more fuel-efficient and cost-effective way. New Ulm's role as an industrial transportation hub, that capitalizes on the airport, rail, and highways, is an untapped transportation and economic development opportunity.





GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The following goals and strategies are aimed at creating a more safe, accessible, and appealing transportation network. These are based on public input and a study of current and future trends.

Goal 1: Implement a transportation plan, through decision-making and strategic funding, that supports an efficient network, the community's economic vitality, and the land use vision.

Strategy 1.1: Realize necessary transportation system improvements in a cost-effective and timely fashion.

Strategy 1.2: Identify new funding sources to improve transportation infrastructure.

Strategy 1.3: Require adequate right-of-way dedication for new and/or expanded multimodal roadways (vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit) based on future planned function.

Strategy 1.4: Provide adequate roadway and intersection capacity for all users to accommodate anticipated growth and improve the safety of people walking, rolling, and biking.

Strategy 1.5: Design and construct streets that allow for the efficient removal of snow and other maintenance activities.

Strategy 1.6: When and where appropriate encourage the use and platting of alleys in new subdivisions.

Strategy 1.7: Partner with agencies (MnDOT, Brown County, and other adjacent communities) on transportation system improvements throughout the region, including multimodal routes and facilities (when appropriate).

Strategy 1.8: Apply street designs that support the Land Use Plan while providing adequate traffic flow and safety across and around the community.

Goal 2: Plan, develop, and maintain a safe, efficient and accessible multimodal transportation system.

Strategy 2.1: Establish a roadway maintenance and improvement program to ensure roadways, trails, and sidewalks are properly maintained. Continually work to identify locations where transportation improvements are needed.

Strategy 2.2: Establish a safe and convenient pedestrian and trail network connecting residential, educational, commercial/retail, employment, civic, medical and recreational destinations throughout the city.

Strategy 2.3: Establish off-street trails and protected on-street routes for the use of bicycles and pedestrians as a year-round mode of transportation.

Strategy 2.4: As the community grows, encourage the expansion of public transit services and facilities in a fiscally responsible manner to ensure mobility for all residents and visitors.

Strategy 2.5: Provide safe and convenient pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular crossings over rail lines throughout New Ulm.

Strategy 2.6: Build an interconnected system of sidewalks and trails to provide safe and efficient travel for pedestrians.

Transportation

Goal 3: Apply a Complete Streets approach that is appropriate and feasible to best serve the transportation needs of all users.

Strategy 3.1: Where appropriate, apply the City of New Ulm Complete Streets Policy to transportation-related projects.

Strategy 3.2: When considering new development connect it to the historic New Ulm grid network to encourage interconnected streets and patterns of development. Use the historic New Ulm grid network to create more convenient multimodal travel options and foster a sense of place.

Strategy 3.3: Maintain and improve multimodal access (where possible) to existing and planned land uses, such as commercial, residential, educational, employment and recreational destinations.

Strategy 3.4: Include sidewalks on all new streets and if feasible on improvement projects on existing roadways.

Strategy 3.5: Where feasible, include boulevards with trees on existing and future roadways with sufficient width (minimum of 6 ft) to accommodate healthy tree growth.

Strategy 3.6: Implement traffic calming measures (where appropriate) to reduce motor-vehicle speeds in residential areas.

Strategy 3.7: Limit the use of cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets.

Strategy 3.8: Consider the evaluation of decreased speed limits in residential areas to 20 mph in accordance with [new Minnesota laws](#).

Goal 4. Promote a healthy, equitable, and economically vibrant community where all residents have greater mobility choices.

Strategy 4.1: Use the City of New Ulm Active Transportation Plan to guide and encourage expansion of the pedestrian and bicycle network, including both the off-street trail system and an on-street network of protected bicycle lanes and other complementary facilities. Review this document and determine the next appropriate implementation steps.

Strategy 4.2: Continue to seek funding and encourage initiatives to support the City of New Ulm Safe Routes to School Plan and mobility for youth.

Strategy 4.3: Provide convenient pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular access to parks and natural features, as well as opportunities to support active living and healthy lifestyle activities.

Strategy 4.4: Target investments in active transportation (interconnected sidewalks and trails) and transit services in neighborhoods with transportation challenges and near employment centers.

Strategy 4.5: Promote walkability through enhanced connectivity including transit access, a diverse mix of land uses, and streetscaping features (including green infrastructure treatments and climate-resilient design).

Strategy 4.6: Balance land use and related parking needs to minimize impervious surfaces, stormwater runoff, and heat island effect.

Strategy 4.7: Support land uses in existing and emerging commercial centers and primary thoroughfares with an adequate supply of parking options.

Strategy 4.8: As development occurs, require a review of shared parking resources to support a “park once” approach.

Strategy 4.9: Continue to accommodate alternative fuel vehicles (e.g. electric vehicle charging stations) in public parking infrastructure and encourage their inclusion in privately-owned parking facilities.

Strategy 4.10: Where not present, add beautification elements (such as flowers and landscaping, trees, community art) on major thoroughfares throughout New Ulm to maintain an attractive, clean, and inviting community image.



CHAPTER 7

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



INTRODUCTION

The economic vitality of a community is critical to its long-term success and quality of life. A healthy economy creates good paying jobs and provides economic opportunities to all citizens. Economic development is more than just businesses. It is also about creating a vibrant community that provides a high quality of life, attracts employees and businesses, and supports a solid tax base that sustains quality schools, police, roadways, parks, and many other community facilities and services. Growth may be limited by regional draw, consolidation and internet sales. Another limitation on economic development is the high cost and inadequate supply of housing and childcare, which continue to contribute to labor shortage issues.

The purpose of the Economic Development chapter is to present goals and strategies that guide and encourage a strong, sustainable economy. It is important to recognize that the entire Comprehensive Plan should be considered as an economic development tool to showcase New Ulm's assets and vision.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The following information was gathered using the most recent demographic data for each topic, including US Census data from 2020, 2021, and 2022, and US Census 2020 Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics (LEHD).

Employment

Employment trends are important to consider since job growth can typically influence household and population growth as people typically desire to live near where they work. Notwithstanding a temporary decrease during the pandemic, employment numbers in New Ulm have increased over the last two decades and are expected to continue to grow.

Table 7.1. Employment - Number of Jobs

Number of Jobs		
Year	New Ulm	Brown County
2010	8,731	14,015
2020	9,041	12,745
2021	9,076	12,737

Source: US Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamic



Industrial warehouse immediately outside of New Ulm



Retail found in New Ulm's Downtown

Economic Development

Employers

3M is the currently largest employer in New Ulm with approximately 700 employees. The city's next two largest employers are the New Ulm Medical Center with 600 employees and Kraft Foods with 495 employees. The manufacturing, education, and government sectors had the largest number of employers in the city. Table 7.2 shows the top five employers in New Ulm.

Table 7.2. Top Employers

New Ulm		
Employer	Industry Type	Number of Employees
3M Corporation	Electrical Equipment & Component Manufacturing	700
New Ulm Medical Center	Medical and Surgical Hospital	600
Kraft-Heinz Foods	Dairy Product Manufacturing	495
New Ulm Public Schools	Education	306
Brown County	County Offices	275

Source: New Ulm Area Chamber of Commerce

Industry

The largest type of industry in New Ulm is manufacturing, which employs an estimated 2,117 people (23% of New Ulm's employment). This is followed by the health care and social assistance industry, which employs more than 1,500 people (17% of New Ulm's employment).

Manufacturing is foundational to economic development in the City of New Ulm, providing essential goods for consumers, creating employment opportunities, and stimulating economic growth. By fostering innovation and technological advancements, educating a local workforce, and attracting new talent, New Ulm can continue to keep manufacturing as a strong economic driver. The city's core industries hold much potential for its future growth and economic vitality. Table 7.3 shows existing industry data.



3M Building

Table 7.3. Industry Employment Statistics (2022)

New Ulm						
Industry	Jobs	Firms	Total Payroll	Avg. Annual Wage	2010 - 2022	
					Change in Jobs	% Change
Total, All Industries	9,199	475	\$479,006,859	\$52,052	+313	+3.5%
Accommodation and Food Services	765	48	\$13,222,821	\$17,264	-120	-13.6%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	96	15	\$1,687,346	\$17,680	+0	+0.0%
Finance and Insurance	256	32	\$19,588,357	\$76,648	+37	+16.9%
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,566	70	\$87,814,261	\$56,004	-28	-1.8%
Information	254	5	\$16,403,798	\$64,480	+96	+60.8%
Manufacturing	2,117	28	\$144,754,409	\$68,328	+111	+5.5%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	168	41	\$5,984,215	\$35,620	-20	-10.6%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	396	37	\$20,224,353	\$50,856	+18	+4.8%
Public Administration	511	14	\$29,958,800	\$58,552	+5	+1.0%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	22	15	\$719,877	\$31,200	-40	-64.5%
Retail Trade	1,247	62	\$40,200,349	\$32,240	+75	+6.4%
Transportation and Warehousing	507	17	\$25,962,692	\$51,220	+98	+24.0%
Utilities	79	1	\$5,807,565	\$74,256	-7	-8.1%
Wholesale Trade	102	14	\$6,682,349	\$66,196	-19	-15.7%

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages

Note: This table does not include all industries

Labor Force

In 2022, New Ulm was home to 475 businesses, supporting 9,199 jobs. Since 2010, the city has seen the addition of 50 businesses and a 3.5% increase in jobs (313 jobs). The Manufacturing sector emerged as the city's largest employer, providing 2,117 jobs and making up 23% of New Ulm's total employment. Following closely were the Healthcare and Social Assistance sector with 1,566 jobs, and the Retail Trade sector with 1,247 jobs. On average, workers in New Ulm earned an annual wage of \$52,052 across all sectors. The Finance and Insurance sector boasted the highest average annual salary at \$76,648, while the Accommodation and Food Services sector recorded the lowest at \$17,264 (Table 7.3).

About 3,554 people (39.2%) of workers both lived and worked in New Ulm while another 5,522 (60.8%) drove into New Ulm to work. This is compared to 2,551 people who live in the region but drove to other cities for work.

Based on the American Community Survey, 2018-2022, New Ulm had about 7,482 people in the labor force with an unemployment rate 2.8%. For workers 16 years or older, about 81% drove alone to work, while 7.9% carpooled. Only 0.5% used public transportation and another 3.4% walked. About 6.6% of people living in New Ulm worked from home. The mean travel time to work was 13.3 minutes in 2022.

There is additional data that classifies workers into specific occupational groups. About 34.2% of people in New Ulm work in the management, business, science, and art occupations and 20.9% work in production, transportation, and material moving occupations.

Table 7.4. Industry Employment Statistics (2022)

New Ulm		
Population	Number	%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS		
Population 16 years and over	11,378	100%
In labor force	7,482	65.80%
Civilian labor force	7,482	65.80%
Employed	7,270	63.90%
Unemployed	212	1.90%
Armed Forces	0	0.00%
Not in labor force	3,896	34.20%
Unemployment Rate	-	2.80%
COMMUTING TO WORK		
Workers 16 years and over	7,147	100%
Car, truck, or van - drove alone	5,792	81.00%
Car, truck, or van - carpooled	566	7.90%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	34	0.50%
Walked	240	3.40%
Other means	41	0.60%
Worked from home	474	6.60%
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	13.3	-
OCCUPATION		
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	7,270	100%
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	2,483	34.20%
Service occupations	1,306	18.00%
Sales and office occupations	1,470	20.20%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	491	6.80%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	1,520	20.90%

Source: US Census ACS 2022 5-year estimates

Income and Wages

In 2021, the median household income in New Ulm was estimated to be \$60,723, compared to \$62,999 in Brown County, and \$77,706 in Minnesota (shown in Table 7.5).

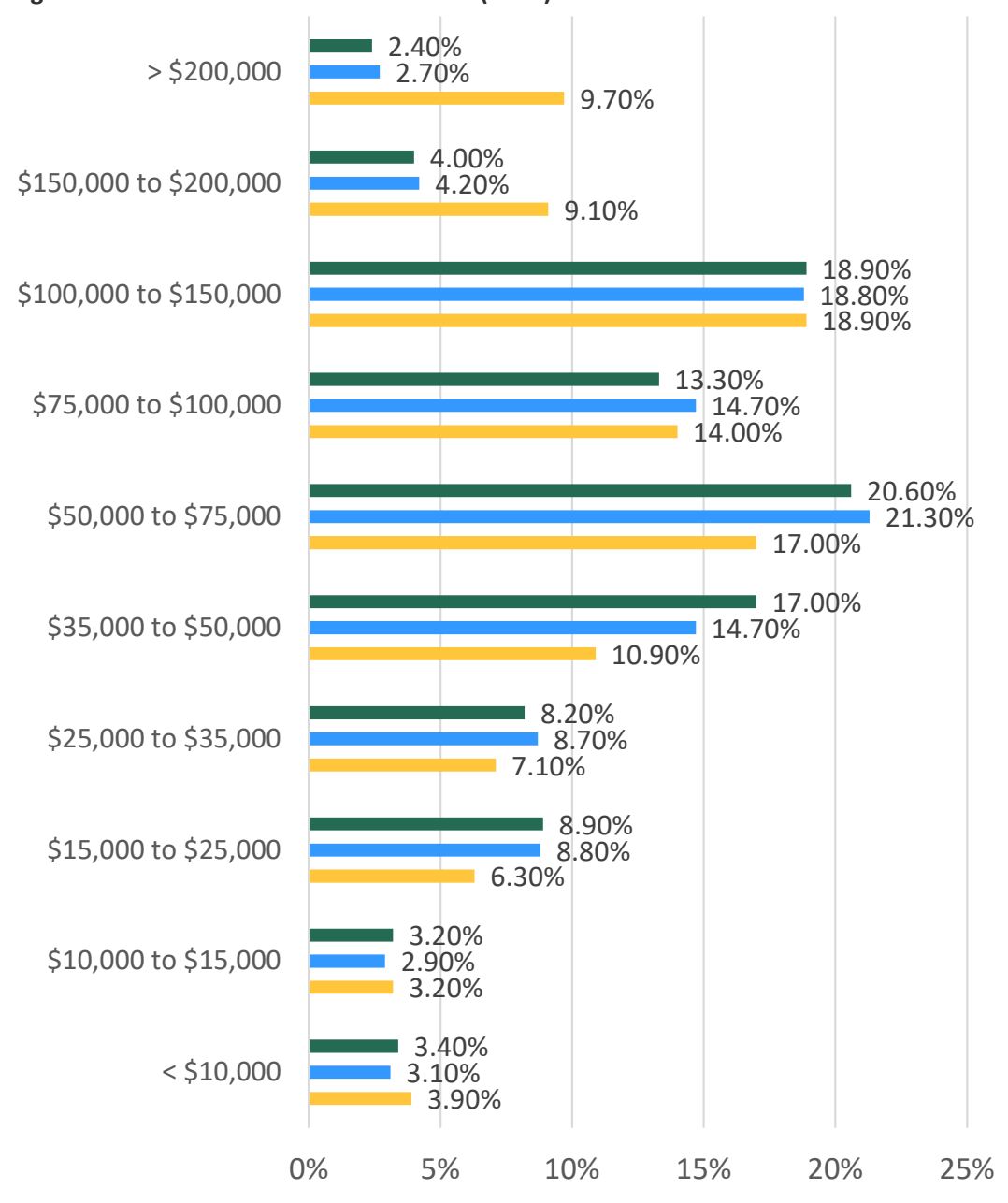
New Ulm household median incomes are lower than both Brown County and Minnesota. When household incomes are less it typically indicates that residents have less choice in meeting everyday needs such as housing, goods, services, and transportation. Additionally, residents likely have less disposable income to spend which directly affects local businesses, particularly those in retail and commercial uses. Fast growing inflation may place additional pressure on lower income households.

Table 7.5. Median Household Income (2021)

Location	Income
New Ulm	\$60,723
Brown County	\$62,999
Minnesota	\$77,706

Source: US Census ACS 2021 5-year estimates

Figure 7.1. Income in the Past 12 months (2022)



Source: US Census ACS 2021 5-year estimates



DID YOU KNOW?

Brown County has the 3rd lowest cost of living in the State of Minnesota.



Brown County Housing Information

The cost of living has increased over the past 2 years. Brown County however had a lower cost of living than the State, with a required hourly wage of \$12.82 for a single person living alone to meet a basic needs cost of living. An hourly wage requirement of \$14.12 would be required for a typical family with 2 adults and 1 child.

Table 7.6. Housing Cost Burden (2022)

	Brown County	Minnesota
Median monthly owner costs, owner-occupied units with a mortgage	\$1,308	\$1,818
% of households with a mortgage spending 30% or more of their income on housing	19.0%	22.0%
Median monthly rent	\$825	\$1,178
% of renters spending 30% or more of their household income on rent	38.9%	46.7%

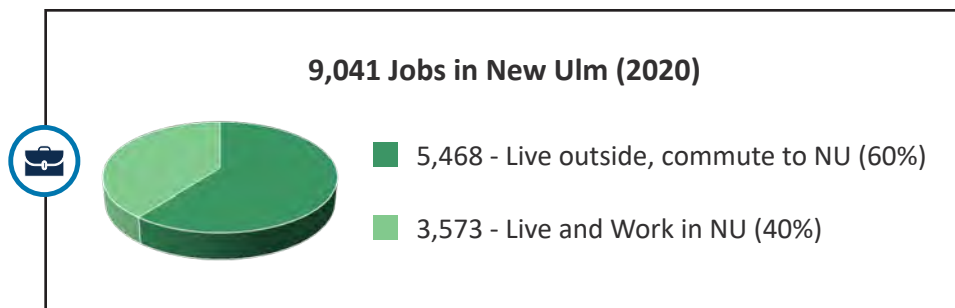
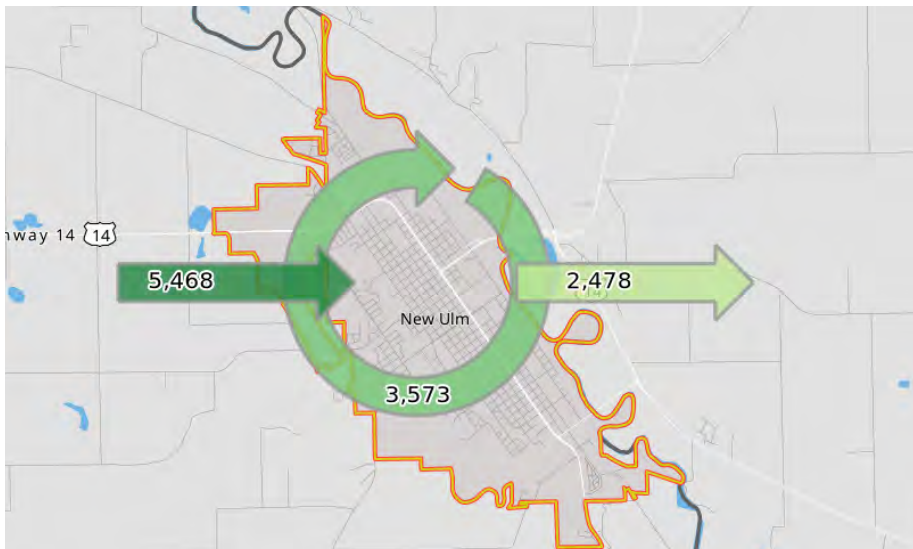
Source: US Census ACS 2022 5-year estimates

Commuting

According to 2020 Census LEHD data (the most recent available), there are a total of 9,041 jobs in New Ulm. About 3,573 of those jobs (about 40%) are held by people who live in New Ulm and work in town.

