



2045 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

HERMANTOWN, MINNESOTA

April 2025

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	III	05 ECONOMIC & HOUSING DEVELOPMENT.....	55
01 PLAN PURPOSE & VISION.....	5	PURPOSE.....	55
PLAN PURPOSE.....	5	EXISTING ECONOMIC CONTEXT.....	56
PLAN VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES.....	6	EXISTING HOUSING CONTEXT.....	60
WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?.....	7	FUTURE GROWTH.....	64
PLANNING PROCESS.....	9	GOALS AND STRATEGIES.....	66
PAST PLANNING EFFORTS.....	13	06 TRANSPORTATION & UTILITIES.....	69
02 BACKGROUND & TRENDS.....	15	PURPOSE.....	69
COMMUNITY CONTEXT.....	15	EXISTING CONTEXT.....	70
HIGH LEVEL TRENDS.....	20	FUTURE INFRASTRUCTURE.....	77
03 NATURAL RESOURCES & RECREATION.....	23	ADAPTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE.....	83
PURPOSE.....	23	GOALS AND STRATEGIES.....	85
NATURAL RESOURCES.....	24	07 IMPLEMENTATION.....	87
COMMUNITY RECREATION.....	27	PURPOSE.....	87
SUSTAINABILITY.....	33	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS.....	88
GOALS AND STRATEGIES.....	36	IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS.....	91
04 LAND USE.....	37		
PURPOSE.....	37		
EXISTING LAND USES AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS.....	38		
PROJECTED COMMUNITY GROWTH AND LAND NEEDS.....	42		
FUTURE LAND USES.....	48		
GOALS AND STRATEGIES.....	52		

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HERMANTOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

- Joseph Peterson
- Jonathan Thornton
- J.P. Brooks
- Beth Wentzlaff
- Karen Pionk
- Micki Wojtysiak
- Bart Porter
- Sam Clark
- Lynne Williams
- Sandi Peterson

CITY COUNCIL

- Wayne Boucher, Mayor
- John Geissler
- Andy Hjelle
- Joe Peterson
- Brian LeBlanc

HERMANTOWN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (HEDA)

- Wayne Boucher, Mayor
- John Geissler, Council
- Andy Hjelle, Council
- Joe Peterson, Council
- Brian LeBlanc, Council
- Karen Pionk, At-Large
- Rob Unzen, At-Large

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

- Corey Kolquist
- Beth Wentzlaff
- Kevin Hagen
- John Stauber
- Matt Fournier
- Amanda Radzak
- Ryan Johnson
- Joe Peterson, Council Liaison

UTILITY COMMISSION

- Jim Samberg
- William Berg
- Rob McLachlan
- Doug Kerfeld
- Andy Hjelle, Council Liaison

PARK BOARD

- Michael Miller
- Dwight Morrison
- Gene Shaw
- Jim Sonnenson
- Kelly Tasky
- Dwight Wikstrom
- James Nelson
- John Giessler, Council Liaison

HERMANTOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STAFF TEAM

- Eric Johnson, Community Development Director
- John Mulder, City Administrator
- Joe Wicklund, Assistant City Administrator
- Trish Crego, Utility & Infrastructure Director
- David Bolf, City Engineer

CONSULTANT TEAM





01. PLAN PURPOSE & VISION

PLAN PURPOSE

The City of Hermantown has had two comprehensive plans since its incorporation as a city in 1975. The first comprehensive plan was completed in 1976, followed by an updated version in 2001. Now more than 20 years old, the current comprehensive plan has become outdated. The current comprehensive plan needs to be updated to address the community's continuing population growth, which exceeded 10,000 residents for the first time in 2020. In addition, the plan lacks some essential elements for dealing with current issues related to community growth, including land use, transportation, housing, and recreation.

As Hermantown continues to grow into the future, the City recognizes the need to proactively plan for new growth areas and new types of development. New residential growth increasingly involves people's interest in a broader range of housing types (e.g. smaller single-family lots, twinhomes, townhouses, apartments). From an economic development perspective, the City sees opportunities to also proactively plan for sufficient and attractive land to be available for increasing jobs in the community, diversifying the City's economic sectors, and ensuring long-term economic stability in sync with residential growth.

Hermantown's 2045 Comprehensive Plan looks out 20 years into the future to provide a long-term and high-level guiding plan for future change, new development, and public infrastructure in the community. The 2045 Comprehensive Plan's most essential purpose is to establish the community's long-term vision, guiding principles, goals, strategies, and maps to shape and manage future changes in the community.



Students cheering at a Hermantown homecoming parade



PLAN VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Using statements and preferences expressed during the community engagement phase of work, and with the input of the Steering Committee and the City Council, the following vision for Hermantown was created:

VISION STATEMENT

Hermantown strives to be the Northland's favorite hometown for people of all ages because the city offers a vibrant and prosperous community with access to diverse housing options, regional and local businesses, natural open spaces, and recreational opportunities.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles support the vision and are intended to be used for future decision-making and to help further define the values and priorities of Hermantown.



Preserve the community's natural resources and small town character by efficiently clustering new commercial and residential land development around key roadways and business areas.



Accommodate a diverse land use mix of neighborhoods, businesses, and recreational activities in order to welcome people of all ages, abilities, and cultures.



Provide a broad range of housing options to meet the needs, desires, and budgets of all household types.



Leverage the development potential of commercial corridors to attract a mix of businesses.



Fill in the network of roads and trails to improve all residents' connections to community destinations.



Support walking and biking as safe and attractive ways for getting around the community.

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan is a visionary document that:

- Guides the physical, social, and economic development of the community and its environs
- Sets forth the concepts, goals, and strategies that are intended to shape Hermantown's future with respect to land use, natural resource and recreation areas, housing, economic development, transportation, and utilities
- Serves as the basis for the City's planning decisions around policies, regulations, capital investments, and initiatives to be considered and implemented
- Provides the legal basis for establishing zoning and subdivision ordinances which regulate day-to-day actions and land development

WHY DO WE PLAN?

The primary purpose of the comprehensive plan is to document the agreed upon vision for the community and to guide future change, new development, and public infrastructure in the community. Comprehensive planning can also help:

- Involve residents, businesses, and others in determining the community's future
- Highlight issues and trends that may impact future decision making
- Support economic and housing development activities
- Identify and protect important natural resources and other valued community features
- Provide coordination with other public and private agencies

PLAN OVERVIEW

The 2045 Comprehensive Plan is organized in a way that builds on the community's existing conditions and trends to address planning topics within four areas.

- **Natural Resources & Recreation**
- **Land Use**
- **Economic & Housing Development**
- **Transportation & Utilities**

The Plan concludes with a series of recommended action steps to implement the goals and strategies included in the document.



A PLAN FOR THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY

The 2045 Comprehensive Plan is a city-wide plan encompassing Hermantown's approximately 34 square miles of land. The adjacent City Base Map highlights the city's current municipal boundaries, waterways, roadways, public institutions, parks, and existing lot patterns (both developed and undeveloped) throughout the community.

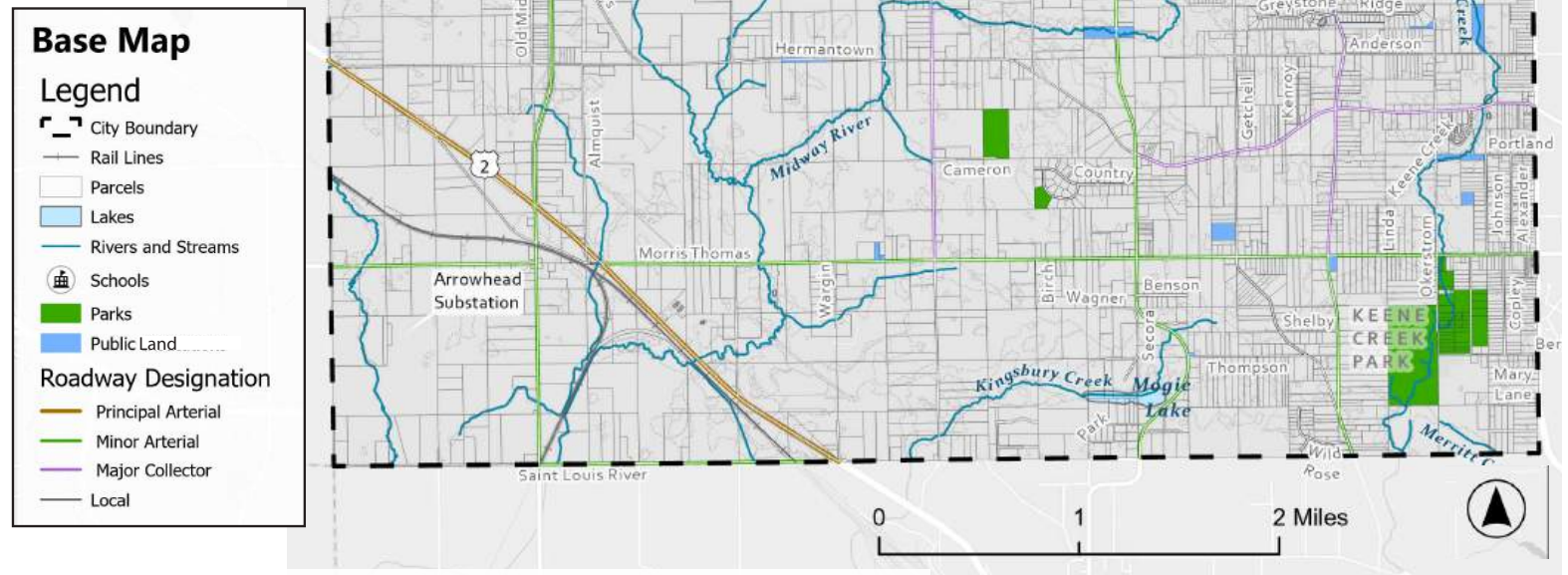


Figure 1.1 Key Features of the Hermantown Community

PLANNING PROCESS

The comprehensive plan was created through a process that involved City staff, planning and community engagement consultants, a project steering committee, the Hermantown Economic Development Authority, the Planning Commission, the City Council, and the broader public.

Following direction from the City Council, a project steering committee was formed in late 2022 to provide input into the comprehensive planning process. City staff and project consultants facilitated five meetings with the steering committee. Throughout 2023, HKGi (comprehensive planning consultant) and Civic Brand (visioning and community engagement consultant) attended pop-up events and coordinated other engagement opportunities in order to solicit feedback about Hermantown today and what people would like to see in the future. These efforts included an online survey, interactive mapping, and stakeholder interviews. In the end, a Vision and Guiding Principles were established to help guide updating of the comprehensive plan and, ultimately, future decision-making using the plan.

The content for each of the comprehensive plan's chapters was developed in 2024 and early 2025. These chapters summarize where Hermantown is today, what forces are influencing its future, and goals and strategies for moving forward. A full draft of the 2045 Comprehensive Plan was shared with the Steering Committee and the public in 2025 before being reviewed and adopted by the Planning Commission and City Council in April 2025.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS

Civic Brand visited Hermantown for a series of focus groups, interviews and pop-up engagement events including:

- Booth at Free Root Beer Float event at the Chamber of Commerce
- Booth at Business After Hours networking event at the Chamber of Commerce
- Focus group with Chamber members
- Booth at Free Family Bowling at Skyline Social & Games
- Booth at YMCA Community Block Party
- Pop-up banner that was moved around the community and promoted the survey
- Card giveaways around town promoting the survey

FOCUS GROUP WITH CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Through a Flower Exercise with City Council Members, shared values across demographics emerged. Values such as Safety, Schools, Quality of Life, Open Space, Strong Community, and Pro-Business were revealed to be common interests across a diverse range of Hermantown residents. Although shared, the community recognizes that these principles can mean different things to different people. For example, quality of life for someone may be being able to walk to a good coffee shop near their apartment and ride their bike to work whereas for another person it may be the ability to work remotely and live on a large residential lot. This diversity is welcomed and embraced in Hermantown.

VISION SURVEY

As part of the visioning process a brief survey was conducted. The responses are

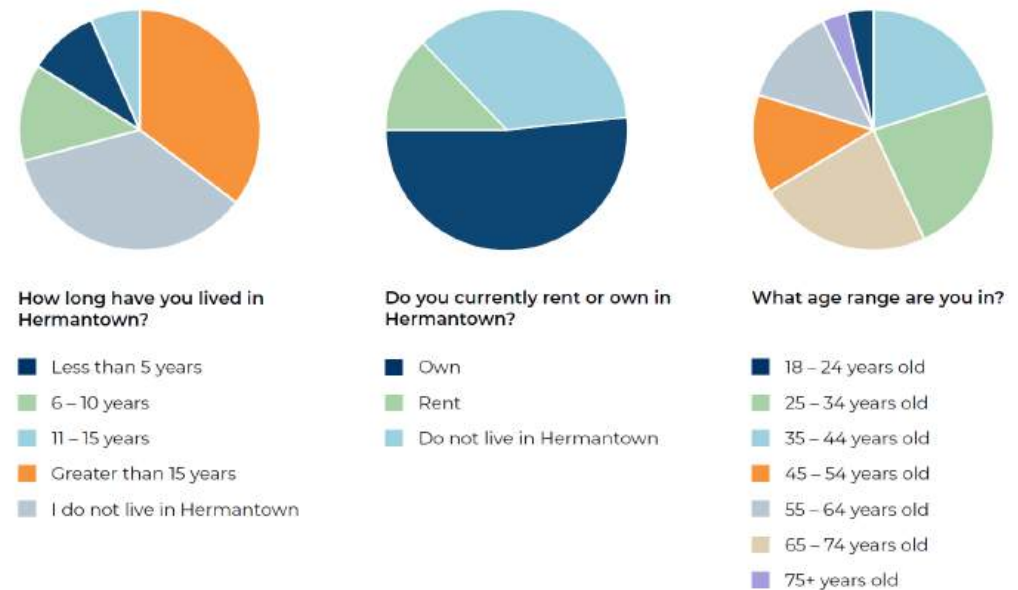


Figure 1.2 Vision Survey Results

Hermantown should....

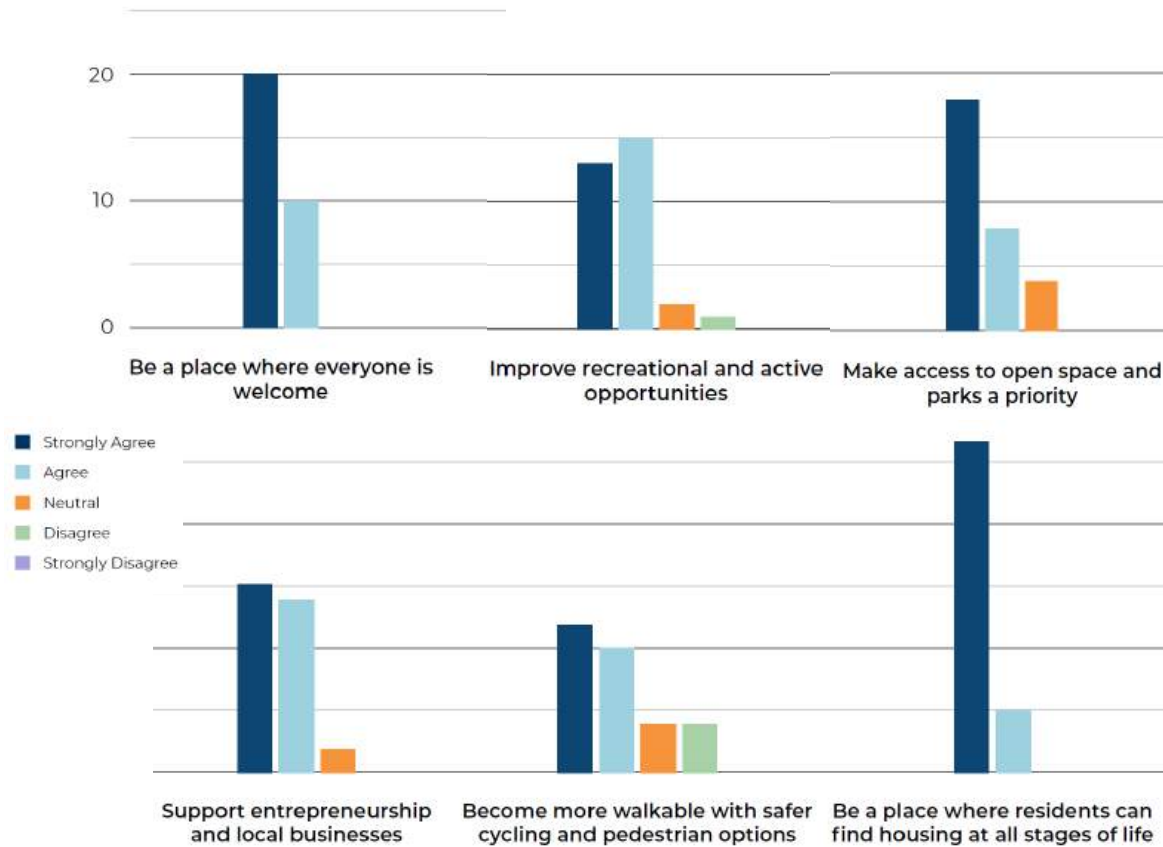


Figure 1.3 Vision Survey Results

displayed below.

As our community changes and grows, what key words or phrases do you think should be part of Hermantown's long-range vision statement and guiding principles?

- I like the "Hometown" feel; small community that cares
- Home, simple, quiet, small business friendly, great outdoors, great athletics
- Togetherness, community, safety, clean, welcoming

As our community changes and grows, what additional housing types do you think are needed or desirable in Hermantown?

- Patio homes for mid income with space for yards
- Mix of single family, duplexes, and affordable apartments/tiny home villages. I'm also a big fan of mixed-use buildings (housing upper floors, businesses/offices on lower)
- Increase availability in one level homes desirable to seniors

COMMUNITY SURVEY

The Community Survey is completed annually by the City of Hermantown. The standard community survey questions were paired with questions related to the engagement efforts for the Comprehensive Plan update. There were 27 survey responses, the questions with the most comments related to the comprehensive plan were as follow:

Top Community Assets

- Schools
- Rural/small town
- Safety
- Parks and recreation
- Neighbors

Top Issues

- High taxes
- Roads
- Lots of development
- Lack of services (post office, internet, sidewalks etc)
- Traffic

Top Opportunities

- Additional businesses
- Lower taxes
- Improving/adding to parks and recreation including sidewalks and trails
- Affordable housing
- Adding/expanding services (internet, fire dept., sewer, library etc)

Housing Needed in Hermantown

- Single family homes
- Single family homes that are more affordable
- Affordable apartments

- Patio homes
- Retirement homes/ senior living
- Prebuilt neighborhoods
- Tiny home villages
- Mixed use buildings

INTERACTIVE MAP

Social Pinpoint is an interactive map that allows users to provide location-based comments throughout the City that help to identify issues and opportunities

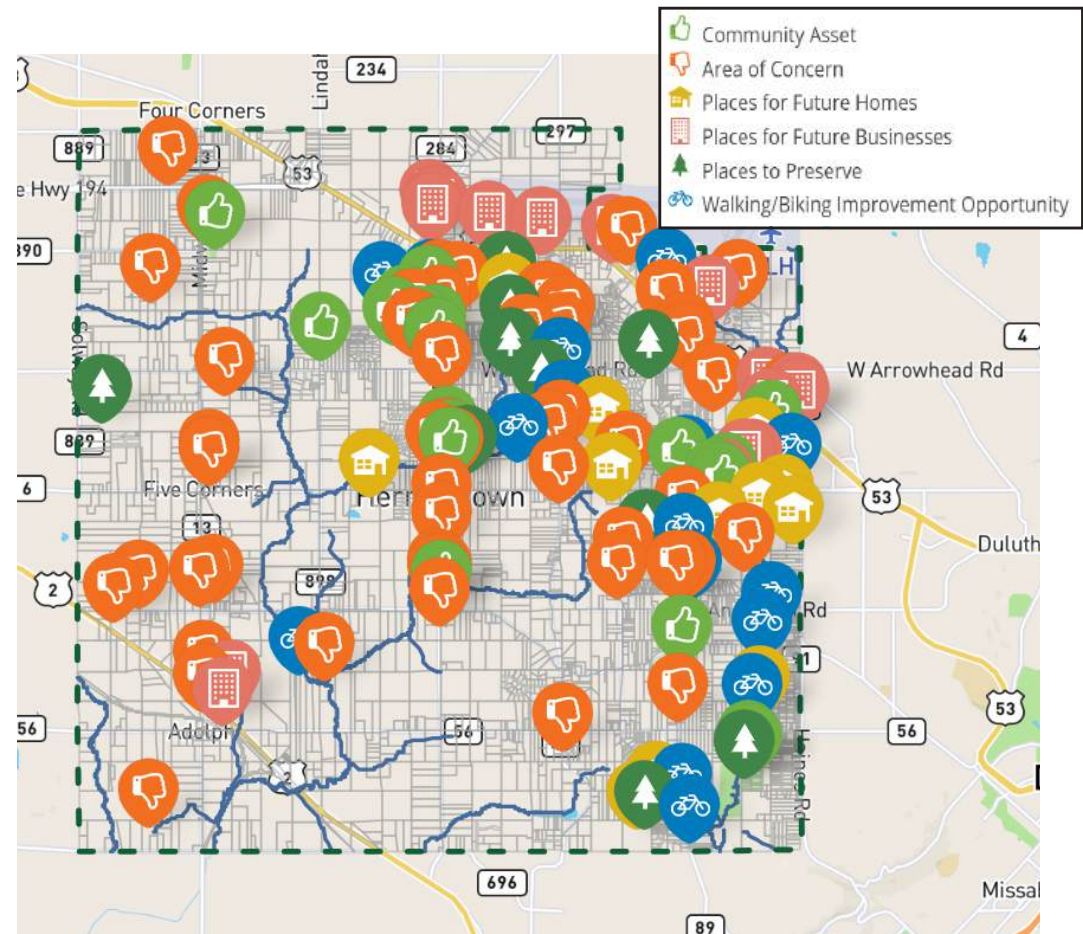


Figure 1.4 Social Pinpoint Response Map

within the community. As of January 2025 there were 131 map comments from 67 unique users on the Social Pinpoint page.

The top 5 Comments on the map were:

- The Hermantown Arena is a great asset to the community. The outdoor rinks continue to be very well used and it is great to see all the people of all ages recreating there. (127 Up votes / 11 Down votes)
- This looks like a perfect spot to develop! It's part of a nice, little neighborhood and some additional housing would be a great fit here. Thoughts on a neighborhood park? (76 Up votes / 18 Down votes, just north of Arrowhead Rd and west of Grouse Ridge Drive)
- Hermantown schools are great (68 Up votes / 3 Down votes)
- Bike lane or sidewalk (63 Up votes / 14 Down votes, along Lavaque Rd north of Arrowhead Rd)
- MUST continue this street out to Lavaque Road [Grouse Ridge Dr]! One entrance/exit to this large neighborhood is unsafe and shouldn't have been allowed from the start. Please complete this road to help make this neighborhood safer and provide balanced access from multiple points to lessen the traffic on Grouse Ridge Drive. (61 Up votes / 24 Down votes)

Common themes:

- Traffic backups
- Dangerous roadway conditions (not following rules of the road or road conditions and pot hole issues)
- Calls for a need for sidewalks and trails
- Importance of preservation of Jackson Homes, forests, creeks, and wetlands
- Interest in single family home developments
- Interest in new businesses
- Interest in additional features at parks

SUMMARY

Community input showed strong support for more housing options when the benefits are presented as providing opportunities for people to find good housing options at all stages of life, creating a place where everyone is welcome, and increasing opportunities for local businesses to be successful.

As questions veer toward allowing increased development density and creating more of a defined downtown in Hermantown, many people expressed support for a small and quaint downtown. However, this support is qualified by many people who view the close proximity to Duluth's downtown as satisfying their need for downtown amenities, identify some of the negative aspects of density, or express the feeling it would just not be possible to create a downtown since one does not exist in Hermantown today.

Based on the community input gathered it appears that people would be more inclined to support higher residential density on key corridors and in commercial areas that could support housing and commercial in a mixed-use environment. Creating areas with housing and commercial in closer proximity is supported as long as it doesn't negatively impact existing suburban-style neighborhoods with homes on larger lots with yards.

This approach would satisfy the community's need for adding housing options that are smaller, more affordable, and support walkable access to businesses and other destinations without impacting the existing suburban neighborhoods and at the same time bring additional vibrancy and opportunity that would be welcomed by the community.



PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

There are a number of past planning efforts that have laid the groundwork for the 2045 Comprehensive Plan. These plans were reviewed and helped to inform updating and creating the new comprehensive plan. This effort ensures that the 2045 Comprehensive Plan builds upon previous goals and directions set forth by the community in order to achieve a consistent future vision for Hermantown. Some of the key planning efforts are noted below:

HERMANTOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2001)

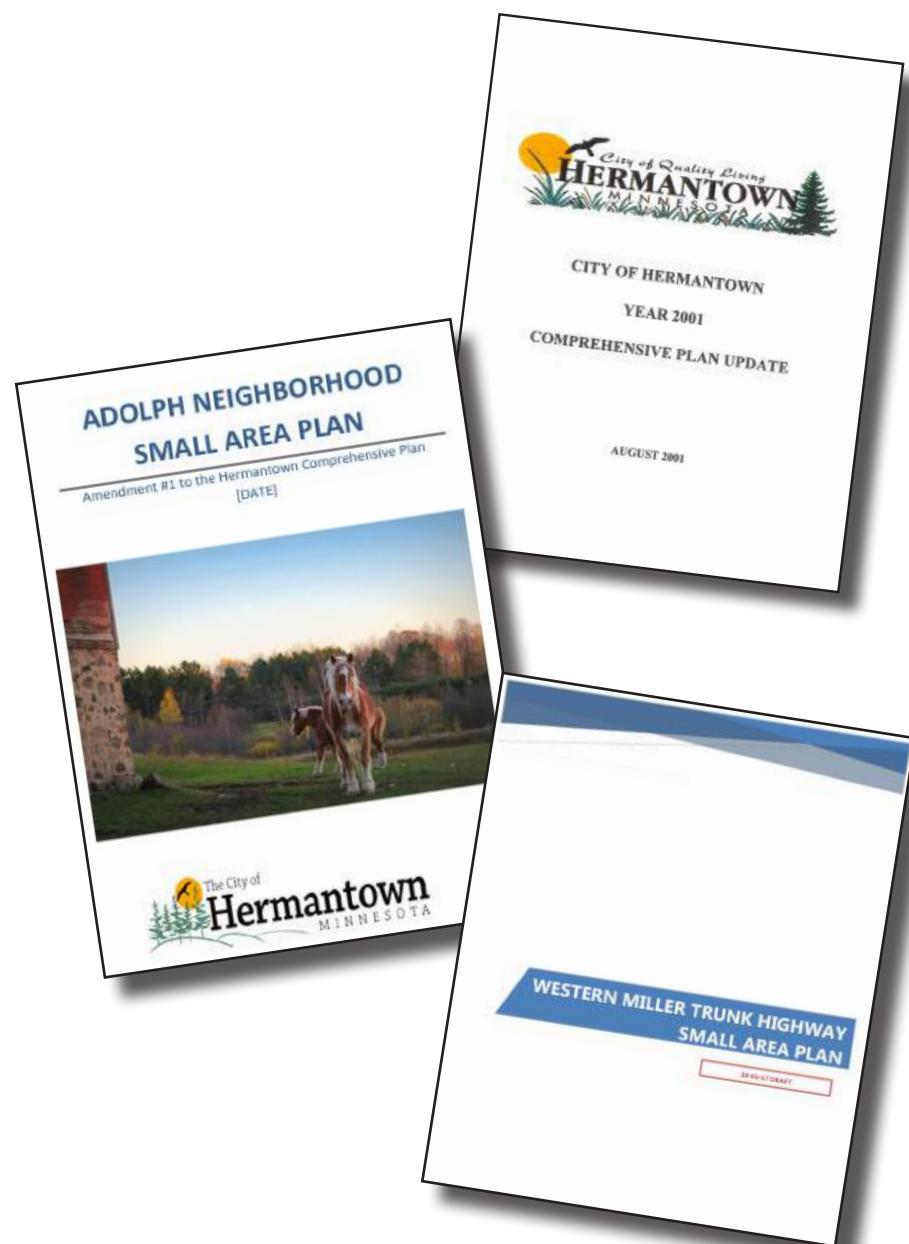
The most recent past comprehensive plan for Hermantown was written in 2001. It was based heavily on the first plan written in 1976 and examined the city's existing conditions including the state of the environment, natural features, and public facilities. It included a vision statement and desired future conditions within a number of areas. This plan recognized there were increasing demands for services from an expanding and changing population, so it examined various means for managing the city's growth and adopted a three-part growth management program.

ADOLPH SMALL AREA PLAN (2014)

The Adolph Small Area Plan provided recommendations developed by community members and the City of Hermantown to implement a shared vision for a stronger, more livable Adolph neighborhood. The Small Area Plan study area was 3.5 square miles located in southwest Hermantown centered on the intersection of Highway 2 and Midway Road. This plan recommended changes to zoning and land use patterns and the transportation system that were designed to preserve and enhance the rural character. This plan supplemented and updated the recommendations of the 2001 Hermantown Comprehensive Plan and was adopted as an amendment to the plan.

WEST MILLER TRUNK HIGHWAY SMALL AREA PLAN (2017)

The purpose of the Western Miller Trunk Highway Small Area Plan was to provide guidance for future development, redevelopment, transportation, infrastructure, and commerce in the western part of Miller Trunk Highway corridor. The study area included the commercial and industrial parcels along the Miller Trunk Highway between Stebner Road and Seville Road.



HERMANTOWN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY STRATEGIC PLAN (2021)

This plan was created by the Hermantown Economic Development Authority (HEDA) which is a public body dedicated to the city's economic development. The HEDA is staffed by the Hermantown City Administrator, Community Development Director, and City Attorney. The plan set the strategic directions of Hermantown's development through 2024. It also defined the accomplishments by which the strategic directions are achievable and established a timeline and priorities among the identified strategic actions. The overarching mission of this plan was to intentionally lead economic growth, creating a vibrant and prosperous community.

ST. LOUIS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN (2019)

The County Comprehensive Land Use Plan established a long-term vision for managing land use where the county maintains zoning jurisdiction. The plan's overall intent was to support county goals and objectives for growth, development, and conservation, and to provide for the well-being of the county's residents.



02. BACKGROUND & TRENDS

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

As Hermantown looks ahead to plan for the community's future, it is necessary to take stock of the community's current context and how elements of the social, economic, natural, and built environments are changing. New regional, national, or even global trends may have significant impacts on how Hermantown evolves and responds to forces outside its control. This chapter examines the direction the community has been heading in recent years and highlights a few high level trends that could influence its future.

COMMUNITY GROWTH

Hermantown's population is projected to stabilize and grow more slowly. The population was estimated to be 10,258 in 2024. In past decades the city's population was increasing significantly. Between 1990 and 2000 the growth rate was 19%, followed by 17% growth between 2000 and 2010, but it slowed a bit to 9% between 2010 and 2020. It is projected that population growth will stabilize in the future, with the possibility of eventually transitioning to population declines at some point.

The projections for a community's population can be expected to follow the trends of the county to some degree, although many other local trends will influence population change. The future projections for St. Louis County show that the county population is currently in slight decline but that the rate of decline is expected to increase consistently over the next forty years or so.

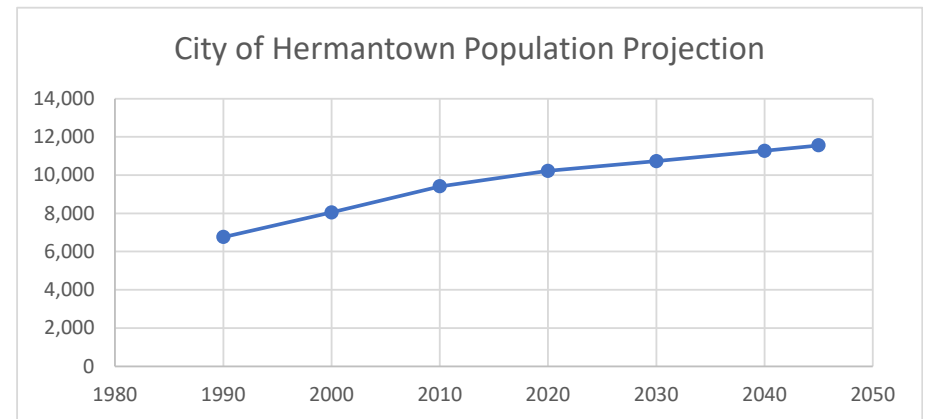


Figure 2.1 City of Hermantown Population Projection

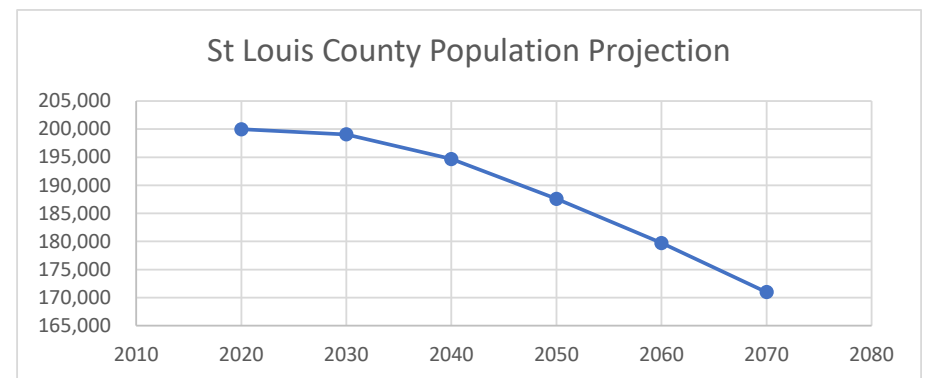


Figure 2.2 St. Louis County Population Projection

POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

HERMANTOWN

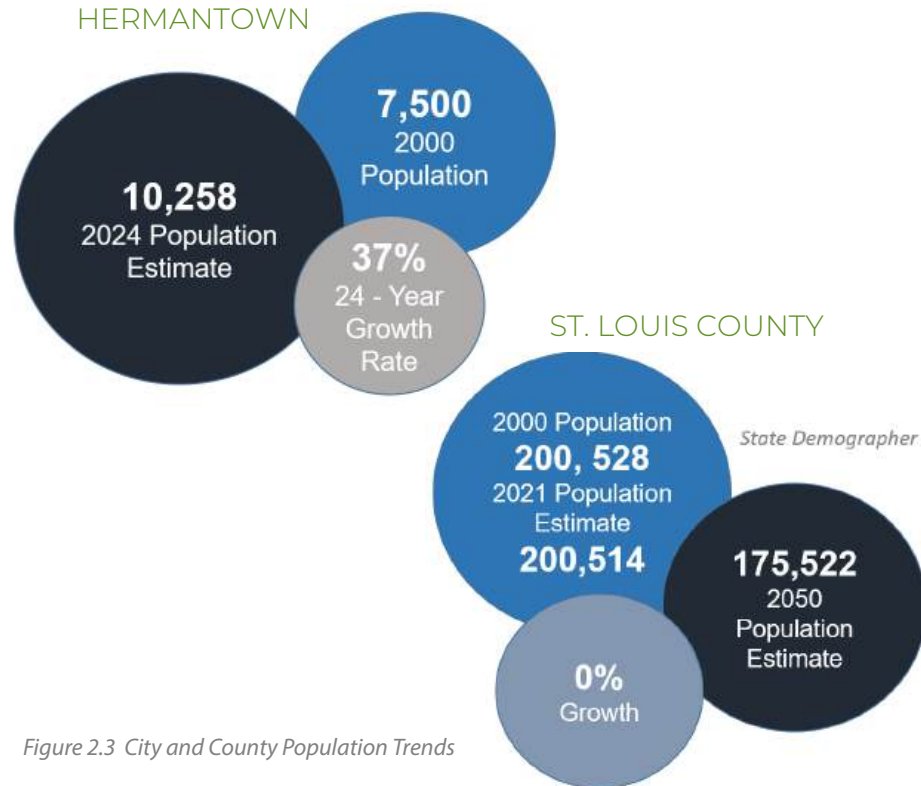


Figure 2.3 City and County Population Trends

POPULATION & HOUSEHOLD TRENDS

Hermantown

Year	Population	Change	% Change	No. of Households	Change	% Change
1990	6,671			2,192		
2000	8,047	1,376	19.00%	2,726	534	24.40%
2010	9,414	1,367	17.00%	3,355	629	23.10%
2020	10,221	807	8.60%	3,696	341	10.20%
1990-2020		3,550	53.20%		1,504	68.60%

Table 2.1 Hermantown Population and Household Trends

Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council (2045 Long Range Transportation Plan)

	1990 Population	2020 Population	Change	% Change
St. Louis County	198,213	199,962	1,749	0.90%
Duluth-Superior MIC	141,527	147,541	6,014	4.20%
Duluth	85,493	86,697	1,204	1.40%
Hermantown	6,671	10,221	3,550	53.20%
Proctor	2,974	3,120	146	4.90%

Table 2.2 Duluth/Superior Population Trends

POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD PROJECTIONS

Hermantown

Year	2045 Population	Change	% Change	No. of Households	Change	% Change
MIC Plan	10,672	451	4.40%	3,900	204	5.50%
Medium Growth	11,550	1,330	+13.0% (5% - 10 yr)	4,230	534	14.40%
High Growth	12,000	1,800	+17.4% (7% - 10 yr)	4,400	700	19.00%

Table 2.3 Hermantown Population and Household Projections

(Projections for number of households based on decreasing avg. household size, household growth higher than population growth.)

Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council (2045 Long Range Transportation Plan)

	2020 Population	2045 Population	Change	% Change
St. Louis County	199,962	191,133	8,829	-4.40%
Duluth-Superior MIC	147,541 (2015)	152,587	5,046 (2015-2040)	3.40%
Duluth	86,697	89,126	2,429	2.80%
Hermantown	10,221	10,672	451	4.40%
Proctor	3,120	3,400	280	9.00%

Table 2.4 Duluth/Superior Population Projections

OUR DEMOGRAPHICS ARE CHANGING

Hermantown's population is getting older. Like many other communities, the city is dealing with an aging population as a result of the "baby boom" generation. Between 2010 and 2020 the proportion of the population under 19 years old grew by 2.7% and the population of people above retirement age (65) grew by 4.7%. Meanwhile, the population of working age adults – those between age 20 and 65 – shrank. Hermantown's median age also increased from 40.1 to 43.8 between 2010 and 2020.

The distribution of age groups in a community can help provide a better understanding of anticipated housing needs, social services, school enrollment, and other public amenities. The current make-up of Hermantown's population indicates that there is a fairly even distribution of age groups but that aging adults will need additional attention in the near term and that future growth could depend significantly on the choices younger generations make to either stay in town or move elsewhere.

Hermantown's population is gradually becoming more racially diverse. The 2020 Census reported that 90.2% of Hermantown's population identified itself as White, 1.9% as Black or African American, 1.5% Asian, 0.9% American Indian and Alaska Native, and 5.4% as another race or two or more races. There are also 2.6% of the population who identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino. In 2010, 93% of Hermantown's population reported as white.

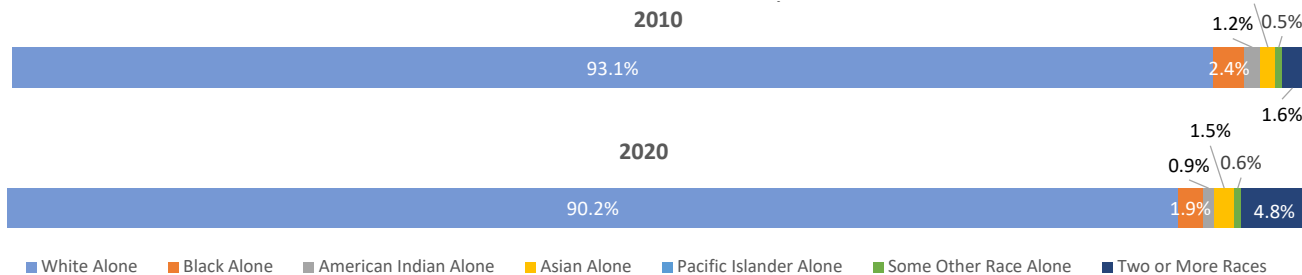


Figure 2.4 Hermantown Population by Race

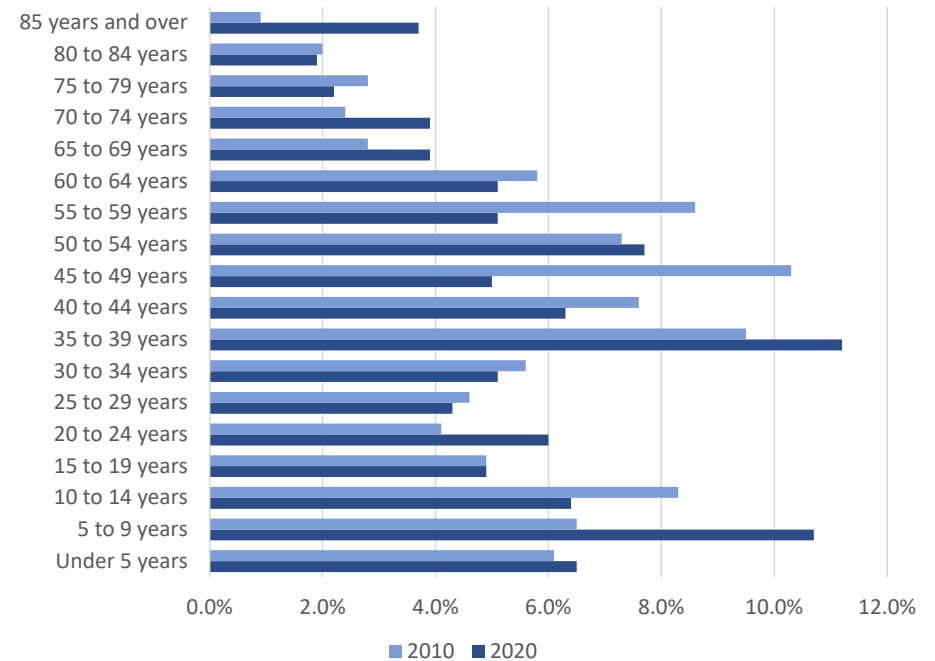
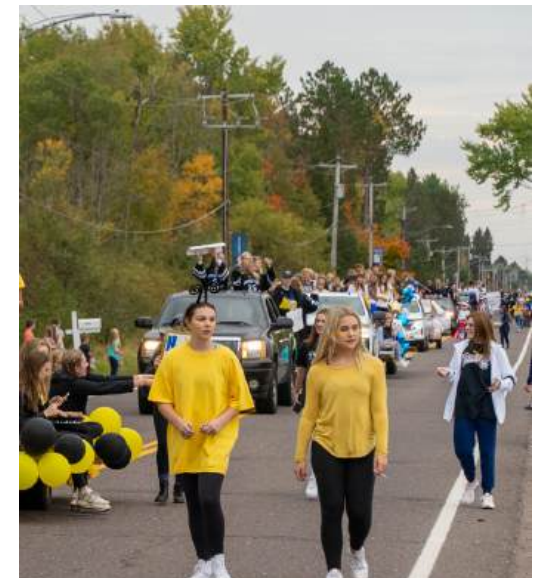


Figure 2.5 Hermantown Population by Age



Students in the Hermantown homecoming parade

OUR HOUSEHOLDS ARE GETTING SMALLER

Hermantown's average household size is generally holding steady. The median household size was 2.55 persons per household in 2010 and 2.54 persons per household in 2024. This is slightly above the average for Minnesota, 2.44. National trends see household size declining in many places as more people are living alone, more families are deciding to have fewer children, and the number of multigenerational households is decreasing. Hermantown may also see the results of this trend more clearly in the coming years.

OUR HOUSEHOLD INCOMES ARE ABOVE AVERAGE

Hermantown's median household income is \$93,625, higher than the median household income for Minnesota at \$87,556. The income range in Hermantown is wide. Around 5% of people in Hermantown were estimated to be in poverty in 2023, lower than in the poverty rate for Minnesota (9%). The portion of the population with household incomes above \$200,000 (more than twice the median household income) is 18%.



Businesses on Maple Grove Road

Households by Income

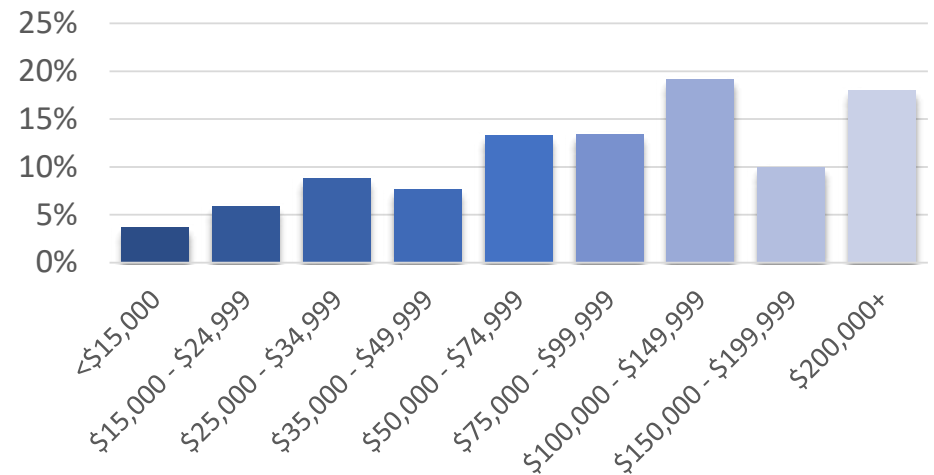


Figure 2.6 Hermantown Percentage of Households by Income

OUR EMPLOYMENT BASE IS STABLE

Hermantown is increasingly becoming a place for businesses to thrive. Businesses and other institutions (486 businesses) within the City employ around 6,285 people (2024). The unemployment rate in Hermantown is very low at only 1%.

There are a range of employment sectors in Hermantown. The largest sector is retail at 34%, followed by health care at 15% and educational services at 8%. Food services, construction, and other services round out the remaining top categories.

The balance between workers leaving town for jobs outside of Hermantown versus workers coming to town for their jobs is fairly even. About 3,986 people are employed in Hermantown but live elsewhere, and 3,902 people live in Hermantown but work elsewhere according to the latest available data from 2022. Only 531 people at this point were both living and working in Hermantown. This number has increased in recent years as the effects of the pandemic allow many people increased flexibility to work from home.



Large lot residential houses

OUR MIX OF LAND USES IS BALANCED

In 2024, of the city's roughly 34 square miles, the largest portion of the land (about 55%) is used for single family homes. Many of these have been built on large multiacre lots. Just over 18% of land is currently vacant. Land for government, educational, religious, social, and healthcare uses is around 8%. Commercial uses occupy around 6%. Since the completion of the last comprehensive plan over 20 years ago, new commercial, industrial, and housing development has occurred in the vicinity of Highway 53, corresponding to population growth and increased market demands.

Hermantown has a tremendous asset in its natural resources. As the community continues to grow, it is important to be mindful of how these assets are preserved, protected, and restored for future generations. The City plays an active role in managing these resources through various ordinances and development decisions.

OUR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IS EVOLVING

How people travel around and through Hermantown has been slowly changing. Following the pandemic in 2020, many more people began working from home. This not only reduced the number of cars on the road, but also made it possible for more people to move to Hermantown and work remotely. Truck traffic continues to increase as consumers shift to online shopping and door-to-door services. Regardless of these trends, people still rely heavily on cars (e.g., the average commute time for a resident is 20 minutes and most people drive alone to work). Four percent of the population (152 households) do not have access to a personal vehicle.

New and planned bikeways in Hermantown will continue to provide options for those who do not drive – either by circumstance or preference. The Hermantown Connector Trail, a spur of the Munger Trail, will link community destinations in Hermantown to Proctor and Duluth and provide a facility for walking, jogging, bicycling, inline skating, and cross-country skiing. The City will continue to construct sidewalks to complement new commercial and residential development.

Public transportation in Hermantown is provided by Arrowhead Transit (AT) which has a station at Miller Hill Mall. This bus service was originally created to provide low-cost transportation for low-income, disabled, and elderly persons and currently provides riders with scheduled service, Dial-A-Ride, and a Volunteer Driving Program. The Duluth Transit Agency provides regular service to the Mall and to the airport.



Arrowhead Transit

HIGH LEVEL TRENDS

Planning requires one to look into the future and make predictions about the choices people might make or what life could look like. These predictions can be affected by many external factors beyond our control. In 2024, these challenges might include:

- Emerging technologies that change how we work, play, or get around
- Global and national market fluctuations
- Global and national political environments
- Climate change
- Social and cultural shifts in consumer preferences and choices

These challenges underscore the importance of how we interpret community progress towards goals and the importance being nimble and responsive to impactful changes.

COMMERCIAL

There have been many changes in the commercial sector in recent years. One of those is the re-emergence of “experience” based commercial uses that were hit particularly hard by the pandemic including: restaurants, fitness businesses, theaters, and the arts.

Retailers are starting to re-imagine their stores to accommodate smaller formats (curated inventories), to provide experience-based shopping, and to address fulfillment needs. Building needs range between 20,000 to 25,000 sq. ft., which is significantly smaller compared to traditional big-box footprints of 50,000 sq. ft.

As Millennials move away from cities to more suburban and rural communities, they bring preferences for a more urban “sense of place,” activity, amenities, and convenience. This includes having a preference for third places (gathering places other than their home and work locations) and other daily needs within a 15-minute driving radius.



Small format business



Coffee shops and breweries serve as a “third place” in many communities



Smaller scale warehouse



Work from home or working remote is increasingly an option

DEVELOPMENT SCALE

While many developers focus on large projects that allow them to achieve scale, there is a movement of small-scale developers that are taking on more modest projects. These projects may be appealing because they require less capital and pose a reduced investment risk should things not go as planned. These types of developments also offer room for more individualism and an opportunity for developers to put their own stamp on a project.

Warehousing is one area that thrived during the pandemic and is likely to remain strong as the shift to e-commerce continues. Smaller distribution centers are on the rise for pick-up orders and to meet last-mile distribution/transfer needs. The re-purposing of vacant retail space (big box stores) has helped address these preferences.

EMPLOYMENT

Many industries are struggling with the dual challenges of labor shortages and changing work environment. Labor supply is vital; growth in the manufacturing industry is being stunted by a lack of employees and companies are having to compete for fewer available workers. In order to attract employees, companies are increasing benefits and adding flexibility when possible.

As work from home remains a more viable option, companies that can are pivoting and pursuing alternative options to cut costs and increase flexibility. Hermantown's location has the potential to attract people who are newly afforded the option to work remotely due to proximity to and appeal of the North Shore. As more workers work from home, the demand for office space square footage is decreasing. Over half (58%) of Americans have the opportunity to work from home at least one day a week which has led to a stronger demand for hoteling and co-working space. This is having the effect of creating a surplus of office space that will likely not be absorbed until beyond 2025.



A modular home build in progress



Multifunctional accessory dwelling unit (ADU)

HOUSING

While there are many characteristics that create great communities, quality housing that can be considered affordable is one of the fundamental elements. The nation as a whole is experiencing a housing shortage. Apartment demand is on the rise and more modular housing options are becoming increasingly common to control construction costs. People are also looking for ways to accommodate life changes or make additional income through the increased construction of accessory dwelling units (ADUs). As the population ages and changes, economic instability reduces the purchasing power of Millennials especially, and the need for more sustainable housing design becomes more apparent, the demand for apartments and other alternative housing types and options has continued to rise:

- In an effort to control costs, reduce delays, and increase quality, modular housing is an emerging approach to building multi-family residential “Missing Middle” housing which is a growing need for many communities.
- Smaller lot sizes that reduce costs and increase efficiencies for the community’s infrastructure are also increasing in popularity.
- Build-to-Rent communities are single family homes that are developed as a neighborhood with the intent of renting them out, rather than selling them.
- ADUs, which are separate living areas located on the grounds or attached to a single-family home, have grown in popularity in recent years to accommodate aging parents, serve as guest housing, or provide an additional income stream.

03. NATURAL RESOURCES & RECREATION

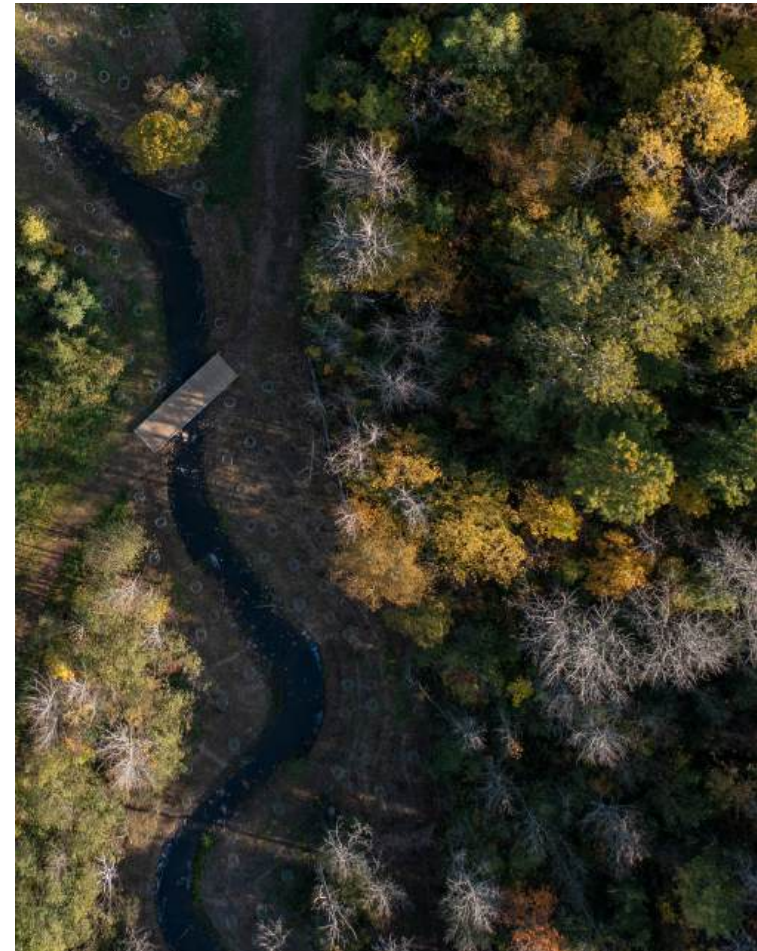
PURPOSE

The Natural Resources and Recreation chapter emphasizes the importance of planning for and preserving open spaces for environmental, recreational, and societal health. It reinforces the City's Parks and Trails Master Plan (2018) and prioritizes maintaining and creating parks, trails, and recreational amenities for current and future generations. The chapter guides efforts to protect the quality and quantity of natural resources as well as emphasizing the responsibility to advocate for sustainable development that protects our community's natural resources.



WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

- Protect the water quality in area creeks and streams.
- Preserve Hermantown's wetlands, woodlands, and other natural habitats and avoid the displacement of wildlife.
- Develop additional trails to safely connect to community destinations.
- Maintain and enhance existing park spaces as multi-purpose recreational destinations.
- Continue to construct new outdoor recreation areas for pickleball courts, playgrounds, and athletic fields.



Keene Creek

EXISTING PLANS

Planning for the community's natural resources and recreation facilities uses the following plans as a foundation:

Hermantown Parks and Trails Master Plan (December 2018)

The Hermantown Parks and Trails Master Plan provides a brief history and background of the park system; parks vision; an inventory and map of the parks system; summaries of the existing facilities, issues, and recommendations for each park, master plan concepts for several parks, and resources for implementation including funding and timeline.

Proctor Hermantown Munger Trail Spur Master Plan (December 2015)

The Proctor Hermantown Munger Trail Spur Master Plan focuses on the vision of linking the communities of Proctor and Hermantown above the ridge line, to the Munger State Trail and Duluth's growing trail network below the ridge line. The plan outlines the preferred alignment for a 16-mile, 10-foot-wide paved trail that will serve as a unique regional recreational resource. The trail is intended to connect numerous regional and local recreation destinations and activity centers within the communities of Proctor, Hermantown, and Duluth, including schools, parks, natural resource areas, city halls/community centers, and downtown business areas. The plan identifies many of these destinations as primary and secondary trailhead opportunities

St. Louis River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (2023)

The St. Louis River Watershed Management Plan guides decisions on what and where to complete projects that restore and protect natural resources within the 3,000 square mile watershed area. It addresses issues related to surface water quality, drinking water protection, land use, altered hydrology, and habitat. Within each category, the plan sets goals and outlines implementing actions.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hermantown celebrates the natural environment in which it is located. The coursing creeks and rivers, diverse wetland areas, and woodlands of the Northern Superior uplands that dominate the landscape of Hermantown give it character and offer residents sources of wonder and respite that are always within reach. The natural resources serve other purposes as well: providing habitat for animals, cleaning the air, filtering water, and cooling surface temperatures.

Hermantown values its wealth of natural resources and is committed to taking care of them. By strategically preserving, restoring, and developing sensitively within its natural environment, the city can harness the ecological functions of the land to prevent natural disasters like forest fires and flooding, and promote the health of its residents through retaining natural areas and taking advantage of the ways natural spaces improve the environment and provide recreational opportunities.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Even though infrastructure is usually thought of as something built - "grey infrastructure", the word can also describe natural and unbuilt landscapes and systems that harness ecological functions to reduce flooding and pollution. Known as "green infrastructure," these features can take many forms, including waterways, drainage channels, rural and urban forests, greenway corridors, parks and open spaces, stormwater areas, and green roofs. Like grey infrastructure, green infrastructure has limited value unless it is networked to form a system. Similar to a disconnected pipe or a dead-end street, a disconnected patch of open space is not living up to its full potential. However, when properly arranged and linked, green infrastructure offers a myriad of benefits, especially when it comes to stormwater and runoff management.

Hermantown contains many natural resources that can be viewed as the city's "green infrastructure", including its rivers, creeks, wetlands, woodlands, native plant communities, agricultural land, groundwater aquifers, and stormwater areas. In addition, the city has many outdoor recreation areas connected by trails and sidewalks.

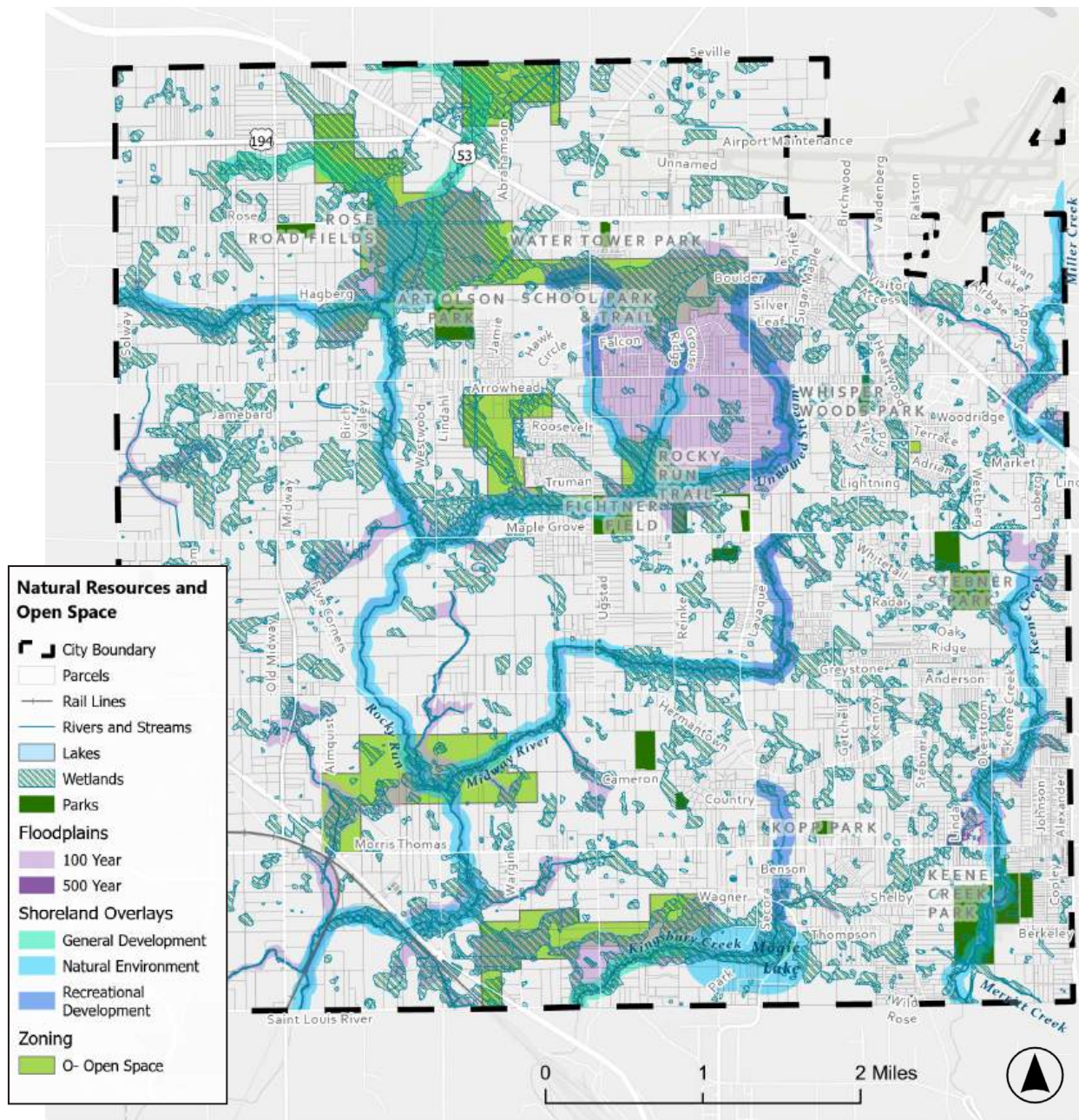


Figure 3.1 Natural Resources and Conservation Areas

HEALTHY, CONNECTED ECOSYSTEMS

A key element of sustaining healthy and connected ecosystems is to ensure that the various natural habitat spaces are linked as much as possible so that they can provide the full potential of ecosystem services. Roads can fragment habitats and lead to vehicle-wildlife collisions that kill or injure animals and motorists. These accidents can result in property damages and high healthcare costs. Wildlife corridors and crossings link two or more habitat areas, enabling migration, (re)colonization, and breeding opportunities for flora and fauna. These connections come in different shapes and sizes and can consist of existing and intact swaths of habitat, created crossings, restored linkages or a mix. Providing greenway corridors that are at least 150 feet wide is appropriate for species movement between patches and contributes to a higher-functioning ecological system.