Almost 3 out of every 5 jobs (60%) are held by people who commute from outside the city.

Providing additional housing options in the city may invite a portion of these workers to move into town to reduce their commute.



Where workers travel-in from

Almost 5,500 workers commute to work in New Ulm. Many of those workers spend more than 20 minutes in travel each way as part of their workday. Top 10 origins, as well as distance and travel time to work for people working in New Ulm are:

Table 7.7. Commuting Origins

City	Workers	Distance (miles)	Travel Time (each way, in minutes)
New Ulm	3,573	NA	NA
Sleepy Eye	336	15	20
Mankato	205	29	35
Courtland	169	10	14
Lafayette	117	11	14
North Mankato	117	29	34
Springfield	92	28	35
Hutchinson	86	43	47
Hanska	75	12	16
Winthrop	74	19	21

Source: US Census 2020 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) with data from Google Maps



US 14 provides a direct connection to surrounding communities, such as Sleepy Eye and Mankato.

WHY NEW ULM?

New Ulm is home to industries such as manufacturing, education, healthcare, agriculture, and small businesses.

Our economic engine provides quality jobs, retail shopping, professional services, hospitality, dining, and recreational experiences. This website highlights business opportunities in New Ulm, and information on incentives to help your business succeed.



LIVE



WORK



PLAY

Current Business Development Programs

The City of New Ulm and the New Ulm Economic Development Authority offer a [range of programs](#) to assist existing and new businesses, including:

- Small Business Loan Program
- Signage and Awning Grant Program
- Small Business Incentive Grant
- Revolving Loan Fund
- Tax Increment Financing
- Tax Abatement

The city connects businesses with various local and state resources, including the Small Business Development Center, Small Business Administration, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, Brown County Economic Development Partners, and Minnesota Business Finance Corporation.

Current Economic Development Partners

Economic development is never completed in a vacuum but requires the formation of multiple relationships with other organizations. These relationships allow for the entire community, area and state to benefit from the successful completion of projects. Some of the groups that the City of New Ulm has a developed relationship with are:

- New Ulm Economic Development Authority (EDA)
- New Ulm Business Resource Innovation Center (NUBRIC)
- New Ulm Area Chamber of Commerce
- Region Nine Development Commission
- Independent School District #88
- New Ulm Area Foundation
- Martin Luther College
- Brown County Economic Development Partners, Inc.
- Heart of New Ulm
- New Ulm Business and Retail Association
- City of Sleepy Eye and Springfield
- Southern Minnesota Housing Partnership
- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (MN DEED)
- Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation



Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center



Martin Luther College

Tourism in the New Ulm Area

The New Ulm area has many attractions to see and experience. These include historic sites, museums, community festivals, breweries, wineries, state and local parks, distilleries, bike trails and the Minnesota and Cottonwood Rivers. These locations provide intrinsic environmental, aesthetic, recreational, and historic value to New Ulm. Subject matter includes historic events and individuals, German culture, the US-Dakota conflict of 1862 and points of interest.

Tourism generally can have four economic impacts. These include:



Infrastructure Development: Tourism provides the government and private sector with the revenue to invest in the infrastructure required for recreational activities;



Natural Resources: Tourism can provide incentives for protecting and preserving natural resources and ecosystems;



Cultural Preservation: Tourism plays a role in preserving historical sites and cultural traditions; and



Local Entrepreneurship & Small Business Growth: The influx of visitors to a destination can also stimulate the growth of small, locally-owned businesses.

New Ulm has the base elements to enhance its year-round tourism program. Tourism has the potential to evolve as a development priority for the community and in the process have a positive financial impact on the community.



To improve its tourism program, New Ulm should consider the following steps:

1. Conduct a study of the New Ulm tourism program for the purpose of identifying strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and threats. The program can provide a list of opportunities to enhance tourism.
2. Evaluate existing sites using a combination of creativity, strategic planning, and a genuine understanding of what makes a destination appealing.
3. Explore new options for existing events and identify opportunities for new activities.
4. Develop and highlight the unique attractions and experiences the New Ulm area has to offer.
5. Leverage social media and online platforms to create engaging content that captures the essence of the destination.
6. Invest in infrastructure and amenities that enhance the visitor experience.
7. Create an unforgettable experience.
8. Develop a focused and targeted marketing campaign.
9. Work to diversify a mature tourism industry.



Bavarian Blast Festival



Parade of Lights



Annual Oktoberfest



State Street Theater



Winter bean-bag tournament



Natural spaces and trails offer outdoor recreation opportunities



2023 "Spikin' in the Street" sand volleyball tournament hosted Downtown



Community Image

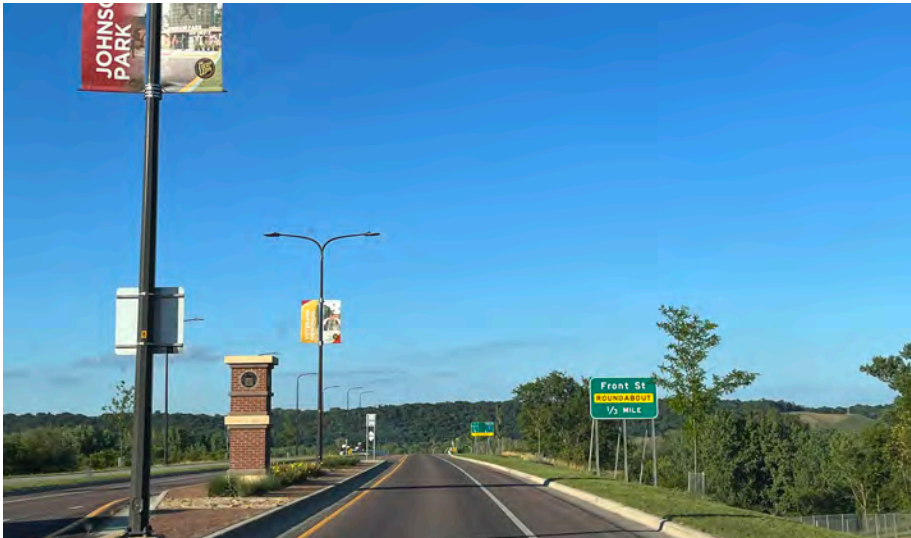
Community image is a thread running through the entire Comprehensive Plan. Every chapter of the Plan deals, in some respect, with the face New Ulm presents. Many factors contribute to the image of a city. The overall impression that a community imparts to residents and visitors is a good indication of the image of a city.

A city's image is solely the perception of its physical appearance that can be encouraged or promoted to enhance the overall impression of the city through an array of urban design strategies. Community image is a process of ordering a community's natural and man-made features to establish a distinct visual appearance and identity—a sense of place—for the community.

The Comprehensive Plan seeks to establish, maintain, or improve a positive community image by:

- Creating an overall development pattern that is well designed and sustainable.
- Maintaining edges and buffers that define and protect adjacent land uses.
- Promoting a development pattern that properly blends the built and the natural environment.
- Sustaining livable neighborhoods and promoting pride in property and community.
- Creating and maintaining an excellent system of parks, trails, and open spaces.
- Providing community facilities that meet the needs of New Ulm residents.
- Taking public action to prevent blight and to promote reinvestment in existing buildings.

In addition to the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, certain aspects of community image merit further attention. Several specific aspects of community image for New Ulm are highlighted in the following page.



7th North Street



South Broadway

Image Issues

Various elements combine to form a community image. In using the Comprehensive Plan as tool to enhance image, it is important to consider the following issues:

- Can the commercial corridors be improved visually?
- Should and/or how can the image of New Ulm be improved in the minds of residents and non-residents?
- How can the sense of “place” be enhanced?
- Should neighborhoods be more clearly defined and identified?
- How can the entrances (or gateways) to New Ulm be more clearly identified or improved?
- Do the city, the business community, and School District market themselves effectively to existing and prospective residents (especially families)?

The answers to these questions will help to guide public actions related to community image.

One of the most important locations requiring a pleasing public landscape are the community’s major roadway corridors. These locations typically host many temporary visitors. These are individuals or families in motor vehicles that pass through the community in a short period of time. They use the federal, state, and county roadway system on their way to their destination outside of New Ulm. Their time in New Ulm is brief and yet it is of sufficient length to allow them to form an opinion about New Ulm. During their short visit, they are exposed to our landscape, streetscape, trees, streets and structures as they move through the city. It is in the city’s best interest to present the visitor with an aesthetically pleasing picture of the community.

It is in these locations that the city needs to present itself as being a pleasant, attractive, and welcoming community. This can partially be accomplished by having our corridors present themselves in an orderly and neat fashion, with visible life and by making it local by emphasizing the unique features and character of the community. The corridors should contain green spaces with trees and vegetation and should have a full tree canopy. Finally, the corridors should embrace flowers and shrubbery that present a colorful and memorable picture of the city.



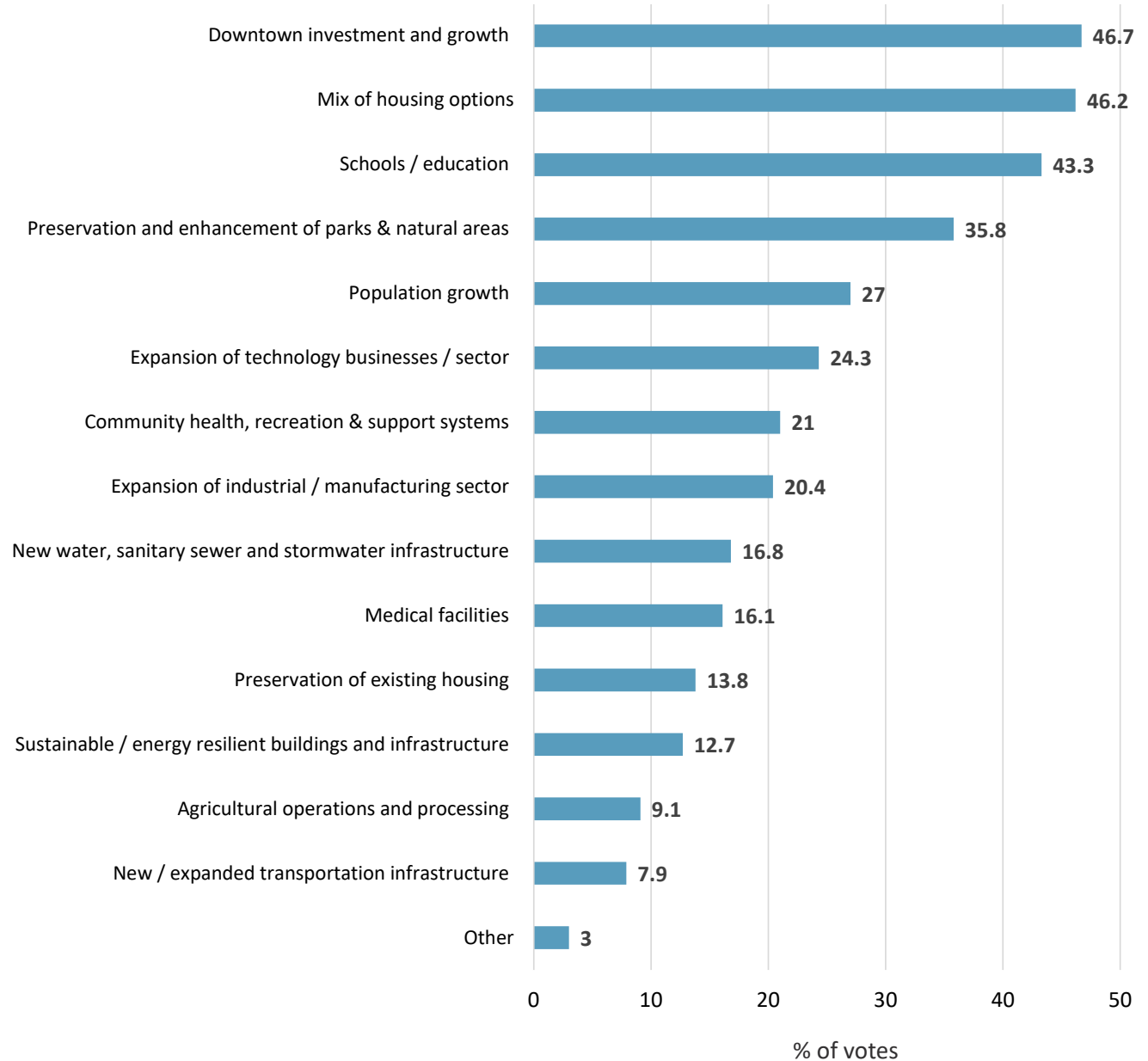
WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING - PUBLIC INPUT

Below is a summary from the plan's community survey asking participants their opinions about existing barriers and future opportunities for the local economy.

- Strengthening the downtown area, creation of new jobs, and a greater range of retail businesses and attractions are key economic development goals for New Ulm residents.
- Downtown investment and growth, mix of housing options, and schools were highlighted as the top influential factors to stimulate economic growth and land development in New Ulm.

Over 2,044 participants provided input in the online survey.

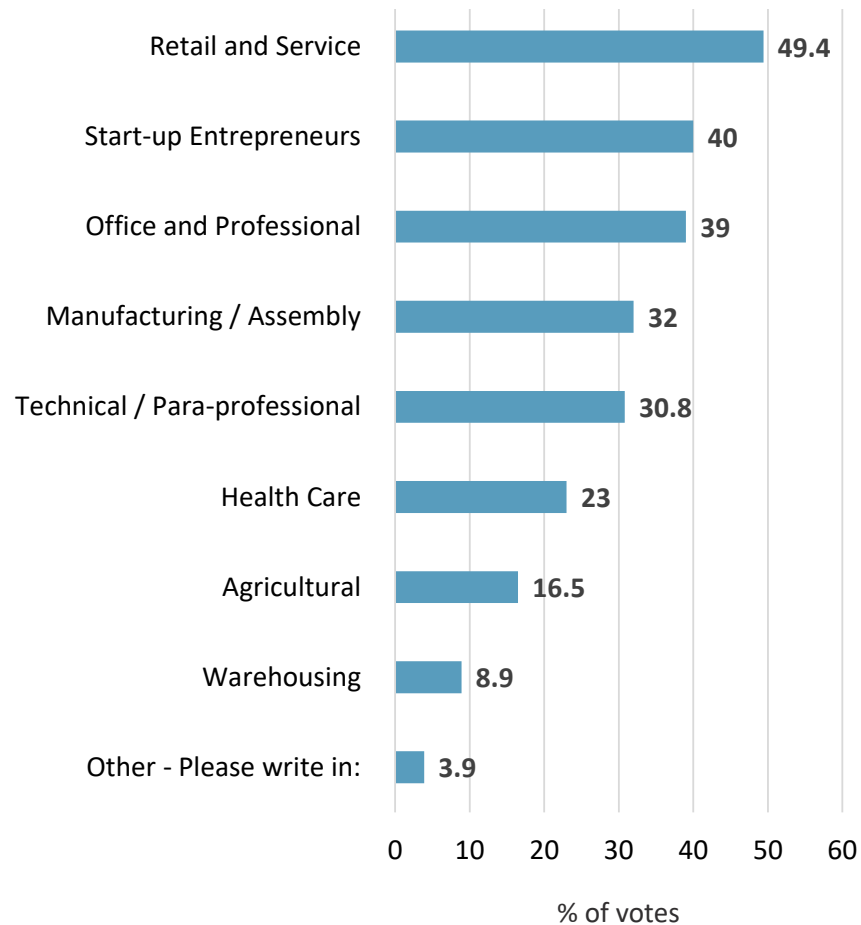
Which of these factors will be most influential in stimulating economic growth and/or land development in the City of New Ulm over the next 20 years?



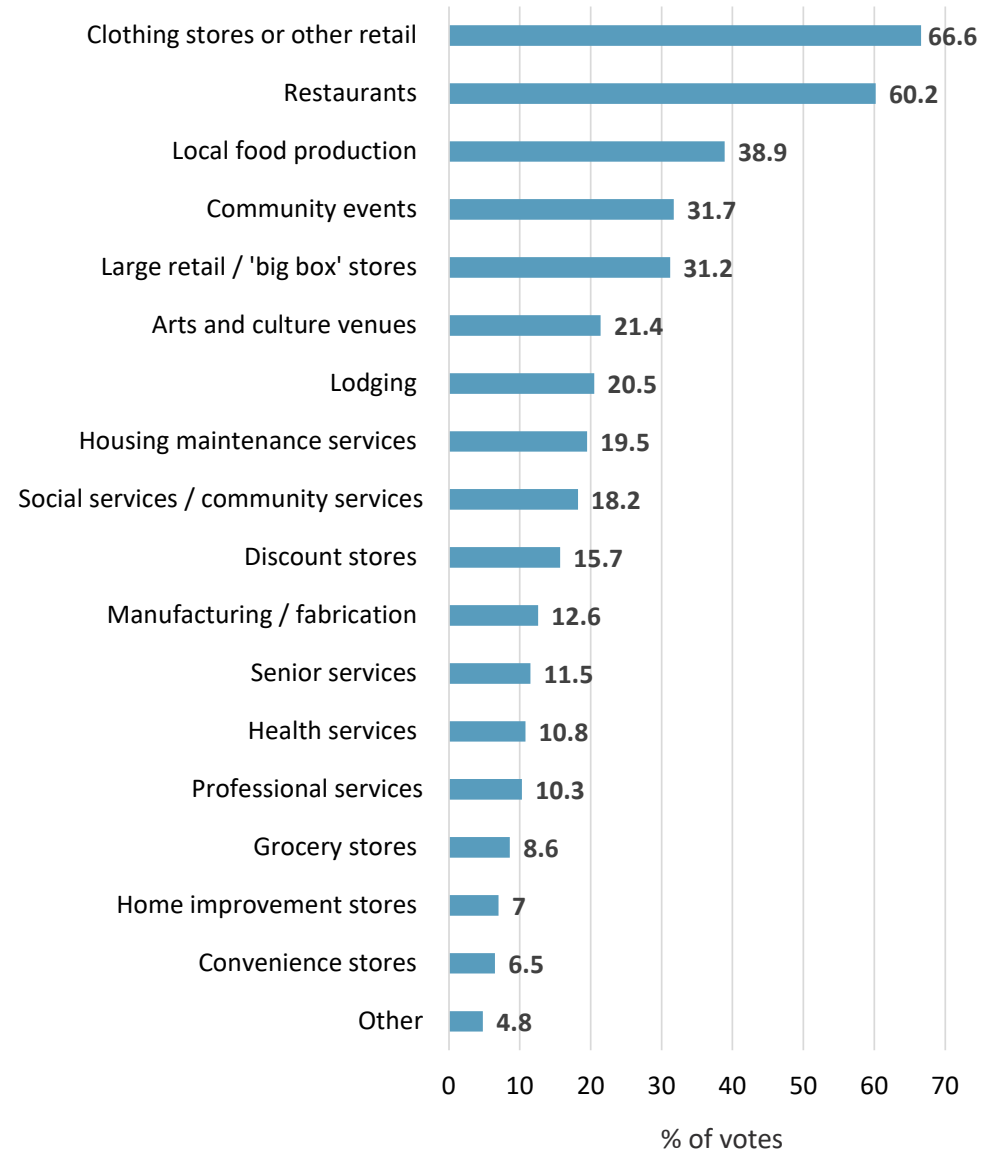
Community survey results indicated that retail stores and restaurants are the types of businesses New Ulm needs the most. Stores that sell a variety of clothing types, especially in the downtown area, were a significant need mentioned by the public.

The public also highlighted retail and service as the top employment types needed in New Ulm. This was followed by start-up entrepreneurs and office and professional employment.

What types of employment/jobs should New Ulm have more of?



Which types of businesses or services are most needed in New Ulm?



Economic Development

Community input indicated that the city should provide support for training and development of local entrepreneurs. Providing financial resources (grants, loans, subsidies, etc.), mentorships and business education resources, and community backing were ways that the city can assist start-ups and small businesses.

Community survey results highlighted that resistance to change and an economic downturn could make New Ulm’s economy and future vulnerable.



88%

of participants

responded that it is important to provide, sponsor or support training and development for local entrepreneurs.

Top risks that New Ulm’s economy might be vulnerable to:



Resistance to change

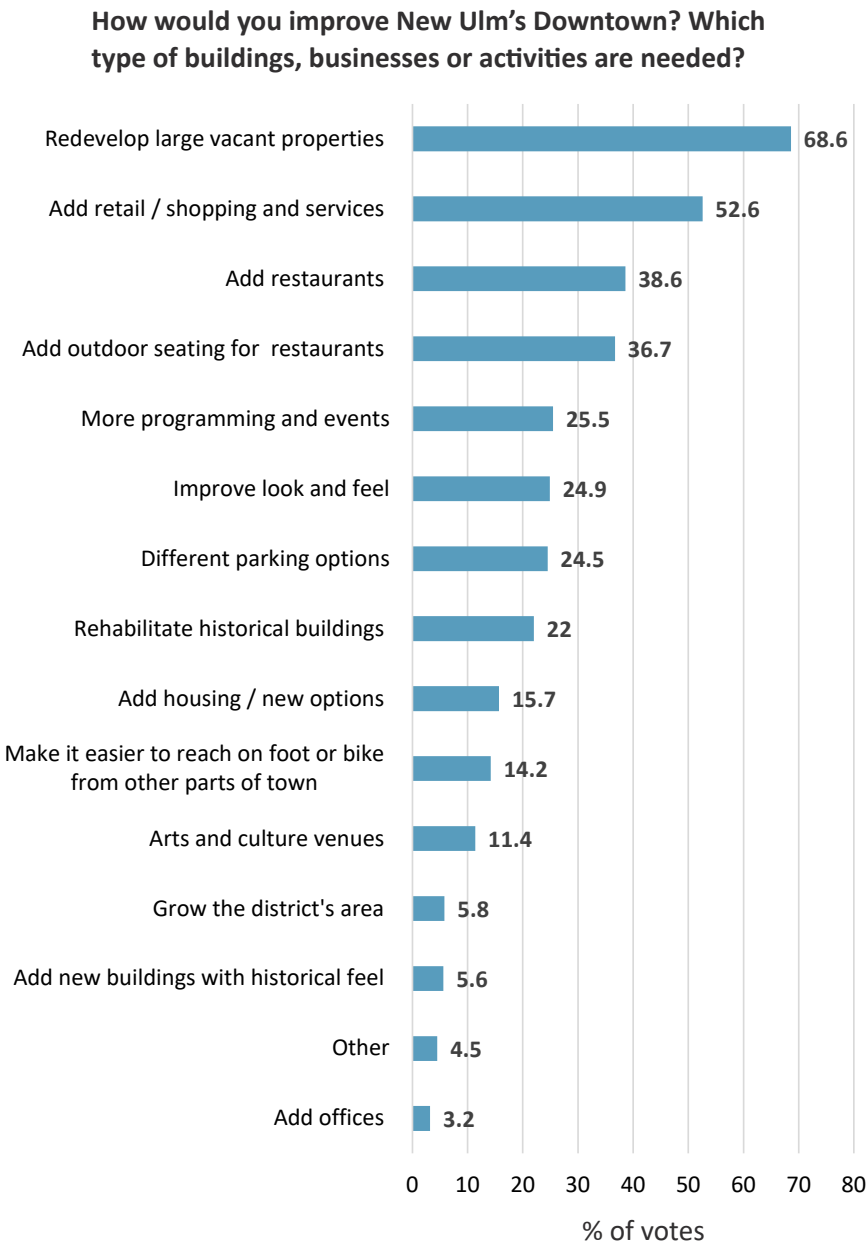


Economic downturn or recession



Loss in population

Downtown - When the public was asked how they would improve New Ulm’s downtown and what type of businesses are needed, redeveloping large vacant properties ranked the highest, followed by adding retail and shopping.



Direct from the public:

"We need to do something with the old mall. It is an absolute waste of space right in the heart of this town."

"I would like more options for shopping. We need a couple more stores that offers items for men, women, children, and household items. Our boutiques are nice but quite expensive."

"New Ulm is a great community. I think our town could thrive with more shopping, restaurants, and activities for kids!"

"Offer small businesses start-up grants, as well as loans. Provide free courses in the basics of starting a small business in New Ulm (i.e., what permits are needed, paperwork, etc.)."

"Balance shopping with more offerings on the south end."

"New Ulm is a very nice town but we need to think about gearing towards younger families."

"I would like to see a retail store to get people downtown that will allow shoppers to check out other small businesses."

"We need to make sure we keep the business and industry we have and attract more. We need the housing and daycare to support it."

"New Ulm needs to become less resistant to change. City and other stakeholders need to be willing to try new things."

DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

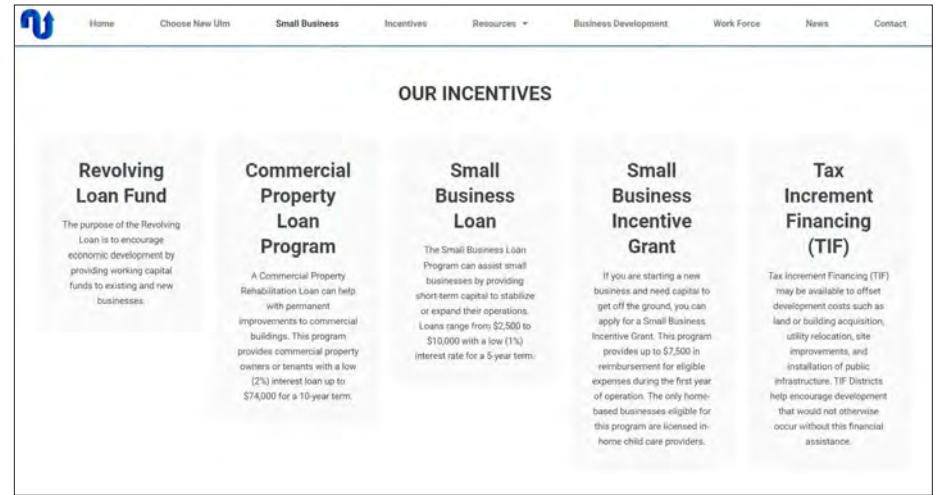
Opportunity 1: Business retention

Retaining a business that is already located in a community is always easier and more economically efficient than attracting a new business. The city should continue to maintain close relationships with its existing businesses and when appropriate help address their needs.

The city should support small business developments and see the value in emphasizing the benefits of economic diversification. New Ulm can then work toward building a stronger existing business environment. Take collective action to build an existing business climate that supports the health of local businesses and foster new business start-ups with entrepreneurial development programs. Buy local campaigns can be a beneficial effort to support existing businesses, as well as those exploring niche markets. Building the capacity of local small businesses, owners can then hire more staff and collectively have a larger impact on the community.



Downtown New Ulm



Some of the business incentives offered by the New Ulm Economic Development Authority and City

Opportunity 2: New businesses that reflect the community vision

With strategic and targeted effort, the city can attract new businesses that support the community vision. Potential business candidates should respond to several considerations, including:

- How well they align with existing local industries and with potential opportunities to develop / grow economic clusters
- How they fit within the existing local capacity (in term of contributing to existing assets and resources)
- How they match existing local labor in terms of headcount, skills, and education
- Matching between industry skill requirements and available training resources
- Geographic and supply chain adequacy

Defining these strategies and targets also ensures that new businesses are set up for long-term success.



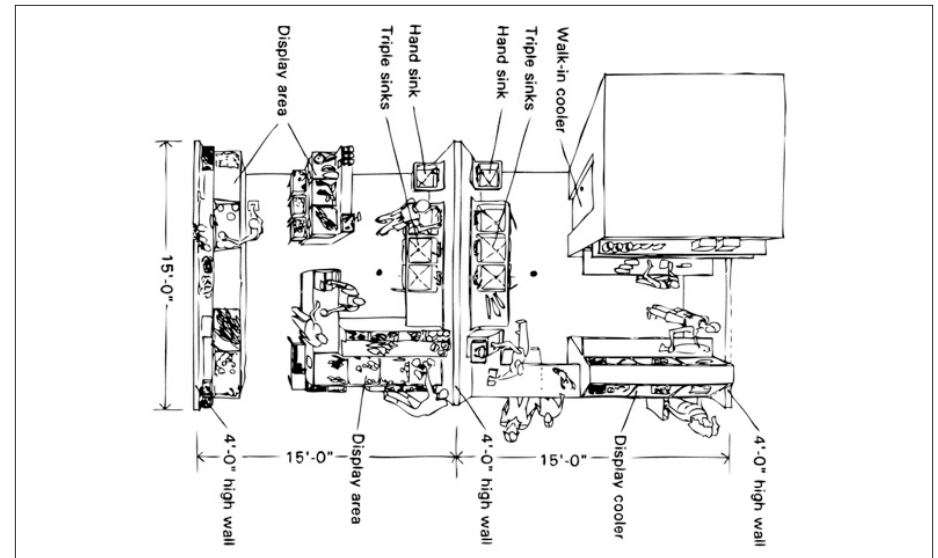
Example of a small retail business incubator

Business Incubator

The community survey demonstrated strong support for developing small businesses and local entrepreneurs. A business incubator is a space or location where new businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs can quickly and inexpensively setup and start their operations. Incubators can take many forms, but their main characteristic is that they lower the “barrier to entry” for starting a new business by:

- Reducing (or pooling) costs
- Streamlining the search for and access to appropriately sized business spaces
- Including access to existing business support services like startup counseling, business training, and entrepreneur loans

Business incubators are a cost-effective investment for communities: they can help jumpstart the most challenging part of an entrepreneur’s journey, which is the movement from a business idea to a working operation. A business incubator can be inexpensively deployed as an outdoor collection of garden sheds, or it can also be developed inside a single building that



A 15x15 “micro-tenant” space for an indoor incubator

has been subdivided to provide suitably small spaces. An incubator can also serve as a community gathering space while promoting new businesses.

In recognition of New Ulm’s German heritage and immigrant roots, the city should continue to support immigrant entrepreneurship. The city’s growing immigrant population is an untapped pool of entrepreneurial potential. Many immigrants bring small business experience from their home countries as well as ideas for goods and services that their fellow immigrants and the larger community need. However, starting a new business can be challenging. Doing so in a new language, while navigating unfamiliar business licensing rules and requirements can be next to impossible. Fortunately, there are many resources that have been developed in Minnesota over the last twenty years to support this important ladder for economic prosperity for individuals and communities. Working with organizations like [Latino Economic Development Center](#), [Neighborhood Development Center](#), and many others can help jumpstart new business, create additional tax revenue, and further enrich the New Ulm community and culture.



Quadplex condominium near downtown New Ulm

Opportunity 3: Housing options

Some employers have indicated a desire to expand their operations, but face challenges attracting and retaining employees due to the lack of housing. According to the 2022 Housing Needs Analysis, employers in the manufacturing sector indicate a continued lack of available affordable housing for both rental and for-sale. Skilled employees relocating to the area have an especially difficult time finding suitable housing in the area.

Additionally, New Ulm is a major job importer, as it attracts 5,930 workers from surrounding communities. Due to the lack of available housing in New Ulm, a portion of these workers who may have otherwise chosen to live in New Ulm are forced to look elsewhere and commute. A lack of housing options can force employers to relocate to communities with more housing options for their workforce.

The city should play an active role in expanding housing options that meet a wide range of needs, including budget, size, and type. This will support the vitality and growth of existing and future businesses, as well as attract commuting workers who may want to relocate to New Ulm. For additional strategies and opportunities to increase housing options in New Ulm please refer to Chapter 5.



Opportunity 4: Broadband

Providing high-quality broadband speed and reliability was highlighted as a priority by the community. Fast and dependable internet service is a key tool for economic development and competitiveness; companies increasingly depend on it for business management, financial transactions, and general operations. It is essential for retaining and attracting both employers and employees. For New Ulm to benefit from 'work from home' trends, it needs to continue to expand its internet service throughout the community.,

The two primary broadband service providers in the community are Nuvera and Comcast. Currently Nuvera is in the process of completing the installation of a new fiber network in the city. This will provide fiber main lines directly to customers throughout the community. Having reliable broadband services makes New Ulm a perfect location for people who work from home or are looking to relocate their business to our community.





Opportunity 5: Strengthen the Downtown

New Ulm's downtown plays a vital role in defining its character and serving as one of its economic engines. It offers a walkable and convenient network, as well as a "live/work/play" environment located near restaurants, bars, services, and entertainment.

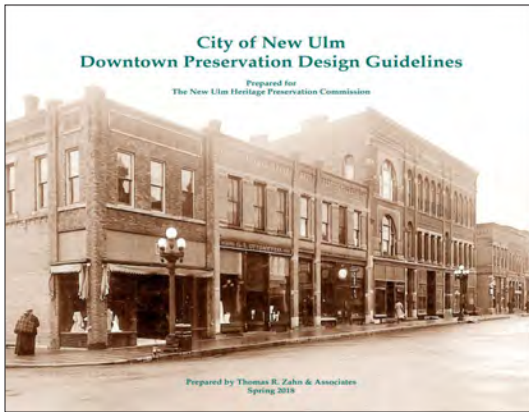
It is an exciting time for New Ulm's downtown as it has seen increased development and investments recently, which can serve as catalysts in attracting even more investors and entrepreneurship. It is important that the city plays an active role in attracting new businesses to keep the downtown a vibrant and desirable area. Community survey results strongly indicate support for continuing to strengthen New Ulm's downtown.

As part of the Comprehensive Plan, the city also prepared a Downtown Small Area Plan to evaluate current conditions and explore potential growth and development opportunities. The Small Area Plan outlines ways growth and development reflects the community vision. Reference the Downtown Small Area Plan for more details additional to this Comprehensive Plan.

Keep an Attractive Streetscape

The city should identify opportunities that create a more appealing streetscape, including public art, attractive and accessible sidewalks, colorful landscaping, plazas and gathering spaces, wayfinding and signage, and street furniture. This would encourage additional activity in the downtown area, which could attract new businesses and development.





New Ulm's richly historic downtown buildings make vital contributions to its charm and attractiveness. They contribute to the community's sense of place and offer unique spaces. The city should encourage rehabilitation of historic buildings by offering opportunities for grants, loans and other financial incentives.

A photograph of a row of red brick terraced houses. The houses feature white bay windows with decorative moldings. The roofline is ornate, with a central gabled section and decorative cornices. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.



The easiest way to have more people patronizing downtown is by having them live there. Expanding housing options in downtown New Ulm will create additional activity that will support local businesses and generate activity throughout the day. This also provides additional residential options for young professionals and seniors which will help alleviate the current tight housing market. For additional recommendations on how to expand downtown housing refer to Chapter 5.