SURFACE WATER

Surface water is abundant in Hermantown in the form of its various waterways and numerous wetland areas. There are a number of streams and creeks throughout the city that drain stormwater runoff and feed it into the St. Louis River and eventually into Lake Superior. Hermantown values and protects its surface water resources for their environmental, aesthetic, and recreational benefits. Figure 3.1 identifies all surface water resources in Hermantown including the Rocky Run, Midway River, Keene Creek, Kingsbury Creek, Merritt Creek, and Mogie Lake along with the other unnamed streams/creeks, wetlands, and floodplains. Mapping these surface water resources enables the city to identify the areas that should be protected for their environmental functions and potentially as public open spaces. The city has adopted shoreland, floodplain, and wetland ordinances to protect its surface water resources during the subdivision and development planning processes involved with the community's future growth.

Ecosystem Services

Ecosystem Services are the direct and indirect benefits that ecosystems provide humans. The woodlands, wetlands, watercourses and waterbodies in Hermantown provide suites of ecosystem services that support and sustain human livelihoods. These are typically broken up into four main categories:

- **Provisioning services:** the material or energy outputs from an ecosystem, including food, forage, fiber, fresh water, and other resources
- **Regulating services:** benefits obtained through moderation or control of ecosystem processes, including regulation of local climate, air, or soil quality; carbon sequestration; flood, erosion, or disease control; and pollination
- **Supporting services:** services that maintain fundamental ecosystem processes, such as habitat for plants and wildlife, or the maintenance of genetic and biological diversity
- **Cultural services:** the non-material benefits that ecosystems provide to human societies and culture, including opportunities for recreation, tourism, aesthetic or artistic appreciation, and spirituality

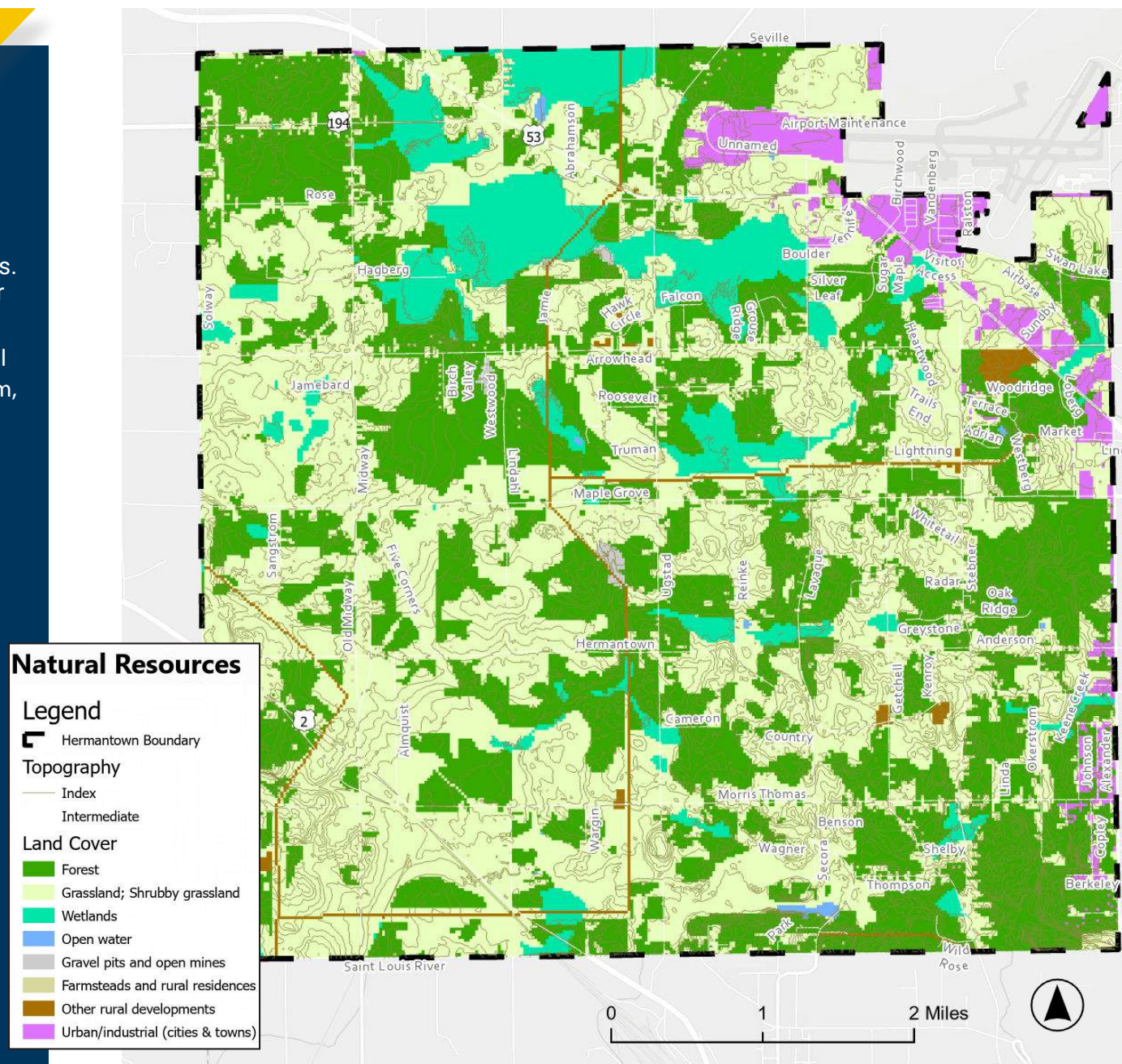


Figure 3.2 Natural Resources

FLOODPLAINS

Some of the low-lying areas that are adjacent to these channels are considered floodplains. These are areas that are prone to flooding when water overflows the banks of a nearby waterbody, often as a result of snowmelt or a heavy storm. Floodplains typically have nutrient rich soil and provide habitat, control erosion, improve water quality, and help dissipate the flooding that is occurring. With the impacts of climate change generating more frequent and intense rainfall events, floodplains are increasingly important to help manage the water that collects across the landscape.

SHORELANDS

Natural vegetation along shoreland areas in the form of plants and grasses provides habitat and protection for animals and helps to prevent pollutants from entering water bodies. Alterations to shorelands increase the potential for erosion, in addition to jeopardizing the scenic views of the water bodies. Hermantown regulates its shorelands through a zoning overlay district.

WETLANDS

Wetlands were once considered wasted space and a hindrance to urban development and crop production. In Minnesota, an estimated 11 million acres of wetlands have been drained or filled over the last hundred years. Nearly 24% of Hermantown's landscape is made up of some type of wetlands. The Hermantown Comprehensive Wetland Protection and Management Plan is an important tool employed by the city to preserve wetland areas and avoid the draining or filling of these habitats.

WOODLANDS

Hermantown is located within the Northern Superior Uplands, which spans all or parts of Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis counties. This upland vegetation consists of woodlands dominated by a mix of aspen, birch, spruce, pine, fir, and maple trees. These woodlands include some peatlands and wet forests.

COMMUNITY RECREATION

Hermantown has approximately 443 acres of existing public parks and athletic fields, including the School District's playfields/park land. Existing community parks consist of four City-owned parks and the School District's playfields/park near the intersection of Ugstad Rd and Arrowhead Rd. The City owns land for two future parks as well. The community's existing and future park land consists of the following:

Parks	Acres
Keene Creek Park	130
Stebner Park	65
Fichtner Park	40
Rose Road Fields	14
Total Existing City-owned Parks	259
Existing School-owned Park	124
Total Existing Parks	383
Future Cameron Park	20
Future Art Olson Park	40
Total Future Parks	60
Total Existing and Future Parks	443

Table 3.1 Park Sizes

Existing parks are concentrated in the eastern and central parts of the city, closest to the areas with the most homes and businesses. More detailed information about each park can be found in the Hermantown Parks and Trails Master Plan. The Master Plan's parks inventory also includes privately-owned neighborhood parks and a number of City-owned undeveloped properties to be considered for potential future parks.

In addition to parks, there is approximately 2,000 acres of open space land that is zoned as Open Space. This land is primarily wetland and creek land and City-owned land.

Existing trails consist of the following:

- Hermantown Connector Trail – central segments have been constructed
- Park trails – Keene Creek Park, Stebner Park, Fichtner Park
- Rocky Run Trail / Minter Trail (City Hall area)
- Hermantown Hawks School Trail

The future vision for Hermantown's parks is established in the Hermantown Parks and Trails Master Plan:

- Through providing parks and trails services and spaces, we enhance the quality of life and nurture the health and wellness of our citizens and the community. Working together we strive to obtain the following for all:
 - The creation of and maintenance of sustainable thriving parks, trails and recreational amenities in order to build a park system for the present and future residents of Hermantown.
 - Through provision of recreation and parks and trail services, we strive to enhance the quality of life and nurture the health and well-being of our residents, community and our environment.

Hermantown has worked diligently in recent years to plan and develop a park system and trail network that connect the more developed areas of the city. The city's park system is transitioning from an orientation around youth sports to include other programming such as a picnic pavilion, small playground structures, a skate park, and other passive park elements.

The significant amount of public open space in the form of large community parks and the relatively large lot sizes in many parts of the city has resulted in minimal demand for adding small neighborhood parks. In addition, some apartments and residential subdivisions have their own recreation areas which provide some of the functions of a neighborhood park. As a community with a relatively low population density and a large land area, a park system composed of several large, well-connected community parks has proven to be a more appropriate and manageable approach. Hermantown's community parks are viewed by many residents as destinations; they host community gatherings, sporting events, and open space for enjoying nature.

Within the adopted Parks and Trail Master Plan, existing parks are classified as one of the following designations:

- 28

Name	Address	Acres (wetland)	Playground	Parking	Ballfield	Soccer Field	Hard Court	Tennis Court	Outdoor Ice Rink	Shelters/ Pavilions	Trail	Lake/Pond
Community Parks												
Keene Creek Park	South Okerstrom	80+		X	X					X	X	X
Stebner Park	M.G. Road	65	X	X		X						
Fichtner Field Park	Arrowhead/Ugstad	40 (w)	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X
Rose Road Fields	Midway Road	9 (w)		X	X					X		
School / Community Parks												
High School Park	North of High School			X		X	X	X			X	
Hockey Arena Park	Arrowhead & Ugstad	9.9		X					X		X	
Elementary School Park	Arrowhead		X	X			X					
Middle School Park	Arrowhead & Ugstad		X	X		X	X					
Future Parks												
Art Olson Park	Lindahl Rd	40									X	
Cameron Park	Cameron Rd	20+									X	
Open Space												
Rocky Run Natural Area	Reinke / Maple Grove	35 (w)									X	X
Kopp Park (owned by ISD709)	Getchell / M.T.	6+										
Unnamed Park	M.G. / Lavaque (SW)	8+										
Valley View Park	Johnson Rd	5										
Water Tower Park	Hwy 53 / E of Ugstad	7										
Whisper Woods Park	Arrowhead/Hrtwod	8.6										
Private Parks												
Timber Trails Park	Timber Ridge Ln	NA									X	
Beacon Bar & Grill	Hermantown Rd	4		X	X					X		
Timber Ridge Apts	Westberg North	0.4	X				X					
Hidden Creek Park	Getchell / White Pine	1.7	X							X	X	
Maple Village Park	Maple Village Devel											

Table 3.2 Parks and Open Space Inventory

PARK SERVICE AREAS ANALYSIS

A park service areas analysis was completed at two levels. A park service areas analysis was completed looking at 1-mile, ½-mile, and ¼-mile buffers of the five existing parks, which represents the watershed or park service area of each park. A 1-mile park service area is appropriate for a larger community scale park, whereas, a ½-mile or ¼-mile park service area is appropriate for a neighborhood scale park. Based on the direction of the project steering committee, it was determined that the large scale of Hermantown's existing parks and larger residential lots support a community park service area approach. At this time, the City's focus is on reinvesting and enhancing existing community parks and adding future community parks where there are gaps. The park service areas analysis found that undeveloped Cameron Park and Art Olson Park make sense as future community parks. In addition, a park gap was identified in the northeast corner of the city, so a future community park should be added in this area.

UPDATES TO THE PARKS AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan builds off the Parks Master Plan and proposes several updates:

1. Merge Community Park and Community Athletic Field designations. Rather than keeping Community Parks and Community Athletic Fields as separate designations, this plan suggests amenities that could help to elevate the existing athletic field areas and allow them to serve the needs of the community more broadly in addition to their primary function as athletic field locations.
2. Remove the Neighborhood Park designation. It was determined that the private parks, large lots, and substantial number of open spaces available in Hermantown diminish the need for small neighborhood parks.

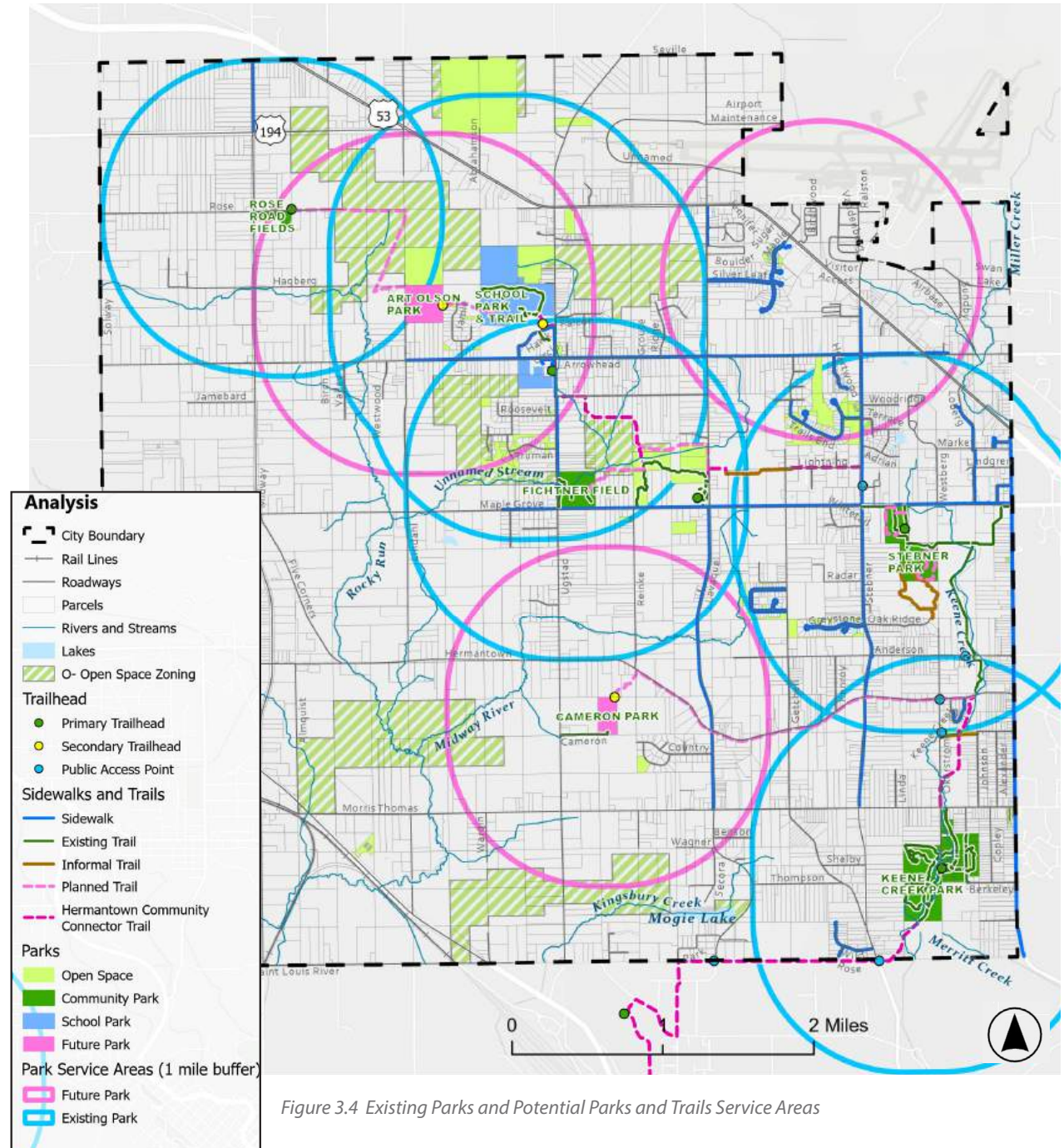


Figure 3.4 Existing Parks and Potential Parks and Trails Service Areas

3. Refine the focus for potential future parks. While the Parks and Trails Master Plan includes eight Undeveloped/Undefined Parks, this plan focuses on two of these as future parks and defines a search area for a future third park.

PROPOSED FUTURE PARKS

Art Olson Park is a 40-acre parcel that is currently undeveloped but was set aside for park and recreational purposes by a 1975 Town Board resolution. The park is near the ISD 700 campus as well as new multi-unit housing. This location allows for convenient connections to these areas using existing informal trail corridors as a way to extend the Hermantown Connector Trail project. Potential uses for this space include soccer fields, destination playground facilities, or retention as permanent open recreation space.

Cameron Park is a 20-acre parcel a short distance from Hermantown Road. The property is predominately upland area with an existing telecommunications facility located in the south-central portion of the property. There is an existing trail that connects to the southwestern corner of the park and continues as an informal trail to the south.

A third future park is planned for the northeast corner of the city. Based on the park service areas analysis, which mapped whether residents are within one mile of a park, a gap was identified in the northeast area. Residents in this area are more than one mile from the city's existing parks – Stebner Park, Fichtner Field, and the Schools Park. This area essentially includes residences east of Lavaque Road and north of Arrowhead Road. As a result of this finding, a future park search area has been identified for the city's northeast corner, most likely south and east of Hwy 53.

TRAILS PLANNING

When complete, the Hermantown Connector Trail (part of the Regional Proctor-Hermantown Munger Trail Spur) will connect community parks and other destinations within the city and provide both a major recreation and transportation option for the community. The trail will stretch from the northwestern neighborhoods to the southeastern corner of the city where it will link to the Willard Munger State Trail as it makes its way south to Hinkley.

The Hermantown Connector Trail is intended to celebrate Hermantown's ecology and establish the community as a healthier, more livable, and more sustainable place. As illustrated in Figure 3.4, a trail alignment has been identified that takes advantage of existing natural systems, open space, parks, and conservation areas to create green corridors. These corridors will preserve natural resources and scenic areas; accommodate movement, including walking and bicycling; improve surface water quality; provide animal habitat; and connect residential areas and community destinations. This type of trail connection can serve as an essential link between larger areas of open space and high-quality habitat.



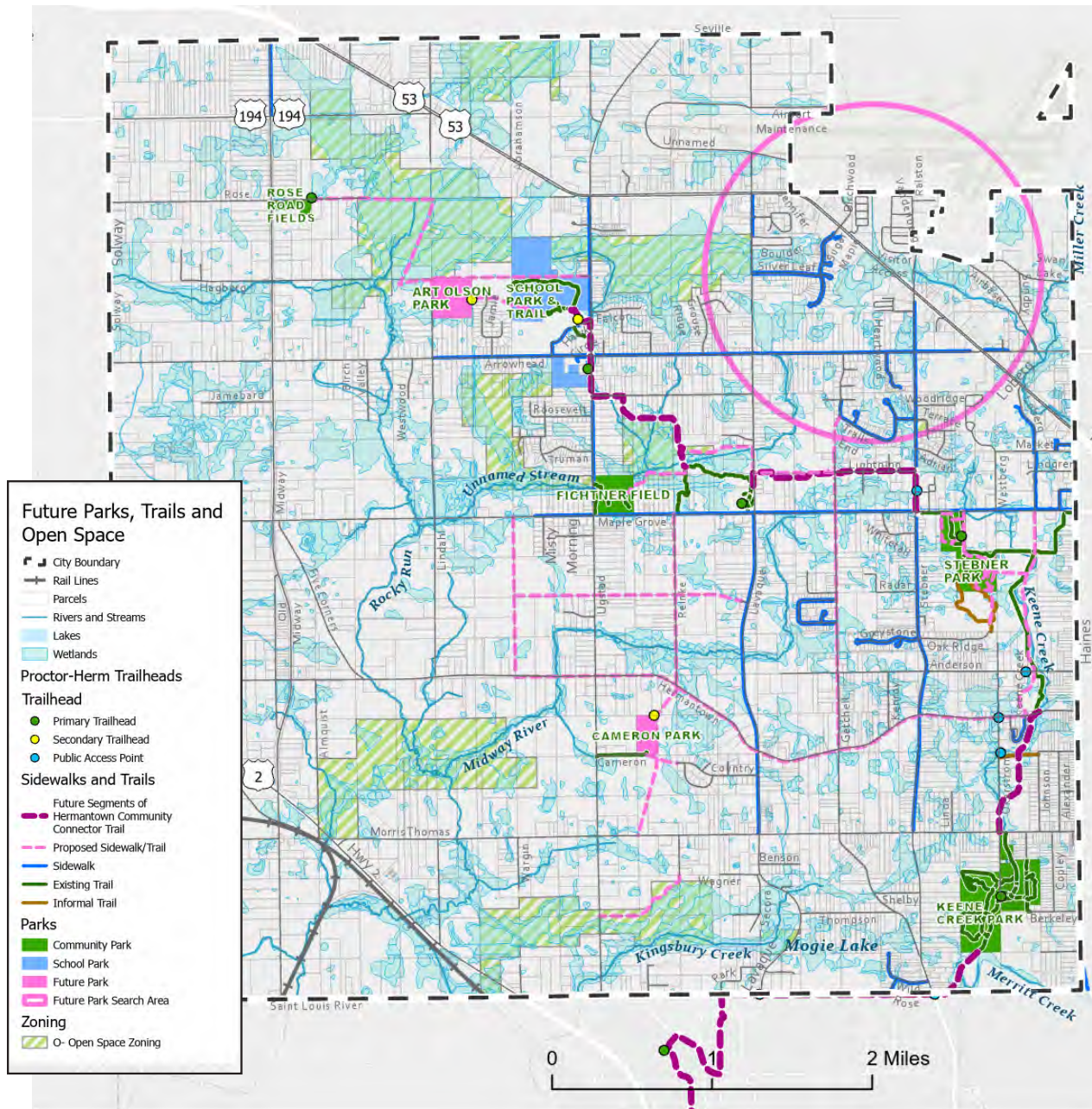


Figure 3.5 Future Parks and Open Space

The main access points for the Hermantown Connector Trail will be the primary trailheads. These sites are planned to be located at community destinations where existing facilities can be shared. All primary trailheads should include the following amenities:

- Motor vehicle parking
- Bicycle parking
- Wayfinding signage, such as a kiosk

The following additional amenities should be included at primary or secondary trailheads as opportunities exist:

- Public restrooms
- Water fountain
- Benches
- Lighting
- Picnic area and picnic tables
- Interpretive artwork
- Food vendors
- Shelter
- Local and regional trail connections

Additional future trail/sidewalk connections have also been identified on the Future Trails, Parks, and Open Space Plan. The primary intents of the planned future trail/sidewalk network is to better connect existing and new neighborhoods to community destinations, including the Hermantown Connector Trail, community parks, schools, Essentia Community Center, the Marketplace, and others. Many of the planned future trail/sidewalk connections would be added to existing roadways as well as potential future roadway connections.

SUSTAINABILITY

As the community continues to see more development, it is critical that new development is sustainable in terms of efficient land use, conservation of natural resources, energy efficiency, and consideration of climate resiliency. Key approaches that will benefit the City in achieving its focus on conservation of natural resources include renewable energy and stormwater management.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

With improved technology and increased investment, renewable energy alternatives are expanding globally. Among the states, Minnesota has set one of the strongest renewable energy standards. Utilities are required to provide 25 percent of electricity generation from renewables by 2025. Private industry has responded. For example, Great River Energy met the 25 percent goal in 2017 and is pushing for 40 percent by 2025.

Among renewable energy options, wind and solar are Minnesota's primary focus. Increasing rates of electricity consumption from wind and solar could imply a more decentralized system of energy production and distribution in Minnesota's future. Therefore, expanding local capacity in St. Louis County is a practical goal for long-term resilience. Ensuring Hermantown's development standards provides adequate support for utility-scale systems is an important part of increasing renewable energy availability.

Solar energy systems and wind turbines require favorable climate characteristics to justify the cost of investment. Overall solar suitability in Hermantown is somewhat limited by land cover (large areas of forests and wetlands), but pockets of open space have potential.



SOLAR RESOURCES

The University of Minnesota developed a high-resolution statewide solar resource map that allows cities to calculate how much electricity they could potentially receive from locally installed solar energy systems. This data (see Figure X) was used to calculate the solar resource, or the city's "solar reserves," in Hermantown. The solar reserves are how much solar energy is reasonably economically available for development, and is measured similar to the manner in which oil or gas reserves are measured. The solar map shows the good sites for solar installations and helps identify where there may be land use conflicts with solar development. Table 3.4 shows the amount of solar energy reasonably available for development in Hermantown. The gross potential includes the total available resource, regardless of location; rooftop capacity and generation include only the resource available on the rooftops of commercial buildings located in the city.



Figure 3.6 Solar Resources (Minnesota Solar Suitability Analysis App)



WIND RESOURCES

Compared to the rest of Minnesota, St. Louis County has low potential for broad development of wind energy systems. Tall turbines would be needed to generate wind energy at a large scale. Moving forward, St. Louis County will probably benefit from wind power generated in western Minnesota and North Dakota through its primary utility agreement. Note that a large increase in consumption of renewable-powered electricity could require modifications to the electrical grid and energy storage systems (i.e., batteries), regardless of where the electricity is produced.



WATER RESOURCES

RAIN GARDENS AND BIORETENTION BASINS

Making sure that landscapes include vegetated areas for stormwater collection helps reduce runoff, mitigates flooding, and cleans water before it recharges an aquifer or enters rivers and streams. Rain gardens capture and temporarily store runoff, using plants and soil to filter or infiltrate stormwater. They can be strategically located to collect runoff from impervious surfaces like parking lots and prevent sediment, chemicals, and other pollutants from contaminating surface water bodies. They are an attractive and effective method of preventing nonpoint source pollution and help manage stormwater close to its source rather than downstream.

VEGETATED BUFFER STRIPS

Vegetated buffer strips are densely vegetated swaths of land that filter sheet flow from adjacent surfaces before it can reach a water body. Water flowing through a buffer strip slows down and drops out sediment and other pollutants. The vegetation in the buffer may also absorb some of the runoff. While turf is common, planting perennial native vegetation is typically more effective at removing sediment and nutrients, can help landscapes resist drought and remain healthy in the face of climate change, and also provides valuable habitat. Vegetated buffer strips are essential components of healthy shorelines, rivers, streams, and ditches, and are also suited to treating runoff from roads, roof downspouts, or small parking lots, especially as a pretreatment system for stormwater destined for a rain garden or other bioretention basin.

ECOLOGICALLY HEALTHY SHORELINES AND FLOODPLAINS

Streams and rivers need ecologically robust shorelines and ample floodplains to remain healthy, and healthy shorelines provide fish and wildlife habitat, buffer flooding, and cleanse stormwater runoff. The shoreline zone includes the stream, the riverbank, several hundred feet on either side of the waterway, plus floodplains that may reach beyond the immediate corridor. Shorelines and floodplains in combination with sustainable land management practices farther “up-slope” in watersheds would significantly reduce the damage and impacts of flooding and improve the health of our surface waters.

TURF REDUCTION

Reducing turf in our parks and other city-managed lands would have a multitude of benefits. Turf grass is a maintenance-intensive groundcover, requiring irrigation, fertilizer, and frequent mowing in order to meet aesthetic standards. It also provides few benefits, other than offering an easy walking surface. Targeting underutilized turf areas (spaces not used for active recreation, picnicking, circulation, or gathering) and converting them to low irrigation or maintenance landscapes, native meadows, shrub beds, flowering lawns, or no-mow fescue lawns would make those areas more resilient to drought, more beneficial as habitat, better at reducing stormwater runoff, and would increase biodiversity. These lawn alternatives also require less fertilizer, oil, gasoline, and time to maintain.

GREEN ROOFS

Green roofs (living vegetation planted on rooftops) positively impact numerous environmental concerns such as heat-island effect, stormwater runoff heating and cooling, energy consumption, and loss of habitat. Green roofs have been in existence for hundreds of years—especially in agricultural buildings in various parts of the world—but in the last three decades they have been gaining acceptance as a viable roofing technique for commercial and residential buildings.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goals and strategies were developed in consultation with the Steering Committee, HEDA, Planning Commission, and City Council with input from the public. Goals are broad statements that describe a desired outcome. Strategies describe the approach that would need to be taken to achieve the goals. Implementation actions are concrete steps that can be taken to reach the strategies and goals.

3.1. *Protect the city's water resources by addressing issues that impact surface water and groundwater quality.*

- 3.1.1. Reduce the amounts of bacteria, chlorides, and other pollutants that impair water quality of streams, rivers, and lakes.
- 3.1.2. Improve and enforce the city's shoreland regulations and promote development techniques that improve water quality and reduce the quantity of stormwater runoff.
- 3.1.3. Preserve and enhance wetlands to help improve water quality, store floodwaters, and provide plant and animal habitats.

3.2. *Guide the location and form of development to ensure the responsible management and protection of existing natural areas.*

- 3.2.1. Discourage development of pristine or contiguous wetlands, woodlands, and prairie land through zoning, public dedications, and conservation easements.
- 3.2.2. Improve and enforce the city's floodplain regulations to limit the impacts of flood events, including loss of life, property, health and safety hazards, and costs to the public and individuals.
- 3.2.3. Promote preservation of wooded areas and retain, as far as practicable, substantial existing tree cover as future site development occurs. This goal can be accomplished by placing structures on lots in such a way that maximizes the number of trees to be preserved, as well as through defining open spaces that are to be protected and preserved for habitat and recreational purposes.

3.3. *Continue to invest in existing parks, trails, and recreation facilities to meet the community's range of recreation needs and desires.*

- 3.3.1. Maintain and improve existing parks to provide updated facilities and a broader range of facilities, both playing fields and facilities for other park activities, such as picnic shelters, playground structures, skate parks, and dog parks. Existing parks should continue to be managed, programmed, and maintained in order to increase their usability and life span.

- 3.3.2. Coordinate and partner with the School District on planning, designing, and maintaining facilities at Fichtner Field as well as the playing fields and other park facilities on the schools' campus in order to prevent duplicating efforts by either party.

- 3.3.3. Collaborate with the Hermantown Area Hockey Association on expanding and maintaining ice rink facilities.

3.4. *Continue to expand out the existing park and open space system.*

- 3.4.1. Fill in the gaps in the community park system in order to provide convenient access to all residents, including Cameron Park, Art Olson Park, and a park in the northeastern portion of the community (location to be determined).
- 3.4.2. Plan and design park facilities across the park system to provide the appropriate balance of active and passive recreation opportunities within the community.
- 3.4.3. Collaborate with residential developers to provide small neighborhood or pocket parks to serve these residents.
- 3.4.4. Continue to solicit grants and other funding sources for the design and development of new park facilities.

3.5. *Continue to expand out the existing trail system.*

- 3.5.1. Complete the Hermantown Connector Trail throughout the city.
- 3.5.2. Partner with Proctor and Duluth to connect the Hermantown Connector Trail to the Munger State Trail and the Duluth trail network.
- 3.5.3. Expand the trail system to provide non-motorized access and increase accessibility to all existing and new parks.
- 3.5.4. Expand and integrate all components of the non-motorized transportation system including paved trails, soft surface trails, and sidewalks.
- 3.5.5. Continue to solicit grants and other funding sources for the design and development of new trails.

3.6. *Support innovative sustainability ideas and projects that embrace emerging trends and new technologies.*

- 3.6.1. Decrease the community's reliance on fossil fuels and increase sources of renewable and noncarbon energy.
- 3.6.2. Encourage alternative fuel stations, electric vehicle charging stations, and supporting infrastructure at commercial sites, office sites, and parking ramps.
- 3.6.3. Integrate green infrastructure into public capital projects.

04. LAND USE

PURPOSE

The Land Use chapter serves as the City's high-level, long-term guide for future growth and development in the community. The foundation of future land use planning is an inventory, mapping, and analysis of Hermantown's existing land uses, development patterns, and community character. With a good understanding of existing conditions, this chapter establishes the community's preferred direction for future growth, development patterns, and land uses. Supporting the plan's vision of balancing growth, development, and preservation opportunities, the Land Use chapter provides guidance for the appropriate types and locations for future development. This chapter will be used to help determine future public investments in infrastructure and facilities, make decisions concerning private development proposals, and set priorities for future planning efforts.

The Land Use chapter also provides broad direction for the regulation of land development, serving as the basis for the Zoning Code and Zoning Map. The future land use map identifies the City's desired development locations and patterns, including varying types of residential, commercial, business/industrial, mixed-use, public, and recreation/open space uses. The future land use locations and patterns are approximate, subject to interpretation, and adjusted as needed based on actual site conditions as future development is considered.



WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

- Preserve the community's natural beauty including creeks, wetlands, and wooded areas
- Appreciation for local amenities, such as the schools, Wellness Center, and Hermantown Arena, and interest in adding other services
- Provide safe trails and sidewalks to destinations
- Expand housing options by allowing a wider variety of housing types



Existing land uses in Hermantown Marketplace

HIGHLIGHT

The major existing land uses are **residential (55%), public/institutional (9%), and commercial (5%)**. Vacant land represents a significant portion of the land at 21%.

EXISTING LAND USES AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

EXISTING LAND USES

Hermantown's current development character is dominated by residential areas, a mix of rural and suburban residential patterns, and a regional commercial corridor along Hwy 53 and Haines Road. The eastern 2/3 of the community, generally east of Lindahl Road, is within Hermantown's urban services boundary. The major existing land uses are residential (55%), public/institutional (9%), and commercial (5%). Vacant land represents a significant portion of the land at 21%.

The city's northeast quadrant (Lindahl Road to the west, Maple Grove Road to the south) contains the majority of the commercial, industrial, and residential development, as well as most of the city's public and private institutions and parks. Within the urban services boundary, larger residential lots are located along the main roads, which have direct access to these roads. Smaller lots are located in pocket neighborhoods, which are accessed via smaller neighborhood roads. The Hermantown Marketplace at the intersection of Hwy 53 & Haines Road contains the highest intensity development with a mix of commercial and higher density residential. West of the urban services boundary, residential lots are larger and do not have access to the city's water and sewer services.

The existing land use map shown in Figure 4.1 displays the quantities and patterns of land uses across Hermantown today. This map is constructed from St. Louis County data with additional staff understanding of local conditions. The map highlights both the commercial focus along Miller Trunk Highway and Haines Road, the predominantly rural/suburban residential character of the rest of the city, and the significant open space and undeveloped areas. A secondary commercial/industrial corridor follows Highway 2 and Midway Road in the southwest. More recent development in the Marketplace is beginning to add new housing opportunities and more contemporary types of commercial.



Existing public/institutional



Existing residential, high density

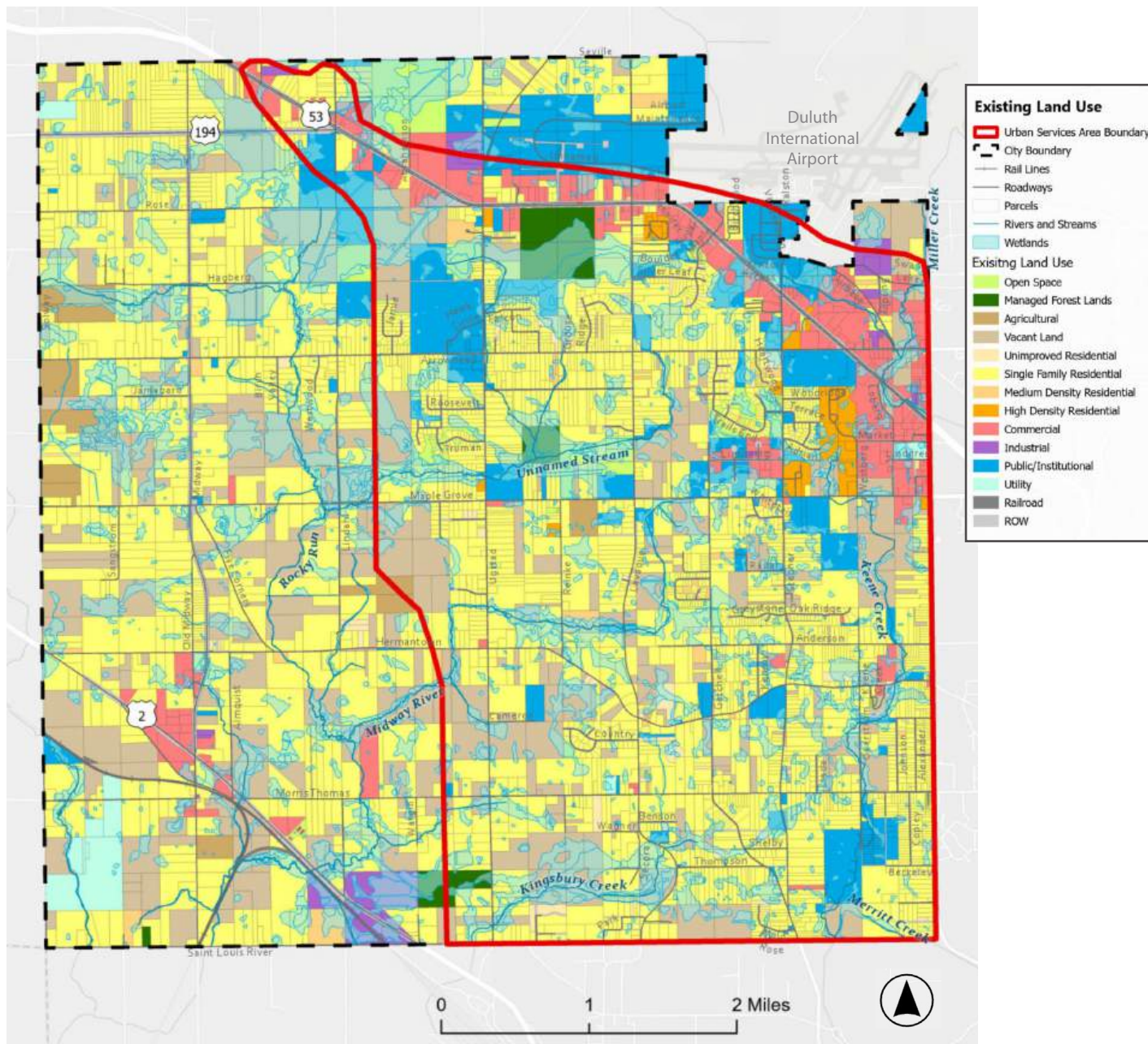


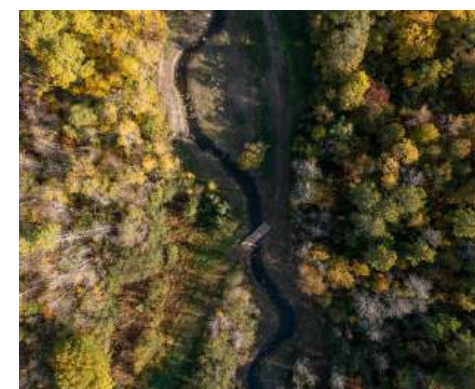
Figure 4.1 Existing Land Use



Existing rural property



Existing recreation land



Existing open space land

Table 4.1 quantifies the amount of land within each existing land use classification, though some qualifiers are needed. Land shown as single family residential – especially in the central and western portions of the city – may be mostly undeveloped and indistinguishable from other unimproved land. Much of this area is constrained by wetlands, floodplains, or other environmental factors. Subtracting these constrained areas results in the amounts listed under Net Acres.

EXISTING LAND USE	TOTAL ACRES	% OF TOTAL	NET ACRES	% OF TOTAL
Agricultural	311	1.4%	258	1.5%
Unimproved Residential	205	0.9%	137	0.8%
Single Family Residential	11,543	52.2%	9,478	55.3%
Medium Density Residential	210	1.0%	154	0.9%
High Density Residential	178	0.8%	159	0.9%
Commercial	1,161	5.3%	1,013	5.9%
Industrial	254	1.2%	141	0.8%
Public / Institutional	1,897	8.6%	1,382	8.1%
Open Space	449	2.0%	185	1.1%
Managed Forest Lands	261	1.2%	116	0.7%
Railroad	45	0.2%	42	0.2%
Right of Way	742	3.4%	697	4.1%
Utility	235	1.1%	217	1.3%
Vacant Land	4,602	20.8%	3,154	18.4%
Total	22,092		17,134	

Table 4.1 Existing Land Use Data

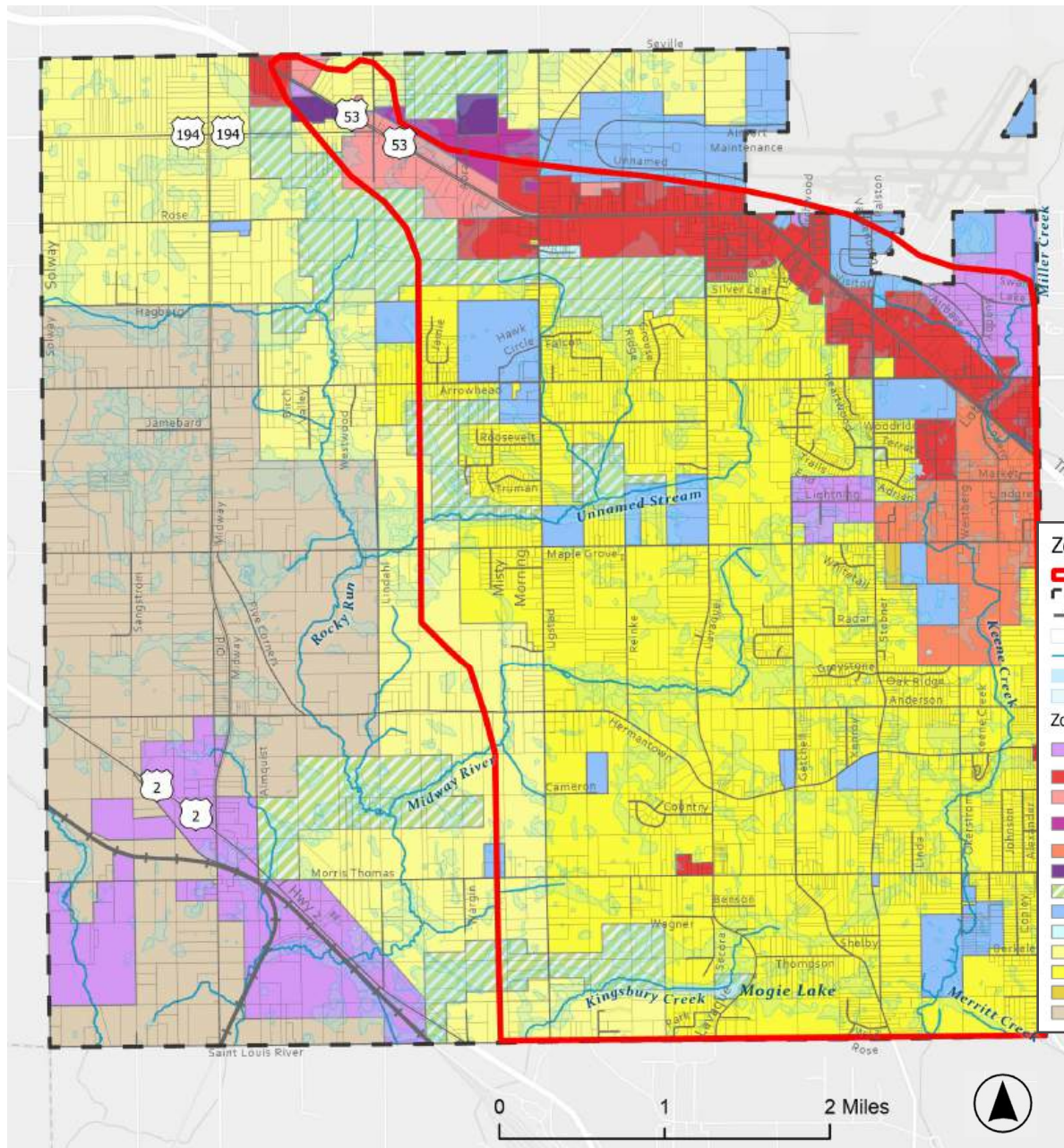
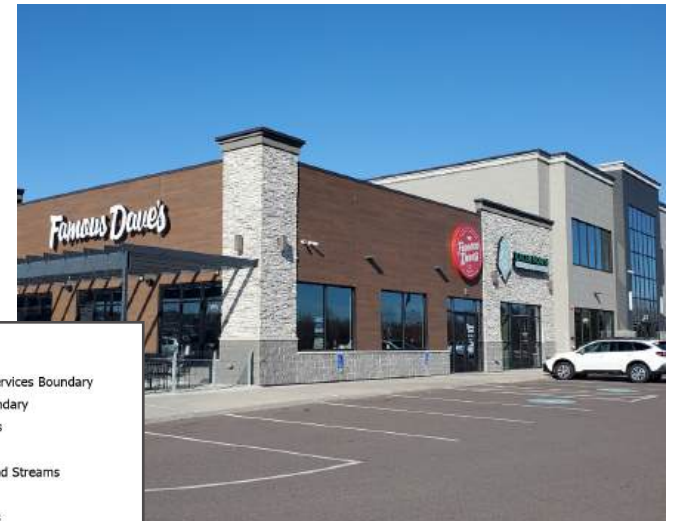


Figure 4.2 Existing Zoning

EXISTING ZONING DISTRICTS

Zoning districts, in contrast to existing land uses, show how land has been classified and what uses are allowed through the city's zoning regulations. The zoning map in Figure 4.2 provides a better picture of the city's previous vision for how Hermantown should develop.



Existing commercial



Existing residential, medium density

A major factor that drives the community's development pattern is the boundary of where urban services (city water and sanitary sewer) are available and where they are not. This boundary is included on the existing zoning map above. Outside this boundary – to the west and north – the density of development is limited to what can be accommodated through the use of septic systems. Within the boundary, higher densities can be supported.

EXISTING ZONING DISTRICT	TOTAL ACRES	% OF TOTAL	NET ACRES	% OF TOTAL
Business and Light Manufacturing	1,438	6.5%	1,196	7.0%
High Density Commercial	982	4.4%	807	4.7%
Low Density Commercial	270	1.2%	214	1.2%
Office/Light Industrial/Adult	101	0.5%	68	0.4%
Hermantown Marketplace	570	2.6%	480	2.8%
Heavy Industrial	65	0.3%	55	0.3%
Open Space	1,865	8.4%	616	3.6%
Public	1,345	6.1%	1,137	6.6%
Planned Unit Development	30	0.1%	30	0.2%
Low Density Residential (R1)	4,076	18.5%	3,291	19.2%
Low Density Residential (R3)	7,360	33.3%	5,983	34.9%
Multiple Family Dwellings	19	0.1%	16	0.1%
Rural Suburban	4,002	18.2%	3,250	19.0%
Total	22,092		17,134	

Table 4.2 Existing Zoning Data

PROJECTED COMMUNITY GROWTH AND LAND NEEDS

Another key factor driving the plans for future development is the anticipated growth that Hermantown is projected to experience over the next two decades. Since 1990, Hermantown has grown by 3,550 people, or 1,504 households. The greatest amount of growth occurred in the early 2000s, but dropped off between 2010 and 2020 (see Table 4.3).

HIGHLIGHT

Since 1990, Hermantown has grown by 3,550 people, or 1,504 households. The greatest amount of growth occurred in the early 2000s.

YEAR	POPULATION	CHANGE	HOUSEHOLDS	CHANGE
1990	6,671	--	2,192	--
2000	8,047	+1,376	2,726	+534
2010	9,414	+1,367	3,355	+629
2020	10,221	+807	3,696	+341
Total (1990-2020)		+3,550		+1,504

Table 4.3 City of Hermantown Growth Trend

The Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council (MIC) projects that through 2045, the population of Hermantown will increase by only another 451 people (a 4.4% rate of growth) and households will increase by 204 (a 5.5% rate of growth). This rate of growth is less than what Hermantown has experienced in recent years, but is still higher than projections for Duluth and St. Louis County as a whole.

In order to ensure that sufficient developable land is available to accommodate the city's growth over the next 20 years, alternative growth rates were developed. Using the MIC growth rate of 4.4% as a baseline, a medium growth of 5% over 10 years and a high growth of 7% over 10 years were calculated and extended out to 2045 (25 years beyond the 2020 Census populations). Table 4.4 shows the range of projected population growth for 2045 as well as the projected number of households. Projections for the number of households are based on decreasing average household size, which results in household growth being higher than population growth.

	2045 POPULATION	CHANGE	2045 NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS	CHANGE	% INCREASE
MIC Plan	10,672	+451	4.4%	3,900	5.5%
Medium Growth	11,550	+1,330	13.0%	4,230	14.4%
High Growth	12,000	+1,800	17.4%	4,400	19.0%

Table 4.4 City of Hermantown 2045 Growth Projections

Because household sizes are generally shrinking, it takes more households to shelter the same number of people. In 1990, Hermantown had approximately 3 people per household (pph). That figure shrank to 2.9 pph in 2000 and 2.8 pph in 2010. In 2020, the number dropped further to 2.75 pph.



Developable land for future growth

POTENTIAL DEVELOPABLE LAND

Potential developable land is constrained by the current urban services boundary, waterways (rivers, creeks, lakes) including shoreland and floodplain, wetlands, protected open spaces, and airport safety zones.

The City currently uses its zoning code and map to protect shoreland, floodplain, and open spaces. Additionally, the zoning ordinance has an open space district to protect areas of unsuitable soils, low marsh/wetlands, bedrock, or steep topography. This district encourages the preservation of wildlife habitat, the retention of water run-off, and conservation of soil and water resources for the present and future enjoyment of the general public.

The Duluth International Airport (DLH) is operated by the Duluth Airport Authority (DAA). The DAA through its Joint Airport Zoning Board (JAZB) has established an airport zoning ordinance that includes land use safety zones. These zones restrict the uses that might be hazardous to the operations of the airport. Safety Zone 3, furthest from the airport, limits uses that may cause radio or electronic interference, have excessive lighting that may cause confusion for pilots, result in glare, or otherwise impair visibility and endanger landing, take off, or maneuvering of aircraft. Safety Zone 2.5 prohibits daycares, residential care facilities, schools, and hospitals. Safety Zone 2 further restricts development by prohibiting uses that encourage the assembly of people, including places of worship, restaurants, movie theaters, arenas, nursing homes, and hotels, among others. Finally, Safety Zone 1, located closest to the runways, prohibits all buildings and temporary structures, but allows agricultural and light outdoor recreation uses, cemeteries, and automobile parking.

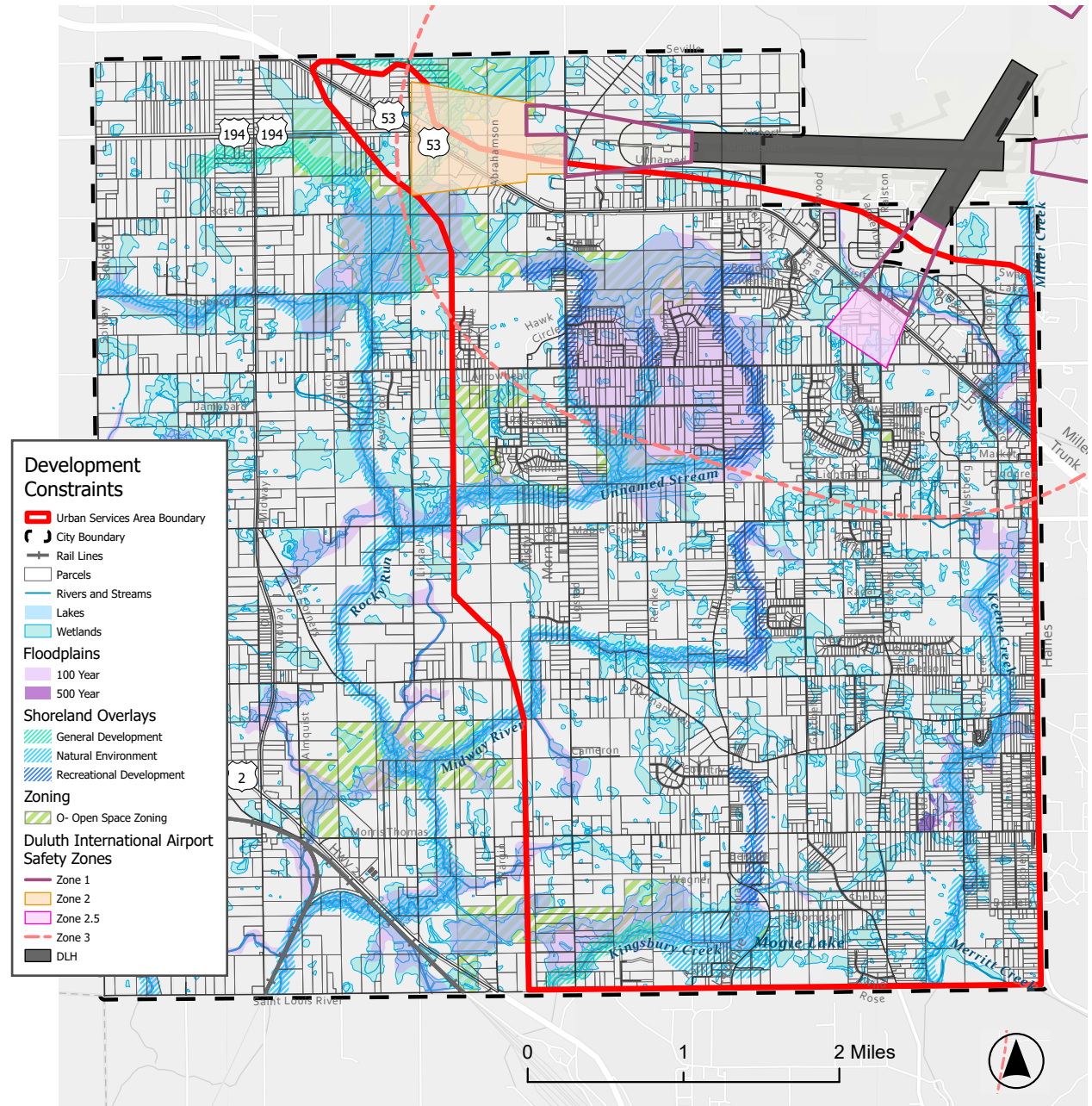


Figure 4.3 Constraints of Future Development

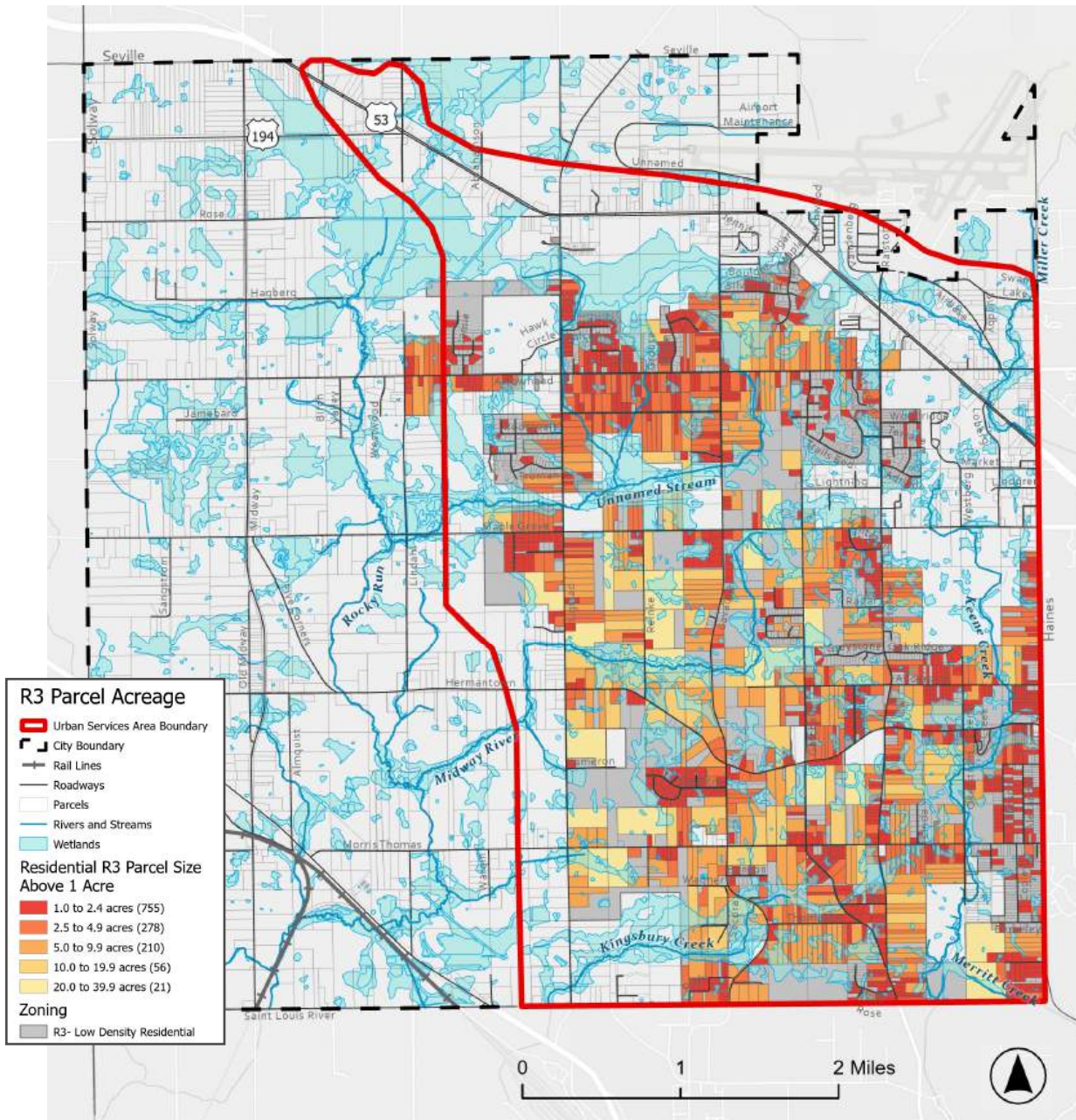


Figure 4.4 Existing Residential Parcel Sizes in R3 Zoning District

After accounting for development constraints, the next step in identifying potential developable land is to understand the existing parcel sizes within the urban services boundary. In particular, existing parcels within the R3 zoning district were mapped and analyzed to determine the existing variety and pattern of residential lot sizes as well as the potential for future subdivision and development of new residential. Figure 4.4 shows the sizes of existing residential parcels within the R3 zoning district. Wetlands are mapped and deducted from these parcel calculations.

The smallest lots, under 1 acre, are in neighborhood subdivisions primarily located in the northeast and central areas of Hermantown, north of Maple Grove Rd, with access primarily off of Stebner Rd, Arrowhead Rd, and Ugstad Rd. There is another cluster of smaller lot neighborhoods in the southeast along or near Haines Rd.

Lots that are 5 acres or larger have more potential for future subdivision. Figure 4.4 shows three ranges of potentially subdividable parcels: 5-10 acres, 10-20 acres, and 20+ acres. Table 4.5 summarizes the amount of existing residential land by parcel size in terms of number of parcels and acres.

R3 PARCEL SIZE	NUMBER OF PARCELS
1.0 to 2.4 acres	755
2.5 to 4.9 acres	278
5.0 to 9.9 acres	210
10.0 to 19.9 acres	56
20.0 to 39.9 acres	21

Table 4.5 Existing R3 Residential Parcel Sizes Summary

Figure 4.5 shows potential residential development land within the urban services boundary. This map shows the following types of potential developable residential land:

- Unimproved residential lots
- Vacant residential parcels in the R-3 district
- Vacant parcels in the HM district which allows residential development
- Potential subdividable residential parcels

Within the urban services boundary, there are approximately 20 potential residential development areas shown on this map, with most of them south of Maple Grove Road. Key access roads for these areas are Maple Grove Road, Ugstad Rd, Lavaque Rd, Hermantown Rd, and Morris Thomas Rd. Adding in key roadway connections in some of these areas will also increase the potential for residential development. There is significant potential residential development land in the Marketplace area and south along Keene Creek. Table 4.6 summarizes the amount of potential developable land in terms of number of acres.