New multi-use building with upper level housing being built in Downtown

Economic Development

Opportunity 6: Intermodal transportation hub

New Ulm's role as an industrial transportation hub, that capitalizes on the airport, rail, and highways, is an untapped economic development opportunity.

The Canadian Pacific/Kansas City Railway offers freight access to national and international markets. Shipments can later be transported via trucks. This provides an attractive opportunity for businesses looking to ship products and materials in an efficient and low-cost manner. Development of intermodal and specialized facilities can capitalize on this asset. The city can attract businesses that could take advantage of intermodal transportation and support economic growth. For example, the city could work with the railroad to develop land along the rail line for the type of cold-storage warehousing that is in high demand. An intermodal hub can transport products to key markets like Mankato, Rochester, and the Twin Cities.

The New Ulm Municipal Airport (KULM) can also provide an air freight option to businesses. This can provide a competitive advantage over other communities that lack an airport.



Opportunity 7: Building sites with existing infrastructure

The city should work closely with the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to identify areas with existing infrastructure. Sites with existing infrastructure reduce immediate development costs and can expedite business operations. The New Ulm Economic Development Authority can help new businesses identify sites that meet their needs and have necessary utilities and infrastructure.





GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Outlined below are goals and strategies that are aimed at guiding future economic development activities for New Ulm businesses and residents. They are based on public input and a study of current and future trends.

Goal 1: Develop and implement a coordinated economic development strategy.

Strategy 1.1: Develop a coordinated, focused and compelling Marketing Plan for economic development in New Ulm that provides a unified message and presents a spirited image of the city. Evaluate, reassess and update the plan every two to three years.

Strategy 1.2: Develop a sustainable and diversified economy for businesses and residents.

Strategy 1.3: Encourage a mix of local services and retail goods adequate to meet regional demand and contribute to an enhanced quality of life.

Strategy 1.4: Development in New Ulm will include complementary infill, adaptive reuse, and redevelopment of underutilized and vacant commercial and industrial properties.

Strategy 1.5: Develop marketing materials and financial incentive policies to assist with business attraction, recruitment, and maintenance.

Strategy 1.6: Offer a variety of employment opportunities for young people of the area.

Strategy 1.7: Encourage community pride through public events and art, vibrant open spaces, city marketing efforts, conservation of natural resources, and preservation of “small town” character.

Strategy 1.8: Define, develop, and grow the city’s comparative economic advantages.

Strategy 1.9: Consider the short-, medium-, and long-term benefits and impacts of development and investment decisions, and make development choices that provide the highest net value for the city in the long term.

Strategy 1.10: Develop fresh marketing messages for the city, with a brand, key themes and messages.

Strategy 1.11: Collaborate with other public, private and non-profit entities when possible to foster economic development efforts and leverage resources.

Strategy 1.12: Provide a range of financial incentives that support healthy growth of existing and new businesses.

Strategy 1.13: Provide safe and affordable housing opportunities that are connected to services, employment, and amenities. Ensure that a range of housing options are available in the local market and evaluate how well affordable workforce housing is located relative to job centers. Collaborate with governmental, non-profit, and private entities to accommodate the variety of incomes and household types in New Ulm.

Strategy 1.14: Better utilize the Cottonwood and Minnesota Rivers as an economic asset and way to strengthen the city’s character. Encourage economic use of the Rivers, while also protecting their natural and cultural significance.

Strategy 1.15: Support the city’s educational system, recreational assets, and artistic venues as an important way to attracting and retaining talent.

Economic Development

Goal 2. Retain, recruit, nurture, and expand businesses.

Strategy 2.1: Maintain and share an up-to-date inventory list of available industrial and commercial properties in the New Ulm area.

Strategy 2.2: Encourage the development and retention of locally owned and operated businesses.

Strategy 2.3: Identify new and complimentary business opportunities within New Ulm.

Strategy 2.4: Continue and expand current business retention and business recruitment programs.

Strategy 2.5: Implement the four area plans prepared as part of this Comprehensive Plan.

Strategy 2.6: Stay in regular communication with key employers to understand their needs, health of operations, and potential opportunities or barriers where the city or other partners might assist.

Strategy 2.7: Regularly discuss growth opportunities with local employers and work with them to help advance their goals.

Strategy 2.8: Build and support local business developments and emphasize the benefits of economic diversification.

Goal 3: Excel in providing resources and amenities critical for attracting residents and businesses.

Strategy 3.1: Leverage and complement the community's unique assets and businesses such as retail stores and commerce, tourism, and entertainment.

Strategy 3.2: Enhance the visual character of existing and new travel corridors to provide a positive impression of the community to users of these systems.

Strategy 3.3: Improve community resources and services, housing, child and senior care, transportation, healthcare, park and recreation facilities, that serve new residents and employees.

Strategy 3.4: Maintain and expand New Ulm's efforts to provide easy access to superior quality-of-life assets.

Strategy 3.5: Maintain a strong local economy that attracts new businesses and supports the ongoing vitality of the city.

Strategy 3.6: Establish a directory of local businesses that allows residents and other businesses to easily find products and services that exist in their community.

Strategy 3.7: Utilize the city's extensive park system to host community, business, arts, and entertainment events.

Strategy 3.8: Work with private sector and government partners to enhance broadband and fiber deployments, especially in areas that need connection or improvement of high-speed internet service.

Strategy 3.9: Develop a resource group to welcome and orient new arrivals to the community.

Goal 4. Develop, train, retain, and attract a talented workforce.

Strategy 4.1: Increase relevant job training and skill development. Use this to address labor needs of existing businesses.

Strategy 4.2: Provide high-quality school systems that prepare youth with the skills that enable them to compete in local, national, and global economies.

Strategy 4.3: Support efforts that connect local youth to internships, apprenticeships, and other education and career opportunities.

Strategy 4.4: Partner with the local school systems and other community entities to support college and career readiness programs.

Strategy 4.5: Collaborate with other community partners to address the daycare shortage that is negatively impacting area businesses.

Strategy 4.6: Provide a program with trained interns and potential new staff that can support the needs of new and existing businesses.

Strategy 4.7: Support the traditional trades and skilled labor as a vital component of the community and provide “upskill” and knowledge enhancement opportunities resulting in a more resilient and adaptive workforce.

Strategy 4.8: Support employers who identify employee skill gaps and provide enhancement opportunities for employees to use new technology.

Strategy 4.9: Establish a continuous pipeline of talented youth from schools/higher education to local employers.

Goal 5. Invest in local entrepreneurs.

Strategy 5.1: Assist in the development of a business incubator that provides small and affordable spaces to start-up businesses.

Strategy 5.2: Provide incubator spaces in the downtown area or industrial areas of the city.

Strategy 5.3: Support aspiring entrepreneurship in all New Ulm populations and communities.

Strategy 5.4: Provide affordable business options for entrepreneurs through the use of shared workspaces or buildings.

Strategy 5.5: Increase access to dedicated business training, services and start-up loans.

Goal 6. Identify the Downtown area as the center of the city and region. Strengthen its retail, cultural, historic, and entertainment amenities.

Strategy 6.1: Maintain design guidelines that celebrate the historic nature of existing buildings in the Downtown Historic District.

Strategy 6.2: Provide incentives to property owners that encourage renovations of historic store fronts, preservation of existing building stock and rehabilitation of upper-level housing areas.

Strategy 6.3: Create a strategic plan that identifies businesses that would be appropriate in the downtown area and attracts entrepreneurs downtown.

Strategy 6.4: Develop the downtown area in a manner consistent with the area’s existing character including building size, architectural design, building materials and façade treatment.

Strategy 6.5: Provide mixed-use developments that incorporate multiple uses and create a people-centered environment.

Strategy 6.6: Host events for residents and visitors downtown on a regular basis.

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CHAPTER 8

PARKS AND RECREATION

Parks and Recreation



Aquatic Center

INTRODUCTION

Parks, open spaces, and recreational programming are important contributors to the quality of life in New Ulm. This system connects New Ulm residents to nature, encourages an active healthy lifestyle, and promotes community interaction and resilience. It provides pleasant and memorable places and recreational activities that draw people to live, work and play in New Ulm.

The founders of New Ulm were rooted in the Turnverein philosophy, of promoting a “Sound Mind Sound Body.” Since the establishment of New Ulm, providing parks and spaces for outdoor recreation has remained a community priority.

This Parks and Recreation Chapter will serve as a framework for future development of this system. It is intended to be a dynamic document responding to New Ulm resident’s evolving needs. Its goal is to provide benchmarks to ensure that resources are wisely managed and that development efforts benefit both residents, their community, and the broader environment.



Hermann 5K Run

PARK SYSTEM TODAY

The city owns and operates 31 park sites within the city limits. The New Ulm Park and Recreation Department is responsible for the management, operation, and maintenance of these parks. North and South German Parks have multiple uses in each park Table 8.1 provides the name of each site, their type or classification, the street address and the size of the park.

The current parks and recreation system consists of ten neighborhood parks, nine community parks, six natural resource areas, thirteen special use areas and four monument locations. City parks and open spaces encompass approximately 30% of the land area of the city. The city also partners with public and private schools within the municipal boundaries for use and maintenance of school recreation facilities.

Figure 8.1 is a map showing the location of the park sites within the city. The location of Flandrau State Park is also provided. Park sites within North German and South German Parks provide or host a variety of different activities that necessitate a smaller scale map.



German Park Amphitheater

Parks and Recreation

Table 8.1. Existing Parks

New Ulm				
Park Name		Classification	Address	Acreage
1	Adams Park	Natural Resource Area	620 Cottonwood St	15.9 acres
2	Archery Range	Special Use Park	220 Tower Rd	0.7 acres
3	Civic Center	Community Park	1212 North Franklin St	10.3 acres
4	Community Garden	Special Use Park	107 - 19th South St	2 acres
5	Defender's Monument	Monument	715 Center St	0.2 acres
6	German Park	Community Park	200 North German St	5.8 acres
7	Harman Park	Community Park and Monument	101 North Garden St	17.5 acres
8	Heritage Tree	Monument	101 South Minnesota St	.02 acres
9	Hermann Heights Park and Monument	Community Park and Monument	14 Monument St	8.2 acres
10	Highland Park	Neighborhood Park	1627 - 5th North St	3.0 acres
11	Kiesling Park and House	Special Use Park	220 North Minnesota St	0.2 acres
12	Lakeside Village Park (undeveloped)	Neighborhood Park	2315 Lake Ave	1.5 acres
13	Lincoln Park	Neighborhood Park	718 South State St	2.8 acres
14	Maplewood Park (undeveloped)	Neighborhood Park	1321 Maplewood Dr	6.9 acres
15	Minnecon Park	Natural Resource Area	2 Minnecon Drive	118.6 acres
16	Nehls Park	Community Park	1100 Summit Ave	12 acres

Table 8.1. Existing Parks (continued)

New Ulm				
Park Name		Classification	Address	Acreage
17	North German Park	-	-	-
	» Art Wall Park	» Special Use Park	» 221- 6th North St	» 3.6 acres
	» Community Center	» Community Park	» 600 North German St	» 1.9 acres
	» Hans Joohs Park	» Neighborhood Park	» 600 North German St	» 2.0 acres
	» Johnson Park (Baseball Field)	» Special Use Park	» 500 North German St	» 4.9 acres
	» Johnson Park (Football Field)	» Special Use Park	» 400 North German St	» 3.6 acres
	» Mueller Park (Baseball Field)	» Special Use Park	» 224 3rd North St	» 8.1 acres
	» Soccer Field	» Special Use Park	» 221 6th North St	» 3.4 acres
18	North Highland Park (undeveloped)	Neighborhood Park	1300 North Highland Ave	2.3 acres
19	North Market Park	Neighborhood Park	1414 North German St	1.1 acres
20	North Park	Community Park	1801 North State St	14 acres
21	Pfaender Park (undeveloped)	Neighborhood Park	1601 - 7th North St	6.6 acres
22	Pollinator Park	Natural Resource Area	2250 North Broadway	2.7 acres
23	Pollinator Park Grounds	Natural Resource Area	2260 North Broadway	20 acres
24	Riverside Park	Community Park	101 South Front St	11 acres
25	Schonlau Park and Glockenspiel	Special Use Park	327 North Minnesota St	0.4 acres
26	South German Park	-	-	-
	» BMX Track	» Special Use Park	» 316 3rd South St	» 2.6 acres
	» Dog Park	» Special Use Park	» 527 South German St	» 1.3 acres
	» Open Space	» Natural Resource Area	» 501 South German St	» 9.6 acres
	» Skateboard Park	» Special Use Park	» 315 1st South St	» 2.6 acres

Parks and Recreation

Table 8.1. Existing Parks (continued)

New Ulm				
Park Name		Classification	Address	Acreage
27	South Market Park	Natural Resource Area	1415 South German St	2.8 acres
28	South Park	Neighborhood Park	1800 South State St	10.2 acres
29	Steinhauser Park (Recreation Center)	Community Park	122 South Garden St	5 acres
30	Trap and Skeet Range	Special Use Park	214 - 21st North St	6.1 acres
31	Washington Park	Neighborhood Park	715 North State St	2.8 acres

Table 8.2. School Park Areas

Park Name		Address	Amenities
32	Cathedral of the Holy Trinity / New Ulm Area Catholic Schools	605 North State St	Playground, Basketball Hoops
33	Independent School District 88	414 South Payne St	Athletic Fields, Playground, Tennis Courts
34	Independent School District 88	910 14th North St	Playgrounds, Athletic Courts
35	Riverbend Education District	1300 South Minnesota St	Playground, Athletic Courts
36	St. Paul's Elementary	126 South Payne St	Athletic Field/Courts, Playground

PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has developed park and trail system standards for communities to use as they develop their park systems. Different parks serve different purposes within a park system. This helps the park system meet the varying needs of a community. Park classifications help define and clarify the intended use of each park type and recreation facility, and provides guidance on the area served, the size and ideal sites. This is useful when planning for new parks within the community or when contemplating park needs for major redevelopment projects. Classifications help guide facility and use plans. The following is a list of park classifications for existing parks in New Ulm. It is important to note that these standards are general guidelines.

Community Park

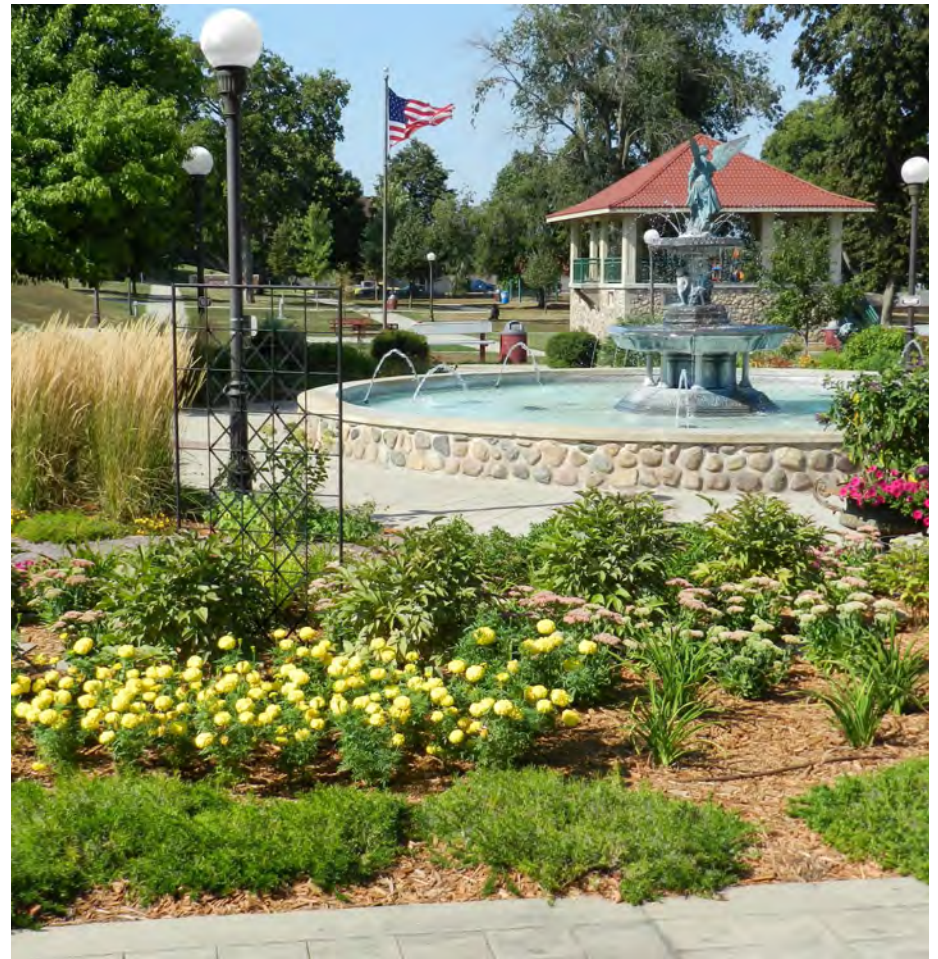
Description: Provides a wide range of community-scale recreation and activities for all age groups or may have facilities for specific recreation activities. This can vary from athletic fields, passive park areas, large playgrounds, and recreation centers.

Location Criteria: These parks should be at locations that are easily accessible via different modes of transportation.

Size Criteria: Facility size varies depending on activities offered at the park.



Johnson Park



German Park

Parks and Recreation



Washington Park

Neighborhood Park

Description: Basic unit of park system that serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Typically developed to provide both active and passive recreation opportunities for residents of all age groups living in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Location Criteria: ¼ mile to ½ mile service area radius

Size Criteria: 4-10 acres (Sizes may be determined as needed to accommodate desired uses)



Schonlau Park and Glockenspiel

Special Use Park

Description: Covers a broad range of parks and recreational facilities oriented toward a single purpose use such as historical, cultural, or social sites. This may include fields, arenas, gardens, plazas, historic sites, skate parks, BMX bike areas, disc golf, or off-leash dog sites.

Location Criteria: Location is primarily based on recreation need, community interest, facility type and availability of land. The site should be easily accessible from major transportation routes and traffic light locations where possible.

Size Criteria: Facility space requirements should determine size of the park.