TYPE OF LAND	ACRES
Unimproved residential land	82
R3 District residential vacant land	915
HM District potential residential vacant land	168
Potential subdividable land	472
Total potential developable land	1,637

Table 4.6 Potential Developable Residential Land

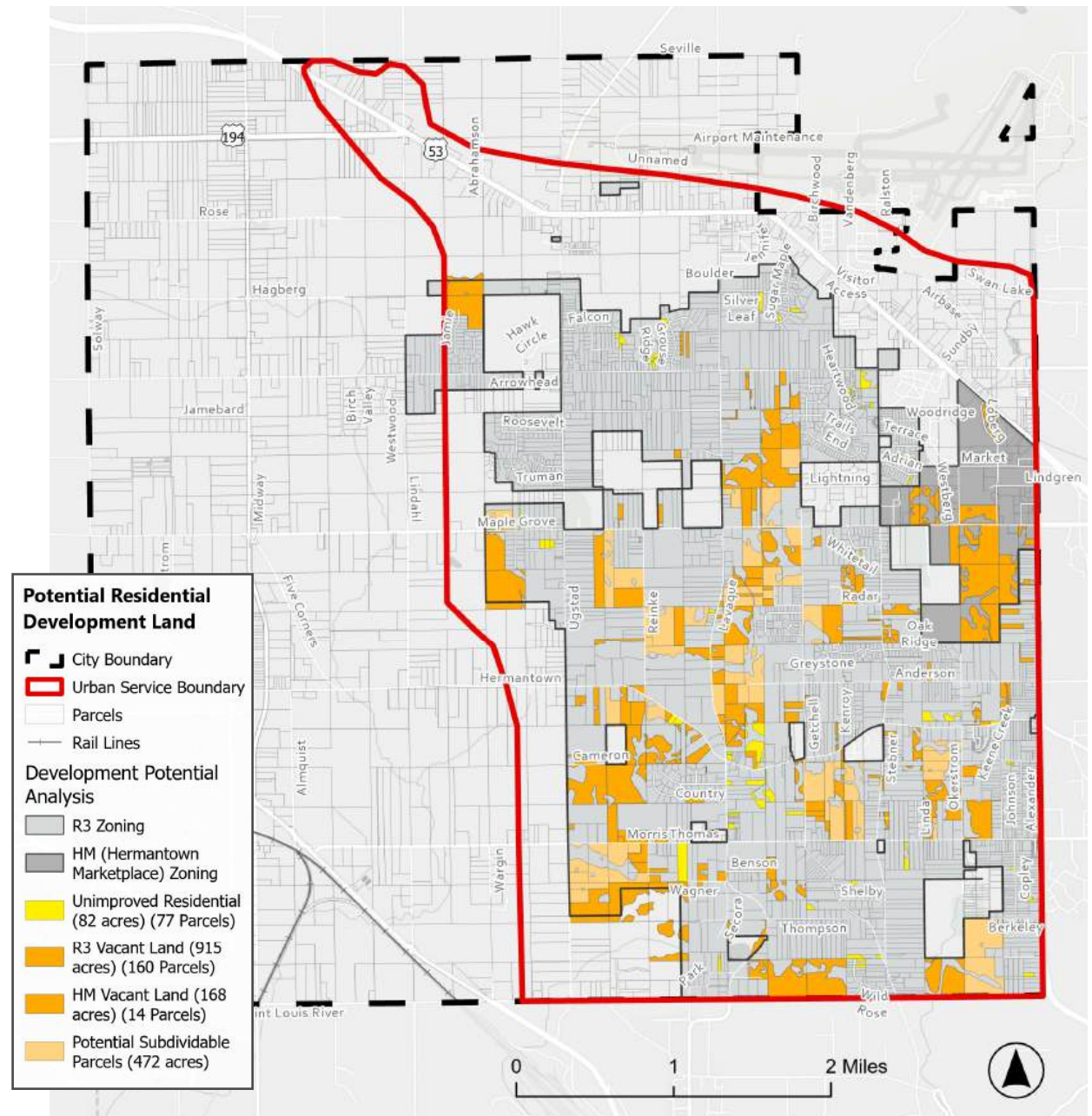


Figure 4.5 Potential Residential Development Land

There are already 1,083 acres of vacant land zoned for either residential or mixed use within the current Urban Services Boundary (USB). In order to meet the MIC projections of an additional 451 people – or 204 households – only 102 acres of land zoned for low density residential development would be needed. If minimum lot sizes were reduced in some areas, the amount of serviced land needed to support these new homes would be even less. Table 4.7 shows the amount of residential land needed based on alternative densities that could be allowed, including minimum lot sizes of 1/2, 1/4, or 1/8 acre.

This consideration is especially important when considering the large public costs needed to extend public infrastructure and expand the USB, including providing adequate roads, sewer, water, fire, and police protection. As long as residential growth can be accommodated within the current USB, these costs can be delayed until a point in the future where they become necessary. Since there is less vacant/developable land within the current USB for commercial, business, and industrial uses, USB expansion in the southwest area for these uses may make sense in the future.

	2045 POPULATION	NO. OF HOUSEHOLDS	CHANGE IN HOUSEHOLDS	ACRES OF LAND NEEDED		
				½ ACRE DENSITY	¼ ACRE DENSITY	1/8 ACRE DENSITY
MIC Plan	10,672	3,900	204	102	51	26
Medium Growth	11,550	4,230	534	267	134	67
High Growth	12,000	4,400	700	350	175	88

Table 4.7 Residential Land Needs for Household Projections



HIGHLIGHT

There are already **1,083 acres** of vacant land zoned for either residential or mixed use within the current urban services boundary. In order to meet the alternative growth projections in the table below - low, medium, and high growth - the amount of land needed depends upon the density of the residential development. **For the highest growth (700 households) at the lowest density (1/2 acre lots), 350 acres of developable land is needed.**





Sites for future growth/development

FUTURE LAND USES

Future land use designations are different from both existing land use classifications (which catalog what is there today) and zoning districts (which align properties with certain sets of regulations around specific permitted uses). Future land use designations, when applied through a map, identify:

- The preferred future character of an area and the general development density and intensity of land uses
- The desired mix of uses across the community
- The appropriate locations for the land use designations

Future land use designations are intended to represent the community's long-range vision and preferences, rather than its current regulatory environment.

Since the Zoning Code is one of the major implementation tools of the Comprehensive Plan, the Zoning Code and Zoning Map should ultimately be updated to be consistent with the future land use designations and the future land use map.

The 2001 Comprehensive Plan did not contain future land use designations nor a proper future land use map. The new designations were developed through discussions with staff and the Steering Committee.

Table 4.8 Future Land Use Designations

LAND USE DESIGNATION	DESCRIPTION
Rural Residential	Land guided for agricultural and rural large lot residential uses not connected to urban services with a maximum residential density of one dwelling unit per ten acres.
Suburban Residential	Land guided for single-unit detached dwellings, two-unit dwellings, and accessory dwelling units, connected to urban services with a maximum density of four units per net acre (minimum lot size of 1/4 acre).
Neighborhood Residential	Land guided for a mix of single-unit detached dwellings, multi-unit dwellings (up to four units), courtyard cottage/bungalow dwellings, townhouses, and accessory dwelling units, connected to urban services.
Corridor Residential	Land guided for a mix of multi-unit dwellings (up to four units), townhouses, and apartment buildings connected to urban services.

LAND USE DESIGNATION	DESCRIPTION
Mixed Use	Land guided for the integration of more than one land use either vertically (e.g. multi-story buildings with residential, office, and/or hospitality uses above and commercial uses at street level) or horizontally as a planned development designed to integrate complementary uses. Land uses allowed are commercial businesses, offices, townhouses, apartments, parks, and institutions. Development should generally achieve a floor area ratio (FAR) greater than 1.0 and a minimum residential density of sixteen units per acre.
Commercial	Land guided for large and small-scale commercial business providing goods and services. This includes food and beverage, entertainment, offices, and regional-scale malls, shopping centers of various sizes, freestanding large-format stores, freestanding smaller businesses, multi-story office buildings, automobile dealerships, and institutions. Buildings should be scaled appropriately to the surrounding neighborhood with appropriate buffers and pedestrian connections provided between commercial areas and adjacent residential neighborhoods. Commercial areas are located in places with visibility and access from the regional highway system.
Business & Light Manufacturing	Land guided for the integration of commercial and industrial land uses which are compatible with each other, including office, light industrial, and retail/service uses. The intent of this land use category is to provide additional flexibility that supports the creation of significant employment centers, generally characterized by a broader diversity of jobs, higher development densities and jobs per acre, higher quality site and architectural design, and increased tax revenues.
Industrial	Land guided primarily for manufacturing, assembly, processing, packaging, warehousing, storage, distribution, or research and development of products, in order to provide employment opportunities and increase the city's tax base.
Public / Institutional	Land guided for public, semi-public, and private government, educational, religious, social, and healthcare facilities.
Park	Land guided for public parks (local, county, regional, state, and federal), playgrounds, and playfields.
Open Space	Land, both publicly and privately owned, preserved for open space uses and recognition of vital environmental resources including waterways, steep slopes, wetlands, and floodplains.
Right of Way	Land preserved for public and semi-public infrastructure such as road right-of-way, railroad right-of-way, energy plants, sanitary sewer facilities, water utilities, and similar uses.

These land use designations were applied across the city on the future land use map after examining both the existing land uses and the zoning map.

- The Rural Residential designation was applied outside of the urban services boundary, while the Suburban Residential designation was applied within it.
- Pockets of higher density housing (Neighborhood and Corridor Residential) were located along major roads in the central and eastern portion of the city.
- A flexible Mixed Use designation was assigned to the area zoned as the Hermantown Marketplace and for targeted locations along Highway 53.
- Miller Trunk Highway is the major Commercial corridor.
- Areas of Business & Light Manufacturing use are planned around the airport and also along Highway 2 in the southwest corner of the city.
- New Industrial uses are planned for the north end of Highway 53.
- A Public/Institutional designation is assigned to schools, municipal buildings, the airport, and the cemetery.
- Parks and other Open Spaces are spread throughout the community.

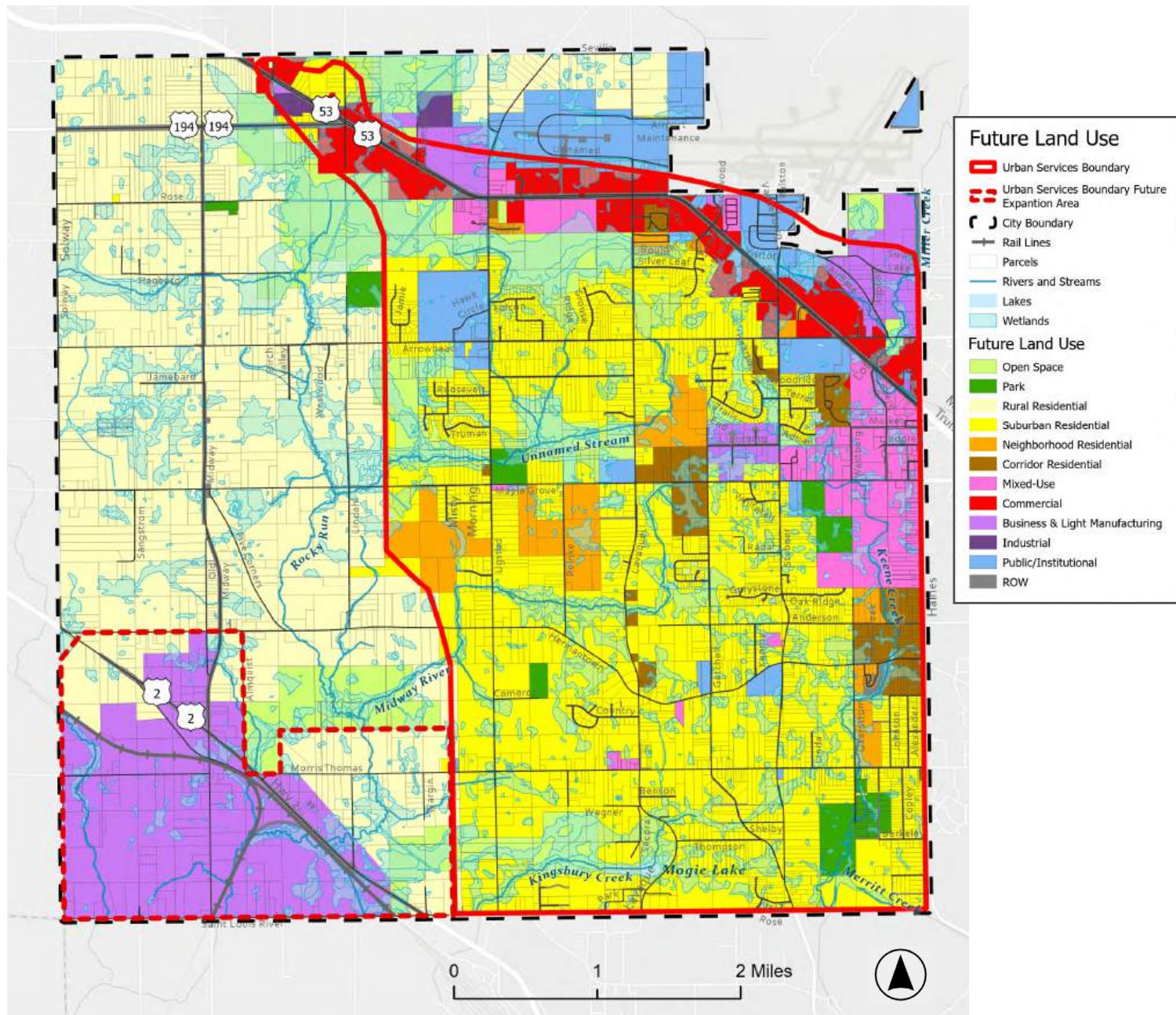


Figure 4.6 Future Land Use Map

Table 4.5 quantifies the future land use map by providing the total acres assigned to each land use designation, as well as the percent of the city's area within each category. The high percentage of lower density residential uses – Rural and Suburban Residential – at 59 percent demonstrate the vision to remain a community predominantly focused on residential neighborhoods. Parks and Open Space make up almost 11 percent of the land area, while roughly 14 percent is designed for Commercial, Business, and Industrial uses. The table also removes the 4,971 acres of land containing known wetlands to show the net acres assigned to each land use category.

FUTURE LAND USE	TOTAL ACRES	% OF TOTAL	NET ACRES	% OF TOTAL
Rural Residential	6,413	29.0%	5,149	30.0%
Suburban Residential	6,607	29.9%	5,308	31.0%
Neighborhood Residential	631	2.9%	548	3.2%
Corridor Residential	424	1.9%	345	2.0%
Mixed-Use	800	3.6%	679	4.0%
Commercial	735	3.3%	590	3.4%
Business & Light Manufacturing	2,208	10.0%	1,884	11.0%
Industrial	63	0.3%	53	0.3%
Public / Institutional	981	4.4%	846	4.9%
Park	309	1.4%	268	1.6%
Open Space	2,119	9.6%	719	4.2%
Right of Way	800	3.6%	747	4.4%
Total	22,092		17,134	

Table 4.9 Future Land Use Data

In order to evaluate the potential capacity of land designated as either residential or employment, the net acres of each were assigned a target density (residential uses) or intensity (employment uses). The tables below show how many households could be developed if all vacant and unimproved land guided for residential uses were developed at their maximum density, and how many square feet could be created if all vacant and unimproved land guided for employment uses were developed at their maximum intensity.

FUTURE LAND USE	NET ACRES	TARGET DENSITY	POTENTIAL HOUSEHOLDS
Suburban Residential	841	4 dwelling units/acre	3,366
Neighborhood Residential	279	15 dwelling units/acre	4,179
Corridor Residential	75	30 dwelling units/acre	2,253
Mixed-Use	176*	30 dwelling units/acre	2,641
Total	1,371		12,438

*Assume 50% of Mixed-Use acres are residential

Table 4.10 Residential Land Development Capacity, Connected to Urban Services (Rural Residential Not Included)

FUTURE LAND USE	NET ACRES	TARGET INTENSITY	POTENTIAL SQUARE FEET
Mixed-Use	176*	30%	1,150,335
Commercial	21	30%	277,465
Business & Light Manufacturing	471	40%	8,207,927
Industrial	0	50%	0
Total	520		9,635,727

*Assume 50% of Mixed-Use acres are nonresidential

Table 4.11 Nonresidential Land Development Capacity



Existing commercial

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goals and strategies were developed in consultation with the Steering Committee, HEDA, Planning Commission, and City Council with input from the public. Goals are broad statements that describe a desired outcome. Strategies describe the approach that would need to be taken to achieve the goals. Implementation actions are concrete steps that can be taken to reach the strategies and goals.

4.1. Guide the location and form of new development to ensure growth is managed in a sustainable manner and enhances Hermantown's existing hometown character.

- 4.1.1. Preserve and protect creeks, wetlands, forests, and prairie lands from unnecessary development.
- 4.1.2. Give priority to development projects that are located on vacant or underutilized sites with existing access to city utilities.
- 4.1.3. Support new developments that incorporate a mix of uses or create mixed use areas in the community.
- 4.1.4. Limit the extension of urban services (city sewer and water) to the western portion of the city for residential development while there is sufficient developable land available within the current urban services boundary to accommodate the city's projected population growth.
- 4.1.5. Consider the extension of urban services as a way to support economic development if suitable land is not available within the urban service boundary.
- 4.1.6. Assist private developers in the construction of infrastructure necessary to support development where past development has created service gaps.

4.2. Facilitate new residential development and new neighborhood types while minimizing any negative impacts on the character of existing neighborhoods.

- 4.2.1. Guide higher density residential development to major road corridors and other areas with convenient access to businesses, services, and recreation facilities.
- 4.2.2. Support new residential developments that expand the range of housing options in the community.
- 4.2.3. Give priority to development projects that incorporate a mix of housing types.
- 4.2.4. Use site design techniques and regulations that achieve the appropriate setbacks from roadways, preservation of natural areas, and tree planting to retain the community's rural character.
- 4.2.5. Update the zoning regulations to allow more medium and high density housing options.
- 4.2.6. Improve the bicycle and pedestrian network to create safe and enjoyable neighborhoods to bike and walk.

4.3. Focus the development of new business, light manufacturing, and industrial uses in designated areas with strategic highway access to create desirable environments for attracting and retaining businesses, increasing local job opportunities, and limiting impacts on residential areas.

- 4.3.1. Target growth and expansion of business, light manufacturing, and industrial uses in three general locations on the future land use map: west end of Hwy 53 (Hawkline Business Park), Haines Road north of Hwy 53 (south of the airport), and Hwy 2/Midway Road.
- 4.3.2. Guide sites for business, light manufacturing, and industrial that are large enough to accommodate large building footprints and employers.
- 4.3.3. Support designated business growth areas with access to city road, water, and sewer infrastructure.
- 4.3.4. Ensure that growth area sites are shovel-ready for new development in terms of road access, utilities (water, sewer, electricity, broadband), site preparation (e.g. soil and environmental tests), and land use/zoning regulations.
- 4.3.5. Investigate opportunities for city acquisition/assembly of land to accelerate economic development.
- 4.3.6. Facilitate site opportunities for business incubators/makerspaces.

4.4. Expand and diversify the city's range of commercial uses by filling in and expanding the community's key commercial and mixed use areas.

- 4.4.1. Identify and fill in underutilized commercial sites along the Hwy 53 corridor.
- 4.4.2. Continue to fill in and expand the Hermantown Marketplace area in order to increase the community's mix of commercial businesses.
- 4.4.3. As new residential development occurs, support commercial and mixed-use development at key intersections in the community.
- 4.4.4. Enhance gateway areas for the commercial areas and the community, such as Hwy 53/Haines Road, Maple Grove Road/Haines Road, and Hwy 2/Midway Road.



05. ECONOMIC & HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE

The Economic & Housing Development chapter provides guidance for maintaining, expanding, and attracting businesses as well as the future development of housing in the city.

Economic development involves the establishment of policies and programs that encourage business growth, job creation, and investment. This chapter documents current employment data in Hermantown, including the industries operating within the city and where people live and work. Through the work of the Hermantown Economic Development Authority (HEDA), actions can be prioritized that support a strong business climate and the factors that make Hermantown an attractive place for employers to locate.

To meet the changing needs of existing and future residents, it is critical that a full range of housing options – both owner-occupied and rental – be available at a range of price points. This chapter examines the state of housing within the city and identifies the current gaps that should be addressed going forward.



WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

- Encourage the construction of a wider range of housing options in the city
- Promote the Hermantown Marketplace as a location for new types of housing and commercial activity
- Support local businesses by advocating for the creation of workforce housing
- Recognize the importance of Highway 53 corridor as an economic driver for the community
- Encourage new commercial uses that serve neighborhoods



New Housing in Hermantown



Businesses in the Hermantown Marketplace

EXISTING ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Business activity in Hermantown is primarily focused along the Highway 53 corridor, with the largest concentration of jobs in the Hermantown Marketplace area north of Maple Grove Rd and west of Haines Rd. A number of retail, restaurants, services, and other commercial establishments are spaced along the highway as it heads north and west. Menards and Walmart are large employers located near the intersection with W Arrowhead Rd. A secondary employment corridor along Highway 2 in the southwest portion of the city accounts for a number of commercial jobs. The combination of the Hermantown school campuses and the Essentia Wellness Center at the intersection of W Arrowhead Rd and Ugstad Rd provide a centrally located employment node.



Buisnesses along Hwy 53

EMPLOYMENT FIGURES

The employment rate in Hermantown was estimated to be 63% in 2022, compared to 66% in Minnesota as a whole. Census data reveals there were around 4,517 jobs in Hermantown in 2022. The proportion of jobs by industry sector is shown in the table below:

INDUSTRY SECTOR	NUMBER OF JOBS	SHARE
Retail Trade	1,561	33.3%
Health Care and Social Assistance	698	14.9%
Educational Services	419	8.9%
Accommodation and Food Services	345	7.3%
Construction	291	6.2%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	225	4.8%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	197	4.2%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	196	4.2%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	190	4.0%
Manufacturing	99	2.1%
Finance and Insurance	95	2.0%
Public Administration	89	1.9%
Wholesale Trade	82	1.7%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	58	1.2%
Information	54	1.2%
Transportation and Warehousing	53	1.1%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	42	0.9%
Total	4,517	100.0%

Table 5.1 Hermantown Jobs by Industry Sector (2022)

EMPLOYMENT INFLOW AND OUTFLOW

531 people live and work in Hermantown, with an almost equal amount of inflow (3,986 employees who live outside of Hermantown) and outflow (3,902 residents who work outside of Hermantown).

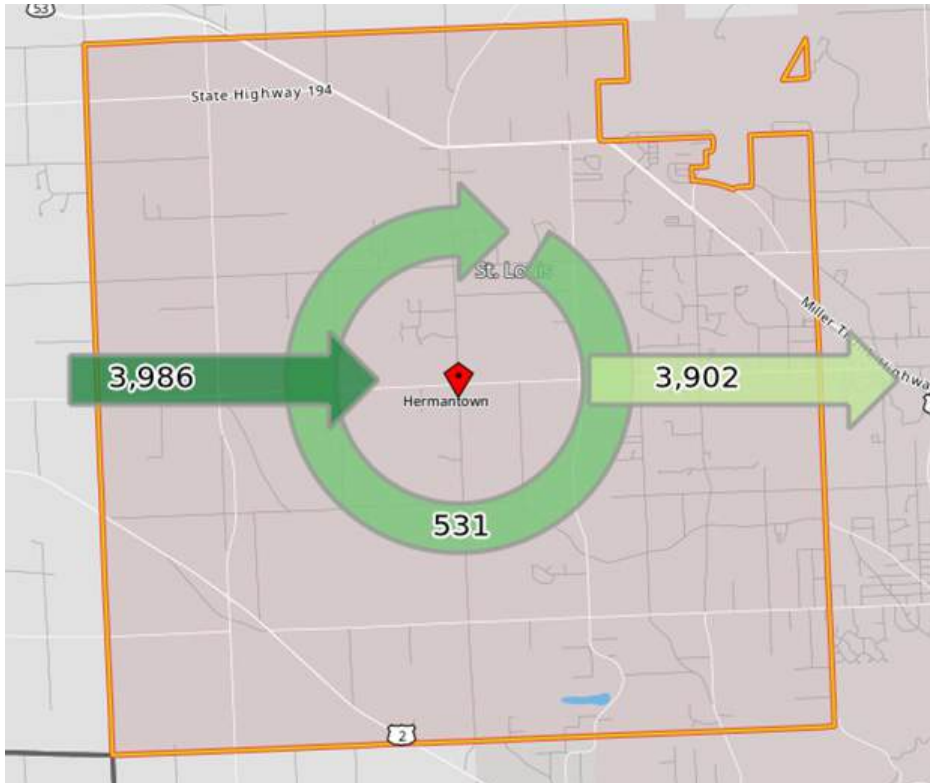


Figure 5.1 Employment Inflow and Outflow (2022)



New office building in Hermantown

WHERE HERMANTOWN WORKERS LIVE

60% of those who work in Hermantown live less than 10 miles from their place of employment, while another 16% live within 10 to 24 miles. Around 18% of workers in Hermantown live more than 50 miles from their place of work.

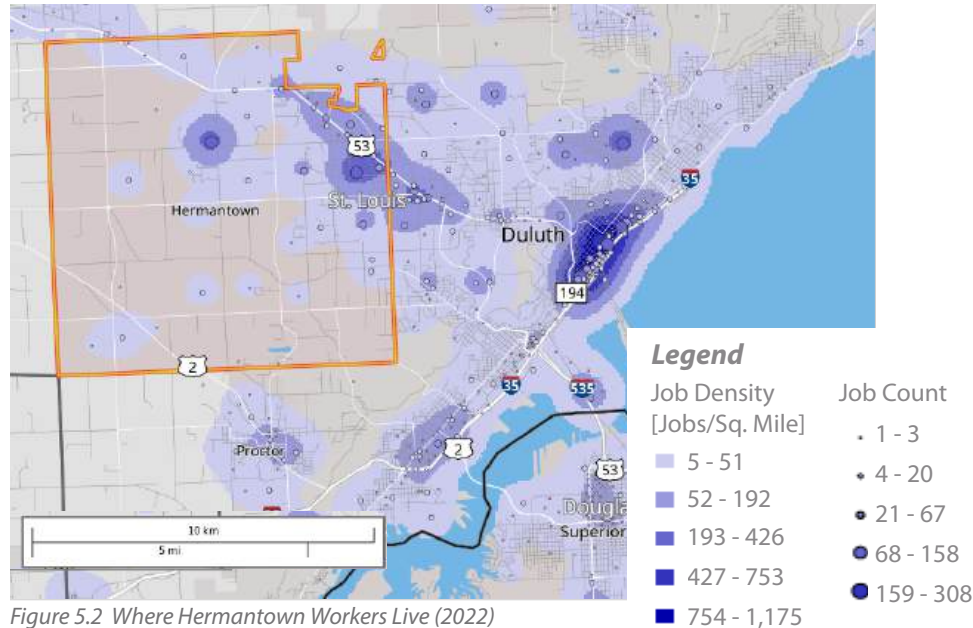


Figure 5.2 Where Hermantown Workers Live (2022)

WHERE WORKERS LIVE (2022)	NUMBER OF WORKERS	% OF TOTAL
Duluth	1,622	34.6%
Hermantown	586	12.5%
Superior	264	5.6%
Cloquet	112	2.4%
Proctor	107	2.3%
Rice Lake	101	2.2%
Esko CDP	27	0.6%
Two Harbors	26	0.6%
Hibbing	21	0.4%
St. Paul	21	0.4%
All Other Locations	1,807	38.5%
Total	4,694	100.0%

Table 5.2 Where Hermantown Workers Live (2022)

WHERE HERMANTOWN RESIDENTS WORK

74% of Hermantown residents who work travel less than 10 miles to get to their job. Another 7% travel between 10 and 24 miles. Around 17% of Hermantown residents live more than 50 miles from their place of work.

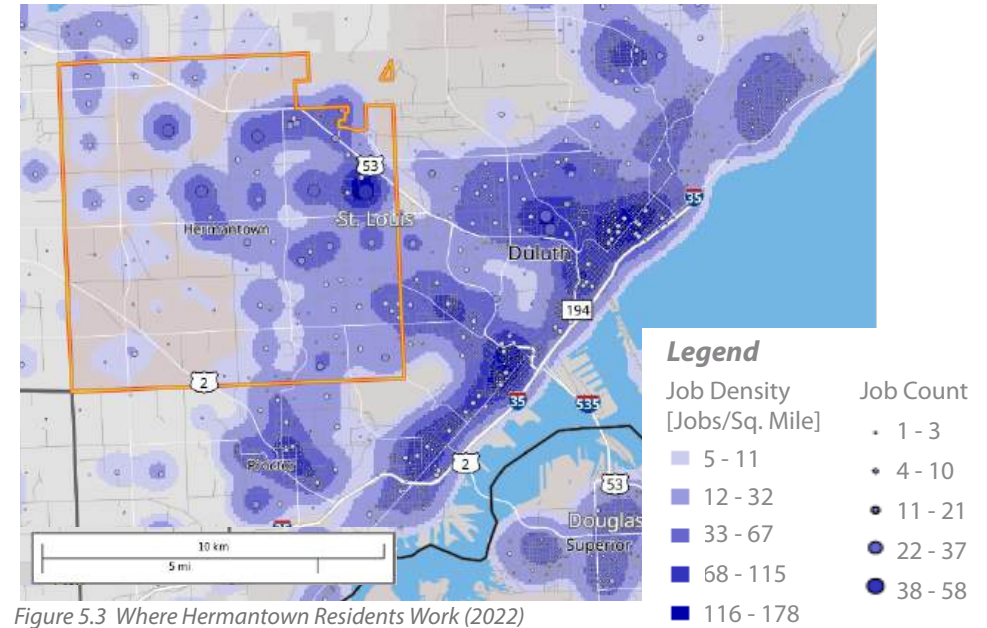


Figure 5.3 Where Hermantown Residents Work (2022)

WHERE RESIDENTS WORK (2022)	NUMBER OF RESIDENTS	% OF TOTAL
Duluth	2,338	52.5%
Hermantown	586	13.2%
Superior	260	5.8%
Cloquet	130	2.9%
Proctor	93	2.1%
Minneapolis	66	1.5%
Minnetonka	45	1.0%
Hibbing	39	0.9%
Rice Lake	35	0.8%
Bloomington	29	0.7%
All Other Locations	830	18.6%
Total	4,451	100.0%

Table 5.3 Where Hermantown Residents Work (2022)

YEAR	NUMBER OF WORKERS (LABOR FORCE)	NUMBER OF JOBS
2002	3,342	2,850
2003	3,449	3,229
2004	3,424	3,166
2005	3,283	3,718
2006	3,560	3,612
2007	3,756	3,296
2008	3,624	3,525
2009	3,207	3,882
2010	3,745	3,818
2011	4,587	3,968
2012	4,505	4,522
2013	4,703	4,496
2014	4,995	4,577
2015	4,764	4,985
2016	4,537	4,835
2017	4,804	4,913
2018	4,568	4,834
2019	4,559	5,084
2020	4,242	4,964
2021	4,433	4,517
2022	4,451	4,694

Table 5.4. Number of Jobs and Number of Workers in the Labor Force by Year (2022)

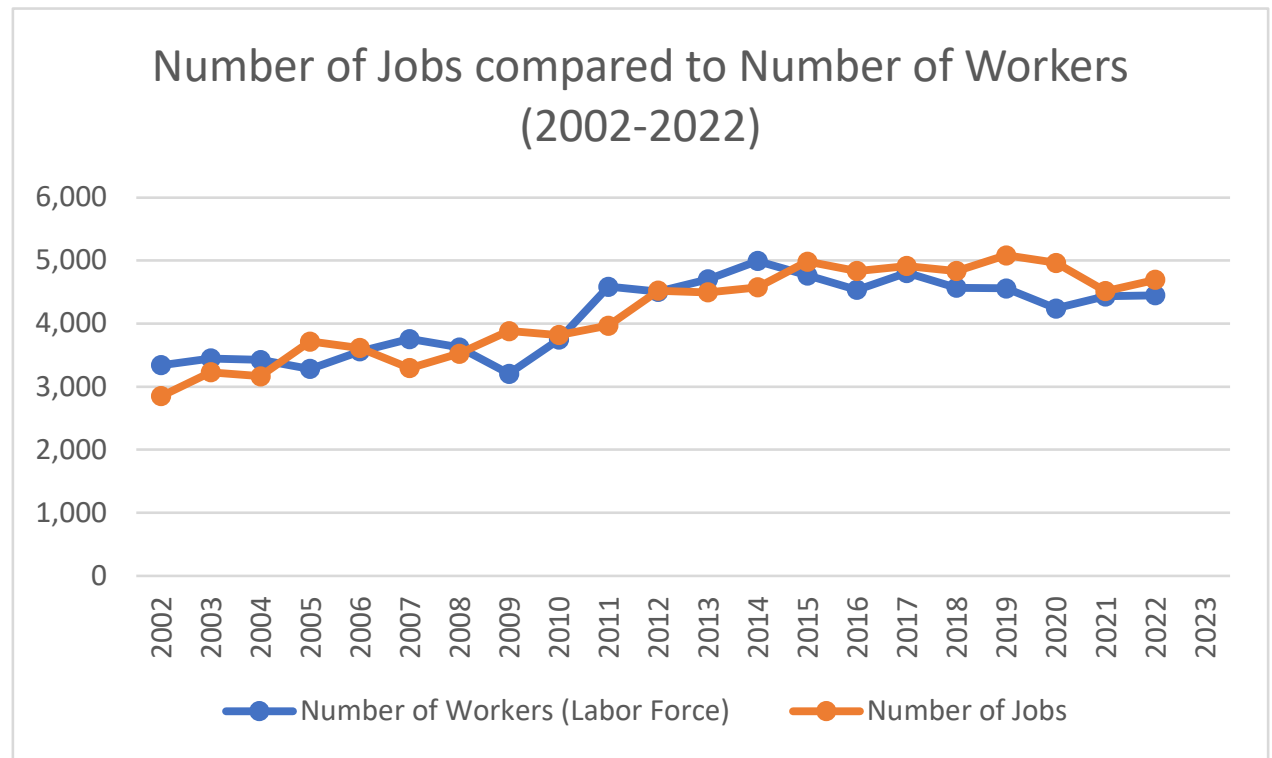


Figure 5.4 Number of Jobs and Number of Workers in the Labor Force by Year

LABOR FORCE TRENDS

The labor force has generally grown in line with population growth. Notable changes to the labor force occurred between 2007-2009 during the great recession when there was a 15% decline in the labor force, as well as between 2019-2020 when there was 7% decline during the COVID-19 pandemic.