Adams Park

Playground/Mini-Park

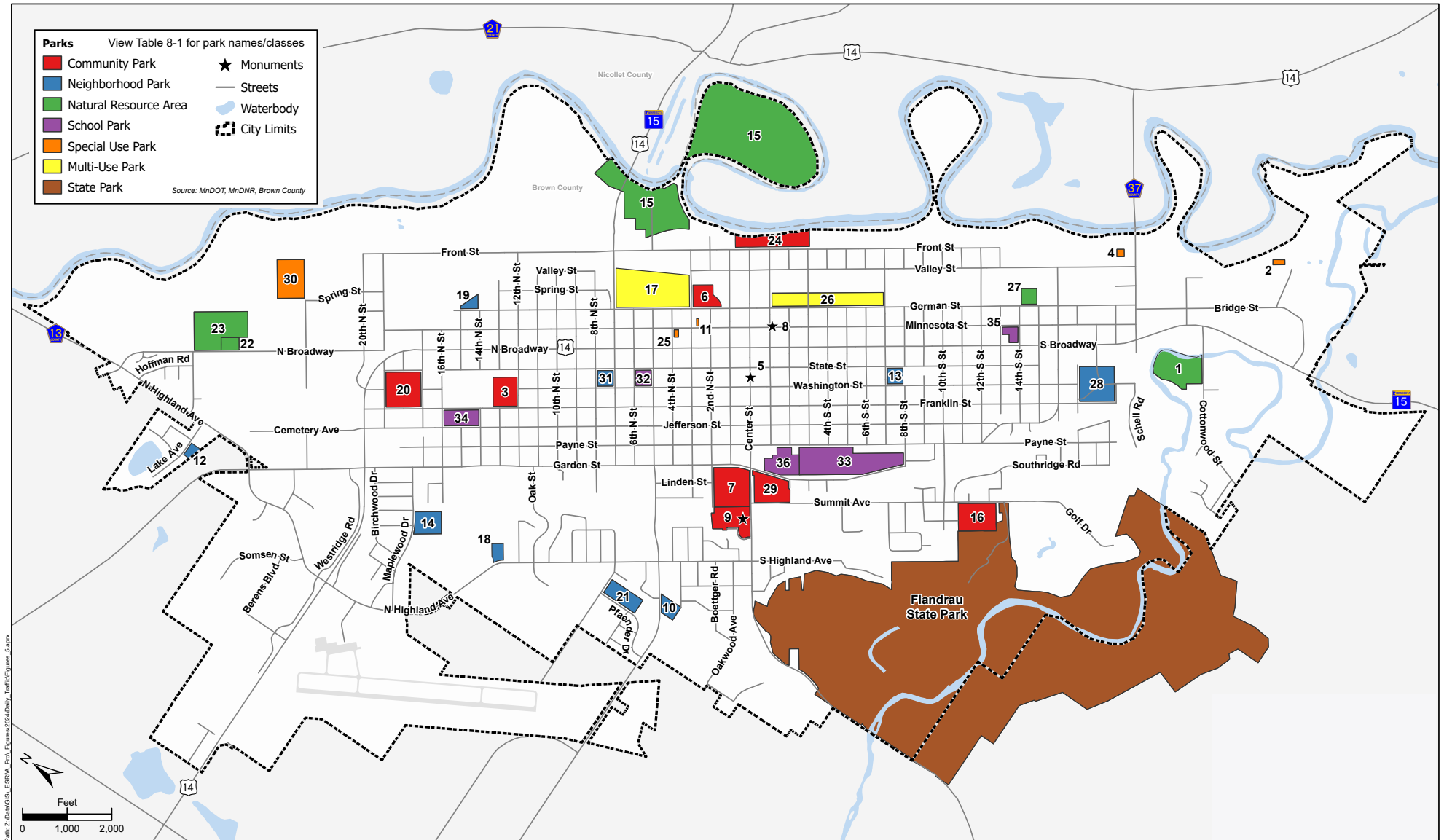
Description: Smallest park classification that is used to address limited or unique recreational needs. Typically contain children's play equipment and may also include a small open play area and/ or a picnic table or seating area.

Location Criteria: Less than ¼ mile radius distance in residential setting

Size Criteria: 2,500 sq. ft. to 1 acre in size but can be up to 3 acres.

Natural Resource Area

Description: Open space, broadly defined, includes woodlands, fields, wetlands, stream banks, floodplains, steep slopes, and unique geological formations and unbuilt areas. Open Space provides protection for scenic areas and endangered habitats. It also continues to provide land for local food production and can help shape the form of urban growth by providing "breathing room" for development.





Hermann Heights Park and Monument

Parks and Recreation



Playground at Lincoln Park



Aquatic Center at the New Ulm Recreation Center



Splash Pad



Farmers' Market



Basketball Court at the New Ulm Community Center



Pickleball at the New Ulm Recreation Center



Defenders Monument



Volleyball tournament hosted Downtown

Parks and Recreation



Neighborhood park in New Ulm

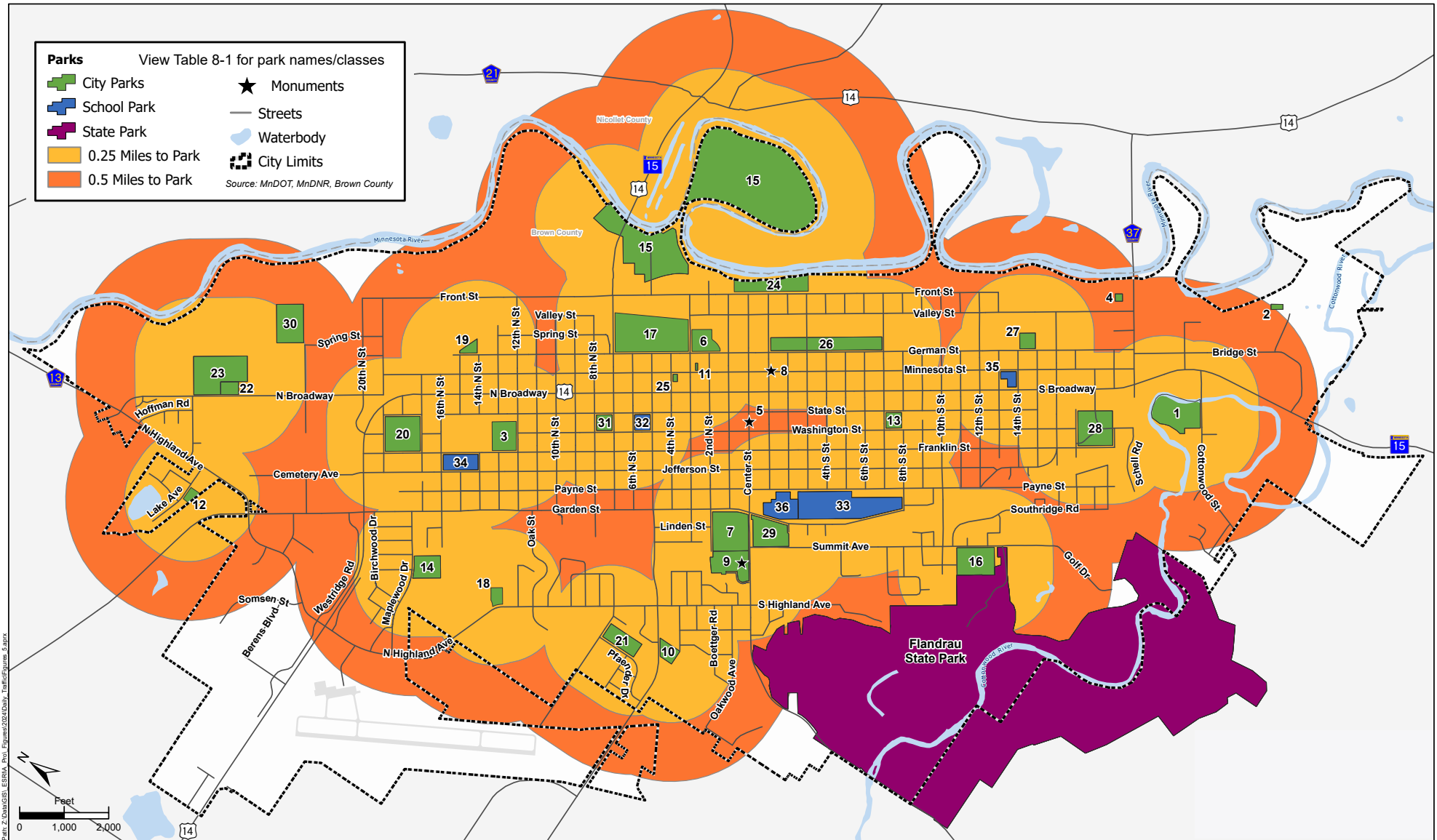


New Ulm Bike Circle Route Trail

GAPS IN PARKS ACCESS

Generally, the city's neighborhoods have good park coverage with most homes being within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile or a 10-minute walk from a park (without major road or railroad barriers). A five minute or $\frac{1}{4}$ mile walking distance is preferred but not always possible. Providing appropriate access to parks and outdoor recreation spaces is one element that allows for the development of a strong community spirit. New Ulm prides itself in providing easily accessible parks to its residents.

Figure 8.3 shows a five-and ten-minute walking radius from each city-owned park. Seeing where existing parks are located helps plan future facilities and open spaces. Additionally, a Comprehensive Park and Open Space Master Plan can evaluate current recreation facilities and programming, as well as identify improvements and updates needed at each individual park.





PARK DEVELOPMENT, EXPANSION, AND RENOVATION

Maplewood Park

Additional park land should be added to Maplewood Park. The park is fairly small and much of its land area is consumed by a storm water retention pond. The size of the pond was also increased from what was originally proposed for the park. This resulted in the loss of park land. The additional land will allow the park to be developed and serve a full range of neighborhood recreation activities.

Pfaender Park

This area of the community has experienced rapid residential development over the past twenty years. This park is located at the intersection of 7th North Street and Pfaender Drive. This park would serve the recreation needs of the surrounding neighborhoods, generally located in the adjoining hilltop area. It is anticipated that the surrounding area will be subject to further residential development which will increase the number of potential users of this park.

South Market Park

This is an undeveloped wooded area that has topographic and slope challenges. The city's bike trail runs through the lower part of the park. The front of the park, paralleling South German Street, should be lowered to improve visibility into the park area and to also provide a level play area adjacent to German Street. Nature trails could be added to the area and the woodlands could be thinned to open up the under story to create an urban forest park. Additionally, some neighborhood park amenities could be added from the park unit plan. A developed Neighborhood Park would be appropriate in this area.

Pollinator Park Grounds

This proposed park area is owned by the city and has not yet formally been established by the City Council. It is located across the street from Traulich Estates Mobile Home Park, as well as residential development to the northwest and townhomes to the north. The proposed park area would directly abut Pollinator Park on three sides and would include property both within and outside the flood plain area of the Minnesota River. The city's bike trail also crosses through the proposed park area in a north-south direction.

Further study of this area is warranted to secure more detailed information on appropriate recreational uses and activities. The area has sufficient size to be classified as a Neighborhood Park and while it does slope towards the Minnesota River, it appears to have sufficient space to create a level field and play area. A Neighborhood Park is also needed in this general area. This area appears ideally suited for a natural play site. It appears that this location has suitable topography for a sliding hill and slides.

The site can also serve as a trailhead for a future trail system extending to the Minnesota River and possibly proceeding up and down the river to other public locations. While this will require further review, this general area appears to have the potential for an expansive trail system. It must be recognized that there is the potential for standing water within this area since it is subject to periodic flooding.

North Highland Park

This is a city-owned area designated for park purposes. The total park area is 2.3 acres, and it is intended to be classified as a Neighborhood Park. The land use for the surrounding area is residential. The New Ulm High School campus is located across the street. Development of this park site will be dependent on more residential development taking place within the immediate area. Residential development is approximately two blocks away at this time.



NEW PARKS

Within the next twenty years, the city is projected to experience new residential development. The Plan identifies several locations where this development could occur. Some of these areas can be served by existing neighborhood parks.

Other locations will require the establishment of new neighborhood parks. There are existing areas that have sufficient residential development to warrant the acquisition of property for a new park. The standard to be used in locating new parks is to have residential neighborhoods within one-half mile walking distance for residents. The anticipated distribution of new neighborhood parks is identified below. It should be noted, though, that as recreation trends and development patterns change with time this distribution may change as well.

Pollinator Park Grounds

See description in previous section.

Cottonwood Park

A new neighborhood park in the hilltop area of Cottonwood Street is needed to serve the upper and lower Cottonwood residential areas.

Lakeside Village Park

This park is a 1.5-acre undeveloped parcel within the Lakeside Village subdivision. This park land is not located on the lake. Rather than develop this property, a recommendation is to acquire 4 to 7 acres of new parkland on the north side of the lake and construct a Neighborhood Park there with lake access. This means land will be needed from the Lakeside subdivision and from the property to the north of the subdivision. The land to the north can be acquired and the new park developed when that property transitions to residential use. The existing 1.5-acre Lakeside Park parcel could be resold as residential lots to help pay for the new parkland acquisition and development.

Airport Community Athletic Park

The city lacks a major park. Most communities have a larger park (25+ acres) with enough fields to hold baseball/softball or soccer tournaments. New Ulm's largest active park is Johnson Park. The park consists of 17 acres and contains a baseball and football field used primarily for high school sports. The MLC soccer fields currently provide space for city recreation use. Since these fields are privately owned there is no long-term assurance of continued public access. In the recent past, MLC has been adding additional sports venues to this area and the amount of space available for the soccer program has been reduced.

A new community athletic park is proposed to meet current and future needs. The scope and facility mix of the park needs to be determined but with the exception of the soccer program, it would not necessarily need to be developed immediately. The size of the park could range from 20 to 30 acres. Acquiring the land now will assure flexibility for the future. Further recreational development can occur over time as funding allows and as needs are refined.

The concentration of active athletics at this location will allow certain smaller community parks to focus on serving neighborhood recreation and/or a specialized community role. For example, the fields at Harman Park could be reduced and the park could focus on being a neighborhood park.

KC Road Park

A new neighborhood park will be needed in this area as further residential growth occurs along and around the KC Road area. This is likely to be a long-range need (+20 years).

Parks and Recreation



Photos courtesy of MNDNR

Flandrau State Park

Flandrau State Park is located in the City of New Ulm and Cottonwood Township. The Park was established in 1937 and has a total area of 822 acres.

The Park is situated in the valley of the Cottonwood River and offers a diversity of terrains and landscapes; from wooded river bottoms to oxbow marshes to scenic hill prairies to open grasslands. The Park has a total of 8 miles of hiking trails, 6 miles of cross-country ski trails and 2 miles of snowshoe trails.

The Park has a sand-bottom swimming pool, picnic area, campgrounds, and a group center. River recreation includes fishing, canoeing, and tubing. The Park contains several buildings built by the Work Progress Administration that have now been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Vegetative features and wildlife can be found in the Park. The Park directly abuts the city's Nehls Park on its east side.



WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING - PUBLIC INPUT

The community engagement process found that New Ulm's park system and recreation programs are highly regarded by its residents. The community values the city's park system and would like to see an improved trail network and more recreational programming. Additionally, pickleball courts, basketball courts, and adult fitness classes ranked highest as recreational options the community would like to see improved or added.



**2nd
Highest**

Parks, trails, open spaces, and recreational facilities ranked as the 2nd highest thing residents like the most about living in New Ulm.

Top Outdoor Park Elements or Amenities Survey Respondents would like to see Improved or Added



**Swimming
pools**



Trails



Bathrooms

Top Active Sports Courts/Fields and Recreation Programs Survey Respondents would like to see Improved or Added



**Pickleball
Courts**



**Basketball
Courts**



**Adult Fitness
Classes (Zumba,
Yoga, etc.)**



Swimming

"New Ulm has done a great job with the splash pads and parks for New Ulm Youth!"

"I like the all the parks and outdoors things to do. Between the disc golf courses, hiking in Flandrau State Park, bike path, splash pads, river nearby, etc. There are a ton of options for people of all ages to enjoy the outdoors."

"Would like the bike trails expanded, especially down or near the river."

"I was impressed 3 years ago when I first visited New Ulm with the thought of moving here. The Grand was a major draw, as were the city parks and Flandrau State Park. I've appreciated the friendliness and the walkability."

"Improve access to rivers, ponds, and playgrounds nearby every new neighborhood."

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARKS AND RECREATION



Opportunity 1: Issues and Trends

The park and recreation environment is dynamic and subject to change. New Ulm's system will need to adapt and update its offerings to keep up with new requests and demands from park users. The system will also need to be flexible in order to accommodate anticipated, and as yet unknown, changes that are forthcoming. This would include the following:

- Public health continues to be a topic of concern. The lack of physical activity, poor nutrition, obesity, substance abuse, mental health and other issues can adversely impact one's health. Active living through participation in parks and recreation activities can offer a way to stay healthier.
- The city's population includes active seniors, and this will change the park and recreation system. While the population ages, they are still trying to stay active. This will result in a transition to lower impact activities by older residents. Potential activities include trail and pickleball use.
- People are now looking for unique experiences with their playgrounds. They are now evolving to provide adventure, nature, and challenge play. This involves different types of features, forms, materials, and landforms.
- Participation in and preferences for specific sports is changing.
- A greater emphasis is now being placed on spending money for experiences and activities, rather than on purchases of items. Parks can serve as a suitable location for people to meet for social and activity purposes.
- A new emphasis on the installation of pickleball and splash pad or other water-oriented facilities.
- Shifts in behaviors, preferences and attitudes are changing the way parks and recreation facilities are used.



Opportunity 2: Prepare a New Master Parks, Trail, and Recreation Systems Plan

The last New Ulm Master Park Plan is dated January 1989. This Plan has served its purpose well but no longer is relevant. A new Plan can establish clear and realistic goals, objectives, and implementation strategies that can guide New Ulm's decision making, provide system-wide recommendations, provide a strategy to preserve and maintain open space and significant natural resources, and evaluate current facilities and programs to determine if the recreation and leisure needs of New Ulm citizens are being met. The Plan can also be a tool to identify the types of programming and facilities the community would like to see in the future.