JOB GROWTH TRENDS

The number of jobs in Hermantown will also impact the 2040 population projections. The number of jobs peaked at 5,084 in 2019, increasing by 2,234 jobs (+78%) over 2002. The number of jobs declined occasionally over the course of the last 20 years, with the only significant declines being in 2007 and after the 2019 peak during the COVID-19 pandemic. See Figure 5.4.

HIGHLIGHT

About **one third of the homes in Hermantown were built before 1980**, so are at least 45 years old. Almost **300 were built before 1940**.

76% of the city's occupied housing units are **owner-occupied** while **24%** are **rental** units.

EXISTING HOUSING CONTEXT

Today, the vast majority of homes are single-unit detached structures on moderate to large lots, with a smaller number of twinhomes, townhomes, and apartments mostly clustered near Hwy 53 and near the city's eastern border with Duluth. Census data indicates approximately 75% of the existing housing units are single-unit detached structures – roughly 21% of structures consist of two or more units. Figure 2.1 shows the pattern of existing housing types across the city.

EXISTING LAND USE	ACRES	PERCENT OF RESIDENTIAL
Unimproved Residential	205	2%
Single Family Residential	11,543	95%
Medium Density Residential	209	2%
High Density Residential	178	1%

Table 5.5 Residential Land Uses

The character of most of the residential neighborhoods is suburban or rural. Given the typical one mile spacing of the roadway network in much of the community, homes are often sited somewhat close to the main roadways on large lots with large expanses of open space located in the interior of the large blocks. More recent housing development has been in the form of subdivisions that branch off main roadways with somewhat smaller lots. Outside of the urban services boundary, housing is more rural with larger lots that accommodate on-site septic systems and wells.

Census data shows almost 30% of households in Hermantown are considered to be cost-burdened, in that at least 30% of household income is being spent on housing costs, including rent, mortgage and other housing needs. Cost-burdened housing typically results from a combination of lower incomes and a shortage of affordable homes. This impact is usually felt disproportionately by renters over home-owners.

The number of households in Hermantown has been growing steadily throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s. However, based on national and state projections, the growth rate is anticipated to slow down over the next 20 years. In 2020, the U.S. Census counted 3,696 households. By 2045, the number of households is projected to grow to at least 3,900 and possibly to 4,400.

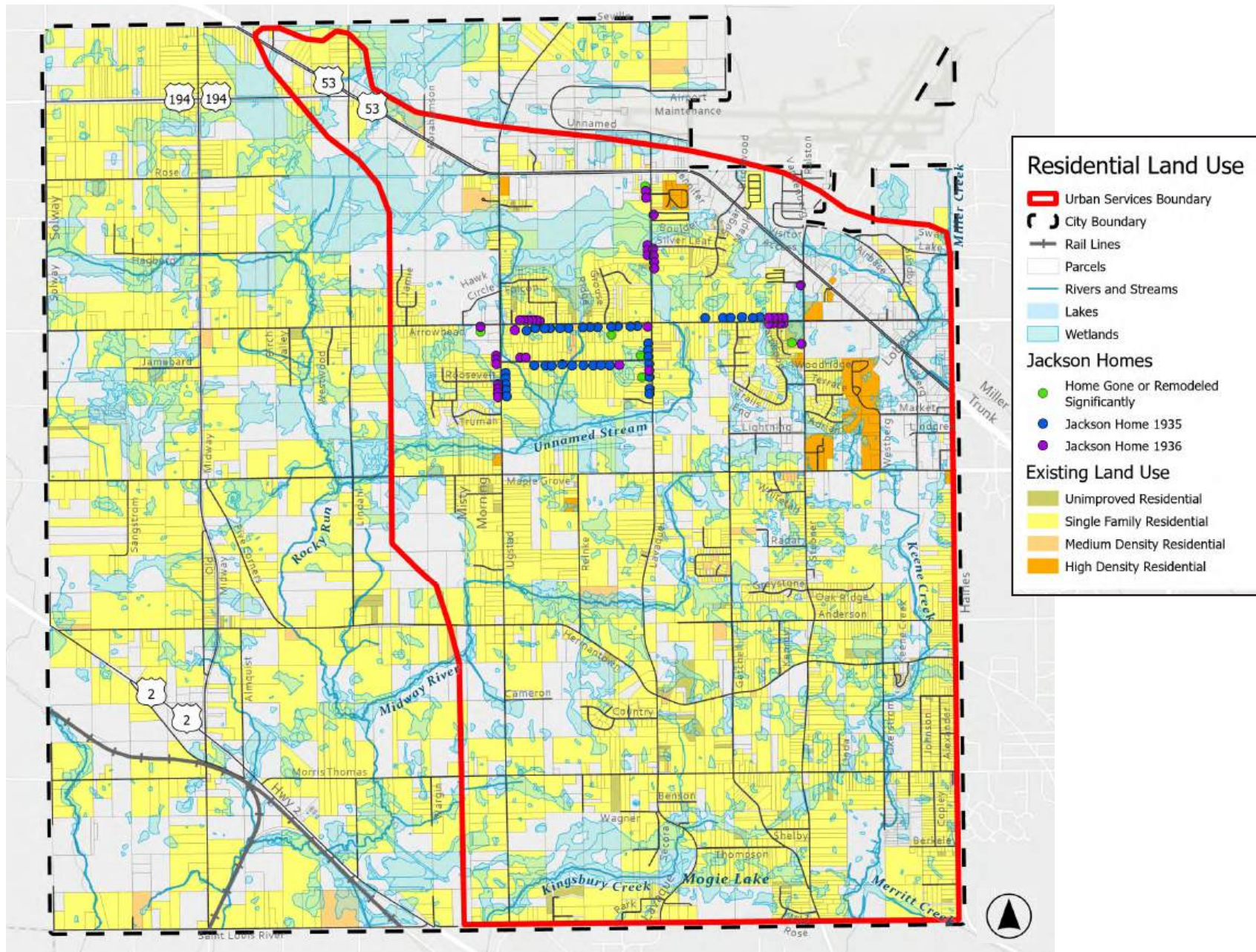


Figure 5.5 Existing Residential Land Use Map

HOUSING TYPES

The term “Missing Middle Housing” typically refers to middle density housing or multiple homes on individual lots ranging from two to 16 homes, depending on the context. This is a market segment that has lagged behind other housing in the United States in recent decades due to restrictions in zoning or other land use regulations.

Housing at this density may come in a variety of types or layouts, with both rental and ownership opportunities. A higher number of units included in a project can drive down the cost of any one unit, increasing affordability and reducing the expense of exterior maintenance and upkeep. This expansion of housing options aids the local housing market.



SINGLE-UNIT DETACHED

Homes on smaller lots offering opportunities for more affordable and/or lower maintenance housing choices.



ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU)

A smaller, self-contained unit that is legally part of a lot that contains another home. ADUs may be internal, attached to a home, incorporated into a detached garage, or a separate detached structure.



TWO-TO FOUR-UNIT ATTACHED

Multiple units in the same structure. Units may be side by side or lower/upper levels and could separate or shared entries.



COURTYARD COTTAGES/ BUNGALOWS

A group of smaller detached homes that are built close together and located around a common open space which could include a shared lawn, garden, or walking path.



TOWNHOMES

A group of attached homes that creates greater density while providing for defined, separated living spaces in an efficient design. The property could include a shared lawn, garden, or walking paths.



SENIOR LIVING

Units in a variety of layouts or building types that are limited to individuals 55 or older. Those who live here may be independent, need a lower-level of services provided (assisted living), or require high-level 24-hour care due to dementia or other health issues (memory care, nursing home).



APARTMENT

A multi-unit building with multiple floors, similar in height to surrounding buildings, and with a shared building entry. Some walk-up units may have individual entrances.

Table 5.6 lists these housing types and indicates which of Hermantown's residential future land use designations might be appropriate for each. As the City zoning code is updated over time, the zoning districts should be adjusted to allow a wider variety of homes.

HOUSING TYPE	RURAL RESIDENTIAL	SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL	NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL	CORRIDOR RESIDENTIAL	MIXED-USE RESIDENTIAL
Single-unit detached	X	X	X		
Accessory Dwelling Unit	X	X	X		
Two-unit attached (duplex/twinhome)	X	X	X		
Courtyard cottage/bungalow		X	X		
Three- or four-unit attached			X	X	
Townhomes			X	X	X
Senior Living			X	X	X
Small apartment building				X	X
Large apartment building				X	X

Table 5.6 Housing Types by Future Land Use Designation

An increase in the diversity of housing available to individuals and families will not only provide more options for those looking to live and work in Hermantown, but the greater density will also consume less land and delay the need to expand the urban service boundary to the west. Construction of new housing must occur in coordination with infrastructure improvements, such as road and utility upgrades, to ensure impacts are managed and congestion or capacity issues avoided.

Jackson Project Homes

Hermantown is home to a unique and historic housing initiative dating back to the 1930s. In an effort to address a shortage of affordable housing in the area, the United States government began the Duluth Homestead Project (also called the Jackson Project) in 1936. The United States Resettlement Administration purchased 1,220 acres of land in what would become Hermantown to construct 84 homes for qualified families.

Construction of the first 40 homes began in 1936. Each lot had five or ten acres of farmland and an identical 20 foot by 30 foot structural footprint. The homes were wood frame with a brick exterior, and there were one and two story options. A second batch of 44 homes were similar but included garages and barns.

Move-in began in April of 1937 and all homes were occupied by the spring of 1938. In 1939, the families formed the Duluth Homestead Association, Inc., and ten years later liquidated all remaining government debt. The structures were customized and adapted over time, but are still recognizable. 82 of the original 84 homes are occupied today, and represent a significant piece of Hermantown's history.





FUTURE GROWTH

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

As covered in Chapter 4: Land Use, Hermantown is expected to face only modest growth over the next 20 years. A projected 5.5% rate of growth equates to approximately 204 new households. Given the amount of vacant land within the urban services boundary that exists today, there is more than enough capacity to meet this demand. However, since the vast majority of the existing housing is in single family detached structures, future construction should be strategically targeted to provide other options in terms of housing type and affordability.

Future housing needs in Hermantown should address the following:

- Housing for employees of existing and new businesses, which will support the growth and recruitment of new businesses and jobs to Hermantown as well as the expansion of existing Hermantown businesses
- Housing options that meet some people's preferences for homes and neighborhoods that have convenient access to nearby parks, trails, businesses, and other community destinations, particularly via pedestrian and bicycling facilities
- Increase of housing options that are affordable to more people, including smaller households (e.g. one- and two-person households), older households looking for smaller homes and less maintenance needs, a broader range of household incomes, and existing cost-burdened households

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As Hermantown looks to its future and contemplates how best to support existing businesses and attract new ones, it can utilize the results of three economic development initiatives in recent years.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The Hermantown Economic Development Authority (HEDA) hired a business development consultant in 2021 to conduct strategic planning with the city. This process resulted in a three-year plan to guide economic development work following five strategic directions:

Promoting the community for investment. This strategy focuses on the importance of messaging with a unified marketing approach in order to compete for business growth.

Comprehensive planning for targeted growth. This strategy recognizes the need for an updated Comprehensive Plan to help clearly identify and guide potential growth areas and to consider new zoning districts.

Positioning and providing infrastructure for development. This strategy emphasizes the importance of physical infrastructure in economic development, and looks to expand broadband alongside water, sewer, and gas services.

Creating a growth environment and tools for businesses. This strategy prioritizes securing resources to support business needs while streamlining the development process.

Establishing a diverse, livable community with a sense of place. This strategy highlights the need to market Hermantown as a desirable community in which to both work and live.

BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION STUDY

Following the creation of the Strategic Plan, HEDA hired the consultant to conduct surveys with local business to understand their thoughts on the business climate, broader community conditions, and the positives and challenges of doing business in Hermantown.

These were a few of the key observations:

- Location is a big advantage. Highway 53 is important, but access, safety, and other improvements must be priorities.
- The small town feel of Hermantown is a positive.
- Availability of utilities is important (landline/cell/electric/broadband/water/sewer).
- Fielding a workforce is challenging; employees can't find housing they can afford.
- A notable challenge is the lack of a community gathering place, such as a central park or a downtown.
- A number of businesses are concerned about costs – sales tax, water/sewer fees, storm water tax, and other business expenses.

HERMANTOWN BUSINESS PARK

In 2022, the City began the process of conducting an Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) for approximately 120 acres of land northwest of the intersection of Highway 53 and Ugstad Road for a potential future business park. This area would include development of up to 22 new buildings ranging in size from 7,800 to 299,000 square feet. Proposed uses would include light industrial, warehousing, and commercial office and retail. Access roads, sewer and water, and stormwater management ponds would also be included in the development.

The purpose of an AUAR is to assess the cumulative impacts of anticipated development within a geographic area and how it might affect the environment in order to guide decision making around land use, zoning, and infrastructure. The Hermantown Business Park AUAR was completed in November of 2023 and adopted by the City Council the following month. A zoning ordinance creating a new 45 acre Business Park zoning district was adopted in January of 2024.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THEMES



SUPPORT EXISTING BUSINESSES

- Maintain/provide infrastructure (utilities, broadband, roads, etc.)
- Offer business tools
- Support the creation of workforce housing for employees



ATTRACT NEW BUSINESSES

- Pursue a wider variety of businesses
- Zone land appropriately
- Engage in targeted marketing
- Develop business-friendly development process



FOSTER A SENSE OF PLACE

- Keep Hermantown a desirable place to work and live in order to attract workers and customers
- Support Hermantown Marketplace as a destination
- Create civic amenities



GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goals and strategies were developed in consultation with the Steering Committee, HEDA, Planning Commission, and City Council with input from the public. Goals are broad statements that describe a desired outcome. Strategies describe the approach that would need to be taken to achieve the goals. Implementation actions are concrete steps that can be taken to reach the strategies and goals.

HOUSING

5.1. Promote the development of a wider variety of housing types in the community.

- 5.1.1. Increase the quantity of housing available for workers of future new businesses and business expansions.
- 5.1.2. Support development of housing types that accommodate the range of household sizes and lifestyle preferences of existing and future residents.
- 5.1.3. Diversify the range of housing price levels to meet the needs of all residents.
- 5.1.4. Provide public amenities supportive to existing and new housing types, such as convenient access to walkable streets, trails, parks, and businesses.

5.2. Reduce barriers to the development of new housing.

- 5.2.1. Eliminate barriers in the zoning regulations.
- 5.2.2. Allow higher residential densities while retaining the community's overall suburban/small town character.
- 5.2.3. Plan for and provide municipal infrastructure expansion to support housing development, including roadways, sanitary sewer, water, stormwater, and broadband services.

5.3. Promote maintenance and reinvestment in existing housing as the city's housing stock ages.

- 5.3.1. Explore partnership and funding opportunities that support rehabilitation and expansions of existing homes to meet lifecycle maintenance needs and changing housing market conditions.
- 5.3.2. Support preservation of the historic homes of the Jackson Homes Project.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

5.4. Market the city to attract new businesses that contribute to a unique and dynamic economy within the region.

- 5.4.1. Pursue a city marketing strategy to attract new businesses and spur growth.
- 5.4.2. Create identifiable zones/districts for desirable business types and potential growth areas.
- 5.4.3. Create a strong sense of identity in Hermantown's business corridors.

5.5. Prepare land and infrastructure so that it is shovel-ready for new development.

- 5.5.1. Zone land sufficient to support demand for commercial, industrial, and mixed use development.
- 5.5.2. Extend city water, sewer, and gas in coordination with broadband growth.
- 5.5.3. Develop tools for business growth and retention and streamline the regulatory processes.

5.6. Attract and retain a labor force to strengthen businesses, provide services, and support tourism efforts.

- 5.6.1. Support housing strategies that will generate workforce housing opportunities.
- 5.6.2. Continue to improve community amenities and activities to create a welcoming environment for new residents.



06. TRANSPORTATION & UTILITIES

PURPOSE

The Transportation & Utilities chapter provides high level and long-range guidance for Hermantown's transportation networks, including roadways for automobile and freight, bus transit, rail, aviation, and non-motorized travel – both bicycle and pedestrian. It also includes utilities such as sanitary sewer, water supply, broadband, and stormwater management. This chapter examines existing conditions and projects future needs based on patterns of usage and expected growth. The goals and strategies listed at the end of the chapter should be used to help make decisions regarding public and private investment in infrastructure.



WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

- Traffic control to reduce congestion is required at key locations
- Many heavily used roads are in need of repair
- There are safety concerns for bicyclists and pedestrians along some roads, including near the ISD 700 campus
- Lack of compliance with stops signs and stoplights presents a danger to others
- Complete sanitary sewer extensions to serve existing neighborhoods
- Extend high speed internet so it is available to all
- Build infrastructure to support new housing for working families



Typical local roadway in Hermantown

HIGHLIGHT

There are over 130 miles of active roadway in Hermantown.

EXISTING CONTEXT

ROADWAYS

Two major highways cross Hermantown – Highway 53 (Miller Trunk Highway) in the northern part of the city and Highway 2 in the southwest. While Highway 53 provides access to a number of commercial and industrial businesses, Highway 2 serves primarily as a travel and freight route between Duluth and communities further north and west. Highway 2 and Midway Road are used by regional residents traveling between Interstate 35 to the south and Highway 53 to the north. In addition, Highway 194 follows Highway 53 across most of the city, but diverges near the western municipal boundary.

A number of county state aid highways (CSAH) pass through at least a portion of Hermantown, but only five main roads span the entire width or length – Midway, Lavaque, Haines, Maple Grove, and Morris Thomas. Municipal roads are spaced roughly every mile to provide local access, which results in a 1-mile grid of roadways throughout the city generally.

ROADWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS

Functional classification is the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes according to the type of service they are intended to provide. Individual streets and highways do not function independently – most travel involves movement through a network of roadways. This travel is served by a hierarchy of roadways within the transportation network. Functional classification defines the role any one street or highway plays in distributing the flow of trips throughout the network. Hermantown has four functional classifications of roads: principal arterials, minor arterials, major collectors, and local streets.

PRINCIPAL ARTERIALS

Principal arterials carry the highest traffic volumes and serve the majority of the trips entering or leaving Hermantown. They typically connect regional commercial and employment centers with residential areas. They are high-speed facilities that also serve as primary bus transit routes and generally have controlled or restricted points of access. Principal arterials in Hermantown include Highway 53, Highway 2, and Highway 194.

MINOR ARTERIALS

Minor arterial roadways accommodate trips of moderate length at lower speeds and with lower traffic volumes. Four of the main roads that cross Hermantown – Midway Rd, Lavaque Rd, Maple Grove Rd, Morris Thomas Rd, Lavaque Bypass Rd, Airbase Rd/W Arrowhead Rd – are minor arterials, though a few other short segments are classified as arterials as well.

MAJOR COLLECTORS

Roadways that are major collectors provide a balance between access and mobility. They provide the links that move local traffic to and from the arterial system, and often support retail or other commercial areas. Arrowhead Rd, Ugstad Rd, Stebner Rd, and Hermantown Rd are the three primary major collectors.

LOCAL STREETS

All other streets in Hermantown are classified as local streets. Local streets provide the highest level of direct access and therefore carry the lowest traffic volumes at the lowest speeds.

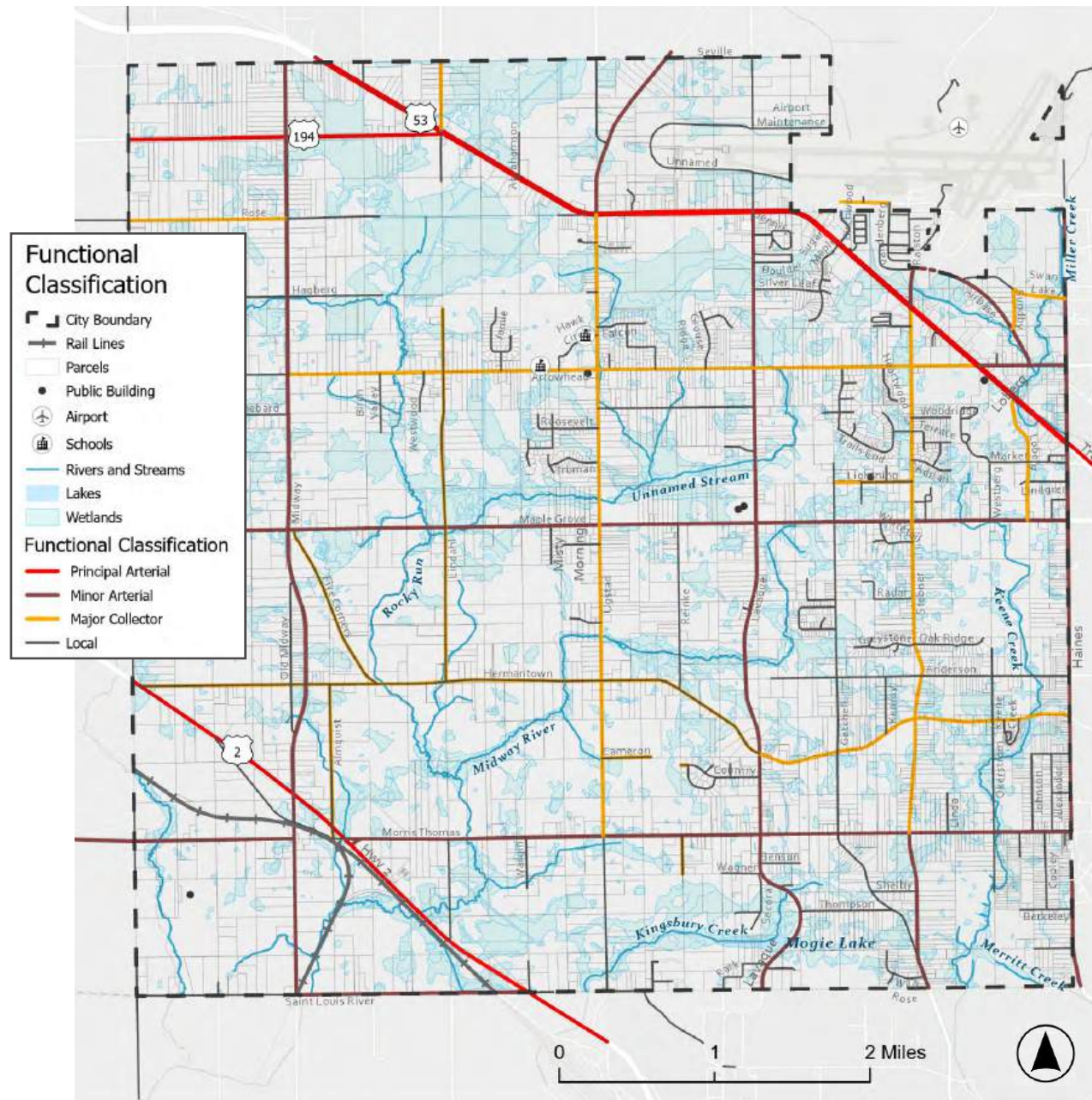


Figure 6.1 Roadway Functional Classifications



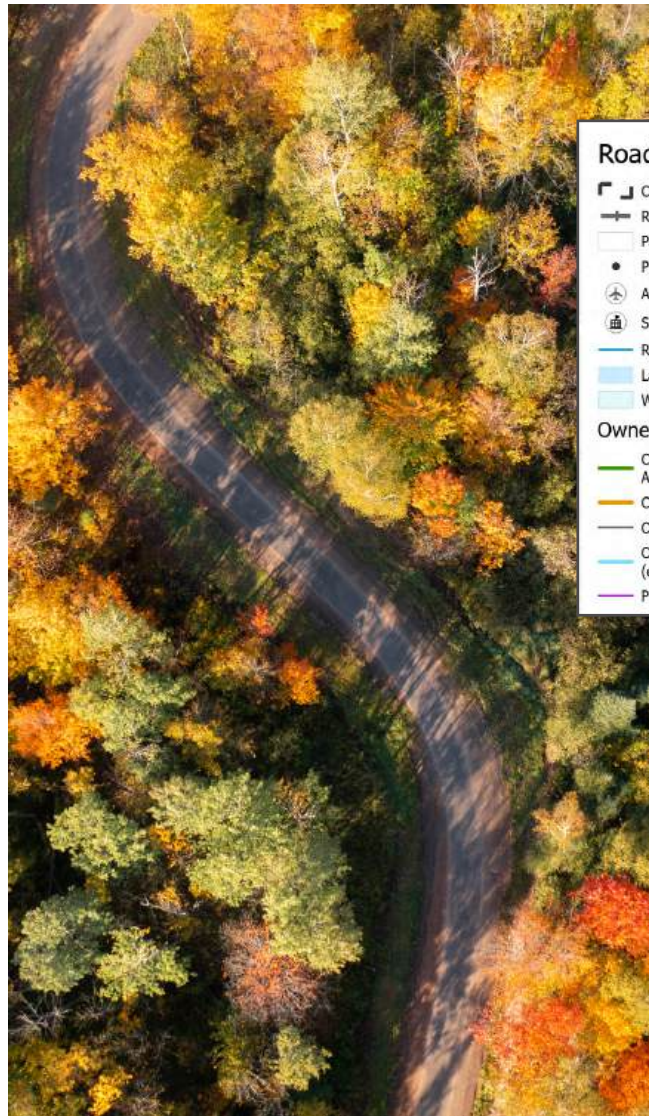
Roundabout intersection at Midway Rd and Maple Grove Rd



Typical collector roadway in Hermantown

ROADWAY JURISDICTION

Jurisdiction (ownership) over Hermantown's roadways is divided between a number of different levels of government or other agencies, including the State, County, City, and airport, as well as some private roads.