Opportunity 3: Expand trail and bikeway network

In Community Survey #2, parks, trails, open spaces, and recreational facilities were identified by respondents as the second highest rated reason for living in New Ulm. Trails were also the second outdoor park element or amenity survey participants would like to see improved or added in New Ulm. The Master Park Plan is scheduled to address this subject. An expanded network will serve the needs of current residents and draw new residents to the community. Combining this effort with Safe Routes to School Planning and with other transportation and park investments will yield benefits to the city.

Opportunity 4: Create a Sense of Place and a Feeling of Community in the Park System

Parks adjoin other land uses, the most typical one being residential. Enhanced amenities at parks and open spaces make neighborhoods more attractive and welcoming. The following are examples of amenities that can produce a positive impression and increase the possibility for expanded activities at existing and future parks and open spaces.



Pergolas and seating along walkways strengthen livability and neighborhood identity.



Rain gardens reduce flooding and increase green areas while remaining low maintenance. This can be a great opportunity to reduce asphalt on parking lots.



Sport courts offer opportunities for physical activity and socialization.



Provide landscaped open space in suitable locations that introduce appropriately sized and shaped shrubs, flowers and under story trees for organized recreation and exercise purposes.



Public art creates more vibrant neighborhoods and strengthens a sense of community. The wall shown is part of the Nuvera building in downtown New Ulm.



Cottonwood River from Flandrau State Park

Opportunity 5: Enhance Recreational Opportunities along the Minnesota and Cottonwood Rivers

Water-oriented recreational opportunities are underutilized in the City's Park and Recreation portfolio. The Cottonwood and Minnesota Rivers are destinations for recreational users of water-oriented sports, such as kayaking or canoeing, and provide abundant fishing opportunities for anglers throughout the state. Emphasis should be given to promote the use of these waters as key recreational opportunities and protect them as natural resource amenities. The city should work with the MN DNR to:

- Improve water access to the Cottonwood River along County Road 13 south of New Ulm
- Seek opportunities for new trail installations along both the Minnesota and Cottonwood River corridors
- Provide river/canoe access at proposed Pollinator Park



GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The following goals and strategies guide the preservation of New Ulm's rich park and recreation system, as well as extensive natural resources. These goals and strategies are based on community input and an evaluation of the current and future needs of New Ulm residents.

Goal 1. Provide a diversified park, recreation, and open space system that is accessible and suitable for all ages, incomes, and interests.

Strategy 1.1: Prepare a new Park, Trails, and Recreation System Master Plan that would serve as a long-term planning document. The Plan will guide the city in maintaining its existing system and plan for future facilities, open spaces, parks, and trails that complement the local and regional system to meet community needs.

Strategy 1.2: Following the approval of the plan, the Park and Recreation Department will implement a process of preparing and updating a five-year Park Improvement Plan. This plan will identify actions to improve individual parks, rank them in priority and indicate possible funding sources.

Strategy 1.3: Prioritize the creation of a system of neighborhood and community parks within an approximate five-to-ten-minute (1/4 to 1/2 mile) walking distance of all residents where possible.

Strategy 1.4: Define and pursue opportunities to partner with New Ulm Schools, Brown County, state agencies, private entities, and other partners to provide a variety of park, recreation, trail, and open space amenities and avoid the duplication of programs and facilities.

Strategy 1.5: Support a variety of affordable and accessible spectator and participatory events and experiences for people of all ages and abilities.

Strategy 1.6: Acquire and develop parks, trails, natural resource areas, and related recreation facilities in accordance with the plan for the purpose of shaping the built form of the community and establishing a balance between parks, trails, and open space areas.

Strategy 1.7: Investigate underutilized park properties in a manner that achieves their highest and best use, serves expanding residential areas, and increases the value to the community while mitigating impacts on surrounding neighborhoods.

Strategy 1.8: Maintain and continue the current cooperative relationship with Flandrau State Park to share and support regional recreational and natural resources. Work in partnership to accomplish mutually beneficial projects and activities, including the sharing of resources, facilities, and grounds. Provide additional connection points between the city and park trail systems.

Parks and Recreation

Goal 2. Provide open space that preserves and enhances significant environmental resources and features, protects scenic vistas and water resources, and retains natural resource corridors.

Strategy 2.1: Define and preserve a system of open space corridors and buffers to provide separation between natural areas and urban land uses.

Strategy 2.2: Identify, preserve, and protect significant environmental features and natural areas including bluffs, hilltops, native prairies, ravines, woodlands, watercourses and wetlands, and provide for appropriate public use.

Strategy 2.3: Continue development of access and physical connections to the Minnesota and Cottonwood Rivers through partnerships with other jurisdictions and acquisition of shoreland property. Define opportunities for watercraft access to the Minnesota and Cottonwood Rivers, and offer recreation and community enrichment activities in shoreland areas near the rivers.

Strategy 2.4: Incorporate neighborhood detention/retention ponds into parks where they are practical for the sake of aesthetics, water quality, and land efficiency.

Strategy 2.5: Seek partnerships and grant opportunities to help implement natural resources goals.

Strategy 2.6: Restore areas throughout the city with pollinator-friendly or native species to protect and enhance habitat for native pollinators and birds.

Strategy 2.7: Market and brand the city's natural resources and open spaces and distinguish them from parks.

Strategy 2.8: In new development and redevelopment retain mature trees that have high ecological value, replace lost trees, and plant additional trees if not present originally and expand the communities tree canopy.

Strategy 2.9: Look for opportunities to reduce or minimize impervious cover citywide.

Goal 3. Provide an interconnected system of accessible multi-use trails and greenway corridors that offer diverse outdoor experiences within a variety of landscapes and natural habitats.

Strategy 3.1: Provide adequate funding for the maintenance of existing and new trails.

Strategy 3.2: Develop relatively uninterrupted trails in conjunction with future developments, parks, natural resource areas, greenways, and roadway projects to provide transportation throughout the city and for recreational purposes.

Strategy 3.3: Where possible, provide adequate screening and buffering along trail corridors to provide separation between the trail and adjacent land uses.

Strategy 3.4: Maintain or establish a trail and sidewalk system that links neighborhoods together and connects to priority destinations, including schools, parks, churches, public facilities, natural areas, medical facilities, commercial areas, and other points of interest.

Strategy 3.5: Complete the establishment of a looped trail system around the city.

Strategy 3.6: Install sidewalks where feasible leading to park properties from of all residential streets and collector or arterial level commercial streets.

Strategy 3.7: Establish New Ulm as a regional leader in providing access to biking, walking, and water trails.

Strategy 3.8: Extend the existing trail system to Schell's Brewery and Flandrau State Park.

Strategy 3.9: Where feasible, incorporate trails or paths through residential areas.

Goal 4. Provide recreational programs and services throughout the community that are fun, educational, accessible, safe, and promote healthy lifestyles for people of all ages and abilities.

Strategy 4.1: Continually evaluate recreation programming to ensure it meets community needs and provides new programs based on gaps in service.

Strategy 4.2: Develop strategic partnerships that are mutually beneficial to optimize opportunities and creatively use resources.

Strategy 4.3: Capture the recreational, entertainment, cultural, and educational opportunities afforded by the Minnesota and Cottonwood Rivers through careful planning, collaboration with other public entities and acquisition of access points.

Strategy 4.4: Explore opportunities to expand youth, teen, adaptive, adult, and senior programs including possible partnerships with wellness providers and other organizations or governmental agencies.

Strategy 4.5: Keep park system facilities, activities, and programs up to date and responsive to the community's desires and needs.

Strategy 4.6: Provide and promote events, festivals, tournaments, celebrations, and gatherings in parks for the purpose of connecting people to each other, to the community, and to the land.

Strategy 4.7: Continue to emphasize the important role of the parks and recreation system as necessary elements in the quality of residential and commercial development, personal health, community-building, public fiscal health, and private economic development.

Goal 5. Design and develop park and open space facilities that reduce overall maintenance requirements and costs, and incorporate sustainable management practices.

Strategy 5.1: Design and develop facilities that reduce overall facility maintenance and operation requirements and costs.

Strategy 5.2: Where appropriate, use low-maintenance materials, settings, or value engineering considerations that reduce care and security requirements and retain natural conditions and experiences.

Strategy 5.3: Create effective and efficient methods of acquiring, developing, operating, and maintaining facilities and programs that accurately distribute costs and benefits to public and private interests. Consider joint efforts with public and private agencies.

Strategy 5.4: Work to reduce the amount of park area devoted to mowed turf and introduce in its place plant species that require less maintenance.

Strategy 5.5: Use data-driven evaluation of park assets to develop a maintenance and replacement schedule and plan for future budgetary needs.

Parks and Recreation

Goal 6. Utilize parks and recreation programming as part of the city's overall economic development strategy.

Strategy 6.1: Work with area agencies and groups to promote city parks, natural resources, and open spaces to attract visitors and create revenue for local businesses.

Strategy 6.2: Seek ways to expand event programming for each park in order to highlight the unique qualities of each neighborhood.

Strategy 6.3: Explore unique ideas and opportunities such as private-public partnerships and sponsorships to leverage and capitalize on the city's environmental assets in the development and operations of parks, recreation, entertainment, and open space facilities.

Strategy 6.4: Create greater recreational opportunities for city residents to participate in outdoor activities to demonstrate to visitors and prospective companies that the city's lifestyle and culture focuses on outdoor activity and environmental stewardship.

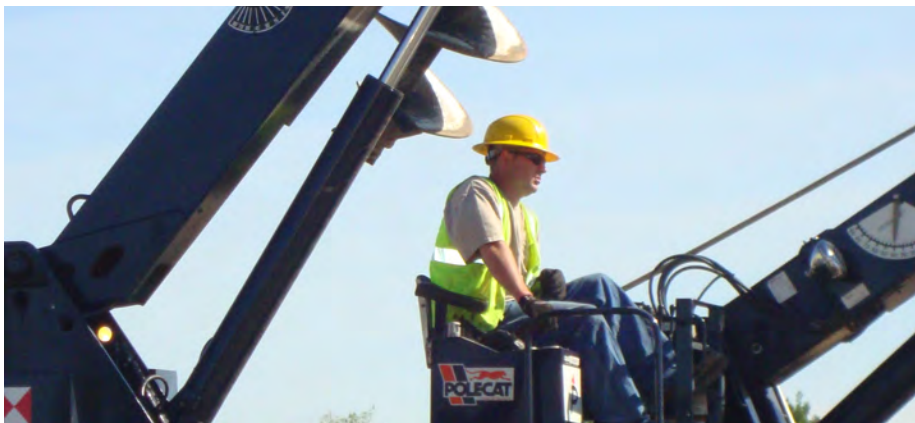
Strategy 6.5: Develop economic development materials for distribution at locations frequented by tourists as small business owners, entrepreneurs, or high-skilled workers may first be exposed to the city as tourists.



CHAPTER 9

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND UTILITIES

Community Facilities and Utilities



INTRODUCTION

The overall health, safety, and well-being of New Ulm relies on a combination of many systems working together. Some of those systems maintain a high quality of life for residents, while others foster job creation or sustain the economy. In order to plan for the future, the city must have a clear understanding of the location, use, capacity of the utilities and community facilities that serve its residents.

Utilities include sanitary sewer, water, and storm sewer systems, as well as electrical, natural gas, telecommunication systems, and solid waste disposal. Community facilities include schools, libraries, community recreation centers, swimming pools, ice arenas, and various health and public safety service facilities.

Utilities and community facilities can help guide development and encourage growth, as well as strengthen community identity. They also are necessary in sustaining the quality of life within the city and are therefore major contributors to the quality and safety of city living. The largest portion of a community's budget includes the construction, maintenance, and operation of the utility systems and community facilities including public works.

The intent of this Chapter is to provide basic information about the community-type services and facilities currently offered in New Ulm. This chapter further contains goals and strategies to guide the maintenance and development of utilities and community facilities in the City of New Ulm.

COMMUNITY UTILITIES TODAY

The City of New Ulm created and established the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to operate and manage all utilities owned by the city. Utilities provided by the PUC include electricity, water, natural gas, district energy, and wastewater treatment.

UTILITIES

Water Treatment



The [water system](#) is managed by the New Ulm Public Utilities Water Department. Water is supplied to customers through thirteen wells that are located near the Minnesota River. The present well capacity is 4.8 MGD (million gallons per day). The distribution system includes two water (4.5 MG and 3MG) towers and three ground storage reservoirs. The water treatment plant, built in 1994, has the capacity to treat 7.5million gallons of water per day. Water is treated for iron and manganese.

Sanitary Sewer System



The wastewater treatment plant is located in the city's southeastern area (3 Tower Road) and was built in 1975. During the last several decades, capital improvements have been made to ensure that the wastewater treatment plant is operating at optimal levels and continues to meet federal and state regulations. The plant is designed to handle a maximum flow of 6.7 million gallons per day of wastewater. The public utilities also has an agreement with the City of Courtland, Minnesota to provide long-term treatment of Courtland's wastewater through the treatment plant. Courtland takes approximately 3% of New Ulm's plant capacity.

Stormwater Management



The City of New Ulm is committed to maintaining compliance with the local, state, and federal stormwater requirements in an effort to improve stormwater quality of surface waters. Under state and federal rules, the City of New Ulm has been classified as a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) community. As such, the city developed and implemented a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to minimize the discharge of pollutants from its storm sewer system and protect the water quality of the receiving waters. This is in accordance with the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) and its amendments.

The City of New Ulm also adopted a Storm Water Management and Standards Ordinance to control storm water pollution and reduce soil erosion and sedimentation within the community.

Community Facilities and Utilities

Electric Service



The PUC Electric Production Department is comprised of one 6 MW and one 15 MW generator. Though the power plant was designed to burn coal and natural gas, it is now a natural gas plant due to permitting. The generators are co-generation units that extract steam from the turbine for use by the District Energy system for high and low pressure steam. There are also two back pressure generators, one for the low pressure and one for the high pressure turbine which improves the plants efficiency and is able to produce 2,000 megawatt hours of electricity annually. The cost to produce verses purchase electricity is monitored to provide customers with the most reliable service at the most economical price.

Two combustion turbines with the capacity of 51 MW, are available and are used as peaking units when prices are high or energy is not available. This caps the price of electricity at its production cost. These units are registered and called on by MISO (Midcontinent Independent System Operator) to generate when electric grid support is needed.

The Electric Distribution Department provides service through a network of 7 miles of 69 kV overhead transmission lines, 35 miles of overhead distribution lines and 86 miles of underground distribution lines. The department continues to improve the system's reliability by burying overhead lines, providing protection from wildlife, and trimming trees around power and service lines annually.

The PUC Regulations require that all new subdivisions in the city be served with underground distribution, which further increases reliability to the electric lines. Residents with overhead lines can also request that their lines be buried.

Natural Gas

New Ulm's natural gas is delivered via a high-pressure pipeline from Hutchinson, Minnesota, which is served by the Northern Border pipeline. Currently the city is using approximately 60% of its capacity on the pipeline leaving room for customer growth. The department purchases natural gas on the daily market as well as hedges natural gas purchases in the future to provide a stable low cost price.

The New Ulm Gas Department maintains 101 miles of pipeline distributed at 80 pounds per square inch gauge (psig) and 5 psig through twelve pressure reducing stations. The department also maintains a backup supply from Northern Natural Gas through a separate city gate.

District Energy

The New Ulm Public Utilities Production Department provides low pressure (9 psi) and high pressure (140 psi) super-heated steam for use by industrial and residential customers. The steam is distributed through steam mains to three high pressure processing customers and 103 district energy low pressure heating customers. The district energy footprint is approximately a 20-block radius adjacent to the power plant.

Solid Waste and Recycling



Recycling is managed by Brown County. The Brown County Landfill is located at 21933 County Road 11, Sleepy Eye, MN. Solid waste hauling is provided by a number of private companies and serve the entire community of New Ulm.

Broadband

New Ulm is a perfect location for people who work from home or are looking to relocate their business to the community.

The two broadband service providers in the community are Nuvera and Comcast. Currently Nuvera is in the process of completing its fiber infrastructure project, which will provide fiber main lines directly to customers throughout the community.

Improving broadband service is a key priority recommended by this plan, as it has important implications for the city's economic development potential, growth of employment, and its desirability as a location for residential development. Potential benefits of improved service include:

- Supporting economic development goals by providing the necessary data infrastructure to support current businesses and future development.
- Supporting remote work options for residents who could be employed remotely from New Ulm
- Supporting educational needs and student development
- Increasing convenience for residents and visitors

Community Facilities and Utilities

New Ulm City Hall



New Ulm's City Hall is located at 100 North Broadway and was opened in November 1919. It houses the City Administration, Department of Building Safety, Community Development, Engineer's Office, Finance Department, Housing Department, Human Resources, Mayor, and City Council Chambers.

New Ulm Public Works

The New Ulm Public Works Department is responsible for the city's streets, parks, trails, compost site, sewer maintenance, and snow and ice removal. The department currently consists of 18 full-time employees. The Public Works Building is located at 2020 North Broadway.

Police Department



The New Ulm Police Department currently has 23 sworn police officers and 4 civilian (non-sworn personnel). Two department members are responsible for animal control duties while some serve on the emergency tactical unit. The department also has four certified firearm instructors, field training officers, and a school resource officer. The New Ulm Police Department also has a police reserve unit. Reserve officers are volunteers who assist at special events or patrol with licensed officers. The New Ulm Police Department is located in the Brown County Law Enforcement Center (15 South Washington Street).

Fire Department



The New Ulm Fire Department (NUFD) currently includes 45 fire fighters, including a full-time Fire Chief. The Fire Department serves New Ulm and its surrounding area. The Main Station is located at 526 8th North Street. Engine Number 3, also known as the Goosetown Fire Station, is located at 18 South Valley Street.



Post Office

The New Ulm Post Office is located at 27 South German Street.

Municipal Airport



The New Ulm Municipal Airport (ULM), built in 1948, is owned by the City of New Ulm and managed by North Star Aviation, Inc. The airport offers full fixed base operator (FBO) services including maintenance and repair. The airport is located at 1617 Highway 14 West. The airport consists of a primary runway and a turf crosswind runway. The airport also includes five hangars that are available to lease. The location of a new cross-wind runway has been identified and zoning approvals obtained. The new cross-wind runway will be implemented as funding allows.

New Ulm Community Access Television (NUCAT)



New Ulm Community Access TV (NUCAT) is a public access television station operated by City of New Ulm staff. A Franchise Agreement between the City of New Ulm and local cable providers, Comcast and Nuvera, provides funding for its services. The city operates one cable channel referred to as a “PEG” Channel, meaning Public, Education, and Government. This channel is available to New Ulm cable subscribers.

Community Center



The New Ulm Community Center includes a Cafetorium that can accommodate up to 250 individuals and includes a stage, basic sound, lighting and projection systems as well as a kitchen. The Cafetorium was designed as a large space to host a wide range of events. At the Community Center there are additional multipurpose rooms that can seat up to 190 people. These include a computer and pottery room. The Community Center is located at 600 North German Street.



Community Facilities and Utilities

Recreation Center



The New Ulm Recreation Center offers a wide range of recreational activities, including a fitness center, group fitness classes, racquetball and wallyball courts, aquatic center, indoor playground, and the Vogel Fieldhouse. The Recreation Center is part of Steinhäuser Park and is located at 122 South Garden Street.



Civic Center



The New Ulm Civic Center hosts hockey, ice skating, dry-floor events, and other athletic and fitness events. The Civic Center is located at 1212 North Franklin Street.



Brown County Fairgrounds



The Brown County Fairgrounds is located at 1201 North State Street. The annual Brown County Free Fair runs for several days in August. The Fairgrounds hosts numerous events throughout the year, including auctions, Bavarian Blast, and offers private storage options for area residents.

Library



The City of New Ulm owns and operates a public library, which is a member of the larger Traverse des Sioux Regional Library System. The library is located at 17 North Broadway. The original library building was constructed in 1937 and moved into a new building in 1976. The library offers access to the New Ulm Art collection, German Heritage collection, and subscribes to numerous periodicals, databases, and electronic resources. The Library also loans games, life jackets, presentation equipment, puzzles, Wi-Fi Hotspots, and many other items through their “Library of Things”.

Brown County Historical Society



The Brown County Historical Society is located at 2 North Broadway. The Brown County Historical Society was founded on May 29, 1930, with Fred Johnson as its first president. To preserve the county’s history, the founding members of the society began collecting artifacts to stock a museum building. In 1935, New Ulm began constructing a new library building, and in 1937, the New Ulm Library and Museum opened with the library on the first floor and the museum in the basement. In 1984, the museum moved into its current location.

The Brown County Historical Society occupies a very distinctive building in New Ulm – the former New Ulm Post Office. The building was built 1909-1910 in Brick Renaissance style. The Post Office occupied the building from 1910 until 1976. The building was then acquired by Brown County, and both the county and the City of New Ulm helped renovate the structure as a museum for the Brown County Historical Society. The historical society moved into the building in 1984.

Medical/Health Care Facilities and EMS



The New Ulm Medical Center is located at 1324 5th North Street and offers a wide range of services including inpatient, outpatient, and emergency care in addition to many other specialty services. Allina Health EMS services are located at 520 North Front Street and provides emergency and non-emergency medical transportation services to the New Ulm area.

Community Facilities and Utilities



Education

New Ulm High School (Public)

9th to 12th grade
1600 Oak Street, New Ulm, MN

Cathedral High School (Private)

7th to 12th grade
600 North Washington Street, New Ulm, MN

Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School (Private)

9th to 12th grade
45638 561st Avenue, New Ulm, MN

River Bend Education District (Public)

Kindergarten to 12th grade
1315 South Broadway, New Ulm, MN

New Ulm Middle School (Public)

5th to 8th grade
414 South Payne Street, New Ulm, MN

Jefferson Elementary School (Public)

1st to 4th grade
318 South Payne Street, New Ulm, MN

St Anthony Catholic Elementary School (Private)

Preschool to 6th grade
514 North Washington Street, New Ulm, MN

St. Paul's Lutheran School (Private)

Kindergarten to 8th grade
126 South Payne Street, New Ulm, MN

New Ulm Christian School

5th to 11th grade
315 South Payne Street, New Ulm, MN

New Ulm Career Technical Education (CTE) Center (Public)

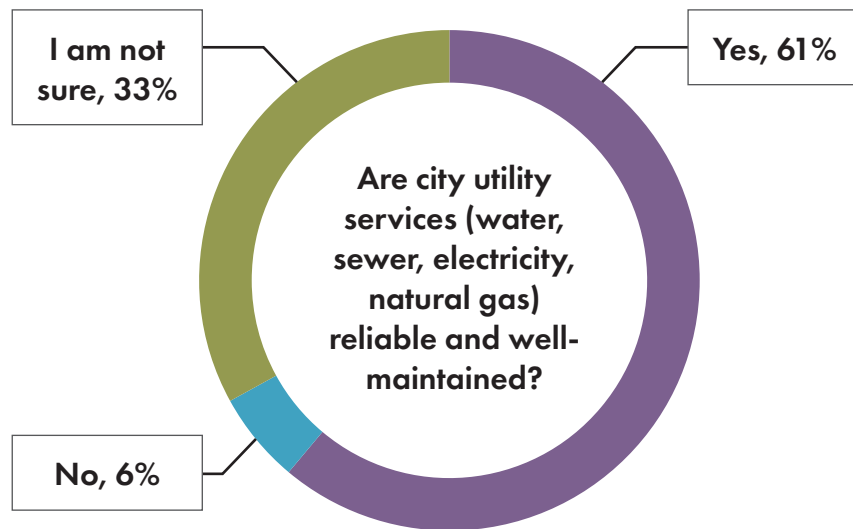
11th to 12th grade
208 North Valley Street, New Ulm, MN

Additionally, **Martin Luther College** is a religious postsecondary education institution located in New Ulm. The College is located at 1995 Luther Court.



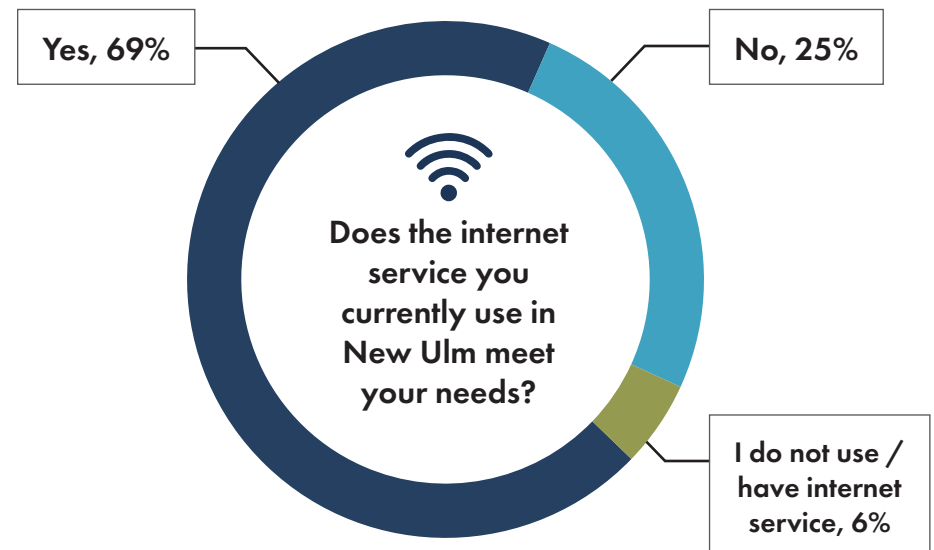
WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING - PUBLIC INPUT

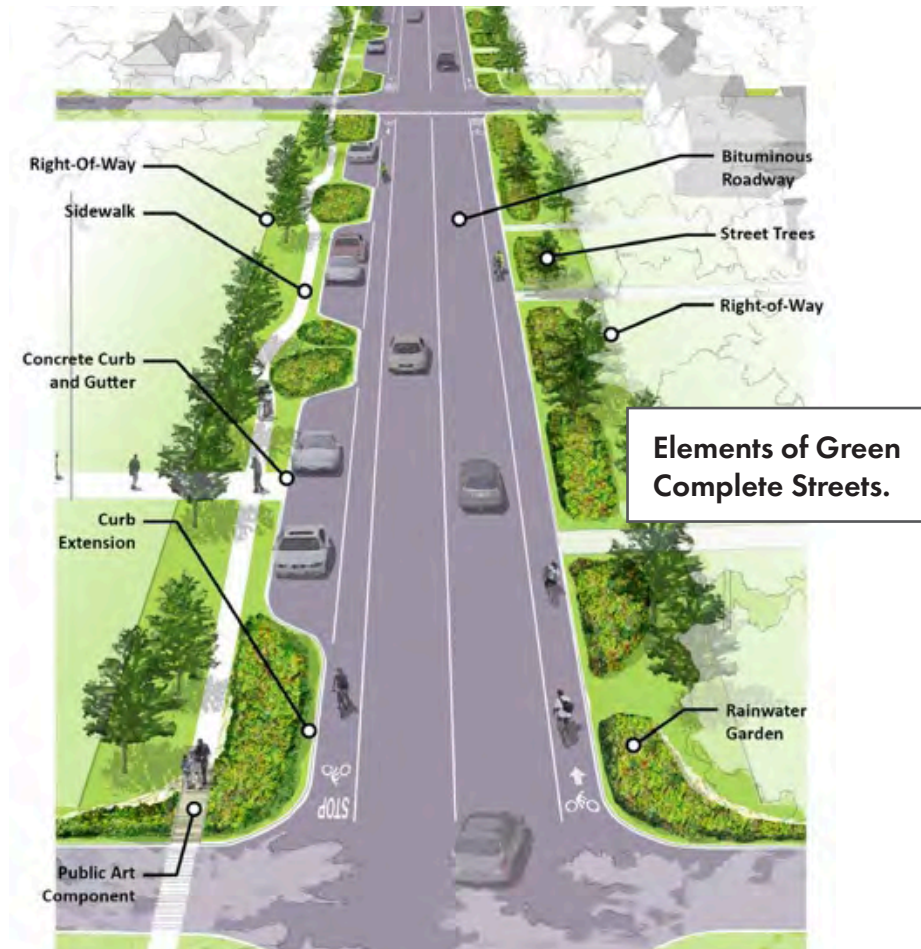
New Ulm residents are generally satisfied with the quality and availability of community infrastructure and services.



"The city needs to update sewer and water lines in town since many of them are getting too old and starting to leak."

"Continue updates to local facilities, good work being done here... keep it going."





OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunity 1: Complete Streets

The New Ulm Complete Streets approach supports New Ulm's philosophy of promoting a sound mind, sound body. The [New Ulm Complete Streets Policy](#) was adopted by the city in October, 2016. It serves as a planning and design approach to provide safe facilities for a variety of transportation modes, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and automobiles. Additionally, it is an approach for developing streets that include:

- Natural and sustainable infiltration and stormwater practices below ground
- Enhanced walking and biking facilities
- Narrower pavement widths (to reduce runoff and stormwater load)
- Calmed traffic
- Enhanced plantings and aesthetics

Continuing to implement Complete Streets approaches can be a cost-effective option when completing major reconstructions and replacing sewer infrastructure. This approach can often reduce capital and maintenance costs. In addition, the above-ground treatments can increase a community's tree canopy and greening, expand its walk/bike network, improve curb appeal for neighborhoods and commercial areas, and increase the real estate valuation of nearby properties. Further development of Complete Streets could be an attractive option for New Ulm as aging infrastructure is replaced.



PUBLIC UTILITIES - GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The following goals and strategies are based on public input and an evaluation of current utility capacity and conditions, as well as potential development.

Goal 1: Continue to provide high-quality, city-owned utilities, community services and facilities through adequate maintenance of existing systems and the addition of new facilities/services when necessary.

Strategy 1.1: Continue to retain municipal ownership of utilities.

Strategy 1.2: Collaborate with the Public Utility Commission (PUC) and Energy Awareness Commission to develop and meet goals, targets, procedures, and metrics for enhancing the sustainability of city infrastructure.

Strategy 1.3: Provide services to protect public, health, safety, and general welfare.

Strategy 1.4: Coordinate utility upgrades and expansions with economic development and multimodal transportation initiatives. Periodically meet with interest groups and governmental bodies to assure that development needs are being addressed.

Strategy 1.5: Continue to implement the city's Wellhead Protection program to ensure safe drinking water.

Strategy 1.6: Encourage creative stormwater management strategies to reduce surface runoff and implement low impact development techniques when constructing new growth areas or improving existing infrastructure.

Strategy 1.7: Continually upgrade and improve the quality and operational efforts of the PUC, its staff, equipment, systems and procedures through educational programs and effective communication with reliable and knowledgeable sources.

Strategy 1.8: Continue participating in Minnesota's GreenStep Cities program to achieve quality-of-life goals for citizens and guide in the creation of a sustainable city.

Strategy 1.9: Continually look for ways to deploy renewable and carbon free energy such as battery storage, solar, wind, purchase of renewable energy certificates (REC), and other means to meet or exceed State of Minnesota's energy mandates.

Strategy 1.10: Plan for changes to the climate including major rainfall events to protect the public, preserve resources and improve the quality of life.

Public Utilities

Goal 2: Operate the public utility system in a fiscally responsible manner to remain economically competitive.

Strategy 2.1: Prioritize infill and redevelopment of existing urbanized areas to maximize use of the utility system infrastructure. Establish written assessment deferral policies for planned development areas.

Strategy 2.2: Maintain strong relationships with the city's wholesale providers of utility services. Evaluate the cost to purchase power and investigate partnerships with other utility suppliers.

Strategy 2.3: Continue to research rates charged by other utility companies to assure competitive utility costs.

Strategy 2.4: Explore and encourage investments in renewable energy sources to diversify New Ulm's energy network and provide competitive rates.

Strategy 2.5: Utility system planning and implementation will occur in coordination with land use and transportation plans and projects to leverage and maximize their benefit.

Strategy 2.6: Plan for the expansion of public utility systems to facilitate healthy and sustainable community growth.

Goal 3: Improve upon inflow and infiltration (I&I) in the sanitary sewer system.

- Strategy 3.1: Continue improvements and upgrades to sanitary sewer mains by lining or replacement.
- Strategy 3.2: Create a policy for improvements to sanitary services to minimize I&I.
- Strategy 3.3: Promote education of the public and continue to enforce building codes to prevent illicit connections.



COMMUNITY FACILITIES - GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The following goals and strategies are based on public input and an evaluation of current and future trends.

Goal 1: Avoid environmentally sensitive areas when extending and constructing utilities and community facilities.

Strategy 1.1: Place overhead utilities underground when feasible.

Strategy 1.2: Establish proper buffer zones between overhead utilities, substations, treatment facilities, and residential and commercial uses.

Strategy 1.3: Consolidate utility boxes for more efficient service and maintenance.

Strategy 1.4: Continue to research and utilize technologically current systems and operating procedures to help protect the natural chemistry and quality of surface and ground water, as well as provide clean drinking water. Meet or exceed state and/or federal requirements for sewage effluent and comply with other pollution standards.

Goal 2. Continue to provide cost-effective and high-quality services and facilities necessary to improve and protect the quality of life of New Ulm's residents, property owners, businesses, and visitors.

Strategy 2.1: The city's Capital Improvement Plan should include funding for the renovation of community facility buildings and construction of new buildings.

Strategy 2.2: Continue to work collaboratively with private sector donors and other public partners to integrate resources for community wide benefits.

Strategy 2.3: Ensure that all facilities in the city provide adequate lot area and are useful, practical, suitable, and can accommodate governmental, educational, and community needs.

Strategy 2.4: Update and maintain facilities and operations on an ongoing basis through regular capital improvement planning and annual budgeting.

Strategy 2.5: Ensure that space is available for the expansion and extension of public services and facilities.

Strategy 2.6: Maintain high quality community facilities for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Strategy 2.7: Ensure that there is a logical and compatible relationship between service facilities/capabilities and land uses.

Goal 3. Present New Ulm's unique history through the use of decorative streetscaping, arts and culture at community facilities.

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CHAPTER 10 IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation



INTRODUCTION

Plans are judged not only by the quality of their content but by the extent to which they are implemented as intended. The Comprehensive Plan is the most significant document for guiding the development of New Ulm and achieving the community's vision through its plans, strategies and actions. The Comprehensive Plan is the foundation for city actions.

Without a specific course of action, it is difficult to achieve the goals and strategies of any plan. Previous chapters of this document provide the baseline information for understanding the community and the determined goals for the community's future. The goals explain what the community wants to accomplish, and the vision desired as an outcome. This chapter outlines the process to achieve these goals.

This Plan is a starting point for these activities. Using the Plan requires striking a balance between following the values described in the Plan and adapting to conditions that will change over the life of this Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY

The primary responsibility lies with the city itself to ensure the plan is implemented. However, the plan includes a vision beyond the scope of basic public services. To fully accomplish what the Comprehensive Plan envisions, partners are needed to work with the city on implementation. While this plan does not directly guide their actions, the intent is to show how ongoing work through a variety of partners can be coordinated together to increase overall impact and effectiveness in achieving shared goals.

The New Ulm Comprehensive Plan aims to be easily accessible to the general public in nature but still is a complex policy document that accounts for interrelationships among various systems, interests, and policy choices. As such, principal groups responsible for implementing the plan include the City Council, Planning Commission and City staff, and they should have a consistent understanding of the plan's priorities, responsibilities, and interpretations.



Plan as a Guide to Decision Making

The Plan will be used by the city in the day-to-day operations of local government. The city will reference Plan goals and strategies in making key decisions relative to public investments, plans and studies, growth, and redevelopment. Requests for land use applications and development projects will be evaluated based on consistency with the Plan.

The Plan includes a number of strategies that will require coordinated efforts by many different public, private, and non-profit entities. As an adopted policy plan, the Plan increases general public awareness and support for the vision, goals and strategies of the city.

Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan involves the conversion of the guiding goals and strategies into official municipal controls, tools, and programs. The Implementation chapter, like the Plan itself, should

be a flexible guide and should be amended as conditions change or are better understood. Change is inevitable, some of which will be entirely unanticipated in the Plan. Adapting to these changes will require flexibility.