Roadway Ownership

- City Boundary
- Rail Lines
- Parcels
- Public Building
- Airport
- Schools
- Rivers and Streams
- Lakes
- Wetlands

Ownership

- City or Municipal Highway Agency
- County Highway Agency
- Other Local Agency
- Other Public Instrumentality (e.g., Airport)
- Private (other than Railroad)

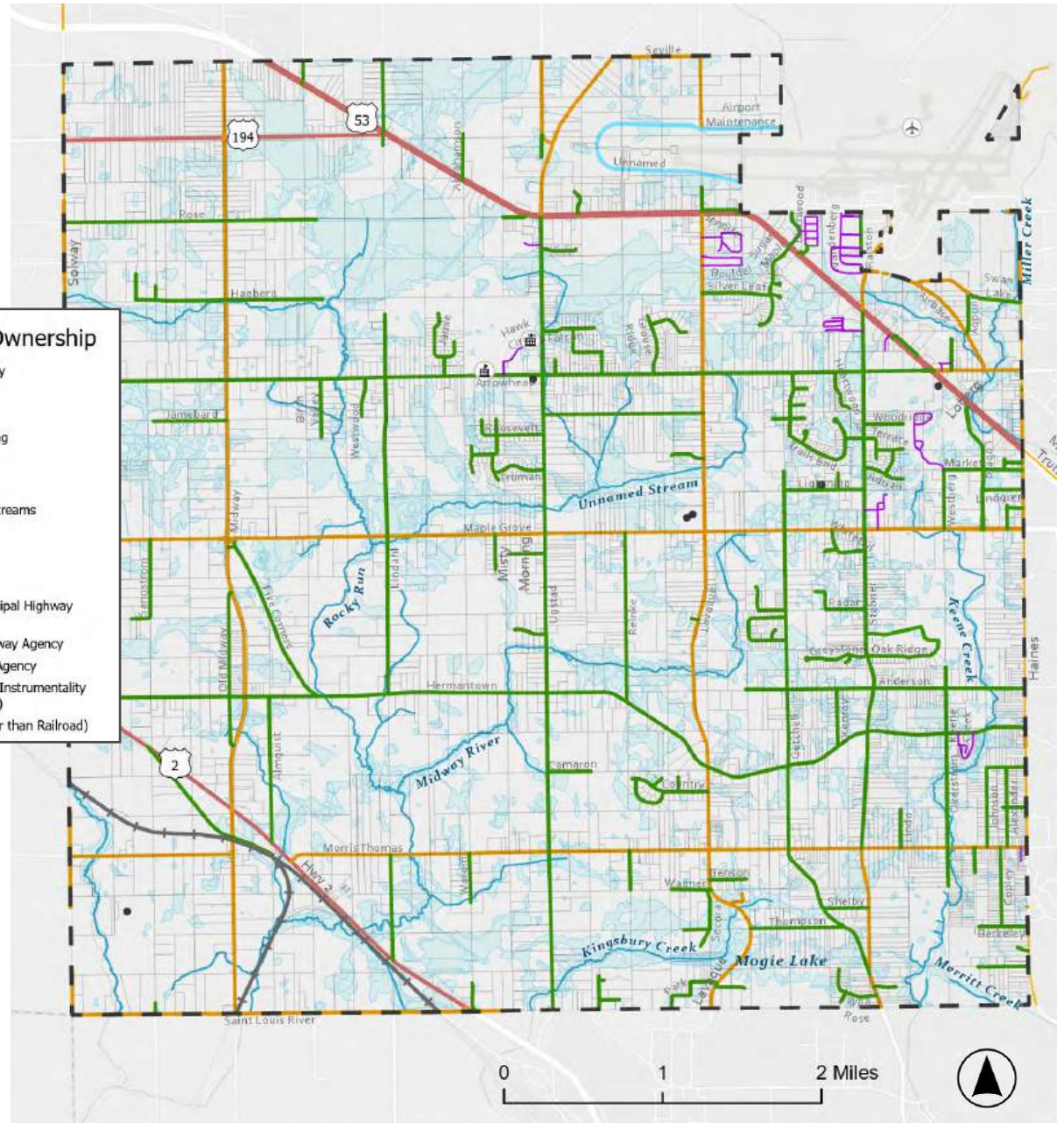
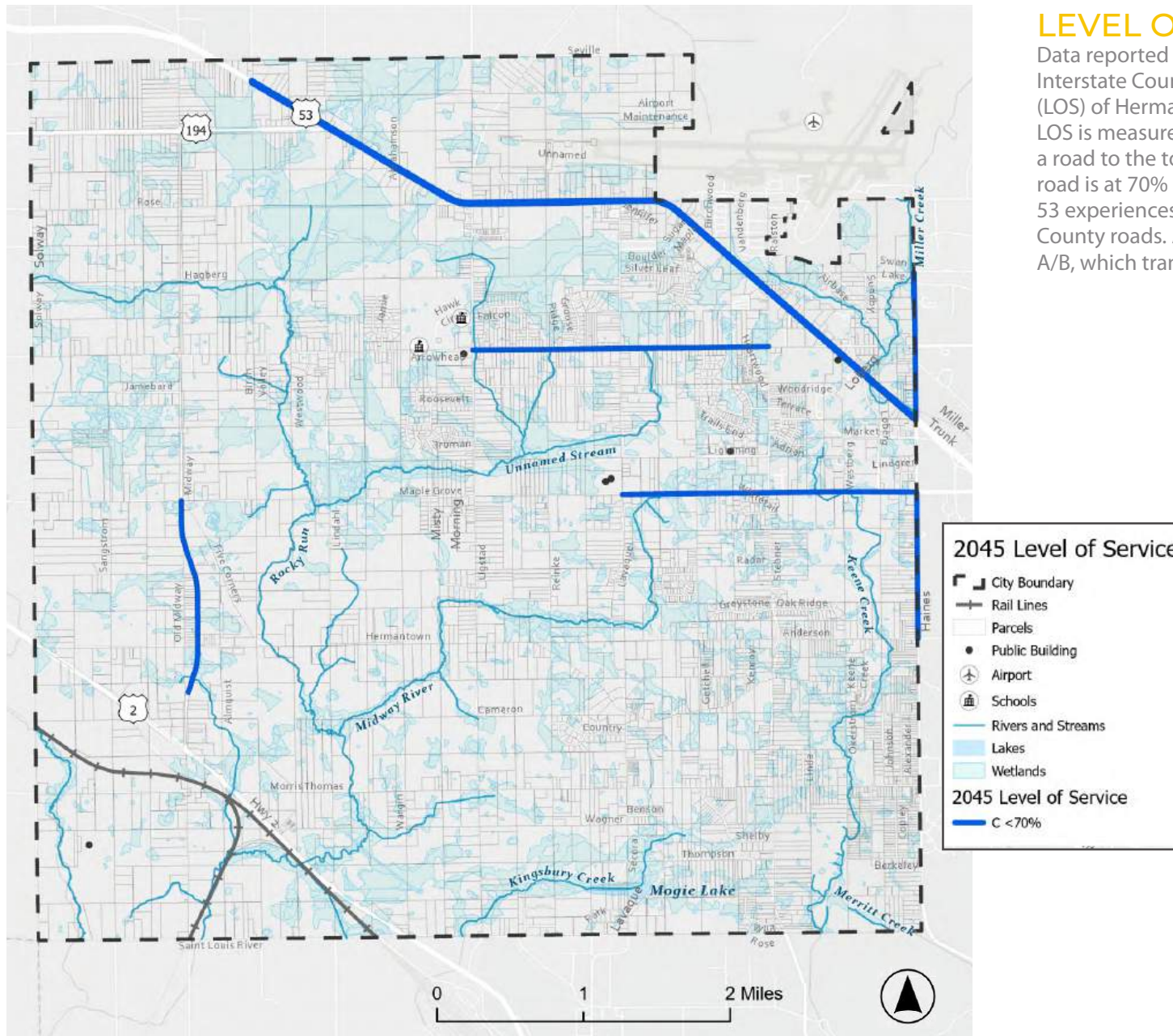


Figure 6.2 Roadway Jurisdictions



LEVEL OF SERVICE

Data reported by the Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council (MIC) shows that the Level of Service (LOS) of Hermantown roads is generally acceptable. LOS is measured by comparing the total capacity of a road to the total daily traffic. A LOS C means the road is at 70% or less of its total capacity. Highway 53 experiences LOS C, as do a few other stretches of County roads. All other roads in the city operate at LOS A/B, which translates to 50% or less of total capacity.

Figure 6.3 Roadway Level of Service (LOS)

NON-MOTORIZED MOVEMENT BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

There are a handful of roadways in the eastern portion of Hermantown that provide sidewalks for pedestrian and bicycle movement, as well as off-road trails connecting parks, open spaces, and other community destinations. Along many roadways, the sidewalk is provided on one side only – though in newer developments and where roadways have been reconstructed, sidewalks have been added to both sides.

The existing sidewalk network primarily follows the principal arterial and major collector roadways, connecting commercial and business areas to other destinations such as schools, City Hall, and various parks and athletic fields. A number of existing trails provide access to open spaces – along Keene Creek, for example, in the southeastern portion of the city.



Existing pedestrian crosswalk and signage

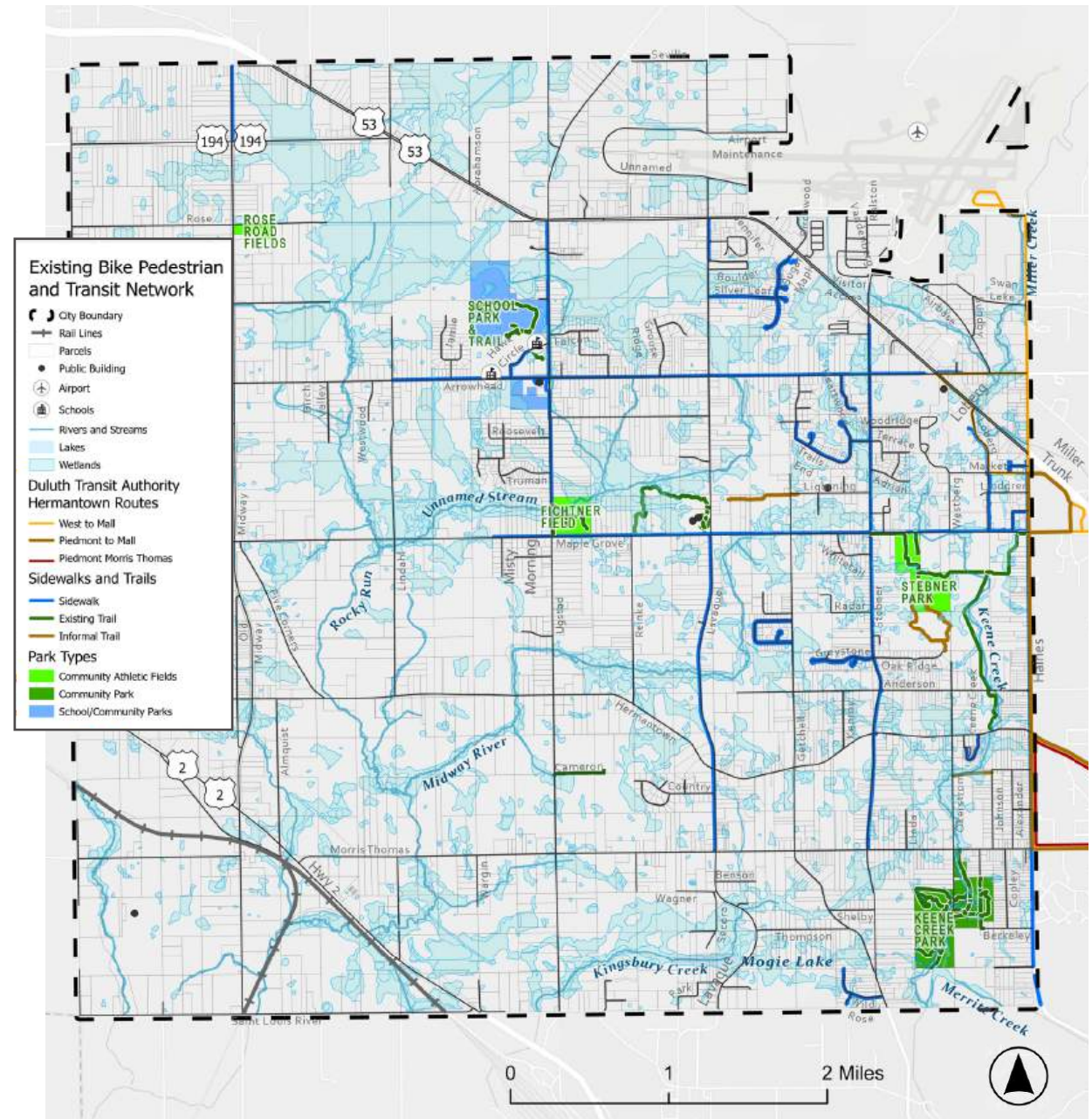


Figure 6.4 Existing Bike, Pedestrian, and Transit Network



Existing hiking trail and wayfinding sign



Duluth Transit Authority Bus



Canadian National Railroad

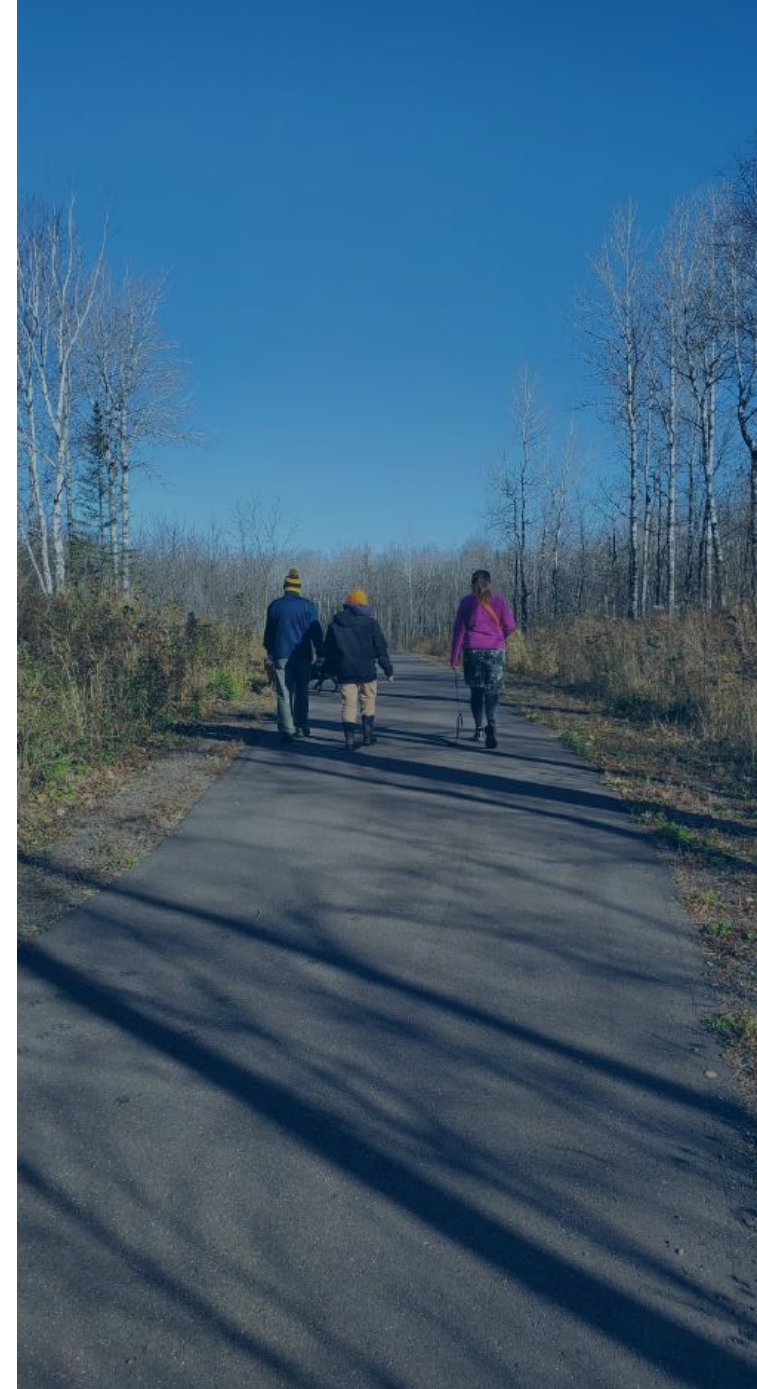
TRANSIT

Two bus lines serve Hermantown. The Duluth Transit Authority, which provides routes throughout Duluth and Superior, has two routes that extend into Hermantown. The 108 travels along Highway 53 and then heads north to the Duluth International Airport. Service is every hour. The 102 (Green Line) connects the Duluth Transit Center with the Miller Hill Mall and the Walmart in Hermantown. Service is every 30 minutes.

Arrowhead Transit provides daily Miller Hill Mall bus service as well as limited service to Rice Lake City Hall. Dial-A-Ride service is also available.

RAIL

A Canadian National Railroad line parallels Highway 2 in the southwest corner of the city, connecting the port in Duluth with other parts of the Iron Range.



Pedestrians walking along existing paved trail in Keene Creek Park

AVIATION

The Duluth International Airport is located at the northeastern corner of the city, partially within the city limits. The airport serves approximately 300,000 passengers per year and has daily flights to Minneapolis-St. Paul and Chicago. Parts of Hermantown near the airport are subject to the requirements of the Airport Zoning Ordinance, which was created by the Airport Joint Zoning Board. The purpose of the ordinance is to restrict uses which may be hazardous to the operational safety of aircraft and to limit population and building density in the runway approach areas.



Duluth International Airport

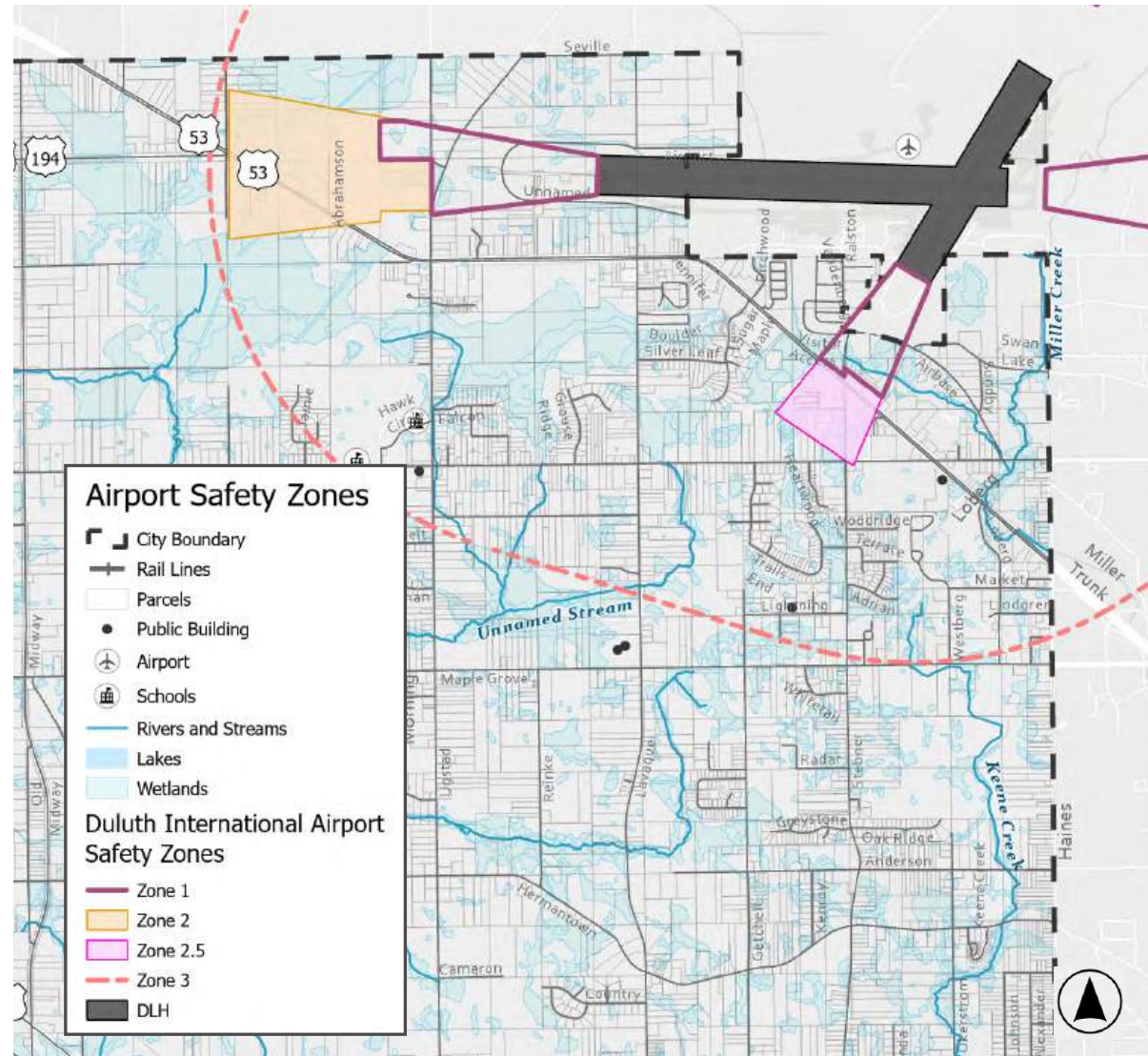


Figure 6.5 Airport Development Constraints

FUTURE INFRASTRUCTURE

ROADWAYS

Given the relatively flat to declining population growth projections for the Duluth-Superior area, the LOS on Hermantown roads is not expected to change much by 2045. There may still be congestion at intersections, especially during peak travel hours. However, with a comprehensive and well-connected roadway network, individual drivers can generally avoid these areas with changes in their travel patterns or timing. The primary change is to break down the existing 1-mile roadway network by adding in roadway connections, particularly in areas with future residential development. This reduces the need for costly infrastructure improvements.



Figure 6.6 Future Roadway Network with Future Roadway Connections

NON-MOTORIZED NETWORK

The Hermantown Connector Trail, a spur to the Munger Trail, will eventually link Hermantown and Proctor to Duluth as segments of the route are completed. This recreational trail will accommodate many forms of non-motorized travel (walking, jogging, hiking, bicycling, inline skating, cross-country skiing) and will connect key civic locations, including Hermantown Schools, the Arrowhead Regional Health and Wellness Center, and City Hall, with a number of parks, including Fichtner, Stebner, and Keene Creek. More information about this future trail can be found in the Natural Resources & Recreation chapter.

Future sidewalks and/or trails are planned along Hermantown Rd, Reinke Rd, and Lavaque Rd, and other connecting roadways. As housing development continues to occur, new sidewalks and/or trails will be constructed to serve these residents. Sidewalks will also be added to growing commercial areas such as within the Hermantown Marketplace.



Bikers along a paved trail

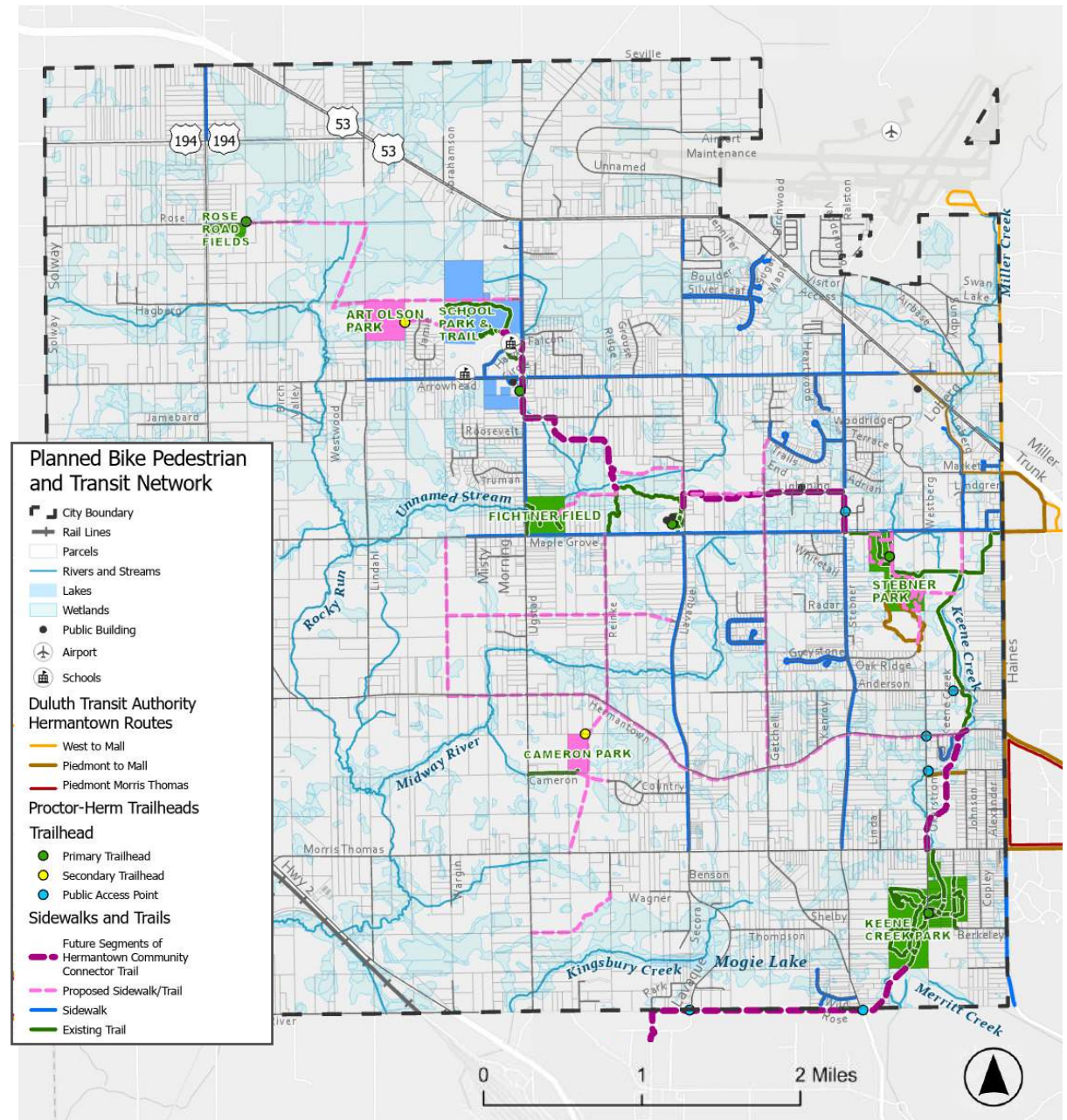


Figure 6.7 Planned Bike and Pedestrian Network

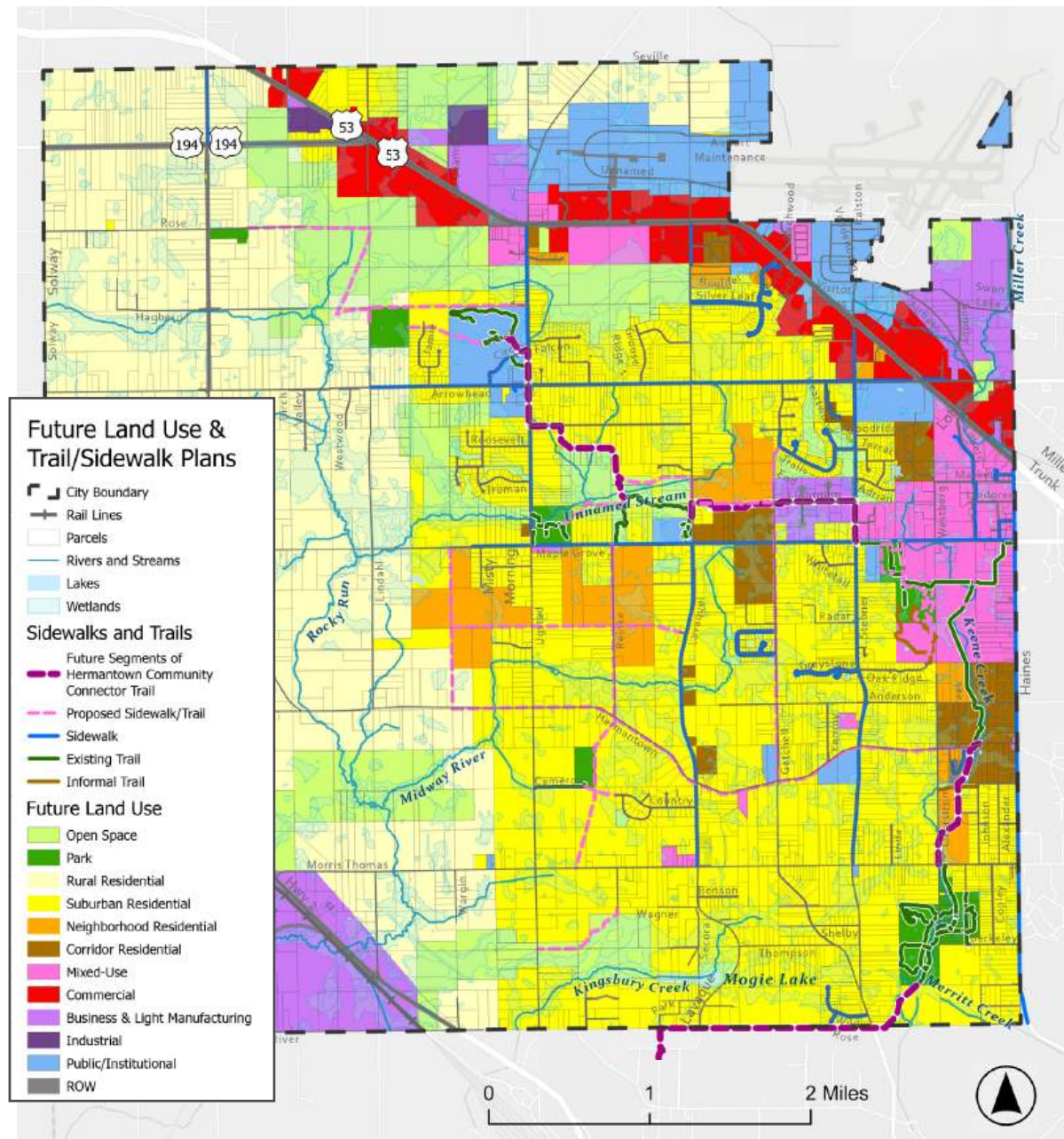
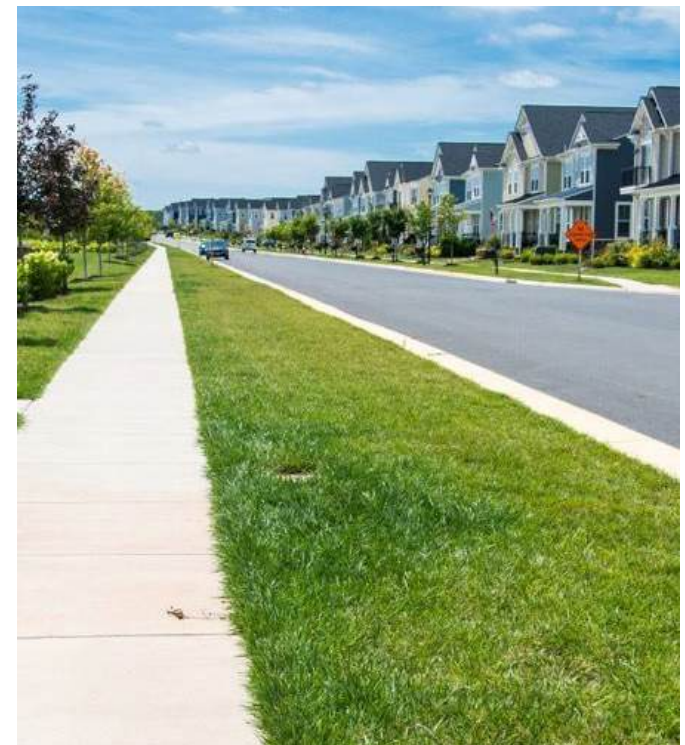


Figure 6.8 Connection Between Future Trails/Sidewalks and Future Land Use

NON-MOTORIZED NETWORK AND FUTURE LAND USE

The adjacent map illustrates the relationship between the future non-motorized network and the future land use map. The future trail and sidewalk network is planned to expand most significantly in areas that are planned for neighborhood and corridor residential development, as well as providing connections to existing parks, future parks, and the growing Hermantown Marketplace. The map also shows that trails and/or sidewalks will be provided with future new streets.