City leadership and staff will implement the Plan on an ongoing basis through decision-making including city budgeting and provision of programs and services. One of the main ways the city implements the Plan is through its system of advisory boards and commissions. Many other organizations and agencies are an important part of the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. This is particularly true for areas that are important to the city but the city itself is not the main implementing agency. Examples of these include Brown County, the New Um School District and various community groups in New Ulm. The city will continue to coordinate with these organizations on areas of shared interest and responsibility.

Other implementation strategies include the following:

- 1. Education and Promotion** – Formal programs or informal efforts undertaken by the city through public education and engagement which involves working with the community to build awareness of an issue, provide information, and engage in finding potential solutions that help move the city towards the desired outcome described in the Comprehensive Plan.
- 2. Incentives and Incentive Regulations** – Development incentives offered by the city or in partnership with others to encourage actions by others that move the city toward its desired future.
- 3. City Ordinances and Other Regulations** – City ordinances and other standards, including administrative approval processes.
- 4. Managing Public Processes and Resources** – Public investments and management decisions for infrastructure, public services, public lands, and public processes.

Implementation



Other Implementation Tools

Official controls are key tools for implementing the Plan and must be consistent with the Plan. The form and character of the city's built environment and the pace of development is driven by private investment decisions. Therefore, local controls greatly influence the Plan's implementation. They can help ensure the form, character, connectedness, and quality of development envisioned in the Plan become reality. Local controls should advance New Ulm's desire for quality development outcomes while recognizing economic factors. At the same time, local controls should not function as disincentives to development or interfere unnecessarily with appropriate new development or redevelopment that is consistent with the Plans' planned outcomes.



Zoning Ordinance

Zoning is the primary regulatory tool used to implement planning policies. It is also fundamental to Plan administration. It consists of the Official Zoning Map and the supporting ordinance text. The purpose of a Zoning Ordinance is to promote the public health, safety, comfort, and general welfare of the people of New Ulm. To that end, the Ordinance regulates a variety of interrelated components including the location, size, use, and height of buildings, the arrangement of buildings on lots, the areas of yards and the density of population, and it creates an administrative structure for planning and zoning for the city. The city's zoning districts effectively guide development in New Ulm.

Any zoning proposal, whether on a large area basis or an individual property, must be determined to be consistent with the goals and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan. Where a conflict exists between the plan and existing zoning, the plan directives generally should prevail. In cases where the Comprehensive Plan is not followed, the findings of fact for the zoning proposed should explain the reasons for not following the Comprehensive Plan. Approval of the zoning proposal should also require the amendment of the Plan to reflect the change.

The Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map are subject to periodic review to ensure consistency with new goals and strategies adopted by the city. The city should review these documents for inconsistencies with the adopted Comprehensive Plan and create a schedule for amending the zoning documents due to these differences. Another option would be to amend the Comprehensive Plan. An important first step is to compare the current zoning map with the adopted Land Use Map and determine the need for any changes. There may be valid reasons why the two documents are not identical, but these reasons should be clear.

The current Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map were adopted on April 4, 2022. The preparation of the new ordinance took an exceedingly long time and involved substantial community participation.

The start date for the Comprehensive Plan study was approximately May 16, 2022. The adoption date for the city's current Zoning Ordinance and the start date for the new Comprehensive Plan have taken place in close proximity to each other. Due to this fact, it is the city's intent that the contents, findings, conclusions, and recommendations associated with these two documents will be considered to be consistent and interrelated and produce one coordinated planning approach for the city. As a result, at this time, it is the determination and finding of the Planning Commission and the City Council that no further amendments or modifications will be required to accommodate the contents of the Comprehensive Plan in the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map.



DID YOU KNOW?

Land use influences how land is used based on its characteristics, such as residential, commercial, or industrial.

Zoning defines how an area can be used and developed. Zoning is regulated through city ordinances. Based on Minnesota state statute, zoning must be consistent with a city's adopted comprehensive plan.



Subdivision Ordinance

The Subdivision Ordinance regulates and governs the subdivision or platting of property in New Ulm. It provides for the orderly, economic, and safe development of land and it facilitates adequate provisions for transportation, water, sewer, storm drainage, public utilities, streets, parks, and other public services and facilities essential to any community. It is the second most widely used land use control mechanism. The purpose of the ordinance is to:

- Safeguard the best interest of the city, the homeowner, the developer, and future owners;
- Encourage well planned subdivisions by the establishment of design and construction criteria;
- Improve land records by establishing standards for survey and plats;
- Protect environmentally sensitive areas of the city.

In addition to setting forth a review process, the Subdivision Ordinance contains engineering and design standards for development purposes. It establishes public land dedication standards for the development of parkland and park amenities. It also encourages the establishment of public improvement design standards to assist with the Plans implementation.



Orderly Annexation Agreements

The City of New Ulm has orderly annexation agreements with the surrounding townships of Milford and Cottonwood. These agreements were adopted in 2005 and 2006. The City of New Ulm and townships agree that city governments most efficiently provide government services in areas developed for residential, commercial, industrial and government purposes. The agreements state that orderly urban development using city services in a responsible, controlled and environmentally sound manner is in the best interest of the entire community. The agreements will terminate January 1, 2025.

The city and townships also agree that the orderly annexation and the development of areas designated in agreements is one way to promote the public health, safety, and welfare by providing for logical community development and extension of city services as urban development occurs. It is policy that utilities will not be extended by either the city or the New Ulm Public Utilities Commission to any property located within the orderly annexation areas in either Milford or Cottonwood Township. Facilitating the expansion of the community is an essential element of achieving the vision of the Comprehensive Plan. New Ulm seeks to grow in an orderly and well-planned manner. The community growth set forth in the Comprehensive Plan may require the expansion of the corporate limits of the city.

The city should work with township officials to extend the term of the current Orderly Annexation Agreements. Within the time frame of the new Comprehensive Plan, it is very likely that the city will expand into the areas identified in the orderly annexation agreements.



Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

The City of New Ulm extended their subdivision regulations into portions of Milford and Cottonwood Township through the adoption of Resolution No. 03-45 on June 17, 2003. The city had previously determined the reasonable future limits of its electrical service territory and that within those limits there was a reasonable opportunity for the growth and expansion of the City of New Ulm. All properties within the designated area were within two miles of the city's corporate limits. The area impacted by the city's extension of their subdivision regulations matches the city's electric service territory.

Minnesota Statutes allows a city by ordinance to extend the application of its subdivision regulations into unincorporated territory located within two miles of its corporate limits. This statute allows cities to enforce such regulations in these areas as if such property was situated within the municipal boundaries. The purpose of the extension was to allow the City of New Ulm to conduct and implement municipal planning in these areas.



Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is a flexible document based upon long-range physical planning and financial projections, which schedule the major public improvements that the city may initiate over the next five years. The CIP program includes transportation, water and sewer systems, park and trail systems, and public buildings. The Comprehensive Plan serves as the foundation for ongoing capital improvements planning by the city.

The flexibility of the CIP is established through annual review and approval. This allows the city to prioritize projects and to make best use of available revenues, and revision if necessary. The annual review assures that the program will become a continuing part of the budgetary process. The review also assures that it will be consistent with changing demands and patterns in cost and financial resources. The CIP should align with the goals of the plan's land use strategies and infrastructure recommendations. The approval process for the CIP should include a review by the City Council to ensure consistency of the projects with other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

Funds are appropriated only for the first year of the program, which is then included in the annual budget. By looking at future needs, the city is better able to find funding sources to fill gaps and to coordinate projects with other entities. The city reserves the right to update the CIP without triggering a need to update this Plan.

The CIP serves as a tool for implementing certain aspects of the city's Comprehensive Plan. As a result, the CIP describes the overall objectives of city development, the relationship between projects concerning timing and need, and the city's fiscal capabilities.

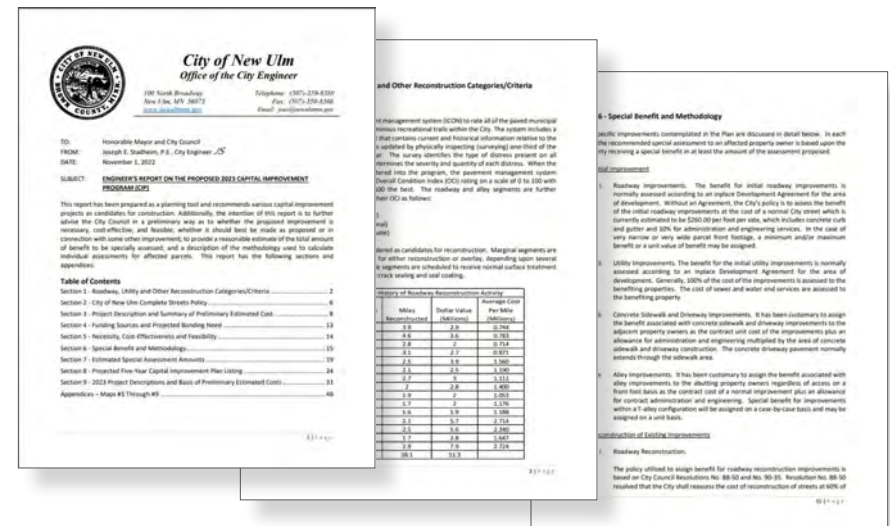
A CIP should be prepared to communicate the following:

- Ensure that community priorities are reflected.
- Provide a consolidated financial picture of anticipated expenditures

and outline recommended funding strategies to underwrite capital investments.

- Document and communicate capital improvement processes for city improvement projects to promote consistency and public understanding of the public improvement process.
- Effectively plan for public improvements that support community needs in the areas of housing, transportation, recreation, public safety, and public utilities with corresponding growth in the city's tax base.

The City of New Ulm has not formally adopted a CIP. An informal CIP is in place with the review of capital projects as a part of the annual budget process. City Departments may have their own CIP with varying levels of detail. The city's last effort to review future needs was a "Long Term Plan" prepared by AEM Financial solutions, LLC in November 2018. No further action was taken at that time. The New Ulm Public Utilities Commission has a CIP.



Implementation



Additional Targeted Planning

The city will use master plans, environmental reviews, area and subject plans, and other technical studies as tools to implement the plan. These tools are typically small plans that either focus on one system, such as parks or utilities, or a specific area, such as the downtown or a neighborhood. They are meant to use the goals in this Comprehensive Plan as a starting point for more detailed work. The tools may include detailed studies, inventory and analysis, and other sections to better inform the final plan and action items.

The city will continue to use new studies to provide the information needed to implement the Plan and to evaluate projects that may lead to comprehensive plan amendments. Such studies in and of themselves will not require amendments to the Plan. As such, parts of the Plan will be implemented with additional planning or special studies to clarify next steps and associated costs and considerations.



Future Interpretation

In the event that a major item of the plan is not clear, the Planning Commission will provide a written interpretation of the item. The Planning Commission can also call upon outside experts for their advice.



Partners

The success of New Ulm relies on everyone who lives and works in the community. More can be done, however, when people join together. The city should explore new and innovative partnerships to achieve more with less. Another critical plan implementation part is New Ulm's cooperation with the townships, special interest groups, and the County. Planning issues often have regional implications that affect several jurisdictions. To carry out not only the city Comprehensive Plan, but also to aid other jurisdictions to accomplish their goals and policies, coordination agreements and cooperative decisions must be made.

In adopting agreements and recognizing regional and other jurisdiction's plans, the city is committed to the vital coordination that is necessary to accomplish effective planning for the area.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

The city should continue to encourage citizen participation at all levels of the planning and development process and explore better opportunities to engage and communicate with the public. Engaging the community in matters of public policy is critical to the success of public projects. Engagement builds pride and ownership in the community and can reveal new and innovative ideas, projects, and programs.

The city should maintain appointed citizen commissions and boards with a suitable number of community representatives, and facilitate attendance and community participation at public meetings. The city should further continue to provide information through its website (<https://www.newulmmn.gov/>) as well as cable television, brochures, social media, and the distribution of press releases to area newspapers. The city should continue to stay abreast of new mediums and ways to reach its residents and businesses.

UPDATING THE PLAN

This plan is envisioned to guide the evolution of the city over the next twenty years. It is intended to apply to a wide range of circumstances, providing a balance between structure and flexibility. The need to amend the Plan should be primarily for major events, rather than routine actions. However, from time-to-time amendments to the plan will be needed to address changing conditions, emerging opportunities, and other factors. Plan amendments may also be required in response to a specific proposal or project.

The Comprehensive Plan should be reevaluated every two years to ensure that implementation of its recommendations are proceeding as planned, and to review opportunities for making updates or improvements to its recommendations. Major updates will typically be made every ten years. The Community Development Department should maintain responsibility for these processes and determine the appropriate level of response to requests for potential changes. When considering amendments to this plan, the city will follow procedures described in the zoning ordinance. Depending on the circumstances, landowners, developers, organizations, individuals, city staff, the City Council and Planning Commission may initiate amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

Implementation Acronyms

The following are acronyms used in the implementation matrix:

- PC: Planning Commission
- CD: Community Development Department
- CS: City Staff
- ADM: Administration
- EDA: Economic Development Authority
- DP: Development Partners
- ENG: City Engineer
- PW: Public Works
- SC: Safety Commission
- HPC: Heritage Preservation Commission
- PRS: Park and Recreation Staff
- PRC: Park and Recreation Commission
- DNR: Department of Natural Resources
- PUCS: Public Utilities Commission Staff

Implementation

Table 10.1. Implementation Tasks

CITY OF NEW ULM			
Plan Element	Action Item	Priority	Champion or “Primary Responsible Party”
Chapter 4: Land Use	Update Zoning Ordinance to support the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use goals and strategies.	Midterm	Planning Commission (PC) and Community Development Department (CDD)
	Prepare new Subdivision Regulations.	Near Term	PC and CDD
	Prepare a Capital Improvement Program for the next five years.	Ongoing	PC and City Staff (CS)
	Work with Cottonwood and Milford Townships to renew orderly annexation agreements within growth/focus areas.	Near Term	Administration (ADM) and CDD
	Review and update Comprehensive Plan every five years.	Midterm	PC and CDD
Chapter 5: Housing	Encourage the development of market-rate, low to medium density housing, that meets the needs of current and new residents.	Ongoing	Economic Development Authority (EDA), Development Partners (DP), and CDD
	Investigate opportunities to work with private businesses on the development of additional housing within the New Ulm area.	Near Term	EDA, ADM, DP, and CDD
	Maintain a residential rehabilitation grant and loan program to preserve and enhance the city's existing housing stock.	Ongoing	EDA, DP
	Investigate the establishment of a housing trust fund.	Midterm	ADM, EDA, and DP
	Review and update the Housing Study every five years.	Midterm	EDA
Chapter 6: Transportation	Develop and implement a community image strategy for the city that improves the physical appearance of major street and highway rights-of-way as well as new or redeveloped areas.	Ongoing	City Engineer (ENG) and CDD
	Continue to improve safety for all travelers at intersections with unsafe conditions or ones with an accident history.	Ongoing	ENG, Public Works (PW), and Safety Commission (SC)
	Continue to seek funding and encourage initiatives to support the City of New Ulm Safe Routes to School Plan.	Ongoing	ENG, PW, and SC

- Ongoing = In progress
- Near term = 1 to 3 years,
- Midterm = 4 to 5 years

CITY OF NEW ULM			
Plan Element	Action Item	Priority	Champion or “Primary Responsible Party”
Transportation (continued)	Prepare the City and its citizens for emerging transportation trends that may impact how people travel in the future.	Midterm	ENG and ADM
	Evaluate decreased speed limits in residential areas to 20 mph in accordance with Minnesota laws.	Midterm	ENG and ADM
Chapter 7: Economic Development	Develop a coordinated and focused Marketing Plan for economic development and business recruitment and implement the plan upon its completion.	Near Term	EDA, ADM, CDD, and DP
	Identify and recruit businesses and entrepreneurs for the downtown and other appropriate areas that would provide a mix of local services and retail goods adequate to meet regional demand and provide a suitable quality of life environment for area residents.	Ongoing	EDA and ADM
	Maintain the community's historic buildings and encourage the rehabilitation of these structures with grants, loans or other financial incentives.	Near Term	CS and Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC)
	Work with Partners to develop a business incubator to provide affordable spaces for start-up businesses.	Near Term	EDA, ADM, and DP
	Maintain an active business retention program and provide the assistance necessary to facilitate a positive local business climate.	Ongoing	EDA
	Conduct a study of the New Ulm areas' strengths, weaknesses, challenges and threats in the operation of its tourism industry.	Midterm	CDD, Chamber of Commerce, and ADM

- Ongoing = In progress
- Near term = 1 to 3 years,
- Midterm = 4 to 5 years

Implementation

CITY OF NEW ULM			
Plan Element	Action Item	Priority	Champion or “Primary Responsible Party”
Chapter 8: Parks and Recreation	Prepare a Master Park Plan as a long-term planning document.	Near Term	Park and Recreation Staff (PRS), Park and Recreation Commission (PRC), and CDD
	From the Master Park Plan, prepare and regularly update a five-year Park Improvement Plan.	Ongoing	PRS, PRC, and CDD
	Work with Partners to evaluate potential opportunities to expand and provide recreational activities along the Minnesota and Cottonwood Rivers.	Ongoing	Department of Natural Resources (DNR), PRS, and CDD
	Review the recommendations found on the trail map and prepare an evaluation of each trail segment, followed by the development of a priority list of projects to be completed in the next 10 years.	Near Term	PRS, ENG, and CDD
Chapter 9: Community Facilities and Utilities	Collaborate with the PUC, Energy Awareness Commission, and other Partners to enhance the sustainability of the city's infrastructure.	Ongoing	ENG and Public Utilities Commission Staff (PUCS)
	The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) should continue to retain municipal ownership of its current utility system.	Ongoing	PUC and PUCS
	Continue coordinating utility upgrades with street expansion and reconstructions.	Ongoing	ENG and PUCS
	Require the annexation of property into the city prior to the extension of utility service by the city or PUC.	Near Term	PUC, ENG, CDD, and ADM

- * Ongoing = In progress
- Near term = 1 to 3 years,
- Midterm = 4 to 5 years



Angel of the Waters