Sidewalks in residential neighborhood

METRO AREA BIKEWAYS PLAN

The Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Bikeways Plan, updated in 2019, includes a framework for the development of the future bikeways system in the Duluth-Superior metro area over the next 25 years. The existing bikeway system includes signed bikeable shoulder routes in Hermantown, including the following roadway corridors:

- Haines Road
- Maple Grove Road
- Arrowhead Road
- Lavaque Road
- Morris Thomas Road
- Midway Road
- Stebner Road (Hwy 53 to Maple Grove Road)
- Loberg Ave and Market St (in Hermantown Marketplace)

Planned future bikeway facilities in Hermantown include the following corridors:

- Hermantown Connector Trail
- Ugstad Road (Hwy 53 to Maple Grove Road)
- Connection between Hwy 53 and Midway Road via a power line corridor

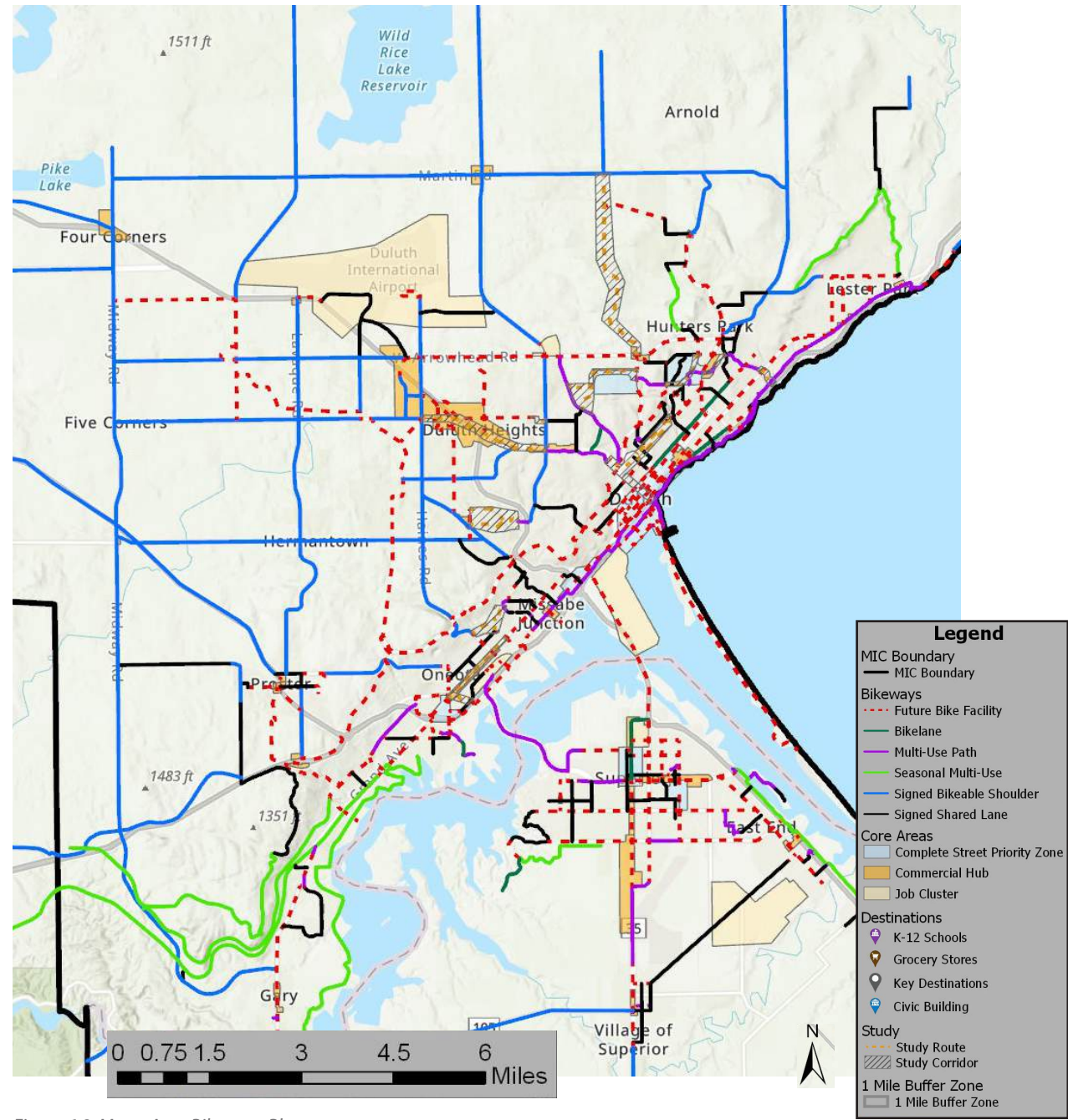


Figure 6.9 Metro Area Bikeways Plan

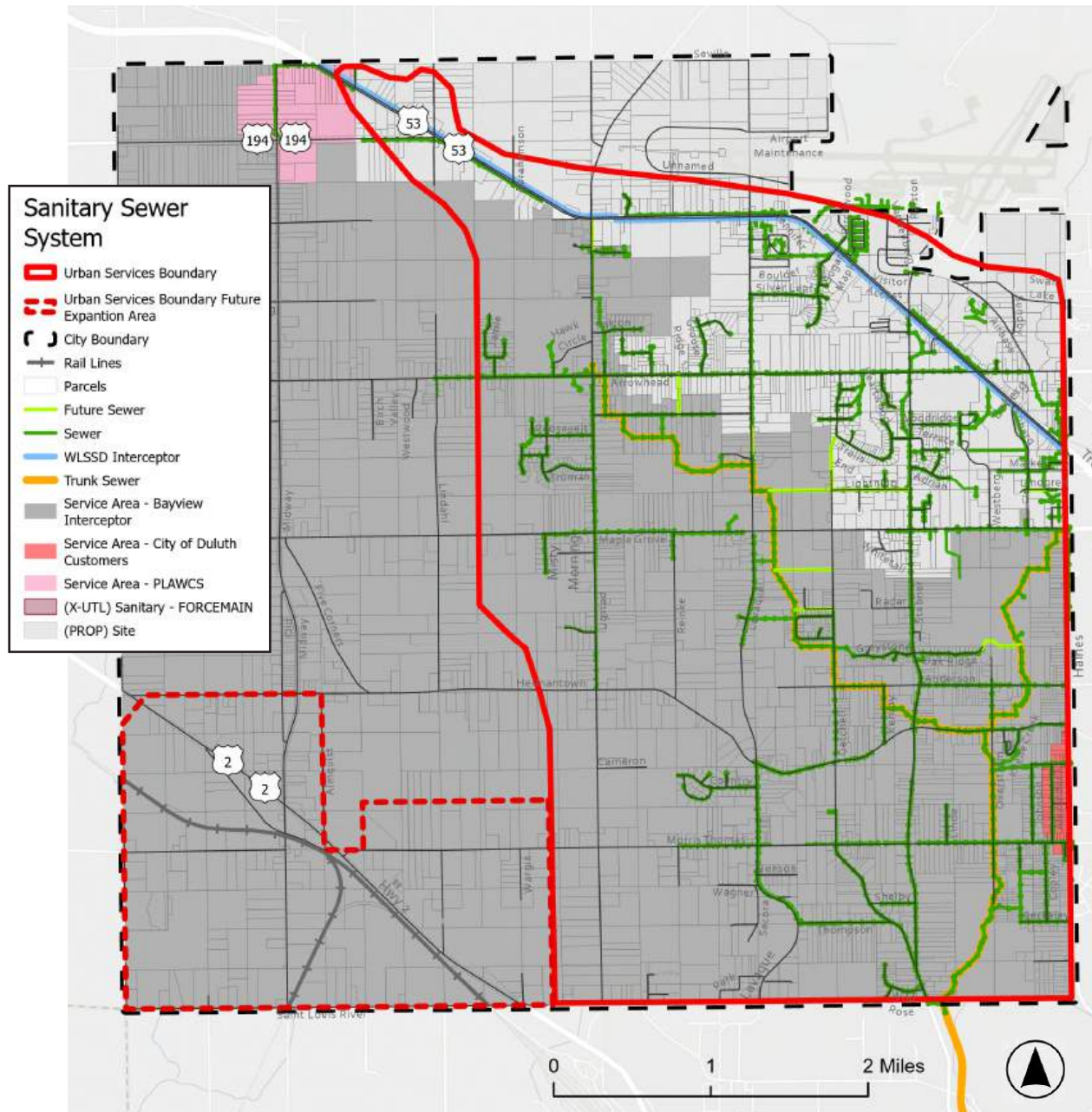


Figure 6.10 Sanitary Sewer System

UTILITIES

Hermantown operates a municipal sanitary sewer system that connects at various points to two interceptor sewers under the jurisdiction of the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District (WLSSD). The WLSSD Hermantown Interceptor generally runs along Highway 53 and carries waste to the District's regional wastewater treatment plant in Duluth. There, wastewater is treated before being discharged to the St. Louis River. The central and southeastern areas are served by City trunk sewer lines that flow south to the WLSSD Bayview Heights Interceptor. The City's trunk sewer line branches to serve both the school campus and the commercial uses in the Hermantown Marketplace. Other lateral lines serve existing neighborhoods. A future expansion of the City's urban services boundary is planned for future business and light manufacturing development in the southwest area of the city.



WLSSD Wastewater Facility

Hermantown purchases all of its potable water from the City of Duluth. The Utility Department is responsible for the distribution of treated water. The City's water supply lines generally follow major roads such as Highway 53 and other arterials and collectors. Future expansion of both the sanitary sewer and the water supply systems is focused on filling existing gaps within the City's urban service boundary or creating connections between neighborhoods.

A second sanitary sewer trunk line that has been envisioned to someday serve a large residential portion of western Hermantown does not appear to be needed in the next 20 years, the lifetime of this plan, given the opportunities for residential infill within the urban service boundary which could provide service at a lower cost. Instead, this line could be constructed to support business development in the southwest portion of the city. See Chapter 3: Land Use for more information.

Without any development, rain and snow would either soak into the ground or run off into streams, lakes, and wetlands. With development, roads, roofs, and other impervious surfaces change the rate of flow and the quality of stormwater. This could, in turn, negatively impact local water bodies. Roads and other constructed barriers prevent water from flowing naturally. Culvert, ditches, storm drains, catch basins, ponds, and bridges help direct the flow of water and assist in flood prevention.

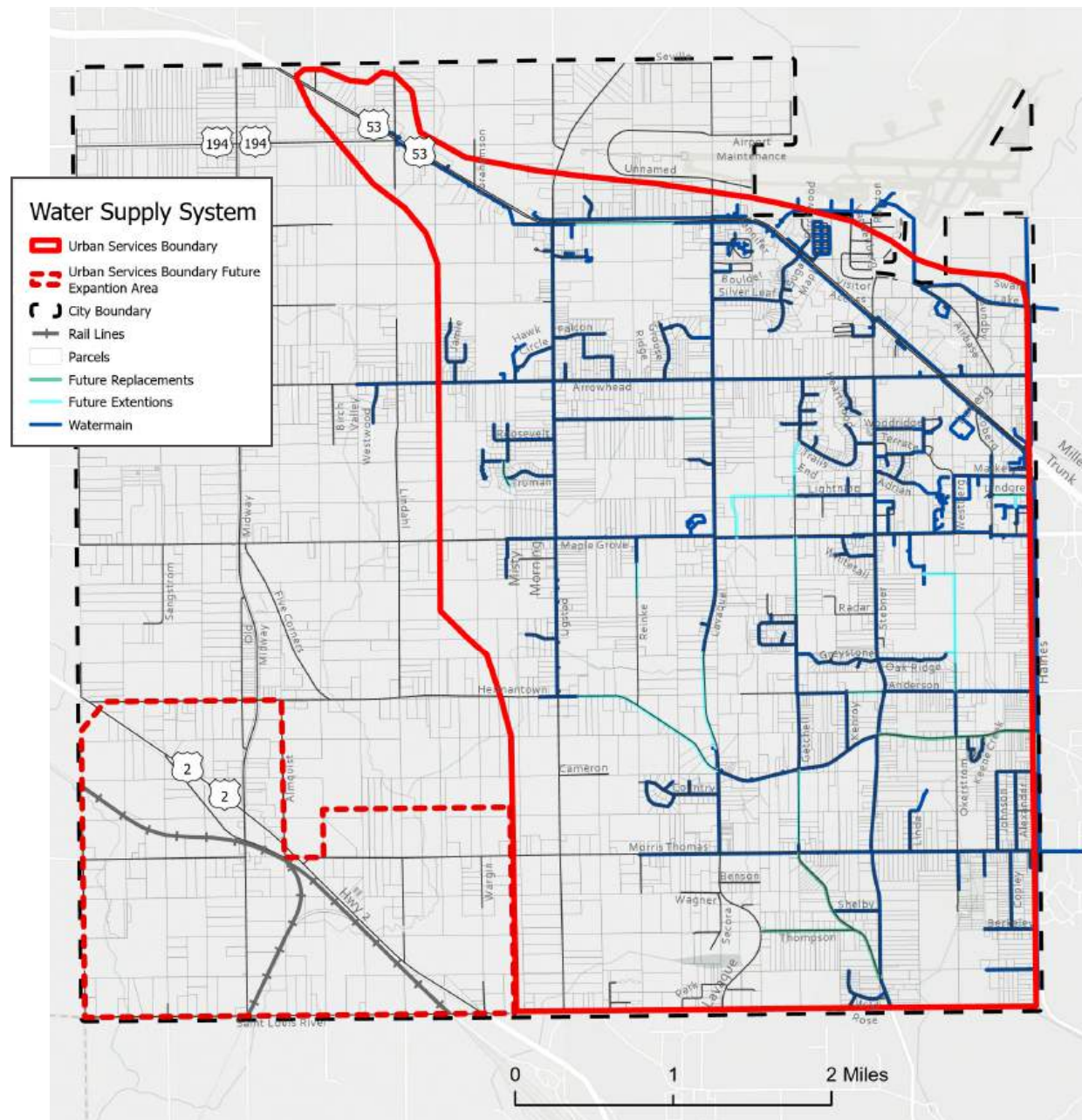


Figure 6.11 Water Supply System



ADAPTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION

The transportation systems within Hermantown are also under the purview of the Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council (MIC) Long-Range Transportation Plan, which looks out to 2045. This plan considers the transportation systems within the MIC area holistically and has identified key takeaways – some of which are relevant for Hermantown:

1. There are many transportation needs and wants, but funding under the current approach is likely not attainable and new approaches will need to be implemented.
2. Stagnant population growth, coupled with a decline in the percentage of people of working age, will result in a decreased tax base to fund increasingly expensive transportation projects.
3. An aging population will likely require expanded or different transportation options.
4. Level of Service projections show little traffic congestion and few areas of concern.
5. Multi-modal travel is desired, and in some cases necessary, for people within the MIC area.
6. Maintenance of critical infrastructure and addressing inefficiencies is strongly desired.
7. Building an environmentally sound and sustainable transportation system is strongly desired.
8. The design of transportation systems has multiple impacts on public health – we should strive for those that benefit and improve the overall health of the community.



For Hermantown, these transportation realities layered on top of the existing conditions provide a glimpse of where the city should focus its efforts. As investments are prioritized, spending time and money on infrastructure projects that improve access for those who are either unable or choose not to drive their own vehicles will become increasingly important. More and better-connected trails and sidewalks will provide options for those who do not drive and those who prefer alternatives to driving.

As part of its long-range transportation planning efforts, MIC conducted surveys to understand public sentiment around various transportation issues. While 66% of those surveyed preferred prioritizing modes other than automobile, barriers to use remained. Results showed that common barriers to walking included the condition of sidewalks, unsafe street crossings, and gaps in the sidewalk network. Barriers to biking included safety concerns when bicycling in the street. For Hermantown, this reinforces the need to explore off-street bicycle facilities.

As regular maintenance of roadways is required, there will be opportunities to construct integrated multi-modal options that improve both safety and access for those not in vehicles.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Climate trends for Minnesota suggest greater chances for extreme weather over the next 50 years, including more precipitation, hotter summers, warmer and wetter winters, and more severe weather events in general. These episodes have the potential to damage public infrastructure, resulting in costly repairs, not to mention damage and loss to private property. Hermantown can work to lessen these threats by adapting the construction of new infrastructure projects while also upgrading existing facilities as opportunities allow.

One significant climate-related risk is flash flooding due to intense storm events and the associated damage to pipes, roads, and bridges, as well as to private property. To combat this risk, the City should strive to preserve floodplains and to construct stormwater infrastructure that can reduce the potential for costly damages.

Other aspects of community resilience in the face of climate change could be explored to address the following threats: spread of invasive tree and plant species, impacted water quality and supply, high energy consumption and/or greenhouse gas emissions, solid waste generation, extreme heat and air quality, and increased prevalence of vector-borne diseases by mosquitoes and ticks.

Participation by Hermantown in the St. Louis County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan efforts in 2020, and the resulting mitigation activities that were identified, are a starting point for addressing community resilience.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goals and strategies were developed in consultation with the Steering Committee, HEDA, Planning Commission, and City Council with input from the public. Goals are broad statements that describe a desired outcome. Strategies describe the approach that would need to be taken to achieve the goals. Implementation actions are concrete steps that can be taken to reach the strategies and goals.

6.1. Provide safe, effective, and efficient access to neighborhoods, businesses, and recreation facilities while respecting the surrounding natural systems.

- 6.1.1. Maintain a roadway system which is consistent with the principals of functional classification and access management, helping ensure that roads are planned and designed in an integrated and efficient manner.
- 6.1.2. Plan for needed roadway infrastructure improvements to manage traffic flow and reduce congestion.
- 6.1.3. Expand and connect the local roadway network to create options for dispersed travel patterns.
- 6.1.4. Provide safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian facilities along roadways and between important destinations.
- 6.1.5. Evaluate transportation projects to ensure they preserve and enhance environmental features and resources.

6.2. Recognize the importance of the Highway 53 corridor for the local business community.

- 6.2.1. Support Highway 53 access management improvements to preserve and improve the function of the highway, including the addition of service roads, consolidation of driveways, elimination or relocation of median crossovers, and intersection upgrades.
- 6.2.2. Continue to cooperate with MN DOT and the Metropolitan Interstate Council on necessary safety improvements in the Highway 53 corridor.
- 6.2.3. Seek federal and state assistance to construct needed highway improvements.

6.3. Provide a transportation system that supports all modes of travel.

- 6.3.1. Expand and connect the sidewalk and trail network in the suburban, neighborhood, corridor, and mixed-use neighborhood areas to provide connections to parks, trails, business areas, and other community destinations.
- 6.3.2. Support bikeway system expansions and improvements of the Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Bikeways System Plan.
- 6.3.3. Provide safe and convenient pedestrian crossings at appropriate intersections.
- 6.3.4. Plan for safe and efficient pedestrian and bicycle options on all new roadway connections and when reconstructing the existing roadways.
- 6.3.5. Support enhancements to regional bus transit services, particularly serving the needs of residents and employees working in Hermantown, working with the transit agencies and Duluth.



6.4. Plan for and provide necessary public facilities and utilities to support forecast growth.

- 6.4.1. Prioritize addressing gaps in services that benefit existing neighborhoods.
- 6.4.2. Extend infrastructure within the City's urban services boundary to promote the addition of new housing types and densities available to a wide range of households, including number of occupants, types, ages, and incomes.
- 6.4.3. Explore options to expand the City's urban services boundary to the southwest to support business development.
- 6.4.4. Provide adequate infrastructure along Highway 53 to meet the needs of existing and new businesses.
- 6.4.5. Inventory existing broadband infrastructure and create strategies to provide broadband service to underserved or unserved areas of the city.

6.5. Increase the community's resilience to the impacts of climate change and mitigation efforts against future natural disaster events.

- 6.5.1. Protect floodplains and restrict development within them.
- 6.5.2. Regulate stormwater runoff volumes and rates to minimize flood risk and damages.
- 6.5.3. Identify and implement road improvement projects to reduce areas of repetitive over-the-road flooding.
- 6.5.4. Ensure all new development and redevelopment projects adhere to the City's Stormwater Ordinance and Sewer Use Ordinance.
- 6.5.5. Continue to participate in the updating and implementation of the County's Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- 6.5.6. Continue to implement projects that will reduce the amount of clear water (inflow and infiltration) entering the sanitary sewer system.

07. IMPLEMENTATION

PURPOSE

The 2045 Comprehensive Plan provides a high level vision for the long term future of Hermantown as it considers how to approach decisions regarding land use, infrastructure, economic development, housing, recreation, and natural resources. The effectiveness of the plan is linked to the actions identified as necessary to implement the goals and strategies within each chapter. Because the time horizon for the Comprehensive Plan spans 20 years and the factors influencing policy decisions change more frequently, the City should revisit the goals, strategies, and implementation actions of the plan at least every five years in order to confirm they are still adequately addressing the issues facing the community.

The Implementation chapter identifies specific implementation actions for each of the elements (chapters) of the Comprehensive Plan:

- Natural Resources & Recreation
- Land Use
- Economic & Housing Development
- Transportation & Utilities

In addition, the timeframe (on-going, short term, or long-term) and the lead / coordinating city departments and commissions/boards for each implementation action.

Implementation regulatory tools are also identified, including the Zoning Ordinance, Land Splits & Platting Ordinance, Capital Improvement Plan, State Aid Roadway Programs, Official Map, and Water Resource Regulations.



Hermantown City Hall

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Timing of implementation actions may shift based on development trends, market forces, funding availability, agency coordination, and other factors. Timeframes are categorized as:

- **On-going:** Strategies that do not have a specific timeframe but will be implemented as needed over time.
- **Short Term:** These are implementation strategies recommended to be completed in the next one to five years. Generally these strategies are either higher priority or lower cost. (0-5 years)
- **Long Term:** These are generally higher cost or more complicated, thus requiring more time to implement, find funding, or build the collaboration and partnerships needed. (5+ years)

Chapter	TABLE 7.1 IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS	Timeframe	Lead / Coordinating Agencies
3	NATURAL RESOURCES & RECREATION		
3.1	Continue to explore funding sources and opportunities to support acquisition, development, and maintenance of the parks and trails system.	On-going	Public Works Dept. and Community Development Dept.
3.2	Engage volunteers and user groups to aid in the on-going maintenance and upkeep of park and trail facilities in coordination with the City's Public Works Department and Park Board.	On-going	Public Works Dept. and Park Board
3.3	Develop a plan to increase accessibility within existing parks and improve non-motorized options for reaching the parks through an expanded sidewalk and trail system.	Short Term	Community Development Dept. and Public Works Dept.
3.4	Revisit the 2018 proposed master plans and fund the improvements needed to modernize and upgrade existing park/playfields to provide a broader range of recreational facilities both active and passive - Rose Road Park, Fichtner Field Park, Stebner Park, and Keene Creek Park. Any relocation of park facilities from an existing park should be coordinated with the planning and design of future parks.	Long Term	Public Works Dept. and Park Board
3.5	Plan, design, and fund construction of planned future parks in conjunction with future development and/or relocation of facilities from existing parks – Cameron Park, Art Olson Park.	Long Term	Community Development Dept., Public Works Dept., Park Board
3.6	Plan for completion of the Hermantown Connector Trail/Munger Trail Spur, including trailheads.	Short Term	Public Works Dept. and Park Board
3.7	Conduct analysis for identification of a potential public park in the northeastern portion of Hermantown.	Long Term	Community Development Dept.
3.8	Plan, design, and construct the extensions and enhancements to the City's trails and sidewalks system, both dedicated trail corridors and facilities within roadway corridors.	On-going	Community Development Dept., Public Works Dept., Park Board
3.9	Update the City's 2018 Parks & Trails Master Plan to reflect the directions of the Comprehensive Plan, since the master plan has reached its original time horizon of 2024.	Long Term	Community Development Dept. and Park Board
3.10	Update the City's Land Splits & Platting Ordinance (subdivision regulations) to improve the design standards, required improvements, and park dedication sections in order to improve the future provision and design of parks and trails with new development.	Short Term	Community Development Dept.

Chapter	TABLE 7.1 IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS	Timeframe	Lead / Coordinating Agencies
4	LAND USE		
4.1	Update the Zoning Ordinance to align with the land use plan and to support development of new housing types, higher densities, and mixed use development in targeted locations.	Short Term	Community Development Dept.
4.2	Evaluate potential and timing for the expansion of the City's urban services boundary to the southwest to support future economic development opportunities.	Short Term	Community Development Dept. and Public Works Dept.
4.3	Conduct property inventory to identify vacant sites with current access to city utilities in order to prioritize infill development.	Short Term	Community Development Dept., Public Works Dept., Utility Dept.
4.4	Initiate small area plans to guide development of growth areas – Uptown, Maple Grove Rd corridor, Keene Creek/Haines Rd corridor, southwest/Hwy 2 area, and Western Hwy 53 corridor.	Short Term	Community Development Dept.
4.5	Develop vision plans for community gateway areas to enhance appearance and increase awareness of Hermantown.	Long Term	Community Development Dept., HEDA
4.6	Update the Land Splits & Platting Ordinance to better support future development as guided in the Comprehensive Plan.	Short Term	Community Development Dept.
4.7	Study road and infrastructure access barriers to identified areas of developable land/growth areas.	Long Term	Community Development Dept. and Public Works Dept.
5	ECONOMIC & HOUSING DEVELOPMENT		
5.1	Create and fund a unified marketing strategy to strengthen city's identity and messaging as a way to attract new businesses and employers.	Long Term	HEDA and Community Development Dept.
5.2	Update the City's business subsidy policy to keep it aligned with market changes.	Short Term	HEDA
5.3	Continue to lead the efforts to develop the Hawkline Business Park north of Hwy 53.	Short Term	HEDA and Community Development Dept.
5.4	Engage with broadband providers to expand service throughout the city, filling gaps and extending coverage to all neighborhoods.	Long Term	HEDA and Utility Dept.
5.5	Explore funding sources and support regulatory changes to allow the construction of a wider variety of housing types.	Short Term	Community Development Dept.
5.6	Consider the creation of a historic district to highlight and preserve the history of the Jackson Homes.	Long Term	Community Development Dept.
5.7	Develop a strategy and criteria for the City's acquisition and assembly of land as a tool to accelerate economic development in growth and redevelopment areas.	Long Term	Community Development Dept. and HEDA

Chapter	TABLE 7.1 IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS	Timeframe	Lead / Coordinating Agencies
6	TRANSPORTATION & UTILITIES		
6.1	Update the 5-year CIP annually to help prioritize the City's infrastructure needs identified in the Comprehensive Plan.	On-going	Community Development Dept. and Public Works Dept.
6.2	Prioritize and construct identified street extensions and improvements to manage traffic flow, reduce congestion, and increase access to developable land.	Long Term	Public Works Dept.
6.3	Continue to evaluate street intersections for necessary safety improvements.	On-going	Public Works Dept.
6.4	Prioritize and initiate utility extensions and improvements to fill gaps in water and sanitary sewer service within the City's urban services boundary.	Short Term	Public Works Dept. and Utility Dept.
6.5	Improve stormwater infrastructure to reduce possibilities of future flooding.	On-going	Utility Dept.
6.6	Incorporate green infrastructure/stormwater treatment practices to improve water quality and protect natural resources.	On-going	Community Development Dept., Public Works Dept., Utility Dept.
6.7	Study the feasibility, costs, and timing of proposed roadway connections, including public vs. private ownership.	On-going	Community Development Dept. and Public Works Dept.

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

In addition to the implementation action steps listed below, there are a handful of regulatory tools that the City already utilizes that should be aligned with the vision of the plan so that they can advance its goals on a regular basis.

ZONING ORDINANCE

The City's Zoning Code is the primary tool for translating the future land uses of the Comprehensive Plan into regulations that govern uses, placement and massing of structures, and performance standards of land within the city. It includes the following:

- Zoning districts
- Official Zoning Map
- Development procedures
- Regulations to manage Shorelands
- Regulations to manage Floodplains
- Administration of Wetland Conservation Act efforts

LAND SPLITS & PLATTING ORDINANCE

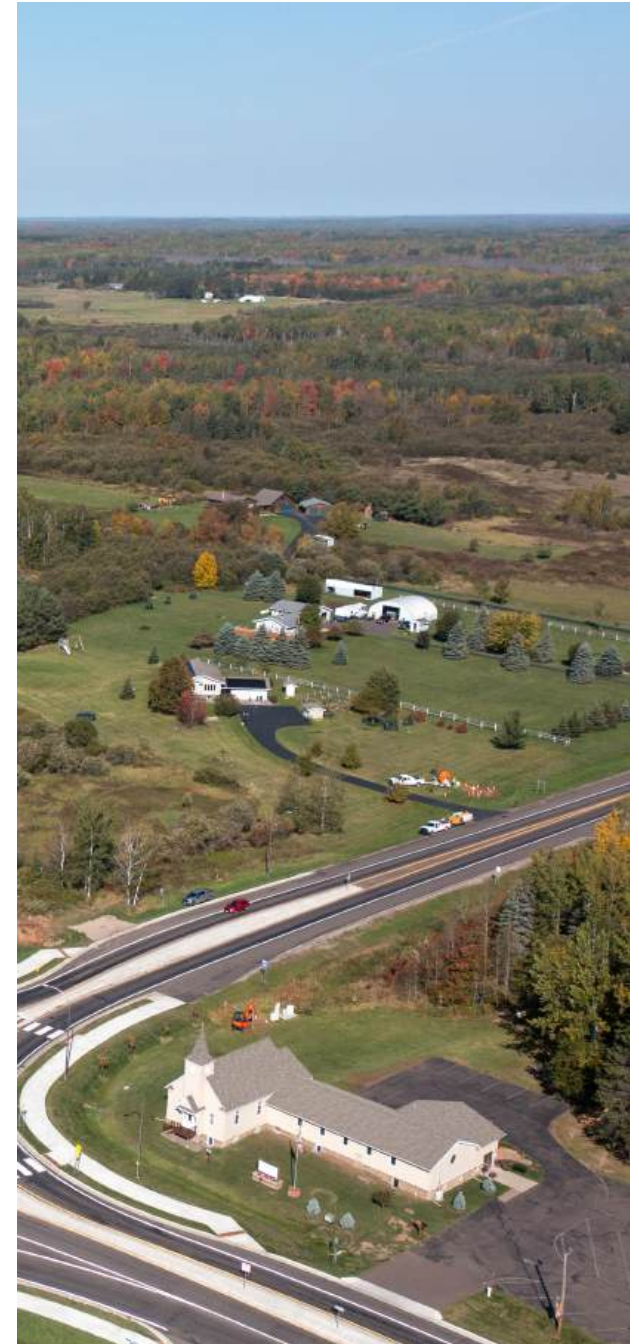
The City's subdivision ordinance, which is called Land Splits & Platting, is a primary tool for planning and designing future development patterns, including streets, blocks, lots, and public areas.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Hermantown's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) maps out the City's capital expenditures over a five year period. It anticipates what projects will receive funding, how much will be spent, and the timing of the efforts.

STATE AID ROADWAY PROGRAMS

There are state aid roadway programs at the County and City levels. While there are approximately 73 miles of roads under the City's jurisdiction, a portion of these roadways are designated as Municipal State Aid Streets (MSAS), which are major collector routes through the city. In addition, the County highways traversing the city, which are either minor arterial or major collector routes, are designated as County State Aid Highways (CSAH). The City evaluates each MSAS project to determine whether a utility infrastructure project could coincide with the road reconstruction or rehabilitation project. The City can work with the County to coordinate potential utility infrastructure upgrades or extensions with each CSAH project. Additionally, the City can continue to collaborate with the MN DOT on federal/state highway project improvements and the Federal-Aid Highway Program for Highways 53, 2, and 194.





OFFICIAL MAP

Land that is needed for future street or other necessary public facilities and services is frequently diverted to private uses that could have been located on other land without hardship or inconvenience to the property owners. When this happens, public uses of this land becomes more challenging, may be denied, may require prohibitive costs to obtain, and/or may involve dislocating the owners and occupants of the land. MN Statute 462.359 provides that municipalities have the right to identify land needed for future public uses on an Official Map. This process enables both public and private property owners to modify their building plans before investments are made that will make future changes difficult to accomplish.

WATER RESOURCES REGULATIONS

Preservation and protection of the community's natural resources, particularly water resources, is an important element of future development in the city. There are multiple tools at the federal, state, and municipal level for regulating changes that may impact water resources.

CREEK, RIVER, AND LAKE SHORELAND

The City currently regulates shoreland with its Shoreland overlay district in the Zoning Ordinance and mapped on the Official Zoning Map. The current Shoreland overlay district uses classifies the community's creeks and rivers using the MN DNR's lake classifications rather than stream/river classifications, which should be adjusted. The MN DNR has created a Shoreland Model Ordinance that provides good guidance for updating the City's Shoreland overlay district.

FLOODPLAINS

Responsibility to adopt regulations to minimize flood losses is delegated to local governments by the State of MN. The City's Zoning Ordinance includes a Floodplain Management Regulations chapter. Local governments are required to adopt floodplain management ordinances in order to be in full compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which is required for flood insurance and certain types of disaster assistance. The MN DNR has created a Floodplain Model Ordinance. This model ordinance has been revised a number of times over the years for various reasons, with the most significant update occurring in early 2022. Local governments are encouraged to adopt the most recent version during each ordinance amendment.

WETLANDS

Wetlands are protected at the federal, state, and local level. The City of Hermantown has a Comprehensive Wetland Protection and Management Plan (2005). Since 2006, the City has enforced the federal Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) through adoption of the Wetland Conservation Act Ordinance, a chapter within the Zoning Ordinance. The City should work with the Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources to review and make any necessary updates to it wetlands plan and ordinance.

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2045 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

HERMANTOWN, MINNESOTA

